

## Symbolic Interactionism Perspective in Interpersonal Communication in Implementation of Family Planning Program: A Theoretical Review

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to describe how social interactions, the meaning of messages and human actions reflect an activity based on certain symbols. Human action in deciding herself to accept Family Planning program is not something that is immediately. Family planning programs designed in the hope of growing welfare and prosperity through restrictions on the number of births from each fertile age couple. This paper will analyze human actions with the premises of symbolic interactionism Herbert Blumer.

The data taken is literature review and secondary data from various sources. The results of the analysis illustrate how people perform actions based on symbols absorbed from the social relationships that lived. Modification of the meaning of messages obtained can occur through the process of interpretation in individuals. Thus becoming a KB acceptor as a human action, strongly influenced by its social interaction and the process of interpretation of the symbols in human social life.

Keywords: Interpersonal Communication, Symbolic Interactionism, Family Planning.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the founding of this nation, the founding fathers have been thinking far ahead. One of them is the national goal, which has been established in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution is to promote the general welfare. So implemented national development is an effort to improve the quality of people and society of Indonesia is done in a sustainable, based on national capabilities by utilizing the progress of science and technology and pay attention to global challenges. In its implementation refers to the nation's personality and universal values to realize the life of a sovereign, independent, just, prosperous nation and strong ethical moral force (GBHN, 1999: 1).

Family Planning is one effort to realize family happiness and prosperity. The main purpose of Family Planning is to further improve the welfare of mother and child. By arranging birth, Wife has many opportunities to pay attention and educate children beside having enough time to do duties as housewife. On the other hand the husband should not be bothered by the demands of living expenses and tuition fees for children. More than that children will get sufficient attention from parents who will be able to give a positive impact for the growth of personality of children, so that become a healthy human physically, mentally and socially in accordance with what is desired and ruled by religion become a pious child (Makmur, 2013).

The problems that often occur in the community are married couples who lack the program or planning in marriage, when to have children, how many children desired of course that match with ability. Because of this lack of planning so many families who eventually have many children, when viewed from the economic conditions they lack. The result of this problem is the child becomes abandoned and neglected, lack of attention from parents, children's education is not considered (Makmur, 2013).

Through Presidential Decree no. 33 of 1972 made perfecting the organizational structure, main tasks, and working procedures of the National Family Planning Coordinating Board (BKKBN). With Presidential Decree No. 38 In 1978 the organization and structure of the National Family Planning Coordinating Board (BKKBN) was refined, which expanded its function not only the issue of family planning but also other activities, namely population that supports KB. Furthermore, the organization of the National Family Planning Coordinating Board (BKKBN) was reorganized with Presidential Decree no. 64 Year 1983 with the main task is to prepare the general policy and coordinate the implementation of the program as a whole and integrated (Sujiyatini, 2009).

The new order era is an era where the family planning program is strongly driven by its implementation in the community. Even the Family Cards of the New Order era contained a column describing the contraceptive used by a family. This is so strongly rooted that the New Order government so massively monitors citizens to the issue of family planning tools used. Now in the post-order era of reform, many lines of life and order are changing. If formerly the KB program is a national program, it is now related to regional autonomy that contains logical consequences of policy decentralization, the implementation of the family planning program depends on the scale of the priorities of the local government itself. It is known that With the existence of Law Number 22 Year 1999 about the Regional Government as amended by Law Number 32 Year 2004 there is a change of authority to local government. To the local government is given the freedom to organize a government that covers all areas of government, unless the areas based on the Act have been established as the central authority. This autonomy includes the full and unanimous authority in governance, from planning, implementation, supervision, control, and evaluation. The consequence of the policy is the central authority including the National Family Planning Program, the management is handed over to the district / city government. This is indicated by the delivery of P3D (Personal Financing, Equipment and Documentation) BKKBN District / City by the central government to the district / city government (Purwaningsih, 2012).

We can see that as a result of the decentralization policy, in addition to the decreasing number of family planning institutions, the quality of managers and implementers of family planning programs at the field level also decreased because many were transferred or retired. The local government at that time moved many and placed former BKKBN employees including PLKB in the sub-districts on the grounds that the employee has an explanation in dealing with the community. In various regions, PLKB is transferred to staff to other agencies, some are heads of villages, some even become carnat. The removal of the PLKBs was also related to the lack of clarity of the BKKBN position at the district / municipality level when the regional autonomy was implemented so that they accepted an offer to serve at another institution. This displacement causes the number of PLKB to be much lower than before regional autonomy so that this can have an impact on program performance. Conditions like this require social support from society. Thus the active acceptor becomes an entity that becomes the main reference for the accepting candidate community to get certain symbols about family planning. The manifestations can be in the family, within the members of the PKK, in assemblies of taklim, church fellowship or the larger community / organization.

In the interaction it is ensured that there are communication events, such as interpersonal communication and group communication. The event is an exchange event of symbols that each have a meaning. The symbols that interact in the Blumer terminology are called symbolic interactions. Thematic family planning and all its symbolism are interchangeable in human society. This writing ultimately questions how possible theoretical explanations for the implementation of family planning programs through interpersonal communication in society?

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### ***2.1. Interpersonal Communication***

Interpersonal Communication is a very important thing in an organization for the smooth activities that become the goal of an organization. There are several notions of interpersonal communication presented by experts, among them: Arni Muhammad (2009, 159) defines "Interpersonal communication is the process of exchanging information between a person with at least one other person or usually between two people who can be directly known backwards. As more people engage in communication, it becomes the perception of the person in the communication event that increases the complexity of the communication. Interpersonal communication is forming relationships with others.

Hafied Cangara (2006, 31) provides the understanding that interpersonal communication or interpersonal communication is a communication process that takes place between two or more people face-to-face. Burhan Bungin (2008, 32) explains that interpersonal communication is a personal interpersonal communication both directly and indirectly (via medium). Examples include face-to-face conversation, telephone conversations, personal correspondence. The focus of his observations are the forms and nature of relationships, conversations (discourse), interactions and characteristics of communicators.

According to Onong Uchjana Effendy (2007, 15) feedback in interpersonal communication can be directly known because communication is done with face to face (communication to face communication) and communicant responses can be immediately known. Indriyo Gitosudarmo and Agus Mulyono (2001, 196) mean that interpersonal communication is face to face communication is an important thing for a manager or leader. Success in this communication is a determinant factor for the success of the organization in achieving goals. According to Agus M. Hardjana (2003: 85) Interpersonal communication is a face-to-face interaction between two or several people, where the sender can deliver the message directly, and the recipient can receive and respond directly. According Deddy Mulyana (2000: 73) Interpersonal communication is communication between people face-to-face, which allows each participant to capture the reaction of others directly, either verbally or nonverbally. This interpersonal communication is a communication that only two people, such as husband and wife, two colleagues, two close friends, teacher-students and so on. From various definitions above can be stated that interpersonal communication is a communication that occurs directly or face to face either between a person with a person or with a group, this communication is very effective because of the direct known response from the communicant.

## **2.2. Symbolic Interactionism**

Some sociologists include Herbert Blumer's approach to symbolic interactionism, expressing the three main principles of symbolic interactionism: meaning, language, and thought. This premise will lead to the concept of a person's self and its socialization to a larger 'community', society. The term "symbolic interactionism" was coined by Herbert Blumer in 1937. However, the basic ideas of this perspective seem to be attached to Herbert's ideas Mead who was none other than the teacher of Herbert Blumer when he studied at the University of Chicago.

Symbolic interaction focuses on the importance of forming meaning for human behavior, which in the theory of symbolic interaction can not be separated from the communication process because initially meaning is meaningless, until finally in interpretive construction by individuals through the process of interaction to create mutually agreed meaning. Individuals use meaning to interpret the events around them. Clearly, they can not communicate without sharing the meaning of the symbols used in these institutions. Three premises of symbolic interaction Herbert Blumer (1969) are: (1). Meaning, (2). Language, (3). Mind.

Blumer proposes the first premise, that, "human act toward people or things on the basis of the meanings they are applying to them people or things." That is, humans act or behave towards other people are basically based on the meaning they impose to the parties other such. Once people define a situation as real, its very real in its consequences. The meaning of what is real to us comes from what we believe to be reality itself. Because we believe that it is real, then we believe it as a reality.

Blumer's second premise is the meaning arises out of the social interaction that people have with each other. Meanings arise from the social interactions that are exchanged between them. Meaning does not appear or attach to something or an object naturally. Meaning comes from the process of negotiation through the use of language (language) in the perspective of symbolic interactionism. Blumer affirmed the importance of naming in the process of meaning. Mead also believes that this symbolic naming is the basis for human society.

Blumer's third premise is "... an individual's interpretation of symbols is modified by his or her own thought process". Symbolic interactionism describes the thought process as a conversation with oneself. This thinking process itself is reflexive. Well, the problem according to Mead is before humans can think, we need the language. We need to be able to communicate symbolically. Language is basically a piece of software that can move our minds. (Herbert Blumer, 1969).

The way in which humans think much is determined by the practice of language. The real language is not merely seen as a "message exchange tool" alone, but symbolic interactionism sees the position of language more as a set of ideas exchanged to others symbolically. Symbolic communication. According to Blumer by doing symbolic interaction someone tries to interpret the meaning of the actions of others, make a definition of the situation, then act on the basis of the meaning or definition of the situation. Through symbolic interaction, the individual also gives an indication or signal about what action is expected from his interaction partner.

The difference in language use ultimately also determines the differences in human thinking. But although the interpretation of a language is largely determined by social context or construct, often individual interpretations play a significant role in the modification of the symbols we capture in the process of thinking. Symbolization in the process of interaction is not unanimously received from the social world, because we basically digest it again in the process of thinking in accordance with our own preferences of each. The thinking process refers to language. Language determines how the process of meaning and thought processes. So, the three are closely related. The third interaction is the main study in the perspective of symbolic interactionism.

In the level of the concept of communication, it can be seen simply that communication is essentially a process of symbolic interaction between actors of communication. There is an exchange of messages (which basically consists of certain symbols) to the other person who is invited to communicate. The exchange of messages is not only seen in the context of the transmission of messages, but also views the exchange of ways of thinking, and more than that for the achievement of a meaning process. Communication is the process of symbolic interaction in a particular language with a certain way of thinking for the achievement of certain meanings also, where all constructed socially.

### ***2.3. Family Planning***

Understanding of Family Planning according to Law no. 10 Year 1992 on Population Development and Prosperous Family Development is an effort to increase the awareness of community participation through maturation of marriage age (PUP), birth arrangement, family resilience development, improvement of small family welfare, happy and prosperous (Arum and Sujiyatini, 2009). The Family Planning Program to realize the norms of a happy and prosperous small family (NKKBS), among others, is needed various ways: (1). Set the distance of pregnancy, (2) Maturing marriage age, (3). Counseling about the importance of family planning, (4). Provision of facilities and infrastructure KB and Posyandu. Prosperous family is a family formed on the basis of legitimate marriage, able to meet the spiritual needs, and mentally decent, devoted to God Almighty, has a harmonious relationship, harmonious and balanced between family members with the community and the environment.

The main purpose of the family planning program by Hartanto is a significant reduction in birth rate (Sari, 2010). In order to achieve this goal, the wisdom of categorizing three phases to achieve the target is, first is the phase of delaying / preventing pregnancy. The phase delaying pregnancy for EFA with a wife age of less than 20 years is recommended to delay her pregnancy. Second is the phase of pregnancy. The wife age period between 20-30 / 35 years is the best age period for childbirth with 2 children and the distance between birth is 2-4 years. Third is the phase stop / terminate pregnancy / fertility. Period of wife age above 30 years, especially over 35 years should end fertility after having 2 children. The fourth important thing is to consider the signs of danger. Prospective acceptors should be taught the danger signs of the contraceptive method they are considering, especially for oral pills acceptor and IUD (Sari, 2010).

### **3. DISCUSSION**

#### ***3.1. Meaning of Message And Action Followed KB Program***

In this segment we will be described how the community, especially couples of childbearing age, get a certain message and then manifest in action to follow the KB program or not. Politics in the voting booth. The existence of a message is certainly tight in a particular communication event. It is impossible when a desire to direct one's actions or behavior without what is called a communication event. Even when researchers write this report, by thinking what will be outlined in these report sheets is basically a process of communicating. Communication with self or intra personal. Likewise, when an or KB cadre wants to direct one's actions, then an interpersonal communication becomes something necessary. As it is known that interpersonal communication, can definitively be interpreted as communication between people face-to-face, which allows each participant to capture the reaction of others directly, either verbally or nonverbally. This interpersonal communication is a communication that only two people, such as husband and wife, two colleagues, two close friends, teacher-students and so on (Mulyana, 2000: 73).

From that definition, manifested in the construction of community interaction that in the case of family planning programs, the community of infertile couples as free individuals, will get a communication message from a cadre or acceptor. That's where the process of interpersonal communication between candidate acceptors with other parties who have become acceptor or other KB cadres. The mission is to give symbols about the family planning program. In this interpersonal communication there are at least two important messages are delivered, the message of the cadre who said to follow the KB program and the message in the form of symbols - the symbols are present through how physical, appearance, lifestyle that looks directly from the acceptor.

#### ***3.2. Humans Act Against Something Based on Meaning***

In the first premise, Blumer says that " Man Acts Against Something by Meaning ". This means that human action is a form of response to stimuli. Humans do not necessarily act against an object or social reality. Humans act by interpreting and defining the objects or social realities encountered. The objects in question include physical objects, social objects and abstract objects (Poloma, 2007: 264). Thus the social reality or the object will never have a single meaning, because it will depend on the people who will give meaning to it. This is what then makes the actions of people will be different even if they look at one object or form of the same excitement. An illustration can be made that according to Poloma, snakes for some people is a very disgusting and frightening animal, but for some others snakes can actually be enjoyed colorful scales, some people call snake is a beauty (Poloma, 2007: 259). Furthermore, it can be guessed that the difference of meaning will lead to differences in treatment of the snake. For those who feel disgusted and fearful it will avoid or get rid of the snake, or with other forms of response and negative actions. But for those who use it as a beauty, then make it a pet or give a positive reaction to the snake as something that is interpreted. Then what about the messages of active acceptors about the family planning program ?. Messages and symbols about family planning for some people will be interpreted as something that should be positively responded, because it is a concrete effort to manage the life of the dimensions of the number of family

members. People who think like this will link their thinking to health, economics, the quality of intra-family relationships, the probability of achieving better prosperity and others in a positive framework. While for others, some say that the message and symbol of family planning as against the provisions of God, where the sacred duties of marriage is the maximum regeneration, or connecting with the cultural dimension that says that many children a lot of fortune, as advised by people of the age past. From the first assumption of Blumer, then every fertile age couple and society in general, will interpret the message and symbol symbols brought by family planning acceptors, field extension workers, and others who happened to discuss the issue of KB first as a reason to take action.

### ***3.3. Meaning arises from one's interaction with others***

For further how the second premise of Blumer will explain the practice or implementation of this family planning program? The discussion will be described in the following paragraphs. The second Blummer premise says: " Meaning comes from one's interaction with others ". The way of thinking by using the point of view of symbolic interactionism must believe that meaning is created by interaction with others (West & Turner, 2008: 100). The meaning for a person about something comes from the ways others act on it in relation to that thing. His actions will create boundaries for others (Poloma, 2007: 259). If so, two people who behave differently about the snake actually come from the residual experience that essentially is the result of interaction with the environment. The first person who hates the snake may have experienced a bite or got a socialization about a dangerous snake. While the second person who loves snakes can be due to life and associate in an environment accustomed to the presence of snakes, or born in the midst of the life of animal lovers and so forth. Every meaning is manifested through symbols, in which the symbol itself is a stimulus for meaning and values for everyone (Griffin 2000: 55). The level of human understanding of the object or social reality, will depend on the extent to which the symbols available are able to represent the meaning in question. Herbert Blumer's second premise will be used to see the phenomenon of Family Planning program implementation in the community. In the case of the welfare story, the management of the child, the ease of taking care of the small family, the success story of the child, the bother of taking care of the many children and being born close together, may have been interpreted as a message aimed at directing the pendulum in the couples of childbearing age, the majority of people or even every individuals already understand. Furthermore, if from the point of view in terms of whether a person or acceptor and counselor tells the story of the welfare and the ease of life of the family planning program participants, then the majority of the voting community already understands the answer. It's just whether the action will be done in accordance with messages sent by agents and acceptors active or will not be considered with others in social or social interaction. Furthermore, there is another meaning expressed by a fertile-age couple in relation to the success stories and welfare of family planning participants provided by these agents. Meaning for example KB can affect health, tarnishing the function of human procreation and replace it with recreation. Deconstruct the function of sex and m, another meaning that develops in interaction with other human beings. The meaning shows the perspective, social interaction and social interaction of the fertile couple affect how the meaning of something to a person. A family planning program is considered a disadvantage, a demotivation innovation that is only negative. Even considered excessive as a dishonorable

practice that reduces the values of humanity is clean and elegant, let alone uphold the humanity fatsun in this country.

### ***3.4. The meaning of a symbol for the individual is modified through an interpretive process***

The discussion will be passed on to the third premise of Blumer which says that: " the meaning of a symbol for the individual is modified through an interpretive process ". For humans, the meaning - meaning that appears in something is not necessarily internalized simply because, in fact, humans always encounter with the meaning - meaning that many. This means that the individual chooses, selects to hold, examine and rearrange and change meaning to know the situation in which he is placed and the direction of the actions. For Blumer this is a manifestation of what is called self-indication, the ongoing process of communication in which the individual knows something, judges, gives meaning, and decides to act on that meaning (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005: 155; Poloma, 2007 : 259). Furthermore, in the interpretation there is called the process of thinking. In the sphere of thinking symbolic interactionism the thinking process is the embodiment of the inner conversation (inner conversation). More specifically Herbert Mead calls it a dialogue in self as minding, ie, interrupting or pausing one second or two just before an individual takes action (Griffin 2000: 56).

Then, how the third premise Blumer can explain the phenomenon of the implementation of family planning programs in this study? Symbols and messages about the Family Planning program in interpersonal communication of the content, will certainly be responded differently by each individual recipient. Using this third premise of Blumer, there are some data collected by researchers that there is evidence of how Blumer is true about how internalization takes place and then brings fruit to the decisions and actions. An active cadre or acceptor or family planning program instructor says how people will still weigh the balance before making a decision that will be poured into action. Encountering many explanations, examples, symbols and other welfare images, may be making the fertile age couple confused, for example because the personality does not recognize the acceptor so the truth of the information is questioned. The effect of socialization and other symbolic exposures if for young fertile couples can be as stimulants and can be easily influenced, but for couples of marriageable age who are older married or others who have been repeatedly involved in elucidation of family planning programs are not very influential.

From the empirical experience of the active acceptors / extension workers who process the message up to the grassroots revealed that the message presented was turned out differently based on the level of acceptors to the couples of fertile age and the credibility of the extension itself. One of the attitudes that may be manifested in action is the tendency to choose to participate in family planning programs. For those who choose such action in the eyes of a certain fertile age pair is a process that has been through selection. The most visible selection is a selection based on a visible symbol of prosperity, visible subjectively by the prospective acceptor / spouse of childbearing age. The basis for this selection is dialogue within each individual. Before deciding to take action as an acceptor or not, the couples of childbearing age have reflected on Blumer's third premise. The voters in responding to stimuli have done the selection, dialogue in self, and also minding as said Herbert Mead.



#### 4. FINAL WORD

In the implementation of the Family Planning program, the intense use of intense interpersonal communication, however, will not necessarily encourage a fertile-age couple to take action by ensuring that they become acceptor. Couples of childbearing age are increasingly critical in viewing and responding to messages and symbols that the acceptor has received regarding the family planning program. In the context of the expected social action of the interpersonal communication process in couples of childbearing age, the symbolic interactional theory of Herbert Blumer would have explained it. The theory is relevant and adequate, so that the implementation of Family Planning program seems to have to carry more symbols more representative about the ideal achievement of a program. Man ultimately remains as an autonomous individual, and in each a decision is returned.

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