



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IN THE INTERNALIZATION OF STATE DEFENSE VALUES AT UNIVERSITAS PEMBANGUNAN NASIONAL “VETERAN” YOGYAKARTA

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Abstract

This study was motivated by the gap between the identity of the “Veteran” National Development University of Yogyakarta as a National Defense Campus and the students’ National Defense Index scores, which have not yet met the institution’s targets. This situation indicates that the internalization of National Defense values has not yet been fully realized in students’ attitudes and behaviors. This study aims to analyze the process of strategic communication and the role of organizational culture in internalizing National Defense values among students at Universitas Pembangunan Nasional “Veteran” Yogyakarta. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Research informants consisted of public relations staff, National Defense program administrators, lecturers, student organization leaders, students, and external parties. The research analysis utilized the concept of Strategic Communication and the Cultural Approach to Organizations theory by Clifford Geertz and Michael Pacanowsky, which views organizations as systems of meaning formed through communication. This theory is analyzed through cultural performances in the form of corporate stories, personal stories, and collegial stories to understand the process of formation, dissemination, and interpretation of Bela Negara values on campus. The results of the study indicate that strategic communication at Universitas Pembangunan Nasional “Veteran” Yogyakarta is implemented through academic programs, student activities, and media

Keywords: Strategic Communication, Organizational Culture, National Defense, Internalization of Values.



Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh adanya kesenjangan antara identitas Universitas Pembangunan Nasional “Veteran” Yogyakarta sebagai Kampus Bela Negara dengan capaian Indeks Bela Negara mahasiswa yang belum mencapai target institusi. Kondisi tersebut menunjukkan bahwa internalisasi nilai-nilai Bela Negara belum sepenuhnya terwujud dalam sikap dan perilaku mahasiswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis proses komunikasi strategis serta peran budaya organisasi dalam menginternalisasi nilai-nilai Bela Negara pada mahasiswa Universitas Pembangunan Nasional “Veteran” Yogyakarta. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Informan penelitian terdiri atas pihak humas, pengelola Bela Negara, dosen, pimpinan organisasi mahasiswa, mahasiswa, serta pihak eksternal. Analisis penelitian menggunakan konsep Komunikasi Strategis dan teori Cultural Approach to Organizations dari Clifford Geertz dan Michael Pacanowsky yang memandang organisasi sebagai sistem makna yang dibentuk melalui komunikasi. Teori ini dianalisis melalui performa budaya berupa corporate stories, personal stories, dan collegial stories untuk memahami proses pembentukan, penyebaran, serta pemaknaan nilai Bela Negara di lingkungan kampus. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi strategis Universitas Pembangunan Nasional “Veteran” Yogyakarta dilaksanakan melalui program akademik, kegiatan kemahasiswaan, media digital, simbol institusional, serta berbagai ritual kampus yang mendukung proses internalisasi nilai. Nilai Bela Negara tidak hanya ditransmisikan melalui komunikasi formal, tetapi juga melalui pengalaman personal mahasiswa dan interaksi sosial antaranggota organisasi. Namun, masih ditemukan hambatan berupa pemahaman Bela Negara yang cenderung dimaknai secara militeristik serta rendahnya partisipasi sebagian mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa komunikasi strategis yang partisipatif dan budaya organisasi yang kuat berperan penting dalam membentuk identitas serta meningkatkan internalisasi nilai Bela Negara pada mahasiswa.

Kata Kunci: Komunikasi Strategis, Budaya Organisasi, Bela Negara, Internalisasi Nilai.



Introduction

Universitas Pembangunan Nasional (UPN) "Veteran" Yogyakarta is institutionally recognized as the State Defense Campus (*Kampus Bela Negara*), with a mission to cultivate graduates who demonstrate academic excellence alongside patriotism, national awareness, and loyalty to *Pancasila*. These values are embedded through the university curriculum, student orientation programs, and institutional culture. However, the internalization of state defense values remains challenging, as reflected in the 2025/2026 State Defense Index (IBN) score of 3.25, which falls below the institutional target of 3.52. This gap suggests that state defense values have not been fully integrated into students' attitudes and behaviours.

This study aims to examine the process of strategic communication and the role of organizational culture in the internalization of state defense values among students at UPN "Veteran" Yogyakarta. Drawing on the Cultural Approach to Organizations developed by Clifford Geertz and Michael Pacanowsky, the study views organizations as systems of meaning constructed through communication. The analysis focuses on cultural performances reflected in corporate stories, personal stories, and collegial stories. The findings are expected to enhance understanding of communication dynamics within the university and provide strategic recommendations for strengthening the internalization of state defense values among students.

Literature Review

Strategic Communication in Organizations

Strategic communication refers to a systematic effort to convey information and motivate audiences to support particular ideas or institutions, with the



objective of influencing public attitudes and behaviours (Shafira et al., 2024). In the context of higher education, communication serves an increasingly strategic role, as it is closely associated with institutional reputation, public legitimacy, and the coordination of relationships with various stakeholders (Orebro, 2024). Furthermore, Deetz (2025) argues that modern organizations should move beyond one-way (top-down) communication and instead foster democratic communication processes that encourage member participation in the continuous construction of shared meaning.

Cultural Approach to Organizations

This study adopts the Cultural Approach to Organizations developed by Clifford Geertz and Michael Pacanowsky (Griffin et al., 2019). This perspective views organizations not merely as rational and mechanistic structures but as social entities bound together by *webs of significance* that are created and sustained through shared processes of interpretation. Pacanowsky further argues that organizations are cultures in themselves and can be understood through cultural performances, including the tradition of storytelling, such as corporate stories, personal stories, and collegial stories (Griffin et al., 2019).

The Concept of State Defense in the Digital Era

From a legal perspective, state defense (*bela negara*) is defined as the manifestation of citizens' commitment and actions, grounded in their love for the Republic of Indonesia and *Pancasila*, to safeguard national sovereignty (Kusuma, 2023). However, with the rapid advancement of the Fifth Industrial



Revolution (Industry 5.0), threats to national security have shifted from conventional physical threats to non-physical challenges, including cyberattacks, provocation, and disinformation (Putri et al., 2025). Consequently, for younger generations and members of the academic community, the expression of state defense has evolved into more creative forms, such as promoting digital literacy, engaging ethically in cyberspace, and contributing through professional service and expertise (Akbar, 2024; Tleuberlinova, 2024). Higher education institutions therefore play a crucial role in fostering this awareness to ensure that the spirit of nationalism is not diminished by the forces of globalization (Alfansa, 2025; Triadi, 2024).

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to provide an in-depth description and analysis of the design, implementation, and perceptions of strategic communication within the university environment without manipulating any variables (Kusumawardani, 2023). The research was conducted at Universitas Pembangunan Nasional (UPN) "Veteran" Yogyakarta, an institution that officially identifies itself as the "State Defense Campus" (*Kampus Bela Negara*).

Data Sources and Informants

The data used in this study consisted of both primary and secondary sources. Secondary data were collected through document analysis, institutional archives, and online publications, including the university's official social media platforms (Grajzel, 2025;



Nihayatul, 2023). Primary data, meanwhile, were obtained directly from informants selected according to predetermined research criteria. Field data were collected using three main techniques (Firdaus et al., 2023):

- In-depth Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview guide to explore the informants' perspectives, experiences, and perceptions regarding the internalization of state defense values (Fadli, 2023).

- Observation

Direct observations were carried out to examine daily activities, routines, and cultural performances within the university environment, including dress discipline, flag ceremonies, and students' responses when the national anthem was played (Mukti et al., 2023).

- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Focus Group Discussions were conducted with student organization leaders to explore collective perspectives and the social dynamics reflected in collegial narratives among students (Mukti et al., 2023).

Results and Discussion

Research Findings

The findings indicate that the low State Defense Index achieved by students at Universitas Pembangunan Nasional (UPN) "Veteran" Yogyakarta stems from a cultural clash between the institution's instructional and militaristic communication strategy, reflected in its corporate stories, and the realities of students, who demand a more adaptive and participatory approach, reflected in their collegial stories.

The institution's rigid approach, characterised by formal regulations and ceremonial activities, has led students to perceive state defense values merely as administrative formalities rather than as an integral part of their personal identity.



Both students and external stakeholders argued that, in the digital era, the essence of state defense for members of civil society should be emphasised through professional service, digital literacy, and compliance with the law. Therefore, to ensure that these values are genuinely internalised within the university culture, the institution needs to shift from a one-way (top-down) communication model to a more dialogic and participatory form of communication with students.

Discussion

The process of internalising state defense values at Universitas Pembangunan Nasional (UPN) "Veteran" Yogyakarta has not yet been fully effective due to the institution's predominantly one-way (top-down) strategic communication approach, as reflected in the students' State Defense Index score of 3.25, which remains below the institutional target of

3.52. From the perspective of the Cultural Approach to Organizations, this phenomenon illustrates a cultural clash between the institution's corporate stories and the students' everyday collegial stories.

The university management has sought to instil state defense values through prescriptive and instructional policies characterised by militaristic and ceremonial practices. In contrast, students have responded with cultural resistance, arguing that the concept of state defense should be redefined to better reflect the realities of academic civil society by emphasising academic freedom, digital literacy, and professional contributions in accordance with their respective fields of study.

As a consequence of this rigid communication approach, state defense values have failed to develop into students' personal stories, resulting in their perception of university regulations as merely administrative requirements rather than meaningful personal values. In response to these challenges, the institution has begun designing a digital evaluation system that focuses on students' empirical engagement and participation. Overall, if state defense values are to become an integral part of the university's organizational culture, the institution must move beyond the illusion of managerial control and adopt a strategic communication model that is more dialogic, collaborative, and participatory, allowing students to play an active role in the co-construction of shared meaning.



Conclusion

The process of strategic communication at Universitas Pembangunan Nasional (UPN) "Veteran" Yogyakarta in internalizing state defense (*Bela Negara*) values has generally been implemented systematically through the stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation. However, a significant discrepancy remains between the dissemination of institutional information and the extent to which these values are assimilated by students. This gap arises largely from a communication pattern that relies heavily on one-way, instructional (top-down) information transmission. Although the University's Public Relations Office functions as the primary channel for information dissemination and the facilitator of ritual performances, its efforts have not been complemented by meaningful cultural negotiation. As a result, state defense values are frequently reduced to administrative obligations or institutional branding rather than being embraced as meaningful personal values by students. This gap in internalization is empirically reflected in the State Defense Index (Indeks Bela Negara/IBN) of UPN "Veteran" Yogyakarta students for the 2025/2026 academic year, which remained stagnant at 3.25, falling short of the institution's target score of 3.52.

From the perspective of the Cultural Approach to Organizations, the primary barrier to the internalization process is the existence of a cultural clash between the institution's formal narratives (corporate stories) and the everyday narratives that emerge at the grassroots level among students (collegial stories). University management has sought to transmit state defense values through prescriptive policies characterised by militaristic and ceremonial practices, such as standardized dress codes and military-style discipline training. In contrast, students have expressed cultural resistance, arguing that such rigid and command-oriented approaches are no longer compatible with the values of contemporary academic civil society. Instead, they advocate for a broader interpretation of state defense that extends beyond physical compliance to encompass digital literacy, critical academic engagement, and professional service aligned with the expertise of each academic discipline.

This divergence in perception demonstrates that the successful internalization of ideological



values cannot be achieved solely through written regulations or institutional symbols. As a strategic response, the development of a digital-based State Defense Student Achievement Index represents an important adaptive initiative for monitoring students' actual engagement with state defense values. Ultimately, the effectiveness of internalizing the principles of the "State Defense Campus" depends on the university's ability to harmonize strategic institutional policies with meaningful opportunities for student participation. This requires a fundamental shift from a one-way model of information transmission toward a communication model that is genuinely dialogic, collaborative, and participatory.

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