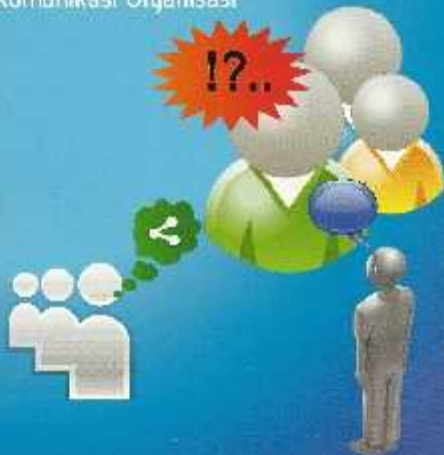




## Komunikasi Organisasi





## ***Experiential Communication Model in the Organizational Communication: a Study of Persuasive Technique in Order to Gain Audience's Trust***

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**Abstract:** Persuasion holds a vital role within an organization. By means of a good persuasive communication, audience's trust can be obtained and all elements within the organization can involve actively and productively in order to achieve the objectives of the organization. The problem is, to obtain audience's trust or the message recipient's trust is not easy. As a matter of fact, trust is the core of persuasion. Therefore, by examining the persuasive communication within the organization, the author offers a new concept of communication model, namely *Komunikasi Berasa*<sup>1</sup> Model or Experiential Communication Model or Experientially-Meaningful Communication Model. Through this *Komunikasi Berasa* Model, message recipients are not only capturing and understanding the gist of the delivered message, but are also directly experiencing the truth by message verification. Consequently, communicator will not speak worthlessly, but directly proves the correctness of his words.

**Keywords:** Experiential Communication (Experientially-Meaningful Communication), Organizational Communications, Persuasion, Audience's Trust

**Abstrak:** *persuasi memegang peranan penting dalam suatu organisasi. Melalui komunikasi persuasi yang baik, kepercayaan khalayak dapat diraih dan segenap unsur dalam organisasi dapat terlibat aktif dan produktif untuk mewujudkan tujuan-tujuan organisasi. Persoalannya adalah meraih kepercayaan khalayak atau penerima pesan tidaklah semudah membalik telapak tangan. Padahal kepercayaan merupakan inti persuasi. Karena itu, melalui telaah komunikasi persuasi dalam organisasi ini penulis menawarkan sebuah konsep model komunikasi baru yakni Model Komunikasi Berasa. Dengan Model Komunikasi Berasa, khalayak penerima pesan tidak hanya menangkap dan memahami makna pesan yang disampaikan, tetapi juga merasakan langsung kebenaran makna pesan tersebut. Hal ini dikarenakan Model Komunikasi Berasa menyinergikan proses penyampaian dan pembuktian pesan sekaligus, tanpa tertunda atau melewati tahapan waktu tertentu. Dengan demikian komunikator tidak hanya asal berbicara, tetapi langsung membuktikan kebenaran ucapannya. Beberapa dimensi Model Komunikasi Berasa adalah: Keberasaan **Indrawi**, Keberasaan **Emosional**, Keberasaan **Rasional**, Keberasaan **Relevansional**, Keberasaan **Benefisial**, dan Keberasaan **Sosial**.*

**Katakunci:** *Komunikasi Berasa, Komunikasi Organisasi, Persuasi, Kepercayaan Khalayak*

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<sup>1</sup> It is not easy to translate 'berasa' into English, but we can assume that it probably means 'experiential' or even it's more directed closely to: 'experientially-meaningful'. Thus, 'komunikasi berasa' can be translated as 'experientially-meaningful communication'.



## Introduction

### The Importance of Audience's Trust

Ever since the economic crisis hit our country several years ago, a new phenomenon of crisis appears in the middle of political struggle of the nation, that is to say crisis of trust and crisis of leadership. Apparently it is not only daily consumer goods that increasing bit by bit and sometimes hardly found in the market, but *trust* is also becoming an “expensive and scarce commodity” in this country.

Not surprisingly, people try to obtain trust in so many ways. A husband tells his wife that he is still in love with her, his wife will not have faith in him instantly. Some moments afterward when her husband is able to prove with his devotion, his wife believes him. An advertisement of powder detergent visually shows the evidence of the effectiveness of the detergent's washing ability to household mothers only for gaining consumers' trust. Another advertisement displays consumer's testimonial to assure and lead other consumers to have confidence on the specialty of the product. Nonetheless, all these advertisements are unable to be verified or being tested directly by the consumers since they have to buy the product first, consume it, and then believe it if what the advertisement said is proven to be true.

Nowadays, people start to lose their trust to words or spoken promises. Frequently we hear a woman says, “Ah, honeyed words,” whilst her mate says love to her. In a similar action, how often we hear the audiences' words, “Ah, that's only an ad!” while they see a message of product advertisement on the TV.

A dramatic decrease of public trust is also experienced by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY). In Kompas polling about the government's performance for the period of 30<sup>th</sup> month revealed that public's desire to vote SBY as a president if an election is conducted at the actual time tends to decline. If it is compared to the earlier six months, this declining feels very significant. Regarding question, “If we held a presidential election at the present time, which figure will you consider as an appropriate one to be a president?” about 44.2 percent offered 48 names. From these names, 35.3 percent chose SBY. Actually, in the period of six months before SBY is elected, he was still voted by 52.6 percent respondents (Kompas, April 20, 2007). This surely is different compared to the moment when SBY went onto the supreme authority. Sweet promises during the campaign successfully sedate the public to be interested and voted for him in

the ballot boxes.

For a great organization called State, a trust toward the leader is a significantly crucial matter for the role of authority. If the leader is already lost his people's trusts, then he only wait to be substituted or “being forced to step back” just like what had happened in the beginning of reformation era. At that time, President Soeharto was deposed by the people through the wave of students' demonstration. In a similar event, when President Abdurrahman Wahid “forced to leave the palace” by the people's representative in the People's Representative Council due to his failure to bring the nation into a significant improvement.

This thing may also happen to a profit-oriented organization such as a company. A company director, who once promised for a better living-condition to his employees, certainly will be protested if in the future is proven to neglect his words. In a smaller scope, when a manager tries to persuade his employees so that they will improve their performance, discipline and professionalism while the manager exhibits unfitting attitudes with his words, definitely he will get protested and even mass boycott from his subordinates which will impact to the discharge of the manager.

Trust certainly implicates toward many things. Apart from protest attitudes, boycott, demo, and other nearly extreme attitudes, lack of trust may also cause the deteriorating of working motivation or willingness to make achievements, teamwork quality as well as professionalism which can disturb productivity in the end. For this reason, it is necessary to perform an effective persuasive communication, so that trust can be obtained courteously and the objectives of the organization can be achieved successfully.

## Study

### Organizations and Organizational Communication

Organizations can be defined as social entities that are goal-directed, are designed as deliberately structured and coordinated activity systems, and are linked to the external environment (Daft, 2007). Organizations are made up of people and their relationship with one another. An organization exists when people interact with one another to perform essential functions that help attain goals.

Meanwhile, Pace and Faules (2006) defines organizations from two approaches: objective and subjective. Objective approach states that



an organization is something physical and concrete, and is a structure with definite boundaries. This approach considers the organization as a container (container view of organizations). The organization is like a basket, and all the elements that make up the organization are placed in the container.

While the subjective approach views the organization as an activity carried out of people. The organization consists of the actions, interactions, and transactions involving people. The organization was created and fostered through continuously changing contacts which is done by one another and does not exist separately from those whose behavior form the organization.

Thus, according to an objective view, the organization means structure, while according to a subjective view, an organization means the process, which leads to organizing behavior and reality-construction process. In this case, the organization is considered as "a collectivity of interlocked actions" (Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982 in Pace and Faules, 2006: 18) and the meaning given to those actions. Apparently, the subjective view is harmony with Daft perspective which emphasizes organization to action aspects and human relationships.

This viewpoint also supports interpretive perspective towards organizational communication as a meaning creation process on interactions which makes organization. The process does not resemble organization, but it is organization. Thus, organizational communication is "organizing behavior" that occurred and how those involved in it transact and give significance to what is taking place (Pace and Faules, 2006: 33).

There are several theories related to organization types and organizational communication. First, Classical Structural Theory that emphasizes structure and function aspects. To achieve a high efficiency, the organization structure should be stable. The more stable, the more efficient an organization is. Hence structures and function tend to remind constant or unchanged. Two popular types of organization in this theory are social organization and formal organization. In social organization, the differences of social status develop a certain hierarchy within the social structure. It places certain figures at important position, which is usually being maintained (Pace and Faules, 2006).

It is similarly in the formal organization or bureaucracy. Structure

is formed hierarchical (vertical) with line and staff system, like a chain of command system in military. The objective is efficiency. This theory looks at organization as "organization" (very objectivist), which structure and stable authority is more important in producing something. The things that irritate structure stability and organization function will be reduced to a minimum, even eradicated. The real case is Indonesia in the new order era which was always concerned with economic, political and security stability, allowing anyone or anything that can destabilize the country would be removed. Government officials and strategic positions were always determined from the top to maintain the stability.

Organizations that follow this classical theory could not accommodate creativity and dynamics, since organization is merely "playing safe". Another example in business, lots of family firms tend to preserve traditional style for bear values. Likewise state-owned companies which is being controlled by the government. No wonder these organizations tend to be rigid, difficult to develop and it is very mechanical (like machine).

Thus emerges Transitional Theories. This theory assumes that the structure and function stability does not always make organization efficient. The organization must give significant attention to human relation aspects. Therefore communication atmosphere must be excellent. The more excellent, the more efficient an organization is.

This theory comprehends that human beings in organization is an active and dynamic being, not only a rigid production tool. Organization should always listen to the aspiration of its member and does not extinguish creativity. Obstacles of communications and information flow within the organization caused by rigid structure and position factors must be eliminated.

This situation is seen during Indonesia's reform era, when media gains their freedom. Militaristic culture began to be reduced, and regional autonomy started to commence. The authority centralization changed to decentralization. Appreciation and recognition of culture, social, and religion pluralism replaced minority-majority concept. In the business world, many companies switched from family firm to professional-based company, such as Bakrie Group, Salim Group, Sinar Mas Group, etc. Even state-owned companies were being privatized such as Indosat, Telkomsel, etc.

Theories that exactly represent transitional theories are behavioral

theories and systems theories such as Barnard's Authority Communication theory that emphasizes importance of developing and maintaining a communication system. Similarly, Mayo's Human Relations theory that states informal group relationship is more important and powerful in determining the morale and productivity. The Bakke and Argyris' Fusion theory suggests personalization and socialization of individuals to produce the fusion of employee and organization needs and desires. While the Linkert's Connector-Pins theory considers the organization as a number of groups that are interconnected with a structure that tends to be horizontal. Similarly, the Katz and Kahn's Social System theory sees organization as a system that focuses on the relationship between people who communicate with each others, receive messages and store information (Pace and Faules, 2006).

However, it should be underlined the importance of creating meaning amongst organization's members, and not just creating communication links. This meaning creation also includes the wider meaning of communications message, because of increasing competition, and the development of an increasingly and rapidly dynamic world, demanding organizations and companies should also take into account environmental factors or the "outside world".

Hence comes Latest and Modern Theory. This theory gives important attention to the aspects of adaptation to the environment or

the dynamics of the "outside world". This theory assumes that human relations are not enough, but the organization also must be adaptive. Organizations could not exist if it does not pay attention to the development of environment in which the organization grows.

When Lenovo changed its corporate culture becomes more open, the company transformed into a giant company, even able to "devour" the other giants of American company, IBM. Now Lenovo is no longer "belong to China" let alone merely a small family-owned company. Lenovo has become the "property of the world" that is able to compete internationally.

Other companies are also doing a lot of cultural transformation as part of its strategy to face intense competition and they are running as what is called "spiritual company" (not religious company), a company that instead of applying a particular culture, they are more like the universal values that transcend religion, ethnicity, race, and even state and nation. Apple, Hewlett-Packard, Garment Bank and Body Shop are some of the companies that have become spiritual companies. In this way, they can survive and maintain the loyalty of customers around the world (SWA, March 1-14, 2007).

The three kinds of theories described above are not chronological, however, can be seen that there is a paradigm shift from objectivist to subjectivist direction as illustrated in the following diagrams.

### Classical Structural Theories – Transitional Theories – Latest/Modern Theories

*Objectivist -----> Subjectivist*

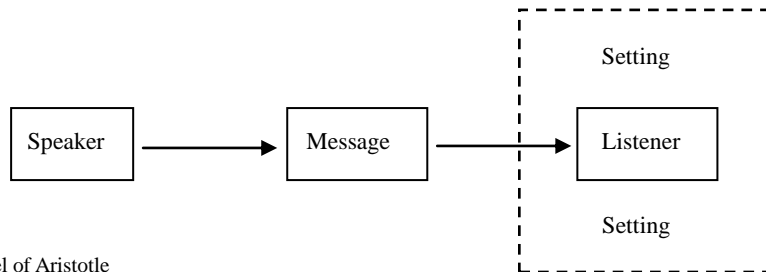
**Figure 1.** Paradigm shift of theories of organizations and organizational communications

Source: author's view

### Theories of Persuasion

According to Aristotle, persuasion can be reached by whoever you are (ethos – your belief), your argument (logos – logic within your opinion) and by frolicking with the audiences' emotion (pathos – audiences' emotion). In other words, factors that take part in

determining the persuasive effect of a speech are consist of the content, the composition, and the way of carriage. Aristotle was also realized the role of the listener audiences. Persuasion occurs through the audiences while they are being resembled by the speech to a particular state of emotion (Mulyana, 2007: 146).



**Figure 2.** The Model of Aristotle

Source: Mulyana (2007)

Focus of communication which was analyzed by Aristotle is a rhetorical communication, which at the present more known as public speaking or speech. Hence, the message power and the speaker's credibility are the strongest variables in determining the appearance of trust from the public or message recipients.

Meanwhile Carl Hovland noted persuasion as not only a technique of communication in influencing the audiences, but furthermore he encompassed the role of persuasion as a way of changing the attitude. Through the theory which is known as Learning Theory, Hovland believes that the appearing attitudes are being learned and they are being altered through the same process that happens when the learning occurs (Severin and Tankard, 2007).

Thus, the element of process is extremely important in a persuasive communication. An attitude cannot be changed instantly unless through the learning stages. Message recipient articulates and interprets the meaning through the experiences and senses in a natural way with the aim to form an attitude toward an object. His endeavor on the attitude alteration delivers an example of convergence research style or integrated, which the researchers inside "carry on various theories in a convergent way to generate links of interest".

Despite the experiment of attitude alteration on the military during the World War II that put attention regarding the impact of one-sided-message or two-sided-message, Hovland and Weiss had also developed an experiment to assess the effectiveness of source's credibility. One of the variables in a communication situation that can be controlled exclusively by the communicator is the sources selection. Therefore, the credibility of the message source becomes an essential element in a process of persuasive communication.

In their experiment, Hovland and Weiss presented the same messages from highly and poorly credible source (in the form of

article) to several people in different groups. The test outcome showed that highly credible source had created more opinion alterations in three out of four existed topics. However, re-test on their opinion four weeks afterward displayed unexpected result, the amount of attitude alteration in average were the same between highly credible source compared to poorly credible source. This event called as *sleeper effect* by Hovland and colleagues. When the next survey was performed, Hovland and Weiss found that the reason was not caused by failure to recall toward the source, but was caused by a tendency to separate the source with the opinion as time passes by.

Another study in the campaign of Rock the Vote to seize teenager voters by presenting pop figure showed, in the appliance of source credibility research, the same source will not have the same credibility to all cluster of audiences. Besides the correlation between sources with the audience, another experiment conducted by Tripp, Jensen and Carlson also showed that even if the source is highly credible, though when associated with many messages will reduce the effectiveness. This phenomenon commonly appears in advertisement, when a celebrity is used to deliver messages of several products. Hence, there is evidence that dual support can reduce the effectiveness of highly credible source.

Contrary to Hovland's Learning Theory which said all of the attitude alterations are based on learning, A. G. Greenwald (Greenwald, 1968 in Severin & Tankard, 2007) proposed Cognitive Response Model, which said the attitude alterations are mediated through the thoughts that happen within the message recipient's mind. Greenwald has an opinion that the endurance and acceptance of a message are two different things – someone can learn the subject matter inside a message without going through an attitude alteration. He suggested that within certain persuasion cases, the message



recipient reiterating, linking with the attitudes, knowledge, and remaining feeling. While the message recipient performs all these things, he reprises the stored cognitive materials.

Main models of persuasive process are McGuire's theory of information-processing (1968) along with two models of double process, namely Petty and Cacioppo's elaboration possibility model (1986) and Chaiken, Liberman and Eagly's heuristic-systematic model (1989). Usually these three developing models of Greenwald Model have the same characteristic. These characteristics are: Firstly, they present attitude alteration or persuasion as a process that happens through several stages and times. Secondly, they emphasize on cognition or information processing. Thirdly, they deliver a more active role toward the message recipients as an agent of information-processing compared to the previous concepts of persuasion or attitude alteration.

From the above theories of persuasion, none includes the element of evidence as one of the components in persuasive communication. As a matter of fact, the phenomenon these days shows that believing attitude in a persuasive message frequently appears once there is evidence. The element of evidence possibly might be brought to the understanding of information-processing in Greenwald's Cognitive Response Model, or incorporated as a part of the process of irrational adaptation in Hovland's Learning Theory, but then the process itself often takes a long time, so that the efficiency and effectiveness is dubious.

### ***Komunikasi Berasa***

As they are known, the theories of persuasion which exist usually only give emphasis to the element of communication influencer on:

1. Source – content – audience (Aristotle)
2. Attitude alteration through the learning process/ natural adaptation (Hovland)
3. Source credibility (Hovland, Whitehead, Tripp et al, Cook & Flay)
4. Cognitive aspect in the information/ message processing (Greenwald, Eagly)

Meanwhile, the aim of persuasive communication is to influence the audience (Aristotle in Mulyana, 2007), change the attitude (Hovland et al in Severin & Tankard, 2007), reinforce an existing the

attitude (Lumsdaine & Janis in Severin & Tankard, 2007). There is none that proposes about the aspect of "audience's trust" or message recipients' trust, and the element of evidence as an influencer factor for the presence of trust. As a matter of fact, trust is the core of persuasive.

If trust is an attitude, so the attitude itself has three models of component, that is to say affective component – preference or feeling towards an object, cognitive component – belief towards an object, and conative component – act or behavior which is meant towards an object.

Goldon Allport said that attitude is a mental and nervous system readiness, which is organized through experience, causes direct or dynamic influence to the responses of a person toward all related objects and situations (Allport, 1954 in Severin & Tankard, 2007). Meanwhile D. Krech and colleagues defined attitude as a sturdy positive or negative evaluation system, emotional feelings, and a tendency of pro or contra action toward a social object (Krech, Crutchfield & Ballachey, 1962 in Severin and Tankard, 2007).

Therefore, trust that arises as a result of persuasive communication is the outcome of positive evaluation, an emotional feeling and tendency of pro action toward a social object, within this case is the message and the source of communication. Believe is also a result of consolidating the experiences that causes direct or dynamic effect on someone's response to all related objects and situations, in this context of communication means all elements of communication.

Greenwald's cognitive response model actually can be implemented in cases of persuasive communication which accentuate the aspect of trust, by taking in verification through experience and perception as a form of information or knowledge that is processed cognitively. Though, this process which is meant by Greenwald and the following researchers emphasizes on the stages and time so that it does not answer the problem of proximity as well as the verification process.

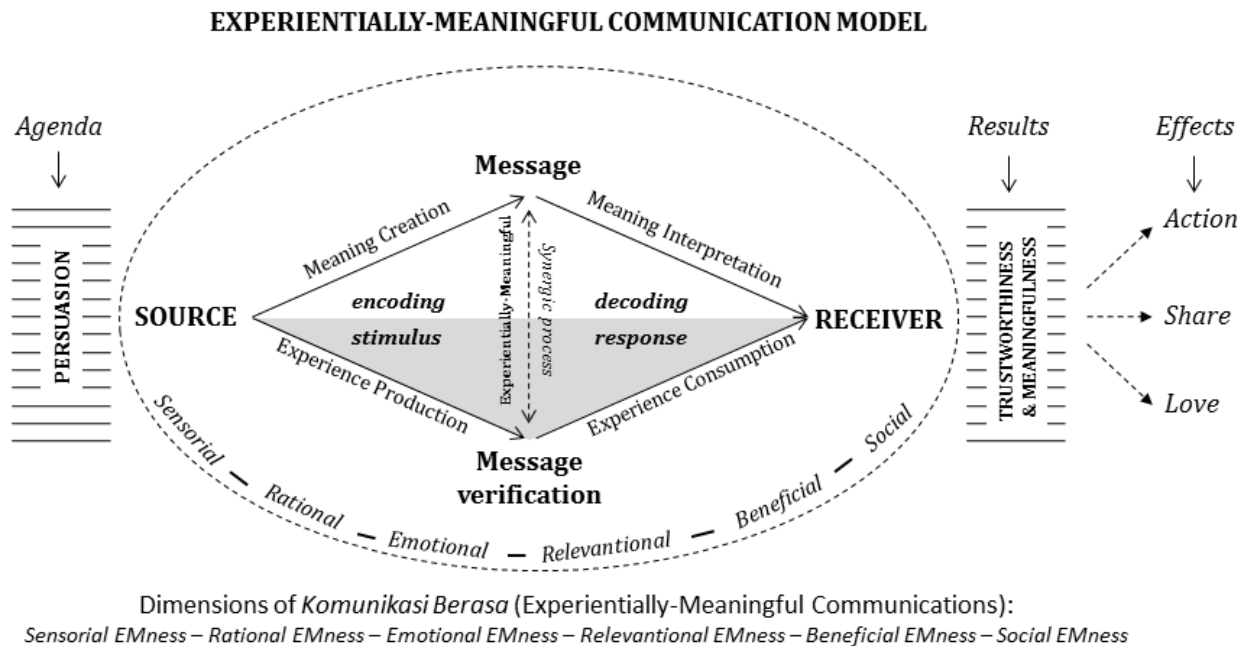
For this reason, the author proposes a concept of new communication model named "*Komunikasi Berasa Model*" or Experientially-Meaningful Communication Model. This model includes direct verification through experience or sense in the process of message delivery. So, when the message arrives to the recipient, the recipient at the same time feels the certainty of the message content. The use of words "experiential" is to declare if the stimulus



that affects the message recipient not only comprises cognitive aspect but importantly, the affective aspect. Recipient experiences realistically the truth of the message by undergoing, seeing, listening, or experiencing directly. This is different compared to hypodermic communication model or Aristotle model, in which the message

authentication is experienced after the message arrives to the recipient through a specific stage of time.

If it is illustrated in a simple way, then *Komunikasi Berasa* or Experientially-Meaningful Communication Model is as follows:



**Figure 3.** *Komunikasi Berasa* (Experientially-Meaningful Communication) Model

Source: Modified from Wijaya (2009)

Source (with the purpose of influencing) deliver the message at once to give a synergic experience or feeling along with the meaning of the message at the same time, which is subsequently accepted by the recipient. In the process of message and sense receiving, recipient does a transaction of message meaning through cognitive process and is also perform a process of verifying the message meaning through affective exploration.

The result of this communication process is recipient or audience's trust on both the source and message content. With the deposit of existing trust, then the public implement their attitude in various forms of behaviors, such as action as expected by the source or the message sender, fondness toward the source and the message so that generate a long term credibility, or in the form of act to spread the

message which is sent to other audiences.

Even in the simplest cases, *Experientially-Meaningful Communication Model* can occur. For example, inside a chilly room, two people communicate to each other. One says, "Cold, huh?" The other person experiences or verifies directly what it is said and answers, "Yes, it is.". Another example is when someone claims that he is a poor person, so the factors which support his words are directly observed or verified the validity by the message recipients, for example, this person wears simple clothes and tends to be scruffy, looks skinny and malnourished, narrow speech, and so on.

In the context of corporate or organizational communication for example, a company director who calls for improving the welfare of the employees when the company earns a significant profit, then the





financial division subsequently raise the salary so that the employees can experience the truth of the director's words in a direct way.

The same thing goes within the context of political communication in the state organization. A president who calls for the importance of improving the quality of education, said that in the midst of a real effort in the field, for example when opening a free undergraduate education for 1000 teachers, or hands over the aid which is intended to improve education facilities for hundreds thousands of schools. The leader can also calls for the importance of law firmness for anyone when the leader comes to the police office to undergo investigation on charges of corruption against him.

Several dimensions of this *Komunikasi Berasa* Model or Experientially-Meaningful Communication Model are: **Sensorial** Experientially-Meaningful (EM)-ness, **Rational** EM-ness, **Emotional** EM-ness, **Relevantional** EM-ness, **Beneficial** EM-ness, and **Social** EM-ness.

Thus, with Experientially-Meaningful Communication or *Komunikasi Berasa*, communicator not only speaks gibberish, but the message is directly proven.

## Conclusion

In the era of crisis of trust and crisis of leadership at the present time, is needed an effective and efficient persuasive communication model in a bid to recall the lost trust and restore the decreasing credibility of the leader (communicator). Then, the model of immediate evidence (soon) as *Komunikasi Berasa* Model or Experientially-Meaningful Communication Model which is proposed by the author is an alternative solution that is worth to consider.

The audience or recipient does not only experience or directly verify the truth of the source's words, but also believe what the source said (because he sees and experiences the real evidence). When the frequency of communication that applies *Experientially-Meaningful Communication Model* is getting larger, the greater the source's credibility will also be. Source's credibility is the reflection of audience's highly trust toward the source. Meanwhile trust is a golden bridge to gain authority.

Within an organization, whatever the form, authority is an important factor in achieving the objectives of the organization.

Authority is the ability to persuade the elements within organization to engage together to achieve an objective. Structurally, a superior should have power and influence over his subordinates. With trust from subordinates, then a superior is easier to use his influence toward subordinate, so that the tasks or organization policies can be implemented correctly. This matter can impact to the improvement of productivity, performance and the health of organizational communication. *Experientially-Meaningful Communication Model* has a very important role in gaining subordinates' trust toward superior (vice versa) as well as partners within the organization.

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