UNDERSTANDING THE RECOGNITION OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH: A CRITIQUE OF CORPORATE CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

In the era of globalization, in the face of industrial competition, companies are attempting to instill a culture of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) as a symbol and image of their existence. However, it is unfortunate that the presence of OSH in the company does not always serve as a barometer of the company's normative compliance with OSH. In practice, the rules governing worker behavior still show varying degrees of permissiveness.

The practice of OSH must be accompanied by moral values in order to achieve the desired condition. Therefore, there are two behavioral approaches in OSH communication practices in companies: (1) do the things right, which means following the rules. This does not necessarily resolve OSH problems, as 'rules' at the minimum only regulate employee behavior and (2) do the right things, which is moral in nature, which allows workers to act and behave according to their nature because what is outlined in the rules does not always reflect free will, so in the end each worker must find a way to do what's best.

The critical-interpretive approach with phenomenological method in research focuses on the meaning and awareness of OSH caused by communication distortion in the company on workers' behavior towards social reality as something complex, continuously evolving and full of meaning. In the development of Axel Honneth's conceptual dimensions of recognition theory (love, rights and solidarity) has a central role and solution in the distortion of corporate communication, especially in the implementation of OSH programs that emphasize the importance of recognizing worker relationships and developing self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem, in the context of Good Corporate Governance (GCG) and Governance Risk and Compliance (GRC), recognition theory provides implications for the importance of recognizing workers' contributions to the goals achieved in the company, thereby increasing workers' dignity and individual values in the company.
Without social recognition, OSH will not be able to serve as operational barometer of a start-up company. It will only serve as a framing to protect the company, “as if” it already fulfills its legal obligations towards OSH.

**Keywords:** Axel Honneth, Disrespect, Interpretive-Critique, Recognition, Work Safety

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**Introduction**

Corporate communication creates a system of cooperation so that each member can participate and have influence in the organization. The growth and efficiency of an organization depends on how effectively workers are involved in enforcing an Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) culture in the company. Companies strive to create OSH as an identity, symbol, and prerequisite for gaining respect from the industrial sector, as the implementation of OSH is a normative imperative stipulated in Law No. 1/1970. In general, rules are only the basis for worker behavior standards. There are two behavioral approaches in OSH communication practices in companies: (1) do the things right, which means following the rules. This does not necessarily resolve OSH problems, as ‘rules’ at the minimum only regulate employee behavior and (2) do the right things, which is moral in nature, which allows workers to act and behave according to their nature because what is outlined in the rules does not always reflect free will, so in the end each worker must find a way to do what’s best.

The development of worker behavior in the company is facilitated by: (1) teleological ethical reasoning as the foundational principle of behavioral norms that are associated with the goal in mind. The achievement of goals is the factor that determines whether one’s actions are good or bad so that goals become the standard; (2) moral behavior from a de-ontological point of view implies that the decision maker determines whether or not the action is interpreted as an attempt to demonstrate personal integrity; and (3) ethical codes of virtue or excellence that indicate that this practice is used as a benefit in ethics. The existence of these views did not emerge drastically; rather, they evolved from the workplace environment, experiences, traditions, and shared existence in their communities that place value on human life. From a historical perspective, a culture or group would claim that this is the most important aspect to consider in the organization.

Company policies should ideally be developed based on experience and tested repeatedly until the rules are credible. All rules are inherently beneficial, but they are not completely exempt of interpretation or evaluation. The dignity of the employee should be taken into consideration when creating company rules or policies that demonstrate the extent of respect the company gives to its employees. As a result, the rules and procedures of OSH should be thoroughly tested in order to increase awareness of them among workers; after reading the rules and regulations, workers should be able to comprehend and accept them with common sense.

OSH is a value that should be championed as a belief system, not merely viewed as an obligation to comply with relevant regulations. In essence, OSH is effectively adopted if companies view workers as assets and that can only be achieved if there is mutual respect and mutual recognition (Honneth, 1995). Norms and values can only be accepted as legitimate if individuals can reach consensus on their implications and benefits for advancing their interests (Poespowardojo, Seran, 2016: 168). Work-related stress causes low self-esteem and communication issues within the company. Employees can show creative tendencies and have the capacity to be themselves regarding their objectives while working (Krijnen, C., 2017: 540). Claiming the critique of OSH recognition of corporate culture is done by revitalizing the organizational structure against an understanding that is limited by economic practice by seeing relationships in the production process as the only way to achieve corporate goals towards a communication practice that
integrates corporate social relations with OSH goals. The conflict over recognition as a worker is resolved through the removal of the pseudo-consciousness that has been colonized by an ideology (Poespowardjo, Seran, 2016: 162).

**Literature Review**

There are five concepts that workers should consider in maintaining good communication in the workplace according to Ronda (2018: 80-81; Ruben & Stewart, 2014; Barton & Beck, 2005). They are (1) understanding the company’s goals; (2) knowing roles and responsibilities; (3) coordination in the execution of work; (4) developing a corporate culture; and (5) establishing a communication network. The characteristics of OSH communication are transactional, positional and transformative, requiring effective collaboration and active participation between workers and leaders. Within the overall structure in the company, OSH communication is always set within an organizational structure that emphasizes authority, specialization, and order (Littlejohn et al., 2017: 320), with further emphasis on intersubjective reciprocity and recognition (Honneth, 1995).

A company is composed of interconnected individual actions (Pace & Faules, 2018); therefore, they are impossible to dissociate from the constant education of their employees. The learning process increases the company’s capacity to alter and evolve as a continual improvement. Therefore, the process of learning must be facilitated by a functional intersubjective communication process that promotes the optimization of the process in order to create an OSH culture in the company. Each company and individual has a singular culture that is characterized by distinct elements that create traditions of behavior and include rules, values, rituals, and communication processes that are specific to the company and individual. (Champoux, 2017: 124; Alvesson dan Berg, 1992: 123). In actuality, in companies, Neilson (1996) in Dua. M (2022: 147) states that many superiors believe that they are powerholders whose job is to issue orders, apply punishment and threat mechanisms without conducting effective communication, and that the task of workers is simply to execute orders. This condition is common in single loop learning process due to the absence of dialogue and the increase of disrespect, leading to the lack of mutual respect. In this case, OSH is not viewed a value.

The company’s culture of OSH is communicated through messages in the context of communication so that others can understand and accept it (Deetz, 1982: 133). As a consequence, OSH culture can be defined normatively as the belief among workers that OSH culture is a norm, attitude, role, social, and technical practice (Dekker, S. 2015: 245), shared values, cognition, commitment, communication (Chen et al., 2018), related to reducing exposure to perceived unsafe or adverse circumstances that affect their safety behavior (Aytac dan Dursun, 2018) and have a long-term impact on OSH behavior. OSH actions are directive and imperative, so workers must first be willing to accept authoritative OSH messages by giving authority in the OSH communication system and filling OSH positions with competent workers (Barnard 1966: 217-218), which is the most important contribution needed from workers so that OSH programs can be implemented and create OSH “agents of change” in the company.

Communication errors in companies that occur distort the truth and lead to ambiguity and thus become a barrier to the implementation of OSH programs. In Habermas’ perspective, there are three types of worker’s distorted expression, including (1) the use of symbols; communication does not follow a consensus, (2) individual behavior that is repetitive (stereotype style), and (3) the emergence of social pathology (Honneth, 2009). Habermas’ psychoanalytic approach provides an explanatory model for unpacking social pathology in companies, where there is a possibility that the social consensus reached in communication is the result of coercion which results in systematically distorted communication (Lawlor, 2013:150; Habermas, 1987).

Honneth’s recognition theory underlines that humans as social beings emphasize mutual respect and the importance of social relations. Each individual has an obligation to bring themselves to adapt and communicate in their environment so that intact social relations and
Respectful relationships between individuals are formed, and at the end point, each individual can be fulfilled at three levels of recognition, namely love, rights and solidarity, and the formation of a community structure that develops as a result of moral struggle (Hazeldine, 2017: 149). Honneth’s recognition theory is a progressive development of the Frankfurt School’s third generation of social criticism, which follows on from Jürgen Habermas’ project of renewing the emphasis on emancipatory social theory. Honneth’s approach refers to the intersubjective turn taken from the writings of Hegel of the early Jena period, to the subject’s experience of disrespect. In its construct, Honneth’s recognition theory not only examines the recognition of individual subjects, but also dynamic social interactions in which subjects are gradually integrated into social norms and practices that give rise to mutual recognition of intersubjectivity (Pada RT, 2017).

The concept of recognition theory does not mean to excuse the forced creation of an individual, but rather is a means of validating the rationality of a subject in their social environment by observing the norms that govern individuality. The theory of recognition, which is derived from social values via the identification of norms in social interactions and relationships, not only describes the subject as an individual, but also as a normative mechanism. The community participates in the process actively, which means that the recognition action begins when a person learns how to differentiate their personal concerns from their responsibilities. (Honneth, 1995:74-75).

The concept of Honneth’s recognition is not separable from Hegel’s idea of ethical life (Sittlichkeit). Honneth explains that gradual individual self-reflective interactions fall into the wider scope of social interactions regulated by norms (Honneth 1995: 78). Therefore, in order to repair social structures, companies becoming lebenswelt and providing support to the development of their members is an unnegotiable need, as a pre-condition or as a basic social grammar of the structure of societal progress (Seran. A, 2013; Honneth, 1995).

Research Methods

Research methodology is concerned with the overall strategy for research, which includes a theoretical foundation and a philosophical framework that is interpretive-critical in nature and that employs the phenomenological method as a means of building the meaning of OSH in the social aspects of workers’ everyday lives and the individual’s awareness of their social position (Schutz, 1967) which is often ideologically distorted. According to Deetz (1982: 132) the interpretive-critical approach is part of the development of new theories and offers different perspectives in corporate communication. It is a blend of paradigms, as Geertz’s blurred genre (Geertz, C, 1980). This gives color to epistemology, proliferation of destruction of the dominant paradigm, rejection of the norms of objectivity, and leads to progressiveness (Denzin N.K, 2010: 422; Dillard, 2006: 64; Nespor, 2006:124).

In Schutz’s phenomenological method, in the process of typification, humans as subjects always create meaning outside the scope of experience. Typification is a process of formalization and abstraction used to categorize objects based on certain types of characters. So, the meaning relationship in this process was referred to as the stock of knowledge (Schutz, 1967), which was a set of experience which then influenced constructed meanings in thoughts, attitudes, behaviors, which were implemented in reality. Data sources, techniques and data analysis were based on informants, through direct observation, literature study and in-depth interviews through unstructured interviews. Thus, in the next process, validity testing was carried out to meet the Goodness Criteria (Lincoln dan Guba, 1986: 77, 1985) and continuous data analysis until saturation by reducing data according to the steps of Schutzian phenomenology.

Results and Discussion

Communication distortion occurs within a company due to the lack of communication to respect the authority of each line management, such as the direct interference of the board of directors and the top-level management
without involving supervisors in communicating with workers. This results in supervisors and employees feeling disheartened and unappreciated. In the culture of work in Indonesia, the position and authority associated with a company's organizational structure has its own significance. The feeling of prestige associated with the position one holds represents a form of recognition of the worker's accomplishments. If ignored, then, the 'feeling' of not being recognized could manifest. Communication relationships in the implementation of OSH are the basis for cohesiveness, between workers and leaders, thus, communication actions as a manifestation of interaction between workers and leaders towards the implementation of OSH in the organization are very important.

From the verification of research findings, it was evident that employees were displeased with the conditions they were experiencing, which ultimately results in them not receiving the 'message-information' clearly and instead strictly performing their duties according to the orders of their superiors. Employees cannot share in the initiative and creativity of their company because of the lack of autonomy granted to them by their supervisors. The failure of leadership communication in the company has an impact on the implementation of OSH programs. According to Brown, J., (2022:141-143) the primary cause of workplace injuries is the failure of leadership to communicate safety culture. Instead of visual components, such as the installation of OSH banners or posters in the workplace, the use of intersubjective communication is more effective.

Communication distortion occurs within a company can be mitigated by improving the internal communication of the organization. Effective communication can promote self-esteem. OSH communication that conceptualizes OSH as a company system is crucial to prevent accidents at work. Effective communication between the leaders and employees can only happen with positive collaboration (Musheke, M. dan Phiri, J., 2021:662). The experience of disrespect in the company inspires employees to strive for recognition and as a means of solidarity. Division of labor is one example of recognition. If employees are only viewed as resources, then it would follow that they would fight for their rights (Groutsis. et al. 2020:7; Honneth, 2010:223-240). One unique aspect of employment is the real-world nature of the work and finding ways to execute duties according to the company's regulations, directions, and strategies. This aspect allows every employee to be creative as a means of self-expression (Angella, 2016:13).

Company compliance in the fulfillment of workers' rights should be applied as a set of principles and practices aimed at ensuring that companies are managed in a responsible and ethical manner, as compliance with Good Corporate Governance (GCG) is necessary for companies that want to maintain their compliance with regulations and laws and promotes transparency and accountability. In the context of OSH, a procedure serves as a guide for both the employee and the company in regards to recognizing and addressing hazards associated with OSH, conducting training, providing personal protection equipment, and evaluating the effectiveness of OSH programs. The method of evaluating the company's compliance with OSH policies and procedures is to conduct OSH audits, investigate accidents that occur at work, conduct risk assessments, and making sure all relevant documentation is accessible to workers. These activities are examples of Governance, Risk and Compliance (GRC).

Work is a common practice that is formalized in the company's structure. The purpose of organizing workers by their abilities is to understand what is required and what is given (Honneth, 2014:53). Companies must educate workers about the normative requirements of the workplace, as this is essential to the recognition process. The objective is to have "negligence" in the implementation of OSH eliminated. Recognition must be granted institutionally by the company, its actions must be positive (Honneth, A., van den Brink, B., & Owen, D., 2007) in order to allow workers to relate to each other positively, both among themselves and with the leaders, which ultimately results in common norms. As expressed by Honneth, institutions are a congregation of standards of behavior that are formally mandated (Honneth, 2014:45).
According to Honneth (2010), working conditions in a company are a means of endeavor, whether individual or group, for emancipation, with the strategy of associating mutual recognition to obtain normative expectations (Angella, M., 2016). Workers’ experience of disrespect conditions results in somatic-psychological symptoms because they feel depressed, which ultimately causes hurt, annoyance, and even resentment towards the company or its leaders. Honneth believes that experiences of disrespect are typically accompanied by emotional experiences, these are forms of indirect recognition that are concealed beneath the surface (Honneth, 1995:136).

OSH training is part of the culture building and action learning process that requires commitment and consistency, and communication is the main factor and positive interaction between workers and leaders to get mutual recognition and communication is the medium in the process. OSH training is part of the culture and learning process that involves commitment and consistency, communication is the paramount factor and the positive interaction between workers and leaders is its main attribute. Work is a profession that should be rewarded and recognized by the company. If their work is a profession, it means that it is not an individual action, but relates to other people, which will simultaneously construct and build their actualization in the company where they are based, as part of a company that is bound by norms, values and rules concerning its responsibilities (Dua M, 2021:313). However, recognition is still necessary as it is a non-negotiable condition. Fundamental to recognition theory is the conception of freedom as intersubjective in the context of OSH in the company. The reproduction of social life is governed by the need to recognize each other (Honneth 1995: 92). Honneth views work as a solid means for individual endeavor. By working, individuals not only contribute to material reproduction (welfare), but also to the formation of identity and the division of labor (Honneth, 1995).

Explicitly, companies can facilitate the realization of workers’ creativity, expression, cooperation and autonomy, as well as psychic strength by elaborating the challenges that workers would face at work, enhancing the individual’s own subjectivity and the quality of production. These processes can be regarded as intersubjective emancipation processes (Angella, M, 2016:5; Honneth, 1995). Recognition is crucial to the attainment of freedom through communication between workers and managers in a corporation. Freedom in regards to recognition is derived from the collective power of solidarity, which enables workers to no longer have to compete with each other, and solidarity becomes a factor that promotes development in the social organization that is internal to the company. The realization of freedom is contingent on the appreciation and recognition of workers’ contributions to the company or outside of the company via self-improvement (Honneth, 1995: 128-129).

The understanding of OSH as a culture of love is broad. Love, as the first space for recognition, places individuals on the basis of normativity that is always present, not as recipients of rights or norms, but as participants in the legalization of norms that are intersubjective in the context of OSH in the company.

In reality, we can use the form of mutual recognition in the company to map the level of practical relationships between individuals, differences in meaning and differences in mutual relationships between the three forms of recognition concepts: (1) love; (2) right/respect; and (3) solidarity, which facilitates the thought process that involves recognizing that the different definitions of OSH, that exist among workers and leaders, must still be considered legitimate perspectives and have an effect on individual behavior and relationships. The definition of OSH causes people to concur in the desire to live safely, comfortably and healthily, which is important and necessary in human life. From a business and corporate perspective, it’s crucial to the survival of a business and a contractual obligation to land a project. OSH is not only seen as values, but also materials. It can only exist as reciprocity in giving meaning to oneself and others.

According to Szhutz (1967:123), OSH is an intersubjective social construction that is also the social construction of others. This implies that OSH is a component of life that is impossible to change for the personal life of the
individual or the lives of others or companies. The significance of the role of OSH cannot be overlooked, as Honneth stated, companies are dependent on principles that bind their members together through recognition (Marcelo G, 2013:211), and thus, the recognition of OSH has become essential for companies. The development of the concept of recognition theory by Axel Honneth has a significant role in the resolution of communication distortion. The work experience dimension (stock of working knowledge) as a new dimension in enhancing Honneth's recognition theory, which concerns the knowledge and experience that workers possess, focuses on the practical application of useful expertise and knowledge that focus on substance, meaning, intensity, and duration of knowledge of their experience that is intended to enhance the awareness of OSH in the company and improve communication regarding OSH.

Reflection

Understanding OSH's recognition as a criticism of the company's culture provides an insight to the importance of the theory of recognition in intersubjective communication related to the implementation of OSH. OSH does not always serve as a barometer of the company's normative compliance with it, because in many cases it is just a façade to protect the company, to give the impression that they have fulfilled their obligations. Providing recognition within the company is essential for the improvement of workers' self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem, as well as the advancement of company productivity. Without it, internal conflict would arise, and workers would attempt to seek recognition on their own, attempting to emancipate themselves.

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Conclusion

OSH in the workplace is a combination of the stock of knowledge of workers who on average have work experience, as a form of endeavor in defining workers' rights, and providing constructive criticism as a communicative aimed at getting recognition. Safety as OSH culture can be interpreted and institutionalized through acts of intersubjective communication. The process of actualizing OSH is a progression that is primarily derived from employees because they want to be safe and secure, so it can be said that the actualization of OSH as a culture in the company is created in the context of formality alone, because the process of self-actualization of workers towards OSH as a culture is a process in which a person can develop their potential and achieve their goals. Actualizing OSH in a company requires recognition of reciprocal relationships, intersubjective relationships and recognition as basic relationships that can provide increased self-actualization of workers.

References


