Interpersonal Communication Analysis of Customs Officers in Passenger Profiling at Sultan Hasanuddin International Airport

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze interpersonal communication which carried out by Customs Officers with passengers at Sultan Hasanuddin International Airport, mainly in an effort to detect the smuggling of prohibited narcotics as well to analyze how customs officers interpreted non-verbal messages originating from passengers who were indicated in carrying out smuggling in making the function of the Directorate General of Customs and Excise to be more optimal. This study uses an approach qualitative research. Data collection techniques used in this study is an In-depth interview method. The results of the study show that interpersonal communication conducted by customs officers with passengers were carried out through several stages, in which through contact perception to obtain information about passengers. Interactional contact is carried out through passenger interviews and involvement with the connection that occurs is impersonal. Upon the case, the meaning of the message is non-verbal is more focused on the facial expressions of passengers.

Keywords: customs officer, interpersonal communication, non-verbal messages.

1 Introduction

Communication is the most important aspect that cannot be separated from the life of human. It is to say that through communication human various needs can be fulfilled. One of the basic human needs is the need to know the opportunities that can be exploited and avoid something that can be a threat to the environment. Opportunities and threats originating from humans can be detected through communication which is an instrument of social interaction that can be used to predict the attitudes of other people [1]. Indonesia, which is an archipelagic country, on the one hand, has various opportunities, including large natural potential, but on the other hand, there is a potential threat of the entry of dangerous goods into the country's border areas.

Some efforts that already made by Indonesian government in order to prevent the threat of entry of dangerous goods are by giving the Directorate General of Customs and Excise the task and function of being a community protector, namely protecting the Indonesian people from the entry of prohibited and/or restricted imported goods, including: narcotics, psychotropics and precursors (NPP) or other dangerous goods [2]. One of the focuses of the duties of the Directorate General of Customs and Excise in carrying out the Community Protector function

is to detect efforts to smuggle narcotics at various international airports, one of which is Sultan Hasanuddin Makassar International Airport.

According to data from the National Narcotics Agency, in 2019 the number of Indonesians who abuse drugs is as many as 3.4 million people out of Indonesia's total population of 186.6 million people [3]. In addition, data sourced from the Indonesia Drugs Report for 2021 and 2022 also shows that the number of Indonesians who must be rehabilitated due to drug abuse has increased by 31.86%, where the number of people undergoing rehabilitation in 2021 is 1,224 people, increasing to 1,614 people in in 2022 [4].

Based on the 2021 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Report (UNODC) report, the report contains a statement from the Malaysian Police that Malaysia is an important country as a transit area for narcotics that came from the Middle East and the Golden Triangle [5]. The Golden Triangle is the name given to the region of the mainland of Southeast Asia where from the early 1950s to the present day is the origin of most of the world's illegal narcotics. Through Malaysia, an international narcotics smuggling network from the Middle East and the Golden Triangle smuggles narcotics from Indonesia to Australia [6]. In addition, the high difference in the price of narcotics on the Indonesian black market compared to the Malaysian black market makes Indonesia a target market for narcotics by smugglers. According to data sourced from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Report (UNODC) in 2020 the price of methamphetamine-type narcotics (Crystaline Methamphetamine) on the Malaysian black market is IDR 143,390/gram and increases more than 10 times when it enters the Indonesian black market to IDR 1,547,000/gram [7].

Makassar Sultan Hasanuddin International Airport as the entry point for passengers originating from Malaysia recorded 10,686 passengers originating from Malaysia within 6 months in 2022, this condition finally made customs officers carry out their main supervision of passengers from Malaysia in order to carry out their functions community protector.

The supervision of passengers from abroad is carried out by interacting with passengers. Interactions that occur between customs officers and passengers are interpersonal. The purpose of interpersonal communication carried out by customs officers is to obtain an overview of the profile of passengers entering Indonesia. The condition of passengers who are strangers to customs officers who come from various cultural backgrounds and countries creates conditions of uncertainty due to a lack of information, especially the process of seeking information in a short time. To reduce this uncertainty, of course, a strategy is needed. Apart from that, in the process of interpersonal communication with passengers, customs officials are also required to make an assessment of the passengers being interviewed, the conclusion being the level of risk of passengers in the category of high risk passengers (high risk of smuggling) or low risk (little possibility of smuggling). The process of assessing the passenger profile must be carried out in a short period of time.

There is a previous study conducted by M. Razib alfarizi which aims to analyze the cross-cultural communication of customs officers in providing services to the public carrying imported goods, as well as obstacles and things that need to be addressed by customs officers in order to create effective cross-cultural communication at Kualanamu International Airport [11]. The results showed that the cross-cultural communication process of customs officers in serving the community of imported goods carriers was done well. Research conducted by M. Razib alfarizi is different from this study, where this study analyzes the stages of interpersonal communication between customs officers and passengers. In addition, this study also shows

how customs officers give meaning to non-verbal messages that arise in interpersonal communication between customs officers and passengers. Based on the literature review, there has never been a previous study that analyzes the meaning of non-verbal messages of customs officers in communicating with passengers at sultan hasanuddin international airport.

Based on the explanation that has been presented, the researchers conducted research (1) on how the interpersonal communication can be interpreted by customs officers in profiling passengers at Sultan Hasanuddin Makassar International Airport? (2) What is the process for interpreting messages from customs officials in profiling passengers at Sultan Hasanuddin Makassar International Airport?

2. Research Method

The type of method used on this research is qualitative research, which based on the philosophy of postpositivism or also known as an interpretive paradigm in which the social reality under study is seen as something holistic/comprehensive, complex, constantly changing, having various meanings, and the relationships or symptoms that occur are interactive [8]. The selection of informants was carried out by conducting preliminary research where the researcher conducted participant observations in the midst of interpersonal communication activities between customs officers and passengers, the selected informants were customs officers who had at least 5 years experience in conducting interpersonal communication with passengers, experiencing direct communication events interpersonal, able to consciously explain their experiences when communicating interpersonally with passengers, based on these criteria 4 Customs Officers were selected as informants, then there are two passengers who have been interviewed by customs officers.

Data collection was carried out in three stages, namely in-depth interviews, observation and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted with customs officers who are tasked with gathering initial information about passengers who will be the target of interpersonal communication as well as Customs officers who carry out interpersonal communication with passengers who are the target of communication.

The observations were made by doing direct observation on the process of interpersonal communication between customs officers and passengers who were interviewed in order to determine the risk of possible smuggling. At the time when the researcher doing direct observation, the activity will be recorded through digital media and the researcher then asked the customs officer about the meaning of the non-verbal messages displayed by the passengers.

The analysis process of the data is based on Miles and Huberman's data analysis technique which describes activities in qualitative data analysis in an interactive and continuous manner so that data saturation is obtained, namely a condition where extracting new data does not add new information for analysis purposes [9]. Data analysis activities began by collecting data from observations and results of in-depth interviews obtained from informants in the form of recorded interviews in the form of voice notes, videos, and notes from researchers when conducting interviews with informants or when making observations. The process of data analysis uses data analysis techniques Miles and Huberman which describes activities in qualitative data analysis in an interactive and continuous manner so that data saturation is obtained, namely a condition where extracting new data does not add new information for analysis purposes [9]. Data analysis activities began by collecting data from observations and results of in-depth interviews obtained

from informants in the form of recorded interviews in the form of voice notes, videos, and notes from researchers when conducting interviews with informants or when making observations.

At the next stage, the researcher then conducted a selection of the data that have been obtained, from the interview results and participant observation related to the attempts to interpret the message of customs officers in interpersonal communication were collected, while irrelevant data was separated. The next stage is the researcher presents data on how customs officers communicate interpersonally with passengers who are strangers to officers and how customs officers interpret messages. Finally, in the last stage the researcher then provided conclusions obtained from a series of research processes that have been carried out.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Interpersonal Communication of Customs Officers in Passenger Profiling

Interpersonal communication between customs officers and passengers is impersonal

The findings of this study illustrated that customs officers initiate interpersonal communication through the perceptual contact stage, in which the contact that occurs is not physical contact. At this stage the perception of customs officers is first formed through information obtained from the control unit which have been tasked to collect information related to specific passengers through an interview. Upon physically meeting the passenger who will be interviewed, the officer already knows the passenger's name, gender, age, and nationality.

Based on the results of field observations and information gained from informants, it is known that the interactional contact stage begins when the customs officer on duty checks the passenger's travel document in the form of a passport. The next stage was the interview activity by the customs officer, at this stage the informant said that the process of exchanging information began by greeting the passengers who would be given short interviews with the aim of creating an intimate atmosphere. Based on the results of the researchers' observations, several informants did start interacting with the passengers who were to be interviewed by trying to greet passengers, for example using the words good afternoon and hello. However, the findings in the field also show that not all officers begin the interaction by introducing themselves to the passengers who will be interviewed. Researchers found officers who started the interaction stage by directly ordering passengers to immediately open the luggage of the passengers being interviewed.

According to the results of the interviews that the researchers conducted, almost all of the informants said that the relationship that occurred between officers and passengers during profiling was only impersonal.

Although the interactions that occurred were relatively short between the passengers who were interviewed and the customs officers, relationship deterioration in the communication process also occurred, based on information from informants and researchers' observations, the deterioration of these relations occurred due to prejudice. This prejudice occurred on the part of customs officials and passengers interviewed. The duty demands of customs officials to be vigilant in carrying out their duties has focused their attention on finding information that leads to smuggling efforts. As it is known that one of the factors that influence a person's perception is the presence of a factor of attention, high concentration on smuggling efforts can lead to distorting the perception of customs officials.

3.2 Customs Officer Interpretation of Non-verbal Messages in Profilling Passengers

Customs officers almost entirely focus on passengers' non-verbal expressions on the face.

According to Social Judgment Theory, when someone listens to messages from other people, they will judge the message based on their personal position in a spectrum of attitudes towards a particular topic. A person's personal position in this spectrum of attitudes is referred to as an anchor [10].

Based on the theory, if it is associated with research findings, the results of the study show that customs officers who carry out interpersonal communication with passengers interpret messages by assessing the messages conveyed by passengers. The findings of the study show that customs officers evaluate the verbal and non-verbal messages of the passengers by placing the results of the message assessment in three zones, namely the acceptance zone, the non-commitment zone, and the rejection zone.

The research findings show that the meaning of the message made by the officer to the smiling passenger when checking the goods is carried out, the customs officer evaluates the message based on the evaluation zone in social judgment theory. Against a smile that sounds friendly and not pushy, the customs officer considers the message to be in the receiving zone. That is, the message is received and can be considered. However, if the smile sounds too forced and unnatural, then the customs officer considers the message to be in the tolerance zone or even the rejection zone, depending on the situation and the context that occurred.

The research findings also show that the anchor or or mindset of customs officers in interpreting the non-verbal messages of passengers conducted by interviews is very diverse. less make non-verbal facial expressions the focus of attention. While other informants focused almost entirely on the non-verbal expressions of passengers on the face.

The results showed that customs officers in assessing non-verbal messages focused on several things, namely facial expressions, gestures (kinesics), appearance, intonation and proximity. In evaluating non-verbal messages, customs officers evaluate non-verbal messages.

The findings in the field show that there were passengers during the interview process showing freeze behavior as stated by Joe Navvaro, that one of the responses of our defense when facing threats is freeze behavior (11). The form of freeze gesture behavior that the researchers managed to observe was the silent attitude of passengers when customs officers conducted interviews and inspected the passengers' goods. Based on field observations and interviews with customs officers, it is known that this behavior is interpreted by customs officers as a form of resistance or unwillingness to cooperate, so that the officers conduct an in-depth inspection of the goods on these passengers. From this the researcher argues that there are differences in the meaning of non-verbal messages in terms of opinion according to Joe Navvaro who interprets freeze behavior as a form of defensive behavior from emerging threats, while customs officers interpret this behavior as a form of behavior against activities carried out by customs officers which in this case is interpreted by passengers as activities that hinder their journey.

The next response when humans face threats according to Joe Navvaro is the flight response (11), this behavior is shown to avoid or stay away from the threat being faced, one example of avoidance behavior put forward by Joe Navvaro is by leaning away from the person being avoided , put a barrier between the people, or point the foot out toward the nearest exit. Based on the observations of researchers, this behavior was seen several times in passengers who were interviewed by customs officials, namely when a customs officer interviewed a

passenger, the behavior of the passenger leaning on the goods trolley was seen with a body position that was leaning away from the officer.

There is one non-verbal behavior of passengers which is interpreted by customs officers as non-verbal avoidance behavior, namely the non-verbal behavior of passengers who play mobile phones while being interviewed by customs officers.

The third non-verbal behavior when humans face threats according to Joe Navvaro is a response to fight non-verbally for example by using body posture or eyes, by puffing out the chest or by disturbing the 'space' of other people (11). Findings in the field indicate that this non-verbal behavior is very rarely encountered considering that the response to resistance by passengers is generally in the form of verbal resistance in the form of arguing with officers.

Findings in the field show that when customs officers conduct interviews with passengers who are profiled, there is a passenger's calming behavior by touching the neck, however, due to the lack of understanding of the officers about this non-verbal behavior, the non-verbal behavior of touching the neck is a self-soothing behavior due to the emergence of a feeling of discomfort. conveniently escaped the attention of customs officers.

4. Conclussion

Based on the results of the research, it was shown that interpersonal communication between customs officers and passengers was carried out through several stages, namely perceptual contact by obtaining information about the passenger, interactional contact carried out through passenger interviews and the involvement of the relationship that occurred was impersonal. While the meaning of non-verbal messages focuses more on the facial expressions of passengers and is interpreted into 2 (two) categories, namely passengers at high risk of smuggling and passengers at low risk of smuggling. This actively demonstrated that the ability of customs officials to interpret non-verbal messages needs to be improved.

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