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## CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY X HOSPITAL IN YOGYAKARTA

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Quality health care needs become the demands of society in the era of globalization. Complaints about hospital services are a big problem. Complaints will reduce the marketing of the hospital and the impact of being shunned by customers, hospitals that cannot handle complaints properly, will be difficult to develop in intense competition with other hospitals. The aim this research to find out the strategy of managing customer complaints X hospital in Yogyakarta. **Methods:** The study used qualitative approach and case study design. Data were obtained through in depth interview and observation. Research subjects included: deputy Director, Customer service, marketing, quality management, public relations. Data triangulation has used source and method triangulation. The results of the interviews were made transcripts then encoded, and the subsequent reduction was made in a narrative form and then made a conclusion. **Results:** Customer complaint management strategy whit mechanism of complaint delivery was not well facilitated because not every suggestions box was equipped with paper and pen, email and SMS gateway were not checked daily. The hospital had specified procedure of customer complaint management and the management of customer complaints was relevant with the procedure. Policies made by hospital directors were in the form of fixed procedure, work instruction on complaint management, hospital staff prepared to handle complaints 24 hours, complaint response time 1×24 hours, and availability of case managing doctors. **Conclusion:** Mechanism of complaint delivery had not functioned effectively. Therefore there should be a special unit that managed customer complaints and a punishment system should be adopted to increase commitment of hospital staff in managing customer complaints.

**Keywords:** *Management, Complaints, Customers, Hospitals*

### Introduction

The need for quality health services is a demand of the community in the era of globalization. Complaints about hospital services are a big problem. Complaints will reduce the marketing of hospitals and the impact of being shunned by customers, hospitals that cannot handle complaints properly, will be difficult to develop in intense competition with other hospitals (Widiharti *et al.*, 2011).

Responsive organizations are organizations that are ready to compete, which have the ability and speed and responsiveness in handling complaints. The faster the patient's complaints are handled, the stronger the competitiveness of the hospital. Hospital sensitivity to patient complaints is one of the strengths of hospitals in competing, complaints can be used as an effort to improve not as a negative criticism (Mulyadi, 2001).

In total quality management or often called Total Quality Management (TQM), customer care (custmer oriented) is a key factor in continuous quality improvement. X hospitals in Yogyakarta have tried to anticipate the needs and demands of the community for the pattern of health services. Screening of patient complaints at hospitals is not only through suggestion boxes but

also books are provided for each ward, as well as by telephone or e-mail or electric mail, and so far there have never been complaints from customers to the mass media.

X Hospital already has customer complaints handling work instructions and customer complaints handling procedures, and based on the results of interviews with the customer service person in charge, it is found that if there are complaints or complaints on each unit then all will be clarified or resolved, but in the document book complaints there are many customer complaints. Based on the description above, the purpose of this study is to find out customer complaint management strategies at X hospitals in Yogyakarta.

## Method

This research is a qualitative study with a case study design. The unit of analysis in this study is X hospital in Yogyakarta, The method of retrieving data in this study through in-depth interviews, observation and documentation studies, interviews were made transcripts then coded, and further reductions made in narrative form were then made conclusions. The subjects in this study are Deputy Director, Customer service, Marketing, Quality Department, public relations. Data triangulation uses source triangulation and methods. Data analysis using qualitative methods.

## Results and Discussion

### *The mechanism for delivering complaints*

The mechanism used by patients or customers to express their dissatisfaction can be done orally or in writing or through the mass media. Hospital X has made it easier for customers to submit complaints, which can be directly orally and in writing, supported by excerpts of interviews with the customer service section as follows:

*"..... if the delivery procedure has made it easier for patients to deliver, only for resolution there are still one or two complaints that have not been maximized".*

Customers can submit their complaints at any time to the officer or to customer service (CS) if the customer feels dissatisfied or disappointed with the service provided by the hospital. Officers in the hospital service unit are generally used to receiving complaints from customers. In addition there is a doctor case manager in charge of receiving and resolving complaints in their respective units. From the results of observations of verbal and non verbal methods from the officer who received the complaint indicates that receiving complaints or complaints from customers is a matter of course, supported by the quality manager's statement as follows:

*"..... How to submit complaints can be done either verbally or in writing, if through oral patients can directly convey to CS, in addition to CS can also deliver directly to the hospital staff then poured in writing by the hospital clerk, and if it is written can be with use the form provided or with the format of the letter itself. "*

In addition to the oral and written methods, complaints can also be conveyed through suggestion boxes, complaint tables, via telephone, SMS (short message service) gateway or via e-mail. Based on interviews with the customer service section as follows:

*"..... During this time most complaints were immediately verbal, then written, written there was also directly to the customer service unit, there was a suggestion in the box there was also a table of criticism suggestions, and often via the last telephone via e-mail using the web".*

The results of the study show that the facilities and media provided by the hospital to facilitate customers in submitting complaints are adequate but have not functioned optimally. In the suggestion box, not all paper and stationery are available. Likewise in the sms gate way, all officers can open the incoming SMS complaint, so that the officer who gets the complaint can delete the SMS complaint from the customer, and there is no fixed procedure regarding the mechanism for submitting complaints through the SMS gate way. The e-mail media has not been opened or checked every day, so that one of the hospital's quality goals, which is resolving complaints within 1x 24 hours, has not been achieved optimally.

The result of the observation was that there was no chart of complaints that could be read by the customer, so that not all customers understood the flow of complaints, but the results of interviews with customer service officers found information that the media used to convey complaints was considered effective, because many methods could be used by customers in submitting complaints. The customer may at any time submit a complaint if he is not satisfied with the service provided by the hospital. This can be seen in the results of interviews with the customer service section as follows:

*"..... The procedure is quite effective because it also facilitates customers who do not want to submit in writing".*

Hospital staff understand the mechanism for submitting complaints, and if complaints are resolved in accordance with the complaint resolution mechanism, it is evidenced by the results of interviews with the hospital deputy director as follows:

*"..... the customer can submit his complaint to the hospital official then the officer will deliver to CS to collect the complaint then a settlement will be made, even though the unit or officer who receives the complaint can also immediately resolve the problem complained by the customer".*

Customers complain about getting a good response, it also shows that hospital staff understand the flow of handling complaints and the importance of handling customer complaints. All complaints submitted are settled according to the level of complaint, first if the complaint enters the customer service, the customer service officer must be able to immediately resolve, as well as complaints that go to service units then each unit or doctor case manager (Dr. cm ) must immediately complete and if it has not been resolved then who will complete the public relations department and marketer and must report to the deputy director, and if there is a complaint that reaches the jurisdiction then who will complete the hospital advocacy team, following the results of excerpts of interviews with public relations managers:

*"..... handling complaints in accordance with the level of complaints, and the final handling of the advocacy team has potential complaints in the jurisdiction".*

The results of the interview passage above are supported by a statement from the marketing manager that complaint handling is adjusted to the level of complaint, and if it is not resolved it will be resolved by the deputy, public relations, marketing, quality manager, advocate. The following statement from the marketing manager:

*"..... customer complaints came first formally from CS or wards that received complaints submitted to CS, then delivered to the relevant for example the doctor in question, resolved according to the level of complaints and if our unresolved case followed up (wadir , public relations department, marketing department, quality manager, advocate), that's how it is handled. "*

Patients and families of patients can directly submit complaints to hospital staff (wards, service units) and customer service officers or through media complaints.

### **Hospital Policy**

X Hospital has implemented several policies related to handling customer complaints in order to improve service quality, the policies taken include the response time of customer complaints no more than 24 hours after the complaint was submitted either through oral or written, and managers and assistant managers must be ready 24 hours if there is a problem, it must be resolved as soon as possible, the hospital also appoints a doctor case manager (Dr. CM) as a hospital representative if there are problems that must be resolved immediately.

The hospital also establishes a customer complaint management procedure policy set by the hospital director, following the results of excerpts of interviews with the hospital deputy director:

*"... the procedure is one of the complaints management policies that we issue, because the purpose is that when the officer receives a complaint the officer knows how the stages of management and the follow-up of complaints submitted by the customer. So that complaints can be quickly responded".*

The hospital also makes policies in the form of construction of work on handling customer complaints that are socialized to service units. So that hospital staff know their respective responsibilities in handling complaints, and to whom complaints are accounted for. This is supported by the results of interviews with the outpatient head:

*"... if the outpatient is just a director's decree regarding complaint management, and it seems the same for all parts, so all the procedures must be made SK so that the instructions work are clear".*

Basically all complaints are resolved, while the evaluation is carried out every 6 months specifically to discuss complaints, in addition there is also a management review meeting that is routinely conducted every 3 months. As the results of excerpts of interviews with the following quality managers:

*"... we always carry out evaluations, once every 6 months we evaluate, we revise according to the development of the hospital and related to complaints we also discuss at management review meetings that we do every 3 months".*

Complaints that are categorized as mild and can be resolved at unit or ward level officers or by customer service officers, not included in management review meetings, while complaints with more severe problems are included in management review meetings, supported by interviews with quality managers as follows:

*"... the problems that are more severe level we put in the management review meeting, because in 7 material in the management review one of them is customer feedback. This is a standard from ISO 9001-2008".*

To improve the quality of service in hospitals, the director also made policies including: fixing infrastructure by evaluating the organizational structure of hospitals and filling all structural positions, completing service facilities and infrastructure, increasing human resources and improving education and skills in hospital human resources. But the fact is that the hospital's infrastructure improvements are still an obstacle in the follow-up of customer complaints, as stated by the hospital's deputy director:

*"There is still a lot of busyness of managers, section heads, and section heads that are both concurrent and functional so that focusing on coordinating and solving problems cannot be optimal".*

Based on the results of the excerpts from the interview above, one of the obstacles in the follow-up of customer complaints was because of the busyness of the managers because there were still many who doubled functional and structural positions. So that to coordinate and resolve problems that customers complain about cannot be optimal.

#### ***Grievance Delivery Mechanism***

Concern for customers is shown by the mechanism of recognizing what is required by customers and efforts to meet these requirements (3). How to submit a complaint is a mechanism used by patients or customers to express their dissatisfaction, the results of the study show that the mechanism for delivering complaints in hospitals is considered to facilitate patients in making complaints, because in addition customers can deliver directly with the customer service and hospital staff. Health service organizations should be more receptive to complaints submitted by patients and relatives, especially problems / events that could potentially harm patients significantly (Kroening *et al.*, 2015).

Facilities and media provided by hospital X to facilitate customers in submitting complaints are adequate but have not functioned optimally, for example in the suggestion box, not all paper and stationery are available. Customers can also submit complaints via e-mail or SMS center. But in its implementation it has not been opened and checks are carried out every day, so that the quality objectives of the hospital have not been reached optimally because not all complaints can be resolved within 1x24 hours. An important factor in assessing the quality of health services is how quickly and effectively complaints can be resolved, patients expect their concerns to be taken seriously, the complainants investigated, explanations given and follow up complaints (5). Many answers from patients who reported complaints did not get an apology and even some of the patients did not receive answers to their complaints, this indicates that health service organizations were not responsive to patient complaints ( Skar and Soderberg, 2018).

All complaints at the hospital are accommodated, and the hospital considers that all complaints are a positive and constructive matter. Customer complaint management is one mechanism to maintain the market. Because the facilities or media provided by the hospital to submit complaints are adequate, until now the hospital has never received a complaint that has reached the mass media or through legal channels. Customer complaint management must generate customer satisfaction but more importantly must lead to operational improvements and the level of financial performance. Many organizations ignore the operational value of complaints and as a result of the complaints process many seem to be directed at trying to defuse customers rather than ensuring that the problem does not recur (Johnston, 2001).

Hospital staff in general are used to receiving complaints from customers. In addition there is a doctor case manager in charge of receiving and resolving complaints in their respective units. From the results of observations of verbal and non verbal methods from the officer who received the complaint indicates that receiving complaints or complaints from customers is a matter of course. The results of the study showed that even though there was no flow of complaints that could be read by customers, the hospital considered the media used to submit complaints to be effective. In contrast to the results of the research at the public hospital in the city of Pangkal Pinang, hospitals consider complaints to be reasonable and facilities or media to

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submit complaints are few, so customers prefer to express their complaints to the mass media because their complaints will be quickly gotten feedback (Kurniawan, 2017)

Not only the clarity of the complaints procedure but the procedure must be easy to understand and easily accessible to customers, and all staff understand the complaints procedure. Customers must understand how to submit their complaints and staff must also understand how to respond to complaints (Johnston, 2002).

This is different from the results of the research in Palangkaraya city health center, that the management of customer complaints is carried out by staff in the service unit using their own methods and the mechanism for handling customer complaints has not been done comprehensively (not following up complaints and not informing complaints) (Wijayanti, 2008). The hospital must convey corrective actions that have been taken and can explain professionally how incidents can occur, and the hospital must admit if something goes wrong (Friele and Sluijs, 2006). There are 9 principles in the complaints handling procedure in the new NHS, one of which is important is fairness or impartiality, namely the existence of equal treatment for all patients and all groups of officers (McCrinkle, 1998). The procedure for handling complaints is fair and impartial, and patient complaints are considered as a serious matter (Friele, Reitsma and De Jong, 2015).

### *Hospital Policy*

An organization that focuses on patients (customers) must have an approach to handling complaints and preventing complaints from reaching the legal domain (Skar and Soderberg, 2018). Management of customer complaints properly can be used as input and criticism from the public in order to improve the quality of services in hospitals. From the customer also obtained information or the source of the occurrence of service quality mismatch with customer expectations. So that customer complaints do not need to be avoided but must be faced as part of service to customers.

Complaint handling is an operational activity that directly aims to help customers solve their problems, in this way handling complaints is oriented to business processes that consist of leading service activities, and the overall process. In addition, complaints planning and handling include long-term complaints analysis. The analysis enables the organization to identify and review the weaknesses of internal and external processes. The need for a culture of complaints, because good organizations consider complaints to be serious, and listen to any complaints that come in and resolve complaints quickly (Huitema and Ros, 2008).

There is already a policy made by the director of the hospital in the context of managing customer complaints, policies are made in the form of fixed procedures, complaints handling work instructions, 1x24 hour response time complaints and hospital staff must be ready 24 hours to face complaints and doctor case manager ready to respond to complaints directly. The problem of implementation is still facing obstacles due to lack of human resources, causing many employees who are in charge of handling complaints to undergo multiple work, namely functional and structural. So that its ability to focus on coordinating and solving problems, and hearing complaints actively cannot be optimal.

Complaints are patient problems that can be resolved immediately or 24 hours and involve related staff (eg nurses, administrative staff, etc.). Most complaints do not require written responses (Levin and Hopkins, 2014). Facing complaints together is very important, and it requires employee competence, friendliness, and active listening skills (Gruber *et al.*, 2009).

### Conclusion

The mechanism for submitting complaints at RS X can be delivered verbally to hospital staff and can also be through the media such as suggestion boxes, e-mails, complaint books, customer satisfaction surveys, SMS gate Way, media submission of complaints not functioning optimally because not all suggestion boxes exist paper and stationery, as well as e-mail and sms gate way not open every day. Policies made by hospital directors in the form of fixed procedures, complaints handling work instructions, and hospital officers must also be prepared 24 hours in the face of complaints, response time complaints 1x24 hours, and there is a doctor case manager (Dr. cm).

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