

The Effective Communication in Street Level Staff in Pariaman Regional Public Hospital

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Abstract

Communication has a significant effect on the quality of public services (Hardiyansyah, 2011), therefore communication services are one of the keys to success in the implementation of public services. The phenomenon of service communication problems is reflected in the results of the last 4 years survey conducted at Pariaman Public Hospital (Ariany; kusdarini; Sitriwanti, 2015, 2016; 2017; 2018), shows the public dissatisfaction to the behavior of service providers in the interaction process. Miss understanding happened when communication between officers and the community is not conveyed properly. Work pressure is one of the justifications for the emergence of this phenomenon. The research conducted with qualitative method aims to contribute in solving communication problems in service interactions in hospitals, by presenting a service communication model that is built by communicators, because communicators are important dimensions in the communication process. The communication theory proposed by Stewart L. Tubbs and Sylvia Moss, 2006, there are five output indicators ineffective communication which emphasized more on the communicant is applied in dissecting and analyzing an effective communication model.

Keywords: *service communication, public service, general hospital*

Introduction

The process of communication by street-level staff becomes a determining factor of service quality for the public sector service delivery unit. When street-level staff can transfer information to the users through an acceptable communication process, communication can influence service users' perceptions of service quality without focusing only on service outputs. This symptom is showed in the results of research conducted from 2013 to 2016 at three of Government Public Hospitals (RSUD) owned by the government of West Sumatra Province. It is showed that the service behavior group including service communication received poor response from service users, so the level of satisfaction of the service user community is relatively low. This condition reinforces Hardiyansyah's statement, (Hardiansyah, 2015), that communication significantly influences the quality of public services, and street-level staff can build this unique condition (Lipsky, 1980) because in the process of interaction they can transfer value, commitment to people's needs and trust (Cramer & Bjørnskov, 2017; Lipsky, 1980).

The previous studies related to service communication mostly focused on organizational communication in conducting services, as well as the strategy and influence of communication to the effectiveness of service organizations. The limitations of studies on the important role of street-level staff communication in building service quality perceptions are still under-examined. As a study conducted by Andi Wahyudi, 2010, examines the urgency of communication in supporting the effectiveness of public service delivery; Liando and Tulung, 2013, examined the effectiveness of government communication of public services in Manado city; and Kusumadinata and Fitriah, 2017, examined the problem of public service communication strategies through the family empowerment

program post. Furthermore the studies about street-level staff, mostly talk about the involvement of street-level staff in policies (Cramer & Bjørnskov, 2017; Gofen, 2013), street-level staff behavior (Destler, 2016), and motivation (Liu & L, 2016; Tape & Christine, 2018), from the results of these studies it can be concluded that the performance of street-level staff plays an important role in the occurrence of policy changes in the organization.

This study will explore the important role of effective communication that has been built among street-level staff and service users in forming the perception of service users about the quality of service they are received. Communication is effective when it has met the output indicator of understanding the message by the recipient; the interest in communication; influence other's attitudes; improving the relationship; provide the results based on the recipient of the message needed.

This paper aims to present the importance of effective communication in the interaction of street-level staff with service users then present effective communication patterns built by street-level staff in interacting with service users and present the perceptions that are built up as a result of the interaction between street-level staff with users of the service.

The interaction among street-level staff with service users is very important for the possibility to form the image of the organization it carries, thus public service organizations need to focus more on creating warm communication patterns (Hadjam, 2001) in the interaction of street-level staff and service users. Based on the background description of the problem, the research question of this study is how is the effective communication model of street-level staff are built-in Pariaman Government Public Hospital?

Method

This research uses a mixed-method research approach. The choice of the mixed-method research approach refers to communication problems that require in-depth data tracking through in-depth interviews and at the same time filling in questionnaires by respondents when collecting data. Data collection techniques through questionnaires were distributed to 4 departments, 383 questionnaires to the outpatient department, 370 questionnaires to the inpatient department, 383 questionnaires to the supporting department and IGD (emergency department) for 21 questionnaires. At the same time, the interviews were conducted with respondents in those four departments.

Interviews are needed to find out and describe how the process of communication between street-level staff with service users in Pariaman Public Hospital, while data collection techniques through questionnaires are carried out to determine the extent of service user satisfaction toward the communication process carried out by street-level staff.

Interviews were also conducted with the management of Pariaman Regional Public Hospital in the quality service department and administration section. The data were also collected through collecting several secondary data in the form of Pariaman Regional Public Hospital profile and other activities data needed in this study. Data triangulation was also carried out by conducting interviews with service officers randomly in those 4 departments, including customer service and cleaning service.

Analysis of the data is done through an interactive analysis process, by carrying out several stages starting from the process of data reduction, presentation and verification of data and drawing conclusions on the data obtained.

Results and Discussion

Hospital is a health organization with all the facilities owned is expected to be able to help patients and their families improve their health and achieve optimal healing both physically, psychologically and socially (Hadjam, 2001). Street-level staff (Lipsky, 1980) at the Hospital are interpreted as service providers who interact directly with service users at the Hospital. Staffs at

the street-level are the executors of organizational policies with inherent discretionary capabilities (Gofen, 2013; Lipsky, 1980) and can make an important decisions (Hupe and Hill, 2007; Gofen, 2013) when there is a vacuum in the rules, so street-level staffs are seen as determining how the policy is accepted by service users.

Communication is expected to be a bridge between street-level staff and service users, especially in hospitals with the main function of providing care, it is possible to build emotional relationships between street-level staffs and service users, reflecting the warmth of sincerity and empathy and positively unconditional acceptance (Cobert in Ellis, et al, 1995; Hadjam, 2001). As an organizational climate, communication by street-level staff is important to be a concern. This happened at the Regional Public Hospital Pariaman which is one of the four hospitals that are owned by the West Sumatra Province Government.

Table 1. Pariaman Regional Hospital Public Satisfaction Survey Value Results Elements of Service Behavior and Communication from 2015 until 2018

Year	Average value per service element	Average Amount Respondents (Org)
2015	3, 28	1.150
2016	3, 02	1.150
2017	3, 32	1.150
2018	3, 50	1.142

Source: Pariaman District Hospital public satisfaction survey report, 2015 to 2018
* interval value = 0 – 4

The data in Table 1 shows the results of a survey toward community satisfaction over the past 4 years related to public opinion about the elements of service behavior and communication at Pariaman Regional Public Hospital. The average value per service element in the last 4 years shows that the value position is very volatile in the good category. However, if it is compared with the average acquisition value of other elements in the current year, the behavioral and communication elements of the incoming service in the index grouping are relatively low, as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Ranking Group Index of Public Satisfaction Survey of Pariaman Regional Hospital Behavior and Service Communication Elements from 2015 to 2018

Year	Number Score	Index Ranking	Amount Element
2015	2575	6	18
2016	2378	9	19
2017	3585	16	22
2018	4001	23	23

Source: Report on the results of the Public Satisfaction Survey of Pariaman Hospital in 2015 until 2018

In table 2 which shows the index ranking of behavioral elements and service communication in the last 4 years, illustrates that there has not been a significant increase in the ranking of the index of behavioral elements and service communication in Pariaman District Hospital. Even in 2018, it became the lowest ranking element, namely the 23rd index ranking out of 23 elements used as instruments in the 2018 community satisfaction survey questionnaire.

This is mean the development of human resources, especially street-level staff, has not been prioritized by the management of Pariaman Regional Hospital. The management of Pariaman Regional Public Hospital is more concentrated on the development systems, facilities, and infrastructure. This is indicated by a significant increase in the number of scores for each service element. However, a significant increase did not occur in the elements of service behavior and communication. This condition needs to be addressed immediately because the behavior of street-

level staff influence is greater than a manager (Destler, 2016) in public service provider organizations.

Actually in general, when referring to the results of the community satisfaction survey (Table 3), the assumptions that are built on service users in Pariaman District Hospital is quite satisfied and even very satisfied for the last 2 years, this is indicated by the value of SKM which tends to increase significantly in 2018.

Table 3. Pariaman District Hospital Public Satisfaction Survey Value Results 2015 to 2018

Year	SKM Value	Conversion Value	Performance
2015	78,45	3,14	Good
2016	78,93	3,16	Good
2017	83,78	3,35	Very Good
2018	92,02	3,68	Very Good

Source: Report on the results of the Public Satisfaction Survey of Pariaman Hospital in 2015 until 2018

However, there still complaints from service users, especially regarding service behavior and communication. The results of interviews conducted by researchers on the Emergency Department, support, outpatient and inpatient care installations at Pariaman District Hospital in 2019 showed that service communications captured by service users in the service interaction process were not only oral but also facial expressions and body language communicators as well be considered communicant to begin the process of interaction. This condition was also conveyed by Handoko in (Hardiansyah, 2015) that communication is the process of transferring understanding in the form of ideas or information from one person to another. The transfer of understanding is not just words, but also facial expressions, intonations, breaking points not only require data transmission, but that depends on certain skills to make the exchange of information successful.

Table 4. The output of street-level staff communication with service users at Pariaman Regional Public Hospital in 2019

Indicator*	Out-Patient Department	Inpatient Department	Supporting Department	Emergency Department
Understanding of messages by recipient	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Interest in Communication	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Influence others attitude	No	No	No	No
Improve relation	No	No	No	No
Provide a desirable result for the recipient of the message	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Data processing questionnaire and interview researchers from July to September 2019

* Indicators of effective communication output from Tubbs and Moss (2006)

The results of interviews with service users (Table 4) that refer to the theory of effective communication by Tubbs and Moss (2006) show that there are still 2 output indicators out of the 5 indicators of effective communication output used, indicating the obstacles in establishing effective communication between staffs and service users at Pariaman District Hospital.

In the output indicators understanding the message, the interview data illustrates that effective communication has been developed in four departments at Pariaman District Hospital. The data illustrates that medical and non-medical staff can deliver messages to the service users properly or in other words service users understand the contents of messages or information provided by officers to them. Triangulation data also shows that in delivering messages, the staff not only convey messages verbally but also use props on several polyclinics in the outpatient and inpatient department.

In the theory of effective communication elements proposed by Tubbs and Moss (1983), input from the two communicators greatly influences the communication style that occurs between the two communicators. Therefore, the innovation of the use of visual aids in delivering the messages in order the recipient of the message easily understands the content of the message to be conveyed by the staff. Props are very helpful in increasing the understanding of message recipients because they are stimuli that can be touched by the senses. Since not all service users can understand the medical terms used when it is communicated verbally, so communicating using visual aids becomes more effective.

The output indicator of interest in communication, in table 4 shows that interest in communication is quite high from the recipient of the message. This is not only because the staffs using props in delivering the contents of the message so that it raised curiosity from service users, but more than that, the interest of service users is more due to the curiosity of service users about the content of the message to be delivered by service personnel. In this context, the filters made by the two communicators are limited to the focus of the service being carried out, so that there is a high interest in communicating between service staff and service users in the 4 departments at Pariaman District Hospital.

In the condition where the interest in communicating with the two communicators will indirectly build a transfer of knowledge between them, which will affect the attitudes of others. However, the data in table 4 shows that the communication process that is developed does not affect the attitude of both the message's recipient and the service personnel who deliver the message. The data illustrates that in the communication process, communicators only conduct communication interactions as an implementation of the function of self as a street-level staff in their work environment, because the communication process that is built ended when the message has been conveyed to service users, without further influencing attitudes and building more relationships continued between the two communicators.

Similarly in the output indicators Relationship Improvement, when the communication that is built is only because of the interest in communicating as part of meeting the needs of each communicator, there will be no improvement in the relationship between service staff and service users at Pariaman Regional Hospital. This condition is illustrated in table 4 which shows that the communication process that occurs between service staff and service users in 4 existing departments does not improve relations between the two. This condition indicates that there is still a gap between service officers and service users in Pariaman Regional Public Hospital. The gap that occurs lies in the mindset that is built between the two communicators. On the service officer side, the communication that is developed is a necessity from his work, so that in establishing communication with service users are not balanced with the desire to build longer and deeper communication. Meanwhile, from the service users' side, the communication that is built with service personnel is the impact of accessing services without the development of longer communication, which is due to the lack of awareness of service users about their rights to access public services.

So that the ongoing communication is formal, there is no phatic communication style in the form of nonverbal communication such as touch on the shoulder or the back of the interlocutor (Ramadanty, 2014) from the communicator that can create a warm communication, because this

phatic communication is very important to maintain the continuity of social relations in circumstances good and pleasant (Tubbs and Moss, 2009; Ramadanty, 2014).

However, although the communication that was built did not create an improved relationship between communicators, the communication process that occurred between service personnel and service users at 4 departments in Pariaman District Hospital showed positive results (Table 4). In this case, the established communication is considered sufficient to provide the appropriate results by the service user. Although the data show positive results, looking at the input in both communicators, it appears that the social background and education that have been received previously is very influential on their understanding of the importance of communication.

The exposure to the data based on the output of effective communication indicators used illustrated that effective communication has not been developed in the service process carried out by service personnel. The findings are supported by human resource management data by the management of Pariaman Government Hospital.

Table 5. Effective Communication Training on HR
Pariaman Regional Public Hospital from 2017 until 2019

Profession	2017 (people)	2018 (people)	2019 (people)	Number of employee
Medical Supporting staff	-	-	-	138
Nurse	3	-	72	175
Doctor	4	-	7	43
Non-Medical Supporting staff	15	-	3	157
Structural	9	-	-	13

Source: Pariaman Regional Public Hospital Staffing Document, 2017, 2018, 2019

The composition of HR is illustrated in table 5 shows that street-level staffs who have participated in capacity building through effective communication training up to 2019, it appears that the ratio of street-level staff in conducting capacity building in the communication sector is still low, compared to the number of staff in Pariaman Regional Hospital is 526 employees, with the composition consisting of 273 State Civil Apparatus (ASN), and 253 contract employees.

The insignificant number of human resources participating in effective communication training will certainly affect the course of communication during the service process in various fields. Moreover, the culture of transfer knowledge within the government bureaucracy is not yet a work culture, so the development of the individual capacity of street-level staff at Pariaman District Hospital must be supported by internal hospital policies that ensure the ongoing learning process.

The management of Pariaman Regional Public Hospital does not appear to have made effective communication development a priority to be addressed, until 2019 the management of Pariaman Regional Public Hospital still more concentrated on the development of service facilities and infrastructure. Although HR capacity building is also carried out annually through various types of training, effective communication techniques training in the last 3 years has only been conducted in 2017 and 2019 (Table 5). Effective communication training has also not been provided for most of its human resources. In table 5 can be seen that in the last 3 years only around 20% of the total human resources in Pariaman Regional Public Hospital have participated in effective

communication training. This figure is indeed still relatively low compared to the number of pieces of training in other medical fields, which are given to street level staff at Pariaman Regional Public Hospital. So that understanding at the street level staff will be important to build effective communication in the service process has not been delivered evenly. It is not surprising if there is dissatisfaction in the process of interaction with street-level staff is still a complaint of service users in this Pariaman Regional Public Hospital.

Another interesting finding based on the results of interviews conducted with respondents in the 4 Departments at Pariaman Government Hospital is the dissatisfaction of service users in communicating in the service interaction process in Pariaman Government Hospital occurs in non-medical officers, namely cleaning service at 7.9% and non-medical staffs who delivery food at inpatient department by 45%. This data is very surprising considering the improvement and construction of hospitals both physical facilities and infrastructure, and human resource development is growing rapidly. This fact indicates that training and briefing on the importance of effective communication have not touched at all levels of service personnel. This fact is reinforced by the data in table 5 which shows that only 3 people have attended effective communication training from the non-medical group. This means that the communication that has been taking place between non-medical staff in the food delivery department of patients in the inpatient department of Pariaman Hospital is built based on the input or knowledge possessed by the service officer, without any influence or additional knowledge about how to communicate well. So it is very natural that miss perception in the process of communicating between the service users with street-level staffs in the inpatient department of Pariaman Government Hospital often occurs, because communication is not innate, but is something that must be learned so that every human needs to develop their communication skills to be able to adapt to the environment (Andi, 2010).

Management of Pariaman Government Hospital, which still struggling with improving service facilities and infrastructure until 2019 must be aware of the importance of communication in the service process delivered by street-level staff. When street-level officers begin to interact with service users that is the time communication takes an important role in the relationships created (Kusumadinata et al., 2017), because the communication function in organizations as forming the organizational climate (Lipsky, 1980), therefore the communication that is built in the service process will affect the formation of service users' perceptions toward the quality of service provided by the organization.

Conclusions

The management of Pariaman Government Hospital, which still concentrated in improving its facilities and infrastructure until 2019, is now important to develop its human resources towards the establishment of effective communication, especially for street-level staff who have direct service functions to service users. Because the communication that is built by street-level staff with service users will greatly affect the perception of service users about the quality of services provided by Pariaman Government Hospital.

Innovation in transferring knowledge by building communication using tools will greatly help service users in understanding the messages conveyed by street-level staff. This condition raises the interest of service users to communicate with street-level staff, but the interest of service users in communicating is not enough to build effective communication, fatic communication is needed in this case. fatic communication which is non-verbal communication can create warmth situation in communication so that it is expected to improve the relationship between the two communicators, which was originally a formal relationship shifted towards an informal relationship which later is expected to affect the attitude of service users in acting.

Therefore, the findings of this research at Pariaman Government Hospital showed that building effective communication is not only needed at the core business level of service organizations, but it is also needed at all levels of the organization. The effective communication service is needed at

any level organization. Effective communication not only gives an external impact that is building perceptions but builds an organizational climate that will have an impact on organizational performance.

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