



# Health Services Communication Strategy in Tarutung Hospital During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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**Abstract.** This research was motivated by the rise of the corona virus in Indonesia which resulted in changes in health services in various hospitals. This of course makes communication used in health services very important for the survival of a company engaged in services. This study aims to find out how the communication strategy used by the Tarutung Regional General Hospital is and how the satisfaction of inpatients during the Covid-19 pandemic at RSUD Tarutung. The author uses a qualitative descriptive research method, namely interviews and observations using a purposive sampling technique of informant withdraw. In this study, the theory that the author uses is the theory of community communication strategy by Alo Liliwery (Implementation, support, and integration) and the theory of patient satisfaction. The results of this study show that Tarutung Hospital uses a community communication strategy, namely Tarutung Hospital has determined programs and activities, set goals, recognizes the audience and develops messages to the community, provides training to hospital staff who keep as carriers or disseminators of messages, integrates through organizational communication, and communication support through social media, billboards, banners and posters as a medium in conveying messages to patients and visitors. As for patient satisfaction, it was concluded that patients were satisfied in terms of direct evidence/physical facilities, responsiveness and care but in terms of responsiveness not all patients were satisfied.

**Keywords:** Communication Strategy · Patient Satisfaction · Covid-19

## 1 Introduction

The hospital functions to carry out basic health efforts or referral health and supporting health efforts. In carrying out its functions, hospitals are expected to always pay attention to social functions in providing health services to the community in line with the high awareness and demands of the community for quality health services. Hospitals must be able to display and provide health services that patients need, so that it will lead to a loyalty to patients and patients will come back to take advantage of the hospital's services [1].

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Patient satisfaction is a level of patient feeling that arises as a result of the performance of health services obtained after the patient compares with what is expected [2]. A dissatisfied patient in turn will result in disobedient attitudes or behavior towards all nursing procedures and medical procedures, for example refusing to put infusions, refusing to take medication, refusing to apply hot/cold compresses, and others [3].

The Covid-19 pandemic that attacked Indonesia had a considerable impact on the hospital and health service industry. A number of hospitals, both public and private hospitals, are not only tested for their financial capacity but also for the health service system provided. Not only in Indonesia, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused many hospitals in the world to experience difficulties both in terms of management and infrastructure in providing services because the number of patients increased in a short time. This bad situation has a huge impact on patient safety, especially if the hospital does not strictly enforce the Disaster Management Plan in the hospital [4].

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Tarutung Hospital was appointed as one of the referral hospitals that treat patients infected with the corona virus, while this hospital has no potential to be used as a Covid referral hospital in terms of room facilities, medical equipment, SDM (Human Resources). Health has not complied. One of the most important steps is to establish a “communication strategy”. A good communication strategy is a strategy that can determine or place a person’s position appropriately in communication with his communication opponent, so as to achieve the communication goals that have been set.

However, in this condition, Tarutung Hospital is able to provide good service to patients seen from the IKM (Community Satisfaction Index) inpatient service unit at Tarutung Hospital, namely in 2019 before the covid-19 pandemic it was 81.4740% with an NRR (Average Value) 3.38 and in 2020 after the covid-19 pandemic it was 86,1248% with an NRR (Average Value) of 3,445. From this, it can be seen that in 2019 to 2020 there was an increase of 4.6508%.

## 2 Research Methods

The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method [5]. Data was collected by observation, documentation, and interviews. Primary data is data that was directly collected by researchers from the main sources, namely paramedic doctors at Tarutung Hospital as many as 4 supporting sources and 4 inpatients. While secondary data was obtained from literature studies or scientific books and the internet related to strategies and forms of health services in Indonesia. public.

Data analysis used qualitative data analysis techniques, following the concept given by Miles and Huberman where there is a data reduction process, namely the process of collecting data and then selecting the most important things. Furthermore, there is a process of presenting data, namely the data that the author has obtained during research, the author will present in the form of an explanation in scientific writing. Then there is the process of drawing conclusions, this is making conclusions based on the findings when conducting research by comparing the theories that the authors set. However, if the initial conclusion can be supported by valid evidence, then it can be concluded to be a credible conclusion.

### 3 Results and Discussion

In increasing patient satisfaction in hospitals, it is not only the task of the leadership, but also requires cooperation from every level in the hospital to be able to work together in providing maximum service to patients in order to realize patient satisfaction as desired. The communication strategy carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic refers to the 3 stages of the communication strategy proposed by Alo Liliweri [6], namely:

#### 1. Implementation Strategy

In this case the Tarutung Hospital provides optimal service with professional service personnel in their field. During this pandemic compared to the period before the pandemic, it is definitely different, Tarutung Hospital must adjust to the new normal. The communication that Tarutung Hospital applies now is still two-way communication, but in direct communication it must be equipped with PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).

In addition, Tarutung Hospital has a program with services that are guided by the hospital's motto, namely "KASIH", where health services are carried out fairly and equitably without distinction of class, race, religion, socio-culture for each patient who is hospitalized. This of course aims to gather public trust so that they prefer treatment at Tarutung Hospital than to other hospitals.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, this program is still running and the 3M health protocol is still being implemented in every unit. The researcher also concludes that the Tarutung Regional General Hospital takes the form of a strategy to build communication by prioritizing service first rather than prioritizing health costs to patients. This form of communication strategy in building relationships with patients is considered efficient to make patients entrust their health services repeatedly to the same hospital.

#### 2. Support Strategy

In this case, the health workers of the Tarutung Regional General Hospital have previously received training and the hospital leadership continues to remind its officers to always apply friendliness and courtesy to patients in every work they do. Tarutung Regional General Hospital employees are trained to be able to convey information as simply as possible so that patients and their families can easily absorb and understand what the Tarutung Regional Hospital staff says so that patients and their families feel comfortable to seek treatment at Tarutung Hospital.

#### 3. Integration Strategy

From the results of interviews with informants, the researchers found that in addition to the human resources used in the hospital, they received training beforehand, the Tarutung Regional General Hospital also used a suggestion box, conducted a patient satisfaction survey through the IKM survey and used social media such as ig, fb, twitter to find out feedback from patients and feedback from employees to facilitate and maintain the quality of services provided by hospital staff to patients. By using this support tool, patients and employees will feel comfortable because the management of Tarutung Hospital is open to criticism and suggestions.

In this integration stage, Tarutung Hospital also builds communication first, namely by building chemistry with its employees. This aims to foster a sense of comfort for its employees so that they continue to provide quality services to each patient. In accordance with its vision and mission, the implementation of communication strategies by Tarutung Hospital cannot be separated from careful planning and aims to increase inpatient satisfaction at Tarutung Hospital.

From the application of the communication strategy at Tarutung Hospital, the researcher relates it to one of the theories that the researcher uses in the description of the communication strategy at Tarutung Hospital, namely the S-O-R theory. Where, the S-O-R theory says that the Stimulus given by the communicator to the Organism can make a positive or negative Response. S-O-R theory is also a collection of controllable tactical marketing tools that companies incorporate in delivering messages to generate responses from their target audiences. In terms of marketing communication, this theory is very influential with the communication strategy applied by Tarutung Hospital. This can be seen from the 3 (three) elements of the S-O-R theory [7], namely:

1. Stimulus (Communicator)

The form of stimulus in this research that the researchers examined was in the form of service, which is a process of delivering messages carried out by Tarutung Hospital officers to patients and their families with the aim of increasing inpatient satisfaction.

2. Organisms (Communicants)

The organisms referred to in the research that the researchers conducted were inpatients at Tarutung Hospital. It is this organism whose attitude will be changed by the stimulus given by the communicator, namely the Tarutung Hospital officer.

3. Response (Feedback)

Organism or communicant means an inpatient at Tarutung Hospital. So it is this organism that we will change its attitude to. Associated with the communication strategy carried out by the Tarutung Hospital, from the results of interviews between researchers and informants, it can be concluded that the response from the patient as communication is that the patient is satisfied with the services provided by the officers from Tarutung Hospital.

Based on the results of interviews with informants, a summary of how patients are satisfied with health services at the Tarutung Regional General Hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic by looking at three main activities, namely direct evidence (Tangible), responsiveness (Responsiveness), and caring (Empathy).

## 4 Conclusion

1. Based on the discussion of the results of the research that the author did on the communication strategy used in health services to increase inpatient satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic at Tarutung Hospital, referring to the 3 stages of the communication strategy, namely

- a. **Implementation strategy**  
At this stage the Tarutung Hospital has determined programs and activities, set goals, recognizes the audience, and develops its message to the community such as taking the form of a communication-building strategy by prioritizing service first rather than prioritizing health costs to patients and prioritizing the security and safety of patients and families as well as staff. Medicine from the dangers of the corona virus.
  - b. **Support Strategy**  
At this stage, Tarutung Hospital provides training to hospital staff who are tasked with being carriers or disseminators of messages to apply friendliness and courtesy to patients in every work they do and are trained to be able to convey information properly.
  - c. **Integration Strategy**  
At this stage the Tarutung Hospital integrates communication through the organization by building communication first, namely by building chemistry with its employees.
2. Theoretically it can be concluded that there is a relationship between service communication strategies in increasing inpatient satisfaction at Tarutung Hospital with the S-O-R (Stimulus, Organism, Response) theory, namely
    - a. **Direct Evidence/Physical Facilities**  
In terms of direct evidence/physical facilities, the satisfaction of inpatients at Tarutung Hospital through the results of interviews with researchers and informants, it can be concluded that patients are satisfied with the services provided by officers from Tarutung Hospital.
    - b. **Responsiveness**  
In terms of responsiveness to satisfaction of inpatients at Tarutung Hospital, it can be concluded that patients are satisfied with the services provided by Tarutung Hospital officers, but at this point not all patients are satisfied.
    - c. **Empathy/Caring**  
From the perspective of empathy/caring for the satisfaction of inpatients at Tarutung Hospital through the results of interviews with researchers and informants, it can be concluded that patients are satisfied with the services provided by officers from Tarutung Hospital.

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