

The Effectiveness of the Complaints Handling Service Provided by the Ciamis Regency Education Department, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Complaints handling services are a key instrument in the delivery of public services, serving as a channel for the public to voice complaints, criticisms and suggestions. The effectiveness of complaints handling services serves as an indicator of a government agency's success in providing responsive, transparent and accountable services. This study aims to analyse the effectiveness of the complaints service at the Ciamis Regency Education Office based on the dimensions of quality, quantity and time, in accordance with Sedarmayanti's theory of effectiveness. The study employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive method. Research informants were selected through purposive sampling and comprised complaint service managers and members of the public using the service. Data were collected through observation, interviews and documentation, and subsequently analysed using the Miles, Huberman and Saldaña model via data condensation, data presentation and drawing of conclusions. The research findings indicate that the effectiveness of the complaints service at the Ciamis Regency Education Office has been functioning reasonably well, though it is not yet optimal. In terms of quality, various complaint channels have made it easier for the public to submit reports, although delays in response and a lack of information regarding the progress of complaint handling were still observed. In terms of quantity, all complaints were processed in accordance with procedures; however, limitations in human resources affected the effectiveness of their resolution. Meanwhile, in terms of time, the complaint resolution process still takes a relatively long time due to the need for coordination with various parties. Therefore, there is a need to enhance human resource capacity, strengthen coordination, establish service time standards, and improve information transparency in order to achieve a more effective complaints service that is focused on public satisfaction.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Complaints Service, Public Service, Education Department, Public Administration.

INTRODUCTION

Public services are one of the government's key functions in meeting the needs of the public and achieving good governance [11], [25]. Law No. 25 of 2009 on Public Services stipulates that every public service provider is obliged to deliver services that are of high quality, transparent, accountable and focused on public satisfaction [28]. One form of public service that plays a vital role in supporting the delivery of high-quality services is the public complaints service [24]. Through this service, members of the public can voice complaints, criticisms or suggestions regarding the services they receive, thereby providing the government with feedback to improve service quality [21].

The Ciamis Regency Education Office, as the agency responsible for delivering services in the field of education, has provided various channels for submitting complaints, such as WhatsApp, email, its official website, social media, and face-to-face services [8]. The integration of these electronic and conventional systems is essential to ensure accessibility [13]. Nevertheless, the implementation of the public complaints service still faces several challenges. Based on the research findings, the public continues to complain about slow responses from staff, a lack of information regarding the progress of complaint handling, and the absence of certainty regarding the timeframe for resolving reports. Furthermore, limited human resources mean that staff managing complaints must carry out other duties, resulting in the complaint handling process not yet being carried out optimally [5]. These conditions indicate that the effectiveness of the complaints service still needs to be improved in order to meet the public's expectations for public services that are prompt, responsive and transparent [27].

Various previous studies have shown that the effectiveness of the complaints service remains a challenge in the delivery of public services. Research by Yahya and Setiyono (2022) states that the effectiveness of complaint handling services is influenced by the level of public participation and the dissemination of information regarding the complaint system [29]. Ariyanti and Mashur (2024) found that limited human resources and slow follow-up on complaints are factors hindering the effectiveness of the service [2]. Meanwhile, Maarif and Al Faraby (2025) explain that the use of electronic complaint handling services can improve the quality of public services, but still faces obstacles in terms of response speed and the resolution of reports [15]. Nevertheless, research on the effectiveness of complaint handling services in the education sector at local government level remains relatively limited, particularly that which uses the dimensions of quality, quantity and time as indicators of effectiveness [3].

In light of these circumstances, this study aims to analyse the effectiveness of the complaints service at the Ciamis Regency Education Office based on the dimensions of quality, quantity and time, in accordance with Sedarmayanti's theory of effectiveness. The research findings are expected to contribute to the development of public administration studies and serve as a basis for evaluation by the Ciamis Regency Education Office in improving the quality of its complaints service to make it more effective, responsive and oriented towards the needs of the community.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using descriptive methods to analyse the effectiveness of the complaints service at the Ciamis Regency Education Office [4]. This approach was chosen as it provides an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the complaints service based on the experiences and perspectives of the informants.

The research was conducted at the Ciamis Regency Education Office, focusing on public complaints services. Research informants were selected using purposive sampling, based on the consideration that they possessed knowledge of and were directly involved in the implementation of the complaints service. The informants comprised complaints service managers and members of the public who had previously lodged complaints with the Ciamis Regency Education Office.

Research data were obtained through observation, in-depth interviews and documentation. Observation was carried out to directly observe the process of implementing the complaints service. Interviews were used to obtain information regarding service mechanisms, obstacles encountered, and efforts to improve the effectiveness of the service. Meanwhile, documentation was used to supplement data in the form of documents, reports and regulations relating to the complaints service [19], [20].

Data analysis followed the qualitative analysis model, which encompasses data condensation, data presentation and the drawing of conclusions. Data validity was tested using source triangulation and methodological triangulation to ensure that the data obtained possessed a high level of validity and credibility.

RESULTS

The research findings indicate that, in terms of quality, the complaints service at the Ciamis Regency Education Office is supported by a range of complaint channels accessible to the public, such as WhatsApp, email, the official website, social media and face-to-face services. The availability of these various channels makes it easier for members of the public to submit complaints in accordance with their individual needs and circumstances [1]. Based on interviews with informants, the complaint submission mechanism has been functioning well and is easily accessible. However, some informants noted that staff responses to complaints still take a relatively long time. Furthermore, updates on the progress of complaint handling are not always provided regularly, meaning the public lacks certainty regarding the resolution process for the complaints they have submitted.

Furthermore, in terms of quantity, the research findings indicate that all complaints received by the Ciamis Regency Education Office are processed in accordance with applicable procedures. Each incoming report is first verified before being forwarded to the relevant division or unit for follow-up in line with the nature of the issue.

Based on information obtained from informants, the implementation of the complaints service is still affected by limited human resources [22]. Staff handling the complaints service also have responsibilities in other areas of work, so the handling of complaints must be adapted to their existing workload. Nevertheless, every complaint received is still processed in accordance with the established mechanisms.

As regards timeliness, the research findings indicate that every complaint received has received an initial response from staff. However, the time taken to resolve complaints varies depending on the nature of the issue reported and the coordination process with the relevant school or department. Based on the interview findings, some complaints can be resolved within a relatively short time, whilst those requiring on-site verification or cross-departmental coordination take longer to resolve [23]. Consequently, the time taken to resolve a complaint is influenced by the complexity of the issue and the coordination mechanisms involved in the complaint-handling process.

DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate that the effectiveness of the complaints service at the Ciamis Regency Education Office is not yet fully optimal when assessed in terms of quality, quantity and timeliness, as outlined by Sedarmayanti. Although various complaint channels are available and accessible to the public, the implementation of this service still faces several obstacles that affect its effectiveness.

In terms of quality, the research findings indicate that the public find it easy to submit complaints through the various channels provided. However, delays in staff responses and a lack of information regarding the progress of complaint handling were still observed. These findings suggest that service quality is determined not only by the availability of complaint channels but also by the organisation's ability to provide a service that is prompt, informative and in line with public expectations. This is in line with Sedarmayanti's theory of effectiveness, which states that service quality reflects the extent to which an organisation succeeds in meeting the needs and expectations of service users [6], [26]. These findings also support the research by Yahya and Setiyono (2022), which concluded that the effectiveness of complaint handling services is influenced by the quality of communication between service providers and the public [29]. Transparency regarding the follow-up to complaints is a key factor in enhancing public trust in public services.

Furthermore, in terms of quantity, the research results indicate that all complaints received were processed in accordance with applicable procedures. However, limitations in human resources meant that staff managing the complaints service had to carry out other duties beyond handling complaints, thereby affecting the effectiveness of complaint resolution. According to Sedarmayanti, quantity relates to an organisation's ability to complete work in line with set targets. Therefore, the availability of adequate human resources is a key factor in supporting the effectiveness of services [23]. These findings are consistent with the research by Ariyanti and Mashur (2024), which states that limited human resources are one of the factors hindering the effectiveness of complaint handling services in government agencies [2].

As for the aspect of timeliness, the research findings show that every complaint received an initial response from an officer, but the resolution time varied depending on the complexity of the issue and the coordination process with the school or relevant work unit. These findings indicate that the timeliness of complaint resolution remains a challenge in the delivery of public services. According to Sedarmayanti, time efficiency is measured by an organisation's ability to complete tasks within the stipulated timeframe. The faster a service is provided without compromising the quality of the outcome, the higher the organisation's level of effectiveness. These research findings are consistent with the study by Maarif and Al Faraby (2025), which states that the effectiveness of complaint handling services is influenced not only by the use of technology but also by coordination between work units and the speed of follow-up on each public report [15].

Overall, the research findings indicate that the effectiveness of the complaints service at the Ciamis Regency Education Office has been functioning reasonably well; however, improvements are still required in terms of the quality of communication, the adequacy of human resources, and the timeliness of complaint resolution. Improvements in these three areas are expected to enhance the quality of public services and strengthen public confidence in the delivery of the complaints service.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of the complaints service at the Ciamis Regency Education Office has been functioning reasonably well, though it is not yet fully optimal. In terms of quality, the complaints service is supported by various channels that make it easier for the public to submit reports; however, delays in response and a lack of information regarding the progress of complaint handling are still observed. In terms of quantity, all complaints have been processed in accordance with procedures; however, limitations in human resources mean that the effectiveness of complaint resolution has not yet been maximised. Meanwhile, in terms of timeliness, the complaint resolution process still takes a relatively long time due to the need for coordination with various parties, meaning that the public has not been given certainty regarding the timeframe for resolving their reports.

Based on these findings, the Ciamis Regency Education Department needs to improve the effectiveness of its complaints service by strengthening human resource capacity, optimising coordination between work units, establishing standard timeframes for resolving complaints, and increasing the transparency of information provided to the public. It is hoped that these efforts will result in a more effective, responsive, transparent and accountable complaints service, thereby improving the quality of public services in the field of education.

DECLARATIONS

Ethical Approval: This study involved human subjects as research informants. Prior to data collection, the author obtained research approval from the Ciamis Regency Education Office. All informants participated voluntarily and gave their consent to take part in the study. **Conflict of Interest:** The author declares that there is no conflict of interest relating to the conduct of this research or the publication of this article. **Data Availability:** The data generated and analysed in this study are available from the author and may be provided to interested parties upon reasonable request.

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