

**Communication Strategy in Raising Customer Service Quality of
Regional Water Utility Company of Sukabumi**

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Abstract

The research is a phenomenon in Regional Water Utility Company of Sukabumi that relates to customer complaint to the service of water utility, which is not optimal. The research is conducted to test empirical facts that happens in the reality and to test scientifically the communication strategy and service quality. The research was conducted two years long by using qualitative design with survey explanatory method to explain and analyze communication strategy that could raise service quality of Regional Water Utility of Sukabumi partially and simultaneously. The research aims at finding influence of communication strategy and service quality, which is able to be measured quantitatively based on indicators from each dimension by using applied statistic. Research population was customers of Regional Water Utility Company of Sukabumi. Sample use was societies who were customers of Regional Water Utility Company of Sukabumi. Sampling technique applied simple random sampling.

Keywords: Communication strategy, service quality, customer

1. Introduction

The management of clean water is very important thing and is the basic need in complying with society daily need. In 1945 constitution article 33 verse 3 explains, "Earth and water and natural resources that is contented inside is controlled by state and is used for people prosperous. Water management is very importance and is the main challenge for future development. Besides focusing to water resources, it does not mean that decreasing the need of other sector, but it needs to combine the plan particularly in sector, which relates to water such as, housing, tourism, and industry.

Regional Water Utility Company (RWUC) gives clean water service and manages water distribution for variety of need. RWUC is one of part from local autonomy that must be ruled as maximal as possible because of reminding autonomy implemented which is meant as local independent from development cost. Local government has to be more selective so that government will run effective and efficient. Besides, it is one of potential income sources that need to be maintained by Regional Owned Enterprises (ROE). ROE is expected to be able to give the best service for society. One of examples from ROE that has a function of public service for local development fund source is Regional Water Utility Company (RWUC).

RWUC tries to smoothe a service process but it still finds obstacles in service process, which is relating to definite time, cost, and manpower needed. Based on observation in service implementation by RWUC, society still feels many weaknesses that is supposed to be able to create a deviation chance such as mechanism a long service procedure, no definite time to solve high cost, no information transparency, whether definiteness, procedure mechanism, requirement and solving process, and lack of professional service given by apparatus.

It is still not optimal in service quality of RWUC of Tirta Bumi Wibawa of Sukabumi that describes function of communication in RWUC of Sukabumi is not optimal yet in serving customer in reference to quantity, quality, and continuity of water service. If service quality, which is given by RWUC of Sukabumi is not raised, therefore it will have negative image and low of public trust to RWUC of Sukabumi. Service to society is good if society as a consumer is easy to get service with simple procedure, a cheap cost, fast time, and never get complaint from society and consumer. Based on the background, by seeing the fact of drinking water customer service quality of RWUC of Sukabumi is not optimal yet because communication is not effective. Therefore the research is try to describe how much the influence of communication strategy to drinking water customer service quality of RWUC of Sukabumi.

2. Theoretical Background

Communication is one of important variables that have influence on implementation of public policy and communication determines to succeed in goal achievement from implementation of public policy. An effective implementation will do if decision makers know what they will do. The information from decision makers only can be got through good communication. The statement is supported by Edward III (1980:9-10) who states that: "... four critical factors or variables in implementing public policy: communication, resources, dispositions or attitudes, and bureaucratic structure." Public implementation will run smoothly if it is supported by factors of communication, disposition, resources, and bureaucracy structure. Communication in the theory is the first factor in determining the success of public implementation. Such policy which is meant is certainly public policy that relates to what thing is made by government, included the policy of service quality that is performed by public service organization.

The different statement is said by Zeithaml, et. al (1990:22) that "... communication is one of dimension that have influence on service quality." According to Zeithaml, et. al (1990:26) communication is ". . . Listens to its customers and acknowledges their comments. Keeps customers informed in a language which they can understand." And Spacek & Spalek (2007:3) says "...the process of communication plays a very important role in public administration. Every member of an administrative organization needs certain information for making a decision. Characteristics of information flows determine features of the communication within public administration system." Concerning with the expert's idea, it can be concluded that communication process plays very important role in public administration. Each organization member in administration needs certain information to make a decision. The information characteristic determines communication feature in public administration system.

The first communication theory was developed according to Effendy (2003:235) was Lasswell theory. Lasswell (1948) stated that the best way to explain communication process is to reply a question: Who says, in which channel, to whom, with what effect. The answer for Lasswell question is communicator, message, media, receiver, and effect. Such communication model is described in this figure.



Figure of Lasswell Communication Model

Source: Harold D. Laswell (Ruben, 2005)

As stated by Muhammad (2009:5-6), the question who means refer to person who take initiative to begin communication. The person who begins communication can be someone or a group of people such as organization or community. The second question is says what or what is said. This question relates to content of communication or what message is said in communication. Third question is to whom. It means asking who become an audience or receiver from a message. Fourth question is through what or through what media. Media means is communication device such as speaking, gesture, eye contact, touch, radio, television, letter, book, picture, etc. It need to be paid attention in this case is not all media will be suitable for certain purpose. Last question is what effect or what effect from communication. The question of communication effect enables to ask things at all, what can be achieved with communication result and what people do as communication result. Do not forget to remember that someone behaviour sometime is not only caused by factor of communication result but also it is had an influence on by other factor.

As communication mentioned from variety of dimension, therefore this reseach applies communication dimensions that is stated by Lasswell. Lasswell theory is more relevant and suitable with the phenomenon and problem. It is expected to explain all kind of communication comprehensively in relation with service quality of RWUC of Sukabumi. Based on Lasswell theory, communicator in service is local government apparatuses in RWUC, especially apparatus who deal with society directly. Meanwhile message content, which is said by communicator is procedure, mechanism, and any kind of requirement in RWUC request. To whom refers to society who request to RWUC and in which channel refers to an effect as expected. It means it can be done directly or through media.

Regarding with society expectation in complying with the quality service of RWUC of Sukabumi so that quality service dimensions mean in theory based on Kotler (in Supranto, 1997:561) state five determinants of service quality are as follow:

1. Reability, skill to do service which is promised accurately and trusted.
2. Responsiveness, skill to help customer and give service quickly or responsiveness.

3. Confidence, knowledge and politeness employee and employee skill to give trust and assurance.
4. Empathy, requirement to care, gives personal attention for customer.
5. Tangibles, physic facility performance, equipment, worker, and communication device.

Based on explanation above, service quality measurement in this research refers to some policies relating to service of RWUC of Sukabumi start from step of input, process, output and outcomes service, and analyze some dimensions of service quality which is relevant to communication so that it can do service comparison that is received by society between pre and post of implementing an effective communication model.

3. Methodology

This research applies quantitative design with explanatory survey method that is to explain and analyze how big communication influence to customer quality service of RWUC of Sukabumi partially and simultaneously. Research population was RWUC of Sukabumi. Sample use was societies who were customers of Regional Water Utility Company of Sukabumi. Sampling tehniqe applied simple random sampling because of taking population is done randomly without giving concern to level of population (Sugiono, 2012:93). From the total of sample is allocated based on spreading of each area.

Sample is taken by two steps; first step, with area sampling tehniqe to decide selected subdistrict as data source location. From seven subdistricts in Sukabumi municipality which is devided in four area of water distribution as area sampling are; (a) Branch Office 1 which is located on Kapt. Moch Mahpud Street, Selabintana Batas No. 1 as many as 22 respondent, (b) Branch Office 2 which is located on Subang Jaya Street No. 3 District.

Subang Jaya Cikole as many as 24 respondents, (c) Branch Office 3 which is located on Suryakencana Street Km 1,4 District Sukasari-Cisaat as many as 31 respondent, dan (d) Branch Office 4 which is located in Perum Gading Kencana Asri Blok F2 No. 2 as many as 23 respondents.

Applied data analysis method in testing hypothesis is structural equation modeling (SEM) where this technique is used to know pattern relation between variable and to know direct and indirect influence or a set of free variable to relating variable. The reason to use SEM analysis, it is because to see the influence of free variable to relating variable. The involved variable is a variable that cannot be measured directly but it use dimension and indicator. The influence between variable, which will be tested based on frame of theory that can explain quality relation between variable.

4. Result and Discussion

Result analysis finds the big influence from communication strategy to customer satisfaction reaches 0.706 score of deviation standard. The score reaches 1 so that can conclude it has strong influence. Influence coefision is positive means as good as communication strategy done so that customer feels service quality will be raising. From five dimensions, which relates to communication strategy, communicator dimension is a dimension that has tight relation or the most important in developing communication strategy and media is the most weak dimension. It explains that communicator is the important aspect in making an effective and efficient communication in achieving raising service quality. Media is the importance thing but it does not become a main priority. Based on loading coefision for service quality variable can be found that response is a dimension that has tight relation with customer service quality. It is because customer complaint is a problem that is often dealt with RWUC of Sukabumi. Therefore it reflects

there is a quick response to customer complaint so that it is going to be higher in customer value to service of RWUC.

To prove is there any significant influence from communication strategy in raising customer service quality of RWUC of Sukabumi so that it will test hypothesis as a result.

Hypothesis:

H₀: $\gamma_{21}=0$ There is no influence of communication strategy in raising customer service quality of RWUC of Sukabumi.

H₁: $\gamma_{21}\neq 0$ There is influence of communication strategy in raising customer service quality of RWUC of Sukabumi.

To test hypothesis is applied statistic t test student as a result such as in tabel of hypothesis test as follows:

| Latent variable | Value | Standard error | t | Pr > t | f ² |
|-----------------|-------|----------------|-------|---------|----------------|
| Communication | | | | | |
| Strategy | 0.706 | 0.072 | 9.865 | 0.000 | 0.993 |

The result of statistic t test student is obtained t score count very big as much as 9.865. The score is bigger compares with t tabel score 1.984. The result shows that there is significant influence of communication strategy in raising customer service quality of RWUC of Sukabumi. f² score shows effect size score. Score 0.993 is bigger than cut-off to have on very high influence. Concerning with the concluded result that there is a positive influence and significant variable from communication strategy in raising customer service quality of RWUC of Sukabumi. It shows in correlation analysis table as follow.

| | Communi cation Strategy | Commun icator | Message | Media | Commu nicant | Effect | Service Quality | Tangib les | Reliabil ity | Respons iveness | Guara ntee | Emph aty |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Communicat ion Strategy | 1.000 | 0.852 | 0.756 | 0.623 | 0.701 | 0.647 | 0.706 | 0.620 | 0.446 | 0.647 | 0.624 | 0.501 |
| Communicat or | 0.852 | 1.000 | 0.621 | 0.322 | 0.567 | 0.433 | 0.700 | 0.671 | 0.368 | 0.620 | 0.572 | 0.564 |
| Message | 0.756 | 0.621 | 1.000 | 0.272 | 0.444 | 0.335 | 0.526 | 0.446 | 0.360 | 0.551 | 0.343 | 0.385 |
| Media | 0.623 | 0.322 | 0.272 | 1.000 | 0.244 | 0.327 | 0.382 | 0.262 | 0.265 | 0.355 | 0.452 | 0.237 |
| Communica nt | 0.701 | 0.567 | 0.444 | 0.244 | 1.000 | 0.409 | 0.445 | 0.352 | 0.277 | 0.454 | 0.436 | 0.274 |
| Effect | 0.647 | 0.433 | 0.335 | 0.327 | 0.409 | 1.000 | 0.417 | 0.439 | 0.323 | 0.281 | 0.408 | 0.250 |
| Service Quality | 0.706 | 0.700 | 0.526 | 0.382 | 0.445 | 0.417 | 1.000 | 0.780 | 0.805 | 0.885 | 0.768 | 0.802 |
| Tangibles | 0.620 | 0.671 | 0.446 | 0.262 | 0.352 | 0.439 | 0.780 | 1.000 | 0.575 | 0.578 | 0.489 | 0.458 |
| Reliability | 0.446 | 0.368 | 0.360 | 0.265 | 0.277 | 0.323 | 0.805 | 0.575 | 1.000 | 0.655 | 0.514 | 0.550 |
| Responsiven ess | 0.647 | 0.620 | 0.551 | 0.355 | 0.454 | 0.281 | 0.885 | 0.578 | 0.655 | 1.000 | 0.639 | 0.661 |
| Guarantee | 0.624 | 0.572 | 0.343 | 0.452 | 0.436 | 0.408 | 0.768 | 0.489 | 0.514 | 0.639 | 1.000 | 0.560 |
| Emphaty | 0.501 | 0.564 | 0.385 | 0.237 | 0.274 | 0.250 | 0.802 | 0.458 | 0.550 | 0.661 | 0.560 | 1.000 |

Correlation analysis result shows there is a positive correlation from each dimension to show that every dimensions in communication strategy and service quality variable support each other.

5. Conclusion

Analysis result finds that there is a significant influence from communication strategy variable in raising customer service quality of RWUC of Sukabumi. It shows that communication strategy has the importance role in raising customer service quality of RWUC of Sukabumi. The influence, which is given by communication strategy is most

determined by communicator dimension. Customer thinks that technical skill, which is owned by RWUC of Sukabumi is the most expectation by customer. Service quality of RWUC of Sukabumi is most seen from employee skill in giving response to apparatus accuracy in processing request document of quality service.

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