

PUBLIC COMPLAINT HANDLING SYSTEM IN SERVICE DELIVERY POLICY AT THE DEPARTMENT OF POPULATION AND CIVIL REGISTRATION

Sasmita Panigoro¹⁾, William Indra S. Mooduto²⁾, Ayu Anastasya Rachman³⁾

^{1,2,3)}Universitas Bina Mandiri Gorontalo

E-mail: sasmitapanigoro06@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the public complaint handling system within the service delivery policy of the Boalemo Regency Department of Population and Civil Registration, with particular attention to complaint mechanisms, institutional responses, and their contribution to responsive public services. The study employed a qualitative descriptive design. Data were obtained from four purposively selected informants consisting of two institutional officials and two community members. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and documentation, and were analyzed through data organization, reduction, categorization, interpretation, and conclusion development, supported by source triangulation. The findings show that the institution has established service standards for population and civil registration services, including specified processing times for document services and document corrections. However, the implementation of these standards is not always consistent, particularly due to employee time discipline. The institution has also provided complaint-handling mechanisms, including a complaint room, suggestion box, supporting facilities, and direct explanations to citizens regarding service-related problems. Nevertheless, these mechanisms have not been fully aligned with community needs because complaint handling remains closely connected to the consistency of service implementation and the effectiveness of follow-up actions. The study concludes that strengthening complaint handling requires an integrated approach linking service standards, employee discipline, complaint responses, and continuous service improvement to promote more responsive and citizen-oriented public services.

Keywords : Public Complaints, Complaint Handling, Public Service, Administrative Responsiveness, Civil Registration

INTRODUCTION

Public service delivery is increasingly evaluated not only by the availability of government services but also by the extent to which public institutions are responsive to citizens' needs, concerns, and experiences. In this context, public complaints represent an important channel through which citizens communicate dissatisfaction, identify service problems, and provide feedback regarding government performance. Complaints can therefore function as more than expressions of dissatisfaction; they can serve as mechanisms for improving administrative responsiveness, accountability, and the quality of public services. Brewer [1], emphasizes that complaints in the public sector should be

understood within the relationship between citizens and government rather than merely as conventional customer-service interactions. Similarly, civil complaints have been identified as a form of democratic feedback through which citizens can communicate problems and expectations to public institutions [2].

Effective complaint handling is consequently an important component of public service management. A well-functioning complaint management system enables government organizations to identify recurring service problems, respond to citizens' concerns, and use complaint information as an input for institutional improvement. Recent research indicates that

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effective public complaint management can contribute to service quality, citizen satisfaction, and public trust [3][4]. From this perspective, the quality of complaint handling is closely connected to the broader capacity of public institutions to respond to citizens in a timely, transparent, and appropriate manner. Complaints can also influence the behavior and motivation of public employees. Pratama et al. [5], for example, demonstrate the relevance of citizen feedback to public service motivation, suggesting that feedback from citizens can become an important mechanism for influencing public servants' orientation toward service delivery.

The importance of citizen feedback becomes particularly significant in services characterized by direct and frequent interaction between government institutions and citizens. Population and civil registration services constitute one such area because they involve essential administrative documents and services required by citizens in various aspects of social and economic life. Nevertheless, the provision of population and civil registration services continues to encounter challenges related to administrative procedures, service responsiveness, information, and citizens' experiences. Kania et al. [6], for instance, identify confusion surrounding electronic identity card services and demonstrate how uncertainty regarding public obligations and government service provision can become a source of difficulty for citizens. These challenges indicate that improving the substantive provision of administrative services should be accompanied by mechanisms that allow

citizens to communicate problems and obtain appropriate responses.

Within population and civil registration administration, complaint handling is therefore particularly relevant because complaints can provide direct information about weaknesses in service processes. Research conducted in the Surabaya City Office for Population Administration and Civil Registration demonstrates the potential of complaint data to support complaint management through text mining and the systematic analysis of information contained in public complaints [7]. Such an approach illustrates that complaints can constitute a valuable source of administrative information rather than simply a collection of individual grievances. At the policy level, civil registration has also been examined as an important dimension of public service policy, highlighting the need for effective implementation and public-oriented administration [8]. Furthermore, the implementation of population and civil registration services is closely related to principles of state administrative law, including the proper organization and delivery of government services to citizens [9].

The development of digital government provides additional opportunities for strengthening complaint handling systems. Digital complaint platforms can facilitate the submission, recording, classification, monitoring, and resolution of citizens' complaints while potentially improving accessibility and transparency. Research on e-grievance management demonstrates the relevance of web-based systems for assessing

and improving complaint services, including through service-quality dimensions such as those represented by SERVQUAL [10]. Similarly, the development of public complaint management systems has increasingly incorporated digital technologies to facilitate interactions between citizens and government institutions [11]. Earlier research on e-government complaint management also demonstrates the importance of systematically processing and ranking information contained in complaints to support government decision-making [12]. More recent technological developments, including voice-enabled complaint management systems, further illustrate the continuing expansion of digital mechanisms for making complaint submission more accessible and efficient [13].

Despite these developments, the existence of complaint channels does not automatically guarantee effective complaint handling. A complaint system must be supported by clear procedures, institutional responsibility, responsiveness, information management, and mechanisms for following up and resolving reported problems. This issue is particularly important in population and civil registration services, where ineffective responses may reinforce citizens' perceptions of bureaucratic complexity and inadequate service. Research on population services has consequently emphasized the importance of citizen involvement and citizen power in transforming public service delivery [14]. Thus, complaint handling should be viewed not merely as an administrative procedure for receiving grievances but as part of a broader service-delivery policy through which

government institutions listen to citizens, identify service deficiencies, and translate citizen feedback into improvements.

Although previous studies have examined public complaint management, citizen feedback, digital complaint systems, and population and civil registration services, these strands of research have largely addressed different dimensions of the issue. Existing studies have discussed complaint management and public trust [3], citizen feedback and public service motivation [5], digital complaint management [11][10], and population and civil registration services [9][8][14]. However, there remains a need to examine how a public complaint handling system operates specifically within the service-delivery policy of a population and civil registration institution, particularly in terms of how complaints are received, processed, responded to, and used as an instrument for improving public services. Addressing this issue is important for understanding whether complaint mechanisms function only as channels for receiving public grievances or have developed into instruments of administrative responsiveness and service improvement.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the public complaint handling system within the service-delivery policy of the Department of Population and Civil Registration. The study focuses on understanding the mechanisms through which public complaints are managed and the extent to which complaint handling supports responsive, accountable, and citizen-oriented service delivery. By examining complaint handling

within the institutional context of population and civil registration services, this study is expected to contribute to the literature on public service management and provide practical insights for strengthening complaint-based mechanisms for improving government service delivery.

Literature Review

Public Complaint Management and Citizen Feedback

Public complaint management represents an important mechanism through which government institutions receive information about citizens' experiences, dissatisfaction, and expectations regarding public services. In the public sector, complaints should not be treated merely as expressions of dissatisfaction but as a source of information for identifying service deficiencies and improving institutional performance. Brewer [1], highlights the distinctive nature of complaints in the public sector because the relationship between citizens and government involves broader accountability than conventional customer-provider relationships. This perspective is supported by Ali et al. [3], who emphasize that effective complaint management can contribute to public trust and institutional performance, while Al-Qudsy et al. [4], associate public complaint management with customer satisfaction. Citizen feedback also provides an important mechanism for evaluating government performance because citizens' experiences with administrative processes can shape their perceptions of government and trust in public institutions [15]. Similarly, feedback mechanisms can

provide governments with information needed to improve the delivery of urban and public services [16]. Thus, complaint management can be understood as an institutional feedback mechanism that connects citizens' experiences with continuous improvement in public service delivery.

Administrative Responsiveness and Public Service Delivery

Administrative responsiveness refers to the capacity of public institutions and administrators to recognize, interpret, and respond appropriately to citizens' demands. In public administration, responsiveness is particularly important because government institutions must address diverse and sometimes complex citizen expectations while maintaining administrative procedures and institutional responsibilities. Liao [17], argues that public responsiveness requires a pragmatic approach that enables administrators to address citizen demands within the complexity of public administration. From this perspective, complaint handling constitutes an important operational mechanism for translating citizens' demands into administrative responses. The effectiveness of a complaint system therefore depends not only on the availability of channels for submitting complaints but also on how institutions process, prioritize, and respond to the information received. Brewer [1], further demonstrates that public-sector complaint handling should be understood within the broader relationship between citizens and government, reinforcing the importance of accountability and responsiveness.

Consequently, an effective complaint handling system should facilitate communication between citizens and public administrators while providing an institutional basis for identifying problems, responding to individual cases, and improving service delivery.

Service Quality, E-Government, and Digital Complaint Systems

The expansion of e-government has transformed the ways in which citizens interact with public institutions and evaluate government services. Service quality has become a central dimension of e-government because citizens assess digital services according to their efficiency, accessibility, usability, reliability, and ability to fulfill their needs. Tetteh et al. [18], demonstrate the relevance of online service quality in evaluating digital services provided by state organizations, while Idoughi and Abdelhakim [19], identify service-related factors as important antecedents of citizen satisfaction with e-government services. Previous studies also indicate that service quality is associated with the acceptance and adoption of e-government services [20][21][22]. Within complaint management specifically, digital systems can provide more structured mechanisms for submitting, recording, and processing complaints. Yeh and Chu [23], emphasize the importance of evaluating e-complaint services from a citizen-centric perspective, while Suhardi et al. [24], connect public complaint service engineering with good governance principles. More recent technological developments, such as voice-enabled complaint management systems,

further demonstrate the potential of digital technologies to improve accessibility and interaction in complaint services [13]. Therefore, the integration of e-government principles into complaint handling can strengthen accessibility, efficiency, transparency, and citizen-oriented service delivery.

Population and Civil Registration Services and Research Gap

Population and civil registration services represent an important context for examining public complaint handling because these services involve direct interactions between citizens and government institutions and frequently require citizens to navigate administrative procedures. The broader literature demonstrates that complaint management, administrative responsiveness, service quality, and digital government are interconnected dimensions of effective public service delivery [1][17][23]. However, the existing literature provided in this review tends to examine these dimensions separately, with considerable attention given to general public complaint management, e-government service quality, and digital complaint systems. Studies such as Suhardi et al. [24], and Abirami et al. [13], primarily emphasize the technological and systemic dimensions of complaint management, whereas studies on e-government largely focus on service quality, satisfaction, and adoption [19][18][22]. Meanwhile, the relationship between complaint handling and administrative responsiveness has received attention from a broader public administration perspective [17]. This indicates a research gap concerning

how complaint handling operates as an integral component of service-delivery policy within population and civil registration institutions. Accordingly, examining the processes through which complaints are received, managed, responded to, and potentially utilized for service improvement can provide a more context-specific understanding of citizen-oriented public administration.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the public complaint handling system within the service delivery policy of the Boalemo Regency Department of Population and Civil Registration. A qualitative approach was selected because the study sought to understand processes, experiences, perceptions, and institutional practices as they occurred in their natural setting [25]. Rather than measuring relationships between variables statistically, the study focused on obtaining an in-depth understanding of how public complaints are received, processed, followed up, and responded to by the service institution. The descriptive design was used to provide a systematic account of the existing complaint-handling practices and the experiences of both service providers and citizens without introducing experimental intervention.

Research Site and Data Sources

The research was conducted at the Boalemo Regency Department of Population and Civil Registration, with data obtained

from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected directly from individuals who were considered knowledgeable about service delivery and complaint handling, including the Head of Civil Registration Services, the Head of Information Management and Population Administration, and members of the community who had experience with population and civil registration services. The selection of these informants was purposive because they represented different perspectives relevant to the research problem, including institutional management, information administration, service implementation, and citizens as service users. Secondary data consisted of relevant institutional documents, administrative records, reports, and other documentation related to public services and complaint handling.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to examine the actual implementation of population and civil registration services, including service activities, facilities, infrastructure, interactions between service personnel and citizens, and mechanisms associated with complaint handling. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with four informants: Dwi M. R. Hadiriyanto, S.Sos., Head of Civil Registration Services; Ilyas Abdullah, S.Sos., Head of Information Management and Population Administration; Yanto Ibrahim, a community member; and Siska Manto, a community member. The

interviews explored participants' experiences and perceptions concerning complaint submission, information provision, institutional responses, follow-up procedures, and the resolution of public complaints. Documentation was used to complement observational and interview data through the examination of relevant reports, administrative records, written materials, photographs, and other institutional documents.

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

The collected data were analyzed through an iterative process involving data organization, reduction, categorization, interpretation, and conclusion development. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary materials were examined to identify recurring themes related to complaint submission, complaint processing, administrative responsiveness, information provision, follow-up actions, and service improvement. Data from different sources were compared to identify consistencies and discrepancies and to strengthen the credibility of the findings. The interpretation was conducted continuously throughout the research process, allowing emerging findings to be compared with subsequent observations and interview information. The final analysis was used to construct a comprehensive description of the public complaint handling system and its implementation within the service delivery policy of the Boalemo Regency Department of Population and Civil Registration.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The findings of this study indicate that the Boalemo Regency Department of Population and Civil Registration has established service procedures intended to provide clear standards for the processing of population and civil registration documents. The service procedures specify the expected completion time for different types of administrative services. Document processing is expected to be completed within approximately 15 minutes, while the correction of erroneous documents is expected to take approximately 3 minutes. These service standards provide a formal reference for employees in delivering services to the community and are intended to ensure that administrative processes are conducted efficiently and within a predictable timeframe. The existence of these standards demonstrates that the institution has established measurable expectations concerning the duration of service delivery. However, the findings also reveal that the existence of formal standards does not automatically guarantee their consistent implementation in daily service activities.

The observation and interviews revealed that employee time discipline remains an important issue affecting the implementation of established service standards. Although the institution has specified processing times, service delivery in practice does not always occur within the expected timeframe. The discrepancy is associated with the consistency of employee attendance and time discipline in carrying out service responsibilities. This condition affects the continuity of the service process because

citizens may have to wait longer than the time indicated in the service standards. The findings therefore show a distinction between the formal service procedure and its practical implementation. The problem is not primarily related to the absence of service standards, but rather to the extent to which these standards are consistently implemented by employees during the provision of services.

The findings further show that the institution has attempted to respond to complaints and concerns expressed by members of the community. One form of response involves providing direct explanations to citizens when problems occur during the service process. In particular, explanations are provided when delays or service-related problems are associated with employee time discipline or other work responsibilities that cannot be postponed. This approach allows employees to communicate the reasons behind particular service conditions directly to service users. The institution has also provided several formal and physical mechanisms for receiving complaints, including a complaint room and a suggestion box. In addition, supporting facilities have been provided to strengthen the process of receiving and responding to complaints. The availability of these mechanisms indicates that complaint handling has been recognized as part of the institution's public service process rather than being treated solely as an informal interaction between employees and citizens.

Despite the availability of these mechanisms, the findings indicate that the existing complaint handling system has not yet

been fully aligned with the needs of the community. The presence of a complaint room, suggestion box, and other supporting facilities provides opportunities for citizens to communicate dissatisfaction or difficulties encountered during service delivery. However, the effectiveness of complaint handling depends not only on the availability of channels for submitting complaints but also on how complaints are responded to and followed up. The findings suggest that some of the concerns experienced by citizens are closely connected to the implementation of service standards, particularly employee time discipline and consistency in providing services. Consequently, complaint handling cannot be separated from the broader process of service management. When the underlying service problem remains unresolved, the availability of complaint facilities alone may not be sufficient to improve citizens' experiences.

Overall, the results demonstrate that the public complaint handling system at the Boalemo Regency Department of Population and Civil Registration is already supported by formal service standards and several mechanisms for receiving community complaints. Nevertheless, a gap remains between the standards established by the institution and their implementation in actual service delivery. The findings also demonstrate that complaint handling remains closely related to employee discipline, service consistency, and the institution's ability to respond to citizens' concerns. Therefore, the main issue identified in the study is not simply the absence of a complaint mechanism, but the

need to ensure that complaints are effectively connected to improvements in service implementation. Strengthening the alignment between service standards, employee discipline, complaint responses, and community needs is consequently important for improving the quality and responsiveness of population and civil registration services.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that the public complaint handling system at the Boalemo Regency Department of Population and Civil Registration is closely connected to the implementation of service standards and employee discipline. Although the institution has established specific service standards, including a processing time of approximately 15 minutes for document services and 3 minutes for document corrections, their implementation is not always consistent with the established procedures. This finding indicates that the effectiveness of public service policy cannot be assessed solely from the existence of formal standards but also from the consistency with which these standards are implemented in daily interactions with citizens. This finding is consistent with the broader perspective of public-sector complaint management, in which complaints reflect citizens' experiences with the actual performance of government institutions rather than merely their formal procedures [1]. Brewer [1] emphasizes that public complaints are embedded in the relationship between citizens and government and therefore involve dimensions of accountability and responsiveness beyond conventional

customer-service relationships. Similarly, citizen feedback can provide governments with information concerning weaknesses in service delivery and opportunities for improvement [16]. In the context of this study, complaints related to service delays and employee time discipline can therefore be interpreted as signals of a gap between institutional service standards and their practical implementation.

The finding concerning employee time discipline also highlights the importance of administrative responsiveness in complaint handling. The existence of a complaint mechanism is meaningful only when the institution is capable of responding to the underlying problems identified by citizens. Liao [17] explains that public responsiveness requires administrators to recognize and respond appropriately to citizen demands within the complexity of public administration. From this perspective, the service delays identified in this study should not be understood merely as operational problems but as issues that can influence citizens' perceptions of institutional responsiveness. The direct explanations provided by employees to citizens represent an initial form of administrative response because they provide information concerning the circumstances underlying service delays. However, explanation alone may not constitute a complete response when the same problem continues to occur. This finding reinforces the argument that complaint management should move beyond receiving complaints toward identifying their causes and translating complaint information into

administrative improvements. Ali et al. [3] similarly emphasize that effective complaint management can support institutional performance and public trust, while Pratama et al. [5] demonstrate the relevance of citizen feedback to public service motivation. Thus, complaints concerning employee discipline can potentially function as organizational feedback that encourages institutions to strengthen service accountability and employee performance.

The study also found that the institution has established several channels for receiving public complaints, including a complaint room and suggestion box, and has provided additional supporting facilities. These mechanisms indicate that complaint handling has already been incorporated into the institutional service process. However, the findings show that the availability of complaint channels does not necessarily mean that the complaint system is fully effective or aligned with community needs. This finding corresponds with Yeh and Chu [23], who emphasize the importance of evaluating e-complaint services from a citizen-centric perspective. A complaint mechanism should therefore be assessed not only according to whether citizens have access to a channel for submitting complaints but also according to whether the institution can process, respond to, and follow up on those complaints. Suhardi et al. [24] similarly associate public complaint service engineering with good governance principles, suggesting that complaint mechanisms should contribute to more responsive and accountable government services. In addition, Al-Qudsy et al. [4]

demonstrate the relationship between complaint management and customer satisfaction, reinforcing the importance of ensuring that complaint handling produces meaningful responses rather than merely providing a formal avenue for expressing dissatisfaction. The situation identified at the Boalemo Regency Department of Population and Civil Registration therefore suggests that strengthening complaint handling requires attention to the entire complaint cycle, from submission and communication to response and follow-up.

The findings are also relevant to the growing role of digitalization in public complaint management. Previous studies have shown that digital systems can support the organization, classification, monitoring, and evaluation of complaints. Alenezy and Akhlaq [11], for example, demonstrate the development of a public complaint management system designed to facilitate complaint processing, while Zirtiloğlu and Yolum [12] emphasize the importance of systematically ranking semantic information contained in government complaints. More recent research has also explored web-based e-grievance systems through service-quality dimensions [10] and voice-enabled complaint management systems that seek to improve accessibility and interaction [13]. These developments indicate that technology can strengthen the administrative capacity to manage complaints. However, the findings of this study suggest that technological infrastructure alone would not necessarily resolve the underlying problems if institutional responsiveness and employee

discipline remain inconsistent. Digitalization should therefore be considered a supporting instrument rather than a substitute for organizational responsibility. The effectiveness of a digital complaint system would still depend on whether complaints are properly received, assigned to responsible personnel, followed up, and connected to concrete improvements in service delivery.

The findings are particularly important in the context of population and civil registration services because these services directly affect citizens' administrative needs and require regular interaction between the public and government institutions. Previous studies have identified challenges associated with population and civil registration services, including confusion concerning electronic identity card services and the relationship between public obligations and government service provision [6]. Research on population and civil registration services has also emphasized the importance of appropriate administrative implementation and citizen-oriented service delivery [8][9]. Mayasiana et al. [14] further highlight citizen power as an important element in the transformation of population services. In this context, complaints should not be regarded simply as negative evaluations of government performance. They can represent a form of citizen participation through which service users communicate weaknesses in administrative processes and demand better services. The findings of the present study reinforce this perspective by showing that complaints are closely related to practical issues experienced during service delivery,

particularly the consistency of service implementation and employee discipline.

Taken together, the findings indicate that the central challenge faced by the Boalemo Regency Department of Population and Civil Registration is not the absence of complaint-handling mechanisms but the need to strengthen the connection between complaint handling and service improvement. The results extend the existing discussion of complaint management by demonstrating that formal complaint channels, service standards, and direct communication with citizens must operate as an integrated system. This interpretation is consistent with research emphasizing that citizen feedback can provide valuable information for improving public services [16], while effective complaint management can contribute to public trust and institutional performance [3]. At the same time, the findings demonstrate that responsiveness requires institutional action beyond acknowledging complaints [17]. Therefore, the complaint handling system should be positioned as a continuous feedback mechanism in which complaints are documented, examined, responded to, and used to identify recurring weaknesses in service delivery. In practical terms, strengthening employee discipline, ensuring consistent implementation of service standards, improving complaint follow-up, and aligning complaint mechanisms with citizens' needs are important steps toward creating a more responsive and citizen-oriented population and civil registration service.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the public complaint handling system at the Boalemo Regency Department of Population and Civil Registration has been supported by formal service standards and several mechanisms for receiving and responding to community complaints, including a complaint room, suggestion box, supporting facilities, and direct communication with service users. However, the implementation of service standards remains inconsistent, particularly in relation to employee time discipline, resulting in a gap between formal procedures and actual service delivery. The findings further indicate that the effectiveness of complaint handling depends not only on the availability of complaint channels but also on the institution's ability to provide appropriate responses and follow up on the problems reported by citizens. Therefore, complaint handling should be positioned as an integral component of service delivery policy and as a continuous feedback mechanism for identifying and addressing weaknesses in public services. Strengthening employee discipline, ensuring consistent implementation of service standards, improving complaint follow-up, and aligning complaint mechanisms with community needs are essential for developing more responsive, accountable, and citizen-oriented population and civil registration services.

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