Building Complaint Handling Mechanisms For Effective Leadership

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Abstract. This paper discusses complaint handling mechanisms local leaders use for effective leadership. In a democratic government, public policy formulation is supposed to represent the interests of the citizens through a democratic political process. However, the involvement of the citizens is also needed during the public service delivery. A number of local leaders have built various complaint handling mechanisms tailored to channeling the voices of their citizenry. For example, the Mayor of Yogyakarta City established Walikota Menyapa (Mayor’s Greeting) as medium of outreach and communication with people under his jurisdiction. The question is: Do such mechanisms contribute to effective leadership? In this regard, how do citizens use the mechanisms in expressing their aspirations and concerns and how does the Mayor respond to the complaints he receives from his citizens?. The research used documentary analysis method. Walikota Menyapa (WM) program reports were analyzed by quantifying the data. Qualitative analysis was also used to decipher the content of the complaints citizens made. The data shows that public complaints to the local government varied. However, the complaints handling mechanisms became an efficient instrument which the mayor used in monitoring the performance of his subordinates.

Keywords: complaint handling mechanism, effective leadership, policy and public service

INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses the effectiveness of complaint handling mechanism in Yogyakarta city. The mayor of Yogyakarta city made breakthrough when he enunciated the program “Walikota Menyapa” (which can be literary translated as Mayor’s Greeting, and is abbreviated as WM) as a public medium for conveying complaints about the state of public service delivery provided by Yogyakarta city administration. WM is a radio broadcast which contains dialog between the mayor and his deputy or another official who assumes his position, with members of the general public. The expectation is that, WM as a public communication and complaints handling mechanism can become a medium of effective bureaucratic leadership.

In Kebumen, a similar radio broadcasting program is in place, and goes by the name “Selamat Pagi Bupati or Good morning district regent”. The general public used the medium as an opportunity to convey complaints about the delivery of public service and performance of the bureaucracy. To that end, the medium has become an effective channel for the public to draw the attention of Kebumen district head by conveying a multitude of problems faced. Such problems range from trash or waste disposal to civil servants suffering from mental health problems (http://www.suaraterdeka.com/harian/0303/24/dar27.htm). By virtue of the “Good morning district head” program, which has since changed its name to “Selamat Pagi Kebumen or Good morning Kebumen”, district residents engage in dialogue with the district head in a process that gives them the opportunity to express their complaints with the district head, Dr. Rustrimingsih, M.Si, in exchanges that are sometimes characterized by highly charged tones.

In the existing literature on public administration, complaints handling mechanism is an important instrument for public service delivery improvement. Focusing
on users is the most important part of public service delivery (Alwi, 2012). Complaints, according to Ross and Littlefield (1978), is a problem solving mechanism. Complaint constitutes an input which has the ability to induce improvement in public policy as well as a dispute resolution medium (Irvine et al., 2010). It is “listening” to and “serving” the public that essentially differentiates the “New Public Service” model of public administration (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2011) from “New Public Management”, which emphasizes market competition-based efficient government (Hood, 1991; Boston et al., 1996; Ferlie et al., 1996; Hughes, 2003; Dunleavy et al., 2006). In the New Public Service context, conveying complaints is part and parcel of public participation that demands the government to “listen”, which in turn evokes improvement in public policy and public service delivery. Mishra et al. (2003) uses the terminology to encapsulate developments in public administration that is characterized by greater stakeholder involvement.

For private and state institutions, the existence of complaints handling mechanism of crucial importance in preserving the reputation of their product and service delivery as it relates to the way problems which consumers or the public face are handled. In the Indonesian context, the problem of public service delivery is a very serious issue. To this day, the quality of public service delivery which the government provides is still very disappointing. There are many complaints leveled against education, health, land service delivery for the high charges the general public have to incur to access it, red tape that characterizes the process and attitude of officials that lacks courtesy (Dwiyanto et al., 2008). Despite the fact that public service delivery is still poor, bureaucracy in Indonesia has yet to put in place an adequate complaints handling mechanism.

In the United States, the importance of public service delivery and ways on improving it through strengthening complaints handling mechanism are crystal clear. Vice President Gore’s National Performance Review team which is strengthened by President Clinton’s Executive Order in the form of “Setting Customer Service Standards” enunciated the government’s customer service revolution in 1993. The purpose of President Clinton’s Executive Order was “to develop a way for citizens to complain and get problems fixed”. Besides, in one of its recommendations, every government department was required to “issue a policy statement that says our organization embraces complaints; we view complaints as opportunities” (The Government of United States of America, www.complaintsoftware.com).

In extant international literature, the performance of complaint handling mechanism has become a topic, which has been intensively researched. Ross and Littlefield (1978) carried out research on complaint handling mechanisms for a private enterprises “Western Television and Appliance Company” in Denver United States. Burr (2008) with his research team conducted research on complaints handling mechanism for health care and social care in England. A study on health care in England, which was carried out by Allsop and Jones (2007) attempted to establish a relationship between the concept of citizenship and consumerism. Guiland (2011) who carried out research on complaint handling mechanisms showed that complaint is an important instrument for increasing the participation of users of services, increase satisfaction with service delivery, and source of feedback for managers in overcoming problems.

WM which constitutes one of the complaints handling mechanism instruments is an interesting topic to research on. The model that underpins the mechanism is rarely applied as communication medium between public officials and their citizenry in finding solutions to public service problems. The model is also a courageous breakthrough because leadership faces the citizenry directly in providing the right response. To the author’s knowledge, there is no literature that discusses complaints handling mechanism such WM. Besides, research on the way the WM works has yet to be done. To that end, this paper attempts to delve into the extent to which the implementation of WM has been effective.

More specifically, this research attempts to examine public response to WN existence, issues raised and the way they are conveyed. The above issues are important to be raised since “Complaints mechanisms need to match with the community context” (Wood, 2011: 3). In the context of WM in Yogyakarta, to what extent does cultural context in Yogyakarta influence public response to the existence of WM?

To find an answer to the above question, the structure of the paper is divided as follows. The following section will discuss theory of complaints handling mechanisms, after which the discussion of public delivery in Indonesia and the importance of complaint handling mechanism is done. Presentation of an analysis of the application of complaint handling mechanism in Yogyakarta follows after that.

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Political democracy is strongly related to democracy in public service delivery. In a conventional political system, citizens play a very limited role in public policy. Citizens are limited to exercise their rights once in every five years through a general election process when they choose their leaders. In day-to-day public policies and public services it is assumed who leaders are elected are entrusted with all the rights to execute their responsibilities. The dissatisfaction of the public as voters is very limited to exercising control of actions of their leaders.

Meanwhile, in a modern democracy, in addition to electing their leaders in a general election, citizens are fully involved in the day to day political process of control them. Citizens exercise control over policies, programs and activities which elected officials carry out. In the control process over officials, complaint handling mechanism is one of the most important mechanisms. Complaint handling mechanism is expected to ensure that policy and public service delivery work effectively; promote public control of the performance of the government; protect and promote rights of citizens over service delivery; strengthen interaction between the government and its
citizenry; enhance public satisfaction with public service delivery; and promote democratization of policy and public service delivery. According to Gruber (2011), complaint handling mechanism guarantees customer satisfaction. In fact the customer expects frontline staff, who have direct contact with service providers to provide solution to problem faced.

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Complaint is the major mechanism for handling consumer problems (Ross and Littlefield, 1978: 199). According to Boden (2001), 91% of people do not complaint. To that end, absence of complaints does not mean that all people are happy. People tend to prefer to take revenge by not buying services that are provided by a provider whose service delivery falls short of their expectations. What is even more dangerous is when consumers who are disappointed with service delivery discuss their bad experiences with seven or more people. This is in fact what the Government of the United States of America says to the effect that “Most dissatisfied customers do not complain”. To that end, “By making it easy for customers to complain, more customers will come to you with their problems, giving you greater opportunity to correct your service delivery or production processes” (The Government of United States of America, www.complaintsoftware.com).

The experience which England shows in putting in place a complaint handling mechanism in the field of health illustrates that the general public use it well. In 2006-2007, for instance, National Health Services (NHS) received not less than 133,400 written complaints, 32 per cent of which were related to primary care services. The Healthcare Commission received 7,696 complaints for independent review of NHS. The Health Service Ombudsman received 862 complaints, which neither NHS nor the Healthcare Commission could resolve. Meanwhile, in the same year, Local Authorities received 17,100 complaints about adult social care services, while Local Government Ombudsmen received 795 complaints which Local Authorities could not resolve (Burr, 2008: 6).

Based on data on complaints above, NHS estimated that the cost of resolving complaints was about 89 Poundsterling (outside Health Service Ombudsman). To handle the complaints, NHS employed 880 full time equivalent staff. There were 94% complaint, which were resolved at the local level, taking 23 working days on average per case to do so. Meanwhile, the cost of resolving social care complaints was estimated to be 13 million Poundsterling (excluding the Local Government Ombudsmen). To handle such cases, 290 whole time equivalent staff were employed. Meanwhile, 95% of complaints were solved at the local level, taking an average of 17 working days per case (Burr, 2008: 6).

According to Allsop and Mulcahy (1996), the underlying motivation for people to make complaints ranges from conveying dissatisfaction, seeking explanation, demand accountability from providers of services, and demanding apology, seeking solutions to problems to the point of obtaining compensation for poor public service delivery. Boden (2001) identifies a number of reasons that motivate people to lodge complaints: quality of product; quality of service; expectations not being met; because we can; to be difficult (just want to make other people life difficult); it’s their job (they are the professional complainers who have the communication skills of a good lawyers); to be helpful (because they have ideas to improve your systems, your product and your service); from boredom (looking for ways to get excitement).

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Forms of complaint handling mechanisms vary greatly. Some are based on the proactive model whereby complaints are sought actively with the purpose of ensuring that customer satisfaction is achieved through offering a certain compensation. On the contrary, some models are reactive in that they respond to users’ complaints of dissatisfaction by expecting users of services to convey complaints to providers. In addition, some complaint handling mechanisms are centralized as they place responsibility for the management of complaints to special staff who are charged us with the task of tackling such problems. On the contrary, some complaints handling mechanisms are decentralized in that the function is entrusted to another function such as salesperson, who also doubles as the party that directly handles complaints (Ross and Littlefield, 1978: 202).

Allsop & Jones (2008) notes that several complaint handling mechanism models: (1) Legal model (which considers it necessary for division of authority between the provider of services and an independent institution which handles complaints); (2) Bureaucratic model (government bureaucracy is responsible for managing complaints); (3) Professional model (emphasizes the management of public complaints using professional judgment by professional group); (4) Managerial model (places emphasis on the solving complaints to increase public satisfaction to ensure their loyalty); (5) Regulatory model (which puts emphasis on the need for regulation of standard and target which are designed in a centralized manner) (Allsop and Jones, 2008).

Complaint handling mechanisms will work effectively if the general public utilize it well and service providers get input to improve service delivery. To that end, complaint handling mechanism should meet several requirements: (1) easy to access structurally, culturally, and politically; (2) cheap for both the government and service users; (3) simple process; (4) clear mechanism (procedures and rules); (5) guarantees public safety (public secrecy is upheld and do not libel or harm character); (6) guarantees public pleasure (does not consider the general public as vocal or unduly talkative); (7) responsive (there is clarity of time to respond and to make progress report in complaints management); and (8) guarantees that complaints become inputs for improving public service delivery.

Putting in place an effective complaint handling mechanism, Dee (1997) calls for the need for quality personnel, who meet a number of criteria: interpersonal skills and empathy ability with parties that lodge
complaints; commitment to establish an efficient, effective and fair complaints system; communications skills; capacity to understand organizational structure and tasks; commitment to achieve organizational missions and values; ability to assess problems in an objective manner; ability to identify complaints in a systematic manner as well as suggest strategies to solve the problems; ability to overcome tension and pressure using polite ways and reduce anger of those lodging the complaints; and ability to undertake mediation and facilitation.

The success of complaints handling mechanisms can be gauged from several indicators that include: (a) Effectiveness: to what extent the usage of the mechanism contributes to program improvement; (b) Efficiency: the cost incurred in implementing the mechanism (includes non-monetary costs such as time spent by users) and how such compares with the benefits obtained by using the mechanism; (c) sustainability: the time required to use the program, whether or not adoption of the program is ad hoc or otherwise (Wood 2011). In addition, Wood (2011) underscores the importance of several principles of complaints mechanisms: (a) legitimate; (b) accessible; (c) predictable; (d) equitable; (e) rights-compatible; and (f) transparent.

Modern democratic nations pay serious attention to the development of a complaints mechanism as a source of redress of people’s rights or as medium to serve political interests. In the event complaints increase, there is a high likelihood that the accumulation of complaints has the potential to become a serious threat to social stability (Allsop & Jones, 2007).

Developments in democracy in Indonesia has extremely important implications for strengthening demands of citizens for good public service delivery (Pramusinto, 2002 and 2004). Since 1998 reformation, citizens have the right to ventilate their aspirations in a free manner, which has led to demands for changes in the role of the state and government in responding to such demands. Although improvements in public service delivery have been made, rising public awareness has meant that the increase in such demands has become inevitable.

The appalling condition of public service delivery can be gauged from various phenomena which the general public face. First, affordable and well distributed basic service delivery in such areas as education, health, and civil records has yet to reach all Indonesians. Study findings of Governance Assessment Survey (Dwiyanto, 2008) showed that the cost of access to the three basic services for the poor has risen and is increasingly beyond reach. The cost of health services which are included in health insurance programs has become increasingly burdensome for some members of the general public. Processing citizenship identity cards is a far cry from contents of public announcements issued by the government.

Secondly, public facilities provided by the government are still poor. The condition of 50 percent of the roads are in deplorable state, and have become a major obstacle for the public access to social and economic activities. Some section of the society still consider drinking water facilities a luxury. In fact many areas, the quality of water provided by regional water companies, does meet the standard requirements for human consumption. Besides, the amount of water supplied is very little, meaning that water supplied does not meet public demand.

Thirdly, the behavior of public service providers shows lack of appreciation of the importance of the general public as users of services. The attitude of pangreh praja is often more dominant with the implication that values of those with power and authority do not reflect their role as providers of services who are supposed to show politeness, good manners and professionalism. The attitude that is expected of providers of services is rarely apparent in the interaction with the general public. For instance, the way to talk to users of services and respond to questions should show politeness as a show of appreciation of the general public as service users.

Fourth, corruption which is still rampant within the Indonesian bureaucracy. Such portrait is not only confined to public officials and staff in the bureaucracy, but is also a reflection of people’s representatives in the parliament. In the bureaucracy, corruption is very prevalent in public service delivery which is directly related to the general public such as making citizenship identity cards, driver’s licenses, making land certificates, and so on (Pramusinto, 2012). Meanwhile, in the legislature, corruption is rampant in the form of project budget allocations for respective group members.

As far as the author knows, the Indonesian bureaucracy does not have a sufficient complaints handling system. Even where this is in place, it still assumes the conventional form that is an advice box. Moreover, the advice box is often not friendly to users as its location is not in easily accessible. In various observations, the advice box is often hidden, making it inaccessible. In contrast, it is very often that advice boxes are placed in front of officials charged with delivering public services. Such a location obviously deprives the secrecy of those who would wish to make complaints receiving services.

The unit responsible for customer service which has become common in the private sector is not yet available in government institutions. When people search for information on complaints, it is rarely available in clear ways. Although complaints can be posed directly to officials who happen to be around, such members of staff do not have sufficient knowledge and communication skills to provide sufficient answers to complaints of service users. In fact it is not rare for members of staff to give information that is misleading to users of services.

Institutions which are responsible for dealing with complaints such as the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia (ORI) still faces many limitations in its reach as it does not have representatives in all regions. Meanwhile, in some regions, where regional Ombudsman body or public service commission has been established, its services are yet to reach the general public, hence its role hardly noticed. Besides, the limited presence in the regions, many people have yet to understand the functions of the Ombudsman or public service commission as a medium where they can lodge their complaints.
RESEARCH METHODS

This research was based on a documentary analysis within one year, 2010. Data for the research were transcripts of radio broadcasts of WM, which were broadcast twice a week for the duration of 12 months. Thus, based on the frequency of broadcasts, there were 104 broadcasts in all. If in one broadcast, 5 members of public conveyed their complaints, that means that more than 500 complaints were made within a year.

The report of Walikota Menyapa (WM) program was evaluated to see the effectiveness of the program as a complaint handling mechanism. Issues covered included frequency of complaints in a month; gender of citizens who convey complaints; issues of services raised; management and response to complaints; and implication for leadership effectiveness in Yogyakarta City.

Some data was quantified to count the frequency of the complaint of the citizen. Some other data was used to analyze qualitatively the content of the complaint. Besides, to gauge the effectiveness achieved in Yogyakarta city, the number of awards of appreciation received was used as a proxy of performance.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The WM was a program which was introduced by Herry Zudianto as soon as he was inaugurated as the Mayor of Yogyakarta. The program has now been in place for 12 years, and is tailored to gathering the response of the general public living in Yogyakarta city. On leaving office, Mr Haryadi Suyuti, who replaced Herry Zudianto and had served as Herry Zudianto’s deputy, has continued the program.

The WM program was broadcast twice a week on Monday and Thursday. The program was broadcast live between 7.30 and 8.00 am. The mayor himself was the presenter of the program on Monday, while the deputy officiated on Thursday. In the event, both the mayor and his deputy were not available, another official would take their position upon receiving assignment from mayor. Such officials included regional government secretary, assistant to regional government secretary, head of regional government development planning board and so on. During the WM program, the mayor can broadcast alive wherever he may be. That way, the mayor is able to discharge his duties even though he happens to be beyond Yogyakarta city borders.

In order to reach as many radio listeners as he could, the program was broadcast simultaneously on three radio stations, which were Radio Republic Indonesia (RRI), Radio Mataram Buana Suara (MBS) and Radio Sonora. The cost of the broadcast per radio station was Rp 350,000.00, which meant that the single broadcast on three radio stations cost Rp. 1,050,000.00 or Rp. 8,400,000.00 per month. In total that amounted to Rp. 113,400,000.00 a year.

The broadcast of WM program, members of the general public had an opportunity to convey their complaints directly through a telephone number 0274-580333. However, as not all complaints could be accommodated and handled through the telephone number, a short messaging service, which used the telephone number 0811269868 served as a supplement. Messages conveyed through short messages were read on the WM program after which response to complaints aired were given in either oral or written form.

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WM program received overwhelming response from members of the general public who showed keen interest in ventilating their complaints about the state of various public service delivery. According to Wood (2011), one of the principles of an effective complaint handling mechanism is being accessible to all people, women, elderly, and disabled inclusive.

Based on records, 525 complaints were conveyed during January-December 2010 period, of which 461 (87.80%) were lodged through telephone and 64 (12.20%) were conveyed through SMS (Table 1). This attests to the reality that despite the fact that complaint mechanism accords the opportunity to convey complaints to all, there is tendency for gender bias in its use which is dominated by men. This is a general proclivity in Indonesian society which considers public space to be the realm of men while the role of women is limited to domestic space. A research conducted by Felstiner, Abel and Sarat (1981) showed that several factors influence the possibility for an individual to express complaints about the service received. The variation of complaints conveyed through telephone ranged from the lowest 26 (October) to the highest 50 (February and March).

Besides, the classification of data on complaints by sex or gender shows that of the 525 complaints, 396 (75.43%) of them were conveyed by men while 102 (19.43%) were conveyed by women, and the gender of 27 (5.14%) could not be determined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>SMS</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

148 International Journal of Administrative Science & Organization, September 2013

Volume 20, Number 3

Table 1. Number of Complaints by Telephone and SMS (January-December 2010)

(87.80%) (12.20%) (100%)

Source: compiled from document of record of Walikota Menyapa, 2010
Table 2. Number of Complaint by Sex (January-December 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Woman</th>
<th>Do Not Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled from document of record of Walikota Menyapa, 2010

not be identified because the SMS did not mention the sex or gender of the person who conveyed the complaints.

According to Wood (2011), complaint handling mechanism should be commensurate with community context. The mechanism that is developed can only be effective if the institution charged with delivering services is socially and culturally friendly.

Based on information available, WM received response from all sections of people raising a diversity of problems. Nonetheless, issues which the public complained about were by and large, public in nature and shied away from those that bore direct relationship with private or personal interests. In the event, the complaints conveyed related to a private concern, the person lodging the complaint was done with the intention of representing the person who directly become a victim of some shortcoming in public service delivery. For instance, “I represent the parent or benefactor of junior school student ‘M-6’. I take this opportunity today to convey the complaint that the student is still not able to attend school because he has not been able to pay the registration fee, including 6 other children of my neighbor” (WM, July 15, 2010).

Nonetheless, more public issues were conveyed than those that had private nuances during WM program. A simple example, was the issue on cleanliness, which was conveyed by Mr. Adam: “I feel sad because there are still many people who litter garbage along streets and highways as well as into river Manunggal. Hopefully, we as people who believe in religion are aware of the fact that cleanliness is part and parcel of faith” (WM, June 9, 2011). Another example concerned traffic related problems, which was conveyed by Mr. Wito: “The street in front of the Gondokusuman sub district offices is in a state of disorder, with twists and turn, making it a location for many accident. Can you please try to repair it?” (WM, August 4, 2011).

Based on the nature of the cases which were conveyed, it is apparent that Yogyakarta culture considers issues that personal or private realm should not be taken to public domain. Perhaps they regarded WM program, which was broadcast live and by the general public not an appropriate medium to ventilate personal issues. WM was considered more as a media to ventilate general problems which the general public face rather than private issues that related to public service delivery.

To that end, WM program served a medium for conveying public concern about many issues. The following are some of the examples of issues that were aired on WM program.

The issue of education: there is need for school dues to be regulated through regional government regulation to avert the practice of school administers asking for whatever money whenever they like (WM, July 8, 2010); school orientation program should be oriented toward enhancing knowledge on reproductive health and danger of narcotics, rather than indulge in violence activities (WM, July 12, 2010); the need to review the ruling on the use of quotas in the registration of pupils who hail from outside Yogyakarta city (WM, January 28, 2010); there is need to review scholarships for pupils who are underprivileged (WM, February 11, 2010); there is need for pupils/students to be equipped with culinary and batik making skills (WM, February 11, 2010); international pioneer school but the teacher cannot speak English (WM, July 8, 2010).

The issue of public transportation: advice to add another route for Trans-Yogya Bus so that such services can reach rural areas (WM, January 11, 2010); there is need for bus stop near Gedongtengen community health center (WM, December 9, 2010); there is need to kraton parking areas (WM, February 11, 2010); parking facilities are no longer sufficient for buses and trucks (WM, December 13, 2010); there is need to instill order into parking personnel by issuing them with distinct uniforms (WM, February 22, 2010); informal traders disrupt road traffic (WM, February 8, 2010); advice for night bicycle rides as a way to attract tourists during the new year season (WM, December 13, 2010).

Traffic service facilities: an advice to place a zebra crossing in front of Gedongtengen elementary school (WM, January 25, 2010); suggestion to install traffic light in Gerjen (WM, January 25, 2010); many sidewalks on Solo street are a state of disrepair (WM, January 25, 2010); Cuwiri road in Mantrijeron is severely damaged (WM, February 1, 2010); traffic light on Kusumanegara street is not effective (WM, February 4, 2010); traffic light at Glagah is too fast (WM, February 4, 2010); lighting along the road is nonexistent (WM, December 6, 2010); road lights are covered or overshadowed by a tree (WM, December 9, 2010).

Public service delivery: asking about the incentives for the disabled persons who are employees of Yogyakarta city (WM, January 25, 2010); there is need for improving
the quality of service delivery in Wirosaban hospital (WM, February 4, 2010); members of police in Giwangan area do not show needed response (WM, February 4, 2010); parking charges should be in accordance with prevailing regulations (WM, February 22, 2010); is there any possibility for one to enjoy maternity cost discount? (WM, February 1, 2010); certification of foodstuffs sold by informal traders in schools (WM, January 11, 2010); there is patients who is very sick in the regional government hospital but because he does not have the financial means to pay for hospital bills, the Doctor is no where to be seen (WM, May 13, 2010).

On the issue of disaster: the Batikan river embankment needs avert the danger of breaking through (WM, May 27, 2010); there is need to anticipate Code river dam (WM, December 6, 2010); whenever it rains heavily landslides occur (WM, December 6, 2010); floods along Babaran road (WM, December 9, 2010); warning about Winongo river floods (WM, December 13, 2010).

The various above comments and complaints from the public show that the concerns of the public are serious in responding to the poor condition of public services. It really helps the public officials in understanding the state of the satisfaction of the public. The variety of issues has involved several agencies such the agency of education, the agency of public works, the agency of health services, etc.

The above data underscore the fact that social cultural issues, which hamper the general public from conveying their complaints. Public issues that arise from personal problems are not conveyed to public policy makers. People have the tendency of conveying public issues that constitute interests of others as well as the general population.

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The public information division of Yogyakarta city government has done a good job of documenting WM program. All WM broadcast are recorded on cassettes and stored properly. In addition, all recordings are transcribed and stored in printed form which is accessible on request. Every week, the program is recapitulated by making columns which contain information on: the date of the WM program; personalities that served as sources of information; names and roles played, questions or complaints conveyed; answers given; and other information. Burr (2008), in a case study on health and social care in England, shows that there is gap between public complaints and responses public service providers give. People often do not know whether or not suggestions and advice they convey are incorporated in public service improvement. Based on the results of discussion with the public relations officials, it was revealed that whenever the WM program is broadcast all units of Yogyakarta city government listen to complaints which members of the general public convey. As regards the response which the Mayor gave to public complaints, these fell into the following categories: 1) Accepted inputs from member of the general public who made a suggestion on improving public service delivery in general, 2) Instructed the unit responsible for making a follow up to effect improvement in public service delivery as suggested, 3) Checked prevailing regulation before making improvement, 4) Suggested or advised city government assembly as the issue is not in the purview of the authority entrusted with an executive arm of regional government.

The following is an example of responses which the mayor made on the suggestion that there is need for public participation in dealing with the imminent drought by spraying with water plants in their vicinity to prevent wilting : “Please write a letter to the editor in the name of the Yogyakarta city imploring members of the general public. The content should be exactly as the comments I have made. Show me the draft of the letter to me. Send the letter to all local press media. Mayor, June 28, 2011” (WM, June 28, 2011). Sometimes the mayor responded to complaints that were lodged by members of the general public by giving a direct positive response through WM: “Thanks you very much because our input on the need to improve drainage along Taman Siswa street has received a follow up from the office of regional infrastructure and public works ” (WM, May 24, 2010).

With respect to suggestions on making improvements, which already have regulations to that effect, the mayor could first and foremost make cross check to read the prevailing regulation. For instance, one member of the general public lodged a complaint that high bumps may end up endangering road users. The mayor responded by making the following statement: “Indeed rules on the height and width of road bumps do exist which were determined with the safety of all road uses, including those using vehicles. I will first of all read through the prevailing regulations afer which I will advise members of the general public to make the necessary adjustments.” (WM, July 25, 2011).

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With the existence of various inputs from members of the general public through WM program, the mayor was able to make improvements in public service delivery performance. WM is a cheap instrument that was used to obtain inputs from the general public. As all city government officials listened to information that was broadcast, units responsible used to respond quickly to complaints that were aired. There was no need for the mayor to exercise control over unit by unit as the task of accountability has been done by the general public. For instance, with respect to the issue that concerned the performance of the hospital, the inputs were immediately effected by making the necessary improvements. As for issues that concerned road signs or traffic lights that were no longer operational or out of order, damaged physical infrastructure, became direct criticisms for the office of the transportation, police, and public works.

In the final analysis, the existence of WM served as a means that enhanced the effectiveness of leadership of the mayor in improving public service delivery which the general public enjoyed as well as control mechanism on the behavior of officials in providing services to his citizenry. The testimony of the importance of the WM is reflected in many awards which Herry Zudianto received from both the central government and non government
organizations alike during his tenure as mayor of Yogyakarta. The Mayor’s leadership effectiveness was shown by his success in various achievement. At the national level, he received 139 awards such as sanitation management, clean environment, innovative leader, Widya Krama award for 9 year education, and autonomy award (www.jogjakota.go.id). Besides, thanks to his good performance, Mayor Herry Zudianto received string public legitimacy that paved the way for his second tenure in office.

During his leadership, Herry Zudianto succeeded in becoming the head of public servants (he preferred to be addressed as head of public servants/kepala pelayan to the that of city mayor ) in a transformative Yogyakarta City. One of the distinguishing features of Herry Zudianto’s leadership lies in his ability to galvanize bureaucracy which had implication for improvement in public service delivery and creation of a clean, and corruption-free bureaucracy. Herry is a quick and hardworking operator in galvanizing bureaucracy into action. He espoused the view that members of the bureaucracy had to provide quick response to problems facing society (Triputro, 2014).

During his tenure as Yogyakarta mayor (2001-2006), Herry Zudianto, Yogyakarta city received not less than 522 awards of appreciation at the provincial and national level. With respect to the national level, Yogyakarta City received 139 awards of appreciation, which included: 1) Widya Krama Award for success in achieving 9 year obligatory education program (in the field of education) at the national level, 2) Provision of sanitation service delivery (in the field of housing) the best at the national level, 3) Adipura Bangun Praja Award (in the field of environment) the best at the national level, 4) Kota Bersih (Clean City) award (in the field of environment) the best at the national level, 5) Otonomi Award (in the realm of government affairs) Grand Category Region in Leading Profile on Political Performance, 6) Special Category Region in a Leading Innovative Breakthrough on Public Accountability, 7) Received Adipura award for the second time for the large city category (in the field of environment) the best at the national level, 8) H. Herry Zudianto was re-elected as Yogyakarta city mayor through direct regional government elections for 2006–2011 period (www.jogjakarta.go.id).

CONCLUSION

Democratization has encouraged democratization of public service delivery. In this context, the general public has an opportunity to participate in the process of formulating and implementing public policy and service delivery. Complaint handling mechanism is an instrument which accords room for public participation in controlling public service performance.

In practice, complaint handling mechanism in Yogyakarta, WM has been proved to be effective as a medium for the collection of all complaints over various shortcomings that relate to public service delivery. Based on the gender of those who lodge in complaints, men dominate the process compared to women. Although many complaints have been made about public service delivery, the issues that are raised are by and large public problems rather than personal which might adverse effects on personal characters of the individuals who are subjects of such reports.

WM has been very effective in providing inputs to local agencies to improve their services. Some issues have been responded directly by each agency by repairing the service conditions, whereas some other issues have to be checked with the existing regulation before doing what the complainants suggested. This has shown that WM has given direct effects to the public officials to improve their performance.

Theoretically, this study complements previous studies such as Allsop et al. (2008), Gruber (2011), Ross & Littlefield (1978) and Wood (2011). This research shows that social cultural factors are responsible for the dominance of men in conveying complaints about public service delivery as well as the nature of the complaints being by and large, public domain that have no relationship with personal interests.

To that end, policy implications which can be drawn from observation of WM performance is that there is need for designing a mechanism that has features that encourage the use of WM to convey their complaints. Women should be encouraged to play a more active role in WM forum. The government should put more thoughts on creating a mechanism that encourages people to convey issues that are directly connected with personal interests as well. Thus, there is need to develop a mechanism that ensures privacy which should in turn instill public pleasure and confidence in conveying complaints about public issues that have direct bearing on their personal interests.

From an academic standpoint, there is an opportunity for another research to conduct more advanced research in this area. The research can be focusing on general public who make use of broadcasts to determine their characteristics and condition that influence the use of WM broadcasts to convey complaints about public service delivery. The extent to which bureaucracy in Yogyakarta city government respond to issues that people raise in complaints is also another issue that needs further research.

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