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Original Research Article

Implementation of Health Center Management Policies on the Quality of Health Services

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ABSTRACT

Effective management is essential for health centers to ensure that health service standards are met through proper planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation. One method to assess service quality at Community Health Centers is the Health Center Performance Assessment, which evaluates activity coverage, service quality, and management. Given the crucial role of management in improving health service quality, the implementation of health center management practices is critical. This study explores the obstacles to effective health center management in Tabalong District. A qualitative approach was employed using a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), observations, and documentation involving 15 informants from the District Health Office and several health centers. Despite efforts to adhere to Minister of Health Regulations No. 6/2016 and No. 19/2020, several challenges persist, including non-functional SMD–MMD activities and mini-workshops that do not follow established guidelines. Additional barriers include limited human resources, budget constraints, incomplete standard operating procedures (SOPs), and fragmented information systems. In conclusion, the implementation of health center management has not been fully optimal, resulting in service quality that has yet to meet expected standards.

Keywords: Centers Management; Community Health Centers; Community Health; Policy Implementation.

INTRODUCTION

The quality of healthcare is crucial as it affects various aspects of individual well-being and societal development. High-quality healthcare ensures that people receive appropriate, safe, and effective services, which in turn improves life expectancy and overall quality of life (Oktemka, 2024). Quality services also enhance public trust in the health system and increase the efficiency of healthcare delivery by reducing long-term costs and optimizing resource use (Siregar et al., 2023).

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In Indonesia, primary healthcare services are delivered through Community Health Centers (Puskesmas). In 2023, there were 10,180 Puskesmas operating nationwide, comprising 4,210 inpatient and 5,970 non-inpatient facilities, with a ratio of 1 Puskesmas per four sub-districts (Ministry of Health, 2023). Despite this extensive network, several national challenges persist, including shortages in health human resources, suboptimal service quality, limited availability of essential medicines and medical devices, and low utilization of the Puskesmas budget.

To ensure service quality, Puskesmas operations are guided by the Minister of Health Regulation No. 44 of 2016 on Puskesmas Management. Effective management is central to improving service quality, and consistent quality evaluation forms a key basis for accreditation (Yandrizal, 2022). Poor management practices—including weak planning, inadequate resource allocation, and lack of supervision—can result in long waiting times, reduced efficiency, and diminished public trust (Nesimnasi et al., 2019; Kalijogo, 2019; Budiman & Yudiansyah, 2024).

In Tabalong Regency, several implementation gaps highlight the urgency of this study. Key activities such as SMD–MMD and PIS-PK have been non-functional since 2021, resulting in planning processes that are not data-driven. Mini-workshops intended to support program coordination are not conducted routinely due to limited funding, and human resource shortages have led to multiple roles being assigned to the same personnel. Additionally, supervision tends to rely heavily on informal communication channels, reducing the comprehensiveness of monitoring activities. These issues indicate a discrepancy between national policy standards and actual implementation at the Puskesmas level.

Given these conditions, it is essential to investigate how Puskesmas management policies are implemented in Tabalong Regency, particularly in relation to the challenges that hinder the delivery of quality and sustainable health services.

Therefore, this study explicitly aims to analyze the implementation of Puskesmas management in Tabalong Regency based on organizational characteristics, policy standards and objectives, resources, communication, implementers' attitudes, and environmental factors.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken information from participants and observable behaviors related to the phenomenon under investigation. Qualitative methods emphasize narrative data rather than numerical measurement (Moleong, 2017). The research was conducted in Tabalong Regency and involved the District Health Office and four health centers that met the adequate assessment criteria in the 2023 Health Center Performance Assessment. A case study design was used to examine the research problem within clearly defined boundaries, allowing for in-depth exploration supported by multiple sources of information. Case studies provide comprehensive, detailed, and intensive insights into contemporary issues (Murdiyanto, 2020).

Data analysis in this study followed an interactive qualitative analysis process consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting and focusing on relevant information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. The reduced data were then organized and presented in a structured manner to identify themes related to Puskesmas management. Following this, conclusions were drawn by interpreting patterns and verifying findings in relation to the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Health Center Management

The effective management of Health centers necessitates comprehensive planning rooted in precise and pertinent data, including an evaluation of past program accomplishments and an

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analysis of the current public health landscape (Nasution, 2024). This planning phase calls for collaboration among multiple stakeholders and efficient budget management. By adapting to policy changes, planning can enhance the quality of health services provided at Health centers (Addinni, 2023).

According to the interview findings, it is evident that the five-year and annual planning at the health centers is aligned with the Strategic Plan of the Health Office. This planning adheres to the provisions outlined in Minister of Health Regulation No. 6 of 2016 and Minister of Health Regulation No. 19 of 2024, which mandates that Health centers develop management plans that are integrated with both national and regional health policies. Effective planning is a crucial component for ensuring that Health centers can deliver high-quality health services. Health planning involves identifying the needs of the community, establishing priorities, and creating realistic plans that engage all relevant stakeholders.

Figure 1. Planning process interview

The health centers planning process has adhered to established principles; however, challenges in data collection remain. Several key programs intended to inform planning, such as SMD MMD and PIS PK, have been inactive since 2021. The lack of these functioning initiatives hampers the acquisition of essential data, which impacts the quality of planning conducted by Health centers.

Following the planning stage, the program's mobilization and implementation begin. By Minister of Health Regulation No. 19 of 2024, the organization and mobilization of human resources in program execution must be conducted effectively to ensure the planned initiatives are carried out successfully. While Health centers has established a process for organizing personnel through monthly and quarterly mini-workshops, these sessions are not conducted consistently. This inconsistency is primarily attributed to funding limitations and the prioritization of other pressing needs.

Due to financial constraints, certain planned activities, such as SMD MMD, could not be executed. This limitation is also tied to the current policy framework, which requires Health centers to have greater flexibility in accessing various funding sources to support essential health programs. Nevertheless, Health centers strives to address this issue by employing more adaptable coordination methods, such as morning roll calls and WhatsApp groups, to facilitate communication among staff. This reflects an ability to adapt to limited resources and rigid scheduling. Although mini-workshops may not always occur as planned, communication and coordination remain intact, allowing activities to progress smoothly. From these challenges, it can

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be inferred that the successful implementation of policies hinges on effective leadership capable of managing diverse challenges and adapting policies to meet prevailing conditions (Ardiansyah et al., 2024).

Supervision of activities, including mini-workshop activity, is needed in policy implementation. Coordination is done through WhatsApp and regular coordination meetings. Based on an interview with one informant, the WhatsApp group is used as an alternative to monitor progress and submit urgent reports or requests. Supervision is not only done through formal means but can also be done informally using faster and more effective communication channels to support the effectiveness of supervision in urgent situations (Pramana et al., 2025). While this informal supervision is adequate for some activities, more structured supervision through mini-workshops is still needed to monitor and evaluate all program aspects thoroughly. This suggests a need to improve the effectiveness of supervision through the more structured organization at Health centers.

Figure 2. Interview on supervision process

The interviews revealed that internal audits are not consistently carried out on a regular basis. Some health centers perform these audits only twice a year or even less frequently. While internal audits play a crucial role in performance oversight, their irregular implementation can undermine the overall quality of performance monitoring and evaluation.

Figure3. Interview supervision

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The Tabalong District Health Office conducts supervision through regular coordination meetings that discuss the achievements of activities and obstacles faced by Health centers. The health Office also monitors Health centers 's performance achievements and provides useful feedback. However, the supervision tends to focus on priority programs, so other programs do not receive the same attention. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct cross-program supervision to ensure that all programs at Health centers are running well.

Obstacles to the Implementation of Health Centers Management

Organizational Characteristics

The organizational structure of the health centers has been regulated and stipulated through the Decree of the Head of the Health Office. This structure is very important to ensure effective coordination between members of the organization and to manage the health centers efficiently. While an effective structure can affect service efficiency, limited human resources often lead to the conflation of tasks among organizational members, potentially affecting service quality and health program management (Gulo et al., 2025).

The pattern of bureaucratic relations in PHC management involves close cooperation between PHC, local government, community, and other institutions. The division of authority and responsibility between Health centers and local government is well structured, but challenges related to budget and human resource limitations remain a significant obstacle. Good coordination and effective communication between all parties are essential to ensure optimal and high-quality health services (Julia & Masyruroh, 2022). The alignment of budget allocations with the operational needs of Health centers is an aspect that needs to be improved to support the success of sustainable health programs.

Policy Standards and Objectives

Health centers have been trying to follow the guidelines set by the Minister of Health Regulation. One of the main focuses is the effort to obtain accreditation, which is considered an indicator of success in providing quality health services. Health centers accreditation is one way to ensure that the services provided meet the national standards set by the Ministry of Health. In addition, regulatory guidelines are essential in implementing Health centers management to achieve optimal service quality standards (Anwar et al., 2020).

Resources

A decrease in service quality can occur if human resources are insufficient according to the needs of the health center, which impacts the heavier workload for medical personnel. Health centers with inadequate personnel will have difficulty providing optimal health services, which can affect the quality of public health services. Shortage of human resources in healthcare facilities is a significant problem in primary health care in Indonesia. The inability to meet HR needs at the health centers can lead to decreased service quality, difficulty in administrative management, and budget waste because existing human resources must cope with more tasks that should be divided more evenly (Hasrillah et al., 2021).

In addition to human resources, the limitations of facilities and infrastructure pose significant challenges to the implementation of policies concerning resource management. The availability of medical equipment remains insufficient, and issues related to the maintenance of facilities and infrastructure, along with budget constraints, further hinder Health centers' ability to deliver optimal health services to the community. The scarcity of medical facilities, both in quality and quantity, negatively impacts the health services offered at Health centers (Ramadhani, 2020).

Comunication

Effective coordination among Health centers staff, the health office, and various cross-sector partners is essential for achieving optimal health services for the community. According to

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an interview with one informant, successful implementation of Health centers management requires efficient resource management, encompassing workforce allocation, budget planning, and the utilization of facilities and infrastructure. Enhancing coordination among the different stakeholders in the health service system is crucial for improving both the effectiveness and efficiency of services at the health centers (Devi et al., 2024).

In addition to coordination, open and effective communication between staff and related parties is an important aspect of Health centers management. An interview with one informant mentioned that communication is done through various means, such as coordination meetings, WhatsApp groups, announcement boards, and applications to monitor the progress of activities. This must be done because transparent and fast communication in health service organizations can improve organizational performance and community satisfaction. Good coordination and communication, supported by adequate training and a strong understanding of regulations, can improve the quality of health services at Health centers (Akhyar, 2023)..

Implementer's attitude

Based on interviews with informants, the management of Health centers is a multifaceted process that encompasses planning, organizing, implementing, controlling, and evaluating health programs. It is essential for this process to be executed effectively to ensure that the health services provided meet established standards. The success of Health centers management relies heavily on the managers' ability to comprehend and apply management principles effectively. This is supported by the interview findings, which indicate that effectively managing human resources, budgeting, and infrastructure necessitates a solid understanding to enable the Health centers to operate at an optimal level (Prasojo et al., 2024).

Response Direction

The direction of response in health center management is identified as a structured and continuous process that includes planning, implementation, supervision, evaluation, and continuous improvement. This process is carried out so that health services are by standards and provide optimal benefits to the community. Planning is an important first step in health center management. Based on interviews, the planning process is carried out by preparing an annual work plan that includes priority health programs based on public health data and regional needs. In its implementation, Health centers is responsible for providing health services according to the plan that has been prepared. An interview with one informant mentioned that adequate human resources, budget, facilities, and infrastructure management is important at this stage. Without effective management, the implementation of health programs can be hampered. In addition, coordination with various related parties, including the local government, the health Office, and the community, is also needed to support the implementation of health programs.

Environment

Support from various stakeholders is essential for the effective operation and success of health programs, a vital component of policy implementation. This support comes from multiple sectors, both internal and external, including central government, local government, the private sector, and the community. All parties collaborate to establish an optimal and sustainable health service system. An interview with an informant highlighted the significance of adequate budget support from local and central governments through the APBD and APBN. These funds are allocated to address the basic operational needs of the Health centers, such as procuring medicines, medical devices, and other essential facilities and infrastructure necessary for delivering services. With this support, Health centers can implement health programs more systematically and efficiently. This underscores the importance of appropriate and sufficient budget allocations in enhancing the quality of health services (Napisah, 2025).

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CONCLUSION

The implementation of Health centers management policies to improve the quality of services in Tabalong District has tried to follow the Minister of Health Regulation Number 6 of 2016 and the Minister of Health Regulation Number 19 of 2024, but the implementation has not been comprehensive. In planning, the SMD MMD that is not running causes difficulties in obtaining the necessary data, resulting in planning that is made less realistic and challenging to implement optimally. In mobilization and implementation, the schedule of monthly mini-workshops and cross-sector mini-workshops that do not follow the guidelines due to limited funds and other priority activities show a gap between the plans that have been prepared and the reality on the ground, which causes late data collection and difficulties in analyzing achievements. The supervision and control process is often carried out through WhatsApp so that supervision of all aspects of the program is not monitored thoroughly. At the same time, the assessment of health centers performance is appropriate. Constraints in implementing Health centers management from the aspect of organizational characteristics, namely the organizational structure of Health centers, have not fully implemented cluster services. This is due to a lack of understanding of the Minister of Health Regulation No. 19 of 2024 and limited human resources where the same individual must duplicate several positions.

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