

Analysis of Handling of Student Complaints about Open University Services (Study at-UT Kupang)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the behavior of Open University students as consumers related to service complaints within UT Kupang. This study aims to identify and analyze: (1) the quality of complaint handling services at UT Kupang in terms of student behavior and level of satisfaction as consumers; (2) What things need to be done by UT Kupang to increase the speed of service for complaints submitted by students as consumers. The data used in this research is primary data. Primary data was obtained by distributing questionnaires to respondents according to a predetermined sample. the average value of the quality of complaint handling services at UT Kupang seen from students' perceptions is in the appropriate/very high category. But overall, UT students still perceive the quality of complaint handling services at UT Kupang to be poor, because the complaint handling services received or in fact are lower than what students expect. To improve complaint handling services at UT Kupang, all aspects need improvement because they have a negative average gap value.

Keywords: complaint, service, satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

The development of increasingly advanced technology and information requires every organization to improve services in various fields. Organizations that offer products, both goods and services, must have the ability to provide maximum service, including after consumers make purchases of goods or services. Service experience, both at the time of purchase and after purchase (after sales service) is the most memorable situation for consumers who buy a product (Sumarwan et al, 2011, p. 121). The ability to handle dissatisfaction with the products or services sold, of course, has a higher value compared to organizations or companies that only offer goods or services but do not pay attention and care about problems that might occur from the goods or services they provide. Organizations must see themselves as a solution provider, more than just a seller of goods or services (Best in Sumarwan et al, 2011). Handling of complaints due to consumer dissatisfaction or due to other problems related to the goods or services purchased, is something that needs to be considered by the organization so that it is handled more quickly and gives satisfaction to consumers. Higher Education is a non-profit organization that provides educational services. Even now, competition is a reality in the world of education. Therefore it is important to continuously improve the quality system in tertiary institutions and on an ongoing basis, of course, with customer



orientation, focusing on meeting customer needs and desires with existing mechanisms. This is a strategy for higher education institutions to be able to compete with their competitors (Sallis, 2010). The Open University (UT) as a Long Distance College (PTJJ) always strives to improve the quality of its services in the hope that it can reach the spread of students in various remote areas. As a PTJJ, its range of services is very wide because it must be able to provide educational services throughout Indonesia and even abroad. The Open University (UT) of Kupang is an operational unit located in the province of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). The geographical condition of NTT which is vast and has an archipelago is an opportunity for UT to reach the unreached as well as a challenge for UT to bring its services closer to students. Various efforts have been made by UT to always be able to provide services in accordance with the PTJJ concept. The services provided through UT Kupang are registration services, study assistance and teaching materials, and evaluation of learning outcomes. UT Kupang as UT's operational representative in the region, certainly has an important role in providing services, because it deals directly with students as consumers, it also handles various student complaints related to registration services, study assistance, teaching materials, and evaluation of learning outcomes.

In 2023, UT Kupang will provide services to 9,825 students who register in the 2022.2 even period, both FHISIP, FE, FST, and FKIP students (source: sipelapor.ut.ac.id). During the even period of 2022.2, there were a number of student complaints handled by UPBJJ-UT Kupang. This can be seen in table 1.1 below.

		(Ja	anuary – J	une)	
No	Complaint Type	Amount	Handled	Unhandled	The root of the problem so that cases occur resulting in complaints
1	Handling Requests for Password Reset Student Ecampus accounts	35	35	0	Students do not pay for semester packages
2	Value doesn't come out	32	32	0	The first registration requirements are incomplete
3	Personal Data Changes	69	69	0	Change of Address and service scheme
4	Tutorial Access Barriers	1	1	0	Students do not know how to reset passwords

Table 1.1 Recap of Service Complaints at UPBJJ-UT Kupang in 2023(January – June)



5	Student Personal Data Status	83	83	0	Incomplete registration file
6	Handling of complaints related to Teaching Materials that have not arrived at the student's domicile address	9	9	0	The address entered by the student for delivery of teaching materials is incomplete and correct
7	Credit Transfer/RPL	90	90	0	The uploaded candidate files are not complete and correct
8	Complaints Regarding Registration Constraints and Missing LIP Packages	52	52	0	Students are late in making reports on lagging package payments
9	Problems with MABA Prospective Registration (Difficulty accessing the SIA Page)	7	7	0	Prospective students find it difficult to register
10	Complaints of Obstacles Related to Final Semester Examinations (KTPU Printing Constraints)	38	38	0	Students do not know how to print KTPU
11	Resignation	19	19	0	Prospective students and students wish to register as new students
	Amount	378	378	0	

Data Source: Primary Data processed by the Author

Judging from table 1.1 above, it can be seen that there are quite a lot of student complaints as consumers due to various academic and administrative service problems and/or obstacles faced by prospective students and students. From a number of handling consumer complaints, all of them can be handled thoroughly by the staff who handle these problems. The constraints are related to the speed at which complaints are handled



by UT staff. This is what made researchers interested in conducting research at UT Kupang, in relation to the quality of complaint handling services at UPBJJ-UT Kupang seen from student perceptions and service improvement to increase the speed of service to complaints submitted by students as consumers.

Literature review

Complain

Complaints can be interpreted as an expression of dissatisfaction or disappointment. Organizations can collect customer complaints in a number of ways, including suggestion boxes, customer complaint forms, special telephone lines, websites, comment cards, customer satisfaction surveys, and customer exit surveys (Tjiptono, 2014, p. 446).

Based on various consumer psychology research, complaints can be divided into 2 types, namely instrumental complaints and non-instrumental complaints. Instrumental complaints are complaints that are expressed with the aim of changing an unwanted situation or condition. Meanwhile, non-instrumental complaints are submitted without special expectations that the desired situation will change (Tjiptono, 2014).

Tjiptono (2014, p. 460 & 471) explains that consumer complaints are expressed in various expressions, such as frustration; resigned; annoyed, annoyed, and cranky; angry and sarcastic expressions; satirize and remind other consumers. The sector with the most complaints is the service sector. This is because the unique service characteristics of services contribute to the tendency for service quality to be more subjective and difficult to evaluate compared to goods. Handling complaints requires careful planning and procedures so that the same mistakes are not repeated and so that problems faced by customers can be resolved. There are five aspects that need to be looked at so that complaints can be handled and turned into opportunities to better satisfy customers, among others:

- 1. Make it easy for customers to submit complaints. Complaints are actually an opportunity to satisfy customers and fix mistakes or problems that have the potential to create silent complainers. Companies need to find ways to make it easier for customers to express their complaints. For example providing suggestion boxes, providing evaluation forms, toll-free telephone lines, websites, Facebook or Twitter accounts, and other alternative ways. That way problems can be resolved before they become big and damage the company's reputation.
- 2. Overcoming the factors that cause complaints. As soon as consumers complain about something, the company must immediately follow up by improving customer service behavior. A number of causes of complaints need to be detected and solutions sought. Some examples include, products or services that do not meet customer expectations, schedules and methods of service delivery are inflexible, internal and external communications tend to be poor, service providers do not meet promised service delivery deadlines and unprofessional staff behavior.



- 3. Handle complaints effectively. Things that should not be done in handling complaints are:
 - a. Being defensive or arguing about the complaint submitted. Agree that there has been a problem and empathize with the customer.
 - b. Ask the customer to repeat the complaint. If the complaint is transferred to another staff, make sure that the staff gets a picture of the problem without having to ask the customer to repeat it.
 - c. Letting customers wait too long. They should be informed of what is going on. Make sure that the staff will contact the customer if the problem has not been resolved on the spot.
 - d. Handle angry customers. Empathy is most needed when dealing with angry customers.
- 4. Learn from mistakes and continuously improve service standards. Companies must learn from every mistake or problem that occurs. As a consequence, service standards must always be updated in order to be able to serve consumers better.

Service

The definition of each of the five dimensions of SERVQUAL according to Zeithaml, Bitnera, Gremler (2006); Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990) are as follows:

1. Tangibles are physical manifestations which include facilities, tools/equipment, employees, and means of information or communication. Hurriyati (2009, p.167) states that in the context of higher education services, physical evidence is an environment where universities and students can interact and in which there are tangible components that support the performance and communication of these services. In the process of delivering educational services to tertiary students, attention must be paid to the style of the building (i.e. the suitability between its aesthetic and functional aspects as an educational institution) as well as supporting facilities (such as educational equipment and facilities). The research results of Maejo, Pirani, and Mujtaba (2011) show that the tangibles dimension is also an important thing that must be considered by universities. Because sometimes this dimension is the first thing students pay attention to because it describes the image of the college.

Front line employees are the spearhead of the service delivery system, not only are they the "face" of the organization, but they are often the reflection of the "service" perceived by consumers. One of the things that must be considered by front line employees is a neat appearance when serving consumers (Tjiptono, 2012, p. 179).

2. *Reliability* relates to the ability to provide the promised service promptly, accurately, and satisfactorily. Customers will certainly want to keep in touch with companies that can keep their promises by always being able to provide the best service for their customers in accordance with what has been set. Kotler and

Keller stated that today's companies must perform the steps from order, payment to payment quickly and accurately, because customers like companies that can promise timely delivery. Moreover, today many companies have used the internet and extranets to increase the speed, accuracy, and efficiency of the order-topayment cycle (2009, p. 73).

- 3. *Responsiveness* is the desire of employees and management to help customers and provide responsive service and care for customer complaints or expectations. This dimension relates to the willingness and readiness of employees to provide fast service to customers, always willing to provide solutions to customer complaints, and the ability to provide the services needed by customers in connection with the services offered by the company.
- 4. *Assurance* is the ability to provide a sense of security from danger, risk, or doubt and certainty which includes knowledge, courtesy and a trustworthy attitude possessed by employees. This dimension relates to the ability of employees to provide information about services clearly and reliably, the manner in which information and services are conveyed is done politely. In assessing service quality, Gronroos (1990) in Arief (2007, p. 123), customers understand that whatever happens, they can entrust everything to service providers and their employees and systems..
- 5. *Empathy*: the nature and ability to give full attention to customers, ease of contact, good communication, and understand the needs of individual customers.

Hypothesis

How good a service quality is depends on the ability of service providers to consistently meet customer expectations (in Arif, 2007, p. 118). Based on these concepts and the assumptions of the researchers, the hypotheses in this study are:

The handling of complaints about the services provided by UPBJJ-UT Kupang is still not good from the perspective of students as consumer.

Research methods

This type of research is descriptive which aims to provide an overview of the quality of complaint handling services at UT Kupang in terms of student behavior and level of satisfaction. The research approach chosen by researchers is more emphasis on quantitative approaches. In this study used primary data and secondary data. The data collection technique used in this study was survey research.

This research will be conducted at UT Kupang between June - August 2023. The population that is the object of this research is UT students in the operational area of UT Kupang. The samples taken in this study were 135 respondents. In accordance with the research objective of analyzing the quality of complaint handling services at UT Kupang seen from student behavior and the level of satisfaction as consumers, the data



obtained will be processed and analyzed by means of univariate analysis and SERVQUAL Model analysis.

Results and Discussion 1. Univariate analysis

Tangible Dimensions

Based on the results of the frequency distribution and score interpretation, it can be said that the average level of satisfaction of respondents in this dimension is in the high category.

	Table 1.1. Tangible Dimensions									
No	Indicator		Re	ality		Average				
		1	2	3	4	_				
1	Complaints can be made through various means or media	7	6	49	73	3,39				
2	The student service waiting room is clean and comfortable	6	3	55	71	3,41				
3	UT Kupang employees look neat and attractive	6	1	46	82	3,51				
	Average					3,44				

Source: processed from the results of data collection in the field from June to August 2023

For this dimension, the indicator that has the lowest score is "complaints can be made through various media". Out of 135 respondents, 13 respondents were dissatisfied with this service. This shows that UT Kupang as a Distance Education service needs to improve services for this indicator so that it can further improve the improvement and speed of complaint service to students. Complaint can be made through various means or media. Refers to it, a few students in capable or unable to use the latest communication technology, that is why they are not satisfied with the information and respons given through various kinds of communication media. To solved this problem, UT Kupang provides offline services, such as face to face services or using the basic communication media such as telephone and mail.

While the indicator that shows the highest satisfaction from student perceptions is "UT Kupang employees look neat and attractive". Every service is of course not always



consistent, therefore this indicator needs to be improved so that it can provide more excellent service to students.

Reliability Dimension

This dimension relates to the ability of UT Kupang employees to resolve complaints submitted promptly, accurately and satisfactorily for students. The results of the study show that based on the results of the frequency distribution and interpretation of scores, it can be said that the average level of satisfaction of respondents in this dimension is in the high category. This can be seen in the following table.

No	Indikator		Keny	vataan		Ratarata
	-	1	2	3	4	-
4	Information regarding registration schedules and course registration, and exams is conveyed clearly and correctly by UT Kupang employees	6	1	30	98	3,63
5	Prospective students and students can easily obtain information about UT	7	5	35	88	3,51
6	Handling of complaints is carried out quickly and precisely by officers	9	6	49	71	3,35
7	Instructional materials are received by students before carrying out face-to- face tutorials and or online tutorials	11	4	45	75	3,36
8	The end of semester exams are carried out according to the schedule set by UT	5	4	43	83	3,51
	Average					3,47

Source: processed from the results of data collection in the field from June to August 2023

For this dimension, the indicator that has the lowest score is the indicator that "Complaints are handled quickly and accurately by officers". Out of 135 respondents, 15 respondents were dissatisfied with this service. This shows that UT Kupang as a Distance Education service needs to improve complaint handling services to be carried out quickly and accurately by officers so that UT can improve improvement and speed of complaint service to students. Many academic administration cases require students to submit several documents involving other parties and takes time to fulfill. Some of these cases affecting students satisfaction



While the indicator that shows the highest satisfaction from student perceptions is "Information regarding registration schedules and course registration, and examinations are conveyed clearly and correctly by UT Kupang Employees." The results of the study show that overall these dimensions are still quite satisfactory with an average value of 3.47.

Empathy Dimension

This dimension relates to the nature and ability of UT Kupang employees to give full attention to students, the convenience of students in making contact with UT Kupang employees, good communication, understanding the needs, emotions and behavior of individual students towards the problems they face. The results of the study show that based on the results of the frequency distribution and interpretation of scores, it can be said that the average level of satisfaction of respondents in this dimension is in the high category. This can be seen in the following table.

No	No Indicator		Reality				
	mulcator	1	2	3	4	Average	
9	UT Kupang employees pay genuine attention to the study problems faced by students	6	4	47	78	3,46	
10	UT Kupang employees are always friendly in serving complaints made by students	8	4	41	82	3,46	
11	UT employees have a friendly attitude towards the students they serve	9	5	38	83	3,44	
12	UT Kupang employees are easily contacted by students to get information about the complaint resolution process	4	5	40	86	3,54	
13	UT Kupang employees serve selflessly in handling student complaints	8	7	41	79	3,41	
	Average					3,46	

Table 1.3 Empathy Dimensions

Source: processed from the results of data collection in the field from June to August 2023

For this dimension, the indicator that has the lowest score is the indicator "UT Kupang employees serve selflessly in handling student complaints." Out of 135 respondents, 15 respondents were dissatisfied with this service. UT Kupang employees show more empathy by serving selflessly to resolve student complaints to improve



service to student complaints. To overcome this issue, UT provide excellent service training to improve front office employees' performance.

But on the one hand, based on the results of the indicator research that shows the highest satisfaction from student perceptions, "UPBJJ-UT employees are easily contacted by students to get information regarding the process of resolving complaints submitted".

Assurance Dimension

This dimension relates to the ability to provide a sense of security from danger, risk, or doubt and certainty which includes knowledge, courtesy and a trustworthy attitude possessed by UPBJJ-UT Kupang employees that complaints can be resolved and create a sense of calm for consumers. Based on the results of the frequency distribution and score interpretation, it can be said that the average level of satisfaction of respondents in this dimension is in the very high category. This can be seen in the following table.

No	Indicator		Reality			
INU	Indicator		2	3	4	Average
14	UT Kupang employees have qualities that students can trust	10	2	41	82	3,44
15	UT Kupang staff are able to provide information about academic problems experienced by students correctly and clearly	7	6	39	83	3,47
16	UT Kupang employees are able to provide understanding to students who submit complaints regarding the resolution of cases that cannot be resolved immediately	5	2	51	77	3,48
	Average					3,46

Table 1.4 Assurance Dimensions

Source: processed from the results of data collection in the field from June to August 2023

The results showed that the indicator that had the lowest score compared to other indicators on this dimension was "UPBJJ-UT employees who can be trusted by students". Even though those who stated high satisfaction, there were still 12 people out of 135 respondents. This needs to remain a concern of UPBJJ-UT to further improve



services by increasing services and knowledge about UT and how to handle cases quickly and appropriately so that students who file complaints feel confident with UT.

The indicator that shows the highest average score is "UT Kupang employees are able to provide understanding to students who submit complaints regarding the resolution of cases that cannot be resolved immediately". Services that are sometimes inconsistent make some people feel dissatisfied with the services provided. Therefore it is expected that UT Kupang employees must be able to provide consistent services for students who come to the UT Kupang Office.

Responsiveness Dimension

This dimension relates to the willingness and readiness of UPBJJ-UT employees to provide fast service, always willing to provide solutions to student complaints, as well as the ability to provide services needed by students regarding the complaints they convey.

Based on the results of the frequency distribution and score interpretation, it can be said that the average level of satisfaction of respondents in this dimension is in the very high category. This can be seen in the following table.

No	Indicator		Rea	Average		
	-	1	2	3	4	_
17	Student complaints about registration problems are immediately handled by UT Kupang staff	5	3	49	78	3,48
18	UT Kupang employees are always quick to respond to complaints submitted by students	5	4	49	77	3,47
19	UT Kupang employees are responsive in providing solutions to complaints submitted by students	6	3	47	79	3,47
	Average					3,47

 Table 1.5 Responsiveness Dimensions

Source: processed from the results of data collection in the field from June to August 2023

The results of the study show that the indicator that has the lowest score compared to other indicators on this dimension has 2 of the same value, among others "UT Kupang employees are always quick to respond to complaints submitted by students and UT Kupang employees are responsive in providing solutions to complaints submitted by students ". A total of 18 respondents expressed dissatisfaction with these 2 service indicators. Every complaint that has not been resolved will cause dissatisfaction which will impact on the continuity of UT's business processes. This, of course, besides



causing anxiety and anxiety for students who provide complaints, of course, will also affect negative information about UT. Therefore this should be a concern for UT's continuous service improvement. Each case needs to be handled differently dan different length in completion. UT's employees need to reassuring the students that every case will be handled properly and quickly.

Among these 5 dimensions, the indicator that shows the highest average and has the same value includes "Information regarding registration schedules and course registration, and examinations are conveyed clearly and correctly by UT Kupang employees and prospective students and students easily obtain information about UT" with a value of 3.63. Of course, this must be maintained and improved, so that students feel comfortable with the services provided by UT.

One way is to resolve complaints quickly and strive for customer satisfaction (2009, p. 143). Because speed in handling complaints is very important in handling complaints, if complaints are not immediately responded to, dissatisfaction with the company will become permanent and irreversible (Tjiptono, 2008). Based on the data and analysis on each quality dimension, the overall complaint service perceived by students is in the appropriate or satisfied category, which is equal to 3,46. this can be seen in the following table.

Dimensi	Rata-rata
Tangibles	3,44
Reliability	3,47
Empathy	3,46
Assurance	3,46
Responsiveness	3,47
Rata-rata	3,46

 Table 1.6 Average Complaint Service Quality Perceived by Students

Source: processed from the results of data collection in the field in August 2023

The results showed that the dimensions of quality that were in the very high category were reliability and responsiveness, while those that were in the very low category were the dimensions of tangibles. This illustrates that UT Kupang employees are considered capable of providing complaint services with the willingness and readiness of UT Kupang employees to provide fast service, always willing to provide solutions to student complaints, as well as the ability to provide the services needed by students regarding complaints. he conveyed and UT Kupang employees were deemed capable of resolving the promised complaints promptly, accurately, and satisfactorily for students.



Servqual Model Analysis

Based on the calculation of the average Hope score, it can be seen that there are 2 indicators, namely Information regarding registration schedules and course registration, and exams is conveyed clearly and correctly by UT Kupang employees and Handling of complaints is carried out quickly and precisely by officers which is the lowest compared to indicators others that is equal to 3.66. The indicators with the highest expectations are 6 indicators with an average score of 4.00. This shows that students' expectations of these 6 indicators are high, as can be seen from the average answer that strongly agrees from the respondents who answered.

Based on the calculation of the average reality score, it can be seen that the Handling of complaints is carried out quickly and precisely by officers indicator has the lowest reality compared to other indicators, namely 3.35. While those who have the highest average score, can be seen in the Information regarding registration schedules and course registration indicators, and exams are conveyed clearly and correctly by UT Kupang employees, with an average number of 3.63. To see the gap or gap between expectations and reality can be seen in the following table.

NO	INDICATOR	н	К	GAP	AVER GAP DIME		SCORE
					Η	K	
Tan	gibles						
1	Complaints can be made through various means or media	3,78	3,39	-0,39			
2	The student service waiting room is clean and comfortable	3,71	3,41	-0,30	3,83	3,44	-0,39
		1				1	
3	UT Kupang employees look neat and attractive	4,00	3,51	-0,49			
Relia	ability						
4	Information regarding registration schedules and course registration, and exams is conveyed clearly and correctly by UT Kupang employees	3,66	3,63	-0,03	3,84	3,47	-0,37
5	Prospective students and students can easily obtain information about UT	4,00	3,51	-0,49			

Table 1.7. SERVQUAL Score



6	Handling of complaints is carried out quickly and precisely by officers	3,66	3,35	-0,31			
7	Instructional materials are received by students before carrying out face-to-face tutorials and or online tutorials	3,90	3,36	-0,53			
8	The end of semester exams are carried out according to the schedule set by UT	4,00	3,51	-0,49			
Emp	athy						
9	UT Kupang employees pay genuine attention to the study problems faced by students	3,98	3,46	-0,52			
10	UT Kupang employees are always friendly in serving complaints made by students	3,99	3,46	-0,53			
11	UT employees have a friendly attitude towards the students they serve	4,00	3,44	-0,56	3,98	3,46	-0,52
12	UT Kupang employees are easily contacted by students to get information about the complaint resolution process	3,96	3,54	-0,41			
13	UT Kupang employees serve selflessly in handling student complaints	4,00	3,41	-0,59			
Assu	irance						
14	UT Kupang employees have qualities that students can trust	3,94	3,44	-0,50			
15	UT Kupang staff are able to provide information about academic problems experienced by students correctly and clearly	3,96	3,47	-0,50	3,86	3,46	-0,40
16	UT Kupang employees are able to provide understanding to students who submit complaints regarding the resolution of cases that cannot be resolved immediately	3,69	3,48	-0,21			
Resp	oonsiveness						
17	Student complaints about registration problems are immediately handled by UT Kupang staff	3,96	3,48	-0,47	3,98	3,47	-0,50



18	UT Kupang employees are always quick to respond to complaints submitted by students	4,00	3,47	-0,53		
19	UT Kupang employees are responsive in providing solutions to complaints submitted by students	3,97	3,47	-0,50		

Source: processed from the results of data collection in the field in August 2023

Based on the calculated data, it can be seen that the indicator that has the highest gap is among others, UT Kupang employees serve selflessly in handling student complaints with a gap score of -0.59 and UT employees have a friendly attitude towards the students they serve -0,56. While the indicator with the lowest gap is Information regarding registration schedules and course registration, and exams is conveyed clearly and correctly by UT Kupang employees -0.03.

The results of the study show that all indicators of the quality of complaint handling services at UT Kupang have a negative gap score. This means that all indicators of the fact that the quality of complaint handling services by UT Kupang is still not good by the majority of respondents. The dimension that has the highest gap is the empathy dimension with a gap of -0.52. Where UT Kupang is expected to improve services by giving more serious attention to learning problems faced by students, always friendly in serving complaints made by students, UT employees must have a friendly attitude towards the students they serve, UT Kupang employees must be easy contacted by students to obtain information regarding the complaint resolution process, UT Kupang employees serve independently in handling student complaints.

Meanwhile, the reliability dimension has the lowest gap, namely -0.37. But it is still a concern because the gap is negative. Therefore, there needs to be continuous improvement to improve good service to students.

Conclusion

- 1. Based on analysis of univariate results, the average value of the quality of complaint handling services at UT Kupang as seen from student perceptions is in the high category. However, if we look at expectations and reality, UT students still perceive that the quality of complaint handling services at UT Kupang is not good, because the handling of complaints received or in reality is lower than what students expected.
- 2. All aspects need improvement in complaint handling services because they have an average negative gap value where expectations are higher than reality.



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