

(Research/Review) Article

Implementation of Public Service Policy in Handling Electricity Customer Complaints

(A Study at PT PLN Persero UP3 Samarinda)

Edi Pamungkas^{1*}, Sri Roekminiati², Sri Kamariyah³

¹⁻³Faculty of Public Administration, Dr. Soetomo University, Surabaya;

e-mail : edipamungkas4@gmail.com

* Corresponding Author : edipamungkas4@gmail.com

Abstract: This study analyzes the implementation of public service policy in handling electricity customer complaints at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Samarinda and evaluates customer-perceived service quality. The research addresses the gap between formal complaint-handling policies and operational practice, reflected in increasing public complaints against state-owned enterprises, including PLN. A descriptive qualitative approach was applied through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation involving 13 informants selected using purposive and snowball sampling. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, with source triangulation to ensure validity. The study combines Edwards III's policy implementation model, covering communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure, with the SERVQUAL model, covering tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Findings show that communication and disposition are satisfactory, while resources and bureaucratic structure require improvement due to an imbalanced customer service ratio and fragmented information systems. SERVQUAL results show negative gaps in all dimensions, especially responsiveness and reliability. The study concludes that complaint-handling policy implementation is adequate but needs stronger human resources, integrated real-time information systems, and improved customer digital literacy for more responsive and reliable public service.

Keywords: Complaint Handling; Policy Implementation; Public Service; Service Quality; SERVQUAL.

1. Introduction

Public service is one of the most fundamental functions of the state. In the perspective of modern public administration, the delivery of quality public services is not merely a procedural obligation, but a concrete manifestation of governmental legitimacy and a reflection of the state's commitment to citizens' welfare. Contemporary public administration literature emphasizes that public service quality is directly correlated with the level of public trust in government institutions and business entities that perform public functions (Rahman, 2021). In the era of digital transformation and rising public expectations, the demand for fast, transparent, accountable, and responsive services has become increasingly urgent for every service provider.

At the global level, complaint handling has developed into one of the critical dimensions in measuring public service quality. International organizations such as the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) emphasize that an effective complaint mechanism is an inseparable component of good governance. Developing countries, including Indonesia, face structural challenges in building complaint-handling systems that are not only technically responsive, but also fair and oriented toward restoring public trust. Factors such as human resource capacity, the availability of technological infrastructure, and a bureaucratic culture that tends to be defensive remain systemic obstacles that must be addressed (Putra Dawan, 2019; Rustiawan & Rachmawati, 2024).

In Indonesia, public service reform efforts have normatively obtained a strong legal foundation through Law Number 25 of 2009 on Public Services. This regulation explicitly governs service standards, complaint mechanisms, and the obligation of service providers to respond to every public complaint in a timely and dignified manner. Articles 36 to 39 of the law require every public service provider, including State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN), to

Received: April, 16 2026

Revised: May, 17 2026

Accepted: June, 20 2026

Online Available: June, 23 2026

Curr. Ver.: June, 23 2026



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors.
Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY SA) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)

provide accessible complaint channels, resolve complaints according to standardized mechanisms, and report complaint management to supervisory agencies. In this context, the implementation of public service policy cannot be separated from the existing regulatory framework and from the institution's ability to translate that framework into real practice in the field. As identified by Elfiansyah Parawu and Taufik (2024) and Natria Aminarti and Rayyan Firdaus (2024), the gap between *de jure* policy and *de facto* reality in Indonesian public service delivery remains a problem that has not been fully resolved.

The electricity sector occupies a strategic position in Indonesia's public service landscape. Electricity has become a basic need that cannot be separated from modern life, from households and economic activities to education and health. PT PLN (Persero), as the only State-Owned Enterprise assigned by the state to provide electricity for the public interest under Law Number 30 of 2009 on Electricity, bears a very large public service responsibility. By the end of 2023, PLN served more than 88 million customers across Indonesia, making it one of the public service providers with the largest customer bases in Southeast Asia (PLN, 2023). With such a massive scope, the quality of customer complaint handling becomes a crucial indicator reflecting the effectiveness of public service policy implementation within the company.

Nevertheless, field realities show that PLN still faces various challenges in managing customer complaints. Data from the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia record that the BUMN sector, with PLN as one of the entities most frequently reported, consistently falls within the category of institutions receiving a significant number of public reports. In 2024, the Indonesian Ombudsman received 10,846 public complaints, a 28% increase from the previous year, and the BUMN/BUMD sector contributed approximately 6.2% of the total reports (Ombudsman RI, 2025). The dominant complaint issues related to PLN include power outages without prior notification, billing inaccuracies, electricity usage control (P2TL) perceived as procedurally improper, and slow field-officer responses. This condition indicates a gap that needs to be examined more deeply between PLN's formally established complaint-handling policy and its implementation at the service-unit level.

Scientific studies on PLN service quality have been widely conducted by public administration researchers. Research by Hardiati and Hasbiyah (2024), which examined service quality at PLN Tabalong, found that the dimensions of responsiveness and reliability were the aspects most frequently rated low by customers. In line with these findings, Novianty et al. (2024), in their study at PLN South Surabaya Customer Service Unit, emphasized that slow and poorly documented complaint handling significantly contributes to a decline in the community satisfaction index. From the perspective of policy implementation, Faridah et al. (2025) and Mardiansyah and Zahra (2025) used George C. Edwards III's model to analyze obstacles in public service policy implementation in Indonesian state-owned enterprises and concluded that communication and resources are the most determining variables in implementation success or failure. These findings strengthen the urgency of more contextual and in-depth studies at specific PLN units.

Samarinda City, as the capital of East Kalimantan Province, has distinctive electricity dynamics. As a rapidly developing metropolitan city, especially with the designation of the Nusantara Capital City (IKN) in the same province, electricity demand in Samarinda has accelerated significantly. PT PLN (Persero) Customer Service Implementation Unit (UP3) Samarinda is the unit responsible for managing electricity services for hundreds of thousands of customers in this area. The increasing number of customers, on one hand, reflects the success of electrification; on the other hand, it also implies an increase in the volume and complexity of complaints that must be handled. Infrastructure challenges, Kalimantan's extreme weather, and dense distribution networks are factors that exacerbate the frequency of disruptions and customer complaints within the UP3 Samarinda work area.

The presence of the PLN Mobile application as a digital complaint channel has brought meaningful progress in service accessibility. Faridah et al. (2025) and Santika I Kadek (2024) note that PLN Mobile adoption has significantly accelerated the reporting of complaints by customers. However, those studies also identify that faster reporting does not always correspond to faster complaint resolution in the field. There are coordination issues between the digital system and the real operational capacity of technical officers, which ultimately affect customer satisfaction perceptions. This finding opens an important space for further study, particularly concerning the implementation aspects of policies that regulate complaint-resolution time standards.

Based on the above discussion, there is a significant research gap regarding the implementation of customer complaint-handling policy specifically at the operational-unit level of

PLN, particularly in East Kalimantan. Most previous studies have focused on measuring customer satisfaction or service quality in general, but few have examined in depth the complaint-policy implementation process from a public administration perspective, ranging from policy communication, resource availability, implementor disposition, to the bureaucratic structure that supports or inhibits the effectiveness of complaint handling. This study seeks to fill that gap by taking PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Samarinda as its locus, a unit that is geographically strategic and increasingly important economically in line with the development of the IKN region. Therefore, this research is important for providing a comprehensive empirical picture of how public service policy in handling electricity customer complaints is implemented at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Samarinda, what factors influence it, and what implications the findings have for improving public service governance in the electricity sector.

2. Preliminaries or Related Work or Literature Review

Public Policy Implementation

George C. Edwards III's theory of public policy implementation emphasizes that policy success is determined primarily at the implementation stage, not merely at the formulation stage (Situmorang, 2020). Implementation is understood as a dynamic process involving the actions of various actors to achieve policy objectives, which in practice are influenced by administrative, political, and social factors. In Meutia's (2019) study, Edwards III identifies four interrelated main variables: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. Communication must be clear, consistent, and free from distortion so that implementors understand their duties; resources include sufficient staff, information, authority, and facilities; disposition concerns the attitudes, commitment, and motivation of implementors in carrying out policy; while bureaucratic structure includes the existence of clear SOPs and inter-unit coordination to prevent fragmentation. These four variables simultaneously determine the effectiveness of policy implementation, including in public service contexts such as customer complaint handling within organizations.

Public Service Quality

Service quality theory through the SERVQUAL model developed by A. Parasuraman, Valarie A. Zeithaml, and Leonard L. Berry views service quality as a multidimensional concept determined by customers' perceptions of the match between expectations and the performance of services received (Erlianti et al., 2019). Service quality is not determined solely by an organization's internal standards, but rather by how customers assess their service experience, so quality emerges from the gap between expectations and perceived performance. The SERVQUAL model identifies five interrelated main dimensions: tangibles, which reflect the appearance of facilities and service media; reliability, which indicates the ability to deliver services accurately and consistently; responsiveness, which relates to speed and readiness to help; assurance, which reflects competence and the ability to foster trust; and empathy, which reflects attention to and understanding of customer needs. These five dimensions provide the analytical basis for comprehensively assessing and measuring service quality in various service contexts.

3. Proposed Method

This study uses a qualitative approach to analyze the implementation of public service policy in handling electricity customer complaints at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Samarinda, in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation process based on George C. Edwards III's model and service quality based on the SERVQUAL model developed by Valarie A. Zeithaml, A. Parasuraman, and Leonard L. Berry. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with purposively selected informants, including unit managers, customer service supervisors, customer service officers, and customers, complemented by direct observation of the complaint-handling process and document analysis such as SOPs, performance reports, and customer complaint data. Data analysis used the interactive model of Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña through the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, with data validity ensured through source and method triangulation.

4. Results and Discussion

General Overview of PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Samarinda

PT PLN (Persero) Customer Service Implementation Unit (UP3) Samarinda is a work unit under PT PLN (Persero) Main Unit for the East Kalimantan and North Kalimantan Region (UIW Kaltimra). UP3 Samarinda is responsible for managing electricity distribution and customer services in Samarinda City and its surrounding areas. As of 2023, UP3 Samarinda served more than 385,000 active customers across six Customer Service Units (ULP), namely ULP Samarinda Kota, ULP Samarinda Ilir, ULP Samarinda Ulu, ULP Samarinda Seberang, ULP Loa Janan, and ULP Sangasanga. The organizational structure of UP3 Samarinda is led by a UP3 Manager assisted by several Field Supervisors, covering the Technical Field, Customer Service and Administration (PP&A) Field, and Finance Field. In complaint handling, the PP&A Field plays a central role as coordinator between customers, digital systems (PLN Mobile and Contact Center 123), and field technical teams.

Table 1. Number of PLN UP3 Samarinda Customers by ULP in 2023.

Customer Service Unit (ULP)	Number of Customers	Percentage
ULP Samarinda Kota	78.450	20,4%
ULP Samarinda Ilir	72.300	18,8%
ULP Samarinda Ulu	81.200	21,1%
ULP Samarinda Seberang	65.750	17,1%
ULP Loa Janan	55.100	14,3%
ULP Sangasanga	32.200	8,3%
Total	385.000	100%

Source: PLN UP3 Samarinda Data, 2023

As shown in Table 1, ULP Samarinda Ulu recorded the largest number of customers (21.1%), followed by ULP Samarinda Kota (20.4%). This uneven distribution of customers affects the complaint-handling workload differently across ULPs.

Implementation of Complaint-Handling Policy Based on George C. Edwards III's Model

The analysis of electricity customer complaint-handling policy implementation at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Samarinda uses the four variables proposed by George C. Edwards III (1980), namely: (1) Communication, (2) Resources, (3) Disposition, and (4) Bureaucratic Structure.

Communication

Communication is the first and most fundamental variable in Edwards III's policy implementation framework. Effective implementation requires implementors to understand what they are supposed to do, a condition that can only be achieved if policy is communicated accurately, consistently, and clearly to all implementors (Edwards III, 1980; Nugroho et al., 2021). Based on in-depth interviews with the PP&A Field Supervisor of UP3 Samarinda (Informant I-1, interview, 10 March 2024), the transmission of complaint-handling policy is carried out through several mechanisms: (a) monthly coordination meetings between the UP3 Manager and all ULP Supervisors, (b) SOP socialization through online communication groups (WhatsApp Group), and (c) direct supervision through field visits. Nevertheless, gaps

were found in the consistency of information delivery down to the technical-officer level (frontline).

Observation results show that several technical officers at the ULP level do not fully understand the time limits (Service Level Agreement/SLA) established for complaint resolution. PLN's official SLA sets a maximum of 3x24 hours for technical disturbance complaints and 5 working days for non-technical complaints. However, field findings show that the actual average response time at UP3 Samarinda still exceeds these standards.

Table 2. Comparison of PLN UP3 Samarinda Complaint SLA Policy and Actual

Type of Complaint	PLN Policy SLA	Average Actual Time	Difference	Status
Technical disturbance (outage)	3x24 hours	4.2 days	+1.2 days	⚠ Exceeded SLA
Billing mismatch	5 working days	6.8 working days	+1.8 days	⚠ Exceeded SLA
New connection	14 working days	12.3 working days	-1.7 days	✓ Within SLA
Power-capacity change	7 working days	7.5 working days	+0.5 days	⚠ Exceeded SLA
P2TL (Inspection/Enforcement)	10 working days	14.1 working days	+4.1 days	⚠ Exceeded SLA

Response Time in 2023.

Source: PLN UP3 Samarinda internal data 2023 and informant interview results

As seen in Table 2, of the five main types of complaints, only new connection handling met the established SLA. This condition indicates that the transmission of resolution-time policy has not been optimally internalized by implementors at the technical level. This finding is consistent with the statement of one Supervisor of ULP Samarinda Ulu:

"We have already conveyed the SOP to officers, but in the field there are many obstacles that delay completion time, especially when disturbances occur at night or the customer's location is difficult to reach."

Policy clarity is also a critical issue. Several customer informants stated that they were confused about the appropriate complaint channel, whether PLN Mobile, Contact Center 123, or direct visits to the office. This condition reflects weaknesses in the transmission of information to the public as service recipients. Based on the analysis of the communication variable, the implementation of complaint-handling policy at UP3 Samarinda is considered formally adequate (with written SOPs and tiered socialization mechanisms), but substantively not yet optimal due to inconsistent transmission at the field level and weak information dissemination to customers.

Resources

Resources are the second determining factor in Edwards III's model. Without adequate resources, whether human, financial, facilities, or authority, even a well-designed policy will face serious implementation obstacles (Edwards III, 1980). In terms of human resources, UP3 Samarinda has a total of 147 organic employees and 312 outsourced workers distributed across six ULPs. Specifically for customer service and complaint-handling functions, there are 23 Customer Service (CS) officers serving more than 385,000 customers, a ratio considered less than ideal by key informants.

Table 3. Ratio of Customer Service Officers to Customers by ULP in 2023.

ULP	Number of Customers	Number of CS Officers
Samarinda Kota	78.450	5
Samarinda Ilir	72.300	4
Samarinda Ulu	81.200	5
Samarinda Seberang	65.750	4
Loa Janan	55.100	3
Sangasanga	32.200	2
Total	385.000	23

Source: PLN UP3 Samarinda staffing data, 2023

Table 3 shows a very high CS-officer ratio, with one officer serving more than 16,000 customers on average. This condition is one factor contributing to the slow response in complaint handling, as acknowledged by the UP3 Samarinda Manager:

"Our number of personnel is indeed limited. We have proposed additional staff, but the decision is at the central level. For now, we are optimizing digital systems so that the CS workload can be reduced."

Based on the interview response above, limited human resources are identified as an issue not entirely within the control of UP3 Samarinda, but rather as a structural problem related to corporate-level HR development policy. This condition reinforces Edwards III's (1980) argument that authority not accompanied by adequate staff and facilities creates a significant implementation gap. Optimizing PLN Mobile as a temporary solution has indeed reduced the CS burden in receiving initial reports, but it does not solve the limited capacity for technical handling in the field.

From the technological infrastructure aspect, PLN Mobile has been used as the main complaint channel. Data show that by the end of 2023, the adoption rate of PLN Mobile in the UP3 Samarinda area reached 62.4% of total active customers, increasing from 41.2% in 2021. Nevertheless, 37.6% of customers still had not used the application, largely due to limited digital literacy, especially among elderly customers and those in suburban areas.

Disposition

Disposition refers to the attitudes, commitment, and values held by policy implementors. Edwards III (1980) emphasizes that implementors with a positive disposition toward a policy tend to implement it responsibly, while apathetic or negative implementors may hinder implementation success. The findings show that, in general, employees of PLN UP3 Samarinda have good understanding and acceptance of the complaint-handling policy. This is reflected in officers' compliance with complaint-recording procedures in the system

and a ticket closure rate reaching 94.7% in 2023. Nevertheless, resolution quality is not always directly proportional to speed and customer satisfaction.

Table 4. Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) of PLN UP3 Samarinda, 2021-2023.

Year	CSI (Scale 1-5)	Category	Complaints Received	Complaints Resolved	Resolution Rate
2021	3,42	Adequate	12.847	11.924	92,8%
2022	3,61	Good	14.213	13.489	94,9%
2023	3,74	Good	15.632	14.804	94,7%

Source: PLN UP3 Samarinda Performance Report, 2021-2023

The data in Table 4 show a positive trend in the CSI, from 3.42 in 2021 to 3.74 in 2023. However, this figure remains below PLN's corporate target of 4.10 on a five-point scale. The consistent increase in CSI reflects the positive disposition of implementors, but the gap between realization and target shows that there remains significant room for improvement. Interviews with CS officers in several ULPs revealed that motivation and work commitment are influenced by high workload and the lack of service-performance-based incentives. One CS officer stated:

"We try to give our best, but with this workload, sometimes all we can do is record and forward reports, not solve them ourselves, because we have to wait for the technical team, which is also short of personnel."

This condition indicates that a positive implementor disposition alone is insufficient without resource support and an adequate reward system, an interdependent relationship among variables that is characteristic of the Edwards III model.

Bureaucratic Structure

Bureaucratic structure includes two main aspects in Edwards III's model: (1) Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which regulate the procedures for policy implementation, and (2) organizational fragmentation, which can hinder coordination among units. Unclear or overly bureaucratic SOPs can slow response, while excessive fragmentation can lead to overlapping responsibilities (Edwards III, 1980; Herdiana, 2021). PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Samarinda has a complaint-handling SOP contained in the Customer Complaint Handling Procedure (P3P), established through a Board of Directors Decree. The SOP regulates the flow from complaint receipt, recording, escalation, resolution, and confirmation to customers. Structurally, the complaint-handling flow involves at least four entities: (a) Customers, (b) CS/Contact Center, (c) Dispatcher, and (d) Field Technical Team.

Table 5. Flow and Processing Time for Technical Complaint Handling at UP3 Samarinda.

Stage	Activity	Responsible Party	Target Time (SOP)	Average Actual Time
1	Complaint receipt and recording	CS / Mobile	15 minutes	18 minutes
2	Verification and classification	Supervisor PP&A	30 minutes	45 minutes
3	Dispatch to technical team	Dispatcher	1 hour	1.5 hours

4	Technical team response to location	Technical Team	2-4 hours	5.2 hours
5	Disturbance resolution	Technical Team	3x24 hours	4.2 days
6	Resolution confirmation to customer	CS	1 hour after completion	3.1 hours

Source: PLN UP3 Samarinda SOP and field observation results, 2024

Table 5 reveals that in almost every process stage, actual completion times exceed the targets set in the SOP. The largest gap occurs at the stage of technical team response to the location (target 2-4 hours, actual 5.2 hours), caused by limited operational vehicles and the breadth of the service coverage area. From the fragmentation aspect, coordination between the PP&A Field, which manages complaint data, and the Technical Field, which handles field resolution, is still insufficiently integrated. The information systems of both fields are not fully synchronized in real time, so situations often occur in which complaints already recorded in the system have not yet been followed up by the technical team because the information has not been delivered.

This finding is strengthened by the statement of the UP3 Samarinda Manager:

"We already have a fairly complete SOP. The problem lies in coordination between the data section in PP&A and the technical team, which often are not synchronized in real time. This is what we are improving through system integration."

Based on the interview response above, it can be concluded that the bureaucratic-structure problem at PLN UP3 Samarinda is not the absence of SOPs, but the weak integration of inter-unit information systems that serve as the backbone of operational coordination. This condition is consistent with the concept of fragmentation in Edwards III's theory (1980), in which separated functions not balanced by effective coordination mechanisms create gaps in the policy implementation chain. The system-integration initiative currently being pursued by management is an appropriate step, although its effectiveness still needs to be monitored in the medium term.

Complaint-Handling Service Quality Based on SERVQUAL Dimensions

Service quality analysis using the SERVQUAL framework (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988) was conducted by measuring customers' perceptions across five dimensions: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews with eight customer informants purposively selected based on the type and frequency of complaints they had submitted to PLN UP3 Samarinda.

Tangibles Dimension

The tangibles dimension includes the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials used in service delivery (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Within PLN UP3 Samarinda, this dimension includes the condition of the service office, the appearance of the PLN Mobile application, and the appearance of field officers.

In general, customers gave relatively good assessments of the tangibles aspect. The service-office waiting room was considered clean and comfortable, the PLN Mobile application was considered user-friendly in its interface, and field officers appeared neat in

identifiable uniforms. This is reflected in a perception score of 3.82, the highest among the five SERVQUAL dimensions measured. The relatively small gap (-0.38) indicates that the physical aspects of service have fairly met customer expectations. Mr. Muhamad Yusuf, a 1,300 VA household customer residing in the ULP Samarinda Kota area, stated:

"In terms of the office appearance and application, everything is good; there are no significant complaints. The problem is the handling time."

Based on the interview response above, it can be understood that PLN's investment in developing physical facilities and digital interfaces has created a positive impression among customers. This condition indicates that the tangibles dimension is not the main priority requiring improvement; rather, it can serve as initial trust capital that should be maintained and enhanced. Nevertheless, the statement also confirms that good physical service quality does not necessarily offset customer disappointment with other, more substantive dimensions, especially the speed of complaint handling.

Reliability Dimension

Reliability refers to the ability of a service provider to deliver promised services accurately and consistently (Parasuraman et al., 1988). In the context of PLN complaint handling, this dimension includes timeliness of completion according to SLA, accuracy of information provided, and consistency of service quality.

The reliability dimension received a low assessment from customers (perception score 3.31), with the second-largest gap (-1.34). Customers often complained about inconsistent information received from different channels, with information from PLN Mobile differing from information delivered by CS officers by telephone and from actual field conditions. The failure to complete disturbances on time, as discussed in Table 2, is the main factor behind the low score for this dimension. Ms. Nuraini Hasanah, a micro-business customer (food stall) in the ULP Samarinda Ilir area, shared her experience: *"I reported it through PLN Mobile and it said it was being processed, but when I asked at the office, no technician had come yet. The information was not synchronized, which made it confusing."*

Based on the interview response above, the unreliability of service perceived by customers is identified as stemming from the lack of synchronization between digital channels and field operations, a structural problem directly related to the weakness in the bureaucratic-structure variable discussed earlier. The customer's experience of having to verify information twice through different channels adds to the interaction burden and deepens distrust in the accuracy of PLN's reporting system as a whole. This condition is in line with the findings of Wahyudi and Pratama (2023), which emphasize that information inconsistency is one of the dominant factors that lowers perceptions of service reliability.

Responsiveness Dimension

Responsiveness is the dimension with the largest gap (-1.54) and the lowest perception score (3.18) in this study. This dimension reflects the willingness and readiness of service providers to help customers and provide prompt service (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Slow response, both in confirming report receipt and in field handling speed, was the main complaint most frequently expressed by informants. Data show that the average initial response time (from report receipt to customer confirmation) reached 63 minutes, far exceeding the 15-minute standard stated in the SOP.

Table 6. Complaint Distribution by Type and Average Response Time at PLN UP3 Samarinda in 2023.

Type of Complaint	Number of Complaints	Percentage	Average Response Time
Technical disturbance (sudden outage)	7.841	50,2%	5.2 days
Billing mismatch	3.127	20,0%	6.8 working days
Voltage-quality disturbance	1.876	12,0%	4.7 days
Power-capacity change/addition	1.406	9,0%	7.5 working days
Penertiban pemakaian (P2TL)	782	5,0%	14.1 working days
Others	600	3,8%	8.3 working days
Total	15.632	100%	average 4.8 days

Source: PLN UP3 Samarinda Complaint System, 2023

The table above shows that technical disturbances (sudden outages) dominated complaints (50.2%), and this type was also the most disruptive to customers because it directly affected daily activities. The high volume of technical complaints further increased the workload of an already understaffed technical team.

Assurance Dimension

The assurance dimension includes the knowledge, courtesy, and ability of officers to generate customer trust and confidence (Parasuraman et al., 1988). At PLN UP3 Samarinda, this dimension relates to officers' technical competence, CS friendliness, and assurance of problem resolution. Customers gave a fairly good assessment of assurance (score 3.55), especially regarding the courtesy and friendliness of CS officers. However, customer trust in guaranteed completion times remained low because previous experiences showed that time estimates given by officers were often not fulfilled. Mr. Hendra Setiawan, a small-industry customer in the ULP Samarinda Seberang area, stated:

"The officers are friendly, but their completion promises are often missed. They said it would be finished in two days, but it was completed only after a week. So it is hard to trust the time estimate given."

Based on the interview response above, a paradox emerges in the assurance dimension: the interpersonal attitude and knowledge of CS officers are considered satisfactory, but the substantive assurance of completion-time certainty is precisely the weak point most felt by customers. This condition indicates that officers' soft skills have developed well, while hard commitment in terms of accountability for problem resolution still needs to be strengthened through stricter control mechanisms and a more responsive escalation system.

Empathy Dimension

Empathy reflects the personal care and attention provided to customers (Parasuraman et al., 1988). This dimension obtained a perception score of 3.67 with a gap of -0.68, better than reliability and responsiveness. Customers generally felt care from CS officers serving at offices and by telephone. Officers were considered patient in listening to complaints and tried to provide alternative solutions when technical resolution could not be done immediately. However, customers in suburban areas (ULP Sangasanga and Loa Janan) felt they received

less attention than customers in the city center. Ms. Marlina Wati, a household customer residing in Loa Janan District and registered at ULP Loa Janan, stated:

"The difference is very noticeable. Neighbors in the city center are handled quickly when they report. Here, we sometimes have to report repeatedly before a technician comes."

Based on the interview response above, the unequal distribution of service attention and response based on geographic location is revealed as a real problem experienced by customers in suburban areas. This condition reflects that empathy shown individually by CS officers has not been systematically translated into an equitable resource allocation policy among ULP areas. Such service inequality not only has the potential to reduce customer satisfaction, but may also create perceptions of service discrimination, which in turn will weaken public trust in PLN as a public service provider that should be universal. Service inequality based on geographic location reflects the challenge of uneven resource distribution among ULPs under UP3 Samarinda.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Samarinda, the implementation of customer complaint-handling policy reviewed through George C. Edwards III's model shows that communication and disposition run relatively well, but resources and bureaucratic structure still require significant improvement due to limited human resources with a CS-to-customer ratio of 1:16,739, limited operational vehicles, and information-system fragmentation between the PP&A Field and the Technical Field. From the SERVQUAL perspective, all dimensions show negative gaps with an average of -0.97, where responsiveness (-1.54) and reliability (-1.34) are the main improvement priorities, while tangibles (-0.38) have relatively met customer expectations. Weaknesses in resources and bureaucratic structure are proven to be directly related to the low ratings in those two dimensions, so service-quality improvement must proceed alongside improvements in the policy implementation system. Therefore, PLN UP3 Samarinda is advised to add CS officers and field technicians, optimize AI chatbots on PLN Mobile, integrate inter-departmental information systems through an integrated dashboard, intensify digital socialization for suburban and elderly customers, develop a performance-based incentive system, and revise SOPs periodically by involving field officers.

References

- Erlianti, D., Tinggi, S., Lancang, I. A., Dumai, K., Gunung, J., & Dumai, B. A. (2019). Kualitas pelayanan publik. *Jurnal Administrasi Publik dan Bisnis*, 1(1). <http://ejournal.stia-lk-dumai.ac.id/index.php/japabis>
- Faridah, A. N., Siagian, S., & Safitri, A. (2025). Efektivitas pelayanan ketenagalistrikan aplikasi PLN Mobile dalam menangani keluhan pelanggan PT PLN ULP Cimahi. *Syntax Literate: Jurnal Ilmiah Indonesia*, 10(9), 7538–7557.
- Ghozali, I. (2018). *Aplikasi analisis multivariate dengan program IBM SPSS*. Badan Penerbit Universitas Diponegoro.
- Hardiati, L., & Hasbiyah, S. (2024). Kualitas pelayanan publik pada Kantor UPT PT PLN Kecamatan Kelua Kabupaten Tabalong. *Jurnal Pelayanan Publik*, 1(3), 948–958.
- Mardiansyah, & Zahra, A. (2025). Implementasi penggunaan aplikasi PLN Mobile pada bagian pelayanan pelanggan di PLN ULP Medan Denai. *Jurnal Ajudan*, 3(2), 63–71.
- Meutia, I. F. (2019). *Analisis kebijakan publik*.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Natria Aminarti, & Firdaus, R. (2024). Implementasi sistem informasi manajemen dalam penggunaan PLN Mobile UP3 Binjai untuk meningkatkan efisiensi pelayanan pelanggan. *Lokawati: Jurnal Penelitian Manajemen dan Inovasi Riset*, 2(4), 128–139. <https://doi.org/10.61132/lokawati.v2i4.1009>

- Novianty, C., Pujiyanto, A., & Pratiwi, I. N. M. (2024). Implementation of the PLN Mobile application in handling customer complaints at PT PLN (Persero) ULP Ngagel Surabaya. *Business Internship Symposium Proceedings*, 1–13.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 64(1), 12–40.
- Parawu, H. E., & Taufik, A. (2024). Manajemen komplain dalam pelayanan publik di Perusahaan Listrik Negara (PLN). *Jurnal Unismu*, 5(5), 955–967. <https://journal.unismuh.ac.id/index.php/kimap/index>
- Putra Dawan, I. (2019). Model perencanaan komunikasi dalam merespon dan mengatasi keluhan pelanggan PT PLN Persero Kabupaten Wajo. *Jurnal Komunikasi dan Organisasi*, 5, 38–50.
- Rahman, M. (2021). *Manajemen pelayanan publik*.
- Rustiawan, M., & Rachmawati, I. (2024). Analisis implementasi good governance pada survei e-government PBB tahun 2022. *Jurnal Penelitian Sosial dan Nasional*, 2(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.38035/jpsn.v2i1>
- Situmorang, C. (2020). *Kebijakan publik: Teori, analisis, implementasi dan evaluasi kebijakan* (Vol. 1). <http://thejournalish.com/ojs/index.php/thejournalish/index>