



A systematic review on communication tactics: Dealing with e-complaints on social media

*Lee Fong Yee

Taylor's University, Malaysia

NicoleFY.Lee@taylors.edu.my

Ong Ai Ling

Taylor's University, Malaysia

Kok Jia Wern

Taylor's University, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Understanding the genuine reasons for a customer complaint, getting to the root of the problem and following up with the customer with effective communication strategies would turn a negative situation into a positive outcome. The objective of the study is to explore communication strategies to help handle e-complaints on social media. However, there are difficulties and challenges when dealing with extreme negativity such as public criticism, and hateful speech from trolls, flammers, or keyboard warriors. Not all companies manage to resolve their customer complaints smoothly and retain customer loyalty. A systematic review of published literature on dealing with negative comments and e-complaints on social media was conducted to answer two questions: (i) What is the process flow of managing e-complaints on social media? and (ii) What communication tactics can be used in responding to customer complaints on social media for resolution or to minimise the effects of negative situations? The findings of the study summarise the proven strategies and solutions for ways to handle negative comments and e-complaints professionally. Based on the findings, a practical workflow to address negative comments on social media is suggested for businesses.

Keywords: *Social media, negative comments, communication tactics, complaint resolution, e-complaint handling*

INTRODUCTION

Today, the success of a brand depends heavily on how well its social networking sites (SNS) are managed and how relationships are cultivated with customers. To a degree, SNS positively influences sales, affecting brand loyalty and connection (Haudi et al., 2022). Having a business account on SNS provides more opportunities to interact with customers, making them feel like they are a part of the story, which motivates them to create content on SNS and tell others about the brand in their social circles (Kitirattarkarn et al., 2019). For such dynamic paradigms of customer service strategy, online business customer services should go beyond just simply solving customer problems when it arises; instead, it should involve proactive anticipation of demands before customers are even aware they exist.

Thus, modern customer service must integrate SNS customer care solutions into online businesses, especially when it comes to handling complaints from demanding customers. Nowadays, consumers are more vocal than ever; they could openly express their positive or negative experiences with online businesses on SNS. To get brand-relevant metrics that describe brand impression, satisfaction, and recommendation, it is necessary to analyse customer sentiment on SNS (Kübler et al., 2020). There are observers who read those experiences online; hence professional complaint processing has a beneficial effect on the business' reputation and indirectly, on the word-of-mouth (eWOM) intentions of the observers (Javornik et al., 2020). Nevertheless, dealing with customer complaints could be an opportunity for businesses to identify the gaps in their services and improve service quality. Managers find that handling customer complaints may be unpleasant, but if done in a friendly, professional manner, there is a good possibility that the customer will be happy with the result and become loyal to the brand (Nur Fadilah et al., 2023).

Customers now demand customer support staff to constantly check the SNS as customers anticipate an immediate reply. *The Global State of Customer Service Report* by Microsoft revealed that 54% of respondents worldwide said they had a more favourable opinion of brands when their complaints on SNS were replied to (Microsoft, 2020). In addition, the report also highlighted that 89% of respondents wished to offer their feedback on the brand. Getting feedback from the customers allows their opinions to be heard, and on the other hand, customer service staff can use the constructive feedback to enhance their procedures and processes.

According to Survata (2016), online businesses may pay a high price for ignoring and failing to respond to customer feedback. As much as 36% of individuals have called out a business on social media for bad customer service. If a brand does not reply, 30% of customers will switch to a competitor of the brand. Customers like to leave negative comments on SNS posts, give poor ratings and review or even highlight it to all their friends on social media. These negative comments may harm a business and it may tarnish the brand indirectly. Research shows that 85% of customers will take into consideration the business's overall ratings while 73% will check out recent reviews that can influence their decisions (Pitman, 2022).

Besides, many businesses use automated response algorithms or chatbots to handle customer responses. In most cases, automated responses in complaint handling may fail if they are not personalised and lack empathy. Users anticipate chatbots to have the same empathy as human agents; however, automated responses by chatbots are still only capable of basic problem-solving and lack emotional responses, empathy, and the ability to handle challenging communication scenarios (Luo et al., 2019). Customers want to feel heard and understood, and a generic response does not accomplish this. Thus, it is important for

companies to show empathy and understanding in their responses, and to try to personalise their messages to the individual customer's situation. Fuoli et al. (2021) stressed that an effective communication strategy for responding to complaints is the affective style, which expresses empathy through devices. In addition, Zhou et al. (2023) conducted a study on communicating-agent chatbots, and the results extended the negative effects of chatbots on communication quality assessments. Therefore, to fill the gap in this research area, additional studies on communication strategy and message creation for organisational response in complaint handling are required.

The body of knowledge about customer complaint management and its utility in media communication was assessed in this study. The goals were to comprehend the crucial factors affecting this process, find evidence gaps, and deliberate ramifications of events. In line with past findings, this study enables the researchers to develop a streamlined framework of experience by scrutinising current trends, such as communication strategies in the practices of e-complaint handling. The following questions were created to assess the effective communication strategies for complaint management in the context of SNS:

- (i) What is the process flow of managing e-complaints on SNS?
- (ii) What communication tactics can be used to respond to e-complaints on SNS for complaint resolution or to minimise the effects of negative situations?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public relations has been defined as a distinctive management that assists in creating and maintaining mutual channels of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organisation and its audiences. In addition to handling difficult situations or problems, public relations aid management in staying informed and responsive to public opinion (Leong et al., 2012). In today's digital age, public relations researchers believe that SNS intensifies the practices of public relations and allows public relations professionals the opportunity to share information and engage key public members for developing reciprocal and long-term beneficial relationships (El-Kasim & Idid, 2016).

In the past, public complaints were regarded as negative feedback from unhappy customers; thus, organisations made efforts to stop and minimise the impact of the negativity on their businesses (Bapat, 2020). Complaint management includes techniques and procedures businesses employ to resolve customer concerns. The procedure for processing complaints entails receiving and verifying a complaint, classifying the problem to its priority, and providing guidelines for a resolution (Afify & Kadry, 2019). Negative feedback may appear on SNS in the form of posts, comments, reviews, ratings, or official social complaints; thus, an online complaint can also be handled using the conventional complaint management systems.

Complaint management phases

Kumar & Kaur (2020) suggested three complaint management dimensions through a review of the literature on complaint management. The three dimensions are categorised as investigation of customer complaint behaviour, complaint handling by businesses, and customer post-complaint behaviour, which covers the complaint management circumstances. Table 1 presents the phases and the related articles identified in complaint management literature. Out of the final 41 articles selected for this review, 5 articles deal with the investigation of causes, 31 articles look at e-complaint handling, and the

remaining 6 articles examine service recovery. The following sections go into further details about the three aforementioned phases.

Table 1. Phases of e-complaint handling

Phases of negative comment management	Previous studies
Investigation of causes	Hirschman (1970); Sarı & Alikilic (2016); Dinçer & Alrawadieh (2017); Agu et al. (2018); Kumar & Kaur (2020)
e-complaint handling	Williams et al. (2000); Johnston & Mehra (2002); Gruber et al. (2006); Riegler et al. (2011); Johnston et al. (2012); Razali & Jaafar (2012); Thomas et al. (2012); Mattila et al. (2013); Cheng & Loi (2014); Haji Abdul Aziz (2015); Min et al. (2015); Barsky & Frame (2016); Siregar et al. (2017); Mei et al. (2019); Putri et al. (2019); Stauss & Seidel (2019); Abisuga et al. (2020); Allard et al., (2020); Huang et al. (2020); Javornik et al. (2020); Kumar & Kaur (2020); Robertson & O'Reilly (2020); Wan Zainodin & Razak (2020); Zhao et al. (2020); Janda et al. (2021); Phabmixay et al. (2021); Chen et al. (2022); Herck et al. (2022); Istanbuluoglu & Sakman (2022); O'brochta (2022); Nur Fadilah et al., 2023
Service recovery	Balaji et al. (2015); Grégoire et al. (2015); Dinçer & Alrawadieh (2017); Kumar & Kaur (2020); Kumar & Kaur (2021); Preuss et al. (2022)

Consumer complaint behaviour: Factors of customer dissatisfaction

Kumar and Kaur (2020) argued that dissatisfaction is the main factor to consider when analysing consumer complaint behaviour. Most customers neither frequently nor formally file complaints as they may choose to end the relationship with the brand product or service altogether. According to earlier research, elements like demographics, psychographics, behavioural traits, culture, and environmental circumstances have an impact on complaint behaviour. Customer dissatisfaction with services appears to be higher than that with products. Here are a few categories of people likely to voice complaints:

- i. customers that are younger
- ii. customers from Generation Y (those born between 1982 and 1994) as they are tech-savvy and frequent social media users
- iii. customers with higher levels of education
- iv. clients in the high-income group
- v. assertive and aggressive customers are very active complainers
- vi. customers with high levels of self-assurance, individualism, and social behaviour
- vii. customers from the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, and France which are more individualistic, are more inclined to complain
- viii. customers in collectivist countries (India, China, Japan, and Hong Kong) find it upsetting to complain, but are more inclined to alert relatives and friends about their dissatisfaction.
- ix. Asian customers prefer to vent to others or exit a brand instead of contacting the companies or complaining directly.
- x. unhappy customers are more likely to complain about the price, durability, or life span of a product.

Before responding to comments from unhappy customers, it is vital to understand the customers' main issues. Dinçer and Alrawadieh (2017) characterised the types of e-complaints made against the hotels in Jordan. Based on the negative reviews that were

posted on the TripAdvisor hotel rating site, the most common negative reviews were on hotel service quality, facility effectiveness, as well as cleanliness and hygiene.

Agu et al. (2018) investigated antecedents to service customers' complaint behaviour in Nigeria's transport sector. The results concluded six main factors (situational, demographic, psychological, service-provider, purchased-service variables, and industry condition) that influence the complaint-making behaviours. Understanding the cause of the problem and identifying the key points of failure is always the key to effective complaint management.

Complaint handling

Customer complaint satisfaction relates to the personality traits and behaviours of the customer service employee. Customers prefer a good customer service employee who is courteous, competent and possesses substantial product knowledge, as well as has the authority to settle their issues effectively. Additionally, customers believe that if customer service employees take them seriously with genuine concern, the problem could be solved with a positive feeling (Huang et al., 2020). The study also promoted active complaint management which emphasises customer openness when the customers feel that their feedback is taken seriously. Subsequently, customers are more likely to maintain their relationship with the service provider and do repeat purchases.

Kumar and Kaur (2020) revealed empirical research tactics on complaint management. Inefficient complaint management may have a detrimental effect on consumer satisfaction and loyalty, and could harm the connection between the consumer and the business (Janda et al., 2021). The crucial stakeholder is the employees who should be empowered to serve customers quickly and effectively. When businesses are aware of what customers anticipate, their staff must be well-trained to handle angry customers more effectively. In the modern era, businesses have developed the idea of an autoreply or programmed response to deal with customers, but customers still desire a personalised response. Additionally, companies can provide repair services, exchange, or money back as forms of compensation for customers.

Managerial intervention

Riegler et al. (2011) have outlined eight classifications on how businesses may respond to bad electronic eWOM on online hotel rating portals. The study examined how hotel managements respond to negative eWOM. When hotel managers notice negative comments online, they were compelled to constantly check and monitor the online comments on the portals and provide an appropriate response with possible solutions. Eight categories of complaint management on social media sites were summarised for managerial responses. Hotel managers can aim to (i) disregard the negative review, (ii) contact the author of the negative comment, (iii) post a statement on the portal, (iv) remove the negative comment, (v) improve customer reviews, (vi) investigate the cause of negative comment, (vi) presume the review is a fake comment, or (vii) take legal action. Statistics have shown that most hotel managers chose to contact the disgruntled complainants and find out more about the reasons for their frustration.

Managerial intervention was introduced by Zhao et al. (2020) to study the impact of managerial strategy on online reviews and how it affects customer satisfaction. This study investigated the effect of managerial responses on customers' additional review valence by using the data of additional reviews, a cutting-edge social media module that enables customers to express follow-up thoughts that complement their initial reviews. The findings demonstrate that managerial intervention significantly improves customer satisfaction in customers' additional reviews. Furthermore, the study also highlighted that any delay

adversely modifies the beneficial effects of managerial responses; therefore, businesses should respond as soon as possible to complaints made by customers in their evaluations.

Communication tactic: Personalised message

Online businesses usually set up a bot to auto-reply user comments on social media instead of employing real humans to do the job. In regard to this, Mattila et al. (2013) found that customers' response was negative, and they feel neglected by a business after complaining about their poor online service. The authors argued that automated responses to consumer complaints constitute a sort of cyberostracism (being ignored over online portals) and this affects customers' opinions just as negatively as a simple "no reply". Cyberostracism takes effect when individuals have a limited scope of experience, feel worse, experience less control, and lose the sense of belonging the more they are ignored. The study implies that there is a general misconception where retailers think that their auto-reply emails are meeting customer needs.

As the hospitality sector has yet to fully realise the potential impact of social media and online reviews on businesses, a survey was done by Market Metrix and TripAdvisor (Barsky & Frame, 2016). According to the study, responding to online reviews boosted the likelihood that customers will recommend the hotels to others by 20%. As a result, word-of-mouth recommendations can account for 40% or more of a hotel's clientele. On the other hand, negative comments can develop into a massive wave of customer dissatisfaction if hotels do not reply to online reviews. Barsky & Frame (2016) developed guidelines, based on industry best practices, to help hotels in building their strategy for managing Internet reviews. They included three main considerations in responding to customer reviews: (i) monitor, (ii) respond, as well as (iii) analyse and improve.

Monitoring refers to proper tracking of online reviews. Hotels must turn on notifications for emails, alerts, and Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feed as their rating scores change and when new reviews are posted. In addition, close monitoring of popular review sites such as Tripadvisor and Booking.com is necessary as they have a high volume of web traffic. Besides, information on hotel websites must be up-to-date with accurate images, videos, and descriptions.

Respond policies should be clearly stated; for example, all online reviews shall be replied to within 24 hours and priority is given to the negative comments first. Should the issue remain unresolved, it should be brought forward to the general manager or other co-workers who can help in the matter. Responding to reviews include raising any false review with the review sites and following up until it is taken down. Moreover, in responding to positive reviews, always begin by expressing gratitude to the guest for leaving a review. When replying to unfavourable reviews, express regret for the cause of the customer's complaint and let them know the proposed solutions to resolve it.

User reviews are crucial to the customers' intention to purchase as hotel guests usually carry out extensive research on hotel facilities before their trip. Further, analysis of hotel reviews can suggest improvements in services, ways to increase customer happiness and loyalty, and even lower operational expenses. Analysis of reviews also gives a big picture of the long-term patterns, highlights the performance gaps against comparable competitors, discovers rating variations between important consumer segments, and aids in assessing prospective investment decisions.

Post-complaint behaviour: Service recovery

Kumar and Kaur (2020) additionally highlighted that at times, a business may or may not be able to satisfy the consumers with the resolution given to their issue, and this could widen

the gap between customer expectations and the business' reaction. When it comes to service, service recovery is essential to a business' success. The response of a business can either strengthen customer relationships or amplify the negative effects of its failures.

Online businesses could implement various processes to lessen the spread of unfavourable reviews on social media and travel websites for post-complaint monitoring. For instance, a hotel manager could approach customers upon checkout to inquire about their satisfaction and experience with the hotel services and accommodations. The hotel manager could follow up with the customers for feedback via email. If a guest has had a bad lodging experience, the hotel management ought to pay closer attention to what the customer posts online. It is important to keep an eye out for negative eWOM and respond quickly when necessary (Chen et al., 2022). However, it is equally important to harness good reviews. The hotel management is advised to encourage visitors to share their good experiences. In return for the positive review given by the customers, incentives in terms of reward points can be given to them (Dinçer & Alrawadieh, 2017).

Frameworks for managing negative information on SNS

Responding to consumer complaints can be difficult, but if you have a complaint management strategy in place, it will be straightforward and simpler. Past studies have included best practices for handling complaints: (i) a clear process, (ii) swift reply, (iii) only one department or person to handle complaints, (iv) the complaint platform must be user-friendly and updated, (v) commitment from staff and management, (vi) resolution follow-up, (vii) analysis of data for solutions, and (ix) reduce the cause instead of complaint cases (Johnston & Mehra, 2002; Stauss & Seidel, 2019).

Abdul Aziz (2015) offered a more complicated process regarding complaint handling for government agencies in his framework. His study consecutively examined policy, procedures, and process for complaints, accessibility, communication channel, responsiveness, support resources, staff training, investigation on causes of problems, prevention, staff commitment, and empowerment. The study stressed on the importance of a complaint policy and procedure which is always available on the web portal to reassure customers that their opinions are valued and that the agency is devoted to resolving the problem in a fair, fast, and effective manner. Additionally, the policy should be documented in a way that is easy to understand and it should describe how customers can file a formal complaint. The formal complaint system should aim to guarantee that all complaints are dealt with fairly, consistently, and, whenever feasible, satisfactorily (Javornik et al., 2020).

Additionally, upon receiving the complaint, the service provider should send an acknowledgment of receipt and record it for further action later. An official facility that allows the customer to voice out their grievances is necessary. Service providers need to be responsive, analyse the patterns of complaints, inform complainants of their progress, and apologise should there be any delay in resolving the issues. All complaints should be stored in a central database and a manager should be assigned to resolve the complaint in a consistent and timely manner. Staff training is another important aspect to make employees understand the complaint policy and procedures, so that they know their roles and what must be done. Assessment and investigation are essential steps to find out the root cause of the problem and to offer effective recommendations. This helps in preventing similar complaints from occurring in the future. However, all employees and management should be made aware and inculcated with a commitment to handle complaints to support the process.

METHODS

A systematic review was used to summarise the media communication literature and the findings were chronologically organised, critically reviewed, and synthesised. The findings contain the gist of the primary studies on research objectives, materials, and methods. Mixed methods of both qualitative and quantitative reviewing approaches were chosen to cover the scope of this study. A mixed-method systematic review provides a more complete reference for multifaceted decision-making and stronger evidence than a single-method review, thus maximising their practicality amongst media communication stakeholders and policy decision-makers.

Peer-reviewed journal selection was done in reliable index and citation databases such as Scopus and Google Scholar. Key searches were done on the database using keywords such as handling customer complaints; e-complaints; negative online reviews; customer complaint management; communication strategies; managing negative social proof and handling negative word-of-mouth customer ratings and comments. The search queries were restricted to social science journals published from 1978–2022 that are indexed based on the key searches of the studies mentioned. A total of 738 document results were found in the Elsevier database search. Next, any study that did not describe research exploring the procedure and results of customer complaint management in the communication field was disregarded. In the end, a total of 41 papers were identified from the search results (Appendix 1).

The selected papers were reviewed and coded by three coders. The resulting coding was then synthesised, and discrepancies were settled by consensus. The primary literature review phase was governed by the eight steps of conducting a systematic literature review extended by Thomé et al. (2016) based on research synthesis methodology (Cooper, 2016) and Zhao & Strotmann's (2015) instruction on citation network analysis. This important systematic literature review protocol was updated in the Cochrane Handbook (Chandler et al., 2019). The steps taken for the journal review process were: (i) articulating the problem and planning; (ii) looking for relevant literature; (iii) acquiring data; (iv) assessing the quality of the data; (v) analysing and synthesizing the data; (vi) interpreting the results, and (viii) updating the review. Specific sub-steps or tasks were included in each major step.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Forty-one articles were reviewed to identify the main concerns in e-complaint handling in past studies (see Table 2). To answer the first research question, the process flow of managing e-complaints on SNS begins with a preliminary investigation. Three studies stressed fact-finding of the original complaints, and four studies emphasised analysis of current situation and finding a solution to the problem. To answer the second research question, most studies highlighted the characteristics of organisational response attributes. Two articles mentioned that remedies and compensation should be given to dissatisfied customers. Finally, post-complaint behaviours are a bigger concern in studies which include satisfaction, eWOM, service recovery, prevention, and most importantly, re-purchase intention. These studies also revealed an understudied domain of message strategy using an empathy approach.

Table 2. Number of past studies that examined the e-complaint handling process

Variables	Number of studies (n=)	Percentage (%)
Investigation of causes	3	7.3
Problem and solution analysis	4	9.7

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Variables	Number of studies (n=)	Percentage (%)
Organisational response attributes	21	51.2
Empathy/affective approach	5	12.1
Remedy and compensation	2	4.8
Post-complaint satisfaction	15	36.5
Post-complaint eWOM	8	19.5
Service recovery	5	12.1
Prevention methods	2	4.8
Re-purchase intention	4	9.7

A conceptual framework was established to provide guidelines for negative social feedback and e-complaint management. As shown in Figure 1 (Appendix 2), this framework was developed by analysing and combining reliable considerations from the previous study. The framework is divided into three phases: investigating the source of problem, handling e-complaints, which mostly focus on organisational responses, and finally, service recovery.

In contrast to past research, phase 1 of the proposed framework concentrates on finding the category of the root causes of the problem. The root causes can be divided into five categories: product quality, service failure, system failure, service provider and situational factors. Prior to taking the proper steps to address a consumer complaint, it is important to determine their priority as minor, major, or critical. It is crucial to analyse the problem and have a deeper understanding of the current situation and develop solutions and alternatives accordingly. The emphasis is aligned with the approaches advocated by Stauss and Seidel (2019), to prevent repeating past mistakes. It is important to discover the complaints' underlying reasons and eliminate them.

Phase 2 of the suggested framework highlights communication tactics with “affective” methods, such as courtesy, empathy, acknowledging mistakes, being open to investigating the cause of the e-complaint, and personalising the message for the complainant as contrasted to previous studies. This suggestion is aligned with the recommendation by Allard et al. (2020) and Min et al. (2015). Besides, customer satisfaction is linked to the responsiveness of managers to customer feedback. Past studies examined the connection between the manager's response in terms of timeliness, facilitation, redress, apology, explanation, attentiveness, and effort (Abisuga et al., 2020; Phabmixay et al., 2021). According to their findings, the aforementioned factors significantly affect customer behaviour and satisfaction.

When handling e-complaints, it is important to use empathy to build rapport and understanding. When engaging with a frustrated customer, you should always validate their feelings and apologise for any inconvenience caused before trying to find a solution. When showing empathy with a customer, a sincere apology starts with phrases like “I understand,” “I'm sorry,” and “I appreciate your feedback.” This follows by carefully reading and interpreting the complaint message while trying not to take things personally; instead, focus on understanding the complainant's perspective, rather than challenging it or defending the position of the business right away. Empathy helps us put ourselves in someone else's shoes so we can better relate to them on a personal level. The response message must acknowledge the problem and re-state the problem which is derived from the original complaint and it must be done with courtesy and respect. This is a form of personalised reply which should not be a standard script or done with an auto-reply by a chatbot. Additionally, it is important to remain calm and professional to demonstrate

a genuine desire to help the customer. By doing this, the organisational response is more effective and will go a long way in gaining the customer's trust and helping to resolve the issue. In short, sincerity and empathy in organisational response demonstrate to the complainant that the business understands his/her worries, issues, and emotions. It shows that the business cares about finding a solution, addressing their concerns, and providing them with a positive experience.

A few crucial elements in service recovery are highlighted in phase 3 of the proposed framework, including post-complaint satisfaction, e-WOM monitoring, chronic complaint management, prevention, and ongoing quality improvement, which influence consumer behaviour intention. This is in line with what Balaji et al. (2015), Grégoire et al. (2015), and Preuss et al. (2022) have suggested. Numerous studies in the literature have emphasised the significance of staff response to complaints influencing the ratings of a business' complaint-handling efforts and leading to higher customer satisfaction and less negative word-of-mouth (Kumar & Kaur, 2021). Additionally, Morgeson et al. (2020) asserted that communication in complaint management has a positive effect on customer satisfaction which moderates customer loyalty. Thus, businesses should concentrate on improving consumer happiness. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider how customers feel about the way complaints are treated and how they feel about organisational commitment to fix the problem. Preuss et al. (2022) studied post-complaint customer satisfaction with complaint management and found that satisfaction with complaint management has a direct impact on organisational commitment, involvement, and engagement. Thus, the commitment to problem-solving is crucial, and the service employee must confirm that the solution offered to the customer did fix the problem.

The proposed conceptual framework helps in achieving the objective of the study as it is useful for understanding how to manage e-complaints on social media. The framework includes elements such as identifying the causes of the complaint, understanding the grievance, implementing an organisational response strategy, and monitoring the effects of the response and service recovery. When responding to e-complaints on social media, it is important to remain professional and to show empathy. It is also crucial to take the time to thoroughly investigate the complaint and craft a thoughtful response with effective approaches that address the root cause of the issue. It is also vital to ensure that the response is timely and that the response is consistent with the company's message. Finally, it is important to ensure that the response is documented, and that follow-up is conducted to ensure that the complaint is resolved in a satisfactory manner.

IMPLICATIONS

The study's discussion has significant ramifications for businesses using SNS to handle unfavourable comments, reviews, or e-complaints. First, the discussion implies that keeping customers satisfied depends on effectively managing e-complaints on SNS. This contribution is in line with earlier studies that have demonstrated that overlooking consumer e-complaints results in decreased satisfaction and customer repurchase intention (Alenazi, 2021; Istanbulluoglu & Sakman, 2022). Online businesses must therefore monitor post-complaint satisfaction to ensure that customers are still satisfied with the resolution since happy customers stick around and become loyal.

Second, more recent studies have demonstrated that customers prefer accommodating tactics, including apologies and empathy that can be adopted when crises occur (Agnihotri et al., 2021; Herck et al., 2022). Consumers are more grateful when they receive a personalised human reply, instead of an auto-reply from the chatbot. Emotion

and affective approaches work; thus, online businesses must invest more time in crafting a sincere response with a few persuasive components: (i) acknowledgements of the mistake, (ii) sincere apology, (iii) empathising with the customer, (iv) paraphrasing the problem, and (v) politeness. Using empathy when dealing with customer complaints allows business owners and employees to not only show compassion but also to build trust between the business and customers by demonstrating a genuine interest in solving any problem presented quickly and efficiently which leads towards greater overall satisfaction. When customers complain, the business' response to their criticism is what the former is most concerned about.

Responding positively to complaints might create a more favourable perception towards the business and appreciation of its professionalism. When the complaint is well managed, customer repurchase intentions will increase. Cheng and Loi (2014) found that the responses to unfavourable online customer reviews has a moderating effect on the relationship between hotel trust and intention to purchase. The study showed that responses to negative reviews with appropriate strategies help make the intention to purchase become less negative and move closer to the neutral state. The results imply that effective complaint handling on SNS is important to retain customers.

When it comes to communication strategies of social media comments, it is important to be proactive and monitor comments and posts related to the business brand, products, and services. This will allow the business to assess any negative comments or feedback and address them quickly and professionally before it escalates to more damaging complaints which may potentially lead to a crisis. While handling negative comments, engaging with customers who have positive things to say is important too. Additionally, the present study serves as a guide to create a strategy for responding to negative comments and posts, so that all responses are consistent, on-brand, and appropriate for the situation. Finally, it's important to use metrics and analytics to track the impact of the communication strategies of a business on social media and to modify the approach as needed.

Moreover, SNS users may not blindly believe the negative reviews about a business, but they might believe the positive reviews if there are more endorsements of its benefits. Therefore, cultivate supporters who can give endorsements recommending the services of a business to others using social reinforcement. This can be an effective way of dealing with online complaints.

Centre for Innovation Policy and Governance (CIPG) suggested ways to improve an ICT-based complaint-handling system that allows the public to highlight problems in relation to the Indonesian government's governance. The research report highlighted two important key areas that can help remove barriers in using the complaint-handling system: openness and bureaucracy (Siregar et al., 2017). The complaint system should have fewer restrictions and the public should be able to access the system and follow the status of their complaints until resolution with greater transparency. Thus, the government was advised to reduce the complicated administrative procedure involved in making complaints as it was time-consuming (O'Brochta, 2022).

Employee competency must also be taken into consideration because the person in charge is the key to effective complaint management by a business (Wan Zainodin & Razak, 2020). Product knowledge and skills are essential for service employees to perform their duties. Employee training and development should be provided by the business to enhance employee performance and boost their confidence at work. Needless to say, qualified and skilled employees will be able to help reduce the number of complaint cases (Putri et al., 2019). Otherwise, the business' profitability, customer retention rate, and brand image may all be negatively impacted by the mishandling of customer complaints.

Further, if complaints are not professionally settled, there may be a high recovery cost, which may spread additional unfavourable publicity to other potential customers on SNS.

CONCLUSION

Despite the literature's novelty, findings for e-complaint management hold true regardless of discipline or industry. The proposed conceptual framework shows the inclusion of affective tactics such as empathy, courtesy, acknowledging mistakes, and carefully comprehending complainant's sentiments in the response to a customer complaint; however, the effectiveness of this strategy is untested. Thus, a thorough examination of customer responses, particularly using such an emotional approach can be beneficial to both businesses and researchers. The handling of e-complaints and negative or unfavourable social media sentiments is difficult to quantify because of intrinsic consumer behaviours. Future studies should include an in-depth study on consumer complaint behaviours. For instance, future research should examine e-complaining practices on social media in the context of different settings, cultures, and social norms. The scope of the current study could also be broadened to examine prevention and continual quality improvement for complaint management.

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Lee Fong Yee

is a senior lecturer at Taylor's University. She has 14 years of experience teaching undergraduate and postgraduate students in several higher education institutions in Malaysia. She is a professional technologist in the Malaysia Board of Technologists and a professional member of *Pertubuhan Wakaf Reka Grafik Malaysia* (wREGA) or Graphic Design Association of Malaysia. Her main research interests are digital and social media marketing, advertising, brand management, communication, and policies.

Ong Ai Ling

is currently a senior lecturer in the School of Media and Communication at Taylor's University. She obtained her undergraduate degree, MBA degree as well as her PhD from the National University of Malaysia. Her areas of interest includes public relations, corporate communication, media literacy, youth and media, and intercultural communication.

Kok Jia Wern

is a senior lecturer at Taylor's University with over 12 years of academic as well as practical experience. He has been working in several higher institutions in Malaysia by day and as a digital media freelancer by night. His main research interests include new media studies, art and design for communication, sustainable design, gamification, pop culture and cultural studies and team projects.

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1. Summary of the selected articles

No.	Author (Year)	Research Design	Variables/ Themes	Findings
1	Hirschman (1970)	Qualitative	exit (dissatisfaction), voice (complaint), loyalty	Complaining behaviour is influenced by demographics, psychographics, and behavioural traits, culture, and environmental circumstances.
2	Sarı & Alikilic (2016)	Quantitative	gender, complaint types	Compared to female consumers, male consumers tend to complain more; Common complaints brought on by staff unresponsiveness of staff and misinformation.
3	Dinçer & Alrawadieh (2017)	Qualitative	eWOM, user-generated content (UGC), e-complaint type	The most common e-complaints included service quality, the efficiency of hotel facilities, and cleanliness and hygiene.
4	Agu (2018)	Qualitative	customer complaint behaviour (CCB)	Customer complaint behaviour is significantly influenced by situational, demographic, psychological, service-provider, purchased-service factors, and industry condition.
5	Williams et al. (2000)	Quantitative	cyberostracism (effects of being Ignore), feeling, sense of control, sense of belonging	More participants who had experienced ostracism expressed feeling bad, having less control, and losing a sense of belonging.
6	Johnston & Mehra (2002)	Qualitative	complaint handling process, organisational culture, improvements and learning from complaint, satisfaction and retention, values and financial benefits	Instead of having cultures that are focused on blame and hiding problems, organisations had cultures that encouraged reporting, sharing, and problem-solving. They all recognised the benefits to the bottom line from keeping consumers, staff retention and improving processes, in addition to the losses of handling complaints in terms of finances and customers.
7	Gruber et al. (2006)	Qualitative	complaint handling attributes, consequences and values: competence, friendliness, motivation, active listening, openness (employee), courtesy, empathy, take time, honesty, responsibility, objectivity, accurateness, stay calm, solution, take someone seriously, loyalty, concentrate on other issues, trust, atmosphere, good treatment, learning, openness (customer), save money, forgiveness, satisfaction, security, well-being, justice, hedonism, success, netter world, harmony	The study provides a thorough understanding of what matters to customers who file complaints by outlining the key complaint handling characteristics, outcomes, and values.
8	Riegler et al. (2011)	Quantitative	handling negative comments and ratings: no action, contact the complainant, response, deletion, positive reviews, investigation, false alarm assumption, legal action	Getting in touch with the unhappy client and conducting an investigation are the two most popular responses to handle negative comments.
9	Johnston et al. (2012)	Qualitative	handling complaint with affective approaches: feelings, values, appreciation, willingness to do something, motivations, and attitudes	identified actions that primarily focused on three key objectives: connecting with clients, resolving the issue, and learning a lesson.
10	Razali & Jaafar (2012)	Qualitative	complaint service recovery attributes: Apology, explain, response speed, resolution speed, accessibility, resolution quality	The six characteristics are crucial to enhancing and raising the efficiency and effectiveness of the complaint management procedure.
11	Thomas et al. (2012)	Qualitative	negative eWOM, communication strategies, user generated content	The following five general approaches can be used to deal with unfavourable eWOM: delay, respond, partner, legal action, and censorship.
12	Mattila et al. (2013)	Quantitative	auto-reply for complaint, cyberostracism (effects of being ignored), emotional response, satisfaction, behavioural response, personalise response	To keep customers loyal and reduce unfavourable behavioural effects, proactive and personalised recovery activities are required when online failure happens.

Appendix 1. (con't)

No.	Author (Year)	Research Design	Variables/ Themes	Findings
13	Cheng & Loi (2014)	Quantitative	customer review, Brand trust, central route persuasive model, outcome, intention to purchase	Negative reviews were shown to be best handled by providing a response that followed a central route to persuasion as opposed to more traditional complaint handling techniques.
14	Aziz (2015)	Quantitative	policy, procedures, and the process for complaints, accessibility, communication channel, responsiveness, support resources, staff training, investigation on causes of problems, prevention, staff commitment, and empowerment	Offered a more comprehensive process for complaint handling process.
15	Min et al. (2015)	Quantitative	paraphrasing statement in response, Empathy, quick response, satisfaction with response	Inserting an empathy statement in response to the negative review improved the ratings of the response
16	Barsky & Frame (2016)	Quantitative	monitor, respond, analyse, improve	The ratings of the response increased when an expression of empathy was added in response to the negative review.
17	Mei et al. (2019)	Qualitative	customer complaint behaviours, double deviation, failed service recovery, eWOM	It is essential that front-line staff members can resolve issues before clients feel the need to use social media. However, as soon as the complaints are posted on Facebook, it is crucial to address them and recognise the issue rather than just dismissing it.
18	Siregar et al. (2017)	Qualitative	complaint-handling systems: openness and bureaucracy	There are two critical areas that greatly aid in removing barrier from using the complaint-handling system: bureaucracy and transparency.
19	Putri et al. (2019)	Quantitative	competency, business process, complaint management	Employee competencies will be able to aid in lowering the number of complaints.
20	Stauss & Seidel (2019)	Qualitative	complaint management, customer satisfaction	To prevent repeating the same errors in the future, it's critical to find and address the complaints' main causes.
21	Abisuga et al. (2020)	Qualitative	timeliness, facilitation, redress, apology, credibility of explanation, attentiveness, effort, satisfaction, eWOM, acceptance	Organisational response: timeliness, facilitation, redress, apology, credibility of explanation, attentiveness, effort re linked to overall satisfaction and post-feedback behaviour, such as eWOM and acceptance.
22	Allard et al., (2020)	Mixed-method	WOM, fairness, negative reviews, customer complaints, affective, empathy, emotions	The study offers consistent evidence that this empathetic concern for the company inspires positive consumer reactions including higher purchase prices and reports of greater patronage intentions.
23	Huang et al. (2020)	Quantitative	employee's warmth, competency, service failure types, customer service recovery	Customers' willingness to cooperate is susceptible to compromises between how friendly and competent personnel appear to them.
24	Javornik et al. (2020)	Quantitative	complaint handling, conversational human voice, Reply length, interactional justice, social media observers, satisfaction, corporate image, eWOM	Comparatively to when a corporate voice is used, the usage of conversational human voice (CHV) results in more favourable observer evaluations of complaint handling. This process is fully mediated by interactional justice, and satisfaction with the treatment of complaints has a beneficial effect on the company's reputation and, indirectly, on the WOM intentions of observers.
26	Robertson & O'Reilly (2020)	Qualitative	social Harmony, customer service, incivility, workplace mistreatment	Based on how much service staff members' activities were meant to foster social harmony, responses to customers were divided into categories of civil or uncivil.
27	Zainodin & Razak (2020)	Qualitative	complaint handling, employee roles	This study indicates the effectiveness of the agencies' direct impact on the non-compliance complaint within the timeframe, following the competency of government agency and unstructured organisational planning.
28	Zhao et al. (2020)	Quantitative	managerial response, negative initial review, positive review	The influence of managerial response treatment on customer satisfaction is mostly driven by the original, unfavourable review rather than by subsequent, favourable ones.

Appendix 1. (con't)

No.	Author (Year)	Research Design	Variables/ Themes	Findings
29	Janda et al. (2021)	Quantitative	customer complaint characteristics, organizational response behaviour, response rate, response time, response quality, customer satisfaction	Long-term customers' complaints that include suggestions for change are less likely to receive a response from businesses. Customer satisfaction levels are inversely correlated with complaint response times.
30	Phabmixay et al. (2021)	Quantitative	complaint management system, customer satisfaction, perceived justice, standardisation, complaint handling guidelines	the impact of three different types of rules—procedural, behavioural, and outcome—on providing consumers with more fairer solutions and, as a result, raising their level of system satisfaction.
31	Chen et al. (2022)	Qualitative	perceived eWOM, management response, complaint causes, negative eWOM handling, customer-driven learning	The management of consumer expectations is made challenging by perceived eWOM, which also has an impact on firm reputation and revenue.
32	Herck et al. (2022)	Qualitative	complaint handling process, contact reason, acknowledgement, gratitude, apology, empathy, content reference, brand positioning, investigation, explanation, conclusion, closing	The submoves that are paradigmatic for this sample are (a) the traditional submoves: greeting, gratitude, conclusion, and sign-off/signature; and (b) the traditional submoves: apology and explanation, which combine interpersonal and transactional techniques in reaction to unfavourable feedback.
33	Istanbulluoglu & Sakman (2022)	Quantitative	complaint handling, receiving response, response time, redress, apology, credibility, attentiveness, propensity to trust, trust in company, repurchase intention	According to the findings, getting a response and its four components— (redress, apology, credibility, and attentiveness) are linked to larger repurchase intentions via increased trust. Additionally, customers who are less likely to trust a brand express a stronger willingness to make another purchase when they believe the business handled their complaint with high credibility.
34	O'brochta (2022)	Qualitative	complaint response, e-government, responsiveness	Politicians are encouraged to respond more quickly to grievances brought directly to their attention since those grievances are more likely to result in electoral advantages.
35	Balaji et al. (2015)	Quantitative	perceived unfairness, desire for retaliation, likelihood of firm response, stability attribution, locus attribution, personal identity, public complaints, private complaints, post-complaining satisfaction, loyalty	Public complaints are strongly influenced by high levels of unfairness, firm response, locus, and personal identity; whereas private complaints are strongly influenced by the desire for retaliation.
36	Grégoire et al. (2015)	Qualitative	service failure and recovery, crisis management, relationship management, complaint management, customer revenge	Identified six different types of social media complaining situations.
37	Dinçer & Alrawadieh (2017)	Qualitative	e-complaining, e-WOM, customer satisfaction, causes of e-complaints	According to the study, the most common e-complaints were to hotel service quality, facility efficiency, and cleanliness and hygiene.
38	Kumar & Kaur (2020)	Qualitative	customer complaint behaviour, complaint handling, timeliness, facilitation, apology, credibility, attentiveness, post-complaint behaviour	Customer complaint behaviour, company complaint handling, and customer post-complaint behaviour all fall under the umbrella of the multifaceted idea of complaint management.
39	Kumar & Kaur (2021)	Qualitative	complaint management, customer satisfaction, customer retention, customer loyalty	The study contributes the conceptual framework of an effective complaint management system.
40	Preuss et al. (2022)	Quantitative	post-complaint satisfaction, distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice, organizational commitment, work involvement, work engagement	The results show that internal clients' satisfaction with the handling of complaints is influenced by perceptions of procedural and distributive justice. Satisfaction with the handling of complaints has a direct impact on organisational commitment, involvement, and engagement.
41	Fadilah et al. (2023)	Quantitative	complaint handling, customer loyalty, customer satisfaction	Customer loyalty and customer satisfaction were significantly and positively affected by complaint handling

Appendix 2. E-complaint handling conceptual framework

