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DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

Excuse you?

A research study on the effectiveness of deterrence tactics

to reduce illegitimate complaining

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Master Thesis

Master Business Administration – Marketing Specialization

June 13th, 2022

PREFACE

In front of you lies the thesis '*Excuse you?*', which is a research study on the effectiveness of deterrence tactics to reduce illegitimate complaining. This thesis was written in context of my graduation process of the Master's degree in Business Administration, with a specialization in Marketing at the Radboud University in Nijmegen.

The research question was developed in a collaborative group setting, in consultation with my supervisor dr. Herm Joosten. Moreover, this question was based on a research study he previously conducted, therefore current study was especially confirmatory in nature. It should be noted that chapter one, two and three have to some extent been jointly composed. The last two chapters are written completely individually.

During the process, my supervisor dr. Herm Joosten provided guidance and answered my questions which me enabled to complete the research. Therefore, I would like to thank him for his enthusiasm, expertise and helpful insights. His enthusiasm and the possibility to combine my marketing knowledge acquired during my Master's with my communication knowledge acquired during my Bachelor's convinced me to deepen into this subject in the first place. Moreover, I would like to thank my fellow master students, in particular Ingrid Breunissen and Nick Spierings, for their contribution to this research and sympathy to share thoughts when decisions got complicated. I also wish to thank the respondents for their time, effort and contribution to this research. Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends for their support and wise advice during the thesis process.

I hope you enjoy reading this thesis,

Sanne van Heumen

Hernen, June 8, 2022

ABSTRACT

Only a small portion of literature acknowledges that customers engage in illegitimate, opportunistic or fraudulent behavior. Research into this subject seems difficult, as customers are unwilling to admit they exhibit illegal behavior. However, a study of Joosten (2022) showed that four types of illegitimate complainers can be distinguished. Moreover, a study of Dootson et al., (2018) proposed that certain deterrence tactics could diminish the positive effect of neutralization techniques on deviant consumer behavior. The objective of this study, therefore, was to find out *how organizations could prevent or reduce the greedy customer type of illegitimate complaining, as described in the typology of Joosten (2022).* In order to answer the research question, a 1x2, online, scenario-based, between-subjects experiment was executed. Findings showed that greedy customers will use the neutralization techniques 'claim of normalcy' and 'claim of entitlement' rather than the neutralizations 'denial of victim' and 'denial of injury' to justify their illegitimate behavior, which is in line with the findings of the study of Joosten (2022). However, no empirical evidence could be found stating a match between deterrence tactic and neutralization used by the greedy customer would increase the level of cognitive dissonance or decrease the intention to complain for this type of customer. Noteworthy, the use of a deterrence tactic in an organization's communication appeared to be more effective regarding the level of cognitive dissonance and intention to complain illegitimately, compared to no use of such tactic. Moreover, findings showed that the hypothesis regarding the effectiveness of 'moral triggers' could be partially accepted. Lastly, further analyses showed significant differences between the level of cognitive dissonance, the intention to complain and gender. However, businesses are advised to interpret these findings in light of the limitations of the research.

Keywords: deviant consumer behavior, illegitimate complaining behavior, greedy customer type, neutralization techniques, deterrence tactics, cognitive dissonance, intention to complain illegitimately.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competing business environment, it becomes increasingly important for firms to understand consumers' behavior in order to meet the expectations of their customers. Therefore, practitioners strive to ensure the highest possible quality to reach satisfaction among their customers. However, there remains a chance that the actual product performance does not live up to the desired expectations, which results in a feeling of dissatisfaction for the customer (Patterson, 1993). The response of the customer that follows such feeling of dissatisfaction collectively falls under the realm of consumer complaining behavior (CCB) (Arora & Chakraborty, 2020). This type of behavior often negatively impacts word-of-mouth communication, attitude formation regarding the brand and the buying behavior of others for similar purchases (Assael, 1987; Grønhaug, 1977). Unfortunately, consumer complaining behavior is not always based on honesty. Practitioners in service industries state that many customers take advantage of a firm's service recovery policy by making illegitimate complaints to obtain benefits (Kim & Baker, 2017; Harris & Reynolds, 2003). They engage on customers with misbehavior such as shoplifting (Kallis & Vanier) and illegitimate, opportunistic and fraudulent complaints (Joosten, 2022; Harris & Reynolds, 2009; Harris & Reynolds, 2005).

Four different types of illegitimate complainers can be characterized, all differing in the extent of their illegitimate claims, as well as their use of neutralization techniques and their impact on the firm's relationship (Joosten, 2022). Since, complaints of illegitimate complainers are false and hard to identify, they will not contribute to the optimalization of the companies complaints handling. Consequently, spending money and energy in handling illegitimate complaining is a waste of the firm resources and might have a negative impact on service quality, staff retention and firm profitability (Berry & Seiders, 2008; Harris & Reynolds, 2003; Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004).

In addition, literature has proven that research into this subject seems difficult, as customers are unwilling to admit illegal behavior. Although, several studies revealed that it is possible (Joosten, 2022; Robertson et al., 2012; Agboola & Salawu, 2011). Subsequently, the Marketing Department of Radboud University succeeded in conducting various research into illegitimate complaining behavior. A first qualitative study, found several types of potential drivers for illegitimate complaints. An additional, quantitative study, confirmed a part of these potential drivers and a third follow-up study, focused on whether type of illegitimate complainers differed on the degree of their complaints, based on the use of neutralizations and on relationship variables. Lastly, in a fourth large-scale confirmatory study, four types of

illegitimate complainers were identified, namely: (1) the immoral firm type, (2) the failing firm type, (3) the greedy customer type and (4) the opportunistic illegitimate complainer. Each of these types are based on distinct drivers and differ in the use of neutralization techniques in order to justify their illegal behavior.

The aim of current study is therefore, to examine the best method to reduce or ideally prevent illegitimate complainers activity, based on the four confirmed complainer types. Here, the main focus will predominantly be on the greedy customer type, since this type is scoping to causes the most damage to a firm (Joosten, 2022).

There are different theories which can be used to deter illegitimate consumer behavior, of which the deterrence theory by Dootson et al., (2018) seems the most promising. This theory suggests that legal sanctions and the punishment of others will avoid consumers to engage in illegal. This type of behavior is grounded in the self-concept maintenance theory and cognitive dissonance theory, which state that acting in a way that violates one's cognitions will likely cause cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). In order to not engage in deviant behavior, the associated cognitive dissonance needs to be reduced or removed. Reducing or removing cognitive dissonance involves using neutralization techniques, which are mechanisms for resolving the conflict between wanting to perform deviant consumer behavior for benefit and not having to negatively update self-concept (Mazar et al, 2008). Subsequently, the theory by Dootson et al., (2018) described several tactics to deter deviant consumer behavior. All of the seven deterrence tactics mentioned in the study, can be used to deter seven of the neutralization techniques which consumers are using to justify their illegitimate consumer behavior. Therefore, the deterrence theory will be the main leading theory for this study.

1.1 RESEARCH AIM

As the different types of illegitimate complainers and their motives for complaining has been determined, the purpose of the current study is to contribute to earlier research and to answer the calls for more research into illegitimate complaints by extending the research of Joosten (2022). Therefore, this study strives to investigate on how to prevent the greedy customer type of complaints, using the deterrence theory of Dootson et al., (2018). More specifically, the aim of this study is to answer the following research question: '*How can organizations prevent or reduce the greedy customer type of illegitimate complaining as described in the typology of Joosten (2022)?*'

In order to answer this question in a structured way, the following sub questions are formulated:

(1) What are illegitimate complaints?

(2) Which types of illegitimate complaints exists?

(3) How can the deterrence theory of Dootson et al., (2018) be used to explain the illegal behavior?

(4) To what extent are the deterrence tactics effective in deterring specific neutralization techniques and countering illegitimate complaints?

1.2 THEORETICAL RELEVANCE

As mentioned before, various research has been conducted regarding the phenomenon of illegitimate complaining behavior (Robertson, McNeill, Green & Roberts, 2012; Agboola & Salawu, 2011). However, none of these studies found a clear empirical evidence for illegitimate complaints, due to its sensitive nature. Given its importance for improving existing theories on illegitimate complaining behavior, this study strives to gather important knowledge about illegitimate complaining by testing the deterrence theory on how this behavior can prevented or reduced. By investigating the research question in a methodologically correct way, important knowledge will be gathered which can contribute to the existing literature. Therefore, this study will be especially confirmatory in nature, instead of exploratory which has been proven in earlier research.

1.3 PRACTICAL RELEVANCE

Since the prevailed assumption of 'the customer is always right' in many business operations, firms spend a lot of money, time and energy in handling complaints. However, research by Joosten (2022) already showed that customers are not always right, which indicates that companies are overspending in complaint handling. Therefore, it would be very valuable for firms to know how they can prevent various types of illegitimate complainers so unnecessary costs can be avoided. Findings of current study could provide a better understanding on why customers engage in illegitimate complaints and how firms should deal with it, which helps managers in optimizing their service recovery process and identifying illegitimate complainers. In this way, firms can spend their resources (e.g. time, money, etc.) on the 'right' (legitimate) complainer. Moreover, current research will focus on illegitimate complainers in the car rental industry, which will make this research also practical relevant for businesses operating in this specific industry.

1.4 THESIS OUTLINE

In order to answer the research question in a structured way, the thesis outline will consists out of multiple chapters. These chapters will elaborate and deepen more into the topic of illegitimate complaining. Chapter 2 will review the theoretical background of illegitimate complaints, whereas various important theoretical concepts and the deterrence theory leading to hypotheses will be established. Chapter 3 provides an explanation of the methodology applied to this study, followed by chapter 4 which shows the research analyses and findings. Chapter 5 finalizes with a conclusion and discussion in which theoretical contributions, managerial implications, limitations and future research directions will be proposed.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This section will start with reviewing the theory behind complaining behavior, illegitimate complaints, cognitive dissonance, neutralization techniques and behavioral change to indicate the definition behind these concepts. Subsequently, the types of illegitimate complaints described in the typology of Joosten (2022) will be discussed. Thereafter, the deterrence theory of Dootson et al., (2018), the leading theory of current research, will be elaborately explained and linked to the greedy customer type. Moreover, the conceptual model will be presented, followed by a short explanation of the relationship between the variables. Chapter 2 will close with a short summary of the most important findings gathered from the existing literature which can be valuable for the current study.

2.1 COMPLAINING BEHAVIOR

The concept of complaining behavior has already been extensively investigated in literature, where it was found that a person's causal analysis of events influences their behavior and feelings (Heider, 1958; Jones et al., 1972). More specifically, when consumers evaluate a product, they infer reasons for the positive or negative performance outcome. These outcomes influence how they respond and whether they complain to the related firm. According to Curren and Folkes (1987), these reactions can be predicted by examining the locus, contrabillity and stability of consumers. Here, the locus influences whether consumers feel the firm owes them compensation or a refund for failed products, whereas stability influences expectancies for product performance (Folkes, 1984). Findings showed that seller-related failures will lead to more communication about products than buyer-related failures. In addition, consumers are likely to complain and warn friends against the products more when the seller had control over the product failure. Consequently, consumers will compliment a seller and recommend a product to friends after product success more, when they perceive product performance to be uncontrolled by the seller (Curren & Folkes, 1987). In order to see whether the same effect occurs in times of illegitimate complaints, literature behind this type of complaining behavior needs further explanation.

2.2 ILLEGITIMATE COMPLAINTS

Complaint handling belongs for many firms to the order of the day, where every complain seems legitimate and valuable to the firm. However, research already showed that the prevailed assumption of the 'customer is always right' not always reflects reality (Kallis & Vanier, 1985;

Harris & Reynolds, 2009) and that consumers might not always be genuine in their behavior and complaints. Consumer unethical behavior has been discussed in literature by using various labels. In service management literature, 'problem customers' (Bitner et al., 1994) 'dysfunctional customers' (Harris & Reynolds, 2003) and 'jaycustomers' (Lovelock, 1994) refer to customers who act in a thoughtless way causing problems for firms, employees and other customers. These customers can be seen as opportunistic customers, who behave in order to receive material gain by exaggerating, altering or lying about the fact or situation (Joosten, 2022). In a retail setting, actions of customers who intentionally preplan the purchase of goods because they will use the products and complain, are known as 'deshopping' or 'fraudulent return' (Harris, 2008; Rosenbaum et al., 2012, & Schmidt et al., 1999). Thereby, 'deshopping' can be seen as a social and risk reducing strategy which is based on social, economic, personal satisfaction, professional, altruistic and miscellaneous needs (Schmidt et al., 1999). Whereas Jolson (1974) found evidence that younger, male customers mostly fraudulently return goods, studies by Schmidt et al., (1999) and Piron and Young (2000) found no differences between sexes and 'deshopping' activities.

According to Harris and Reynolds (2003), this type of behavior is called illegitimate complaining, where complainants act in a dysfunctional manner by making inauthentic complaints based on purpose. There is no basis in the quality of the product or service, compared to legal and industry standards by any independent expert (Joosten, 2022). This type of complainer seeks self-interest and opportunities with little consideration for consequences by taking advantage of any situation, to gain some benefit (Wirtz & McColl-Kennedy, 2010). The study by Joosten (2022) categorized the types of complainers into three dimensions of illegitimate complaining. These dimensions indicate that illegitimate complaints are complaints that are made up or exaggerated, or in which the firm is wrongly blamed. Hence, these fictious complaints often have the goal to receive some form of compensation, which leads to an extensive abuse of firms' money guarantees (Baker et al., 2012; Tsikas, 2017).

2.3 COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

In general, consumers avoid being immoral for fear of exposure and punishment (Becker, 1968), even if anonymity is guaranteed (Gneezy, 2005; Lundquist et al., 2009). This could be due to the certain level of cognitive dissonance that arises (Aronson, 1969; Chang, Xie & Fan, 2022). According to Festinger (1957), the dissonance theory states that elements of knowledge can be relevant or irrelevant to another. Here, two cognitions are consonant if one follows from

the other, and are dissonant if the opposite of one cognition follows from the other. In addition, the existence of cognitive dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, motivate people to reduce the dissonance and avoid situations which they perceive as incompetent, immoral or irrational (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959). For example, cognitive dissonance is experienced when dieters succumb to temptation and order the dessert they know they should not have or when consumers spend more money than they really want to spend. In both examples, one of the cognitive elements (i.e. attitudes, beliefs or behavior) is inconsistent with one or more of the other cognitive elements. Thereby, the cognition that one likes the activity is dissonant with the cognition that one is not performing it. Therefore, Festinger (1975) argued that whenever there is inconsistency between cognitions, there is cognitive dissonance. In order to reduce cognitive dissonance, consumers often use neutralization techniques to justify their (immoral) behavior (Aronson, 1969; Stephens, 2017).

2.4 NEUTRALIZATION THEORY

According to the neutralization theory of Sykes and Matza (1957), neutralization techniques are often used in order to protect the individual from self-blame and the blame of others after the immoral act. More specifically, individuals engaging in deviant consumer behavior are enabled to diminish the impact of their misbehavior in their own eyes and those of others. This type of behavior is often not in line with the individual's core ethical values and beliefs. Therefore, individuals often use the neutralization techniques as guilt-reducing mechanisms (Harris & Dumas, 2009; Mitchell & Dodder, 1980).

Sykes and Matza (1957) distinguished five neutralization techniques which people use to justify their criminal or deviant behavior. By using these cognitive techniques, people try to justify their behavior and want to convince themselves and others that their behavior is appropriate. Since different types of illegitimate complainers have different motives to complain and complain under different circumstances, they may also have different ways to justify their behavior. However, the most frequently used techniques are: (1) *denial of victim* (i.e. 'the firm deserves this for what they have done'), (2) *denial of injury* (i.e. 'no one is getting hurt'), (3) *denial of responsibility* (i.e. 'it was not my fault'), (4) *condemnation of the condemners* (i.e. 'the firm is also not always fair towards their customers') and (5) *appeal to higher loyalties* (i.e. 'I did it not for myself, but for others of out of principle') (Joosten, 2022; Sykes & Matza, 1957). Later on, other studies expanded the exhaustible list of neutralization techniques by adding *defense of necessity* (i.e. 'I had no choice but to do it'), *metaphor of the*

ledger and claims of relative acceptability (i.e. 'Normally I always adhere to rules'), *denial of negative intent* (i.e. 'I did not intent to cause harm') and *justification of postponement* (i.e. 'I don't think about it') among others (Harris & Daunt, 2011; McGregor, 2008; Hinduja, 2007).

2.5 TYPES OF ILLEGITIMATE COMPLAINTS

According to Joosten (2022), four types of illegitimate complainers can be distinguished. These four types of illegitimate complainers are based on the level of intention (did it out of greed vs. did not do it out of greed) and the level of attribution (customer blames himself vs. customer blames firm), since the attribution theory suggests that both attribution of the cause of the problem and intention, affect someone's motivation and response (Heider, 1958). The classifications can be seen in Figure 1.

To start with *Type 1*: the *immoral firm type*. This type of complainer feels the firm has deliberately cheated on him to make a profit. The complainer tries to make the firm change course, but fails, since the firm does not respond and does not keep to what has been agreed. The customer feels he lost control, therefore illegitimate complaining is his last cry for help. This results in a customer who slightly exaggerates, makes up complaints and blames the firm for justify complaining. However, this type of complainer is not very satisfied with his illegitimate behavior and therefore uses neutralizations in order to justify the behavior. These neutralizations consist of denial of responsibility, denial of victim, condemnation of condemner, appeal to higher loyalties and defense of necessity. The immoral firm type does not refer to other people to justify behavior, since he feels the firm has deliberately cheated on him to make a profit.

Secondly, *Type 2: the failing firm type.* This type of complainer feels the firm has treated him unfairly due to lack of ability. This type exaggerates, makes up complaints and blames the firm the least of all types. Moreover, the failing firm type has the lowest score on degree of illegitimate complaining, therefore he feels less need to justify his behavior. In addition, this type scores low on neutralization techniques. The highest scoring technique is 'the firm would not really suffer from my complaint'.

Thirdly, *Type 3: the greedy customer type.* This type of complainer feels the need to deliberately cheat on the firm out of his own greed. Thereby, the customer admits he is the culprit. This type exaggerates, makes up complaints and blames the firm the most of all types. He justifies behavior by claim of normalcy and claim of entitlement. Moreover, this type refers to others to justify his behavior, instead of referring to the firm. The greedy customer type

admits to have preplanned their illegitimate complaining out of personal greed, therefore he scores low on denial of negative intent. Subsequently, he takes advantages out of the firm which results in a customer who is happy to visit the firm again.

Lastly, *Type 4: the opportunistic illegitimate complainer.* This type of complainer grabs the opportunity to cheat on the firm because the firm has a liberal redress policy. The customer exaggerates and makes up complaints not as much as the greedy customer type, but more than the immoral firm and failing firm types. In order to justify his illegitimate behavior, this type uses neutralization techniques as justification by postponement and claim of relative acceptability. He scores the lowest on condemnation of condemners. Furthermore, this type does not refer to misbehavior of the firm, because the customer knowns and admits the firm has done nothing wrong and it was him being able to take advantage of the firm's liberal redress policy.

Figure 1. Typology of Illegitimate complainers (Joosten, 2022)

Since current study focuses on how businesses can prevent the greedy customer type from illegitimate complaining, it is expected that this type of customer will use the neutralization techniques 'claim of normalcy' and 'claim of entitlement' more than neutralizations related to the immoral firm type, for example 'denial of injury' and 'denial of victim'.

Therefore, the following can be hypothesized:

H1: *Greedy customers will use the neutralization techniques claim of normalcy and claim of entitlement rather than the neutralizations denial of injury and denial of victim.*

2.6 DETERRENCE THEORY

The deterrence theory by Dootson et al., (2018) gained insight into the different ways of how deviant consumer behavior (DCB) can be controlled. In their study, the authors define DCB as: 'any behavior that violates consumers laws, policies or accepted norms of conduct' (Dootson et al., 2018, p. 578), and can be directed toward employees (e.g. verbal abuse) merchandise (e.g. shoplifting, fraudulent returns), financial assets (e.g. all types of fraud), physical or electronic premises (e.g. vandalism) or other consumers (e.g. jumping queues) (Fullerton & Puni, 2004). Since illegitimate customer complaining violates social norms and rules, it can be considered as deviant consumer behavior (Joosten, 2022). The theory proposes two approaches to control behavior which are based on fear of punishment (Akers & Sellers, 2004) and the principles of vicarious learning (Bandura, 1977). More specifically, it suggests that people's perception of certainty, severity and swiftness of punishment are influenced by what they are told or what they experientially learn. This theory assumes that individuals weigh up the costs and benefits of a situation to make rational decisions based on increasing their pleasure and decreasing their pain (Pratt et al., 2010). If an individual perceives legal sanctions, one will be deterred from engaging in illegal behavior (Akers and Sellers, 2004). Moreover, the punishment of current offenders to deter others from offending and the focus on preventing reoffending, tend to be important factors for controlling behavior. In other words, individuals who observing others being caught and punished as a result of engaging in a specific action and individuals who are punished following a specific action, will avoid engaging in the same action.

Therefore, the authors aim to shift the conversation from exploring why consumers engage in deviant behavior to understanding how DCB could be deterred by using neutralization techniques and deterrence tactics. Various neutralization techniques could enable DCB by distorting the link between an individual's action and their consequences, whereas disengagement could cause an individual to engage in behaviors they originally considered unacceptable without experiencing much cognitive dissonance. On the other hand, deterrence tactics will reintroduce cognitive dissonance by presenting the consumer with a piece of information that challenges their attitudes, beliefs or behavior. By doing so, it is proposed that certain deterrence tactics could diminish the positive effect of neutralization techniques on DCB if the tactics challenge the justifications consumers are using to excuse their actions. In their conceptual framework, Dootson et al., (2018) addresses seven deterrence tactics that can be used to deter six neutralization techniques.

First of all, the tactic of *communicating the objective risk of formal sanctions.* Since some DCB is driven by a perceived low risk of being caught and punished, a commonly used neutralization technique is 'denial of the probability of punishment' (i.e. 'I won't get caught) (Dootson et al., 2016). By using this neutralization, the consumer can reduce any dissonance associated with performing illegitimate complaining. In order to deter this justification, the author proposes the tactic communicating the objective risk of being caught and punished. One way to achieve this is to communicate the objective risk of formal sanctions from an authority, for example an organization, or to communicate the objective risk of incurring social sanctions from other consumers. By doing so, consumers will not be able to use the justification 'I won't get caught' to shift their deviance threshold and accommodate DCB.

The second deterrence tactic is *communicating the objective risk of social sanctions.* The only way this tactic differs from the previous one, is the one administering the sanctions to deter DCB, in this case peers, members of a social group or other consumers. Communicating the objective risk of social sanctions is consistent with formal sanctions in being a tactic that will inform perceptual risk. Consequently, if the consumer perceives the threat of being caught by others, the denial of punishment probability neutralization technique will be challenged which reintroduces cognitive dissonance. Therefore, it is expected that communicating the objective risk of formal and social sanctions will decrease the positive relationship between the denial of punishment technique and cognitive dissonance.

Another deterrence tactic which has been described, is to *humanize the organization.* This tactic is based on the identifiable victim effect which states that the more identifiable the victim, the less likely deviant acts will be directed toward them. This is due to the victim's ability to cause empathy from the offender (Jenni & Loewenstein, 1997). In addition, the study of Small and Loewestein (2003) provided evidence that a consumer is more likely to feel socially close to another human victim than they are to an abstract victim like an organization. This can be problematic when the victim is not identifiable, since offenders will perceive no caused harm, which facilitates their illegitimate complaining. Therefore, Dootson et al., (2018) mention that when deviant consumer behavior involves direct harm to an organization, the most frequently used neutralization is denial of victim. By humanizing the organization, the customer is less likely to use the justification and therefore will be less likely to engage in illegitimate complaining. Therefore, it is expected that increasing the perceived humanness of the organization will decrease the positive relationship between the denial of victim technique and cognitive dissonance.

The next tactic which has been discussed is *educating the consumer.* It is stated that individuals who are more likely to engage in DCB are focused on the benefit they gain from performing the behavior, rather than on acknowledging the negative outcome of others due to their behavior (Forsyth, 1980). Therefore, organizations should create awareness of the outcomes of the deviant behavior, for example by educating consumers about the harm caused to the victim. This can be achieved through the use of personal stories that reinforce empathy with the victim, so the denial of injury justifications can be challenged. Consequently, challenging the justifications by presenting the harm objectively will make it difficult to discount without reintroducing cognitive dissonance. Therefore, it is proposed that educating consumers about the harm incurred by victims of illegitimate complaining will decrease the positive relationship between the denial of injury technique and cognitive dissonance.

The fifth deterrence tactic is *social proof*, which can be justified by using the normal practice neutralization technique. Since peers, friends and family have been found to influence a consumer's behavior, this technique can reduce any cognitive dissonance associated with a DCB if they perceive that everybody else is doing it (Albers-Miller, 1999). Moreover, social proof is able to persuade individuals to perform a behavior an organization desires, by suggesting that the group a person feels connected with, also engages in that legitimate behavior (Goldstein et al., 2008). Therefore, it is stated that the more specific and positive the message is, and the more closely related the message is to the individuals' situation, the more effective the message will be in changing their illegitimate behavior (Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007). In addition, it is expected that positive social proofs will decrease the positive relationship between the normal practice technique and cognitive dissonance.

Moreover, the sixth deterrence tactic which can be applied is *transparency in rules*. This tactic is based on the theory that an opportunity arises for DCB out of inconsistencies between how the law and organizational rules, objectively classify behavior as wrong and how the consumer classifies it (Dootson et al., 2018). In addition, Brehm (1966) stated that individuals will be motivationally aroused to engage in restricted behavior when their freedom of choice can be restored. Organizations can motivate this behavior by being transparent about the rules in place as a means of enhancing consumers' comprehension of those rule, since people are tend to be more compliant when they comprehend the reasons for engaging in a specific action (Glik, 2007; Mileti & Peek, 2000). Furthermore, transparency in rules will result in consumers do not engage in DCB or that they change their neutralization technique to one that challenges the specific reason for the rule. Therefore, it is expected that transparency of the organizational

rules or law will decrease the positive relationship between the claim of entitlement technique and cognitive dissonance.

A final deterrence tactic is *moral triggers and self-sanctions.* While each of the other tactics seeks to challenge one specific neutralization technique and reintroduce cognitive dissonance to impede DCB, moral triggers are likely to challenge any neutralization technique through the administration of self-sanctions. These triggers work by increasing the salience of moral values, for example honesty, to trigger self-sanctions (e.g. guilt or shame). By triggering these sanctions, people are likely to deter themselves from engaging in illegitimate behaviors. Research confirms this by mentioning that individuals who rely on internal self-sanctions are less likely to engage in deviant actions (Aquino and Reed, 2002). Thereby, the goal of the tactic is to encourage reasoning (i.e. it's just not the right thing to do), therefore the neutralization technique which stresses 'not what a good person does' can be applied. Based on the literature, it is expected that increasing the saliency of moral traits through moral trigger tactics will decrease the positive relationship between general neutralization techniques and cognitive dissonance.

2.7 DETERRENCE THEORY AND TYPE OF CUSTOMER

Now all the deterrence tactics of Dootson et al., (2018) have been discussed, current study aims to investigate whether these tactics can be applied to reduce the greedy customer type from illegitimate complaining. Theory already showed that this type is the most likely to grab the opportunity to complain and blame the firm in contrast to the other types. Therefore, findings about reducing greedy customers can lead to important recommendations for the organization.

First of all, according to Joosten (2022) the greedy customer type justifies his behavior by using the neutralizations 'claim of normalcy' (i.e. normal practice) and 'claim of entitlement'. In addition, Dootson et al., (2018) showed that to decrease the positive relationship between the neutralization technique 'normal practice' and engaging in illegitimate consumer behavior, the deterrence tactic 'social proofs' will be the most promising. Here, individuals are persuaded through appeals to what behavior 'should' or 'ought' to be performed in a given situation, which reflects the norms of a specific group. The justification of normal practice can be challenged by making consumers aware that people similar to them, in the situation the individual faces, responded with a particular (non-deviant) behavior (Goldstein et al., 2008). Moreover, social proofs are positively worded and highlight the prevalence of the legitimate behavior. Thereby, research argues that the more specific the message is and the more closely

related to the individuals situation, the more effective the message will be in altering illegitimate behavior (Goldstein et al., 2008).

Furthermore, to decrease the positive relationship between the neutralization technique 'claim of entitlement' and engaging in illegitimate consumer behavior, the deterrence tactic 'transparency in rules' will be the most promising (Dootson et al., 2018). Literature showed that organizations can be transparent about their rules in place as a means of enhancing consumers' comprehension of those rules. Being transparent about a rule will help consumers understand the rule, which will raise their likelihood of compliance. Moreover, better informed consumers are better able to understand why a request is being made, to judge it as reasonable, and therefore to comply with the legitimate consumer behavior (Glik, 2007).

This leads to the following hypothesis :

H2: *If the deterrence tactics matches the neutralization techniques used by the greedy customers, the level of cognitive dissonance will increase more than when the deterrence tactics do not matches the neutralization techniques used.*

In addition, the deterrence theory by Dootson et al., (2008) states that the use of deterrence tactics will reintroduce cognitive dissonance. Therefore, it is proposed that certain tactics could diminish the positive effect of neutralization techniques on deviant consumer behavior. If doing so, greedy customers will experience a higher level of cognitive dissonance which attempts to reduce their intention to complain illegitimately (i.e. consumer deviant behavior).

This leads to the following hypothesis:

H3: *If the deterrence tactics matches the neutralization techniques used by the greedy customers, the level of intention to complain will decrease more than when the deterrence tactics do not matches de neutralization techniques used.*

Lastly, the deterrence tactic of moral triggers and self-sanctions seems a promising tactic to reintroduce cognitive dissonance to impede DCB. In contrast to the other tactics, moral triggers are likely to challenge any neutralization technique through the administration of self-sanctions (Dootson et al., 2018). Therefore, it is expected that this tactic does not have to match with a specific neutralization technique in order to be effective.

This leads to the last hypothesis:

H4: *The deterrence tactic of moral triggers and self-sanctions does not have to match with a specific neutralization technique to be effective in order to increase cognitive dissonance for greedy customers.*

2.8 BEHAVIORAL CHANGE

Behavioral change is a complex and difficult process that is commonly marked by different definitions and conceptualizations (Stein & Markus, 1996). However, concepts such as motivation, determination, will, intention and resolve are all important in behavioral change, regardless of the degree of these 'feelings'(Ellis, 1979). Therefore, it is possible that very little effective change takes place without people having much will and intention, for example.

In current research, the study by Dootson et al., (2018) gained insight into how deviant consumer behavior can be controlled, ideally can be reduced. One important factor here is the use of deterrence tactics which should increase the level of cognitive dissonance (i.e. feeling uncomfortable) of the greedy customer so the intention to complain illegitimately will be reduced. More specifically, current study focuses on whether the fit between a specific neutralization technique and deterrence tactic leads to a behavioral change in intention to complain illegitimately. Therefore, the intention to complain and extent of the claim of the greedy customer will be measured twice, in order to see whether a change in behavior occurs.

2.9 CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Neutralization technique:	**Cognitive dissonance**
1. Claim of normalcy	- Discomfort
2. Claim of entitlement	
3. Denial of injury	**Intention to complain illegitimately (behavioral change)**
4. Denial of victim	- Intention
Deterrence tactic:	- Extent of claim
1. Social proof	
2. Transparency of rules	
3. Educate customer	
4. Humanize organization	
5. Moral triggers and self-sanctions	

Figure 2. Conceptual model current study

The relationships between the variables of current study are shown in the conceptual model (see Figure 2). As mentioned in the previous section, the deterrence tactics of Dootson et al., (2018) can be used to lower the impact of multiple neutralization techniques in order to resolve the cognitive dissonance of greedy customers. More specifically, the tactics functions as a moderator between the dependent variables and independent variable. For instance, greedy customers tend to often use the neutralization 'claim of normalcy' to lower their level of cognitive dissonance which makes their intention to complain illegitimately higher. By introducing the matching deterrence tactic (i.e. in the example social proof), it will challenges the neutralization technique. Subsequently, it is expected that the level of cognitive dissonance will be higher and the intention to complain illegitimately will be lower. It should be noted that the deterrence tactic moral triggers and self-sanctions should be effective for all of the neutralization techniques mentioned in the conceptual model.

2.10 SUMMARY

In this chapter, different theories behind illegitimate complaining and consumer misbehavior have been discussed. It became clear that there are four types of illegitimate complainers, each justifying their behavior by using different neutralization techniques. Those neutralizations can be deterred using the related deterrence tactic. Notable, is that current study only focuses on the greedy customer type. Therefore, the specific deterrence tactics correlated to this type will be tested, in order to see if we really can prevent and deter illegitimate complaining.

3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the methodology used to test the aforementioned hypotheses. Here, the applied experimental research design is indicated, followed by an explanation of the used stimulus materials. Afterwards, an elaboration of the measurement and the results of a pretest are given, subsequent on a discussion of the research procedure and research ethics. Lastly, the final sample description is given and, the applied statistical treatment will be discussed.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Previous literature has shown that empirical evidence with regards to illegitimate complaining is hard to find due to its sensitive nature and potential for bias (Ro & Wong, 2012; Harris, 2008). Since illegitimate complaining behavior is considered illegal and unethical by many people, illegitimate complainers are usually not open and honest about their behavior (Kim & Baker, 2020). Given that people do have a natural tendency to answer in a socially acceptable manner, it is likely that customers conceal their illegitimate complaining behavior in current study, which will lead to bias in the results (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960).

However, there are various ways to limit the social desirability bias. First of all, it is suggested that instructions to emphasize anonymity of a survey and the need for honest answering will reduce biased responding (Gordon, 1987). Moreover, collecting quantitative data via an online channel tends to reduce biased responding even more (Wirtz & McColl-Kennedy, 2010). However, when conducting online research, construction and formulation of neutral questions without any form of judgement becomes vitally important (Kuokkanen, 2017; Gregson et al., 2002). Based on these assumptions, it was decided that an online, quantitative study was most suitable concerning the subject of current research.

In addition, a quantitative research gives the ability to quantify and pattern the meaning of people, rather than solely interpretate the meaning people bring to their own action (Payne & Payne, 2004). Since a survey relies on actual happened situations and illegitimate complaining is expected to be cognitively neutralized, it would be hard for customers to retrieve a certain situation from memory. Therefore, scenario-based experiments were used in which participants were exposed to real-life situations. This method has been widely used for studying service failures and provides a high degree of internal validity by manipulating and controlling variables (Bendapuli & Leone, 2003; Namasivayam and Hinkin, 2003). Moreover, by using this type of experiment, written scenario's with narration are suggested to be sufficiently vivid to manipulate someone's belief (McNiel & Fleeson, 2006). For example, by engaging an

individual in behavior that would characteristically imply his endorsement of that belief or by letting the person imagine being in a certain situation (Cramer & Fong, 1991), which compensates for a lack of realism (Hende & Schoormans, 2012). Thereby, the use of scenario-based experiments and surveys to measure illegitimate behavior is suitable to retrieve real-life information about the perspective of customers regarding their performed behavior (Berry & Seiders, 2008).

Furthermore, quantitative findings can be generalized to a whole population or sub-population because it involves a large sample which is randomly selected. Subsequently, these characteristics often lead to a higher generalizability, compared to generalizability of qualitative findings (Rahman, 2020; Carr, 1994). Therefore, conducting research in a quantitative way will increase the external validity of the study's findings (Myers, 2013).

To test the hypotheses, it was decided to conduct an online, scenario-based experiment using written scenarios as stimuli. Six written scenarios were created, in which one independent variable was manipulated by the moderator 'deterrence tactic'. The independent variable 'neutralization technique' contained four levels (i.e. claim of normalcy, claim of entitlement, denial of injury and denial of victim) and the moderator 'deterrence tactic' contained six levels (i.e. social proof, transparency of rules, educate customer, humanize organization, moral triggers and self-sanctions and control group). Each of the respondents were randomly assigned to either one of the six scenarios, which enabled the researcher to eliminate possible disturbances and thereby improved the internal validity of the results. Since, the manipulated scenarios were given in the middle part of the survey, respondents were asked to continue answering the questions. Both scenarios and complementary survey were provided in Dutch. Moreover, an in-between design was opt for, since multiple groups were compared, based on whether the neutralization technique matched the neutralization founded by Joosten (2022). Succinctly put, a 1x2, online, scenario-based, in-between, experiment was executed.

3.2 STIMULUS MATERIAL

In this study, the independent variable 'neutralization technique' and moderator 'deterrence tactic' were manipulated in the scenarios. These written scenarios with narration were used in order to enable the participant to imagine being in particular service situation. Additionally, it was important that respondents perceived the scenarios as realistic and were able to put oneself in the described situation. In order to do so, the ideally service setting needed to be familiar to the participants. Therefore, the written scenarios were based on renting a car during one's

holiday, since participants were most likely familiar with such a situation. Moreover, also the presence of the chosen neutralization techniques and deterrence tactics had to be realistic and useable for the particular situation.

All the scenarios were written in a first person singular perspective and followed a logical sequence. Each scenario first told the participants that after two years of COVID-19 and staying home, traveling abroad was possible again. Therefore, you were planning to hire a car to drive around Spain. Coincidentally, one of your friends did the same last year. He told you that after a car failure (which was fixed easily), he complained to the car rental company and received a partial refund of the rental costs. After you found out that the rental company would reimburse quickly, you also filed a complaint to receive a refund. In the scenario, it was emphasized that your complaint was made-up, which made it an illegitimate complaint. Thereby, it should be noted that the full scenario description can be found in Appendix I.

Furthermore, participants were manipulated based on one of the deterrence tactics of the conceptual model (see Figure 2). The content of each scenario can be found in Table 1 and Appendix I. In scenario 1, no deterrence tactic was included, since this scenario functioned as the control group. In scenario 2, the deterrence tactic 'social proof' was included, in which the customer was thanked for its honesty just like all the other customers of the car rental company. In scenario 3, 'transparency of rules' was included, in which the company indicated that their customers should abided by the company's rules. In scenario 4, 'educate the customer' was included, in which the company was honest about the consequences of the customer's behavior. In scenario 5, 'humanize the organization' was included, in which the organization emphasized the identification with the customer. Finally, in scenario 6 'moral triggers and self-sanctions' was included, in which the organization triggered honesty of the customer. It should be noted that all scenarios were pre-tested on their realism which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Table 1. Content of used scenarios based on conceptual model

Scenario	Neutralization technique	Deterrence tactic
Scenario 1	All	None (control group)
Scenario 2	All	Social proof
Scenario 3	All	Transparency of rules
Scenario 4	All	Educate customer
Scenario 5	All	Humanize organization
Scenario 6	All	Moral triggers and self-sanctions

3.3 MEASUREMENT

Except for the specific deterrence tactic, due to the aligned randomization, all participants faced the same questionnaire. The questionnaire, included in Appendix I consisted of multiple parts, which will be elaborated in the following paragraphs. These parts consisted out of: cognitive dissonance, intention to complain illegitimately, neutralization technique, manipulation checks and some demographic variables.

3.3.1 Cognitive dissonance

The level of cognitive dissonance (CD) was measured twice during the experiment. First, the level of cognitive dissonance was measured after presenting the scenario (CD_1). By doing so, it could be measured whether the situation of the exaggerated claim indeed let to cognitive dissonance of the greedy customer. Second, the level of cognitive dissonance was measured after the manipulation of the deterrence tactic (CD_2). The aim of the second measurement was to see to what extent the level of cognitive dissonance increased/decreased after seeing the organization's message. To measure cognitive dissonance, the cognitive dissonance scale of Elliot and Devine (1994) was adapted to the context of this study. Here, participants were asked to what extent they feel uneasy about filing such a complaint and asking for a refund. The final added scale consisted of six items which were measured on a five-points Likert scale, anchored by totally disagree until totally agree (see Appendix I). An example of one of the items was: ''*I would feel uncomfortable about asking for a refund''*. The final cognitive dissonance construct was a composite score of the six variables and therefore considered as a metric variable.

3.3.2 Intention to complain illegitimately

The intention to complain illegitimately (ITC) was measured twice during the experiment. Similar to the measurement of cognitive dissonance, intention to complain was measured after presenting the scenario (ITC_1). By doing so, it could be measured whether the participants would indeed file a complaint. Second, intention to complain was measured after manipulation of the deterrence tactics (ITC_2). The aim of the second measurement was to see to what extent the intention to complain increased/decreased after seeing the organization's message. To measure intention to complain, questions of the study by Joosten (2022) were adapted, which consisted of three items which were measured on a five-point Likert scale, anchored by totally disagree until totally agree. The final intention to complain construct was a composite score of the three variables and therefore considered as a metric variable. Moreover, a fourth item was included which measured the percentage of the amount of refund participants would ask, ranging from an interval score of zero percent to a hundred percent. By measuring this item, it could be checked whether the percentage of refund increased/decreased for the second ITC measurement, compared to the first ITC measurement.

3.3.3 Neutralization technique

After the first measurement questions regarding cognitive dissonance and intention to complain illegitimately, the items regarding the four neutralization techniques were presented. Participants were asked to rank the neutralizations in order of importance, in places one, two, three and four. This resulted in a rank order, a nominal scale based on the master thesis of Rouwhorst (2020) and Van Pinxteren (2019). The neutralization 'claim of normalcy' was measured using the single-item scale: ''*Everyone exaggerates once in a while''*. The neutralization 'claim of entitlement' was measured using the single-item scale: ''*I deserve a windfall once in a while as well'*. The neutralization 'denial of injury' was measured using the single-item scale: ''*The company will not suffer from any real damage''*. Lastly, the neutralization 'denial of victim' was measured using the single-item scale: ''*The company deserves it as a consequence of their own wrongdoing''*.

3.3.4 Realism check and manipulation checks

To measure the realism of the scenario, realism scales of Maxham (2001) and Goodwin and Ross (1992) were used. The final realism construct was a composite score of the three items and therefore considered a metric variable. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale. The first item '*I think something similar could happen to me'*, was anchored by very

unlikely until very likely. The second item '*The situation in the scenario is…*', was anchored by very unrealistic until very realistic. Lastly, the third item '*To imagine myself in this situation is…*', was anchored by very difficult until very easy.

Furthermore, two manipulation checks were performed in order to see whether participants were aware of their role as greedy customer and whether the manipulation of the deterrence tactics (i.e. decrease in cognitive dissonance) succeeded. The first manipulation check regarding the role of the greedy customer, consisted out of three items which were measured by using a five-point Likert scale, anchored by totally disagree until totally agree. For example, participants were asked: *'To what extent is your complaint exaggerated?''*. In order to check whether participants indeed experienced a sense of cognitive dissonance, a second manipulation check was conducted. The measurement of cognitive dissonance (CD_1) consisted out of six-items which were measured by using five-point Likert scale, anchored by totally disagree until totally agree. For example, one of the items was:' *'I would feel uncomfortable about asking for a refund''*.

3.3.5 Demographic variables

The last part of the questionnaire involved some general information. Participants were asked about their age, gender and education level.

3.3.6 Pre-test and pilot-test

In order to make sure a clear, valid measurement instrument has been developed, the written scenarios as well as the questionnaire were checked at forehand by conducting a pre-test. A total of 16 participants without any knowledge regarding the subject of illegitimate complaining behavior or other theoretical concepts were asked to evaluate the car rental scenario and role of the greedy customer. The realism scale in this pre-test consisted of three five-point Likert scale items adapted from existing scales (Maxham, 2001). On average, 52.25% of the participants evaluated the scenario as realistic, where 43.75% of the participants could imagine themselves in a certain situation now or in the future. Moreover, participants were asked if there were any remarks concerning to ambiguity, vagueness or distinctiveness. These remarks were analyzed and taken into account, which led to some minor adjustments.

After these adjustments, a pilot-test has been conducted. This pilot-test checked whether the participants were able to understand and fill in the survey as provided. Based on some feedback, it was decided to adjust the post-measurement of cognitive dissonance (CD_2) and intention to complain (ITC_2). This adjustment had to be made, since participants scored

already high on CD_1 and could not score higher on CD_2. Therefore, some small revisions to the wording were made. For example, instead of repeating the question of the pre-measurement, participants were asked whether their level of cognitive dissonance was reduced/the same/increased after reading the message of the organization. Finally, it was decided to position the realism check after the manipulation check. The final questionnaire can be found in Appendix I.

3.4 PROCEDURE AND RESEARCH ETHICS

For current research, Dutch participants aged 16 years or older were recruited between April 21th, 2022 and May 16th, 2022. Anyone who made ever use of a service could be categorized to this target group and therefore complete the survey. The survey was distributed online via WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, where participants were asked to voluntarily participate in the study. Since this type of research considers human beings, exiting literature states that research ethics should be considered throughout the whole study (Goodwin et al., 2003). Therefore, the research ethics discussed in current research will be based on the general ethical principles of the American Psychological Association (APA) (Pope & Vetter, 1992).

At first, when people decided to participate, the online survey tool Qualtrics randomly assigned each of the participants to one of the six scenarios. Participants first faced an introduction text in which they were told that current research was interested in how consumers evaluates certain service situations. The concrete aim of current research was not mentioned, since this could cause bias due to foreknowledge. Moreover, issues like anonymity have been taken care of, risks for participants were kept as minimal as possible and openness about subject and results were ensured. For example, the introduction stated that the results of current study have and will only be used for this research, participants were informed about their rights and the opportunity to quit at every possible time and instructions about the questionnaire were provided.

After reading the introduction, participants were asked to carefully read the scenario and try to put themselves in the situation of the scenario they were assigned to. Each respondent had to fill in the same questionnaire, only the messages of the organization differed due to the manipulation of the deterrence tactic. The questions were related to the level of cognitive dissonance (CD_1, CD_2), intention to complain illegitimately (ITC_1, ITC_2), neutralization techniques, realism and manipulation checks and demographic information. After finishing the survey, the participants were debriefed and thanked for their time. Additionally, in case of

remarks towards the survey or interest in the results, participants were able to contact the researchers, therefore some email details were provided.

3.5 SAMPLE

Due to the sensitive nature of illegitimate complaining, the sampling method that was conducted for current research was the convenience sampling method. By using this method, participants were selected based on their ease of availability (Given, 2008). There was no criteria the selection of participants must met, therefore anyone willing to complete the survey was suitable (Saunders et al., 2012). This is also one of the limitations of current study, since not everyone had the same chances of being included (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). Nonetheless, one of the advantages of this type of sampling was that this method increased the probability of gathering useful data and data could be collected quickly (Given, 2008).

According to Hair et al., (2014), the recommended minimum cell size for ANOVA is 20 participants per cell (experimental group). Since larger sample sizes are more able to maintain acceptable levels of statistical power, it was strived to conduct more than 20 participants per cell. Moreover, current study should have equal or approximately equal sample sizes per group. As Qualtrics equally assigned participants to each scenario and all the group sizes ranged between 36 and 55 participants, both assumptions were considered to be met (see Table 3).

Table 3. Number of participants per scenario

Scenario	N
Scenario 1	48
Scenario 2	54
Scenario 3	41
Scenario 4	55
Scenario 5	36
Scenario 6	41

By the means of a convenient sampling method, a total of 349 native Dutch people participated the survey. Notable is that 536 people opened and started the survey. However, only 334 participants finished the survey. This means that a total of 202 respondents did not make it to the end of the survey, of which 15 participants only did not fill in the control

questions. Therefore, it is decided to delete these 15 participants from the dataset, since relevant data could not be gathered. All the other respondents, stopped the survey before they filled in 50% of the total questions or gave a wrong answer to the control question: *'Do you remember what the message you read before filed a claim was about?'*. Since these participants could not remember what the message of the organization was about, it can be assumed that these participants failed the experiment. Therefore, it was decided to delete these participants from the dataset.

However, the 275 respondents in the final sample had an average age of 33 (32.68), ranging from 16 to 77 years old. Moreover, the majority of the respondents were women (66.8%) in contrast to men (32.5%). Only two respondents (0.7%) could not identify themselves with a specific gender, or wanted to keep this information private. Lastly, for most respondents the highest education level is HBO (41.2%), followed by WO (38.7%), MBO (16.8%), secondary education (2.9%) and primary education (0.4%). A total overview of the descriptive variables can be found in section 4.5.

3.6 STATISTICAL TREATMENT

In order to analyse the data gathered, IBM SPSS Statistics 27 was used. This study relied on an experimental design, where two dependent variables of metric level, one independent variable of categorical level and one moderator of categorical level were involved. Moreover, the aim of current research was to find differences between groups. For example, this study was interested in differences between groups regarding the assigned deterrence tactic and level of cognitive dissonance. Moreover, differences between groups regarding the assigned deterrence tactic and intention to complain were also measured.

Based on these characteristics, multiple one-way ANOVA's were suitable for current research. In order to test the hypotheses, all data was renamed, prepared and transformed into an appropriate format for analysis. Moreover, manipulation checks and a factor analysis have been conducted. Additionally, the reliability of the variables have been checked and the descriptive statistics were explained. Finally, after checking for the assumptions, the ANOVA has been executed, whereof the results will be presented in the next chapter.

4 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter shows the analysis conducted and the obtained results. First, manipulation checks will be discussed. Subsequently, the executed factor analysis and the results from the reliability analysis are presented. In addition, the descriptive statistics of current research are described, followed by the assumptions of the statistical treatment. Finally, the chapter concludes with the results of the hypothesis testing and some additional analyses.

4.1 MANIPULATION CHECKS

In order to check whether the written scenarios evoked the desired mindset of the participants, two manipulation checks were performed (see Appendix II). First, the manipulation to check whether participants have understood their role as greedy customer was checked by the measurement of the mean score of this variable. The scenario check construct consisted out of three items, measured on a five-point Likert scale, where participants were asked to what extent their complaint was exaggerated, made up and pre-planned. The mean score highly indicated that participants indeed understood their role of the greedy customer ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.0$), therefore the manipulation succeeded.

Secondly, the manipulation to check whether participants experienced a feeling of discomfort was checked by the measurement of the mean score of cognitive dissonance before introducing the deterrence tactic. It was expected that the participants' level of cognitive dissonance should be high after reading the introduction scenario. The mean score highly indicated that participants indeed experienced cognitive dissonance before the manipulation ($M = 4.53$, $SD = .627$). Therefore, the second manipulation also succeeded.

4.2 REALISM CHECK

In addition to the manipulation checks, a realism check was conducted to test whether the participants perceived the scenario as realistic (see Appendix III). This study strived to create a scenario which was as realistic as possible, since participants would better able to empathize with the research. As stated before, this check consisted out of three items which were measured using a five-point Likert scale. The overall realism score, has been measured based on the total score of the three items. The total mean score and score per item are displayed in Table 4.

In general, the findings showed that participants perceived the scenario as unrealistic ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 1.003$). However, further research indicated this is due to differences in scores between the realism items. More specifically, respondents seemed to indicate that in general

the situation is reasonably realistic ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 1.246$), but that something similar could never happen to themselves (so others might) ($M = 1.87$, $SD = 1.090$). These findings can be explained based on the existing literature of illegitimate complaining. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, greedy customers would not easily admit that they perform illegitimate behavior. The consequences of these results will be further discussed in the next section.

Table 4. Descriptives realism check

Item	Mean	SD
Realism_similar	1.87	1.090
Realism_situation	2.40	1.246
Realism_imagine	2.19	1.157
Total	2.15	1.003

4.3 FACTOR ANALYSIS

In order to check the discriminant validity of the constructs, an exploratory factor analysis (principal axis factoring) has been conducted (see Appendix IV). More specifically, discriminant validity is demonstrated by evidence that measures of constructs that theoretically should not be highly correlated to each other, are not found to be highly correlated (Field, 2013). Subsequently, only the measurement scale of intention to complain was not based on existing research. Therefore the items of ITC_1 and ITC_2 were included in the principal component analysis with oblique rotation. In order to check whether factor analysis was appropriate for the data, multiple assumptions needed to be met. First, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure (KMO) verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = .757), as it was above the threshold value of .50 (Hair, 2014). Second, Bartlett's test of sphericity (X^2 (15) = 2154.5, $p < .001$), showed that the correlation between items was sufficiently large enough to perform the analysis. Moreover, the oblique rotation was approved since the correlation between component one and component two was >|.30| (Hair, 2014).

Results of the factor analysis showed that two factors had an Eigenvalue of >1 (i.e. Kaiser's criterion), and together explained 93.95% of the total variance. Moreover, the pattern matrix showed that none of the items was found to be a double-loader and all items scored high on the components. Therefore, the construct met the assumption that measures of the construct should not be highly correlated to each other.

4.4 RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Not only the discriminant validity of the measurement scale needed to be checked, also the reliability of the constructs was very important. The scale's internal consistency refers to the degree to which the items that make up the scale, are all measuring the same underlying construct (Pallant, 2011). The internal consistency of the scales was checked by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient of each scale. For this measure, an alpha coefficient of $>.70$ was desired and $>. 60$ was required. The reliability analysis of each of four constructs, can be found in Appendix V. The construct 'CD_1' consisted of six items of which the internal consistency was found to be excellent ($\alpha = .923$). The construct 'CD_2' consisted of six items of which the internal consistency was also found to be excellent ($\alpha = .977$). In addition, the constructs 'ITC_1' and 'ITC_2' both consisted of three items, and had an internal consistency which was found to be excellent ($\alpha = .956$) and ($\alpha = .978$). In addition, the construct 'Realism' consisted of three items of which the internal consistency was found to be good ($\alpha = .825$). Finally, the construct 'Scenario' consisted of three items of which the internal consistency was found to be adequate ($\alpha = .787$). Therefore, it has been decided to continue the analysis with these constructs.

Table 5. Reliability analysis

Construct	N of items	Cronbach's alpha (α)
CD_1	6	.923
ITC_1	3	.956
CD_2	6	.977
ITC_2	3	.978
Realism	3	.825
Scenario	3	.787

4.5 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

A first impression of the results can be found in Table 6. This table shows the descriptive statistics of all variables and constructs. The mean score of the first measurement of cognitive dissonance was found to be 4.53, with a standard deviation of .627. This score indicated that participants experienced a high level of cognitive dissonance before manipulation of the deterrence tactic. Moreover, the mean score of the second measurement of cognitive dissonance was found to be 3.81, with a standard deviation of .807. This score indicated that the level of

cognitive dissonance remained the same or even increased after seeing the organization's message. In addition, the mean score of the first measurement of intention to complain was found to be 1.58, with a standard deviation of .805. This score indicated that participants' intention to complain was low before manipulation of the deterrence tactic. Moreover, the mean score of the second measurement of intention to complain was found to be 2.10, with a standard deviation of .851. This score indicated that the intention to complain decreased after seeing the organization's message. Furthermore, the mean scores of the first (M = 9.38, SD = 13.40) and second measurement (M = 6.16, SD = 11.13) regarding discount rate indicated that the amount of discount participants would ask as compensation for the service failure was very low. In addition, the mean scores of neutralization techniques are presented. It should be noted that due to the ranking of the techniques (i.e. ordinal scale), the technique with the lowest mean score was used the most. Therefore, the neutralization 'claim of entitlement' was used the most (M = 1.98 , SD = .883), followed by 'claim of normalcy' (M = 2.00, SD = .898). Lastly, the sample consisted mostly out of women (66.8%) and people who were HBO educational leveled (41.2%). Moreover, the respondents had an average age of 33 years.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics

Variable		N	Percentage	Mean	SD
CD_1		275		4.53	.627
ITC_1		275		1.58	.805
CD_2		275		3.81	.807
ITC_2		275		2.10	.851
DR_1		275		9.38	13.40
DR_2		275		6.16	11.13
NeutralizationT					
	ClaimN			2.00	.898
	ClaimE			1.98	.883
	DenialI			2.58	1.07
	DenialV			3.44	.867
DeterrenceT					
	SocialP	54	19.6		
	TransR	41	14.9		
	EducateC	55	20.0		
	HumanizeO	36	13.1		
	MoralT	41	14.9		

	ControlG	48	17.5		
Age				32.68	13.61
	16-26	146	53.3		
	27-39	57	20.8		
	40-77	71	25.9		
Gender					
	Men	89	32.5		
	Women	183	66.8		
	Other/private	2	.7		
Education					
	Primary	1	.4		
	Secondary	8	2.9		
	MBO	46	16.8		
	HBO	113	41.2		
	WO	106	38.7		

4.6 ASSUMPTIONS

To perform one-way ANOVA's in an appropriate way, the data should passes multiple assumptions. When these assumptions are found to be met, valid results can be gathered. Therefore, all the assumptions regarding ANOVA will be discussed of which the visuals and outputs can be found in Appendices VI until VIII.

The first assumption is that the dependent variables measured should be of interval or ratio level (i.e. they are continuous). As can be seen in the conceptual model (Figure 2) and the measurement section (3.3), the variables cognitive dissonance and intention to complain illegitimately are both continuous variables, since they are measured by using a 5-point Likert scale. Moreover, the overall scores of these measurements will be used in order to test the hypotheses. Therefore, the Likert-scores can be considered a measurement of interval level instead of ordinal level (Field, 2014).

The second assumption is that the independent variable measured should consist of two or more categorical, independent groups. The independent variable 'neutralization techniques' consist out of four levels (i.e. four different techniques), whereas the moderator variable 'deterrence tactics' consists out of six levels (i.e. five different tactics and the control group). Therefore, the second assumption is also found to be met.

Thirdly, another issue that had to be addressed is the fact that an ANOVA should have independence of observations, which means that there is no relationship between the observations in each group or between the groups themselves (Hair, 2014). This assumption could be considered met, since participants have completed the survey in individual settings (i.e. different ID values).

Furthermore, it must be checked that there are no significant outliers in the data that could negatively influence the results of current study. The Q-plots and boxplots of all the variables are presented in Appendix VI. From these plots, it became clear that CD_1 scores indicated an extreme outlier, which has to be explained. The data view results showed that the extreme outlier '64' was related to CD_1 scores of 1, where the majority of the participants scored 5. It can be argued that this respondent did not succeed the manipulation check of cognitive dissonance, but had a correct answer to the control question. Therefore, it is expected that the outlier will not have much negative influence on the final results.

Additionally, the data should be collected from a random sample from the population of interest, which means that every subject in the target population must have an equal chance of being selected in the sample. As mentioned before, due to the sensitive nature of illegitimate complaining (i.e. participants are not likely to admit deviant behavior), the participants were based on their ease of availability. Although the assumption could not be considered met, the convenience sampling method was an very useful way to collect many participants in a short period of time.

Moreover, normality of the dependent variables had to be assured. In order to check whether these variables were normally distributed, normality histograms as well as the skewness and kurtosis values for each variable were assessed (see Appendix VII and Table 7). This table shows that none of the scores fall within the recommended limit values of $|<2|$ (Hair, 2014). Therefore, this assumption cannot be considered met, of which the consequences will be discussed in the section 'limitations of current research' (5.4).

Table 7. Normality check dependent variables

Construct	Skewness	Kurtosis
CD_1	-12.63	17.61
ITC_1	10.70	6.82
CD_2	1.55	-4.14
ITC_2	-4.56	-4.80

The last issue that had to be addressed is the homogeneity of variances, which tests whether the variance in the scores is the same for each comparison group. First, it was determined that the data set consisted out of unequal group sizes, since the ratio of the largest to smallest group was higher than 1.5 (i.e. in this study 2.3). Second, the Levene's test for homogeneity of variances showed a significant p-value for CD_1 ($p = .001$), ITC_1 ($p = .007$) and CD_2 ($p < .001$). Only variable ITC_2 was found to be non-significant ($p = .201$). More specifically, the significant results indicated that there is a difference in variance for these variables. Therefore, this assumption cannot be considered met.

4.7 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

4.7.1 Hypothesis one

''Greedy customers will use the neutralization techniques claim of normalcy and claim of entitlement rather than the neutralizations denial of injury and denial of victim''.

First of all, to test whether greedy customers used the neutralization techniques 'claim of normalcy' and 'claim of entitlement' rather than the neutralizations 'denial of injury' and 'denial of victim', the mean score of each neutralization has been calculated. In the questionnaire, the participants had to order the neutralization techniques from one to four which they would use the most. Therefore, the neutralization technique with the lowest mean score is used the most, and the technique with the highest mean score is used the least. These mean scores are displayed in Table 8, where the SPSS outputs can be found in Appendix IX.

Table 8. Mean score results

Neutralization technique	*M*	*SD*
Claim of entitlement	1.98	.940
Claim of normalcy	2.00	.898
Denial of injury	2.58	1.07
Denial of victim	3.44	.867

The results showed that greedy customers used the neutralization technique 'claim of entitlement' the most, followed by the neutralization 'claim of normalcy'. In line with the expectations of current research, the neutralization techniques 'denial of injury' and 'denial of

victim' were used the least. Therefore, the results of the study of Joosten (2022) can be confirmed and hypothesis 1 can be accepted.

4.7.2 Hypothesis two

''*If the deterrence tactics matches the neutralization techniques used by the greedy customers, the level of cognitive dissonance will increase more than when the deterrence tactics do not matches the neutralization techniques used''*.

Secondly, to test whether the level of cognitive dissonance will increase more when there is a match between deterrence tactic and neutralization technique, in contrast to no match, an one-way ANOVA was conducted (see Appendix IX). The one-way ANOVA revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the level of cognitive dissonance between at least two groups (F (2, 272) = 25.42, $p < .001$). To see which groups significantly differ from each other, a post-hoc test was performed. Since the tests of homogeneity of variances showed that equal variances are not assumed, the Game-Howell post-hoc test had been used. It should be noted that the 'matching' group (i.e. deterrence tactic matched) and moral triggers group are merged, since the tactic moral triggers is presumed to be effective with any neutralization technique.

Subsequently, the post-hoc test showed some significant findings between the control group (i.e. no deterrence tactic), 'matching' group (i.e. deterrence tactic matched) and 'no matching' group (i.e. deterrence tactic matched not). The control group ($M = 3.14$, $SD = .578$) experienced a lower level of cognitive dissonance, compared to the 'matching' group ($M = 3.89$, $SD = .745$) and 'no matching' group ($M = 4.05$, $SD = .815$). Since both the 'matching' group and 'no matching' group involved a message based on one of the deterrence tactics, it is likely that the use of a deterrence tactic in the organization's communication results in a higher level of cognitive dissonance, compared to no deterrence tactic-based message.

However, no significant effect was found between the 'matching' group and the 'no matching' group, which indicates that no conclusions can be drawn based on their mean outcomes. Additionally, it cannot be stated whether a match between deterrence tactic and neutralization technique leads to a higher level of cognitive dissonance, in contrast to no match between these two. Therefore, hypothesis 2 should be rejected.

4.7.3 Hypothesis three

''If the deterrence tactics matches the neutralization techniques used by the greedy customers, the level of intention to complain will decrease more than when the deterrence tactics do not matches de neutralization techniques used''.

Thirdly, it was expected that a match between neutralization technique and deterrence tactic would lead to a lower intention to complain, compared to no match between the technique and tactic. In order to test this hypothesis, an one-way ANOVA was conducted (see Appendix IX). The statistical test revealed there was a statistically significant difference in the intention to complain between at least two groups (F (2, 272) = 11.37, p < .001). To see which groups significantly differ from each other, the post-hoc test Games-Howell was conducted again. Moreover, the 'matching' group also included the participants who were manipulated by using the moral triggers tactic, since this tactic should match every neutralization.

Subsequently, the post-hoc test showed some significant findings between the control group (i.e. no deterrence tactic), 'matching' group (i.e. deterrence tactic matched) and 'no matching' group (i.e. deterrence tactic matched not). The control group (M =2.58, SD = .761) experienced a higher intention to complain, compared to the 'matching' group (M = 2.06, SD = .814) and 'no matching' group (M = 1.89, SD = .859). More specifically, the 'matching' group and 'no matching' group were less sure about whether they would file a complaint than the control group. Similar to the findings of hypothesis 2, it is presumed that the use of a deterrence tactic in an organization's communication would lead to a lower intention to complain, compared to a message which does not include a deterrence tactic.

However, no significant effect was found between the 'matching' group and the 'no matching' group, which indicates that no conclusions can be drawn based on their mean outcomes. Additionally, it cannot be stated whether a match between deterrence tactic and neutralization technique leads to lower intention to complain, in contrast to no match between these two. Therefore, hypothesis 3 should also be rejected.

4.7.4 Hypothesis four

''The deterrence tactic of moral triggers and self-sanctions does not have to match with a specific neutralization technique in order to be effective for greedy customers''.

Lastly, it was expected that the deterrence tactic of moral triggers and self-sanctions does not have to match with a specific neutralization technique in order to be effective. Here, 'to be effective' refers to an increase in the level of cognitive dissonance and a decrease in intention

to complain. Therefore, this hypothesis consists of two parts, which will be discussed sequentially.

4.7.4.1 Part A

At first, an one-way ANOVA was performed to compare the effect of deterrence tactic 'moral triggers and self-sanctions' and control group (i.e. no deterrence tactic) on the level of cognitive dissonance (see Appendix IX). The statistical test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in level of cognitive dissonance between at least two groups (F (3, 271) = 17.81, $p < .001$). To see which groups significantly differ from each other, the post-hoc test Games-Howell was conducted again. It should be noted that this time the 'matching' group does not include moral triggers, since this study is interested in the effect of the specific tactic.

Subsequently, the post-hoc test showed some significant findings between 'moral triggers' and the control group regarding level of cognitive dissonance. The participants who read a message with the deterrence tactic 'moral triggers' experienced a higher level of cognitive dissonance ($M= 3.74$, $SD =.762$) in contrast to the participants who read a message with no deterrence tactic ($M = 3.14$, $SD = .578$). More specifically, the use of the deterrence tactic 'moral triggers' in the organization's communication resulted in a higher level of cognitive dissonance compared to not using any tactic.

Additionally, to check the effectiveness of the deterrence tactic 'moral triggers' on the different neutralization techniques another ANOVA was conducted (see Appendix IX). The expectation was that there would not be a difference between these groups, since 'moral triggers' should not have to match with a specific neutralization in order to increase the level of cognitive dissonance. The statistical test revealed that there was indeed no statistically significant difference in level of cognitive dissonance between at least two groups (F (3, 37) = 2.20, $p = .104$). This finding indicates that the expectation meets the findings, therefore part A of hypothesis 4 should be accepted.

4.7.4.2 Part B

Second, a one-way ANOVA was performed to compare the effect of deterrence tactic 'moral triggers and self-sanctions' and control group on the intention to complain (see Appendix IX). The statistical test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the intention to complain between at least two groups (F (3, 271) = 7.84, $p < .001$).). To see which groups significantly differ from each other, the Tukey Post Hoc Test was conducted (i.e. Levene's statistic was found to be not significant).

However, the post-hoc test showed that no significant effect between control group and moral triggers was found (p = .066). Therefore, further analyses regarding the different neutralizations are unlikely to result in different outcomes. In contrast to part A, part B of hypothesis 4 should be rejected.

4.8 ADDITIONAL ANALYSES

In addition to the ANOVA tests, which partially confirmed the hypotheses, some extra tests were run which yielded some interesting results (see Appendix X).

4.8.1 Intention to complain and percentage of discount

First, the construct 'intention to complain' has been measured based on three items, whereas the survey included a fourth item; the percentage of discount people would ask from the car rental company. This item could not be included in other analyses, since the other items were based on Likert-scale items (e.g. totally disagree – totally agree) instead of percentages. However, it might be interesting whether the discount rate people ask also changes after the manipulation of the deterrence tactics. Therefore, the mean scores (i.e. in percentages) of both items are compared. Findings showed that the mean score after the manipulation of the deterrence tactics (M = 6.16, SD = 11.13) was lower, compared to the mean score before the manipulation (M = 9.38, SD = 13.39). More specifically, the percentage of discount people ask was higher before manipulation of the deterrence tactics than after manipulation. This finding can be considered quite logical, since current study expected that the intention to complain would be lower after the manipulation of the deterrence tactics.

To include these items in further analyses, the items needed to be standardized. Based on their z-scores, the discount percentages could be translated into new scores similar to the scores of the other items. Subsequently, two new variables were created in which all the items of the construct intention to complain were included. Moreover, to test whether the intention to complain will decrease more when there is a match between deterrence tactic and neutralization technique in contrast to no match, an one-way ANOVA was conducted. The ANOVA revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in intention to complain between at least two groups (F (2, 272) = 3.15, p < .05). To see which groups significantly differ from each other, the post-hoc test Games-Howell was conducted again. This post-hoc test showed some significant findings between the control group (i.e. no deterrence tactic) and the 'no matching' group (i.e. deterrence tactic matched not). The control group (M = 4.00, SD = 3.06) experienced a higher intention to complain in contrast to the 'no matching' group (M = 3.09, SD = 2.66).

More specifically, the participants who got a message that did not include any deterrence tactic are more likely to file a complaint than the participants who got a message that include a deterrence tactic which not matched the neutralization technique. Therefore, including the item 'discount' led logically to the same conclusion as the findings related to hypothesis 3 already presented.

4.8.2 Cognitive dissonance, intention to complain and gender

Second, in order to check whether the level of cognitive dissonance and the intention to complain varied among men and women after manipulation of the deterrence tactics, two independent sample t-tests were conducted. Most of the assumptions regarding t-tests do overlap with the assumptions of an ANOVA, mentioned in section 4.5. The main difference between those statistical tests is that t-tests are focused on differences between two groups (i.e. men and women) instead of three groups (i.e. men, women, others). Since the sample of current study mainly consisted out of men and women, the findings between those groups are the most interesting.

The first independent sample t-test showed a significant difference between the level of cognitive dissonance and gender ($t(270) = -2.61$, $p < .05$). This test indicated that women ($M = 3.91$, $SD = .827$) experienced a higher level of cognitive dissonance after manipulation of the deterrence tactics, compared to men ($M = 3.64$, $SD = .741$). More specifically, women experienced a stronger feeling of discomfort regarding illegitimate complaining than men.

The second independent sample t-test showed a significant difference between the intention to complain and gender ($t(270) = 2.06$, $p < .05$). This test indicated that the intention to complain after manipulation of the deterrence tactics was higher for men ($M = 2.23$, $SD = .802$), compared to women ($M = 2.01$, $SD = .864$). More specifically, men are more likely to file an illegitimate complaint than women.

5 DISCUSSION

In this chapter the research is concluded by discussing the results related to existing literature. In addition, theoretical contributions and managerial implications are addressed. The chapter closes with the limitations of current research and possible topics for further research.

5.1 CONCLUSION

The prevailed assumption of 'the customer is always right' still holds in almost every company nowadays, resulting in companies spending a lot of money and time in handling (illegitimate) complaints. (Berry & Seiders, 2008; Harris & Reynolds, 2003; Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004). However, it is questioned whether companies also really benefit from those investments or whether there is still a unexplored dark side.

This research made an attempt to find empirical evidence supporting the propositions made by Joosten (2022) and Dootson et al., (2018). Therefore, a confirmatory, scenario-based experiment has been conducted. The question central to this study was: '*How can organizations prevent or reduce the greedy customer type of illegitimate complaining as described in the typology of Joosten (2022)?*'. To provide an answer to this question, four hypotheses were developed. However, one hypothesis could be accepted and one hypothesis could partially be accepted. These findings implied that greedy customers uses the neutralizations 'claim of normalcy' and 'claim of entitlement' rather than the neutralizations 'denial of injury' and 'denial of victim', which is in line with the results of Joosten (2022) who stated that the greedy customer type would use these neutralizations the most in order to justify their behavior. Moreover, the deterrence tactic 'moral triggers' did not have to match a specific neutralization in order to increase the level of cognitive dissonance.

By (partially) two hypotheses, two hypotheses were rejected. However, analyses related to these hypotheses showed that the use of one of the deterrence tactics in an organization's communication will be more effective to increase cognitive dissonance of customers, in contrast to no deterrence-based message. In addition, similar findings were found regarding intention to complain. In other words, the analyses showed evidence that the use of one of the deterrence tactics in an organization's message will be more effective to decrease the intention to complain of customers, in contrast to no deterrence based message. Furthermore, the use of the deterrence tactic 'moral triggers' in the organization's communication resulted in a higher level of cognitive dissonance compared to not using any tactic, which is in line with the findings of Dootson et al., (2018). Unfortunately, no further significant findings were found regarding the

hypothesis of deterrence tactic 'moral triggers'. Lastly, some additional analyses were conducted regarding changes in discount rate and differences in level of cognitive dissonance and intention complain for gender. The first analysis showed that the percentage of discount people asked was higher before manipulation of the deterrence tactics than after manipulation. Moreover, the second analysis showed that women experienced a stronger feeling of discomfort (i.e. cognitive dissonance) regarding illegitimate complaining, compared to men. In addition, men were more likely to voice their complaint compared to women. It should be noted that all the hypotheses with corresponding results are shown in Table 8. An elaboration on these results will be given in the upcoming paragraph.

Table 8. Overview of hypotheses and results

Hypothesis		Result
H1	Greedy customers will use the neutralization techniques claim of normalcy and claim of entitlement rather than the neutralizations denial of injury and denial of victim.	**Accepted**
H2	If the deterrence tactics matches the neutralization techniques used by the greedy customers, the level of cognitive dissonance will increase more than when the deterrence tactics do not matches the neutralization techniques used	**Rejected**
H3	If the deterrence tactics matches the neutralization techniques used by the greedy customers, the level of intention to complain will decrease more than when the deterrence tactics do not matches de neutralization techniques used	**Rejected**
H4	The deterrence tactic of moral triggers and self-sanctions does not have to match with a specific neutralization technique in order to be effective for greedy customers	**Partially Accepted**

5.2 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptual papers and literature reviews have already shed light on the phenomenon of illegitimate complaining, without further empirical support (Baker et al., 2012; Agboola & Salawu, 2011). This study made a first attempt to find this evidence, in order to possibly support propositions made by Joosten (2022) and Dootson et al., (2018). Findings of this thesis therefore, contribute to the literature of illegitimate complaining behavior in context of service failures. Moreover, this study tried to find a way on how organization can prevent or reduce the

greedy customer type of illegitimate complaining as described in the typology of Joosten (2022).

In being one of the first studies that present significant findings for the use of neutralization techniques together with deterrence tactics for a specific type of illegitimate complainer, this study extends the applicability of the neutralization theory from other fields such as criminology and healthcare (Sykes & Matza, 1957; Dodder & Hughes, 1993). Therefore, this study answers the call for further research in customer's motivation for misbehavior.

Moreover, this experimental study provides rich insights regarding the use of neutralization techniques of the greedy customer type. It was hypothesized that the neutralization techniques 'claim of normalcy' and 'claim of entitlement' would be rather used than the neutralizations 'denial of injury' and 'denial of victim', which could be confirmed. This finding is in line with findings presented in the study of Joosten (2022), who stated that the greedy customer type justifies his/her behavior by referring to others (i.e. claim of normalcy, claim of entitlement), instead of referring to the firm. Additionally, since the intention to complain is based on personal greed, this type scored low on denial intent (i.e. denial of injury, denial of victim).

However, in contrast to the study of Dootson et al., (2018), current research cannot provide evidence that a match between deterrence tactic and neutralization technique will decrease the positive relationship between neutralization technique and cognitive dissonance. Nonetheless, this study can provide rich insights into the effect of using a deterrence tactic in an organization's communication compared to not using such tactic. More specifically, findings of current study showed that the use of a deterrence tactic in communication is more effective in increasing the level of cognitive dissonance and decreasing the intention to complain illegitimately, compared to communication which did not include a deterrence tactic.

Furthermore, even though not hypothesized, this study found an effect of gender on cognitive dissonance and intention to complain. In line with findings of Hochschild (1983) and Schaubroeck and Jones (2000), women experienced a stronger feeling of discomfort regarding illegitimate complaining than men. A possible explanation for this finding could be that women are more conditioned to manage their emotional displays and more likely to be concerned about being viewed unfavorably by others based on their behavior (Wharton, 1993). However, in contrast with expectations of Heung and Lam (2003), men are more likely to file an illegitimate complaint than women. A possible explanation for this finding could be that females are likely

to be more concerned about behaving in a socially desirable manner, thus leading to lower levels of voice complaints compared to men (Rudman et al., 2012).

Finally, in line with the study of Dootson et al., (2018), this study found statistical results regarding the use of neutralizations and deterrence tactics in order to change the level of cognitive dissonance of illegitimate complainers. Additionally, the deterrence theory can also be considered as a behavioral change theory, since current study showed that the use of a deterrence tactic in communication led to a decrease in intention to complain (i.e. change in behavior). The practical implications of these findings will be discussed in the next paragraph.

5.3 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Previous research already showed that customers are not always right, resulting in companies which are overspending in complaint handling (Joosten, 2022). Due to the sensitive nature of illegitimate complaining, little is known about how illegitimate complainers can be reduced or prevented. This study tried to explore how organizations can prevent the greedy type of customer based on the use of neutralization techniques and deterrence tactics. Results are therefore relevant for business practitioners and may help managers in optimizing their service recovery process in which the organization can spend their resources on the 'right' complainer.

First, the experiment showed that there is a significant effect between certain groups and the level of cognitive dissonance, which would indicate that businesses can use this information in their communication towards illegitimate complainers. This effect explains that the use of a deterrence tactic in the communication of an organization towards its customers is likely to be more effective than not using such tactic. In contrast to the study of Dootson et al., (2018), this effect is not dependent on whether the tactic matches the specific neutralization technique used. Therefore, the organization has a wide choice of deterrence tactics that might be used to increase the level of cognitive dissonance of illegitimate complainers. Examples of these tactics are used in current study, such as being transparent in rules, educating the customer or humanizing the organization.

Managers of organizations could also act on a similar advice regarding intention to complain illegitimately. Results of this thesis indicated that customers who read a message of the organization including a deterrence tactic were less sure about whether they would file an illegitimate complaint, compared to customers who read a message where such tactic was missing. Subsequently, this effect explains that the use of a deterrence tactic in the communication of an organization is likely to be more effective than not using such tactic.

Therefore, organizations could use various deterrence tactics to decrease the intention to complain of their customers, independent of whether it matches a particular neutralization technique.

Moreover, the experiment showed that women experienced a stronger feeling of discomfort regarding illegitimate complaining than men, whereas men were more willing to file an illegitimate complaint. Therefore, it might be useful for organizations to pay extra attention to their communication towards complaints that are filed by male customers. Managers could for example extra emphasize the deterrence tactic in their message towards males, in order to optimize their service recovery process.

Finally, managers should train their employees to recognize illegitimate complaining behavior and set guidelines on how to deal with it. The study of Berry, Seiders and Grewal (2002) already contributed to the formulation of such directions. Additionally, current thesis can provide information of the characteristics of the greedy customer type and how their deviant behavior can be reduced. Notable is, the results are mainly focused on customers who justify their behavior by using the claim of normalcy and claim of entitlement technique. In order to find out how organizations could reduce other types of illegitimate complainers, further research is deemed to be necessary. Moreover, current research raises a lot of other opportunities for further inquiry, which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF CURRENT STUDY

As with any other experiment, current research has several limitations which also provide directions for further research. First, the sample of current research did not appear to be homogenous, since women and high educated people were clearly overrepresented. Moreover, the study of Hueng and Lam (2003) implied that these people are the most frequently complainers, which could have influenced the results. In addition, the sample was based on basis of convenience, which implies that the sample was not random and did not meet the required random sampling method. Due to the lack of representations, findings of current research should be interpreted with cautions.

Second, the experiment consisted out of written scenarios with narrative text. The participants were asked to read the scenario carefully and to imagine oneself in the described situation, in a relatively short period of time. As implied by Green (2004) the time participants in an online experiment spent reading the scenario, is often too short to become really immersed into the text. Subsequently, important aspects of reality might be missed by the participants or

questions in the survey turn out to be unclear, leading to low external validity. Results will therefore be more externally valid if the experiment would be repeated in a field experiment with real-life interactions.

In line with the previous limitation, the realism check revealed that the participants perceived the written scenarios as unrealistic. Further research showed that this evaluation was based on differences in the scores between the items of the realism construct. For the question with the lowest score ('I think something similar could happen to me') it was argued whether the participants answered the question based on their own perspective instead of the greedy customer perspective, since greedy customers are likely to not admit their illegitimate behavior. Similar substantiations could be given for scores of the question 'To imagine myself in this situation is..'. However, the item with the highest scores ('The situation is.. very unrealistic – very realistic') indicates that participants perceived the story about the car rental company as quite realistic. In order to optimize the experiment, more attention should be paid regarding the formulation of the realism questions. Moreover, in order to gather rich data, further research should focus on participants who admit their illegitimate complaining behavior. However, practice showed that due to the sensitive nature of illegitimate complaining this could be very difficult.

A next limitation of current research concerns the fact of socially desirable answering. Since illegitimate complaining is in essence an illegal activity, participants are likely to be not transparent and open about their illegal behavior. In light of the realism check, participants may have reframed their answer regarding illegitimate complaining behavior because they are ashamed about performing this behavior. As this fact was known at forehand, an attempt was made to reduce this bias, stating in the introduction that the participants could not provide any wrong answers and the results are completely anonymous.

Another drawback of current research concerns the sample size. Initially, the sample consisted out of 536 participants, whereas the final sample consisted out of only 275 participants. The results showed that the majority of the participants ended the survey after a couple of questions. Therefore it could be questioned whether participants perceived the survey as too long or unclear. Moreover, some participants did not answer the control question correctly, which indicated that the experiment did not succeed for these respondents. Although the sample sized decreased with more than 50%, none of the sample groups was found to be underrepresented. Therefore, the number of participants per scenario was large enough to continue the research.

Regarding the assumptions of the statistical tests, several assumptions of the one-way ANOVA were not considered to be met (i.e. normality of dependent variables, homogeneity of variances, random sampling), leading to a lower statistical power. However, due to the relatively large sample of current research, it is expected that the influence of these results can be neglected. In addition, to test the hypotheses only one-way ANOVA's have been conducted. Future research could decide to use a MANOVA instead of multiple ANOVA's to test hypothesis two and hypothesis three. In doing so, the risk of a Type 1 error can be avoided.

Finally, the generalizability of the study is also constrained by the applied single service context (i.e. car rental company). Therefore, cautions needs to be exercised in generalizing the study's findings. In order to improve the generalizability of the findings, the study could be replicated in other contexts. For example, future research could focus on the fashion industry, since fashion retailers often experience deviant consumer behavior such as shoplifting (Kallis, Dinoo & Vanier, 1985).

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The results of this thesis also yield some potentially fruitful avenues for future research. At first, this study only examined how organizations could prevent or reduce the greedy customer type of illegitimate complaining. Since the study of Joosten (2022) identified four types of illegitimate complainers which organizations would ideally prevent, it might be interesting to focus on one of the other types from this typology. An interesting follow-up research could therefore, examine whether a match between deterrence tactic and neutralization technique used by the opportunistic customer type would increase/decrease the level of cognitive dissonance, compared to no match. Findings of this research could contribute to literature on how organization could prevent this type of customer, which is associated with different neutralization techniques to justify their behavior.

Secondly, current research is based on the literature and findings of the study of Dootson et al., (2018) who stated that the use of deterrence tactics together with specific neutralization techniques can result in a change in behavior (i.e. level of cognitive dissonance). However, literature showed that there are many other theories regarding changing deviant consumer behavior. For instance, the prospect theory of Kahneman and Tversky (1984) found evidence on how partial refunds can decrease customer opportunism, and the study of Bandura (1991) centrals the concept of self-efficacy in order to perform legal behavior. Therefore, it might be

interesting to use one of these theories regarding behavioral change to examine how organizations could prevent or reduce a specific type of illegitimate complainer.

The last suggestion for future research refers to the degree of the service failure. The car service failure mentioned in the scenarios of current study, can be considered a relatively innocent failure compared to service failures that have a long-lasting or physical impact. As research of Weun et al., (2004) indicated, minor failures may deter customers from voicing, which could have influenced the findings of this study. Therefore, it might be interesting for future research to test whether a match between a deterrence tactic and neutralization technique used by a type illegitimate complainer, could lead to an increase/decrease in cognitive dissonance and intention to complain based on a major service failure.

As has been argued, the topic of illegitimate complaining behavior still rises a wide range of possibilities and unexplored areas for research. The researcher, therefore hopes that future research will extend current research and offer further insight in this fascinating topic.

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APPENDIX I: SCENARIO-BASED SURVEY

<u>Introductie</u>

Beste meneer/mevrouw,

Hartelijk dank voor uw deelname aan dit onderzoek!
Wij zijn Sanne, Nick en Ingrid, masterstudenten van de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen. Voor onze scriptie doen wij - onder begeleiding van onze docent Dr. Herm Joosten - onderzoek naar het klaaggedrag van consumenten.

In dit onderzoek vragen we u om zich te verplaatsen in een denkbeeldige situatie waarin u een klacht gaat indienen bij een ondernemer. Het is dus een scenario, een verzonnen verhaal, en we vragen u te denken en te doen alsof u de hoofdpersoon in dat verhaal bent. En de vragen daarna te beantwoorden alsof u het zelf meemaakt. Het kan zijn dat u deze situatie in het echt nooit zult meemaken. Dat is voor het onderzoek niet erg. Wij vragen u om zich gewoon in te leven in het verhaal.

Deze enquête is volledig anoniem, wij gebruiken de gegevens uitsluitend voor dit onderzoek en deelname is uiteraard geheel vrijwillig. Er zijn geen goede of foute antwoorden, omdat het gaat om uw mening. De enquête zal ongeveer 10 minuten duren. Als u vragen of opmerkingen heeft kunt u ons of onze begeleidende docent mailen. De mailadressen staan hieronder.

Nogmaals hartelijk dank voor uw deelname! U helpt ons en de wetenschap een stap verder!

Ingrid Breunissen - (ingrid.breunissen@ru.nl)
Sanne van Heumen
Nick Spierings
Dr. Herm Joosten (herm.joosten@ru.nl)

Start experiment – Scenario

Stelt u zich voor dat u in deze situatie zit. Probeer u zo goed mogelijk in te leven.

U bent al 2 jaar niet op vakantie geweest, maar nu reizen naar het buitenland weer mogelijk is, bent u van plan een auto te huren en door Spanje te rijden. Terwijl u uw reisplannen met vrienden bespreekt, vertellen ze u dat ze vorig jaar een auto hebben gehuurd bij een bedrijf in Barcelona om 2 weken door Spanje te reizen. Ze vertellen u dat een keer - terwijl ze bij een tankstation stonden - de motor van de auto niet wilde starten. Ze vonden echter een bestuurder van een andere huurauto met verstand van auto's die wilde helpen. Hij maakte de accupolen weer goed vast en toen startte de auto weer. Uw vrienden vertellen u ook dat ze -na hun reis- een klacht hebben ingediend bij het autoverhuurbedrijf en een gedeeltelijke terugbetaling van de huurkosten hebben gekregen. Het autoverhuurbedrijf deed helemaal niet moeilijk.

U gaat zoeken naar informatie over dat verhuurbedrijf op beoordelingswebsites op internet (zoals Tripadvisor.com) en u vindt inderdaad veel reviews die suggereren dat dit verhuurbedrijf inderdaad heel gemakkelijk is met het klachten van klanten, het verhuurbedrijf vergoedt snel.

U bent nu in Spanje en u heeft een auto gehuurd bij dat zelfde autoverhuurbedrijf. U gaat proberen om - net als uw vrienden - uw huurkosten gedeeltelijk terug te krijgen door een klacht in te dienen. De klacht is helemaal verzonnen. U bent van plan om ze morgen - als u de auto terugbrengt - te vertellen dat de motor meerdere keren weigerde te starten tijdens de reis en dat u het zelf moest repareren. Dan gaat u vragen om een korting op de huurprijs van de auto.

[Cognitive dissonance 1]

Hoe zou u zich voelen als u om korting zou vragen naar aanleiding van een verzonnen klacht? (helemaal oneens – helemaal eens)

1. Ik zou me ongemakkelijk voelen als ik om een terugbetaling zou vragen.
2. Ik zou me bezwaard voelen als ik om terugbetaling zou vragen.
3. Ik zou er geen moeite mee hebben om geld terug te vragen.
4. Ik zou me ergeren aan mezelf als ik om terugbetaling zou vragen.
5. Ik zou me schamen als ik om een terugbetaling zou vragen.
6. Ik zou me generen als ik geld terug zou vragen.

[Intention to complain illegitimately 2]

Hoe zeker bent u ervan dat u de claim door gaat zetten en daadwerkelijk indient?
7. Ik ga deze klacht zeker indienen
8. Ik ben er niet van overtuigd dat ik deze klacht ga indienen
9. Het staat voor mij vast dat ik deze klacht ga indienen
10. Hoe hoog is het kortingspercentage dat u gaat vragen van de camperverhuurder? Geef een percentage van de autohuurkosten.

[Neutralisaties]

Veel mensen proberen hun gedrag in zo'n situatie voor zichzelf en anderen te rechtvaardigen. Welke rechtvaardiging zou u gebruiken in deze situatie waarin u een onterechte klacht gaat indienen?

Zet de rechtvaardigingen in volgorde van belangrijkheid,
waarbij 1= meest van toepassing en 4 is minst van toepassing)
11. Iedereen overdrijft wel eens
12. Ik mag ook wel eens een meevallertje hebben
13. Het autoverhuurbedrijf verdient het door wat ze gedaan hebben
14 Het autoverhuurbedrijf ondervindt geen schade door mijn onterechte claim

[Deterrence tactic,]

Vlak voordat u uw claim indient bij het verhuurbedrijf, ziet u de volgende boodschap:

(Controlegroep, deze boodschap werkt nergens tegen)
"Geachte klant. Vergeet niet de sleutels van uw huurauto en de verzekeringspapieren en handleiding in het dashboard compartiment achter te laten. Zonder die zaken kunnen we de camper niet aan de volgende klant verhuren. Dank u!"

(Social proof werkt tegen claim of normalcy)
"Geachte klant. Wij danken u dat u eerlijke klanten bent. We hebben geen enkele overdreven of verzonnen klacht van een klant ontvangen sinds we ons bedrijf een paar jaar geleden begonnen. Onze autoverhuur kan alleen gedijen als onze eerlijke diensten worden gewaardeerd door eerlijke klanten. Wij danken u dat u een eerlijke klant bent, net als al onze klanten"

(Transparency rules and law werkt tegen claim of entitlement)
"Geachte klant. Houd er rekening mee dat het indienen van een verzonnen of overdreven klacht een schending is van onze klantovereenkomst en van de toepasselijke Spaanse wetgeving. Het schaadt ons bedrijf en het schaadt onze klanten als u onterechte klachten indient. Ons bedrijf kan alleen gedijen als u deze regels niet overtreedt."

(Educating customers werkt tegen denial of injury)
"Geachte klant. Houd er rekening mee dat overdreven of verzonnen klachten van klanten ons bedrijf, onze medewerkers en onze klanten ernstig kunnen schaden. Ons bedrijf kan failliet gaan, onze werknemers kunnen worden ontslagen en klantenprijzen kunnen stijgen als klanten onterecht klagen. "

(Humanize the organization werkt tegen denial of victim)
"Geachte klant. Onze familie werkt elke dag hard in ons familie-bedrijf om onze klanten tevreden te houden. Daarmee verdienen we ons brood en kunnen we onze kinderen naar school sturen. Wij zijn blij en tevreden als u dat bent. Wij zijn ontevreden en ongelukkig als u dat bent. Laat het ons weten als u echt en oprecht ontevreden bent".

(Moral triggers en self-sanctions zou tegen elke neutralisatie moeten werken volgens Dootson)
"Geachte klant, we doen eerlijk zaken en we zijn er zeker van dat u een eerlijke klant bent. We zijn er zeker van dat u het met ons eens bent dat u alleen moet klagen als u een oprechte klacht heeft en oprecht ontevreden bent".

[Cognitive dissonance 2]

Hoe zou u zich voelen als u om korting zou vragen naar aanleiding van een verzonnen klacht?
(veel minder – veel meer)

15. Ik zou me ongemakkelijk voelen als ik om een terugbetaling zou vragen.
16. Ik zou me bezwaard voelen als ik om terugbetaling zou vragen.
17. Ik zou er geen moeite mee hebben om geld terug te vragen.
18. Ik zou me ergeren aan mezelf als ik om terugbetaling zou vragen.
19. Ik zou me schamen als ik om een terugbetaling zou vragen.
20. Ik zou me generen als ik geld terug zou vragen.

[Intention to complain illegitimately 2]

Hoe zeker bent u ervan dat u de claim door gaat zetten en daadwerkelijk indient?
(veel minder – veel meer)

21. Ik ga deze klacht zeker indienen
22. Ik ben er niet van overtuigd dat ik deze klacht ga indienen
23. Ik weet zeker dat ik deze klacht ga indienen
24. Hoe hoog is het kortingspercentage dat u gaat vragen van de camperverhuurder? Geef een percentage van de autohuurkosten.

[Realism check]

Hoe realistisch is dit scenario? Kunt u zich voorstellen dat u zich nu of in de toekomst in zo'n situatie bevindt?
25. Ik denk dat mij iets soortgelijks kan gebeuren: zeer onwaarschijnlijk - zeer waarschijnlijk
26. De situatie in het scenario is: zeer onrealistisch – zeer realistisch
27. Mezelf in deze situatie voorstellen is: heel moeilijk – heel gemakkelijk

[Manipulation check greedy customer]

28. In hoeverre is uw klacht overdreven? (ofwel erger voorgesteld dan het daadwerkelijk was)
29. In hoeverre heeft u de klacht verzonnen
30. In hoeverre was de klacht van tevoren gepland?

[Manipulation check deterrence tactic]

31. Weet u nog waarover het bericht ging dat u las voordat u een claim indiende?

0. controlegroep. Het bericht vroeg de klant om sleutels en papieren in het dashboard achter te laten
1. Social proof: Het bericht wees op het feit dat de klanten van de autoverhuurder eerlijk zijn.
2. Transparancy rules Het bericht wees erop dat verzonnen klachten de klantovereenkomst en Spaanse wetgeving schenden
3. Educating customers Het bericht wees erop dat verzonnen en overdreven klachten het bedrijf, werknemers en klanten veel schade kunnen berokkenen
4. Humanize organization Het bericht wees erop dat de autoverhuurbedrijf een familiebedrijf is waarmee een gezin haar brood verdient
5. Formal sanctions dreigen met hoge pakkans. Het bericht wees erop dat de kans om betrapt te worden groot is omdat alle klachten grondig onderzocht worden
6. Formal sanctions dreigen met hoge straf. Het bericht wees erop dat klanten die betrapt worden op onterecht klagen een hoge straf krijgen

7. Moral triggers. Het bericht wees erop dat men er vanuit gaat dat u eerlijk bent en alleen klaagt als dat terecht is.

8. Channel phone. Het bericht wees erop dat klachten alleen kunnen worden ingediend via de telefoon

9. Channel mail. Het bericht wees erop dat klachten alleen kunnen worden ingediend via email

[Leeftijd]

32. Wat is uw leeftijd? (vul leeftijd in jaren in)

[Geslacht]

33. Wat is uw geslacht?
o Man
o Vrouw
o Anders/
0 wil niet zeggen

 [Opleiding]
34. Wat is uw hoogst genoten opleiding (met of zonder diploma)?
o Lagere school/basisonderwijs
o Voortgezet onderwijs
o MBO
o HBO
o WO

Dit waren de vragen. We willen nogmaals benadrukken dat de gegevens uitsluitend voor dit onderzoek gebruikt zullen worden en anonimiteit verzekerd is.

Nogmaals hartelijk dank voor uw medewerking! Indien u geïnteresseerd bent in de resultaten van het onderzoek of anderzijds vragen heeft kunt u een e-mail sturen naar ingrid.breunissen@ru.nl

Scenario check

Statistics

Scenario check

N	Valid	275
	Missing	0
Mean		4.1018
Std. Error of Mean		.06074
Std. Deviation		1.00734
Variance		1.015
Range		4.00
Minimum		1.00
Maximum		5.00

Cognitive dissonance (CD_1)

Statistics

Cognitieve dissonantie 1

N	Valid	275
	Missing	0
Mean		4.53
Std. Error of Mean		.038
Std. Deviation		.627
Variance		.394
Range		4
Minimum		1
Maximum		5

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Realisme check	275	1.00	5.00	2.1539	1.00331
Valid N (listwise)	275				

Statistics

		Ik denk dat mij iets soortgelijks kan gebeuren onwaarschijnlijk/waarschijnlijk	De situatie in het scenario is onrealistisch/ realistisch	Mezelf in deze situatie voorstellen is moeilijk/makkelijk
N	Valid	275	274	274
	Missing	0	1	1
Mean		1.87	2.40	2.19
Std. Error of Mean		.066	.075	.070
Std. Deviation		1.090	1.246	1.157
Variance		1.187	1.553	1.339
Range		4	4	4
Minimum		1	1	1
Maximum		5	5	5

APPENDIX IV: FACTOR ANALYSIS

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.757
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi–Square	2154.496
	df	15
	Sig.	.000

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Ik ga deze klacht zeker indienen.	1.000	.915
Ik ben er van overtuigd dat ik deze klacht ga indienen.	1.000	.941
Het staat voor mij vast dat ik deze klacht ga indienen.	1.000	.904
Ik ga deze klacht zeker indienen 2	1.000	.950
Ik ben er van overtuigd dat ik deze klacht ga indienen 2	1.000	.964
Het staat voor mij vast dat ik deze klacht ga indienen 2	1.000	.962

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings[a]
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	3.241	54.024	54.024	3.241	54.024	54.024	2.936
2	2.395	39.923	93.948	2.395	39.923	93.948	2.825
3	.152	2.540	96.487				
4	.094	1.568	98.056				
5	.073	1.219	99.275				
6	.044	.725	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

Scree Plot
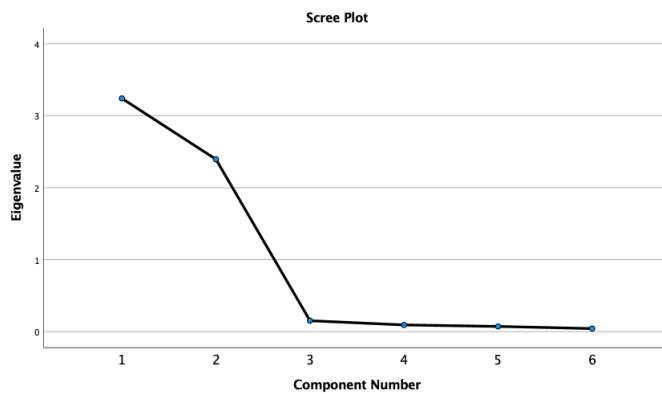
Component Matrix[a]

	Component 1	Component 2
Ik ga deze klacht zeker indienen.	.679	.674
Ik ben er van overtuigd dat ik deze klacht ga indienen.	.683	.689
Het staat voor mij vast dat ik deze klacht ga indienen.	.689	.655
Ik ga deze klacht zeker indienen 2	.798	-.560
Ik ben er van overtuigd dat ik deze klacht ga indienen 2	.773	-.605
Het staat voor mij vast dat ik deze klacht ga indienen 2	.778	-.598

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 2 components extracted.

Pattern Matrix[a]

	Component 1	Component 2
Ik ga deze klacht zeker indienen.		.957
Ik ben er van overtuigd dat ik deze klacht ga indienen.		.972
Het staat voor mij vast dat ik deze klacht ga indienen.		.948
Ik ga deze klacht zeker indienen 2	.970	
Ik ben er van overtuigd dat ik deze klacht ga indienen 2	.984	
Het staat voor mij vast dat ik deze klacht ga indienen 2	.983	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

Cognitive dissonance (CD_1)

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.923	6

Cognitive dissonance (CD_2)

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.977	6

Intention to complain (ITC_1)

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.956	3

Intention to complain (ITC_2)

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.978	3

Realism

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.825	3

Scenario

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.787	3
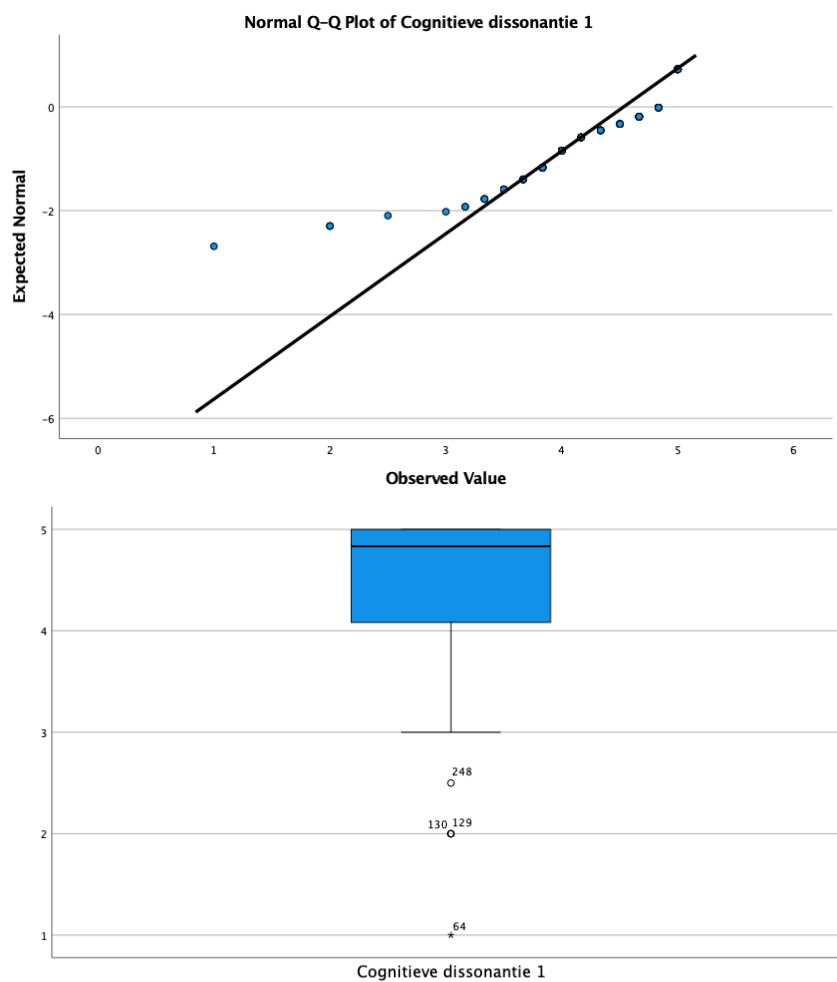
Extreme outliers check CD_1

Normal Q–Q Plot of Cognitieve dissonantie 1

Cognitieve dissonantie 1

Extreme outliers check CD_2

Normal Q–Q Plot of Cogntieve dissonantie 2

Cogntieve dissonantie 2

Extreme outliers check ITC_1

Normal Q–Q Plot of Intention to complain 1

Intention to complain 1
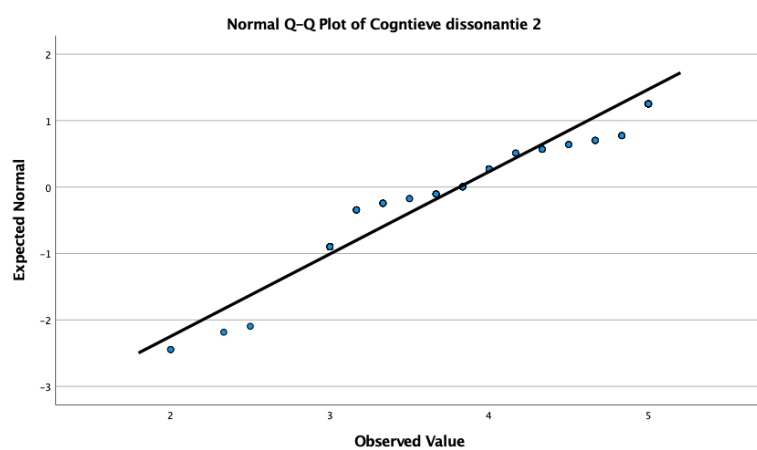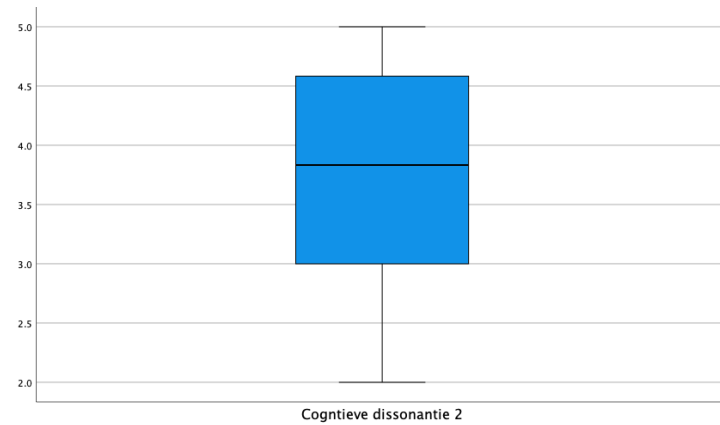
Extreme outliers check ITC_2
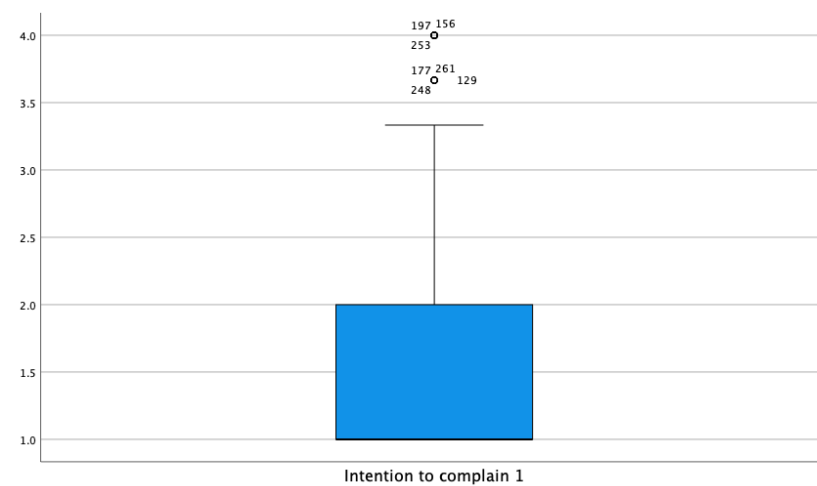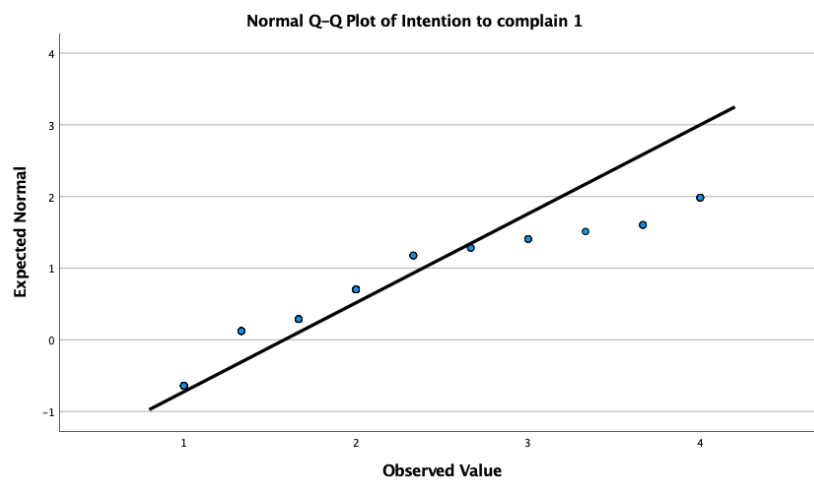
Normal Q–Q Plot of Intention to complain 2
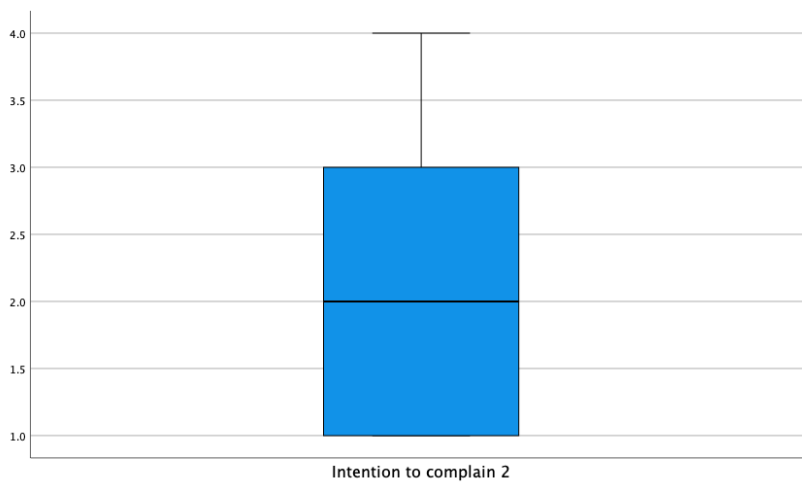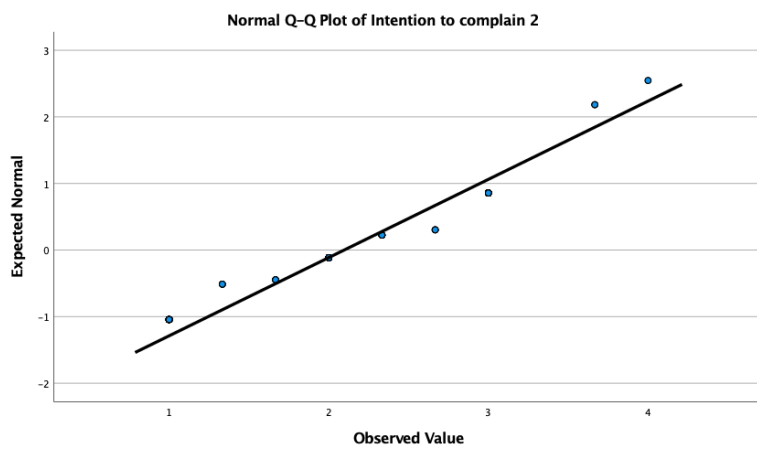
Intention to complain 2

SPSS Output

Statistics

		Cognitieve dissonantie 1	Intention to complain 1	Cogntieve dissonantie 2	Intention to complain 2
N	Valid	275	275	275	275
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.53	1.58	3.8127	2.0958
Median		4.83	1.00	3.8333	2.0000
Std. Deviation		.627	.805	.80699	.85110
Variance		.394	.649	.651	.724
Skewness		−1.857	1.574	.228	−.067
Std. Error of Skewness		.147	.147	.147	.147
Kurtosis		5.160	1.998	−1.214	−1.407
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.293	.293	.293	.293
Minimum		1	1	2.00	1.00
Maximum		5	4	5.00	4.00

Normality check CD_1
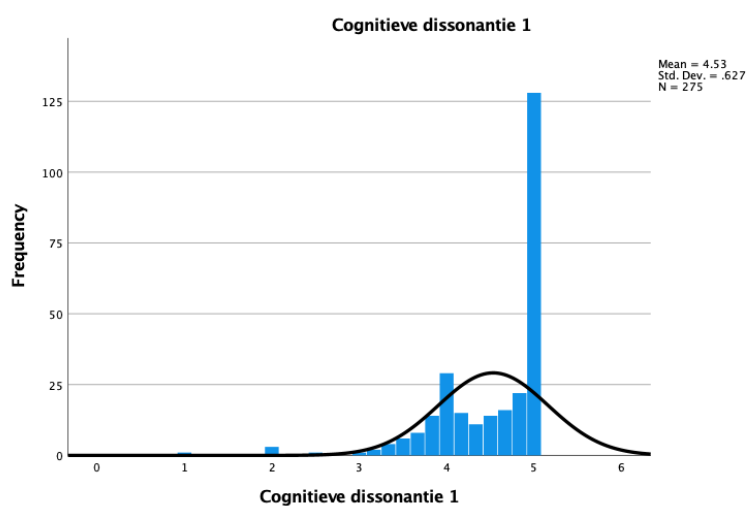
Normality check CD_2

Normality check ITC_1

Intention to complain 1

Mean = 1.58
Std. Dev. = .805
N = 275
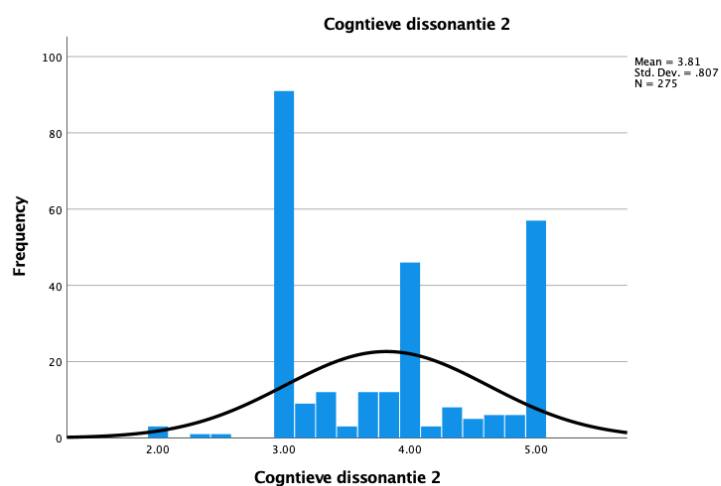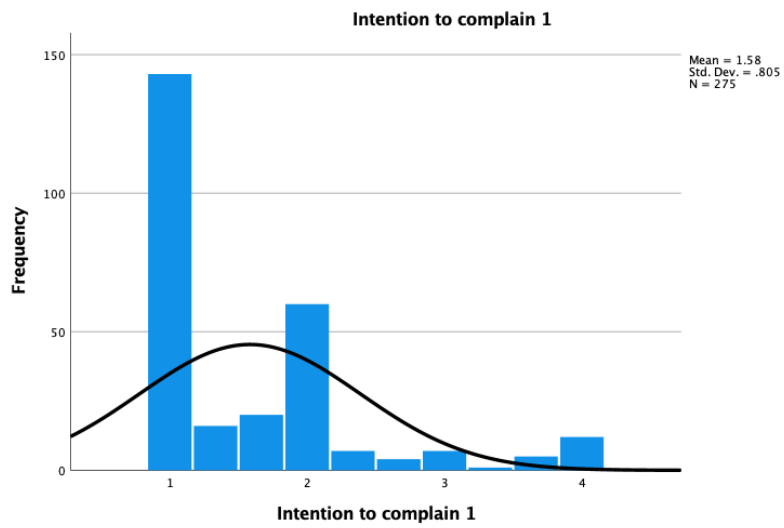
Normality check ITC_2

Intention to complain 2

Mean = 2.10
Std. Dev. = .851
N = 275

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Cognitieve dissonantie 1	Based on Mean	5.533	3	271	.001
	Based on Median	2.043	3	271	.108
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2.043	3	232.411	.109
	Based on trimmed mean	4.396	3	271	.005
Intention to complain 1	Based on Mean	4.105	3	271	.007
	Based on Median	2.930	3	271	.034
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2.930	3	248.199	.034
	Based on trimmed mean	3.913	3	271	.009
Cogntieve dissonantie 2	Based on Mean	7.788	3	271	.000
	Based on Median	9.839	3	271	.000
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	9.839	3	261.164	.000
	Based on trimmed mean	8.623	3	271	.000
Intention to complain 2	Based on Mean	1.555	3	271	.201
	Based on Median	3.496	3	271	.016
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	3.496	3	219.858	.016
	Based on trimmed mean	1.875	3	271	.134

Hypothesis one

Total overview Neutralization Techniques
 (1 = claim of normalcy, 2 = claim of entitlement, 3 = denial of injury, 4 = denial of victim)

Statistics

		Welke rechtvaardiging gebruikt u? Zet de rechtvaardigingen in volgorde van uw keuze. (1 = mee	Welke rechtvaardiging gebruikt u? Zet de rechtvaardigingen in volgorde van uw keuze. (1 = mee	Welke rechtvaardiging gebruikt u? Zet de rechtvaardigingen in volgorde van uw keuze. (1 = mee	Welke rechtvaardiging gebruikt u? Zet de rechtvaardigingen in volgorde van uw keuze. (1 = mee
N	Valid	275	275	275	275
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.00	1.98	2.58	3.44
Median		2.00	2.00	3.00	4.00
Mode		2	1	3	4
Std. Deviation		.898	.940	1.072	.867
Variance		.807	.883	1.149	.751
Range		3	3	3	3
Minimum		1	1	1	1
Maximum		4	4	4	4

Neutralization Technique 'Claim of normalcy'
(1 = claim of normalcy, 2 = claim of entitlement, 3 = denial of injury, 4 = denial of victim)

Welke rechtvaardiging gebruikt u? Zet de rechtvaardigingen in volgorde van uw keuze. (1 = mee

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	91	33.1	33.1	33.1
	2	114	41.5	41.5	74.5
	3	50	18.2	18.2	92.7
	4	20	7.3	7.3	100.0
	Total	275	100.0	100.0	

Neutralization Technique 'Claim of entitlement'
(1 = claim of normalcy, 2 = claim of entitlement, 3 = denial of injury, 4 = denial of victim)

Welke rechtvaardiging gebruikt u? Zet de rechtvaardigingen in volgorde van uw keuze. (1 = mee

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	103	37.5	37.5	37.5
	2	96	34.9	34.9	72.4
	3	55	20.0	20.0	92.4
	4	21	7.6	7.6	100.0
	Total	275	100.0	100.0	

Neutralization technique 'Denial of injury'
(1 = claim of normalcy, 2 = claim of entitlement, 3 = denial of injury, 4 = denial of victim)

Welke rechtvaardiging gebruikt u? Zet de rechtvaardigingen in volgorde van uw keuze. (1 = mee

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	66	24.0	24.0	24.0
	2	41	14.9	14.9	38.9
	3	110	40.0	40.0	78.9
	4	58	21.1	21.1	100.0
	Total	275	100.0	100.0	

Neutralization technique 'Denial of victim'
(1 = claim of normalcy, 2 = claim of entitlement, 3 = denial of injury, 4 = denial of victim)

Welke rechtvaardiging gebruikt u? Zet de rechtvaardigingen in volgorde van uw keuze. (1 = mee

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	15	5.5	5.5	5.5
	2	24	8.7	8.7	14.2
	3	60	21.8	21.8	36.0
	4	176	64.0	64.0	100.0
	Total	275	100.0	100.0	

Hypothesis two (ANOVA)

Descriptives

Cogntieve dissonantie 2

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Control group	48	3.1354	.57802	.08343	2.9676	3.3033	2.00	5.00
Match incl Moral Triggers	137	3.8917	.74524	.06367	3.7658	4.0176	3.00	5.00
Geen match	90	4.0537	.81490	.08590	3.8830	4.2244	2.33	5.00
Total	275	3.8127	.80699	.04866	3.7169	3.9085	2.00	5.00

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Cogntieve dissonantie 2	Based on Mean	11.918	2	272	.000
	Based on Median	15.169	2	272	.000
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	15.169	2	261.657	.000
	Based on trimmed mean	13.323	2	272	.000

ANOVA

Cogntieve dissonantie 2

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	28.101	2	14.051	25.421	.000
Within Groups	150.338	272	.553		
Total	178.439	274			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Cogntieve dissonantie 2

Games–Howell

(I) Match tactic en neutralisatie	(J) Match tactic en neutralisatie	Mean Difference (I–J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control group	Match incl Moral Triggers	-.75631*	.10495	.000	-1.0058	-.5068
	Geen match	-.91829*	.11975	.000	-1.2023	-.6343
Match incl Moral Triggers	Control group	.75631*	.10495	.000	.5068	1.0058
	Geen match	-.16198	.10692	.286	-.4147	.0907
Geen match	Control group	.91829*	.11975	.000	.6343	1.2023
	Match incl Moral Triggers	.16198	.10692	.286	-.0907	.4147

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Hypothesis three (ANOVA)

Descriptives

Intention to complain 2

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Control group	48	2.5833	.76105	.10985	2.3623	2.8043	1.00	4.00
Match incl Moral Triggers	137	2.0584	.81439	.06958	1.9208	2.1960	1.00	4.00
Geen match	90	1.8926	.85945	.09059	1.7126	2.0726	1.00	3.67
Total	275	2.0958	.85110	.05132	1.9947	2.1968	1.00	4.00

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Intention to complain 2	Based on Mean	1.697	2	272	.185
	Based on Median	4.892	2	272	.008
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	4.892	2	221.195	.008
	Based on trimmed mean	2.113	2	272	.123

ANOVA

Intention to complain 2

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	15.317	2	7.659	11.373	.000
Within Groups	183.161	272	.673		
Total	198.478	274			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Intention to complain 2
Games-Howell

(I) Match tactic en neutralisatie	(J) Match tactic en neutralisatie	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control group	Match incl Moral Triggers	.52494[*]	.13003	.000	.2149	.8350
	Geen match	.69074[*]	.14239	.000	.3523	1.0292
Match incl Moral Triggers	Control group	-.52494[*]	.13003	.000	-.8350	-.2149
	Geen match	.16580	.11423	.317	-.1041	.4357
Geen match	Control group	-.69074[*]	.14239	.000	-1.0292	-.3523
	Match incl Moral Triggers	-.16580	.11423	.317	-.4357	.1041

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Hypothesis four (ANOVA)

Output part A

Descriptives

Cogntieve dissonantie 2

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Controle groep	48	3.1354	.57802	.08343	2.9676	3.3033	2.00	5.00
Matcht	96	3.9549	.73289	.07480	3.8064	4.1034	3.00	5.00
Matcht niet	90	4.0537	.81490	.08590	3.8830	4.2244	2.33	5.00
Moral triggers	41	3.7439	.76203	.11901	3.5034	3.9844	3.00	5.00
Total	275	3.8127	.80699	.04866	3.7169	3.9085	2.00	5.00

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Cogntieve dissonantie 2	Based on Mean	7.788	3	271	.000
	Based on Median	9.839	3	271	.000
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	9.839	3	261.164	.000
	Based on trimmed mean	8.623	3	271	.000

ANOVA

Cogntieve dissonantie 2

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	29.380	3	9.793	17.805	.000
Within Groups	149.059	271	.550		
Total	178.439	274			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Cogntieve dissonantie 2

Games–Howell

(I) Match neutralisatie en deterrence tactic	(J) Match neutralisatie en deterrence tactic	Mean Difference (I–J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Controle groep	Matcht	-.81944*	.11205	.000	-1.1115	-.5274
	Matcht niet	-.91829*	.11975	.000	-1.2301	-.6065
	Moral triggers	-.60849*	.14534	.000	-.9905	-.2265
Matcht	Controle groep	.81944*	.11205	.000	.5274	1.1115
	Matcht niet	-.09884	.11390	.821	-.3942	.1965
	Moral triggers	.21096	.14056	.442	-.1586	.5805
Matcht niet	Controle groep	.91829*	.11975	.000	.6065	1.2301
	Matcht	.09884	.11390	.821	-.1965	.3942
	Moral triggers	.30980	.14677	.158	-.0751	.6947
Moral triggers	Controle groep	.60849*	.14534	.000	.2265	.9905
	Matcht	-.21096	.14056	.442	-.5805	.1586
	Matcht niet	-.30980	.14677	.158	-.6947	.0751

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Moral triggers match

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Claim of normalcy	14	5.1	34.1	34.1
	Claim of entitlement	13	4.7	31.7	65.9
	Denial of injury	9	3.3	22.0	87.8
	Denial of victim	5	1.8	12.2	100.0
	Total	41	14.9	100.0	
Missing	System	234	85.1		
Total		275	100.0		

Descriptives

Cogntieve dissonantie 2

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Claim of normalcy	14	3.6905	.82134	.21951	3.2162	4.1647	3.00	5.00
Claim of entitlement	13	4.1026	.68563	.19016	3.6882	4.5169	3.00	5.00
Denial of injury	9	3.2963	.67586	.22529	2.7768	3.8158	3.00	5.00
Denial of victim	5	3.7667	.64118	.28674	2.9705	4.5628	3.00	4.67
Total	41	3.7439	.76203	.11901	3.5034	3.9844	3.00	5.00

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Cogntieve dissonantie 2	Based on Mean	.804	3	37	.500
	Based on Median	.759	3	37	.524
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.759	3	31.579	.525
	Based on trimmed mean	.878	3	37	.461

ANOVA

Cogntieve dissonantie 2

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.518	3	1.173	2.201	.104
Within Groups	19.710	37	.533		
Total	23.228	40			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Cogntieve dissonantie 2
Games–Howell

(I) Moral triggers match	(J) Moral triggers match	Mean Difference (I–J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Claim of normalcy	Claim of entitlement	-.41209	.29042	.500	-1.2115	.3874
	Denial of injury	.39418	.31455	.602	-.4880	1.2763
	Denial of victim	-.07619	.36112	.996	-1.2010	1.0486
Claim of entitlement	Claim of normalcy	.41209	.29042	.500	-.3874	1.2115
	Denial of injury	.80627	.29481	.061	-.0291	1.6417
	Denial of victim	.33590	.34407	.766	-.7728	1.4446
Denial of injury	Claim of normalcy	-.39418	.31455	.602	-1.2763	.4880
	Claim of entitlement	-.80627	.29481	.061	-1.6417	.0291
	Denial of victim	-.47037	.36466	.591	-1.6144	.6736
Denial of victim	Claim of normalcy	.07619	.36112	.996	-1.0486	1.2010
	Claim of entitlement	-.33590	.34407	.766	-1.4446	.7728
	Denial of injury	.47037	.36466	.591	-.6736	1.6144

Output part B

Descriptives

Intention to complain 2

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Controle groep	48	2.5833	.76105	.10985	2.3623	2.8043	1.00	4.00
Matcht	96	2.0174	.80549	.08221	1.8542	2.1806	1.00	4.00
Matcht niet	90	1.8926	.85945	.09059	1.7126	2.0726	1.00	3.67
Moral triggers	41	2.1545	.83698	.13071	1.8903	2.4187	1.00	3.00
Total	275	2.0958	.85110	.05132	1.9947	2.1968	1.00	4.00

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Intention to complain 2	Based on Mean	1.555	3	271	.201
	Based on Median	3.496	3	271	.016
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	3.496	3	219.858	.016
	Based on trimmed mean	1.875	3	271	.134

ANOVA

Intention to complain 2

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	15.857	3	5.286	7.844	.000
Within Groups	182.621	271	.674		
Total	198.478	274			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Intention to complain 2
Tukey HSD

(I) Match neutralisatie en deterrence tactic	(J) Match neutralisatie en deterrence tactic	Mean Difference (I–J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Controle groep	Matcht	.56597*	.14512	.001	.1908	.9411
	Matcht niet	.69074*	.14672	.000	.3115	1.0700
	Moral triggers	.42886	.17457	.069	-.0224	.8801
Matcht	Controle groep	-.56597*	.14512	.001	-.9411	-.1908
	Matcht niet	.12477	.12045	.729	-.1866	.4361
	Moral triggers	-.13711	.15315	.807	-.5330	.2588
Matcht niet	Controle groep	-.69074*	.14672	.000	-1.0700	-.3115
	Matcht	-.12477	.12045	.729	-.4361	.1866
	Moral triggers	-.26188	.15467	.329	-.6617	.1380
Moral triggers	Controle groep	-.42886	.17457	.069	-.8801	.0224
	Matcht	.13711	.15315	.807	-.2588	.5330
	Matcht niet	.26188	.15467	.329	-.1380	.6617

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Descriptives discount items (DR_1) & (DR_2)

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Hoe hoog is het kortingspercentage dat u gaat vragen van de autoverhuurder?	275	.00	88.00	9.3782	13.39336
Hoe hoog is nu het kortingspercentage dat u gaat vragen van de autoverhuurder? 2	275	.00	88.00	6.1600	11.13306
Valid N (listwise)	275				

Measurement ITC_2 including discount item

Descriptives

Q6_inclkorting

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Control group	48	4.0000	3.06664	.44263	3.1095	4.8905	.75	12.25
Match incl Moral Triggers	137	3.0985	3.16857	.27071	2.5632	3.6339	.75	24.75
Geen match	90	2.6583	2.66254	.28066	2.1007	3.2160	.75	14.75
Total	275	3.1118	3.01744	.18196	2.7536	3.4700	.75	24.75

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Q6_inclkorting	Based on Mean	1.794	2	272	.168
	Based on Median	.909	2	272	.404
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.909	2	264.282	.404
	Based on trimmed mean	1.995	2	272	.138

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Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Q6_inclkorting
Games–Howell

(I) Match tactic en neutralisatie	(J) Match tactic en neutralisatie	Mean Difference (I–J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control group	Match incl Moral Triggers	.90146	.51885	.197	-.3363	2.1392
	Geen match	1.34167*	.52411	.032	.0915	2.5919
Match incl Moral Triggers	Control group	-.90146	.51885	.197	-2.1392	.3363
	Geen match	.44021	.38994	.497	-.4802	1.3606
Geen match	Control group	-1.34167*	.52411	.032	-2.5919	-.0915
	Match incl Moral Triggers	-.44021	.38994	.497	-1.3606	.4802

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Independent sample t-tests CD_2 & ITC_2

Group Statistics

	Wat is uw geslacht?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Cogntieve dissonantie 2	Man	89	3.6386	.74078	.07852
	Vrouw	183	3.9080	.82701	.06113

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Cogntieve dissonantie 2	Equal variances assumed	1.572	.211	-2.606	270	.010	-.26944	.10338	-.47296	-.06591
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.708	192.770	.007	-.26944	.09952	-.46572	-.07316

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Cogntieve dissonantie 2	Cohen's d	.79993	-.337	-.591	-.082
	Hedges' correction	.80216	-.336	-.590	-.081
	Glass's delta	.82701	-.326	-.581	-.070

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.
Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.
Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control group.

Group Statistics

	Wat is uw geslacht?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Intention to complain 2	Man	89	2.2397	.80244	.08506
	Vrouw	183	2.0146	.86431	.06389

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Intention to complain 2	Equal variances assumed	.305	.581	2.062	270	.040	.22513	.10915	.01023	.44003
	Equal variances not assumed			2.116	186.597	.036	.22513	.10638	.01526	.43499

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer[a]	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Intention to complain 2	Cohen's d	.84465	.267	.012	.521
	Hedges' correction	.84700	.266	.012	.519
	Glass's delta	.86431	.260	.005	.515

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.
Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.
Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control group.