The drivers of illegitimate complaining behavior

An exploratory research study on the drivers of illegitimate complaining behavior

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Master's Thesis Marketing
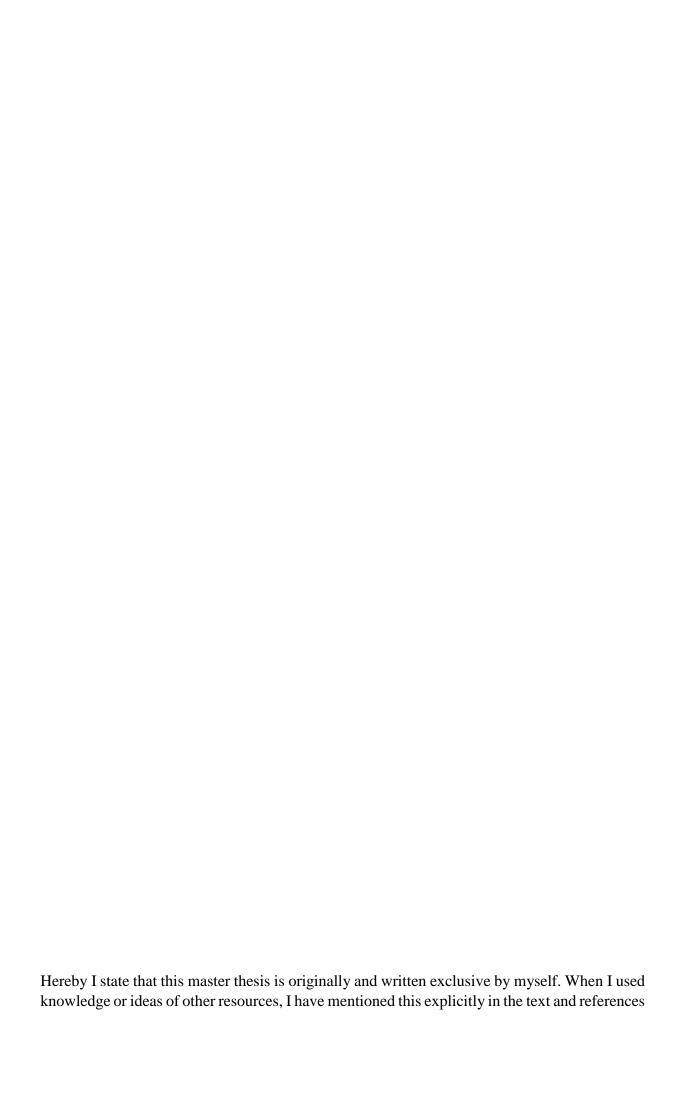
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Hereby I state that this master thesis is originally and written exclusive by myself. When I used knowledge or ideas of other resources, I have mentioned this explicitly in the text and references

Preface

In front of you lies my thesis about the drivers of illegitimate complaining behavior. This research has been partly done as a joint-effort between Ester van Laar and me. The theoretical framework, survey, measures, data collection and data analysis have to some extent been jointly composed, in order to be able to finish this thesis within the designated period. I would like to thank Esther for all fine and valuable cooperation and her contribution to this thesis.

I would like to thank my supervisor Herm Joosten for his excellent guidance, support and enthusiasm during this process. Furthermore, I would like to thank Marcel van Birgelen for all his effort as second examiner, and I would like to thank all respondents for their help to gather the data we needed. Last, I would like to thank all family and friends for their support and motivation to work hard.

I hope you enjoy your reading.

John van Bokhoven

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Abstract

Effectively handling customer complaints contributes to the competitive position of firms, which is of crucial importance giving the growing competition nowadays. Many companies assume customers are reasonable when filing complaints and provide them open-handed compensations. However, firms must consider customers could behave illegitimately as customers do exaggerate or made up their complaints. As research on the drivers of illegitimate complaining behavior is missing, this research aims to find out what drives illegitimate complaining behavior in a service recovery context.

To provide an answer on what drives illegitimate complaining behavior, a survey has been conducted to directly ask respondents their drivers behind real-life voiced illegitimate complaints. 25 variables were measured via the questionnaire, in order to test as much as possible drivers who could determine why people exaggerated the problem, made up the problem and/or exaggerated their claim.

Based on a gathered sample of 181 respondents, it turned out that the drivers of illegitimate complaining are 'opportunism', 'financial greed' and 'personal-based conflict framing style'. It seems these drivers focus on three aspects: 'when' customers complain illegitimately, namely when a lucrative opportunity arises; 'why' customers involve in illegitimate complaining behavior, which is both due to the financial benefits of it and due to the available opportunity; and `how´ customers complain illegitimately, namely by pressurizing the service provider.

As this study proves the existence of illegitimate complaints, firms must deal effectively with unfair customers in order to save both money, time and effort. Managers need to eliminate opportunities to complaint illegitimately like liberal redress policies or 100% money back guarantees. Further, they must warn customers the financial consequences of unfair behavior and be aware of customers who show characteristics of a personal-based conflict framing style.

Future research is necessary to expand our knowledge of this topic, looking at the limitations this research entails.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Nowadays, companies are increasingly exposed to competition which makes it important to maintain customer relationships and establish a unique competitive position. In these customer-company relationships, problems and complaints are inevitable, so companies must handle these effectively to maintain customer satisfaction and loyalty (Tax and Brown, 1998). Previous research (DeWitt, Nguyen and Marshall, 2008; Orsingher, Valentini and Angelis, 2010; Maxham, 2001; Stauss and Friege, 1999) even finds out that companies who are able to successfully deal with customer complaints, it positively influences customer trust, customer retention, purchase intentions and word of mouth. Conversely, companies risk to lose customers (Homburg and Fürst, 2005) and have dissatisfied customers who spread negative word of mouth (Orsingher, Valentini and Angelis, 2010) if complaints are not handled effectively.

Whether or not customers perceive the complaint handling of an organisation as fair depends on three justice dimensions (Gelbrich and Roschk, 2011). Distributive justice refers to the degree to which a customer associates the outcome of a decision or exchange as fair. Procedural justice is defined as the degree to how the complainant perceives the way in which the outcome is delivered. Last, interactional justice refers to how customers perceive the way they are treated through the service provider during the process.

Considering the justice theory, an organization can satisfy complainants by offering a compensation to them (Gelbrich and Roschk, 2011). Many companies nowadays give complaining customers the benefit of the doubt and provide them open-handed compensations (Lovelock and Wirtz, in Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy, 2010), with the prevailing assumption "the customer is always right" in their mind. However, Jacoby and Jaccard already mentioned in their study in 1981 that customers may complain because of a perceived possibility of gain. The study of Joosten (2017) even concludes that two third of all complaints were illegitimate. If that's the case, companies do not act wisely to compensate such fraudulent claims. For example, the Dutch `Centrum voor bestrijding verzekeringscriminaliteit' ('Centrum for combating insurance crime') (2017) investigated more than 27,000 questionable incidents. By not compensating these – in hindsight – illegitimate claims, it saved insurances finally 83 million euros, which comes down to a saving of €3,059 per research carried out. This shows that companies must consider customers could behave illegitimately in order to avoid substantial losses.

Customers could behave illegitimately when a lucrative opportunity arises or when they observe illegitimate complaining behavior of others and therefore know how to voice

illegitimate complaints effectively (Reynold and Harris, 2005). Besides, they could even purposely seek out opportunities to fraud (Reynold and Harris, 2005). Several studies have been conducted to explore illegitimate complaining behavior. For example, Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy (2010) examined the impact of contextual variables on illegitimate claiming behavior and found that customers behave more illegitimate when facing large firms instead of small firms and in case of one-time transactions compared to continuous relationships with companies. Subsequently, Baker, Magnini and Perdue (2012) investigated how the likelihood of illegitimate complaining could be reduced and what the possible consequences are of (not) yielding to an illegitimate complaint. More specific, the likelihood of illegitimate complaining can be reduced by communicating the financial costs of redress. If customers still voice illegitimate complaints, companies can yield to these complaints which could lead to unnecessary costs. They could also neglect these complaints with the possible consequences of losing customers or causing customers to voice their complaint up in the chain of command. Further, researchers examined several determinants of illegitimate claiming behavior, like customer's social value orientation (Macintosh and Stevens, 2013), customer's attitude towards complaining (Kim, Kim, Im and Shin, 2003) and firm's generous redress practices (Harris and Reynolds, 2003). However, there still remains a gap of knowledge concerning illegitimate complaining behavior.

1.1 Problem statement

There is a gap of knowledge regarding *why* customers engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour. A possible rationale behind this could be that examining illegitimate behaviour is challenging because of its sensitive nature (Fisk, Grove, Harris and Keeffe, 2010). Illegitimate complaining is a sensitive topic because it's considered immoral and illegal and therefore people won't concede they misbehave.

As mentioned earlier, it's essential for companies to deal effectively with illegitimate complaints, which makes it interesting and necessary to understand the drivers of customers to behave illegitimate. Joosten (2017) already mentioned possible underlying theories which could explain such behaviour. One example is the *contrast effect* (Anderson, 1973), which presumes that customers will evaluate a particular service or product excessively negative if a discrepancy exists between (high) expectations and (low) actual performance. Another example is the *halo effect* (Halstead, Morash and Ozment, 1996), which means that customers evaluate multiple service attributes negatively once they have experienced a single service failure. However, the data Joosten (2017) used in his research were not suited to examine why customers complain

illegitimately, because customers do not admit they behaved fraudulently or simply don't explain their motivation behind their behavior.

Therefore, the goal of this research is to examine why customers complain opportunistically, in order to contribute to the body of knowledge about this research area.

1.2 Research question
Following the problem statement, this study will address the following research question:

"What are drivers of illegitimate complaining behavior?"

To answer this research question appropriately, additional questions needs to be answered. This study first needs to investigate what the concept illegitimate complaining contains. Second, customer's motives to complain illegitimate needs to be examined. To be able to provide an answer for this, this research will examine several theories which could explain motives to complain illegitimate.

1.3 Initial conceptual model
Based on the problem statement and research question, the following initial conceptual model has been composed.

| **Drivers of illegitimate complaining** | → | **Illegitimate complaining** |

Figure 1 - Initial conceptual model

1.4 Theoretical relevance
This research is theoretical relevant because it aims to identify possible drivers of illegitimate behavior, which contributes to the existing literature about this "challenging" research area. While previous research only mentioned possible drivers of illegitimate behavior without empirically testing it (e.g. Baker *et al*, 2012), this study will empirical identify customer's drivers to complain illegitimate.

1.5 Practical relevance

Complaining customers are a source of feedback for companies and therefore companies should encourage complaints (Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy, 2010). If companies respond properly to customer complaints, it enables companies to turn their dissatisfied complainants into satisfied customers (Bitner *et al*., 1990). However, companies should be aware of illegitimate complaining customers to avoid large monetary losses and to prevent losing a lot of time and energy. For marketing managers, this study provides insights in the possible drivers of illegitimate claiming behavior, which could help them to tackle such complainants. If companies know what customers drives to behave illegitimate, companies could take the appropriate actions to prevent this.

1.6 Structure of the report

The following chapter describes a theoretical background regarding both illegitimate complaining in the service recovery context and underlying theories which are possible drivers of illegitimate behavior. Chapter three provides an elaboration on the used methodology. Subsequently, chapter four presents the analysis and results of our empirical research. This research is concluded by the provision of a conclusion and discussion in chapter five.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

First of all, in this chapter the concept of illegitimate complaining is explained. Next, to contribute to the expansion of knowledge about drivers of illegitimate complaining, theories which could explain this behavior are discussed. Each theory contains an accompanying hypothesis, which will be tested in the remainder of this study. All theories discussed in this section are divided into two parts, whereby the last part has been produced by Van Laar (unpublished). To end with, the definitive conceptual model of this study is composed.

2.2 Illegitimate complaining

The concept of unfair customer complaining has been labelled in diverse ways in literature, such as "dysfunctional customers" (Harris and Reynolds, 2003), "jaycustomers" (Harris and Reynolds, 2004), "unfair customers" (Berry and Seiders, 2008) and "opportunistic complaining customers" (Ro and Wong, 2012). Hereby, some researchers classify complaints of customers as wrong or unjust, whereby customers consciously voice complaints. However, customers aren't always conscious that their complaints are unjust or wrong. Joosten (2017) even founds out that 65% of all primary illegitimate complaints where so-called 'neutral complaints', referring to customers who unjustly believe there is something wrong with the product or service. In contrast, the term illegitimate complaining does assume that customers could perceive their unjust complaint as righteous.

By "exaggerating, altering, or lying about the fact or situation, or abusing service guarantees" (Ro and Wong, 2012, p.420) customers could behave illegitimate. Besides, customers could unintentionally complaint illegitimate (Huang, Zhao and Miao, 2014). In that case, customers believe they have the relevant expertise in a certain situation and they unjustly claim that the service provider is wrong. This is in line with the study of Joosten, who defines illegitimate complaining as "an intentionally or unintentionally complaint for which there is no basis in the quality of the product or service, when compared to professional, legal and industry standards by an independent expert" (Joosten, unpublished).

It's important to pinpoint the different forms of illegitimate complaining, which has been done by Reynold and Harris (2005) into four distinguishable groups. The first group of illegitimate complaining customers is labeled as "one-off complainants", which refers to customers who complained illegitimately once. Overall, these kinds of customers feel guilty about their misbehavior. The second form concerns "opportunistic complainants", which

represents "customers who complain in an unjustified manner when, and only when, a potentially lucrative opportune occasion arises" (Reynold and Harris, 2005, p. 326). Third, Reynold and Harris labeled one group of illegitimate customers as "conditioned customers", referring to customers who regularly behave illegitimately by observing misbehavior of others. Through this observation, they learned how to voice illegitimate complaints effectively. The last group named "professional complainers" refers to customers who consciously and frequently seek out opportunities to voice unjust complaints.

Based on previous literature (e.g.: Jacoby and Jaccard, 1981; Reynold and Harris, 2005; Ro and Wong, 2012), customers could voice an illegitimate complaint in two ways. First, they could exaggerate their complaint by presenting the situation worse than reality. Besides exaggerating a complaint, customers could also (partly) made up a complaint. More specific, they could come up with an untruth situation or problem to take advantage out of it. Based on this, this research defines illegitimate complaining as filing an conscious exaggerated or made up complaint to take advantage of the firm. Further, a distinction has been made between exaggerating or made up the problem or the proposed solution.

2.3 Possible drivers of illegitimate complaining

Previous research mentioned different possible drivers of illegitimate complaining behavior. Some studies (e.g.: Harris and Reynolds, 2005; Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy, 2010) identified the financial and material benefits as the main drivers to voice unjust complaints. In addition, Baker *et al*. (2012) examined firm-centric drivers and customer-firm relationship-centric drivers of opportunistic complaining.

To extend our knowledge about the possible drivers of illegitimate complaining, this section discusses several theories which could explain this phenomenon. After each discussed theory, an accompanying hypothesis is given which will be tested further in this study.

2.3.1 Contrast theory

Anderson (1973) found out that customers have certain expectations of a product and when these expectations don't meet actual product performance, customers will evaluate that product disproportionally negative. In other words, if the discrepancy between expectations and reality is too large, customers are 'surprised' and through this negatively exaggerate this discrepancy.

Applying this theory in a service recovery context, it could be argued that customers will exaggerate their complaints when a contrast effect occurs. For example, complainants could have high expectations of a firm through high prices or a company's reputation, but these

6

expectations were not met by actual performance. These perceived poor performances result in dissatisfaction, which in turn causes complainants exaggerate their complaint. This is also mentioned by Tang *et al*. (2010), who pinpoint that a disparity between expectations and delivered services or products leads to stronger disappointment and exaggerated discrepancy.

Based on just mentioned, the following hypothesis is formulated:

> *H1:* *The more customers experience a discrepancy between expectations and actual performance, the more they will complain illegitimately.*

2.3.2 Assimilation theory

Companies constantly offer services and products to customers and hereby are service failures order of the day. Customers sometimes accept these product or service failures and don't complaint about them, which could indicate assimilation (Joosten, 2017). Based on the cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, in Anderson, 1973), people are exposed to dissonance when they experience discrepancies between cognitions. People experience this dissonance as uncomfortable and therefore alter their cognitions in order to reduce or eliminate this dissonance (Anderson, 1973; Oliver and DeSarbo, 1988). For example, if a customer has high expectations of a product and the actual product performance is disappointing, customers could soften their evaluation of that product to reduce this dissonance.

Related to the service recovery context, it could be expected that customers won't exaggerate or made up their complaints when a service failure occurs. Customers could still be dissatisfied with the service recovery outcome, but based on the assimilation theory they will mitigate or positively raise their evaluation of the service or product and accept small failures. Vice versa, when customers file illegitimate complaints, it can be expected that customers did not assimilate the cognitive dissonance. The following hypothesis can be formulated:

> *H2:* *The more customers experience a need to assimilate through cognitive dissonance, the less they will complain illegitimately.*

2.3.3 Halo effect

When a service failure occurs, customers are more aware of the organization's actions (Magnini *et al*., 2007). Due to this state of focus, customers could remark more mistakes in a product or service. However, the emergence of a halo effect is also possible. A halo effect refers to "the notion that a singly service failure could potentially lead to multiple complaints" (Halstead *et*

al., 1996, p.109). For example, a customer who bought one bottle of orange juice and one bottle of raspberry juice voiced a complaint to the greengrocer about the freshness of both juices. After the customer noticed a deviating taste of the orange juice, he tasted the other bottle of raspberry juice critically and also experienced an abnormal taste. The customer returned the bottles of juice and received two new ones. However, it turned out later that the raspberry juice was in perfect condition, so the negative experience of the orange juice bottle predisposes the customer to negatively evaluate the other juice.

In summary, it can be assumed that customers file illegitimate complaints when an earlier service failure occurs. To investigate this relationship the following hypothesis has been drawn up:

> H3:   *The stronger the halo effect customers experience, the more they will complain illegitimately.*

2.3.4 Attribution theory

The attribution theory assumes people make causal explanations, in other words people are interested in the causes of observed behavior (Kelley, 1973). The core of the theory concerns that people 'attribute' causes of events in two possible ways: internal and external. When an individual attributes a cause of observed behavior as internal, behavior is under personal control of the individual. In the case of external attribution, people infer that the outside forces you to behave a certain way.

The attribution theory is used in several research contexts, including the context of consumer complaining behavior (Fokes, 1984). In this context, the attribution theory is used to predict how customers respond to reasons why a product or service failed (Fokes, 1984). Customers investigate causes for product or service failure, and this perceived cause of failure influences how customers react. Fokes mentioned in his study (1984) that anger or revenge are the resulting outcomes of external attribution. In other words, when a service failure occurs through a mistake outside yourself, customers will be angry or willing to take revenge via an illegitimate complaint. Besides, it should be noted that a self-serving attribution bias could emerge, which refers to the tendency of people to assign success to themselves and blaming failure to others (Bitner, Booms and Mohr, 1994). So, when a service failure occurs, customers tend to avoid responsibility for this. Further, when a (partly) self-inflicted service failure or a service failure who isn't committed by the company occurs, customers tend to look for solutions

and their desire to harm the company decreases (Folkes, 1984). This leads to the following hypothesis:

> H4:   The more customers attribute the failure externally (compared to internally), the more they will complain illegitimately.

2.3.5 Theory of reasoned action

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) developed the theory of reasoned action, which assumes that an individual's behavioral intents are a function of attitudes and beliefs (Madden, Ellen & Ajzen, 1992). In other words, someone's attitude towards certain behavior and the perception of what others see as the social norm influence a person's intention to engage in specific behavior. In a service failure context, the theory of reasoned action relates to a customer's attitude towards complaining and the social norm towards complaining in a particular situation.

2.3.5.1 Attitude towards complaining

More specifically, attitude towards complaining refers to a person's predisposition toward voicing a complain after experiencing a service failure (Blodgett, Granbois & Walters, 1993). Some customers who are dissatisfied witch a product or service will seek redress, while other displeased customers won't seek redress because they are reluctant towards complaining (Blodgett et al., 1993). This is also confirmed by Richins (1982), who appoints that customers with a positive attitude towards complaining are more likely to complain because they perceive it is successful to do so or because of a sense of comfortability about complaining. It could be suggested that customers who have a negative attitude towards complaining will be less willing to file illegitimate complaints. Hence, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

> H5a: The more customers are reluctant to complain, the less they will complain illegitimately.

2.3.5.2 Social norm

However, a customer's complaining behavior is not only affected by their attitude towards complaining, also their concern with the social norm determines whether or not customers complaint. Kowalski (1996) mentioned that people can be afraid of the negative social consequences of complaining. For example, people who complain more frequently tend to be perceived more negatively due to the negative connotations complaining has (Kowalski, 1996).

Therefore, people voice less complaints to avoid negative impressions of others and it could be suggested that customers who believe that their environment will turn against illegitimate complaining behavior will voice less illegitimate complaints. This leads to the following hypothesis:

>*H5b:*   *The more a customer's environment abhors illegitimate complaining behavior, the less they will complain illegitimately.*

2.3.6 Conflict framing style

Customers respond to conflict with service providers in several ways, the same customer even reacts differently to the same service failure (Beverland, Kates, Lindgreen and Chung, 2010). Reason for this is that each customer frames a situation differently. Beverland *et al.* (2010) found out two central conflict frames, namely task and personal. Customers who adopt a task-based conflict framing style tend to focus on the source that led to the conflict and they adopt a conflict style with the aim of achieving practical outcomes (Beverland *et al.*, 2010). Customers who frame conflict in a personal style tend to frame a situation more in a personal way, they perceive the actions of the service provider as completely unjustified and are out for revenge. They believe the company could have full control over the mistakes made, resulting in anger and less willingness to reason.

Customers with a personal-based conflict style aren't mollified by a practical solution like an economic recompense. Such customers voice emotive language to the service provider and they tend to take revenge (Beverland *et al*, 2010). Therefore, it's reasonable to suggest that customers with a personal-based conflict style behave more illegitimate. Besides, customers who frame conflict through a task-based style are solution-oriented and they are willing to offer the service provider an opportunity to repair the situation (Beverland *et al*, 2010). Based on this reasoning, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

>*H6a:*   *The more customers adopt a personal-based conflict framing style, the more they will complain illegitimately.*
>*H6b:*   *The more customers adopt a task-based conflict framing style, the less they will complain illegitimately.*

2.3.7 Negotiation tactic

As customers have access to both the internet, mobile applications and social networks to retrieve information, they are more informed and critical than ever before (Holmes *et al*, 2017). Through these possibilities, customers are capable to compare products and pricing information making them more powerful in negotiations (Grewal, Iyer and Levy, in Holmes *et al*., 2017). Negotiation refers to "the process whereby people attempt to settle what each shall give and take or perform and receive in a transaction between them" (Rubin and Brown, in Thompson, 1990). Nowadays, customers can use their information availability to empower their negotiation position in daily practices. As firms are familiar with this power shift, they are open to negotiate with customers in order to build loyalty (Holmes *et al*, 2017). However, because companies want to keep customers satisfied and loyal, this could lead to unfavorable outcomes like economic inefficiency as customers try to get the best out of negotiations (Srivastava & Chakravarti, in Holmes *et al*, 2017). This could also occur in a service recovery context when customers file complaints. For example, instead of asking reasonable compensations for a service failure, customers could exaggerate their complaint and claim inappropriate compensations. In other words, customers could utilize a negotiation strategy by which they consciously exaggerate or made up their complaint, in order to meet their wishes or even more. To investigate this relationship the following hypothesis has been drawn up:

> *H7:* *The more customers use a negotiation tactic, the more they will complain illegitimately.*

2.3.8 Neutralization techniques

Sykes and Matza (1957) were the first who introduced neutralization techniques people use to justify their misbehavior. Their theory explains various techniques to neutralize misbehavior, like the 'denial of injury', 'denial of responsibility' and 'denial of the victim'. By using these cognitive techniques, people could persuade or justify themselves that their actions were appropriate. Subsequently, Harris and Daunt (2011) list other neutralization techniques from literature which could explain why people justify misbehavior, like 'defense of necessity', 'metaphor of the ledger' and 'claims of relative acceptability'.

There are several neutralization techniques people could adopt in a service recovery context. To start with, 'denial of injury' refers to the cognitions that particular illegitimate behavior would not harm anyone (Sykes and Matza, 1957). For example, a customer can argue

that a large wealthy company is not harmed by a small monetary loss of an unjustified complain. Further, the 'metaphor of ledger' (e.g. Hinduja, 2007) involves the comparison between one's good and bad behaviors and thereby arguing that a sufficient degree of good behavior compensates for that specific instance of misbehavior. For example, a policyholder can rationalize that he or she always behaves according the rules and therefore he or she thinks it´s appropriate to claim illegitimately once. Next, ´justification by comparison´ (e.g. Cromwell and Thurman, 2003) relates to comparing misbehavior with much worse behavior. In a service recovery context, a customer could argue that filing an illegitimate complaint is not that serious compared to theft. Another neutralization technique concerns 'defense of necessity' (Harris and Daunt, 2011), which refers to the believe of an individual that it's necessary to misbehave, even if that person consciously knows it's morally wrong. A customer could complain illegitimately because he knows it's the only way to get a refund or to drive the business to action. To end with, Sykes and Matza (1957) mentioned that some criminals felt regret after their crimes. In order to justify their crimes, they internalize their norms and values because of these regrets. This is also in line with Barriga, Sullivan-Cosetti and Gibbs (2009), who argue that people try to excuse misbehavior by showing regret. Related to a service recovery context, customers could neutralize their illegitimate complaint through a regret.

Based on these neutralization techniques, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

H8a: *The more customers use the technique of 'denial of injury', the more they will complain illegitimately.*

H8b: *The more customers use the technique of 'metaphor of ledge', the more they will complain illegitimately.*

H8c: *The more customers use the technique of 'justification by comparison', the more they will complain illegitimately.*

H8d: *The more customers use the technique of 'defense of necessity', the more they will complain illegitimately.*

H8e: *The more customers use the technique of 'regret, the more they will complain illegitimately.*

2.3.9 Firm size

Several researchers examined firm-centric drivers of illegitimate complaining, including firm size (e.g.: Baker *et al*., 2012; Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy, 2010). They point out that customers could complaint differently towards small or large firms. For example, some customers file

more complaints to large firms because they believe large firms could afford more claims as their profit margins are higher compared to small firms (Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy, 2010). This reasoning can be explained with the 'denial of injury' neutralization technique described in previous paragraph (Skyes and Matza, 1957). A second argument why customers behave more illegitimately towards large firms concerns that large companies possess both formal service recovery policies and systems in place that consider expensive customer refunds (Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy, 2010). To summarize, customers give it a try to exaggerate their claims in their relationship with a large company because of perceived low damage caused to the company and established service recovery policies. Therefore, the following hypothesis has been drawn up:

> *H9:* *The larger customers experience the size of a firm, the more they will complain illegitimately.*

All theories discussed in the remaining of this chapter are produced by Van Laar (2018) and have been added to this theoretical framework in order to support this research.

2.3.10 Perceptions of injustice

Customers evaluate complaint handling in terms of perceived fairness (Tax *et al*., 1998; Gelbrich & Roschk, 2011). More specifically, using justice theory, Tax *et al*. (1998) found that customers judge complaint handling within firms based on the outcomes they receive (distributive justice), the used procedures to come to these outcomes (procedural justice), and the interaction with the service provider (interactional justice). Consequently, the justice perception of the customer has an influence on the post-complaint satisfaction (Gelbrich & Roschk, 2011). In a similar vein, Voorhees and Brady (2005) studied the influence of the fairness perceptions on satisfaction and intentions to complain. They discovered that distributive and interactional justice have a positive and direct effect on satisfaction and decrease future complaint intentions, which suggests that firms treating dissatisfied customers fairly will be rewarded with future benefits (Voorhees & Brady, 2005).

However, it is also possible that customers perceive the complaint handling as unfair. Real or imagined injustices can lead to feelings of revenge which results in customers' misbehavior (Fullerton & Punj, 2004). In this regard, Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy (2010) discovered that customers experiencing lower distributive, procedural, and interactional justice were more likely to complain opportunistically than customers not experiencing such forms of

injustice. These findings are comparable to results of studies in other research fields. For example, perceived injustice can lead to employee theft (Greenberg, 1990). It is therefore reasonable to argue that perceptions of injustice lead to increased illegitimate complaining as well. Thus, this study proposes the following:

> *H10:* The more customers experience injustice, the more they will complain illegitimately

2.3.11 Loss of control

Control is defined as "the belief one can determine one's own internal states and behavior, influence one's environment, and/or bring about desired outcomes" (Wallston, Wallston, Smith & Dobbins, 1987, p. 5). Stated differently, "when people perceive that they can take responsibility for causing outcomes (both desired and undesired) instead of attributing them to external factors, they feel in control" (Chang, 2006, p. 207). A sense of control is very important for understanding the reactions of customers to services (Joosten, Bloemer & Hillebrand, 2017). It is even more important during complaint handling since a service failure indicates that the behavior of the customer does not lead to the desired outcomes (Chang, 2006). The perception of loss of control then "represents a very unpleasant sensation and provides a strong motivation to try to re-establish control" (Hui & Toffoli, 2002, p. 1840). The phenomenon of trying to re-establish the loss of control can be explained by reactance theory which suggests that when the behavioral freedom of an individual is threatened, the individual becomes motivated to regain it (Brehm, 1966).

That urge to regain freedom increases even more when a second loss of control occurs due to a firm not responding to the complaint of a customer or a firm not adhering to the agreements that have been made (Joosten, unpublished). It is possible that the customer then tries to capture the firm's attention by exaggerating or making up the complaint. Customers may think that the firm feels more forced to respond to their complaint when the complaint is more extensive and intense, and that therefore the chance they will get a response and regain control increases. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> *H11:* *The more customers experience a loss of control, the more they will complain illegitimately*

14

2.3.12 Lack of morality

Attribution theory is developed by Heider (1958) and suggests people seek to understand the causes of behavior (Kelley & Michela, 1980). People attribute causes in an external and internal way (Thibaut & Riecken, 1955). In the context of a service failure, most complaining customers attribute the cause in an external way, namely to the service provider (Joosten, unpublished). Within attributing causes in an external way, customers have two options (Joosten, unpublished). One option of external attribution is an attribution to lack of ability of the service provider, another option is an attribution to lack of morality of the service provider (Wooten, 2009; Grégoire *et al*., 2010; Joosten, unpublished). In other words, it means that the complaining customer feels that the service provider did not have the skills to act in the right way (lack of ability) or that the service provider did not act in the right way on purpose, for his own sake (lack of morality). Lack of morality is comparable to perceived greed which is defined as "the judgement that the perpetrator is causing damage to others in order to obtain a personal advantage" (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016, p. 432). In terms of the central theme of this research, this means the complaining customer perceives the service failure as a result of the service provider acting to gain personal advantage instead of doing what is best for the customer.

Previous research has found that lack of morality is perceived differently than lack of ability (Wooten, 2009; Grégoire *et al*., 2010). More specifically, the service provider failing on purpose (lack of morality) creates a higher urge for punishment than the service provider lacking ability (Wooten, 2009). In a similar vein, researchers have found that perceived greed is a well-documented driver of hate and retaliation to questionable corporate behavior (e.g. McGovern & Moon, 2007; Grégoire *et al*., 2010; Antonetti & Maklan, 2016). In the context of the current study, such punishment or retaliation can be expressed by complaining illegitimately. Therefore, this study posits:

> *H12:   The more customers experience a lack of morality of the service provider, the*
> *   more they will complain illegitimately*

2.3.13 Anger

Emotions play a crucial role in the complaint handling process (Holloway, Wang & Beatty, 2009; Dasu & Chase, 2010; Bougie, Pieters & Zeelenberg, 2003). More specifically, negative emotions play a bigger role than positive emotions; especially the role of anger is found to be important (Holloway *et al*., 2009; Bougie *et al*., 2003; Kim, Wang & Matilla, 2010). Anger is an emotion which is "associated with appraising an event as harmful and frustrating" and can

be directed at an institution among others (Bougie *et al*., 2003, p. 379). An important element distinguishing anger from other negative emotions is the aspect of blame or the belief of the individual experiencing such an emotion that he or she has been treated deliberately unfair (Bougie *et al*., 2003).

In addition, anger is an emotional response often experienced at the moment of a failing complaint handling process (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004). Echoing this, Holloway *et al*. (2009) and Bougie *et al*. (2003) suspect that negative responses which may come up in the complaint handling process are manifested through anger. Consequently, customers experiencing an emotion of anger will behave in an aggressive and hostile way (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004). Anger results in the customer not searching for a solution anymore, but rather maliciously attempting to hurt the institution (Joosten, unpublished; Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004). In the context of the current study, causing harm to the company may take the form of complaining illegitimately. Therefore, the current study suspects anger induces illegitimate complaining behavior and assumes the following:

> H13:   *The more customers experience a feeling of anger, the more they will complain illegitimately.*

2.3.14 Desire for revenge
Joireman, Grégoire, Devezer and Tripp (2013) define the desire for revenge as "the extent to which an individual wants to punish and cause harm to a firm for the harm it has caused" (p. 318). In other words, this definition shows that, from the customer's point of view, the firm did not act in a correct manner which has negative consequences for the customer and therefore the firm should be punished. More specifically, in terms of failed complaint handling, the firm has "blown his chance to win back the customer" and therefore has committed a so-called double deviation (Joireman *et al*., 2013, p. 315). Consequently, "customers become much more likely to seek revenge after a firm has failed to redress an initial service failure" (Grégoire, Laufer & Tripp, 2010, p. 739).

Failures can turn customers into "enemies" and "terrorists" (Grégoire & Fischer, 2008, p. 247; Tax & Brown, 1998, p. 86). However, instead of customers perceiving themselves as enemies or terrorists, they mostly view themselves as being a victim of negative circumstances caused by the firm which leads to retaliation (Funches, Markley & Davis, 2009; Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009). The procedure of retaliation requires cognitive processing rather than it being an impulsive act: the customer consciously determines the action and the

target of that action (Funches *et al.*, 2009). Revenge-driven actions can take many forms. For example, physical violence or vandalism (Bunker & Ball, 2008) or creating brand-specific hate sites (Bechwati & Morrin, 2003). Moreover, revenge-driven actions could be illegitimate since "motivations for retaliation extend beyond simple getting even" (Funches *et al.*, 2009, p. 231). Therefore, in terms of the central theme of this research, it is possible that customers who experience negative emotions and feelings of revenge as a result of failed complaint handling, complain illegitimately as a response. Accordingly, the following is formulated:

> *H15:* *The more customers experience a desire for revenge in the context of complaint handling, the more they will complain illegitimately.*

2.3.15 Opportunism

A well-known definition of opportunism is formulated as "self-interest seeking with guile" (Williamson, 1985, p. 30). That is, an individual is likely to take advantage of the opportunity at hand to further his or her self-interest (Singh & Sirdeshmukh, 2000). More specifically, opportunism involves the intention of one party to enhance its position "at the expense of the other party involved in the exchange" (Kelley, Skinner & Ferrell, 1989, p. 329). In addition, opportunism is related to an opportunity that occurs in which customers "take what they can, rather than what they should" (Wirtz & McColl-Kennedy, 2010, p. 654).

Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy (2010) put opportunistic complaints, defined as "the customer appearing to be taking advantage of the firm given the context", against legitimate complaints, defined as "reasonable in the circumstances" indicating opportunism could lead to illegitimate complaining behavior (p. 659). A possible explanation for opportunistic behavior is given by Mazar, Amir and Ariely (2008) who found that when people face a possibility to behave opportunistically, they do so, but only in a relative modest manner. In this way, people gain profit but without disrupting the positive self-view (Mazar *et al.*, 2008). Keeping aforementioned reasoning in mind, this study assumes that customers will easily complain illegitimately in order to exploit the opportunity that arises and to take advantage. Therefore, the current study proposes the following:

> *H15:* *The more customers experience an opportunity to complain illegitimately, the more they will complain illegitimately*

2.3.16 Financial greed

Complaining customers who are driven by financial greed "attempt to obtain free goods and services without experiencing any genuine dissatisfactory incidences" (Reynolds & Harris, 2005, p. 327). In a more general way, this means that customers want to gain something for nothing. This construct was already researched by Resnik and Harmon in 1983. They conducted an exploratory study on the perceptions of managers and customers of appropriate responses to complaint letters. The results showed that managers were more skeptic than customers about the complaint being legitimate. The most important reason for that was the managers' perception of the customers wanting to gain something for nothing. Reynolds and Harris (2005) and Baker and colleagues (2012) confirmed the findings of financial greed influencing complaint behavior in a study on the impact of financial greed on opportunistic complaining behavior. Opportunistic complaints are part of illegitimate complaining behavior (Reynolds & Harris, 2005). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that, more generally, financial greed acts as a potential driver for customers to complain illegitimately as well. Hence, the current study assumes:

> *H16:   The more customers are driven by financial greed, the more they will complain illegitimately.*

2.3.17 Prior experience with the firm

Prior experience with the firm is commonly understood as the previous interaction a customer has had with the company in question (e.g. a purchase or just a phone call with an employee) and it can be positive as well as negative. However, in the context the current study, it is more likely that the previous interaction has been positive as it is questionable whether a dissatisfied customer would visit that company again (Joosten, unpublished). Academic literature suggests two ways in which prior experience with the firm can influence the response of a customer to a product or service failure: by buffering or by magnifying (Joosten, unpublished; Holloway *et al*., 2009). Buffering refers to the effect of a very positive prior experience with the firm leading to one failure having a less damaging impact (Tax *et al*., 1998; Holloway *et al*., 2009; Joosten, unpublished). In contrast, magnifying refers to the effect of a very positive prior experience with the firm leading to high expectations which results in one failure having a damaging impact (Kelley & Davis, 1994; Holloway *et al*., 2009; Joosten, unpublished).

Prior interactions with a company that have been very positive could have similar effects regarding illegitimate complaining behavior (Joosten, unpublished). Prior positive

experience could buffer against illegitimate complaining behavior while it is also possible that it magnifies expectations and increases illegitimate complaints. Joosten (unpublished) has tried to investigate the relationship between the prior experience with the firm and illegitimate complaining behavior. However, his study did not allow any definitive conclusions concerning this effect to be drawn. Therefore, the current study follows his suggestions and posits:

> *H17a: The more positive the prior experience with the firm has been, the less the customer will complain illegitimately (buffering).*
> *H17b: The more positive the prior experience with the firm has been, the more the customer will complain illegitimately (magnifying).*

2.4 Definitive conceptual model

Based on the theoretic framework, the following definitive conceptual model is developed.

Drivers of illegitimate complaining
Contrast between expectations and actual performance (H1)
Assimilation (H2)
Halo effect (H3)
External attribution (H4)
Attitude towards complaining (H5a)
Social norm towards complaining (H5b)
Personal-based conflict style (H6a)
Task-based conflict style (H6b)
Negotiation tactic (H7)
Neutralization techniques (H8a,b,c,d,e)
Large firm size (H9)
Perception of injustice (H10)
Loss of control (H11)
Perception of lack of morality (H12)
Anger (H13)
Desire for revenge (H14)
Opportunism (H15)
Financial greed (H16)
Prior experience with the firm (H17a,b)

Illegitimate complaining

Exaggerating the problem
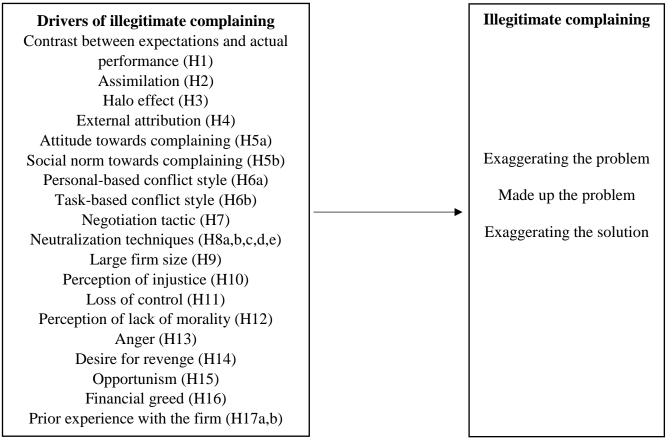
Made up the problem

Exaggerating the solution

Figure 2 Definitive conceptual model

3. Method

In this chapter, the methodology of this research is described in greater detail. First, the research design is introduced. Second, the sample technique is described followed by the procedure of the pre-test and questionnaire, whereby attention is paid to research ethics. Further, the measures of the constructs are described. Finally, the most suitable data analysis method for this research is given.

3.1 Research design

Although Ro and Wong (2012) mention it's hard to find clear evidence for illegitimate customer complaining, there are various ways to measure illegitimate complaining behavior of customers. It's both possible to conduct a scenario-based experiment and to involve third parties who assess the degree of illegitimacy of submitted claims to measure to what extent customers complain illegitimately (Writz and McColl-Kennedy, 2010). To test the hypotheses, this study conducted a survey to retrieve self-reported data. Using a survey to measure illegitimate behavior is suitable to retrieve real-life information about the perspective of customers regarding what happened and why (Berry and Seiders, 2008). It's important to measure a consumer's perspective about their situation in this study, because their point of view determined their motivation to behave illegitimate, regardless whether or not reasonable. In contrast, by conducting an experiment artificial situations are measured which might not represent real customer behavior. Additionally, analyzing case files by third parties may not provide a complete picture about the drivers of customers to complain illegitimately, as these drivers are possible not clearly visible in these case files. One possible drawback of using a survey to examine this topic concerns socially desirable answers of participants. In order to reduce this, several techniques are used which will be described in section 3.3.2.

3.2 Sample

It's difficult to gain information about illegitimate behavior because of its sensitive nature. Illegitimate complaining is considered unethical and illegal, which causes that respondents are less probably to admit they exhibited that behavior. For that reason, a convenience sample has been used to attempt to collect a lot of information. By using a convenience sample, participants are selected based on their ease of availability (Given, 2008). Participants who are most willing and able to fill out the survey are the ones who are selected, which increases the probability of gathering useful data (Given, 2008).

3.3 Procedure

3.3.1 Pre-test

In order to identify any potential problems such as unclear items or wrongly formulated questions and to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, a pre-test has been conducted. First, the plus-minus method was performed by six people. Participants were asked to read our questionnaire and, at the same time, to add plus marks in clear or well-judged pieces of text or questions and minus marks in unclear or bad reviewed pieces of text or questions (Sienot, 1997). After that, a posttest interview has been conducted to discuss the pluses and minuses given by the participant. The decision has been made to implement the plus-minus method based on the argument that this method is very successful in detecting as many different kinds of reader problems as possible (Sienot, 1997).

Second, the survey was running on forty respondents in order to assess the clarity of the survey, to be able to already examine possible relationships between the variables and to assess if the reliability and validity of the scales were not problematic. Thereafter, the questionnaire has been improved based on these two conducted pre-tests. More specific, in order to clarify the introduction text, it has been rewritten. Next, as some statements were not fully understood, these statements have been adjusted and clarified to prevent misunderstanding. Last, the overarching question prior to all statements has been adjusted in order to create a better fit with the statements.

3.3.2 Questionnaire

The sensitive nature of illegitimate complaining could cause socially desirable responding of our respondents. To reduce social desirable answers, three techniques are used in the introduction of the questionnaire. These techniques are successfully used in the medical sector, while communicating with patients about sensitive issues (McBride, 2010). The first attempt to decrease social desirability concerns using transparency. In the introduction of the survey is mentioned what the goal of this research is, so it's clear for respondents why this research is being conducted. Additionally, pictures of ourselves were added to show the respondent we have nothing to hide. The second technique used to decrease social desirability is called normalizing, which refers to the use of universality statements (McBride, 2010). This is embedded in the questionnaire by using texts like 'everyone complains illegitimately sometimes'. Using these kinds of texts shows the respondents that it's not unusual to behave that way. Last, a communication technique is used whereby the wording of a question in a specific way attempts to decrease anxiety for the respondent, called 'gentle assumption'

(McBride, 2010). This refers to asking a question which assumes a behavior is already occurring. In this context, instead of asking 'do you voice illegitimate complaints' the respondent is asked 'to think about a situation where you have voiced an exaggerated or forged complaint', or even asked how many times they filed an illegitimate complaint. It shows the respondent this behavior is not unusual, increasing the probability that the respondent will feel more at ease discussing it (McBride, 2010). To strengthen the feeling that illegitimate complaining isn't unusual, examples of illegitimate complaints voiced by ourselves are provided.

After reading the introduction, participants are asked to recall a situation in which they complained illegitimately. To stimulate their memory, examples of illegitimate complaining of ourselves are provided. Subsequently, respondents are asked to describe their illegitimate complaint via several questions (see Appendix A for the whole questionnaire). Thereafter, respondents are asked a lot of statements that focused on possible drivers of illegitimate complaining. The survey ends with some statements about their complaint, some demographic questions, a thank you for participating and an option is provided to get the final results of the survey.

3.4 Research ethics

Besides the attempts to reduce social desirability, research ethics are considered in the introduction of the survey. First, anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed. Respondents are assured that all data provided is strictly confidential and the questionnaire cannot be traced back to individual respondents. Further, respondents are informed about the study's purpose, content and duration to provide transparency . Last, respondents are informed that there were no right or wrong answers and they can stop participating in the survey at any point.

3.5 Measurement

To measure the constructs used in this research, all constructs are measured using 5-point Likert-type scales anchored by totally disagree – totally agree, expect the constructs illegitimate complaining and firm size. Some scales are adapted from existing scales, where other newly scales had to be composed as there were no useful scales available.

Illegitimate complaining – refers to filing an conscious exaggerated or made up complaint to take advantage of the firm. As can be derived from this definition, it is twofold: customers could file made up complaints without experiencing any kind of dissatisfaction or

customer could exaggerate, alter or lie about a situation (Ro and Wong, 2012). Further, a distinction can be made between filing illegitimate complaints regarding the problem customers encounter or the submitted claim of the complainant. Therefore, it can be argued that customers exaggerate the problem, exaggerate the claim and/or fabricate the problem. Taken together, illegitimate complaining is measured with a newly composed three-item scale. These items are measured using 5-point Likert-type scales anchored by totally not exaggerated – totally exaggerated or totally not made up – totally made up. An example is: 'I have exaggerated the problem'.

Contrast theory – refers to the negatively perceived discrepancy between expectations and product performance (Anderson, 1973). Derived from Allen *et al*. (2015), a three-item scale is used to gauge the extent of contrast. An example is: 'My experience with the product / service was worse than expected'.

Assimilation – means that customers detect service failures but don't complain about them as people don't like to perceive cognitive dissonance (Joosten, 2017; Anderson, 1973). To measure this construct, a newly composed two-item scale is used. An example is: 'despite the fact the product/service had more defects, I took it for granted'.

Halo effect – is defined as "the notion that a singly service failure could potentially lead to multiple complaints" (Halstead *et al*., 1996, p.109) and measured with a newly composed two-item scale. An example is: 'After I discovered an error in the product/service, I discovered more defects'.

Attribution theory – refers to what extent customers assign causes internal or external (Fokes, 1984). Derived from the attributional style questionnaire (ASQ) from Peterson *et al*. (1982), a three-item scale is used to gauge the extent of internal or external attribution. An example is: 'The cause of the problem was the responsibility of the company'.

Attitude towards complaining and *social norm* – are both constructs derived from Fischbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action. They refer – in the context of illegitimate complaining – to someone's predisposition towards voicing a complain after experiencing a service failure and the social norm towards the justice of illegitimate complaining (Blodgett, Granbois & Walters, 1993). Derived from Thøgersen, Juhl and Poulsen (2009), both a two-item scale for attitude towards complaining and a two-item scale for social norm towards illegitimate complaining is used to measure these constructs. Examples are: 'I believe people complain too quickly' and 'I think my friends and acquaintances would have forged or exaggerated their complaint in the same situation'.

Conflict framing style – can be divided into two central conflict frames, namely task and personal (Beverland *et al*., 2010). *Personal based* framing style refers to people who approach and deal with conflict by aiming to achieve practical solutions in collaboration with the service provider (Beverland *et al*., 2010). *Task based* framing style refers to people who approach and deal with conflict by thinking the service provider behaves unjustly and therefore they pressurize the firm in order to get the best out of the conflict. Derived from Oetzel (1998) and adapted to the context based on the article of Beverland *et al*. (2010), a one-item scale is developed for each framing style. An example of a personal-based conflict framing style is: 'During the complaint process I tried to pressurize the entrepreneur as much as possible to get my way'.

Negotiation tactic – Negotiation refers to "the process whereby people attempt to settle what each shall give and take or perform and receive in a transaction between them" (Rubin & Brown, in Thompson, 1990). Based on that definition, a single-item measure has been developed: "I exaggerated/made up the complaint because I know I have to set high standards in order to get what I want".

Neutralization techniques – Various techniques exist to neutralize misbehavior. Every technique included in the current study is measured by a single item based on theories of Sykes and Matza (1957), Harris and Daunt (2011), Hinduja (2007) and Cromwell and Thurman (2003). An example is: "I think the firm will not experience a great loss as a result of my exaggerated/made-up complaint" (denial of injury).

Firm size is conceptualized in several different ways in previous literature or documents. For example, the CBS (2017) uses the Dutch term '*Algemeen Bedrijfsregister (ABR)*' – meaning 'general company register' – to classify organizations in size classes based on the number of FTE employees. However, because this study examines whether perceived firm size influences customer's extent of illegitimate complaining, the perception of company size by the respondents themselves needs to be measured. Therefore, firm size is defined in terms of a large, medium or small firm.

All measures discussed in the remaining of this chapter are produced by Van Laar (2018) and have been added to this measure section in order to support this research.

Perceptions of injustice – "Justice perceptions are the individual subjective assessments of organizational responses" (Gelbrich & Roschk, 2011, p. 26). Perceptions of injustice can then be defined as the negative individual subjective assessment of an organizational response. It was measured with a three-item scale adapted from Joosten *et al*. (2017). An example is: "The way the company treated me during the complaint was rude".

Loss of control – Since control is defined as "the belief one can determine one's own internal states and behavior, influence one's environment, and/or bring about desired outcomes" (Wallston *et al*., 1987, p. 5), loss of control can be defined as the opposite of that definition, namely the belief one cannot determine one's own internal states and behavior, influence one's environment, and/or bring about desired outcomes. Loss of control was measured with a three-item scale adapted from Chae, Boyoun and Zhu (2014). An example is: "I felt as if I no longer had any control over the process".

Lack of morality – Lack of morality is comparable to perceived greed which is defined as "the judgement that the perpetrator is causing damage to others in order to obtain a personal advantage" (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016, p. 432). It was measured with a three-item scale adapted from Grégoire *et al.* (2010). An example is: "The company had wrong intentions".

Anger – Anger is defined as an emotion which is "associated with appraising an event as harmful and frustrating" (Bougie *et al*., 2003, p. 379). It was measured with a three-item scale adapted from Grégoire *et al*. (2010). An example is: "I was outraged about the company".

Desire for revenge – Desire for revenge is defined as "the extent to which an individual wants to punish and cause harm to a firm for the harm it has caused" (Joireman, *et al*., 2013, p. 318). It was measured with a three-item scale adapted from Grégoire *et al*. (2010). An example of an item is: "I wanted to punish the firm in some way".

Opportunism – Opportunism was operationalized in the context of the current study as an individual taking advantage of an opportunity at hand (Singh & Sirdeshmukh, 2000). It was measured with a four-item scale adapted from Daunt and Harris (2012). An example is: "I responded to a possibility that occurred".

Financial greed – Financial greed is defined as customers wanting to gain something for nothing. It was measured with a three-item scale adapted from Daunt and Harris (2012). An example is: "I made some money from behaving in this way".

Prior experience with the firm – Prior experience with the firm is defined as the previous interaction a customer has had with the company in question. It was measured with a two-item scale adapted from Hess *et al.* (2003) and Tax *et al.* (1998). An example is: "My prior experience(s) with the firm was/were positive".

An overview of the operationalization of all constructs can be found in Appendix B.

3.6 Data analysis

To confirm or disconfirm the hypothesis, the gathered data will be analyzed using multiple regression analysis. Regression analysis is a suitable method to examine how customers make decisions and form attitudes (Hair *et al*., 2014), which is therefore useful for this study. By using multiple regression analysis, relationships between dependent- and independent variables can be analyzed (Hair *et al*, 2014). The results of the multiple regression analysis provide insightful information about whether and to what extent the independent variables do influence the dependent variable, which is the aim of this research.

4. Results

The upcoming chapter describes and explains the results of our data analysis. First, the execution of research is presented, followed by the sample description, factor analysis and reliability analyses. Thereafter, the assumptions of the regression analysis and the results of the regression analysis itself will be discussed.

4.1 Execution of research

After the successful pre-test of the questionnaire, the definitive questionnaire was distributed mainly through online channels like Facebook, WhatsApp and LinkedIn, and some were distributed via email. Thereafter, the collected data has been analyzed using factor analysis, reliability analysis and multiple regression analysis. Because of the exploratory nature of this research, a large amount of variables – namely 25 – were added to the analysis to examine which drivers influence illegitimate complaining behavior. However, running the regression analysis of the initial model appeared to result in an insignificant model ($F_{(25,50)} = .965$, $p = .526$). Therefore, the best model for this study has been sought by means of an iterative process using stepwise – both forward selection and backward elimination – and hierarchical regressions. Based on this iterative process, the variables causing 'noise' in the analysis, meaning odd results, were disregarded and so the best model is created. Accordingly, the results described in this chapter are based on this best model, which is shown in figure 3.

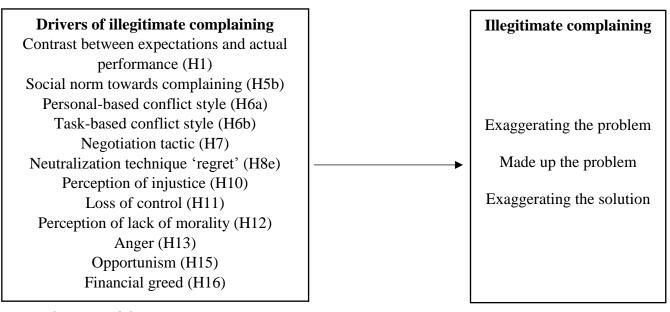| **Drivers of illegitimate complaining**	**Illegitimate complaining**
Contrast between expectations and actual performance (H1) Social norm towards complaining (H5b) Personal-based conflict style (H6a) Task-based conflict style (H6b) Negotiation tactic (H7) Neutralization technique 'regret' (H8e) Perception of injustice (H10) Loss of control (H11) Perception of lack of morality (H12) Anger (H13) Opportunism (H15) Financial greed (H16)	Exaggerating the problem Made up the problem Exaggerating the solution

Figure 3 Best model

4.2 Sample description

By using a convenience sampling method a total of 242 native Dutch respondents are collected. However, 56 respondents didn't complain illegitimately and so they were filtered out of the data. Of the remaining sample of 186 participants, 5 were not useful for the analysis and therefore removed from the sample. The remaining sample consists of 181 illegitimate complainers, of which 174 completed the survey and 7 participants filled in the questionnaire for at least 60 percent. The decision has been made to include just mentioned participants using pairwise deletion due to the sensitive nature of this research, in which every respondent is of great value. In the end, this results in the final sample of 181 respondents which will be analyzed to test the hypotheses. According to Hair *et al.* (2014), minimum sample size to perform a regression analysis is 5 respondents per variable and desired level for sample size is 15 to 20 observations for each independent variable. Since the use of 12 variables in the analysis, this requirement has been met.

Of these 181 respondents, 58 (33.3%) are male and 116 (66.7%) are female. Further, average age of the participants is 28 and most people belong to that group with a younger age (< 25), as can be seen in table 1. This is probably because the questionnaire is distributed via our social network which consist mostly of students. Additionally, table 2 shows that the sample is highly educated. Furthermore, the descriptive statistics have shown that 137 respondents (75.7%) filed their illegitimate complaints within a large firm, 31 respondents (17.7%) within a medium sized firm and 12 respondents (6.6%) within a small firm. Of all respondents, 107 (62.9%) have indicated this was the only time they filed an illegitimate complaint, whereas 42 (24.7%) respondents did twice, 8 (4.4%) respondents did thrice, and 13 (7,6%) respondents even filed more than three times an illegitimate complaint. Of these illegitimate complaints, 75 (41.4%) have been treated within the past year, 50 (27.6%) longer than a year ago and 56 (30.9%) longer than two years ago.

Table 1 Age categories

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
< 25 years	115	63.5	66.1
25 till 35 years	21	11.6	12.1
35 till 45 years	11	6.1	6.3
45 till 55 years	24	133	13.8
> 55 years	3	1.7	1.7
Total	174	96.1	100
Missing	7	3.9	

Table 2 Education categories

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
Primary education	1	.6	.6
Secondary education	9	5.0	5.2
MBO	33	18.2	19.0
HBO	47	26.0	27.0
University	84	46.4	48.3
Total	174	96.1	100.0
Missing	7	3.9	

4.3 Factor analysis

To identify the underlying structure of a set of variables, to check if the items in the questionnaire measure the latent variables well and to assess the discriminant validity of the measurement scales, an exploratory factor analysis has been conducted (Field, 2013). As the best model does include some one-item constructs, these variables are not included in the factor analysis. Additionally, all 22 items associated with the constructs 'illegitimate complaining', 'injustice', 'lack of morality', 'loss of control', 'anger', 'financial greed', 'social norm towards illegitimate complaining' and 'contrast' were included in the analysis (see Appendix C). Noteworthy, the construct 'opportunism' is not included in the factor analysis as the reliability of the construct was low (α=.53) and a critical theoretical assessment gathered the insight that only one item measured opportunism as wished in the context of this study. Based on that, the decision has been made to continue the analysis with opportunism as an one-item construct measured as: "I responded to a possibility that occurred to exaggerate/ made up my complaint".

First, to verify sampling adequacy and to indicate sufficient correlations exist among the variables, the KMO-test must exceed .50 and Bartlett's test of sphericity must be significant (<0.05) (Hair, 2014). Both assumptions are met, as the value of the KMO-test was above the threshold value of .50 (KMO = .872) and Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant (X^2 (231) = 1951.429, p < .001) (see Appendix C).

The decision has been made to use Oblique rotation, because it's considered that the constructs are correlated. This expectation has been confirmed by the factor correlation matrix, since the correlation between both factor 4 and 1 and between factor 2 and 5 were >|.30| (see Appendix C) (Hair, 2014).

Next, an initial analysis was run to gain eigenvalues for each factor in the data. As a result, five factors had eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 and those variables explained

53.952 percent of the variance (see Appendix B) (Field, 2013). However, examining the communalities showed that the threshold value of .20 was not met for 'illegitimate complaining 1' and 'contrast 1' (Field, 2012). For theoretical reasons, the decision has been made to retain the variable 'illegitimate complaining 1' in the analysis. 'Illegitimate complaining 1' measures to what extent the respondent exaggerated the problem, which is an important aspect of illegitimate complaining. 'Contrast 1' has been removed from the analysis, because this item measures whether the respondent had high expectations of the product/service, which is not essential to measure contrast theory in this context. The most important aspect of the contrast theory is a high discrepancy between expectations and actual performance, what is literally measured with the other variables. After exclusion of this variable, the final factor analysis (KMO= .876; Bartlett's test of sphericity X^2 (210) = 1922.540) extracted five factors with an eigenvalue above 1 and together explained 55.718 percent of the variance (see Appendix D) (Field, 2013). Table 3 shows the results of the final factor analysis.

As can be seen, some items cluster on the same factors which is not in accordance with the initial intended measurement scales: all items of injustice, lack of morality and loss of control cluster on factor 1 and all items of anger and contrast cluster on factor 4. Regarding the first issue, a reason could be that injustice, lack of morality and loss of control all more or less measure something about misbehavior of the service provider which is uncontrollable for the complainant in question. Regarding the second issue, it could be argued that a high discrepancy between expectations and actual performance causes people to get angry, making 'anger' and 'contrast' load on the same factor. Because all constructs measure something else theoretically, the decision has been made to keep the constructs separately in the analysis, which consequences must be considered in chapter five. Last, the pattern matrix shows the factor loadings of 'Illegitimate complaining 1', 'injustice 1' and 'finance2' are relatively low. Although factor loadings are relatively low, these factors are still significant (>.40) and do exceed the minimum level of |.30| needed for interpretation of the facture structure (Hair *et al*, 2014). In combination with the theoretical relevance of the items, the decision has been made to keep these items in the analysis.

Table 3 Summary final factor analysis

Pattern Matrix

	Factor					Communality
	1	2	3	4	5	
IllegitimateCompl1					.437	.173
IllegitimateCompl2					.513	.429
IllegitimateCompl3					.573	.401
Injustice1	.464					.382
Injustice2	.830					.677
Injustice3	.608					.468
LackMoral1	.760					.619
LackMoral2	.883					.725
LackMoral3	.809					.685
LossControl1	.735					.528
LossControl2	.698					.598
LossControl3	.578					.605
Anger1				.688		.733
Anger2				.574		.585
Finance1		.849				.749
Finance2		.438				.328
Finance3		.796				.600
SocialNorm1			.824			.676
SocialNorm2			.591			.373
Contrast2				.767		.666
Contrast3				.804		.699
Eigenvalue	7.453	2.504	1.495	1.328	1.145	
% Total Variance	33.669	9.818	4.903	4.465	2.863	
Total variance					55.718	

4.4 Reliability analyses

Besides the need to check the validity of the scales via factor analysis, the reliability of the scales must be assessed. The reliability of scales refers to the internal consistency of the scales, which means that the questionnaire of this study consistently reflects the construct that it's measuring (Field, 2013). Cronbach's alpha is used to measure the reliability of the scales, with values of >.60 as required and >.70 as desired (Hair *et al*, 2014). A reliability analysis has been performed for all constructs with at least two items (see Appendix E). Table 4 shows the main results of the reliability analysis, which makes visible that the subscales 'illegitimate complaining' and 'social norm' are problematic. Still, these variables are included in the analysis because of the exploratory nature of this research. The consequences of using these

low-reliability constructs in the analysis will be discussed further in chapter 5. As can be seen in Appendix E, only financial greed could be improved if 'financial greed 2' would be removed. The decision has been made to keep that item in the analysis, because it measures an representative aspect of financial greed and reliability of that scale remains good including that item.

Table 4 Main results reliability analysis

Construct	N of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Illegitimate complaining	3	.534
Injustice	3	.777
Lack of Morality	3	.893
Loss of Control	3	.804
Contrast	2	.868
Anger	2	.862
Financial greed	3	.738
Social norm	2	.653

4.5 Assumptions

Before a multiple regression analysis can be performed, the corresponding assumptions must be checked. There are five assumptions to be examined before executing a regression analysis, namely multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, linearity, normality of the error term distributions and independence of the error terms (Hair *et al*, 2014). In this paragraph, each assumption will be described separately. An overview of the data used to assess the assumptions can be found in Appendix F. Furthermore , before the assessment of the assumptions is described, possible outliers who could influence the data have been checked and all variables used in the analysis should be measured at the continuous level.

First of all, because multiple regression analysis is very sensitive to outliers (Pallant, 2001), the data has been checked for extreme scores. Based on generated boxplots, there were some high scores in the data. However, these outliers were valid and therefore there was no reason to delete them. Second, all variables should be measured at the continuous level (Hair *et al*., 2014). This is fulfilled in this research, because all variables in the optimal model are measured with a five point Likert scale.

Next, the assumption of multicollinearity has been checked. Multicollinearity refers to the relationship between independent variables (Pallant, 2001). More specific, when the

independent variables correlate highly with each other, there is multicollinearity. Multicollinearity can be assessed directly via the collinearity statistics; tolerance or variance inflation factor (VIF) (Hair *et al*., 2014). A small degree of multicollinearity exists if tolerance values are above .10 and values of VIF below 10 (Hair *et al*., 2014; Field, 2013). Based on the collinearity statistics of the analysis (see Appendix F), this is the case for all variables and so it can be concluded there is low multicollinearity.

Further, the assumption of normality of error terms has been assessed, which refers to whether the residuals about the predicted scores of the dependent variable are in correspondence to the normal distribution (Hair *et al*., 2014). First, normality of the dependent variable could be improved because of its positive skewness (1.104, see Appendix F). Therefore, the dependent variable has been successfully transformed (see Appendix F) using the squared rood method, which is effective in bringing the values of skewness and kurtosis closer to 0 (Field, 2013). Thereafter, a visual check of the histogram and normal P-P plot showed a normal distribution of the error terms (see Appendix F).

The third assumption who has been checked concerns the independence of error terms, which means that the residual terms are uncorrelated (Field, 2013). The Durbin-Watson statistic has been used to test this assumption, whereby a desired value of 2 refers to uncorrelated residuals. The value of the Durbin-Watson test (see Appendix F) was very close to 2, which indicates uncorrelated residuals.

The fourth and most critical assumption regarding regression analysis that has been checked concerns linearity, which could be examined with the scatterplot (Hair *et al*., 2014; Field, 2013). Linearity has been violated if the scatterplot showed some data in which there is a curvilinear pattern in the residuals. The scatterplot (Appendix F) shows a linear relationship as no clear curve in the residuals occurs, so linearity can be determined. To guarantee linearity has been met, polynomial terms were included in the analysis. Since these turned out to be insignificant, linearity could not be improved.

Last, the assumption concerning homoscedasticity has been checked, which could also be done via the scatterplot. The assumption of homoscedasticity is met if there is no pattern visible regarding the scatterplot. As can be seen in Appendix F, the data violates the assumption of homoscedasticity. The points form a clear cone-shaped pattern: they become more spread out across the graph which is a sign for heteroscedasticity (Field, 2013). Heteroscedastic data can be remedied through data transformations or via the weighted least squares method. Although these available methods to overcome this problem, the data remained heteroscedastic. Caution is therefore required in the conclusions, which will be discussed further in chapter 5

4.6 Regression analysis

After testing the assumptions of regression analysis, a multiple linear regression analysis was executed to test the hypotheses. An overview of all used results of the multiple regression analysis can be found in Appendix G.

As already mentioned, the original model with all variables was insignificant. For the optimal model, a significant regression equation was found ($F(12.164) = 5.191$, $p<.001$). The model has a reasonable explanatory power, given the adjusted R^2 has a value of .222. This means that 22,2% of the variance of illegitimate complaining will be explained by all independent variables of the model.

Table 5 shows the most important results of the regression analysis needed to test the hypothesis. As the constructs assimilation, halo effect, attribution, attitude towards complaining, neutralization techniques 'denial of injury'/'metaphor of ledger'/ 'justification by comparison' / 'defence of necessity', firm size, desire for revenge and prior experience with the firm are not included in the best model, these accompanying hypothesis are not tested. All tested hypothesis will be described in the remaining of this paragraph.

Table 5 Results regression analysis

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1,382	,104		13,248	,000
Injustice	-,021	,027	-,085	-,779	,437
LackMoral	,027	,030	,098	,909	,365
LossControl	-,027	,029	-,113	-,950	,343
Contrast	-,023	,021	-,108	-1,138	,257
Anger	-,010	,023	-,045	-,436	,664
Finance	,040	,020	,167	2,019	,045
SocialNorm	,002	,022	,006	,081	,936
Opportunism	,059	,018	,289	3,382	,001
NeutrRegret	,027	,020	,096	1,366	,174
Negotiation	-,016	,017	-,073	-,937	,350
PersConflict	,037	,018	,170	2,072	,040
TaskConflict	-,045	,016	-,198	-2,780	,006

H1: The more customers experience a discrepancy between expectations and actual performance, the more they will complain illegitimately.

To start with, the relationship between contrast and illegitimate complaining has been analyzed and turned out to be insignificant (p>.05). The relationship even turned out to be negative, for which a possible underlying explanation will be given in chapter 5. Based on this, hypothesis 1 has to be rejected.

H5b: The more a customer's environment abhors illegitimate complaining behavior, the less they will complain illegitimately.

The relationship between social norm and illegitimate complaining also turned out to be insignificant, as the p-value of .936 does not meet the requirement of p<.05. Based on that, hypothesis 5b has to be rejected.

H6a: The more customers adopt a personal-based conflict framing style, the more they will complain illegitimately.
H6b: The more customers adopt a task-based conflict framing style, the less they will complain illegitimately.

Further, the relationships between both the task-based and personal-based conflict framing style and illegitimate complaining have been tested. First, from table 5 it becomes clear there is a significant negative relationship between task-based conflict framing style and illegitimate complaining (β= -.198, p<.05). Therefore, hypothesis 6a can be accepted. Second, table 5 shows that the relationship between personal-based conflict framing style and illegitimate complaining is significant too. In contrast, this relationship is in accordance to the hypothesis positive. In other words, customers who frame conflicts in a personal-based style behave more illegitimate. That being the case, hypothesis 6b can be accepted.

H7: The more customers use a negotiation tactic, the more they will complain illegitimately.

The following tested hypothesis concerns the relationship between negotiation tactic and illegitimate complaining. Based on the data, it can be concluded negotiation tactic turned

out to be insignificant. More specific, the relationship is even negative and therefore possible explanations for this will be discussed in chapter 5. Hypothesis 7 must be rejected.

H8e: The more customers use the technique of 'regret', the more they will complain illegitimately

In addition, the relationship between neutralization technique 'regret' and illegitimate complaining has been tested. As the p-value (.174) does not meet the requirement significance level of $p<.05$, it can be concluded that neutralization technique 'regret' doesn't influence illegitimate complaining. Therefore, hypothesis 8e must be rejected.

H10:   The more customers experience injustice, the more they will complain illegitimately

Next, it can be concluded that perception of injustice has an insignificant negative relationship with illegitimate complaining ($p>.05$). A possible explanation way customers complain less illegitimately the more they experience injustice will be given in chapter 5. Based on the results, hypothesis 10 must be rejected.

H11:   The more customers experience a loss of control, the more they will complain illegitimately

In accordance with injustice, the data (see table 5) also shows that the relationship between loss of control and illegitimate complaining is insignificant and negative ($p>.05$), which results in the rejection of hypothesis 11. A more detailed interpretation and explanation of this relationship will be discussed in chapter 5.

H12:   The more customers experience a lack of morality of the service provider, the more they will complain illegitimately

Furthermore, the relationship between lack of morality and illegitimate complaining turned out to be insignificant too ($p>.05$). Therefore, it can be concluded that customers won't complain more illegitimately the more customers experience a lack of morality of the service provider. Therefore, hypothesis 12 has to be rejected.

H14: The more customers experience a desire for revenge in the context of complaint handling, the more they will complain illegitimately.

As the relationship between a customer's desire for revenge and illegitimate complaining is insignificant (p>.05), hypothesis 14 has been rejected. It can be concluded there is no relationship between a customer's desire for revenge and the extent of illegitimate complaining.

H15: The more customers experience an opportunity to complain illegitimately, the more they will complain illegitimately

Further, the relationship between opportunism and illegitimate complaining has been analyzed. The data output (see table 5) shows there is a significant positive relationship between opportunism and illegitimate complaining (β=.289, p<.05). Therefore, hypothesis 15 can be accepted.

H16: The more customers are driven by financial greed, the more they will complain illegitimately.

The last relationship who has been tested concerns the relationship between financial greed and illegitimate complaining. Table 5 demonstrates there is a significant positive relationship between financial greed and illegitimate complaining (β=.167, p<0.05). In other words, customer's financial greed contributes positively to the degree of illegitimate complaining. On the basis of this, HX can be accepted.

Last, table 5 has also been used to examine which independent variable has the greatest relative influence on illegitimate complaining, by looking at the beta values. Based on that, opportunism has the strongest influence on illegitimate complaining (β=.289), followed by task-based conflict framing style (β= -.198), personal-based conflict framing style (β=.170) and financial greed (β=.167).

5. Discussion

In this last chapter, a conclusion on the research question will be given by linking the results with existing literature. Further, both theoretical and managerial implications of this research are described. At the end of this chapter, the limitations of this research and suggestions for future research are described.

5.1 Conclusion

As competition is becoming increasingly fierce it is all the more important to keep customers satisfied. Even so, service failures are order of the day and handling them effectively contributes positively to customer trust, customer retention, purchase intentions and word of mouth (DeWitt, Nguyen and Marshall, 2008; Orsingher, Valentini and Angelis, 2010; Maxham, 2001; Stauss and Friege, 1999). However, customers do not always complaint for legitimate reasons and even try to gain benefits that could result from the situation. Although previous research claims that illegitimate complaints occur (e.g. Reynold and Harris, 2005; Macintosh and Stevens, 2013; Kim *et al*, 2003), research into the drivers of illegitimate complaining is still lacking while knowing this could help to tackle these complaints. In order to examine the drivers of illegitimate complaining behavior, an survey has been conducted in order to answer the following research question: *'What are the drivers of illegitimate complaining behavior?'*. 24 hypotheses were developed to provide an answer on this research question, of which an overview is visible in table 6.

Based on the conducted multiple regression analyses, the following answer can be formulated: the drivers of illegitimate customer complaining are opportunism, financial greed and a personal-based conflict framing style. In other words, it seems these drivers focus on three aspects: 'when' customers complain illegitimately, namely when a lucrative opportunity arises; 'why' customers involve in illegitimate complaining behavior, which is both due to the financial benefits of it and due to the available opportunity; and `how´ customers complain illegitimately, namely by pressurizing the service provider.

Table 6 Overview of hypotheses and results

Hypothesis		Result
H1	The more customers experience a discrepancy between expectations and actual performance, the more they will complain illegitimately.	Rejected
H2	The more customers experience a need to assimilate through cognitive dissonance, the less they will complain illegitimately.	Not tested

H3	The stronger the halo effect customers experience, the more they will complain illegitimately.	Not tested
H4	The more customers attribute the failure externally (compared to internally), the more they will complain illegitimately.	Not tested
H5a	The more customers are reluctant to complain, the less they will complain illegitimately.	Not tested
H5b	The more a customer's environment abhors illegitimate complaining behavior, the less they will complain illegitimately.	Rejected
H6a	The more customers adopt a personal-based conflict framing style, the more they will complain illegitimately.	Accepted
H6b	The more customers adopt a task-based conflict framing style, the less they will complain illegitimately.	Accepted
H7	The more customers know how to set high standers in order to get what they want, the more they will complain illegitimately.	Rejected
H8a	The more customers use the technique of 'denial of injury', the more they will complain illegitimately.	Not tested
H8b	The more customers use the technique of 'metaphor of ledge', the more they will complain illegitimately.	Not tested
H8c	The more customers use the technique of 'justification by comparison', the more they will complain illegitimately.	Not tested
H8d	The more customers use the technique of 'defense of necessity', the more they will complain illegitimately.	Not tested
H8e	The more customers use the technique of 'regret, the more they will complain illegitimately.	Rejected
H9	The larger customers experience the size of a firm, the more they will complain illegitimately.	Not tested
H10	The more customers experience injustice, the more they will complain illegitimately	Rejected
H11	The more customers experience a loss of control, the more they will complain illegitimately	Rejected
H12	The more customers experience a lack of morality of the service provider, the more they will complain illegitimately	Rejected

H13	The more customers experience a feeling of anger, the more they will complain illegitimately	Not tested
H14	The more customers experience a desire for revenge, the more they will complain illegitimately	Rejected
H15	The more customers experience an opportunity to complain illegitimately, the more they will complain illegitimately	Accepted
H16	The more customers are driven by financial greed, the more they will complain illegitimately	Accepted
H17a	The more positive the prior experience with the firm has been, the less the customer will complain illegitimately (buffering)	Not tested
H17b	The more positive the prior experience with the firm has been, the more the customer will complain illegitimately (magnifying)	Not tested

5.2 Theoretical contributions

This research is relevant for marketing academics because it contributes to our knowledge about the – by researchers claimed 'challenging to measure' (Fisk *et al*., 2010) – drivers of illegitimate complaining. This study tried to find informative empirical evidence for this, to (dis)support the suggestions made by Joosten (unpublished) and Baker *et al*. (2012). The results of this research therefore contributes to our theoretical understanding of this research subject.

Based on studies like Joosten (unpublished) and Baker *et al*. (2012), several possible drivers of illegitimate complaining are analyzed. To start with, it is hypothesized that injustice is a positive driver of illegitimate complaining (see table 6). A lot of research in the context of service recovery has shown that justice plays an important role in complaining behavior (e.g. Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy; Voorhees and Brady, 2005; Blodgett, Hill and Tax, 1997). In contrast, this research shows that the relationship between injustice and illegitimate complaining is insignificant. Further, it can also be concluded that a lack of morality, a loss of control, contrast between expectations and actual performance, anger, a social norm towards illegitimate complaining, neutralization technique 'regret', and a negotiation tactic are insignificant drivers of illegitimate complaining.

Several reasons may underlie these counter-intuitive results. A first possible reason could be that all these hypothesized effects simply doesn't exist. Another explanation could be that the research design of this study biased the results, causing the insignificant relationships. Possible limitations of the research design used in this study will be discussed in the limitations section.

In contrast to the hypothesized relationships, the results of the analysis have shown that the constructs 'injustice', 'loss of control', 'contrast', 'anger' and 'negotiation tactic' were all negatively related to illegitimate complaining. A possible explanation for the construct injustice could be that customers are so upset because of perceived injustice, that customers do not want to have anything more to do with that firm. Therefore, they won't complain illegitimately as they think it's not worth it. This could also be a possible explanation regarding the negative relationship of anger, as a customer could be so angry for any reason making him leave the relationship with the firm directly and forever.

The negative relationship regarding the contrast effect may possible underlie the cognitive dissonance and assimilation theories (Anderson, 1973). Customers who experience cognitive dissonance between expectations and actual performance assimilate this perceived uncomfortable contrast according to assimilation theory (Anderson, 1973; Oliver & DeSarbo, 1988). Therefore, it could be argued customers will complain less illegitimate as customers have the tendency to eliminate that dissonance by altering their cognitions and evaluations.

A possible reasoning regarding the contrary results of loss of control might be that the more customers perceive they control the situation, the more they dare to complain illegitimately. Conversely, customers who perceive a loss of control don't have the courage to complain illegitimately.

A theoretical reasoning for the negative relationship of negotiation tactic has not been found. Therefore, a possible explanation concerning this negative relationship could be the chosen measurement of this construct.

In addition, the results of this study show that opportunism is the most important positive driver of illegitimate behavior. This indicates that the more customers experience an opportunity to complain illegitimately, the more they will complain illegitimately. This is in line with the reasoning of several researchers (e.g. Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy (2010); Berry and Seiders, 2008), who state that customers behave unfair as an opportunity to do so arises. Besides, it could be argued the participants in this study remembered a situation in which such an opportunity arises best.

The second strongest driver of illegitimate complaining concerns task-based conflict framing style, which relationship is negative. This means that the more customers adopt a task-based conflict framing style in the context of complaint handling, the less customers will complain illegitimately. This is also in line with Beverland *et al*. (2010), who argue that customers with a task-based conflict framing style are willing to find a solution in collaboration with the service provider, instead of getting the best out of it for themselves. In contrast,

personal-based conflict framing style does have a positive significant relationship with illegitimate complaining. This assumes that the more customers frame service failures personal-based, the more illegitimate they will complain. This is in line with Beverland *et al*. (2010) too, since customers with a personal-based conflict style are less willing to reason and are out for revenge by for example voicing an illegitimate complaint.

Besides, the findings of this research show that customer's financial greed is a positive driver of illegitimate complaining. This is in line with studies of Reynold and Harris (2005) and Baker *et al*. (2012), who argue that the more customers are driven by financial greed, the more they will complain illegitimately. Customers hope to become compensated by the company in question, despite they have no right to (Baker *et al*, 2012).

It's obvious that the results of this study are in contrast to the data of Joosten (unpublished), whose research suggested that drivers of illegitimate complaining have a tendency towards external attribution. More specific, the results of Joosten his study suggested that drivers of illegitimate complaining are more attributed towards mistakes or inappropriate behavior of the company. Besides, Joosten (unpublished) concluded that most illegitimate complaints were neutral complaints, referring to ignorance of the customer about the illegitimacy of their complaint. A possible explanation for these differences concerns the different research designs of both studies. While this study tries to investigate the drivers of illegitimate complaining by means of a survey, Joosten (unpublished) conducted a multiple-case study in cooperation with the *Dutch Foundation for Disputes Committees (SGC)*. By using a survey only conscious cases of illegitimate complaining could be measured, while Joosten his research design was suitable for analyzing unconscious cases. Therefore, it could be argued that conscious or deliberately illegitimate complaints are more intern attributed, while unconscious illegitimate complaints are more external attributed. This will be discussed further in the end of this chapter.

5.3 Managerial implications

As stated by Berry and Seiders (2008), identifying situations which could cause customers to complain illegitimately is relevant for marketing managers. Therefore, this research contributes to marketing managers as the findings of it could help managers to evaluate their existing practices to consider possible necessary changes (Berry and Seiders, 2008). This research shows those who may still doubt about the existence of illegitimate complaints that a lot of people do voice illegitimate complaints. All respondents described a situation in which they consciously misbehaved, and even 37,1% of all respondents indicated they have done it at least once more.

If companies are able to limit such illegitimate complaints and deal effectively with unfair customers, both money, time and effort can be saved (Berry and Seiders, 2008).

Managers need to consider if opportunities are provided to customers to complain illegitimately. As the results of this study show that opportunism is one of the drivers of illegitimate complaining, companies must ensure that their customers do not get an opportunity to complain illegitimately. Examples of opportunities who 'invite' customers to voice an illegitimate complaint are liberal redress policies or 100% money back guarantees (Baker *et al*, 2012; Reynolds and Harris, 2005; Joosten, unpublished). Consequently, managers can reduce illegitimate complaining by taking away these opportunities.

Further, the findings of the this research highlight that customers complain illegitimately due to financial greed. Customers have the desire to get something for nothing and therefore file illegitimate complaints (Reynold and Harris, 2005). To prevent this, marketing managers could communicate the financial risks of complaining illegitimately. For example, a policyholder who is being caught on fraud by their insurer receives a fine of 532 euros in the Netherlands (Van Lonkhuyzen, 2016). By communicating the possibility of receiving a fine in the case of illegitimate complaining behavior, this perception of risk could influence someone's decision-making causing them not voicing an illegitimate complaint (Williams and Noyes, 2007).

A third managerial implication of this study is that customers voice illegitimate complaints via a personal-based framing style. In other words, if customers pressurize a firm or frontline employees during a service recovery process, it could indicate they behave illegitimately. Managers could train their employees to recognize personal-based framing styles, in order to deal effectively with it. This could help to reduce illegitimate complaining.

5.4 Limitations and future research

Although this research was carefully prepared, there still consists some unavoidable limitations and shortcomings due to the research design and methodology adopted in this study. These limitations will be outlined in this paragraph, combined with suggestions for possible fruitful avenues for future research based on these limitations.

A first limitations of this research concerns the use of a survey to measure the drivers of illegitimate complaining. Although a survey is very suitable for measuring motivations and underlying cognitions of complainers (Berry and Seiders, 2008), the drawbacks of this method concerns the possibility of social desirable answers and the inability to measure unconsciously illegitimate complaints of respondents. To clarify, participants of the survey could still

neutralize their illegitimate complaint despite different techniques are used to limit social desirable answers. Further, as respondents had to recall a real situations in which they complained illegitimately, only conscious situations could be measured as respondents are not aware of unconscious illegitimate complaints. Therefore, future research is suggested to adopt a research design by which they could measure unconscious illegitimate complaints of respondents. In addition, it is proposed to examine to what extent drivers of intentionally and unintentionally illegitimate complaints differ, as the drivers of this research clearly show different outcomes compared to the study of Joosten (unpublished).

Furthermore, some limitations come up through sample considerations. First, the decision has been made to use a convenience sample – because of time limits and the sensitivity of this research – in order to reach as much as possible respondents. A drawback of convenience sampling can be a lack of external validity (Given, 2008). Next, despite requirements of sample size are met, this research was conducted only on a small size of the whole population who could complain illegitimately which limits generalizability of the results. Besides, as some respondents partially completed the survey and selected the 'not-applicable' option regarding the halo effect and assimilation, these final sample sizes are just around the minimum. Based on these limitations, future research should involve more participants in their study or use another sample selection method to improve generalizability of the results.

Another possible limitation of this research concerns the topicality of the information provided by the respondents. As the results of the analysis show that 58.5% of all complaints took place longer than one year ago, this could cause recall bias due to memory lapse (Coughlin, 1990). The longer the time interval since the complaint process, the less detailed the described situation can be recalled (Coughlin, 1990). Therefore, future research is suggested to analyze actual illegitimate complaints, in order to collect more detailed information.

Further, there are some limitations regarding the reliability and validity of this research. First, several one-item constructs are used to limit questionnaire length, which could bias the results due to possible inferior reliability and validity of the scales (Wanous *et al.*, 1997). Therefore, further research is suggested to examine these variables in more detail by including more items. Furthermore, the reliability of the construct 'illegitimate complaining' and 'social norm' were low, which could also bias the accuracy of the results. Future research should strive to develop more reliable constructs. Looking at the validity of the scales, there were possible issues with the discriminant validity as injustice, lack of morality and loss of control loaded on the same factor, just like anger and contrast loaded on the same factor. Future research should therefore also strive to design a more valid measurement scale.

As mentioned in chapter 4, the data violated the assumption of homoscedasticity. This could influence the results, as the ordinary least squares estimator is inefficient because the covariance and true variance are underestimated and significance test may run too high or too low (Goldberger, 1964; Stephanie, 2015). Future research is therefore suggested to examine the drivers of illegitimate complaining without heteroscedastic data.

To end with, all discussed limitations may have caused the insignificance of the overall model. Therefore, several variables are not tested in the optimal model. As discussed in chapter 2, it is expected that these variables have a relationship with illegitimate complaining. Therefore, future research should examine these variables in order to test these hypothesized relationships.

Although some fruitful avenues for future research are already mentioned, there are still some left that need to be outlined. To start with, some possible drivers of illegitimate complaining behavior are still unexamined, like customer personality traits (Baker *et al*., 2012), the duration of a customer-firm relationship (Baker *et al*., 2012), channels of complaining (Reynold and Harris, 2005) and someone's social value orientation (Macinthosh and Stevens, 2013). Further, the results have shown that the respondents mainly filed complaints within large firms (75.7%). This could indicate that customers voice more illegitimate complaints towards large firms instead of medium sized or small firms, which could be examined by future researchers.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Questionnaire (translated in Dutch)

Beste meneer/mevrouw,

Hartelijk dank voor uw deelname aan dit onderzoek! Wij zijn John van Bokhoven en Esther van Laar, masterstudenten Marketing. Voor onze masterthesis doen wij - onder begeleiding van onze docent Dr. Herm Joosten - onderzoek naar het klaaggedrag van consumenten.

Iedereen heeft wel eens geklaagd over een product of dienst. Veel mensen willen ook toegeven dat hun klacht soms niet helemaal eerlijk (overdreven of verzonnen) is. U claimt bijvoorbeeld schade aan uw mobiele telefoon die u zelf veroorzaakt heeft of u klaagt over het eten in een restaurant, terwijl er niets mis mee is. Het kan ook zijn dat u klaagt bij uw kabelmaatschappij dat u al weken zonder internet zit, terwijl u maar een dag zonder zat of u eist een schadevergoeding die helemaal of deels onterecht is.

Dit onderzoek richt zich op de motivatie van consumenten om klachten te overdrijven of te verzinnen. Wij begrijpen dat dit onderwerp wellicht gevoelig ligt, daarom is deze enquête **volledig anoniem** wat betekent dat niemand kan achterhalen wie de antwoorden heeft ingevuld. Daarnaast gebruiken wij de gegevens uitsluitend voor dit onderzoek en is deelname geheel vrijwillig; u kunt op elk gewenst moment stoppen. Tot slot zijn er geen goede of foute antwoorden, omdat het gaat over hoe u de situatie heeft beleefd. De enquête zal ongeveer 10 minuten duren.

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

Esther van Laar,

John van Bokhoven,

Dr. Herm Joosten

Uit onderzoek blijkt dat veel mensen wel eens een klacht hebben overdreven of verzonnen. Heeft u ook wel eens een klacht overdreven of verzonnen?

Toelichting:

Mocht u niet onmiddellijk een eigen overdreven of verzonnen klacht te binnen schieten, dan helpen misschien voorbeelden uit ons eigen leven:

Esther: "Mijn mobiele telefoon was buitenshuis gevallen en hierdoor kapotgegaan. Vervolgens heb ik aan de verzekering doorgegeven dat dit in huis was gebeurd. Daardoor heb ik geld terug kunnen krijgen via mijn inboedelverzekering, zodat mijn portemonnee toch nog enigszins bespaard bleef."

John: "Voor mijn komende zomervakantie is plotseling mijn heenvlucht gewijzigd naar een andere luchthaven waardoor ik extra lang moet reizen om er te komen. Dit vond ik nergens op slaan, en daarom heb ik van de situatie gebruik gemaakt en een schadevergoeding geëist die een beetje overdreven was."

Herm: "De touroperator vertelde dat ze mij om moesten boeken naar een ander hotel in Spanje. Ik heb gedaan of ik dit heel erg vond en daardoor kreeg ik uiteindelijk voor elkaar dat ik een veel betere hotelkamer kreeg, met uitzicht op zee." Neem de tijd om goed na te denken over een situatie waarin u een klacht (deels) heeft verzonnen of overdreven.

- -

1. Over welk product of welke dienst heeft u geklaagd?

_____

2. Wat was de waarde van het product/de dienst ongeveer?

_____

3. Waar heeft u geklaagd (bij welk bedrijf of welke instantie)?

_____

4. Hoe groot was het bedrijf waar u heeft geklaagd?

⭕ Klein bedrijf (bijv. eenmanszaak of familiebedrijf)

⭕ Middelgroot bedrijf (bijv. 2 of 3 vestigingen)

⭕ Groot bedrijf (bijv. winkelketen of grote producent)

5.Wat was (volgens u) het probleem met het betreffende product of de dienst?

_____

6. In hoeverre heeft u het probleem overdreven (dus erger voorgesteld dan het daadwerkelijk was)?

	Helemaal niet overdreven	Een klein beetje overdreven	Half overdreven	Grotendeels overdreven	Geheel overdreven
Probleem overdreven	○	○	○	○	○

7. In hoeverre heeft u het probleem verzonnen (ofwel anders voorgesteld dan het daadwerkelijk was)?

	Helemaal niet verzonnen	Een klein beetje verzonnen	Half verzonnen	Grotendeels verzonnen	Geheel verzonnen
Probleem verzonnen	○	○	○	○	○

8. Wat stelde u voor als oplossing voor het probleem?

_____

9. In hoeverre heeft u de voorgestelde oplossing overdreven (dus meer gevraagd dan u zelf redelijk vond)?

	Helemaal niet overdreven	Een klein beetje overdreven	Half overdreven	Grotendeels overdreven	Geheel overdreven
Oplossing overdreven	○	○	○	○	○

10. Wat stelde het bedrijf voor als oplossing?

_____

11. Wanneer speelde de klacht?

○ Het afgelopen jaar

○ Langer dan een jaar geleden

○ Langer dan twee jaar geleden

In hoeverre bent u het eens met de volgende stellingen?

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Niet mee eens/niet mee oneens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
12. Het voorstel van het bedrijf om de klacht op te lossen was oneerlijk naar mij toe	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
13. De manier waarop het bedrijf mij behandelde tijdens de klacht was onbeleefd	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
14. De klachtprocedure van het bedrijf was traag en moeizaam	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
15. Het bedrijf wilde van mij profiteren	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
16. Het bedrijf probeerde misbruik van mij te maken	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
17. Het bedrijf had verkeerde bedoelingen	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
18. Het bedrijf reageerde niet meer op mijn verzoeken	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
19. Het bedrijf hield zich niet aan de afspraken	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
20. Het voelde alsof ik geen controle meer had over het proces	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
21. De oorzaak van het probleem lag bij het bedrijf	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
22. De oorzaak van het probleem lag aan de omstandigheden waar zowel ik als het bedrijf niks aan konden doen (bijv. het weer)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
23. De oorzaak van het probleem was mijn eigen schuld	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
24. Ik had hoge verwachtingen van het product/de dienst	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

25. Mijn ervaring met het product/de dienst was veel slechter dan verwacht	○	○	○	○	○
26. Aan mijn verwachtingen van het product/de dienst werd niet voldaan	○	○	○	○	○
27. Ik wilde het bedrijf op een bepaalde manier straffen	○	○	○	○	○
28. Ik wilde overlast veroorzaken bij het bedrijf	○	○	○	○	○
29. Ik wilde het bedrijf het betaald zetten	○	○	○	○	○
30. Ik was boos op het bedrijf	○	○	○	○	○
31. Ik was woedend op het bedrijf	○	○	○	○	○

In hoeverre bent u het eens met de volgende stellingen?

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Niet mee eens/niet mee oneens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
32. Ik heb van tevoren gepland om mij op deze manier te gedragen	○	○	○	○	○
33. Het gedrag dat ik vertoonde was impulsief	○	○	○	○	○
34. De garantieregeling van het bedrijf verleidde mij om de klacht te overdrijven/verzinnen	○	○	○	○	○
35. Ik reageerde op een mogelijkheid die zich voordeed om mijn klacht te overdrijven/verzinnen	○	○	○	○	○
36. Ik heb de klacht overdreven/verzonnen om geld te verdienen	○	○	○	○	○
37. Ik heb de klacht overdreven/verzonnen om iets gratis te krijgen	○	○	○	○	○

38. Ik heb geld verdiend door de klacht te overdrijven/verzinnen	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
39. Tijdens het klachtproces heb ik geprobeerd de ondernemer zoveel mogelijk onder druk te zetten om mijn zin te krijgen	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
40. Tijdens het klachtenproces heb ik geprobeerd in overleg en samenwerking tot een oplossing te komen	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
41. Ik ben iemand die niet snel klaagt	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
42. Ik vind dat veel mensen te snel klagen	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
43. Als ik mijn vrienden en kennissen zou vertellen dat ik een klacht overdreven of verzonnen had, zouden ze daar niet van schrikken	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
44. Ik denk dat mijn vrienden en kennissen in dezelfde situatie de klacht ook overdreven of verzonnen zouden hebben	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
45. Ik heb de klacht overdreven/verzonnen omdat ik weet dat je altijd hoger moet inzetten tijdens onderhandelingen om uiteindelijk te krijgen wat je wil	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
46. Ik denk dat het bedrijf geen grote schade ondervindt van mijn overdreven/verzonnen klacht	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
47. Ik ben normaal gesproken eerlijk als consument, dus ik mag best een keertje overdrijven/verzinnen	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
48. Vergeleken met bijv. diefstal en oplichting is het	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

overdrijven/verzinnen van een klacht niet ernstig

49. Het overdrijven/verzinnen van de klacht was de enige manier om iets gedaan te krijgen van het bedrijf	○	○	○	○	○
50. Ik heb er later wel spijt van gehad dat ik mijn klacht heb overdreven/verzonnen	○	○	○	○	○
51. Ik beschouw mezelf als "vaste klant" van dit bedrijf	○	○	○	○	○
52. Ik ben boos op het bedrijf dat ze een (vaste) klant zo slecht behandelen	○	○	○	○	○
53. Ondanks de beschreven ervaring met het bedrijf blijk ik positief over het bedrijf	○	○	○	○	○

In hoeverre bent u het eens met de volgende stellingen?

(**Let erop** dat er bij onderstaande stellingen een 'niet van toepassing' optie is toegevoegd.)

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Niet mee eens/niet mee oneens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens	Niet van toepassing
54. Mijn eerdere ervaringen met het bedrijf zijn positief	○	○	○	○	○	○
55. Nadat ik een fout ontdekte in het product/de dienst, ontdekte ik nog meer gebreken	○	○	○	○	○	○
56. Toen ik een fout had ontdekt ging ik verder kijken en bleken er nog meer fouten in te zitten	○	○	○	○	○	○
57. Het product/de dienst had nog meer gebreken, maar daarover heb ik niet geklaagd	○	○	○	○	○	○

58. Ondanks dat het product/de dienst nog meer gebreken had, nam ik die voor lief   ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯

Als laatste volgen er een aantal feitelijke vragen over uw situatie evenals uw leeftijd, geslacht en opleiding.

59. Wat was de totale tijd dat het conflict (tot dusver) heeft gespeeld?

_____

60. Heeft u al vaker een klacht overdreven/verzonnen?

◯ Dit was de enige keer

◯ 2 keer

◯ 3 keer

◯ Vaker dan 3 keer

61. Wat is uw leeftijd?

◯ Leeftijd in jaren _____

62. Wat is uw geslacht?

◯ Man

◯ Vrouw

63. Wat is uw hoogst genoten opleiding (met of zonder diploma)?

○ Lagere school/basisonderwijs

○ Voortgezet onderwijs

○ MBO

○ HBO/Universiteit

Heeft u nog opmerkingen over de vragenlijst (verbeteringen, onduidelijkheden, de duur van het invullen, etc.)?

_____

Dit waren de vragen. **Nogmaals hartelijk dank voor uw medewerking**. Indien u geïnteresseerd bent in de resultaten van het onderzoek kunt u een mail sturen naar johnvanbokhoven10@hotmail.com of e.vanlaar@outlook.com.

Appendix B – Operationalization

Variable	Dimension	Items	Label analysis
Illegitimate complaining	Problem exaggeration	In hoeverre heeft u het probleem overdreven?	IllegitimateCompl1
	Problem made up	In hoeverre heeft u het probleem verzonnen?	IllegitimateCompl2
	Solution exaggeration	In hoeverre heeft u de voorgestelde oplossing overdreven?	IllegitimateCompl3
Injustice	Distributive	Het voorstel van het bedrijf om de klacht op te lossen was oneerlijk naar mij toe	Injustice1
	Interactional	De manier waarop het bedrijf mij behandelde tijdens de klacht was onbeleefd	Injustice2
	Procedural	De klachtprocedure van het bedrijf was traag en moeizaam	Injustice3
Lack of morality		Het bedrijf wilde van mij profiteren	LackMoral1
		Het bedrijf probeerde misbruik van mij te maken	LackMoral2
		Het bedrijf had verkeerde bedoelingen	LackMoral3
Loss of control		Het bedrijf reageerde niet meer op mijn verzoeken	-
		Het bedrijf hield zich niet aan de afspraken	-
		Het voelde alsof ik geen controle meer had over het proces	-
Attribution	External	De oorzaak van het probleem lag bij het bedrijf	-
	External environment	De oorzaak van het probleem lag aan de omstandigheden waar zowel ik als het bedrijf niks aan konden doen (bijv. het weer)	-
	Internal	De oorzaak van het probleem was mijn eigen schuld	-
Contrast		Ik had hoge verwachtingen van het product/de dienst	-
		Mijn ervaring met het product/de dienst was veel slechter dan verwacht	Contrast2
		Aan mijn verwachtingen van het product/de dienst werd niet voldaan	Contrast 3
Desire for revenge		Ik wilde het bedrijf op een bepaalde manier straffen	-
		Ik wilde overlast veroorzaken bij het bedrijf	-
		Ik wilde het bedrijf het betaald zetten	-
Anger		Ik was boos op het bedrijf	Anger1
		Ik was woedend op het bedrijf	Anger2
Opportunism		Ik heb van tevoren gepland om mij op deze manier te gedragen (reverse coded)	-
		Het gedrag dat ik vertoonde was impulsief	-
		De garantieregeling van het bedrijf verleidde mij om de klacht te overdrijven/verzinnen	-
		Ik reageerde op een mogelijkheid die zich voordeed om mijn klacht te overdrijven/verzinnen	Opportunism
Financial greed		Ik heb de klacht overdreven/verzonnen om geld te verdienen	Finance1
		Ik heb de klacht overdreven/verzonnen om iets gratis te krijgen	Finance2
		Ik heb geld verdiend door de klacht te overdrijven/verzinnen	Finance3

Conflict framing style	Personal-based	Tijdens het klachtproces heb ik geprobeerd de ondernemer zoveel mogelijk onder druk te zetten om mijn zin te krijgen	PersConflict
	Task-based	Tijdens het klachtenproces heb ik geprobeerd in overleg en samenwerking tot een oplossing te komen	TaskConflict
Attitude towards complaining		Ik ben iemand die niet snel klaagt	-
		Ik vind dat veel mensen te snel klagen	-
Social norm		Als ik mijn vrienden en kennissen zou vertellen dat ik een klacht overdreven of verzonnen had, zouden ze daar niet van schrikken	SocalNorm1
		Ik denk dat mijn vrienden en kennissen in dezelfde situatie de klacht ook overdreven of verzonnen zouden hebben	SocialNorm2
Negotiation tactic		Ik heb de klacht overdreven/verzonnen omdat ik weet dat je altijd hoger moet inzetten tijdens onderhandelingen om uiteindelijk te krijgen wat je wil	Negotiation
Neutralization	Denial of injury	Ik denk dat het bedrijf geen grote schade ondervindt van mijn overdreven/verzonnen klacht	-
	Methaphor of ledger	Ik ben normaal gesproken eerlijk als consument, dus ik mag best een keertje overdrijven/verzinnen	-
	Justification by comparison	Vergeleken met bijv. diefstal en oplichting is het overdrijven/verzinnen van een klacht niet ernstig	-
	Defence of necessity	Het overdrijven/verzinnen van de klacht was de enige manier om iets gedaan te krijgen van het bedrijf	-
	Regret	Ik heb er later wel spijt van gehad dat ik mijn klacht heb overdreven/verzonnen	NeutrRegret
Prior experience with the firm		Ik beschouw mezelf als "vaste klant" van dit bedrijf	-
		Mijn eerdere ervaringen met het bedrijf zijn positief	-
	Magnifying	Ik ben boos op het bedrijf dat ze een (vaste) klant zo slecht behandelen	-
	Buffering	Ondanks de beschreven ervaring met het bedrijf blijk ik positief over het bedrijf	-
Halo effect		Nadat ik een fout ontdekte in het product/de dienst, ontdekte ik nog meer gebreken	-
		Toen ik een fout had ontdekt ging ik verder kijken en bleken er nog meer fouten in te zitten	-
Assimilation		Het product/de dienst had nog meer gebreken, maar daarover heb ik niet geklaagd	
		Ondanks dat het product/de dienst nog meer gebreken had, nam ik die voor lief	
Firm size		Hoe groot was het bedrijf waar u heeft geklaagd?	

Appendix C – Factor analysis (first attempt)

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,872
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1951,429
	df	231
	Sig.	,000

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
IllegitimateCompl1	,166	,165
IllegitimateCompl2	,350	,426
IllegitimateCompl3	,304	,433
Injustice1	,434	,382
Injustice2	,653	,674
Injustice3	,502	,465
LackMoral1	,670	,622
LackMoral2	,788	,725
LackMoral3	,741	,686
LossControl1	,529	,529
LossControl2	,594	,599
LossControl3	,602	,602
Anger1	,751	,739
Anger2	,681	,582
Finance1	,535	,749
Finance2	,306	,326
Finance3	,491	,599
SocialNorm1	,373	,741
SocialNorm2	,309	,339
Contrast1	,177	,134
Contrast2	,668	,680
Contrast3	,674	,673

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings[a]
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	7,482	34,008	34,008	7,097	32,258	32,258	6,620
2	2,516	11,435	45,443	2,074	9,427	41,685	2,144
3	1,611	7,322	52,765	1,132	5,146	46,830	1,239
4	1,365	6,205	58,970	,958	4,355	51,185	4,047
5	1,149	5,222	64,192	,609	2,767	53,952	1,630
6	,867	3,939	68,131				
7	,829	3,769	71,900				
8	,774	3,516	75,416				
9	,710	3,228	78,644				
10	,653	2,969	81,613				
11	,612	2,783	84,396				
12	,522	2,374	86,770				
13	,430	1,953	88,723				
14	,407	1,851	90,574				
15	,374	1,698	92,272				
16	,334	1,518	93,790				
17	,317	1,439	95,230				
18	,282	1,282	96,512				
19	,255	1,158	97,670				
20	,218	,990	98,661				
21	,174	,789	99,450				
22	,121	,550	100,000				

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Scree Plot

Pattern Matrix^a

Pattern Matrix[a]

	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
IllegitimateCompl1					,430
IllegitimateCompl2					,538
IllegitimateCompl3					,593
Injustice1	,481				
Injustice2	,827				
Injustice3	,614				
LackMoral1	,784				
LackMoral2	,892				
LackMoral3	,830				
LossControl1	,746				
LossControl2	,721				
LossControl3	,600				
Anger1	,323			,635	
Anger2	,352			,529	
Finance1		,860			
Finance2		,428			
Finance3		,803			
SocialNorm1			-,868		
SocialNorm2			-,552		
Contrast1				,356	
Contrast2				,717	
Contrast3				,707	

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
 Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.

Factor Correlation Matrix

Factor	1	2	3	4	5
1	1,000	-,170	-,091	,499	-,207
2	-,170	1,000	-,162	-,014	,385
3	-,091	-,162	1,000	,080	,007
4	,499	-,014	,080	1,000	-,041
5	-,207	,385	,007	-,041	1,000

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
 Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Appendix D – Factor analysis (second attempt)

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,876
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1922,540
	df	210
	Sig.	,000

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
IllegitimateCompl1	,165	,173
IllegitimateCompl2	,350	,429
IllegitimateCompl3	,290	,401
Injustice1	,431	,382
Injustice2	,652	,677
Injustice3	,498	,468
LackMoral1	,662	,619
LackMoral2	,784	,725
LackMoral3	,740	,685
LossControl1	,529	,528
LossControl2	,593	,598
LossControl3	,601	,605
Anger1	,746	,733
Anger2	,680	,585
Finance1	,533	,749
Finance2	,306	,328
Finance3	,490	,600
SocialNorm1	,370	,676
SocialNorm2	,308	,373
Contrast2	,656	,666
Contrast3	,670	,699

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Total Variance Explained

Factor	Total	Initial Eigenvalues % of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings % of Variance	Cumulative %	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings[a] Total
1	7,453	35,490	35,490	7,070	33,669	33,669	6,557
2	2,504	11,923	47,413	2,062	9,818	43,487	2,060
3	1,495	7,121	54,533	1,030	4,903	48,390	1,205
4	1,328	6,324	60,858	,938	4,465	52,855	4,888
5	1,145	5,453	66,311	,601	2,863	55,718	1,464
6	,837	3,984	70,295				
7	,786	3,741	74,036				
8	,717	3,415	77,451				
9	,654	3,116	80,567				
10	,614	2,923	83,491				
11	,535	2,548	86,039				
12	,432	2,059	88,098				
13	,409	1,946	90,044				
14	,374	1,779	91,823				
15	,334	1,592	93,415				
16	,317	1,508	94,923				
17	,282	1,344	96,267				
18	,257	1,223	97,490				
19	,219	1,043	98,532				
20	,186	,886	99,419				
21	,122	,581	100,000				

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Scree Plot

Pattern Matrix[a]

	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
IllegitimateCompl1					,437
IllegitimateCompl2					,513
IllegitimateCompl3					,573
Injustice1	,464				
Injustice2	,830				
Injustice3	,608				
LackMoral1	,760				
LackMoral2	,883				
LackMoral3	,809				
LossControl1	,735				
LossControl2	,698				
LossControl3	,578				
Anger1				,688	
Anger2				,574	
Finance1		,849			
Finance2		,438			
Finance3		,796			
SocialNorm1			,824		
SocialNorm2			,591		
Contrast2				,767	
Contrast3				,804	

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
 Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Factor Correlation Matrix

Factor	1	2	3	4	5
1	1,000	-,136	,035	,606	-,157
2	-,136	1,000	,211	-,073	,367
3	,035	,211	1,000	-,032	,047
4	,606	-,073	-,032	1,000	-,118
5	-,157	,367	,047	-,118	1,000

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
 Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Appendix E – Reliability analyses

Illegitimate complaining

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,534	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
IllegitimateCompl1	3,96	3,654	,273	,537
IllegitimateCompl2	4,50	2,640	,380	,377
IllegitimateCompl3	4,59	2,943	,394	,353

Injustice

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,777	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Injustice1	4,69	4,670	,573	,746
Injustice2	5,02	4,766	,685	,630
Injustice3	4,52	4,629	,592	,724

Lack of morality

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,893	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
LackMoral1	3,68	3,275	,752	,894
LackMoral2	3,96	3,448	,858	,787
LackMoral3	4,05	4,014	,783	,861

Loss of control

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,804	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
LossControl1	4,65	5,228	,607	,777
LossControl2	4,43	4,690	,706	,674
LossControl3	4,17	4,643	,644	,742

Contrast

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,868	2

Anger

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,862	2

Financial greed

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,738	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Finance1	4,71	4,729	,645	,552
Finance2	4,59	5,630	,434	,798
Finance3	4,86	4,917	,621	,583

Social norm

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,653	2

Appendix F – Assumptions

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	1,382	,104		13,248	,000		
Injustice_COM	-,021	,027	-,085	-,779	,437	,369	2,713
LackMoral_COM	,027	,030	,098	,909	,365	,380	2,629
LossControl_COM	-,027	,029	-,113	-,950	,343	,310	3,228
Contrast_COM2	-,023	,021	-,108	-1,138	,257	,493	2,027
Anger_COM	-,010	,023	-,045	-,436	,664	,410	2,437
Finance_COM	,040	,020	,167	2,019	,045	,644	1,554
SocialNorm_COM	,002	,022	,006	,081	,936	,705	1,418
Opportunism4	,059	,018	,289	3,382	,001	,606	1,650
Neutralization5	,027	,020	,096	1,366	,174	,903	1,108
Negotiation1	-,016	,017	-,073	-,937	,350	,727	1,375
Conflict1	,037	,018	,170	2,072	,040	,653	1,532
Conflict2	-,045	,016	-,198	-2,780	,006	,868	1,151

a. Dependent Variable: Illegitimate_COM_SQRT

Histogram

Dependent Variable: Illegitimate_COM_SQRT

Mean = 0,01
Std. Dev. = 0,956
N = 177

Transformation Illegitimate Complaining

		Illegitimate_COM	Illegitimate_COM_SQRT
N	Valid	181	181
	Missing	0	0
Std. Deviation		,79004	,25361
Skewness		1,104	,783
Std. Error of Skewness		,181	,181
Kurtosis		,764	-,116
Std. Error of Kurtosis		,359	,359

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

Dependent Variable: Illegitimate_COM_SQRT

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	,525[a]	,275	,222	,22366	,275	5,191	12	164	,000	2,098

a. Predictors: (Constant), Conflict2, Injustice_COM, Neutralization5, SocialNorm_COM, Finance_COM, Conflict1, Negotiation1, Contrast_COM2, Opportunism4, Anger_COM, LackMoral_COM, LossControl_COM

b. Dependent Variable: Illegitimate_COM_SQRT

Scatterplot

Dependent Variable: Illegitimate_COM_SQRT

Appendix G – Multiple regression analysis

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Illegitimate_COM_SQRT	1,4529	,25361	181
Injustice_COM	2,3720	1,02697	181
LossControl_COM	2,2081	1,05129	181
LackMoral_COM	1,9484	,92151	181
Anger_COM	2,3611	1,15799	180
Conflict1	2,36	1,169	177
Conflict2	3,43	1,122	177
Opportunism4	3,15	1,234	177
Finance_COM	2,3597	1,06093	177
Negotiation1	3,17	1,165	177
Neutralization5	1,89	,908	177
Contrast_COM2	2,9337	1,16953	181
SocialNorm_COM	3,2627	,90149	177

Model Summary[b]

					Change Statistics					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	,525[a]	,275	,222	,22366	,275	5,191	12	164	,000	2,098

a. Predictors: (Constant), Conflict2, Injustice_COM, Neutralization5, SocialNorm_COM, Finance_COM, Conflict1, Negotiation1, Contrast_COM2, Opportunism4, Anger_COM, LackMoral_COM, LossControl_COM
b. Dependent variable± Illegitimate_COM_SQRT

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3,116	12	,260	5,191	,000[b]
	Residual	8,204	164	,050		
	Total	11,320	176			

a. Dependent Variable: Illegitimate_COM_SQRT

b. Predictors: (Constant), SocialNorm_COM, Anger_COM, Conflict2, Neutralization5, Finance_COM, Negotiation1, Conflict1, Injustice_COM, Opportunism4, Contrast_COM2, LackMoral_COM, LossControl_COM

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1,382	,104		13,248	,000		
	Injustice_COM	-,021	,027	-,085	-,779	,437	,369	2,713
	LackMoral_COM	,027	,030	,098	,909	,365	,380	2,629
	LossControl_COM	-,027	,029	-,113	-,950	,343	,310	3,228
	Contrast_COM2	-,023	,021	-,108	-1,138	,257	,493	2,027
	Anger_COM	-,010	,023	-,045	-,436	,664	,410	2,437
	Finance_COM	,040	,020	,167	2,019	,045	,644	1,554
	SocialNorm_COM	,002	,022	,006	,081	,936	,705	1,418
	Opportunism4	,059	,018	,289	3,382	,001	,606	1,650
	Neutralization5	,027	,020	,096	1,366	,174	,903	1,108
	Negotiation1	-,016	,017	-,073	-,937	,350	,727	1,375
	Conflict1	,037	,018	,170	2,072	,040	,653	1,532
	Conflict2	-,045	,016	-,198	-2,780	,006	,868	1,151

a. Dependent Variable: Illegitimate_COM_SQRT