Illegitimate Complainants within Service Recovery

A quantitative research study of the typology of illegitimate complainants

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Master Thesis Marketing 2021

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Preface

Before you lies the master thesis "Illegitimate complainants within Service Recovery?", a quantitative research study into the typology of illegitimate complainants and its relations among the drivers, degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques, and customer-company relationship. This master thesis was written to obtain my master's degree in Business Administration with a specialization in marketing and was carried out in the period from December 2020 to June 2021.

This study's aim was to provide insight into the typology of illegitimate complainants and to enhance knowledge on the phenomenon of illegitimate complaining behaviour within service recovery. Together with three fellow students, this sensitive topic was examined. We all wrote our own individual thesis, but collaborated during data collection and analyzation. Therefore, I would like to thank Matty Cooijmans, Myrthe Eijkelkamp, and Jan Peters for the pleasant cooperation. Furthermore, this research study could not have been successfully executed without the input of all respondents. Therefore, a special thanks to them and to my family and friends who supported me during this entire process. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to especially thank my supervisor dr. H.W.M. Joosten for his enthusiastic involvement on this topic and his professional guidance throughout the process.

I hope you will enjoy reading it.

Lyn Bannink

Nijmegen, June 14, 2021

Abstract

Companies will always be confronted with service and product failures, as such situations are unavoidable. As a consequence, customer dissatisfaction arises which can result in customer complaints. However, previous studies found that customer complaints are not always legitimate, as certain customers exaggerate, alter or lie about the situation, completely fabricate a complaint, or falsely blame the company.

This study examines the phenomenon of illegitimate complaining behaviour within service recovery by empirically researching the typology of illegitimate complainants. Accordingly, this study aims to provide more insight into the four types of illegitimate complainants who each contain a combination of drivers, degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques, and certain customer-company relationship. Accordingly, the following research question was developed: "*What types of illegitimate complainants can be distinguished?*". By executing an online survey, sufficient data was collected in order to perform a multivariate analysis of variance and afterwards a post hoc test. The analysis and post hoc results suggested that the must-type complainant, need-type complainant, and the want-type complainant are considered to be distinguishable types of illegitimate complainants. The can-type complainant was found to be non-existent, as the typology's predictions regarding the can-type complainant's degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques, and customer-company relationship were barely present within this study.

Considering these results, managers should implement strategies in the future that neutralizes the drivers and neutralization techniques of the types of illegitimate complainants, as this could prevent illegitimate complaining behaviour. These strategies can include showing goodwill to the customer, clear communication, training employees to become more service oriented, deserting the mantra 'the customer is always right', and changing the service recovery process. Lastly, managers need to consider whether it is worth to sustain certain relationships with the types of illegitimate complainants, as illegitimate complaints consume a considerable amount of money, time, and energy.

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1. Introduction

Many companies nowadays operate in an environment that emphasizes the great importance of delivering high service quality in order to maintain a competitive advantage (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). In delivering high quality service, it is assumed that companies do everything in their capacity to ensure that the customer is satisfied with the delivered result. This in return can lead to the creation of customer satisfaction and the increased chance of establishing a long-term customer-company relationship (Caceres & Paparoidamis, 2007). However, within service delivery it is impossible to avoid failure situations (Hart, Heskett & Sasser, 1990). Accordingly, companies are bound to deal with customer complaints, when maintaining the established customer-company relationships and coping with failure situations (Tax, Brown, & Chandrashekaran, 1998).

1.1 Customer Complaints

Achieving customer satisfaction is crucial for a company in order to survive (Kau & Loh, 2006). However, the presence of customer dissatisfaction is unavoidable due to service failures that are created by human and non-human errors and due to the difference between the expected and actual performance of the provided services (Kau & Loh, 2006; Hess, Ganesan, & Klein, 2003). Customer dissatisfaction can cause customers to voice a complaint towards the company. However, this is not necessarily a problem, as it provide the company with an opportunity to recover from the failure and restore customer satisfaction (Hess, et al., 2003) Nevertheless, companies need a good service recovery in place in order to resolve the failure. Besides, a good service recovery can change customers attitudes and turn frustrated customers into loyal customers (Miller, Craighead, & Karwan, 2000; Tax et al.,1998). In addition, it provides the opportunity to retain customers, which is more effective than continuously acquiring new ones (Stauss & Friege, 1999; Keller & Parameswaran, 2019). However, to assure that companies are given the opportunity to recover from failure, companies actively encourage customers to voice a complaint when they are not satisfied (Huppertz, 2007). Moreover, companies are even willing to generously compensate customers and give them the benefit of the doubt when it is questionable if the complaint is justified (Wirtz & McColl-Kennedy, 2010).

1.2 Illegitimate Customer Complaints

In previous research, customer complaints were always considered to be legitimate, as it was assumed that customers did not complain without having a valid reason (Reynolds & Harris,

2005). However, more recent studies recognized that customers file complaints for various reasons that are not limited to customer dissatisfaction (Huang, Zhao, Miao, & Fu 2014). Moreover, Baker, Magnini, and Perdue (2012) recognized that customers even deliberately file a fictitious complaint when the provided service was experienced as satisfying (Baker, Magnini, & Perdue, 2012). This deviant behaviour that is portrayed by certain customers is recognized by Reynolds and Harris (2005), as opportunistic complaining behaviour or illegitimate customer complaints. Currently, companies are increasingly confronted with illegitimate customer complaints, which consume a considerable amount of money and energy (Fisk, Grove, Harris, Keeffe, Daunt, Russell-Bennett, & Wirtz 2010; Khantimirov, & Karande, 2018). Accordingly, it is important that companies understand this behaviour in order to prevent customers from filing illegitimate complaints and effectively manage customers that reflect opportunistic behaviour (Berry & Seiders, 2008; Khantimirov, & Karande, 2018). Nonetheless, it has been proven difficult to conduct research about illegitimate complaining behaviour, as this subject is sensitive in nature (Fisk et al., 2010; Ro & Wong, 2012). Accordingly, customers are less inclined to talk about this behaviour as it is considered undesirable or illegal by society (Fisk et al., 2010).

Although researching illegitimate complaining behaviour is deemed as difficult, it is important to understand the reasons behind this behaviour in order to prevent illegitimate complaining behaviour. Several studies have been conducted to explain possible motives or reasons behind illegitimate customer complaining behaviour, but no definite conclusion has been reached regarding 'why' customers file illegitimate complaints. In previous studies by Joosten (unpublished), possible drivers behind illegitimate complaining behaviour have been researched. These drivers have been tested in a quantitative research by Bokhoven (2018) and Laar (2018), who found significant evidence of their existence. Afterwards, a new research (Joosten, 2020) was conducted which suggested that the confirmed drivers can be categorized into different types of illegitimate complainants who uses neutralization techniques to rationalize their misbehaviour and have a certain perception on the customer-company relationship (Sykes & Matza, 1957). Based on these previous researches, Joosten (2020) developed the typology of illegitimate complainants, which suggests that within service recovery there are four types of customers who engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour. Moreover, the typology suggests that each type of illegitimate complainant has its own combination of drivers, degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques and perception on the customer-company relationship. To gain more insights, this study will empirically test the typology of illegitimate complainants

1.3 Research Aim

Joosten (2020) proposed the typology of illegitimate complainants, which has not yet been tested empirically. Therefore, the purpose of this studies is to provide more insight into the typology of illegitimate complainants by conducting a quantitative research. In order to achieve the aim of this research, the following research question is formulated: *What types of illegitimate complainants can be distinguished?*

1.4 Theoretical Relevance

Multiple research studies have examined drivers behind illegitimate complaining behaviour and the degree in which customers engage in this behaviour (Baker et al., 2012; Bokhoven, 2018; Huang et al., 2014; Jacoby & Jaccard, 1981; Joosten, 2020, Laar, 2018; Reynold & Harris, 2005). Moreover, some studies categorized drivers into an overarching term to develop a comprehensive overview regarding what motivates illegitimate complaining behaviour. These categorizations consider how the company, customer, customer-company relationship, and environment can trigger illegitimate complaining behaviour (Baker et al., 2012; Huang et al., 2014). Still, existing studies have not considered to understand illegitimate complaining behaviour by categorizing drivers into distinctive types of customers.

In contrast, Joosten (2020) proposes a typology that attempts to understand illegitimate complaining behaviour by distinguishing four types of customers within service recovery, namely: must-type, need-type, want-type, and can-type. Each type of illegitimate complainant includes a set of drivers, degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques, and a perception on the customer-company relationship. However, the typology of illegitimate complainants by Joosten (2020) has not yet been empirically tested. Therefore, this research study contributes to existing research and literature by providing insight into a new typology that includes the relationship between the drivers, degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques, and the customer-company relationship. Moreover, empirically researching this typology provides new insights and knowledge into the phenomenon of illegitimate complaining behaviour and addresses the current knowledge gap regarding illegitimate customer complaining in service recovery.

1.5 Practical Relevance

Companies nowadays are exposed to deal with an increased number of illegitimate customer complaints (Khantimirov, & Karande, 2018). It is essential that managers handle these complaints as effectively as possible, since it consumes a considerable amount of time, money,

and effort (Fisk, et al., 2010). Moreover, illegitimate customer complaints do not just affect the company, but it also creates negative consequences for the company's employees and other customers (Berry & Seiders, 2008). Therefore, it is important that companies become aware and alert of illegitimate customer complaints in order to prevent investing too much financial resources, time and energy in such cases. Providing insight into the different types of illegitimate complainants provides managers with the opportunity to deal properly with illegitimate complaints. The typology provides knowledge that managers can use to detect specific customers and their fraudulent behaviour. Moreover, it provides managers with the knowledge to prevent customers from filing illegitimate complaints or to take appropriate actions when prevention was not possible. Finally, this insight provides managers with the ability to understand the perceived customer-company of each type of illegitimate complainant. Thereupon, this can create the opportunity to manage the customer-company relationship more effectively and take appropriate actions during service recovery in order to achieve customer satisfaction.

1.6 Thesis Outline

This research draws upon previous theories and findings of Joosten (2020) in order to answer the research question and formulate applicable recommendations. The following chapter provides a theoretical background about the four types of illegitimate complainants. Furthermore, chapter three provides an overview of the methodology applied in this research study. Thereupon, chapter four discusses the analysis and results. Finally, chapter five contains the conclusion and discussion, in which the theoretical contributions, managerial implications, limitations and directions for the further research are discussed.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter a short definition of illegitimate complaining will be given. Furthermore, the different types of illegitimate complainants will be discussed which is followed by an elaboration of the drivers underlying the illegitimate complaining behaviour. Thereupon, the various neutralization techniques and the relationship variables will be explained. Finally, the typology of Joosten (2020) will be discussed.

2.1 Illegitimate Complaining

In various research and management practices, the mantra 'the customer is always right' is widely applied in dealing with customer complaints (Bishop & Hoel, 2008; Ro & Wong, 2012). In these cases it was assumed that customer complaints originated from dissatisfaction due to service failure, since providing a 100 percent error-free service is unfeasible (Fisk, Brown, & Bitner, 1993). Moreover, these complaints were perceived as legitimate, as it was unimaginable that customers would knowingly complain without a justifiable reason (Reynolds & Harris, 2005). However, various studies acknowledged the existence of illegitimate complaining, in which customer deliberately file fictitious complaints in order to gain personal benefits (Reynolds & Harris, 2005; Baker et al., 2012; Huang et al., 2014).

In academic literature, various perspectives on illegitimate complaining behaviour have been researched. According to Huang et al. (2014), illegitimate complaining is perceived as dishonest and unreasonable behaviour. Moreover Harris and Reynolds (2003), discuss that illegitimate complaining is purposely and dysfunctional behaviour, in which the customer knowingly makes an inauthentic complaints. Furthermore, Ro and Wong (2012) suggest that illegitimate complaining is opportunistic behaviour, since customer file complaints that are most likely exaggerated, altered or are lied about in order to gain material compensation. In addition, Joosten (2020) suggests that illegitimate complaining behaviour is threefold. First it can concern complaining without experiencing dissatisfaction, in which the customer completely fabricates the complaint. Second, it can concern complaining after experiencing dissatisfaction, in which the customer exaggerates, alters, or lies about the situation. Finally, it can concern complaining, in which the customer falsely blames the company for the failure. The definition suggested by Joosten (2020) will be adopted in this study.

2.2 Types of Illegitimate Complaining

Jacoby and Jaccard (1981) were the first to recognize that some customers complain without having a valid reason. Thereupon, various research studies have been conducted in order to gain more insight into what motivates customers to engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour (e.g. Daunt & Harris, 2012; Joosten, 2020; Reynolds & Harris, 2005). These studies recognized various drivers, triggers, motives, and categorizations that explain why customers complaint illegitimately. For example, Daunt and Harris (2012) identified the drivers 'financial gain', 'egoistic gain', and 'revenge towards the company', while Reynolds and Harris (2005) recognized six motives that are each related to either emotional or financial needs. However, most researches recognized 'monetary gain' and 'material benefit' as main drivers that steer illegitimate complaining behaviour (Huang et al., 2014). Furthermore, various studies categorized drivers into overarching terms to develop a comprehensive overview of what triggers illegitimate complaining behaviour (e.g. Baker et al., 2012; Huang et al., 2014). For example, Baker et al. (2012) categorized drivers in three clusters, namely: customer-centric, firm-centric, and relationship-centric drivers. Similarly, Huang et al. (2014) categorized triggers in the following three forms: individual-triggers, organizational-triggers, and environmental-triggers. However, the aforementioned studies have not considered to categorize drivers into different types of customers to explain illegitimate complaining behaviour.

In contrast, Joosten (2020) has conducted multiple research studies and developed the typology of illegitimate complainants, which recognizes various reasons behind illegitimate complaining behaviour based on different types of customers within service recovery. In this typology, fourteen drivers were identified which can be categorized in four types of illegitimate complainants, namely: the must-type, the need-type, the want-type and the can-type. Moreover, the typology of Joosten (2020) suggests that each type of illegitimate complainant has its own combination of drivers, degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques and perception on the customer-company relationship. As mentioned in chapter 2.1, Joosten (2020) suggests that illegitimate complaining behaviour is threefold. Accordingly, the degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour discussed in the typology is referred to as the degree a type of illegitimate complainant exaggerates, alters, or lies about the situation, completely fabricates a complaint or falsely blames the company. The drivers, neutralization techniques, and relationship variables addressed in the typology will be discussed in the paragraphs below.

2.3 Drivers of Illegitimate Complaining

In previous research of Joosten (2020), fourteen drivers were identified which explain illegitimate complaining behaviour. Below each driver is briefly discussed.

2.3.1 Lack of Morality

The lack of morality refers to the customer's perception that the company intentionally causes damage in order to gain financial benefit, by not delivering an optimal product or service (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016). Moreover, the lack of morality is experienced by customers as some kind of company's greed, since actions are perceived as opportunistic behaviour (Grégoire, Laufer & Tripp, 2010). Furthermore, Wooten (2009) discusses that perceiving lack of morality results in a strong feeling of revenge which leads to the tendency to punish and retaliate towards the company. Thus, in the service context this would entail that the customer would retaliate in the form of filing an illegitimate complaint.

2.3.2 Loss of Control

A sense of control can be perceived as determining one's own behaviour but also the ability to influence one's own environment (Poon, 2003). Moreover, it can be referred to as the tendency to demonstrate one's own competence, superiority, and mastery over the environment (Hui & Toffoli, 2002, pp.1827). Hui and Toffoli (2002) suggest that customers who experience loss of control will most likely focus on regaining control over the situation (Hui & Toffoli, 2002). Thus, in order to understand the behaviour of customers, it is important to understand the customer's perception of control (Joosten, Bloemer, & Hillebrand, 2017). Furthermore, in a service context a customer can experience loss of control when a service failure occurs, because the customer senses that there is a difference between one's own behaviour and the wanted result (Chang, 2006). Moreover, customers want to regain control after losing it and even have the tendency take matters into their own hands when the company does not correct the mistake (Brehm, 1966). Accordingly, customers attempt to take back control by voicing an illegitimate complaint towards the company.

2.3.3 Perceived Injustice

Justice is an important element in the customer-company relationship, as customers need to perceive a sense of justice in order to remain satisfied and loyal (McColl-Kennedy & Sparks, 2003). However, this perception of justice is also linked to the company's complaint handling after the service failure (Blodgett, Granbois, & Walters, 1993). Tax et al. (1998) proposes three

dimension of perceived injustice during the complaint handling procedure, namely: distributive injustice, procedural injustice, and interactional injustice.

Distributive injustice is the customer's perception of justice regarding the recovery outcome in terms of fairness, need fulfilment and whether the outcome felt as deserved (Tax et al., 1998). Therefore, the degree of customer satisfaction will be determined by the received compensation, such as: an apology from the company, product replacement, future credits, product repair, or refund (Kelley & Davis, 1994). Thus, including an effective complaint distribution is important in order to avoid customer's perception of distributive injustice and regain customer satisfaction (Kelley & Davis, 1994). However, the outcomes of distribution complaint handling can differ per customer as it depends on prior experiences with the company, knowledge of other customer outcomes, and the perception of one's own outcome (Tax et al., 1998).

Procedural injustice can be referred to as the customer's perception of fairness regarding the complaint handling procedure (Tax et al., 1998). It is important that the procedure of filing a complaint is easily accessible, clear, and the outcome is communicated in a timely manner in order to avoid the perception of procedural injustice and regain customer satisfaction (Maxham & Netemever, 2002; Tax et al, 1998).

Interactional injustice is the customer's perception of justice regarding the fair treatment the company's employees provide during the complaint handling procedure (Tax et al., 1998). However, even when the customer is satisfied with the received outcome and the distribution of the complaint handling, the customer can still perceive the treatment as unfair by the company's employees and therefore become dissatisfied (Tax et al., 1998).

2.3.4 Internal and External Attribution

The attribution theory is the need to understand social events, so one could understand why individuals would communicate certain thoughts (Kelly, 1973; Laczniak, DeCarlo, & Ramaswami, 2001). Moreover, the theory discusses how individuals cope with given information, make causal inferences and in return use this information to respond (Kelley, 1973). According to Kelley (1973), customers attribute problems both internally and externally.

Customers who attribute problems internally feel responsible and guilty for the situation and attempt to solve the situation on their own (Folkes, 1984). It can be argued that in a service context this would entail that the customer feels responsible for the service failure and attempts to fix the mistake instead of voicing a complaint to the company. In case of external attribution, the customer seeks to identify a cause that relates to external factors. As a consequence, the

customer develops the feeling of anger and revenge towards the guilty party (Folkes, 1984). Thus, it can be argued that in a service context, the customer would perceive the company as the guilty party and therefore wants revenge that can take form in filing a complaint.

2.3.5 Contrast Effect

Customers have certain expectation regarding the performances of products and services offered by a company. However, in some situation there is a discrepancy between the expected- and actual performances. This perceived gap is also known as the contrast effect, which proposes that in a situation where reality does not meet the set expectations, the customer will magnify the contrast between expectations and reality (Anderson, 1973; Oliver & Swan, 1989). Moreover, this discrepancy can result in customer dissatisfaction which in turn can lead to customers filing a complaint to the company (Bowen, 2001; Hess, et al., 2003).

2.3.6 Disappointment

Customers can experience the feeling of disappointment when the product's or service's performances is not in line with the expectations (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 1999). The feeling of disappointment affects both the customer's behaviour and satisfaction, which can result in customer voicing a complaint (Hess. et al., 2003; Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004).

2.3.7 Anger

Customer can experience strong negative emotions towards the company in a situation of service failure and recovery. Moreover, the emotion anger is a common emotion that arises in such situations, as customer experiences the company as the guilty party in the service failure (Folkes, 1984; Nguyen & McColl-Kennedy, 2003). The feeling of anger can result in retaliation towards the company and can affect the customer's perception and appreciation of the company's attempt to reconcile (Bonifield & Cole, 2007). Thus, the emotion anger causes customer complaints and increased company efforts to regain customer satisfaction.

2.3.8 Financial greed

Financial greed can be referred to as taking advantage of a company without giving anything in return (Daunt & Harris, 2012). Moreover, the customer intentionally engages in opportunistic complaining behaviour, just because the person is greedy and hopeful to receive a compensation from the company (Reynolds & Harris, 2005). Furthermore, financial greed is a main

determinants for various kinds of misbehaviour including filing illegitimate complaints (Jacob & Jaccard, 1981; Reynolds & Harris, 2005).

2.3.9 Pre-planned

Customer complaining is expected to originate from service failure and dissatisfaction (Hess et al., 2003). However, some complaints are planned beforehand and are submitted for personal gain. For example, a customer creates a product failure on purpose and afterwards returns the product to the company (Reynolds & Harris, 2005).

2.3.10 Opportunism

In academic literature, opportunism can be referred to as seeking self-interest that includes deception (Ping, 1993). Specifically, it is an individual taking advantage of a situation in order to further one's own self-interest (Singh & Sirdeshmukh, 2000). Mazar, Amir, and Ariely (2008) discuss that customers express opportunistic behaviour when the opportunity is presented, but only in a modest manner in order to avoid disrupting the positive self-image. Moreover, Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy (2010) argue that service recovery situations are subjective and can therefore easily be abused by the opportunistic behaviour of individuals. These opportunistic customers pay little attention to consequences of the filed complaints and are more occupied with what advantage can be gained from the situation instead of what should happen under the circumstances (Wirtz & McColl-Kennedy, 2010). So, in the service context, an opportunistic customers files an illegitimate complaint when recognizing an opportunity to get monetary gain from the company's service failure and recovery (Baker et al., 2012).

2.3.11 Liberal Redress Policy

Redress policy can be referred to as the internal complaint handling procedure, in which the company compensates the customers for the failure during the transaction (Ong & Teh, 2016). Company's need a good working complaint handling procedure, since it affects customer satisfaction which is crucial for the company's survival (Baker et al., 2012; Kau & Loh, 2006). As a consequence, companies are willing to give customers the benefit of the doubt during the complaint handling procedure in order to regain customer satisfaction, even though the complaint may not be justified (Wirtz & McColl-Kennedy, 2010). Thus, company's redress policies are important for increasing customer satisfaction and even turning angry customers into loyal one's (Baker et al., 2012; Tax et al., 1998). However, companies with redress policies who uphold the liberal attitude of "the customer is always right", provide opportunities for

customers to behave in a deviant manner (Bishop & Hoel, 2008; Reynolds & Harris, 2005). Therefore, the presence of liberal redress policies increases the possibility of opportunistic complaining behaviour which leads to customer's taking advantage of the company's failure and recovery procedure in order to get monetary gain (Wirtz & McColl-Kennedy, 2010). In the service context, this opportunistic complaining behaviour results in customers filing illegitimate complaints (Baker, et al., 2012). So, the more generous a company compensates, the more likely that customers will engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour.

2.3.12 Social norms

Social norms incorporated in society affect how individuals behave. This phenomenon can be explained by the theory of reasoned action. This theory argues that behavioural intentions of individuals are driven by one's attitude and belief that a certain behaviour will result in a specific outcome (Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992). In other words, the intentions of an individual to behave in a specific manner depends on his perception of socially accepted behaviour in a specific situation (Fishbein, & Ajzen, 1977; Kowalski, 1996). Thus, in the service context, customer behaviour towards complaining is influenced by the social norms regarding complaining in particular situations. Depending on the socially accepted norms, engaging in complaining behaviour can be a potential social risk. For example, complaining in a situation that is not socially acceptable, can lead to rejection of the social group. On the other hand, not complaining can also result in exclusion from the social group one's a member of (Kowalski, 1996).

2.3.13 Attitude towards Illegitimate Complaining

The personality trait attitude is found as one of the determinants that drives opportunistic customer complaining behaviour (Baker et al., 2012). Blodgett et al. (1993) argue that one's need for seeking compensation after failure, is influenced by the customer's attitude towards engaging in complaining behaviour. So, customers who are dissatisfied but have a negative attitude towards complaining will probably not complain towards the company. However, customers with a more positive attitude towards complaining are most likely to file a complaint towards the company (Kim, Kim, Im, & Shin, 2003). Moreover, customers who are comfortable with complaining have a greater tendency to file illegitimate complaints for personal gain (Wirtz & McColl-Kennedy, 2010). Therefore, a customer's attitude towards complaining depends of whether a customer will engage in illegitimate complaining.

2.4 Neutralization Techniques

Customers who behave in a deviant manner by voicing an illegitimate complaint have the tendency to rationalize their actions. According to Mitchell and Dodder (1980), rationalizing deviant actions is a mechanism to cope with the consequences of behaving in a way that is not in line with a customer's beliefs and values. Moreover, it is a justification of misbehaviour in order to protect one's self from remorse or blame after the act. Especially, customers who tend to feel connected with society have the need to justify their misbehaviour (Sykes & Matza, 1957). The concept of rationalizing deviant behaviour has first been introduced by Sykes and Matza (1957) and is known as the neutralization theory. The neutralization theory consists of five neutralization techniques, which are types of excuses or justifications that customers tend to use in order to gain moral relief (Sykes & Matza, 1957). The five identified neutralization techniques are as followed; (1) 'denial of responsibility', (2) 'denial of injury', (3) 'denial of the victim', (4) 'condemnation of the condemners', and (5) 'appeal to higher loyalties'. These five techniques will be discussed below.

1. *Denial of responsibility:* this technique is applied when the customer has the notion that the crime is a fault that occurred due to certain external circumstances and therefore is out of the individual's control (Piquero, Tibbetts, & Blankenship, 2005; Sykes & Matza, 1957). Moreover, the customer perceives the crime as an accident and therefore does not feel accountable and responsible for the act (Piquero et al., 2005).

2. *Denial of injury:* this technique is used when the customer negates the harm injected or the damage that is accompanied with the deviant behaviour (Piquero et al., 2005; Sykes & Matza, 1957). Moreover, since the behaviour did not directly result in any harm, the act becomes acceptable in the eyes of the customer (Harris & Dumas, 2009; Piquero et al., 2005).

3. *Denial of victim:* this technique is applied when the customer attempts to justify misbehaviour by arguing that the violated party did something wrong and therefore should not be identified as a victim (Harris & Dumas, 2009; Piquero et al., 2005). Even so, the customer believes that the violated party earned whatever happened and perceives the inflictions of the actions as a form of justified punishment (Harris & Dumas, 2009).

4. *Condemnation of the condemners:* this technique is employed when the customer attempts to move the attention towards those who criticize the deviant behaviour in order to point out that their behaviour is similarly deviant (Piquero et al., 2005; Sykes & Matza, 1957). Furthermore, the customer uses this technique to diminish the misbehaviour by creating the

perception that the deviant action is relatively less unjust (Piquero et al., 2005, Harris & Dumas, 2009).

5. *Appeal to higher loyalties:* this technique is used in an attempt to rationalize the misbehaviour by claiming that this behaviour fits with the values and norms of the group which the customer is a member of (Harris & Dumas, 2009; Piquero et al., 2005). Moreover, this results in ignoring the collective norms and values and therefore disrespecting the law (Sykes & Matza, 1957). However, the customer claims that this misbehaviour is unavoidable when living up to a higher order of ideal and values of the group (Piquero et al., 2005; Sykes & Matza, 1957).

Furthermore, various scholars identified seven additional neutralization techniques that customers use in order to rationalize misbehaviour, namely: (1) the 'metaphor of the ledger' (Klockars, as cited in Harris & Dumas, 2009), (2) 'defence of the necessity' (Minor, 1981), (3) 'claim of entitlement', (4) 'Justification by postponement' (Cromwell & Thurman, 2003), (5) 'claim of relative acceptability' , (6) 'claim of normalcy', and (7) 'denial of negative intent' (Henry, as cited in Harris & Dumas, 2009).

1. *Metaphor of the ledger*: this technique is used by customers who have the notion that all good and bad behaviour can be counterbalanced (Harris & Dumas, 2009). Moreover, the customer beliefs that goodwill is created by good behaviour which can be used to outweigh the misbehaviour (Piquero et al., 2005).

2. *Defence of the necessity*: this technique is applied when customers feel that the misbehaviour was necessarily in the situation and therefore should not feel guilty about the act, even though the action is perceived as morally wrong (Minor, 1981; Piquero et al., 2005).

3. *Claim of entitlement:* this technique is applied when customers somehow feel authorized to the benefits that are the results of deviant behaviour (Eliason, 2003).

4. *Justification by postponement:* This technique is applied by simply putting the misbehaviour out of one's mind in order to postpone the feeling of guilt (Cromwell & Thurman, 2003).

5. *Claim of relative acceptability:* This technique is used through comparing one's own misbehaviour with deviant actions of others. These actions are perceived as similar or even more devious, which makes one's own deviant behaviour more justifiable (Cromwell & Thurman, 2003; Harris & Dumas, 2009).

6. *Claim of normalcy:* this technique is used by claiming that one's own behaviour is common and that multiple customers participate in similar behaviour, which reasons that the misbehaviour cannot be perceived as unjust (Harris & Dumas, 2009).

7. *Denial of negative intent:* this technique is used by claiming that the action, which inflicted harm, was unintentionally. This perception leads to the belief that the customer can ignore the consequences of the action and is not responsible for it (Harris & Dumas, 2009).

2.5 Relationship Variables

The relationship between a customer and a company starts existing after the first transaction is made by the customer through purchasing a product or service (Hennig-Thurau, & Hansen, 2013; Kumar, 2018). Ideally, the company establishes a positive relationship with customers by providing customer value within the transactions. Afterwards, the customer determines the value of the provided customer value by making a trade-off between the cost and the benefits of the transaction (Leroi-Werelds, Streukens, Brady, & Swinnen, 2014). Moreover, companies who established a strong customer relationship have a greater ability to retain loyal customers, which leads to an increased profitability as acquiring new customer is more costly (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). However, customers are not just recipients of the company's offerings, they also provide value to the company in terms of direct and indirect economic value (Ahn & Rho, 2016; Kamur, 2018). According to Ahn and Rho (2016), customers are contributors towards the improvement of service quality in multiple aspects and can play an active role in developing personalized and unique products and services that are desired in the market. Altogether, it can be argued that a strong customer relationship generates benefits for both the company and the customer.

The customer-company relationship includes multiple variables which determine the creation of mutual benefits, such as: (1) 'loyalty', (2) 'trust', (3) 'commitment', (4) 'word-of-mouth' and (5)'satisfaction' (Verma, Sharma, & Sheth, 2016). These variables differ in strength and magnitude, but also in value based on the influences on the company's economic outcomes (Buttle & Maklan, 2019; Palmatier, Dant, Grewal, & Evans, 2006). Furthermore, the variables are often in relation with each other, for instance, Palmatier et al. (2006) discuss the mediating effect of commitment, trust, and customer satisfaction on customer loyalty and word-of-mouth, as outcome variables. Similarly, Haumann, Quaiser, Wieseke, and Rese (2014) discuss the positive effect of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty. Below, an overview of these variables is provided.

1. In academic literature, the construct *customer loyalty* can be referred to as a deeply held commitment to consistently repurchase a preferred good or service in the future, in spite of external influences that attempt to change the behaviour (Bowen & Chen, 2001; Hallowell, 1996; Verma et al., 2016, pp.209). Furthermore, various studies argue that customer loyalty affects the company's profitability and causes customer retainment and positive word-of-mouth (Anderson, 1998; Bowen & Chen, 2001; Hallowell, 1996; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). According to Kumar and Shah (2004), a distinguish can be made between behavioural and attitudinal loyalty. Behavioural loyalty focusses on the value of the customer to the company in terms of profit. Thus, it focusses on the purchase behaviour of the customer (Kumar & Shah, 2004). Moreover, these customers only remain loyal to the company until a better substitute in the marketplace is offered (Dick & Basu, 1994). Attitudinal loyalty focusses on the cognitive and affective aspects of loyalty, which includes the connection and commitment the customer experiences with the company (Kumar & Shah, 2004). This form of loyalty is of a higher order and often long-term, since these customers are not easily persuaded by other appealing substitutes in the market (Shankar, Smith, & Rangaswamy, 2003). However, both behavioural and attitudinal loyalty are needed in order to create the optimal form of customer loyalty (Kumar & Shah, 2004).

2. The construct of *customer trust* is recognized in various studies as an important mediator that influences the company performances and customer loyalty (Nguyen, Leclerc, & LeBlanc, 2013; Palmatier et al., 2006; Verma, Sharma, & Sheth, 2016). According to Siau and Shen (2003), the construct customer trust consists of three components. First, the relationship involves the customer and the company, who are both dependent of each other to gain benefits. Secondly, trust comes with risks and uncertainties as guarantees made by the company will not always result in the expectations of the customer. Finally, trust includes the customer's faith in the company's goodness, reliability, honesty, commitment, and the absence of betrayal (Morgan & Hunt, 1994 Siau & Shen, 2003). Altogether, trust entails the customer's internal belief and confidence of the company's ability to fulfil the customer's need (Anderson, & Weitz, 1989).

3. In academic literature it is proposed that the construct *customer commitment* is perceived as a strong mediator that affects the construct customer loyalty (Bricci, Fragata, & Antunes, 2016). According to Moorman, Zaltman, and Deshpande (1992), customer commitment is the desire to preserve a valuable relationship with the company. Moreover, customer commitment is an essential component for a long-term customer-company relationship and without it the relationship ceased to exist (Anderson & Weitz, 1992; Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Furthermore, Jones, Fox, Taylor, and Fabrigar (2010) discuss that customer commitment can be divided in three dimensions, namely: affective, normative and continuance commitment. Affective commitment is the degree to which the customer is psychological invested based on the favourable feelings towards the company (Gruen, Summers, & Acito, 2000; Meyer, Stanley, Jackson, McInnis, Maltin, & Sheppard, 2012). Furthermore, normative commitment is the degree to which the customer feels obligated to remain having a psychological bond with the company (Gruen et al., 2000; Meyer et al., 2012). Finally, continuance commitment is the degree to which the customer finds the perceived cost associated with leaving the company to high (Gruen et al., 2000; Meyer et al., 2012). According to Meyer et al. (2012), all dimension of commitment are required to create strong customer loyalty.

4. The construct *customer word-of-mouth* (WOM) entails informal communication between customers regarding the assessment of services and goods of a particular seller instead of filing a complaint to the company (Anderson, 1998; Westbrook, as cited in Gremler, Gwinner, & Brown, 2001). Moreover, it is the probability a customer will positively refer a seller to other potential customers (Palmatier et al., 2006). Companies strive to achieve a positive WOM since it positively affects the company's performances. However, the construct itself does not predict any valuations, so it can be either positive, negative, or neutral. Therefore, the presence of satisfied and loyal customer is required, because these customers engage in positive WOM (Anderson, 1998). Furthermore, the construct is perceived as one of the most influential communication channels as customers perceive the construct as more relevant and credible compared to marketing-initiated communications (Allsop, Bassett and Hoskins, 2007; Keller & Parameswaran, 2019). A possible explanation is that customers prefer the opinion of customers who experienced the product or service of the company and therefore recognize the information as a most trusted source (Keller & Parameswaran, 2019).

5. The construct *customer satisfaction* is the customer's evaluation of the product or service post consumption by comparing the expected and perceived performance (Haumann et al., 2014). Moreover, it's the customer's judgement regarding the ability of the company to produce quality products, carry a good reputation, and effectively handle customer complaints (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993). In academic literature, it is assumed that customer satisfaction affects customer loyalty, which affects the company's profitability. So, assuring customer satisfaction will lead to a higher change of repeat purchases (Hallowell, 1996; Bowen & Chen, 2001; Verma, et al., 2016). However, service failures are inevitable and so

is customers dissatisfaction. Therefore, it is critical that the company has a good service recovery in order to change the customers attitudes and regain customer satisfaction (Fisk et al., 1993; Miller et al., 2000). Even so, successful service recovery can result in improved customer satisfaction and turning dissatisfied customers into loyal ones (Hart et al., 1990). This phenomenon is also known as the service recovery paradox and occurs when the customers satisfaction after service recover is greater than the satisfaction experienced before the recovery (De Matos, Henrique, & Alberto Vargas Rossi, 2007).

2.6 Typology of Illegitimate Complainants

As mentioned before, Joosten (2020) recognizes four types of illegitimate complainants, namely: the must-type, the need-type, the want-type, and the can-type. These types of complainants include certain drivers, degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, and neutralization techniques which affect the customer-company relationship in terms of customer loyalty, trust, commitment, WOM, and customer satisfaction.

2.6.1 The must-type complainant

According to Joosten (2020), the behaviour of the must-type complainant is driven by: 'lack of morality', 'loss of control', and 'perceived injustice'. This type of complainant engages in deviant behaviour, as the customer feels that the company deliberately attempts to take advantage of the situation. Consequentially, the customer develops the perception that the company engages in unjust behaviour, while the customer did everything possible to solve the problem. Therefore, the customer sees no other alternative to get the attention from the company and starts filing illegitimate complaints.

This type of illegitimate complainant uses the following six neutralization techniques: 'denial of responsibility', 'denial of victim', 'denial of negative intent', 'condemnation of the condemners', 'appeal to higher loyalties', and 'defence of the necessity'. In order to rationalize the misbehaviour this type tends to use the following excuses: "it was not my fault", "the company deserves it, because of their behaviour", "the company is also dishonest towards the customer", "I did it not for selfish reasons, but for the sake of others", "I did not plan to exaggerate in advance", and "otherwise the company did not take my complaint seriously". Altogether, this entails that the customer has the perception that the customer is innocent and complaints out of necessity in order to be heard, while the company is perceived as guilty and behaves opportunistic. As a consequence, the relationship between the customer and the company is negatively affected. This is also reflected by previous findings of Joosten (2020),

which indicate that the must-type complainant has the worst customer-company relationship compared to the other types of illegitimate complainants in terms of customer loyalty, WOM, trust, commitment, and satisfaction. These findings also indicate that the must-type complainant is least likely to engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour compared to the other types of illegitimate complainants, since this type complaints out of necessity to be heard and not for personal gain. This study proposes the following hypotheses regarding the must-type complainant:

H1a: The complainants that affiliate with the must-type score highest on the neutralization technique 'denial of responsibility' compared to the other types of complainants.

H1b: The complainants that affiliate with the must-type score highest on the neutralization technique 'denial of victim' compared to the other types of complainants.

H1c: The complainants that affiliate with the must-type score highest on the neutralization technique 'denial of negative intent' compared to the other types of complainants.

H1d: The complainants that affiliate with the must-type score highest on the neutralization technique 'condemnation of the condemners' compared to the other types of complainants.

H1e: The complainants that affiliate with the must-type score highest on the neutralization technique 'appeal to higher loyalties' compared to the other types of complainants.

H1f: The complainants that affiliate with the must-type score highest on the neutralization technique 'defence of the necessity' compared to the other types of complainants.

H2: The complainants that affiliate with the must-type score lowest on illegitimate complaining behaviour compared to the other types of complainants.

H3: The complainants that affiliate with the must-type score lowest on the relationship variables compared to the other types of complainants.

2.6.2 The need-type complainant

According to Joosten (2020), the behaviour of the need-type complainant is driven by: 'external attribution', 'contrast effect', 'disappointment', and 'anger'. This type of complainant engages in deviant behaviour, because the customer is angry and disappointment towards the company, as the product or service performance did not meet the customer's expectations. The customer feels that the company is responsible for the gap between the expected and the real performance. Therefore, the customer can develop the feeling of revenge towards the company and files an illegitimate complaint to force the company to take responsibility for the situation.This type of illegitimate complainant uses the following two neutralization techniques: 'denial of

responsibility' and 'denial of injury'. In order to rationalize the deviant behaviour this type tends to use the following two excuses: "the company probably won't suffer from any damages" and "it was not my fault". This entails that the customer perceives the company as the guilty party who needs to take responsibility. On the other hand, the customer self is perceived as innocent, since the illegitimate complaining behaviour is seen as harmless. This customer's perception of the company influences the customer-company relationship negatively. This is also reflected by previous findings of Joosten (2020), which indicate that the need-type complainant has the second worst customer-company relationship compared to the other types of illegitimate complainants in terms of customer loyalty, WOM, trust, commitment, and satisfaction. These findings also indicate that the need-type complainant is more likely to engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour than the must-type complainant, but less likely to engage in this behaviour compared to the want-type complainant and can-type complainant. The reason for this order is that this type complaints in order to force the company to take responsibility and not for personal gain. This study proposes the following hypotheses regarding the need-type complainant:

H4a: The complainants that affiliate with the need-type score highest on the neutralization technique 'denial of responsibility' compared to the other types of complainants.
H4b: The complainants that affiliate with the need-type score highest on the neutralization technique 'denial of injury' compared to the other types of complainants.
H5: The complainants that affiliate with the need-type score second lowest on illegitimate complaining behaviour compared to the other types of complainants.
H6: The complainants that affiliate with the need-type score second lowest on the relationship variables compared to the other types of complainants.

Note that hypothesis 1a predicts that the must-type complainant scores highest on the neutralization technique 'denial of responsibility' compared to the other types of complainants, while hypothesis 4b also predicts that the need-type complainant scores highest on the technique 'denial of responsibility' compared to the other types of complainants. The typology predicts that both these types of complainants should score higher on this neutralization technique compared to the want-type complainant and the can-type complainant. Moreover, it is predicted that the must-type complainant and the need-type complainant score equally high on the neutralization technique 'denial of responsibility'.

2.6.3 The want-type complainant

According to Joosten (2020), the behaviour of the want-type complainant is driven: 'internal attribution', 'financial greed', and 'pre-planned'. This type of complainant fabricates complaints in advance in order to obtain financial gain. Thus, the customer engages in opportunistic behaviour by deliberately filing an illegitimate complaint in order to receive financial compensation from the company.

This type of illegitimate complainant uses the following neutralization technique 'claim of entitlement'. This type rationalizes deviant behaviour by using the following excuse: "I am also allowed to have a godsend for once". In other words, the customer has the perception that without experiencing a service failure it is allowed to file illegitimate complaints towards the company, as everybody deserves a godsend once in a while. This entails that the customer does not necessarily carries negative feelings towards the company, as the customer is conscious about the deviant act. This is also reflected in the previous findings of Joosten (2020), which indicate that the want-type complainant has the best customer-company relationship compared to the other types of illegitimate complainants in terms of customer loyalty, WOM, trust, commitment, and satisfaction. These findings also indicate that the want-type complainant is most likely to engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour compared to the other types of illegitimate complainants, as it is done out of personal gain. This study proposes the following hypotheses regarding the want-type complainant:

H7: The complainants that affiliate with the want-type score highest on the neutralization technique 'claim of entitlement' compared to the other types of complainants.

H8: The complainants that affiliate with the want-type score highest on illegitimate complaining behaviour compared to the other types of complainants.

H9: The complainants that affiliate with the want-type score highest on the relationship variables compared to the other types of complainants.

2.6.4 The can-type complainant

According to Joosten (2020), the behaviour of the can-type complainant is driven by: 'opportunism', 'liberal redress policy', 'social norms', and 'attitude towards illegitimate complaining'. This type of complainant engages in deviant behaviour, as the customer was presented with an opportunity in which filing an illegitimate complaint would result in a personal benefit. However, the illegitimate complaint was not fabricated deliberately in advance which makes the action socially acceptable from the customer's point of view. In other words,

the customer engages in opportunistic behaviour by taking advantage of a situation which is perceived as socially acceptable and therefore does not negatively affect the customer's perception of oneself.

This type of illegitimate complainant uses the following three neutralization techniques: 'claim of relative acceptability', 'claim of normalcy', and 'metaphor of the ledger'. This type rationalizes misbehaviour by using the following two excuses: "normally I follow the rules" and "other people have done worse". Thus, the customer has the perception that it is socially allowed to complaint illegitimately for personal gain when the opportunity has presented itself during the transaction. The opportunity can also be presented when there are no failures in the transaction between the customer and the company. This type of illegitimate complainant is aware of the deviant action and therefore does not carry negative feelings towards the company. This is also reflected in the previous findings of Joosten (2020), which indicate that the can-type complainant has the second best customer-company relationship compared to the other types of illegitimate complainants in terms of customer loyalty, WOM, trust, commitment, and satisfaction. These findings also indicate that the can-type is more likely to engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour compared to the must-type complainant and need-type complainant, but is less likely to engage in this behaviour compared to the want-type complainant. The reason for this order is that even though this type does not fabricate the complaint in advance, the complaint is still filed for personal gain. This study proposes the following hypotheses regarding the can-type complainant:

H10a: The complainants that affiliate with the can-type score highest on the neutralization techniques 'claim of relative acceptability' compared to the other types of complainants.
H10b: The complainants that affiliate with the can-type score highest on the neutralization techniques 'claim of normalcy' compared to the other types of complainants.
H10c: The complainants that affiliate with the can-type score highest on the neutralization techniques 'metaphor of the ledger' compared to the other types of complainants
H11: The complainants that affiliate with the can-type score second highest on illegitimate complaining behaviour.
H12: The complainants that affiliate with the can-type score second highest on the relationship variables.

Note that the neutralization technique 'justification by postponement' was not hypothesized, since the typology by Joosten (2020) does not consider this as a technique that is applied by the types of complainants. However, as this neutralization technique 'justification by

postponement' is suggested by Cromwell and Thurman (2003), the technique is included within this study in order to discover whether the technique is applied by a type of illegitimate complainant.

2.7 Conceptual Model

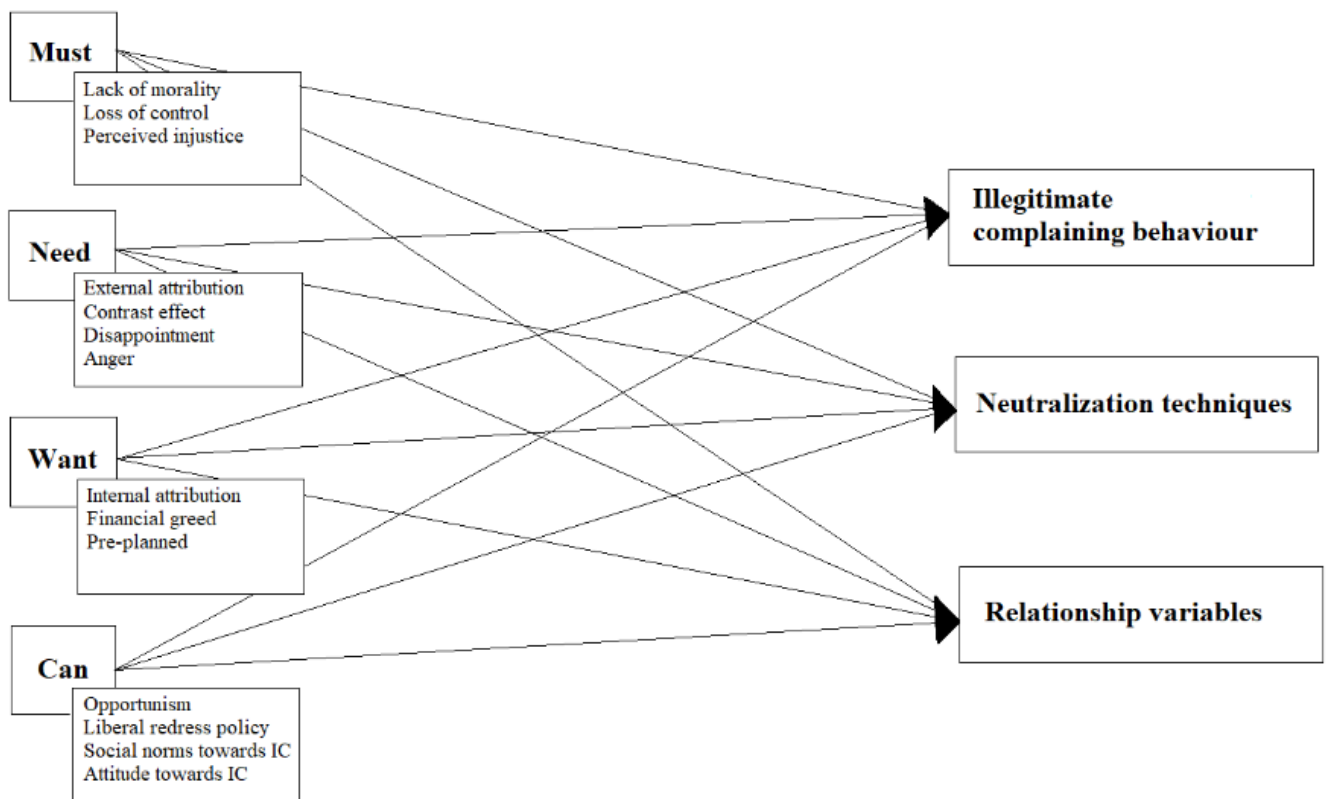Figure 1 presents the conceptual model which is composed out of the theoretical framework.

Figure 1: Conceptual model

In the following chapter, an elaboration on the methodological aspects of this research will be provided.

3. Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology of this empirical research. First, the data collection process will be discussed including the research design, procedure, the sampling method, and the measurements of the variables. Thereupon, the data analysis will be discussed which includes the data processing strategy. The methodology section is concluded by a reflective discussion of research ethics.

3.1 Research Design

This study conducts a quantitative research in order to empirically test the typology of complainants proposed by Joosten (2020). Specifically, an online survey was designed in order to collect self-reported data that provides insight in the perception of the participants regarding illegitimate complaining (see Appendix II). An online survey was found most suitable in this research as this method allowed for a quick data collection (Wright, 2005). Moreover, this ensured full anonymity of participants' responses (Krohn, Waldo, & Chiricos, 1974).

Anonymity is a crucial element for attracting enough participants in a study, when working with self-reported data. According to Renzetti and Lee (1993), deviant behaviour is a sensitive research area, which also makes illegitimate complaining a sensitive subject. It is found that topics with a sensitive nature are harder to research as they include socially undesirable or illegal behaviour (Fisk et al., 2010). Thus, asking questions about deviant behaviour can discourage individuals to participate in a study, as they might fear experiencing certain consequences or implications by participating (Sieber & Stanley, 1988). Consequently, to ensure that people were willing to participate in this study it was important that the participants' responses were fully anonymous. Another reason for integrating anonymity in the online survey was to prevent biased responses. Participants tend to give social desirable answers about subjects that have a sensitive nature if anonymity is not guaranteed. However, such biased responses can create misleading research findings which consequently lead to an increased measurement error and decreased validity and reliability (Fisher, 1993; Tourangeau & Yan, 2007).

3.2 Procedure

First, the online survey was pre-tested by 10 potential respondents, before the questionnaire was publicly distributed (see Appendix I). This pre-test helped with identifying potential errors in the online survey, such as incorrect formulated questions or unclear items which could have

led to misinterpretations. The think-aloud method was used, in which participants mentioned everything that came to their minds when they went through the online survey (Collins, 2003). This method provided the ability to understand the respondent's view on the online survey and ensured that all statements were formulated clearly (Collins, 2003; Drennan, 2003). The original online survey was altered, based on the results from the pre-test in order to eliminate the errors found.

The online survey started with a short introduction containing information about the survey. The purpose of this introduction was to reassure that participants remained encouraged to start filling in the survey. However, to ensure this, it was important to address the sensitive nature of the subject in order to prevent non-responses and social desired responses. Consequently, attention was paid to the presentation of this information, by using the three communication techniques of McBride (2010), namely: transparency, normalizing, and gentle assumption. First, transparency towards the participants was achieved by including an explanation about the purpose of the survey in this empirical study. Moreover, the researchers working on this study were introduced and a description was provided about how the data would be used. Secondly, the sensitive subject was normalized by including a statement that gave the impression that everyone exaggerates a complaints once in a while. Moreover, the researchers presented a real life example that illustrated the normality of the behaviour. Finally, the gentle assumption was ensured by creating the impression that this deviant behaviour already has occurred. This assumption was applied in the introduction by providing the participants a moment to recall a situation, in which they have complained illegitimately. At the end of the introduction, the confidentiality concerns were addressed by emphasizing that the survey was designed solely for research purposes and that the responses remain confidential and fully anonymous.

After the introduction, participants were exposed to questions regarding drivers, neutralization techniques and relationship variables. The survey was concluded by thanking the respondents for their participations and by again reassuring the full anonymity of this survey. This study solely focussed on Dutch participants, therefore the survey was translated into Dutch. The online survey was distributed via WhatsApp and the social media channels: Facebook and LinkedIn.

3.3 Sampling Method

This study applied the convenience sampling approach to secure an adequate amount of respondents. This sampling approach is a non-probability sampling technique, which entails

that not all individuals in the population have an equal opportunity to be included in this online survey (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The convenience sampling method composed the sample by using practical criteria such as: ease of availability and accessibility, geographical and online proximity, and the willingness to cooperate (Etikan et al., 2016). The criteria willingness to cooperate was particularly important in this study given the sensitive nature of the subject. Furthermore, this technique composed a sample that was not completely at random, therefore, findings cannot be generalized (Seddon & Scheepers, 2012). Fortunately, this does not have major consequences on this study as the research purpose is to confirm each type of illegitimate complainants' relationships between the drivers, degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques, and relationship variables.

3.4 Measures

The operationalization of all the constructs will be discussed in this section and can also be found in Appendix II. This study builds on previous research findings of Joosten (2020). Therefore, the measures regarding the degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques, and relationship variables will be taken from previous researches. The measures of the degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques, and relationship variables are produced by the 2020 manuscripts of Pinxteren (2020) and Rouwhorst (2020). However, the measures regarding the drivers are newly developed by Joosten (2020). These drivers are integrated into four scenarios that include the four types of illegitimate complainants. To provide a comprehensive overview, all the variables are defined and provided with statements. The constructs are measured on a 5-point Likert scale and each construct is measured by one item in order to narrow down the number of questions and the duration of the online survey. However, first the construct of illegitimate complaining behaviour will be discussed before moving on to the other constructs. The construct illegitimate complaining behaviour is measured with a scale ranging from "completely not" to "completely".

Illegitimate complaining behaviour ~ the definition of illegitimate complaining behaviour that will be applied in this study consists of three parts. Firstly, it can concern a complaint that is completely fabricated, meaning that the customer did not experience any dissatisfaction. Secondly, it can concern a complaint in which the customer did experience dissatisfaction but exaggerated, altered or lied about the situation. Finally, it concerns the complainant falsely blaming the company for the failure (Joosten, 2020). Derived from this definition, the following three statements will be used to measure this construct: "To what

extent did you exaggerate the complaint (i.e. make it worse than it actually was)…?", "To what extent did you make up the complaint (or present it differently than it actually was)…?" and "To what extent did you wrongly blame the company for the complaint (when in reality the company was not to blame)…?".

3.4.1 Measures Types of Illegitimate Complainants

The drivers that underly illegitimate complaining behaviour will be measured within a scenario related to the four types of illegitimate complainants, namely: must-type, need-type, want-type, and the can-type. The possibility exists that neither scenario is applicable to a participant's situation, therefore the participants are asked to select the most suitable scenario. The four scenarios are measured with a scale ranging from 'completely not fitting' to 'complete fitting'. Next, the four scenarios will be presented in which the belonging drivers and the single item will be discussed.

The must-type complainant ~ the must category is characterized by customers who complain illegitimate out of necessity. The category includes the following three drivers:

1. *Lack of morality*: lack of morality can be compared to perceived greed which is defined as "the customer's believe that a firm has opportunistically tried to take advantage of a situation to the detriment of the customer's interest" (Grégoire et al., 2010, pp. 739).

2. *Loss of control*: the feeling of being in control is defined as "the need to demonstrate one's competence, superiority, and mastery over the environment" (Hui & Toffoli, 2002, pp. 1827). Accordingly, this would entail that loss of control refers to the absence of one's ability to control the environment or in this case the company who handles the complaint.

3. *Perceived injustice*: the perception of injustice will be referred to in this study as the customer's perception regarding the fairness of the entire procedure of complaint handling including the outcome and the interpersonal treatment (Tax et al., 1998).

Thereupon, the must-type complainant is measured with the one-item scale: "The company tried to take advantage of me, for example by deliberately delivering a bad product or service (*lack of morality*). That felt quite unfair to me (*perceived injustice*). I complained and did everything I could in my ability to hold them accountable, but the company didn't care and didn't follow their terms of service regarding complaints (*loss of control*)".

The need-type complainant ~ the need category is characterized by customers who complain illegitimate, because the delivered product or service is not in line with their expectations and therefore feel angry and disappointed. The category includes the following four drivers:

1. *External attribution*: external attribution is defined as attributing the cause of a problem to external factors. This leads to the development of the feelings anger and revenge towards the perceived guilty party (Folkes, 1984).

2. *Contrast effect*: the contrast effect is referred to as the perceived discrepancy between the expectations and actual performance, which is magnified or exaggerated (Anderson, 1973). In other words, the customer will magnify the problem regarding the product or service performance when the set expectations are not met.

3. *Disappointment*: disappointment is referred to as an emotion that measures whether or not the feeling of disappointment has occurred after a discrepancy between expectations and reality (Joosten, 2020; Zeelenberg & Pieters, 1999).

4. *Anger*: anger is referred to as an emotion which is "associated with appraising an event as harmful and frustrating" (Bougie, Pieters, & Zeelenberg, 2003, pp. 379). This feeling of anger can be pointed to an institution, such as an organization.

Thereupon, the need-type complainant is measured with the one-item scale: "The company has not perform as they should have performed (*contrast effect*). The delivered product or service was below my expectations which made me disappointed and angry with the company (*disappointment/anger*). The company may not have done it intentionally, but they are still responsible for the product or service failure (*external attribution*)".

The want-type complainant ~ the want category is characterized by customers who fabricate illegitimate complaints in advance in order to obtain financial gain. The category includes the following three drivers:

1. *Internal attribution*: internal attribution is defined as attributing the cause of a problem to one's self. This leads to feeling responsible and guilty for the situation and the need to personally solve the problem (Folkes, 1984).

2. *Financial greed*: financial greed is referred to as customers who want to gain something from the company but give nothing in return (Daunt & Harris, 2012).

3. *Pre-planned*: pre-planned is defined as the measure of timing and evaluates if customers have planned to act deviant in advance (Joosten, 2020; Reynolds & Harris, 2005).

Thereupon, the want-type complainant is measured with the one-item scale: "The company didn't really do anything wrong. On the contrary, I (*internal attribution*) deliberately exaggerated or made up the situation (*pre-planned*) in order to obtain a (financial) advantage such as compensation, a new product, or a voucher (*financial greed*)".

The can-type complainant ~ the can category is characterized by customers who fabricate illegitimate complaints, because they are presented with an opportunity. The category includes the following four drivers:

1. *Opportunism*: opportunism is in this study referred to as an individual taking advantage of an opportunity that has presented itself in a certain situation (Singh & Sirdeshmunkh, 2000).
2. *Liberal redress policy*: a liberal redress policy is defined as "give the customer the benefit of the doubt and compensate with well-dosed generosity" (Wirtz & McColl-Kennedy, 2010, pp. 400). In other words, the company compensates generously even when the complaint may not be justified.
3. *Social norms*: social norms is defined as the intentions of an individual to behave in a specific manner depends on the perceived socially accepted behaviour (Fishbein, & Ajzen, 1977; Kowalski, 1996).
4. *Attitude towards illegitimate complaining*: the attitude towards IC is defined in this study as seeking compensation after a failure in the transaction is determined by an individual's negative or positive attitude towards complaining (Blodgett et al., 1993). In other word, customers who have a positive attitude have the tendency to complaint even when they are satisfied, while customers with a negative attitude will not complaint after experiencing dissatisfaction.

Thereupon, the can-type complainant is measured with the one-item scale: "The company has flexible guarantee terms or a very friendly customer service. Something like "not satisfied, money back". So I saw a great opportunity (*opportunism*) to get an advantage (*liberal redress*). Therefore, I have exaggerated or made up the situation. The complaint was not pre-planned. I believe that others also would have taken advantage of the opportunity (*social norm*). My behaviour does not bother me (*attitude towards illegitimate complaining*)".

3.4.2 Measures Neutralization Techniques

The neutralization techniques that customers use to rationalize and justify their behaviour is measured with a scale ranging from 'completely disagree' to 'complete agree'.

Denial of responsibility ~ the technique is defined as "the notion that the crime committed is not the fault of the individual, instead it is assumed that the deviant act was an accident and that the individual is not accountable for the consequences of the action because it was due to forces beyond their control" (Piquero et al., 2005, pp. 163). In other word, customers deny responsibility, because they believe that the occurred problem is not their fault, even though it might be. The technique is measured with the item: "It was not my fault".

Denial of injury ~ the technique is referred to in this study as "Individuals content that their norm violating behaviour is not really serious, since no party directly suffers because of it" (Vitell & Grove, 1987, pp.434). The technique is measured with the item: "The company would not suffer any serious damage".

Denial of victim ~ the technique is defined as "Individuals counter any blame for their actions by arguing that the violated party deserved whatever happened". (Vitell & Grove,1987, p 434). In this technique, the role of the victim is shifted from the company the complaint (Piquero et al., 2005). The technique is measured with the item: "The company deserved the complaint for its wrongdoing".

Condemnation of the condemners ~ the technique is defined as "Shifting attention from the deviant's transgression to the hypocrisy and moral failing of those who disapprove of the violations" (Piquero et al., 2005, pp.164). The technique is measured with the item: "The company is also not always honest to its customer".

Appeal to higher loyalties ~ the technique is referred to as "Occasions where the deviant individual remains loyal to the norms of a subgroup above that of wider society" (Harris & Daunt, 2011, pp.837). The technique is measured with the item: "I did it not for selfish reasons, but for the sake of others".

Metaphor of the ledger ~ the technique is defined as "Counterbalancing all the good and bad behaviours, thereby tolerating the aberrant behaviour in question" (Harris & Dumas, 2009, pp.385). In other words, the individual perceives the deviant behaviour as less inappropriate when this person also engages in socially accepted behaviour. The technique is measured with the item: "Normally I do uphold the rules".

Defence of the necessity ~ the technique entails in this study that "if an act is perceived as necessary, then one need not feel guilty about its commission, even if it is considered morally wrong in the abstract" (Minor, 1981, pp.298). So, the deviant behaviour is neutralized by convincing oneself that the behaviour was essential. The technique is measured with the item: "Otherwise, I would not have been taken seriously by the company".

Claim of entitlement ~ the technique is referred to as the individual's feeling of authorization over the benefits that resulted from the deviant behaviour (Eliason, 2003). The technique is measured with the item: "I am also allowed to have a benefit for once".

Justification by Postponement ~ the technique is referred to in this study as "suppressing the feeling of guilt after engaging in misbehaviour, by postponing the evaluation of the action until a later moment when one is less stressed" (McGregor, 2008, pp.272). The technique is

measured with the item: "At that point I didn't really think about the consequences (the feelings came later)".

Claim of relative acceptability ~ the technique is referred to as the "intend to minimize the consequences of the aberrant behaviour by drawing a comparison with other perpetrators of with more questionable forms of behaviour" (Harris & Dumas, 2009, pp.385). In other words, the individual feels that their behaviour is not as wrong compared to the crimes committed by others. The technique is measured with the item: "Other people have done worse".

Claim of normalcy ~ the technique claim of normalcy "insists that everybody engages in such activities, and thereby being commonplace, such behaviour cannot really be perceived as wrong" (Coleman, as cited in Harris & Dumas, 2009, pp. 385). In other words, the individual's deviant behaviour cannot be perceived as unjust when multiple others participate in similar behaviour. The technique is measured with the item: "Everybody exaggerates sometimes".

Denial of negative intent ~ the technique is defined as "the diminished responsibility, since the behaviour was not supposed to cause any harm" (Harris & Dumas, 2009, pp. 385). In other words, the individual believes that the consequences of the deviant action can be ignored when the inflicted harm was unintentional. The technique is measured with the item: "I did not plan in advance to complain illegitimately".

3.4.3 Measures Relationship Variables

Customers can experience certain feelings towards the company after the service recovery. This feeling can either affect the customer-company relationship positively or negatively. The relationship that the customer experiences with the company is measured with the following relationship variables and is measured with a scale ranging from 'much smaller' to 'much larger'.

Loyalty ~ customer loyalty is defined as "a deeply held commitment to rebuy a preferred product or service consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having potential to cause switching behaviour" (Oliver, as cited in Verma et al., 2016, pp. 209). So, in this study is loyalty perceived as the repurchase intentions of the customer. The relationship variable is measured with the item: "the chance that I will make a repurchase at the company in question after this complaint is…".

Trust ~ customer trust is referred to in this study as "the expectations held by the consumer that the service provider is dependable and can be relied on to deliver on its promises" (Sirdeshmukh, Singh, & Sabol, 2002, pp.17). In other words, the customer beliefs that the

company will fulfil the desired needs in the future. The relationship variable is measured with the item: "My confidence in the company in question after this situation is…".

Commitment ~ customer commitment is defined in this study as "an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship" (Verma et al., 2016, pp.208). The relationship variable is measured with the item: "My relationship with the company in question after this situation is…".

Word-of-mouth ~ customer word-of-mouth is referred to in this study as "informal communications directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services and/or their seller" (Verma et al., 2016, pp.209). The relationship variable is measured with the item: "The probability that I would recommend the company to others (family/friends) is…".

Satisfaction ~ customer satisfaction is defined in this study as "a customer's post-consumption evaluation of a product or service, determined by the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations and the actual performance" (Haumann, et al., 2014, pp.80). In this study there will be focused on the satisfaction regarding the company's products/services and the complaint handling procedure. The relationship variable is measured with the item: "My satisfaction with the company in question after the situation is…".

3.5 Data Analysis

In contrast to the previous sections, this section discusses which methods are used to process the collected data and answer the research questions. The data was processed by using the data analysis program SPSS (Version 25). In this research, the different types of illegitimate complainants are tested, in which the types of illegitimate complainants are the independent variables and illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques, and the relationship variables are the dependent variables. To determine the different effects of the independent on the dependent variables, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted (MANOVA analysis) This analysis measured whether there was a mean differences between the four types of illegitimate complainants on the degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques and the relationship variables (Field, 2013). Afterwards, a post hoc test was performed to determine more specifically how the four types of illegitimate complainants significantly differ in their means on all dependent variables (Field, 2013). These results were used to provide insight in how each type of complainant differs in degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques, and relationship variables

3.6 Research Ethics

A crucial aspects that needs to be considered in this research process is ethics (Goodwin, Pope, Mort, & Smith, 2003). As previously discussed, ensuring participants' anonymity is an important aspect of this research, as the research subject centres around behaviour that is considered undesired and illegal. Providing anonymity creates a sense of trust and the perception that there will be no consequences or implications after participating (Faria & Dickinson, 1996; Sieber & Stanley, 1988). Additionally, the participants were informed that all data is completely confidential and the responses of the survey cannot be traced back to a single respondent. Also, the respondents were given the option to stop participating in the survey at any moment. This eliminated any sense of obligation the participant otherwise might have experienced before starting the survey. Finally, the participants got the reassurance that there were no right or wrong answers in this survey.

The following chapter will discuss the results of the conducted analysis.

4. Results

This chapter discusses the statistical results and hypotheses. First, the sample and the assumptions will be discussed. Thereupon, the MANOVA analysis, post hoc results, and hypotheses will be discussed. The result section is concluded by discussing an additional finding.

4.1 Sample

This study collected initially 719 responses, but only 276 responses were recognized as useful. The sampling results indicated that a significant large portion of the respondents only opened the survey and thereupon decided not to participate. A possible explanation is that participants either could not come up with a situation in which they might have complaint illegitimately or did not come up with an imaginary example of an illegitimate complaint. Another reason for the high number of none response is the online approach that was used to publicly distribute the survey. Furthermore, some missing data was detected within the dataset, which was less than 10 per cent. Accordingly, the decision was made not to delete these respondents and replace the missing data with the average mean of other responses (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014). In addition, one other respondent was left out of the final dataset, as this respondent had to many missing answers. The final data resulted in N=275 responses. The sample size requirements for conducting a MANOVA analysis and the adequacy of this sample will be discussed further in this chapter.

Furthermore, the sample contained 182 females (66.2%), 66 males (33.1%), and 2 respondents who preferred not to indicate their gender (0.7%). The respondents' age ranges from 14 to 70 years old and the average age is 35. However, most respondents are between 21 and 25 years old (48.7%). Furthermore, 210 respondents (76,4%) followed a higher vocational or university education, 211 respondents (76.7%) filed a complaint against a larger company, and 86 respondents (31.3%) indicated to have exaggerated or fabricated a complained at least two time or more times. Finally, 215 (78,2%) respondents indicated that the situational description, which reflected a type of illegitimate complainant, was somewhat to entirely accurate to the respondents' situations. Specifically, the situational accuracy regarding each type of illegitimate complainant was according to the respondents as follows: the must-type complainant 79,2 per cent, the need-type complainant 80,9 per cent, the want-type complainant 82,5 per cent, and the can-type complainant 58,3 per cent.

4.2 Assumptions

Before the MANOVA analysis was conducted the required assumptions were tested, which will be discussed below.

Sample size

In order to perform a MANOVA analysis one is required to have a sufficient sample size. This can be determined by multiplying the number of cells of the independent variable times 20 responses (Hair et al., 2014). The minimum of 20 responses per cell is needed in order to guarantee robustness (Pallant, 2001). This study has one independent variable with four cells, therefore the required sample size is 80 responses. As this study included 275 responses, the sample size is considered sufficient.

Normality

The normality of the data has been determined by looking at univariate normality and multivariate normality. To determine univariate normality two methods have been applied, namely the z-values and the test of normality. The corresponding histograms have not been included in determining normality, as the data derived from them are subjective and sensitive to misinterpretations (Greasley, 2007). Both methods indicated that all dependent variables have a non-normal distribution (Table 3, Appendix III). Furthermore, the multivariate normality has been determined by looking at the Mahalanobis distance (Table 4, Appendix III). The results indicated that the data includes multivariate outliers involving 13 cases.

To conclude, the data violates the assumption of normality as both the univariate and multivariate normality tests do not meet the requirements. Consequently, the types of illegitimate complainants are not independent in their reaction to the degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques, and the relationship variables. Moreover, this results in variances not being equally distributed across the four types of illegitimate complainants, which is also shown in table 5 in Appendix III (Hair et al., 2014). However, violating normality is not considered to be a major concern when the sample size exceeds 200 responses (Hair et al., 2014). As the data includes 275 responses, violating normality is not considered to be a major concern in this study. Accordingly, no additional responses have been removed and no variable have been transformed. Specifically, deleting these cases would barely influence the analysis, while it could result in losing valuable information (Zijlstra, Van der Ark, & Sijtsma, 2011). Also, transforming the variables would have included transforming all

dependent variables as neither of them were normally distributed. Thus, the original data remained being used.

Linearity

Linear relationships between dependent variables are usually determined by creating scatterplots. However, this study did not include scatterplots, as the linear relationships were not interpretable due to the high number of dependent variables. Therefore, the test for linearity was conducted, which produced numerical values to determine linear relationships (Table 6, Appendix III). The results indicated that the variables: 'illegitimate complaints fabricated', 'denial of responsibility', 'denial of victim', 'denial of negative intent', 'claim of entitlement', 'loyalty', 'WOM', 'trust', 'commitment', and 'satisfaction' violated the assumption of linearity. Nevertheless, the mentioned variables have not been transformed due to the high number of dependent variables. Thus, this study continued using the original dataset and conducted a not fully linear analysis. Consequently, the power of the statistical test has been reduced (Nimon, 2012).

Multicollinearity

Dependent variables need to moderately correlate in order for the MANOVA analysis to perform properly (Pallant, 2001). However, variables that correlate highly are considered to be a concern, as their explained variance becomes less unique (Field, 2013). Accordingly, such variables can be considered to be eliminated. To determine the multicollinearity among the dependent variables, a correlation matrix has been created (Table 7a-7f, Appendix III). The results indicated that only the relationship variables correlate highly with each other (Table 7f, Appendix III). However, this result was expected as this study examens the relationship variables as a whole instead of considering them separately. Therefore, the high multicollinearity among the relationship variables are not considered to be an issue in this study. Hence, no variables have been removed from the dataset.

Homoscedasticity

As mentioned, the non-normal distribution regarding the variables in this study are not considered to be a major concern. However, it can result in unequal variances across groups (Hair et al., 2014). Accordingly, to determine homoscedasticity, the Levene's Test and Box's M test were used. The results derived from the Levene's Test indicated that the following variables violated the assumption of equality of variance: 'illegitimate complaints fabricated', 'illegitimate complaint exaggerated, altered or lied about', 'illegitimate complaints company

falsely blamed', 'denial of responsibility', 'denial of negative intent', 'justification by postponement', and all relationship variables (Table 8, Appendix III). Also, the Box's M test $F_{(630,23664)}=1.535$, $p<0.05$ indicated that the assumption of equality of variance was violated. Thus, the data includes heteroscedasticity, which affects the post hoc test that will be discussed later on in this chapter (Field, 2013).

4.3 Multivariate Analysis

A MANOVA analysis was conducted with the four types of illegitimate complainants as independent variable and the illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques, and relationship variables as dependent variables. Also, the two variables 'time of complainant' ($F_{(20,245)}=1.735$, $p<.05$, partial $\eta^2=.124$) and 'company size' ($F_{(20,245)}=2.456$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2=.167$) have been included as covariates as these were found to have a multivariate effect. The analysis was conducted one time with and without the covariates to determine whether they influence the overall effect of this analysis (Hair et al., 2014). As the MANOVA analysis with the covariates had one more main effect, the covariates remained included within the analysis. Afterwards, a post hoc test was conducted to identify whether all types of illegitimate complainants differ significantly in their mean. The Games Howell test was applied, as the variances and group size were not equal across the dependent variables (Field, 2013).

Univariate & Multivariate effect

Most dependent variables were found to have a significant effect, except: 'denial of injury' ($F_{(3,271)}=.866$, $p=.459$), 'appeal to higher loyalties' ($F_{(3,271)}=3.982$, $p=.760$), 'claim of relative acceptability' ($F_{(3,271)}=.450$, $p=.717$), and 'metaphor of the ledger' ($F_{(3,271)}=1.930$, $p=.125$). Accordingly, the four types of illegitimate complainants do not significantly differ on these variables. The variables that have significant effect will be discussed later on in this chapter.

Furthermore, the Pillai's trace has been used to determine how each dependent variable relates to the multivariate effect, as this multivariate test was found to be more robust considering the dataset violated several assumptions (Hair et al., 2014; Pallant, 2001). The Pillai's trace ($F_{(60,741)}=4.304$, $p<0.0025$ with a large partial $\eta^2=.258$) was found to have a significant effect, which entails that there is a difference among the four types of illegitimate complainants (Pallant, 2001).

4.3.1 Illegitimate Complaining Behaviour

The three forms of illegitimate complaining behaviour were found to have a significant effect (Table 9), which indicates that the four types of illegitimate complainants differ in the degree that one would engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour (e.g. completely fabricate a complaint, exaggerate, alter or lie about the situation, or falsely blame the company).

However, the post hoc test revealed that the four types of illegitimate complainants only significantly differ in their means on the variables: 'illegitimate complaint fabricated' and 'illegitimate compliant falsely blamed' (Table 10). Moreover, the variable 'illegitimate complaint falsely blamed' is recognized to only differentiate on the need-type complainant and want-type complainant. Furthermore, the types of illegitimate complainants do not differ on the variable 'illegitimate complaint exaggerated, altered or lied about'. Accordingly, all four types of illegitimate complainants are considered to equally exaggerate, alter or lie about the situation when filing a complaint.

Table 9 results types of illegitimate complainants on illegitimate complaining behaviour

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta sq.	Effect
(a) Illegitimate complaints ~ completely fabricated	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	M=1.712; SD=.216 M=1.478; SD=.085 M=3.030; SD=.135 M=2.176; SD=.175 F(3,271)= 31.702	***	.261	Large
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	F(1,273)=.316 F(1,273)=.285	(ns) (ns)		
(b) Illegitimate complaints ~ exaggerated, altered or lied about the situation	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	M=2.341; SD=.236 M=2.431; SD=.093 M=2.921; SD=.147 M=2.786; SD=.191 F(3,271)= 3.235	*	.035	Small
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	F(1,273)=4.616 F(1,273)=.168	* (ns)	.017	Small
(c) Illegitimate complaints ~ falsely blaming the company	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	M=1.771; SD=.249 M=1.658; SD=.098 M=2.343; SD=.156 M=2.331; SD=.202 F(3,271)= 6.115	***	.064	Medium
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	F(1,273)=8.958 F(1,273)=.030	** (ns)	.032	Small

 * = p<.05   ** = p<.01   *** = p<.0025[1]   (ns) = non-significant

First, the typology proposed that the must-type complainant would score lowest on illegitimate complaining behaviour. The post hoc results revealed that the must-type complainant only

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[1] Bonferroni adjustment has been applied to reduce the chance of a Type I Error (Pallant, 2001). The original alpha level (p<.05) has been divided by the 20 dependent variables.

significantly differs in its mean on the variable 'illegitimate complaints fabricated' in comparison to the want-type complainant, in which the must-type complainant was found to have the lowest mean. Furthermore, the must-type complainant does not significantly differ in its mean compared to the need-type complainant and can-type complainant, which entails that the three means can be considered equal. Considering the aforementioned results, hypothesis 2 has been partly accepted. Moreover, the MANOVA analysis (Table 9) also revealed that the must-type complainant does not consistently have the lowest mean compared to the other types of illegitimate complainants. Hence, both analyses provided supportive evidence that this hypothesis should be partly accepted.

Second, the typology proposed that the need-type complainant would score second lowest on illegitimate complaining behaviour. The post hoc results revealed that the need-type complainant significantly differs in its mean on the variable 'illegitimate complaints fabricated' in comparison to the want-type complainant and can-type complainant, in which the need-type complainant was found to have the lowest mean. Also, the need-type complainant significantly differs in its mean on the variable 'illegitimate complaints falsely blamed' compared to the want-type complainant, in which the need-type complainant was also found to have the lowest mean. Furthermore, the need-type complainant does not significantly differ in its mean on any form of illegitimate complaining behaviour compared to the must-type complainant, which entails that the two means can be considered equal. Considering the aforementioned results, hypothesis 5 has been partly accepted. Moreover, the MANOVA analysis (Table 9) revealed that the need-type complainant does not consistently have the second lowest mean in comparison to the other types of illegitimate complainants. Hence, both analyses provided supportive evidence that this hypothesis should be partly accepted.

Third, the typology proposed that the want-type complainant would score highest on illegitimate complaining behaviour. The post hoc results revealed that the want-type complainant significantly differs in its mean on the variable 'illegitimate complaints fabricated' compared to the other types of complainants, in which the want-type complainant has the highest mean. Also, the want-type complainant significantly differs in its mean on the variable 'illegitimate complaints falsely blamed' in comparison to the need-type complainant, in which the want-type complainant was found to have the highest mean. Considering the aforementioned results, hypothesis 8 has been partly accepted. As mentioned, the want-type complainant does not significantly differ in its mean on the variable 'illegitimate complaint exaggerated, altered or lied about'. Hence, the hypothesis can only be partly accepted. Moreover, the results produced by the MANOVA analysis (Table 9) indicate that the want-type

complainant has the highest mean compared to the other types of illegitimate complainants. Thus, both analyses provided supportive evidence that this hypothesis should be partly accepted.

Finally, the typology proposed that the can-type complainant would score second highest on illegitimate complaining behaviour. The can-type complainant significantly differs in its mean on the variable 'illegitimate complaints that are fabricated' in comparison to the need-type complainant and want-type complainant, in which the can-type complainant has the second highest mean. Furthermore, the can-type complainant does not significantly differ in its mean compared to the must-type complainant, which entails that the two means can be considered equal. Considering the aforementioned results, hypothesis 11 has been partly accepted. However, the results produced by the MANOVA analysis (Table 9) indicate that the can-type complainant has the second highest mean compared to the other types of illegitimate complainants. Thus, from a non-statistical perspective, this hypothesis is considered a plausible prediction.

Table 10 Post Hoc results Illegitimate Complaining Behaviour

Illegitimate Complaints Exaggerated, Altered or Lied about	Must-type	Need-type	Want-type	Can-type
Must-type		-.07	-.51	-.38
Need-type			-.44	-.30
Want-type				.14
Can-type				
Illegitimate Complainants Fabricated	Must-type	Need-type	Want-type	Can-type
Must-type		.23	-1.32***	-.46
Need-type			-1.55***	-.69*
Want-type				.87*
Can-type				
Illegitimate Complainants Falsely Blamed	Must-type	Need-type	Want-type	Can-type
Must-type		.15	-.45	-.44
Need-type			-.60*	-.59
Want-type				.01
Can-type				

Shows the mean difference at significant level * = p < .05 ** = p < .01 *** = p < .001

4.3.2 Neutralization Techniques

The must-type complainant

The typology proposed that the must-type complainant would score highest on the following neutralization techniques: 'denial of responsibility', 'denial of victim', 'denial of negative intent', 'condemnation of the condemners', 'appeal to higher loyalties', and 'defence of the necessity'. As mentioned in the univariate effect section, the neutralization technique 'appeal to higher loyalties' did not have a significant effect. Consequently, hypothesis 1e has been

rejected. However, the mean scores derived from the MANOVA analysis (Table 11) indicate that the must-type complainant has a higher mean on the neutralization technique 'appeal to higher loyalties' compared to the other types of illegitimate complainants. Thus, from a non-statistical perspective, the hypothesis is considered a plausible prediction.

Table 11 Results mean score must-type complainant on the proposed neutralization techniques

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta sq.	Effect
(a) Neutralization technique ~ Denial of responsibility	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	M=4.463; SD=.216 M=4.311; SD=.085 M=2.467; SD=.135 M=3.062; SD=.174 $F_{(3,271)}$= 51.424	***	.364	Large
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	$F_{(1,273)}$=2.777 $F_{(1,273)}$=4.006	(ns) *	.015	Small
(b) Neutralization technique ~ Denial of injury	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	M=4.104; SD=.181 M=4.373; SD=.071 M=4.290; SD=.113 M=4.212; SD=.146 $F_{(3,271)}$= .886	(ns)		
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	$F_{(1,273)}$=1.916 $F_{(1,273)}$=.005	(ns) (ns)		
(c) Neutralization technique ~ Denial of Negative Intent	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	M=4.368; SD=.230 M=3.788; SD=.091 M=3.252; SD=.144 M=3.543; SD=.186 $F_{(3.271)}$ = 6.261	***	.065	Medium
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	$F_{(1,273)}$=6.030 $F_{(1,273)}$=.348	* (ns)	.022	Small
(d) Neutralization technique ~ Condemnation of the condemners	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	M=4.028; SD=.225 M=3.197; SD=.089 M=2.707; SD=.140 M=2.717; SD=.182 $F_{(3,271)}$= 9.738	***	.098	Medium
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	$F_{(1,273)}$=.313 $F_{(1,273)}$=3.982	(ns) *	.015	Small
(e) Neutralization technique ~ Appeal to higher loyalties	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	M=2.282; SD=.232 M=2.090; SD=.091 M=1.993; SD=.145 M=2.137; SD=.188 $F_{(3,271)}$= .391	(ns)		
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	$F_{(1,273)}$=.055 $F_{(1,273)}$=8.624	(ns) **	.031	Small
(f) Neutralization technique ~ Defence of the necessity	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	M=3.784; SD=.232 M=3.302; SD=.091 M=3.903; SD=.145 M=2.981; SD=.188 $F_{(3,271)}$= 4.137	**	.044	Small
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	$F_{(1,273)}$=6.570 $F_{(1,273)}$=6.778	** **	.024 .025	Small Small

* = $p<.05$ ** = $p<.01$ *** = $p<.0025$[1]   (ns) = non-significant

Furthermore, the post hoc results revealed that the must-type complainant significantly differs in its mean on the above mentioned variables in comparison to the other three types of illegitimate complainants (Table 12), in which the must-type complainant was found to have the highest mean. Accordingly, the following hypotheses have been accepted: 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, and 1f. Note that the must-type complainant and need-type complainant do not significantly differ in their mean, but both have a higher mean on the variable 'denial of responsibility' compared to the want-type complainant and can-type complainant. Therefore, the must-type complainant and the need-type complaint have an equal mean on the variable 'denial of responsibility', but also a higher mean compared to the want-type complainant and the can-type complainant as was predicted and discussed in chapter 2.

Table 12 Post Hoc results must-type complainant on the proposed Neutralization Techniques

Denial of Responsibility	Must-type	Need-type	Want-type	Can-type
Must-type		.09	1.84***	1.29***
Need-type			1.75***	1.21***
Want-type				-.54
Can-type				
Denial of Victim	Must-type	Need-type	Want-type	Can-type
Must-type		.88**	2.32***	2.15***
Need-type			1.44***	1.27***
Want-type				-.17
Can-type				
Denial of Negative intent	Must-type	Need-type	Want-type	Can-type
Must-type		.56*	1.05***	.75**
Need-type			.48*	.19
Want-type				-.30
Can-type				
Condemnation of the Condemners	Must-type	Need-type	Want-type	Can-type
Must-type		.77*	1.20***	1.24***
Need-type			.42*	.46
Want-type				.04
Can-type				
Defence of the Necessity	Must-type	Need-type	Want-type	Can-type
Must-type		.58	1.12***	.97**
Need-type			.54*	.39
Want-type				-.15
Can-type				

Shows the mean difference at significant level * = p < .05 ** = p < .01 *** = p < .001

The need-type complainant

The typology proposed that the need-type complainant would score highest on the following neutralization techniques: 'denial or responsibility' and 'denial of injury'. As mentioned in the univariate effect section, the latter neutralization technique did have a non-significant effect. Consequently, hypothesis 4b has been rejected. However, the mean scores produced in the MANOVA analysis (Table 13) indicate that the need-type complainant has a higher mean on

the neutralization technique 'denial of injury' in comparison to the other types of illegitimate complainant. Thus, from a non-statistical perspective, the hypothesis is considered a plausible prediction.

Furthermore, the post hoc results revealed that the need-type complainant significantly differs in its mean on the variable 'denial of responsibility' in comparison to the want-type complainant and can-type complainant (Table 12), in which the need-type complainant has the higher mean. As mentioned, the need-type complainant and must-type complainant do not significantly differ in their mean score, but do have a higher mean compared to the other two types of illegitimate complainants. Therefore, hypothesis 4a has been accepted.

Table 13: Results mean score need-type complainant on the proposed neutralization techniques

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta sq.	Effect
(a) Neutralization technique ~ Denial of responsibility	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	$M=4.463$; SD=.216 $M=4.311$; SD=.085 $M=2.467$; SD=.135 $M=3.062$; SD=.174 $F_{(3,271)}= 51.424$	***	.364	Large
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	$F_{(1,273)}=2.777$ $F_{(1,273)}=4.006$	(ns) *	.015	Small
(b) Neutralization technique ~ Denial of injury	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	$M=4.104$; SD=.181 $M=4.373$; SD=.071 $M=4.290$; SD=.113 $M=4.212$; SD=.146 $F_{(3,271)}= .886$	(ns)		
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	$F_{(1,273)}=1.916$ $F_{(1,273)}=.005$	(ns) (ns)		

* = p<.05   ** = p<.01   *** = p<.0025[1]   (ns) = non-significant

The want-type complainant

The typology proposed that the want-type complainant would score highest on the neutralization technique 'claim of entitlement'. As shown in table 14, the neutralization technique was found to have a significant effect. Moreover, the post hoc results (Table 15) revealed that the want-type complainant significantly differs in its mean on the neutralization technique compared to the other types of illegitimate complainant, in which the want-type complainant has a higher mean. Consequently, hypothesis 7 has been accepted.

Table 14: Results mean score want-type complainant on the proposed neutralization techniques

(j) Neutralization technique ~ Claim of entitlement	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	$M=3.280$; SD=.166 $M=3.435$; SD=.065 $M=3.937$; SD=.103 $M=3.422$; SD=.134 $F_{(3,271)}= 6.639$	***	.069	Medium
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	$F_{(1,273)}=9.624$ $F_{(1,273)}=5.060$	*** *	.035 .018	Small Small

* = p<.05   ** = p<.01   *** = p<.0025[1]   (ns) = non-significant

Table 15 Post Hoc results want-type complainant on the proposed Neutralization Technique

Claim of Entitlement	Must-type	Need-type	Want-type	Can-type
Must-type		-.09	-.48*	-01
Need-type			-.40**	.07
Want-type			.	.47*
Can-type			-	

Shows the mean difference at significant level * = p < .05 ** = p < .01 *** = p < .001

The can-type complainant

The typology proposed that the can-type complainant would score highest on the neutralization technique 'claim of relative acceptability', 'claim of normalcy', and 'metaphor of the ledger'. As mentioned in the univariate effect section, the neutralization techniques 'claim of relative acceptability' and 'metaphor of the ledger' are found to have a non-significant effect. Consequently, hypotheses 10a and 10c have been rejected. Moreover, the mean scores derived from the MANOVA analysis (Table 16) indicate that the can-type complainant does not have a higher mean on the two neutralization techniques in comparison to the other types of illegitimate complainant. Thus, also from a non-statistical perspective, the hypotheses should be rejected.

Table 16 Results mean score can-type complainant on the proposed neutralization techniques

(a) Neutralization technique ~ Claim of relative acceptability	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	M=3.926; SD=.202 M=3.801; SD=.079 M=3.964; SD=.126 M=3.870; SD=.163 F(3,271)= .450	(ns)		
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	 F(1,273)=.777 F(1,273)=5.003	 (ns) *	 .018	 Small
(b) Neutralization technique ~ Claim of normalcy	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	M=3.475; SD=.175 M=3.762; SD=.069 M=4.069; SD=.109 M=3.872; SD=.142 F(3,271)= 3.134	*	.034	Small
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	 F(1,273)=.936 F(1,273)=.160	 (ns) (ns)		
(c) Neutralization technique ~ Metaphor of the ledger	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	M=4.138; SD=.155 M=3.974; SD=.061 M=4.242; SD=.097 M=4.095; SD=.126 F(3,271)= 1.930	(ns)		
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	 F(1,273)=1.519 F(1,273)=5.340	 (ns) *	 .019	 Small

* = p<.05   ** = p<.01   *** = p<.0025[1]   (ns) = non-significant

Furthermore, the post hoc results (Table 17) revealed that the can-type complainant does not significantly differ in its mean on the variable 'claim of normalcy' compared to the other types of illegitimate complainants. Therefore, all four types of illegitimate complainants are

considered to have an equal mean on the neutralization technique 'claim of normalcy'. Consequently, hypothesis 10b has been rejected. Moreover, the mean scores derived from the MANOVA analysis (Table 16) indicate that the can-type complainant does not have the highest mean on the neutralization technique compared to the other types of illegitimate complainants. Thus, also from a non-statistical perspective, this hypothesis should be rejected.

Table 17 Post Hoc results can-type complainant on the proposed neutralization technique

Claim of Normalcy	Must-type	Need-type	Want-type	Can-type
Must-type		-.27	-.55	-.36
Need-type			-.28	-.09
Want-type				.19
Can-type				

Shows the mean difference at significant level * = p < .05 ** = p < .01 *** = p < .001

4.3.3 Relationship Variables

All relationship variables are found to have a significant effect (Table 18), indicating that the four types of illegitimate complainants have different customer-company relationships.

Table 18 Results types of illegitimate complainants on the relationship variables

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta sq.	Effect
Relationship variable ~ Loyalty	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	M=1.681; SD=.179 M=2.562; SD=.071 M=3.132; SD=.112 M=3.166; SD=.145 F(3,271)= 19.639	***	.180	Large
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	F(1,273)=.011 F(1,273)=.279	(ns) (ns)		
Relationship variable ~ WOM	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	M=1.704; SD=.181 M=2.493; SD=.072 M=3.113; SD=.113 M=3.194; SD=.147 F(3,271)= 19.871	***	.181	Large
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	F(1,273)=.036 F(1,273)=2.193	(ns) (ns)		
Relationship variable ~ Trust	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	M=1.590; SD=.187 M=2.556; SD=.074 M=3.118; SD=.116 M=3.258; SD=.151 F(3,271)= 20.886	***	.189	Large
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	F(1,273)=2.489 F(1,273)=.773	(ns) (ns)		
Relationship variable ~ Commitment	Must-type Need-type Want-type Can-type	M=1.761; SD=.171 M=2.571; SD=.068 M=3.116; SD=.107 M=3.130; SD=.139 F(3,271)= 18.622	***	.172	Large
	Covariates Time of complaint Company size	F(1,273)=.836 F(1,273)=3.012	(ns) (ns)		

Relationship variable ~ Satisfaction	Must-type	M=1.757; SD=.199	***	.200	Large
	Need-type	M=2.618; SD=.078			
	Want-type	M=3.325; SD=.124			
	Can-type	M=3.511; SD=.161			
		F(3,271)= 22.365			
	Covariates				
	Time of complaint	F(1,273)=.1.657	(ns)		
	Company size	F(1,273)=.954	(ns)		

* = p<.05   ** = p<.01   *** = p<.0025[1]   (ns) = non-significant

The must-type complainant

The typology proposed that the must-type complainant would score lowest on the relationship variables. The post hoc results (Table 19) support this prediction as the must-type complainant significantly differs in its mean on all relationship variables compared to the other types of illegitimate complainants, in which the must-type complainant has the lowest mean. Therefore, hypothesis 3 has been accepted.

The need-type complainant

The typology proposed that the need-type complainant would score second lowest on the relationship variables. The post hoc results (Table 19) support this prediction as the need-type complainant significantly differs in its mean on all relationship variables in comparison to the other types of illegitimate complainants, in which the need-type complainant has the second lowest mean. Therefore, hypothesis 6 has been accepted.

The want-type complainant

The typology proposed that the want-type complainant would score highest on the relationship variables. The post hoc results revealed (Table 19) that the want-type complainant significantly differs in its means on all relationship variables compared to the must-type complainant and the need-type complainant, in which the want-type complainant has the second highest mean. However, the want-type complainant only has the highest mean on the relationship variable 'commitment' in comparison to the must-type complainant and the need-type complainant. Furthermore, the want-type complainant and can-type complainant do not significantly differ in their means on any of the relationship variables. Consequently, the two types of illegitimate complainants are considered to have equal means for all relationship variables. Considering that only the relationship variable 'commitment' supports the typology's prediction, hypothesis 9 has been rejected. Moreover, the mean scores presented in Table 18 indicate that the want-type complainant has the second highest mean on all relationship variables. Thus, also from a non-statistical perspective, this hypothesis should be rejected.

The can-type complainant

The typology proposed that the can-type complainant would score second highest on the relationship variables. The post hoc results revealed (Table 19) that the can-type complainant significantly differs in its means on all relationship variables in comparison to the must-type complainant and the need-type complainant, in which the can-type complainant has the highest mean. However, the can-type complainant only has the second highest mean on the relationship variable 'commitment' compared to the must-type complainant and the need-type complainant. As mentioned, the can-type complainant and want-type complainant do not significantly differ in their means on any of the relationship variables. Therefore, the two types of illegitimate complainants are considered to have equal means for all relationship variables. Considering that only the relationship variable 'commitment' supports the typology's prediction, hypothesis 12 has been reject. Moreover, the mean scores presented in Table 18 indicate that the can-type complainant has the highest mean on all relationship variables. Thus, also from a non-statistical perspective, this hypothesis should be rejected.

Table 19 Post Hoc results types of illegitimate complainants on relationship variables

Loyalty	Must-type	Need-type	Want-type	Can-type
Must-type		-.89***	-1.48***	-1.50***
Need-type			-.58***	-.61***
Want-type				-.02
Can-type				
WOM	Must-type	Need-type	Want-type	Can-type
Must-type		-.82**	-1.48***	-1.53***
Need-type			-.66***	-.71***
Want-type				-.05
Can-type				
Trust	Must-type	Need-type	Want-type	Can-type
Must-type		-1.01***	-1.62***	-1.74***
Need-type			-.61***	-.73***
Want-type				-.12
Can-type				
Commitment	Must-type	Need-type	Want-type	Can-type
Must-type		-.85**	-1.45***	-1.43***
Need-type			-.60***	-.58***
Want-type				.02
Can-type				
Satisfaction	Must-type	Need-type	Want-type	Can-type
Must-type		-.90**	-1.66***	-1.82***
Need-type			-.76***	-.92***
Want-type				-.16
Can-type				

Shows the mean difference at significant level * = $p < .05$ ** = $p < .01$ *** = $p < .001$

4.4 Additional finding

As mentioned in chapter 2, the neutralization technique 'justification by postponement' is not considered to be a neutralization technique that is applied by any type of illegitimate complainant. However, the neutralization techniques was included in the MANOVA analysis to determine whether it could be applied by a type of illegitimate complainant. Table 20 shows that there is significant effect, which indicates that the types of illegitimate complainants differ in mean on this variable.

Table 20 Results types of illegitimate complainants on Justification by Postponement

Neutralization technique ~ Justification by postponement	Must-type	M=2.289; SD=.230	*	.040	Small
	Need-type	M=2.449; SD=.091			
	Want-type	M=2.588; SD=.143			
	Can-type	M=3.102; SD=.186			
		$F_{(3,271)}$= 3.745			
	Covariates				
	Time of complaint	$F_{(1,273)}$=.117	(ns)		
	Company size	$F_{(1,273)}$=2.972	(ns)		

* = p<.05   ** = p<.01   *** = p<.0025[1]   (ns) = non-significant

Furthermore, the post hoc results (Table 21) revealed that only the need-type complainant and can-type complainant have a significant mean difference, in which the can-type complainant has a higher mean. Accordingly, the can-type complainant would be more likely to use this neutralization technique. Therefore, future research can include the neutralization technique 'justification by postponement' as a rationalization tool that is used by the can-type complainant. However, future researchers also need to be aware that this is only supported by one mean difference between two types of illegitimate complainants

Table 21 Post Hoc results types of illegitimate complainants on Justification by Postponement

Justification by Postponement	Must-type	Need-type	Want-type	Can-type
Must-type		-.12	-.22	-.78
Need-type			-.10	-.66**
Want-type				-.56
Can-type				

Shows the mean difference at significant level * = p < .05 ** = p < .01 *** = p < .001

5. Discussion

This chapter presents the conclusion which includes a summary and the answer to the research question. Thereupon, the theoretical contributions and the managerial implications will be discussed. This chapter will end with discussing the limitations of this research and directions for future research.

5.1 Conclusion

Academic literature always considered customer complaints as legitimate, since customers would not deliberately complain without having a valid reason (Reynolds & Harris, 2005). This conviction is also reflected in management practices as the phrase 'the customer is always right' is widely used when handling customer complaints (Bishop & Hoel, 2008; Ro & Wong, 2012). However, more recent studies acknowledged that some customers deliberately file fictitious complaints without having a justifiable reason (Baker et al., 2012; Berry & Seiders, 2008; Reynolds & Harris, 2005). Moreover, companies are increasingly confronted with handling illegitimate customer complaints which consumes a considerable amount of time, money, and effort (Fisk, et al., 2010; Khantimirov, & Karande, 2018). Therefore, it is important that companies understand illegitimate complaining behaviour. Accordingly, various research studies examined and recognized numerous drivers and categorizations that provide insight into why customers complaint illegitimately (e.g. Baker et al., 2012; Daunt & Harris, 2012; Huang et al., 2014; Joosten, 2020; Reynolds & Harris, 2005). However, these research studies have not considered to categorize drivers into distinctive types of customers to understand illegitimate complaining behaviour

In contrast, Joosten (2020) proposes the typology of illegitimate complainants that examines illegitimate complaining behaviour by distinguishing four types of customers within service recovery, namely: must-type, need-type, want-type, and can-type. Each type of illegitimate complainant includes a set of drivers, degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques, and certain customer-company relationship. The aim of this study was to empirically test this typology and provide insight into different types of illegitimate complainants. Therefore, the following research question was developed: *What types of illegitimate complainants can be distinguished?* In order to answer this question, several hypotheses were constructed as shown in Table 22. Not all hypotheses have been supported by empirical findings, but an enhanced insight has been developed regarding the four types of

illegitimate complainants. Before an answer is provided regarding the research question, each type of complainant will first be discussed below.

Table 22 Summary of the hypotheses

	Hypothesis	Accepted/Rejected
H1a	The complainants that affiliate with the must-type score highest on the neutralization technique 'denial of responsibility' compared to the other types of complainants.	**Accepted**
H1b	The complainants that affiliate with the must-type score higher on the neutralization technique 'denial of victim' compared to the other types of complainants.	**Accepted**
H1c	The complainants that affiliate with the must-type score higher on the neutralization technique 'denial of negative intent' compared to the other types of complainants.	**Accepted**
H1d	The complainants that affiliate with the must-type score higher on the neutralization technique 'condemnation of the condemners' compared to the other types of complainants.	**Accepted**
H1e	The complainants that affiliate with the must-type score higher on the neutralization technique 'appeal to higher loyalties' compared to the other types of complainants.	**Rejected**
H1f	The complainants that affiliate with the must-type score higher on the neutralization technique 'defence of the necessity' compared to the other types of complainants.	**Accepted**
H2	The complainants that affiliate with the must-type score lowest on illegitimate complaining behaviour compared to the other types of complainants.	**Partly Accepted**
H3	The complainants that affiliate with the must-type score lowest on the relationship variables compared to the other types of complainants.	**Accepted**
H4a	The complainants that affiliate with the need-type score highest on the neutralization technique 'denial of responsibility' compared to the other types of complainants.	**Accepted**
H4b	The complainants that affiliate with the need-type score highest on the neutralization technique 'denial of injury' compared to the other types of complainants.	**Rejected**
H5	The complainants that affiliate with the need-type score second lowest on illegitimate complaining behaviour compared to the other types of complainants.	**Partly Accepted**
H6	The complainants that affiliate with the need-type score second lowest on the relationship variables compared to the other types of complainants.	**Accepted**
H7	The complainants that affiliate with the want-type score highest on the neutralization technique 'claim of entitlement compared' to the other types of complainants.	**Accepted**
H8	The complainants that affiliate with the want-type score highest on illegitimate complaining behaviour compared to the other types of complainants.	**Partly Accepted**
H9	The complainants that affiliate with the want-type score highest on the relationship variables compared to the other types of complainants.	**Rejected**
H10a	The complainants that affiliate with the can-type score highest on the neutralization techniques 'claim of relative acceptability' compared to the other types of complainants.	**Rejected**
H10b	The complainants that affiliate with the can-type score highest on the neutralization techniques 'claim of normalcy' compared to the other types of complainants.	**Rejected**
H10c	The complainants that affiliate with the can-type score highest on the neutralization techniques 'metaphor of the ledger' compared to the other types of complainants	**Rejected**
H11	The complainants that affiliate with the can-type score second highest on illegitimate complaining behaviour.	**Partly Accepted**

| H12 | The complainants that affiliate with the can-type score second highest on the relationship variables. | **Rejected** |

The must-type complainant

This study found sufficient evidence that supports the typology's prediction regarding the must-type complainant. First, this study recognized that the must-type complainant's behaviour is driven by: 'lack of morality', 'loss of control', and 'perceived injustice', as vast majority of the respondents indicated that the behaviour reflected by the must-type complainant is applicable to their own situation. Accordingly, it is supported the must-type complainant engages in illegitimate complaining behaviour in order to attract attention from the company and prevent the company from taking advantage of the situation.

Second, this study recognized that the must-type complainant fabricates less in complaints compared to the want-type complainant and fabricates as much in complaints compared to the need-type complainant and the can-type complainant. Furthermore, this study recognized that the must-type complainant exaggerates, alters, or lies about the situation and falsely blames the company as much as the other types of illegitimate complainants. However, the typology suggested that the must-type complainant would be least likely to engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour. Accordingly, this study found limited evidence to support this prediction, as the must-type complainant only differs in complaining behaviour compared to the want-type complainant one form of illegitimate complaining behaviour.

Third, this study recognized that the must-type complainant uses the neutralization techniques: 'denial of responsibility', 'denial of victim', 'denial of negative intent', 'condemnation of the condemners', and 'defence of the necessity'. Therefore, it is supported that the must-type complainant rationalizes one's behaviour by perceiving one's self as innocent and viewing the company as the guilty party which behaves opportunistic. Moreover, the must-type complainant rationalizes one's behaviour by perceiving complaining behaviour as a necessary tool in order to be heard by the company. However, this study did not recognize that the must-type complainant uses the neutralization technique 'appeal to higher loyalties'. Accordingly, it remains unproven that the must-type complainant rationalizes one's misbehaviour by indicating it was not out of self-interest, but for the sake of others.

Finally, this study recognized that the must-type complainant has the worst customer-company relationship. Accordingly, it supports the prediction that the customer-company relationship deteriorates after service recovery.

The need-type complainant

This study found sufficient evidence that supports the typology's prediction regarding the need-type complainant. First, this study recognized that the need-type complainant's behaviour is driven by: 'external attribution', 'contrast effect', 'disappointment', and 'anger', as vast majority of the respondents indicated that the behaviour reflected by the need-type complainant is applicable to their own situation. Therefore, it is supported that the need-type complainant engages in illegitimate complaining behaviour in order to force the company into taking responsibility for the unfulfilled customer's expectations.

Second, this study recognized that the need-type complainant fabricates less in complaints compared to the want-type complainant and can-type complainant and fabricates as much in complaints in comparison to the must-type complainant. Also, the need-type complainant falsely blames the company less compared to the want-type complainant and falsely blames the company as much as the must-type complainant and the can-type complainant. Furthermore, this study recognized that the need-type complainant exaggerates, alters, or lies about the situation as much as the other types of complainants. However, the typology proposed that the need-type complainant is more likely to engage in illegitimate customer complaining behaviour than the must-type complainant, but less likely to engage in this behaviour in comparison to the want-type complainant and can-type complainant. This study found some evidence to support this prediction, as the need-type complainant differs in complaining behaviour compared to the want-type complainant on two forms of illegitimate complaining behaviour and compared to the can-type complainant on one form of illegitimate complaining. However, note that this study did not recognize that the need-type complainant engages second least in illegitimate complaining behaviour, only that it in comparison engages less in complaining behaviour.

Third, this study recognized that the need-type complainant uses the neutralization technique 'denial of responsibility'. Therefore, it is supported that the need-type complainant rationalizes one's behaviour by perceiving the company as the guilty party who needs to take responsibility for the situation. However, this study did not recognize that the need-type complainant uses the neutralization technique 'denial of injury'. Accordingly, it remains unproven that the need-type complainant rationalizes one's behaviour by perceiving one's self as innocent and viewing one's illegitimate complaining behaviour as harmless.

Finally, this study recognized that the need-type complainant has the second worst customer-company relationship. Accordingly, it supports the prediction that the customer-company relationship deteriorates after service recovery.

The want-type complainant

This study found sufficient evidence that supports the typology's prediction regarding the want-type complainant. First, this study recognized that the want-type complainant's behaviour is driven by: 'internal attribution', 'financial greed', and 'pre-planned', as vast majority of the respondents indicated that the behaviour reflected by the want-type complainant is applicable to their own situation. Therefore, it is supported that the want-type complainant engages in illegitimate complaining behaviour in order to obtain financial compensation from the company.

Second, this study recognized that the want-type complainant fabricates more in complaints compared to the other types of illegitimate complainant. Moreover, the want-type complainant falsely blames the company more compared to the need-type complainant and falsely blames the company as much as the must-type complainant and the can-type complainant. Furthermore, this study recognized that the want-type complainant exaggerates, alters, or lies about the situation as much as the other types of complainants. The typology proposed that the want-type complainant is most likely to engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour. This study found some evidence to support this prediction, as the want-type complainant differs in complaining behaviour compared to the three types of illegitimate complainants on one form of illegitimate complaining behaviour and compared to the need-type complainant on another form of illegitimate complaining behaviour.

Third, this study recognized that the want-type complainant uses the neutralization technique 'claim of entitlement'. Therefore, it is supported that the want-type complainant rationalizes one's behaviour by believing that it is allowed to file an illegitimate complaint without experiencing a service failure, as everybody deserves a godsend once in a while.

Finally, this study recognized that the want-type complainant has the second best customer-company relationship, as this is supported by all relationship variables except for 'commitment'. Moreover, this study recognized that both the want-type complainant and can-type complainant are considered to have an equally good customer-company relationship. However, the typology suggested that the want-type complainant would have the best customer-company relationship. Accordingly, this study found little evidence to support this prediction, as this is only supported by the 'commitment' relationship variable. Nevertheless, as this study recognized that the customer-company relationship improves after service recovery, part of the typology regarding the customer-company relationship is still supported.

The can-type complainant

This study found little evidence that supports the typology's prediction regarding the can-type complainant. First, this study found some evidence indicating that the can-type complainant's behaviour is driven by: 'opportunism', 'liberal redress policy', 'social norms', and 'attitude towards illegitimate complaining', as half of the respondents indicated that the behaviour reflected by the can-type complainant is applicable to their own situation. Therefore, it is supported that the can-type complainant engages in illegitimate complaining for personal gain when an opportunity is presented.

Second, this study recognized that the can-type complainant fabricates less in complaints compared to the want-type complainant and fabricates more in complaints compared to the need-type complainant, and fabricates complaints as much as the must-type complainant. Furthermore, this study recognized that the can-type complainant exaggerates, alters, or lies about the situation and falsely blames the company as much as the other types of complainants. However, the typology proposed that the can-type complainant is more likely to engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour in comparison to the must-type complainant and need-type complainant, but is less likely to engage in this behaviour compared to the want-type complainant. This study found limited evidence to support this prediction, as the can-type complainant only differs in complaining behaviour compared to the need-type complainant and the want-type complainant one form of illegitimate complaining behaviour.

Third, this study did not recognize that the can-type complainant uses the neutralization technique: claim of relative acceptability' ,'claim of normalcy', and 'metaphor of the ledger'. Therefore, it remains unproven that the can-type complainant rationalizes one's behaviour by perceiving illegitimate complaining as socially accepted behaviour when an opportunity is presented during a transaction.

Finally, this study recognized that the can-type complainant has the best customer-company relationship, as this is supported by all relationship variables except for 'commitment'. As mentioned, both the can-type complainant and want-type complainant are considered to have an equally good customer-company relationship. However, the typology suggested that the can-type complainant would have the second best customer-company relationship. Accordingly, this study found little evidence to support this prediction, as this is only supported by the 'commitment' relationship variable. Nevertheless, as this study recognized that the customer-company relationship improves after service recovery, part of the typology regarding the customer-company relationship is still supported.

Answer to the research question

This research study recognized the must-type complainant, need-type complainant, and the want-type complainant as distinguishable types of illegitimate complainants. Each type of illegitimate complainant deviates to some extent from the typology's predictions regarding the degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques, and customer-company relationship. However, as most predictions have been supported, this study confirms the existence of the three types of illegitimate complainants. However, the existence of the can-type complainant has not been confirmed within this study, as the typology's predictions regarding the can-type complainant's degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques, and customer-company relationship were barely supported within this research.

5.2 Theoretical Contributions

This research study aimed to provide insight into the typology of illegitimate complainants and its relationships per type of illegitimate complainant. Specifically, this research provided insight into different customers who engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour and its drivers, degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques, and customer-company relationship. Accordingly, this research study contributed to theoretical knowledge by providing insight into a new typology and the phenomenon of illegitimate complaining behaviour within service recovery. Moreover, this study provided more validation regarding the manuscript of Joosten.

Second, the hypotheses regarding illegitimate complaining behaviour have only been partly accepted, as this research indicated that the four types of illegitimate complainants reflect equal behaviour on certain forms of illegitimate complaining behaviour. Specifically, the types of illegitimate complainants are considered to behave equally when exaggerating, altering, or lying about the situation. Also, majority of the types of illegitimate complainants are considered to behave equally when falsely blaming the company. Only in comparison to each other, the need-type complainant and the want-type complainant behave different when falsely blaming the company. However, these research findings are not in line with the typology's prediction, as it was expected that each type would differ in illegitimate complaining behaviour. A possible explanation behind the contradicting results is that the hypothesized effect does not exist on all the three forms of illegitimate complaining behaviour. Also, the limitations of this research study could have been responsible for the contradicting results, which will be discussed later on in this chapter. Nevertheless, the typology's prediction remains plausible as it is supported

by other research studies (e.g. Berry & Seiders, 2008; Harris & Dumas, 2009; Joosten, 2020). For example, Berry and Seiders (2008) also suggest that customers differ in complaining behaviour, as each driver can result in different complaining behaviour. Moreover, Harris and Dumas (2009) also recognized that illegitimate complaining behaviour differs among customers, as neutralization techniques are either used pre-behaviour or post-behaviour, which affects the degree of complaining behaviour. Still, more research is needed in order to confirm either this study's results or the typology's prediction.

Third, the hypotheses regarding the neutralization techniques have almost all been accepted. This contributes to the theoretical knowledge regarding the use of neutralization techniques. Specifically, it confirms that customers use certain neutralization techniques in order to rationalize their deviant behaviour. Furthermore, this research recognized that some neutralization techniques are also applicable in a business environment, as previous studies (e.g. Cromwell & Thurman, 2003; Harris & Dumas, 2009; Minor, 1981; Sykes & Matza, 1957) mainly examined and recognized the use of neutralization techniques in a legal environment. However, this could also explain why certain neutralization techniques are not confirmed within this study, as some definitions may not be transmittable from a legal environment to a business one. Specifically, the theoretical mismatch could have caused respondents not to relate to certain neutralization techniques. Nevertheless, more research is required in order to determine the extent to which neutralization techniques are applicable in a business environment.

Fourth, this study recognized that the neutralization technique 'justification by postponement' could be applied by the can-type complainant. This contributes to the theoretical knowledge regarding the use of neutralization techniques and provides insight into the typology of illegitimate complainants. A possible explanation can be found within the typology. The typology suggests that the can-type complainant is aware of one's deviant act, but perceives illegitimate complaining as socially acceptable behaviour. Accordingly, the can-type complainant would not feel the need to take responsibility for the act and could rationalize this behaviour by simply putting it out of one's mind (Cromwell & Thurman, 2003). However, it is important to note that this study did not find statistical evidence that supports the existence of the can-type complainant. Hence, the discussed explanation is hypothetical.

Fifth, two hypotheses regarding the relationship variables have been accepted. This contributes to the existing theoretical knowledge that customer's attitude towards the company and perceived service recovery outcome affects customer satisfaction and in turn the customer-company relationship (Blodgett & Li, 2007; Miller et al., 2000; Tax et al., 1998). Furthermore, two hypotheses regarding the relationship variables have been rejected, as the want-type

complainant and the can-type complainant were not found to have the typology's predicted customer-company relationship. Specifically, this study recognized that the want-type complainant has the second best customer-company relationship and the can-type complainant the best customer-company relationship. A possible explanation for these contrariwise findings is that the want-type complainant pre-plans illegitimate complaints, while the can-type complainant files the complaint afterwards when an opportunity is presented. Accordingly, the can-type complainant could develop a relative better perception of the company after service recovery, as this type of complainant did not have any expectations regarding the service recovery outcome beforehand.

Finally, this study recognized that the service recovery paradox is to some extent applicable within the phenomenon of illegitimate complaining behaviour (De Matos et al., 2007), which contributes to the existing knowledge regarding the service recovery paradox. Specifically, this research recognized that customer satisfaction is increased for the want-type complainant and the can-type complainant after service recovery, as both have a more positive perception on the customer-company relationship. However, the must-type complainant and the need-type complainant have a decreased customer satisfaction after service recovery, as both have a more negative perception on the customer company relationship. Accordingly, the service paradox recovery is only applicable to the want-type complainant and the can-type complainant.

5.3 Managerial Implications

Many companies nowadays still operate under the motto 'the customer is king', which reflects the idea that the customer is always right and should be given the benefit of the doubt in service failure situations (Kim & Aggarwal, 2016). However, research revealed that some customers take advantage of companies' service recovery process by complaining illegitimately (Reynolds & Harris, 2003; Fisk, et al., 2010). Accordingly, deeper insight is required to determine what types of customers engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour so managers can decide whether it is beneficial to continue investing money, time, and effort in complaint handling. This study's research findings provide insights that enables managers to develop a greater understanding in the phenomenon of illegitimate complaining behaviour and the types of illegitimate complainants. As mentioned, it is important to note that this study did not find statistical evidence that supports the existence of the can-type complainant. Therefore, the following discussing relating the can-type complainant should be considered with precaution.

First, this research shows that all types of illegitimate complainants have certain drivers that motivates their illegitimate complaining behaviour and use particular neutralization techniques in order to rationalize this behaviour. Companies who want to prevent customers from filing illegitimate complaints need to neutralize both these drivers and neutralization techniques. Managers can adopt various strategies that neutralizes illegitimate complaining behaviour. The must-type complainant and need-type complainant both blame the company for the service failure situation and perceive themselves as innocent. Consequently, the company is perceived as the party that should take responsibility. As the must-type complainant also perceives the company as opportunistic, managers can neutralize this type of complainant by showing goodwill to the customer. This gesture can deactivate the perception that the company takes advantage of the situation. Furthermore, the need-type complainant is mostly disappointed that the company could not deliver a service or product that met the customer's expectations. Therefore, managers can neutralize this type of complainant by providing clear communication, as this can prevent miscommunication and misperception beforehand or in an early service recovery stage. Also, managers could neutralize both the must-type complainant and the need-type complainant by training and rewarding its employees to become more service oriented and polite towards the customers. As a consequence, customers could develop a more positive image of the company, which will results in a reduced motivation to engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour, as it becomes harder for customers to rationalize their misbehaviour. Thus, it will become harder for the must-type complainant and need-type complainant to place the blame solely on the company.

Furthermore, the want-type complainant and can-type complainant do not blame the company for the service failure situation, as both are aware that they engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour for personal gain. Therefore, it is important that managers adopt a service recovery protocol that reduces the motivation to engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour in advance or when an opportunity is presented. Managers can neutralize the behaviour of both the want-type complainant and can-type complainant by abolishing the mantra 'the customer is always right' within service recovery. Accordingly, managers could abandon its redress policy or reduce the ease of complaint filing, which could include implementing more criteria that customers need to abide by, submitting more substantial evidence, or asking more critical questions. As a consequence, customers need to put in more effort which could demotivate customers who plan to file an illegitimate complaint or who notice an opportunity. However, note that adopting this strategy can be negatively received by customers who have legitimate complaints. Accordingly, managers need to find a balance that

avoids customers with legitimate complaints from being dissatisfied, but demotivates customers with illegitimate complaints to engage in illegitimate complaining behaviour.

Finally, illegitimate complaints consume a considerable amount of money, time, and energy (Fisk, et al., 2010). Moreover, these illegitimate complaints distract attention from legitimate complaints that need to be processed and solves. Nevertheless, managers need to consider whether it is more beneficial to invest in preventing illegitimate complaints from being filed or to continue operating without battling this deviant behaviour. The must-type complainant and the need-type complainant are found to have a more negative perception on the customer-company relationship after service recovery, while the want-type complainant and can-type complainant are found to have a more positive perception on the customer-company. Having a good customer-company relationship is important for companies as retaining customers is more beneficial than attracting new one's (Keller & Parameswaran, 2019; Stauss & Friege, 1999). Accordingly, manager needs to map out whether it is worth sustaining relationships with certain types of illegitimate complainants.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

This research study has been carefully set-up and executed. However, the shortcomings in the selected research design caused that this study's findings and contributions have been constrained by certain limitations. Nevertheless, these limitations also provide opportunities for future research within the field of illegitimate complaining behaviour. This section will discuss the found limitations within this research study and potential areas for future research.

First, the method selected within this study comes with certain limitations. An online survey was conducted, in which full anonymity was guaranteed. Consequently, the researcher had no control over the selected sample and it proved impossible to confirm that each response came from an unique individual. Moreover, the validity was negatively affected as not everyone in the population had an equal chance to participate in this study (Duda & Nobile, 2010). Finally, this method is associated with an increased chance of non-response, as potential participants can ignore the received invitation to take part in this research study (Evans & Mathur, 2005). Therefore, future research could conduct a qualitative study with in-depth interviews, as this provides the opportunity to examine illegitimate complaining behaviour deeper and explore other possible relations among the types of illegitimate complainants (Bleijenbergh, 2013). Moreover, a qualitative research design with in-depth interviews gives researchers more control over the selected sample and the ability to confirm that each response

is unique to one individual. However, as this topic remains sensitive in nature, a qualitative research will also be associated with certain limitations.

Second, the sample contains some limitations that need to be addressed. The convenience sampling method was applied that could cause sampling bias (Etikan et al., 2016). Specifically, the dataset contained mostly Dutch women who are highly educated and are between 21 and 25 years old. Moreover, women are considered to have a higher tendency to complain and express feelings of dissatisfaction regarding a company's complaint handling protocol (Heung & Lam, 2003). Accordingly, the behaviour portrayed by this study's sample can differ from other segments of the population. As a consequence, the generalizability of the research findings is limited (Etikan et al., 2016). However, it is important to mention that this study did not aim to produce generalizable results. Nevertheless, future research could focus on improving the external validity, as it gives the typology more validation. Specifically, future researchers could include the quota sampling method, as this method aims to include various respondents with different demographic features and cultural backgrounds (Babbie, 2016). Thereupon, future research could examine the extent to which cultural and demographical characteristic cause different illegitimate complaining behaviour, as it is recognizes that culture and demographic characteristics affect customer behaviour (Hui & Wan, 2007; Yuksel, Kilinc, & Yuksel, 2006). Finally, the sample could be influenced by recall bias, which affects this study's reliability and generalizability (East & Uncles, 2008). The recall bias arises when the situation in question has been exposed to a certain period of time, whereby details have become clouded in memory (Coughlin, 1990). As 38,5 per cent of the respondents indicated that the illegitimate complaint occurred more than two years ago, it is most likely that these cases are influenced by recall bias. Therefore, future research can focus on including more recent cases or on examining solely recent cases as this will limit recall biases and improve both the study's reliability and external validity.

Third, this research used single-item measures which affects the study's overall validity (Wanous, Reichers, & Hudy, 1997). Future research could attempt to measure the variables by multiple items in order to increase the validity. However, as this will create a more extended survey, researchers need to find a balance between including multiple-item measures and a survey length that attracts respondents into participating. Furthermore, this research did not empirically test all the typology's components, as the drivers were not measured separately but within a predicted scenario aimed at testing the types of illegitimate complainant. This decision was made to reduce the length of the survey and to make it more attractive to potential participants. Also, previous research (e.g. Joosten, 2020) had already examined clusters of

drivers that could be assigned to a certain type of illegitimate complainant. Nevertheless, this study cannot confirm whether each driver is accurately assigned to a certain type of illegitimate complaint and whether this is in line with previous research findings. Consequently, the overall power of the research findings and the typology have been reduced. Accordingly, future research could empirically test all typology's components separately in order to increase the overall power. Finally, this study does not include all variables that predict illegitimate complaining behaviour and affect the customer-company relationship. Accordingly, future research could include other drivers and relationship variables to enhance knowledge on the phenomenon of illegitimate complaining behaviour.

Fourth, the dataset includes some limitations that need to be discussed. First, the dataset barely meets the assumptions that have been tested before conducting the MANOVA analysis. Specifically, the sample was not equally distributed, not every group contained 30 responses, and both normality and to some extent linearity was violated. Accordingly, the results have become less interpretable and the power relating the statistical test and research findings have been reduced (Field, 2013; Nimon, 2012; Voorhis & Morgan, 2007). Second, the Box's M test was found significant within this study. However, as this research included unequal group sizes, the robustness of the MANOVA analysis has been affected (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Thus, future research should aim to collect a dataset that meets the statistical assumptions in order to increase the statistical power, interpretation of the results, and the power and robustness of the research findings.

Fifth, this research looked at illegitimate complaining behaviour within the service industry, which is known for its effort to keep customers satisfied (Huang & Miao, 2016). However, this study did not examen the difference among illegitimate complaints based on services or products, while both are considerable different in nature (Parry, Newnes, & Huang, 2011). Accordingly, future research could examine how the difference between products and services can affect illegitimate complaining behaviour.

To conclude, this research study aimed to provide insight into the four types of illegitimate complainants based on the underlying drivers, degree of illegitimate complaining behaviour, neutralization techniques, and customer-company relationship. The quantitative nature of this study was accompanied by several limitations which affected the results' power and robustness and constrained the study's overall power. Nevertheless, the researcher is hopeful that future research continues to examine both the phenomenon of illegitimate complaining behaviour and the typology of illegitimate complainants by taking into account this study's findings and limitations.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Pre-Test Survey

Table 1 pre-test demographic data

Respondent	Age	Education level (Dutch educational system)	Device	Date (dd-mm-yyyy)	Time
1	58	MBO	Laptop	28-03-2021	14 min
2	56	HBO	Laptop	28-03-2021	16 min
3	24	WO	Laptop	28-03-2021	12 min
4	56	MBO	Laptop	28-03-2021	14 min
5	59	HBO	Laptop	28-03-2021	15 min
6	23	WO	Laptop	29-03-2021	15 min
7	25	HBO	Laptop	30-03-2021	14 min
8	23	WO	Laptop	30-03-2021	16 min
9	16	MBO	Laptop	30-03-2021	15 min
10	20	MBO	Laptop	31-03-2021	12 min

Table 2 pre-test results respondents

Respondent 1:
- Het lijkt nu net alsof je het ook mag verzinnen, dat is een beetje gek. Het voelt dan niet alsof het een valide onderzoek is. Misschien is het slimmer om het te verwoorden op een manier dat voorstelt om een situatie te bedenken die je zelf kan voorstellen of waarin je je kan inleven o.i.d.?
- De 'mee oneens' klinkt een beetje gek vind ik. Ik zou de 'mee' weghalen, of er van maken 'niet mee eens'.

Respondent 2:
- De zin dat er gevraagd wordt om de vragenlijst in te vullen voor een niet verzonnen klacht of overdreven klacht die je te binnen schiet vind ik onduidelijk en hier moet ik lang over nadenken.
- De vraag: Wat is uw hoogst genoten opleiding, waarom staat hier tussen haakjes met of zonder diploma? Dit is overbodig aangezien er toch geen verschil wordt gemaakt.

Respondent 3:
- Vraag me af of het nodig is om de bedrijfsnaam te weten.
- In de scenario's wordt financieel voordeelTJE genoemd, ik zou dit gewoon aanpassen naar voordeel, dit is wat zakelijker.
- In de scenario's zie ik veel losse kort zinnen, denk dat het mooier is om de zinnen aan elkaar te maken.
- Vervolgens wordt er gevraagd in hoeverre de situatie bij mij past. Wat wordt bedoeld met past half? Beetje onduidelijk. Dit kan denk ik duidelijker door dit te veranderen in de zin: "De omschreven situatie past bij mijn situatie" en dan variëren van helemaal mee eens tot helemaal mee oneens.

Respondent 4:

- Beetje gek dat ik zelf een klacht moet verzinnen, klopt het onderzoek dan wel?

Respondent 5:
- Ik vind het persoonlijk mooier als bij het beginstukje 'namelijk overdreven of verzonnen' buiten de haakjes staan.
- Bij het beginstuk bovendien erg heftige voorbeelden van klachten. Dit zou kunnen afschrikken. Misschien al voorbeelden doen die iets minder heftig zijn zoals dat je na 10 dagen klaagt dat je al weken zonder internet zit i.p.v. dat je dat al na een dag doet.
- Jan's stukje moet ook nog tussenhaakjes.
- Ik vind dit zin "Mocht u nog nooit een klacht overdreven of verzonnen hebben, wilt u dan de vragenlijst invullen voor een niet verzonnen of overdreven klacht die u te binnen schiet?" onduidelijk. Misschien alleen van maken: "Mocht u nog nooit een klacht overdreven of verzonnen hebben, wilt u dan toch de vragenlijst invullen?".
- Ik zou voor de vragenlijst begint de anonimiteit nogmaals benadrukken.
- I.p.v. bv. zou ik bijv. of bijvoorbeeld neerzetten.
- Bij de vraag over de verschillende beschrijvingen benadrukken dat er sowieso iets gekozen moet worden. Bijvoorbeeld zeggen: "Misschien past de beschrijving niet volledig, maar we vragen u om wel **een keuze te maken** voor de **beste passende** beschrijving".

Respondent 6:
- Bij het beginstuk is het dan wel handig om te verwijzen naar u in plaats van het breed pakken en naar iemand of een persoon verwijzen.
- Bij de vraag: "Mocht u nog nooit een klacht overdreven of verzonnen hebben, wilt u dan de vragenlijst invullen voor een niet verzonnen of overdreven klacht die u te binnen schiet?" verzin je nog steeds een nieuwe klacht. De omschrijving wordt niet goed geïnterpreteerd door de respondent.
- Apart dat als je nog nooit een klacht hebt verzonnen/overdreven dat je daar nu over moet liegen in de survey/zomaar iets verzinnen. Mij lijkt dat je hiermee niet meet wat je wilt meten. Ook kon ik hierdoor niet goed antwoord geven op de vragen erna.
- Vraag: "In hoeverre heeft u de klacht **overdreven** (dus **erger** voorgesteld dan het daadwerkelijk was)?"staat lettertype anders. Geldt ook voor de volgende vraag.
- Ik zou het woord 'half' veranderen in vraag 12,13, en 14 vervangen door het woord 'enigszins'.
- Bij de vraag 18 "het was niet mijn schuld", oppassen dat het een dubbele ontkenning is. Dit geldt voor meerdere vragen. Volgens mij hoort dit zoveel mogelijk vermijden te worden dus dan zou je er eerder van kunnen maken "het was mijn schuld".
- Vraag: "Het bedrijf is ook niet altijd eerlijk tegenover klanten", eventueel van maken óók.
- Vraag 23: "Mijn band met het bedrijf is na deze situatie…" mijn band met het bedrijf na deze situatie is dan sterker of zwakker ipv groter of kleiner.
- Soms staat er het bedrijf in kwestie en soms niet dus kijk er nog even naar ivm consistentie.

Respondent 7:
- Het zou kunnen dat mensen een door hen overdreven klacht niet bestempelen als overdreven, vandaar dat de gegeven optie om een een niet verzonnen of overdreven klacht die hen te binnen schiet te beschrijven goed is. Maar ik zou het wel anders formuleren, want nu komt het wat vreemd over.
- Gek dat demografische vragen aan het einde zijn; eerst profiel opstellen omtrent klachten en erna pas info over wie je bent.

Respondent 8:
- Een spatie na Matty.
- Ik zou namelijk overdreven of verzonnen tussen komma's zetten.

- De voorbeelden zijn vrij heftig in het beginstuk, ze komen nogal heel overdreven over, dus ik zou een iets simpelere tussen zetten.
- Bij Matty: uiteindelijk heb ik bij de vliegmaatschappij, de heb ik mist zeg maar.
- dit bleek waar: misschien van maken en dit bleek ook zo te zijn.
- 'Mocht u nog nooit een klacht overdreven of verzonnen hebben, wilt u dan de vragenlijst invullen voor een niet verzonnen of overdreven klacht die u te binnen schiet?' - vind ik een beetje gek dat je dan alsnog een klacht verzint, misschien ervan maken: wilt u dan de vragenlijst invullen op basis van een van de eerder genoemde voorbeelden oid.
- Ik zou er: heeft u ooit, dus de al weghalen.
- Als je dan dus nee invult, krijg je wel de vraag: over welk product of welke dienst heeft u overdreven of geklaagd. Dus eigenlijk is het niet logisch dat je dan alsnog de vragen moet beantwoorden, dus misschien moet je voor die mensen gewoon de survey laten eindigen.
- Waarom willen jullie eigenlijk de naam van het bedrijf weten?
- Bij de vraag in hoeverre de klacht is overdreven 'probleem overdreven' weghalen, beetje overbodig, same voor de verdere vragen.
- De lettertypes op die pagina en kleuren zijn trouwens anders.
- Bij de vraag om een best passende beschrijving te kiezen staat bij de eerste bv, ik zou dit uitschrijven want is niet zo professioneel.
- De past beschrijving ook weer weghalen, het staat zo gek en dubbel haha. Tenzij dit moet natuurlijk, maar mij lijkt het alleen maar onnodig.
- Kan een band groter zijn? Ik zou eerder sterker oid verwachten.
- Dit was de enige keer misschien gewoon 1 keer van maken, consistent met de 2 en 3 kee.r
- Wat is uw hoogst genoten opleiding met of zonder diploma? Dan krijg je toch verschillende antwoorden want de 1 zegt met en de ander zonder, dus ik zou er 1 kiezen.

Respondent 9:
- Op de eerste pagina's staan er geen komma's achter Lynn en Matty.
- Op bladzijde 1 staat er dat 'Iedereen heeft wel eens geklaagd over een product of dienst.' Hierna begint pagina 2 met 'Uit onderzoek blijkt dat veel mensen wel eens een klacht hebben overdreven of verzonnen.' Dit klopt dus niet.
- Het is een beetje onduidelijk wat jullie bedoelen met 'Neem de tijd om goed na te denken over een situatie waarin u een klacht (deels) heeft overdreven of verzonnen. Mocht u nog nooit een klacht overdreven of verzonnen hebben, wilt u dan de vragenlijst invullen voor een niet verzonnen of overdreven klacht die u te binnen schiet?'
- Bij vraag 1 staat 'al', daarom lijkt het alsof het normaal is om een klacht te overdrijven of te verzinnen.
- Bij vraag 9 is het antwoord 'Helemaal niet onterecht de schuld gegeven' een beetje raar. Het klinkt niet logisch.
- Op pagina 5 staat 'In hoeverre bent u het eens met de volgende stellingen betreffende uw klacht?', maar de vragen hierover staan op pagina 6. Ik zou die zin op dezelfde pagina als de vragen zetten.

Respondent 10:
- In de voorbeelden over klagen worden niet echt volle zinnen gebruikt, meer losse stukken. Bijvoorbeeld bij 'Uiteindelijk bij de vliegmaatschappij een hoger bedrag opgegeven over de waarde van de inhoud dan dat er daadwerkelijk in zat.' Hier kun je 'Uiteindelijk HEB IK bij de vliegmaatschappij…..' van maken.
- De overloop van vraag 1 naar vraag 2 is vreemd. Voeg dan toe: 'wanneer u 'nee' invult, vul de volgende vragen dan in voor een niet verzonnen of overdreven klacht die u te binnen schiet'. Dit is wat dubbelop, maar beter dubbelop dan onlogisch/verwarrend.

- Bij vraag 3 zou ik erachter zetten 'in euro's'.
- Bij vraag 6: wat moet je invullen als er geen probleem was?
- Vraag 25 is geen vraag, en de echte vragen staan pas op de volgende pagina (denk ik).
- Vraag 26: 'aan aankoop' moet 'een aankoop' zijn.
- Vraag 34: kun je 'genoten' niet vervangen door iets anders?

Appendix II: Survey

Beste meneer/mevrouw,

Hartelijk dank voor uw deelname aan dit onderzoek! Wij zijn Myrthe, Jan, Lyn en Matty, masterstudenten van de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen. Voor onze thesis 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 wel toegeven dat hun klacht soms niet helemaal eerlijk, namelijk 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 een week zonder internet zit, terwijl u maar een dag zonder zat of u eist daarbij een schadevergoeding die helemaal of deels onterecht is.

Dit onderzoek richt zich op de omstandigheden waarin klanten klachten overdrijven of verzinnen. Wij begrijpen dat dit onderwerp wellicht gevoelig ligt, daarom is deze enquête volledig anoniem. Deelname is uiteraard geheel vrijwillig, uw antwoorden worden alleen voor dit onderzoek gebruikt en u kunt op elk 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!

Myrthe Eijkelkamp

Jan Peters

Lyn Bannink

Matty Cooijmans

Dr. Herm Joosten

Radboud University

Uit onderzoek blijkt dat veel mensen wel eens een klacht hebben overdreven of verzonnen. Heeft u ook wel eens een klacht overdreven of verzonnen? Denk dan terug aan die situatie bij het beantwoorden van de vragen.

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

Matty: "Mijn koffer is de heenreis van vakantie eens kwijtgeraakt. Waar ik de eerste vijf dagen aan het lijntje werd gehouden met de belofte dat mijn koffer 'de dag er na zou aankomen' hoorde ik vanaf dag vijf niks meer over mijn koffer. Uiteindelijk heb ik bij de vliegmaatschappij een hoger bedrag opgegeven over de waarde van de inhoud dan dat er daadwerkelijk in zat. Ik verwachtte niet het gehele bedrag te krijgen, en dit bleek ook zo te zijn."

Lyn: "Ik heb wel eens een nieuwe blouse op een te warme temperatuur gestreken (zonder te kijken of ik die blouse wel kon strijken) waardoor het materiaal smolt. Op het label stond echter dat je het kledingstuk op een lage temperatuur kon strijken. Ik heb het bedrijf daarom verteld dat ik niet te warm gestreken heb en mijn klacht dus overdreven om zo een nieuwe blouse te krijgen."

Myrthe: "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, en bleef de schade voor mij beperkt."

Jan: "Mijn provider had eens storing waardoor ik een half uur lang geen tv kon kijken. Ik heb vervolgens de provider gebeld en gezegd dat ik een voor mij heel belangrijke voetbalwedstrijd niet heb kunnen kijken omdat de storing 'de hele middag' duurde. Door deze overdreven klacht heeft de provider mij een maand lang alle voetbalkanalen gratis aangeboden."

Herm: "De touroperator vertelde dat ze mij om moesten boeken naar een ander hotel in Spanje. Ik heb gedaan alsof 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 overdreven of verzonnen. Ook wanneer u vindt dat uw klacht niet overdreven of verzonnen is, vragen wij u de vragen te beantwoorden. Ook dan zijn de antwoorden waardevol voor het onderzoek.

1. Over welk product of welke dienst heeft u overdreven of verzonnen geklaagd (of een claim ingediend)?

_____

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

_____

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

○ Klein bedrijf (bijv. eenmanszaak)

○ Middelgroot bedrijf (bijv. 2 of 3 vestigingen)

○ Groot bedrijf (bijv. winkelketen of grote producent)

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

_____

5. In hoeverre heeft u de klacht **overdreven** (dus **erger** voorgesteld dan het daadwerkelijk was)?

	Helemaal niet	Een klein beetje	Enigszins	Grotendeels	Volledig
Probleem overdreven (illegitimate complaints 1)	○	○	○	○	○

6. In hoeverre heeft u de klacht **verzonnen** (ofwel **anders** voorgesteld dan het daadwerkelijk was)?

	Helemaal niet	Een klein beetje	Enigszins	Grotendeels	Volledig
Probleem verzonnen (illegitimate complaints 2)	○	○	○	○	○

7. In hoeverre heeft u **ten onrechte** de ondernemer **de schuld gegeven** van de klacht (terwijl hij/zij er in werkelijkheid geen schuld aan had)?

	Helemaal niet	Een klein beetje	Enigszins	Grotendeels	Volledig
Onterecht de schuld geven (illegitimate complaints 3)	○	○	○	○	○

8. Wanneer speelde uw beschreven situatie?

○ Het afgelopen jaar

○ Langer dan een jaar geleden

○ Langer dan twee jaar geleden

---

9. Welke beschrijving hieronder past het best bij wat u is overkomen? Toelichting: misschien past de beschrijving niet volledig, maar we vragen u om wel **een keuze te maken** voor de **beste passende beschrijving**.

Must

a. Het bedrijf heeft geprobeerd misbruik van mij te maken, door bv opzettelijk een slecht product of slechte dienst te leveren. Dat voelde erg onrechtvaardig. Ik heb geklaagd en alles gedaan wat ik kon om ze ter verantwoording te roepen, maar ze hielden zich niet aan afspraken en trokken zich nergens wat van aan.

Need:

b. Het bedrijf heeft niet gepresteerd zoals ze zouden moeten presteren. Hun product of dienst was ver beneden mijn verwachtingen, hierdoor was ik teleurgesteld/boos op het bedrijf. Het was misschien geen opzet van hun kant, maar ze zijn wel verantwoordelijk voor hun slechte product of dienst.

Want:

c. Het bedrijf heeft niet echt iets verkeerd gedaan. Integendeel. Ik heb zélf opzettelijk de zaak overdreven of verzonnen om een (financieel) voordeeltje te behalen zoals een vergoeding of een nieuw product of een tegoedbon.

Can

d. Het bedrijf heeft een erg soepele garantieregeling of erg vriendelijke klantenservice. Zoiets als "niet goed, geld terug". Dus ik zag een mooie kans om een voordeeltje te behalen. Daarom heb ik de zaak overdreven of verzonnen. Het was niet vooraf gepland van mijn kant. Ik denk dat anderen ook hun kans gegrepen zouden hebben. Ik zit er niet mee.

10. Hoe goed past die beschrijving bij wat u is overkomen?

	Past helemaal niet	Past een beetje	Past enigszins	Past grotendeels	Past helemaal
Past beschrijving?	○	○	○	○	○

In hoeverre bent u het eens met de volgende stellingen betreffende uw klacht?

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Niet mee eens/niet mee oneens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
11. Het was niet mijn schuld (denial of responsibility)	○	○	○	○	○
12. Het bedrijf zal er heus geen ernstige schade door lijden (denial of injury)	○	○	○	○	○
13. Het bedrijf verdient het door wat ze gedaan hebben (denial of victim)	○	○	○	○	○
14. Het bedrijf is ook niet altijd eerlijk tegenover klanten (condemnation of the condemners)	○	○	○	○	○
15. Ik deed het niet voor mezelf (maar uit principe of voor anderen) (Appeal to higher loyalties)	○	○	○	○	○
16. Iedereen overdrijft wel eens (claim of normalcy)	○	○	○	○	○
17. Ik was niet op voorhand van plan om overdreven te klagen (denial of negative intent)	○	○	○	○	○
18. Andere mensen doen veel ergere dingen (claim of relative acceptability)	○	○	○	○	○
19. Normaal gesproken houd ik me wel aan de regels (metaphor of the ledger)	○	○	○	○	○

20. Ik mag ook wel eens een meevallertje hebben (claim of entitlement)	○	○	○	○	○
21. Anders werd ik niet serieus genomen door het bedrijf (defense of necessity)	○	○	○	○	○
22. Op dat moment dacht ik niet echt na over de consequenties (gevoelens kwamen later pas) (justification by postponement)	○	○	○	○	○

We zijn bijna aan het einde van de vragenlijst!

In hoeverre is uw houding ten opzichte van het bedrijf veranderd na het indienen van uw klacht?

	Veel kleiner	Kleiner	Onveranderd	Groter	Veel groter
23. De kans dat ik nogmaals aan aankoop doe bij het bedrijf in kwestie na deze situatie is… (loyalty)	○	○	○	○	○
24. De kans dat ik anderen (familie/vrienden/etc.) het bedrijf in kwestie aanraad is na deze situatie…(WOM)	○	○	○	○	○
25. Het vertrouwen dat ik in het bedrijf in kwestie heb na deze situatie is… (trust)	○	○	○	○	○
26. Mijn band met het bedrijf is na deze situatie… (commitment)	○	○	○	○	○
27. Mijn tevredenheid over het bedrijf is na deze situatie… (satisfaction)	○	○	○	○	○

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

○ Nog nooit

○ 1 keer

○ 2 keer

○ Vaker dan 3 keer

29. Wat is uw leeftijd?

_____

30. Wat is uw geslacht?

○ Man

○ Vrouw

○ Anders/ wil ik niet zeggen

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

○ Lagere school/basisonderwijs

○ Voortgezet onderwijs

○ MBO

○ HBO

○ Universiteit

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

Nogmaals hartelijk dank voor uw medewerking! Indien u geïnteresseerd bent in de resultaten van het onderzoek kunt u een mail sturen naar: myrthe.eijkelkamp@student.ru.nl, jw.peters@student.ru.nl, l.bannink@student.ru.nl or m.cooijmans@student.ru.nl.

Appendix III: Assumptions

Assumption: Normality

Table 3 Univariate normality

Variable	Shape descriptors				Test of Normality	
	Skewness	*Z-value*	*Kurtosis*	*Z-value*	*Statistic*	*Sig.*
Illegitimate Complaints Exaggerated, Altered or Lied About	.283	1.925	-.800	-2.730**	.194	.000
Illegitimate Complaints Fabricated	1.041	7.082**	-.145	-.495	.309	.000
Illegitimate Complaints Falsely Blamed	1.134	7.714**	.013	.044	.332	.000
Denial of Responsibility	-.725	-4.932**	-.671	-2.290*	.227	.000
Denial of Injury	-1.375	-9.354**	1.674	5.713**	.295	.000
Denial of Victim	.036	.245	-1.005	-3.430**	.154	.000
Condemnation of the Condemners	-.127	-.864	-.622	-2.123*	.187	.000
Appeal to Higher Loyalties	.877	5.966**	-.182	-.621	.252	.000
Claim of Normalcy	-1.132	-7.701**	1.893	6.461**	.343	.000
Denial of Negative Intent	-.773	-5.259**	-.279	-.952	.288	.000
Claim of Relative Acceptability	-.659	-4.483**	.296	1.010	.205	.000
Metaphor of the Ledger	-.910	-6.190**	1.414	4.826**	.313	.000
Claim of Entitlement	-.662	-4.503**	.854	2.915**	.275	.000
Defence of the Necessity	-.429	-2.918**	-.709	-2.420*	.228	.000
Justification by Postponement	.334	2.272*	-.690	-2.355*	.204	.000
Loyalty	-.264	-1.796	.116	.396	.331	.000
WOM	-.214	-1.456	-.157	-.536	.309	.000
Trust	-.170	-1.156	-.424	-1.447	.272	.000
Commitment	-.343	-2.333*	.057	.195	.326	.000
Satisfaction	-.240	-1.633	-.777	-2.652**	.223	.000

* Non-normal distribution at .05 significance level (> 1.96)
** Non-normal distribution at .01 significance level (> 2.58)
Note 1: the z-values were derived by dividing the standard error of .147 (Skewness) and .293 (Kurtosis).
Note 2: for the Test of Normality, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was conducted.

Table 4 Multivariate normality

Case Number	Value
1	58.111
25	56.336
240	51.076
26	47.556
177	46.373

Note: Mahalanobis Distance Critical Value: 37.57 at p < .01.

Table 5 Group variances

Type of Illegitimate Complainant	N
The Must-type	24
The Need-type	152
The Want-type	63
The Can-type	36

Assumption: Linearity

Table 6 Test of linearity

Variable	F-value	Sig.
Illegitimate Complaints Exaggerated, Altered or Lied About.	$F(2,271) = 1.373$	.255
Illegitimate Complaints Fabricated	$F(2,271) = 30.800$	.000**
Illegitimate Complaints Falsely Blamed	$F(2,271) = 2.448$	.088
Denial of Responsibility	$F(2,271) = 27.016$	.000**
Denial of Injury	$F(2,271) = 1.291$	.277
Denial of Victim	$F(2,271) = 12.403$	.000**
Condemnation of the Condemners	$F(2,271) = 2.477$	.086
Appeal to Higher Loyalties	$F(2,271) = 1.092$	.337
Claim of Normalcy	$F(2,271) = 2.002$	.137
Denial of Negative Intent	$F(2,271) = 3.678$	.027*
Claim of Relative Acceptability	$F(2,271) = .464$	.629
Metaphor of the Ledger	$F(2,271) = 2.203$	.112
Claim of Entitlement	$F(2,271) = 5.789$	.003**
Defence of the Necessity	$F(2,271) = 2.649$	.073
Justification by Postponement	$F(2,271) = 1.077$	.342

Loyalty	F(2,271) = 5.557	.004**
WOM	F(2,271) = 4.426	.013*
Trust	F(2,271) = 5.310	.005**
Commitment	F(2,271) = 6.122	.003**
Satisfaction	F(2,271) = 3.412	.034*

*Non-linear at significance level (p < .05)
** Non-linear at significance level (p < .01)

Assumption: Multicollinearity

Table 7a Correlation matrix illegitimate complaints

Measures	1	2	3
(1)Illegitimate Complaints Exaggerated, Altered or Lied About		.423**	.303**
(2)Illegitimate Complaints Fabricated	.423**		.274**
(3)Illegitimate Complaints Falsely Blamed	.303**	.274**	

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)
** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 7b Correlation matrix illegitimate complaints and neutralization techniques

Measures	Illegitimate Complaints Exaggerated, Altered or Lied About	Illegitimate Complaints Fabricated	Illegitimate Complaints Falsely Blamed
Denial of Responsibility	-.161**	-.442**	-.242**
Denial of Injury	.128*	-.008	.082
Denial of Victim	-.021	-.288**	-.119*
Condemnation of the Condemners	.000	-.136*	-.015
Appeal to Higher Loyalties	-.035	-.044	.049
Claim of Normalcy	.334**	.191**	.122*
Denial of Negative Intent	-.028	-.067	.042
Claim of Relative Acceptability	.041	.006	.011

Metaphor of the Ledger	-.035	.043	.033
Claim of Entitlement	.142*	.159**	.066
Defence of the Necessity	.142*	-.163**	.107
Justification by Postponement	.091	.083	.109

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)
** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 7c Correlation matrix neutralization techniques

Measures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
(1)Denial of Responsibility		.133*	.542**	.247**	.091	-.138*	.142*	-.001	-.116	-.143*	.132*	-.127*
(2)Denial of Injury	.133*		.201**	.000	-.065	.191**	.003	.159**	.074	.123*	.202**	-.022
(3)Denial of Victim	.542**	.201**		.363**	.098.	.008	.158**	.109	-.035	.042	.345**	-.119*
(4)Condemnation of the Condemners	.247**	.000	.363**		.084	.164**	.101	.101	.141*	.081	.374**	.005
(5)Appeal to Higher Loyalties	.091	-.065	.098	.084		-.028	.030	.186**	.090	.122*	.103	.106
(6)Claim of Normalcy	-.138*	.191**	.008	.164**	-.028		-.095	.236**	.158**	.313**	.102	.023
(7)Denial of Negative Intent	.142*	.003	.158**	.101	.030	-.095		.051	.045	-.139*	.044	-.022
(8)Claim of Relative Acceptability	-.001	.159**	.109	.101	.186**	.236**	.051		.248**	.501**	.213**	.104
(9)Metaphor of the Ledger	-.116	.074	-.035	.141*	.090	.158**	.045	.248**		.163**	.066	.034
(10)Claim of Entitlement	-.143*	.123*	.042	.081	.122*	.313**	-.139*	.501**	.163**		.286**	.173**
(11)Defence of the Necessity	-.132*	.202**	.345**	.374**	.103	.102	.044	.213**	.066	.286**		.210**

(12)Justification by Postponement	-.127*	-.022	-.119*	.005	.106	.023	-.022	.104	.034	.173**	.210**	

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)
** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 7d Correlation matrix relationship variables and neutralization techniques

Measures	Loyalty	WOM	Trust	Commitment	Satisfaction
Denial of Responsibility	-.285**	-.275**	-.288**	-.279**	-.320**
Denial of Injury	.092	.082	.052	.062	.081
Denial of Victim	-.376**	-.376**	-.416**	-.435**	-.453**
Condemnation of the Condemners	-.444**	-.470**	-.422**	-.432**	-.459**
Appeal to Higher Loyalties	-.062	-.090	-.055	.002	-.078
Claim of Normalcy	-.018	.014	-.041	-.018	-.019
Denial of Negative Intent	-.161**	-.190**	-.132*	-.138*	-.182**
Claim of Relative Acceptability	-.062	-.074	-.073	-.048	-.058
Metaphor of the Ledger	-.023	-.034	-.064	-.034	.036
Claim of Entitlement	.050	.041	-.007	.040	.009
Defence of the Necessity	-.273**	-.288**	-.245**	-.256**	-.226**
Justification by Postponement	.137*	.112	.146*	.139*	.161**

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)
** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 7e Correlation matrix illegitimate complaints and relationship variables

Measures	Illegitimate Complaints Exaggerated, Altered or Lied About	Illegitimate Complaints Fabricated	Illegitimate Complaints Falsely Blamed
Loyalty	.112	.190**	.063
WOM	.060	.163**	.062
Trust	.122*	.170**	.106
Commitment	.155*	.187**	.120*
Satisfaction	.129*	.180**	.139*

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)
** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 7f Correlation matrix relationship variables

Measures	1	2	3	4	5
(1)Loyalty		.899**	.819**	.788**	.769**
(2)WOM	.899**		.841**	.815**	.804**
(3)Trust	.819**	.841**		.856**	.844**
(4)Commitment	.788**	.815**	.856**		.850**
(5)Satisfaction	.769**	.804**	.844**	.850**	

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)
** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Assumption: Homoscedasticity

Table 8 Levene's Test

Dependent variable	F	Sig.
Illegitimate Complaints Exaggerated, Altered or Lied About	$F(3,271) = 1.884$	.132
Illegitimate Complaints Fabricated	$F(3,271) = 14.273$	.000**
Illegitimate Complaints Falsely Blamed	$F(3,271) = 11.727$	.000**
Denial of Responsibility	$F(3,271) = 5.553$	.001**
Denial of Injury	$F(3,271) = .952$	.416
Denial of Victim	$F(3,271) = .761$	.517

Condemnation of the Condemners	F(3,271) = .405	.749
Appeal to Higher Loyalties	F(3,271) = 1.396	.244
Claim of Normalcy	F(3,271) = 2.719	.045*
Denial of Negative Intent	F(3,271) = 2.889	.036*
Claim of Relative Acceptability	F(3,271) = 1.290	.278
Metaphor of the Ledger	F(3,271) = .701	.552
Claim of Entitlement	F(3,271) = 1.910	.128
Defence of the Necessity	F(3,271) = 1.671	.173
Justification by Postponement	F(3,271) = 4.338	.005**
Loyalty	F(3,271) = 9.310	.000**
WOM	F(3,271) = 9.145	.000**
Trust	F(3,271) = 15.031	.000**
Commitment	F(3,271) = 12.977	.000**
Satisfaction	F(3,271) = 11.748	.000**

* Violated the assumption of equality of variance at significant level (p < .05).
** Violated the assumption of equality of variance at significant level (p < .01).