The typology of illegitimate complaining behavior

Confirmatory research on the typology of illegitimate complainants.

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Master Thesis, 2021

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Preface

In front of you lies the master thesis 'The typology of illegitimate complaining behavior'. This research is partly composed of a joint effort with Lyn Bannink, Matty Cooijmans, and Jan Peters. The data has been collected together to gather a higher number of responses in a short time. The chapters of the research itself are written individually. I would like to thank Lyn, Matty, and Jan for the pleasant collaboration and their input in this research.

I would like to thank Herm Joosten for his expertise, positivity, and valuable supervision during this thesis process. Furthermore, I would like to thank my second examiner Pao Franco for his effort. Finally, I would like to thank all the participants of this study for their input.

Hopefully, you enjoy reading this thesis.

Myrthe Eijkelkamp

Nijmegen, June 14, 2021

Abstract

Dealing with customer complaints is a common activity for most firms. Although it is assumed that complaints are genuine and reasonable, customers sometimes exaggerate their complaints or wrongly blame the service provider, referred to as illegitimate. Identifying different types of illegitimate complainants can help firms decide whether to invest in the customer or not. The current study aims to empirically test the typology of illegitimate complainants developed by Joosten and contribute to theory by introducing a complete typology that is currently lacking. Therefore, the following question is studied: *What is the relation between the drivers, the degree of the illegitimacy, neutralizations, and relationship variables of illegitimate complaints?* More specifically, four types of illegitimate complainants (must-, need-, want-, and can-type) were formed based on the drivers motivating these types to complain illegitimately. The types were tested on their differences in the degree of illegitimacy, neutralization techniques used to justify the behavior, and the relationship with the firm influenced by the complaint. Subsequently, an online survey was conducted to find evidence for the hypothesis based on theory.

A MANOVA revealed the following relations of the drivers (lack of morality, loss of control, and injustice) of the must-type: denial of responsibility, denial of the victim, condemnation of the condemners, defense of necessity, denial of negative intent, a low degree of illegitimacy, and the most damaged relationship with the firm. Furthermore, the analyses revealed the following relations of the drivers (anger, disappointment, the contrast effect, and external attribution) of the need-type: denial of responsibility, a low degree of illegitimacy, and a damaged relationship with the firm. Moreover, the drivers (internal attribution, financial greed, pre-planned) of the want-type are related to: claim of entitlement, the highest degree of illegitimacy, and almost no damaged relationship with the firm. To conclude, the drivers (opportunism, liberal redress policy, social norm, attitude) of the can-type are related to: a high degree of illegitimacy and an almost no harmed relationship with the firm.

Based on the findings, practitioners are recommended to minimize the time and costs spend in the must- and need-type and continue investing in the relationship with the can- and want-type of complainants. However, further research is evoked to copy the current study and try to find evidence for the several neutralization techniques which could not be tested. Besides, further research is advised to try to minimize the limitations of the current study. The researcher genuinely hopes for the replication of the study which will contribute to existing knowledge regarding this growing and interesting topic.

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1.Introduction

Probably the most desirable reaction on the sold products or services any firm wishes for is customer satisfaction (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993). As satisfied customers are positively related to the repurchase intention, they are great predicators for prospective sales (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Terblanche, 2018). However, it is not always easy to achieve the desired level of customer satisfaction (Arora & Chakraborty, 2020). Due to the labor-intensive character of services, failures in service and product delivery are unavoidable, even for the strongest firms (Hess, Ganesan, & Klein, 2003). In this regard, deficiencies in the product or service quality might harm the satisfaction of customers. Besides, failures might even change satisfaction into dissatisfaction and motivate customers to voice a complaint (Sangpikul, 2021; Jacoby & Jaccard, 1981).

Subsequently, service recovery enables firms to effectively deal with such customer complaints and rebuild customer satisfaction (Tax & Brown, 1998). Once the customer decides to express dissatisfaction about the product or services to the provider, the service recovery process starts. This process consists of the activities taken by the firm to explore and deal with customer complaints. Moreover, it enables firms to learn from their failures and change unhappy and disappointed customers into satisfied and devoted customers, leading to customer retention. In fact, retaining current customers is essential for firms since attracting new customers is more costly (Hart, Heskett, & Sasser, 1989).

However, existing literature argues that complaints are not always legitimate and genuine, but customers might be consciously communicating false complaints about the product or service, referred to as illegitimate complaints (e.g. Farrington, 1914; Ro & Wong, 2012; Wirtz & McColl-Kennedy, 2010). The behavior of illegitimate complaining consists of complaints that are made up, exaggerated, or wrongly blame the service provider and will be explained in more detail hereafter (Ro & Wong, 2012).

1.1 Illegitimate complaining

In 1914, Farrington already noticed that customers' complaints are not always genuine and can be opportunistic and incorrect (Farrington, 1914). Only a few academics recognized that customers' complaints are not always the consequence of product and service failures (Baker, Magnini, & Perdue, 2012; Fullerton & Punj, 2004; Reynolds & Harris, 2005). However, these studies are mostly anecdotal, conceptual, experimental, or based on a small portion of data. Moreover, Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy noticed that "opportunistic customer behavior in the

service recovery context has been largely ignored" (2010, p.654). Besides, Ro and Wong (2012, p.424) mentioned that "clear empirical evidence of opportunistic customer complaints is hard to find".

Nevertheless, Reynolds and Harris (2005) attempted to explore the motives and styles of illegitimate customer complaints. Their findings reveal that customers do not perceive their illegitimate complaints as irrational or absurd. Furthermore, they have acknowledged four forms of illegitimate customer complaints: one-off, opportunistic, conditioned, and professional complaints. Besides, they have recognized six possible motives for getting involved in this behavior: freeloaders, fraudulent returners, fault transferors, solitary ego gains, peer-induced esteem seekers, and disruptive gains. Furthermore, Baker et al. (2012) studied the behavior of opportunism and introduced customer-, firm-, and relationship-centric drivers as possible motives. Besides, they argue that getting involved in opportunistic behavior depends on for example a person's character, the firm size, and the duration of the customer-firm relationship. However, these existing typologies of illegitimate complainants are based on limited data, conceptually confusing, and incomplete since different types of complainants are not combined with the motives, excuses to legitimize the behavior, and the effect on the customer-company relationship.

Therefore, Joosten (2020) developed a typology of illegitimate complaints in a recent multiple-case study. The different types of illegitimate complainants, drivers underlying the behavior, neutralization techniques to justify the behavior, and the impact on the customer-company relationship are combined within this typology. This typology, however, has not been tested empirically.

1.2 Research aim

Several researchers have introduced different types and drivers of illegitimate complaining behavior so far. However, these studies are limited and therefore Joosten (2020) developed a typology that has not been tested empirically before, as mentioned in the previous section. The current research aims to empirically test the typology of illegitimate complaints of Joosten, which will lead to new interesting insights.

The following research question will be answered in the study:
What is the relation between the drivers, the degree of the illegitimacy, neutralizations, and relationship variables of illegitimate complaints? To be able to answer this question, the complete typology developed by Joosten (2020) and the theory regarding this typology will be

explained first. Thereafter, the typology was tested empirically and conclusions about the drivers, degree of the illegitimacy of the complaint, neutralizations, and relationship variables were drawn from this test.

1.3 Initial conceptual model
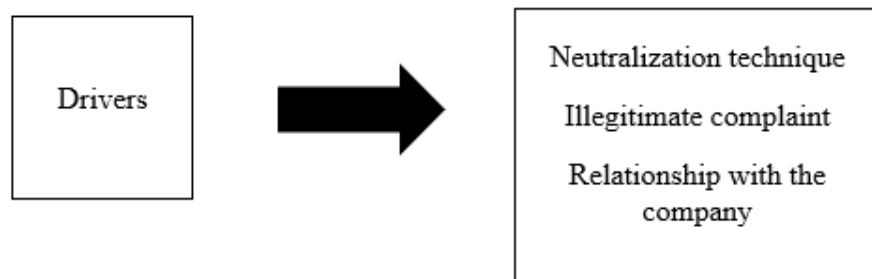
Figure 1 Initial conceptual model

1.4 Theoretical relevance

The current research is theoretically relevant because it aims to empirically test the typology of Joosten (2020) and contribute to the existing theory by introducing a complete typology of illegitimate complainants.

1.5 Practical relevance

For firms, illegitimate complaints can lead to severe direct and indirect financial consequences. For example, the growing workloads for employees dealing with complaints and the negative effect on the sales and profit of the firm (Harris & Reynolds, 2003). Since illegitimate complaints are growing and leading to increased costs for firms, it is a worthy and interesting concept to study (Kim & Baker, 2020). In addition, a better understanding of the types of illegitimate complaints is required to be able to prevent the financial and non-financial consequences.

Therefore, the current research is of practical relevance since it aims to provide insights into the types of illegitimate complaining behavior, which managers can use to understand the complaining behavior of their customers and subsequently minimize or prevent the negative consequences as mentioned before.

1.6 Thesis outline

This thesis is structured as follows: the next chapter provides the theoretical background of illegitimate complaining behavior including the typology of Joosten (2020). Chapter three presents the methodology of the research. Subsequently, the results of the study are described in chapter four. Finally, in chapter five, the study is concluded and directions for further research are discussed.

2. Theoretical background

This chapter elaborates upon relevant literature for the current study. First, the concept of illegitimate complaining and several types and drivers regarding the behavior are introduced. Furthermore, the neutralization techniques used to justify misbehavior are described. In addition, the possible effects of illegitimate complaining on the relationship between customer and firm are explained. Lastly, the typology developed by Joosten (2020) in which the drivers, neutralizations, and relationship variables are combined is discussed.

2.1 Illegitimate complaining

Voicing dissatisfaction is one of the most normal activities taking place daily for most individuals. These dissatisfactions are commonly classified as complaints and might arise because of unhappiness about yourself, others, or your surroundings (Kowalski, 1996). More precisely, a complaint is described as the expressed negativity by an individual about the product or service towards the service provider (Jacoby & Jaccard, 1981). However, dissatisfaction is not always the underlying reason for complaints since satisfied individuals might voice complaints as well (Kolwalski, 1996). In addition, customers might complain without experiencing genuine service or product failures (Jacoby & Jaccard, 1981), referred to as illegitimate complaints.

Several academics came up with terms to identify illegitimate complaining behavior. For instance, Harris & Reynolds (2003) labeled it as "dysfunctional customer behavior," representing customers who consciously or unconsciously behave in a way that disturbs the service provider by, for example, voicing false complaints. Another term introduced is "deviant consumer behavior" which is described as the behavior that people regard as unsuitable and unacceptable according to the acknowledged social standards (Mills & Bonoma, 1979). Furthermore, "aberrant consumer behavior" also concerns behavior that breaks the generally agreed-upon standards in certain circumstances that causes shame by other people (Fullerton & Punj, 1993). Next, the label "problem customers" indicates that customers are wrong and behave unacceptably (Bitner, Booms, & Mohr, 1994). To conclude, Lovelock (1994) describes the concept as "jaycustomers" who harm the service provider with their inconsiderate and rude behavior.

Thus, the concept of illegitimate complaining behavior has already been acknowledged by various researchers who all labeled the concept differently. Coming back to the concept of the current research, illegitimate complaining behavior can be defined as "the behavior in

which a customer complains in order to receive material gain by exaggerating, altering, or lying about the fact or situation, or abusing service guarantees" (Ro & Wong, 2012, p. 420).

2.2 Types of illegitimate complaining

The different forms of illegitimate complainants recognized by academics are described within this section. However, it seems that these types are incomplete, conceptually confusing, and only based on theory. Therefore, Joosten (2020) introduced four types of illegitimate complainants explained later in this chapter.

First, Reynolds and Harris (2005) distinguished four types of illegitimate complainants based on the number of complaints expressed in a period. The first category, the "one-off complainants" concerns the customers who have complained illegitimately only once which resulted in feelings of fear and regret. The second category is defined as the "opportunistic complainants". Customers within this category only complain illegitimately if the right circumstances arise, without planning the complaint. The third category is labeled as "conditional complainants", referring to customers who complain illegitimately frequently. For their complaints to succeed, these customers have studied illegitimate complaints of different customers. The fourth type, the "professional complainers" refers to customers regularly searching for chances to express illegitimate complaints for their advantages (Reynolds & Harris, 2005).

Similarly, Huang and Miao (2016) studied illegitimate complaining behavior and acknowledged three distinct types. First, the "opportunistic plotters" who are eager to leverage from the service provider and complain illegitimately for their individual advantages such as free products or discounts. Second, "repetitive grumbles" are the customers who continually express complaints to every service provider they deal with, especially when the previous complaints succeed and resulted in a reward. Third, "occasional tyrants" voice complaints if the service provider did not meet their wrong and unfair requests, which happens infrequently.

Since these types are lacking, Joosten (2020) introduced four types of illegitimate complainants within his typology, namely the 'want', 'must', 'need', and 'can' complainants which will be discussed later. The several drivers, neutralization techniques, and relationship variables combined in the typology are explained first within this chapter. Thereafter, the complete typology of Joosten (2020) is presented.

2.3 Drivers of illegitimate complaining

The drivers of illegitimate complaints concern the motives underlying these complaints. The drivers distinguished by Joosten (2020) are the loss of control, injustice, lack of morality, disappointment, anger, external attribution, internal attribution, financial greed, pre-planned, social norm, opportunism, attitude towards complaining, contrast effect, and liberal redress policy.

First of all, the 'loss of control', refers to the lack of control customers perceive. Control is defined as "the belief that one can determine one's own internal states and behavior, influence one's environment, and/or bring about desired outcomes" (Wallston, Wallston, Smiths, and Dobbins, 1987, p.5). The extent of customer control determines the likelihood of customer satisfaction. In other words, more control will result in more customer satisfaction (Joosten, Bloemer, & Hillebrand, 2017). Hence, the most contented customers derive from possessing the quantity of control they wish for (Joosten, Bloemer, & Hillebrand, 2016). On the other hand, customers who perceive a loss of control are more inclined to express dissatisfaction and will attempt to rebuild the control (Hui & Toffoli, 2002). Concluded, individuals might complain illegitimately when trying to rebuild their control.

Second, the driver 'injustice' refers to feelings of unfairness, resulting in the misbehavior of customers towards the service provider (Fullerton & Punj, 2004). In this regard, Tax and Brown (1998) discovered that customers base their feelings of fairness on the effect their complaint has (distributive justice), the standards and procedures during the process of the complaint (procedural justice), and the communication with the service provider (interactional justice). Additionally, low perceptions of distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice can cause the expression of illegitimate complaints (Wirtz & McColl-Kennedy, 2010).

Third, research has shown that the driver, 'lack of morality', is strengthened by perceived greed which is defined as "the judgment that the perpetrator is causing damage to others in order to obtain a personal advantage" (Antonetti and Maklan, 2016, p. 432). Specifically, the perception of the service provider intentionally making mistakes causes illegitimate complaining behavior (Wooten, 2009).

The fourth driver, 'disappointment' is the negative emotional response of customers due to products or services that did not meet the customers' expectations (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004). In this regard, customers might complain illegitimately to express their disappointment.

Furthermore, 'anger' is the emotional reaction rising from a service failure perceived as unfair (Bougie, Pieters, & Zeelenberg, 2003). Moreover, Bougie et al. (2003, p. 389) found that angry customers "felt like letting themselves go and behaving aggressively, they actually complained and said something nasty." Therefore, when customers express illegitimate complaints, they could behave aggressively and communicate nasty due to the perceptions of unfairness.

Sixth, the drivers 'internal and external attribution' refers to the attribution theory. According to this theory, consumers seek clarifications of why the product or service failed, either internal or external, before voicing a complaint to the service provider. Failures caused by the firm (external) are more likely to provoke illegitimate complaints due to feelings of anger than consumer-related (internal) failures (Folkes, 1984).

Next, Reynolds and Harris (2005) studied 'financial greed' as a driver for consumers to complain illegitimately. Their results revealed that customers driven by financial greed are aiming to get the product for free even though they have enough money to purchase the product themselves. Besides, Resnik and Harmon (1983, p.91) studied financial greed as well and found that "consumers desired something for nothing from the company." In the context of the current study, customers might complain illegitimately when trying to receive the products or services for free.

Furthermore, illegitimate complaints might be 'pre-planned' by customers. Pre-planned complaints are explained by the theory of planned behavior in which the customers' plan to execute a certain behavior is the main principle (Ajzen, 1985). In addition, intentions specify how motivated individuals are to complain illegitimately. In other words, the stronger the intention, the more motivated the individual is to express illegitimate complaints (Beck & Ajzen, 1991).

Moreover, illegitimate complaining behavior might be driven by the 'social norm'. This concept refers to the social risk customers are facing when voicing complaints. Specifically, customers who complain too often will be seen as more negatively and face the risk of losing their social contacts, resulting in fewer complaints voiced. Conversely, customers facing a little risk of negative feelings from their social environment will be more inclined to complain illegitimately (Kowalski, 1996).

Next, the driver 'opportunism is defined as "seeking self-interest with guile, exploiting opportunities with little consideration for principles or consequences, choosing the path of what can rather than what should happen in a scenario, and taking advantage, often, unethically, of any circumstance of possible benefit" (Baker et al., 2012; Ping, 1993; Wirtz & McColl-

Kennedy, 2010, p.655). Opportunistic customers express illegitimate complaints about their self-imagined product or service failures with the purpose to get some kind of compensation (Baker et al., 2012).

Eleventh, the driver 'attitude towards complaining' concerns customers who are inclined to complain towards the service provider (Blodgett, Granbois, & Walters, 1993). In other words, customers with a positive attitude towards complaining believe their complaint will have a favorable outcome, feel good about it, and are therefore more likely to express illegitimate complaints, even when they are satisfied (Richins, 1982).

Furthermore, 'the contrast effect' refers to the contrast theory, that states that customers complain illegitimately whenever they regard the received product less positively than expected it would be (Anderson, 1973).

To conclude, liberal redress policy concerns the redress individuals seek because of the experienced dissatisfaction (Blodgett et al., 1993). In fact, the bigger the customer perceives their chance to receive a reward, repayment, or compensation, the more likely the customer is to voice illegitimate complaints (Blodgett, 2007).

2.4 Neutralizations

According to Sykes and Matza (1957), individuals engage in neutralization techniques to prevent accusations from themselves or others of their misbehavior. In their study, they introduced five neutralization techniques people use for the justification of their actions, which are included in the typology by Joosten (2020).

First, 'denial of responsibility' represents the absence of taking responsibility for one's actions. Individuals often blame other people or aspects for their misbehavior, such as non-supporting parents or wrong mates. Furthermore, 'denial of injury' indicates that the misbehavior does not damage the victim because of the assumption that the violated party can afford it. Third, 'denial of the victim' states that the violated party deserved the harm and the complainant, and therefore denies the party as a victim. The feelings of denial increase whenever it is an unfamiliar person or just a fuzzy abstraction. Fourth, 'condemnation of the condemners' centers on moving the attention from your misbehavior to the behavior of the ones who disagree with the misbehavior. In other words, individuals state that they are not the only ones performing this sort of misbehavior. Finally, 'appeal to higher loyalties' is a technique in which an individual falls into the dilemma of, for example, choosing between the demands of family or legislation (Sykes & Matza, 1957).

Similarly, Harris and Dumas (2009) studied neutralizations and came up with five techniques which are included in the typology of Joosten (2020) as well. First, 'defense of necessity' is applied as neutralization when an individual feels the misbehavior was unavoidable and no other option was possible. Next, the 'metaphor of the ledger' refers to the action of compensating the bad behavior with decent and acceptable behavior. Third, 'claims of normalcy' centers on the notion that everybody does it, resulting in the perception of the behavior being ordinary and common instead of wrong. Furthermore, 'denial of negative intent' states that the misbehavior was not intended to do any damage and happened by chance. Lastly, 'claims of relative acceptability' concerns the comparison of your own misbehavior with the similar or different misbehavior of others, that is in your eyes worse, to get acceptance for your behavior (Harris & Dumas, 2009).

Furthermore, Eliason (2003) found one more neutralization technique that is included in the typology by Joosten (2020), namely the 'claim of entitlement' that refers to individuals who feel they are permitted to complain illegitimately. For example, individuals justify their illegitimate complaints by saying that everybody does it and therefore they deserve an advantage as well (Eliason, 2003).

2.5 Relationship variables

This section describes the effect illegitimate complaints have on the customer-company relationship. A strong and long-term relationship between the firm and its customers is beneficial and valuable for both parties. On the one hand, firms profit from a powerful relationship with their customers since obtaining new customers is more costly than managing current ones (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). On the other hand, customers take advantage of this strong relationship as well because of the feeling of being interested in and the perception that someone concerns about you (Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 1991). However, illegitimate complaints may harm this relationship by a decreased loyalty, trust, commitment, satisfaction, and the communication of negative word of mouth.

First, the variable 'loyalty' refers to customers purchasing the same product again, buying another product from the same firm, writing references, and ignoring competitors' products (Thiry, 1991). Providing customers consistently with products and services of excellent quality increases loyalty (Reichheld, 1993). As illegitimate complaints might be driven by, for example, dissatisfaction about the quality of the product or service, it is assumable that customers will not consider a repurchase leading to a damaged relationship with the firm.

Second, the variable 'trust' can be defined as "a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence" (Moorman, Deshpande, and Zaltman, 1993, p.82). In addition, the feeling of the service provider being able to provide the services determines the presence of trust (Moorman et al., 1993). For customers who complain illegitimately might lack the feeling of trustworthiness or do not believe the service can satisfy their needs, which will harm the customer-company relationship.

Furthermore, the variable 'commitment' is essential for a strong relationship between the customer and service provider. Commitment is an attitude representing the feelings of attachment towards another (Fullerton, 2005). Besides, Morgan and Hunt stated that "the committed party believes the relationship is worth working on to ensure that it endures indefinitely" (1994, p.23). Following this, it can be assumed that illegitimate complaining behavior decreases the level of commitment since customers might express complaints without aiming and willing to rebuild the relationship.

Next, 'satisfaction' is the attitude of a consumer after the purschase and usage, coming from the comparison between the price paid and the returns (Gilbert, Churchill, & Surprenant, 1982). In addition, Anderson and Sullivan (1993) found that satisfied consumers are to a greater extent inclined to purchase the product or service again from the provider. However, dissatisfaction about the product or service might motivate customers to complain illegitimately and subsequently harm the relationship with the company.

Furthermore, the variable 'word of mouth' (hereafter referred to as WOM) concerns the exchange of information of customers regarding their opinions about products or services, either negative or positive (Anderson, 1998). Satisfaction and WOM are related to each other, meaning that satisfaction results in spreading positive WOM and dissatisfaction in negative WOM (Söderlund, 1998). As the communication of negative WOM will hurt the service provider this will lead to a damaged relationship with the complainant voicing the WOM.

2.6 Typology

As a consequence of the already existing, incomplete, and insufficient types and drivers of illegitimate complaints, Joosten (2020) developed a typology based on explorative research in which the types, drivers, neutralizations, and relationship variables are combined. This typology categorizes complainants into four different types. First, the 'want-type' refers to the customers who deliberately express illegitimate complaints. Complainants within this category planned their complaints and voiced dishonesty towards the firm to gain financial advantages for themselves. Second, customers might complain illegitimately out of necessity. These

complainants believe it is the only way to achieve their desired outcome and therefore belong to the 'must-type'. Third, customers within the 'need-type' feel the urge to complain because the received product or service did not meet their expectations. Lastly, the 'can-type' concerns the customers who voice illegitimate complaints because of the opportunities they have to perform the misbehavior. Moreover, the categories distinguished within the typology differ in the strength of the illegitimate complaint, the used neutralization techniques, and the effect on the relationship between the customer and company.

The typology is further specified in this section and will be tested empirically within the current study. An explanation of how the typology will be tested is given in the next chapter.

2.6.1 The must-type

This category within the typology refers to the must-type who expresses complaints out of necessity. The drivers underlying the misbehavior of customers within this category are the lack of morality, loss of control, and injustice. In other words, customers argue that the service provider took advantage of them on purpose (lack of morality), perceive this as unjust (injustice), and did everything they can do within their power but nothing seemed to work (loss of control). Additionally, the neutralizations used to justify their complaints are: 'it was not my fault' (denial of responsibility), 'they deserved it' (denial of the victim), 'it was not my intention' (denial of negative intent), 'they are sometimes dishonest as well' (condemnation of the condemners), 'otherwise they would not take me seriously' (defense of necessity), and 'I did not do it for myself but others' (appeal to higher loyalties).

Furthermore, the must-type scores lowest on the relationship variables because of the feeling that the service provider intentionally took advantage of the customers. Thus, these complainants are less likely to be loyal, committed, satisfied, feel trust, and spread positive WOM after voicing the complaint. Moreover, customers rather feel forced to complain than trying to benefit from the complaints, causing complaints that are the least exaggerated in comparison to the other categories (Joosten, 2020). Hence, the current study assumes:

H1a: The must-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'denial of responsibility' compared to the other types of complainers.

H1b: The must-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'denial of the victim' compared to the other types of complainers.

H1c: *The must-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'condemnation of the condemners'.*

H1d: *The must-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'appeal to higher loyalties' compared to the other types of complainers.*

H1e: *The must-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'defense of necessity' compared to the other types of complainers.*

H1f: *The must-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'denial of negative intent' compared to the other types of complainers.*

H2:   *The must-type of complainer scores lowest on the illegitimacy of the complaints compared to the other types of complainers.*

H3:   *The must-type of the complainer scores lowest on the relationship variables compared to the other types of complainers.*

2.6.2 The need-type

Customers within the need-type are driven by external attribution, the contrast effect, disappointment, and anger. More specifically, customers express complaints because they are upset (anger), feel sad, and let down (disappointment) because the product or service is not what they expected it would be (contrast effect), and they blame the company for it (external attribution). The complainants score highest on the following neutralization techniques: 'it was not my fault' (denial of responsibility) and 'the company will not suffer from the damage' (denial of injury).

Customers within this category especially feel disappointed and upset because they did not receive what they expected. Since the service provider did not fail on purpose, the complaints will be less exaggerated in comparison to the two upcoming categories, but more than the must-category. Furthermore, the relationship with the service provider will be damaged because of the disappointment, but less damaged than the must-type since the service provider did not fail purposefully (Joosten, 2020). Therefore, the study suggests:

H4a: *The need-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'denial of injury' compared to the other types of complainers.*

H4b: *The need-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'denial of responsibility' compared to the other types of complainers.**

H5: *The need-type of complainer scores second lowest on the illegitimacy of the complaints compared to the other types of complainers.*

H6: *The need-type of complainer scores second lowest on the relationship variables compared to the other types of complainers.*

* For both the must- and need-type the highest score on the neutralization technique denial of responsibility is hypothesized. This means that both types score higher on this technique compared to the want- and can-type.

2.6.3 The want-type

Customers who planned their complaints constitute the want-type. These complaints are driven by internal attribution, financial greed, and are pre-planned. So, the complaints are intentionally planned (pre-planned) by the customer (internal attribution) to gain financial benefits (financial greed). This category scores highest on the degree of illegitimacy concerning the other categories. The complainants use only one neutralization technique to justify their misbehavior: 'I deserve some luck as well' (claims of entitlement).

Since customers within this category deliberately voice pre-planned complaints without blaming the service provider, it is understandable that they score highest on the relationship variables. Thus, the complaints will not damage the loyalty, WOM, trust, commitment, and satisfaction towards the service provider and score the best on these variables compared to the other categories (Joosten, 2020). So, the current study proposes the following:

H7: *The want-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'claim of entitlement' compared to the other types of complainers.*

H8: *The want-type of complainer scores highest on the illegitimacy of the complaint compared to the other types of complainers.*

H9:   The want-type of complainer scores highest on the relationship variables compared to the other types of complainers.

2.6.4 The can-type

The can-type concerns customers expressing complaints because of the arising opportunity to complain. The motives underlying this behavior are opportunism, liberal redress policy, social norm, and the attitude towards illegitimate complaints. More precisely, complainants state they had the chance to benefit from the situation (opportunism), therefore tried to get compensation (liberal redress), it was not the intention or pre-planned, and the behavior is accepted by others (social norm) and by themselves (attitude). The category scores second-highest on the illegitimacy of complaints. The following neutralization techniques belong to the category: 'usually I always follow the rules' (the metaphor of the ledger), 'the misbehavior of others is much worse than mine' (claims of relative acceptability), and 'everyone does it' (claim of normalcy).

So, customers argue that they normally adhere to the rules, that their misbehavior is an exception, and that they are quite decent because others behave much worse than they did. In addition, they are aware of the fact that they made the complaint illegitimately themselves and can not blame the service provider. Therefore, the relationship between customer and company hardly gets damaged (Joosten, 2020). Hence, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H10a: The can-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'metaphor of the ledger' compared to the other types of complainers.

H10b: The can-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'claim of normalcy' compared to the other types of complainers.

H10c: The can-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'claim of relative acceptability' compared to the other types of complainers.

H11:   The can-type of complainer scores second-highest on the illegitimacy of the complaints compared to the other types of complainers.

H12:   *The can-type of complainer scores second-highest on the relationship*

           variables compared to the other types of complainers.
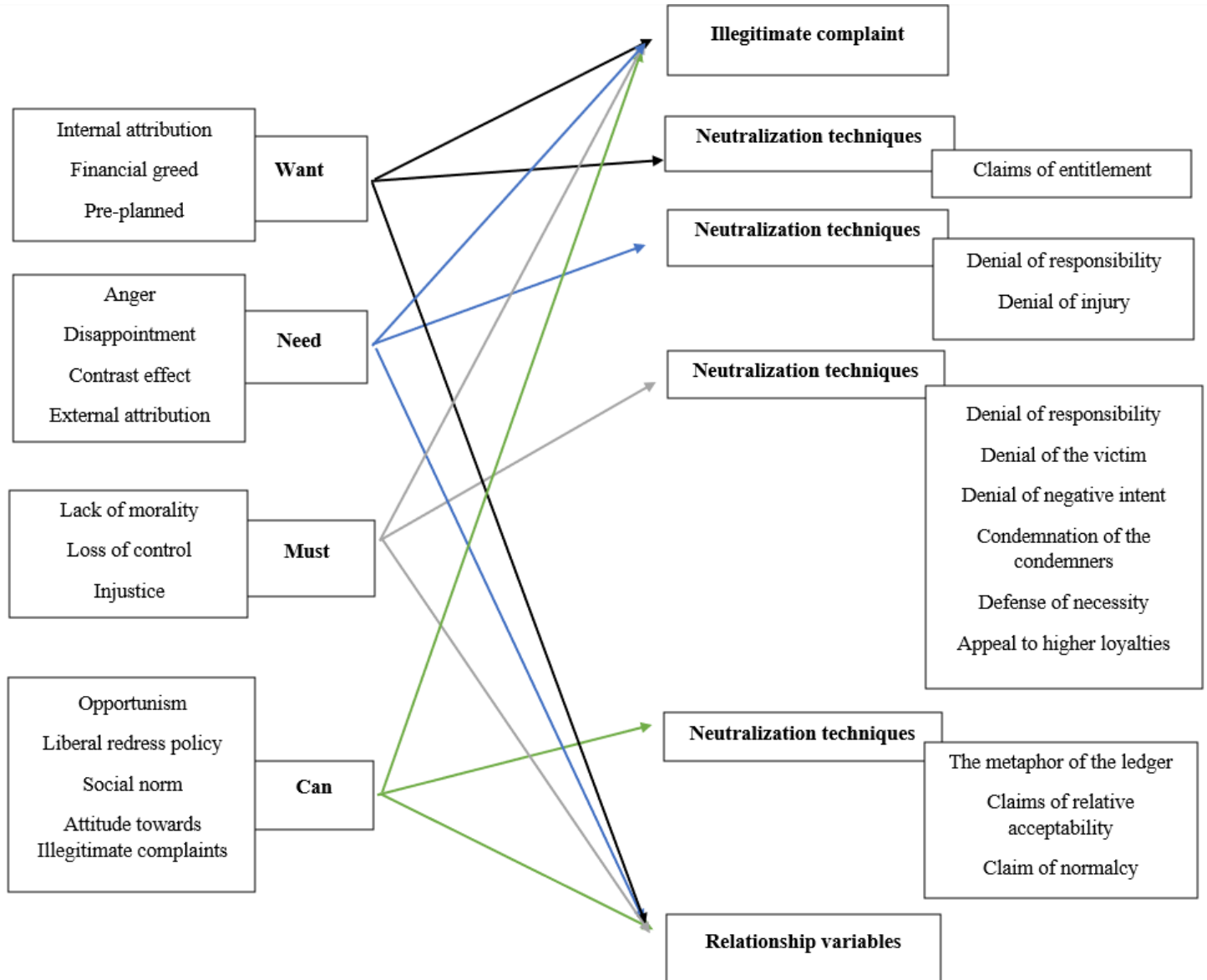
2.7 Definitive conceptual model

Figure 2 Definitive conceptual model

3. Methodology

The method of the current research is explained in this chapter. First, the research design is introduced. Next, the measurement with the used scales is described followed by the procedure and sampling technique. Thereafter, the research ethics in which the ethical standards are specified are explained. Finally, the data analysis method is clarified.

3.1 Research design

The purpose of the study is to test and confirm the typology developed by Joosten (2020) and is therefore labeled as confirmatory research. An online survey, which can be found in Appendix I, is conducted to find empirical evidence for the typology. More specifically, this quantitative method examined the relationship between the drivers, the illegitimacy of the complaint, neutralizations, and relationship variables that are combined within the typology, and confirmed if these factors belong to each other within the (need, want, must, and can) categories. Besides, Berry and Seiders (2008) advise surveying customers to understand their illegitimate complaints and the reasons behind this behavior. This confirms that a survey is an appropriate method for the current study.

However, respondents are asked about their experiences with illegitimate complaints and their explanations are therefore subjective. So, the results can be biased, meaning that respondents will not admit their misbehavior (Ro & Wong, 2012). To prevent such biased answers, the survey is completely anonymous and examples of illegitimate complaints from the researchers themselves are mentioned in the beginning.

In contrast, the survey has advantages as well, such as access to a large group of individuals, saving time for the researchers, and little costs (Wright, 2005). Since a large number of respondents is important for the validity of the results, and little time and money are available, conducting a survey is suitable for the current study.

3.2 Measurement

The constructs are measured with a 5-point Likert scale in the survey. The operationalization of the constructs is given within this section. The measures of the drivers are newly developed by Joosten and the measures of the neutralization techniques and relationship variables are used from Rouwhorst (2020). The survey begins with an open question in which the participants are asked to describe a situation of their illegitimate complaint.

Illegitimate complaints - Illegitimate complaints are defined in the current study as the behavior in which complaints are made up, exaggerated, or wrongly blame the service provider (Ro & Wong, 2012). Based on this definition, illegitimate complaints are measured by a three-item scale. An example is "To what extent did you make up the complaint (presented it differently than it actually was)?"

3.2.1 Drivers

The drivers of illegitimate complaining behavior are measured with a scenario for each category in which the drivers are described. The respondents are asked to select the most fitting scenario of their illegitimate complaint. Thereafter, a 5-point Likert scale varying from 'completely not fitting' to 'completely fitting' is given in which respondents are asked to indicate to what extent the chosen scenario fits their complaint. The drivers within the scenarios, which are explained hereafter, will be measured by a single construct to prevent a high number of non-responses since using multiple constructs would make the survey too extensive. The scenarios of the four categories are presented next.

The must-type - The must-type is characterized by customers who express illegitimate complaints out of necessity. The drivers belonging to the must category are:

- Loss of control - Loss of control refers to the situation in which individuals experience a lack of power in which one can not decide one's actions, affects one's surroundings, and/ or creates the longed-for results (Wallston et al., 1987).
- Injustice - Injustice refers to feelings of unfairness towards the service provider (Fullerton & Punj, 2004).
- Lack of morality - Lack of morality directs to perceived greed and is identified as "the judgment that the perpetrator is causing damage to others to obtain a personal advantage" (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016, p. 432).

Furthermore, the scenario used to measure the must category is as follows: the company tried to take advantage of me, by for instance delivering a bad product or service on purpose (**lack of morality**). This felt unjust (**injustice**). I complained and did everything I can to hold them accountable, but the company did not care and did not follow their terms of service regarding complaints (**loss of control**).

The need-type - Customers within the need-type express illegitimate complaints because they did not receive what they expected and therefore feel angry and disappointed. The drivers motivating the customers within this category to express illegitimate complaints are:

- The contrast effect - The contrast effect directs to the recognized differences between the predicted and real product or service (Anderson, 1973).

- Disappointment - Disappointment refers to the negative emotional response resulting from products or services that did not match the expectations (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004).

- Anger - Anger is the emotional reaction due to the perceptions of unfairness (Bougie et al., 2003).

- External attribution - External attribution directs to the external clarifications individuals seek for product or service failures (Folkes, 1984).

Moreover, the scenario developed to measure the need category is: the company did not achieve what they should have achieved (**contrast effect**). Their product or service was far below my expectations. Therefore, I was disappointed or angry at the company (**disappointment and anger**). Perhaps it was not the companies' intention but they still are responsible for their product and service failures (**external attribution**).

The want-type - The want-type represents customers with a preconceived plan to complain illegitimately for their benefits. The motives underlying the behavior of customers within the want category are:

- Internal attribution - Internal attribution refers to the internal clarifications individuals seek for product or service failure (Folkes, 1984).

- Pre-planned - Pre-planned refers to the theory of planned behavior which is described as the intention of the customer to perform a certain behavior (Ajzen, 1985).

- Financial greed - Financial greed refers to the situation in which a "customer desired something for nothing from the company" (Resnik & Harmon, 1983, p. 91).

Lastly, the scenario describing this category is: the company did not do anything wrong. Conversely, I (**internal attribution**) deliberately exaggerated or made up the situation (**pre-planned**) for (financial) advantages such as compensation, a new product, or a voucher (**financial greed**).

The can-type - The can-type indicates that customers voice illegitimate complaints because they have the opportunity. Customers within this category are driven by:

- Opportunism - Opportunism is defined as someone who "recognizes an opportunity to take financial advantages of a company's service failure and recovery efforts" (Berry & Seiders, 2008, p.34).

- Liberal redress policy - Liberal redress policy refers to the rewards, repayments, or compensations individuals seek because of their dissatisfaction (Blodgett, 2007).

- Social norm - Social norm refers to the social risk individuals are facing such as losing social contacts (Kowalski,1996).

- Attitude - Customers with a positive attitude towards illegitimate complaining will feel the urge to complain regardless of whether they experience satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Blodgett et al., 1993).

The following scenario is included in the survey to measure the can-type: the company has flexible guarantee terms or friendly customer service. Something like 'not good, money back'. So, I saw a nice 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 others would have benefited from the situation as well **(social norm)**. It does not bother me what I have done **(attitude)**.

3.2.2 Neutralization techniques

After voicing a complaint, customers might want to justify this behavior by using a neutralization technique. In the current study, these techniques are measured with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'completely disagree' to 'completely agree'. As previously mentioned, the statements are adapted from the study of Rouwhorst (2020).

Denial of responsibility - Denial of responsibility indicates that individuals blame other people or aspects for their misbehavior (Sykes & Matza, 1957). The neutralization technique is measured with the statement "It was not my fault."

Denial of injury - Denial of injury argues that the victim can afford the misbehavior and therefore does not get harmed (Sykes & Matza, 1957). Denial of injury is measured with the statement "My complaint will not harm the firm."

Denial of the victim - Denial of the victim indicates that the violated party deserved the harm and therefore is not a victim (Sykes & Matza, 1957). The statement used to measure this neutralization technique is "The firm deserves the complaints due to its wrongdoing."

Condemnation of the condemners - Condemnation of the condemners argues that individuals justify their misbehavior by saying that they are not the only ones performing this behavior (Sykes & Matza, 1957). This neutralization technique is measured with the statement "The firm is also not always honest with customers."

Appeal to higher loyalties - This technique indicates that individuals behave on the behalf of others instead of their own (Sykes & Matza, 1957). Appeal to higher loyalties is measured with the statement "I did not do it for myself but out of the principle or for others."

Defense of necessity - Defense of necessity states that the behavior was unavoidable (Harris & Dumas, 2009). The statement used to measure this neutralization technique is "Otherwise, I was not taken seriously by the firm."

The metaphor of the ledger - This technique argues that individuals normally behave in a good and decent way that compensates the misbehavior (Harris & Dumas, 2009). The metaphor of the ledger is measured with the statement "Normally, I do live by the rules."

Claims of normalcy - Claims of normalcy indicate that the behavior is normal since everybody does it (Harris & Dumas, 2009). The statement used to measure claims of normalcy is "Everyone exaggerates somewhat."

Denial of negative intent - This technique argues that it was not the intention to behave in a certain way (Harris & Dumas, 2009). Denial of negative intent is measured with the statement "I did not plan to complain illegitimately."

Claims of relative acceptability - Claims of relative acceptability can be described as the comparison of your behavior with others that is worse in your eyes (Harris & Dumas, 2009). The neutralization technique is measured with the statement "Other people have done worse."

Claims of entitlement - Claims of entitlement directs to individuals who believe they are allowed to behave in a certain way (Eliason, 2003). The neutralization technique is measured with the statement "For once, I might benefit too."

3.2.3 Relationship variables

After the complaint is expressed and handled by the firm, customers will have a certain feeling towards the firm. These feelings are measured with the relationship variables by a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'much smaller' to 'much larger'.

Loyalty - The intention to purchase again from the firm is a determinant of the customer's loyalty towards that firm (Thiry, 1991). Besides, Bolton and Mattila (2015) pointed out that the willingness to purchase again is the best measure of loyalty. Therefore, loyalty is measured with the statement "The chance that I will make another purchase at the firm in question after this complaint is..."

Trust - Trust is defined as "a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence" (Moorman et al., 1993, p.82). This is measured by the feelings of the customer towards the service provider after one's expressed an illegitimate complaint (Frenzen & Nakamoto, 1993). The following statement is used: "The trust that I have in the firm in question after this situation is…"

Commitment - This relationship variable refers to the feelings of attachment towards another (Fullerton, 2005). Therefore, commitment is measured by the devotion of the customer towards the firm after expressing a complaint (Fullerton, 2005). The statement "My relationship with the firm in question after this situation is…" is used.

Satisfaction - Customers who are content about the bought product or service or about the way their complaint is managed are satisfied (Oliver & Bearden, 1985). Satisfaction is measured with the statement "My satisfaction with the firm after this situation is…"

Word of mouth - The relationship variable word of mouth direct to individuals exchanging opinions about their purchase (Anderson, 1998). In their research, Frenzen and Nakamoto (1993) measured this factor by the chance that customers would voice positivity about the firm. Therefore, word of mouth is measured with the statement "The chance that I recommend others (family/friends) to the firm in question after this situation is…"

3.3 Procedure

Before the survey was distributed, a pre-test was performed among 10 participants to test whether the questions are interpreted in the right way and to discover any errors. The method used for the pre-test is the think-aloud approach, meaning that participants were asked to mention and answer the question out loud. Besides, the participants were requested to tell what they are thinking while reading the questionnaire (Collins, 2003). The results of the pre-test, which can be found in appendix II, revealed problems such as unclear questions or elements. After the pre-test was performed, the needed adjustments were made and the survey was finalized and distributed. The survey was distributed through Linkedin, Whatsapp, Facebook, and E-mail.

Since illegitimate complaining behavior is a sensitive subject that could lead to low response rates or dishonest answers, actions were taken for high response rates and to stimulate honesty. In this regard, the techniques recommended by McBride (2010) to reduce these risks were applied to the survey. First, an explanation of why questions about illegitimate complaints are asked and the purpose of the research is given in the introduction. This explanation covers the technique of transparency causing less worrying by participants about the importance of the survey. Second, the technique of normalizing is applied by stating that illegitimate complaints are common and many people engage or have engaged in such behavior. Participants will be less anxious to be honest since the statement shows that the behavior is used everywhere. Furthermore, McBride (2010) introduced communication techniques that

decrease the concerns of the respondent. The technique of "gentle assumption" is applied and refers to the assumption that the behavior already happened instead of asking if participants think about conducting the behavior. Thus, respondents were asked to name a situation in which they complained illegitimately. This technique, again, increases the feeling that illegitimate complaints are normal and therefore increases the willingness to talk about complaints. Lastly, as already mentioned previously, illegitimate complaints of the researchers themselves are shared in the introduction to let the participants know the behavior is usual.

3.4 Sampling method

Since it is not possible to involve the entire population within the study, a sampling method was used, namely the convenience sampling method. This non-random sampling method includes respondents who are not difficult to reach and approach for the researchers (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). More specifically, "members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study" (Etikan et al., 2016, p.2).

The convenience sampling method is suitable for the current study since the lack of time requires easily accessible and available participants. Therefore, the respondents mainly consist of the researchers' friends, family, or fellow students who are all valuable for the results. To get an insight into how the sample is distributed, questions with demographic variables like gender, age, and education are included in the survey.

3.5 Research ethics

It is important to include research ethics since researchers will face ethical dilemmas within their study (Goodwin, Pope, Mort, and Smith, 2003). First of all, the respondents are assured of complete anonymity and privacy, and their answers are only used for purposes of the current study. Anonymity and privacy are of high importance because of the sensitivity of the research subject. Furthermore, the participants were aware of the aim of the survey and the amount of time the questions took, which strengthens the transparency. In addition, participants were informed that they might leave the survey at any time so they did not feel forced to finish the survey if they were not comfortable with the questions.

As a final point, the reliability and validity of the current research are important aspects to assess. According to Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2014, p.3), reliability is the "extent

to which a variable or set of variables is consistent in what is intended to measure." Since the variables, except the variable illegitimate complaint, are measured by a single statement instead of multiple statements, the reliability can be questioned. However, as explained previously, multiple statements would make the survey too extensive and possibly result in respondents not finishing the survey. In addition, the statements are adopted from previous research and proven as appropriate measures for the variables and therefore positively influence the reliability. The validity concerns the extent the research measures what it intends to measure (Hair et al., 2014). In the context of the current study, validity is assured by starting the survey with examples of illegitimate complaints, so respondents are aware of what illegitimate complaints are and therefore increases the chance of useful answers for the research. Besides, the anonymity of the answers increases the chance of respondents willing to admit their illegitimate complaints and positively influences the validity as well.

3.6 Data analysis

After the data was collected through the survey, the data analysis process started. In this process, the independent variable (the drivers) was tested against several dependent variables. In total, 17 dependent variables were included in the study, namely the variable illegitimate complaint, 11 neutralization techniques, and 5 relationship variables.

In the analyses, the first step taken was cleaning up the dataset since missing data occurred due to participants who did not finish the survey. After the removal of the missing data, factor analysis was conducted for the variable 'illegitimate complaint' that was measured by 3 items and therefore required the determination of the underlying structure (Hair et al., 2014). Thereafter, a reliability analysis was performed for the variable illegitimate complaint. Next, a MANOVA test was performed to explore the dissimilarities between the four categories based on the different drivers and the dependent variables. According to Hair et al. (2014, p.26), "MANOVA is useful when the researcher designs an experimental situation to test hypotheses concerning the variance in group responses on two or more metric dependent variables." So, MANOVA is the appropriate analysis since it can test the means of the different neutralization techniques, relationship variables, and degree of illegitimacy on the drivers and therefore test the typology.

4. Results

This chapter demonstrates the results of the data analysis. First, the sample is described followed by the missing data. Thereafter, the factor and reliability analyses, assumptions of the MANOVA, and the results of the MANOVA itself are presented. Lastly, the results of the additional analysis are discussed.

4.1 Sample

In total, 719 Dutch individuals started filling in the survey. However, only 275 finished the survey which resulted in a sample of 275 Dutch respondents. These respondents are all useful to test the hypotheses since they all came up with a situation of an illegitimate complaint and answered the questions regarding their complaint. The sample sizes for each group are as follows: 24 respondents in the must-type, 152 in the need-type, 63 in the want-type, and 36 in the can-type. The minimum sample size within each group needs to be bigger than the total amount of dependent variables (Hair et al., 2014). Since the current study consists of 17 dependent variables, the sample size is sufficient.

The demographics of the sample are shown in table 1. Within the sample, 181 (65, 8%) participants are women, 91 (33,1%) participants are men, and 3 (1,1%) participants preferred to keep their gender anonymous. Furthermore, the age of the participants ranges between 14 and 70 with an average age of 35. Moreover, the results show that most respondents study at the university. Besides, the participants were asked if they have complained illegitimately more often than the complaint they filled in the survey for. Most of the participants, namely 185 (67,3%) admitted they have complained illegitimately at least one time more. From this number, 86 (31,3%) participants complained illegitimately at least twice more. The remaining 90 participants (32,7%) did not complain illegitimately more often than the complaint of the survey. In addition, concerning the size of the firm participants expressed their complaint to, 211 (76,7%) participants voiced their complaint to a big firm, 41 (14,9%) to a middle-sized firm, and 23 (8,4%) to a small firm. Subsequently, 92 participants (33.5%) voiced their complaint last year, 77 participants (28%) more than 1 year ago, and 106 participants (38.5%) have complaint illegitimately more than 2 years ago. Finally, to test whether the chosen scenario of the complaint indeed fits the actual complaint, the participants were asked to indicate the fitting. The results show that only 7 participants (2,5%) indicate that the scenario does not fit at all, 53 participants (19,3%) argue that the scenario fits a little bit, 64 participants (23,3%) say the scenario fits somewhat, 117 participants (42,5%) argue that the scenario fits

the utmost extent, and according to the remaining 34 participants (12,4%) the chosen scenario completely fits their complaint. So, most of the participants recognized their complaints in the situation which strengthens the validity of the study.

Table 1 Demographics

Demographics	Frequencies	
Gender	65,8%	Women
	33,1%	Men
	1,1%	Anonymous
Age	45,8%	< 25 years
	16%	25 – 35 years
	4.4%	36 – 45 years
	17.5%	46 – 55 years
	15.3%	> 55 years
Education	0.4 %	Primary education
	5.8 %	Secondary education
	17.5%	MBO
	32%	HBO
	44%	University
Sample size	N=275	

4.2 Missing data

The examined missing data is less than 10% of the total data and therefore could be considered ignorable (Hair et al., 2014). Hence, the incomplete and unusable answers were made valuable by filling in the average answers of the whole sample.

4.3 Factor analysis

After the missing data were examined and corrected, factor analysis was performed to find the underlying structure of the dependent variables. However, the variable 'illegitimate complaint' is the only dependent variable that qualifies for a factor analysis since it is the only variable measured by multiple items. Therefore, only the three items measuring the degree of illegitimacy were included in the factor analysis. Since the items are linked to the variable a priori, the factor analysis is confirmatory (Hair et al., 2014).

First of all, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity are assessed to indicate if factor analysis is appropriate for the current study. The threshold for KMO is .60 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity requires a

significant result (Pallant, 2001). The results are presented in appendix III and show that both tests are met, KMO=.620 and Bartlett's test (.000) gave a significant result. Therefore, factor analysis is appropriate and can be continued.

Secondly, the output in Appendix III shows that all the communalities after extraction are above the threshold of .20. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that only one factor can be extracted based on the Eigenvalue higher than 1. This factor explains 55,6% of the total variance. Furthermore, the component matrix shows that all three items have a strong loading on the factor because they are above .40 (Pallant, 2001). Since only one factor is extracted, factor rotation is not possible and the factor analysis is finished. The data analysis is continued with the three items of the dependent variable illegitimate complaint.

4.4 Reliability analysis

After examining the underlying structure of the variable illegitimate complaint, the reliability can be assessed by checking Cronbach's Alpha. The minimum value of .70 of the Cronbach's Alpha indicates the internal consistency of the scale (Hair et al., 2014). The output is presented in appendix IV and shows a Cronbach's Alpha of .596. Therefore, the threshold is not met. Deleting one of the items does not improve Cronbach's Alpha so the analysis will be continued with the current data. The implications of the low Cronbach's Alpha are discussed in chapter 5.

4.5 Assumptions

Several assumptions were checked before the MANOVA was conducted. Besides these assumptions, MANOVA requires that the independent variable is of categorical level and the dependent variables need to be metrically scaled (Field, 2013). In the current study, the independent variable consists of multiple categories and has a nominal level of measurement. The dependent variables are metrically scaled since they are measured with a 5-point Likert scale. Therefore, the requirement of the measurement levels is met. The remaining assumptions are discussed hereafter.

The first assumption is the independence of the observations, implying that it is not allowed that one observation affects another (Pallant, 2001). The observations are independent since the respondents participated completely individually and were not influenced by others. Therefore, the assumption of independence is met.

The second assumption refers to the normal distribution of all the dependent variables (Hair et al., 2014). The normality is assessed with the skewness, kurtosis, normal p-plots, and the Kolmogorov- Smirnov test, which are all presented in appendix V. A insignificant result of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, skewness and kurtosis between -3 and 3, or a straight line in the normal p-plots indicate a normally distributed data (Hair et al., 2014). Regarding the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the results show significant results for each variable and indicate a not-normal distributed data. However, the results of the skewness and kurtosis show a normal distribution for multiple variables. The normal-p plots in the appendix confirm the normal distribution for the following variables: condemnation of condemners, loyalty, WOM, trust, and commitment. Therefore, the assumption of normality is partly met. According to Hair et al. (2014), not-normal distributed data is not a reason for concern if the sample size is larger than 200. Since the sample size of the current research is big enough (N=275), the analysis is continued with the current data.

The third assumption is the homogeneity of (co)variances matrices (Pallant, 2001). The homogeneity of variances is assessed with Levene's test and Box's M test is examined for the homogeneity of the covariances (Field, 2013). According to the Box's M test, the covariances are not equal among the groups: $F(630,23644,376)= 1385,611$, p= .000. Furthermore, Levene's test gave the result of equal population variances of the following variables: denial of injury $F(3,271)= .793$, p=.499, denial of victim $F(3,271)= .669$, p=.572, condemnation of the condemners $F(3,271)= .140$, p=.936, appeal to higher loyalties $F(3,271)= 1.510$, p=.212, claim of normalcy $F(3,271)=1.341$, p=.261, claim of relative acceptability $F(3,271)=.844$, p=.471, metaphor of the ledger $F(3,271)=.469$, p=.704, claim of entitlement $F(3,271)=1.645$, p=.179, and defense of necessity $F(3,271)=1.808$, p=.146. The results of the remaining dependent variables showed unequal population variances. Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity is violated. Hence, the analysis is continued and limitations of this violation are discussed in chapter 5.

The fourth assumption is the linearity of the dependent variables (Hair et al., 2014). The results in appendix V show that the assumption of linearity is partly violated. The following variables are linear: denial of injury $F(2,271)= 1.292$, p=.277, condemnation of the condemners $F(2,271)=2.477$, p=.086, appeal to higher loyalties $F(2,271)=1.092$, p=.337, claim of normalcy $F(2,271)=2.002$, p=.137, problem exaggerated (illegitimate complaint_1) $F(2,271)=1.270$, p= .283, wrongly blamed (illegitimate complaint_3) $F(2,271)=2.448$, p=.088, claim of relative acceptability $F(2,271)=.464$, p=.629, metaphor of the ledger $F(2,271)= 2.203$, p=.112, and defense of necessity $F(2,271)=2.649$, p=.073. The remaining dependent variables are non-

linear. Hence, the analysis is continued and the limitations of the violations of the assumption of linearity are discussed in chapter 5.

The fifth assumption refers to the univariate and multivariate outliers (Hair et al., 2014). The Mahalanobis distance is assessed to determine the multivariate outliers. Since the study involves 17 dependent variables, the maximum allowable critical value for the outliers according to the chi-square table is 33.41 at a probability of $p = 0.01$ (Field, 2013). The results in appendix V show that the maximum value of 56.431 exceeds the critical value. In total, 21 multivariate outliers are present in the data. The 21 outliers are studied and did not show any reasons for concern. Therefore, the analysis is continued without deleting the multivariate outliers. Besides, the univariate outliers are assessed by checking the boxplots (see appendix) which reveal the presence of 35 univariate outliers. Again, the outliers are studied but show no reason for concern. Therefore, the analysis is continued.

The last assumption is the multicollinearity of the dependent variables (Hair et al., 2014). The results (see appendix) show that none of the neutralization techniques correlate with .8 or higher and neither does the variable illegitimate complaint. However, almost all the relationship variables are highly correlated with a correlation of .8 or higher and show signals of multicollinearity (Pallant, 2001). Therefore, the assumption is partly violated and limitations are, again, discussed in chapter 5.

4.6 Multivariate analysis of variances

Although some assumptions were violated, the MANOVA still was conducted with the type of complainant (can, must, need, and want) as an independent variable and illegitimate complaint, the neutralization techniques, and relationship variables as dependents.

Since the assumptions are not all met, the statistic chosen to examine the differences between the independent variable and the dependents is Pillai's Trace (Pallant, 2001).The results show a statistically significant difference between the type of complainants and the dependent variables: $F_{(60,762)}=4.698$, p= .000; Pillai's Trace= .81; Partial Eta Squared= .27. Therefore, the statistical significance and the means of the dependent variables were studied individually. Additionally, the means of the insignificant dependent variables are useful for the study as well and therefore mentioned in the hypotheses testing. The results of the dependent variables are separately discussed in the remainder of this section.

4.6.1 Neutralization techniques

The results of the neutralizations are presented in table 2 and show how the different types of complainants scored on the techniques.

Hypothesis 1 examines the several neutralization techniques the must-type scores highest on, namely denial of responsibility, denial of the victim, denial of negative intent, condemnation of the condemners, defense of necessity, and appeal to higher loyalties. The results show that the must-type scores higher compared to the other types of complainers on denial of responsibility, denial of the victim, denial of negative intent, condemnation of the condemners, and defense of necessity. Therefore, H1a, H1b, H1c, H1e, and H1f are confirmed. The neutralization technique, appeal to higher loyalties, is not statistically significantly different among the categories of the independent variable. Nevertheless, the results show that the must-type of complainants score highest on this neutralization compared to the other types of complainants. However, H1d needs to be rejected because of the insignificant result.

Hypothesis 4 examines that the need-type scores highest on the neutralization techniques denial of responsibility and denial of injury. Even though the need-type scores highest on denial of injury, the results give an insignificant result and H4a needs to be rejected. Nevertheless, the need-type significantly scores second-highest on denial of responsibility with little difference between the must-type which scores highest. Since it is hypothesized that both categories of complainants score highest compared to the other two types of complainants on this neutralization, H4b can be confirmed.

Hypothesis 7 examines that the want-type scores highest on the neutralization technique claims of entitlement. The results show that the want-type indeed scores highest on the neutralization technique claim of entitlement compared to the other types of complainants. Therefore, hypothesis 7 is confirmed.

Hypothesis 10 examines that the can-type scores highest on the neutralization techniques metaphor of the ledger, claims of relative acceptability, and claim of normalcy. The results show an insignificant result for the metaphor of the ledger and claims of relative acceptability. Besides, the neutralization claim of normalcy scores significantly second-highest on the can-type. Therefore, H10a, H10b, and H10c are rejected.

Table 2 Results MANOVA Neutralization Techniques

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta sq.	Effect
(a) Denial of responsibility	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: M=4.375; SD=.215 2: M=4.289; SD=.085 3: M=2.540; SD=.132 4: M=3.083; SD=.175 F(3,271)= 48.854	***	.35	Large
(b) Denial of injury	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: M=4.125; SD=.178 2: M=4.382; SD=.071 3: M=4.270; SD=.110 4: M=4.194; SD=.146 F(3,271)= .954	(ns)		
(c) Denial of victim	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: M=4.208; SD=.212 2: M=3.329; SD=.084 3: M=1.889; SD=.131 4: M=2.056; SD=.173 F(3,271)= 48.949	***	.35	Large
(d) Condemnation of the condemners	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: M=3.958; SD=.223 2: M=3.184; SD=.088 3: M=2.762; SD=.137 4: M=2.722; SD=.182 F(3,271)= 8.710	***	.08	Moderate
(e) Appeal to higher loyalties	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: M=2.375; SD=.232 2: M=2.105; SD=.092 3: M=1.921; SD=.143 4: M=2.139; SD=.189 F(3,271)= 1.004	(ns)		
(f) Claim of normalcy	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: M=3.500; SD=.173 2: M=3.770; SD=.069 3: M=4.048; SD=.107 4: M=3.861; SD=.141 F(3,271)= 2.869	*	.03	Small
(g) Denial of negative intent	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: M=4.375; SD=.229 2: M=3.770; SD=.091 3: M=3.286; SD=.141 4: M=3.583; SD=.187 F(3,271)= 6.090	**	.06	Moderate
(h) Claim of relative acceptability	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: M=4.000; SD=.200 2: M=3.816; SD=.080 3: M=3.905; SD=.124 4: M=3.861; SD=.163 F(3,271)= .310	(ns)		
(i) Metaphor of the ledger	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: M=4.167 SD=.155 2: M=3.974; SD=.061 3: M=4.222; SD=.095 4: M=4.111; SD=.126 F(3,271)= 1.827	(ns)		
(j) Defense of necessity	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: M=3.917; SD=.233 2: M=3.336; SD=.093 3: M=2.794; SD=.144 4: M=2.944; SD=.190 F(3,271)= 7.105	***	.07	Moderate

	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: M=3.417; SD=.167 2: M=3.467; SD=.066 3: M=3.857; SD=.103 4: M=3.389; SD=.137 F(3,271)= 4.136	**	.04	Small
(k) Claim of entitlement					

* = p<0.05   ** = p<0.01   *** = p<0.001   (ns) = non significant

4.6.2 Illegitimate complaint

An overview of how every type of complainant scores on the dependent variable illegitimate complaint can be found in table 3 below.

Hypothesis 2 examines that the must-type scores lowest on the illegitimacy of the complaint. The results show that the must-type scores lowest on the item exaggeration of the complaint, second-lowest on making up the complaint, and second-lowest on wrongly blaming. Although, it is confirmed that the must-type scores low on the illegitimacy of the complaint, the category does not score the lowest on all the items compared to the other categories. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is rejected.

Hypothesis 5 examines that the need-type scores second-lowest on the illegitimacy of the complaint. The results show that the need-type scores second-lowest on the exaggeration of the complaint, lowest on making up the complaint, and lowest on wrongly blaming compared to the other types of complainers. Again, it can be confirmed that the need-type scores low on the degree of illegitimacy, but not second-lowest on all the items. Therefore, hypothesis 5 is rejected.

Hypothesis 8 examines that the want-type scores highest on the illegitimacy of the complaint. The results show that the want-type scores higher than the other types of complainants on the exaggeration of the complaint, making up the complaint, and wrongly blaming. Therefore, hypothesis 8 is confirmed.

Hypothesis 11 examines that the can-type scores second-highest on the illegitimacy of the complaint. The results show that the can-type scores second-highest on the exaggeration of the complaint, making up the complaint, and wrongly blaming compared to the other types of complainants. Therefore, hypothesis 11 is confirmed.

Table 3 Results MANOVA Illegitimate complaint

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta sq.	Effect
(a) Problem exaggerated *(illegitimate complaint 1)*	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: *M*=2.375; SD=.234 2: *M*=2.447; SD=.093 3: *M*= 2.889;SD=.144 4: *M*=2.778; SD=.191 F(3,271)= 2.818	*	.03	Small
(b) Problem made up *(Illegitimate complaint 2)*	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: *M*=1.708; SD=.213 2: *M*=1.480; SD=.084 3: *M*= 3.032;SD=.131 4: *M*=2.167; SD=.174 F(3,271)= 33.924	***	.27	Large
(c) Wrongly blamed *(Illegitimate complaint 3)*	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: *M*=1.833; SD=.249 2: *M*=1.684; SD=.099 3: *M*= 2.286;SD=.154 4: *M*=2.278; SD=.204 F(3,271)=4.838	**	.05	Moderate

* = p<0.05   ** = p<0.01   *** = p<0.001   (ns) = non significant

4.6.3 Relationship variables

Finally, the scores of the types of complainants on the dependent variables commitment, satisfaction, WOM, trust, and loyalty are shown in table 4.

Hypothesis 3 examines that the must-type scores lowest on all the relationship variables. The results show that the must-type scores lowest compared to the other categories of complainants on loyalty, WOM, trust, commitment, and satisfaction. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is confirmed.

Hypothesis 6 examines that the need-type scores second-lowest on all the relationship variables. The results show that the need-type scores second-lowest on loyalty, WOM, trust, commitment, and satisfaction compared to the other types of complainants. Therefore, hypothesis 6 is confirmed.

Hypothesis 9 examines that the want-type scores highest on all the relationship variables. The results show that the want-type scores second-highest on loyalty, WOM, trust, satisfaction, and scores highest on commitment compared to the other types of complainants. Therefore, hypothesis 9 is rejected.

Hypothesis 12 examines that the can-type scores second-highest on all the relationship variables. The results show that the can-type scores highest on loyalty, WOM, trust,

satisfaction, and second-highest on commitment compared to the other types. Therefore, hypothesis 12 is rejected.

Table 4 Results MANOVA Relationship Variables

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta sq.	Effect
(a) Loyalty	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: M=1.667; SD=.176 2: M=2.559; SD=.070 3: M=3.143; SD=.109 4: M=3.167; SD=.144 F(3,271)=21.888	***	.20	Large
(b) WOM	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: M=1.667; SD=.179 2: M=2.487; SD=.071 3: M=3.143; SD=.111 4: M=3.194; SD=.146 F(3,271)=23.035	***	.20	Large
(c) Trust	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: M=1.542; SD=.184 2: M=2.553; SD=.073 3: M=3.159; SD=.114 4: M=3.278; SD=.151 F(3,271)=24.823	***	.22	Large
(d) Commitment	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: M=1.708; SD=.170 2: M=2.559; SD=.067 3: M=3.159; SD=.105 4: M=3.139; SD=.139 F(3,271)=22.593	***	.20	Large
(e) Satisfaction	1. Must-type 2. Need-type 3. Want-type 4. Can-type	1: M=1.708; SD=.196 2: M=2.605; SD=.078 3: M=3.365; SD=.121 4: M=3.528; SD=.160 F(3,271)=26.439	***	.23	Large

* = p<0.05   ** = p<0.01   *** = p<0.001   (ns) = non significant

4.7 Additional analysis

The analysis revealed some interesting effects of the variables firms size and time of the complaint. Therefore, an additional analysis (MANCOVA) was conducted with these two variables included as covariates. Both the time of the complaint $F(20,250)$=2,307, p=.002; Pillai's Trace=.16; Partial Eta Squared=.16 and firm size $F(20,250)$=2.639, p=.000; Pillai's Trace=.17; Partial Eta Squared=.17 shows a significant effect. Although no hypotheses were formulated, the means were analyzed and presented in table 5. The outcomes show that the time when the complaint was expressed and the size of the firm sometimes influenced the effect

of the independent variable on the dependent variables. However, according to the partial eta squared, the effects of the covariates are small.

Table 5 Results additional MANCOVA

Dependent Variable	Covariates	F	Sig.	Partial Eta sq.	Effect
(a) Problem exaggerated *(illegitimate complaint 1)*	Time of complaint Company size	F(1,269)=4.406 F(1,269)=.196	* (ns)	.02	Small
(b) Problem made up *(Illegitimate complaint 2)*	Time of complaint Company size	F(1,269)=.316 F(1,269)=.285	(ns) (ns)		
(c) Wrongly blamed *(Illegitimate complaint 3)*	Time of complaint Company size	F(1,269)=8.958 F(1,269)=.030	** (ns)	.03	Small
(d) Denial of responsibility	Time of complaint Company size	F(1,269)=2.777 F(1,269)=4.006	(ns) *	.02	Small
(e) Denial of injury	Time of complaint Company size	F(1,269)=1.961 F(1,269)=.005	(ns) (ns)		
(f) Denial of victim	Time of complaint Company size	F(1,269)=1.649 F(1,269)=1.673	(ns) (ns)		
(g) Condemnation of the condemners	Time of complaint Company size	F(1,269)=.313 F(1,269)=3.982	(ns) *	.02	Small
(h) Appeal to higher loyalties	Time of complaint Company size	F(1,269)=.055 F(1,269)=8.624	(ns) **	.03	Small
(i) Claim of normalcy	Time of complaint Company size	F(1,269)=.936 F(1,269)=.160	(ns) (ns)		
(j) Denial of negative intent	Time of complaint Company size	F(1,269)=5.789 F(1,269)=.401	* (ns)	.02	Small
(k) Claim of relative acceptability	Time of complaint Company size	F(1,269)=.777 F(1,269)=5.003	(ns) *	.02	Small
(l) Metaphor of the ledger	Time of complaint Company size	F(1,269)=1.519 F(1,269)=5.340	(ns) *	.02	Small
(m) Defense of necessity	Time of complaint Company size	F(1,269)=6.570 F(1,269)=6.778	* *	.02 .03	Small Small
(n) Claim of entitlement	Time of complaint Company size	F(1,269)=10.574 F(1,269)=4.601	** *	.04 .02	Small Small

(o) Loyalty	Time of complaint	$F(1,269)=.011$	(ns)
	Company size	$F(1,269)=.279$	(ns)
(b) WOM	Time of complaint	$F(1,269)=.036$	(ns)
	Company size	$F(1,269)=2.193$	(ns)
(c) Trust	Time of complaint	$F(1,269)=2.489$	(ns)
	Company size	$F(1,269)=.773$	(ns)
(d) Commitment	Time of complaint	$F(1,269)=.836$	(ns)
	Company size	$F(1,269)=3.012$	(ns)
(e) Satisfaction	Time of complaint	$F(1,269)=1.657$	(ns)
	Company size	$F(1,269)=.954$	(ns)

$* = p<0.05$ $** = p<0.01$ $*** = p<0.001$ (ns) = non significant

5. Discussion

In this final chapter, the current study is concluded followed by the theoretical contributions. Thereafter, the managerial implications are discussed. Finally, the limitations and directions for further research are explained.

5.1 Conclusion

As mentioned previously, complaints are not always legitimate but customers sometimes exaggerate or make up their complaints, or even wrongly blame the service provider (e.g. Harris & Reynolds, 2003; Jacoby & Jaccard, 1981; Ro and Wong, 2012.). In this regard, existing research already attempted to describe different types of illegitimate complainants (e.g. Huang & Miao, 2016; Reynolds & Harris, 2005). However, these types are confusing and incomplete. Therefore, Joosten (2020) developed a typology of illegitimate complainants in which the drivers underlying the behavior, neutralizations used to justify the behavior, and variables regarding the damaged relationship with the service provider are combined. The current study aimed to confirm this typology by answering the research question: *What is the relation between the drivers, the degree of the illegitimacy, neutralizations, and relationship variables of illegitimate complaints?* A MANOVA was conducted to find empirical evidence for the typology. In the analysis, the drivers were combined as a scenario and tested against the degree of illegitimacy, neutralization techniques, and the relationship variables to study the differences between the types and dependent variables. According to the results, the scenarios fitted properly to the illegitimate complaints of the participants, which strengthens the validity of the study. The outcomes of the analysis for each different type of complainant are discussed next.

The results of the must-type of complainer revealed that the driver's lack of morality, loss of control, and injustice are related to the neutralization techniques in the hypothesized effects: denial of responsibility, denial of victim, condemnation of the condemners, defense of necessity, and denial of negative intent. Furthermore, the drivers are related to a low degree of the illegitimacy of the complaint and a low level of loyalty, commitment, feelings of trust, satisfaction, and positive WOM towards the service provider.

The results of the need-type showed that the driver's external attribution, the contrast effect, disappointment, and anger are related to the hypothesized neutralization technique denial of responsibility, a low degree of illegitimacy, and a low level of loyalty, commitment, feelings of trust, satisfaction, and positive WOM towards the service provider.

The results of the want-type revealed that the drivers internal attribution, financial greed, and pre-planned are related to the hypothesized neutralization technique claim of entitlement, a high degree of illegitimacy, and a high level of loyalty, commitment, feelings of trust, satisfaction, and positive WOM towards the service provider.

The results of the can-type showed that the driver's opportunism, liberal redress policy, social norm, and attitude towards illegitimate complaints are not related to one of the neutralization in the hypothesized effects. However, the drivers are related to a high degree of illegitimacy and a high level of loyalty, commitment, feelings of trust, satisfaction, and positive WOM towards the service provider.

Based on the analysis and the confirmed and rejected hypotheses that are presented in table 6, empirical evidence for the typology developed by Joosten (2020) is partly found.

Table 6 Overview hypotheses and results

Hypothesis		Result
H1a	The must-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'denial of responsibility' compared to the other types of complainers.	Confirmed
H1b	The must-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'denial of the victim' compared to the other types of complainers.	Confirmed
H1c	The must-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'condemnation of the condemners'.	Confirmed
H1d	The must-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'appeal to higher loyalties' compared to the other types of complainers.	Rejected
H1e	The must-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'defense of necessity' compared to the other types of complainers.	Confirmed
H1f	The must-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'denial of negative intent' compared to the other types of complainers.	Confirmed
H2	The must-type of complainer scores lowest on the illegitimacy of the complaints compared to the other types of complainers.	Rejected
H3	The must-type of complainer scores lowest on the relationship variables compared to the other types of complainers.	Confirmed
H4a	The need-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'denial of injury' compared to the other types of complainers.	Rejected
H4b	The need-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'denial of responsibility' compared to the other types of complainers.	Confirmed
H5	The need-type of complainer scores second lowest on the illegitimacy of the complaints compared to the other types of complainers.	Rejected
H6	The need-type of complainer scores second lowest on the relationship variables compared to the other types of complainers.	Confirmed
H7	The want-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'claim of entitlement' compared to the other types of complainers.	Confirmed
H8	The want-type of complainer scores highest on the illegitimacy of the complaints compared to the other types of complainers.	Confirmed

H9	The want-type of complainer scores highest on the relationship variables compared to the other types of complainers.	Rejected
H10a	The can-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'metaphor of the ledger' compared to the other types of complainers.	Rejected
H10b	The can-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'claim of normalcy' compared to the other types of complainers.	Rejected
H10c	The can-type of complainer scores higher on the neutralization 'claim of relative acceptability' compared to the other types of complainers.	Rejected
H11	The can-type of complainer scores second-highest on the illegitimacy of the complaints compared to the other types of complainers.	Confirmed
H12	The can-type of complainer scores second-highest on the relationship variables compared to the other types of complainers.	Rejected

5.2 Theoretical contribution

The current research contributes to knowledge of illegitimate complainants by extending the existing theory with the typology of illegitimate complainants of Joosten (2020). More precisely, existing typologies of illegitimate complainants (e.g. Huang & Miao, 2016; Reynolds & Harris, 2005) are incomplete since the drivers, neutralizations, and relationship variables are not combined. Besides, existing typologies are often conceptual and not empirically tested. Therefore, the current study provides a more complete typology based on empirical evidence which expands the knowledge regarding illegitimate complaining behavior.

Second, the hypothesized effects of the types on the neutralization techniques denial of responsibility, denial of victim, condemnation of the condemners, defense of necessity, denial of negative intent, and claim of entitlement are confirmed and consistent with theoretical predictions. Only the existence of these neutralizations as excuses to justify misbehavior was acknowledged by previous research, but the researchers did not connect these techniques with specific types of complainants (Eliason, 2003; Harris & Dumas, 2009; Sykes & Matza, 1957). Therefore, these outcomes contribute to existing theoretical knowledge by providing insights on what type of complainant uses which techniques.

In addition, the hypothesized effects of the types on the neutralization techniques appeal to higher loyalties, denial of injury, the metaphor of the ledger, and claim of relative acceptability are rejected. The results give insignificant results which are inconsistent with expectations based on theory. The insignificance might be caused by shortcomings of the study which are discussed in section 5.4, but other reasons could be possible as well. First, Harris and Dumas (2009) found that the neutralization technique appeal to higher loyalty is mostly used before conducting the misbehavior. As the current research studied the effect of

neutralizations after the participants voiced their illegitimate complaint, this could be a potential reason for the lack of evidence of this effect. Another possible clarification might be the effect of the firm size. Research has found that misbehavior is more likely to be recognized as unacceptable when it concerns a smaller-sized firm instead of a bigger-sized firm (Harris & Dumas, 2009). In other words, customers who have expressed an illegitimate complaint to a smaller-sized firm might be more inclined to justify their behavior since they realize their behavior is unacceptable. As 76,7% of participants of the current study voiced their complaint to a bigger-sized firm, this could be a possible reason for the lacking evidence of several neutralization techniques.

Besides, the result of the neutralization technique claim of normalcy contradicts the predictions based on theory as well. The claim of normalcy scored statistically highest on the want-type instead of the hypothesized effect on the can-type. More precisely, the results showed high scores of this technique for every type of complainant, stating that all complainants justify their misbehavior with the excuse that everyone does it. In their study, Harris and Dumas (2009) acknowledged that the majority of 75% of their participants apply the technique claim of normalcy. Therefore, it is a possible explanation that the neutralization does not fit one specific type of complainant.

Third, the hypothesized effects of the types on the degree of illegitimacy are confirmed for the want- and can-type. The effects of the degree of illegitimacy for the must- and need-type differs from the hypotheses. However, the results show little differences between the must- and need-type and confirm a low score on the degree of the illegitimacy of the complaint. Therefore, the outcomes contribute to theoretical knowledge by introducing types of illegitimate complainants based on the degree of illegitimacy since existing typologies do not make this distinction. For example, Huang and Mia (2016) introduced three types based on reasons underlying the complaint but did not include the level of illegitimacy. Furthermore, Reynolds and Harris (2005) acknowledged four types based on the quantity of the complaints and, again, did not involve the degree of illegitimacy.

Fourth, the hypothesized effects about the relationship variables are confirmed for the must- and need-type. Although the effects for the want- and can-type are different from expectations based on theory, the results show a high score of both types on the relationship variables. These results provide insights into how illegitimate complaints influence the relationship with the service provider. Existing theory about illegitimate complaining behavior did not explain how specific types of complaints differ in how their misbehavior affects the customer-company relationship (e.g. Fullerton & Punj, 1993; Lovelock, 1994; Wirtz &

McColl-Kennedy, 2010). Therefore, the current study extends existing knowledge with to what extent the commitment, loyalty, trust, satisfaction, and WOM of complainants get influenced by different types of complaints.

Furthermore, although not each prediction based on Joosten's typology was supported by our research, the current study extends existing theoretical knowledge with the effects that have been found empirically.

5.3 Managerial implications

The study provides several implications for firms that are willing to decrease the costs and money spent on the illegitimate complaints of their customers. More precisely, the outcomes of the current research enable managers to understand the complaining behavior of their customers. A thorough understanding of the reasons underlying customers' complaints and the influenced customer-company relationship will help managers by making the rights decision whether to continue investing in the complainant or not. This is especially important since, as mentioned before, managing current customers is less costly than attracting new ones (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). However, acknowledging illegitimate complaints as acceptable, by for example giving compensations, will only be a motivation for customers to misbehave more (Baker et al., 2012). Therefore, it is essential to make conscious choices about whether to invest in the complainant or not. For instance, investing in customers who do not feel any commitment, loyalty, trust, and satisfaction towards the service provider or even spread negative WOM will be a waste of time and money. For that reason, it is beneficial for firms to identify the type of complainant with the knowledge of the current study and only invest in valuable customers. Besides, Berry and Seiders (2008) confirmed that service providers should not neglect illegitimate complaints but work out a policy to handle them.

First, the results show that customers within the must-category voice a complaint with a low degree of illegitimacy because of the lack of morality, injustice, and loss of control. In addition, they can be recognized by using the following excuses: 'it was not my fault', 'they deserved it because of what they have done', 'it was not my intention beforehand', 'they are sometimes dishonest as well', and 'otherwise I would not be taken seriously'. Lastly, the complainants perceive the complaint as a reason to be less loyal, committed, satisfied, feeling less trust, and spreading positive WOM. Therefore, when managers categorize complainants within the must-type, they are advised to strongly minimize investing time and money in these customers. Since these complainants are most likely to leave the firm as a customer, it will be a waste of time to rebuild their loss of control or feelings of injustice. Subsequently, breaking

the relationship with the customer will be difficult but is sometimes necessary (Berry & Seiders, 2008).

Second, the results showed that customers within the need category express complaints with a low degree of illegitimacy because of external attribution, the contrast effect, disappointment, and anger. Furthermore, managers can recognize these complainants when the excuse 'it was not my fault' is used. The need-type of complainants will be feeling a decreased loyalty, commitment, satisfaction, and trust towards the service provider and are not likely to spread positive WOM. Therefore, when managers are dealing with the need-type of complainants, they are advised to minimize the time and money investing in these types of customers since it is expected that these types will, for example, refuse a repurchase or spread negative WOM. In other words, managers should not devote their time or money attempting to recover the complainants' disappointment, anger, or contrast effect since they are not worth it.

Third, the results showed that customers within the want category complain pre-planned and highly illegitimate because of internal attribution and financial greed. Besides, they can be recognized by the excuse 'I deserve some luck as well'. However, these complainants do not perceive the complaint as a reason for an extremely damaged relationship with the service provider. Therefore, when managers categorize the complainants as the want-type, they are advised to continue spending time and money on them since these customers still will be loyal and committed to the firm for example. Subsequently, since these complainants aim to get something for free (financial greed), managers are not advised to give them a financial reward because admitting the complaint will not prevent them from doing it again (Baker et al., 2012).

Fourth, the results showed that customers within the can-category can not be recognized by the neutralization techniques that were hypothesized based on theory. However, these type of complainants still can be identified if the complaint was voiced because the customer wanted to benefit from the situation (opportunism), tried to get compensation (liberal redress policy), and if the behavior was accepted by others (social norm) or themselves (attitude towards). Since these complainants are trying to get some kind of compensation, managers are not advised to yield to the complaint because giving compensation will motivate them to misbehave again (Baker et al., 2012). Besides, the loyalty, trust, commitment, satisfaction, and intention to spread positive WOM will not be decreased terribly. Therefore, when managers categorize complainants within the can-type, it is advised to continue the relationship since these customers are likely to remain valuable to the service provider.

Finally, all managers are advised to read the implications with the limitations of the current study in mind. The limitations are discussed in the following section.

5.4 Limitations and further research

Although the study was carried out carefully, limitations are unavoidable and need to be discussed. However, the limitations which are highlighted within this section as well give fruitful avenues for further research.

First, the chosen method for the current study has a few limitations itself. As pointed out in chapter 3, the survey was distributed to individuals familiar to the researchers themselves. Therefore, the study could be biased since not every one of the population could participate. Another reason for biased results is that the survey was only distributed via the internet and therefore ruled out individuals without an internet connection. Furthermore, self-selection can occur since the survey was only available for people active on the social media platform through which the survey was distributed (Duda & Nobile, 2010). In addition, careless respondents can be an issue in the current study which harms the quality of the study since answers might be randomly chosen (Meade & Craig, 2012). Lastly, respondents could have found it difficult to answer the questions based on their misbehavior from a long time ago, referred to as memory bias. Especially since the results show that 38.5% filled in the survey for an illegitimate complaint from more than 2 years ago, it is reasonable that the results are biased by memory (Mingay & Greenwell, 1989). Therefore, future research should find ways to limit the biased results such as offline interviews or only including recent experienced illegitimate complaints.

Second, as explained in chapter 3, illegitimate complaining behavior is a sensitive subject that could prevent people from participating in the survey or filling in honest answers. Although the techniques introduced by McBride (2010) were applied to the survey, respondents potentially gave socially desirable answers. Therefore, further research should attempt to find methods to limit the changes on socially desirable answers.

Third, regarding the assumptions of linearity and multicollinearity. The assumption of linearity is partly violated which states a non-straight line between several dependent variables and the independent variable (Hair et al., 2014). Furthermore, multicollinearity appeared to be present among the relationship variables. In other words, the outcomes of one relationship variable can be explained by another which makes it difficult to determine the impact of one separate relationship variable (Hair et al., 2014). The researcher attempted to repair the violations but unfortunately without success. For that reason, the choice was made to pursue the analysis with the statistical insufficiencies and therefore the results need to be interpreted carefully. Subsequently, it is advised for further research to copy the current research with a

linear relationship between de independent and all the dependent variables and with the absence of multicollinearity.

Fourth, concerning the sample, a few shortcomings appeared which resulted in the violation of the assumption of homogeneity. As the sample sizes of the groups happened to be unequal, this resulted in significant test results for a few variables. Besides, the demographics show that the sample is mostly represented by women, young individuals, and highly educated people. Therefore, the outcomes of the research are mainly generalizable for people characterized by these aspects. The imperfections of the sample weaken the validity and reliability of the study. For future research, it is advised to make use of equality within the sample concerning gender, age, and education and to utilize equal sample sizes of the four types of complainants. Especially since Reynolds and Harris (2005) confirmed that individuals of a younger age, females, and highly educated people express more complaints, it is interesting for further research to examine the typology with a more equal sample.

Fifth, the reliability of the variable illegitimate complaint appeared to be lower than the desired value of the Cronbach's Alpha. It is advised for further research to include more items that measure the degree of illegitimacy which will increase the reliability of this concept.

Sixth, all the variables, except illegitimate complaint, were measured by only one item which lowers the reliability of the study. Therefore, future research can utilize multiple items that measure every variable to make the outcomes more reliable.

Seventh, the results showed that 76,7% voiced their illegitimate complaint to a big-sized firm. Subsequently, future research should include the same number of complaints expressed to big, medium, and small-sized firms to make the results generalizable for all-sized firms. Especially since additional analyses revealed that firm size affects the relationship between the type of complainant and a few neutralization techniques.

In this regard, additional analyses revealed the effects of the firm size and the time of the complaint. However, the effects that have been found appeared to be small which can be explained by the various shortcomings explained in this section such as the sample size or statistical insufficiencies. As Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy (2010) found that most opportunistic claims were expressed to a larger-sized firm, they confirmed the effect of firm size. Therefore, further research should try to find more evidence for the effects of firm size and the time of the complaint.

Ninth, regarding the validity of the study, it can be considered to what extent the study measured what it was intended to measure (Hair et al., 2014). The participants who have never complained illegitimately were asked to fill in the survey with a self-imagined illegitimate

complaint to stimulate the response rate. This could jeopardize the validity since it is difficult to emphasize the situation and fill in genuine answers without actually having complained illegitimately. Therefore, future research should try to control this by only including participants who have expressed an illegitimate complaint.

To conclude, the effects of a few neutralization techniques appeared to be insignificant and could not be tested. The insignificance can be caused due to statistical insufficiencies or shortcomings of the sample. It is recommendable for future research to conduct the study again and improve the current limitations as mentioned above to find empirical evidence for the complete typology and improve existing theoretical knowledge regarding illegitimate complaining behavior.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Survey

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 hele 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

Uit onderzoek blijkt dat veel mensen weleens 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 op 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 zes 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 zo te zijn.'

Lyn: 'Ik heb weleens 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 kapot gegaan. 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? (in euro's)

_____

3. Hoe groot was het bedrijf waar u heeft geklaagd?
- o Klein bedrijf (bijvoorbeeld eenmanszaak)
- o Middelgroot bedrijf (bijvoorbeeld 2 of 3 vestigingen)
- o Groot bedrijf (bijvoorbeeld 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 overdrijven (illegitimate complaints 1)	o	o	o	o	o

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)	o	o	o	o	o

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

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

10. Wanneer speelde uw beschreven situatie?

- o Het afgelopen jaar.
- o Langer dan een jaar geleden.
- o Langer dan twee jaar geleden.

11. 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.

a. Het bedrijf heeft geprobeerd misbruik van mij te maken, door bijvoorbeeld 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. (must-type)

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. (need-type)

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, een nieuw product of een tegoedbon. (want-type)

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. (can-type)

12. In hoeverre past de gekozen beschrijving bij uw situatie?

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

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
13. Het was niet mijn schuld (denial of responsibility)	o	o	o	o	o
14. Het bedrijf zal er heus geen ernstige schade door lijden (denial of injury)	o	o	o	o	o
15. Het bedrijf verdient het door wat ze gedaan hebben (denial of victim)	o	o	o	o	o

16. Het bedrijf is ook niet altijd eerlijk tegenover klanten (condemnation of the condemners)	o	o	o	o	o
17. Ik deed het niet voor mezelf (maar uit principe of voor anderen) (Appeal to higher loyalties)	o	o	o	o	o
18. Iedereen overdrijft wel eens (claim of normalcy)	o	o	o	o	o
19. Ik was niet op voorhand van plan om overdreven te klagen (denial of negative intent)	o	o	o	o	o
20. Andere mensen doen veel ergere dingen (claim of relative acceptability)	o	o	o	o	o
21. Normaal gesproken houd ik me wel aan de regels (metaphor of the ledger)	o	o	o	o	o
22. Ik mag ook wel eens een meevallertje hebben (claim of entitlement)	o	o	o	o	o
23. Anders werd ik niet serieus genomen door het bedrijf (defense of necessity)	o	o	o	o	o

24. Op dat moment dacht ik niet echt na over de consequenties (gevoelens kwamen later pas) (justification by postponement)	o	o	o	o	o

We zijn bijna aan het einde van de vragenlijst!

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

	Veel kleiner	Kleiner	Onveranderd	Groter	Veel groter
26. De kans dat ik nogmaals een aankoop doe bij het bedrijf in kwestie is na deze situatie: (loyalty)	o	o	o	o	o
27. De kans dat ik anderen (familie/vrienden/etc.) het bedrijf in kwestie aanraad is na deze situatie (WOM)	o	o	o	o	o
28. Het vertrouwen dat ik in het bedrijf in kwestie heb na deze situatie: (trust)	o	o	o	o	o
29. Mijn band met het bedrijf is na deze situatie: (commitment)	o	o	o	o	o
30. Mijn tevredenheid over het bedrijf is na deze situatie: (satisfaction)	o	o	o	o	o

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

  o Nog nooit

  o 1 keer

  o 2 keer

  o 3 keer

  o Vaker dan 3 keer

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

_____

33. Wat is uw geslacht?

  o Man

  o Vrouw

  o Anders/ wil niet zeggen

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

  o Lagere school/basisonderwijs

  o Voortgezet onderwijs

  o MBO

  o HBO

  o WO

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

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

Radboud University

Appendix II: Pre-test

Table 7 Participants pre-test

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 8 Results pre-test

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 keer
- 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 III: Factor analysis

Table 9 Correlation matrix

		Problem exaggerated	Problem made up	Wrongly blamed
Correlation	*Problem exaggerated (illegitimate complaint_1)*	1.000	.420	.301
	Problem made up (illegitimate complaint_2)	.420	1.000	.274
	Wrongly blamed (illegitimate complaint_3)	.301	.274	1.000

Table 10 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sampling adequacy		.620
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	*Approx. Chi-Square*	86.785
	df.	3
	Sig.	.000

Table 11 Communalities

	Initial	**Extraction**
Problem exaggerated	1.000	.621
Problem made up	1.000	.595
Wrongly blamed	1.000	.451

Extraction method: Principal Component analysis

Table 12 Total Variance Explained

Initial Eigenvalues				Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.668	55.600	55.600	1.668	55.600	55.600
2	.754	25.128	80.728			
3	.578	19.272	100.000			

Extraction method: Principal Component analysis
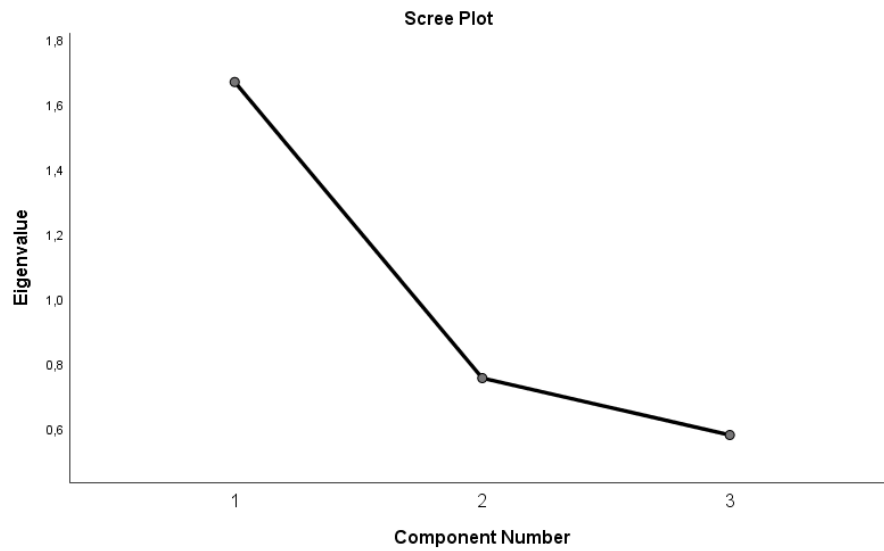
Figure 3 Scree plot

Table 13 Component Matrix

	Component 1
Problem exaggerated	.788
Problem made up	.771
Wrongly blamed	.672

Extraction method: Principal Component analysis

Appendix IV: Reliability Analysis

Table 14 Reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of items
.596	.598	3

Table 15 Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item deleted	Corrected Item Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Problem exaggerated (illegitimate complaint_1)	4.50	3.762	.427	.200	.462
Problem made up (illegitimate complaint_2)	3.86	3.859	.451	.214	.430
Wrongly blamed (illegitimate complaint_3)	4.53	3.994	.341	.117	5.91

Appendix V: Assumptions

<u>Assumption 1: Normality</u>

The normality is examined by checking the skewness and kurtosis, the tests of normality and the normal Q-Q plots. First, the z-values are calculated by dividing the skewness with the standard error and the kurtosis with the standard error. The standard errors for the skewness is .147 and for the kurtosis is: .293. Secondly, the statistics used as tests of normality is Kolmogorov- Smirnov which indicates normality when the value is higher than the alpha level of .05, so at a non-significant result (Hair et al., 2014). The results are viewed in table 16. The normal Q-Q plots in which the plots show a straight line indicate normality (Pallant, 2001). The normal Q-Q plots for the dependent variables showing a normal distribution are presented in figure 4.

Table 16 Assumption of normality

	Descriptives				Tests of Normality	
Dependent Variable	*Skewness*	*Z-value*	*Kurtosis*	*Z-value*	*Statistic*	*Significance*
Problem exaggerated (Illegitimate complaint_ 1)	.28	1.87*	-.80	-2.74	.904	.000
Problem made up (Illegitimate complaint_ 2)	1.04	7.08	-.15	-.49*	.762	.000
Wrongly blamed (Illegitimate complaint_ 3)	1.13	7.71	.01	.04*	.737	.000
Denial of responsibility	-.73	-4.93	-.67	2.29**	.836	.000
Denial of injury	-1.38	11.64	1.67	5.71	.745	.000
Denial of victim	.04	0.24*	-1.01	-3.43	.907	.000
Condemnation of condemners	-.12	-.86*	-.62	-2.12**	.914	.000
Appeal to higher loyalties	.88	5.97	-.18	-.62*	.826	.000
Claim of normalcy	-1.13	-7.71	1.89	6.46	.794	.000
Denial of negative intent	-.783	-5.33	-.264	-.90*	.848	.000
Claim of relative acceptability	-.66	-4.48	.30	1.01*	.853	.000
Metaphor of the ledger	-.91	-6.19	1.41	4.83	.791	.000
Claim of entitlement	-.69	-4.67	.88	3.01	.844	.000
Defense of necessity	-.43	-2.93	-.71	-2.42**	.893	.000

Loyalty	-.26	-1.77*	.12	.40*	.821	.000
Word of mouth	-.21	-1.46*	-.16	-.54*	.845	.000
Trust	-.17	-1.16*	-.42	-1.44*	.879	.000
Commitment	-.34	-2.33**	.06	.19*	.832	.000
Satisfaction	-.24	-1.63*	-.78	-2.65	.893	.000

* Normally distributed at .05 significance level (<1.96)

** Normally distributed at .01 significance level (<2.58)

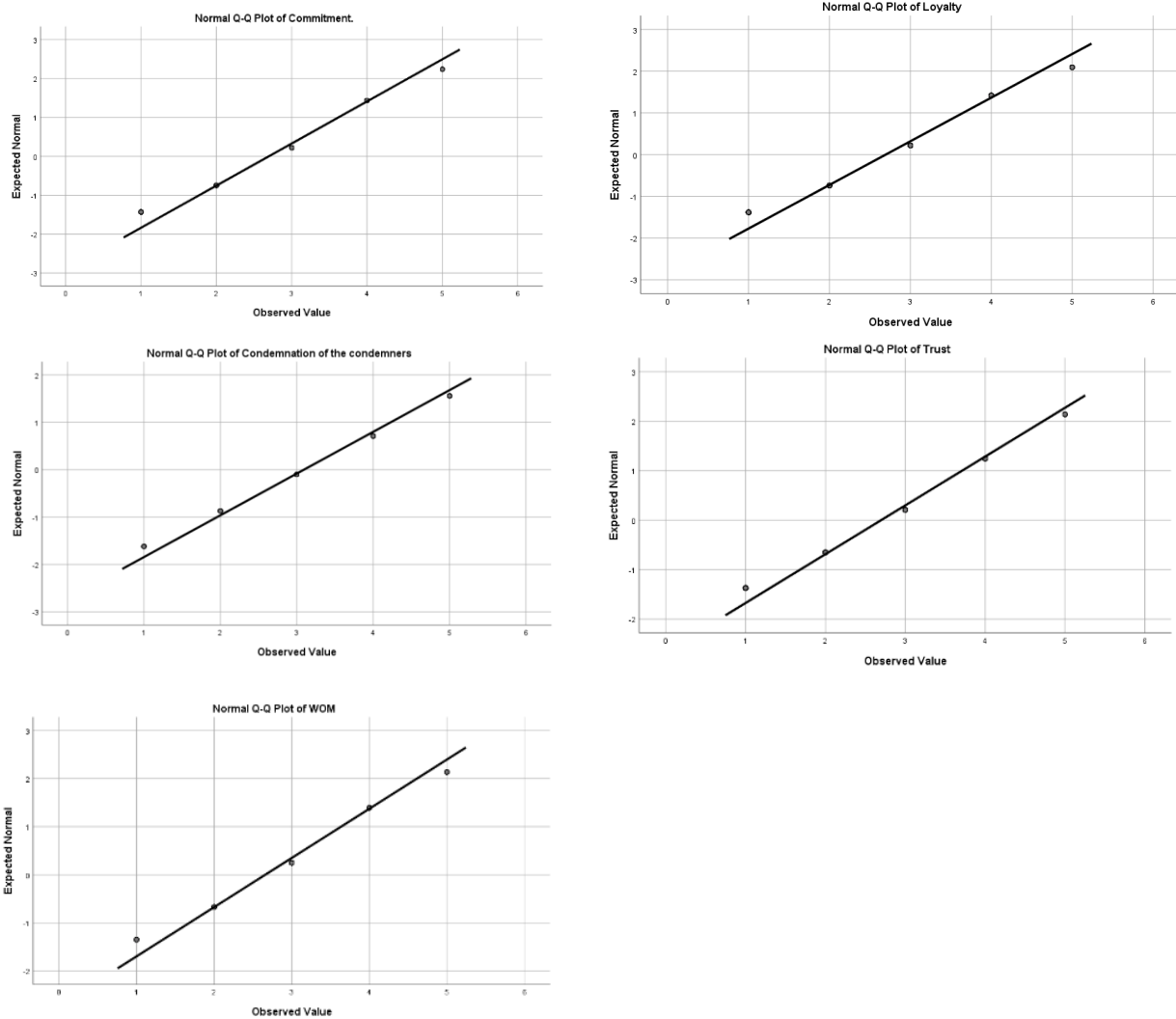*Figure 4 Normal Q-Q plots*

<u>Assumption 2: Homogeneity</u>

A non-significant result (p> .05) for both Box's M and Levene's test indicates homogeneity (Field, 2013). The results for Box's M Test are shown in table 17 and for Levene's Test in table 18.

Table 17 Box's M Test

Box's M		1385.611
F	*Approx.*	1.685
	df1	630
	df2	23644.376
	Sig.	.000

Table 18 Levene's Test

Dependent variable	**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**Sig.**
Problem exaggerated (Illegitimate complaint 1)	4.493	3	271	.004
Problem made up (Illegitimate complaint 2)	16.957	3	271	.000
Wrongly blamed (Illegitimate complaint 3)	11.081	3	271	.000
Denial of responsibility	5.285	3	271	.001
Denial of injury	.793	3	271	.499
Denial of victim	.669	3	271	.572
Condemnation of the condemners	.140	3	271	.936
Appeal to higher loyalties	1.510	3	271	.212
Claim of normalcy	1.342	3	271	.261
Denial of negative intent	2.970	3	271	.032
Claim of relative acceptability	.844	3	271	.471
Metaphor of the ledger	.469	3	271	.704
Claim of entitlement	1.645	3	271	.179
Defense of necessity	1.808	3	271	.146
Loyalty	6.968	3	271	.000
WOM	7.483	3	271	.000
Trust	15.802	3	271	.000
Commitment	12.370	3	271	.000
Satisfaction	12.927	3	271	.000

Assumption 3: Linearity

The deviation of linearity in table 19 shows a non-linear relation at P >.05 (Field, 2013).

Table 19 Linearity

Dependent variable		Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Problem exaggerated (Illegitimate complaint 1)	Deviation from Linearity	66,791	2	33,395	30,800	,000
Problem made up (Illegitimate complaint 2)	Deviation from Linearity	66,791	2	33,395	30,800	,000
Wrongly blamed (Illegitimate complaint 3)	Deviation from Linearity	7,302	2	3,651	2,448	,088
Denial of responsibility	Deviation from Linearity	59,673	2	29,836	27,016	,000
Denial of injury	Deviation from Linearity	1,968	2	,984	1,291	,277
Denial of victim	Deviation from Linearity	26,877	2	13,438	12,403	,000
Condemnation of the condemners	Deviation from Linearity	5,894	2	2,947	2,477	,086
Appeal to higher loyalties	Deviation from Linearity	2,811	2	1,406	1,092	,337
Claim of normalcy	Deviation from Linearity	2,868	2	1,434	2,002	,137
Denial of negative intent	Deviation from Linearity	9,886	2	4,943	3,938	,021
Claim of relative acceptability	Deviation from Linearity	,893	2	,446	,464	,629
Metaphor of the ledger	Deviation from Linearity	2,530	2	1,265	2,203	,112
Claim of entitlement	Deviation from Linearity	7,575	2	3,788	5,642	,004
Defense of necessity	Deviation from Linearity	6,920	2	3,460	2,649	,073
Loyalty	Deviation from Linearity	8,265	2	4,132	5,557	,004
WOM	Deviation from Linearity	6,816	2	3,408	4,426	,013

Trust	Deviation from Linearity	8,667	2	4,334	5,310	,005
Commitment	Deviation from Linearity	8,456	2	4,228	6,122	,003
Satisfaction	Deviation from Linearity	6,316	2	3,158	3,412	,034

Assumption 4: Outliers

The maximum value of the Mahalanobis distance is shown in table 20 and used to determine the multivariate outliers. The boxplots in figure 5 show the ID numbers of the univariate outliers.

Table 20 Residuals Statistics

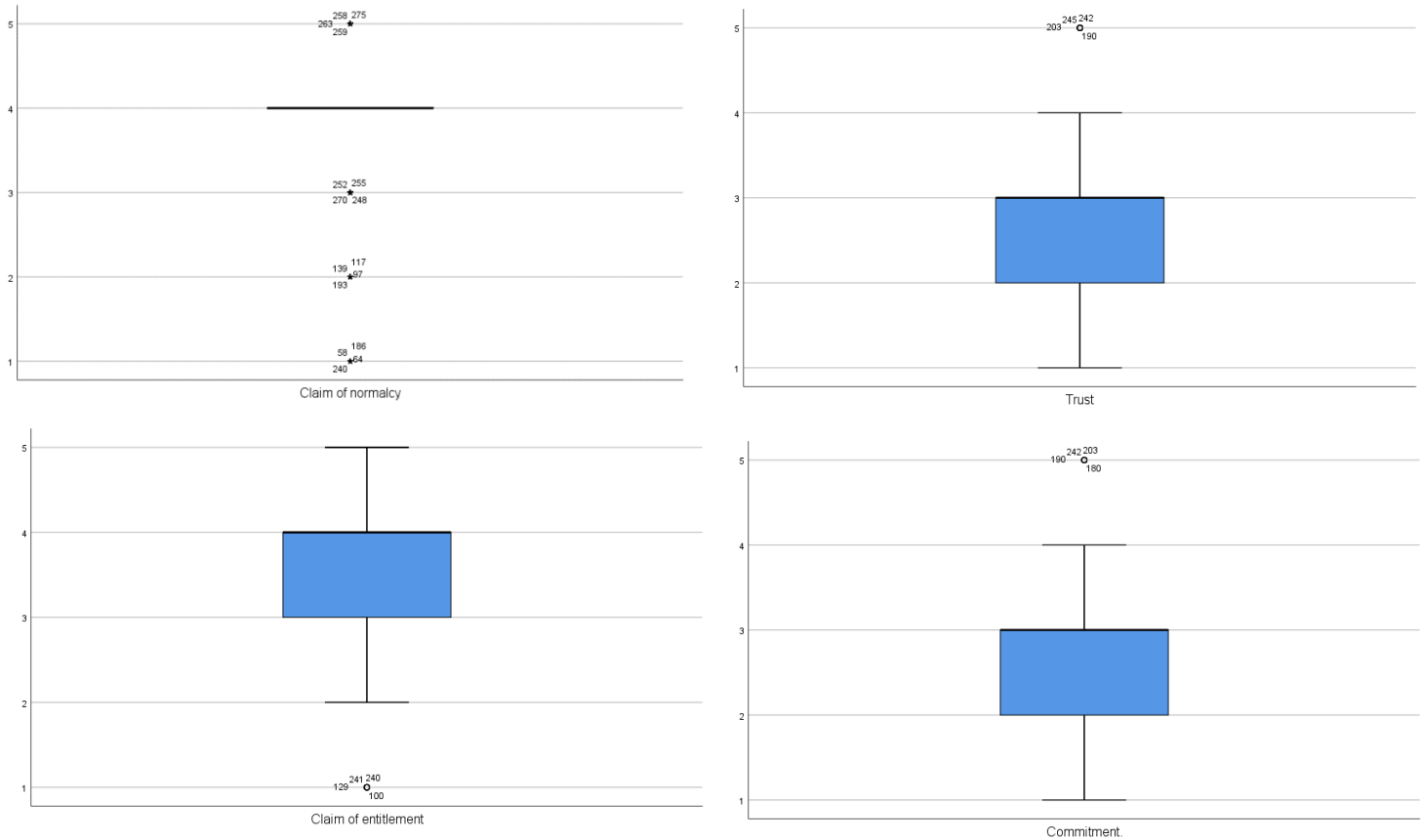|	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**N**
Predicted value	1.17	3.79	2.40	.540	275
Std. Predicted value	-2.275	2.575	.000	1.000	275
Mahal. Distance	4.943	56.531	19.927	8.372	275
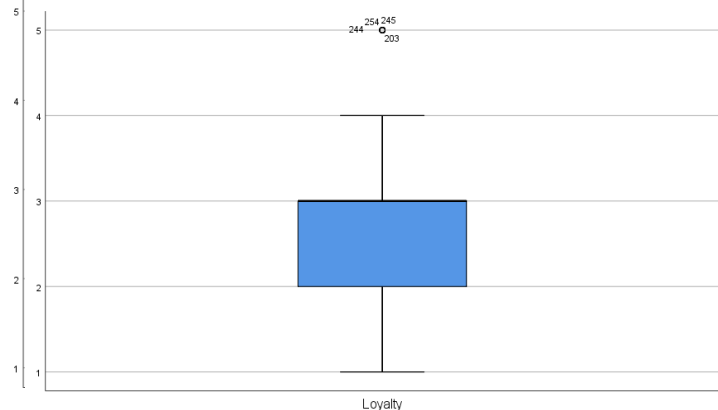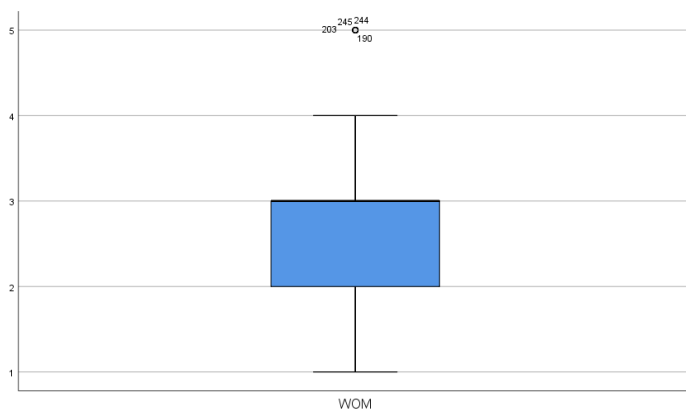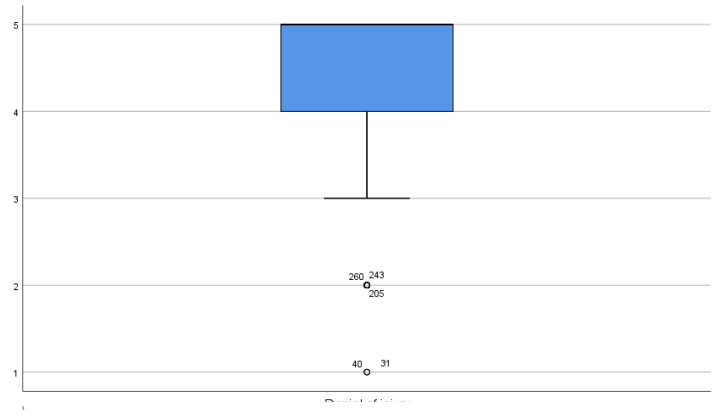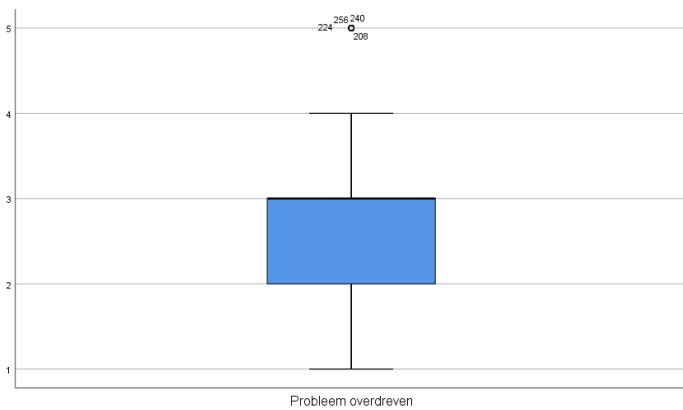
Figure 5 Boxplots

Assumption 5: Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity is examined with Pearson Correlation. When the value is higher than .80, multicollinearity is an issue (Pallant, 2001). All the correlations of the variable illegitimate complaint and the neutralization techniques were lower than this criterium. However, as shown in table 21, the relationship variables are highly correlated and above the threshold of .80.

Table 21 Correlations

		Loyalty	**WOM**	**Trust**	**Commitment**	**Satisfaction**
Loyalty	*Pearson Correlation*	1	,899**	,819**	,788**	,769**
WOM	*Pearson Correlation*	,899**	1	,841**	,815**	,804**
Trust	*Pearson Correlation*	,819**	,841**	1	,856**	,844**
Commitment.	*Pearson Correlation*	,788**	,815**	,856**	1	,850**
Satisfaction	*Pearson Correlation*	,769**	,804**	,844**	,850**	1

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 (2-tailed)