



**SERVICE FAILURE AND SERVICE RECOVERY STRATEGIES IN THE
CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION: A PROVINCIAL PERSPECTIVE
IN SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy: Management Sciences specialising in Marketing**

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DECLARATION

I, Steven Kayambazinthu Msosa, hereby declare that this thesis is original and all the contents are appropriately acknowledged and explicitly referenced. A bibliography is appended to the thesis. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Durban University of Technology.

I also certify that the thesis has not heretofore been submitted in any of its parts or entirety for a degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences specialising in marketing in any other institution of higher learning locally or internationally.

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Date

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late mother, Esther Kumwenda Msosa who passed on in September, 2017 during the course of this study. May her soul rest in eternal peace. I would like to dedicate this thesis further to my father, Goodson Japhet Msosa and aunt, Grace Msosa. I thank them for their prayers, encouragement and financial support. I could not have achieved this milestone without you. You have been my pillar of strength and I shall always be grateful for your unconditional love.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The journey of life is full of challenges; many of which break us. The power of resilience and grace to overcome these challenges can never be attributed to mankind. To the giver and sustainer of life, Almighty God in heaven, I honour and glorify you king of glory for the good health, direction and grace during the period of study. You are my shepherd (Psalm 23)

I am highly indebted to my supervisor, Professor J.P. Govender for his encouragement, relentless support and instruction during the period of my study. I have grown into the researcher I am because you have honed and nurtured my research skills.

I would like to express gratitude to my uncle Aggrey Msosa, Aliford Nguni and Yomi Bajela for their support and encouragement

To my language editor, Prof Dennis Schauer, thank you for all the corrections and effort in editing my work.

I would like to express gratitude to the staff at the Department of Marketing and Retail Management for their administrative support.

ABSTRACT

In recent times, service failure and service recovery have gained the attention of marketing practitioners and scholars because of their significance to the marketing philosophy. However, the focus has been in sectors that have low exit barriers or switching costs for customers and little attention has been paid to sectors with high switching costs, specifically, the higher education sector. The current study seeks to address this gap in the literature. The overall aim of this study is to explore student perception of service failure and service recovery strategies in higher education. A quantitative research approach was adopted and data were collected by means of a modified service recovery self-administered questionnaire. This research encompasses a quantitative, descriptive and cross-sectional study. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select 430 full-time registered students across three public universities viz. University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN), Durban University of Technology (DUT) and University of Zululand (UNIZULU). Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 24.0 and Smart Partial Least Square (PLS).

Customer perception of service recovery strategies was assessed and the results show that students were satisfied with an explanation and dissatisfied with the speed, empowerment, compensation and apology of the service recovery process. Similarly, student perception of distributive and interactional justice was satisfactory, whereas the majority of the students expressed dissatisfaction with procedural justice. Furthermore, relationships between several variables were evaluated and significant findings that emerged from the correlation analysis were corroborated by previous studies. The study recommended to the management of higher education institutions to offer training to customer-facing employees to enhance their problem-solving, listening, customer service and communication skills. The results also suggest that students prefer interactional justice to achieve recovery satisfaction rather than distributive justice. The practical implication is that managers of institutions should prioritise the use of apology and explanation to foster recovery satisfaction. The study further provides a service recovery model (SERVREC) as a tool for marketing practitioners and institutional managers to address service failure. Future research should be commissioned across many public universities in other provinces or nationally using a large sample size and a longitudinal study.

Keywords: Service failure, service recovery, perceived justice, SERVREC, negative emotions.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	Average Value Extracted
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CRC	Cluster Research Committee
DUT	Durban University of Technology
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
FRC	Faculty Research Committee
HEQF	Higher Education Qualification Framework
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
IPMA	Important Performance Map Analysis
IREC	Institutional Research Ethics Committee
KZN	KwaZulu Natal
MUT	Mangosuthu University of Technology
NASFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
PLS	Partial Least Square
SASCO	South African Student Congress
SERVREC	Service Recovery (Model)
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SRC	Students' Representative Council
UKZN	University of KwaZulu Natal
UNISA	University of South Africa
UNIZULU	University of Zululand

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM ORIENTATION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Service failure in higher education institutions cannot be isolated from the issues of institutional transformation. Much has been said about higher education transformation but the narrative seems to be applied from a narrow perspective despite the fact that the reality points to a more holistic approach that encompasses institutional metamorphosis in different spheres. Thus, it is a challenge that demands innovation both at institutional management, student interface as well as in the social and policy contexts (de Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010: 264). Extant research shows that even the best or top-ranked universities experience service failure and some of the service failures are costly for the institution such that there is a need to respond adequately with service recovery strategies to minimise the impact of the failure. In addition, it must be noted that if management of higher education institutions can provide effective recovery strategies to service failures, students can develop a sense of emotional commitment and trust in what the universities or higher education institutions do (Chen, 2015:81). The momentum of change in higher education will continue to be robust and it is only institutions that respond appropriately to the present challenges that will be able to remain competitive, attractive and vibrant, while those that maintain the status quo will face challenges in meeting their goals (PWC, 2014:1).

In the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), higher education is affected by a number of problems that impact on the delivery of quality service to its customers. Some of the problems affecting academic quality are poorly-equipped libraries, poor academic and laboratory infrastructure, a high staff: student ratio, demotivated staff, an aging professoriate and overloaded academic staff (Kotecha, Wilson-strydom and Fongwa, 2012:17). In Singapore, Yeo (2008:270) notes that higher education institutions tend to oversell their potential and academic readiness by boasting that they have state-of-the-art learning facilities, technology, laboratories and other supporting infrastructure. Therefore, this misrepresentation of their actual capacity helps students to build fuzzy expectations. Another observation is that sometimes students receive a service that is hugely compromised because university lecturers assume multiple roles such as stand-up lecturing, curriculum development, mentoring, project

supervision and other administrative responsibilities. As such, the level of service quality delivered may become less desirable and standardised.

The challenges raised above are synonymous with the problems of higher education in South Africa. However, it has also been observed that university students are faced with problems of access to finances and, therefore, are unable to register and, at the same time, fail to access classes and other facilities. In responding to funding challenges experienced by students in different universities, the South African Student Congress (SASCO) president, Nthukuko Makhomboti observed that “everything we have achieved in this country was through united actions. This is not the time to lock ourselves in boardrooms and have permanent meetings that do not resolve the plight of our students. It is an attack on the poor and has to be responded with mass action” (SAPA, 2014).

Needless to say, all these challenges provide a fertile ground for service failure especially when student expectations are not met. As a result, trust and relationships are broken and this situation calls for service recovery. This study aims to analyse student perception of service failure and service recovery strategies in higher education with particular reference to the three public universities in Kwazulu Natal province viz. University of Kwazulu Natal (UKZN), Durban University of Technology (DUT) and University of Zululand (UNIZULU).

1.2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION AND PERSPECTIVE

Service failure is defined as an exchange where a customer perceives a loss (financial or otherwise) due to failure (in a core or peripheral service) on the part of the service provider. In the event of a service failure, a service provider might decide to engage in service recovery to address, amend and restore the loss suffered by the customer as a result of deficiencies in service performance (Gronroos, 1988). There have been a plethora of theories within service marketing that have been reported in the literature. However, it is important to highlight that service failure and service recovery draw their existence from the social exchange theory and equity theory (Smith, Bolton and Wagner, 1999: 358) which is based on social psychology (Adams, 1963) which deals with how customers perceive fairness in situations or decisions.

Equity theory posits that a customer will perceive inequity when comparing the ratios of his input to outcomes with those of others and finding the differences in the ratios (Prasongsukarn and Patterson, 2012:511). During service recovery, customers compare their inputs against their outputs when evaluating the service recovery process. Inputs can be viewed as costs associated with service failures such as financial, time, energy and psychic costs, whereas outputs refer to specific service recovery strategy such as in the context of this study, compensation, speed, apology, empowerment, explanation and the service policies designed to handle such situations (Hoffman and Kelly, 2000:420).

Social exchange theory is used to explain customer perception of justice or fairness that influences how customers evaluate exchanges which include processes used when delivering the service and outcomes of core service delivered (Smith et al. 1999:358). Three dimensions of justice viz. distributive justice (which deals with outcomes of the core service), procedural justice (which deals with the processes used to deliver the service) and interactional justice (which deals with the interpersonal nature of the interaction during the service recovery process) have been integrated more recently in research on service evaluation in general and service recovery contexts specifically (Prasongsukarn and Patterson, 2012:511).

Procedural justice was initially used in courtrooms and not in a labour market and the link between perceptions of fairness and the grievance or complaints handling structure was addressed by Gordon and Fryxell (1993). They argued that how a union relates to its members is closely connected to procedural and distributive justice provided for by its inclusion in the grievance system more than any other form provided for in the Collective Bargaining Approach (CBA). Consequently, the filing of a complaint is a formal indicator of procedural justice perception based on the perceptions of the impartiality of the system and the perception about the service provider. Put in another way, the perceived justice of the grievance procedure is emphatically connected to the level of customer satisfaction with grievance handling practices and the organization leadership (Thibault and Walker, 1975).

The two theories are discussed in detail in Chapter Four under justice theory, which is a crucial component of the service recovery process and, therefore, forms the basis of this study. In addition to the theoretical foundation that has been laid, several models and theories

relevant to the study are presented in order to entrench a deeper understanding of service failure and service recovery strategies among institutional managers and marketing practitioners. According to Hart, Heskett and Sasser (1990:148), a good service recovery initiative can convert angry customers into loyal customers. Moreover, it can create goodwill than if there was no service failure in the first place. The reality is that service failure causes customer defection and complaints. However, engaging in service recovery can assist higher education institutions to achieve customer satisfaction and retention.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Service providers cannot completely eliminate service failures because services are inseparable and more variable than goods (Komunda, 2013:23). Therefore, higher education institutional managers need to align themselves with changing student demands and ensure that they are able to meet and exceed student expectations. In South Africa, just like many countries in the world, students from institutions of higher learning have their own expectations, such as receiving a service free of errors in their interaction with members of staff as well as when they are accessing university facilities and services. Sometimes the process and outcome of their encounter are not up to their expectations. The situation is further compounded by management and members of staff who have in some cases failed to respond to service failure incidents and student complaints. As a result, higher education institutions have turned into battlegrounds rather than manufactures of knowledge. An article in the Sunday Sun by Gamede (2015:11) reports that students at the University of KwaZulu Natal are fighting for what they believe are their constitutional rights. Many students from poor families have been deprived of financial aid. However, the university has turned a blind eye to their concerns. As a result, the University of KwaZulu Natal has seen one of the worst violent strikes at the institution.

Service marketing research in the South African higher education sector has largely focused on measuring gaps in service quality and also evaluating student perception of service quality using different scales (de Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010:251; Green, 2014:132, Govender, Veerasamy and Noel, 2012: 588) and customer service (Lekhanya, 2014:299). However, there is a dearth of research in Africa and the South African higher education sector on service failure and service recovery despite the numerous service failure incidents students encounter

in higher education institutions. Various scholars and practitioners have covered certain aspects of service failure and service recovery in the higher education sector in other parts of the world, but were quick to point out that there is a huge gap in literature and research on service failure and service recovery in the higher education sector (Voss, Gruber and Reppel, 2010:615; Chandra, Gruber and Lowrie, 2012:1, Chen, 2015:81, Chahal and Devi 2015:67). Looking at a broader picture, some scholars have attempted to cover this area of research in other sectors of the African economy such as telecommunication (Ibrahim and Abdallahamed, 2014:198), and banking (Assefa, 2014:48). In the South African economy, research of a similar nature has been undertaken in other sectors such as the hotel industry (Petzer and Steyn, 2006: 162), airlines (Mostert, De Meyer and Van Rensburg, 2009:118) and banking (Smith and Mpinganjira, 2015: 39-40).

It is against this backdrop that maiden research has to be undertaken in the South African context in order to investigate students' perception of service failure and service recovery strategies in the higher education sector. The reality is that in South Africa, most higher education institutions are grappling with issues of transformation in order to become preferred institutions of higher learning, but this can only be achieved with a holistic and systematic change. According to Brown (2000:8), pacesetters do not implement best practices in silos. They design and come up with systems for identifying service failures, exchanging information, analysing causes, developing and executing solutions in the organisation, while at the same time determining investment priorities aimed at improving service quality delivery.

1.4. RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this study is to examine student perceptions of service failure and service recovery strategies in higher education institutions. In addition, the following specific objectives are derived to achieve the overall aim of the study:

- To evaluate student perceptions of the causes of service failure and the nature of the services provided where most of the students experience service failure;
- To assess the customer complaints-management system in HEIs;
- To analyse student perceptions of service recovery strategies in HEIs;

- To assess students' perceptions of justice dimensions (distributive, procedural and interactional);
- To determine the highest performing service recovery strategy and to examine the relationship between service recovery strategies and justice dimensions;
- To determine the highest performing dimension of justice in the higher education sector and to ascertain the relationship between justice dimensions and recovery satisfaction;
- To determine the influence of justice dimensions on negative emotions;
- To evaluate the effect of secondary negative emotions (negative emotions with service recovery) on secondary satisfaction (recovery satisfaction); and
- To develop a service recovery model or framework for the higher education sector.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The envisaged significance of this study is to develop an integrated service recovery model for the higher education sector which will act as a framework for the application of alternative service recovery strategies thereby creating a springboard for altering institutional policies and procedures so that they are responsive to the needs of students. The current study integrates existing concepts and practices, i.e. service failure, complaints management, service recovery strategies (speed, apology, explanation, compensation and empowerment), justice dimensions (distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice) and negative emotions.

The higher education sector continues to face several challenges which impact on the quality of service delivered at various institutions of higher learning. When student expectations of a desirable service are not met, the service provided is deemed to have failed. This leads to student reaction in the form of anger, strikes, protests and boycotts which subsequently affects the academic calendar (Hlophe, 2016; Dawood, Peters and Anna, 2016). In some cases, efforts to prevent the occurrence of service failures do not yield positive results. As such, institutions are caught up in a scenario where they have to make up for their mistakes. The challenge is that some institutional managers don't have the requisite skills and knowledge to deal with service failures emanating from unmet student demands or expectations. Therefore, service recovery cannot be ad-hoc either and, if institutions are serious about addressing

student problems, they must put in place strategies and equip members of staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement effective service recovery to service failure (Rashid, Ahmad and Othman, 2014:459).

This study attempts to set a benchmark in higher education on the service failure issues in the developing world where the prevailing conditions such as institutional capacity in terms of resources, funding and infrastructure and social and cultural differences play a crucial part in the final recipe, as well as students' perception. In cross-examining students' perception of service failures, the study further interrogates processes used by institutions of higher learning which have a bearing on the outcome. The importance of this study cannot be overemphasised as it addresses important needs and gaps in the higher education sector, especially in the African context. Chahal and Devi (2015:68) have observed that service failure in higher education institutions can effectively be managed if institutions can analyse student perception of service failure as well as evaluate and monitor student behavioural responses more often. The feedback from complaining or dissatisfied students can provide information that will help management to minimise the future occurrence of service failures through the use and operationalisation of effective service recovery strategies.

1.6. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following is a synopsis of the methodology used in this study. A detailed perspective of the methodology is provided in Chapter Five.

1.6.1. Research design

The research design is a roadmap that is used to address the research problem and the data collection process (Clow and James, 2014:34). The three types of research design are exploratory, descriptive and causal (Hair, Celsi, Ortinau and Bush, 2013:76). The choice of the research design for this study is descriptive. Descriptive research is used to describe answers to questions of who, what, where, when and how. It is desirable if the researcher wants to extend the findings to a larger study (Burns and Bush, 2014: 103).

This study adopted a quantitative approach. Hair, Celsi, Ortinau and Bush (2013:77-78) have noted that quantitative research is often associated with descriptive research and it provides predetermined answers or options to a large number of research participants. The main goal of the quantitative study is to predict relationships between market factors and behaviour, validate relationships and test hypotheses. Furthermore, the results of a quantitative study can be projected onto the population of interest.

1.6.2. Population

According to Walliman (2011:185), a population simply means the total number of elements that are the subject of a research investigation. The target population of this study were all full-time registered students in the three designated institutions (i.e. UKZN, DUT, and UNIZULU).

1.6.3. Sampling method

A non-probability sampling technique was used in this study. This entails that the likelihood of a sampling unit being selected is not known. A purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents because of the absence of a sampling frame. Purposive or judgmental sampling uses the researcher's discretionary choice of a respondent due to the qualities the respondent possesses. It is a non-probability technique that does not need underlying theories. Simply put, the researcher makes decisions regarding what needs to be found and sets out to find respondents who can and are ready to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Bernard 2002, Lewis and Sheppard 2006).

1.6.4. Sample size

Several methods have been documented in the literature for determining a sample size. Marketing researchers are advised to conduct research within the time frame and allocated budget. There is always a temptation to use small samples because of resource constraints. However, this practice should be avoided because small samples do not provide conclusive findings and the funds spent on such an exercise will be wasted (Clow and James, 2014:230). The sample size for this study was large so as to obtain data that can provide meaningful inferences. A judgemental sample of 460 students was used. The choice of the sample was

based on Sekaran and Bougie (2016:264) who advise that for a population of more than 75,000, a sample size of 384 respondents is adequate. In addition, a larger sample size was chosen to cater for non-responses so as to achieve a statistically significant sample size.

1.6.5. Measuring instrument

A survey approach was adopted for this study using a self-administered questionnaire. A self-administered questionnaire is a data collection technique in which the research participant responds to the questionnaire without the presence of the researcher or interviewer (Hair et al., 2013:115). The questionnaire for this study included existing variables for service recovery strategies, complaints management, justice dimensions, recovery satisfaction and negative emotions.

1.6.6. Data analysis

Data were analysed by means of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and smart Partial Least Square (PLS) 3 statistical packages. A structural equation model (SEM) was used to analyse data. Structural equation models are normally referred to as linear structural relations (LISREL) models and are useful when assessing the relationship between latent variables. The relationship is formulated by linear regression equation and graphical representation by path diagrams using arrows (Nachtigal, Kroehne, Funke and Steyer, 2003:3).

1.6.7. Validity and reliability

Validity is the appropriateness of a data collection instrument to evaluate the concept of the study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016:220), whereas reliability measures the degree of consistency in a measuring instrument (Hair et al., 2013:165). Discriminant validity was performed by measuring the average variance extracted (AVE) which were all above the acceptable threshold of 0.5. Construct validity was achieved by performing a factor analysis. Factor analysis helps to summarise data thereby facilitating easy understanding and interpretation of patterns and relationships (Yong and Pearce, 2013:79). Reliability for the study was measured using the Cronbach Alpha and composite reliability evaluation (Clow and James, 2014:269).

Wiid and Digginess (2015:249) have noted that Cronbach's Alpha values between 0.6 and 0.8 are considered acceptable, whereas values below 0.6 are considered unacceptable.

1.6.8. Ethical considerations and confidentiality

To ensure compliance with institution ethics requirements, letters of approval to commission a research in the three universities were obtained and submitted together with the proposal for review. Participants' informed consent was obtained before collecting data. Anonymity and confidentiality of respondents were maintained during this study by not disclosing their names when analysing and presenting study findings. Burns and Bush (2014:224) advise that information collected from a respondent should not have his or her name or any identifying designation associated with his or her responses. In addition, they indicated that, despite the researcher knowing the respondent's name, such information should not be divulged to third parties.

1.7. CLASSIFICATION OF CHAPTERS

The classification of chapters is divided as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction, problem orientation and design

This chapter provides the introduction and background to the study, problem statement, study objectives, the significance of the study and a brief outline of the research methodology used in this study.

Chapter Two: Service failure in the context of higher education

This chapter provides an overview of the higher education sector in South Africa as well as an international perspective. It highlights key challenges in institutions of higher learning that have a bearing on service delivery, student expectations and perceptions of service quality. It further discusses the service encounter, service failure and customer reaction to service failure.

Chapter Three: Complaints management and service recovery strategies in the higher education sector

This chapter presents a discussion of literature with particular reference to the complaints-management process and service recovery. Service recovery models, service recovery implementation and service recovery strategies, i.e. speed, apology, compensation, explanation and empowerment are discussed in detail.

Chapter Four: Justice theory and recovery satisfaction in the higher education sector

The main focus of this chapter is on the dimensions of justice, i.e. interactional, distributive and procedural justices and their relationship with recovery satisfaction. Lastly, the chapter discusses negative emotions and consecutive failures which are commonly known as double deviation, customer reaction to double deviations and service recovery strategies for double deviation scenarios.

Chapter Five: Research methodology and design

This chapter presents the methodology of this study, strategies employed for primary research and the details regarding the operational aspects. In addition, the sampling procedure, ethical considerations, reliability and validity of the study are presented.

Chapter Six: Data analysis and discussion of findings

The primary focus of this chapter is to present an analysis of the data collected from the student survey and reports of empirical findings of the study. The results emerging from the study are interpreted and discussed in detail.

Chapter Seven: Summary, recommendations and conclusion

This chapter provides a discussion of the summary of the findings, recommendations and major conclusions of this study. It further highlights the major contribution of this study, its implication for the industry practitioners and it offers a suggestion for future studies.

1.8. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The current chapter provided the context of this study, research problem, aims and objectives and an overview of the research methodology. Furthermore, a brief outline of the classification of chapters was presented. The next chapter provides a literature review of service failure in the higher education sector.

CHAPTER 2

SERVICE FAILURE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of service failure in the higher education sector. The South African higher education sector is presented so that there is a better understanding of the sector in general. A more detailed perspective of higher education in the KwaZulu Natal province and, specifically, the three universities (DUT, UKZN and UNIZULU), where this research is conducted, is provided so that the dynamics in each of the three universities are properly understood. A global perspective is unveiled by providing excerpts of extant research from countries such as Nigeria, Uganda, Malaysia, India and Nepal. Furthermore, a generalised picture of the higher education sector in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, America and Europe is discussed to give credence to the global perspective. Service quality in the higher education sector is briefly discussed as it is the foundation on which students ascertain whether or not the service rendered has been satisfactory. The causes of service failure in general and in higher education in particular, are highlighted by reviewing what other eminent scholars have published in the field. Lastly, this chapter discusses customer-complaining behaviour with respect to service failures and the different set of traits customers depict when they are complaining.

2.2. AN OVERVIEW OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

Moyes, Dunn and Douglas (2015:340) claim that education is a service-process although it offers products such as diplomas, degrees and awards. Students undergo a period of service delivery in institutions of higher learning before they can receive the diploma or degree for which they have worked. In order to ground the discussion on higher education, an overview of the sector in South Africa and a global perspective is provided.

2.2.1. The state of the South African higher education sector

According to the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 (2012), higher education means “all learning programmes leading to a qualification that meets the requirement of the Higher Education Qualification Framework (HEQF)”. In South Africa, a higher education institution

means any institution that provides higher education on a full-time, part time or distance learning-basis which is:

- Merged, established or deemed to be established as a public higher education institution under the Act;
- Declared as a public higher education institution under the Act; and
- Registered or provisionally registered as a private higher education institution under the Act.

The South African public higher education system went through a restructuring process that involved merging universities, technikons and colleges between 2001 and 2007. The Minister of Education in South Africa released a national plan for higher education to reduce the number of public higher education institutions from 36 to 23. The plan further highlighted that, following the mergers, eleven institutions would be traditional universities, six would be comprehensive universities and another six would be universities of technology (Arnolds, Stofile and Lillah, 2013:1-2). Currently, there are 26 public universities in South Africa. Two additional universities were launched in 2014 and another was unveiled in 2015 to offer a wide range of formative and technology courses (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015; Business Tech, 2015)

The higher education sector has identified main issues that need attention both from the student and management perspectives. Within the higher education institutions, the quality and status of teaching and learning is a priority. Other issues include ensuring adequate staffing levels, improving curriculum development skills, improving infrastructure and use of technology to support learning (Lewin, 2015:2). Student demands in South Africa range from quality accommodation, transport from residence to campuses, low accommodation and tuition fees, transformation process, language and other academic policies. The two major protest movements under the banner, 'fees must fall' and 'Rhodes must fall' have been pushing the student agenda. There have been concerns about lack of transformation which was one of the key priority areas given to the institutions of higher learning. In this regard, changes are not visible and there is also a lack of feedback to inform students and the

university community of the milestones that have been achieved so far (South Africa History Online, 2015).

Hall (2016) notes that disagreements over tuition fees, shortage of student accommodation, low paid staff and the language of instruction are some of the problems affecting various universities in South Africa. For instance, protests at selected universities escalated when some students were barred from registration because of their outstanding fees. This was compounded by the failure of the government loan agency- the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NASFAS) to meet its promises. Andrews (2016) believes that, while student protests cannot be condoned, their actions have challenged the status quo by standing up against the universities 'business-as-usual' approaches to funding, teaching and the curriculum and in the process also exposing South Africa's overall glaring economic inequality. Shay (2016) argues that institutions of higher learning should work extra hard to tolerate dissent and debate. Academics and members of the university community should be flexible and move out of their comfort zones, embrace and listen to ideas with which they disagree. Simply put, universities must learn to engage the chaos which at present is an inevitable reality.

Funding for public universities has declined and this has subsequently affected quality. For instance, enrollments per year in higher education have been rising while the public expenditure per student has fallen significantly. The funding model is not working due to inefficiency and funding policies which are not linked to performance (Materu, 2007:17). Another school of thought cements this observation on funding by suggesting that there is a decline in state funding for universities in South Africa. University funding has been on an upward trajectory from R11 billion in 2006 to 26 billion in 2013. Despite the increase in funding, higher education expenditure has decreased drastically in student per capita terms. The decline in government subsidies has put a strain on the sources of income available to universities such as tuition fees and another stream comprising research grants, contract income and donations. The student protests in respect to funding are being organised annually and this points to the fact that the funds allocated to meet the needs of eligible students for National Students' Financial Aid Scheme (NASFAS) loans and bursaries are not adequate (Universities of South Africa, 2014).

2.2.2. Higher Education in the KwaZulu Natal Province

KwaZulu Natal (KZN) province has a population of 11,079,700 representing 19.8 percent of the total population of South Africa and is the second largest province in South Africa after Gauteng (Statistics SA, 2016). KZN province is dominated by Africans, constituting 87.6 percent of the KZN total population, followed by Indians at 6.9 percent, Whites at 4.1 percent and Coloureds constituting a negligible population (KwaZulu Natal Provincial Government, 2016:7). The province of KwaZulu Natal has five universities namely; University of Zululand (UNIZULU), Durban University of Technology (DUT), Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and a satellite campus of the University of South Africa (UNISA).

2.2.2.1. University of Zululand (UNIZULU)

The University of Zululand is a rural comprehensive University in the KwaZulu Natal province. The majority of students are enrolled at the undergraduate level and 97 percent of these students are African and 64 percent are females. As of 2015, the student population was relatively small at 16,891. UNIZULU was established in 1960 as a constituent college of the University of South Africa. The university only catered for Zulu and Swazi tribes up to 1979 after which it opened doors to other black students from different ethnic groups. The institution opened its doors to all races in 1986. In the year 2002, the university changed from a traditional university to a comprehensive university and is part of the six comprehensive universities and one among the only two universities which did not undergo the merger processes (CHE, 2010:6-8; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2016).

Without undermining the achievements registered since 1994, historically black universities such as UNIZULU represent the complexity in which South Africa thrives and this is true for higher education where the marginalised, impoverished and disadvantaged groups of the population seek to acquire knowledge. It is, however, important to highlight that there is a slight improvement in the running of universities. For instance, in 2006, the University of Zululand suspended lectures and students were sent home after they protested about poor housing conditions and the offering of courses that are not nationally recognised. The reality is that problems in historically-disadvantaged universities or newly-merged institutions have not gone away (Morrow, 2008:363-364).

2.2.2.2.University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN)

The University of KwaZulu Natal was established after a merger between the University of Durban Westville, a historically disadvantaged university and the University of Natal, a historically advantaged university. The legal merger of the two universities took place on 1 January 2004, whereas the real merger involving new processes and relocation of faculties began on 1 January 2005. The challenge of merging two institutions with different practices and leadership was very big and could have affected university operations if not properly scrutinised and resolved. A progressive environment with a paradigm shift in terms of doing things was created by dismantling the old and setting up new structures such as creating a new cadre of leadership. All key positions were advertised because the previous management was appointed to positions and there were fears that the old crop of leaders or individuals would constrain the progress of the merged institutions with past practices and attitudes (Webbstock, 2008:2).

Despite the merger which was implemented with the view to improving operations, problems continue to manifest themselves at the institution. In 2007, UKZN students were arrested because they were demonstrating against the lack of transport between the university campus and Durban CBD and falling and inadequate accommodation at one of its campuses. These are recurring problems as some years later, high prices of food in the cafeteria, poor accommodation and transport services were also reported by UKZN former SRC President, Thanduxolo Sabelo in 2010 (Mpemnyama, 2015).

2.2.2.3.Durban University of Technology (DUT)

The Durban Institute of Technology was established on 1 April 2002 after a merger between ML Sultan and Technikon Natal. The Department of Education advised on the need for further restructuring to ensure that South African institutions position themselves against global benchmarks so as to attract the best students and members of staff. In view of the recommendations from the Department of Education, the Durban Institute of Technology was renamed the Durban University of Technology (DUT) in 2006 (Durban University of Technology, 2008). The University has a history spanning a period of more than 100 years as an institution offering vocational and higher education. The DUT is a multi-campus institution with seven campuses in two cities, Durban and Pietermaritzburg and it has six

faculties. The Durban University has a headcount enrollment of 27,023 students and 97 percent of these are enrolled in undergraduate diplomas and degrees. In terms of race, 81 percent of students are African, 11 percent Indian, 1 percent coloured, and 2 percent white. From the student population, 80 percent are from disadvantaged backgrounds and come from deep rural and peri-urban communities (Durban University of Technology, 2016:2; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2016).

2.2.3. A global perspective of higher education

Higher education is crucial to the development of any country. It provides opportunities for the people to reflect on social, cultural, moral, economic and spiritual issues affecting mankind. It provides a platform for individuals to have specialised knowledge and skills which may be critical for national development (Chahal, 2015:67). Hussey and Smith (2010:1) emphasise the importance of higher education. A nation cannot compete in the global marketplace by merely using its muscle power, but also through the acquisition of knowledge, invention and imagination. Furthermore, the efficiency, discipline and success of every organisation depends on its educated managers.

Developing nations have the challenge of ensuring that they provide quality higher education for their citizens. In the 21st Century, ideas are regarded as the currency of our times. Therefore, individuals must be able to access education if they are to succeed in life and if society is to progress (Maharey, 2011:66). Sadly, higher education is considered as an elite system and the private sector has tried to increase accessibility through using small low-quality institutions which do not have facilities befitting a 'real' university. The higher education participation rate in sub-Saharan Africa at 5-10 is very low compared to the rest of the world (Cloete, Maassen and Bailey, 2015:6). The quest for quality is a priority in the higher education sector in Africa. However, the tension created by the political pressure to increase accessibility to universities and the desire by the academics to maintain quality has not provided a platform whereby a healthy culture can evolve (Materu, 2007:13-14).

2.2.4. Critical issues facing the higher education sector

The higher education sector is mired by various challenges that affect the smooth running or operations at higher education institutions. The problems in the sector are unique to different countries and in some cases they are similar. Some of the challenges affecting the sector include high enrollments, inadequate funding, poor policy implementation, infrastructure problems and institutional politics.

2.2.4.1.High enrollments

In sub-Saharan Africa, 6 percent of the youth are enrolled at tertiary education institutions compared to 26 percent which is the global average. Between 2000 and 2010, there has been a significant increase in higher education enrollment which has doubled from 2.3 million to 5.2 million. There is an increase in the enrollment of students in higher education institutions throughout Africa. This is worth celebrating, but the drawback is that the availability of well-trained lecturers, study materials and infrastructure development is lagging behind and failing to keep pace with the rising enrollment. Consequently, the quality of education is severely compromised (The Africa-America Institute, 2015:10-11).

Most public universities in sub-Saharan Africa have large student enrollments which are beyond the institutional capacity. The challenge of increasing enrollment without addressing resources and infrastructure is that the quality of the education or learning environment is compromised (Mohamedbhai, 2011:1-2). Similarly, Hayward (2012:4) notes that postgraduate studies in many African countries are limited and have been held hostage to the high demand for undergraduate studies which has put a strain on university resources. Therefore, the limited availability of graduate programmes have contributed to the low output of graduates and, subsequently, been the reason for the shortage of faculty members or lecturers.

2.2.4.2.Inadequate Institutional funding and poor financial management

In many parts of the world, the study conditions have declined in response to the financial problems higher education institutions are facing. In Nigeria, the education system continues to experience a number of challenges. One of them is inadequate funding. Funding is critical

and a major threat to quality education. Inadequate funding results in failure to upgrade or build institutions, facilities or to pay lecturers and staff reasonable salaries among others (Asiyayi, 2013:163-164).

The higher education crisis in sub-Saharan Africa is multi-pronged. Most higher education institutions are under-funded and, consequently, infrastructure is deteriorating and there is under development in the libraries, ICT and the shortage of staff. The staff-students ratios are high and intolerable. Furthermore, universities in Africa lack proper policies, strategies and leadership. Management in higher education institutions is very poor and this is exacerbated by political interference and lack of institutional autonomy. There is a shortage of faculty members which has been exacerbated due to lack of resources, budget cuts, low salaries and poor working conditions. Furthermore, brain-drain has exacerbated the situation because qualified lecturers are quitting institutions and opting for higher-paying and attractive jobs in the UK, USA, Canada, Europe and other African countries (Hayward and Ncayiyana, 2014:23).

Another observation shows that funding in higher education is stagnant and, in some cases, declining and not matched by increasing students enrollment. In Africa, spending on higher education is very high compared to other developing countries and this demonstrates the high levels of inefficiency and overspending. If universities are to improve on their resource envelope, they may need to raise tuition fees. However, the danger of charging high tuition fees is that public universities will be treated as private enterprises that do not benefit from government funding or subvention (Mohamedbhai, 2011:3-4).

2.2.4.3. Administrative hiccups and poor policy implementation

In Uganda, students complain of bureaucracy which makes it difficult for one to get their problem or complaint attended to. The process is very long and frustrating. In addition, there are also problems of poor record-keeping by the university whereby students fail to access results because they cannot be found. Consequently, many students are forced to re-sit for examination and this process is very frustrating to them. Lecturers and students use strikes and protests as a way of conveying their grievances to the institutional management and this

leads to loss of time and resources. Sometimes, students complain of missing classes due to timetable clashes, lecturer absenteeism and power blackouts. Furthermore, intake numbers or admissions into university are in excess of normal requirements or intake-capacity and this affects the delivery of quality service because of limited resources such as the library, furniture, laboratory and classrooms to absorb the students (Bunoti, 2010:5-6).

Poor policy implementation is one the biggest challenges in the higher education sector. Some education institutions promote research among academic staff at the expense of teaching. The 'publish-or-perish' syndrome is promoting research, but resulting in the neglect of teaching and, consequently, students are 'half-baked'. Lack of resources has also exacerbated the problems being encountered in the higher education sector. Higher education quality is based on the quality and quantity of material resources available in universities. The classes are overcrowded with most of the students learning while standing. Therefore, shortage of facilities in institutions has contributed to the decline in the quality of higher education (Asiyayi, 2013:165).

2.2.4.4. Staff welfare and infrastructure problems

Similarly, Yizengaw (2008:1) notes that the African higher education sector is facing a lot of challenges related to critical staff shortages, inadequate funding, inadequate facilities and infrastructure, poor quality, irrelevant teaching, research problems and failure to meet the demand for equitable access. The numbers of faculty positions that are filled are different from one institution to another. At least 70 percent are filled, whereas, in some departments it is only 30-40 percent. Another challenge is that not less than 40 percent of faculty members are close to retirement and over 30 percent are sent overseas for further education and training but do not return. To echo these sentiments, the World Bank (2000:23) believes that one of the challenges affecting higher education institutions in Africa is that sometimes quality is compromised due to the absence of well-qualified staff members. The problem can even be traced in flagship universities. Consequently, access to existing and emerging knowledge is limited. Additionally, quality of education is affected by issues bordering on faculty or university incentive structure. Salaries are very low compared to alternative professional occupations.

Lewin and Mawoyo (2014:59) add that some of the challenges students face relate to lecturers' inability to facilitate meaningful learning. Furthermore, large classes present their own challenges to both the students and the lecturer. Most of the lecture facilities or classrooms were not built to accommodate such large numbers of students and the acoustics in them are challenging. Students who are seated at the back of classrooms or far from lecturers may not hear what is being taught and this makes it difficult to accommodate them in inclusive discussions.

2.2.4.5. Institutional politics

Political groupings or politics, in general, has a greater impact on the university atmosphere. While political groupings have helped to address the injustices students face, in many cases they have disrupted the campus life. This makes research, lecturing and learning very difficult when students and members of staff take part in disruptions as combative agents of different political groupings and factions (World Bank, 2000:24). Similarly, higher education in Nepal is infuriated by politics. Political parties have contributed to the problems currently faced by higher education institutions. Almost every political party is affiliated or has a sister organisation in the universities which pushes their agenda by disrupting teaching through strikes and at the same time forcing the institutions to shut down. Consequently, ensuring quality in the higher education sector is a challenge in Nepal. There are no proper processes and standards for quality control and measurement. There is no quality assurance and the accreditation system does not exist (Simkhada and Teijlingen, 2010:89).

Singh (2011) adds to the debate on the status of higher education in India. It is believed that the current system of education is not serving the purpose for which it was created. The focus of institutions is to generate profits such that quality is lost in the increase of quantity. The institutional politics are also affecting the academic system in general. Other problems in the Indian higher education sector include inadequate infrastructure, large vacancies in faculty positions, outdated teaching methods, demotivated students and overcrowded classrooms.

2.2.4.6. Students funding, support and accommodation

In Malaysia, students complain of university facilities such as accommodation as being inappropriate, unsafe, poor and inconvenient. They complain that the university does not provide enough information regarding accommodation. International students have complained that their accommodation is isolated and they feel insecure. In addition, the hostels are not in good condition. Students also complain of low internet speed and the style of teaching by lecturers who leave the burden of gathering materials to students and this is not ideal for bigger classes. The only problem registered with postgraduate supervisors is a lack of time and unclear feedback. Supervisors do not have time to hold regular meetings with students to provide feedback (Talebloo and Baki, 2013:141-142).

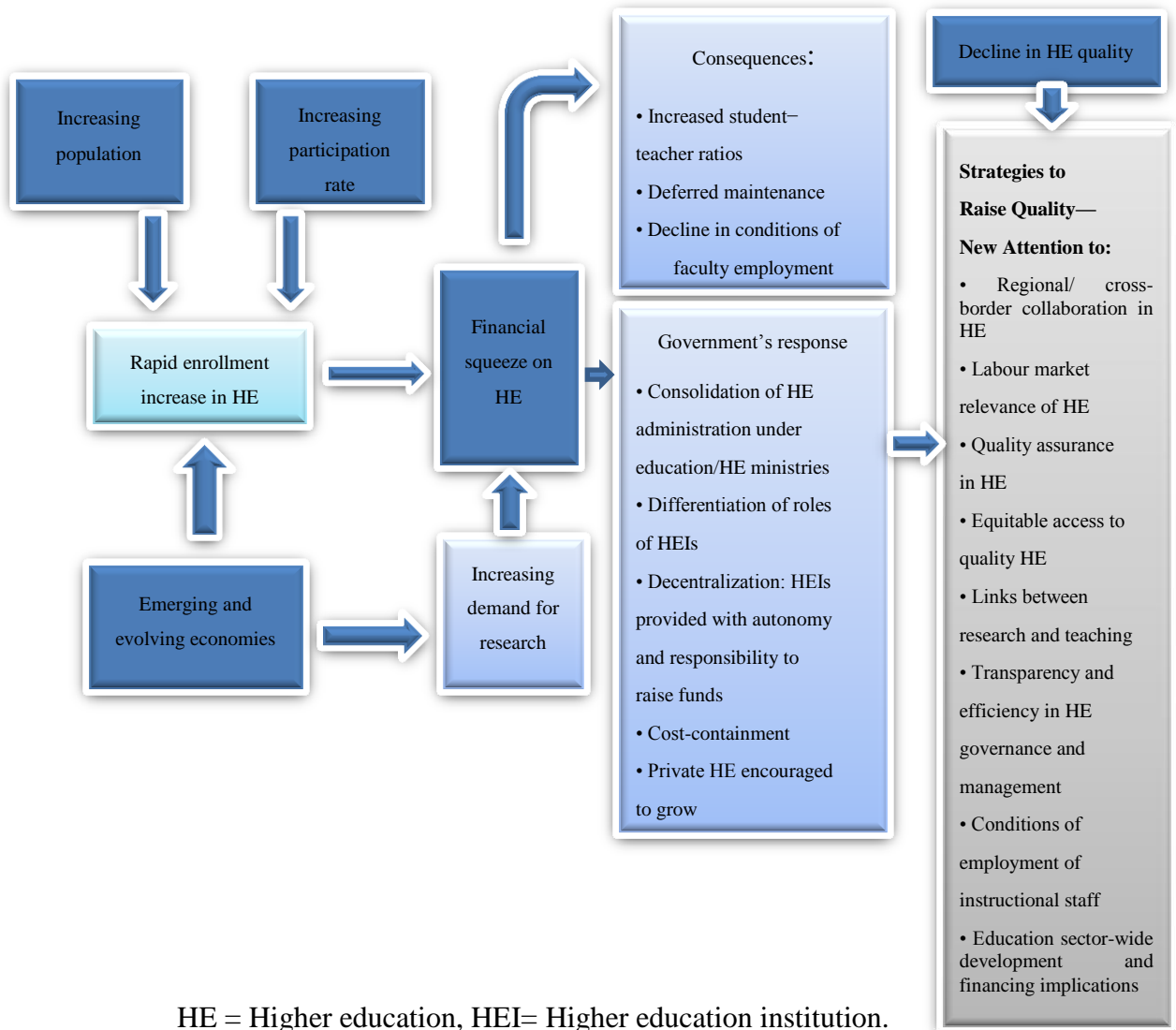
Peretomode and Ugbomeh (2013:26) have noted that higher education institutions in the developing world experience numerous challenges such as lack of accommodation, inadequate experts in sciences, limited classroom space, lack of laboratories, poorly stocked libraries and poor funding which is compounded by large student intake beyond the capacity of available facilities and staff. The issue of funding rears its ugly head in the Nigerian higher education sector. Students from poor families work in cassava farms to get money for their studies. Others, especially female students, resort to commercial sex or befriending older men so that they can raise finances for their education.

The higher education sector in Asia is currently facing a lot of problems. The problems include a lower level of teaching quality, poor financing of higher education, studies are too theoretical rather than practical whilst, privatisation, traditional methods of teaching, and inadequate facilities and infrastructure complicate matters further. The depressed economic climate has also contributed to the problems in higher education. Most of the students come from the 'ordinary class' and are unable to provide necessities for themselves. About 70 percent of the student population is in financial distress. The support schemes enabling students to earn while learning are not adequate and cannot suffice to meet student's economic challenges (Chahal, 2015:70-72).

2.2.4.7. Pressures faced by higher education in Asia

Figure 2.1 highlights the higher education pressure that institutions have to deal with in the day-to-day running of universities across Asia. The general picture of the state of affairs in the region has been dissected and summarised below:

Figure 2.1 Flow of pressures on higher education across Asia



HE = Higher education, HEI= Higher education institution.

Source: Adopted from Asian Development Bank (2011:5)

As highlighted in Figure 2.1, a report by the Asian Development Bank (2011:5-6) shows that higher education has been under intense pressure due to increased enrollment. Despite the increase, most universities lack the financial resources to sustain quality. Internal efficiency is

a major challenge across universities in Asia and this makes it very difficult for HEIs to achieve students', institutions' and national set goals of education. The massive enrollment figures have resulted in high student-teacher ratios, poor faculty employment conditions, outdated management systems and delays in facilities' maintenance. It further shows that, in order to curb the decline in the quality of higher education, there is a need for regional and cross-border collaboration, improving quality assurance, enhancing links between teaching and research and crafting the curriculum in such a way that it is relevant to the labour market.

2.3. SERVICE QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Quality is a relative concept and just like beauty, it lies in the eyes of the beholder. The implication is that what is considered as good quality for one may not be consistent with the view or perception of another as the same may be considered of poor quality. The evaluation of quality from the staff perception may not be the same with the assessment from the perspective of the student (Elassy, 2015:255).

The process of learning in higher education takes the form of lesson-delivery, advising, counselling and project supervision and these services are provided to students who are viewed as customers. The quality of each learning experience in higher education is different and is determined by student expectations. The expectations differ and are based on the intellectual engagement and the outcome of an assessment. Institutions are sometimes faced with the challenge of having to exceed student expectations and needs. There are also cases of an increase in the staff-student ratio due to a shortage of academics and high enrollments which have led to large class sizes. The implication is that the level of attention given to students inside and outside the class is minimal. Therefore, higher education needs to find ways of improving the relationship between lecturers and students beyond the classrooms. Trust and reliability between students and lecturers can be enhanced through frequent dialogue sessions with practical examples and techniques on how to forge a relationship. In this regard, management of students' expectations is paramount because they are not static and tend to change over time. The leadership of HEIs should create a conducive environment where both the students and lecturers have a clear understanding of each other's expectations (Yeo and Li, 2014:98-117). The next section will present a discussion on the attributes of service quality and ways of assessing and improving service quality.

2.3.1. Attributes of service quality in higher education

The definition of quality in the context of education is very complex and multi-faceted. It encompasses elements such as students, instructors, administrators, curriculum, teaching and assessment methods. Unlike goods, education deals with student attitudes, values and minds such that students receive and perceive the teaching or lecturing process differently (Elassy, 2015:258). Thus, the provision of high quality education is a subject of never-ending debate in the higher education sector.

In Austria, Sultan and Wong (2013:77) have noted that there are three categories of quality in higher education, i.e. academic quality, administrative quality and facilities quality. The specific attributes related to the categories that students encounter at the institutions of higher learning are academic service quality which encompasses quality of lectures, lecturer availability, lecturer intellectual ability and understanding of the subject and students. Attributes under administrative service quality include an effective reply to students' queries, admission process and the overall process of delivering quality education services. Facilities service quality attributes include library facilities, transport, dining, entertainment facilities, career counselling, workshops and seminars. Some of the service failures in institutions of higher learning occur when expected standards under the different attributes of higher education quality are not met.

Similarly, Jain, Sinha and Sahney (2011:309) have noted that quality has two dimensions, namely; programme quality and quality of life. The sub-dimensions include curriculum, industry interaction, input quality, academic facilities, non-academic processes, support facilities, campus interaction quality. Teeroovengadum, Kamalanabhan and Seebaluk (2016:253) found that administrative quality, physical environment quality and core education quality are the three primary dimensions of higher education quality. Administrative quality encompasses attitude and behaviour of administrative staff and administrative processes. Physical environment quality consists of support infrastructure, learning setting and general infrastructure, whereas core educational quality encompasses attitude and behaviour, curriculum, competency and pedagogy.

Douglas, Douglas, McClelland and Davies (2015:337-341) suggest that the key determinant of quality is access, attentiveness, availability and communication. Access encompasses service location, ease of the environment and contact with university staff. Attentiveness encompasses staff willingness to help or assist a student by providing the necessary support. Availability refers to staff dedication in terms of time they are able to give and listen to students, whereas communication is the ability by the university to engage with students using the medium or language they understand. It encompasses things such as lecturers' communication when classes are cancelled, providing feedback on modules and supervision of students. Students have some expectations which, at a minimum, must be met by the institution. However, when faculty members are late for classes, do not interact with students, have ambiguous or unfair policies, the overall classroom experience becomes distracted. Consequently, it is imperative for the faculty to set standards that must be adhered to by its members (Hoffman and Lee, 2015:136).

2.3.2. Assessing and improving quality in higher education

Student experiences in the institutions of higher learning in respect of any service that has been rendered, leads to that service being judged against the student's initial expectation and this eventually forms the yardstick for measuring quality and satisfaction. Higher education institutions should, therefore, be held accountable for failure to meet and exceed student expectations of the quality of the service being offered. This is a challenging task for HEIs because students expect to be treated as customers with the same right to complain about poor service and facilities. Ultimately, students expect value for their money. Thus higher education institutions have a challenge or an obligation to improve their services, facilities and also to be pro-active in responding to students' complaints. Failure to meet students' needs and expectations may lead to dissatisfaction and, subsequently, the service will be deemed to have failed (Fosu and Owusu, 2015:96).

Service quality is largely dependent on the perceptions of students based on their direct experience. When student expectations are high, the level of tolerance for service failure is low. However, universities can modify student expectations by offering different choices to them. What is critical to offset any negative perception regarding the service being offered is that the support services and facilities should play a very important role in contributing to

overall service quality in higher education and not only focus on academic excellence alone (Yeo and Li, 2014:99). Therefore, quality is assessed during delivery of the service and, in works that are labour intensive, quality is not only affected by the service provider, but also customer behaviour. The assessment of the quality of higher education should not only be confined to the classroom alone, but it should also encompass non-academic aspects (Riznic, Duric and Rajic, 2011:533-539). Hoffman and Lee (2015:137) advise that faculties should strengthen the hiring process by incorporating other traits rather than hiring faculty members based on their publication record. Furthermore, students' feedback should be solicited during the hiring process of prospective faculty members because the assessment of students on faculty performance is done through a different lens or perspective.

2.4. THE SERVICE ENCOUNTER

The service encounter provides a process of exchange in which the benefits any party receives during the exchange are contingent on the benefits the other party receives. For instance, in a service complaint resolution situation, a service provider will only address the complaint if he or she feels the customer will, as a result, remain in the relationship and the complaining customer will only remain in the relationship if the problem or complaint is addressed. In other words, both parties will exchange value if there are sufficient mutual benefits (Boshoff, 2017:2). While each service encounter is discrete, an element of customer impressions and satisfaction with the service provider is cumulative. Therefore, spillover of these outcomes from earlier service encounters accentuates the importance of a well-defined view of the overall service experience. The touchpoints are a service provider's way to facilitate the service encounter and create interactions with customers. For instance, they can be online platforms, physical environments or catalogues (Voorhees, Fombelle, Gregoire, Bone, Gustafsson, Sousa and Walkowiak, 2017:270).

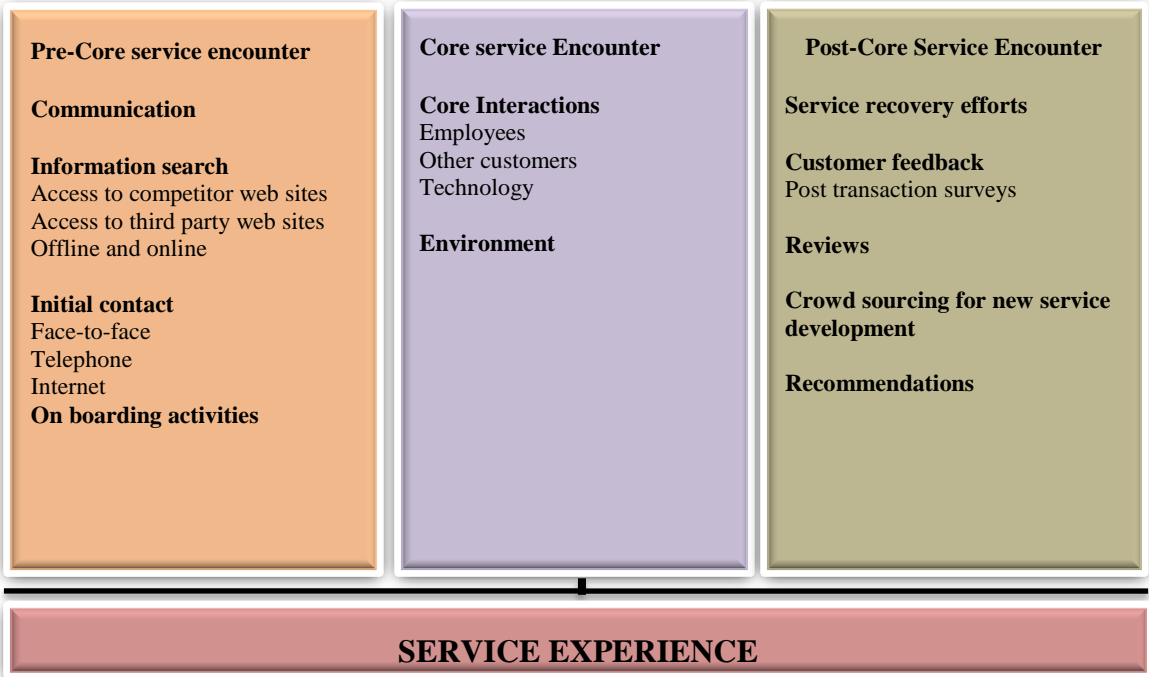
The service sector is known for the moment of truth or the service encounter, many of which leave marks of unpleasant and negative feelings while others leave marks of positive feelings (Weeks, 2015: 360). In most cases, the service encounters take place in full view of other customers. The nature of the service received by one customer helps other customers to form their own expectations of an ideal service (Anaya, Miao, Mattila and Almanza, 2016:359).

The next discussion will focus on the service encounter dimensions, types and evaluation of service encounters.

2.4.1. Service encounter dimensions

Every component of the service process where customers engage with the service provider presents an opportunity for a service breakdown. While the importance of processes may be undermined, others may be critical for a good customer experience (Palmer, 2011:58). Figure 2.2 highlights a model of service encounters through the service experience.

Figure 2.2 Model of service encounters through the service experience



Source: Adopted from Voorhees, Fombelle, Gregoire, Bone, Gustafsson, Sousa and Walkowiak (2017:271)

As shown in Figure 2.2, the pre-core service encounter period is the time interval preceding the core service encounters that focuses on leading customers to engage with the firm in the core-service encounter. This period may encompass multiple service encounters. Pre-core encounters take place when customers either begin reviewing information about a firm's offering or make initial contact with the firm. Instances of pre-core encounters include seeking information from online reviews, addressing initial and exploratory questions to

frontline employees and on boarding processes. In terms of examples, this stage includes activities like orientation for students in new graduate programmes (Voorhees et al., 2017:271).

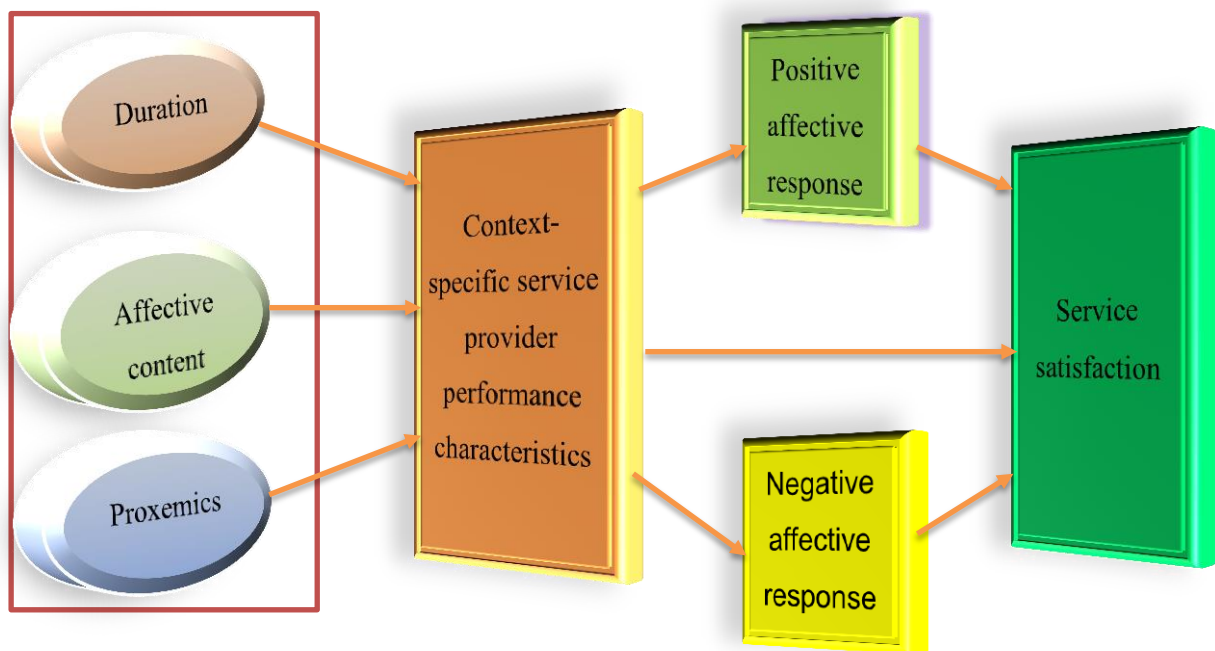
The core service encounter period as shown in Figure 2.2 is defined as the time interval during which the primary service offering is provided to the customer. The primary service fulfils a basic customer need, which is the focal motivation that leads customers to engage with the service provider. This period is often referred to as the moment in which the customer is “in the factory” and has been researched extensively, with the literature investigating the core interactions between customers and employees, other customers and technologies. This stage includes activities like delivering a lecture (Bitner, Brown and Meuter, 2000). The post-core service encounter period is defined as the time intervals following the core service encounter during which consumers assess and act on their experience in the two previous periods. Through this period, the firm's goal is to retain customers and to improve future service experiences. Post-core encounters include, for example, pro-active firm activities such as the receipt of a survey, a request for social media posting, any situations involving a complaint, or a firm's actions to sustain a relationship with the customer over time (Voorhees, Fombelle, Gregoire, Bone, Gustafsson, Sousa and Walkowiak, 2017:272).

The service encounter is crucial to the customer's service experience. The quality of the service experience during a service encounter has a bearing on customers' satisfaction and their perception of the organisation and its employees. The service encounter is, therefore, the meeting and interaction between a service provider and a customer and is sometimes known as the “moment of truth”. In addition, the service encounter is multidimensional and includes the social contact dimension and the physical dimension. The social contact dimension is the interaction between the service employee and the customer. The physical dimension entails that customer's value the environment in which the service will be rendered. Service providers can minimise dissatisfying service encounters through disintermediation. Disintermediation is the process where the human intervention is eliminated when discharging a service and is replaced with technology or equipment (Solomon, Marshland Stuart 2012:301). For example, the higher education institutions can adopt technology and

conduct processes such as online registration. Figure 2.3 shows how the three service encounter dimensions are linked to service satisfaction:

Figure 2.3 A general model of service encounter dimensions, provider performance and service satisfaction

Service encounter dimensions



Source: Adopted from Price, Arnould and Tierney (1995:84)

Another school of thought suggests that service encounter has three dimensions, i.e. temporal duration, affective or emotional content and spatial proximity of the service provider and customer. The three dimensions play a significant role in relationship development and the outcome of the service encounter. Figure 2.3 highlights that any variation in the three dimensions of the service encounter will have a significant impact on the service providers' performance and outcome. It further shows that service providers' performance has a direct impact on the affective responses and satisfaction and indirect impact on satisfaction through affective response. Service providers' performance during an interaction can either lead to positive or negative reactions (Price et al., 1995:83-84). Therefore, service failure will occur if the reaction is negative or the customer is not satisfied with the encounter. Mattila and Enz (2002) claim that the affective response has a significant impact on customer encounter-level evaluation even in the context of short and monotonous service encounters.

Consumers approach service encounters with different forms of expectation, ranging from the ill-defined unfamiliar situations to the well-defined familiar ones. What is critical for service providers to know is that whether expectations are met or not will have an impact on perceived service quality. The majority of service encounters require close interaction between a service provider and the consumer. To determine whether the interaction was satisfactory or not depends on a number of factors such as the appearance of the academic or support staff and his or her perceived competence. Although some of these factors may contribute to service heterogeneity and variability, they are not easy to control (Rasli, Danjuma, Yew and Igbal, 2011). Boshof (2017:11) argues that, regardless of the facial features of individual service providers, their general appearance cannot be neglected. The physical appearance of service providers must reflect respect and consideration for their customers and that calls for proper grooming and a professional dress code that beams the message that they are 'professional' rather than 'sexy'.

2.4.2. Types of service encounters

The service encounter can be categorised as a remote encounter, a telephone encounter or a face-to-face encounter. A customer can experience any of the three or a combination of the three. Remote encounters are service encounters that occur without human interaction or contact such as registration through a web-based portal. Even in the absence of human contact, the service encounter is an opportunity for the service provider to reinforce customer perception of the quality of the service sought. In some organisations, service encounters are done or experienced through a telephone conversation. However, the chances of variability in the interaction are high in a telephone conversation. The tone, knowledge of employees and efficiency in handling customer issues or queries form an important criterion for assessing service quality on the part of the customer. In face-to-face service encounters, both verbal and non-verbal cues are important for ascertaining service quality (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler, 2012:86).

Service encounters can also be viewed in terms of the level of contact. Some service encounters are short or brief, whereas others are long. High contact services are those where there is a direct contact between the customer and the service provider. During high contact service encounters, customers are exposed to physical cues about the service provider. These

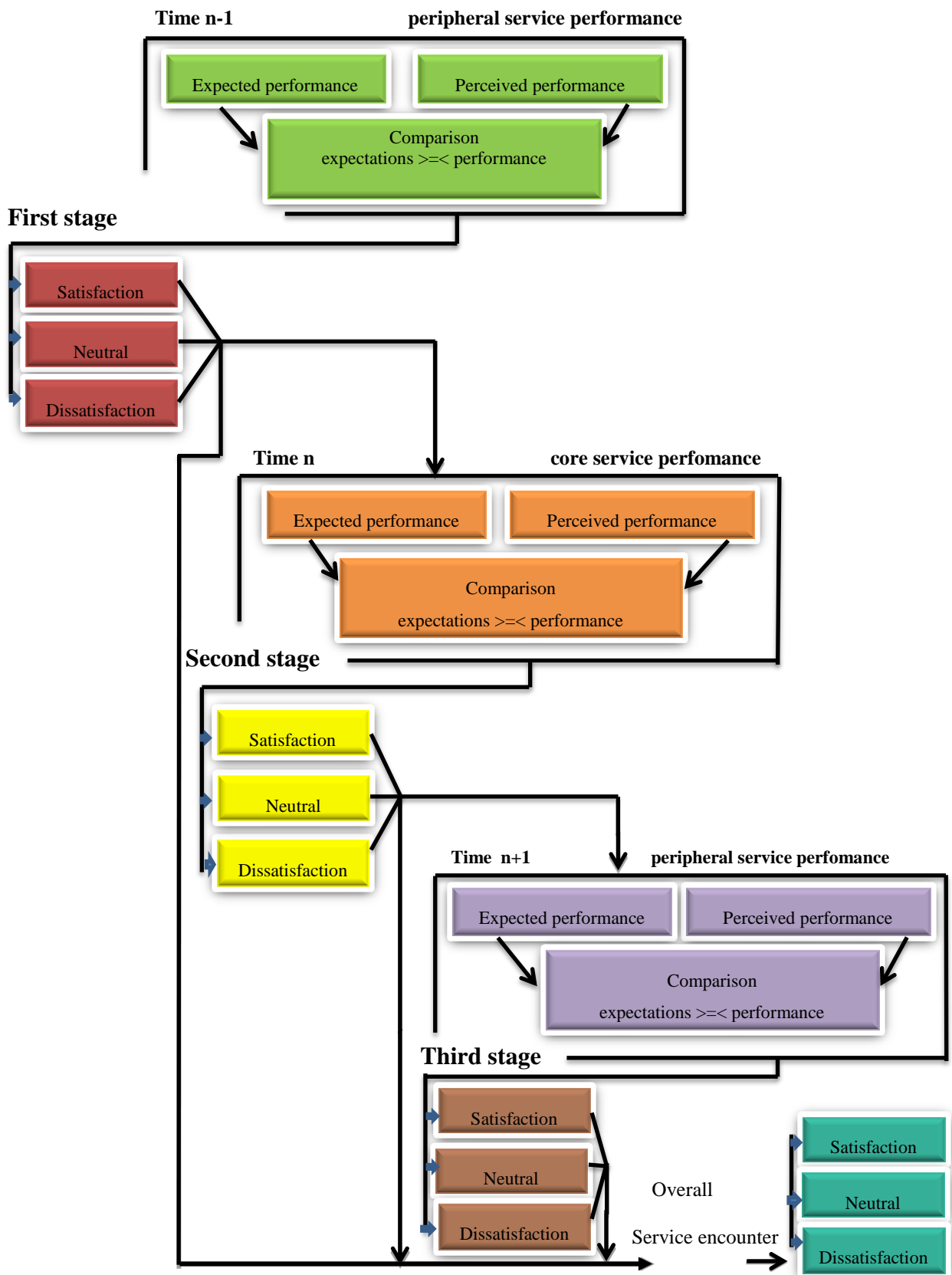
cues may include appearance and behaviour of employees. In low contact service encounters, there is little and, in some cases, no contact between the customer and service provider. Contact is done through equipment or physical distribution channels. Most of the services are migrating from high to low contact because, in the modern era, high contact services are regarded as a recipe for customer inconvenience (Wirtz, Chew and Lovelock 2018:70).

2.4.3. Service encounter evaluation

Sometimes, customers are exposed to business environments that are volatile and susceptible to change in the blink of an eye such that the onus is on the service provider to deliver a service encounter experience of high quality in order to win the allegiance of time-pressed customers. The understanding of service encounters is crucial for the organisation to be able to re-engineer business and service processes. The absence of effective tools to monitor and capture customers' behaviour throughout the service lifespan is a major setback to service providers in their quest to gaining insight or information about service encounters. The advent of technology has provided a platform for service providers to start tracking service encounters' performance. It is imperative for service providers to embrace technology in their operations so that social and transactional interactions can be monitored (Qiu, 2013:2).

A service encounter that is genuinely empathic and heart-felt is significantly better than a "hi and bye" transaction, especially as a foundation for a relationship. Instead, real connections must be naturally and genuinely formed by service representatives who are motivated by a meaningful purpose and work with a true sense of passion. In human touch service systems, customers feel privileged to be served in this manner (Bolton, Gustafsson, McColl-Kennedy, Sirianni, and Tse, 2014:18). Figure 2.4 show how customers evaluate the service encounter.

Figure 2.4 Service encounter evaluation



Source: Adopted from Walker (1995:8)

As illustrated in Figure 2.4, service encounter evaluation is influenced by three different integrated stages, i.e. peripheral service performance, core service performance and overall service encounter. The model explains what happens in a typical service encounter scenario. It further highlights that customer expectations can change during the service encounter. Before consumption of the core service, consumers encounter peripheral components which may include employee personality and attitude and subsequently compare the performance with the expectations which are regarded as passive. The impression created by the service provider sets the direction or tone for future interactions. The overall service encounter is a function of the three integrated stages and determines whether the customer is satisfied, dissatisfied or neutral. For instance, in a higher education institution and specifically teaching, attention will be drawn to the environment in which the lecture will be delivered, the reputation of the school, the attire of the lecturer or instructor rather than the core service of offering education (Walker, 1995:8-10).

The behaviour of employees is therefore critical for effective interaction and service delivery during the service encounter. Front office employees are the ambassadors of the organisation. As such, their appearance, demeanour, body language, facial expression, language and tone have a great influence on the customer service experience and evaluation. Even with the best employees, the service encounter can be unpleasant if customer etiquette is not valued (Cockerell, 2013:10).

Lloyd and Luk (2011:184-188) have noted that while it is important to get a good outcome during a service encounter, service providers need to pay attention to small things like gestures and other behaviour cues. Furthermore, customers form perceptions regarding a service encounter not only from the outcome of the service, but also from the interaction such that it is important to emphasize to the employees the need to ensure quality during interaction as that forms the basis for assessing service quality and the service encounter. It is important that the employee's body language and facial expression show qualities such as patience, helpfulness, politeness, cheerfulness and love for the job. The reality is that customers do not only analyse the service providers' attitude but also their performance.

Employees' negative attitude, coupled with poor service performance, gives customers a bad impression of the service provider and they tend to believe that the service experience has been unreasonable. Such negative attitudes include ignoring customers and interacting impersonally (Fikawa and Erevelles, 2014:387). Therefore, the ability of front-desk employees to read customer behaviour, expressed emotions and facial expressions will enable them to read customers' silent feedback. This will enable the employees to correct service failures in real-time even in the absence of the customer explaining his or her dissatisfaction with the service encounter (Mattila and Enz, 2002).

2.5. SERVICE FAILURE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education institutions have similar characteristics as those of other services. Therefore, students regard institutional services as inseparable from the employee who delivers the service on behalf of the institution. With the increase in the number of students enrolling in higher education, institutional support services have no choice but to make changes in service areas such as admission, registration, academic advising, food services and financial aid (Mohanraj and Baby, 2014:131).

A service offering that is free from errors enhances the organisation reliability and customers have confidence and trust in the employees and the organisation's efficiency (Garg, 2013:33). However, service failures are inevitable and efforts by institutions and customers to prevent their occurrence may be an exercise in futility (Waqas, Khan and Ali, 2014:268). Iglesias (2009:127) believes that special attention should be given to service failures because they are important challenges for the service providers, specifically those who are keen to enhance service quality and customer satisfaction. According to Van der Heijden, Schepers, Nijssen and Ordanini (2013:517), service failure simply means a deviation from the expected process or outcome and addressing these deviations is an opportunity to generate knowledge for improvement, such as the creation of new procedures that will improve speedy service recovery.

Michel (2001:20-22) notes that since services production and consumption are inseparable, the performance of service delivery depends on various factors such as the attitude of service

personnel at the front office, the capacity of the system and the conduct of customers involved in the transaction. Customer perception of a deviation from the service blueprint can be regarded as a service failure depending on his expectation of the ideal process. Sometimes customers view incidents as a service failure even if the process matches the service blueprint. Reported errors or incidents are therefore regarded as service failures and lead to dissatisfaction

Service failures are unavoidable despite efforts to offer a zero defects service. Employees may be rude to students, lecturers may not show up for the scheduled class, the classroom environment may be dirty and congested. Students experience unpleasant service encounter because the service has not been delivered as expected or planned (Ennew and Schoefer, 2003:2). Similarly, when faculty members exhibit inappropriate behaviour and attitude towards students, their reaction may be negative because, naturally, students expect the behaviour of faculty members to be above board. Therefore, it is extremely important to remind members of the faculty that their personal opinions and biases may have a negative impact on the learning experience and, consequently, students may be helpless in dealing with the situation. Because of this, higher education institutions are advised to facilitate workshops that will help faculty members to be aware of the impact of the biases and the need to be sensitive to what they say during interaction with students (Hoffman and Lee, 2015:135).

2.5.1. Types and causes of service failure

Service management is multi-dimensional and consists of a product-related dimension which is known as, the technical, or outcome dimension and a service-related dimension known as the functional or process-related dimension. In higher education institutions, the service encounter is a function of both product and service-related features. For example, students are given notes or handouts which are an outcome, but the lecturer also interacts with them, which is a functional, or process-related dimension. These service encounters between students and lecturers may be satisfactory or unsatisfactory (Silber, Bustin and Zvi, 2009:730).

A critical aspect of handling service failure lies in the determination of where the service failure occurred and what caused it. According to Chuang, Cheng, Chang and Yang (2012:268), service failures are twofold, outcome and process-related. As such, it is imperative for service providers to understand the two failure types because such understanding and knowledge will help them to judge or identify a service failure that has occurred. Furthermore, service providers will be better positioned to respond effectively and to make up for the loss or pain suffered. Outcome failure refers to the failure by the organisation to provide or perform the service need, whereas process failure refers to the flaws in the delivery of the service (Smith, Bolton and Wagner, 1999: 358). Outcome failure leads to economic loss such as money and time. It is also known as utilitarian loss and can, therefore, be recovered using an economic compensation (Siagian and Triyowati, 2015:99).

The process and outcome of a service experience are not independent of each other such that a good outcome is not enough to ensure a pleasant service experience if the process has flaws and this may lead to service failure (Gronroos, 1984:37-40). The implication is that service providers should make an effort to make sure that both the process and outcome of the service are error-free. There is no point in concentrating on one area or aspect of service delivery only because, at the end of the transaction, the customer looks at the totality of the service experience in evaluating the quality of the service rendered. Soares and Proenca (2015:2) observe that outcome failure results in an economic loss on the part of the customer, whereas process failure leads to social loss. Abbas (2012:4) believes that any form of service failure has some losses attached to it. The losses can be in the form of health, character, emotional, respect, identity, money, control or comfort.

Outcome service failure in a student cafeteria or restaurant may be where the food served is different from that which was requested. Other scenarios may include food served with undesirable invasive objects, such as insects or food that has impaired taste because it was undercooked or overcooked. Process failure may include dealing with frontline employees who are rude, slow or passive during interaction with the customer. Customers expect to interact with service employees who are courteous and service-oriented (Tan, 2014:26).

Blackboard Student Service (2013:2) notes that challenges that lead to service failures in institutions of higher learning are a global phenomenon. In the United States of America, Ivy Tech Community College has observed that a fragmented customer service, long call hold times and high abandon rates are the most frequent service breakdowns. The college campuses are also characterised by the absence of personalised attention or service and inconsistencies in processes across campuses resulting in the high dropout rate. Chahal and Devi (2013:213) claim that service failure in higher education may be experienced in respect of examination, teaching, library services, laboratory assistance and infrastructure. At this stage, it is important to highlight that areas where service failures may occur in the higher education institutions, are not exhaustive. An institution is a much broader entity with many facets that interface with students.

2.5.2. Classification of the causes of service failure

Failure categorisation is a very important aspect of failure analysis because it helps to identify types of frequent service failure incidents and provides insight into why these types of service failure incidents occur. It further provides information to minimise the occurrence of similar incidents in future (Gonzalez, Hoffman and Ingram, 2005:59). Categorising or classifying service failures is very important for organisations. Extant research suggests that most firms fail to document service failures and this makes learning a challenge (Tax and Brown, 1998:76). According to Bitner, Booms and Tetreault (1990:75), dissatisfactory incidents are classified into three categories, namely, employee response to service delivery system failure, employee response to customer needs and requests and unprompted and unsolicited employee actions.

2.5.2.1. Employee response to service delivery system failure

The service delivery mechanism is bound to fail and the nature of the response to customer requests or needs will have a bearing on the customers' perceived satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Service delivery system failure is made up of three types of failure: unavailable service, unreasonably slow service and other core service failures (Mattila and Ro, 2008:303).

- **Unavailable service**

Unavailable service refers to a service that is lacking or absent (Bateson and Hoffman, 2016:355). In the context of higher education, unavailable service refers to the service that would have been delivered or is planned as indicated on the timetable or schedule, but is lacking or absent. For instance, a cancelled class or lecture in an event that a lecturer did not show up for a class that was earlier planned and students had turned up.

- **Unreasonably slow service**

Unreasonably slow service refers to a scenario whereby service employees are very slow in discharging their function (Bateson and Hoffman, 2016:355) .e.g. slow registration process, slow service leading to lengthy queues at the university cafeteria or restaurant. In Nigeria, a survey conducted in the higher education sector shows that students complain of a cumbersome and slow pace of registration and screening process. Students wake up around 5 am to get in the queue to ensure that they are assisted (Peretomode and Ugbomeh, 2013:26). The danger of laxity in service provision is that customers can forgive service providers for a poor service, but they may not forget an unpleasant customer experience. They are fond of mentioning the incident and the ripple effects can be destructive to the business. Therefore, it is extremely important to provide excellent customer service all the time (O’Sullivan, 2010:42).

- **Other core service failures**

Other core service failures relates to all aspects of a service that fails to meet the basic expected performance or standards of the higher education industry e.g. a dirty classroom without chairs and a cold meal served at the university cafeteria. Students have legitimate expectations for their education such as quality, fees and the conditions of study and it will be highly irrational to think that the university students can spend their time trying to improve a higher education institution that fails to reasonably meet their expectations (Bergan, 2003). Other core service failures may include facility problems, cooking issues in the students’ cafeteria or unclear policies. However, it is important to underline the fact that each sector or industry has its own unique set of core service failures (Bateson and Hoffman, 2016:355).

2.5.2.2.Employee responses to customer needs and requests

This category refers to service failures emanating from employees' response or handling of customer needs and it further highlights that customer needs can be implicit or explicit (Mattila and Ro, 2008:304). For example, in the context of higher education institutions, implicit needs may fail if a student scholarship or stipend is cancelled without prior notice such that the student does not have ample time to find alternative means to secure living expenses. Explicit needs consist of four types and these are special needs, customer errors, customer preferences and disruptive others. Special needs relate to customer special requests such as the language of instruction at the University, whereas customer preference may be a modification to the timetable to accommodate a sporting event or if it is clashing with another lecture or programme of the university. Customer errors may be in respect of a lost residence key or a lost meal coupon or book owned by the university library. Sometimes employees are advised to take action against disruptive customers. For instance, a lecturer disciplining or reprimanding noise-makers in a class (Bateson and Hoffman, 2016:355).

2.5.2.3.Unprompted and unsolicited employee actions

Unprompted and unsolicited employee actions relate to the unexpected conduct of employees in the process of dealing with customers. Their behaviour is not sanctioned by the organisation or the customer and it is not within the company's scheme of service delivery mechanism (Mattila and Ro, 2008:304). The five unprompted employee actions are:

- **Lack of attention**

Lack of attention is synonymous with employees who have attitude problems. With respect to attitude and personality, Harris (2013:4) explains that what is important in customer service is having the right attitude. It, therefore, makes no difference to provide excellent customer service if small things that matter to the customer are overlooked. Therefore, employees must be trained to anticipate changing customer needs and to make the right decisions. Du, Fan and Feng, (2010:584) believe that the attitude of service personnel can hurt customer feelings and sometimes recovery efforts may not be enough to salvage a poorly executed service encounter.

- **Unusual actions**

Unusual actions may relate to rudeness, abusiveness and inappropriate touching. Similarly, Timm (2011:21) stresses that the behaviour of employees can build or disrupt relationships with customers and awareness of this can help to improve customer service. It is further noted that the problem is that many employees are clueless about the impact of their behaviour. Gronroos (2007:249) claims that unfriendly and negative behaviour by service-oriented employees has a negative impact on service quality. Moreover, it has the potential of affecting the company's productivity and profitability.

- **Cultural norms**

Cultural norms refer to any activity that violates cultural practices or norms e.g. stealing, cheating and others, deemed unfair by the client. Cultural norms also refer to certain actions that strengthen cultural norms such as equality, fairness and honest or to those that violate cultural norms such as dishonesty, discriminatory behaviour and any unfair conduct by customers (Bateson and Hoffman, 2016:355).

- **Gestalt**

Gestalt relates to a holistic nature of customer evaluations such that it is difficult for the customer to attribute service failure to an employee or his own actions. At the end of the day, the customer will evaluate the encounter as in "everything went wrong" or "the whole experience was terrible". Customers may also lament unbelievable situations in terms of how they were served by employees of an organisation (Mattila and Ro, 2008:304; Bateson and Hoffman, 2016:355). For example, students may be dissatisfied with the student cafeteria, but may not be able to pinpoint the specific incidents that led to their dissatisfaction.

- **Adverse circumstances**

Adverse circumstances relate to a situation where the customer is displeased or unimpressed with the way the employee handled a stressful encounter (Mattila and Ro, 2008:304). For satisfactory encounters, customer empathy for customer-facing employees and appreciation of their goodwill when employees are working under pressure, leaves an indelible mark, which

helps to mitigate against customer discomfort with crowds, short-handedness or acts of God (Bitner et al., 1990:80)

2.5.2.4. Problematic customers

Bateson and Hoffman (2016:355) have added another category of service failure which is problematic customers. This occurs when customer actions lead to service breakdown that is not due to the organisation or its employees. Verbal and physical abuse, unco-operative customers are some of the examples of problematic customers. Moyes, Dunn and Douglas (2015:340) observe that the behaviour of customers can easily affect other customers experience or enjoyment of the service. For instance, noisy students, loud and aggressive students and drunken students can spoil the experience of other students and subsequently lead to service failure. The reality is that customers are not always right as there is an existence of 'toxic' students in higher education. The conduct of some students in lecture rooms impedes learning and teaching. A range of inappropriate behaviour can be manifested in the classroom and different methods should be used to deal with this. Poddar and Madupalli (2012:552) claim that some of the behaviour exhibited by problematic customers is drunkenness, foul language and disregarding company policies. These customers are difficult to please.

Ultimately, regardless of who is identified as the responsible party, customers affected by another customer's disruptive behaviour expect the service organization to respond appropriately to salvage their experience. Prevention of all disruptive service behaviour requires service providers to provide proper training to employees on how to identify and how to deal with those misbehaving customers before their behaviour starts influencing by-standing customers service experiences negatively (Gursoy, Cai and Anaya, 2017:2356).

2.5.3. Other categories of the causes of service failure in higher education

Despite efforts by service providers to employ creativity and to differentiate their service, there are a certain number of flaws that remain and these eventually lead to customer dissatisfaction and a situation known as service failure. Service failure is multi-dimensional and encompasses operational failure, informational failure and feedback failure. It, therefore,

follows that each service recovery initiative should correspond to the classification of the service failure encountered (Singhal, Krishna and Lazarus, 2013:192).

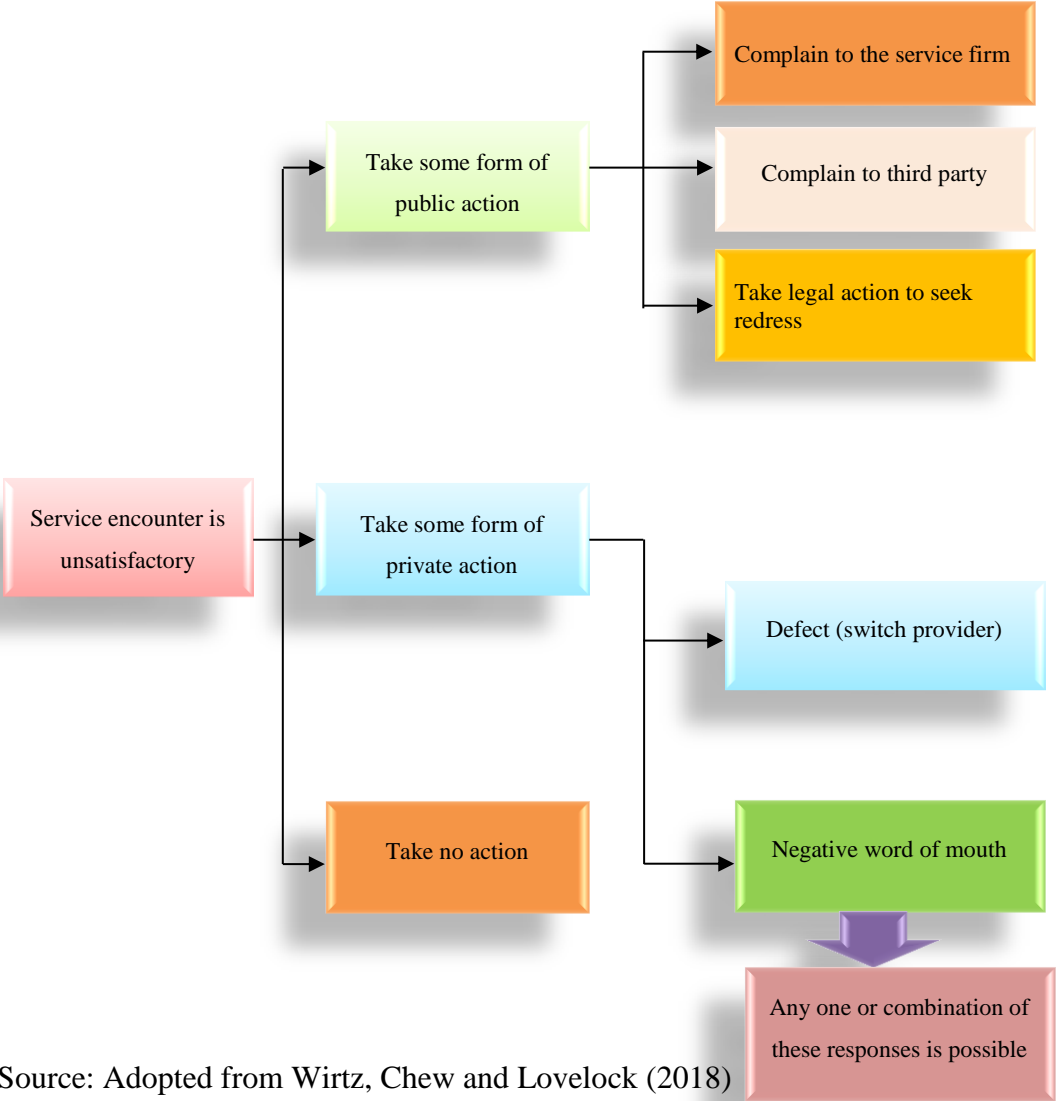
Other service failures include hygiene failure which relates to hygiene problems inside the business premises, whereas infrastructure failure can refer for example to service failure as a result of shortage of space and lack of parking space. In most cases, infrastructural failure can be recovered, but at an exorbitant cost which may not make economic sense. Procedural failure refers to the business and processing formalities which have to be fulfilled. Procedural failure is sometimes exacerbated by system flaws and delays in each step to assist the customer which eventually leads to customer dissatisfaction. However, such failures are recoverable. Information failure relates to a situation where there is a need to provide appropriate information to the customer quickly, but this ends up not happening because of delays. The crucial aspects of information failure are the absence of information and lack of prompt dissemination of the relevant information. Response and feedback failure relates to a situation whereby a service transaction demands follow-up, but the service provider does nothing to provide the required feedback (Singhal, Krishna and Lazarus, 2013:193).

2.6. CUSTOMER REACTION TO SERVICE FAILURE

Service failures are context-specific and differ in frequency of occurrence. In addition, the reactions of customers in relation to service failures are different from one organisation to another. In this regard, frontline employees play a crucial role in defining customer dissatisfaction (Khanmohammadi, Zohoori, Asgharian Golmohammadi and Aghapour, 2014:61). Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler (2012:343) have noted that customers react differently to service failure. Emotions such as anger, discontent, disappointment, self-pity and anxiety can occur at any time. Some scholars are of the view that service failures should not be a cause for panic. Customer complaints or service failure do not entail the demise of the firm, but could be an opportunity to cement and enhance customer loyalty. It is only when a service failure occurs that the service providers can review and analyse their operations (Timm, 2011:95).

Extant research suggests that most customers prefer not to complain if they believe their efforts will yield nothing. However, it is imperative to highlight the different courses of action at the customers' disposal in response to service failure. Approximately 5 to 10 percent of dissatisfied customers chose to complain about service failure. The majority defect to other service providers or choose to attack the service provider with negative word of mouth accounts. Some customers do not complain because they believe the organisation will do nothing and they are also not sure of their rights and the firm's obligation. Others are reluctant because they fear the service provider will retaliate by providing lower service quality when the need for the service arises again (Wirtz, Chew and Lovelock, 2018:416-417). Figure 2.5 shows the categories of customer responses to service failures.

Figure 2.5 Customer response categories to service failures



Source: Adopted from Wirtz, Chew and Lovelock (2018)

2.6.1. Public action

As shown in Figure 2.5, customers may decide to take some public action which may include launching a formal complaint to the service provider or to a third party such as consumer affairs or a protection body and seek legal action through a civil or criminal court (Wirtz, Chew and Lovelock, 2018:415). Similarly, Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler (2012:345) have noted that some customers prefer to complain to the service provider on the spot and this is the best scenario the service providers can bargain for because it provides them with a second chance to make things right. Customers may also decide to complain to third parties such as consumer rights bodies, standards departments, a licencing authority, national government or a professional association.

The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University was taken to court by its students because the University had, without proper consultations, abruptly introduced e-learning as a temporary mechanism without considering the plight of disadvantaged students who had no computers and access to the internet. The e-learning initiative was introduced as part of the academic recovery plan to salvage the lost time when the university had been closed (Carlisle, 2016).

The matter between the Durban University of Technology versus Sphiwe Zulu and others attests to the fact that service failure can lead to lawsuits. While emphasis has been placed on the customer, who is the student, in this case, to seek legal redress in the event that the service provider fails to meet his or her expectations or the relationship has resulted in irreparable damage, one can also see that the service provider, in this case, the university is at liberty to protect its business and property if the actions of the customer (student) is disruptive to the conduct of its affairs. The case no: 1693/16P highlights student dissatisfaction over a number of issues which led to disruption which showed no signs of abating after opening the campus in 2016. Unrest on campus led to property damage of the applicant, Durban University of Technology (DUT). In this matter, the institution sought relief to prevent further acts of disruption of lectures, test or examinations at various campuses (High Court of South Africa, 2016).

Similarly, as one way of taking public action, student protests were also reported in Durban because they were unhappy with the living conditions in a building in Dr Yusuf Dadoo Street. They complained that outsourced rental accommodation by the institution is converted into barely habitable flats. Student efforts of going through the relevant channels to register their problems had not yielded any positive results, therefore, the protest action occurred (Dawood, Peters and Anna, 2016).

2.6.2. Private action

As highlighted in Figure 2.5, taking some form of private action is one of the courses of action customers can adopt. Customer defection or switching is a fundamental set of private action and reaction employed by the customer (Suh, Greene, Rho and Qi, 2013:193). A customer may decide to stop patronising the service provider and defect to other suppliers (Wirtz, Chew and Lovelock, 2018:415). In addition to defections, customers may decide to spread negative word-of-mouth accounts to friends, relatives and co-workers. The ripple effects for the negative word-of-mouth initiative can be extremely effective as it reinforces negative feelings other customers have towards the service provider. Customers may further decide to complain through the internet and several other mushrooming social media platforms. The implication is that such communication is spread to a much broader audience at the click of a button (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler, 2012:344).

In view of the proposal for defection which is one form of customer reaction to a service failure, the treatment of students as customers is highly contested in higher education. This paradigm has several implications for students' welfare on campus. The reality is that a customer gets a service that is largely defined by the service provider and has little interest in the service provider and his or her products as long as they are affordable and of good quality. When expectations of customers are not met, they tend to respond by defecting to other service providers rather than trying to convince the service provider to make changes to meet their desires or expectations. The tragedy of using the customer analogy to address students is that it contradicts a conventional idea of treating students as members of the academic community. As members of the academic community, students participate in building the institution and if they find anything to be unsatisfactory, they take necessary steps to provide feedback aimed at improving the institution other than going to another institution. Defecting

to other institutions for campus problems is simply a non-starter in higher education, whereas, for clients who patronise goods and services, such decisions can be made easily because the ripple effects are not disastrous (Bergan, 2003)

Despite the conflicting argument on the treatment of students as customers, another school of thought suggests that the customer narrative has several advantages that it presents to the students. They argue that it is legitimate for students to be treated as customers because, as customers, students have the right to complain about poor teaching, substandard facilities, understocked libraries and appalling accommodation (Hussey and Smith, 2010:20).

2.6.3. No action

As shown in Figure 2.5, taking no action is one remedy at the disposal of the customer. A customer may decide to act as if nothing happened at all. Some customers may opt to remain silent when a service failure occurs because the perceived cost of complaining exceeds the benefit (Mousavi and Esfidan, 2013:553). Goodman and Newman (2003:54) contend that minor inconveniences are underplayed by consumers because they are not regarded as important enough to warrant a complaint. Simply stated, consumers do not complain about problems they consider as minor inconveniences. Similarly, looking at our own perspective as consumers, we may agree that not all mediocre services warrant a complaint.

Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler (2012:345) have noted that customers who do not complain in an event of service failure are not likely to return. Service providers should be concerned at customer passivity when they are faced with service failure. It is a threat to company progress and success. Furthermore, some customers experience cognitive dissonance which simply means getting involved in certain actions that are inconsistent with one's beliefs. Cognitive dissonance can be experienced during service failure and the service recovery process. This occurs when customers decide to maintain a relationship with the service provider despite being aware or having fears that the service failure may recur in future (Singh and Crisafulli, 2016:17).

2.6.4. Combination of actions

Customers are sometimes compelled to reconsider their relationship with a service provider in an event of a service failure. They may either decide to stay or opt out because of frustration and disappointment. Furthermore, the customer may engage in retributive behaviour such as negative word-of-mouth or defecting to a competitor (Boshoff, 2014:298). Harrison-Walker (2012:116) notes that customers are more frustrated with service failure when they assume that the failure is a result of poor training or sheer incompetence. An example would be a cook who puts too much salt in the food that is served to many students. One would expect members of staff to act with caution because, in a group, it is normal to expect some students who don't eat salty food at all. This situation is the result of negligence and gross incompetence by the service provider which may cause the students to become frustrated and angry. Furthermore, service failure can either be controllable or uncontrollable. Sometimes customers are left in a predicament as to why service failure has occurred and as a result, it becomes very difficult to attribute the cause of failure to anything specific. Customers in this scenario are sometimes left in the state of confusion and, at the same time, not knowing how to react. Consequently, they don't know whether they should be angry, frustrated or disappointed. Ultimately, they are left in a state of uncertainty (Harrison-Walker, 2012:116).

When service failure is severe, customers do not forgive easily. They may engage in negative publicity and retaliatory behaviour. When students rush to protests when something goes wrong it justifies the unforgiving and retaliatory behaviour narrative. It is believed that young people have pride and do not forgive easily. They regard themselves as strong human beings with a lot of inner drive to combat obstacles such that they don't need to be compassionate towards the offender (i.e the employee who has given them the bad service or is not responsive to their needs). They engage in retaliatory, vengeful acts rather than seeking peace and psychological equilibrium in their relationship with the service provider (Tsarenko and Tojib, 2012:1231-1232). For example, student protests have been going on for quite some time. As reported in the press, protests concerning accommodation and funding (NASFAS) support have taken place at the following institutions: University of Limpopo in 2009, 2011 and 2012, Mangosuthu University of Technology in 2009, Tshwane University of Technology in 2012, University of Witwatersrand in 2004 and 2015, Vaal University of Technology in 2014 and Walter Sisulu University of Technology in 2012. Student protests have in some cases been violent and have led to injuries and arrests. Some members of the students'

representative council (SRC) have been arrested and others are facing disciplinary and criminal actions at selected universities such as the University of Limpopo, Durban University of Technology and Vaal University of Technology (South African History Online, 2015).

Mccoll-Kennedy and Smith (2006) observe that anger is the most frequently experienced negative emotion during service encounters. High levels of anger and dissatisfaction have negative consequences for the service provider such as customer attrition, lower return on investment, decreased brand loyalty and spread of negative word-of-mouth. Aggrieved customers may decide to react differently to service encounters which were not good or where service failure occurred. This behaviour ranges from complaining to superiors or an employee in a calm manner, screaming or verbal abuse towards the employee, complaining to a third party such as a consumer rights body, spreading negative word-of-mouth accounts to potential and existing customers, seeking revenge through nonviolent actions such as switching, boycotts and exiting the relationship, damaging the service providers' property, physical manhandling of the employees, displacing the anger and internalising the anger. In the context of higher education, the practicability of certain reactions, as highlighted in service marketing literature, is a subject of debate. Reactions such as defecting, boycotting and switching universities are not easy options for a student. Suh, Greene, Rho and Qi (2013:192) reiterate that the backdrop of service failure includes losing customers, negative word-of-mouth, and customer complaints to consumer right bodies.

Service failure that triggers anger can be categorised as external and non-external. An externally-triggered service failure is caused by the service provider whereas a non-external service failure is caused by the customer or by a situation or something known to the customer. In addition, goal-relevance exacerbates customer emotions when a service failure occurs. The extent to which a problem is personally perceived to be important to the customer's well-being will invoke emotions when things go wrong. The more relevant the problem is to one's goal, the greater the intensity of negative feelings when a service failure occurs. For instance, if the university delays to credit a student account after paying fees, the student will be up in arms if such action hinders registration and access to other facilities (Nguyen and McColl-Kennedy, 2003:48-49).

2.7. CUSTOMER AND SERVICE PROVIDER RELATIONSHIPS IN SERVICE FAILURE SCENARIOS

Severe service failure has a negative impact on a long-term relationship that exists between the customer and service provider. Ultimately, it causes a huge strain on the relationship. The likelihood of occurrence is high when a service failure is less severe for customers who have a short relationship with the service provider due to outcome failure and also when compensation is granted to recover from a weak failure (Soares and Proenca, 2015:8). Customers in an early stage of a relationship with a service provider may be forgiving and are inclined to believe that the service failure was just a rare occurrence. As a result, they give the service provider the benefit of the doubt and come back for the second time. However, the tragedy of the relationship occurs in the medium-term. As the old adage says, 'once-beaten twice shy'. The implication is that the customer may be forgiving for a once-off service failure occurrence, but may not come back when a service failure occurs the second time. This is because the service provider has not built a strong relationship, trust and commitment of a long-standing customer (Palmer and Bejou, 2016:481).

When service failure is induced by the service provider, customers often seek a more secure way to safeguard their interests or to protect themselves against any potential harm than they would where there is no service failure. Sometimes, it's not easy to win customers who have experienced service failure because they need to go through a forgiveness process that involves changes in their emotional state which could also lead to the restoration of trust. In some instances, customers may reserve their right or choice not to patronise the service provider because they feel betrayed or disappointed due to emotional scars left by service failure. However, the service provider can regain customer confidence if effective service recovery efforts are implemented (Lai and Choi, 2012:120). In the context of higher education, students may decide to shun classes taught by a lecturer who is not good in the subject or shun the university cafeteria if they think the food being served is consistently of poor quality.

Inyang (2015:113) argues that a favourable relationship that exists between a service employee and the customer can cushion severity or effects of service failure. Customers exhibit great tolerance to service failure incidents that have occurred at the hands of service

employees they have a good relationship with. For instance, in the context of an institution of higher learning, some of the students who have stayed for three or four years at the institution have developed a personal relationship with members of staff working in different departments and they are likely to be more tolerant to service failures than students who have just joined the institution (freshmen). Stone (2011:111) notes that the effect of a single deviation or failure is different for existing rather than new customers because new customers do not have prior good experience with the service provider and any service breakdown will be treated as very serious. On the other hand, existing customers with an established relationship with the service provider will be more tolerant of the service failure.

Loyal consumers with a consistent consumption experience, which can be regarded as cumulative, have accurate and realistic expectations of the service provider's performance. Loyal customers treat any deviation from the expected performance as a temporal problem whereas non-loyal customers have an inaccurate and unrealistic expectation and will treat any deviation from the expected performance as a serious service failure. The relationship level a consumer has with the service provider determines the attitude towards service failure (Kwon and Jang, 2012:1238).

A comprehensive study on service failure suggests that customers with sufficient knowledge of the industry are likely to judge the employee servicing accurately or will assist them in an event of service failure. Simply stated, customers with a lot of experience are able to distinguish between the different types of service failure more than inexperienced customers (Bujisic, Parsa, Bilgihan, Galloway and Hern, 2014:264).

2.8. UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER COMPLAINING BEHAVIOUR IN SERVICE FAILURE SCENARIOS

Complaining customers should not be treated with contempt or be viewed as enemies of the business. It is easy for service providers to be defensive when customers register problems or frustrations. However, service providers should take criticisms as constructive contributions to the management of service failures (Harris, 2013:31). Bateson and Hoffman (2016:344) believe that complainers are true customers because they inform the service providers that

they have operational or managerial problems which need to be sorted out. Service providers should be concerned about non-complainers because they have either left or are prepared to leave and to go to the competition. On the other hand, service providers should also avoid attracting inappropriate customers to patronise their business as a result of their communication policies. It is imperative for communication to target the right customers or market. Ultimately, service providers should not labour to be all things to all the people or customers. In some cases, customers will make wrong decisions and are prepared to take responsibility for the poor decision. i.e. when the service does not match the expectation. In this case, the service provider should be willing to let these customers defect or go (Harrison-Walker, 2012:120).

2.8.1. Types of Complainers

Customers are categorised into groups depending on how they respond to service failure. The following are the groups of complainers: passives, voicers, irates and activists.

2.8.1.1.Passives

Passives are customers who prefer to take no action when a service failure occurs because they believe complaining will not yield anything considering the time and effort required for such action. Sometimes passives are driven by personal values and norms which do not permit complaining (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2007:289; Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler, 2012:345).

2.8.1.2.Voicers

Voicers are customers who are relentless in their approach to complaining, but are less likely to defect, spread negative word of-mouth accounts and to complain to third parties. The authors believe that these customers should be seen as the service provider's best friend because by actively complaining they are giving the service provider a second chance. Furthermore, their values and personal norms are consistent with complaining (Singh, 1990:80; Hoyer and MacInnis, 2007:289).

2.8.1.3.Irates

Irates are customers who complain bitterly given a service failure incident and are likely to spread negative word-of-mouth accounts and switch to other service providers. However, irates are unlikely to lodge complaints with third parties. These customers are very angry and are not likely to give a second chance to the service provider and will rather defect to another service provider (Singh, 1990:80-81).

2.8.1.4.Activists

Activists are customers whose approach can be disastrous for the service provider. They complain to the service provider, other customers and third parties. Complaining is consistent with their personal values and norms. They are optimistic that complaining will yield something positive (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2007:289; Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler, 2012:345).

The different types of complainers highlighted in literature are general across various sectors but may also differ because some sectors have created another set of types of complainers. For instance, another school of thought grouped complainers under the categories of, the meek customer, the aggressive customer, the high-roller customer, the rip-off customer and the chronic-complainer customer. Furthermore, the authors noted that in the hotel industry, the types of complainers include “people with ruined dreams, face-savers, freebie lovers, wounded warriors, martyrs/passive–aggressive, the loyal customer and the truly injured”. The challenge for service providers is to understand that customers should not always be pampered or glorified regardless of the cost. The reality is that some customers are more valuable than others and the onus is on the service provider to decide which customers to retain (Bateson and Hoffman (2016:357). The analogy may be difficult in the context of higher education because the decision of expelling students for mischievous acts is not an easy one. However, unruly students who create problems for the institution should be disciplined and let go and those who are able to show remorse can be re-integrated into the system.

2.8.2. Causes of customer complaining behaviour

There are a variety of reasons why customers complain, and one of the reasons is to obtain restitution or compensation. Customers endeavour to recover the economic loss suffered by seeking a refund or compensation. Secondly, customers complain because they want to release their anger. Consumers often complain as one way of rebuilding their self-esteem or to release their anger and frustration. Sometimes rigid and unreasonable rules or service processes and rude service employees affect customer self-esteem and self-worth. As a result, customers may become angry and emotional. The third reason for complaining is to help to improve the service. Sometimes, customers who are highly involved with the service providers such as an alumni association will provide feedback in order to contribute towards the improvement of the service. Lastly, customers complain out of concern for others. Some customers are concerned about the plight of other customers and feel that they should be able to do anything reasonably possible to raise their concern so that the service is improved. This saves others from going through the same ordeal if the necessary steps are taken by the service provider to rectify the problem (Wirtz et al., 2018:416).

Complaining behaviour can be influenced by several factors. At times, if dissatisfaction is attributed to service providers, the customers will show the desire to have the problem addressed. Some of the factors that can influence complaints are: the price, severity of the problem, perceived inconvenience of the complaint system and, lastly, perceived willingness of the service provider to assist (Stefura and Cuza, 2010:489). Customer complaining behaviour can sometimes be influenced by previous dissatisfactory experience. However, if handled properly, it may not have negative effects on customer satisfaction. Service managers are therefore encouraged to develop strategies to manage dissatisfaction and complaints effectively so that they should not lead to customer dissatisfaction (Mensah, 2012:190).

Conversely, customers may decide not to complain about service failure for a number of reasons. Some believe complaining will not change anything and they also do not know who to complain to. Furthermore, customers may decide not to complain because they believe they were part of the problem whereas others doubt their own evaluation of the problem to warrant launching a complaint. Some customers lack the expertise to ascertain the need for

complaining and others may feel uncomfortable about complaining to a service provider in a face-to-face conversation (Bateson and Hoffman, 2016:360).

2.9. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The present chapter highlighted that the higher education sector in South Africa has evolved since the dawn of the multi-party democracy. The challenges the sector is facing in South Africa are similar to those being experienced in other countries. They range from a decline in funding, high student-staff ratios, brain-drain, the slow pace of transformation and infrastructure problems. These challenges affect the smooth running of the sector. As a result, the quality of service delivered in various higher education institutions is highly compromised. The review in the current chapter noted that quality is an elusive concept as such different stakeholders have their own yardstick for measuring it. Students have expectations of an ideal service and when these expectations are not met, the service is deemed to have failed. It was further discussed in the current chapter that the assessment of whether a service has been satisfactory or not depends on the interaction between the customer and service provider. This is called a service encounter or moment of truth.

This chapter further highlighted that service failure is multi-dimensional and encompasses process and outcome failure. For instance, in the higher education sector, service failure can be experienced in the library, during an examination, teaching, in laboratories and in the lack of suitable infrastructure. The various categories of the causes of service failure were also discussed. Furthermore, it was noted that customers who encounter service failure react differently. The reactions range from complaining to third parties or to the service provider, instituting lawsuits, defection and taking no action. The chapter also emphasised that complaining is one of the actions taken by the customers in an effort to find closure and resolution to service failure. Conversely, other customers do not complain because they believe complaining will not yield any positive results. The next chapter focuses on complaints management and service recovery strategies i.e. speed, compensation, apology, empowerment and explanation.

CHAPTER 3

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT AND SERVICE RECOVERY STRATEGIES IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided a discussion on service failure in the higher education sector. This chapter underlines the importance of customer complaints management and service recovery strategies in addressing service failures. In this regard, a number of theories, strategies and models for complaints management and service recovery are reviewed. Firstly, the concept of complaints management has been highlighted in order to ground the discussion. In addition, the chapter highlights strategies that can be adopted for the effective implementation of a complaints management system. This chapter further discusses the four stage service recovery model comprising pre-recovery, immediate recovery, follow-up recovery and lessons learned. Furthermore, a three-outcome service recovery model encompassing the customer's recovery, the employee recovery and the process recovery is dissected to provide the foundation for service recovery. The present chapter also discusses ways for effective implementation, co-creation of service recovery and service recovery strategies based on the severity or magnitude of service failure. Lastly, service recovery strategies i.e. apology, speed, compensation, empowerment and explanation are discussed in detail to provide an understanding of the options available to higher education institutions every time they are confronted with a service failure recovery scenario.

3.2. COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

Service recovery and customer complaints management are treated as independent concepts but are related or complementary. Complaints handling is an integral part of the service recovery process and essential to addressing service failures. Chahal and Devi (2015:70) observe that few cases of service failures or complaints are reported and registered because people simply don't know where to complain and there is limited time to complain. In some cases, negative experiences of poor service encounters or being badly handled create the conviction that complaining will yield no results because they will be ignored by the service provider.

Customer complaints may arise because of a service or product that is defective, unfulfilled customer expectation or a broken promise. Therefore, a poorly executed service, unreliable service and failure to meet commitments may all lead to customer complaints (Chan, Hsiao and Lee, 2016:48). Sometimes there is a wrong belief among service employees that low complaints represent good performance to the extent that they do not value complaints. Therefore, service managers need to provide training to members of staff to enhance their skills in handling customer complaints effectively (Tan, Kashif, and Murali, 2014).

The traditional method of handling service or product failures is through the handling of complaints where aggrieved customers can make formal complaints regarding their experience. Complaints handling improves customer perception of the service orientation of the organisation despite the fact that it is inherently non-service oriented (Gronroos, 2007:126). Abbas, Abdullateef and Mokhtar (2015:259) posit that it is imperative for service providers to provide every possible channel to enable customers to launch complaints on matters relating to service breakdown. This will enable the service provider to gain an understanding of the problems and engage the customer in an effort to redress any defects found. In doing so, the service provider will be able to retain the customer and minimise defections.

Complaints management is a process that is deemed as a key battleground where stakes are high and the outcome is not known. Thus, the complainant may leave the scene dissatisfied and less likely to return. On the other hand, if the service provider can address the problem to the satisfaction of the customer, the customer may leave the scene satisfied and will be likely to patronise the service or business in the future (Rust, Subramanian and Wells, 1992:41). Therefore, complaints handling should deal primarily with the outcome and secondly the process. When the provision of a speedy service recovery is not possible due to other matters such as lawsuits, the service provider must make sure that customers are updated on the issues surrounding their complaints (Stone, 2011:110).

3.2.1. Creating an effective complaints management system

Customer complaints provide the service provider with meaningful information which can prove useful in helping firms to recognise their problems, recover from service failure and maintain a sustainable relationship with customers. Therefore, laying out a clear complaints procedure will enable customers to know how to launch complaints, where to complain and this initiative should be favourably considered by service providers (Quy and Lan, 2015:1087). Service managers have no choice, but to learn about service failure incidents if service recovery is to be achieved. In this regard, customer complaints are essential and crucial feedback that helps managers to conduct a thorough analysis of the root cause of service failure and to detect areas within the operation that are leading to this (Lervik-Olsen, Andreassen and Streukens, 2016:420).

Service providers should create an environment or provide an experience that enhances customer perception of the likelihood of complaints being addressed satisfactorily or reaping some reward. Previous experience of the service provider can be positive only if the service provider is able to do things right every time (Azam, Javed, Ali, Kanjoo, Rukhsar, Muzaffar and Nawaz, 2013:150). Service quality and productivity law warn organisations to do things right the first time. However, service providers cannot ignore the fact that service failure is an inevitable phenomenon. It, therefore, follows that how the service providers deal with and resolve complaints will determine customer loyalty or defection (Wirtz, Chew and Lovelock, 2018:415).

Management of higher education institutions should solicit and incorporate student feedback in decision-making as part of continuous improvement. Therefore, it is important for institutional managers to communicate to students the various channels that can be used to voice their concerns or to register complaints (Hoffman and Lee, 2015:137). Students will derive satisfaction from a service recovery process if satisfied with the process of seeking the remedy. Furthermore, higher education institutions must provide a fair complaint process that facilitates student flexibility and control. Universities are advised to come up with policies and a communication framework that is clear to students and which facilitates prompt and timely feedback to complainants (Waqas, Ali and Khan, 2014: 276-277). In this regard, service managers can adopt the use of internet and cell phones to facilitate complaints

registration. Furthermore, service providers' complaints management system must be flexible to respond with speed in an event of service failure to ensure that the customer is not disadvantaged as a result of substandard service. The longer it takes to enforce service recovery, the higher the level of compensation needed (Ibrahim and Abdallahamed, 2014:205)

Service providers should establish a good complaint management and service recovery system to avoid the spread of negative word-of-mouth accounts about the organisation and its products from disappointed or dissatisfied customers (Okyere and Kumadey, 2015:32). Similarly, Ibrahim and Abdallahamed (2014:198) have noted that service failure has negative implications for the service providers as such customers should be encouraged to register complaints and employees should be willing to assist. Simply put, effective complaints management depends on both the employee and the customer playing their part or role in a transaction.

3.2.2. Practical ideas for effective complaints management

Achieving customer satisfaction through the handling of complaints cannot happen by chance. The service provider must put in place strategies that will guide the front office in particular and the entire organisation in general to view complaints as an opportunity to retain customer confidence. The following are some of the ideas or strategies that can be used to manage customer complaints effectively.

3.2.2.1. Treat complaints as opportunities

Customer complaints should be seen as both an opportunity and a problem. Complaints can create discomfort and fear. Conversely, organisations can view complaints as an opportunity to receive constructive customer feedback and to strive to use this to enhance their reputation, credibility, customer confidence and satisfaction (Scriabina and Fomichov, 2007:3). This view is reinforced by Garin-Munoz, Perez-Amaral, Gijon and Lopez (2016:811) who have noted that service providers should view complaints as opportunities since they provide the service provider with a second chance to make things right.

3.2.2.2. Encourage customers to express dissatisfaction

One of the most important strategies is to encourage and track complaints. Service failure occurs when least expected and sometimes without the knowledge of the service provider such that it takes the customer to inform the service provider. Consequently, organisations can encourage and track complaints by developing a mind-set that complaints are good, by making complaining easy, by being an active listener, by asking customers about specific issues and through conducting short surveys (Wilson, Bitner, Zeithaml and Gremler, 2012:354).

Private e-complaints channels such as emails and company website and public channels such as online blogs, virtual communities, protest websites and video channels can be used to facilitate the communication and registration of complaints. The danger however of online complaints communication channels is that there is no control over the audience or who receives the message. Emails may facilitate one-on-one engagement with a company representative whereas virtual communication such as social networks provides for interaction of more than one person (Breitsohl, Khammash and Griffiths, 2014:915).

Mudie and Pirrie (2012:256) have noted that encouraging complaints or customers to air their views work to the advantage of the service provider. Sometimes organisations are faced with the difficulty of having to strike the right balance between making the system easily accessible or making it too accessible. Whilst it is important to encourage customers to make justifiable or legitimate complaints, it is sterile to set up a complaints procedure that creates an impression that the service provider is expecting lots of complaints.

3.2.2.3. Consider the customer's perspective

Service providers should appreciate customers who reserve time to complain by providing a fast and convenient complaints handling process. Service providers can garner customer confidence by acknowledging complaints, indicating a time frame that will be taken to address the complaints, maintain confidentiality and communicate with the complainant in plain language (Scriabina and Fomichov, 2007:4). Rust, Zharik and Keiningham (1996:186-187) have noted that it is important for an employee to take the role of championing customer

welfare so that he or she should be responsible for following up and seeing to it that there is a successful resolution to the problem. The principle of immediate advocacy should not be confused with immediate resolution of the problem. It, however, means having someone in the organisation representing the complaining customers' interests irrespective of the time it takes to solve the problem.

3.2.2.4. Establish guidelines, documentation and maintain records

Guidelines are pointers that assist employees to respond quickly. Furthermore, customer satisfaction is eroded when service recovery is delayed or handed off through more than one person (Brown, 2000:8). Service providers should establish complaints handling policies and objectives that guide the process. The processes should be supported by procedures that define the requirements for receiving, investigating, responding to and resolving complaints and the roles of employees with respect to complaints management (Scriabina and Fomichov, 2007:4).

Organisations are also advised to maintain a database of their customers so that they are able to track the customer when a problem occurs. In the context of higher education, developing and maintaining a database for students which includes student numbers, phone numbers and emails can assist university employees to reach out to students in an event of a problem. Maintaining a database of all relevant information is a prerequisite for a business (Rust, Zharik and Keiningham, 1996:186). Vutete, Itumeleng and Wadzanayi (2015:106) urge service providers to acknowledge receipt of customer complaints by soliciting their contact details thereby enabling them to know that the service provider is taking their problem seriously. Another key aspect of complaints management is for the service provider to maintain the anonymity of customers who launch complaints to deter victimisation by members of staff.

Customer service management can be enhanced if service providers can understand the differences in customer complaints behaviour. Thus, service providers are advised to adopt international standard organisation (ISO): ISO 10002:2004 as a framework or guide for the implementation of an effective complaints management process (Badghish, Stanton, Hu,

2015:65). Another school of thought supports this view by stating that organisations should adopt and adhere to world-best practices such as the implementation of ISO 9004:2000 as highlighted in Table 3.1 and ISO 10002:2004 which provides for quality management and complaints handling in the organisation (Scriabina and Fomichov, 2007:8). Table 3.1 illustrates the application of ISO 9004 to complaints handling. It is important for higher education institutions to set up a complaints management system that is customer focussed, supported by the leadership or management, and embraced by the employees. In addition, systems or processes should be put in place to facilitate effective handling of complaints.

Table 3.1 Application of ISO 9004 to complaints handling

ISO 9004 quality management principle	To properly apply the quality management principle to complaints handling:
Customer focus	Focus complaints handling on customers or complainant needs and requirement
Leadership	Ensure leaders commitment to effective and efficient complaints handling
Involvement of people	Train employees to work with customers complaints and motivate them to improve their skills
Process approach	Manage complaints handling as a process
System approach to management	Identify how the complaints handling process interacts with other business processes in your management system
Continual improvement	Continually improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the complaint handling process
Factual approach to decision making	Analyse complaints handling information and data to make decisions for improvements
Mutually beneficial supplier relationship	Provide suppliers affected by complaints with adequate information so that they are able to make improvements

Source: Adopted from Scriabina and Fomichov (2007:4)

3.2.2.5. Train employees

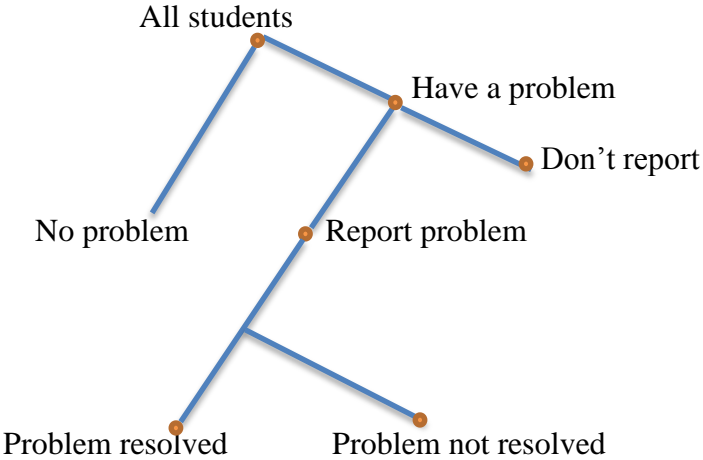
Service employees who interface with the customers represent the organisation in the eyes of the customer such that it helps to have skilled and well-trained staff to manage the complaints handling process. Training must occur so that it caters for both managers and lower staff that interface with customers and enables them to be able to provide courtesy, acknowledgement

and to respond as prescribed by the organisation complaints handling procedures (Scriabina and Fomichov, 2007:6). Lervik-Olsen, Andreassen and Streukens (2016:420) have noted that employees must be trained to encourage and welcome complaints from customers and they must be empowered to provide the necessary relief to avoid double deviation situations.

3.2.2.6.Problem Impact Tree

Service providers can use the problem impact tree to determine the effectiveness of the organisation complaint resolution procedures and to pinpoint areas that need improvement. The problem impact tree (PIT) is a graphic method for presenting key components of complaints programmes to service managers depicting areas which offer opportunities for improvement (Rust, Subramanian and Wells, 1992:42). Berry (1995) believes that the PIT is a powerful diagnostic tool for service recovery especially when data are classified by the nature of the service problem.

Figure 3.1 The problem impact tree

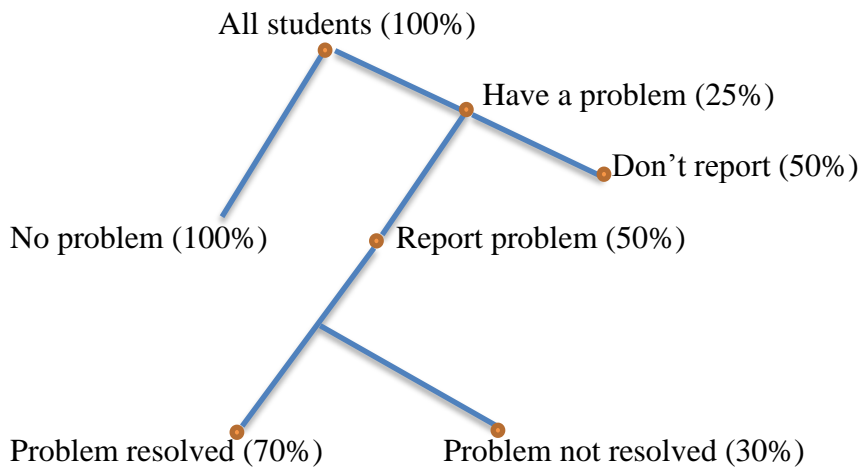


Source: Adapted from Rust, Subramanian and Wells (1992:42)

As highlighted in Figure 3.1, at the summit of the diagram are students who may have a problem or no problem. These students chose a university they prefer based on a set of attributes and their expectation is that the learning process will be smooth and without problems. Conversely, if a problem occurs, any outcome whether good or bad is possible. The branching of the problem impact tree hinges on whether dissatisfied students report the problem encountered and if the students decide not to report, the outcome is bad because the

university has missed an opportunity to correct the mistakes (Rust, Subramanian and Wells, 1992:42).

Figure 3.2 Complaints management resolution performance



Source: Adapted from Rust, Subramanian and Wells (1992:42)

Figure 3.2 shows complaints management resolution in an organisation using the PIT. Out of all students (100%), 25% have a problem. Only 50% of them report the problem and 30 % of the reported problems remain unresolved. Complaints management affects customer satisfaction and retention. The use of customer satisfaction and retention data with complaints management information helps service providers to calculate the value of guiding the customer down different branches of the problem impact tree. This enables the organisation to use its resources effectively (Mudie and Pirrie, 2012: 259). Nikbin, Marimuthu and Hyun (2015:243) observe that, in order to achieve customer satisfaction in complaints handling, service providers should ensure that a fair treatment is provided to customers.

3.2.3. Implementation of an efficient complaints management system

An efficient complaints handling system should be put in place to strengthen procedural justice practices. There is a need for total commitment from managers of institutions to ensure efficient complaints handling. The absence of commitment in this area can have adverse effects on the service providers because dissatisfied customers may harm the organisation through negative word-of-mouth accounts (Nikbin, Marimuthu and Hyun, 2015:256).

Bougoure, Russell-Bennett, Fazal-E-Hasan and Mortiner (2016:68) advise that managers of service organisations should improve the complaints handling process in order to generate trust and to ensure that service recovery will be effective. A complaint handling process that is non-effective damages customers' perception of the recovery process and, subsequently, brand credibility.

Komunda (2013:22) notes that complaints management is a crucial task for service providers to enable customers to recover from service failure and to ensure that they operate competitively with others. Service managers and employees should be pro-active in complaints handling to convert dissatisfied customers into loyal ones and, at the same time, promote the image of the organisation through positive word-of-mouth reporting. Fierro, Polo and Olivan (2014:192) claim that positive word-of-mouth accounts are a weapon for converting average customers into value-building evangelists, or customers who are willing to spread positive information about the service provider to other stakeholders thereby boosting the organisation's image and brand.

Chaparro-Pelaez, Hernandez-Garcia and Uruena-Lopez (2015:86) believe that creating positive emotions during the complaints handling process and dealing with adversity are key management challenges. Customers do not only patronise a service, but rather the total experience. This means that from purchase, customer service and actual use of the service are important ingredients of the total customer experience. The management of complaints should, therefore, be treated as a preventive rather than a corrective process.

Service providers who are keen to offer a customer-centric service recovery experience should set up systems that incorporate multiple communication channels, steps on how to complain, engage several recovery actions to meet or exceed customer expectations, impart knowledge to front office staff to be able to deal with a range of complaints and tailor-made service recovery solution to provide room for customer preferences (Contiero, Ponsignon, Smart and Vinelli, 2016:1663).

3.2.4. The effects of defensive organisation behaviour on complaints management

Effective complaints management is a crucial component of business management. Poor solicitation, handling and analysis of complaints can have damaging effects on the service provider. Sometimes organisations are involved in what is known as defensive organisation behaviour (DOB). It is important for service managers to warn employees not to be involved in DOB because this acts as an impediment for rolling out an effective complaints management system. Managers can effectively diffuse attempts of DOB by setting up appropriate complaints channels, to communicate the organisation's resolve to respond to all complaints and to advise customers where, how and to whom they can register complaints. In addition, managers should set up guidelines that regulate employees' behaviour towards customer complaints and jealously monitor their strict adherence to this. Lastly, standard operating procedures for systematically analysing complaints and main causes of customer dissatisfaction should be put in place. An information system package can be used to evaluate customer complaints (Homburg and Frost, 2007:1-3).

Sometimes it is not feasible to prevent the occurrence of service failure, but service providers can institute measures to help them cope with such service breakdowns because customers value quick responses to service failures, thus, service managers need to pay attention to the prompt treatment of customer complaints (Park and Park, 2016:240) because addressing customer complaints may be profitable in the long run. Satisfied customers have a positive effect on the business through word-of-mouth reporting which, subsequently, helps to build the reputation of the company and therefore attracts new customers. It is, therefore, important for service providers to channel their efforts and financial resources towards handling complaints (Garin-Munoz, Perez-Amaral, Gijon and Lopez, 2016:814).

3.3. SERVICE RECOVERY

The key to responding with appropriate service recovery strategies is to identify the various types of service failures and classifying them into broader categories (Jha and Balaji, 2015:143). Higher education is a service that is inherently difficult to defect from or switch from in an event of a service failure. When a customer makes a decision to access services from an organisation that is inherently difficult to switch from if they receive poor services,

their decision is regarded as a serious commitment and investment in the service provider such that the customer has high expectation from the service provider to demonstrate a capability to resolve the problem in an event of a service failure (Wood and Tadisina, 2008:19). Therefore, complaints management and service recovery must focus on providing a reasonable solution to customers if the service providers are to achieve customer satisfaction and maintain a good image (Fierro, Pineda, Benitez and Carrasco, 2011:517).

3.3.1. Meaning of service recovery

Service recovery refers to actions by the service provider to resolve any problems arising from a service failure. Some of the service recovery examples include compensation, discounts, free service, upgrade and an apology (Sahadev, Purani and Malhotra, 2015:121). In addition, service recovery is a multi-dimensional construct. It refers to a complaint management system that seeks to address service breakdowns as they occur as well as monitoring the service delivery process with the view to identifying problems as they occur (Boshoff, 2014:375).

Another school of thought suggests that service recovery refers to the action and steps taken by the service provider to mitigate the impact of service failure in an effort to restore credibility and to strengthen the bond with customers. Every time a poor service is executed, an organisation has to switch into the recovery mode. The responsibility to deliver a service that is free of errors and to respond with appropriate recovery strategies when a service failure occurs is in the hands of the service provider (Waqas, Khan and Ali, 2014:265). Thus, institutions are always in a precarious situation when a service failure occurs. Moreover, customers are fond of apportioning the responsibility for service failure to the service provider even when the employees have no control over the situation. Institutions are, therefore, advised to regard service recovery as an important process of the business. However, the challenge is that sometimes employees do not take their roles seriously when a service failure occurs even though customer expectations are high that the employees will deliver (Battaglia, Sellito and Pereira, 2012:959).

Most services are performed in the presence of customers. Therefore, errors are inevitable. However, opportunities for service recovery are countless. Any problem front desk employees unearth and resolve is an opportunity to go beyond the call of duty to retain customers for life. It is tempting to brush off sporadic customer problems as insignificant and view complaining customers as mere cranks, but service managers should confront this attitude. No service provider can afford the luxury of losing customers because the cost of replacing a customer can be exorbitant. An organisation that alienates and frustrates customers will have no one left to irritate or upset and those who go the extra mile to please customers will have many customers to service (Kayastha, 2011; Hart, Heskett and Sasser, 1990).

Customers' decisions are based on their evaluation of the outcome. Customers assess service breakdown or failure in low perceived quality and high perceived quality as different classes of losses. Customers perceive that a great loss in high-quality service triggers low value from the recovery initiative (Jha and Balaji, 2015:136). Despite massive opportunities available to service providers for recovery, the organisations often drop the ball and fail to recover successfully from service breakdowns (Gonzalez, Hoffman and Ingram, 2005:58). Service providers must be prepared to face service failures head on because they inevitably occur so it is important to take care of the afflicted customer in order to avoid customer attrition and loss of future profits (Ghalandari, Babaeinia and Jogh, 2012:965).

Whilst it is important for service providers to deliver the right service the first time, it must be noted that deviations are likely to occur. Service providers must first quickly understand or appreciate the factors leading to the problem before any reaction or decision is taken to respond, and secondly they must communicate with the customer. Such action will show the company's commitment towards a satisfactory resolution of the problem (Fierro, Pineda, Benitez and Carrasco, 2011:517). Similarly, Lee and Park (2010:60) point out that service providers should analyse and understand potential hazards that service failure could bring and devise robust service management strategies to prevent their occurrence. Initial customer dissatisfaction can be prevented if service providers are more active and respond quickly to customer needs.

Service providers have a rare opportunity to provide the right service the first time because a good service recovery is not a substitute for poor service. It may only assist to limit the impact of the damage caused (Ibrahim and Abdallahamed, 2014:205). Similarly, Nikbin, Marimuthu, Hyun and Ismail (2015:258) note that the ultimate goal of service recovery is not only to prevent customer defections, but to restore trust, customer satisfaction and to maintain a sustainable relationship with customers. However, this does not happen by chance. It takes some effort by the service provider. The most important thing when a service failure occurs is the organisation's ability to channel its efforts towards restoring customer trust because service failure triggers doubt and forces customers to be more sensitive in future transactions with the service provider. In addition, customers are not certain whether their expectations will be fulfilled as a result of previous service encounters which were not satisfactory (La and Choi, 2012:119).

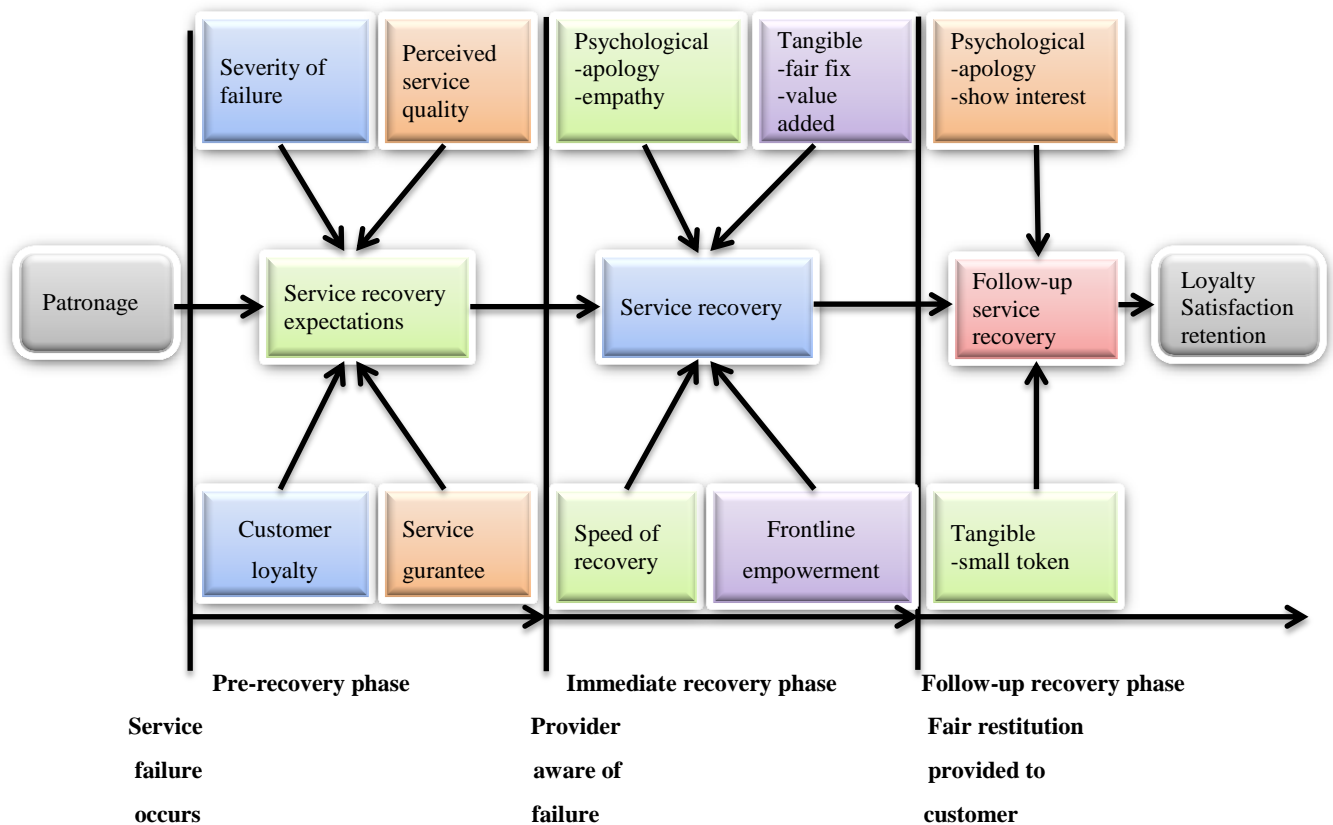
3.3.2. Service recovery models

Several models have been presented in the literature to explain service recovery. Murphy, Bilgian, Kubickova and Boseo (2015:313) coined the four-stage service recovery model which is a framework that guides service recovery. Furthermore, the three outcomes of the service recovery model was also developed by Johnson and Michel (2008:91) to explain the service recovery process. A detailed perspective of these models is provided in subsequent discussions.

3.3.2.1. Miller, Craighead and Karwan service recovery model

This model is made from three critical intertwined phases: the pre-recovery phase, immediate recovery phase and follow-up recovery phase. Figure 3.3 highlights the different phases of the service recovery framework that customers have to undergo during the service recovery process.

Figure 3.3 Service recovery framework



Source: Adopted from Miller, Craighead and Karwan (2000:388)

- **Pre-recovery stage**

As highlighted in Figure 3.3, Miller, Craighead and Karwan (2000:389) observe that the pre-recovery phase commences with a service breakdown until the service provider is aware of the failure. This period may last seconds or a fairly long time spanning months. During this period, customers form expectations for service recovery. Murphy, Bilgian, Kubickova and Boseo (2015:313) have noted that the pre-recovery phase is characterised by establishing policies and procedure, adequate reward systems and training. In this stage, service providers must define policies and procedures for service recovery. This should be followed by training of employees and the provision of an adequate reward system to facilitate the handling of complaints. In addition, well-developed posters and signage should be put in place to act as reminders to members of staff of their role.

- **Immediate recovery Phase**

Miller, Craighead and Karwan (2000:389) have noted that the immediate recovery phase commences when the service provider is aware of the service breakdown and ends when a fair restitution is made to the customer. Service providers' recovery effort in this phase should focus on providing a prompt and fair restitution. As highlighted in Figure 3.3, the tangible immediate recovery stage is characterised by timely responses to customers, offering a reasonable tailor-made compensation and the 'wow' factor to facilitate customer retention. The intangible immediate recovery stage is divided into four phases: employees must have good listening skills, employees must empathise with the customer, employees must place themselves in the customer's situation and, lastly, employees must create a good relationship with the customer (Murphy, Bilgian, Kubickova and Boseo, 2015:316).

Customers express dissatisfaction when a service failure occurs. The task for service providers is to get to the root cause of the problem and to provide solutions while making sure that the customer is aware of the steps being taken to correct the situation (Fierro, Pineda, Benitez and Carrasco, 2011:65). Organisations should avoid creating a culture of laxity in service delivery where service failure is tolerated and, at the same time, develop a culture of excellent service recovery efforts. Thus, an organisation's service recovery goal should be both operationally active so that service recovery efforts should be aggressively implemented forthwith and passive so that service recovery opportunities should not be rehearsed (Michel and Meuter, 2008:453).

- **Follow-up recovery stage**

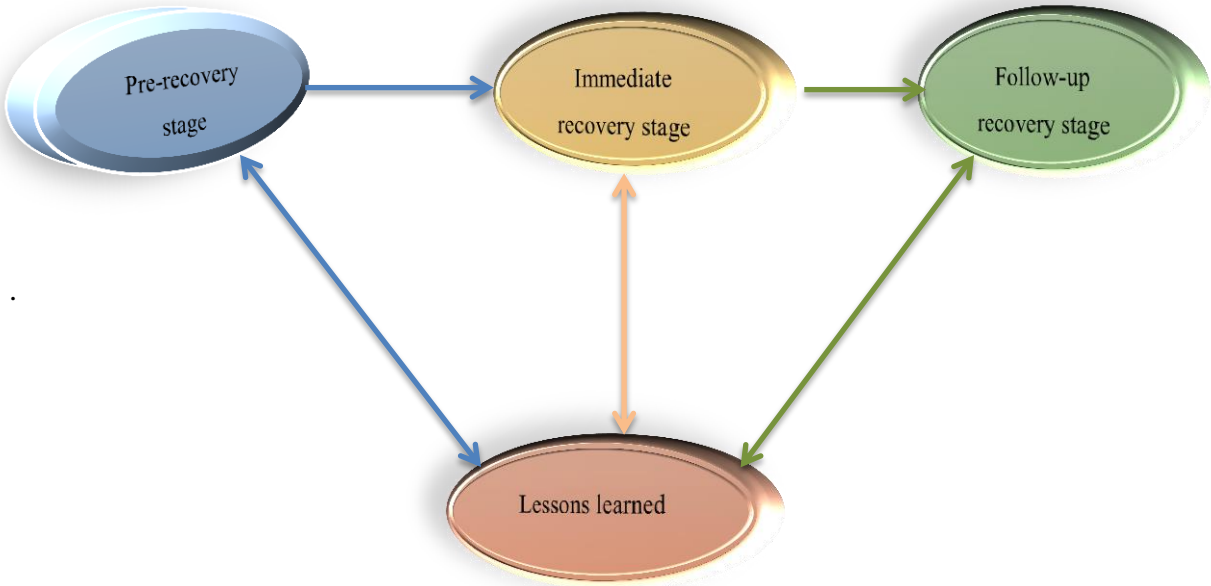
As shown in Figure 3.3, the follow-up recovery stage is characterised by identifying trends in occurring glitches, finding solutions to the service breakdown and following up on the issue. In this stage, managers should be able to deal with the source of the problem and, if possible, revise policies and procedures (Murphy, Bilgian, Kubickova and Boseo, 2015:317). A comprehensive study on service recovery suggests that the follow-up recovery phase commences as soon as the customer receives a fair restitution. This phase may not be necessary if the immediate recovery phase was very successful and also took into

consideration the severity of the service failure (Miller, Craighead and Karwan, 2000:389-390).

3.3.2.2. Four stage service recovery model

Murphy, Bilgian, Kubickova and Boseo (2015:313) extended the work of Miller, Craighead and Karwan (2000:389-390) and designed a four-stage service recovery cycle model which is based on pre-recovery, immediate recovery, follow-up recovery and lessons learned. This framework includes the lessons learned as the only addition to the existing model. The three stages, i.e. pre-recovery stage, immediate recovery stage and the follow-up stage have been discussed in the preceding section. To avoid duplicating the narrative, this section will only highlight the extension to the model which is the lessons learned as highlighted in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4 Four stage service recovery model



Source: Adopted from Murphy, Bilgian, Kubickova and Boseo (2015:313)

- **Lessons learned recovery stage**

Service failure experiences should be used as a learning curve for altering existing processes and creating new knowledge that will foster continuous improvement and innovation for service providers (Wamuyu, Gichira, Wanjau and Mung’atu, 2015:859). As highlighted in

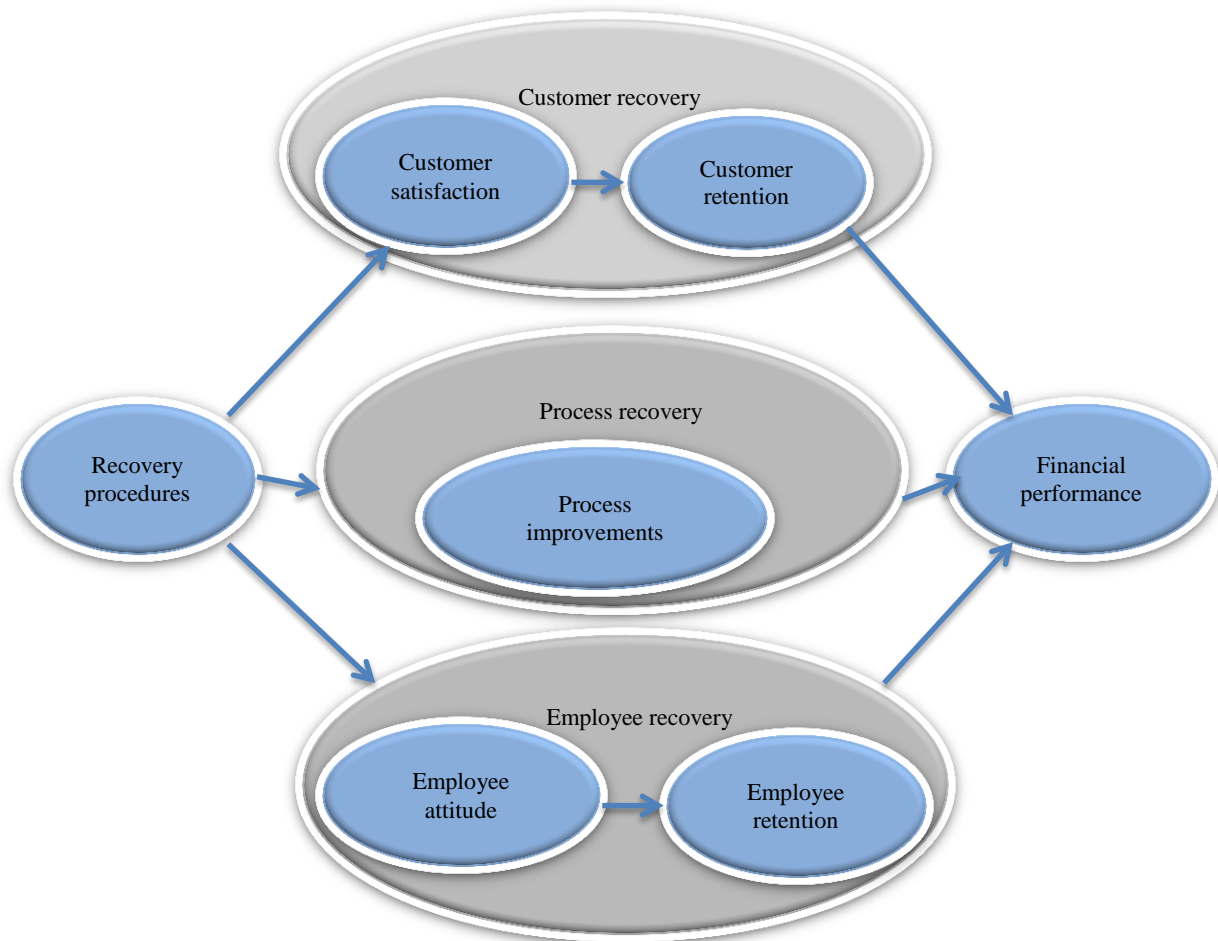
Figure 3.4, lessons learned are the results or feedback from recovery efforts that managers learn from service failure. The lessons learned have a very big impact on the recovery cycle model stages. Managers have to identify the trend of service failure by monitoring all service issues and problems that frequently occur. Future customers are likely to have a better experience if problems are tracked and prevented before they occur. In order to solicit a pool of information and efficiency on lessons learned, it is imperative for managers to emphasize and encourage team work (Murphy, Bilgian, Kubickova and Boseo, 2015:317).

Problem resolution situations do not only assist the service provider to fix service failure or breakdowns, but they also provide valuable information for learning and identifying sources of problems and, subsequently, lead to modification of processes. Service providers should try to learn from customers. Research to unearth the reasons why customers have decided to leave can be helpful in preventing future service failure. The reality is that nobody likes to be in a position where they should evaluate or examine their own failure yet such types of examination can prove useful in preventing mistakes and customer attrition (Wilson, Bitner, Zeithaml and Gremler, 2012:358). It is extremely important for non-profit making organisations, such as higher education institutions, to take an interest in generating knowledge on how to recover from service failure as one way of regaining student satisfaction (Waqas et al., 2014: 264).

3.3.2.3. Expected outcomes of the service recovery model

Service recovery is a multi-dimensional concept that encompasses customers, employees and the process in the event that a complaint is registered following a service failure (Kumar, and Kumar, 2016:275). Figure 3.5 shows a model of the outcomes of service recovery comprising customer recovery, process recovery and employee recovery.

Figure 3.5 Three outcomes of the service recovery model



Source: Adopted from Johnson and Michel (2008:91)

- **Customer recovery**

As highlighted in Figure 3.5, customer recovery has four themes: customer satisfaction after a service failure, the impact of recovery on loyalty or customer retention, the impact of recovery on delight and impact of recovery on profit. Customer satisfaction following a service failure can be achieved if customer recovery efforts involve seven key strategies viz. acknowledgement of the problem, empathy, apology, owning the problem, fixing the problem, providing assurance and providing compensation (Johnson and Michel, 2008:81-82).

- **Process recovery**

As highlighted in Figure 3.5, process improvements are key to minimising complaints. This can be achieved by conducting root cause analysis and learning from the service failure as such organisations are advised to keep records of previous interactions with the customer. A breakdown in the system is viewed as a deliberate action by a service provider who does not want to take responsibility for their mistake. This action entails failure in process recovery and the implication is that a poor process recovery affects both the customer and employee recovery (Kumar, and Kumar, 2016:281-283).

In process recovery, the overriding goal of service recovery, in addition to achieving customer satisfaction, is to use service failure information and its consequences to make improvements by focussing attention on problem areas. Organisations that learn from service failure migrate service recovery from transactional activities focusing on recovering and satisfying customers towards managerial actions that drive systems and process improvements to guarantee future customer satisfaction and cost reduction (Johnson and Michel, 2008:85). Service providers should try to communicate process improvement to complaining customers. Thus, whenever the service provider makes an improvement to the business process based on the input of customer complaints, it is important that the process recovery improvements are communicated back to the complaining customer in order to increase recovery satisfaction (Van Vaerenberg, Lariviere and Vermeir, 2009:21).

With respect to process recovery, service providers should endeavour to collect service failure data and analyse it so as to draw lessons that can be used to improve the current processes. Data can be collected using the critical incidence technique method. This entails that the service provider can ask students or the customer about the critical incidents they have encountered. Another suggestion that can be adopted to achieve process improvement or process recovery is to adopt the use of a fish bone diagram to define problems, identify causes and later develop a plan of action (Michel, Bowen and Johnson, 2009:259-258). Valenzuela, Cooksey, Chandralal and Hassan (2013:476) advise managers to blueprint the service process to facilitate identification of errors. The processes should be re-engineered to simplify them and proper training should be provided to enable flawless execution of service delivery. Zainol (2012:110) believes that service providers can minimise service failure by having

stringent procedures and by blueprinting the service delivery process to overcome hurdles in an event that a service breakdown occurs.

- **Employee recovery**

As highlighted in Figure 3.5, employee recovery is another facet of the outcome model. Frontline employees are a crucial component of the service recovery procedure because they often have to deal with complaining and sometimes extremely emotional customers. Employees often find themselves at a crossroads of having to strike a balance between dealing with customer grievances and applying rigid organisational policies and procedures thereby leading to high levels of stress on service employees (Johnson and Michel, 2008:86-87). Employee recovery deals with practices that aid employees to flourish in their quest to recover customers or themselves from the negative feelings they encounter in recovery scenarios. When employees are overwhelmed with recovery situations and do not get the necessary support, they feel alienated. This is compounded by the perception that management is not doing enough to recover them from helpless recovery situations such as improving service delivery processes so that they don't have to meet the same predicament in recurring service failure situations (Michel, Bowen and Johnson, 2009:258-259).

The effectiveness of customer recovery depends on process recovery activities and employee recovery activities. Process recovery activities include updating operating systems, making the complaints registration process simple and enhancing communication between functions. Employee recovery activities include creating targets focused on training programmes, empowering frontline employees and improving employees' self-recognition (Kumar, and Kumar, 2016:283).

3.3.3. Service recovery implementation

Service recovery can be used as an effective weapon for gaining competitive advantage in the face of the turbulent business environment (Singhal, Krishna and Lazarus, 2013:192). Addison and Haig (2013:2) posit that service recovery, if properly executed, can turn angry customers into fanatics who will extol the service provider for the top-notch service.

Mostafa, Lages and Saaksjarvi (2014:307) argue that, in order to deal with service failure and also to ensure that subsequent service recovery efforts are effectively managed, managers need to make sure that the following questions are answered:

- Do service personnel keep customers abreast of each step of the service recovery process?
- Do service employees pacify the customer promptly with the first service recovery effort available?
- Does the company use compensation as an interim recovery plan to the problem or as a way of silencing the customer instead of resolving the service failure and the causes?
- Do service employees accept responsibility for the service breakdown and apologise for the mistakes emanating from a fault on the part of the service provider?

Service providers should cultivate relationships with customers. Firms that make use of relationship marketing stand a better chance to recover from a service failure effectively. Service providers who have a strong relationship with customers will likely be forgiven and the customers are more open to service recovery efforts. Cultivating good relationships with customers can provide some cushion when a service failure occurs (Wilson, Bitner, Zeithaml and Gremler, 2012:357). The importance of a strong relationship with the customer has been overstated. Customers who have a strong bond with the service provider are likely to be more forgiving towards service failure. In addition, such customers may respond favourably towards any service recovery efforts (Esen and Sonmezler, 2017:72).

Successful and fair handling of customer complaints is crucial to avoid a spiral of increasing complaints. Business managers or service providers should come up with appropriate or suitable service recovery strategies and inculcate ideas and knowledge to employees through training. In addition, it is imperative to institutionalise and establish standard operating procedures for service failure recoveries. These may include an apology, listening properly to customer complaints and opinions, understanding customer problems, suggesting and conducting a service recovery alternative, confirming the effect of the service recovery alternative, getting feedback and adding to the service recovery system database to facilitate the process of dealing with similar future service problems (Chang and Chen, 2013).

Adequate service recovery processes or initiatives can act as a barrier for customer behavioural intention to switch to another service provider. Therefore, customer complaints management and service recovery strategies must focus on attaining or achieving a reasonable solution if customers are to derive satisfaction and the service providers' image is to remain unscathed. With respect to this narrative, service recovery can enhance customer satisfaction if the service provider can show an ability to solve the problem encountered effectively (Fierro, Pineda, Benitez and Carrasco, 2011:65).

The attitude of service personnel can hurt customers' feelings and sometimes recovery efforts may not be enough to salvage a poorly executed service encounter (Du, Fan and Feng, 2010:584). Therefore, service providers should try to prevent other customers from observing the recovery process to avoid the negative consequences of observational learning. A separate location or office can be designated to deal with complaining customers so that no customer observes whether the service recovery experience was good or unsatisfactory. If a customer observes the unfair treatment of another customer by the service provider, the service recovery will influence the customer's perception of quality. Customers do not only form a perception of service quality based on their own experience, but they also rely on observation of other customers' experience (Van Vaerenbergh, Vermeir and Lariviere, 2013:507-508).

There are no quick fixes as far as service recovery is concerned. Any attempt to fix service failure quickly will only address symptoms and not the root cause of the problems (Michel and Coughlan, 2009). Another study on service recovery agrees with this observation by stating that, while it is extremely important for service providers to provide quick recoveries, the challenge is that such recovery efforts may not provide or create customer satisfaction. Therefore, service providers should strive to provide a response that demonstrates uniqueness and that comes as a pleasant surprise to the customer or complainant (Michel and Meuter, 2008:453).

Spreng, Harrell and Mackoy (1995:16) stress that service recovery efforts are very important for the consumer because of the heightened attention and evaluation following a service failure. Furthermore, a service recovery process has the potential of being the last encounter the customer has had with the organisation resulting in a 'recency effect'. The implication is

that the effectiveness of the service recovery efforts may have a greater impact on the customer's willingness to transact with the organisation in future than the initial failure.

Bell and Zemke (1987) proposed five service recovery strategies for service failure: an apology, urgent reinstatement, empathy, symbolic atonement and follow-up. With respect to an apology, the authors believe that an apology should be made by the first contact person rather than having to wait for a corporate apology. The apology needs to acknowledge that service failure has occurred. Urgent reinstatement entails the need to respond with speed in an effort to correct mistakes even if this may not be possible in some cases. Empathy simply means a service provider, such as an institution of higher learning, should show a sincere expression of feelings for the customer's welfare. Symbolic atonement means that service providers should prescribe some form of compensation for service failure. This can be in the form of free service or discount on future service. Follow-up simply means that an effort should be made to check if the customer is happy or satisfied with the recovery intervention.

Schneider and Bowen (2009) are of the view that service providers should put in place well-planned recovery tactics. Thus, a good recovery outcome that fosters satisfaction and loyalty can be achieved by:

- Recovering quickly (speed): service providers should attempt to fix customer problems promptly without asking too many questions. If this cannot be provided immediately, the service provider should follow up with the customer and keep her or him updated;
- Recovering effectively: sometimes a service provider has one opportunity to recover so it is important to address the problem the first time because if recovery fails, a double deviation is committed and this is invariably associated with customer outrage; and
- Leave the customer better off than before the error or service failure: service providers must endeavour to make customers feel safer and better for this experience and ultimately feel that he or she has been fairly treated (Schneider and Bowen, 2009).

Unhappy customers want service providers to take responsibility or to shoulder the burden for service failures. Furthermore, in an event of service failure, service recovery strategies such as compensation, apology, promptness, empathy, effort, facilitation and repatriation should be used to restore the customer's trust and loyalty to the firm (Cengiz, Er and Kurtaran, 2007:182). Similarly, service managers should show concern for and empathy with the customer during the service recovery process (Sungupta, Balaji and Krishnan, 2015:672).

3.3.4. Customer involvement or co-creation in service recovery

Another element that can be explored by service providers in addressing service failure is co-creation of the service recovery. When customers get involved in the recovery process or help to shape the recovery, they influence the actual process and its outcome. Their involvement makes a good or worse result acceptable (Roggeveen, Tsiros and Grewal, 2012:772). Sengupta, Balaji and Krishnan (2015) concur with this view by suggesting that managers should design a service recovery strategy plan that involves the customer in discussing the problem and also in coming up with a mutually-acceptable outcome.

Service providers should involve customers in the decision-making process when addressing service failure by facilitating their participation in shaping the final outcome of service recovery and in assisting with information to facilitate their evaluation and adaptation to service failure. Providing customers with information about the progress of service recovery efforts or the cause of the service breakdown reinforces the positive effects of process and decision control thereby boosting the customer's evaluation of the service provider's service recovery performance. In many instances, service providers attempt to shield customers from the reason for the service failure in order to avoid exposing flaws in the service delivery system. However, the authors found that transparency enhances the results of service recovery efforts (Guo, Lotz, Tang and Gruen, 2016).

Compensating customers for service failure is often costly. However, service managers can influence the customer to an acceptable resolution without compensation through co-creation of the solution. To achieve this, employees must be empowered and trained so that they are armed with the skills and knowledge to manage service recovery proactively without shifting

responsibility to higher authority. It is not enough simply to leave matters to fate hoping service failure will go unnoticed or that customers will not have the luxury to complain (Xu, Marshall, Edvardson and Tronvoll, 2014:382).

Service providers should encourage customers to be co-producers by giving them an opportunity to take part in controlling the service delivery process which makes them own the process when there is a service breakdown (Wamuyu, Gichira, Wanjau and Mung'atu, 2015:859). The implication is that when customers are involved in the service recovery process, they tend to maintain a relationship with the service provider (Gohary, Hamzelu and Alizadeh, 2016:138). Sengupta, Balaji and Krishnan (2015) warn service managers to involve customers in the recovery process so that the problem encountered is discussed and an acceptable, or win-win, solution is achieved. In so doing, the provider will be able to monitor, adapt and maintain a flawless service delivery process.

A study on higher education in Bangladesh noted how friendly and approachable the professor is. He encourages students to share their problems and have their opinions appreciated. Encouragement was further noted as an ideal recovery initiative in trying to find the solution to the problem. Students also noted that active listening is an attribute they desire in university staff during service recovery process (Gruber, Chowdhury and Reppel, 2011:26-28). Behari-Leak, Ramugondo and Kathard (2016) are of the view that genuine listening and a thorough comprehension of student demands can make a difference in universities currently in turmoil where students often complain of being unheard. The authors further suggest that deadlocks can be resolved and truces brokered only when disgruntled or protesting students are provided with real solutions to their problems.

3.3.5. Service recovery based on severity or magnitude of failure

Service providers are advised to consider the magnitude of service failure when designing recovery strategies. Failure to identify the severity of the failure by the service provider can lead to misallocation of resources and the firm's failure to satisfy and retain customers (Balaji and Sarkar, 2013:77). The magnitude of service failure will determine the type of service recovery strategy that can be used to mitigate customer dissatisfaction. For instance, where

the customer has suffered a financial loss, an apology will not be adequate as the customer will be expecting compensation from the service provider. In extreme cases, no amount of recovery performance or strategy will restore the customer to the previous position because of the damage caused by the initial failure. No matter the apology or size of compensation, any recovery tactic won't make the customer whole again and there is no way to recover (Mccollough, 2009:91).

When service failure is severe, no amount of recovery or compensation is sufficient to please the customer. Chuang, Cheng, Chang and Yang (2012:267) made a finding that is consistent with the prospect theory. It contends that when outcome and process-related service failures are severe, it is not easy for the service provider to resolve the problem by either tangible or psychological recovery approach. Simply put, customers regard the loss emanating from service failure to be greater than the gain obtained from the service recovery effort such that they consider any recovery effort as insufficient to mitigate a serious failure.

The prospect theory and mental accounting principles suggest that the effectiveness of service recovery depends on the severity of the failure such that service recovery strategies or tactics will be effective when failure severity is low. With respect to gain and loss, as the service failure severity becomes low, the perceived loss emanating from failure and the perceived gain created by service recovery effort decreases such that the customer will consider the loss to be smaller and the gain bigger. The implication is that low service recovery effort guarantees that there is little to gain, but may be as effective as a high service recovery effort when a peripheral service failure occurs (Yi and Lee, 2005:6-7).

3.4. SERVICE RECOVERY STRATEGIES

Provision of a flawless customer service is sometimes impossible. However, effective service recovery strategies can assist in maintaining long-term customer loyalty (Esen and Sonmezler, 2017:72). The strategies or tactics that can be used to recover customers from service failures are apology, compensation, empowerment, explanation and speed. The list is not exhaustive, but, for the purpose of this study, the aforementioned are deemed critical for effective service recovery in higher education institutions and are explained in detail.

3.4.1. Apology

An apology is a very important strategy to re-establish trust broken by service failure (Kruger, 2016:175). Any proper service failure recovery strategy should start with an apology, identifying the service failure source and offering a reasonable solution. When a service failure occurs, the customers normally express their displeasure with the situation. However, it is imperative for the service provider to make an obvious effort to get to the root of the problem and to provide an appropriate solution while, at the same time, convincing the customer that initiatives or steps have been taken to address the situation (Fierro, Pineda, Benitez and Carrasco, 2011:61-65).

An apology may operate through all forms of justice. An apology is a remedial tactic following an unpleasant customer encounter experience. The intensity of an apology operates through interactional justice and reflects the service provider's awareness of the service failure and the harm caused to the complainant. An intensive apology has higher psychological benefits for the complainant than a moderate one and strengthens the distributive justice complainant output/input ratio. A timely apology has the likelihood of fostering satisfaction through procedural justice because the complainant views this response as fair (Roschk and Kaiser, 2013:296). Othman, Zahari and Radzi (2013: 120) argue that service recovery is a very important strategy which determines the customer's future behavioural intentions. Verbal service recovery should be used frequently when service providers encounter service failure because it is offered at no cost.

Traditionally, certain behaviour such as making an apology and being polite are expected of employees. It is also important to realise that it makes no difference to the customer when an apology is provided, but it leaves an indelible, negative mark or negative impact when an employee does not provide one. Therefore, training should prescribe sample phrases to front-line employees that can be used in an event of service failure and need for service recovery (Sumaco and Hussain, 2011:49).

An apology is a service recovery strategy that does not address the service failure by itself, but it implies that the service provider acknowledges the customer's problem and admits that

a mistake was made (Iglesias, Varela-Neira and Vazquez-Casielles, 2015:705). While several scholars have highlighted the need for an apology, Mostafa, Lages and Shabbir (2015:29) questions the use of an apology to strengthen perceived justice. They believe that apologising to customers may, in some cases, be construed as an admission of guilt and exacerbates perceived interactional injustice. Accordingly, a discussion on the types and the dimensions of apology will be presented to provide a deeper understanding of the concept.

3.4.1.1.Types of apologies

Apologies can be approached from two fronts. The first one is a frontline apology. This means that front desk employees apologise to the customer. The second is Upper management apology. In this scenario, senior members or executives of the organisation apologise to the customer (Gonzalez, Hoffman and Ingram, 2005:61).

Manika, Papagiannidis and Bourlakis (2017:215) reflect on what is known as social media apology. There have been mixed views regarding the use of social media apology to service failure by the service provider. While it is common knowledge of the importance of the use of technology in the digital era to interact with customers, such usage needs to be approached with a certain degree of caution. The use of social media apology such as on the platforms of twitter and facebook for service failure incidents may reach customers who are not affected by the incident and which could affect the image of the organisation negatively. Jung and Seock (2017:29) advise managers to create effective strategies of apology such as the mediums used to deliver the apology messages as well as appropriate methods of apology to dissatisfied customers. In doing so, they may save company resources by avoiding monetary compensation. The following section will provide a discussion of the dimensions of apology.

3.4.1.2.Dimensions of apology

Comparatively, the effect of an apology is similar to compensation on process failure. An apology has three dimensions which are empathy, timing and intensity. Empathy means the service provider should be sympathetic and remorseful whereas timing means an apology should be done immediately after a complaint or even in direct response to the complaint. Ebesu Hubbard, Hendrickson, Fehrenbach and Sur (2013:317) believe that the timing and

sincerity of the apology matters and might be beneficial in helping the service provider communicate regret and remorse more effectively (if in the wrong).

Intensity means that the words synonymous with an apology such as, 'sorry' should be used multiple times. An intense apology is more likely to help the relationship regain equilibrium than a moderate one. An intense apology carries, presumably, a higher psychological benefit to the complainant. However, empathy is considered as the more important dimension rather than the other two because the customer as a complainant wants to be answered and assisted by a human being and not by a machine. It is important to state that each apology is unique and is based on the contribution of each component. If the service provider focuses on one component, the tactic attenuates the explanation power because the three facets predict customer satisfaction with service recovery separately or independent of each other (Roschk and Kaiser, 2013:296-305). Another strategy of service recovery adopted in this study is speed and a more detailed perspective will be provided.

3.4.2. Speed

The challenge for service providers is to address or respond to the complaints quickly and if it is not possible to address the problem immediately, the company must inform the customer quickly and indicate that steps are being taken to address the problem (Rust, Zharik and Keiningham, 1996:187). The reality is that slow processes and resolutions of customer problems create negative word-of-mouth reports. The implications of slow service recovery are greater than if the recovery process was quick (Gronroos, 2007:130).

Service failures should be handled quickly and efficiently. Quick and timely service recovery initiatives are essential to creating a sustainable bond with customers while, at the same time, will avoid possible conflicts between the customer and the service provider (Komunda and Osarenkhoe, 2012:95). Applying this scenario in the context of higher education institutions, it is possible that some of the conflicts, disagreements and protests are as a result of institutional managers failing to rise to the occasion quickly and to deal with service failures emanating from unmet student expectations. One may be inclined to assume, that some institutional managers and employees are clueless as to what to do in an event of service

failure. They are not familiar with service recovery strategies and, as a result, most of the service failure incidents are left to chance.

Service providers should create a seamless system that is able to detect service failure and respond immediately with service recovery efforts without consumers asking for relief (Ellyawati, Phammesta, Purwanto and Herk, 2013:519). For example, responses to student queries and needs should be addressed quickly. The needs may range from academic, financial, technical, administrative to social issues. In view of this, there is a need to set up policies and to provide training to members of staff to ensure that they adhere to service standards and, ultimately, achieve student satisfaction (Yeo and Li, 2014:118).

Service providers who encourage or welcome customer complaints must be prepared to act quickly. Sadly, many organisations require customers to get in touch with multiple employees before being assisted and having the problem resolved. Extant research suggests that more satisfaction can be derived from a transaction if problems are handled by the first contact person. However, the reality is that more than one person is often needed to address the problem and this affects customer satisfaction. A problem that cannot be solved immediately is likely to escalate and puts an organisation in an awkward position. The ability to provide a quick response depends not only on good systems and processes, but also on empowered employees. Employees should not only be given authority, but they should also not be punished for taking action. Employees should be encouraged to be pro-active or responsive without fear of retribution (Wilson, Bitner, Zeithaml and Gremler, 2012:355).

Van der Heijden, Schepers, Nijssen and Ordanini (2013:517) warn service providers to be wary of time and effort spent interacting with customers to acquire information regarding a service failure event because the lost time cannot be used to recover service failure such that it may have adverse effects on service recovery speed. The period or time that is taken to respond to customer complaints should not be too long because the customer will not find the recovery effort or solution satisfactory. This is regardless of whether the service provider response was empathetic and caring or not (Xu, Tronvoll and Edvardsson, 2014:1259-1260).

Customers want to experience service recovery as soon as the service failure occurs and the onus is on them to make a decision regarding future consumption. Managers are advised to focus on immediate recovery solutions because recoveries that offer future solutions are less effective and desirable (Silber, Israel, Bustin and Zvi, 2009:740). Conversely, another school of thought believes that service providers should consider delaying provision of a resolution in an event of service failure because a passage of time can calm down negative emotions emanating from service failure thereby enabling customers to respond to service provider recovery efforts rationally. Conventional wisdom suggests that a service recovery should be provided immediately to deal with service failures and customer complaints. The authors suggest that under certain conditions, delaying a response produces favourable effects. Some services are inseparable such as hairstyling, whereas some are separable such as freight transport. An immediate response is ideal for non-separated service failures because customers are very impatient with waiting and such cases magnify a customer's negative emotions (Zhou, Tsang, Huang and Zhou, 2014:159-164). The following section will provide a discussion with respect to compensation which is one of the service recovery strategies.

3.4.3. Compensation

One of the methods that can be used to recover from service failure is by offering compensation to aggrieved customers. However, it is also important for service employees to engage in pro-active behaviour throughout the service recovery process. Such acts may lessen the firm's financial burden or loss of resources that could have been avoided if other avenues for service recovery were explored and implemented (Inyang, 2015:103).

Nowadays, customers expect the service provider to deal with effects of service failure. They expect to be compensated when they spend a lot of time and effort trying to find a solution to their complaint or when the service provider is taking too long to address their complaint. Service providers can avoid compensation by minimising the time customers spend to register a complaint and the time they take to solve the complaint (Valenzuela and Cooksey, 2012:15). Furthermore, service providers are warned not to use compensation as a tool for compromise against a poor service recovery process. Compensation should be used together with other available recovery strategies at the service provider's disposal. Some of the forms of

compensation that can be used are discounts, refunds, replacements, coupons and upgrades of the service (Wamuyu, Gichira, Wanjau and Mung'atu, 2015:859).

Despite the good intentions that some service providers have in response to service failure, it is a known fact that human beings are by nature selfish and far more tolerant of inequity when it provides a positive benefit to themselves. The perception of inequity in this scenario is considered to be lower than the perception of inequity that results in a negative benefit. Simply put, consumers who receive more value than their actual loss from service failure will not perceive compensation to be inequitable or intolerable and have, therefore, no sense of guilt (Kim and Ulgado, 2012:163-164). In order to provide a holistic picture of the recovery strategy of compensation, an overview on how higher education institutions can select the right compensation strategy, types of compensation and ways for the effective application of compensation will be presented in the following sections.

3.4.3.1. Selecting the right compensation strategy

The managers in the service sector should identify the different types of customers they are dealing with and customise the right type of compensation when a service failure occurs. Service providers can go the extra mile by designing processes to allow employees to select compensation based on the characteristics of the consumer (Tsai, Yang and Cheng, 2014:156). Gelbrich and Roschk (2011b:39) advise that, in order to facilitate compensation, company procedures should not prescribe the type of compensation, but give employees discretion to ask complainants about their expectations regarding an acceptable problem solution. Nikbin et al., (2015:255) believe that customers who are compensated after encountering service failure will have the confidence to transact with the service provider without the fear or risk of a likely failure because they believe that the service provider will compensate them this time around in order to restore the relationship.

Different compensation strategies do not yield the same amount of recovery satisfaction. Managers are advised to adopt different recovery tactics in different service failure incidents (Fu, Wu, Huang, Song and Gong, 2015:62). A high value of compensation leads to high satisfaction. Furthermore, where financial loss is encountered as a result of service failure,

customers expect a good service recovery commensurate with the loss and, in some cases, compensation is appropriate when it restores the customer to the previous status before the failure occurred (Ellyawati, Phammesta, Purwanto and Herk, 2013:517).

Consumers are subjected to different types of losses emanating from a similar type of failure. Singhal, Krishna and Lazarus (2013:198) coined a principle “like recovers like” meaning that compensation should be the same as to that which was lost. In addition, the complainant receiver should be involved throughout the service recovery process because, as soon as she or he gets out of the picture, the customer loses faith and trust in the process which can be hard at times to recreate. Yi and Lee (2005:3) argue that service failure leads to loss of economic and social resources such that that economic resources can be recovered using compensation, whereas social resources can be recovered using an apology.

Compensation is an effective service recovery strategy. However, it is more effective if customers perceive it as being offered benevolently. Thus, it is important for service managers to advise employees to provide compensation in a manner that shows sincere regret for the service breakdown (Lastner, Folse, Mnagus and Fennell, 2016:4285). Compensation is regarded as a very good service recovery strategy and helps to diffuse customer anger and dissatisfaction after a service failure. Service failure that is caused by a service provider leads to the lowest satisfaction whereas service failure that is caused by the customer leads to the highest satisfaction with the same compensation (Fu, Wu, Huang, Song and Gong, 2015:55-60).

Determining the level of compensation given to customers is a contentious issue in service recovery. However, service providers should be guided by the following:

- The position of the organisation- customers expect service failures to be rare for organisations that are known for excellence and charge premium amounts for service quality. In the event of service failure, such firms should be prepared to offer something of greater value;
- The severity of service failure- an apology can suffice for a minor defect, but customers expect more if the service failure is severe; and

- The profile of the affected customer- long-term and high-spending customers expect more from the service provider when a failure occurs. Thus, service providers should make some effort to save their business. Compensation cannot be high for new customers. However, they expect to be treated fairly if they are to patronise the service again in the future (Wirtz, Chew and Lovelock, 2018:424).

3.4.3.2.Types of compensation

Compensation is multi-dimensional and can be divided into two types, on-the-spot and delayed compensation. On-the-spot compensation is provided immediately when the failure occurs, whereas delayed compensation is provided at a later stage or during the next visit. When service failure is severe, on-the-spot compensation is regarded as better at generating recovery satisfaction. When service failure has been induced by the service provider, delayed compensation can still be used to persuade or attract the customer one more time (Kim and Ulgado, 2012:158-163).

A different perspective by Gelbrich and Roschk (2011a:32-40) categorised compensation into simple compensation and over-compensation. They noted that the two categories are mutually exclusive. Service providers are faced with two decisions when determining compensation, either to pay a simple compensation or to over-compensate. Simple compensation is aimed at minimising losses and subsequent dissatisfaction. In the event of over-compensation, an additional or supplementary amount of remuneration is given to the customer beyond simple compensation. Simply put, customers receive compensation that is greater than 100 percent. Over-compensation does not only aim at minimising dissatisfaction, but at enhancing customer satisfaction. The following section will provide details on how higher education institutions can provide effective compensation to students.

3.4.3.3.Effective application of compensation to customers

If service recovery is to be viewed as effective and a cure for service failure rather than simply a remedy, service managers should come up with a compensation package that influences customer satisfaction and positive word of-mouth accounts by exceeding customer expectations (Migacz, Zou and Petrick, 2017:13). Thus, service managers should optimise the

usage of their marketing budgets and avoid inefficient spending on over-compensation. Over-compensation may prove to be a good strategy in few isolated cases where firms are operating in highly competitive markets and it might work where firms have a strong focus on a relationship on marketing. In this scenario, over-compensation may help to restore quality and subsequently contribute to a long-lasting bond with the customer (Gelbrich and Roschk, 2011a:44).

The effectiveness of a compensation strategy depends on whether the service is utilitarian or hedonic. Customers who receive utilitarian compensation such as price reduction after service failure tend to have a higher level of post-recovery satisfaction for utilitarian services (eg. at a bank or hotel) than for hedonic services (eg. at restaurant or leisure hotel). On the other hand, customers who receive hedonic compensation such as a free gift after failure tend to have higher levels of post-recovery satisfaction for hedonic services than they do for utilitarian services (Huang and Lin, 2011:213).

Tangible compensation encompasses offering a refund of money, discount, or coupons. It is further noted that different types of compensation are appropriate for service failures, depending on who caused the failure and its severity. It is, therefore, imperative for service managers to evaluate the circumstances of the service breakdown before providing specific types of compensation (Bambauer-Sachse and Rabeson, 2015:126).

Service managers should provide compensation based on the status of the relationship. However, it is important to approach this with caution as over-compensating customers entails high operating costs. Sometimes service providers run the risk of over-compensating and investing in customers who are not expecting and valuing such gestures. Service providers should take note that, when the new business relationship starts with a negative service scenario, even over-compensating a customer is not an effective strategy to address customers' overall assessment of the service provider (Gelbrich, Gathke and Gregoire, 2016:8).

Customers are not pleased with how good the compensation is, but would like service providers to respond to their complaints and provide an explanation as to what led to the problem. Compensation may not be adequate because it does not entail that the service provider will change the way it treats customers or change its approach in subsequent service encounters. Compensation is also viewed as a short-term intervention and does not guarantee that a similar type of failure will not occur again (Mostafa, Lages and Saaksjarvi, 2014:307).

Customer satisfaction with service recovery can be attained if compensation is provided. What is critical in the application of compensation is the ability to gauge the level of customer motivation. The status of the customer has to be taken into account to determine if the given compensation will be sufficient to please him or her. In this regard, customers with high power motivation will be satisfied with status-enhancing compensation and those with low power motivation will be satisfied with utility-enhancing compensation. However, the implementation of differential compensation depends on the ability of members of staff to identify customers with high and low levels of power motivation (Wong, Newton and Newton, 2016:72-73). The following section will discuss empowerment of employees as one of the strategies that can be used during service recovery.

3.4.4. Empowerment

The importance of empowerment in higher education institutions cannot be overemphasised. Speedy resolution of customer problems is only possible if employees managing the front desk are given some authority to settle complaints. Taking a problem through different chains of commands would be slow; therefore, there is a need to implement a key to the successful delegation which is empowerment (Rust, Zharik and Keiningham, 1996:187). Similarly, Gronroos (2007:396) argues that service employees may, in some cases, feel helpless, frustrated and humiliated by angry customers if they have not been given sufficient authority or empowerment to deal with service failures as soon as they occur. Furthermore, failed service recovery may cause a lot of stress to service employees as such organisations should find a way of absorbing and recognising these scenarios and assist employees to recover. Thus, training and autonomy are important elements of empowerment that can help employees to deal with service failure and recovery incidents and will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

3.4.4.1. Training

Training and empowering employees are interdependent of each other such that it is of no use to spend resources training employees who are not empowered. The fact that employees are pleasant, friendly or attentive to a customer is not important if he or she is not able to solve the problem. This leads to customer dissatisfaction and eventually to defection (Boshoff, 2014:378). This view is shared by Gronroos (2007:130) who argues that training of customer-facing employees is very important as it provides skills and understanding of their roles in service recovery. However, training may not be enough if the employees don't have the authority to make decisions regarding what to do and how much to compensate.

For example, customer reaction is more intense and negative to process failures during service encounters. However, firms can take some steps to minimise process failures by setting up feedback or performance evaluation systems to assess staff service quality. Additionally, individual members of staff should be provided with professional education and training to enhance their confidence and the quality of their customer-relationship. Emotional intelligence training can also assist members of staff, particularly those working in the frontline, to engage customers better and more professionally (Tsai, Yang and Cheng, 2014:156).

Mostafa, Lages and Saaksjarvi (2014:307) have noted that service providers such as higher education institutions should demonstrate beyond mere rhetoric their commitment to addressing customer problems. Consequently, action is preferable to rhetoric in satisfying customers. Being courteous may be good, but good manners are of no use if the employee cannot solve the customer's problem. Therefore, service providers should train employees to be able to deal with issues promptly and also equip them with resources to do so.

It is difficult for service employees with no professional training to deliver good service or maintain quality (Lee, Wu, Wu and Liang, 2012:631). Nowadays, in order to enhance quality service, the competencies of the service personnel are critical such that there is a need to increase knowledge in service operations. The two competencies that are critical to effective service delivery are employee skills and behaviour. Furthermore, organisations are asked to

pay particular attention to hiring, selection and training of employees (Skaalsvik, 2013:8). Douglas, Moyes and Douglas (2016) argue that in higher education institutions, lecturers' training should include an aspect on how to deal with student classroom disruptions.

Training and empowerment programmes should be encouraged and developed so that, if supported with recognition and reward programmes, employees are likely to improve their service recovery performance (Abou and Abou, 2013:23). In order to address errors which depend on individual staff, management should endeavour to promote an organisational culture that cultivates the right attitude by members of staff. Thus, training should be provided to members of staff to deal with service breakdowns promptly. This should be coupled with service-recovery processes and actions aimed at compensating customers for problems encountered, thereby minimising customer annoyance and discontent (Zainol, 2012:110). Park and Ha (2016:315) believe that service-oriented companies should ensure that frontline employees are well-trained to handle collaborative recovery processes as constructively, attentively, and efficiently as possible.

3.4.4.2. Autonomy

According to De Ruyter and Wetzels (2000:105), employee autonomy is a prerequisite for effective real-time service recovery. Service employees should be given the authority to offer different recovery efforts or tactics including compensation without management or superiors' interference. Wamuyu, Gichira, Wanjau and Mung'atu (2015:38) argue that frontline employees should be given authority to deal with customer complaints without referring them to other people. The probability of a successful service recovery increases when the initial contact is empowered to deal with customer complaints quickly. Prompt response to customer complaints increases the likelihood of customer satisfaction. Therefore, service providers need to give members of staff autonomy to be able to resolve customer problems independently without management intervention.

Employee empowerment in the higher education sector can enhance the speedy resolution of customer complaints. Front-desk employees should act quickly, show empathy and avoid arguments with customers when handling complaints. This will enable the employees to re-

establish customers' good will through an effective service recovery strategy. Furthermore, service recovery processes should be flexible and employees should be given authority to use their judgement and communication skills to come up with a solution that will ensure that the aggrieved customers are satisfied (Nwokorie, 2016:8). Masoud and Hmeidan (2013:141) advise service managers to encourage employees to handle customer problems effectively without seeking management consent before handling the problem.

Employees represent an organisation when complaints are registered and it is important that they are empowered to provide a small atonement which will comfort dissatisfied customers rather than referring every matter to their supervisors or managers. Service providers should look for customer-handling skills when hiring new members of staff and train service employees, especially those who deal directly with complaints. Lastly, the organisation should empower employees to deal with customer complaints effectively (Ekiz and Khoo-Latimore, 2011:692). In terms of recruitments, human resources departments should avoid recruiting employees with low efficacy and who exhibit polychronicity to frontline positions, as these employees generally tend to have low self-confidence and favour a self-learning and multi-tasking orientation. These types of employees will not be able to do the required work well, nor will they contribute to the organisation's recovery performance; instead, they are more likely to cause problems and may even increase costs (Daskin and Kasim, 2016:480

Another school of thought suggests that stringent rules and procedures undermine employees' empowerment or authority over customer complaints. Li and Fang (2016:193) claim that employee empowerment becomes weaker as service providers institutionalise process guidelines for service recovery. In this context, the authority weakens because employees have to follow the process guidelines which are explicit directions to frontline employees to follow. When employees have to perform routine jobs, process guidelines are critical as they facilitate timely responses to customers, therefore, making authority or empowerment less important.

It is difficult to achieve a 100 percent free service failure performance. However, it is essential to consistently put some effort into minimising service failures through frequent training programmes, especially for frontline service employees (Sparks and Butcher,

2012:4). Frontline employees are critical when managing service failure. Their behaviour is far more important than offering compensation for service failure and a perfect service recovery procedure (Waqas et al., 2014:277). A comprehensive study on employee empowerment suggests that, in order to improve service recovery performance, management should take cognisance of the fact that frontline employees are a valuable asset in the recovery process and that different means should be explored to develop their abilities (Yang, Lee and Cheng, 2015:143).

Whilst the proponents of service recovery advocate training, empowerment can minimise the negative effects of service failure. As such, service managers should give employees authority and responsibility to manage their customers (Ozkan-Tektas and Basgoze, 2017:394). Effective service recovery means a quick resolution of customer problems. Complaints that are escalated to more than one person take more time and increase costs. In this regard, empowering employees is critical to facilitating effective service recovery (Addison and Haig, 2013:2).

Frontline employees play a crucial role in helping the service provider to deliver or provide service recovery initiatives or efforts to service failures. Frontline officers act as an interface for knowledge acquisition and this helps them to build solid ideas based on the combination of their own and customer insights to enhance service recovery performance (Van der Heijden, Nijssen and Ordanini, 2013:527).

Service failures can be discovered if the frontline is able to spot them when they occur or if the customer brings the problem to the attention of the frontline employees. A frontline employee may have the capacity to deal with the process related to failure while management is responsible for addressing service failures that involve financial situations. The level of authority given to employees determines the extent to which they can intervene when service failures are reported. This is so because managers draft company policy such that it is within their discretion to determine the limits and powers of employees (Schumacher and Komppula, 2016:120). Harun, Rokonuzzaman, Prybutok and Prybutok (2018:74) believe that institutional managers should keep an eye on evaluating the organizational structure and ensure an appropriate work environment through employee empowerment. This would assist frontline

employees in responding appropriately to specific service failure situations. The following section will discuss explanation as one of the service recovery strategies.

3.4.5. Explanation

It is important for service providers to explain reasons behind service failure and what measures are being taken to deal with the problem. For this to materialise, organisations must engage employees capable of dealing with clients in a friendly and effective way (Fierro, Pineda, Benitez and Carrasco, 2011:518). In this regard, Tan (2014:43) notes that the role of front desk employees is to provide an explanation for the service failure other than justifying or legitimising it. It is, therefore, essential for frontline employees to acknowledge that the failure took place and that the service provider is taking responsibility to resolve it.

While service providers recognise that compensation and other monetary incentives or strategies are common tactics used in service recovery when there is a service breakdown, the use of such strategies are a burden on the organisation because they lead to additional costs. Conversely, managers need to understand that customers want to understand the reason for the failure which they believe is a right. Therefore, a proper explanation should be provided by the service provider (Tarofder, Nikhashemi, Azam, Selvantharan and Haque, 2016:528). In this regard, it is important to provide a more detailed perspective of the types of explanations.

3.4.5.1. Types of explanation

The four types of explanation are, excuse, justification, reference to other people and penitence. A referential explanation entails that the affected customer was treated better than others despite service failure. Penitence is the apology from the organisation to the customer. Where organisations fail to provide tangible compensation, customer satisfaction and loyalty can be achieved if the affected customers are furnished with sufficient or adequate and truthful information about the service failure. A candid explanation can translate into an effective service recovery effort for customers. The challenge in managing service failure is that service providers often focus on providing tangible compensation forgetting that it is a vital human need to comprehend why things have gone wrong. Accepting responsibility while providing justification for the action can effectively lead to a better understanding of the

service failure incident. In some cases, especially where service failure is severe, an explanation may not be effective and can easily backfire (Wang and Mattila, 2011: 434-435).

3.4.5.2. Elements of an effective explanation

Customers always try to understand why service failure has occurred. The proper explanation can assist in diffusing negative reaction. For an explanation to be considered adequate it must contain the following characteristics. Firstly, the content of the explanation must be appropriate and must contain relevant facts and pertinent information. Secondly, the style of delivery of the explanation should reduce customer dissatisfaction. Explanations that are viewed as honest, sincere and not manipulative are generally most effective (Wilson, Bitner, Zeithaml and Gremler, 2012:357).

Dissatisfied customers expect service providers to show empathy with their predicament and to make some effort to rectify the service failure. They further expect an apology and good explanation as to what happened. Strictly speaking, an entirely satisfactory solution may not always be found, but a good explanation and apology can help the service provider to restore the company image and placate customer frustration and anger (Casado, Nicolau and Mas, 2008:19)

An explanation given to the customer must demonstrate fairness on the part of the service provider. Wang and Mattila (2011:430-435) have noted that a fair explanation by the service provider can compel the customer to reconsider the severity of service failure in his mind and thereby maintain the relationship with the service provider. On the other hand, an unfair explanation triggers anger and customer defection. Even in the absence of compensation, adequate and sincere explanation about service failure can facilitate customer satisfaction and loyalty. Compensation is often misplaced by the service provider in trying to recover from a service failure. While it may be key to offer compensation, it is important to provide an explanation regarding the cause of the service failure first because it is an essential need of the customer to know why things went wrong.

It is very important for service providers to give an explanation for the service failure and show that efforts are being made to recover from the service failure (Wirtz, Chew and Lovelock, 2018:418). Bradley and Sparks (2012:48) warn service managers that, whilst an explanation for service failure may look like common sense, in reality, explanations are not universally provided by members of staff. Therefore, the onus is on managers to encourage their subordinates to explain service mishaps and an explanation is the most significant and cost-effective tool to restore customer satisfaction. An explanation produces a favourable feeling as it assists customers to understand the service failure and minimises their inferences concerning the likely causes of service failure or poor performance (Chern and Hui, 2011:20).

Iglesias, Varela-Neira and Vazquez-Casielles (2015:708-716) believe that providing customers with an explanation as a recovery strategy may not be effective in situations of high intentionality. Therefore, customers distrust in the service provider may provoke them not to accept any recovery strategy that is merely based on words instead of actions. In such cases, only the provision of material or tangible compensation may demonstrate the company's willingness and intent to provide authentic recovery and not an act of hypocrisy and disdain. In some cases, when a service failure has occurred, it is not possible to reduce customers' perception of intentionality. However, it is important for the service provider to give an appropriate response to the customer's complaints.

3.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed complaints management which is considered as the first step towards recovering the customer from a service failure. It was noted that customers expect the organisation to provide a complaints' management system that is accessible and fair. Furthermore, the review highlighted that service recovery and complaints' management are complementary interventions. Therefore, service recovery gives an opportunity to service providers to do things correctly the second time. The chapter also presented service recovery models such as the four-stage recovery model and the outcome recovery model. The chapter further highlighted that a critical aspect of the service recovery model is lessons learned from the recovery process and that improvement to recovery systems can only be made if the lessons learned are integrated or used to re-engineer the business processes. The different recovery strategies viz. speed, apology, empowerment, explanation and compensation were

also discussed and it was discovered that these recovery strategies are independent of each other. However, it is important where necessary, to use a combination of strategies to recover from a service failure. The next chapter provides a discussion relating to justice, recovery satisfaction, double deviation and negative emotions.

CHAPTER 4

JUSTICE THEORY AND RECOVERY SATISFACTION IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses social exchange and equity theories as they are the foundation on which the justice theory is based. The dimensions of justice viz. procedural, distributive and interactional justices are discussed in detail to highlight the key aspects of service recovery strategies that resonate with the different forms of justice. Furthermore, the relationship between recovery satisfaction and the justice dimensions (distributive, procedural and interactional justice) is discussed by highlighting what various scholars have found. In addition, negative emotions and the double deviation are presented. The double deviation is discussed to highlight that, sometimes, service recovery efforts may not yield positive results or may fail. Customer reactions to double deviation such as retaliatory behaviour, rage and anger are dissected. Lastly, the chapter discusses service recovery strategies that can be used to address double deviation scenarios.

4.2. SOCIAL EXCHANGE AND EQUITY THEORY

The concept of justice and service recovery is based on a social exchange and equity theory, and as a precursor to the discussion on the justice dimensions, a foundation will be laid by highlighting what social exchange and equity theories entail. Oliver and Swan (1989:25) observe that fairness or justice is a positive function of the customer and service provider outcome and a negotiative function of the customer and service provider inputs. The social exchange and equity theories are very important principles or theories that provide the foundation for the application of the justice theory in particular and the service recovery process in general. It is imperative for service providers to understand the basic principles of these theories if the service recovery process is to be robust, meaningful and achieve its intended purpose which is recovery satisfaction.

Yim, Gu, Chan and David (2003:36) claim that a very important strategy for effective implementation of service recovery is an understanding of the psychological process in the evaluation of service failure and in the service recovery effort. In this regard, an

understanding of the equity and social exchange theory is critical. Furthermore, Maxham and Netemeyer (2002:240) have used the social exchange theory and equity to describe how individuals behave during service recovery and a detailed discussion of social exchange and equity theory is provided.

4.2.1. Social exchange theory

Social exchange theory has been used to explain different social situations such as organisational management, consumer buying behaviour, service recovery, politics, marriage and decisions to terminate a romantic relationship. The rationality of individuals has been put to question and is a subject of debate. Perception of fairness is very subjective and prone to bias and opens differences in the perception of the parties to a transaction. These differences may lead to anger, guilt, resentment and conflict (Redmond, 2015). Social exchange includes actions dependent on the rewarding reaction of others, which, over time, provides for mutually-rewarding transactions and relationships (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005:890). Similarly, Redmond (2015) claims that social exchange theory relates to the process by which individuals engage in an exchange where rewards and compensation are sought and costs incurred. Martinez-Tur, Ramos, Piero and Moliner (2006:104) have noted that a relationship-oriented approach to social exchange theory is used in procedural and interactional justice.

The social exchange theory contends that customers and firms interact in a manner that enables each party to maximise their outcome or reward and to minimise costs. For an exchange to occur, two conditions have to be met. Firstly, an exchange will be contingent, in part, on causes endogenous to itself. Secondly, elements that are exogenous to the exchange can be consequential. This implies that the availability of other sources of satisfaction and other determinants may influence the outcome of exchanges (Magozi, 1974:77-78).

In the analysis of “social behaviour as an exchange” Homans (1958:603-606) adopted a view that interaction between individuals is an exchange of goods, material and non-material items. It is further noted that there is a change in a person’s behaviour when the circumstances permit less profit, whereas, when the profit is greater, the change in behaviour is least evident. However, this does not mean that an individual’s behaviour will stabilise when the

conceivable profit to him is greater because the award of profit is at the mercy or discretion of other people's behaviour.

Thibault and Kelly (1959:198-199) coined the interdependence theory, which suggests that, by using the minimax rule or principle, individuals seek to maximise their benefits and minimise their costs. The ideal situation is an interaction that offers an opportunity for both parties to a transaction to get optimum income at the same time. However, we live in a world that is not perfect such that there is a probability that one individual's gain will come at the expense of the other. Redmond (2015) believes that engaging in ongoing social exchanges can facilitate the creation of a trust that ensures the development of a close relationship or bond. When parties to a transaction are able to meet each other's goals, they create a balanced reciprocal and interdependent relationship.

Social exchange theory presents two yardsticks of comparison used to assess a given outcome whether in prison or under normal circumstances. This scenario is known as a game theory. The first standard is the comparison level and deals with relative satisfaction. This notion holds that an individual's comparison level (CL) is the threshold above which an outcome appears to be attractive. An individual's satisfaction is dependent on their expectation which is determined by the prior experience of past events (Thibault and Kelly, 1959:199). Control such as money, time and effort are used by the customer in comparison to costs and benefits to evaluate the fairness of the outcome of the service recovery initiative (Joosten, Bloemer and Hillebrand, 2017:5).

The social exchange theory has not been short of criticism. Emerson (1976:359) claims that social exchange theory should not be treated as a theory, but rather as a frame of reference that takes into consideration movement of the valued resource through a social process. Redmond (2015) argues that the weakness of social exchange theory is evident after considering equity. The reality is that some individuals remain in inequitable situations or relationships even when social exchange theory would predict leaving the relationship. Individuals stick to inequitable relationships for reasons that go beyond economic logic.

Joosten, Bloemer and Hillebrand (2017:5) discuss reaction theory in service recovery and observed that consumers who feel that their sense of freedom and control is threatened are motivated to remove any threat and restore freedom and control. Furthermore, with respect to service failures, reaction theory contends that an individual's failure to secure the desired outcome leads to a perceived lack of control which forces the customer to react in order to get it back. Complaining to the service provider is an option at the customer's disposal in order to get back control and the desired outcome during service recovery.

4.2.2. Equity theory

The application of equity in service recovery is idiosyncratic to a specific service sector or industry. The implication is that the use of the service recovery effort should resonate with the service failure (De Ruyter and Wetzels, 2000:103). However, equity is in the eyes of the beholder. A customer's evaluation of equity will depend on their evaluation of the value and relevance of the inputs and outcomes (Walster, Berscheid and Walster, 1976:2). Michel, Bowen and Johnson (2009:256) have noted that distributive justice is outcome justice and focuses on equity in the eyes of the customer. Thus, an evaluation of the benefits received is relative to costs such as money and time associated with the loss. A service provider who does not deliver expected benefits leads to the perception of unfair treatment that warrants service recovery.

Customer assessment of service breakdown and efforts for the service recovery depends on the type and amount of resources lost and gained during the exchange (Levesque and McDougall, 2000:21). Equity theory is based on the principle that customers' actions are guided by fairness and any discrepancies in this fairness during service recovery will spur customers to redress this. Furthermore, Adams' equity theory calls for a fair balance between the customer's inputs (time and effort) and the service provider's output. Thus, a fair balance is critical in ensuring that a strong relationship is achieved and that the customer is contented with the result (Kaur, Aggarwal and Khaitan, 2014:230). Adams (1963) claims that people develop their beliefs on what is considered to be fair. In this regard, they compare their exchange with others who are known as referents. If they believe that the treatment received is inequitable compared to others, they are motivated to do something about it and to seek justice.

Walster, Berscheid and Walster (1976:2-6) have noted that equity theory assumes that man is selfish. In view of this, the following are the four propositions of equity theory:

- Individuals will try to maximise their outcomes. This narrative assumes that if unrestrained, individuals would do anything to get what they want and, at the same time, will monopolise community resources. Similarly, they would be confronted by those who want to reclaim the resources. It is only through a compromise that individuals avoid continual warfare and maximise collective reward;
- Groups maximise collective rewards by developing acceptable systems for equity, allocating rewards and costs among members. Groups reward members who treat others equitably and punish members who treat others inequitably;
- When customers find themselves in an equitable relationship, they become distressed. The more the inequitable the outcome is, the more distress the customer feels; and
- Customers who realise that they are in an inequitable relationship will attempt to deal with their distress by restoring equity. When inequity is greater, the customers feel more distressed and they try harder to restore equity (Walster, Berscheid and Walster, 1976:26).

The challenge facing service providers in an effort to recover from service failure is that customers do not conform to the notion of equity consistently. They do behave consistently to a certain extent, but have different preferences for the balance between their outcome/input ratio and that perceived in comparison to others (Huseman, Hatfield and Miles, 1987:231). Equity is an important theory as far as issues of justice or fairness are concerned. When customers believe that there has been inequality in exchange, they become upset, disappointed or regretful. The customer may choose to adopt a form of action or response that will help him or her to restore equity with minimum costs (Chan, Hsiao and Lee, 2016:48). Customers would like to strike a balance between inputs invested and outputs received and this is subsequently traded off against the service provider's inputs and outputs. Customer inputs include monetary expenses, time and effort, whereas an outcome can be in terms of a monetary gain (De Ruyter and Wetzels, 2000:93).

The adequacy of equity is another technique that is useful in service recovery. Service providers are likely to compensate customers for a service failure if adequate compensation is available rather than not. Insufficient or inadequate and excessive compensation lack adequacy and service providers should desist from making such compensation (Walster, Berscheid and Walster, 1976:13-14).

4.3. JUSTICE THEORY

Several scholars have weighed in on the theory of justice. A comprehensive study of justice in the service marketing field defines the concept as perceived compliance to rules that express appropriateness in the context of decisions. Organisational justice demonstrates the extent to which an organisation or executive management is perceived to act consistently, equitably and truthfully in making decisions (Colquitt and Rodell, 2015:188). Another school of thought suggests that service recovery justice is perceived as the customer's evaluation of fairness in which the service failures are handled in a manner that reflects distributive, procedural and interactional justice (Huang, Hung, Fu, Hsu and Chiu, 2015).

Being fairly treated by service employees in a service recovery scenario raises customers' perceptions of quality and justice (Chen, Lee and Weiler, 2014:9). Customer perception of how well and fairly they have been treated during the service recovery process after lodging a complaint will affect their satisfaction and their intention to recommend the organisation (Siu, Zhang and Yau, 2013:685). Complaints from customers are an indication that they are concerned about fairness. Thus, customers expect to be treated fairly in respect of the outcome and process used during the service recovery and the interpersonal treatment received from employees in their quest to address service failure. Ultimately, a fair treatment is crucial for effective service recovery (Wilson, Bitner, Zeithaml and Gremler, 2012:357). The next section provides an overview of the dimensions of justice.

4.3.1. Dimensions of justice

Perceived justice is regarded as a three-component construct comprising distributive dimensions (perceived fairness of remedies or mitigating initiative by the service provider), procedural dimensions (perceived fairness of the service provider's return and exchange

policy) and interaction dimensions (perceived nature of feedback by the firm to the complaint launched by the customer). In the event that service failure occurs, managers should bear in mind that perceived justice is a significant predictor of customer satisfaction and this knowledge should aid them to facilitate a fair complaint-handling process. In adopting this principle, service providers are able to build a profile of satisfied customers who, in turn, will have repurchase intentions and become positive advocates of the business (De Matos, Viera and Veiga, 2012:2205).

Customers perceive the dimensions of justice (interactional, procedural and distributive justices) differently, based on the nature of the service recovery administered (Jung and Seock, 2017:28). Organisations can improve their service performance through interactional, distributive and procedural justice. Furthermore, organisations should come up with policies that foster robust customer collaboration, customer satisfaction surveys and speedy or timely responses to complaints as a way of reassuring customers of good service recovery (Ateke, Oganu and Ishmael, 2015:119).

Justice theory should be viewed as transaction specific and assesses the fairness of service recovery measures or efforts in the transaction (Kwon and Jang, 2012:1236). Gelbrich and Roschk (2011b:39) warn service providers not only to focus on the recovery effort, but also on the perception of justice. Ultimately, the customer and not the company decides what is considered to be fair. Service providers who ignore customer perception run the danger of assuming they have responded properly while in reality, the customer is still disgruntled and he or she may engage in unfavourable actions.

Service providers should work harder at improving justice within the customer's mind because it is important in service evaluation. When customers perceive less justice, they tend to defect to the competition and this means that the organisation will have to spend more money on attracting new customers (Gohary, Hamzeli and Alizadeh, 2016:138). The feelings of anger, disappointment and offence are triggered by the injustice that customers perceive concerning the service providers' policies, complaints-handling process and methods used to address service failure (del Rio-Lanza, Vazques-Casielles and Diaz-Martin, 2013:779). The three

dimensions of justice viz. distributive, interactional and procedural are explained in detail in the subsequent discussions.

4.3.1.1. Distributive justice

Distributive justice is based on equity theory because it is premised on the understanding of how customers respond to outcome distribution. Customers seek to maximise gains and minimise losses in the distribution of outcomes (Martinez-Tur, Ramos, Piero and Moliner, 2006:103). Thus, distributive justice is regarded as what the customer receives as an outcome of the service recovery process. For example, a replacement for incorrect marks or an apology for a delayed class (McColl-Kennedy and Sparks, 2003:253). Distributive justice presents challenges to service employees because customers use a set or combination of inconsistent rules (equity, equality and need) in determining distributive justice, or if the outcome was fair. The equity rule entails that customers invest effort, time and money such that the service provider should reciprocate proportionally, whereas the equality rule entails that all customers should be treated the same way irrespective of the investment. The need rule entails that customers have unique requirements as individuals and that service providers should treat them as individuals (Schneider and Bowen, 2009).

Distributive justice refers to fairness shown by the service provider with respect to the tangible outcome of service recovery in an effort to pacify a dissatisfied customer and to recover from the service provider. Distributive justice encompasses both monetary and non-monetary compensation such as refunds, credit, discounts, replacement, coupons and apology (Boshoff, 2014:382). Similarly, it is noted that, in outcome or distributive justice, customers expect to be compensated by way of a refund, replacement, and repairs. In addition, an apology is also regarded as compensation for the customer's inconvenience and rude treatment. Compensation packages should reflect an amount that is reasonable and that acknowledges the cost of service failure to the customer (Tax and Brown, 1998:89).

Distributive justice depends on customer feelings of equity which triggers the need to compare input costs with the received outcomes. Received outcomes may include reimbursements, apologies, discounts and refunds (Ibrahim and Abdallahamed, 2014:199).

Classic inequities in distributive justice occur when a customer believes that the outcome is not sufficient given the inputs. The common recoveries encountered by the customer are those where the customer reacts to negative inequities by seeking redress which involves cost adjustment, refund and exchange. Sometimes there are differences with respect to customers' and service provider's perspective of distributive justices and this results in inequity. Inequity leads to dissatisfaction if there are different viewpoints between the service provider and the customer on things such as cost incurred, customer's time and effort to seek assistance in an event of a service failure (McCollough, Berry and Yadav, 2000: 124).

The need for an error-free service delivery cannot be overemphasised as it is key to ensuring customer satisfaction and retention. Distributive justice or monetary compensation is not adequate cover for the poor service delivered and, in some cases, it is not just necessary, but it is important for service providers to administer the service in a manner that meets customer expectations because some customers will not value the service providers' recovery efforts. They defect and simply don't want to give the service provider a chance to correct the mistakes (Xu, Tronvoll and Edvardsson, 2014:1258).

4.3.1.2.Procedural justice

Procedural justice refers to fairness in the process used to achieve an outcome or service recovery from service breakdown. Procedures can only be deemed to be fair if they are easy, flexible, convenient, timely, accurate, consistent and provide customers with the freedom to share their views on the recovery decision process (Boshoff, 2014:382). Another school of thought suggests that procedural justice is concerned with the process used to address a problem. The elements of procedural justice include policies and structural considerations that have an impact on the final outcome (McMcoll-Kennedy and Sparks, 2003:253). Conversely, it must be noted that procedural justice can be spoiled by rude members of staff, impersonal interaction style of acquiring customer information and communicating the outcome (Stone, 2011:111).

It is also important for the service provider to know that some customers do not act in a legitimate way if given a chance to claim. They have self-serving justice perceptions and are

fond of engaging in opportunistic claiming. When service recovery efforts are considered to be fair, customers tend to be less opportunistic in making their claims. Thus, service providers should set up fair recovery processes and procedures to curb these opportunistic claims (Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy, 2010:672). According to Harun, Rokonuzzaman, Prybutok and Prybutok (2018:74), managers should seek feedback from frontline employees. This may include asking whether they feel constrained in providing fast responses and any challenges in problem-solving because of any organizational policy. Based on the feedback, management can adapt existing policies

A fair procedure should have three components i.e. the service provider taking responsibility for the service breakdown, complaints being dealt with promptly and, lastly, system flexibility that takes cognisance of individual circumstances and customer feedback regarding the ideal or expected outcome (Siagian and Triyowati, 2015:105). When a member of staff lacks empowerment, it becomes burdensome and time-consuming to get closure or assistance for the problems. When customers perceive the process to complain as cumbersome and time-consuming they may assume that the service provider is trying to run away from his responsibility and this is not a favourable image (Chen, Lee and Weiler, 2014:9). Therefore, managerial initiatives such as explicitly designing and establishing organisational policies pertaining to training, employee reward systems, as well as creating a service climate that fosters supportive management and servant leadership behaviours, should facilitate higher service recovery (Daskin and Kasim, 2016:480). The following section will discuss interactional justice which is one of the dimensions of justice.

4.3.1.3. Interactional justice

Interactional justice simply means the extent to which customers perceive fairness with respect to the conduct of service employees through non-face communication during the service recovery process. As part of the interaction, it is important for managers to manage customer emotional well-being and experiences soon after service failure (Ibrahim and Abdallahamed, 2014:199). Effective service recovery from service failure can be achieved if service providers can provide a fair outcome which encompasses a sincere apology, an explanation of how the problem occurred and can be rectified and an undertaking or commitment to correct the service breakdown (Mohamad, Abdullah and Mokhlis, 2011:7). In

this regard, it is important to highlight the elements of interaction justice so as to provide a deeper understanding of the justice dimension.

- **Elements of interactional justice**

Several scholars have come up with different perspectives regarding the components or elements of interactional justice. Interactional justice demands that the treatment of individuals should be done with politeness, courtesy, respect and empathy after registering their complaint with the organisation (Boshoff, 2014:382). Another school of thought suggests that interactional justice relates to the processing of communication (information) between organisational employees and the customer (Tsai, Yang and Cheng, 2014:142). Xiao, Ran and Omar (2014:254) have noted that interactional justice has five components i.e. explanation, honesty, politeness, effort and empathy.

Interactional justice focuses on the customer's concerns with respect to the quality of the treatment or interaction they have received or encountered during service recovery (Ngahu, Kibera and Kabonyo, 2016:55). Similarly, another study suggests that interaction justice means that the manner in which customers are assisted should reflect respect, politeness and dignity during the interaction (Esen and Sonmezler, 2017:65). Trust and respect are pertinent in a relationship between the service provider and customer, especially in cases where the customer expects to enjoy privileges of occupying a higher social position than the service employee. Therefore, the implication of infringing this social order is that the customer will perceive that they have been treated unfairly (Chen, Lee and Weiler, 2014:9).

McCcoll-Kennedy and Sparks (2003:253) reinforce the various propositions made on interactional justice by highlighting that the concept refers to the manner in which service failure or breakdown is addressed by service providers and the associated interactions between the customer and the service employee. The elements of interactional justice include sensitivity, respect and explanation for service failure and recovery. The following section will provide a discussion relating to customer expectations during interaction with the service provider.

- **Customers' expectations during interaction with the service provider**

Assefa (2014:55) claims that the role of interaction during service failure and the service recovery process is crucial. Customers expect to interface with employees who are polite and are concerned about their predicament and are able to provide a reasonable explanation as to what caused the problem. Komunda (2013:22) states that unhappy customers expect a good explanation from a service provider in an effort to restore their happiness. Furthermore, customers expect service providers to take responsibility for situations that have gone wrong. In this regard, provision of speedy service recovery is important and if it cannot be provided, the service provider should at least try to furnish the customer with updated information of any recovery measures that are being taken.

Ho, Tojib and Khajehzadeh (2017:18-19) warn that customer rationality in an event of service unfairness depends on the actions of members of staff. It is, therefore, important to manage customer impressions by encouraging them to express their opinions in a timely manner when something goes wrong. Training of members of staff should focus on inculcating a culture of responding positively to customer queries by showing positive attitudes, facial expression and body language.

4.3.2. Implications of the three justice dimensions

Post-recovery customer satisfaction can be attained through service recovery implementation methods such as distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice. Consequently, it is imperative for organisations to explore these dimensions of justice to ensure that service failures are properly addressed (Lin, Wang and Chang, 2011:526). Distributive justice occurs when there is a need to compensate a customer for service failure, whereas procedural justice takes place when the customer has concerns with the processes in order to get a recovery. Interaction justice occurs when the customer has a perception about the capacity of service recovery such as the empathy, courtesy and effort of employees (Berndt and Tait, 2012:16).

Customer expectation of distributive, procedural and interactional justice is proportional to the severity of service failure and provides insights into how service providers should design

their speed and compensation when responding to service breakdown. This implies that compensation and speed should be proportional to the severity of service failure. While at their discretion, service providers could over-compensate customers in service failure incidents that are less severe in order to get positive disconfirmation, under-compensating the customer in more severe service failure incidents could lead to double deviation (Yim, Gu, Chan and David, 2003:48).

Beugre and Viswanathan (2006:11) raise a very important debate on the application of justice dimensions in service recovery scenarios. The findings of their study suggest that distributive recovery strategies may be ideal when addressing both distributive and interactional failure, whereas interactional recovery strategies may only be suitable in addressing interactional failure. This implies that an apology, which is interactional, cannot restore an outcome such as the serving of good quality food when a poor quality food (distributive failure) has been served. Conversely, a free desert can help to restore a customer's emotional being that was upset by a rude employee (Interactional failure). Abbas, Abdullateef and Mokhtar (2015: 260) observe that one dimension or form of justice cannot be used as a substitute for another. Simply stated, in some cases, distributive justice will be suitable for the purpose of service recovery, whereas in other scenarios interactional justice should be used.

A comprehensive study on the justice theory suggests that the dimensions of justice are not independent of each other so that, where procedures and interaction in which the recovery takes place are considered to be unfair, it may not be sufficient to provide the customer with a fair outcome such as compensation for the factual loss and apology to reduce the emotional stress of the customer (Gronroos, 2007:127). Customers evaluate the recovery effort based on the recovery process (interaction justice) and outcome (distributive justice). Distributive justice (DJ) and interactional justice (IJ) are not unrelated constructs, but are facets of the same construct, justice. However, distributive justice does not entail a favourable interaction justice such that distributive justice may be fair even if interactional justice is flawed (McCullough, Berry and Yadav, 2000: 125).

Service providers tend to prescribe distributive justice, whereas procedural and interactional justices are often excluded. It is important for service employees to have a proper

understanding of the problem and experience of the customer. An apology on its own may not be enough. Customers want to be heard and feel that their stress and inconvenience is acknowledged and understood and that the service provider genuinely cares and that efforts are being made to fix the problem (Michel and Coughlan, 2009).

Customers should be handled fairly and provided with a solution or assistance that is in tune with their perception of justice and it must also be noted that perception with respect to justice between the organisation and customers varies. Thus, it is imperative for service providers to channel their resources in order to understand customer expectations and what they regard or consider as fair in order to internalise their needs in service processes or at the very least, assist them to comprehend that the solution given is the most appropriate option for their predicament. It is further noted that older customers' perceive justice or fairness in service recovery process more than younger customers (Fierro, Pineda, Benitez and Carrasco, 2011:518).

With respect to perceived justice and satisfaction, customers appreciate dealing with employees who are keen to resolve their problems and to keep them updated throughout the service recovery process. However, this does not happen by chance and organisations need to invest in staff training which emphasises employee attitudes and patience when engaging customers and in resolving their complaints (Fierro, Polo and Olivan, 2014:200).

4.4. CUSTOMER RECOVERY SATISFACTION

The pursuit of impeccable service quality in higher education is a continuous struggle because student expectations and perceptions are bound to change with context and time (Yeo, 2008:281). Customer expectations are critical in determining student satisfaction both prior and after a service failure. Provision of adequate information to students before enrollment is important in building student expectations of various aspects of university services. The absence of information with respect to services offered by higher education institutions might build fuzzy students expectation on the services available and subsequently affect their satisfaction (Sultan and Wong, 2011:18). There are a plethora of studies with respect to recovery satisfaction and it is important that a proper perspective is presented regarding what

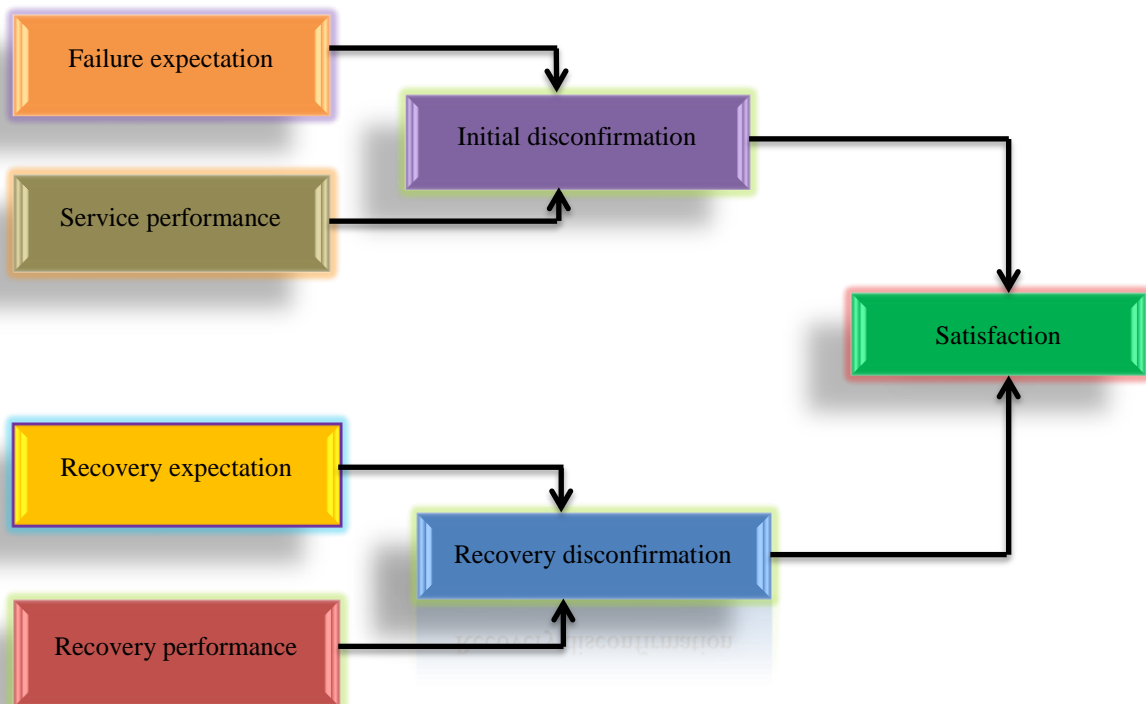
the concept entails. The following discussion will provide information relating to the meaning of recovery satisfaction and the relationships with the justice dimensions.

4.4.1. Meaning of customer recovery satisfaction

Promises and actual delivery are two critical aspects of service marketing. Promises create customer expectations while the delivery of quality that meets those expectations leads to customer satisfaction. The key to managing these expectations is first to know what they are (Hussain, Al-Nasser and Hussain, 2015:7). Customer satisfaction is an elusive concept and many scholars have come up with different conceptual and operational definitions (Mattila and Ro, 2008:298). Customer satisfaction measures the extent to which service providers meet or exceed the expectation of the customer (Ateke, Oganu and Ishmael, 2015:119). Similarly, customer satisfaction is a performance-oriented concept based on the customer's assessment of service from affective and cognitive viewpoints or perspectives, whereas recovery satisfaction refers to the favourability of the customer's subjective evaluation of the corrective measures taken after service breakdown (Ngahu, Kibera and Kabonyo, 2016:56).

Another school of thought suggests that customer satisfaction is the degree to which the value offering of the service provider meets or exceeds customer expectations, whereas recovery satisfaction or post-complaint satisfaction refers to the degree to which service recovery initiatives have yielded positive results by way of meeting or exceeding customer expectations after encountering a service failure (Walter, Chituru and Chibunna, 2015:119). Figure 4.1 depicts the model of satisfaction after service failure and service recovery.

Figure 4.1 Model for customer satisfaction after service failure and recovery



Source: Adopted from McCollough, Berry and Yadav (2000: 123).

It is imperative for service providers to come up with ways of minimising customer complaints when a service failure occurs. Service providers should offer different service recovery initiatives based on the severity of service failure. This may lead to post-recovery satisfaction (Lee, Liu, Chen and Cheng, 2012: 3059). Customer reaction to service recovery and satisfaction can best be understood using the disconfirmation concept. The concept holds that customers will compare service performance to expectation. A positive disconfirmation entails that the service performance exceeds the expectation. Any performance that meets expectations is confirmed and any performance that does not meet the expectation falls short of the initial expectation and is negatively disconfirmed (McCollough, Berry and Yadav, 2000: 122).

The traditional models of customer satisfaction are built on the met-expectation model (also called Disconfirmation of expectations) as shown in Figure 4.1. This model assumes that customers have expectations of an ideal service encounter and meeting such expectations by the service provider will ultimately lead to satisfaction (Schneider and Bowen, 2009). Recovery disconfirmation refers to the disparity between recovery expectation (expectation

held by a customer on what the service provider will undertake given the service failure) and recovery performance (customer perception on the measure taken by the service provider in response to service failure) (McCollough, Berry and Yadav, 2000:122). Customer satisfaction is critical for maintaining a long-term relationship with the customer. When a service encounter ends up in failure, customer satisfaction is compromised and the challenge for service providers is to restore customer satisfaction and to retain unsatisfied customers (Siu, Zhang and Yau, 2013:675).

In highly competitive markets of international education, there are many institutions offering homogenous services and the only way to create a name or reputable brand is by having satisfied clients. Customer satisfaction is dependent on how the product is supplied and the service delivered by the service provider such that if customer expectations are met, they will be satisfied and delighted if they are exceeded (Ndanusa, Harada and Abdullateef, 2014:177). Customers who are satisfied with service recovery have their confidence restored in the service provider. In order to sustain satisfaction, the customer must perceive fairness in the recovery process. Therefore, frequent evaluation of service quality, training for employees and setting up service delivery or working standards are some of the measures that can be adopted to prevent service failure and achieve recovery satisfaction (Siu, Zhang and Yau, 2013: 684-685)

Service recovery is needed when a poor service is executed and it is the responsibility of the service provider to provide effective service recovery to address service failure and ensure customer satisfaction (Waqas, Ali and Khan, 2014:265). Previous research in the Taiwan catering industry has found that service recovery has a significant correlation with customer recovery satisfaction (Chueh, Wang and Liao, 2014: 861-862). Similarly, a study on electronic banking in India also found a significant link between service recovery and recovery satisfaction (Regikumar, 2015: 17).

Customer attribution to what triggered service failure determines the level of service recovery satisfaction. Thus, when customers apportion service failure to the service provider, they will be less satisfied with the service recovery efforts than when they perceive the failure as temporary and that it was difficult for the service provider to avoid service failure (Moliner-

Velazquez, Ruiz-Molina and Fayos-Gardo, 2015:479). Service providers should conduct regular evaluations of customer satisfaction because it is key to customer retention. Understanding what customers expect from the service provider is important for managers because expectations provide a yardstick against which customers evaluate an organisation's performance (Morel, Faure and Moreau, 2014:74).

4.4.2. Relationship between distributive justice and recovery satisfaction

Distributive justice such as discounts, refunds, vouchers and free tickets are important strategies for achieving customer satisfaction (Nikbin et al., 2015:254). Student satisfaction in an event of a service failure is based on a number of factors such as proper compensation, fair outcome, sincerity, empathy, politeness, timely outcome, fair policies and procedures. Extant research on service recovery in Pakistan higher education institutions found that distributive justice has a significant relationship with student recovery satisfaction (Waqas, Ali and Khan, 2014). A study on the effects of justice on service recovery satisfaction on Metro Manila diners found that distributive justice has a stronger correlation with customer satisfaction compared to other dimensions (Tan, 2014:34). Cengiz, Er and Kurtaran (2007:182) have noted that, in Turkish banks, distributive justice has a significant relationship with recovery satisfaction. Similarly, Martinez-Tur, Ramos, Piero and Moliner (2006:112) found that distributive justice has a significant effect on customer recovery satisfaction in the hotel and restaurant industry.

A study conducted on perceived justice and recovery satisfaction found that distributive justice affects customer recovery satisfaction significantly (Jha and Balaji, 2015:142). In Singapore, a study on the effects of service recovery on consumer satisfaction found that distributive justice has a positive relationship with recovery satisfaction (Kau and Wan-Yiun Loh, 2006:107). Ellyawati, Phammesta, Purwanto and Herk, 2013:517) conducted a study on perceived justice in Indonesia and found that distributive justice has a significant correlation with service recovery.

4.4.3. Relationship between interactional justice and recovery satisfaction

The quality of interpersonal interaction may signal to customers that the service provider cares. As such, it is important to treat customers with respect, friendliness and politeness during a service encounter. The cost of interacting with customers in a way that raises their dignity is not going to be as high as the cost of satisfying customers either through procedural or distributive justice. Therefore, it is imperative to train service employees so that they have good communication skills to provide adequate assistance in an event of service breakdown (Fang, Chiu and Wang, 2011: 494-495).

A number of studies have been conducted in different sectors on the relationship between justice dimensions and recovery satisfaction. In the South African banking industry, interactive justice was found to have a significant relationship with recovery satisfaction (Smith and Mpinganjira, 2015: 39-40). Another study on service recovery and justice dimensions in Istanbul found that interactional justice has a stronger influence on recovery satisfaction than distributive justice and procedural justice (Esen and Sonmezler, 2017:72). A similar study on perceived justice and recovery satisfaction found that interactional justice affects customer recovery satisfaction significantly (Jha and Balaji, 2015:142).

In the Turkish banking sector, a study on service failure and service recovery found that interactional justice was not significantly related to recovery satisfaction (Cengiz, Er and Kurtaran, 2007:182). A study on perceived justice and service recovery with Indonesian customers found that interactional justice has a significant correlation with service recovery (Ellyawati, Phammesta, Purwanto and Herk, 2013:518). Kau and Wan-Yiun Loh (2006:108) conducted a study on the effects of service recovery on customer satisfaction in Singapore and the results show that interactional justice has a positive relationship with recovery satisfaction.

Ozkan-Tektas and Basgoze (2017:394) claim that for organisations with a poor reputation, interaction strategies are as important as tangible outcomes for enhancing customers' recovery satisfaction where the contact employee interacts with the customers. Valenzuela and Cooksey (2012:15) believe that there is a risk associated with spending a lot of time trying to

resolve a problem, but a clear communication of the service recovery process can reduce this risk and assist the customer to evaluate the service provider positively.

4.4.4. Relationship between procedural justice and recovery satisfaction

Jha and Balaji (2015:143) have observed that procedural justice is the basic prerequisite of the service recovery process because a low level of procedural justice can trigger negative emotions which may cause customer dissatisfaction. In the Chinese restaurant industry, Siu, Zhang and Yau (2013:682-685) have noted that procedural justice has a positive association with recovery satisfaction, whereas interactional justice is insignificant. Jung and Seock (2017:29) conducted a study on service recovery on online shopping websites and the findings show that procedural justice influences customers' recovery satisfaction more than any of the other dimensions. A similar study in the cellular telephone sector by del Rio-Lanza, Vazques-Casielles and Diaz-Martin, (2013:779) found that procedural justice has a significant effect on recovery satisfaction.

In Turkey, a study on service failure and service recovery in banks by Cengiz, Er and Kurtaran (2007:182) found that procedural justice has a significant and positive relationship with recovery satisfaction. Ellyawati, Phammesta, Purwanto and Herk (2013:518) conducted a study on service recovery and justice with Indonesian customers and found that procedural justice has a positive relationship with recovery satisfaction. Similarly, a study on service recovery in Singapore by Kau and Wan-Yiun Loh (2006:108) found that procedural justice has a positive relationship with recovery satisfaction.

4.5. THE DOUBLE DEVIATION AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

A relationship between the customer and the service provider implies a personal contract. From the customer's perspective, the burden of the relationship sustainability rests with the service provider or organisation to make things right. When things go wrong, there is a breach of this implied contract which awakens emotions and feelings of frustration, anger, anticipation of service recovery and hope. While there is a great expectation that the service provider will make things right, sometimes service recovery may not happen (Christensen and

Ringberg, 2005:440). A discussion of negative emotions and the double deviation will be presented in the next section in order to highlight the complexity of the recovery process.

4.5.1. Negative emotions

Emotions are defined as “a mental state of readiness that arises from cognitive appraisals of events or thoughts; has a phenomenological tone; is accompanied by physiological processes; is often expressed physically (e.g., in gestures, posture, facial features); and may result in specific actions to affirm or cope with the emotion, depending on its nature and meaning for the person having it” (Bagozzi, Gopinath and Nyer, 1999:184). When things go wrong with a service during the initial service failure, or during the service recovery (double deviation), customers tend to experience negative emotions such as frustration, annoyance, anger, and sometimes rage and when customers feel that the service provider did not follow acceptable standards of what ‘should’ have been done, the customer’s negative emotions increase and if the customers perceive that they have been treated unfairly, their negative emotions escalate (Andreassen, 2001).

Two scenarios that can trigger emotions are service failure and service recovery. The emotions that are triggered by service failure are negative and undesirable for the service provider, whereas those that are triggered by service recovery can either be positive or negative, depending on the outcome of the service recovery process. Consequently, the customer who experiences multiple service failure is likely to get emotional twice. Emotions are context-specific and may include positive emotions, e.g. relieved, peaceful, thrilled and negative emotions such as anger, frustration, disappointment and feeling cheated. Emotions that follow the initial failure or single deviation are not forgotten and when they are coupled with subsequent negative emotions following a poor recovery process, customers evaluate the service recovery process and the organisation overall negatively. However, if emotions are coupled with a positive service recovery, they can successfully recover satisfaction even more than prior to the customer experiencing the negative emotions after a single deviation (Valentini and Polyakova, 2016:2-12).

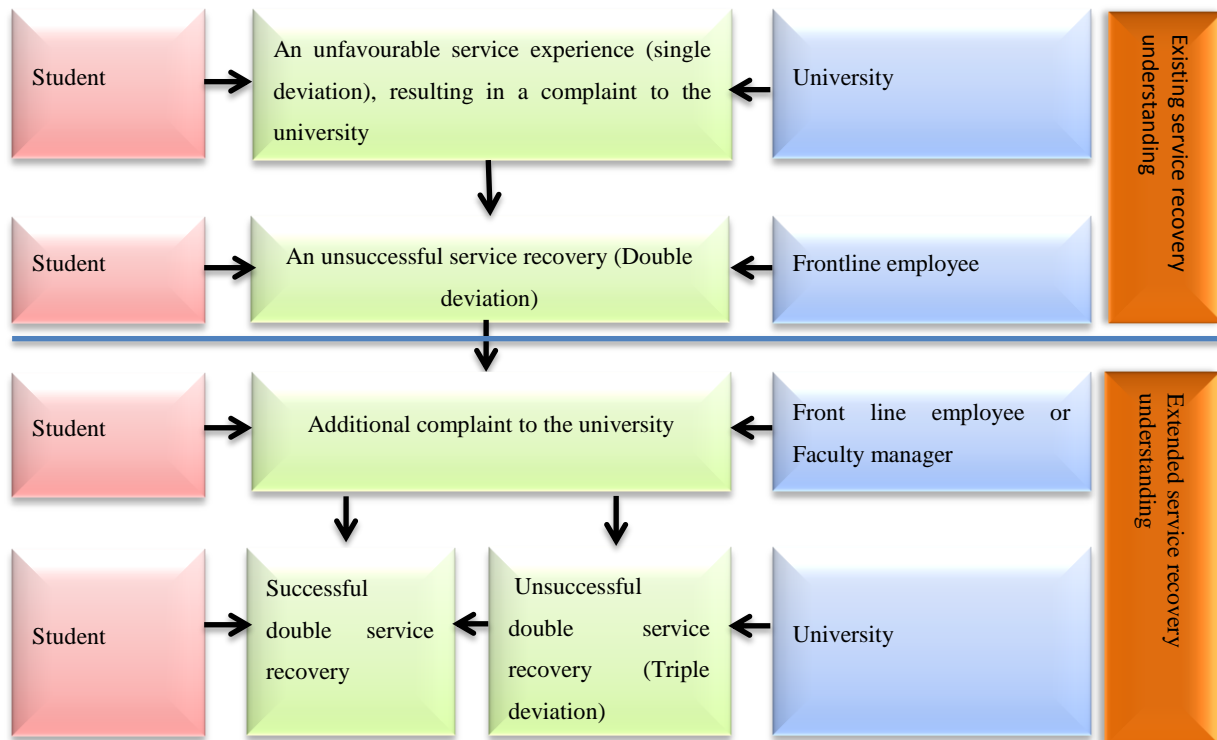
Intense emotions such as anger and frustration and also the perception of unfairness are associated with customer dissatisfaction or double deviation during service recovery. One of the important, but difficult principles of customer satisfaction is getting the balance to have both the service provider (employees or lecturer) and service (content) to meet the expectation of the customer. The implication is that consumers have mixed reactions to a consumption episode. It follows that it is possible for a student to be satisfied with a lecturer's expertise and delivery of content, but dissatisfied with his rude and bossy behaviour (Mattila and Ro, 2008:299). When service recovery is effective and leads to satisfaction, the customer satisfaction increases and negative word-of-mouth accounts decreases. However, if service recovery from failure is poorly executed, recovery satisfaction decreases and negative-word of-mouth reports increase (Balaji and Sarkar, 2013:75). Kozub, O'Neill and Palmer (2014:240) have noted that the importance of emotions in customers' evaluation of recovery highlights the need for employees to be selected, trained and evaluated on the basis of their emotional intelligence, and, particularly, on their ability to identify, understand and respond to the emotions felt by the customer.

4.5.2. Double deviation

Sometimes service recovery intentions do not yield positive results and customers experience another service failure known as a recovery failure. Lee and Park (2010:48) describe double deviation as a situation which involves multiple consecutive failures. Simply put, the double deviation is a sum total of the initial service failure and the recovery failure. Edvardson, Tronvoll and Hoykinpuro (2011:343) claim that some of the causes of double deviation and recovery are role ambiguity in customer interface areas, lack of communication, competence and poor co-ordination of the flow of actions and resources in the service system.

Maxham III and Netemeyer (2002:57) have observed that most of the studies have focused on how customers react to a single failure or deviation, but there is a dearth of research on how customers will react to multiple failures. Service recovery may sometimes fail because of the root causes of the tension among customer recovery, process recovery and employee recovery (Michel, Bowen and Johnson, 2009:267). Figure 4.2 shows a complex service recovery process which culminates into a double deviation.

Figure 4.2 Complex service recovery process



Source: Adapted from Edvardsson, Hoykinpuro and Tronvoll (2011:335)

The need to understand the service recovery in both single and double deviation scenarios cannot be over-emphasised. The initial service failure leads to a complaint which must be resolved by the service provider, in this case the university. If the service recovery process is not properly executed, the customer experiences a recovery failure known as double deviation. Double deviation occurs during an existing or first recovery initiative. If a customer is recovered for the second time after unpleasant service experience, this represents a double service recovery and if a consecutive or repeated service recovery effort fails, the outcome is called a triple deviation (Edvardson et al., 2011:332).

Double deviation represents scenarios or consumption encounters where customers are confronted with initial service failure and failed service recovery (Casado-Diaz, Mas-Ruiz and Kasper, 2005:5). Another school of thought believes that a double deviation is a service encounter or performance that has resulted in dissatisfaction in the first instance and dissatisfaction as a result of the failure of the resolution to the problem. In other words, two consecutive failures will result in double deviation. The challenge in many organisations is

that front office employees conceal customer complaints. As a result, superiors don't hear of such complaints. In the absence of a proper customer feedback mechanism, only a handful of complaints reach the head office. Customers who have used other channels of launching their complaints and feel their problems have not been resolved turn to online public channels to complain (Wirtz et al., 2018:417)

Poor service recovery entails a double service failure. This recovery failure has a stronger effect than the initial failure because customers who are already burdened by the initial failure have a high recovery expectation and the zone of tolerance for service recovery is generally narrow. Secondly, a failed service recovery may demonstrate the service provider's pattern of poor service. Thirdly, the service providers may be demonstrating that they don't care when they manage the service recovery process ineffectively by being defensive and rigid. Service failure emanating from incompetence may be exacerbated by a recovery failure that shows a lack of concern (Berry and Leighton, 2004:15-16). In this regard, a discussion of the recovery strategies, causes of double deviation and customer reaction to double deviation will be provided to give higher education practitioners and institutional managers an understanding of the areas that need attention during the service recovery process.

4.5.2.1. Causes of double deviation

When service organisations provide inadequate or no compensation at all after a service failure, this represents a double deviation (Gelbrich, Gathke and Gregoire, 2016:8). Customers become highly emotional in post-failure stages and some recovery failures emanate from dissatisfaction with customer service attitude and threatening interpersonal justice perceptions. Furthermore, the absence of an apology or an explanation for service failure, no empathy and late feedback to customer requests for service recovery are often issues that trigger double deviation scenarios (Lee and Park, 2010:60).

Employees who believe management does not support them in preparing them to engage in successful service recovery will feel unfairly treated. Simply put, fairness is contagious and is critical to both internal and external customers. Ultimately, a shoddy process recovery means that both employees and customers will feel failed or disappointed. In addition, negative spill-

overs may occur if the absence of internal service recovery influences employees to feel alienated and subsequently resort to service sabotage such as them deliberately failing customers (Michel, Bowen and Johnson, 2009:259).

4.5.2.2. Customer reaction and effects of double deviation

When a service failure occurs, the brand credibility is affected by how the complaint is handled, the severity of the failure and the degree of satisfaction generated (Bougoure, Russell-Bennett, Fazal-E-Hasan and Mortiner, 2016:68). Customers who complain about consecutive failures within a short space of time are likely to recall the first service failure incident. The customers may think the two failures are one large failure. Customers may view service providers making multiple failures as careless and as ones that are consistently making errors without improving. Therefore, it will be difficult for service providers handling two similar complaints to recover (Maxham III and Netemeyer, 2002:60).

If a service provider fails to address complaints following a service failure, the customer may think the organisation is greedy and uncaring and this can trigger a feeling of anger, desire for revenge and retaliatory behaviour. Service providers are vulnerable to revenge or retaliation by customers who may want to get even by defecting to competitors or they may complain to third parties. Retaliatory behaviour is aimed at getting even and punishing the service provider (Joireman, Gregoire, Devezer and Trip, 2013:2).

Joireman, Gregoire and Trip (2016: 78) claim that service failure that is followed by a failed service recovery generates anger and desire for revenge. Therefore, forgiveness becomes an ideal process. Casado-Diaz, Mas-Ruiz and Kasper (2005:20-21) believe that the repetitive nature of service failure, which is a trait of double deviation, creates a backlash of anger which has a significant impact on recovery satisfaction. Double deviation leads to a magnification of negative evaluation by customers and these evaluations trigger customer behavioural responses that can lead to losses for service providers.

Poor or ineffective handling of customer problems makes customers more enraged. Service providers are advised to tread carefully when dealing with service failures that have not been

resolved satisfactorily because customer emotions can change from low to high intensity. Unhappy customers have a carryover of negative emotions which can easily translate into a rage. In the context of the South African higher education, the narrative resonates with the current landscape where unresolved student problems often lead to rage and subsequent violent protests (Surachartkumtonkun, McColl-Kennedy and Patterson, 2015:28).

Customers engage in online public complaining when a service failure is followed by recovery failure or double deviation. Online reports of customer bad encounters can easily reach millions of customers just at the click of the button. Victims of multiple failures tend to turn to online public complaints channels because they feel betrayed and have developed a strong desire for revenge and avoidance. Revenge and avoidance are not mutually exclusive, they can coexist. Customers who have experienced multiple failures hold grudges against organisations and ultimately fail to forgive. A timely recovery effort can decrease customer desire for revenge in an event of service failure (Gregoire, Trip and Leqoux, 2011:27). Service failure adds costs and the way a service provider responds to the problem can increase costs, cancel it out or use it as a tool for enhancing customer perception of quality thereby creating an evangelist (Addison and Haig, 2013:2).

4.5.2.3.Recovery strategies for double deviation

Service providers who fail to project a good image of service fairness cannot develop or gain customer confidence which is a prerequisite for loyalty (Seiders and Berry, 1998:9). Casado, Nicolau and Mas (2008:18) suggest that organisations should attempt to take full control of the service recovery process because the double deviation can lead to amplification of negative feelings, unusual behaviour responses from customers, attrition and other losses on the part of the service provider. Ozkan-Tektas and Basgoze (2017:394) have noted that managers can minimise the negative effects of feelings after-service failure by enhancing the customer's perception of justice.

The nature of failure dictates the type and intensity of service recovery that can be used to address the service failure. Fast response and correction are important basic principles and strategies for service recovery. Customers who have experienced a double deviation expect

members of staff to move out of their shell or cocoon to deal with the situation. The double deviation can be resolved if the service providers can act with speed, provide a written apology from a higher authority, compensation, assurance and explanation (Johnston and Fern, 1999:79-81).

Service providers who encounter angry customers after service failure should attempt to apologise to minimise the level of anger (Tarofder, Nikhashemi, Azam, Selvantharan and Haque, 2016:528). However, Schwab (2015) warns that in double deviation scenarios, a mere apology is not sufficient because the magnitude of the complaint is so large. In double deviation scenarios, firms can improve customer satisfaction by providing concrete evidence that the customer problem or complaint has been addressed or that a solution is being implemented.

Mirani, Hanzae and Moghadam (2015:472) admonish employees to provide a concise explanation of service failure, sincerity, an apologetic attitude, communication, politeness, respect, attention to the problem at hand, willingness to listen to complaints and, ultimately, to making an undertaking to resolve the problem. In an event of a double deviation, firms should attempt to provide an explanation and if an explanation is not feasible, an apology and compensation should be provided to customers. Questions relating to what level or sort of compensation should be provided are still a subject of debate (Joireman, Gregoire, Devezer and Trip, 2013:2).

Negative word-of-mouth accounts should be prevented at all costs by resolving service failures which were not satisfactory. It is, therefore, imperative for service providers to acquaint themselves with customer needs and preferences such as finding out potential recovery solutions that can be adopted to improve business performance (Fierro, Polo and Olivan, 2014:200). Furthermore, training programmes should be put in place to assist employees to deal with customer responses to service failures. Emphasis should also be placed on how employees can deal with specific emotions arising from service failure and failed service recoveries by using empathy in resolving problems (Casado-Diaz, Mas-Ruiz and Kasper, 2005:22).

4.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The current chapter emphasised that the application of justice theory and its dimensions is premised on social behaviour theories i.e. social exchange and equity theory. The chapter further highlighted that the theory of justice has three dimensions which are, procedural, distributive and interaction justice. What is evident from the literature review is that customers seek the presence of these forms of justice in order to get recovery satisfaction. Thus, the application of various aspects of the recovery process and justice dimensions can lead to either customer recovery satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Furthermore, the relationships between recovery satisfaction and the three dimensions of justice were discussed. The current chapter further highlighted that recovery failure is often inevitable and, in cases where the service providers have failed to recover the customer successfully through the different forms of justice, the customer experiences consecutive failures and this triggers a situation known as the double deviation. A review of the literature found that double deviation triggers intense negative emotions when compared to single deviation scenarios because the customer has a carryover of emotions. The next chapter discusses the research methodology that was used in this study.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided a detailed perspective of the justice theory, recovery satisfaction, negative emotions and double deviation. The current chapter presents a research methodology of this study. It encompasses philosophical underpinnings, the research design, the sampling process, approaches to gathering data, the measuring instrument, data analysis and the pilot study. In addition, the reliability and validity, ethical considerations of this study are explained.

5.2. PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION AND RESEARCH PARADIGM

Research philosophies are multidimensional and can either represent ontological or epistemological thinking. Ontology is concerned with reality and has two aspects which are objectivism and subjectivism. Epistemology is acceptable knowledge of a particular field of study and encompasses positivism, realism and interpretivism (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009:109-112). For the purpose of this study, a positivist approach was adopted. Positivists believe that by understanding relevant facts about phenomena, the conclusion can be made regarding the behaviour of individuals (Walliman, 2011:73). Furthermore, positivists help to create knowledge and draw their research strategy based on existing theory to develop a hypothesis which is tested, confirmed and can facilitate subsequent development of a theory for further study or evaluation. In addition, positivism emphasizes on quantitative research that can be analysed statistically (Saunders et al., 2009:113-114).

5.3. RESEARCH APPROACH

Research can take a deductive or inductive approach. A deductive approach moves towards the testing of a hypothesis after which a concept is confirmed, refuted or modified. It involves the elaboration of a set of principles or concepts that are later tested through empirical observation or experiment, whereas the inductive approach involves making plans for data collection after which data are analysed to check if any patterns emerge that suggest a relationship between variables (Gray, 2013:16-17). Babbie (2011:23) highlights that

deductive theory is aimed at testing and proving whether the expected scenario, assumptions or theory really occurs in practice. In this study, the deductive reasoning or approach was adopted because the research framework was developed based on existing theory.

5.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

Babbie (2011:93) claims that a research design means all the relevant steps of the research process and methods adopted. According to Burns and Bush (2014:101-107), the three types of research designs are exploratory, descriptive and causal. Exploratory research is unstructured, informal research that is conducted to gain background information about the general nature of the research problem. It simply means the study does not follow a predetermined set of procedures or rules whereas causal research refers to an understanding of a phenomenon in terms of conditional statements and is determined by the use of experiment.

Descriptive research uses numbers which enable statistical and mathematical relationships to be evaluated. However, caution should be exercised when interpreting the relationships because descriptive research cannot be used to establish causality (Clow and James, 2013:28-29). Another school of thought suggests that, in a descriptive research, data is gathered to describe characteristics of people and situations. They noted that descriptive studies play an important role in explaining attributes of a given scenario such as market segments and factors influencing customer satisfaction. Descriptive research also provides insights for further scrutiny (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016:97). This research was a quantitative, descriptive and cross-sectional study. Gilbert (2008:35) notes that a typical social survey is cross-sectional in nature because all the respondents are subjected to the same questions at the same time. Even if there are differences in days between the first and last respondents, the design assumes that the time period is irrelevant.

5.5. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Quantitative research seeks to measure a phenomenon using numbers and often takes the form of surveys whereas qualitative research is used to describe scenes and collect data through interviews or analyse the meaning of documents (Gilbert, 2008:35). Another school of

thought suggests that qualitative research is designed to understand, explain, discover and clarify situations, perception and experience of individuals whereas quantitative research is more structured, rigid, fixed and predetermined to ensure reliability and validity of information or data (Kumar, 2014:132-133). In addition, quantitative research uses statistical methods and commences with data collection based on a known theory and is followed by the application of descriptive and inferential statistics (Patil and Mankar, 2016:5). In this study, a quantitative research design was adopted. The advantage of a quantitative research approach is that it has relative precision and lacks ambiguity (Gilbert, 2008:35).

5.6. POPULATION AND SAMPLING

Sampling is a critical aspect of the research process. The sampling process involves drawing a conclusion about an entire population by evaluating only a portion of all the population elements. Sampling makes research possible in cases where assessing everyone or on everything is impossible (Zikmund and Babin, 2010:412). The critical aspects of the sampling process in this study are identifying the target population, selecting the sampling method and determining the sample size.

5.6.1. Target population

Population refers to all elements that possess a common set of characteristics and are of interest for the purpose of a research problem. Information regarding a population can be obtained through the use of census or a sample. A census refers to the enumeration of all elements of the population, whereas a sample is a subgroup of the population (Malhotra, 2010:371). The target population for this study were all full-time students in the three designated institutions. The total student population in the three institutions is 89,420. UKZN has the largest student population of 45,506 followed by DUT with a student population of 27,023 and UNIZULU with a student population of 16,891 (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2016).

5.6.2. Sampling method

Sampling techniques are twofold: non-probability and probability sampling. Non-probability sampling relies on the discretion of the researcher rather than on chance to select elements of

a sample whereas, in probability sampling, the elements of a sample have an equal chance of being selected (Malhotra, 2010:376). Four types of probability sampling are: simple, random, cluster, stratified and systematic sampling whereas non-probability sampling techniques are convenience, judgemental, snowball and quota sampling (Wiid and Diggines, 2015:191). What is critical for probability sampling to take place is the availability of a sampling frame (May, 2011:99).

In this study, judgemental sampling was used to select respondents. Judgemental or purposive sampling is a method where samples are carefully picked because they have certain characteristics which can serve the research purpose. The proponents of purposive sampling believe that, by focussing on respondents or traits that are considered helpful, the researcher is able to pick only those that can articulate views relevant to the study (Churchill, Brown and Suter, 2010:334-336). The choice of the sampling method was made because there is no sampling frame that allows the researcher to work only with students who have experienced service failure (Leow, 2015:135). Service failures are not commonplace and, because of this, a random sample would be unlikely to produce sufficient numbers of respondents with the relevant experience (Menon and Dube, 2004).

5.6.3. Sample size

Sample size refers to the number of elements that form part of the study. The nature of the research determines the size of the sample. Exploratory studies often attract a smaller sample size whereas, in descriptive research, a larger sample size is required. Sample size can also be influenced by the average sample size of previous research or similar studies especially in cases where non-probability samples are used. Sample size determination should also take into account the resource envelope or constraints (Malhotra, 2010:374).

The decision regarding sample size is often more a case of judgement than calculation. Samples drawn should be big enough to achieve a relatively precise estimate of the population values, but, at the same time, which can be executed economically and practically (Wiid and Diggines, 2015:202). A judgemental sample of 460 students was used as highlighted in Table 5.1. A 20 percent non-response rate was factored into the desired sample size of 384

respondents which was guided by Sekaran and Bougie (2016:264). It is imperative for researchers to make a provision for non-response to ensure maximum participation of respondents (Malhotra, 2010:416-419). Table 5.1 shows how the sample size was determined per institution.

Table 5.1 Sample size determination

Name of University	Population per institution	Sample size(proportion based on population)
University of KwaZulu-Natal	45,506	234
Durban University of Technology	27,023	139
University of Zululand	16,891	87
Total	89,420	460

5.7. APPROACHES TO GATHERING DATA

The two approaches to gathering data are categorised as primary and secondary. Secondary data was collected by reviewing what eminent scholars have covered and reported on regarding service failure and service recovery through journals, books, periodicals, media articles, government publications, dissertations, theses and the internet, whereas primary data was collected by getting first-hand information from students regarding their perception of service failure and service recovery strategies through the administration of a questionnaire (Kumar, 2014:171). Primary data that are crucial for marketing research include demographic and socio-economic characteristics, psychological and personal characteristics, attitudes, opinions, awareness, knowledge, intentions, motives and the behaviour of people (Wiid and Diggines, 2015:94). In this study, secondary data has been presented in the entire thesis, but largely covered in chapters two, three and four. The next section discusses the composition and development of the measuring instrument.

5.7.1. Measuring instrument

In this study, a structured, self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. A questionnaire refers to a written set of questions intended to solicit and record respondents' answers. A good questionnaire should be clear and easy to understand because in some

instances if not many, there is nobody to explain the meaning of questions to respondents. Furthermore, a questionnaire should be developed in an interactive way so that the respondents should feel as if the researcher is talking to them (Kumar, 2014:178).

Previous studies on service failure and service recovery have used different methods to carry out research i.e. recall method of critical incidents (Mostafa, Lages and Saaksjarvi, 2014:307; Mirani, Hanzae and Moghadam, 2015:468) and experiment or scenario-based method (Du, Fan and Feng, 2010:589; McCollough, Berry and Yadav, 2000:126, Smith, Bolton and Wagner, 1999:358). In this study, the recall method of critical incidents within a questionnaire survey design was used so that respondents are able to assess the study based on their lived experience rather than on simulated scenarios that may never happen in real life. The use of the recall method of service failure incidents was deemed appropriate when compared to experiments or simulated scenario-based methods because the use of artificial conditions or scenarios only assist the researcher to apply a particular method, but they do not say anything about the conditions, decisions and contradictions that form part of the actual social life (May, 2011:9).

5.7.2. Development of the measuring instrument

As highlighted in Table 5.2, existing parameters were modified to suit this particular study, but were adapted from previous studies on service recovery strategies (Boshoff, 1999:247; Mostafa, Lages and Saaksjarvi, 2014:305 and Ramadan, 2012: 211-214), Justice dimensions (Smith, Bolton and Wagner, 1999:363, Severt, 2002 and Ramadan, 2012: 211-214), recovery satisfaction (Ramadan, 2012; Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, Suárez-Acosta and Aguiar-Quintana, 2014:6) and negative emotions (Casado-Diaz, Mas-Ruiz and Kasper, 2005; Kim and Tang, 2016; Varela-Neira, Vázquez-Casielles and Iglesias, 2010). The information gathered using this questionnaire will help to ascertain the relationship between variables. A five-point Likert scale, with answers ranging from strongly disagree representing scale number 1 to strongly agree representing scale number 5 was used to gauge customer feelings on service recovery, recovery satisfaction, negative emotions and the three dimensions of justice (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009:379).

Table 5.2 Structure of the questionnaire and validation of the items of the construct

Construct	Item	Measurement	Closely related source
Complaints Management (CM)	CM1	The university encourages students to complain when they face problems.	Yilmaz, Varnali and Kasnakoglu (2016)
	CM2	The university has different platforms or communication channels for registering complaints.	
	CM3	I know where to register my complaints because the university has publicised	
	CM4	It is easy, fast and convenient to register complaints at this university.	
	CM5	The members of staff have authority to settle or address complaints at this university.	
Speed (SP)	SP1	The university or member of staff offered a quick service recovery plan for the problem I encountered.	Mostafa, Lages and Saaksjarvi (2014), Ramadan (2012)
	SP2	My problem was solved at once and I did not need to ask for further help.	
	SP3	I was not kept waiting unnecessarily and a solution was found quickly.	
	SP4	My problem was solved within a reasonable time.	
Apology (AG)	AG1	The university or a member of staff were sorry for the inconvenience caused.	Mostafa, Lages and Saaksjarvi (2014), Ramadan (2012)
	AG2	The university apologized to me for what had happened.	
	AG3	The university expressed regret for the mistake that occurred.	
	AG4	The university offered me additional benefits as a token for the mistake or service failure.	
Compensation (CN)	CN1	The university provided compensation as a remedy for my problem.	Mostafa, Lages and Saaksjarvi (2014), Ramadan (2012)
	CN2	The university or member of staff offered a good solution for my service problem.	
	CN3	The solution offered by the university was acceptable to me.	
	CN4	The university offered a good service fix.	
Explanation (EN)	EN1	The university employee explained why the problem might have happened.	Mostafa, Lages and Saaksjarvi (2014), Ramadan (2012)
	EN2	The university explained why the problem might have happened.	
	EN3	The university explained what caused the problem	
	EN4	The university provided a convincing explanation for the reason of the problem.	
Empowerment (EM)	EM1	The first contact employee solved my problem.	Boshoff (1999)
	EM2	The employee immediately told me what to expect from the process.	
	EM3	The employee did not need help to solve my problem	
	EM4	The employee had the skill and knowledge to deal with my problem.	
Distributive Justice (DJ)	DJ1	The outcome that I received was fair.	Ramadan (2012)
	DJ2	In resolving the problem the university did not give me what I needed.	
	DJ3	The way the problem was resolved reflected the loss suffered.	

	DJ4	The university resolved the problem according to my expectation.	
Procedural Justice (PJ)	PJ1	The university procedures were fair.	Severt (2002), Ramadan (2012)
	PJ2	The university procedures were sensible.	
	PJ3	The university procedures were streamlined.	
	PJ4	The university procedures did what I expected.	
	PJ5	The university procedures put the customer first.	
	PJ6	The university procedures made me feel important.	
Interactional Justice (IJ)	IJ1	The behaviour of university employees gives you confidence to deal with them.	Ramadan (2012)
	IJ2	University employees had the requisite knowledge to respond to your questions.	
	IJ3	University employees give you individual attention.	
	IJ4	University employees put proper effort into resolving my problem.	
	IJ5	University employees' communication with me was appropriate.	
	IJ6	The University employee gave me the courtesy I was due.	
Recovery satisfaction (RS)	RS1	I think the university or the employee was on this particular occasion good in resolving my problem.	Ramadan (2012), Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, Suárez-Acosta and Aguiar-Quintana (2014).
	RS2	I am satisfied with the way the employee or the university handled my problem.	
	RS3	Overall I am satisfied with the way my issue was resolved.	
Negative emotions (NE)	NE1	I was frustrated with the way the employee or university handled my problem.	Casado-Diaz, Mas-Ruiz and Kasper (2005); Kim and Tang (2016), Varela-Neira, Vázquez-Casielles and Iglesias (2010)
	NE2	I was angry with the way the university or employee handled my problem.	
	NE3	I am disappointed with the way the university or employee handled my problem.	
	NE4	I was offended by the way the employee resolved my problem on this particular occasion.	

5.8. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The primary purpose of the application of statistical techniques is to estimate whether or not the probability existed that the pattern of data collected could have occurred by chance rather than by the causes proposed by the theory being tested. These techniques should be carefully selected based on the type of data collected and should be carried out in the context of theory using measures derived from a theory (Lowry and Gaskin, 2014:123). Another school of thought suggests that the purpose of statistical analysis is to make sense of data and to convert raw numbers into meaningful information that can be used to make an informed decision. In some cases, more complex analyses are needed to understand the relationships among

variables (Clow and James, 2013:38). In this study, data were analysed using a statistical package called Smart PLS 3 and the SPSS. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse data.

5.8.1. Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics summarise patterns in the responses of cases in a sample and are conducted and presented in three broad ways: tabular, graphical and statistical. Tabular involves the use of tables to present results of analysis, whereas graphical analysis is the presentation of results of analysis using graphs. Statistical analysis is the presentation of results using a single number and it does not contain as much information as in graphs and tables, but can provide an easily understood snapshot of a set of cases (De Vaus, 2014:207)

5.8.2. Inferential statistics

Inferential statistics are predictive and based on inferences made from the analysed data. The predictive element is made on the basis that certain traits prevalent in a sample will manifest in the entire population (Walliman, 2011:213). Two types of inferential statistics are interval estimates and tests of statistical significance. Interval estimates provide an estimate of the margin of error around the sample figures where true population figures are likely to lie (De Vaus, 2014:207-208). Statistical significance is used to establish whether or not a set of statistical results are likely to have occurred by chance. In statistics (eg. one-tail or two-tail tests) results are deemed to be statistically-significant if they are unlikely to have occurred by chance (Young and Bolton, 2009).

5.8.3. Correlation analysis

Correlation is derived by assessing the variations in one variable as other variables also vary. A correlation coefficient indicates the strength, direction and significance of a relationship. Theoretically, there could be a perfect positive correlation between two variables which is represented by +1 or a perfect negative correlation which would be represented by -1. However, neither of these will be found in reality when assessing the correlation between any two variables. Furthermore, the Pearson correlation coefficient is appropriate for interval and ratio-scaled variables whereas the Spearman rank or Kendall's tau coefficients are appropriate

when variables are measured on an ordinal scale (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016:287). This study used correlation analysis to evaluate the relationship between constructs and to identify the presence of multi-collinearity which is defined as the high degree of correlation among several independent variables (Pallant, 2010:183). Multi-collinearity occurs when there is repetition or many variables measuring similar phenomena that have been incorporated into the model.

5.8.4. Structural equation model (SEM)

A structural equation model (SEM) was utilised to analyse data in this study. A structural equation model is a multivariate tool that combines interdependence and dependence techniques to allow the researcher to test theory represented by a series of regression equations, each involving multiple-item measures that are solved simultaneously (Zikmund and Babin, 2010:631). The limitation of SEM is that it cannot be used to perfect or cover flaws in a study. Furthermore, a poorly-executed research plan, inaccurate and invalid data, insufficient theoretical guidance over the interpretation of causal relationships can lead to false conclusions (Beran and Violato, 2010:9). The following are components of a structural equation model:

- **Measurement model**

The measurement model involves the assignment of the relevant measured variables to each latent construct and is usually represented by a diagram. The degree to which each measured variable is related to its construct is represented by that variable's loading. In a measurement model, there is no need to distinguish between exogenous and endogenous constructs; they are all treated as being of the same type, similar to factor analysis (Malhotra, 2010:730). The measurement model in this study was evaluated through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). CFA differs from exploratory factor analysis (EFA) in that factor structures are hypothesized as a priori and verified empirically rather than derived from the data (Lei and Wu, 2007:34). The measurement model in this study was also subjected to the model fit assessment using Partial Least Square (PLS) smart 3.

- **Structural model**

The specification of the structural model addresses two questions: which constructs should be included in the model and how are they hypothesized to be interrelated? That is, what are the directions and strengths of the causal influences between and among the latent constructs? (Honseler, Hubonaand Ray, 2015:6). The structural model is evaluated after assessing the measurement model. The structural model differs from the measurement model in that the emphasis moves from the relationship between latent constructs and the observed variables to the nature and magnitude of the relationship between constructs (Malhotra, 2010:735). The structural model can only be evaluated after establishing reliability and validity of measurement model and this enables validation of the structural relationships. To ascertain how the structural model matches the data, the variance (R²) of every dependent factor is calculated as follows (Cornell and Berger, 1987):

$$R^2 = 1 - \frac{\sum (y_i - \bar{y})^2}{\sum (y_i - \bar{y})^2} \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

The fitness of the model was assessed using NFI, SMRM, **d_ULS**, **d_G**, and Chi-Square. The assessment was based on acceptable thresholds as highlighted in Table 5.3

Table 5.3 Structural model and measurement fit indices

Fit index	Acceptable threshold	Comment	Source
NFI	NFI ≥ 0.80	Values greater than 0.8 suggest a good fit	Simon, Kriston, Loh, Spies, Scheibler, Wills and Härter, (2010:239); Byrne (2001); Forza and Filippini (1998)
SMRM	SMRM ≤ 0.10	Values less than 0.10 are acceptable	Byrne (1998); Browne and Cudeck (1993),
Chi-Square	p ≥ 0.05	Sensitive to sample size > 200	Wheaton, Muthen, Alwin and Summer (1977).
d_ULS	N/A	The value of the d_ULS and d_G in itself do not pertain any value	Dijkstra and Henseler (2015)
d_G	N/A	The value of the d_ULS and d_G in itself do not pertain any value	Dijkstra and Henseler (2015)

The global model fit can be assessed in two non-exclusive ways: by means of inference statistics, i.e. so-called tests of model fit, or through the use of fit indices, i.e. an assessment of approximate model fit. In order to have some frame of reference, it has become customary to determine the model fit both for the estimated model and for the saturated model. Saturation refers to the structural model, which means that in the saturated model all constructs correlate freely (Henseler, Hubona and Ray, 2016:9).

- **The path analysis**

Path analysis is an extension of multiple regressions in that it involves various multiple regression models or equations that are estimated simultaneously. This provides a more effective and direct way of modeling mediation, indirect effects and other complex relationship among variables. Path analysis can be considered a special case of SEM in which structural relations among observed (latent) variables are modeled (Lei and Wu, 2007:34). Path analysis (PA) is also known as causal modeling, analysis of covariance structures and latent variable models. Path analysis calculates the strength of each relationship using only a correlation or covariance matrix as input (Malhotra, 2010:749).

- **Partial least square**

Partial least square is a multivariate tool which combines the factor analytic approach with a regression approach to produce path estimates between multiple item independent variables and dependent variables (constructs) (Zikmund and Babin, 2010: 631). PLS path models are formally defined by two sets of linear equations: the measurement model (also called outer model) and the structural model (also called inner model). The measurement model specifies the relations between a construct and its observed indicators (also called manifest variables), whereas the structural model specifies the relationships between the constructs (Honseler, Hubonaand Ray, 2015:4). In addition, Tenenhaus, Vinzi, Chatelin and Lauro (2005) have noted that the PLS path modelling is used to account for the PLS model performance in both measurement and structural terms. Therefore, the predictive power of the model has to be ascertained and it shows the geometric mean of ordinary Communality Index (CI) and average R² as presented in section 6.9, which is computed as follows:

$$GoF = \sqrt{CI * R^2} \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

5.9. PILOT STUDY

A pilot study is a small scale research project that collects data from research participants to assess if the designated procedure will actually work as envisaged. Pilot studies are a very critical aspect of the research process as they help in refining measures and reducing the risk that the main study will be flawed (Zikmund and Babin, 2010:61). In this study, a pilot study was conducted and 20 students were used as respondents. The results of the pilot study indicated that the research instrument was reliable and valid. The overall Cronbach alpha of pilot study was 0.899 which show a high degree of consistency. The results of the pilot study are shown in Table 5.4. The respondents for the pilot study were only used for the purposing of ascertaining the suitability of the questionnaire and were not used in the main study.

Table 5.4 Reliability of the pilot study

Classification	Construct	Cronbach Alpha
Complaints handling	Complaints management	0.948
	Speed	0.947
Service recovery	Apology	0.988
	Compensation	0.988
	Explanation	0.994
	Empowerment	0.977
Justice dimensions	Distributive	0.922
	Procedural	0.974
	Interactional	0.948
Customer satisfaction	Recovery satisfaction	0.989
Emotions	Negative emotions	0.987
Overall Cronbach Alpha		0.899

5.1 Validity

Wiid and Digginess (2015:242) have pointed out that validity is the fitness of a data collection instrument to measure the concept of the study. Simply put, validity is concerned with

whether or not the right concept is measured. Zikmund and Babin (2010:335-336) maintain that when a measure lacks validity, any conclusions based on that measure are likely to be wrong. The three basic approaches to establishing validity are content or face validity, predictive or criterion or concurrent validity and construct validity and their detailed explanation is provided in Table 5.5

Table 5.5 Methods for establishing validity

Validity	Application or measurement
Content validity	It refers to the ability of a measure of a construct to adequately cover important aspects of that construct. It is, however, difficult to guarantee that a measure will possess content validity because it is based on judgement or panel evaluation. To achieve content validity, a systematic review of relevant literature should be undertaken to see how other scholars have measured the concept in the past. Content validity is sometimes known as face validity.
Predictive validity	This is a form of validity that shows how well the measuring instrument predicts characteristics or specific behaviour of an individual. It is sometimes known as criterion or concurrent validity.
Construct validity	This form of validity is viewed or considered as the most difficult type of validity to establish. A measure is deemed to have construct validity if each item of the measuring instrument reflects the construct and depicts a correlation with other items in the instrument. In order to establish construct validity, it is essential to demonstrate that a measure has the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convergent validity which simply means positive correlation with other measures of the same construct; • Discriminant validity which means that a measure does not correlate with measures of other constructs; and • Nomological validity which means a measure is related to other constructs in theoretically predictable ways.

Source: Adopted from Churchill, Brownand Suter (2010:257-260).

In this study, the questionnaire was analysed by the supervisor, Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC) reviewers and a practitioner to establish face or content validity. Another school of thought suggests that experts should be asked to check the suitability of the questionnaire and that they should be allowed to make contributions to the structure. This practice enabled the researcher to address content validity and also make the necessary

changes before the final questionnaire was deployed for data collection (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009:394).

In addition, the construct validity of the questionnaire was assessed by performing a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to determine if individual questions load onto or contribute to the constructs in the questionnaire. The aim of factor analysis is to establish validity and reduce data by identifying constructs that may or may not be apparent using the direct analysis. In this regard, factor loadings were used to assess the validity of the construct. A factor loading of 0.40 on a factor can be considered as meaningful, whereas those with a value near 1 show that the item has loaded highly on a specific factor (Wiid and Diggines, 2015:242).

Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the measure of average variance extracted (AVE) with the correlated squared root (r). The AVE measures the amount of variance captured by the construct and its items relative to the amount of variance due to measurement error (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The results of the AVEs in this study are shown in section 6.8 and were calculated using the following formula recommended by Henseler, Ringle and Sinkovics (2009):

$$AVE = \frac{\sum \lambda_i^2}{\sum \lambda_i^2 + \sum (1 - \lambda_i^2)} \dots\dots\dots(3)$$

and discriminant validity (r) (Spiegel, 1972):

$$r = \frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2 \sum (y_i - \bar{y})^2}} \dots\dots\dots (4)$$

Convergent validity assesses the extent of positive associations of the measurement item with other items measuring the same construct (Malhotra, 2010:725). In this study convergent validity was evaluated by using the correlation coefficient and items loadings. To ensure that convergent validity is achieved, only items that were loading greater than 0.5 on all constructs were considered (Fornell & Lacker, 1981:46).

5.10. RELIABILITY

Reliability is the ability of the measure or instrument to obtain consistent results for the same object, trait or construct (Churchill, Brown and Suter, 2010:257). According to Zikmund and Babin (2010:334), consistency is the key to understanding reliability. A measure is considered as reliable if several attempts at measuring something provide the same result. Simply stated, when a measuring process provides reproducible results, the measuring instrument is deemed to be reliable. The three approaches for measuring reliability are test-retest reliability, alternative form reliability and internal consistency reliability as highlighted in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Approaches for assessing reliability

Reliability	Method of evaluation
Test-retest reliability	This is where identical sets of scale items are administered to respondents at two different times but under equivalent conditions. The degree of similarity between the two measurements is determined by computing a correlation coefficient so that the higher the correlation coefficient, the greater the reliability.
Alternative-form reliability	This form or approach uses two equivalent forms that are constructed and measured using same respondents at two different times. The scores are correlated to ascertain reliability.
Internal consistency reliability	Using this approach, several items are summed to form a total scale. The two forms of internal consistency reliability are Split-half reliability and the coefficient alpha or Cronbach alpha. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Split-half reliability: This is the simplest measure of internal consistency whereby items are split into two halves and the resulting half scores are correlated. High correlation between the halves signifies high internal consistency. • Cronbach Alpha: This is a measure of internal consistency which is the average of all possible split-half coefficients resulting from different splitting of the scale items.

Source: Adapted from Malhotra (2010:318-319)

In this study, construct reliability was performed using the Cronbach alpha reliability test and a composite reliability (CR) test. Cronbach alpha is a measure of internal consistency. Tavakol and Dennick (2011:53-54) agree that, in order to test the reliability of the study, a Cronbach's alpha can be used. In addition, the values of alpha above 0.70 are considered

adequate and acceptable. According to Clow and James (2014:269), the advantage of using Cronbach’s alpha is that correlation with other variables will be low for items that are not a good measure of a model. Similarly, Tavakol and Dennick (2011:54) explain that items with a lower score close to zero should be deleted or revised. Internal consistency results are presented in section 6.8 and were ascertained using Cronbach's alpha (α) (Cronbach 1951) as follows:

$$\alpha = \frac{N - \bar{r}}{1 + (N - 1) - \bar{r}} \dots\dots\dots (5)$$

Composite reliability measures the degree to which observable variables measure the latent variable. It provides a measure of reliability by taking into account the contribution of each latent factor to each item and each item’s error. The CR and Cronbach Alpha measurement have the same threshold of 0.70. As shown in section 6.8, this study estimated CR to represent correlations between item and factors by following hints suggested by Henseler et al., (2009) as follows:

$$CR = \frac{(\sum \lambda_i)^2}{(\sum \lambda_i)^2 + \sum (1 - \lambda_i^2)} \dots\dots\dots (6)$$

5.11. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Stakeholders in research have different interests, perspectives and motivations that can affect the way research is undertaken and results communicated such that it is imperative that the way research is conducted is not affected by subjectivity, self-interest or in a manner that can harm any party (Kumar, 2014:284). In this study, the proposal had undergone rigorous review by the Cluster Research Committee (CRC), Faculty Research Committee (FRC) and the Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC). Ethical clearance was provided by the institutional research ethics committee after they were satisfied that all the necessary requirements of the research proposal have been met. The ethics clearance number IREC 097/17 was assigned to the study. In addition, permission to conduct research was obtained from UKZN, DUT and UNIZULU. Participant Informed Consent was also obtained from the respondents prior to the commencement of questionnaire administration. The letters for research participants advised them that their participation is voluntary and that they were free

to withdraw at any time without providing reasons for such actions. In addition, the researcher undertook to maintain participants' anonymity and confidentiality with respect to their personal details and data collected.

5.12. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter described the research philosophy that was used in this study. The study adopted a positivist and deductive approach because it was formulated based on existing theory. In terms of the methodology, the research followed a quantitative, descriptive and cross-sectional study method. The chapter further highlighted the sampling process, approaches used to gather data, the measuring instrument, reliability and validity of the study. In addition, the chapter presented formulas that were used to calculate reliability, validity and the PLS model. A pilot study was also conducted to test the reliability of the constructs used and the results show that the measuring instrument is highly reliable as the overall Cronbach alpha was above the acceptable threshold. The next chapter presents data analysis and discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER 6

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1. INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter discussed the research methodology of this study. The research design, statistical techniques for analysing data and all the relevant methodological steps taken in this study were highlighted. This chapter focuses on the discussion of the empirical findings. In this regard, tables and graphs have been used to present information. Data analysis for descriptive statistics was computed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 24.0. The smart Partial Least Square (PLS) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were used to analyse latent variables and evaluate the fitness of the measurement and structural model.

Data used in this study were collected from a sample of 460 students across three public universities namely: UKZN, DUT, and UNIZULU. A total of 430 usable questionnaires were received by the researcher. This represents a response rate of 93.5 percent which is considered very high in comparison to similar studies on service recovery (Chen, Ma, Bian, Zheng and Devlin, 2018). The research instrument consisted of 57 items divided into 7 sections: demographic data, service failure, complaints management, service recovery strategies, justice theory, recovery satisfaction and negative emotions. The different sections presented were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The constructs were assessed for the presence of a significant relationship through correlation analysis.

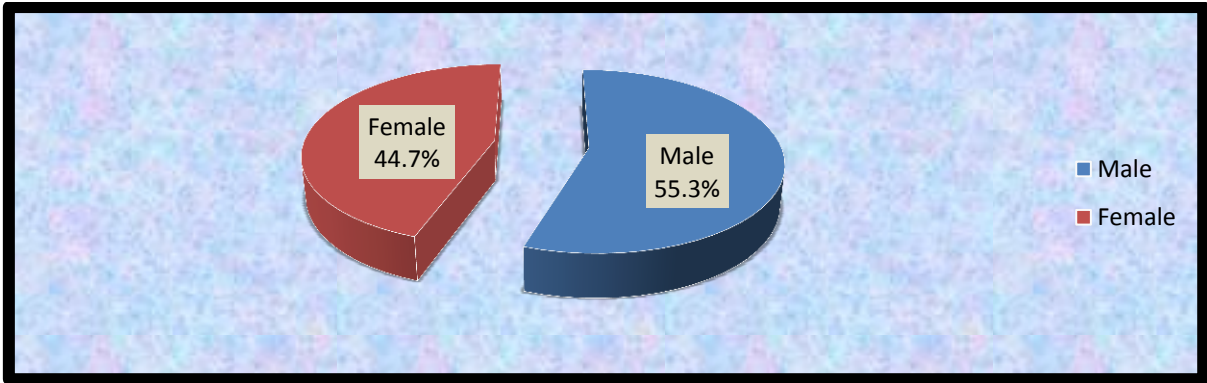
6.2. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

This section summarises the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The demographic questions covered gender, age, level of study, the name of the respondents' university, academic discipline, race and nationality. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the demographic data.

6.2.1. Gender composition of respondents

Figure 6.1 shows the breakdown of sample respondents in terms of gender. The results show that 55.3 percent of the respondents were male and 44.7 percent were female. This implies that there was a fairly equal distribution of the gender of the sample respondents.

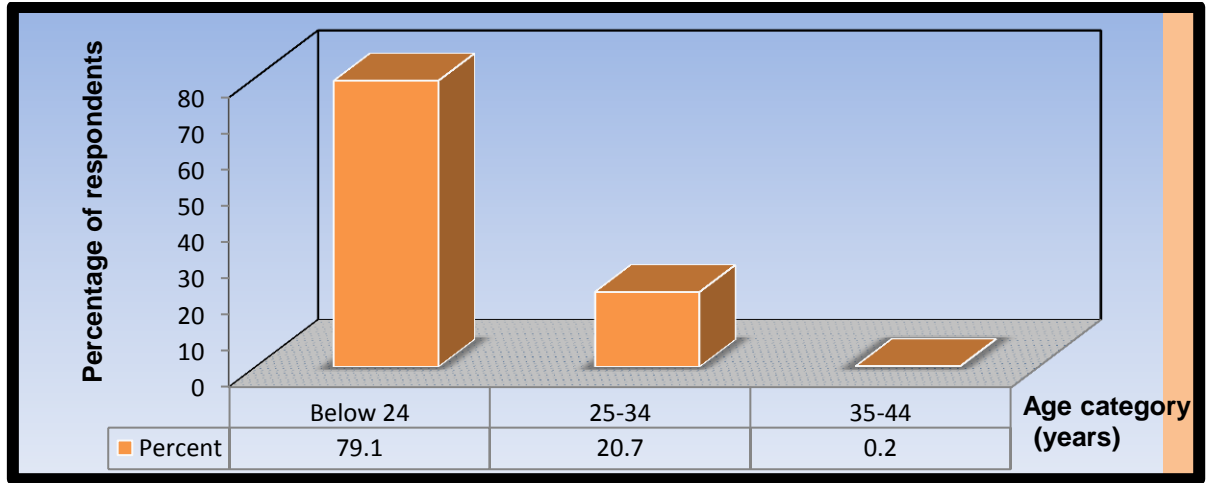
Figure 6.1 Gender of respondents



6.2.2. Age distribution of respondents

Figure 6.2 represents the age category of the respondents. As indicated in the bar graph, the majority of the respondents were below 24 (79.1 percent). The age category between 25 and 34 equated to 20.7 percent of the sample respondents, whilst 0.2 percent of the sample respondents were between the age category of 35 and 44.

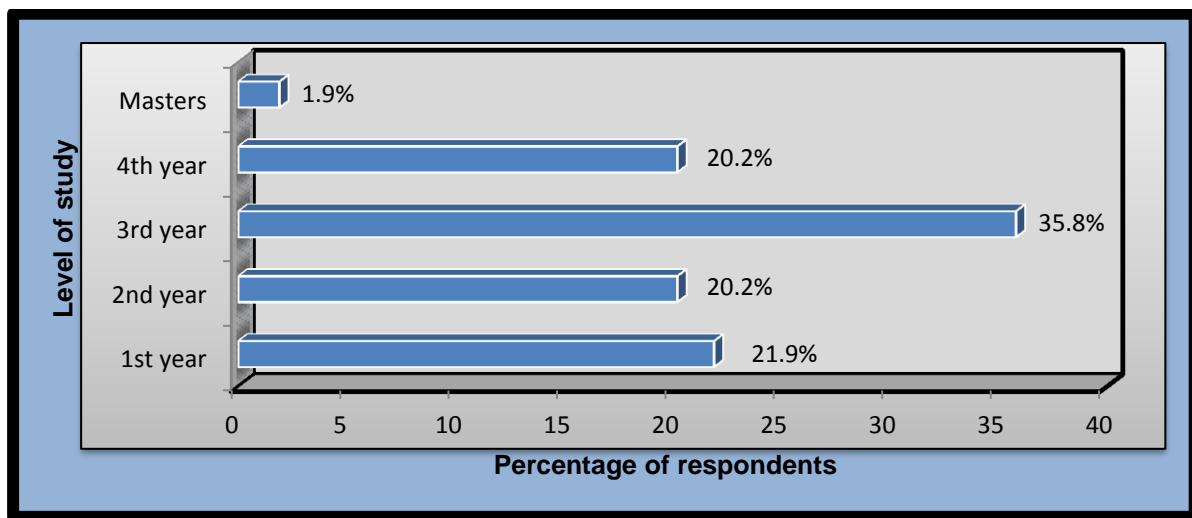
Figure 6.2 Age of respondents



6.2.3. Level of study of respondents

The level of study for the sample respondents is depicted in figure 6.3. The findings reveal that the majority of respondents were studying in their 3rd year (35.8 percent), while 21.9 percent of the sample respondents were studying in 1st year. There is an equal percentage of the sample respondents that were studying in 4th year and 2nd year (20.2 percent). Furthermore, the results show that 1.9 percent of the sample respondents were studying for a Master's degree.

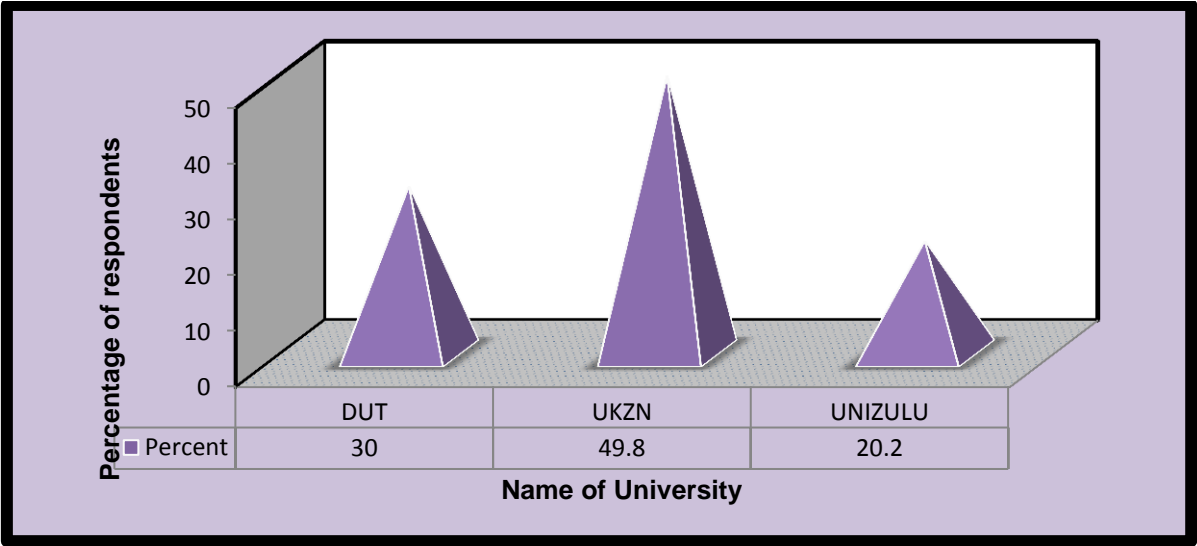
Figure 6.3 Level of study of respondents



6.2.4. Universities of respondents

Figure 6.4 identifies the universities from which the sample respondents were drawn. The majority of respondents (49.8 percent) were from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). The Durban University of Technology (DUT) contributed 30 percent to the sample, while University of Zululand (UNIZULU) contributed 20.2 percent. The number of sample respondents per university was proportional to the student population such that UKZN had a larger student population, followed by DUT and then UNIZULU.

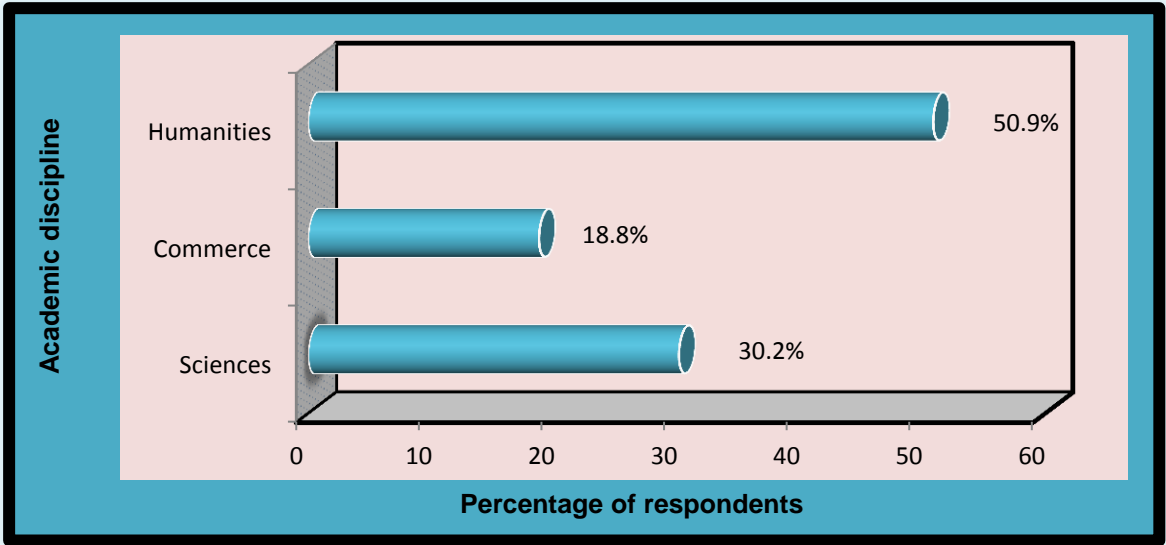
Figure 6.4 Universities of respondents



6.2.5. Academic discipline of respondents

Respondents were requested to indicate whether they are registered in the following academic disciplines: humanities, commerce and sciences. Figure 6.5 reveals that the majority of students in this study were registered for humanities courses (50.9 percent), followed by those registered for sciences courses (30.2 percent), while those registered for commercial courses equated to 18.8 percent.

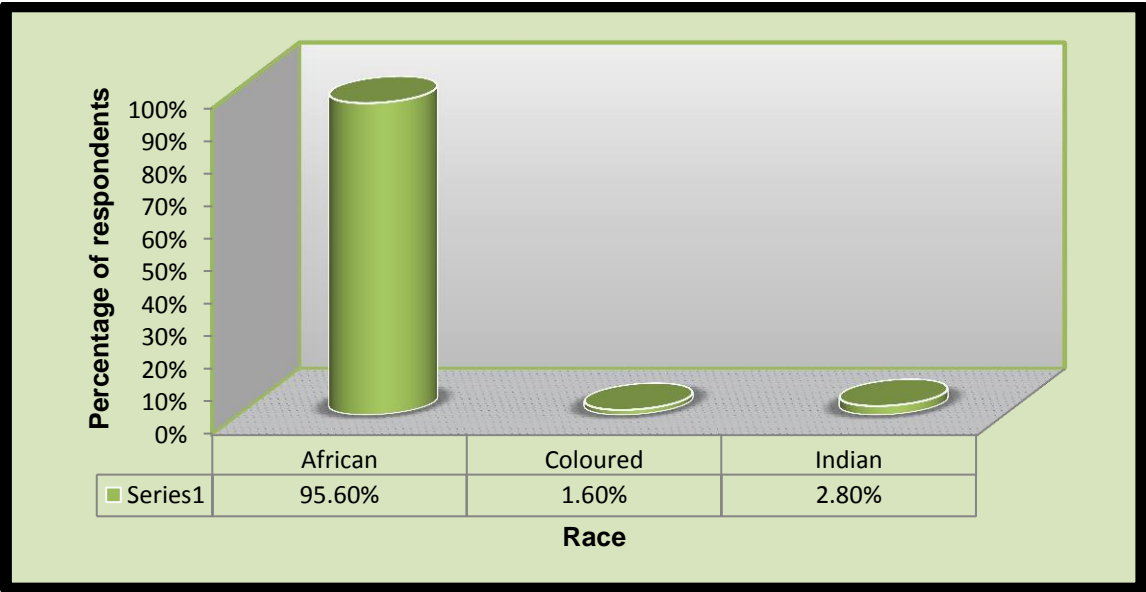
Figure 6.5 Academic discipline of respondents



6.2.6. Race composition of respondents

The race of the sample respondents in this study is represented in Figure 6.6. As shown in the bar graph, the majority of the sample respondents were Africans (95.6 percent), followed by Indians (2.80 percent) and coloureds (1.60 percent). The disparities in terms of race stem from the fact that the majority of the students in South Africa are Africans.

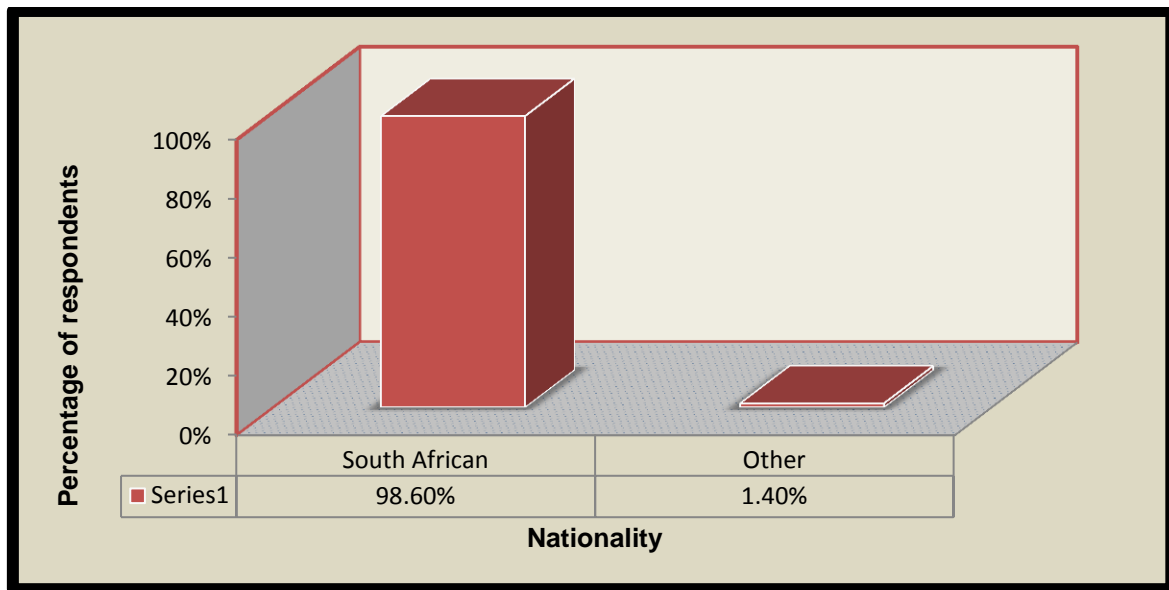
Figure 6.6 Race composition of respondents



6.2.7. Nationality of respondents

Figure 6.7 shows the breakdown of the nationality of the sample respondents who were involved in this study. The findings highlight that 98.6 percent of the sample respondents were South Africans while other nationalities equated to 1.4 percent. A simpler explanation to the disparities is the fact that priorities in terms of students recruitment are given to South Africans who are in the majority by virtue of being citizens.

Figure 6.7 Nationality of respondents

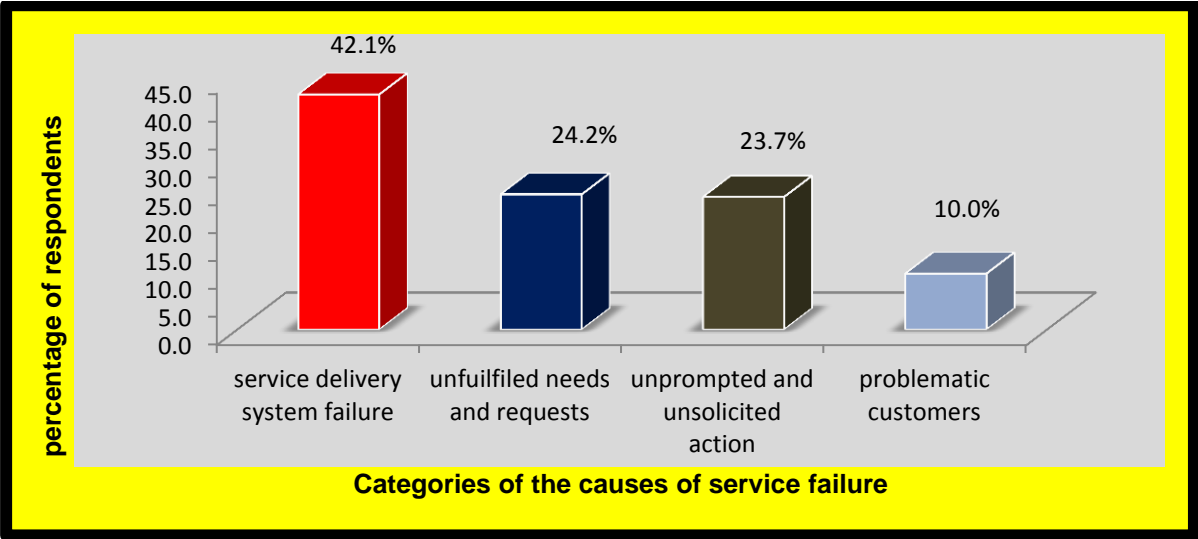


6.2.8. Causes of service failure

The categories of the causes of service failure are depicted in Figure 6.8. The majority of respondents had experienced service delivery system failure (42.1 percent) followed by unfulfilled needs and requests (24.2 percent), unprompted and unsolicited action (23.7 percent), while service failure as a result of problematic customers amounted to 10 percent. Service failure consists of four major categories: employees' response to service delivery system, employees' response to implicit/explicit customer requests, unprompted and unsolicited employee' actions and problematic customer behaviour. Service delivery system failure represents product or service defects, slow/unavailable service, facility problem, unclear policy and when the food at student cafeteria is not delivered in an acceptable way. When lecturers fail to re-schedule classes, due to timetable clashes or there are some seating problems for the students, the service failure is categorized as employee' responses to implicit and explicit customer requests. Another important category due to the employee' unprompted and unsolicited employee' actions involve employee' behaviour, wrong grades being given, lost examination results, and over-charging students fees on statement. Lastly, sometimes service fails due to problematic customer's behaviour or is more likely due to aberrant consumer' behaviour such as making a noise and drunkenness (Ishaque, Tufail and Habib, 2016:272).

With respect to problematic customer behaviour, customers place a high importance on following particular service norms and policies governing service encounters. As identified in the ‘service rule breakers’ and ‘ignorant customers’ categories, customers become bothered when other customers either do not pay attention or do not follow typical service processes or norms. Similar to many societal-based norms, there are implicitly and/or explicitly established ‘service norms’ that each customer should pay attention to and adhere to. Service rule breakers make both employees and other customers upset. Dissatisfaction of those customers who follow the rules increases when frontline employees fail to respond (Gursoy, Cai and Anaya, 2017:2357). Therefore, a better service can be obtained by providing proper customer orientation in order to avoid potentially uncivil behaviour that endangers the positive relationships between customers and service providers. The behaviours seen as uncivil by employees includes insulting comments, the anger of customers, foul language, customer frustration taken out on employees, personal verbal attacks, and offensive body language (Torres, van Niekerk, M. and Orłowski, 2017:62).

Figure 6.8 Categories of the causes of service failure

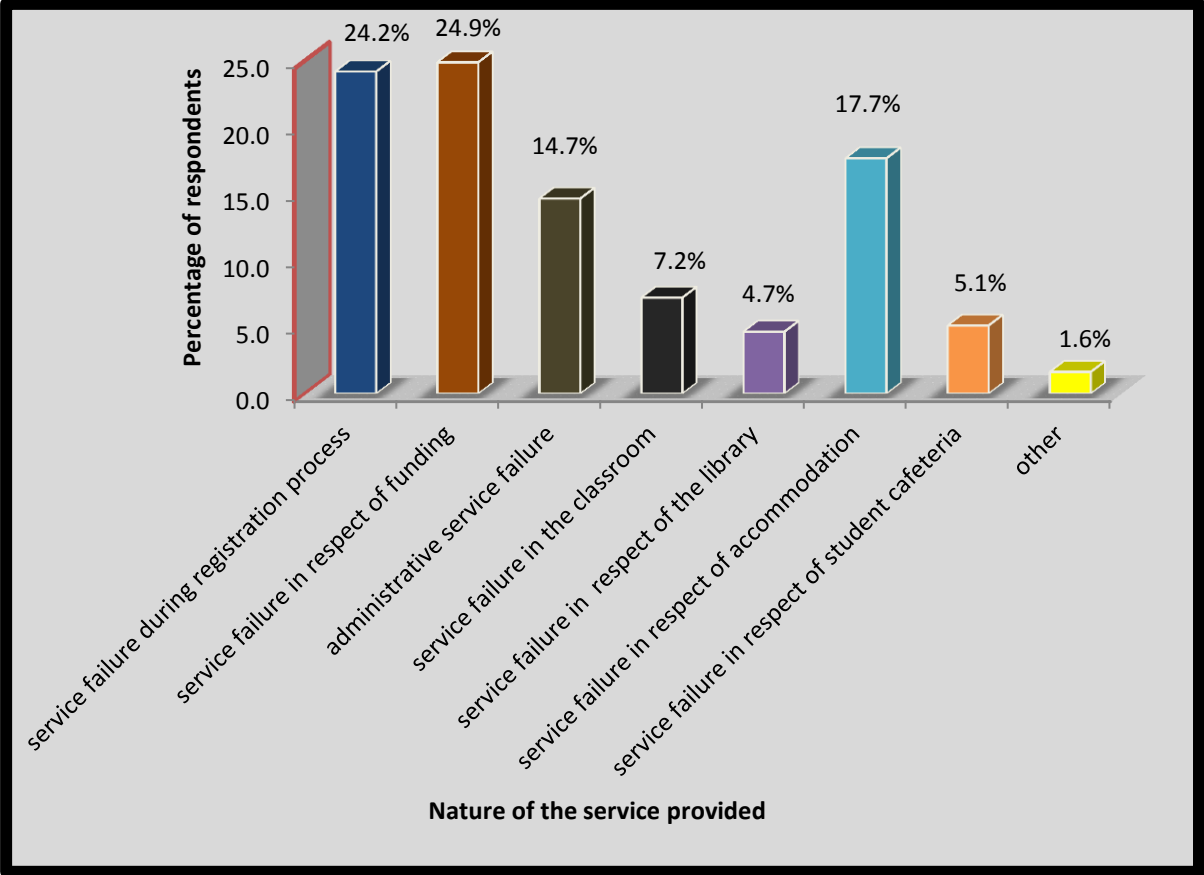


6.2.9. Nature of services provided during service failure

Figure 6.9 shows the breakdown of the nature of services provided in the higher education institutions where students can experience service failure. The results reveal that the majority of students experience service failures in respect of funding (24.9 percent) followed by service failure during the registration process (24.2 percent), service failure in respect of

accommodation or student housing (17.7 percent), administrative service failure (14.7 percent), service failure in the classroom (7.2 percent), service failure in respect of student cafeteria (5.1 percent), service failure in respect of the library (4.7 percent) while other service failures amounted to 1.6 percent.

Figure 6.9 Nature of the service failure with respect to the services provided at universities



6.3. CUSTOMER PERCEPTION OF COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

This section provides a discussion of findings relating to customer perception of complaints management. All the items under customer complaints will be reviewed to ascertain whether customers were satisfied or not.

6.3.1. University or employees encourage complaints

With respect to respondents' perception on whether the university or employees encourage students to complain when they face problems, 23.9 percent (103) of the respondents disagree while 29.1 percent (125) were uncertain. Furthermore, as reflected in Table 6.1, the majority of respondents (47 percent; n= 202) agree that the university and its employees encourage students to complain. Merlo, Eisingerich, Auh and Levstek (2018) have noted that encouraging customer complaints and finding out what drives customer attrition can be a powerful strategy. Knowing what students value most, what areas are in need of improvement and how the company performs vis-à-vis competing offerings can be useful to identify the kind of information that should be shared within higher education institutions to improve customer relationship management and problem resolution.

Similarly, Soares, Zhang, Proença and Kandampully (2017:535) observe that encouraging dissatisfied customers to give feedback is important. Rather than viewing them as annoyances, managers should consider complaints as an opportunity to gain the trust of the customers. In competitive sectors, service firms must try to retain their existing customers and to transform dissatisfied ones into active ambassadors of the firm. Thus, building customer trust is possible for those firms who take an interest in the customer and rectifying errors. In particular, service firms should offer incentives to encourage customers to provide feedback on any service failure.

6.3.2. The university provides different platforms for registering complaints

The perception of respondents as to whether or not the university provides different platforms for registering complaints is highlighted in Table 6.1. The results show that 21.4 percent (92) of the respondents disagree while 33 percent (142) of the respondents were uncertain. Furthermore, 45.6 percent (196) (which represents the majority of respondents) agree that the university has different platforms or communication channels for registering complaints. Therefore, it is important for higher education institutions to set up appropriate complaint systems as one way of encouraging students to express their dissatisfaction easily. Brief customer satisfaction surveys in various forms may be administered to collect information and to monitor student satisfaction levels continuously (Villi and Koc, 2018:53). In addition,

mobile phone applications, SMS and web-based portals can be used to assist students to lodge complaints (Badhe, Birajdar and Mapari, 2017:954).

6.3.3. The university has publicised where to register complaints

Table 6.1 depicts the perception of respondents with respect to whether they knew where to register their complaints or not as a result of university publicity. The results reveal that 38.8 percent (167) representing the majority of respondents disagree, followed by 33 percent (142) of the respondents who agree and 28.1 percent (121) who were uncertain as to whether or not they knew where to register a complaint because the university has publicised. Thus, feedback from the students is beneficial and this is the reason why universities should make it clear or publicise to their students that any feedback is welcome. Without a doubt, it is best to do everything perfectly from the beginning. Still, there are times when something goes wrong. Something unexpected happens and, in those cases, it is important to have a good customer dissatisfaction and complaint management system. Such systems usually have a strong positive impact on students (Kloviene and Pazeraite, 2017:10).

6.3.4. Easy, fast and convenient to register a complaint

Respondents were asked whether it was easy, fast and convenient to register a complaint at their university. The findings show that the majority of the respondents (41.2 percent; n=177) disagree while 27.9 percent (120) were uncertain. Furthermore, as highlighted in Table 6.1, 30.9 percent (133) of the respondents agree that it was easy and fast to register complaints at their institution of higher learning. Therefore, higher education institutions should make sure that the complaint management procedures should be easy to understand by both students and the employees of the institution. Dissatisfied students should clearly understand how to file the complaint and employees need to know who is to accept those complaints (Kloviene and Pazeraite, 2017:4)

6.3.5. Authority to settle complaints by members of staff

The results shown in Table 6.1 indicate that 30.5 percent (131) of the respondents disagree that members of staff had authority to settle complaints while 32.3 percent (139) of the respondents were uncertain. The findings show further that the majority of the respondents

(37.2 percent; n=160) agree that members of staff had authority to settle or address complaints registered at the university. Quality of service encounters are frequently determined by the performances of front-line staff members whose experiences and commitment may be different from one another. Thus, management should empower and provide guidelines for the staff to follow with regard to handling complaints appropriately. Apart from the normal job training, management should consider providing training that is focused on complaint-handling and service recovery strategies. Furthermore, complaint cases should be reviewed and a constant reminder during daily briefings is suggested to improve overall team performance (Chan, Tang and Sou, 2017:71)

Table 6.1 Frequency distribution of complaints management

Complaints Management	Disagree		Uncertain		Agree		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Encourage complaints	103	23.9%	125	29.1%	202	47%	430	100%
Platforms for complaints	92	21.4%	142	33%	196	45.6%	430	100%
Knew where to complain	167	38.8%	121	28.1%	142	33%	430	100%
Easy to register complaints	177	41.2%	120	27.9%	133	30.9%	430	100%
Authority to settle complaints	131	30.5%	139	32.3%	160	37.2%	430	100%

6.4. ANALYSING CUSTOMER PERCEPTION OF SERVICE RECOVERY STRATEGIES

This section will provide a discussion of findings relating to customer’ perception of the service recovery strategies which are speed, apology, explanation, compensation and empowerment.

6.4.1. Speed

6.4.1.1.The university offered a quick service recovery plan

Respondents were asked whether or not the university offered a quick service recovery plan to the problem they encountered as indicated in Table 6.2. The results show that the majority of the respondents (41.2 percent, n=177) disagree while 29.1 percent (125) were uncertain.

Furthermore, 29.8 percent (128) of the respondents agree that the university offered a quick service recovery plan for their problems. Hogueve, Bilstein and Mandl (2017: 881) have noted that customers also grant firms a recovery time zone of tolerance, during which they can restore customer satisfaction without providing higher compensation. If the recovery time lies outside the recovery time zone of tolerance, firms need to compensate the customer more, but by doing so, they might still restore satisfaction. Therefore, managers should check their service recovery processing time, to determine if it lies within their customers' recovery time zone of tolerance and enables them to benefit from lower expected compensation

6.4.1.2.The university solved my problem at once

The results in Table 6.2 show that 48.4 percent (208) of the respondents disagree that their problem was solved at once and did not need to ask for further help, followed by 27.4 percent (118) who agree and 24.2 percent (104) who were uncertain. The results show that the majority of respondents are not happy with the way the university solved their problems. Thus, a good complaint management system includes situations where a complaint is managed with a simple process. Every student should be entitled to the opportunity to file a complaint with one simple contact and the employees should be trained to resolve complaints without running to their superior every time the problem arises (Kloviene and Pazeraite, 2017:4).

6.4.1.3.The university did not keep me waiting unnecessarily

The findings in Table 6.2 reveal that 52.6 percent (208) of the respondents disagree that they were not kept waiting unnecessarily and a solution was found quickly followed by 24.4 percent (105) who agree and 23 percent (104) who were uncertain. The results imply that the majority of the respondents were not happy with the waiting time before they could get a solution provided by the university. In view of the current challenges, higher education institutions need to identify common customer waits in the process and points of potential excessive waits. These should then either be designed out of the process or, if that is not possible, the institutions can implement strategies to make waits less unpleasant (Wirtz, 2017:50).

6.4.1.4. The university solved my problem within a reasonable time

Respondents were asked whether the university resolved their problems within a reasonable time or not. The results as depicted in Table 6.2 show that 52.6 percent (226) of the respondents disagree, followed by 25.8 percent (111) who agree and 21.6 percent (93) who were uncertain. This means that the majority of the respondents found the time taken to resolve the reported problems unsatisfactory. Ultimately, customers value prompt response to service failures more than anything else. Thus, higher education institutional managers need to pay more attention to the prompt treatment of customers' complaints. What students view as important when they encounter service breakdown is how university employees treat their complaints and what measures they use to solve them. Therefore, a successful service recovery requires university employees to understand the importance of the prompt response to service failure (Park and Park, 2016:240). In addition, service standards and targets should be established for each activity, reflecting customer expectations. This includes specific times to be set for the completion of each task and the acceptable wait between each customer activity (Wirtz, 2017:50).

Table 6.2 Frequency distribution of speed

Speed	Disagree		Uncertain		Agree		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Offered a quick recovery plan	177	41.2%	125	29.1%	128	29.8%	430	100%
Problem was solved at once	208	48.4%	104	24.2%	118	27.4%	430	100%
Was not kept waiting	226	52.6%	99	23%	105	24.4%	430	100%
Solved within reasonable time	226	52.6%	93	21.6%	111	25.8%	430	100%

6.4.2. Apology

6.4.2.1. The university was sorry for the inconvenience caused

Table 6.3 shows that 47 percent (202) of the respondents disagree that the university or member of staff was sorry for the inconvenience caused, followed by 30.4 percent (131) who agree and 22.6 percent (97) who were uncertain. The findings imply that the majority felt the university did not feel sorry or express remorse for the inconvenience caused. Thus, it is plausible that service managers who face angry customers suffering from service failure should offer a sincere apology. This gesture can help to minimise the customers' level of

anger and encourage them to accept and be satisfied with the apology (Tarofder, Nikhashemi, Azam, Selvantharan, and Haque, 2016:20).

6.4.2.2.The university apologised for what had happened

Respondents were asked whether the university apologised to them for what had happened. The findings as indicated in Table 6.3 reveal that 48.6 percent (209) of the respondents disagree followed by 27.7 percent (119) and 23.7 percent (102) who were uncertain. The results mean that the majority felt that the university did not apologise for what had happened. Therefore, in order to address the needs of relation-oriented students, university employees are advised to engage these students actively in order to have a full understanding as to where the services went wrong and then to make quick and sincere apologies to the aggrieved students (Cheung and To, 2017:782)

6.4.2.3.The university expressed regret for the mistake

The findings as presented in Table 6.3 show that 47 percent (202) of the respondents disagree that the university expressed regret for the mistake that had occurred followed by 27.2 percent (93) who were uncertain and 25.8 percent (111) who agree. The results show clearly that the majority of the respondents were of the view that the university had not expressed regret for the mistakes that had occurred. It is imperative for higher education institutional service managers to train frontline employees to offer service recovery in a manner that demonstrates sincere regret for the service failure incident that has occurred (Lastner, Folse, Mangus and Fennell, 2016:8).

6.4.2.4.The university offered additional benefits as a token for the mistakes

Respondents were asked whether they had received additional benefits as a token for the mistake or service failure by the university. The results as depicted in Table 6.3 show that 57 percent (245) of the respondents disagree followed by 22.3 percent (96) who were uncertain and 20.7 percent (89) who agree. This implies that the majority of the respondents did not receive additional benefits as a token for the mistake that had occurred. The reality is that customers are happy with the employees taking on the additional effort, not only to rectify the problem, but also to complete their transaction (Collier, Breazeale and White, 2017:612).

Table 6.3 Frequency distribution of apology

Apology	Disagree		Uncertain		Agree		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Was sorry for inconvenience	202	47%	97	22.6%	131	30.4%	430	100%
Apologised for what happened	209	48.6%	102	23.7%	119	27.7%	430	100%
Expressed regret for mistake	202	47%	93	27.2%	111	25.8%	430	100%
Offered additional benefits	245	57%	96	22.3%	89	20.7%	430	100%

6.4.3. Compensation

6.4.3.1. The university provided compensation as a remedy to my problem

As reflected in Table 6.4, 55.1 percent (237) disagree that the university offered or provided compensation as a remedy to their problems, followed by 23.7 percent (102) who were uncertain and 21.2 percent (91) who agree. The results imply that the majority of the respondents felt the university did not offer them any compensation as a remedy to the problem they encountered. Thus, service providers should give compensation that meets customers' expectations (i.e., stays within the zone of tolerance), the compensation should have a positive effect on perceived service quality, continuance intention, and repurchase intention. Employees are also warned that over-compensation does not pay off and, although managers might consider a very high compensation level as an appropriate response to service failure, inflated levels of compensation can have a negative effect on important outcomes (Goode, Hoehle, Venkatesh and Brown, 2017:722).

6.4.3.2. The university offered a good solution to my problem

Respondents were asked to state whether the university had offered a good solution to their problems or not. The findings as depicted in Table 6.4 shows that 42.1 percent (181) of the respondents disagree, followed by 35.6 percent (153) who agree and 22.3 percent (96) who were uncertain. The results show that the majority of the respondents felt that the university did not offer a good solution to their problem. When a high-involvement service has failed and the failure is severe, only high benefit compensation, such as a credit for future consumption or refund, should be offered, independently of whether the customer or the service provider is responsible or not. The case in which the customer is responsible and the employee would have to offer high benefit compensation might, in particular, represent a

difficult situation for employees. Therefore, they should be specifically trained on how to behave in such situations (Bambauer-Sachse and Rabeson, 2015:340).

6.4.3.3.The university offered a solution that was acceptable

As shown in Table 6.4, 37.7 percent (162) of the respondents disagree that the university offered an acceptable solution to their problem followed 36.5 percent (157) who agree and by 25.8 percent (111) who were uncertain. The findings imply that the majority of the respondents were not satisfied or happy with the intervention or solution offered by the university. Therefore, managers should be mindful of whether or not an organization's recovery efforts compensate for consumers' economic and social losses (e.g. money, goods or time) (Hur and Jang, 2016:732). In addition, customers expect to be compensated for the inconvenience related to the failure and having to go through the recovery process. The typical forms of compensation are one or some combination of refunds, credits, correction of charges, repairs and replacement (Amin, Amin and Kumar, Piaralal, 2017:155).

6.4.3.4.The university offered a good service fix to the problem

Respondents were asked whether the university offered a good service fix to their problem. As reflected in Table 6.4, 36.3 percent (237) of the respondents disagree followed by 35.8 percent (154) who agree and 27.9 percent (120) who were uncertain. This means that the majority of the respondents felt that the university did not provide a good service fix for their problem. Thus, service recovery efforts need to go beyond simply 'fixing' the problem to compensate for the potential time and effort costs that now need to be made to finish a transaction (Collier, Breazeale and White, 2017:612).

Table 6.4 Frequency distribution of compensation

Compensation	Disagree		Uncertain		Agree		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Provided compensation as remedy	237	55.1%	102	23.7%	91	21.2%	430	100%
Offered a good solution	181	42.1%	96	22.3%	153	35.6%	430	100%
Solution offered was acceptable	162	37.7%	111	25.8%	157	36.5%	430	100%
Offered a good service fix	156	36.3%	120	27.9%	154	35.8%	430	100%

6.4.4. Explanation

6.4.4.1. The university explained why the problem might have happened

As shown in Table 6.5, 41 percent (176) of the respondents agree that the university or member of staff explained to them why the problem might have happened followed by 35.3 percent (152) who disagree and 23.7 percent (102) who were uncertain. The findings show that the majority of the respondents were happy that the university provided an explanation with respect to the problem they encountered. Tarofder, Nikhashemi, Azam, Selvantharan, and Haque (2016:20) believe that focusing on strategies that can simply satisfy customers can be rewarding for higher education institutions. This means understanding the fact that the customer's need to know the reason for the failure is their right and that this must be addressed through proper explanation by service providers.

6.4.4.2. The university explained the factors that might have caused the problem

Respondents were asked whether the university had explained the factors that might have caused the problem. As depicted in Table 6.5, 43.7 percent (188) of the respondents agree, followed by 30.7 percent (132) who disagree and 25.6 percent (110) who were uncertain. This implies that the majority of the respondents were happy with the explanation that the university provided with respect to the factors that might have led to the problem. Therefore, while it is difficult for institutions to reduce or even eliminate service failures in their daily operations, they can adapt their communication strategies to students. In cases where the institution is not responsible for the failure, its communication to its students should clearly emphasize the external factors causing the service failure. By pro-actively communicating in

service failure situations, a university can prevent the students from drawing the wrong conclusions regarding controllability (von Aswege, Kemper and Brettel, 2018:1512).

6.4.4.3. The university explained what might have gone wrong

As shown in Table 6.5, 41.4 percent (178) of the respondents agree that the university explained what might have gone wrong, followed by 30.9 percent (133) who agree and 27.7 percent (119) who were uncertain. The findings mean that the majority of the respondents were satisfied with the way the university provided an explanation with respect to what might have gone wrong. Gohary, Hamzeli and Alizadeh (2016:137) argue that customers prefer to be aware of the reasons for the failure. Explaining the reasons for the failure to students can enable them to gain sufficient information about the procedure for providing services. This information helps customers to assess their conduct and assists organisations to provide better solutions to them. Therefore, explaining what happened to students gives them information which is the basis of involvement in recovery procedure and co-recovery.

6.4.4.4. The university provided a convincing explanation to the problem

As shown in Table 6.5, 35.6 percent (153) of the respondents disagree that the university provided a convincing explanation to the reported problem, followed by 34.9 percent (150) who agree and 30.9 percent (119) who were uncertain. The results imply that the majority of the respondents were not satisfied with the university explanation of their problems. Higher education institution employees or managers should aim at achieving customer satisfaction and offer an explanation about how or why a service failed. Providing an explanation can reduce the ripple or catastrophic effects of failure and can prevent unwanted outcomes (Tarofder, Nikhashemi, Azam, Selvantharan, and Haque, 2016:18).

Table 6.5 Frequency distribution of explanation

Explanation	Disagree		Uncertain		Agree		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Explained why the problem might have happened	152	35.3%	102	23.7%	176	41%	430	100%
Explained what caused the problem	132	30.7%	110	25.6%	188	43.7%	430	100%
Explained what might have gone wrong	133	30.9%	119	27.7%	178	41.4%	430	100%
Provided a convincing explanation	153	35.6%	127	29.5%	150	34.9%	430	100%

6.4.5. Empowerment

6.4.5.1. The first contact employee solved the reported problem

Respondents were asked whether the first contact employee solved their problem. As reflected in Table 6.6, 54.9 percent (236) of the respondents disagree, followed by 24.4 percent (105) who agree and 20.7 percent (89) who were uncertain. The majority of respondents were not happy that the first contact employee did not solve their problem. The reality is that employees who are empowered to encounter service failures will perform better than those who are not empowered. Not only that, empowered employees will also be more inclined towards going the extra mile to prevent the occurrence of service failures in the first instance. Prevention of service failures, by making additional efforts, improves the service quality perception of customers and increases their satisfaction (Zahoor and Sahaf, 2018).

6.4.5.2. The employee explained what to expect from the process

As indicated in Table 6.6, 40 percent (159) of the respondents agree that the university employee told them what to expect from the process, followed by 37.4 percent (161) who disagree and 25.6 percent (110) who were uncertain. This means that the majority of respondents were happy that the employee told them what to expect from the service recovery process. Higher education institutions can enhance cognitive control by providing reliable information that is tailored to the student's level of understanding about the cause of the failure and the steps and time needed to recover from it. This action can enhance the student's understanding of what has happened and what is about to happen, which, in turn, reduces

stress and anxiety and improves post-recovery evaluations (Joosten, Bloemer and Hillebrand, 2017:511).

6.4.5.3.The employee did not need help to solve the problem

As reflected in Table 6.6, 42.3 percent (182) of the respondents disagree that the university employee did not need help to solve their problem, followed by 30.3 percent (130) who agree and 27.4 percent (118) who were uncertain. The majority of respondents were not happy that the first contact employee did not resolve their problems. Therefore, management should empower the frontline employees so that they can respond with flexibility to customer needs, non-routine encounters and service failures. Empowerment and training will give them the authority, skills, and self-confidence to use their own initiative in delivering service excellence (Wirtz, 2018:71).

6.4.5.4.The employee had the skill and knowledge to deal with the problem

Respondents were asked whether or not the employee had the skill and knowledge to deal with their problem. As indicated in Table 6.6, 39.7 percent (171) of the respondents agree, followed by 32.6% percent (140) who disagree and 27.7 percent (119) who were uncertain. The results imply that the majority of the respondents were satisfied that the employee had the requisite skill and knowledge to resolve their problems. Higher education institutions should be mindful that even if rigorous screening is done when hiring front-line staff who are knowledgeable and experienced in effective service recovery practices, managers should take purposeful action to ensure that employees understand their roles and responsibilities and the ways in which their efforts will be supported to reduce the magnitude and frequency of service-related errors. When gaps in support are found, formal or informal training programmes may be designed and implemented to help individuals, both employees and supervisors, to develop skills and abilities that are required for effect service recoveries (Pasamehmetoglu, Guchait, Tracey, Cunningham and Lei, 2017:16-17).

Table 6.6 Frequency distribution of empowerment

Empowerment	Disagree		Uncertain		Agree		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
First contact employee solved my problem	236	54.9%	89	20.7%	105	24.4%	430	100%
Employee told me what to expect from the process	161	37.4%	110	25.6%	159	40%	430	100%
Employee did not need help	182	42.3%	118	27.4%	130	30.3%	430	100%
Employee had skills and knowledge	140	32.6%	119	27.7%	171	39.7%	430	100%

6.5. CUSTOMER PERCEPTION OF JUSTICE DIMENSIONS

This section will provide a discussion of findings relating to customer perception of the three dimensions of justice viz. procedural, interactional and distributive and, an evaluation of items under each justice dimension will be made to ascertain customers' perception.

6.5.1. Distributive justice

6.5.1.1.The outcome received was fair

As shown in Table 6.7, 45.3 percent (195) of the respondents agree that the outcome they received was fair, followed by 29.3 percent (126) who disagree and 25.3 percent (109) who were uncertain. This means that the majority of the respondents were happy that the outcome they received was fair. Therefore, higher education institutions should develop good service recovery practices on distributive justice that ensure fairness in the outcomes to achieve recovery satisfaction (Lee, Siu, Zhang, 2018:31).

6.5.1.2.The university gave what was needed in resolving the problem

As depicted in table 6.7, 47.2 percent (203) of the respondents agree that in resolving the problem, the university gave them what they needed, followed by 29.5 percent (127) who disagree and 23.3 percent (100) who were uncertain. As per the findings, the majority of respondents were happy that the university gave them what they needed to resolve their problem. To demonstrate distributive fairness, higher education institutions have to show that

the recovery deals they provide are fair and concise and, not only this, but there should be clear interactions from which both the service provider and customer can benefit (Sekhon, Roy and Devlin, 2016:185).

6.5.1.3.The way the problem was resolved reflected the loss suffered

Respondents were asked whether the way the problem they reported was resolved reflected the loss they suffered or not. As depicted in Table 6.7, 38.6 percent (174) of the respondents agree, followed by 31.6 percent (136) who disagree and 29.8 percent (128) who were uncertain. The results imply that the majority of respondents were happy that the problem was resolved in a way that reflected the loss suffered. Higher education institutional management should focus on the outcome of complaint handling and they should try to understand how satisfied the complainant is from service recovery efforts. It is important to give a message to the complainant that management is sorry about the failure and that they are ready to compensate for it. Depending on how serious the failure is, management should take appropriate action that will lead to recovery satisfaction (Nadiri, 2016:210).

6.5.1.4.The university resolved the problem according to expectation

The results as presented in Table 6.7 indicate that 40.5 percent (174) of the respondents agree that the university resolved the problem according to their expectation, followed by 33.5 percent (144) who disagree and 26 percent (112) who were uncertain. The results imply that the majority of the respondents were happy that the university resolved the reported problem according to their expectation. It is important for service employees to study their customers. When dealing with consumers who believe that service failure is not morally acceptable, service providers should aim to meet rather than overly exceed consumer expectations. A service recovery meeting a consumer's expectations will result in better outcomes and higher satisfaction. In other words, monetary offers exceeding expectation, although more costly, generate less favourable responses than expected compensation, which means financial compensation higher than expectation is a waste of business resources (Chen, Ma, Bian, Zheng and Devlin, 2018:7)

Table 6.7 Frequency distribution of distributive justice

Distributive Justice	Disagree		Uncertain		Agree		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Outcome was fair	126	29.3%	109	25.3%	195	45.3%	430	100%
Gave me what I needed	127	29.5%	100	23.3%	203	47.2%	430	100%
The way the problem was resolved reflected the loss suffered	136	31.6%	128	29.8%	166	38.6%	430	100%
Problem resolved to my expectation	144	33.5%	112	26%	174	40.5%	430	100%

6.5.2. Procedural justice

6.5.2.1. The university procedures were fair

Respondents were asked whether the university procedures were fair or not. As presented in Table 6.8, 38.6 percent (166) of the respondents agree, followed by 31.2 percent (134) who disagree and 30.2 percent (130) who were uncertain. This means that the majority of the respondents were satisfied that the university procedures were fair. Therefore, service providers should emphasize the procedural aspects of service recovery in order to increase students' post-recovery satisfaction in higher education institutions. These aspects might include a stable and reliable policy for solving students' complaints, prompt and timely responses to dissatisfied students and a convenient and comfortable process of service recovery for students (Jung and Seock, 2017:29).

6.5.2.2. The university procedures were sensible

As depicted in Table 6.8, 38.4 percent (165) of the respondents agree that the university procedures were sensible, followed by 31.9 percent (137) who were uncertain and 29.7 percent (128) who disagree. The findings imply that the majority of the respondents felt that the university procedures were sensible. It is necessary to pay attention to service recovery procedures. HEIs should train their staff to respond to customers' complaints quickly. Therefore, clarifying policies about how staff should deal with complaints and giving authority to staff on how to handle complaints immediately will influence customers' perceptions of justice positively. Also, HEIs should make it clear to the complainant that the

policies and practices that the institution will follow will be most appropriate for both parties and convince the complainant of this (Nadiri, 2016:210).

6.5.2.3.The university procedures were streamlined

The results as presented in Table 6.8 reveal that 36.3 percent (156) of the respondents agree that the university procedures were streamlined, followed by 32.1 percent (138) who disagree and 31.6 percent who were uncertain. The results imply that the majority of students were satisfied that the university procedures were streamlined. Increasing procedural justice requires the establishment of procedures which will prevent mishaps. However, procedures lacking in flexibility may delay the practices and affect procedural justice. Therefore, service providers must strike a balance between standardization and flexibility in the handling of failures. Higher education institutions must, therefore, create a comprehensive, but flexible service operating procedures for service recovery (Tsao, 2018:26).

6.5.2.4.The university procedures did what I expected

As reflected in Table 6.8, 37.4 percent (161) of the respondents disagree that the university procedures did what they expected, followed by 35.1 percent (151) who agree and 27.4 percent (118) who were uncertain. The results imply that the majority of the respondents were not happy that the university procedures did not do what they expected. Thus, higher education institutions need to be more efficient in terms of producing recovery satisfaction by creating appropriate policies and procedures such as promptly addressing service failures, showing respect and concern and providing truthful explanations and communication (Nikbin, Marimuthu, Hyun and Ismail, 2015: 258).

6.5.2.5.The university procedures put the customer first

Respondents were asked whether the university procedures put the customer first or not. The findings as presented in Table 6.8 reveal that 43.3 percent of the respondents disagree, followed by 30.7 percent (132) who agree and 26 percent (112) who were uncertain. The results mean that the majority of the respondents do not believe that the university procedures put the customers first. Therefore, there is a need for individual institutions to ensure that they have fair policies and systems for dealing with service failure. The system needs to allow for

students to be able to access the service recovery process without problems (Smith and Mpinganjira, 2015:41).

6.5.2.6.The university procedures made me feel important

As shown in Table 6.8, 40.7 percent (175) of the respondents disagree that the university procedures made them feel important, followed by 32.1 percent (138) who agree and 27.2 (117) who were uncertain. This means that the majority of the respondents do not feel that the university procedures made them feel important. Thus, personnel involved in service recovery efforts need to be swift in responding to student complaints, as this may demonstrate greater concern for students grievances, which, in turn, can make the students feel that they matter to the institution (Smith and Mpinganjira, 2015:41).

Table 6.8 Frequency distribution of procedural justice

Procedural Justice	Disagree		Uncertain		Agree		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Procedures were fair	134	31.2%	130	30.2%	166	38.6%	430	100%
Procedures were sensible	128	29.7%	137	31.9%	165	38.4%	430	100%
Procedures were streamlined	138	32.1%	136	31.6%	156	36.3%	430	100%
Procedures did what I expected	161	37.4%	118	27.4%	151	35.1%	430	100%
Procedures put the customer first	186	43.3%	112	26%	132	30.7%	430	100%
Procedures made me feel important	175	40.7%	117	27.2%	138	32.1%	430	100%

6.5.3. Interactional justice

6.5.3.1.The behaviour of university employees’ gives students’ confidence to deal with them

As shown in Table 6.9, 37.4 percent (161) of the respondents disagree that the behaviour of university employees gave them the confidence to deal with the employees, followed by 33.5 percent (144) who agree and 29.1 percent (125) who were uncertain. The results show that the majority of the respondents do not believe that the university employees give them the confidence to transact at the institution. Thus, members of staff should show respect and deal with customers ethically when recovering from a service failure. The institutions should also

strive to resolve service failures effectively and diligently (Petzer, De Meyer-Heydenrych and Svensson, 2017:250).

6.5.3.2.The university employees had the requisite knowledge to respond to questions

As shown in Table 6.9, 40.7 percent (175) of the respondents agree that the university employees had the requisite knowledge to respond to their questions, followed by 31.2 percent (134) who were uncertain and 28.1 percent (121) who disagree. The majority of the respondents were happy that the university employees had the requisite knowledge and skill to respond to questions. Thus, management of the procedure of service recovery and the deployment of trained and skilled personnel to handle customer complaints are important to ensure satisfaction with the service recovery (Daskin and Kasim, 2016:480).

6.5.3.3.The university employees gave individual attention

The findings, as depicted in Table 6.9, indicate that 38.4 percent (165) of the respondents disagree that the university employees gave them individual attention, followed by 36.5 percent (157) who agree and 25.1 percent (108) who were uncertain. This means that the majority of the respondents felt that employees did not give them individual attention. Management of higher education institutions should lay more emphasis on customer orientation of employees. Personal attention must be provided by employees to the customers so as to result in an improved service experience. This will improve the chances of customer retention (Zahoor and Sahaf, 2018).

6.5.3.4.The university employees had put proper effort into resolving the problem

The results, as presented in Table 6.9, reveal that 35.6 percent (155) of the respondents disagree that university employees had put proper effort into resolving their problems, followed by 32.6 percent (140) who were uncertain and 31.9 percent (137) who agree. The results imply that the majority of the respondents were not happy that the university employees had put proper effort into resolving their problems. Resolving customer problems is a culmination of deliberate effort and commitment. Therefore, the main foundation of a reasonable inter-personal conduct is by showing politeness, concern, honesty, giving an

explanation of why the service failure occurred in the first place and putting effort into solving the customer's problem (Amin, Amin and Kumar, Piaralal, 2017:156).

6.5.3.5.The university employee communication was appropriate

The findings in Table 6.9 indicate that 41.2 percent (177) of the respondents agree that the university employee communication with them was appropriate, followed by 31.2 percent (134) who disagree and 27.7 percent (119) who were uncertain. The results imply that the majority of the respondents were satisfied or happy that the university employee communication with them was appropriate. Fundamentally, students must perceive that they are being treated fairly and the situation has been rectified in an acceptable manner. Communication acknowledging service failure and identifying attempts at recovery is extremely important. Communication should convey evidence of equitable solutions and fairness in ensuring satisfaction. Indeed, to ensure continued relationships with students, service failure recovery should identify equity and fairness explicitly so that universities may enhance the successful implementation of retention programmes that can provide value and trust for students (Ozuem, Patel, Howell and Lancaster, 2017:108).

6.5.3.6.The employee gave the courtesy that was due

As presented in Table 6.9, the results show that 35 percent (151) of the respondents agree that the employee gave the courtesy that was due to them, followed by 34.4 (148) who disagree and 30.5 percent (131) who were uncertain. This means that the majority of the respondents were happy that they were given the courtesy that was due to them. Customers are more willing to praise frontline employees when they treat them well interpersonally. Such positive interaction increases the chance for the employees to receive praise after service recovery (Cai and Qu, 2018:339).

Table 6.9 Frequency distribution of interactional justice

Interactional Justice	Disagree		Uncertain		Agree		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Employees gave confidence	161	37.4%	125	29.1%	144	33.5%	430	100%
Employees had knowledge	121	28.1%	134	31.2%	175	40.7%	430	100%
Employees gave individual attention	165	38.4%	108	25.1%	157	36.5%	430	100%
Employees put in proper effort	153	35.6%	140	32.6%	137	31.9%	430	100%
Employees communication was appropriate	134	31.2%	119	27.7%	177	41.2%	430	100%
Employees gave the courtesy I was due	148	34.4%	131	30.5%	151	35.1%	430	100%

6.6. DETERMINING THE PERFORMANCE OF SERVICE RECOVERY STRATEGY THROUGH MEASURES OF CENTRAL TENDENCY AND DISPERSION

A measure of central tendency such as the mean is often used in research to indicate the suitability of responses to a question, but also to compare variables, whereas measures of dispersion such as standard deviation indicate how data is spread around the measures of central tendency (Wild and diggines, 2013:248).

As shown in Table 6.10, the mean score for service recovery strategies is 3.048 for explanation. The mean score for explanation was the highest among service recovery strategies and this implies that students rated this particular strategy highly and were satisfied with the explanations given regarding the service failure incident. It is important for universities to realise that students who value an initial explanation might not want to be reminded repeatedly that the process is still taking time, whereas students who have not received such an explanation may be more interested in updates that assure them the process is ongoing (Hogreve, Bilstein and Mandl, 2017:881).

Empowerment was ranked second with a mean score of 2.862. Students ranked this particular recovery strategy as not satisfactory and were not impressed with the university employees'

lack of empowerment. The employees demonstrated an inability to deal with students' problems at once without having to refer them to other employees. Effective service recovery, however, cannot be taken for granted and requires significant investments in both training the frontline employees and empowering them to make immediate decisions concerning the recovery strategies (Räikkönen and Honkanen, 2015). Kim and Tang (2016:917) reiterate that employees should be empowered in a variety of ways to respond with an appropriate approach to specific situations. Giving this empowerment to employees without requiring them to seek supervisor approval clearly identifies authority and decision-making boundaries.

Compensation was ranked the third service recovery strategy with a mean score of 2.806 and this entails that students were not happy with different compensatory incentives that were given to them. In an event of service failure, organisations are advised to provide compensation that is accordant with the time they need to complete the service recovery process. Seeking to provide fast resolutions can produce benefits for service firms and prevent higher compensation expectations and enhance students' satisfaction with service recovery, as well as to alleviate students' negative feelings of anger and betrayal (Hogreve, Bilstein and Mandl, 2017:881).

Speed was ranked fourth with a mean score of 2.659. Students expect higher education institutions to be prompt in resolving their grievances and expressed dissatisfaction with this particular recovery strategy. An improvement in the way employees handle student problems can enhance satisfaction. Firstly, a greater focus on service delivery standards of performance is warranted. Service standards will assist in mitigating service failures. Such standards should encompass the recognized 'moments of truth' elements associated with service delivery and should be widely known among the university employees. For example, in delivering a (non-interpersonal) service, a standard could be set not to let the students wait for more than a defined amount of time, without invoking a service failure recovery strategy. In some cases, it could be argued that making students wait more than one minute for a particular 'moment of truth' service element will produce a negative response. It is suggested that, where applicable, managers can undertake the development of such critical incident service standards (Trianasari, Butcher and Sparks, 2018:35).

Apology was the lowest-ranked service recovery strategy with a mean score of 2.659. The students rated this particular service recovery strategy lowly in comparison to other strategies and they perceive that the universities or its employees are not doing enough and should be sincere when apologising to them for the inconvenience caused as a result of service failure incidents. A sincere apology or expression of sympathy is more likely to help dissipate student anger since it allows the student to regain any ‘face’ that may have been lost through the service failure (Fu, Wu, Huang, Song, and Gong, 2015:61).

The standard deviation of service recovery strategies ranges from 1.046 to 1.152. In terms of responses, variability was significant as shown by the lowest (minimum) response which is 1 and the highest (maximum) response which is 5. This entails that the who range of scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used by the respondents (Burns and Bush, 2014:327).

Table 6.10 Mean and standard deviation of service recovery strategies.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Speed	430	1	5	2.659	1.097
Apology	430	1	5	2.630	1.099
Compensation	430	1	5	2.806	1.120
Explanation	430	1	5	3.048	1.152
Empowerment	430	1	5	2.862	1.046

6.7. DETERMINING THE PERFORMANCE OF JUSTICE DIMENSIONS THROUGH MEASURES OF CENTRAL TENDENCY AND DISPERSION

As shown in Table 6.11, distributive justice was ranked first with a mean score of 3.106 and, therefore, is the highest performing service recovery justice dimension in comparison to the other dimensions. Most of the students perceived the outcome of the recovery process to be fair and according to their expectation. When compensation is provided that is more than students’ expectation, they perceive a high level of distributive justice. More importantly, higher education institutions need to provide consistent service recovery efforts. Students compare what they receive with others and depend on such information to evaluate their perceived justice (Cai and Qu, 2018:339).

Interactional justice was ranked second with a mean score of 2.997 and most of the students were satisfied with the way university employees interacted with them. Therefore, students care most about the interpersonal interactions experienced during the recovery from service failure, such as whether they are treated respectfully and given adequate explanations, whether the service personnel are genuinely empathetic and attempt to solve the problem, and whether they follow-up after the issue has been dealt with. The attitude of the personnel handling service failures in higher education institutions is crucial (Tsao, 2018:25). Furthermore, managers should take students' justice perceptions as their goal and evaluate student satisfaction regularly through, for example, customer-satisfaction surveys. This evaluation can build mutual trust and commitment between the students and higher education institutions that will come in handy when failures arise (Lee, Siu and Zhang, 2018:31).

Procedural justice was ranked lowly with a mean score of 2.957. Students ranked this particular dimension low in comparison to other justice dimensions. This means that there is a need for improvement if students are to be satisfied with the procedures that the higher education institutions follow. Cumbersome procedures impede speedy access to justice. Therefore, the extent of customer satisfaction is dependent on the notions of fairness and swiftness of recovery actions. The likelihood of achieving outstanding recovery, as perceived by customers, is dependent on the settings and strategies used to satisfy consumers. If consumers perceive they have been treated fairly, then recovery is realisable (Ozuem, Patel, Howell and Lancaster, 2017:108).

According to Fu, Wu, Huang, Song, and Gong (2015:62), service recovery policies and procedures should be formulated and effectively communicated to frontline employees so that they can react accordingly when failures occur. Training frontline employees to identify different service failures and how to respond appropriately is the key to successful service recovery. Mirani, Hanzae and Moghadam (2015:472) believe that, in order to promote procedural justice, training programmes should be crafted to entrench the strict adherence to company policies and procedures while, at the same time, being mindful of the need to react to customer problems quickly and to handle their complaints on time.

Table 6.11 Mean and standard deviation of justice dimensions

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Distributive Justice	430	1	5	3.106	1.061
Procedural Justice	430	1	5	2.957	1.069
Interactional Justice	430	1	5	2.997	1.068

6.8. ANALYSIS OF THE MEASUREMENT MODEL

The measurement model which is used to gauge how well a research model was operationalized could be determined by the power of the measurement model. This is demonstrated from end-to-end methods of convergent validity as well as discriminant validity (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle and Mena, 2012). Convergent validity is typically assessed using three assessments: reliability of questions, the composite reliability of constructs and variance from constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity can be evaluated by the relationships among the research questions (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) along with variance and covariance between constructs (Igbaria, Parasuraman and Badawy, 1994). The SmartPLS3 is capable of giving discriminant validity based on a cross-loading evaluation of the research model. This is presented in Table 6.12.

Table 6.12 Item loadings and cross-loadings

	Apology	Compensation	Negative emotions	Distributive_justice	Empowerment	Explanation	Interactional justice	Procedural justice	Recovery satisfaction	Speed
AG1	0.821									
AG2	0.848									
AG3	0.832									
AG4	0.851									
CN1		0.765								
CN2		0.847								
CN3		0.805								
CN4		0.876								
NE1			0.872							
NE2			0.925							
NE3			0.939							
NE4			0.912							
DJ1				0.891						
DJ2				0.863						
DJ3				0.832						
DJ4				0.847						
EMT1					0.781					
EMT2					0.800					
EMT3					0.530					
EMT4					0.778					
EN2						0.825				
EN3						0.823				
EN4						0.944				
IJ1							0.798			
IJ2							0.821			
IJ3							0.815			
IJ4							0.853			
IJ5							0.839			
IJ6							0.866			
PJ1								0.909		
PJ2								0.878		
PJ3								0.848		
PJ4								0.830		
PJ5								0.838		

PJ6								0.877		
RS1									0.884	
RS2									0.925	
RS3									0.916	
SP1										0.845
SP2										0.813
SP3										0.817
SP4										0.858

AG (Apology), CN (Compensation), DJ (Distributive justice), EMT (Empowerment), EN (Explanation), IJ (Interactional justice), NE (Negative emotions), PJ (Procedural justice), RS (Recovery satisfaction), SP (Speed)

The cut-off point for a good question is pegged at 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Considering that, the empowerment (EMT) construct contains some key business processes of the current study where item EMT3 (0.530-the smallest value) was kept in the empirical analysis to preserve content validity. The model validity shows whether a measuring instrument measures what it was supposed to measure (Raykov, 2011), and this shows the extent to which items of a particular factor represent the same factor. It is quantified utilizing a standardised factor loading, which must be above 0.5.

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of this PLS3 software was again used to ascertain whether or not the broadly-accepted criteria for reliability and validity were achieved. Reliability, being the extent to which factors, measured by a multiple item scale, reflect the true estimates of the factors relative to the error (Hulland, 1999; Aibinu and Al-Lawati, 2010), was measured by the estimate of internal consistency and composite reliability.

To estimate how consistently a person responds to items within a scale, composite reliability is used (Shin, 2009). Composite reliability (CR) offers a reflective method of overall reliability amount of the coefficient in the measurement model and evaluates the consistency of the factor itself, together with stability and uniformity of the factor (Roca, Garcia and De La Vega, 2009; Suki, 2011). The results for equation (5) and (6), as indicated in section 5.11 of the current study, are presented in table 6.13. As shown in the Table 6.13, all values of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha were above 0.7, which indicates that all factors

have good reliability (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Henseler et al., 2009, Bagozzi and Yi, 2012).

Table 6.13 Construct reliability and validity

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Apology	0.904	0.904	0.904	0.702
Compensation	0.893	0.897	0.894	0.680
Distributive justice	0.918	0.919	0.918	0.738
Empowerment	0.820	0.834	0.818	0.535
Explanation	0.900	0.905	0.899	0.750
Interactional justice	0.931	0.932	0.931	0.693
Negative emotions	0.952	0.953	0.952	0.832
Procedural justice	0.946	0.947	0.946	0.746
Recovery satisfaction	0.934	0.934	0.934	0.825
Speed	0.901	0.901	0.901	0.695

Table 6.13 shows that all items achieved loadings higher than 0.5 on their respective factors, providing evidence of acceptable convergence validity. Discriminant validity indicates the extent to which a given factor is really unique from other factors (Suki, 2011). The frequently-used statistical measure of discriminant validity is a comparison of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with the correlated squared root (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) and the formulas (equation 3 and 4) used to achieve this are presented in section 5.10. To pass the test of discriminant validity, the AVE of a factor should be greater than the square root of the inter factor correlations (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

The AVE determines the amount of variation that the coefficient captures from its dimension items (Henseler et al., 2009). Table 6.14 shows the AVE values and the correlations among factors, with the square root of the AVE in bold on the diagonal. Since the diagonal values exceed the inter factor correlations, it can be inferred that discriminate validity was acceptable. This study, therefore, concludes that dimension scales have sufficient validity and demonstrate high reliability after calculating the AVE using formulas presented in section 5.10 (Henseler et al. 2009).

Table 6.14 Factor AVE and correlation measures (Fornell-Larcker criterion)

Factor	AG	CN	DJ	EMT	EN	IJ	NE	PJ	RS	SP
AG	0.838									
CN	0.706	0.824								
DJ	0.530	0.719	0.859							
EMT	0.659	0.620	0.576	0.731						
EN	0.504	0.608	0.515	0.615	0.866					
IJ	0.642	0.698	0.767	0.687	0.628	0.832				
NE	-0.484	-0.666	-0.724	-0.509	-0.510	-0.742	0.912			
PJ	0.555	0.721	0.825	0.670	0.584	0.844	-0.786	0.864		
RS	0.545	0.716	0.792	0.635	0.561	0.803	-0.869	0.811	0.908	
SP	0.667	0.690	0.591	0.568	0.388	0.622	-0.519	0.610	0.574	0.833

Note: the values in bold along the diagonal are the square root of AVE for each factor.

AG (Apology), CN (Compensation), DJ (Distributive justice), EMT (Empowerment), EN (Explanation), IJ (Interactional justice), NE (Negative emotions), PJ (Procedural justice), RS (Recovery satisfaction), SP (Speed)

Multi-collinearity is a phenomenon where there is unnecessary repetition of items among constructs. In addition to the above evaluations, a collinearity test to find out if there were repetition issues among the variables of the study was carried out. Relying upon the variance inflation factors (VIF) of the PLS3, this test calculated each latent variable with respect to all the other latent variables. The full collinearity test results were generated, which exhibited VIF values of latent factors. This should be lower than 5 in the strictest sense, though 10 is acceptable (Kline, 2005).

The highest VIF value recorded in this study was 6.483 for the negative emotion (NE3) of the model, as shown in Table 6.15. This means that collinearity can be ruled out as a significant source of bias.

Table 6.15 Collinearity statistics (VIF)

	VIF
AG1	3.146
AG2	4.032
AG3	3.017
AG4	1.880
CN1	1.982
CN2	3.131
CN3	2.988
CN4	2.949
NE1	3.895
NE2	4.891
NE3	6.483
NE4	4.813
DJ1	3.109
DJ2	3.812
DJ3	2.779
DJ4	2.654
EMT1	1.698
EMT2	1.990
EMT3	1.572
EMT4	1.749
EN2	2.961
EN3	3.317
EN4	2.455
IJ1	2.450
IJ2	2.896
IJ3	2.438
IJ4	3.066
IJ5	3.386
IJ6	3.289
PJ1	3.595
PJ2	4.449
PJ3	3.910
PJ4	3.285
PJ5	3.866
PJ6	3.511
RS1	3.415
RS2	4.348
RS3	4.364
SP1	2.177

SP2	2.648
SP3	3.100
SP4	2.784

AG (Apology), CN (Compensation), DJ (Distributive justice), EMT (Empowerment), EN (Explanation), IJ (Interactional justice), NE (Negative emotions), PJ (Procedural justice), RS (Recovery satisfaction), SP (Speed)

In summary, the measurement model passes several stringent tests of convergent validity, discriminant validity, reliability, and collinearity, proving the model passes widely accepted data validation criteria. The loadings suggest that the instrument has acceptable convergent validity (Hair, William, Barry and Rolph, 2010). This suggests that the results of this model can generally be trusted as free from data measurement problems. Overall, the measurement properties of both reflective and composite constructs of this study had good measurement properties. After this point, researchers are allowed to proceed with the evaluation of the structural model, as a rule-of-thumb for the PLS-SEM analysis.

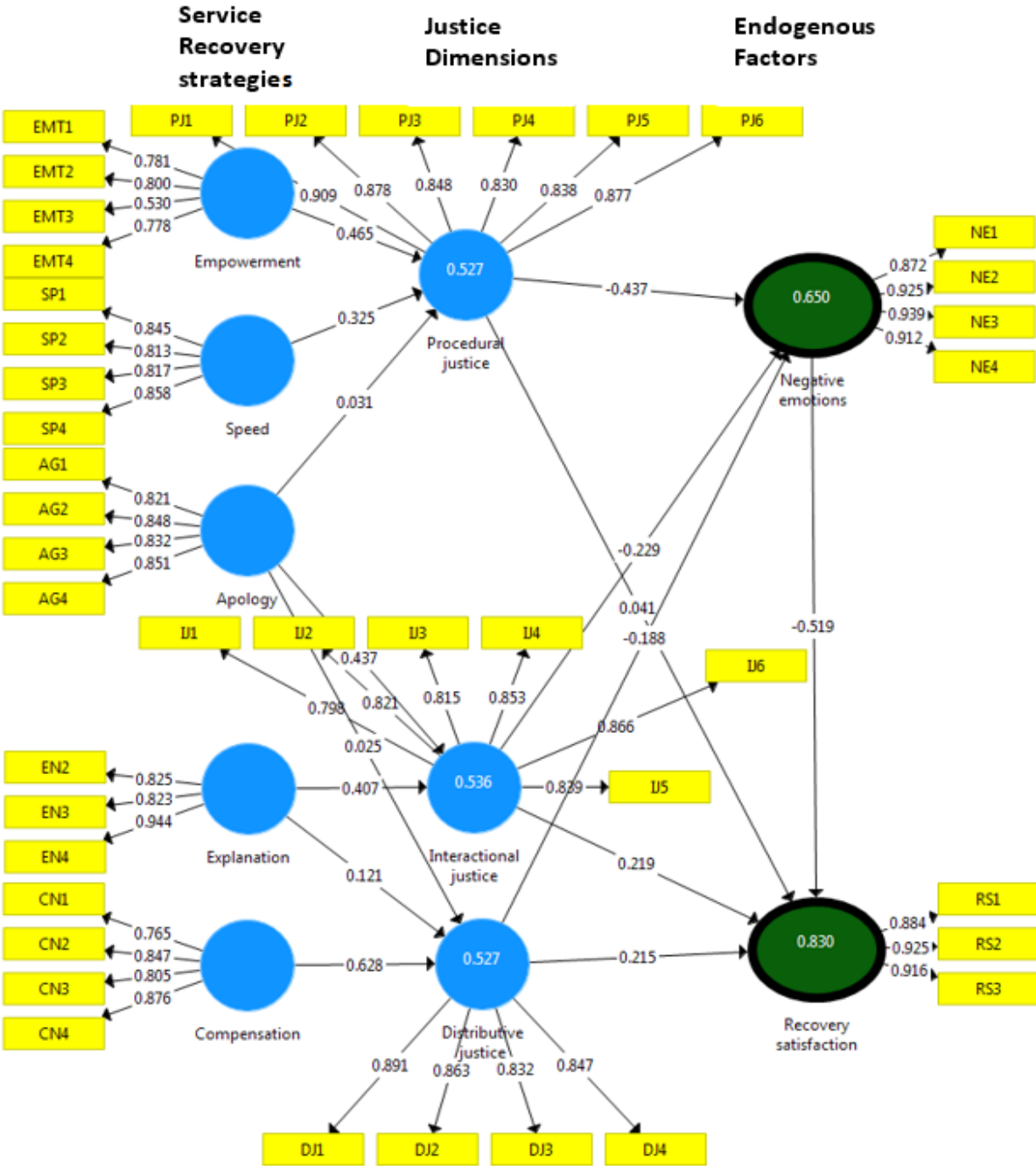
6.9. STRUCTURAL MODEL

The structural model was assessed after confirming the reliability and validity of the measurement model. To be able to validate the structural relationships, the hypothesized causal paths were estimated. The variance (R^2) of every dependent factor is an indication of how well the model matches the data. R^2 shows the quantity of variation in a dependent factor that is clarified by the research model and is calculated based on the formula (equation 1) presented in sub section 5.8.4 (Cornell and Berger, 1987).

Additionally, the criterion for PLS path modelling was suggested by Tenenhaus, Vinzi, Chatelin and Lauro (2005) to account for the PLS model performance at both measurement and structural terms. This suggestion intends to locate the overall predictive power of the model and shows the geometric mean of ordinary Communalities (CI) and average R^2 and is calculated based on the formula (equation 2) presented in sub section 5.8.4. Using this to assess the structural model is meant to authenticate the fitness of the model to the data, and it is a measure of the validity of the model when found to meet various yardsticks. Each path or link on a nomological net is hypothesized to correspond to a course in the structural model

of the dataset, whereby both R^2 s of dependent variables and coefficients on the linked paths indicate a model match to depict how well the model is constructed (Hulland, 1999). To this end, the overall fit of the model, together with its explanatory power is examined, along with the comparative strengths of the individual causal route. Figure 6.10 shows the outcome of the structural model assessment of this study, with the calculated R^2 explanatory values and significance of individual paths to determine the proposed model's efficacy for the study.

Figure 6.10 Empirical results of testing the proposed SERVREC model



The support for each causal path on the model can be determined, by examining the beta (β) value (positive or negative) and statistical significance (t-value) for its corresponding route. In this, the SmartPLS3 uses a bootstrapping technique to execute these statistical values of the connections coefficients to determine the strength of the proposed model. This study used this bootstrapping technique to obtain the corresponding t-values corresponding these paths in the structural model (Figure 6.10) and examined the β values together with the statistical significance of the t-values of the corresponding path (Table 6.16). With a significance level of 0.01, the acceptable t-value should be greater than 2.0 (Keil, Tan, Wei, Saarinen, Tuunainen and Wassenaar, 2000) for any causal path to be acceptable. Table 6.16 displays the consequence of these tests, whereby most of the proposed causal paths were supported by the virtue of their statistical importance.

Table 6.16 Results of model testing

Factors	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-Statistics (O/STDEV)	P-Values
Apology -> Distributive justice	0.025	0.023	0.074	0.337	0.736
Apology -> Interactional justice	0.437	0.435	0.054	8.028	0.000
Apology -> Procedural justice	0.031	0.027	0.085	0.364	0.716
Compensation -> Distributive justice	0.628	0.628	0.073	8.569	0.000
Distributive justice -> Negative emotions	-0.188	-0.188	0.072	2.628	0.009
Distributive justice -> Recovery satisfaction	0.215	0.217	0.064	3.336	0.001
Empowerment -> Procedural justice	0.465	0.469	0.071	6.512	0.000
Explanation -> Distributive justice	0.121	0.122	0.060	2.025	0.043
Explanation -> Interactional justice	0.407	0.409	0.054	7.522	0.000
Interactional justice -> Negative emotions	-0.229	-0.227	0.080	2.860	0.004
Interactional justice -> Recovery satisfaction	0.219	0.218	0.074	2.958	0.003
Negative emotions -> Recovery satisfaction	-0.519	-0.518	0.049	10.616	0.000
Procedural justice -> Negative emotions	-0.437	-0.439	0.095	4.583	0.000
Procedural justice -> Recovery satisfaction	0.041	0.040	0.084	0.486	0.627
Speed -> Procedural justice	0.325	0.325	0.065	4.972	0.000

Note: SE (standard error), ns (not significant), * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed t-tests)

6.10. STRUCTURAL MODEL ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VARIABLES

This study evaluated several relationships between variables and the results of the analysis are explained in detail in the following section.

6.10.1. Relationship between interactional justice and recovery strategies (explanation and apology)

The structural model was tested to analyse the relationship between explanation and interactional justice as shown in Figure 6.10. The testing of the model as presented in Table 6.17 shows a positive significant correlation ($\beta=0.407$, t-value =7.522, $p=0.000$). This result is in congruence with the findings of other studies which concluded that explanation and interactional justice have a positive and significant relationship (Mostafa, Lages, Shabbir and Thwaites, 2015:22).

The testing of the structural model to analyse the relationship between apology and interactional justice (as presented in Table 6.17) shows a positive and significant correlation ($\beta=0.437$, t-value=8.0280 $p=0.000$). A study conducted by Shin, Casidy and Mattila (2018:8) has also found a positive and significant effect of apology on interactional justice. Similarly, prior research has established the effects of apology on customers' perception of interactional justice (Choi and Choi, 2014).

6.10.2. Relationship between distributive justice and recovery strategies (compensation, explanation and apology)

The structural model was tested to evaluate the relationship between compensation and distributive justice. The findings show a positive significant correlation ($\beta=0.628$, t-value =8.569, $p=0.000$). The results of the current study are consistent with the findings of research conducted by Shin, Casidy and Mattila (2018:8) who found a positive and significant effect of compensation on distributive justice.

In the same vein, the test of the structural model was conducted to assess the relationship between explanation and distributive justice. The finding reveals that there is a positive and significant correlation ($\beta=0.219$, $t\text{-value}=2.025$, $p=0.043$). The findings of this study are in accordance with the findings of research conducted by Casado-Diaz, Mas-Ruiz and Kasper (2005) who found that explanation has a positive and significant relationship with distributive justice.

Another test of the structural model was conducted to ascertain the relationship between apology and distributive justice. The finding shows a positive and insignificant correlation ($\beta=0.025$, $t\text{-value}=0.337$, $p=0.736$). Customers respond differently to service recovery efforts. Their response will depend on a number of resources lost and gained during the exchange. Any form of recovery is better than no recovery at all. Service providers are advised at least to use an apology as a recovery tool when the circumstances do not allow them to do much or to go the extra mile. Furthermore, when a service failure is a core, a perceived low service recovery initiative such as an apology may be deemed as a poor service recovery and can subsequently lead to double deviation. A core service failure requires sufficient recovery initiative such as monetary compensation to cover the loss suffered (Yi and Lee, 2005:13-14).

6.10.3. Relationship between procedural justice and service recovery strategies (speed and empowerment and apology)

The structural model was tested to analyse the relationship between empowerment and procedural justice. The results reflect a positive and significant correlation ($\beta=0.465$, $t\text{-value}=6.512$, $p=0.000$). Good service recovery does not happen by chance. It takes extraordinary individuals or employees to address customer problems. However, organisations should not rely on uncommon scenarios of resourcefulness. They should take measures to ensure that every member of staff has the requisite skills, motivation and authority to take a service recovery initiative as an integral part of the operation (Hart, Heskett and Sasser, 1990). Thus, employee empowerment is critical to achieve customer satisfaction because the modern customer is very unpredictable. Employees should have the requisite knowledge and freedom to make decisions to handle the encounter successfully (Azemi, Ozuem and Azemi, 2015:387).

Further tests of the structural model were conducted to ascertain the relationship between speed and procedural justice. The results show a positive and significant correlation ($\beta=0.325$, $t\text{-value}= 4.972$, $p=0.000$). The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Mostafa, Lages, Shabbir and Thwaites (2015:22) who found that speed and procedural justice have a significant and positive relationship.

Lastly, the test of the structural model was done to analyse the relationship between apology and procedural justice. The results as depicted in Table 6.17, show a positive and insignificant correlation ($\beta=0.031$, $t\text{-value} =0.364$, $p=0.716$). Therefore, service failure emanating from unfriendly service is more of a psychological factor such that a service recovery effort like giving money may be inappropriate and fatal for the service provider because, in such a scenario, a customer will be expecting an apology and acknowledgement of responsibility towards service failure (Siagian and Triyowati, 2015:99).

6.10.4. Relationship between perceived justice (interactional, distributive and procedural justice) and negative emotions

The structural model was tested to analyse the influence of interactional justice on negative emotions. The findings reveal a negative and significant correlation ($\beta=-0.229$, $t\text{-value}=2.860$, $p=0.004$). Chebat and Slusarczyk (2005) analysed the effects of perceived justice on negative emotions and found that interactional justice has a negative and significant effect on negative emotions.

Similarly, tests were done on the structural model to evaluate the influence of distributive justice on negative emotions. The results reflect a negative and significant correlation ($\beta=-0.188$, $t\text{-value}=0.009$, $p=2.628$). The findings of this study are in agreement with previous studies (Kim and Tang, 2016:911; DeWitt, Nguyen and Marshall, 2008) which concluded that the justice perception of service recovery has a significant influence on negative emotion.

Additional tests were conducted on the structural model to assess the influence of procedural justice on negative emotions. The results emanating from the testing of the structural model reveal a negative and significant correlation ($\beta=-0.437$, $t\text{-value}=4.583$, $p=0.000$). The finding

corroborates a study conducted in the cell-phone industry which found a negative and significant effect of procedural justice on negative emotions. This implies that procedural justice perceptions elicit emotional responses from students. Therefore, this result is consistent with affect control theory and cognitive appraisal theory, which explains human emotions as a result of the subjective evaluation of events that occur in the environment. According to this study, perceived procedural justice appears to represent cognitive appraisal dimensions that help to explain the emotions triggered by the service recovery process (del Rio-Lanza, Vazques-Casielles and Diaz-Martin, 2013:779).

6.10.5. Relationship between perceived justice (interactional, distributive and procedural justice) and recovery satisfaction

The structural model was tested to analyse the relationship between distributive justice and recovery satisfaction. The results indicate a positive and significant correlation ($\beta=0.215$, $t\text{-value}=3.336$, $p=0.000$). The findings of this study are consistent with a similar study in the banking sector in South Africa which found a positive and significant relationship between distributive justice and recovery satisfaction (Petzer, De Meyer-Heydenrych and Svensson, 2017:248). Similarly, Joosten, José Bloemer and Hillebrand (2017:508) found a significant and positive relationship between distributive justice and recovery satisfaction.

In the same vein, tests were conducted to analyse the relationship between procedural justice and recovery satisfaction. The results reflect a positive and insignificant correlation ($\beta=0.041$, $t\text{-value}=0.486$, $p=0.627$). The findings in the current research corroborate the study conducted in the Brazilian retail sector which found that there is a positive and insignificant relationship between procedural justice and recovery satisfaction (Lopes and da Silva, 2015:117). This is consistent with the findings of other studies which suggest that the effect of procedural justice is negligible because most organisations will not offer the consumer a deep insight into how complaints are handled internally and the complainant can only infer the fairness of procedures from obvious front-office actions, which provide only a little insight into internal procedures (Gelbrich and Roschk, 2011:36). This is contrary to most of the studies which have found a significant relationship between recovery satisfaction and procedural justice (Smith and Mpinganjira, 2015).

Similarly, the test of the structural model was conducted to evaluate the relationship between interactional justice and recovery satisfaction. The results reveal a significant and positive correlation ($\beta=0.219$, $t\text{-value}= 2.958$, $p=0.003$). The findings also show that interaction justice had the strongest correlation with recovery satisfaction. A study undertaken by Petzer, De Meyer-Heydenrych and Svensson (2017:248) found a positive and significant relationship between interactional justice and recovery satisfaction

6.10.6. Evaluating the effect of secondary negative emotions (negative emotions with service recovery) on secondary satisfaction (recovery satisfaction)

The structural model was tested to ascertain the relationship between negative emotions and recovery satisfaction. The results show a negative and significant correlation ($\beta=-0.519$, $t\text{-value}=10.616$, $p=0.000$). The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Casado-Diaz, Mas-Ruiz and Kasper (2005) who found that negative emotions have a negative and significant influence on recovery satisfaction. According to Kozub, O'Neill and Palmer (2014:240), the use of emotions can provide a better diagnostic tool for understanding attitudes that customers go away with following a service recovery failure, rather than concentrating on cognitive measures of performance.

Table 6.17 Summary of the model testing

Factors	Original Sample (O)	T-Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P-Values	Result
Apology -> Distributive justice	0.025	0.337	0.736 ^{ns}	Unsupported
Apology -> Interactional justice	0.437	8.028	0.000***	Supported
Apology -> Procedural justice	0.031	0.364	0.716 ^{ns}	Unsupported
Compensation -> Distributive justice	0.628	8.569	0.000***	Supported
Distributive justice -> Negative emotions	-0.188	2.628	0.009**	Supported
Distributive justice -> Recovery satisfaction	0.215	3.336	0.001***	Supported
Empowerment -> Procedural justice	0.465	6.512	0.000***	Supported
Explanation -> Distributive justice	0.121	2.025	0.043**	Supported
Explanation -> Interactional justice	0.407	7.522	0.000***	Supported
Interactional justice -> Negative emotions	-0.229	2.860	0.004***	Supported
Interactional justice -> Recovery satisfaction	0.219	2.958	0.003***	Supported
Negative emotions -> Recovery satisfaction	-0.519	10.616	0.000***	Supported
Procedural justice -> Negative emotions	-0.437	4.583	0.000***	supported
Procedural justice -> Recovery satisfaction	0.041	0.486	0.627 ^{ns}	Unsupported
Speed -> Procedural justice	0.325	4.972	0.000***	Supported

Note: SE (standard error), ns (not significant), * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed t-tests).

As expected from this study, all theorised paths in the SERVREC model were significant at various levels, other than those of apology to distributive justice, apology to procedural justice, and procedural justice to recovery satisfaction.

6.11. EFFECT SIZE

The effect of each of the predictor factors on the dependent factor is derived by computing the R^2 values for independent factors, when each factor is excluded $R^2(e)$ and included $R^2(i)$ to test for its significance. The effect size f^2 is calculated using a formula recommended by Helm, Eggert and Garnerfeld (2010) as follows:

$$f^2 = \frac{R^2(i) - R^2(e)}{1 - R^2(i)} \dots\dots\dots (7)$$

The results, depicted in Table 6.18, indicate the quality of effect size of the model factors. By investigating effect sizes, researchers are able to ascertain if the effects of the path coefficients are small, medium or large, according to these recommended values: 0.02, 0.15 or 0.35 respectively. Values below 0.02 are too weak to be considered effective (Kock, 2010), therefore, all values of this research model are effective.

Table 6.18 Effect size quality (f-square)

	AG	CN	DJ	EMT	EN	IJ	NE	PJ	RS	SP
AG			0.001			0.307		0.001		
CN			0.347							
DJ							0.031		0.080	
EMT								0.245		
EN			0.019			0.267				
IJ							0.040		0.074	
NE									0.556	
PJ							0.115		0.002	
RS										
SP								0.117		

AG (Apology), CN (Compensation), DJ (Distributive justice), EMT (Empowerment), EN (Explanation), IJ (Interactional justice), NE (Negative emotions), PJ (Procedural justice), RS (Recovery satisfaction), SP (Speed)

6.12. MEDIATING (FACTORS) EFFECT

Following from the explanation of effect size above, the effects of factors which were mediated by other factor(s) or which were indirectly linked to other factors through middle factor(s) are shown in Table 6.19. The size of powers of such factors is affected by the fact that they have to link through another factor(s). Therefore, depending on the performance of the mediating factor(s), the depending factor may exhibit different values which could be small, medium or large.

Table 6.19 Indirect effects

	Specific Effects	Indirect
Apology -> Distributive justice -> Negative emotions		-0.005
Compensation -> Distributive justice -> Negative emotions		-0.118
Explanation -> Distributive justice -> Negative emotions		-0.023
Apology -> Interactional justice -> Negative emotions		-0.100
Explanation -> Interactional justice -> Negative emotions		-0.093
Apology -> Procedural justice -> Negative emotions		-0.014
Empowerment -> Procedural justice -> Negative emotions		-0.203
Speed -> Procedural justice -> Negative emotions		-0.142
Apology -> Distributive justice -> Recovery satisfaction		0.005
Compensation -> Distributive justice -> Recovery satisfaction		0.135
Explanation -> Distributive justice -> Recovery satisfaction		0.026
Apology -> Interactional justice -> Recovery satisfaction		0.096
Explanation -> Interactional justice -> Recovery satisfaction		0.089
Apology -> Distributive justice -> Negative emotions -> Recovery satisfaction		0.002
Compensation -> Distributive justice -> Negative emotions -> Recovery satisfaction		0.061
Explanation -> Distributive justice -> Negative emotions -> Recovery satisfaction		0.012
Apology -> Interactional justice -> Negative emotions -> Recovery satisfaction		0.052
Explanation -> Interactional justice -> Negative emotions -> Recovery satisfaction		0.048
Apology -> Procedural justice -> Negative emotions -> Recovery satisfaction		0.007
Empowerment -> Procedural justice -> Negative emotions -> Recovery satisfaction		0.106
Speed -> Procedural justice -> Negative emotions -> Recovery satisfaction		0.074
Apology -> Procedural justice -> Recovery satisfaction		0.001
Empowerment -> Procedural justice -> Recovery satisfaction		0.019
Speed -> Procedural justice -> Recovery satisfaction		0.013

6.13. MODEL FIT

The model fit describes how good the model fits a set of observations. Therefore, the measures of the goodness of fit summarises the discrepancies or how the model fits the set parameters. A model's fit indicator pertains to the capacity of the model to reproduce the information typically in the variance covariance matrix. The smaller the model's parameters, the better the matching between the model and the data. The standardised root mean residual (SRMR) is the standardised difference between the observed covariance and the covariance. Values for the SRMR range from zero to 1.0 with well-fitting models obtaining values less than 0.05 (Byrne, 1998; Diamantopoulos and Siguaw, 2000). However, a recent simulation

study shows that even entirely correctly-specified models can yield SRMR values of 0.08 and higher (Henseler, Dijkstra, Sarstedt, Ringle, Diamantopoulos, Straub, Ketchen, Hair, Hult and Calantone, 2014:193).

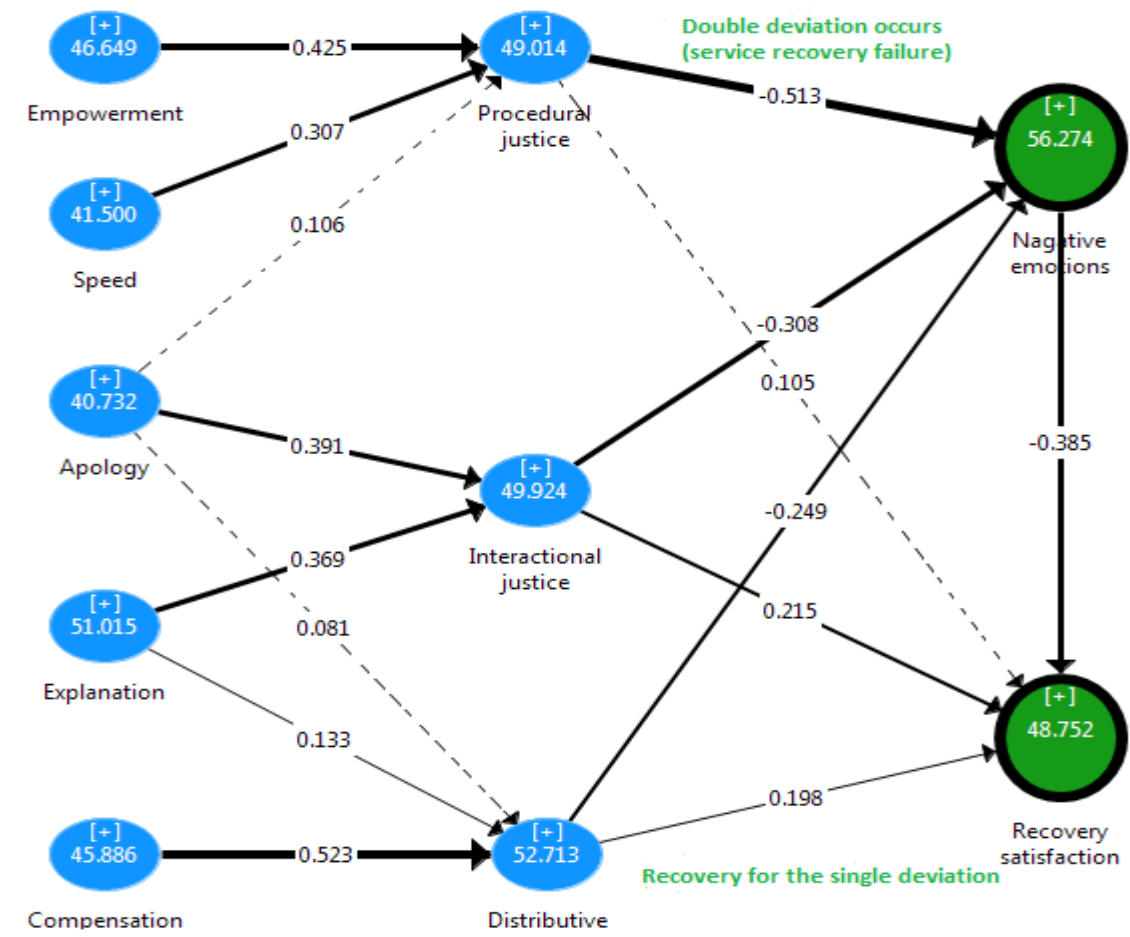
An SRMR of 0 indicates a perfect fit, but it must be noted that SRMR will be lower when there is a high number of parameters in the model and in models based on large sample sizes (Hooper, Coughlan and Mullen, 2008:55). In the current study, both the d_ULS and the d_G are less to encourage the model. As defined by Dijkstra and Henseler (2015), d_ULS (the squared Euclidean distance) and d_G (the geodesic distance) represent two different ways to compute this discrepancy. The bootstrap routine provides the confidence intervals of these discrepancy values. A model fits well if the difference between the correlation matrix implied by the model and the empirical correlation matrix is so small that it can be attributed to sampling error alone. Therefore, the difference between the correlation matrix implied by the model and the empirical correlation matrix should be non-significant ($p > 0.05$). Otherwise, a significant ($p < 0.05$) discrepancy means that model fit has not been established.

For models with approximately 75 to 200 cases, Chi Square (χ^2) is a reasonable measure. Assuming a multi-normal distribution, the χ^2 value of a PLS path model with a degree of freedom (df) approximately is $(N-1)*L$, whereby N is the number of observations and L the maximum likelihood function as defined by Lohmöller (1989). Nevertheless, the χ^2 is influenced by the dimensions of the correlations from the model, in which, the larger the correlation the poorer the fit. The cases from the current study are over 500 for both sets of information and this is shown in the values registered for the χ^2 in Table 6.20. The normed fit index (NFI) defines the null model as a model where each of correlations or covariant is zero. A value above 0.80 suggests a good fit and over 0.95 is extremely good (Simon, Kriston, Loh, Spies, Scheibler, Wills, and Härter, 2010: 239; Hu and Bentler, 1999; Forza and Filippini, 1998:14). NFI values below 0.80 suggest a need to re-specify the model (Hutchinson, Wilkes, Jackson and Vickers, 2010:175). Since the current study's values are over 0.80, the SERVREC model is adequate and should be accepted.

Table 6.20 Model fit summary

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.037	0.128
d_ULS	1.204	1.869
d_G1	1.228	1.859
d_G2	0.979	1.564
Chi-Square	#####	#####
NFI	0.883	0.833

Figure 6.11 Important Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) between latent variables for SERVREC



Note: **→** a statistically significant path
- - - → a statistically insignificant path

The path coefficients displayed in Figure 6.11 explain the relative importance of one construct to the other. However, the IPMA adds performance values of each construct to enable the simple non-statistical minds to comprehend in simple terms the difference between importance and performance. This information on the performance of constructs is relevant for drawing conclusions between what is important and what is performance or both. The closer the score is to 100, the higher the performance of the latent variable of that construct (Schloderer, Sarstedt and Ringle, 2014; Ringle and Sarstedt, 2016). This is particularly important in order to prioritize managerial actions. As a result, it is preferable to focus on improving the performance of those constructs that exhibit a large importance regarding their explanation of a certain target construct but, at the same time, have a relatively low performance. Therefore, as indicated Figure 6.11, the distributive justice construct performs better than interactional justice in modelling how to deal with students complaints while interactional justice is, in turn, better than procedural justice. Nevertheless, interactional justice proved the most important construct with 0.536 (Figure 6.10) against the other two (0.527).

As shown in Figure 6.11, the path coefficients of the three justice dimensions towards negative emotions are very high, as depicted by the thick lines compared to the path coefficient of the justice dimensions towards recovery satisfaction. Therefore, the thickness of the lines in the proposed model shows the intensity or strength of the relationship between variables, so, the thicker the line, the stronger or more intense the effect or relationship is. This means that, as a result of the injustices customers experienced during the service recovery process, the service recovery had failed at that time, resulting in a double deviation which triggers emotions. Stone (2011:110) argues that service recovery in the eyes of the customer depends on whether he has been fairly treated during the recovery process. Unsuccessful service recovery or double deviation creates negative emotions such as anger.

Similarly, perceived justice had contributed to recovery satisfaction. Therefore, this was in response to the single deviation (Initial service failure). However, this IPMA must be understood in the context of all students. The majority experienced recovery failure and negative emotions were intense and the path coefficients were higher than those that had an effect on recovery satisfaction. The IPMA shows further that the double deviation effect was

stronger on procedural justice, therefore, the intense negative emotions as shown in the path diagram and coefficient. Voorhees, Brady and Horowitz (2006:516) have noted that customers who are dissatisfied because of their service encounters are likely to experience negative effects. Customers who complain, but do not receive any recovery efforts or receive dissatisfactory recovery, undergo service failure twice which leads to double deviation and the negative effect is stronger in these types of customers. Stone (2011:110) notes that service employees' unwillingness to respond to service failure is the reason for most unsatisfactory service encounters. The initial service failure may not lead to a dissatisfactory experience, but the inability to respond to the failure incident may lead to dissatisfaction and a situation known as the double deviation.

6.14. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter has presented the analysis of data and discussion of the findings. The presentation was divided into sections with the first section focussing on descriptive analysis of the study using the SPSS. In this regard, characteristics of demographic variables were highlighted using graphs and the sectional analysis of the main study variables was analysed and discussed using tables. The findings of this study painted a picture that students were not satisfied with service recovery strategies which are speed, compensation, apology and empowerment, while the recovery strategy of explanation was rated as being satisfactory. Similarly, customers expressed satisfaction with distributive justice and interactional justice, whereas procedural justice was rated as not satisfactory.

The second section of the analysis focused on the measurement and ascertaining the fit of the model using Smart PLS 3. In order to achieve this, a rigorous methodological process to evaluate reliability and validity was undertaken. Cronbach alpha and composite reliability were assessed and the coefficients for the model variables were above the acceptable threshold. Similarly, the validity was ascertained using factor analysis and Average Extracted Values (AVEs) and the results showed that all the factors loaded perfectly and the AVEs were also above the acceptable threshold. Correlation analysis was also undertaken and the relationship between different variables was measured to ascertain the level of significance. Lastly, in the current chapter, the SERVREC was developed and tested and the results showed that the model has a normed fit index above the acceptable threshold such that the model was

adequate and accepted. The next chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of this study.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1. INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter presented the empirical findings of this study. PLS-SEM was used to evaluate the relationships between variables and to ascertain the fitness of the proposed model. This chapter draws conclusions from the study based on the empirical findings and from the literature review. It further provides recommendations for institutional managers and marketing practitioners in the higher education sector. Firstly, the chapter evaluates the attainment of the research objectives. Secondly, conclusions will be drawn by comparing the empirical findings and objectives of this study. Thirdly, the recommendations and the contribution of the study will be presented based on the findings of the study. Lastly, the limitations and suggestions for future research will be discussed.

7.2. SUMMARY OF THE THEORETICAL STUDY

In recent times, the higher education sector has been facing the challenge of satisfying students whose demand for quality services are not static and who are fond of resorting to extreme measures whenever their grievances are not resolved. The aim of this study was to examine students' perceptions of service failure and service recovery strategies in higher education institutions. In order to lay a solid ground for this study, an extensive literature review was conducted. Chapter Two set the tone of this study by discussing service failure issues in the higher education sector in South Africa with specific reference to institutions in the KwaZulu Natal province namely: DUT, UKZN and UNIZULU. Furthermore, a global perspective of higher education was presented and challenges affecting the sector discussed. It was noted that some of the challenges affecting higher education include high enrollments, poor policy implementation, inadequate institutional funding, institutional politics, students funding, support and accommodation. These challenges affect the smooth running of higher education institutions and subsequently contribute to service failure when students' expectations are not met.

In addition, the literature review demonstrated that there are four service failure categories: service delivery system failure, unfulfilled needs and request, unprompted and unsolicited action, and problematic customers. Service failure is inevitable and sometimes efforts to prevent it occurring may be an exercise in futility. However, effective recovery efforts can minimise its impact. The discussion in Chapter Three presented the service recovery strategies that can be used during the recovery process viz. explanation empowerment, compensation, speed and apology. In Chapter Four, it was noted that service providers can achieve fairness during the recovery process through the operationalisation of distributive justice, procedural justice and interaction justice. However, this must be done in line with principles of equity and social exchange to avoid injustices which may lead to customer dissatisfaction. Chapter Four ended with a discussion on recovery satisfaction, double deviation and negative emotions. The review noted that sometimes service recovery strategies can fail resulting in recovery failure which is known as a double deviation. The recovery failure effect triggers negative emotions which, subsequently, affect recovery satisfaction.

7.3. REFLECTION AND EVALUATION OF STUDY OBJECTIVES

A number of objectives were formulated in order to address the research problem. A quantitative study was undertaken to achieve the set objectives. The following is a summary of the findings in relation to the objectives of this study.

7.3.1. To evaluate student perceptions of the causes of service failure and the nature of the services provided where most of the students experience service failure

The first empirical objective was to evaluate student perceptions of the causes of service failure and the nature of the services provided where most of the students experience service failure. The findings of the study reveal that the majority of the students experienced service failures that are caused by the service delivery system failure. Similarly, most of the students experienced service failure in respect of funding and the registration process. Therefore, the objective as to ascertain the causes of service failure and the nature of service where students' experienced failure was addressed.

7.3.2. To assess the customer complaints management system HEIs

To achieve this objective, students were requested to rate individual items of complaints management using a five-point Likert scale which was collapsed to three during the empirical analysis (disagree, uncertain and agree). The findings of this study indicate that the majority of students were generally satisfied with the complaints management system in the higher education sector. Despite the overall satisfaction, the findings also reveal the need to improve issues related to the convenience of the system and publicity of where to register complaints. Based on the study findings, it can be concluded that this particular objective was met.

7.3.3. To analyse student perception of service recovery strategies

The study analysed students perceptions with respect to five service recovery strategies (i.e. speed, apology, compensation, explanation and empowerment). Students were asked to rate individual items of each service recovery strategy by using a five-point Likert scale which was collapsed to three during the final analysis (disagree, uncertain and agree). Based on the findings, the study concluded that the majority of students were not satisfied with the speed, apology, compensation and empowerment. However, most of the respondents were generally satisfied with an explanation as a recovery strategy.

7.3.4. To assess students perception of justice dimensions (distributive, procedural and interactional)

To achieve this objective, students were asked to rate individual items of the three dimensions of justice (i.e. distributive, procedural and interactional) using a five point Likert scale which was collapsed to three during the final analysis (disagree, uncertain and agree). Based on the findings, the study concluded that the majority of students expressed satisfaction with distributive and interactional justice. Similarly, the majority of students expressed dissatisfaction with procedural justice.

7.3.5. To determine the highest performing service recovery strategy and examine the relationship between service recovery strategies and justice dimensions

To achieve this objective, several relationships between individual service recovery strategies (i.e. speed, apology, compensation, explanation and empowerment) and the corresponding justice dimensions, (i.e. procedural, distributive and interactional justice) were evaluated. Based on the findings, the study concluded that speed and empowerment have a positive and significant correlation with procedural justice respectively. The second relationship shows that apology and explanation have a positive and significant correlation with interactional justice respectively. Lastly, based on the findings, the study concluded that compensation has a positive and significant correlation with distributive justice. To ascertain the performance of the recovery strategies, mean scores of the recovery strategies were evaluated and it was found that an explanation had the highest mean score and it was the highest performing service recovery strategy

7.3.6. To determine the highest performing dimension of justice in the higher education sector and to ascertain the relationship between justice dimensions and recovery satisfaction

The justice dimensions encompass distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice. Fairness in dealing with customer grievances is critical to achieving customer recovery satisfaction. This study evaluated the relationship between the three dimensions of justice and recovery satisfaction. Based on the findings, the study concluded that distributive justice has a significant and positive correlation with recovery satisfaction. Secondly, the findings show that interactional justice has a significant and positive correlation with recovery satisfaction. Lastly, procedural justice has a non-significant and positive correlation with recovery satisfaction. To ascertain the performance of the three justice dimensions, mean scores of procedural, distributive and interactional justice were evaluated and it was found that distributive justice had the highest mean score. Therefore, distributive justice was the highest performing dimension of justice.

7.3.7. To determine the influence of justice dimensions on negative emotions

The study evaluated the influence of justice dimensions (i.e. distributive justice, interactional and procedural justice) and negative emotions. Based on the findings, the study concluded that distributive justice has a negative and significant influence on negative emotions. The results further reveal that procedural justice has a negative and significant influence on negative emotions. Lastly, interactional justice has a negative and significant influence on negative emotions. Therefore, the objective to determine the influence of negative emotions on justice dimensions was achieved.

7.3.8. To evaluate the effect of secondary negative emotions (negative emotions with service recovery) on secondary satisfaction (recovery satisfaction)

To achieve this objective, the study evaluated the effect of negative emotions on recovery satisfaction and it was found that students feel that the service provider did not do enough during the recovery process and, therefore, more intense negative emotions were triggered. Based on the findings, the study concluded that there is a direct negative effect of negative emotions (anger, frustration, disappointment and offended) on the recovery satisfaction.

7.3.9. To develop a service recovery model or framework for the higher education sector

To achieve this objective, the study integrated existing concepts i.e. speed, apology, explanation, empowerment, compensation, distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice, negative emotions and recovery satisfaction. The validity and reliability of these variables were tested and found to be acceptable. The measurement and saturated model were both tested through a rigorous statistical procedure to determine the fitness of the proposed model named SERVREC. The model shows the links between the variables. All the hypothesised relationships among the constructs in the model were significant, except the relationships between procedural justice and recovery satisfaction, apology and distributive justice, apology and procedural justice which were insignificant. In addition, the critical paths have been drawn to enable institutional managers and marketing practitioners to make informed decisions.

7.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

The following recommendations emanate from the findings of this study.

7.4.1. Operationalisation of the service recovery (SERVREC) model or framework

This study recommends the service recovery model or framework as a tool that can be used by higher education institutional management to address service failure. The model, as presented in Figure 6.11, shows Important Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) with respect to the association between variables. Of particular relevance to management are variables whose relationship is significant. Therefore, the variables whose relationships are insignificant, are of little value towards the attainment of recovery satisfaction which is the ultimate goal of higher education institutions. In view of the findings as depicted in the SERVREC model, management of HEIs are encouraged to prioritise interactional justice in order to achieve recovery satisfaction because it has the strongest impact compared to other forms of justice. In this regard, employees should be encouraged to prioritise aspects of interactional justice, (i.e. apology and explanation), when confronted with a service failure and recovery scenario.

Secondly, it is suggested that distributive justice should be used to achieve recovery satisfaction as an alternative to interactional justice. In this regard, adequate compensation and explanation are key strategies for achieving this purpose because they are associated with distributive justice. Therefore, it is important for institutional managers to encourage employees to use an explanation as distributive justice because it is offered at no cost. A reasonable explanation will help the customer to understand what has happened. The use of compensation should be made where necessary and managers should be guided by the severity of the failure.

It is also suggested to the management of higher education institutions to come up with strategies that can be used to improve the performance of justice dimensions (i.e. procedural, distributive and interactional justice) because they have a stronger influence on negative emotions than recovery satisfaction. Detailed recommendations for the dimensions of justice will be addressed in a subsequent discussion. However, it is important to emphasise the need for HEI's managers to work towards improving procedural justice because the double

deviation effect was stronger as is evident in the intense negative emotions highlighted in the service recovery framework. In this regard, aspects of procedural justice i.e. speed and empowerment, need to be reviewed and appropriate tactics put in place to improve their overall performance.

The need for HEI management to work towards the improvement of justice dimensions cannot be over-emphasised because any injustice triggers negative emotions which have a negative effect on recovery satisfaction as shown in the SERVREC model. Therefore, it is suggested that employees are properly trained on how to deal with and pacify customer emotions such as anger, frustration, and disappointment because they affect recovery satisfaction. This strategy can improve the performance of justice dimensions and, subsequently, reduce negative emotion. In this regard, the following discussions will attend to substantive issues on how management can improve the overall performance of the variables highlighted in the framework.

7.4.2. Procedural justice

Managers should not only focus their attention on service recovery strategies alone, but also on the perception of justice. The findings of this study show that students rated this particular dimension lowly compared to other forms of justice and it also had a significant influence on negative emotions. Therefore, it is recommended to higher education institutions to review and redesign their procedures to enhance fairness. In this regard, a system audit should be undertaken to identify areas that are choking the smooth running of the institution. For instance, an audit can be undertaken with the view to analysing procedures in respect of students' registration, accommodation, the library, finance and accounting. Effective procedures should be able to facilitate speedy or timely access to facilities, services, and resolution of service breakdowns. Furthermore, organizational procedures should be designed to indicate standards or response periods to encourage speedy resolution of student complaints. For example, management of HEI's can commit to resolving customer complaints within five working days for complex complaints that need to be investigated. The management of student expectations is essential towards achieving recovery satisfaction.

In addition, it is proposed to the management of HEI's to conduct surveys among employees so as to get insights into areas they think are contributing to system problems and into those that are impeding effective service recovery. This information can be vital in order to identify bottlenecks and to the redesigning of procedures which should improve overall organization justice.

In order to achieve procedural justice, it is recommended to the management of higher educational institutions to conduct training sessions to enhance employees' knowledge and skill. Employee training is associated with empowerment and this entails that employees who are knowledgeable and have the right skill sets will be able to make the right judgements or calls when faced with a service failure incident. This will, in turn, enhance students' recovery satisfaction and trust in the system to address their problems.

It is further recommended to the management of HEI's to come up with a policy that spells out clear lines of responsibility and delegation so that every member of staff knows his or her responsibility when a customer complaint is launched. This can help to address role conflicts and overlapping responsibilities, which may lead to procedural injustices when customers are not assisted in time.

7.4.3. Interactional justice

The findings of this study show that university students were satisfied with interactional justice. Conversely, the influence or impact of interactional justice on negative emotions was stronger than on recovery satisfaction. Employees' interaction with aggrieved customers is an opportunity to mitigate anger and dissatisfaction. The following can assist higher education institutions to improve and ensure fairness when interacting with students:

Good interpersonal communication should be encouraged and employee skills, such as empathy and listening can be enhanced through training. This will, in turn, enable members of staff to gain skills to be able to explain service failure incidents in a manner that will help the customer to understand the reasons for the failure and the initiatives being taken to resolve the problem. There is a need for HEIs to show genuine interest and understanding when

interacting with the students. In the absence of a proper interaction during service recovery, it is not possible to achieve a favourable student experience. Interactive communication is a crucial element of the service recovery process and it enables both parties to define the situation, to determine what should be done and to map a way forward on how to carry the different activities towards service recovery.

It is further recommended that employees should be familiar with all the university processes and services offered by a higher education institution. This implies that customer-facing employees should be able to provide adequate information on examinations, fees, account balances, registration processes, programmes offered and other ancillary services. Product and system knowledge is critical when responding to students' problems. In this regard, in-house training and orientation should be conducted to assist employees to familiarise with all the processes and key aspects of the institution.

7.4.4. Distributive justice

The findings of this study show that distributive justice was the highest performing justice dimension. However, it had the least influence on recovery satisfaction. In order to improve customer perception of justice or fairness in the recovery process, there is a need to ensure that the outcome of the service process is fair and meets the customer's expectations.

It is, therefore, recommended for the management of HEI's to involve students in determining the right compensation or outcome which is acceptable to both parties. When students are involved in the process of determining the outcome, they are likely to accept the decision as fair. In addition, employees should be empowered to make a decision regarding the outcome without seeking management intervention.

7.4.5. Speed

The findings of this study show that the majority of students were not satisfied with the speed at which the university and its employees undertook the recovery process. This entails that there is a need for improvement of this particular recovery strategy in order to achieve procedural justice and, subsequently, recovery satisfaction. It is, therefore, recommended for

the management of these institutions to create a value chain. The value chain can be created by strengthening the following support activities:

Human resources management- There is a need to review how the organisation hires, trains and motivates its workers. Higher education institutions need to employ members of staff with customer acumen and the right skills to facilitate the provision of speedy resolutions to student problems. In addition, there is a need for staff training to facilitate the acquisition of new skill sets. In this regard, customer service and problem-solving skills should be inculcated in members of staff to allow the provision of seamless quality service. Quick and timely service is essential if these institutions are to achieve students' recovery satisfaction.

Technological development: Institutions are like steel beams, they tend to rust with the passage of time. It is, therefore, recommended for these institutions to invest in new technology or systems that will enable speedy resolution of customer problems. There is a need to redesign systems and processes so that they are responsive to the needs of students. In this regard, the universities can develop web portals to enable students to log in complaints and follow up on their problems without having to present themselves physically in the case of issues that can be dealt with easily. This will help the universities to manage queues, which are partly the genesis of recovery strategy failure.

Higher education institutions struggle to provide quality service because there are no robust systems in place to ensure delivery of superior service. Thus, universities should undertake the implementation of ISO 10002:2004 and/or ISO 9004:2000 to ensure speedy resolution of customer complaints. This will make a university an interconnected web of efficiency in dealing with several stakeholders including students. When systems and processes are audited and certified, as being ISO compliant, members of staff follow set standards of quality such that there is no room for deviation or provision of mediocre service. Ultimately, achieving this fit raises the university's profile and also students' confidence in the management of service failure issues.

Infrastructure: There is a need for higher education institutions to strengthen support systems such as accounting, IT and administration. Higher education institutions can only be effective in their solution of customer problems if cross-functionality among departments is encouraged. The speedy resolution of problems should not be left to the front desk alone or those in customer interface designation. Members of staff across different departments should be informed of the importance of cross-functionality because, if one department drops the ball in the process of helping the customer, the performance of the whole organisation is affected.

7.4.6. Empowerment

The findings of this study reveal that students were not satisfied when dealing with members who are not empowered. Empowerment is a critical service recovery strategy as it has a bearing on other recovery strategies. It is, therefore, recommended for management to ensure that members of staff are empowered to make the right decisions. Staff empowerment can be achieved through the implementation of the following:

Training: Customer-facing employees should be trained so that the role they have to play during the service recovery process is properly understood and executed. In addition, it is proposed that professional training or courses be provided to employees to enhance their confidence and skills in emotional intelligence and customer-relationship management. For example, training can be provided to lecturers to enable them to deal with class disruptions effectively.

Autonomy: It is proposed that members of staff be given authority to make decisions on customer-related issues. This can be done through the creation of a policy which gives a mandate to employees to make a decision without escalating every problem to senior management. Employees need to be informed of the extent to which they can intervene when a service breakdown is reported. This will ensure the speedy resolution of customer problems because the next in line in terms of authority to address a problem is known, depending on the severity of the problem. In addition, members of staff should be able to make decisions such as offering compensation without the interference of management.

7.4.7. Compensation

The majority of students were not satisfied with the level of compensation given to them in an event of a service failure. The following strategies are, therefore, recommended to management of HEIs in respect of compensation:

Offer adequate compensation: Higher education employees should be encouraged to offer compensation that meets the expectation of students. For instance, a student who has suffered financial loss because of the actions of the university or its employees should be compensated with a package that will restore him to the previous position before the loss was encountered. Anything less will lead to dissatisfaction and a situation known as a double deviation.

Consider severity of service failure: It is recommended for employees to consider the severity of service failure when offering compensation to students. In this regard, members of staff should offer compensation that is commensurate with the loss suffered. For example, students whose marks were erroneously captured by employees should be granted the correct marks (refund). Similarly, students whose exams scripts are missing should be allowed to re-write the examination.

Involve and appraise the customer throughout the compensation process: It is proposed that members of staff should come up with a compensatory solution that is acceptable to the customer. This can be achieved by involving the customer in determining the right compensation solution. Furthermore, employees should undertake to appraise the customer regularly on the status of the compensation and efforts being taken towards a speedy outcome. This will help the university or employee to put the customer at ease and maintain confidence towards the institution's ability to resolve the problem.

7.4.8. Apology

The majority of students were not satisfied with this particular recovery strategy and it was rated the lowest compared to other recovery strategies. An apology is considered as the cheapest form of recovery because there is no money involved. As such, it is recommended to

the management of universities to encourage employees to exhaust this particular strategy before administering other forms of recovery. The following strategies should be used to make an apology effective:

Intensity: An apology should be intense (sincere) if it is to be effective. This means that the right words such as ‘sorry’ should be used when communicating with the customer. It is, therefore, proposed that employees use words that express sincerity, remorse, concern and compassion for the service failure or loss suffered. In this regard, management can emphasise the importance of this element during staff-orientation or training.

Timeliness: Management of higher education institutions should encourage employees to offer an apology as soon as they realise that a student has encountered service failure occasioned by the action of the university or its employees. A timely apology to a service failure incident is deemed as fair and demonstrates a sense of responsibility on the part of the employee.

The severity of the service failure: While an apology is the right strategy for addressing service failures, it is recommended for employees to assess the severity of the failure before deciding the type of recovery strategy to use in response to service failure. In some cases, an apology may not be adequate because customers are expecting compensation due to the magnitude of the loss incurred. In addition, it is further recommended to employees to discern the type of apology that can be effective in an event where the failure is severe. For example, a frontline apology may be ideal to address a minor service breakdown, whereas a management apology may be appropriate to address severe service failures. In this regard, it is important for the institution’s management to be prepared for such eventualities and to be ready to step in without creating further bottlenecks if recovery satisfaction is to be achieved.

Type of the service failure: Members of staff should also be encouraged to be mindful of the type of service failure that has occurred when providing a recovery strategy. An apology may be ideal for a service failure emanating from process flaws but not for one emanating from an outcome failure. For example, an apology may be ideal to pacify anger emanating from the

slow registration process, whereas the same apology may not be effective when dealing with a service failure where a student has been allocated wrong grades because what he expects at that moment is some form of compensation to restore him to his rightful position.

7.4.9. Explanation

The findings of this study reveal that the majority of students were satisfied with the explanation that the university provided after encountering service failure. However, customer needs are not static and there is a need for continuous improvement to achieve recovery satisfaction consistently. It is, therefore, recommended for the management of higher education institutions to train employees in communication and customer service to enhance their capacity to resolve customer service failure incidents. In this regard, it is proposed that employees should take into consideration the following elements when interacting with customers:

Tone: it is suggested to employees to use the right tone when explaining the reasons behind service failure to students. In this regard, employees should avoid justifying or legitimising the service failure incident even if the customer is partly to blame. The employee communication style to the customers should make them feel at ease and to feel that they are welcomed by the service provider.

Candid: Employees should be honest and truthful when explaining service failure incidents to students and the reason behind the failure and steps being taken to correct the failure should be provided. In addition, employees should provide adequate information to the customer to remove any elements of doubt in the process being undertaken to address the failure.

7.5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The current study was based on a purposive sample drawn from 430 students across three public universities in the KwaZulu Natal province such that the findings cannot be generalized to all other universities in South Africa or beyond this context. However, they can add value and prove meaningful to other universities with similar functional and management

architectures. In addition, it was necessary to use purposive sampling because service failures are rare occurrences and only customers who have experienced failure were useful.

The study could not be commissioned across many universities because of limited time and budget constraints. A study of this magnitude, if operationalized beyond the current scope, will require additional external funding because the research budgetary support provided by the institution cannot go beyond the minimum threshold for postgraduate students.

The other limitation of this study is that it relied on students' memory to recall critical service failure incidents. Memory is fallible and some of the service failure incidents can be exaggerated. However, students were asked to recall the most recent incidents to eliminate bias and problems associated with the loss of memory for old scenarios.

7.6. DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It is recommended that future research include a qualitative component so that management of higher education can get an in-depth understanding of customer perceptions with respect to service failure and recovery. This can be combined with a quantitative study which should involve a larger sample of many universities. In addition, this study only focused on collecting service failure incidents from full-time students. Future research can explore the inclusion of part-time students because they may have problems that are unique to their mode of study.

A cross-sectional design was used in this study. This limits the ability of the research to observe changes in factors over time. It is proposed that future research carry out longitudinal studies as they may provide insights into variations or changes that may happen in factors that influence students' perception of justice and service recovery strategies. In addition, the study may include other recovery strategies variables such as facilitation and justification.

Future research should pay more attention to the analysis of double deviation scenarios and operationalization of double service recovery. Many failed service recovery incidents need to be investigated through a comprehensive analysis using all justice dimensions.

Future studies in higher education should also try to analyse the effect of pre-recovery emotions (emotions triggered by initial service failure) on service recovery strategies and perceived justice in the sector. It is important to ascertain how the pre-recovery emotions affect the service recovery process. This study focused only on negative emotions after service recovery was triggered by service recovery failure (double deviation effect).

Despite the above limitations, it is important to state that they do not dilute the relevance and contribution of this study, but provide further opportunities for research. The limitations act as pointers to future researchers to explore other avenues for knowledge creation.

7.7. CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has contributed to literature and to marketing practice in several ways. The contributions of this study are presented in detail. Firstly, this study has developed the first service recovery model for the South African higher education sector. This model could serve as a strategic intervention for addressing service failures at HEI's. The model links existing concepts of service recovery strategies, justice dimensions, negative emotions and recovery satisfaction. The inclusion of service recovery strategies in the model is very important for evaluation of the service recovery performance rather than merely concentrating on justice dimensions as is evident in previous studies in the higher education sector. The reality is that recovery strategies and justice dimensions do not operate in isolation. There is a basic need for marketing practitioners and institutional managers to understand the different service recovery strategies. This, coupled with an understanding of the justice theory or dimensions, can enhance the effective application of the model and strategies to achieve recovery satisfaction.

In addition, the inclusion of negative emotions in this study is the first attempt to model negative emotions in the higher education sector in the context of service recovery. Intense

negative emotions, as shown in this study, point to the fact that the service recovery process was generally not satisfactory. This means that the majority of students experienced injustices during the recovery process which lead to a service recovery failure known as a double deviation scenario. Therefore, this study underpins the need for university management to analyse students' negative emotions following the service recovery process critically because they affect recovery satisfaction. Furthermore, this study contributes to existing literature on emotions triggered by the service recovery process. The results show that all the three justice dimensions i.e. procedural, interactional and distributive justice have a negative and significant influence on negative emotions.

The study further contributes to existing literature in the service industry in general and to higher education in particular by demonstrating that students in higher education institutions value interactional justice in order to achieve recovery satisfaction. This finding is a wakeup call to institutional managers to analyse critically how members of staff interact with students. The acquisition of such information can facilitate the creation of an enabling environment where members of staff understand the need to treat students with respect, politeness, empathy and courtesy because these elements are central to recovery satisfaction.

The study makes a critical contribution to existing literature in terms of the use of an explanation as distributive justice. Normally, compensation is the traditional service recovery strategy used to achieve an outcome or distributive justice. Therefore, the use of an explanation as an outcome or distributive justice offers an alternative approach to higher education institutions to offer a solution at no cost or without squeezing the limited resources at their disposal. However, this must be exercised with caution depending on the severity of the failure to avoid injustice. Simply put, where a student has incurred a financial loss as a result of university negligence, a financial compensation will be appropriate. If the financial loss can be proven to be occasioned by the student's own negligence or self-induced failure, an explanation will be ideal to achieve distributive or outcome justice. Similarly, where a student's examination results have not been released on time, an explanation will be feasible to achieve outcome justice.

The significance of distributive justice on recovery satisfaction is evident in this study. However, it plays second fiddle to interactional justice in terms of its impact on recovery satisfaction. This implies that students of higher education institutions place a high value on interactional justice to achieve recovery satisfaction. A simpler explanation can be that as intellectuals, students realise that higher education institutions are non-profit making organisations. Consequently, it may not be feasible to expect distributive justice, which, in most cases, wears a financial face in the form of compensation. The nature of higher education institutions makes the use of compensation as distributive justice very problematic and not viable because they survive on government funding or subvention. Therefore, the use of an explanation and apology should be highly considered by higher education institutions because they are associated with interactional justice which has the strongest impact on recovery satisfaction.

This study is one of the pioneers, or few, service recovery studies based on customers' perception of actual service failure and recovery scenarios. The majority of service failure and recovery studies are based on experiment and artificial or hypothetical scenarios in order to achieve reliability. This study used rigorous methodological steps of smart PLS to achieve both reliability and validity. Despite the reliability and validity fears associated with studies that are based on recall of incidents or actual scenarios, this study achieved higher reliability coefficients for both Cronbach alpha and composite reliability measurements of variables. In addition, validity (AVEs) scores were above the acceptable threshold. Therefore, this study makes a complementary contribution to literature through testing the validity and reliability of the hypothesized relationships of the research model. The relationships investigated have been extracted from previous studies. Therefore, this study has developed a theory based on an accumulated body of extant research and has provided empirical justification for existing theory in order to verify or disprove the measurement and structural properties of tested constructs in a different research context or environment.

7.8. CONCLUSION

This study can be seen as a contribution to the marketing philosophy. The study has provided theory and new insights into service failure and service recovery strategies in the context of higher education in the developing world, specifically in the KwaZulu Natal province, South

Africa. The aim of this study was to examine students' perception of service failure and service recovery strategies in higher education institutions. The researcher believes higher education institutions are at a crossroads and the problems confronting them cannot be resolved with the same kind of thinking if they are to be relevant and responsive. This study has analysed the causes of service failure and developed a service recovery framework (SERVREC) that can assist marketing practitioners and institutional managers to design and alter institutional policies, procedures and practices so that the dynamic needs of students are addressed.

The empirical findings of this study should, therefore, act as pointers to the institutions' management to pinpoint areas that are affecting their institutional operations and where improvements are needed. Particular attention should be paid to the application of justice dimensions as they have a significant effect on negative emotions and recovery satisfaction. Like all cost-saving minded organizations, HEIs are advised to adopt and exhaust the use of interactional justice to achieve students' recovery satisfaction because it is offered at no cost. In the same vein, it is important to highlight that all the recommendations provided in this study are not prescriptive, but should serve as the mirror for design, reorganization, correction and enhancing performance. Ultimately, all efforts and resources should be channeled towards achieving student satisfaction and fostering continuous improvement. Thus, it is possible to make higher education institutions a better place for managing student grievances. This study has provided the foundation for realising the better place vision.

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ANNEXURE 1:
THE SERVICE RECOVERY QUESTIONNAIRE



Section A

Please cross **X** or tick **✓** one block for each question

1. Please specify your gender.	Male	Female
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2. Please indicate your age category.	Below 24	25 – 34	35 – 44	45 – 54	55 and above
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3. Please indicate the level of your study	1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year	4 th year	Masters	PhD
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4. Please indicate the name of your university	DUT	UKZN	UNIZULU
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5. Please indicate the academic discipline you are registered for	Science subjects	Commercial subjects	Humanities subjects
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6. Please indicate your race	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Others
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7. Please indicate your nationality	South African	Other-specify:
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Section B

Questionnaire Guide

The aim of this study is to gather information related to service failure and service recovery incidents. Service failure involves a situation or service encounter where your expectations were not met resulting in unpleasant or dissatisfying service experience. At times, customers who experience service failure go through a service recovery process which is an undertaking by the employee or the University to correct the mistakes. Service recovery efforts may be successful or they may fail thereby triggering another failure. This entails that efforts by the service provider or university to correct the mistakes failed and were not satisfactory or did not meet your expectation. This results in a situation known as a double deviation and triggers negative emotions.

Instructions

Please recall or think of the most serious recent incident you complained about a service failure (poor service) or the service provided did not meet your expectation at this University. Select one cause of service failure from the categories presented and the nature of the service provided at that particular time that represents the incident that you have just recalled or encountered at this institution

	Service failure	
8	Please select one cause of service failure from the three categories that represents the service failure incident you have recalled and encountered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tick one
	Service delivery system failure- The service I received was unreasonably slow service, service below expected standard or the service was not available at that particular moment	
	Unfulfilled needs and request- The employees failed to handle or provide your needs or request	
	Unprompted and unsolicited action- The service failure was caused by employees behaviour (administrative or academic) such as lack of attention and unusual actions	
	Problematic customers- The service failure was caused by actions of other customers	

9	Please select the nature of the service provided when you encountered the service failure that you have highlighted above	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tick one
	I experienced service failure during the registration process	
	I experienced service failure in respect of funding or financial aid	
	I experienced administrative service failure	
	I experienced service failure in the classroom	
	I experienced service failure at the library	
	I experienced service failure in respect of student residence or accommodation	
	I experienced service failure in respect of the student cafeteria	
	Other- Specify:	

Analyse the service recovery process at this University with respect to the treatment that you received when you launched the complaint regarding the service failure incident that you have highlighted above.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
A	Complaints management					
10.	The university or employees encourages students to complain when they face problems	1	2	3	4	5
11.	The university has different platforms or communication channels for registering complaints	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I knew where to register my complaint because the university has publicised	1	2	3	4	5

13.	It was easy, fast and convenient to register my complaint at this university	1	2	3	4	5
14.	The members of staff had authority to settle or address my complaint at this university	1	2	3	4	5
	Service recovery strategies	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
B	Speed					
15.	The university or member of staff offered a quick service recovery plan for the problem I encountered	1	2	3	4	5
16.	My problem was solved at once and I did not need to ask for further help	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I was not kept waiting unnecessarily and a solution was found quickly	1	2	3	4	5
18.	My problem was solved within a reasonable time	1	2	3	4	5
C	Apology					
19.	The university or a member of staff was immediately sorry for the inconvenience caused	1	2	3	4	5
20.	The university or member of staff apologized to me for what had happened	1	2	3	4	5
21.	The university or employee expressed regret for the mistake that occurred	1	2	3	4	5
22.	The employee offered me additional benefits as a token for the mistake or service failure	1	2	3	4	5
D	Compensation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
23.	The university or employee provided compensation as a remedy for my problem	1	2	3	4	5
24.	The university or member of staff offered a good solution to my service problem	1	2	3	4	5
25.	The solution offered by the university was acceptable to me	1	2	3	4	5
26.	The university or employee offered a good service fix for my problem	1	2	3	4	5
E	Explanation					
27.	The university or employee explained why the problem might have happened	1	2	3	4	5
28.	The university or employee explained what factors might have caused the problem	1	2	3	4	5
29.	The university or employee explained what might have gone wrong	1	2	3	4	5
30.	The university or employee provided a convincing explanation of the reason for the problem	1	2	3	4	5

F	Empowerment					
31.	The first contact employee solved my problem	1	2	3	4	5
32.	The employee immediately told me what to expect from the process	1	2	3	4	5
33.	The employee did not need help to solve my problem	1	2	3	4	5
34.	The employee had the skill and knowledge to deal with my problem	1	2	3	4	5

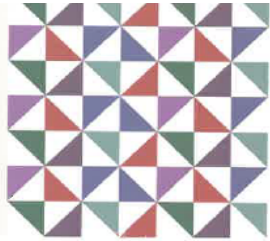
Analyse the degree of fairness or justice during the service recovery proces with respect to the outcome you received (**Distributive justice**), the interaction with the service provider or employee (**Interactional justice**) and the procedures used (**Procedural justice**)

	Justice Theory	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
A.	Distributive Justice					
35.	The outcome that I received was fair	1	2	3	4	5
36.	In resolving the problem, the university gave me what I needed	1	2	3	4	5
37.	The way the problem was resolved reflected the loss suffered	1	2	3	4	5
38.	The university resolved the problem according to my expectation	1	2	3	4	5
B.	Procedural Justice					
39.	The university procedures were fair	1	2	3	4	5
40.	The university procedures were sensible	1	2	3	4	5
41.	The university procedures were streamlined	1	2	3	4	5
42.	The university procedures did what I expected	1	2	3	4	5
43.	The university procedures put the customer first	1	2	3	4	5
44.	The university procedures made me feel important	1	2	3	4	5
C.	Interactional Justice					
45.	The behaviour of university employees gave you the confidence to deal with them	1	2	3	4	5
46.	University employees had the requisite knowledge to respond to your questions	1	2	3	4	5
47.	University employees gave you individual attention	1	2	3	4	5
48.	University employees had put proper effort into resolving my problem	1	2	3	4	5
49.	University employees communication with me was appropriate	1	2	3	4	5
50.	University employee gave the courtesy I was due	1	2	3	4	5

Please rate your satisfaction with the service recovery process. Recovery satisfaction highlights your satisfaction and negative emotions are triggered by your dissatisfaction with the service recovery process

	Recovery Satisfaction	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
51.	I think the university or the employee was on this particular occasion good in resolving my problem	1	2	3	4	5
52.	I was satisfied with the way the employee or university handled my problem	1	2	3	4	5
53.	Overall I was satisfied with the way my issue was resolved	1	2	3	4	5
	Negative emotions					
54.	I was frustrated with the way the employee or university handled my problem	1	2	3	4	5
55.	I was angry with the way the university or employee handled my problem	1	2	3	4	5
56.	I was disappointed with the way the university resolved my problem	1	2	3	4	5
57.	I was offended with the way the university resolved my problem on this particular occasion	1	2	3	4	5

ANNEXURE 2: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Institutional Research Ethics Committee
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate
2nd Floor, Berwyn Court
Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus
Durban University of Technology
P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001
Tel: 031 373 2375
Email: lavishad@dut.ac.za
http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics
www.dut.ac.za

25 October 2017

IREC Reference Number: **REC 95/17**

Mr S K Msosa
Flat 307
Maroela
25 Bristow Crescent
Mayville
4086

Dear Mr Msosa

Service failure and service recovery strategies in the context of higher education: A provincial perspective in South Africa

I am pleased to inform you that **PROVISIONAL APPROVAL** has been granted to your proposal REC 95/17 subject to:

- Piloting of the data collection tool. *Please note that should there be any changes to the data collection tool, in a letter signed by the researcher and supervisor, list the changes to the document and submit to IREC with the final data collection tool. Even when there are no changes to the data collection tool, IREC has to be notified.*
- Obtaining and submitting the necessary gatekeeper permission/s to Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC).

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS NOT A FINAL APPROVAL LETTER. KINDLY SUBMIT THE ABOVE MENTIONED DOCUMENTS WITHIN THREE MONTHS TO THE IREC OFFICE. DATA COLLECTION CAN ONLY COMMENCE WHEN IREC ISSUES FULL APPROVAL

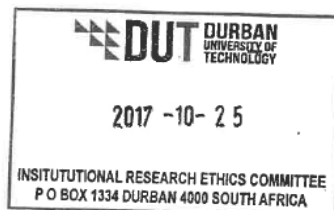
The Proposal has been allocated the following Ethical Clearance number **IREC 097/17**. Please use this number in all communication with this office.

Approval has been granted for a period of two years, before the expiry of which you are required to apply for safety monitoring and annual recertification. Please use the Safety Monitoring and Annual Recertification Report form which can be found in the Standard Operating Procedures [SOP's] of the IREC. This form must be submitted to the IREC at least 3 months before the ethics approval for the study expires.

Yours Sincerely



Professor J K Adam
Chairperson: IREC



ANNEXURE 3:
APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH-UNIZULU



University of Zululand, Private Bag X1001, KwaDlangezwa, 3886
W: www.unizulu.ac.za

T: +27 35 902 6731 E: MdutshaneN@unizulu.ac.za

Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation Office

Mr. S.K. Msosa
Department of Marketing and Retail Management
Durban University of Technology
Durban
4001

Per email: kayambazinthu@gmail.com

03 November 2017

Dear Mr. Msosa

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT UNIZULU "SERVICE FAILURE AND SERVICE RECOVERY STRATEGIES IN THE CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION: A PROVINCIAL PERSPECTIVE IN SOUTH AFRICA"

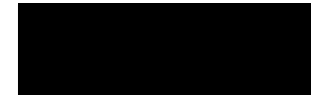
Your letter to me, dated 18 September 2017, refers.

I hereby grant approval for you to conduct part of your research at UNIZULU, as per the methodologies stated in your research proposal and in terms of the data collection instruments that you have submitted. I note also that the Durban University of Technology, has issued an ethical clearance certificate and having read the documentation, I am happy to accept that certificate.

You may use this letter as authorization when you approach the appropriate persons. Please note that permission is based on the documentation that you have submitted. Should you revise your research instruments, or use additional instruments, you must submit those to us as well.

I wish you well in your research.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Gideon De Wet
Chairperson: University of Zululand Research Ethics Committee
Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation
cc: Mr. D Van Rensburg- Registrar

ANNEXURE 4:
APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH-DUT



*Directorate for Research and Postgraduate Support
Durban University of Technology
Tromso Annexe, Steve Biko Campus
P.O. Box 1334, Durban 4000
Tel.: 031-3732576/7
Fax: 031-3732946*

13th December 2017

Mr Steven Kayambazinthu Msosa
c/o Department of Marketing and Retail
Durban University of Technology

Dear Mr Msosa

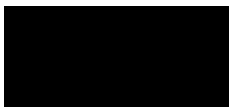
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE DUT

Your email correspondence in respect of the above refers. I am pleased to inform you that the Institutional Research Committee (IRC) has granted full permission for you to conduct your research "Service failure and service recovery strategies in the context of higher education: A provincial perspective in South Africa" at the Durban University of Technology.

The DUT may impose any other condition it deems appropriate in the circumstances having regard to nature and extent of access to and use of information requested.

We would be grateful if a summary of your key research findings can be submitted to the IRC on completion of your studies.

Kindest regards.
Yours sincerely



PROF CARIN NAPIER
DIRECTOR (ACTING): RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE SUPPORT DIRECORATE

ANNEXURE 5:
APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH-UKZN



5 October 2017

Mr Steven Kayambazinthu Msosa
Faculty of Management Sciences
Durban University of Technology
Email: Kayambazinthu@gmail.com govendej@dut.ac.za

Dear Mr Msosa

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"Service failure and service recovery strategies in the context of higher education: A provincial perspective in South Africa"

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by handing out questionnaires to full time registered students on all five campuses.

Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire:

- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the Protection of Public Information Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely


MR SS MOKOENA
REGISTRAR






Office of the Registrar

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2206 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 7824/2204 Email: registrar@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

ANNEXURE 6: EDITING CERTIFICATE

ASOKA RESEARCH

CELL NO.: 0836507817



DECLARATION CERTIFICATE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITING

This is to certify that I have English Language Edited the thesis

:

Service failure and service recovery strategies in the context of higher education: A provincial perspective in South Africa.

Candidate: Msosa S.K,



DISCLAIMER

Whilst the English language editor has used electronic track changes to facilitate corrections and has inserted comments and queries in a right-hand column, the responsibility for effecting changes in the final, submitted document, remains the responsibility of the candidate in consultation with the supervisor/promoter.

Editorial Board member: Prof. Dennis Schaffer, M.A.(Leeds), PhD, KwaZulu (Natal), TEFL(London), TITC Business English, Emeritus Professor UKZN. Univ. Cambridge Accreditation: IGCSE Drama. Hon. Research Fellow, DUT. Durban University of Technology.