Bård Tronvoll

Customer Complaint Behaviour in Service

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DISSERTATION

Abstract

It is vital for service providers to obtain feedback from their customers. This is especially important when a customer has perceived an unfavourable service experience. One way to receive feedback from these customers is to encourage and facilitate the complaint process.

Scholarly knowledge about complaint behaviour gives the service provider valuable insight into service problems and how to improve service offerings, service processes and interactions to increase customer satisfaction, loyalty and profit. Customers who have an unfavourable service experience should therefore be encouraged to complain, because if they do not, the provider risks losing the customer and thus future revenue.

Previous research about complaint behaviour has mainly focused on the static description of motivation, antecedents or the outcome response of complaint behaviour. The research has mainly explored different features linked to the market, the provider, the service and/or individual customer's issues. To learn more about customer complaint behaviour, a dynamic and processual approach is needed. This may help providers to serve customers more adaptly and prevent unfavourable service experiences.

The main aim of this dissertation is to enhance the knowledge of the dynamic behavioural processes in customer complaint behaviour. The dissertation will contribute to conceptualise different aspects of customer complaint behaviour. In addition, the dissertation will give an empirically grounded understanding of contextual and emotional aspects that may help to recognize the complexity of the complaint behaviour process.

The contribution of this dissertation is a portrayal of different models describing the dynamic process of complaint behaviour including a new customer complaint behaviour model. Customer complaint behaviour is viewed as action and reaction, i.e., as a dynamic adjustment process that occurs during and/or after the service interaction, rather as a post-purchase activity. In order to capture these adjustments, a new conceptual complaint model is suggested which holds three thresholds for complaint behaviour and emphasises three different behavioural categories in the complaint process. Furthermore, the dissertation gives an explanation of contextual and emotional issues that influence the complaint behaviour. The dissertation also includes an epistemological framework to anchor the paradigmatic belongings of service research as a basis for the design of studies in the area of customer complaint behaviour.

Acknowledgements

A doctoral dissertation in service research will never been developed without interactions, co-creation and relationships with other people. In this respect I have many people to thank who, one way or another have helped me during my study.

Fist of all I want to thank my main adviser, Professor Bo Edvardsson, not only for this enormous knowledge on different subjects within service research and thereby a source of inspiration, but also for his willingness to assist, and generosity to share. Dear Bosse, thank you for all your help and I hope that we will stay in touch for many years. I will also thank my co-adviser Professor Anders Gustafsson for valuable comments on both the survey questionnaire and feedback on the articles and the dissertation.

I have really enjoyed the opportunity to be a part of a stimulating research environment, and I have always felt welcome at Service Research Center (CTF) at Karlstad University. I wish to express my appreciation for the support from colleagues and friends. I hope that you will welcome me as part of your research team also in the future. A special thanks goes to Ingrid Hansson, who always greets me when I am walking down the corridors of CTF. Further, my gratitude goes to a very service-minded and professional librarian, Berit Hjort. She has promptly answered my questions and given useful guiding in my search for various articles.

My thanks go also to my colleagues at Oslo School of Management. We were four "students" starting the doctoral studies together; Sander Sværi, Terje Slåtten and Tore Waters, - thank you for your friendship and many interesting discussions on various service research topics. To them I have only one call – write every day! In addition, a special thanks goes to Tore Mysen, Gøran Svensson and Roger Mathisen for many appealing academic discussions and support. A warm thought also goes to Hilah Geer at the library of Oslo School of Management who has helped me to get hold of different articles.

Finally, and most importantly my sincere appreciation goes to my dear wife Anne who has patiently accepted my writing, and has helped me when I needed an English word or to have a chapter proofread. Thank you for your love and support. My warmest thoughts also go to our children Linn, Tormod and

Håkon - to them I will say "knowledge is power". At the end I also want to thank my mother who always encourages me to continue studying and to my uncle Magne for his enormous knowledge and thereby is an inspiration to continuous learning.

Lillestrøm, April 2008

Bård Tronvoll

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Tronvoll, B. (2008b). "The Effect of Negative Emotions on Customer Complaint Behaviour.", International Journal of Service Industry Management, second review.

1. Introduction

Complaint behaviour is an important phenomenon for both service scholars and managers and must be understood because of its impact on the customer's perceptions of the service experience. Knowledge about complaint behaviour gives the service provider valuable insight into many areas such as identifying common service problems (Harari 1992; Johnston and Mehra 2002), improving service design and delivery (Marquis and Filiatrault 2002; Tax and Brown 1998), understanding the customer's perceived service quality (Edvardsson 1992; Harrison-Walker 2001) and helping strategic planning (Dröge and Halstead 1991; Johnston and Mehra 2002). Rust et al. (1996) and Tax and Brown (1998) argue that dissatisfied customers should be encouraged to complain because if a customer is unhappy but does not complain, the provider risks losing the customer. Learning about the customer's complaint behaviour process will consequently help companies to serve customers correctly and prevent an unfavourable service experience.

It is important for customers to complain after encountering an unfavourable service experience. I agree with Zemke and Bell (1990) who argue that complaining gives the customer an opportunity to (i) receive an apology for the inconvenience, (ii) be offered a fair solution of the problem, (iii) be treated in a manner where the service company appreciates the customer's problem (including fixing it), and (iv) be offered some value-added atonement for the inconvenience.

Although knowledge about complaint behaviour exists there is a special need, in my view, to increase the knowledge about the behavioural processes of a complaining customer and the factors influencing this behaviour. This dissertation will therefore enhance the knowledge by investigating the following four research questions: what are the dynamic processes of a customer's complaint behaviour, in which way do customers give their response to an unfavourable service experience, what contextual factors influence complaint behaviour, and what kind of negative emotions do negative impressions generate? Customer complaint behaviour is defined in this dissertation as a process that emerges when a service experience lies outside a customer's 'acceptance zone' during the service interactions and/or in the evaluation of the value-in-use. This unfavourable experience can be expressed in the form of

verbal and/or non-verbal communication to another entity and can lead to a behavioural change (Tronvoll 2007b).

Complaint behaviour or responses to problems have been studied in several research fields. In the 1970s, Hirschman (1970) studied the phenomenon within the field of political science. Day and Landon (1977b) have studied complaint behaviour in the context of product marketing. Complaining has also been studied within various academic disciplines, e.g., psychology where complaining has been described as individual responses to dissatisfaction in interpersonal relationships (Drigotas et al. 1995; East 2000; Maute and Forrester Jr. 1993; Rusbult et al. 1988). Ping (1999) has explained responses to dissatisfaction in business to business relationships. In this dissertation, I will contribute to the knowledge of the contextual and dynamic processes of complaint behaviour within the service research field.

Service research has searched for a valid theoretical foundation since its inception. For many years, the emphasis has been on the differences between services[1] and products (Lovelock and Gummesson 2004; Shostack 1977; Vargo and Lusch 2004b). The focus on service characteristics has influenced the development of key concepts such as service quality, customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and therefore customer complaint behaviour. The majority of service companies have employed a business logic based on a conventional product marketing, or a goods-dominant logic of marketing (Lusch and Vargo 2006c; Vargo and Lusch 2004a; 2008b). The theoretical foundation for this logic comes from the micro-economic idea of value creation through exchange of physical goods, which entails value embedded in the product (Alderson 1957; Bagozzi 1975; Hunt 1976). Even though service is the fundamental basis for exchange (Vargo and Lusch 2008a), thoughts and concepts of marketing theory have remained in the goods-dominant logic. This logic has naturally been applied to research on customer complaint behaviour. Consequently, customer complaint behaviour has mainly been linked to product failure and has been viewed as a static, post-purchase activity (Gilly and Gelb 1982; Richins

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[1] Within the conventional marketing, "services" means intangible output (goods) of the service company. I will, in this dissertation, use the singular term, "service," which reflects the process of doing something beneficial for and in conjunction with some entity, rather than units of output - immaterial goods - as implied by the plural "services." Service, then, represents the general case, the common denominator, of the exchange process; service is what is always exchanged. Goods, when employed, are aids to the service-provision process (Vargo and Lusch 2008b).

1987; Singh 1990b; Stephens 2000). In my view, the research on customer complaint behaviour has primarily focused on (i) motivation for complaining, (ii) antecedents to complaint behaviour and (iii) types of complaint response. The research in these areas has explored different features linked to the market, the provider, the service and/or individual customer issues. These factors have been used to explain why some customers engage in complaint behaviour and others do not. One factor that influences complaint behaviour is market competition, which is explored in article I, Complainer Characteristics When Exit is Closed (Tronvoll 2007a).

An extensive amount of research has been conducted on customer complaint behaviour in the previously mentioned categories (motivation, antecedents and response). To extend the knowledge about complaint behaviour, it is necessary to explore not only the static outcome of the complaint behaviour but also the dynamic process. To do so, it is essential to relate and link the complaint behaviour construct to other service constructs and even to the discipline itself. Researchers have emphasised the dynamic aspects of service and consequently supported definitions of service to include activities, deeds, interactions, performances and processes embedded in the relationship between the customer and the service company (Edvardsson et al. 2005b; Grönroos 2000; Vargo and Lusch 2004a). A necessary condition for understanding this foundation and process is to understand the ontological and epistemological dynamics of service. In searching for this knowledge, there is a need for a theoretical framework to comprehend the principles and basis of service research. Article II, A Framework for and Analyzes of Paradigms in Service Research, explores this foundation (Tronvoll et al. 2008a).

To describe customer complaint behaviour from a dynamic perspective, it is necessary to have a dynamic understanding of service. In this dissertation, therefore, service is viewed as 'in time and place' linked activities and interactions provided as solutions to customer wishes and needs. Service is viewed mainly as experiential since customers assess activities and interactions during and after the service. A dynamic perspective is defined as a behavioural orientation and interaction in response to a changing contextual environment within the relationship. By this definition, dynamic interaction is viewed as being embedded in the process. This perspective may be applied in both service processes and complaint behaviour processes. Behavioural interaction and processes have been emphasised during the past two decades in service

research. Several authors have participated in building a foundation for the dynamic service perspective (see e.g. Grönroos 1984; Gummesson 1987b; Shostack 1984). One of the latest contributions to the dynamic perspective is the service-dominant logic of marketing (2006a; Lusch and Vargo 2006c; Vargo and Lusch 2004a; 2008a; 2008b; Vargo and Morgan 2005). The service-dominant logic emphasises that value is experienced only when it is in use and co-created by the customer together with the service provider. The concept of value-in-use is understood as being the experience of a customer-centred process whereby customers use their own private and public resources in co-creation with the provider's private and public resources to create value. In terms of customer complaint behaviour, the change in perspective will result in a shift from failure in the operand resources, e.g., product failure causing dissatisfaction, to a lack of quality or failure in the operant resources, e.g., failed or missing competence causing a negative impression and an unfavourable service experience. Consequently, a change to a dynamic perspective requires new approaches and models in research on customer complaint behaviour.

The dynamic process is the basis for understanding and conceptualising complaint behaviour. Article III, Customer Complaint Behaviour from the Perspective of Service-dominant Logic of Marketing (Tronvoll 2007b), explores the dynamic processes in complaint behaviour and article IV, A New Model of Customer Complaint Behaviour from the Perspective of Service-dominant Logic of Marketing (Tronvoll 2008c), proposes a complaint behavioural model which adopts the dynamic behavioural perspective.

Although research on customer complaint behaviour has focused on different characteristics of the complainers, the internal processes such as emotional processes have received little attention (Mattsson et al. 2004). Negative impressions and unfavourable service experiences will often generate negative emotions. These emotional processes become sub-processes in the complaint behavioural process. To understand the customer's wide spectrum of negative emotions, there is a need to identify and classify these emotions and through this understand their influences on the complaint behaviour. These emotions are explored in article V, The Effects of Negative Emotions on Customer Complaint Behaviour (Tronvoll 2008c).

The previously mentioned issues demonstrate a need for a deeper understanding of the dynamic aspects of customer complaint behaviour.

Today's knowledge is based mainly on a static understanding of complaint behaviour. Previously, senior scholars have focused on various dynamic aspects of service research such as functional process quality (Grönroos 1984), relationships (Gummesson 1987b) and quality dynamics (Teboul 1991). This focus has seldom been used to explain complaint behaviour. To reduce the knowledge gap, the research on complaint behaviour should focus on its dynamic aspects. In this dissertation, I will examine these important issues in relation to the research field of customer complaint behaviour.

1.1 Aim

The overall aim of the dissertation is to enhance the knowledge about the dynamic behavioural processes of complaint behaviour. The focus will be on the behaviour of a complaining customer and the factors that influence this behaviour. Consequently, the dissertation will focus on the dynamic aspects of the complaint behaviour and attempts to conceptualise customer complaint behaviour. In addition, the dissertation will embrace contextual and emotional aspects that may help to understand the complaint behaviour process.

The aim of this dissertation is to contribute to,
- the ontological and epistemological framing of the service research field, and through this provide insights into the dynamics of customer complaint behaviour,
- the development of a customer complaint behaviour model based on dynamic interaction between the customer and the service company,
- the identification and analysis of contextual factors that influence the customer complaint behaviour, and
- revealing the emotions involved when the customer has experienced an unfavourable service experience.

The dissertation will focus on complaint behaviour from the customer's point of view. More accurately, the dissertation will focus on the dynamic aspects of complaint behaviour in the service interaction. An alternative approach is to view customer complaint behaviour as part of the relationship that continues over time. This approach would have made it possible to trace changes in the relationship arising from unfavourable service experiences.

To understand the entire complaint process, the service company's recovery activities should be involved because there is no strict line between the customer's actions and the service company's reactions in the complaint process. The interaction between the provider and the customer, as action and reaction in a process, constitutes the total complaint activities and processes. If I had chosen in this dissertation to view complaint behaviour from the service company's perspective, contributions would have been made to the service recovery domain.

This dissertation will only study complaint behaviour as part of an active relationship with the service provider. A customer may protest or complain to a provider for reasons that are unrelated to a specific unfavourable service experience. It could be, for instance that people complain to/about the service provider as a general protest against society, the branch or other aspects of business life.

1.2 Contribution of the appended articles

This section will give a brief summary of contributions from the appended articles. Table 1 shows the title, the research question, type of article, the contribution of the article, the author's contribution in the article of the appended articles and where the article is published or in a review process.

Table 1: Contributions of the appended articles

Article I	Title	**Complainer Characteristics When Exit is Closed**
	Research question	Does a monopolistic market structure influence the complainer characteristic?
	Type of article	Empirical
	Contribution of the article	The demographic and socio-economic characteristics of complainers in a monopoly market structure are different from earlier studies conducted in competitive markets. In the present study, consumers from the lower socio-economic groups had the highest complaint frequency, that is, consumers with the lowest incomes, those outside the labour market, those with the most modest standards of accommodation, and those who live alone.
	The authors contribution in the article	Single author
	Published/ review process	This article is published in International Journal of Service Industry Management **18**(1): 25-51 (Tronvoll 2007a).

Article II	Title	**A Framework for and Analyzes of Paradigms in Service Research**
	Research question	How can service research be classified in an epistemological framework?
	Type of article	Conceptual
	Contribution of the article	The article creates an epistemological framework to understand the paradigmatic home for service research output, which contains quadrants of normative, interpretative, monologic and dialogic paradigms.
	The authors contribution in the article	Idea and concept, data collection, part of the data analysis, development of the first and second draft.
	Co-authored	The article was co-authored with Professor Stephen W. Brown at Center for Services Leadership at W. P Carey School of Business, Arizona State University, USA and Professor Bo Edvardsson at Service Research Center, Karlstad University, Sweden.
	Published/ review process	The article is in the review process of Journal of Service Research (Tronvoll et al. 2008a).

Article III	Title	**Customer Complaint Behaviour from the Perspective of the Service-dominant Logic of Marketing**
	Research question	How can the behavioural processes of a complaint customer be described?
	Type of article	Conceptual
	Contribution of the article	The article emphasises that customer complaint behaviour models should be viewed differently depending on whether or not there is an exchange of ownership. Where the exchange of ownership is absent, complaint behaviour should be understood as a dynamic adjustment process that occurs during and after the service interaction, rather than as a post-purchase activity.
	The authors contribution in the article	Single author
	Published/ review process	This article is published in Managing Service Quality **17**(6): 601-620 (Tronvoll 2007b).

Article VI	Title	**A New Model of Customer Complaint Behaviour from the Perspective of Service-Dominant Logic**
	Research question	How do customers voice their complaints?
	Type of article	Conceptual
	Contribution of the article	The article establishes a conceptual model on customer complaint behaviour that embraces the entire feedback and complaint behaviour processes during and after service interaction. The model proposes three different behaviour categories in the complaint process: no complaint behaviour, communicative complaint behaviour and action complaint behaviour.
	The authors contribution in the article	Single author
	Published/ review process	The article is in the review process of European Journal of Marketing (Tronvoll 2008c).

	Title	**The effect of negative emotions on Customer Complaint Behaviour**
Article V	Research question	What kind of negative emotions do negative impressions generate and how do these influence the complaint behaviour?
	Type of article	Empirical
	Contribution of the article	The article shows that a negative impression generates strong negative emotions. These negative emotions can be clustered into certain categories that form specific patterns. The article has confirmed the validity of the latent categories of 'shame', 'sadness', 'fear', 'anger', and 'frustration', and has also confirmed the agency dimensions of 'other-attributed', 'self-attributed', and 'situational-attributed' negative emotions. Finally, the article shows that 'other-attributed' negative emotions, such as frustration, are the main drivers of complaint behaviour.
	The authors contribution in the article	Single author
	Published/ review process	The article is in the review process of International Journal of Service Industry Management, (Tronvoll 2008b).

Each article will be comprehensively described later in the dissertation. Article I is described in chapter 2, article II is described in chapter 3 and articles III-V are described in chapter 4. The articles are presented and discussed according to the development of complaint behaviour research, from a static to a dynamic view. Dynamic aspects have been used in service research for many years (e.g. Grönroos 1984; Gummesson 1987b; Shostack 1984), whereas it has seldom been applied in customer complaint behaviour. This order of the articles gives a better understanding of how the knowledge within customer complaint behaviour has evolved.

The articles contribute to reducing the knowledge gap by providing a better understanding of the dynamic aspects through an epistemological framework, an examination of the complaint process and a dynamic complaint model. The articles further contribute with factors that influence the complaint process - either contextual conditions or emotional sub-processes.

1.3 The development of the discipline

1.3.1 Marketing and service research discipline

Marketing, as a discipline, inherited business logic from economics based on the exchange of goods. This logic focuses on tangible resources, embedded values, transactions and the real value that becomes visible in the form of production outputs. This inheritance logic can be traced back to a classic and neoclassic economics period from 1800 to 1920 (Marshall [1890] 1927; Say 1821; Shaw 1912; Smith [1776] 1969). The next period of early/formative marketing was from 1900 to 1950 and focused on descriptions of commodities, institutions and marketing functions (Cherington 1920; Copeland 1923; 1917; Weld 1916). After the Second World War, marketing management (1950-1980) was developed and companies became focused on the customer for the first time (Drucker 1954; McKitterick 1957). The view changed from commodities to fulfilment of customers' needs and wants. The business logic, however, was still tuned to the goods-dominant logic where value was determined in the marketplace (Levitt 1960). Marketing was viewed as a decision-making and problem-solving function (Kotler 1967; McCarthy 1960). In the period from 1980 to the present, marketing became a social, environmental and economic process focusing on market orientation (Narver and Slater 1990). Several new sub-disciplines of marketing has evolved during this period such as service marketing (Grönroos 1984; Zeithaml et al. 1985), relationship marketing (Berry 1983; Gummesson 1994; 2002), and quality management (Deming 1982; Juran 1981; Parasuraman et al. 1988; Shewart 1931), although no distinct boarder exists between the sub-disciplines.

Fisk, Brown and Bitner (Brown et al. 1994; 1993) have elaborated and characterised the evolution of the service marketing field. They described the field in three stages: Crawling Out (pre-1980), Scurrying About (1980-85), and Walking Erect (1986-present). The Crawling Out stage began with the first service marketing scholars debating whether or not "services marketing are different". The goods marketing versus service marketing discussion represented a fundamental dispute as to the right of the service-marketing field to exist. The Scurrying About stage investigated substantive issues unique to the field such as service quality and service encounters. In the Walking Erect stage, the focus was on the cross-disciplinary and international nature of the service marketing field. Although the topics of the service field have changed during the different stages, the fundamental conditions and underlying issues have

been based on the characteristics of service versus product marketing. The four characteristics or the IHIP characteristics of intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability (Kotler 2003; Lovelock and Gummesson 2004; Sasser et al. 1978; Zeithaml et al. 1985), have gained acceptance over the years and is referred to in most service-marketing textbooks.

1.3.2 Complaint behaviour field

The development of the research field of complaint behaviour has not previously been described. I have divided the field into four stages. Each of these stages has common characteristics that are different from the previous stage. The stages can be labelled as (i) descriptive, (ii) conceptual, (iii) empirical, and (iv) functional. During the descriptive stage, the customer complaint behaviour escalated from a provider issue to a market issue. In 1970, the special assistant[2] to the President for US Consumer Affairs stated that "we are being flooded" with correspondence from people who complain, and indicated that they received 3.500 complaint letters per month and called it "evidence of a growing rebellion" (President's Comitte on Consumer Interests 1970). Within complaint research, the main focus was to identify who complained and why they complained (e.g. Gaedeke 1972; Hustad and Pessemier 1973; Mason and Himes 1973). The second stage can be called the conceptual stage. In this stage, researchers started to conceptualise the complaint behaviour. They were especially focused on complaint antecedents and responses, and several models were suggested (e.g. Day and Landon Jr. 1977a; 1977b; Landon 1977; Singh 1988). At the same time, marketers started to borrow models (e.g. Hirschman 1970) from other academic disciplines and apply them to consumer contexts. This stage emphasised that a service failure, and the subsequent dissatisfaction, is the source of complaint behaviour. Thereafter, the empirical stage emerged with similar features as the Walking Erect stage. This stage contains multi-disciplinary research, is more theory-driven and is concerned with the empirical testing of conceptual frameworks. Many complaint researchers were motivated by scholars such as Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry and by models using the disconfirmation-expectation theory (e.g. Parasuraman et al. 1988; e.g. Zeithaml et al. 1985). This stage is characterised by the connection to different service concepts and the evolving theoretical foundation of complaint behaviour. The

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[2] Congressional testimony from Mrs. Virgina Knauer in US Congress, Senate. Federal Role in Consumer Affairs. Hearing before the Subcommittee on Reorganization and Government Research of the Committee on Government Operations, 91st Congress, 2nd Session 1970.

fourth stage can be called the functional stage. This stage links compliant behaviour to various aspects of service research, views customer complaint behaviour as more complex, and includes constructions such as justice and emotions.

1.4 Structure

Figure 1 is a guide to the structure of this dissertation. The first part is an introduction and frame for the research field. It examines some of the theoretical foundations and the current static approach to customer complaint behaviour. In the second part, the dissertation investigates the scientific philosophy and related complaint behaviour from different epistemological points of departure. Then a thorough examination of customer complaint behaviour is conducted and is explored through a complaint macro- and micro-environment. The third part is dedicated to the contribution of the dissertation and the fourth part includes the five appended articles.
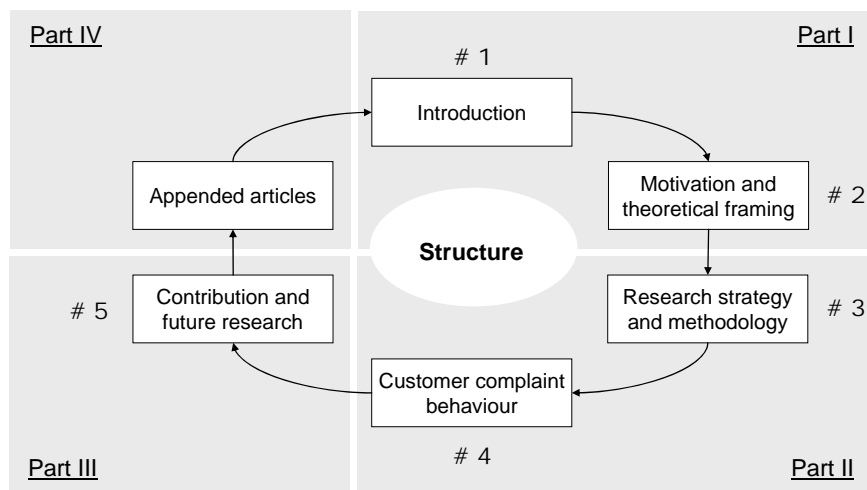
Figure 1: Structure of the dissertation

The first chapter introduces the dissertation; it states the research questions and frames customer complaint behaviour in service research. The second chapter describes the common theories of complaint behaviour and topics in today's research. This research is divided into three main areas: motivation, antecedents and responses in complaint behaviour.

An examination of the research strategy follows in the third chapter. A thorough argument is presented by contrasting today's more static complaint perspective against a dynamic perspective that is proposed in this dissertation. The fourth chapter applies a dynamic and processual perspective on customer complaint behaviour. The fifth and final chapter summaries the dissertation and focuses on the contributions. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future research.

The appendix thoroughly describes the complaint behaviour theories explained in chapter 2. The appended articles constitute the final part of the dissertation.

2. Motivation and theoretical framing

This chapter will give a review of the research on customer complaint behaviour conducted during the past decades. First, I will provide motivation for the importance of complaint behaviour and describe the most frequently used theories within the field. Second, I will thoroughly examine the motivation, antecedents and responses of complaint behaviour. Finally, a short introduction to article I will be presented.

2.1 The importance of customer complaint behaviour

From the provider's perspective, complaint behaviour is important because it, (i) influences the possibility for future survival on the service provider, (ii) may reduce the effect of the negative impression and (iii) helps the provider to develop a sustainable business.

Perceived service failures experienced by customers are a major concern for the service provider because of the potential influence of the service outcome. A complaint allows the service provider to obtain customer feedback that is useful in making improvements to increase customer satisfaction, loyalty, long-term sales and profits (Fornell and Wernefelt 1987; Kelley et al. 1993; Reichheld 1993; Reichheld and Sasser Jr. 1990). Singh (1991) argues that providers recognise the extent of customer dissatisfaction in the marketplace and the handling of service recovery as key indicators of customer loyalty, discontent and welfare. Tax et al. (1998), have further demonstrated that effective resolution of customer problems can have a positive impact on customers' trust and commitment. The complaint handling, therefore, is a critical "moment of truth" in maintaining and developing the customer relationships (Berry and Parasuraman 1991; Dwyer et al. 1987). Successful service companies recognize that while attracting new customers is vital, retaining current customers in a closer relationship is perhaps more essential for profitability (Johnson and Selnes 2004). Consequently, dissatisfied customers should be encouraged to complain (Tax et al. 1998). A complaint from a customer and a subsequent lack of service recovery activities has a major impact on the service company's financial future. When a service problem occurs, the service company's response has the potential to either emphasize a strong customer relationship or change an apparently minor distraction into a major incident. Improving a service company's customer retention rate by 20 percent has the same effect on

profits as cutting costs by 10 percent (Power and Driscoll 1992). Furthermore, it has been estimated that by decreasing customer defections among dissatisfied customers by just 5 percent, a company can achieve a profit improvement of 25-85 percent (Reichheld and Sasser Jr. 1990). Complaint handling can be a significantly superior investment for a service company and can generate 30-150 percent return on investment (Brown 2000). Essentially, the payoff for customer retention is high and a good complaint response can be used to recover from an unfavourable service experience and subsequently secure the future of the company.

In addition to a direct negative effect on the company's financial future, the unfavourable service experience may also have an indirect effect. A customer who has experienced a negative critical incident or experienced an unfavourable service may spread negative word-of-mouth communication. By understanding the complaint process and the customer complaint behaviour, the service company can learn how to reduce the impact of an unfavourable service experience or complaint. Unhappy customers often voice their displeasure in the form of negative word-of-mouth to other current and potential customers (Ah-Keng and Wan-Yiun Loh 2006; Richins 1983a; Singh 1988; Voorhees et al. 2006). When a negative critical incident occurs, a company may make the customer into a "terrorist" and engage in protest activities. On the other hand, if the complaint is properly handled the customer may engage in positive word-of-mouth (Blodgett and Anderson 2000; Helm 2003; Shields 2006). During recent years, negative word-of-mouth communication has developed a new dimension due to technological advancements. There is a large amount of evidence showing that frustrated and angry customers voice their negative impressions on the internet. Bailey (2004) has identified four categories for corporate complaint websites that are used for negative word-of-mouth communication: (i) individual sites developed by disgruntled customers or former employees, (ii) corporate complaint sites, (iii) intermediate sites and (iv) consumer protection agency sites.

As mention earlier, customer feedback and complaints are key drivers for improving different aspects of business and may help the provider to develop a sustainable company. An effective complaint management process can be an important quality improvement tool. Many studies emphasise that customer feedback and complaints should be welcomed and encouraged by the service provider because they generate valuable information (Nyer and Gopinath 2005; Reynolds and Harris 2006; Tax and Brown 1998). Customer complaints may be

useful in many ways: providing marketing intelligence data (Harrison-Walker 2001), identifying common service problems (Harari 1992; Johnston and Mehra 2002; Richins and Verhage 1985; Tax and Brown 1998), learning about organisation (Hoch and Deighton 1989; Johnston and Mehra 2002; Tax and Brown 1998), improving service design and delivery (East 2000; Marquis and Filiatrault 2002; Tax and Brown 1998), measuring and enhancing the perception of service quality (Edvardsson 1992; Harrison-Walker 2001; Marquis and Filiatrault 2002), and helping strategic planning (Dröge and Halstead 1991; Johnston and Mehra 2002).

A customer who does not complain to the service provider when having an unfavourable service experience is of particular concern to any service company. It is generally accepted that obtaining feedback from customers' service experiences is important and if the provider fails to obtain such valuable feedback, the opportunity to remedy the problem and retain the customer is lost (Hirschman 1970). The company's reputation can also suffer damage from negative word-of-mouth among dissatisfied customers (Richins 1983b). It is often asserted that lack of feedback from dissatisfied customers represents a loss of potential and current customers. Therefore, it is important to understand the customer's service evaluation through increased knowledge about the behavioural process and in the case of an unfavourable service experience, the complaint behaviour.

2.2 Theories used in customer complaint behaviour

Customer complaint behaviour has been studied mainly from a normative managerial perspective. To provide an overview of complaint behaviour, a review of the most common theories will be conducted in this section. For further examination of the theories, an extended description has been attached in the appendix.

Complaint behaviour research has been developed mostly in light of the conventional marketing theories. The conventional view of marketing is often based on a transaction-oriented perspective (Bagozzi 1978; Williamson 1975). In the transaction, the supplier delivers a product to the customer and the customer pays a certain amount of money in return. If customers are dissatisfied with the product, they may engage in different complaint activities after the purchase, e.g., seek redress and subsequently receive their money back.

Although the transaction-oriented perspective has been the typical view, several theories used in customer complaint behaviour are borrowed mainly from psychology and sociology.

2.2.1 Performance theories

A multitude of theories has been applied to the study of complaint behaviour (Blodgett et al. 1997; Crie and Ladwein 2002; Folkes 1984a; Ganesh et al. 2000; Johnston 1995; Oliver 1997). Undoubtedly, the most common applied theory is the expectation-disconfirmation theory. This theory argues that satisfaction is related to the size of the disconfirmation experienced, where disconfirmation is related to the customer's initial expectations (Anderson 1973; Oliver 1980; Olson and Dover 1979; Parasuraman et al. 1985; Tse and Wilton 1988). The expectation-disconfirmation theory suggests that if the experience is worse than expected then the service quality is perceived to be poor and the customer becomes dissatisfied and may engage in complaint responses (Bearden 1983; Berry et al. 1985; Bolton and Drew 1991; Churchill and Surprenant 1983; Day and Landon Jr. 1977a; Grönroos 2000; Oliver 1980; Singh 1988; Tse and Wilton 1988). There has been criticism of this theory, however, both for empirical and conceptual reasons (Cronin Jr. and Taylor 1992; 1994; Teas 1993; Teas and DeCarlo 2004). The primary area of criticism concerns the dependence on gap scores that are derived by calculation, i.e., the difference between customers' perceived service and expected service.

Based on this criticism and additional exploratory research, a standard-based zone of tolerance was developed (Berry and Parasuraman 1991; Ziethaml et al. 1993). Poiesz and Bloemer (1991) suggested that it would be suitable to portray expectations as a zone rather than as discrete points on a scale. At the same time, Berry and Parasuraman (1991) suggested that the zone of tolerance should intervene between the customer's desired level of service and the level of service that the customer considers satisfactory. The zone of tolerance is a range of performance that the customer considers acceptable. The essential aspect of this zone is that customers will accept any variation within the boundaries of the zone and any fluctuation will only have a marginal effect on perceptions of service quality (Strandvik 1994). It is only when performance is outside this range that service quality will be affected (Johnston 1995). Any service experience below acceptable levels in the zone of tolerance will create customer frustration and increase the possibility for complaining (Stauss et al.

2005; Tronvoll 2008b). Compared to the disconfirmation measurement instrument, which has a static foundation, the zone of tolerance model offers a richer measure of service quality and captures more of the dynamic aspects of customer complaint behaviour.

Prospect theory describes how customers make choices between alternatives that involve risk, e.g., whether or not to complain (Kahneman and Tversky 1979). The customer's perception of probabilities and potential outcomes associated with particular actions may influence the complaint behaviour. Customers place a greater weight on negative variation than on positive deviation (Oliver 1997). Consequently, the customer perceives the losses to be larger than the gains. Equally, asymmetric disconfirmation proposes that negative performances have greater influence on service experience and purchase intention than positive performance (Kahneman and Tversky 1979; Mittal et al. 1998). Given the prospect theory view that losses are weighed more heavily than gains, it may take several favourable service experiences to temper the effects of one negative critical incident. Prospect theory, disconfirmation theory and zone of tolerance suggest that negative performances influence the customer more than positive performances. Complainants experiencing two negative events (second negative critical incident and unfavourable recovery) following a favourable first recovery, likely weigh the negative incidents more heavily than the favourable recovery. This results in significant rating dips.

2.2.2 Fairness theories

Equity theory proposes that customers' attitudes and behaviours are affected by their assessment of their contributions and the rewards they receive (1965; Adams 1963; Austin and Walster 1974; Walster et al. 1978). The contributions or inputs may include resources such as effort, skill and money. The rewards or outcomes may include elements such as a favourable service experience, status and recognition. When customers believe that an inequality exists in an exchange, they become upset, disappointed or regretful. Consequently, the customer may choose different complaint responses depending on the action that is most likely to restore equity with the minimum cost.

Theory of justice is based on a three-dimensional view of the concept of fairness and has evolved over time to include distributive justice (Deutsch 1985; Homans 1961), procedural justice (Lind and Tyler 1988; Thibaut and Walker

1975) and interactional justice (Bies and Shapiro 1987). Distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness of the actual outcome or consequence of a decision. Procedural justice refers to whether or not the procedures or criteria used in making the decision are perceived as being fair. Interactional justice deals with interpersonal behaviour in the enactment of procedures and delivery of outcomes. Justice theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the complaint process from initiation to completion (Tax and Brown 1998).

Both equity theory and the theory of justice suggest that perceptions of fairness are induced when a customer compares the interaction, procedures and outcomes with other customers or prior experience. The principle of justice maintains that customers, in an exchange relationship with others, are entitled to receive a reward that is relative to what they have invested in the relationship (Homans 1961). Equity theory broadens this perspective to include other comparative conditions that may influence the perceived fairness of an exchange relationship (Adams 1965). According to theories based on fairness, a service provider that considers customers as expendable will adopt an under-benefiting strategy which either ignores customer complaints, or merely acknowledges them with an answer. Whereas, a service provider that emphasizes a long-term commitment with its customers will develop an over-benefiting strategy. The rationale behind over-benefiting is the hope of increasing profits through future purchases and favourable word of mouth (Gilly and Hansen 1985). Indeed, complaint handling can be seen as delighting or disappointing the customer based on whether the customer's expectations were met or exceeded (Estelami 2000; Shields 2006).

2.2.3 Response theories

Attribution theory refers to the cognitive processes through which an individual infers the cause of a customer's behaviour. Attribution theory suggests that when a customer believes that a service company is responsible for a harmful outcome, or believes the service company fails to meet performance expectations, they are likely to assign blame (Allred 1999; Weiner 1986). Responsibility judgements, then, are based on two aspects: the customers' perceptions of who (or what) caused an outcome, and their perception of whether or not that outcome met expectations (Hamilton 1978). Attribution

theory suggests that customers who complain may believe that the service provider consistently makes mistakes.

Commitment theory believes that customers are willing to make an effort to maintain a relationship with a retailer (Morgan and Hunt 1994). This theory describes the process which leads a customer to make a purchase decision and develop a relationship. Complaint behaviour is not an incidental behaviour in response to an unfavourable service experience; it is the result of the customer's commitment in a relationship. A complaint is the result of a commitment bound to the purchase decision and the relationship.

Researchers have used several theories when exploring and describing customer complaint behaviour, although the field cannot be characterised as theory-driven. The theories that are based on human relations such as the prospect, fairness, and response theories are all suitable for explaining customer complaint behaviour. Consequently, there is a large potential for future research to apply these theories and other social science theories to complaint behaviour.

2.3 The focus of customer complaint behaviour in today's research

Research on customer complaint behaviour has mainly emphasised three aspects: (i) motivation for complaining, (ii) antecedents to complaint behaviour and (iii) types of complaint responses.

2.3.1 Motivation for complaining

Even decades ago, researchers argued that dissatisfaction serves as the motivation for complaint behaviour (e.g. Day 1984; Oliver 1977). Since then, several researchers have followed in their footsteps and argued that dissatisfaction is the main source of complaints. Dissatisfaction is more thoroughly examined later in the dissertation (section 4.1). I believe it is possible to use Keaveney's (1995) categorisation for customer switching behaviour to argue for motivation of customer complaint behaviour. According to Keaveney (1995), there are several determinants to switching behaviour, which can be categorised as single or complex types of determinants. The categories depend on the number of factors involved in the switching behaviour. These types of determinants suggest that fully understanding the motivation for complaint behaviour is complicated.

Based on Keaveney's (1995) research, there are three main single sources for complaint behaviour: (i) core service failure, (ii) service encounter failure and (iii) responses to failures. Core service failure is the most commonly reported reason for dissatisfaction (Bitner et al. 1990). The main reason for an unsatisfactory outcome in service encounters is the employee's response to service delivery system failures (Bitner et al. 1990). Inadequate response to service failures also increases the likelihood that dissatisfied customers will complain about the incident (Bitner et al. 1994). Oliver (1997) notes that as many as half of all customer complaining episodes end with even more dissatisfaction ("secondary dissatisfaction").

2.3.2 Antecedents to complaint behaviour

Extensive research has been conducted to reveal the antecedents of customer complaint behaviour. It can be assumed that there are a basic set of factors influencing customer complaint behaviour. It is possible to categorise these factors into four main constructs. The first construct is situational factors that assume that dissatisfied customers objectively evaluate the extent of the service failure, the cost and benefits of complaining, and the probability for success, and then decide whether or not to act based on this assessment. The sub-categories are economic, perceived benefits and seriousness of the failure or problem. The second construct is individual factors that drive or restrain dissatisfied customers from action because of the kind of people they are. The customer may also learn over time to become active or inactive complainers depending on the success or failure of their earlier attempts. The sub-categories are demographical, psychological, personality, emotional, cultural, social, and experience. The third construct is the service provider/service factor that assumes that the service failure is related to the service provider or the service. The sub-categories are service provider and the service. Finally, the fourth construct is market factors that may inhibit or encourage complaint behaviour. The sub-categories are market and structure. These four main categories with sub-categories are shown in table 1.

Table 2: Description of antecedents of customer complaint behaviour

Factors/ constructs	Items	Descriptions
Situational	Economic	Cost/benefits of complaining (Bolfing 1989; Singh and Wilkes 1996), cost/quality (Francken and van Raaij 1985).
	Perceived	Judgement the benefit too small (Landon 1977),
	Seriousness	Seriousness of the problem (Richins and Verhage 1985), perceived alternatives (Fornell and Didow 1980), failure type (Smith et al. 1999), failure magnitude (Smith et al. 1999), criticality (Ostrom and Iacobucci 1995; Webster and Sundaram 1998).
Individual	Demo-graphical	Age (Andreasen and Best 1977; Bearden 1983; Hogarth and English 2002; Moyer 1985; Singh 1990a), gender (Hustad and Pessemier 1973; Kolodinsky 1993; Solnick and Hemenway 1992), income (Andreasen 1988; Kraft 1977; Mason and Himes 1973; Reifner et al. 1980), education (Crosier et al. 1999; Hogarth and English 2002; Kolodinsky and Aleong 1990), place of residence (Crosier and Erdogan 2001; Crosier et al. 1999), large households (Mason and Himes 1973; Pfaff and Blivice 1977), lifecycle stage (Kolodinsky 1993), socio-economic levels (Kraft 1977; Spalding and Marcus 1981; Tronvoll 2007a).
	Psycho-logical	Personal values (Rogers and Williams 1990), personality (Bolfing 1989; Fornell and Westbrook 1979), attitude towards complaining (Bearden and Oliver 1985; Day 1984; Richins 1987), attitudes towards business and government (Jacoby and Jarrard 1981), personal confidence level (Richins 1983b), attitude towards complaining/post complaining (Singh and Wilkes 1996; Volkov et al. 2002), submissive (Bolfing 1989; Fornell and Westbrook 1979).
	Personality	Consumer response to peer-pressure (Malafi et al. 1993; Slama and Celuch 1994), individual's self-esteem (Liu et al. 1997; Markus and Kitayama 1990), personal confidence levels (Richins 1983b).
	Emotional	Attribution of blame (Folkes et al. 1987; Richins 1983b; Stephens and Gwinner 1998), emotions (Bolfing 1989; Folkes et al. 1987; Spalding and Marcus 1981; Tronvoll 2008b).

	Cultures	Various dimensions of culture such as collectivism and individualism that contribute to customer propensity to complain (Liu et al. 2001; Liu and McClure 2001).
	Social	Social and political involvement (Robinson et al. 1982; Warland et al. 1975), employment status (Ash 1978; Crosier et al. 1999; Liefeld et al. 1975), social climate (Jacoby and Jarrard 1981).
	Experience	Customer experience (Day 1984; Jacoby and Jarrard 1981; Singh 1990a).
Service provider/ service	Service	Perceived importance of product/service (Blodgett and Granbois 1992), complex/expensive (Day and Landon Jr. 1977b; Landon 1977), product type (Day 1984).
	Service provider	Type of store (Day and Landon Jr. 1977b), Store reputation (Bearden and Mason 1984; Granbois et al. 1977), Provider's responsiveness (Bolfing 1989; Jacoby and Jarrard 1981; Richins 1983b), likelihood of success (Blodgett et al. 1993; Blodgett et al. 1995; Granbois et al. 1977; Richins 1987), level of responsiveness, friendliness, reliability, and promptness of employees (Zeithaml et al. 1988), company size (Oster 1980).
Market	Market	Degree of market competition (Andreasen 1985; Hirschman 1970; Tronvoll 2007a).
	Structure	industry structure (Kolodinsky 1995; Singh 1991).

In summary, the literature review of the antecedents of complaint behaviour suggests that typical complainers belong to the upper socio-economic groups in society. They tend to complain when the service has a high complexity, is expensive, has a favourable cost/benefit ratio, or the problem is serious. In addition, personal confidence levels, values, attitudes towards complaining, and whether or not the failure is the provider's fault, all increase the complaint frequency. Factors like cultural collectivism, individualism, social and political involvement, and experience contribute to a complaint response as well. Finally, the degree of market competition or industry structure, the type of provider, the likelihood of success, the responsiveness of the provider, and friendliness generate complaint behaviour.

2.3.3 Types of complaint responses

Several different complaint response models have been suggested in the past. There are two main types of complaint responses: (i) complaint models that include intermediate factors in the complaint process such as justice (e.g. Blodgett and Granbois 1992; Tax et al. 1998) or emotions (Mattsson et al. 2004; White and Yi-Ting 2005) and (ii) complaint response models that are untainted (e.g. Day and Landon Jr. 1977b; Hirschman 1970; Singh 1988). The latter complaint models are most often referenced.

Hirschman's (1970) theory of exit, voice and loyalty was one of the first to conceptualise customer complaint responses. According to Hirschman (1970), the customer can choose to voice a complaint to the seller or a third party and then exit the relationship with the seller through switching or determination. The model suggests that 'exit' or 'voice' is dependent on the degree of customer loyalty. Day and Landon (1977b) suggested a three-level hierarchical classification scheme. The model distinguished between taking no action and taking some action and is further subdivided into private and public responses. Private actions include decisions to stop further purchases and warnings to friends and/or ceasing to patronise a retail outlet; public actions include redress-seeking efforts directed toward the seller, complaints to third-party consumer affairs institutions and legal action. Singh (1988) extended Day and Landon's (1977b) hierarchical model to a three-dimensional model consisting of private response (e.g., negative word-of-mouth), voice response (e.g., seeking redress from the seller), and third-party response (e.g., taking legal action or complain to an external third party). Private response refers to behaviour exhibited within a customer's own social sphere. Such behaviour can vary from warning friends and relatives against using a service provider to deciding not to purchase from a provider again. Voice response essentially refers to complaining directly to the offending provider. A customer who contacts a service provider in person, in writing or by telephone would be using voice response. Singh (1988) also included the "no complaint action" in this category. Third-party response, conversely, refers to complaints expressed to an external party who are not directly involved with the offending service provider but who may have some authority or influence over the provider. Customers who contact customer protection agencies, lawyers or newspapers as a result of a dissatisfying experience with a service provider are taking third-party action (Singh 1988). Exit is when the customer begins a personal boycott against the

service provider to avoid repeating the original transaction that led to dissatisfaction.

As a continuation of the customer complaint behaviour, research article I Complaint Characteristics When Exit is Closed emphasises the antecedents of complaint behaviour. Hence, the article focuses on complainer characteristics in a monopoly market where the threshold to exit the relationship with the service provider is high or "impossible".

2.4 Article I: Complainer Characteristics When Exit is Closed

Within service industries, it is common that customers experience dissatisfaction after a service failure. Several studies have shown, however, that many customers fail to complain when confronted with a service failure (Andreasen and Best 1977; Day and Ash 1979). This unwillingness to complain indicates that dissatisfaction is a necessary, but not sufficient, cause for complaining (Singh and Pandya 1991). Researchers have tried to explain this phenomenon by using many different characteristics such as market structure, demographics and socio-economic variables. Studies have established that complaint behaviour varies across different markets and that market structure affects complaining (Best and Andreasen 1977; Hirschman 1970; Singh 1990b). Most studies of complainer characteristics have been undertaken in competitive markets or loose monopoly markets. A literature review of complainer characteristics shows that a typical complainer in a competitive market structure has the characteristics as consumers who belong to higher socio-economic groups in society.

The aim of article I, is to discover whether or not demographic and socio-economic characteristics of complainers in a monopolistic market are different from those in a competitive market or a loose monopoly market. The empirical findings in this article with a monopolistic service provider do not support the assumptions that a complainer belongs to higher socio-economic groups as in a competitive market. The article reveals that complainers in a monopoly market without the possibility to exit the relationship come from lower socio-economic groups (consumers with lowest income, those outside the labour market, those with most modest standards of accommodations, etc.). The article indicates several possible reasons for this phenomenon.

3. Research Strategy and Methodology

This chapter will provide a comprehensive description of the research strategy and methodology. First, ontological, epistemological and methodological issues will be examined. There will be a description of the development of service research from a static to a dynamic perspective. To understand the development and the static aspects of customer complaint behaviour, it is necessary to understand the same development within the service research as these fields are interdependent. A short description of article II will follow. Second, there will be an introduction to the epistemological framework described in article II and a classification of the most important complaint behaviour articles into their paradigmatic homes. The result of the classification will be discussed and there will be some reflections on the epistemological foundation of the complaint behaviour research. Third, there will be a review of the methodology used in the appended articles and finally there will be a reflection of my own research process.

3.1 The ontology, epistemology and methodology

The researcher's view of reality could be considered as a starting point or foundation for the research process and consequently a foundation for the whole research strategy. Therefore, it is important to understand the existence of different world-views or paradigms. Different paradigms make it possible to embrace different types of research methodologies. The challenge is not whether the different paradigms are correct or incorrect but to know when the paradigms exist below the level of awareness. In research, this means that it is necessary to express and explain the paradigm that belongs to the researcher's world-view. It is necessary to understand the foundation or paradigm on which the knowledge is built, in order to identify the potential and the limitations of different forms of research.

A paradigm consists of beliefs about knowledge, world-view or the lenses through which we view the world. Senge (1990) describes a paradigm as our "mental model". A paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs based on ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions (Guba and Lincoln 1994 p. 107), as shown in figure 2. The researcher must pay attention to these basic assumptions in relation to the research question, and be able to engage these basic beliefs in a dialogue (Guba 1990). The "valid" research

depends on the view of these fundamental elements and upon the paradigms that are commonly used by the present research community. Kuhn (1970 p. 175) was the first to popularize the term paradigm, and he described it as the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques etc., shared by the members of a given community. In this dissertation, I will use the view described by Hunt (2000) who defines a paradigm as a widely held or competing, generally implicit, ontological, epistemological, and methodological antecedent to specific beliefs developed by leadership researchers in the course of inquiries. Researchers' preferred paradigms can help to determine their research methods (Guba and Lincoln 1994).
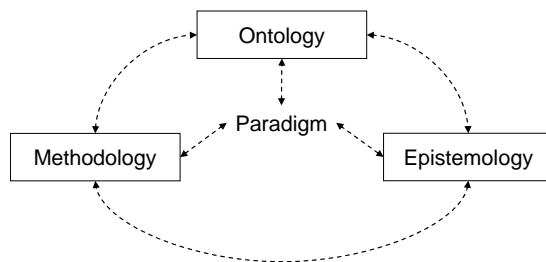
Figure 2: The paradigmatic connections

Ontology raises basic questions about the nature of reality – whether or not an objective reality exists. In social science, or the science of being (Burrell and Morgan 1985), ontology refers to the claims or assumptions that a particular approach to social enquiry makes about the nature of social reality. It includes claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other.

Epistemology asks how we get to know the world and what the relationship is between the inquirer and the known. According to Burrell and Morgan (1985), epistemology deals with how one understands the world and communicates that understanding as knowledge to others. Epistemology, defined as the science of the methods of knowledge (Burrell and Morgan 1985), refers to the assumptions about the possible ways to learn about a reality.

Methodology focuses on how to gain knowledge about the world and can be defined as "a body of methods, procedures, concepts, and rules" (Merriam-Webster 2004). The research methodology is the rationale or basis for the selection of methods used to gather data and for determining the sequence and samples of data to be collected. Furthermore, methodology will be the

consistency between the theoretical level and the methods, and between ontology and epistemology.

A search for a suitable research methodology is influenced by several factors (Bryman 1989; Easterby-Smith et al. 1991): (i) the type of research questions, i.e., "what," "how," "who," "why," etc. since each question requires different research designs for effective answers (Yin 1994), (ii) the nature of the phenomenon under study, (iii) the extent of control required over behavioural events in the research context (Yin 1994), and (iv) the researchers' philosophical position, i.e., their understanding of the nature of social reality and how knowledge of that reality can be gained (Blaikie 1993). Consequently, the choice of research methodology must be suitable for the research problems and objectives. Based on these objectives, the appropriate research methods are chosen.

In light of the service versus product marketing and the IHIP debate (Inseparability, Heterogeneity, Intangibility and Perishability), I will argue that two important and fundamental issues have missed thorough examination and discussion. One of the issues is the static versus dynamic approach of the service research or the inability to view and analyse the service research field as a process. The other issue is the ontological and epistemological reflection or paradigmatic associations of service research. Both issues will be discussed in the following sections.

3.2 From goods-dominant logic to service-dominant logic of marketing

Much of the recent discussions about the future of service research has come from experienced contributors (Edvardsson et al. 2005b; Lovelock and Gummesson 2004; Stauss 2005). The core of this generally accepted criticism is that service characteristics and other ways of describing and defining services are 'wrong', irrelevant or do not capture "the essence of services" or "value creation through service". This in turn leads to two natural questions: what are the paradigmatic foundations of the service research field and are these paradigms relevant for directing future research?

To date, service research has primarily described, analyzed and understood the service phenomenon by borrowing concepts, models and theoretical frameworks developed to study manufacturing companies and physical

products. Thus, service research has mainly been studied through the lens of a goods-dominant logic with some modest adaptations to service. A major challenge is the lack of a widely accepted definition for the concept of "service" among leading service scholars. Furthermore, the way service has been traditionally defined and portrayed is in relation to goods - not the established theoretical paradigms capable of capturing the essence of service. Service characteristics such as IHIP are often referred to but seldom applied or used as a guide for choosing problems or methods. In my view, these characteristics do not have a major influence on the design of empirical studies or in analyzing and interpreting the data and findings.

The goods-dominant logic perspective proposes that the main purpose of economic activities is to manufacture and distribute physical goods that can be sold. The companies have to manufacture goods embedded with value in order to attract customers. During the production and distribution process, the company must add value to the product so that their offering is superior to their competitors in value. To get maximum production control and effectiveness, goods are standardised and manufactured away from the market. Goods can be inventoried until there is a demand and then delivered to the customer. Recently, the goods-dominant logic has changed and the dynamic perspective has become successful.

In recent years many senior scholars have been critical of the static perspective based on service characteristics (Edvardsson et al. 2005b; Grönroos 2007; Lovelock and Gummesson 2004; Vargo and Lusch 2004b). Edvardsson et al. (2005b), found that leading service scholars advocate for a more dynamic approach to service in future research, although Grönroos (1982) argued already in the early 1980s for an interactive marketing function. I notice that there has been an evolution in the way service is understood, portrayed and defined. Today, service are most often described in terms of activities, deeds, performance, interactions, processes and relationships focusing on co-creation of value (Edvardsson et al. 2005b; Grönroos 2007; Grönroos 2000; Gummesson 2002; Vargo and Lusch 2004a; 2004b).

There are several avenues to a dynamic approach in customer complaint behaviour such as customer relationship management (Grönroos 1989; 1994; 1990; 1995; Gummesson 1987a; 2002; 1999) and the service-dominant logic of

marketing (Lusch and Vargo 2006a; Lusch et al. 2007; Vargo and Lusch 2004a; 2008a).

Grönroos (1990, p. 138) believes that relationship marketing will "establish, maintain, and enhance relationships with customers and other partners, at a profit, so that the objectives of the parties involved are met. This is achieved by a mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises". Grönroos (1995) states that establishing a relationship can be divided into two parts: to attract the customer and to build the relationship with that customer so that the economic goals of that relationship are achieved. Such relationships have to be dynamic and are usually, although not necessarily, continued for some time.

Vargo and Lusch (2004a) have based much of their service-dominant logic on previous research including studies from the Nordic School of management (Grönroos and Gummesson 1985; Gummesson 1995; Normann and Ramírez 1993). Vargo and Lusch (2004a) seek to show that co-creation is the indisputable core of every marked offering; goods become valuable to customers as service appliances and as distribution mechanisms for services so that the service value is determined as value-in-use. The notion of service-dominant logic is a dynamic concept whereby an interactive co-creation process drives the overall service experience and results in value-in-use for the customer. Vargo and Lusch (2004a) have thus rejected the conventional view of marketing as an activity that is delivered to the customer in favour of a view that perceives marketing in terms of interacting with the customer. When Vargo and Lusch (2004a) proposed the service-dominant logic, they emphasised the relationship between goods and service, where goods refers to an appliance or resource used in service provision. Consequently, customers make an evaluation of value and assess the attraction of the service experience from goods as value-in-use. In this way, the focus becomes service-dominant and the exchange is no longer transaction bounded. In service-dominant logic, competence is posited as the fundamental unit in the exchange process and service is defined as "… the application of specialized competences (knowledge and skills), through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself" (Vargo and Lusch 2004a p. 2). Service-dominant logic can be described as an interactive process of exchange where the service provider suggests possible value for the customer. It is only through the interactive co-creation process, however, that the customer is enabled to evaluate this proposition and assess its actual value (as a value-in-use).

The service-dominant logic is based on ten fundamental premises (Lusch and Vargo 2006b; Vargo and Lusch 2004a; 2008a). The essential points in summary are as follows:

- Service-dominant logic highlights that customers are arbiters of value in service interaction, either directly in interaction with providers or through service interaction derived from goods.
- Service-dominant logic is grounded in resource-advantage theory and views service as the application of operant resources. Competitive advantages are based on operant resources, co-creation of value and sharing of collaborative competence, which is accomplished by engaging customers and value network partners. Value is thus uniquely and phenomenological determined by the beneficiary.
- Service-dominant logic emphasizes the dynamic development of relationships through which communicative interaction and co-created value might emerge over time.

To strengthen and distinguish the lexicon of service-dominant logic, Lusch and Vargo (2006c) have presented a table showing how marketing is transitioning. This table describes the out-put based lexicon of goods-dominant logic and the process or experienced-based lexicon of service-dominant logic.

Table 3: Conceptual transitions

Goods-Dominant Logic Concepts	Transitional Concepts	Service-Dominant Logic Concepts
Goods	Services	Service
Products	Offerings	Experiences
Feature/attribute	Benefit	Solution
Value-added	Co-production	Co-creation of value
Profit maximization	Financial engineering	Financial feedback/learning
Price	Value delivery	Value proposition
Equilibrium systems	Dynamic systems	Complex adaptive systems
Supply chain	Value chain	Value-creation network/ constellation
Promotion	Integrated Marketing Communications	Dialogue
To market	Market to	Market with
Product orientation	Market orientation	Service orientation

Source: Lusch and Vargo 2006b, p. 286

As described previously, Vargo and Lusch (2004a) used existing knowledge when they developed the service-dominant logic of marketing. The authors have combined existing knowledge to create new connections and, in my view, managed to relate the service-dominant logic to an epistemological basis through the advantage-resource theory. Although, the service-dominant logic implicates a general change in perspective, this has been previously suggested by other researchers. One of my criticisms of the service-dominant logic is the high level of abstraction in the description of the logic. The service-dominant logic's core elements need to be further developed, defined and described. Some of the main criticisms of the service-dominant logic contain the following: it does not include important aspects like service interaction (Ballantyne and Varey 2006; Berthon and Joby 2006), the fundamental premises are too complex and do not combine to form a meaningful whole, it does not constitute a systematic scheme or a framework for thinking, it does not have a systematic description of value (Holbrook 2006), and there is an internal inconsistency of the premises (Schembri 2006). Despite the criticism, it is important to remember that the service-dominant logic has been developed since it was introduced in 2004 and it will continue to be developed in the future. Vargo and Lusch have invited other scholars to join them and contribute to the development of the service-dominant logic of marketing.

3.3 Article II: Paradigms in Service Research: A Framework and Analysis of the Discourse

Service research has grown in the past decades to become a successful research discipline. Throughout its development, service research has focused on practical issues related to managerial problems. The service discourse has been more relevance-driven rather than theory-driven. In addition, the service research has emphasised the service characteristics (Inseparability, Heterogeneity, Intangibility and Perishability, IHIP) as differentiators from goods or manufacturing marketing. Few ontological and epistemological discussions about the future of service research have been brought forward in academic journals, and there has not been much discussion about the paradigmatic assumptions within the service discipline.

Article II pinpoints the importance in understanding the paradigmatic foundation of the service research field. The aim of the article is to identify and portray different paradigms within service research. The suggested framework

provides an epistemological quadrant established by the "origin of concept and problems" and "nature of relations" dimensions. The quadrant represents four different paradigms consisting of normative, interpretative, monologic and dialogic approaches. The suggested epistemological framework illustrates how the different paradigms are related to service research. The article tests the paradigmatic framework on 50 articles from the service field including the profound article of Shostack (1977).

The article reveals that many service studies have used a static epistemological and paradigmatic approach. A minor part of the examined studies has used a dynamic epistemological approach, even though many scholars have described service as a dynamic process (Edvardsson et al. 2005a; Grönroos 1984; Vargo and Lusch 2004a).

3.4 The epistemological belongings of complaint behaviour research

It is possible to use the epistemological quadrant developed and discussed in article II (Tronvoll et al. 2008a) on customer complaint behaviour studies and thereby classify their epistemological associations. The quadrant contains the "nature of relations" and the "origin of concept and problems" dimensions. The nature of relations dimension explains the purpose and contribution of the studies. The dimension has a static and a dynamic pole. The static pole describes a study that is focused on the present and is stationary. At this pole, the studies are viewed as transactional relations and the participants are passive suppliers and receivers. At the dynamic pole, the studies focus on the process and try to capture the dynamics in the value co-creation. The "origin of concept and problems" dimension explains the methodology of the study and has the poles, local/emergent and elite/a priori. The local/emergent pole projects reality as human integration and tries to obtain phenomenological insight, revelation and open language system. The elite/a priori pole views reality as a concrete structure and tries to obtain a fixed language system and construct a positivistic science. These two dimensions frame the service research using ontological and epistemological bases to create a grid of four paradigms used as a point of departure for the academic research. The paradigms are normative, interpretative, monologic and dialogic. For a more thorough explanation and discussion of the dimensions and the paradigms see article II. By using these four paradigms, it is possible to classify the paradigmatic homes of complaint behaviour studies.

The following section will describe the research method I used to classify complaint studies into their paradigmatic homes. The subjects included in the dataset (peer-reviewed academic articles) have referenced complaints in the title, abstract or keyword and were published in service research related journals. A computerized search was conducted by using the ISI web of science and limited to the years from 1970 to 2008. To embrace the entire field of service research, the search was not limited to a specific set of journals. The searches included phrase such as complain in combination with service, marketing, operation, information technology, management or quality. The articles were further selected by subject areas such as business, management, marketing, operation, service and psychology, social or computer science.

To be included in the sample for further analysis, the articles had to meet three criteria: (i) to be conducted in service and marketing related contexts, (ii) to have complaints as a main focus or use complain as a significant component in the study and not just refer to complaints, and (iii) the highest average yearly citation rate. The result of the initial collection of articles that referenced complaints was 408. Out of the initial collection, 27 studies were selected according to the criteria. The final sample articles are shown in table 4 and are distributed after the average yearly citation rate. The dataset of complaint articles is not equally distributed throughout the years. The first article in the final dataset that refers to complaints was published in 1987 (Fornell and Wernefelt 1987). The period from 1996 to 2002 has the highest representation and included 17 studies. The most important journals of complaint articles are, Journal of Marketing, followed by Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, and Journal of Marketing Research.

Table 4: Complaint articles distributed by publication year

Publi-cation year	Author(s)	Journal	Average yearly citation rate	Paradig-matic home
1996	(Zeithaml et al. 1996)	Journal of Marketing	26,46	Normative
2000	(Meuter et al. 2000)	Journal of Marketing	12,33	Dialogic
1998	(Tax et al. 1998)	Journal of Marketing	10	Normative
2001	(Szymanski and Henard 2001)	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	9,56	Normative

2001	(Kaiser and Miller 2001)	Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin	5,88	Normative
1987	(Fornell and Wernefelt 1987)	Journal of Marketing Research	5,36	Normative
1997	(Blodgett et al. 1997)	Journal of Retailing	5,00	Normative/ Monologic
2002	(Maxham III and Netemeyer 2002a)	Journal of Marketing	4,86	Monologic
2001	(Bowman and Narayandas 2001)	Journal of Marketing Research	4,38	Monologic
1998	(Tax and Brown 1998)	Sloan Management Review	4,09	Dialogic
1988	(Singh 1988)	Journal of Marketing	3,71	Normative
1992	(Goodwin and Ross 1992)	Journal of Business Research	3,35	Normative
2003	(Maxham III and Netemeyer 2003)	Journal of Marketing	3,33	Monologic
2003	(Bougie et al. 2003)	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	3,00	Normative
2004	(Zeelenberg and Pieters 2004)	Journal of Business Research	3,00	Normative
1996	(Conlon and Murray 1996)	Academy of Management Journal	2,77	Normative
1993	(Blodgett et al. 1993)	Journal of Retailing	2,73	Monologic
1999	(Sheehan and Hoy 1999)	Journal of Advertising	2,67	Normative
1990	(Singh 1990a)	Journal of Retailing	2,58	Normative
2002	(Maxham III and Netemeyer 2002b)	Journal of Retailing	2,55	Monologic
1996	(Kowalski 1996)	Psychological Bulletin	2,38	Dialogic
1998	(Stephens and Gwinner 1998)	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	2,00	Dialogic
2000	(Levesque and McDougall 2000)	Canadian Journal of Administrative Science	1,78	Normative
2006	(Wegge et al. 2006)	British Journal of Management	1,67	Normative
1998	(Söderlund 1998)	International Journal of Service Industry Management	1,57	Normative

2006	(Hays and Hill 2006)	Production & Operation Management	1,57	Normative
2006	(Morgan and Rego 2006)	Marketing Science	1,33	Normative
2006	(Voorhees et al. 2006)	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	1,33	Normative/ Inter-pretative*

* Have used different methodologies (triangulation) and may therefore be classified in two different paradigmatic homes.

The complaint articles distributed in the epistemological quadrant are shown in figure 3 as follow: (i) 19 articles are located in the normative paradigm, (ii) 0 articles in the interpretative paradigm, (iii) 5 articles in the monologic paradigm and (iv) 4 articles in the dialogic paradigm.

When I classified the articles into their paradigmatic homes, I met some challenges. My main challenge was the articles not always having an apparent epistemological foundation. As well, there was sometimes a difference between what the author(s) argue to do and what they actually do. I have found it difficult to classify some of the articles in the monologic paradigm because the author(s) argue for a processual approach, often exemplified by a process model, although their research design does not contain such processual design. The classification will naturally depend on how strict the dynamic approach is judged. Nevertheless, I have chosen to classify these articles in accordance with the author(s)' intensions. The other challenge was to define the "nature of relations" dimension because there was no strict line between the static and dynamic pole and sometimes a personal judgement was necessary. These two challenges made some of the complaint behaviour studies borderline cases, although I believe that Figure 3 gives a representative picture of the paradigmatic homes of the articles.
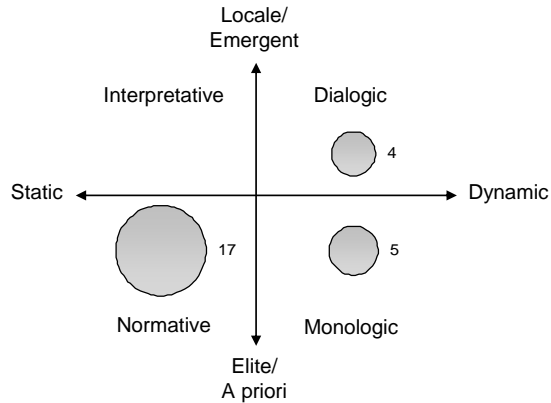
Figure 3: Paradigmatic home of complaint articles

In classifying the complaint behaviour articles, several interesting findings were made. First, the majority of articles are of a normative nature. This makes sense since the normative approach is among the most common paradigms within the marketing research field. Svensson et al. (2008), compared themes and methodology used in the presentation of articles published in service marketing journals between 2000 to 2007. Their investigation revealed that quantitative models for constructing and testing service marketing theories were by far the most common. Table 4 also shows that out of the seven most referenced articles, six of them have a normative paradigmatic home. Five articles on the list were published after 2004 and all of them are normative. Second, there are no articles classified in the interpretative paradigm. This seems unusual although local/emergent research methodology and a stationary description of a phenomenon is not extraordinary within the research field. Third, the majority of the articles are classified as static (interpretative and normative quadrant). Fourth, of the seven articles that are classified as dynamic, the research colleagues Maxham and Netemeyer have written three of them. The overall picture of the paradigmatic belongings is not surprising - it merely confirms my impression of the field. The paradigmatic classification of complaint research has mainly used a static lens when contributing to the knowledge of complaint behaviour. Consequently, to broaden the understanding of complaint behaviour, it is possible to investigate the dynamic processes of customer complaint behaviour.

3.5 The shift of epistemological perspective in complaint behaviour research

As a result of the service-dominant logic customer complaint behaviour research should make a shift and change the focus from a transactional post-purchase behaviour to a service interaction feedback and complaint behaviour where the focus covers the intra- and post-interaction behaviour.

To contribute to the dynamic aspects of complaint behaviour, some key foundations must be identified and changed. To make this distinction and strengthen the differences between static complaint behaviour and dynamic complaint behaviour, a conversion lexicon of complaint behaviour is created, as shown in table 5.

Table 5: Epistemological changes in the customer complaints behaviour understanding

Descriptions	Previous understanding of customer complaints	New understanding of customer complaints
Perspective Customer – provider interaction	Goods-dominant logic Static/transactional	Service-dominant logic Dynamic/relationship
Complaint phase Basis of complaint	Post-purchase Product failure (based on the expected attributes)	Intra and post-interaction Failure or missing competence (based on the perceived value proposition)
Result of failure Nature of communication	Dissatisfaction Listening to the customer Noting specific complaint	Negative impression Dialogue with the customer Seeking feedback
Aims of service recovery	Correcting specific product failure Obtaining a satisfied customer	Learning and adjustment during co-creation process Strengthening the relationship

Source: Tronvoll 2008c

To make the epistemological shift in the approach to customer complaint behaviour, several changes have to be made. The research must capture the customer's attention, i.e., provider interaction within the dynamic relationship as some scholars have previously emphasised (e.g. Blodgett et al. 1993). By using a dynamic relationship approach, the focus will change from the post-purchase and outcome-related behaviour to an intra- and post-interactional

behaviour. The basis of complaint behaviour will therefore change from product failure to a failure or missing competence from the service provider. The main terminology describing motivation for complaining may consequently change from dissatisfaction as a post-purchase cognitive/emotional construct to a negative impression as an intra-interaction construct. As a result, the nature of communication will change from passive listening to the customer when explaining the product failure after the purchase, to a dialogue during the interaction where the service provider actively seeks feedback. The researcher may thereby focus on the learning aspects from the dialogue, and the adjustments during the service interaction and subsequently strengthen the relationship.

3.6 Methodology in the appended articles

The research is linked to the empirical world by the research design. The epistemological paradigms and theories will form the point of departure and guide the researcher through the research design to the specific methods for collecting and analysing the empirical data. The choice of methodology should be taken into account on the basis of the research problem and question.

To investigate the subject of customer complaint behaviour, four different research designs have been used in the appended articles: (i) literature reviews which have been used in article I and VI, (ii) explorative design which has been used in studies from article II, III and V, (iii) descriptive design which has been used in article I, and (iv) causal design which has been used in article V. Table 6 gives an overview of the research methodology of the appended articles. The table shows the type of paper, the data collection, the research subject and the empirical base of the studies.

Table 6: Methodology applied in the appended articles

	Article I	Article II	Article III	Article IV	Article V
Type of paper	Empirical	Conceptual/ Empirical	Conceptual	Conceptual	Empirical
Data collection	Literature review and questionnaire	Empirical illustrations	Narratives about the service field	Literature review	Interviews and questionnaire
Research subject	Users of governmental institutions	Notable research papers	Four invented stories	Not applicable	Customers in the tourism industry
Empirical base	22 service research articles and 332 respondents from a national survey	13 award winning articles and the 37 most frequently cited service articles	Not applicable	Not applicable	25 semi-structured interviews and 3104 respondents

3.6.1 Literature review and questionnaire, article I

Article I, Complainer characteristics when exit is closed (Tronvoll 2007a), starts with an extensive literature review. The focus was to expose, (i) the kind of empirical findings that have been revealed about the complainers' demographical and socio-economic characteristics and (ii) the market structure in which these studies been conducted. A computerised search in ISI citation index and Ebsco academic/business source premier was used to search for relevant academic studies. Various key words, alone or in combination, were used starting generally with complaint, complaining, complaint characteristics, etc. This resulted in only a few applicable articles, so the review list was then extended to relevant service marketing textbooks that had chapters on complaining or service recovery (Lovelock and Wirtz 2004; Swartz and Iacobucci 2000; Zeithaml and Bitner 2003). Added to the list were academic studies found in the reference list of the reviewed academic journals and textbooks. The articles were selected among peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings with special focus on dissatisfaction and/or consumer complaint behaviour. The initial search resulted in 27 relevant studies. To be part of the final sample the articles had to include a minimum of two significant demographic characteristics. This limitation resulted in 22 studies. The literature review showed a clear result and revealed that people who complain most

frequently belong to the upper socio-economic layers of society. The empirical studies of the initial sample were conducted in a competitive or loose monopoly market structure and not in a monopolistic market.

The quantitative study was conducted by using data collected for the Norwegian Office for Social Insurance (NOSI). Most Norwegians use NOSI and are in contact with them at least once in their lifetime. Independent of the user's income, the service of NOSI is important for the well-being and the security of the welfare system. In the past few years private healthcare and pension funds have become available to Norwegians, but only in a minor way. I believe, therefore, that NOSI may be viewed as an institution operating in a monopolistic market. The data were drawn from TNS Gallup's postal consumer-satisfaction survey, which was conducted from October to December 2000. This national survey was conducted to collect data on consumers' attitudes towards various governmental institutions. The questionnaire was mailed to a representative random sample of the Norwegian population. The total sample numbered 43.784 respondents. From these, 19.095 questionnaires were returned and accepted - a response rate of 43.6%. Of these replies, 16.664 respondents were users of the NSIO and 6.541 had used the NSIO in the previous 12 months. Of these 6.541 respondents, 332 respondents made a written complaint.

3.6.2 Empirical illustrations, article II

Article II, A Framework for and Analyzes of Paradigms in Service Research (Tronvoll et al. 2008a), is a conceptual paper although it has a substantial number of articles used as empirical illustrations of the epistemological framework. The focus in selecting the empirical illustrations was to find notable and representative studies within the area of service research.

The first dataset was collected from the annual award-winning service articles that are selected by a committee of senior scholars affiliated with the American Marketing Association's special interest group for services - SERVSIG. One article has been selected each year since 1994. To be eligible for this award, candidates/papers must meet the following criteria: (i) appearance in a refereed journal during the previous year, (ii) mention service in the title, (iii) mention service in the body of the article, and (iv) cite service research. This search resulted in 13 articles.

The second dataset was collected from a computerized search using the ISI web of science and limited to the years between 1977 and 2007. To embrace the entire field of service research, the search was not limited to a specific set of journals. Instead, a search string was used to include articles with service in the title, key-words, or abstract and one of the following words: service in combination with marketing, operation, information technology, manage or quality. Furthermore, the articles had to be published in ISI related journals within the area of social science by the following subject areas: management, psychology, business, finance, computer science, information systems, public administration, psychology, social and operations research. The result of the initial collection of articles referring to service was 9.710 studies.

To get a representative collection of studies, the years between 1977 and 2007 were divided into five-year periods (1977-1981, 1982-1986, etc). Each period was studied as a separate analysis. The number of articles selected from one period depended on its relation to the total number of articles published in the overall period. In the period between 1992 and 1996, for example, 2.872 articles were published, representing 29, 6% of the total number of articles.

To be included in the final sample, the articles had to meet two criteria: (i) a service related context and (ii) the highest average yearly citation rate. Out of the second sample collection, 37 studies were selected according to the criteria. This resulted in no article from 1977-1981 and 1982-1986, one article from 1987-1991, seven articles from 1992-1996, 11 articles from 1997-2001 and 17 articles from 2002-2007. In addition, was the article by Shostack (1977) included.

The final sample consisted of 50 notable academic articles within the service research area. We analysed the articles separately, in relation to the pole of each dimension, and consequently put them into their paradigmatic home.

3.6.3 Narratives about the service field, article III

Article III, Customer Complaint Behaviour from the Perspective of the Service-dominant Logic of Marketing (Tronvoll 2007b), is a conceptual paper using narrative about the service field. Each of the narratives emphasises one of the following dominant interactions: (i) the product interaction, (ii) the service environment interaction, (iii) technological interaction and (iv) human

interaction. The narratives are not from actual informants telling their stories and experiences from the service field, but rather representative narratives about the service field.

3.6.4 Literature review, article IV

Article IV, A New Model of Customer Complaint Behaviour from the Perspective of Service-dominant Logic (Tronvoll 2008c), is a conceptual article, although a literature review has been used when searching for definitions of complaint behaviour. A computerized search was conducted in Ebsco Business Elite as well as a search in textbooks on service marketing. Even though many scholars have referenced different definitions of customer complaint behaviour, there are not many original definitions. These are described in article VI.

3.6.5 Interviews and questionnaire, article V

Article V, The Effect of Negative Emotions on Customer Complaint Behaviour (Tronvoll 2008b), is an empirical paper using both in-dept interviews and survey questionnaires. The dataset is part of a larger research project that I conducted with two colleges at Oslo School of Management. We started to plan the research project during the spring of 2005 and we recruited students during the fall of 2005 after several information meetings to conduct the empirical data collection. The selected students were recruited among the senior bachelor students. Out of 95 applications, we selected 45 students ranked according to their average marks and an interview asking about their motivation to participate in the research project. The students were put into groups of two or three and asked to either conduct in-dept interviews or use a survey questionnaire. In the fall of 2005, the selected students received an extensive introduction to the research project, theory, training in data collection and interview-probe techniques. The students used the dataset as part of their bachelor thesis.

In the fall of 2005, an initial interview guide and a survey questionnaire were constructed. Both the interview guide and the survey questionnaire were framed to systematically cover the total service process. The instruments were discussed internally, checked by senior researchers and were rewritten several times. My colleagues and I tested the interview guide on the students involved in the research project and later the students tested the guide on 15 informants.

The final interview guide was then accepted. From January to April 2006, in-dept interviews were conducted. The data collection resulted in 309 interviews.

The final version of the survey questionnaire was completed after 25 in-depth interviews were carried out. This resulted in some changes, e.g., a new group of emotions was included. The survey questionnaire was then pre-tested by 40 respondents for content validity. As a result, some questions were reworded to improve validity and clarity. The data collection resulted in 3.104 respondents recruited among the general public in southern and eastern Norway from February to April, 2006.

Both the semi-structured interview and the questionnaire were conducted with informants/respondents who were asked to describe their unfavourable service experiences as customers. The interviews/questionnaires covered the following aspects: (i) the overall service process, (ii) the type of service, (iii) the time and location of the negative critical incident took place, (iv) the circumstances surrounding the incident, (v) the type of triggers that appeared to cause the incident, (vi) their emotional responses during the incident, and (vii) their complaint behaviour during and after the service interaction. The critical incident technique was used asking informants to recall a specific event and to explain the circumstances surrounding the incident. The informants/ respondents were asked to recall a negative critical incident during the past 12 months. A negative critical incident was defined as an incident that had the potential for an adverse effect on the customer's attitude and/or behaviour towards the service company. Both instruments were structured to guide the informants/respondents through the entire process, so that the recollection of the negative critical incident was framed in an actual service experience.

There were three criteria for inclusion in the studies: (i) informants/ respondents had experienced an unfavourable service experience in the tourism industry during the last 12 months, (ii) they were 16 to 80 years old and (iii) they were permanent residents of Norway for at least five years.

3.7 Reflection on the research process

This dissertation includes studies performed with different research strategies and is analysed according to different research traditions. This process has challenged me and has been a positive learning experience. At an early stage in

my doctoral work, I decided to write an article-based dissertation. Three reasons pointed me in this direction: (i) exploring different research themes and using different research designs and methods, (ii) writing articles together with other research colleagues and (iii) taking one step (or article) at a time. I have never regretted this decision.

The writing process has followed the true idea of the circle of hermeneutics. The writing process and knowledge I have gained during the past years have contributed to a change in my research approach. My research started with a static view in search of antecedents of complainer characteristics (article I) and has ended in research anchored in a dynamic epistemology. In the beginning, I thought this dissertation would contain five appended articles using quantitative research design. During the learning and writing process, I was challenged and became interested in fundamental and conceptual topics resulting in three conceptual articles.

Since my first year at the University of Oslo when I was introduced to the philosophy and history of science, I have been interested in the basis or philosophy of science. This interest lead to the following question: where is the main epistemological anchor or relationship of service research? This was the starting point of article II, A Framework for and Analyzes of Paradigms in Service Research. In retrospect, I have asked myself if this digression was wise or would it have been easier to choose an empirical and normative article – the answer is probably yes. The next question is would I do it again? The answer is the same - probably yes. This article, however, has made me read and study philosophy of science topics that are not common as part of a doctoral in-service research. Nevertheless, this article has given me a deeper understanding of the philosophy of service research.

Common questions when reflecting on the research process concern the validity and reliability of the research. Even though these terms are most used in quantitative research, I choose to use this terminology when commenting on the evaluation of the research. Validity concerns the extent to which the research reflects reality and can be generalized across time, settings and persons (Merriam 1988; Mitchell 1985). Reliability is the extent to which a study has minimized errors and biases (Yin 1994).

In article I, Complainer Characteristics When Exit is Closed, there could be a question about validity - is the social insurance market really a true monopoly market and is it possible to generalize the findings across settings, e.g., to other monopoly markets domestic or abroad? The argumentation of why the social insurance market can be described as monopolistic is discussed in section 3.4.1. It can be argued that some Norwegians belonging to the upper socio-economic layer of the population are rich enough to not need the service of NOSI. Obviously this is true, but anyone who has a deep insight into Norwegian society knows that the wealth is mainly located in the government or governmental institutions and not with private persons. Apparently, this will change in the near future because the wealth is growing and shifting towards private persons and as a result, the monopolistic market structure of NOSI will be weakened. The second question about whether or not the results can be generalized across time or settings is more difficult. Throughout the world, the social insurance market is heavily influenced by local priorities, and political systems etc., therefore it is difficult to generalize the findings in the Norwegian social insurance market to those of other countries. Likewise, it may be difficult to generalize the findings to other monopolistic markets for the same reasons. It is challenging to find a true monopolistic market structure, at least in the OECD countries, although several markets have monopolistic features. In spite of the problems of generalizing the findings in article I, I think the research makes a contribution. The principle of when exit is closed (monopolistic market) the complainer characteristics are different from a competitive market, is worth taking into account when analysing true monopoly markets or markets with monopolistic features.

In article V, The Effect of Negative Emotions on Customer Complaint Behaviour, the reliability could be questioned. My two research colleagues and I have asked students to do the data collection. Although we have constructed the interview guide and survey questionnaire based on a solid theoretical foundation and given the students intensive training in how to collect the data to strengthen the reliability, some problems could exist. The most difficult part of the data collection was the in-depth interviews, where the students had to probe to reveal the actual emotions experienced during the unfavourable service experience. Nevertheless, these in-depth interviews resulted in a new group of emotions that was not defined by Diener et al. (1995) that we included in the questionnaire.

The survey data collection was controlled in several phases. First, we reduced the possibility for pseudo answers by letting the students work in groups of three. Second, during the data input, one student read while another student punched the data into a SPSS web-based questionnaire. By separate reading and punching, and using a web-based questionnaire for input data, we reduced punching errors. Third, we checked the data files thoroughly for any errors. In spite of the possible problems with reliability using students in data collection, I believe we have managed to minimise the errors and biases.

The point of departure in this dissertation is the use of critical incidents and thereby indirectly the critical incidents technique (CIT). It has mainly been used as a conceptual technique, although it has been applied empirically in article V. The critical incident technique is a suitable method to use to discover a negative critical incident, which is an important trigger in customer complaint behaviour. The critical incident technique has received some criticism, mainly on issues like reliability and validity (Chell 1998; Gremler 2004) because the informants' stories can be misinterpreted or misunderstood (Edvardsson 1992; Gabbott and Hogg 1996), flawed by recall basis (Michel 2001), or reinterpreted (Johnston 1995). When the research design in article V was constructed, we emphasised that the informant/respondent should be able to recall their unfavourable service experience by asking about the contextual environment and following their service process from the beginning to the end. In addition, we limited the time of the negative critical incident to within 12 months.

Clearly, it is of less importance to discuss validity and reliability when discussing conceptual articles. It might instead be of more interest to discuss the fruitfulness of the articles. I have used much of this dissertation to argue that my main contribution to complaint behaviour research is using a dynamic perspective. Articles II, III and IV have this focus. I maintain that the epistemological quadrant of paradigmatic belongings, a dynamic conceptualisation of the complaint behaviour process, and a conceptual model of customer complaint behaviour responses are contributions to the ongoing service research and thereby give a fruitful contribution to the research.

4. Customer complaint behaviour

This chapter will, based on the epistemological assumptions in chapter 3, argue for the dynamic process of customer complaint behaviour. First, different definitions of customer complaint behaviour will be referenced before I explain my own definition. Second, an examination of the theoretical foundation of a complaint process will be given and a description of different triggers as sources for complaint behaviour. Third, the complaint system will be explained and an introduction will be given to a new complaint behavioural model. Included in this discussion is a short summary of articles III and VI. Finally, there will be an investigation of one of the sub-processes of complaint behaviour - the customer's emotional processes, followed at the end of the chapter with a description of article V.

4.1 The nature and definitions of customer complaint behaviour

Customer complaint behaviour is a complex construction although three factors are commonly mentioned in different definitions of the phenomenon, either separately or in combination. The definitions either describe the complaining customer's state of mind, a behavioural, and/or a communicational act. The definitions of customer complaint behaviour have generally been based on dissatisfaction and a goods-dominant logic perspective, and are outcome-oriented; consequently, complaint behaviour becomes per definition a post-purchased activity. Landon (1980, p. 337) defines customer complaint behaviour as "an expression of dissatisfaction by individual consumers (or on a consumer's behalf) to a responsible party in either the distribution channel or a complaint handling agency". Day (1980) extended this definition to exclude false claims by including only those claims that are honest and reasonable. Oliver (1980) notes that complaint behaviour is dissatisfaction which is caused by negative disconfirmation of purchase expectations. Jacoby and Jarrard (1981, p. 6) defined complaining as "action taken by an individual which involves a communicating something negative regarding a product or service, either the firm manufacturing or marketing that product or service, or to some third-party organisational entity". Day et al. (1981, p. 93), stated that complaining is a "specific consumption experience … in which a consumer has recognized a highly unsatisfactory experience of sufficient impact that is neither assimilated nor otherwise quickly forgotten". Grönroos (1988) defined customer complaints as a post-incident reaction by customers left dissatisfied

after a service failure. The most common definition of customer complaint behaviour, however, is suggested by Singh (1988, p. 94). This is an improved version of Singh and Howell (1985), where customer complaint behaviour is conceptualised "as a set of multiple (behavioural and non-behavioural) responses, some or all of which are triggered by perceived dissatisfaction with a purchase episode". Finally, Stephens (2000, p. 295) stated that "complaining is a post purchase process that may or may not occur when customers are disappointed".

Based on a dynamic perspective, it is necessary to redefine the definition of customer complaint behaviour, as described in Table 5. As previously described, my definition of customer complaint behaviour is a process that emerges if the experience is outside the acceptance zone during the service interaction and/or in the evaluation of the value-in-use. This unfavourable experience may be expressed in the form of verbal and/or non-verbal communication to another entity and may lead to a behavioural change (Tronvoll 2007b). The first part of the definition is discussed in article III and the last part of the definition is the point of departure for the new complaint behavioural model described in article VI.

In the prior definition, seven key-phrases can be identified: "process that emerges", "unfavourable service experience", "outside the acceptance zone", "during the service interactions", "and/or in the evaluation of the value-in-use", "verbal and/or non-verbal communication", and "lead to a behavioural change". These key phrases can be explained as follows:

- "process that emerges" – is a series or chain of progressive and interdependent activities that spread from a source and appear as networks of activities, rather than as sequences, although they are still linked in an orderly way. The process has a certain starting point while it does not always have a definite end point.
- "unfavourable service experience" – is knowledge or practical wisdom gained from what the customer has observed, understood, and remembered as it occurred at the time. This causes the customer to form a negative cognitive and emotional impression, which ultimately results in a negative mental 'mark' (or memory) (based on Edvardsson et al. 2005a).
- "outside the acceptance zone" – is an experience that is beyond the boundary or limit of what is tolerable.

- "service interactions" – is the co-creation process consisting of a series of moment-of-truth activities where the customer meets the resources of the service provider or his network. The main rationale for interaction between the customer and provider is to communicate about, coordinate and adapt the activities and resources the provider is allocating to and/or using in the relationship (Wynstra et al. 2006). During these interactions, the service comes alive, within the relationship and in a service environment. The interaction is considered to be a crucial part of the service experience and will influence the relationship with the service company (Bitner 1990). The service interaction may therefore contain several phases and each phase may have different dominant service interaction forms. The service interactions are embedded in the interaction platforms and may include interaction with products/goods, service employees, technical systems, and/or service environment. The service interaction is the generator of service experience.

- "and/or in the evaluation of the value-in-use" – is a judgement or assessment the customer does during and/or after the service interaction. Value becomes something that is assessed and develops over time during and/or after the service interaction. It starts as an impression through the exchange of value and is a judgement of desirability and preference, ending as a total evaluation of the interaction including an assessment of the process. Value can only be created with and determined by the user in the 'consumption' process and through use or what is referred to as value-in-use (Lusch and Vargo 2006c). The customer's value-in-use begins with the enactment of value propositions and offers some thoughts on the development and practical use of reciprocal value propositions for generating sustainable betterment (Ballantyne and Varey 2006). The service provider can only make value propositions (offerings), since it is the customer who determines value and co-creates it (Vargo and Lusch 2004a). The actual value-in-use is first evaluated during and/or after the service interaction.

- "verbal and/or non-verbal communication" – verbal communication behaviour includes written and spoken exchanges using many channels, whereas non-verbal communication behaviour refers to physical expressions and acts (or performances).

- "may lead to a behavioural change" – is a possible response or reaction made by the customer in the specified circumstance.

I believe that this definition of customer complaint behaviour is fruitful because it captures the dynamic behavioural process of a customer who has experienced an unfavourable service interaction. The definition includes incidents during the service interaction and evaluation after the interactions as motivations to complain. In addition, the definition indicates the behavioural responses that are possible and the long-term behavioural effect.

4.2 The process and triggers of complaint behaviour

4.2.1 Service quality drivers as triggers of complaint behaviour

The participation of customers in the co-creation process of service entails that, besides the service outcome, the service process is important and affects service quality (Grönroos 1984; Smith et al. 1999) and service experience perceptions. Both Hirschman (1970) and Singh (1988) explain the trigger of complaint behaviour as a lack of quality; others use dissatisfaction as the point of departure for complaint behaviour (Grönroos 1988; Landon 1980; Stephens 2000). Complaints do not always stem from dissatisfaction and dissatisfaction does not always lead to a complaint behaviour; this suggests that dissatisfaction is not sufficient cause for customers to complain (Day 1984; Singh and Pandya 1991). Davidow and Dacin (1997), for example, have shown that personality related variables represent almost half of the total complaint responses. Complaining behaviour would thus appear to be more complex than a simple reaction to post-purchase dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, the scholars agree that complaint behaviour has its source in service quality drivers. Consequently, it is interesting to understand the quality drivers and subsequently the effect on complaint behaviour.

The service process and service quality drivers, which are important for the service experience and customer complaint behaviour, have usually been categorised into broad items-based categories. Grönroos (1984) used the frame of technical and functional quality to capture the service quality drivers. Driver and Johnston (2001) used interpersonal and non-interpersonal attributes and Rust and Oliver (1994) used service product, service delivery and service environment. Brady and Cronin Jr. (2001) also used a three factor service quality model consisting of interaction quality, physical environment quality and outcome quality. In addition, a number of researchers have suggested that an additive effect of service process quality and outcome quality exist on post-consumption behaviour, showing that outcome attributes such as reliability are

more important determinants of service quality than process attributes such as responsiveness, empathy and assurance (Brady and Cronin Jr. 2001; Parasuraman et al. 1988). Hui et al. (2004), however, argue that there is a significant interactive affect of the two types of service quality on post-consumption behaviour. Their research confirms that service quality can be multiple rather than additive in nature. Consequently, can an unexpected negative impression resulting from an unfavourable experience make a substantial effect on post-consumption behaviour. This may clarify situations when customers feel uncertain about the service outcome prior to consumption. The customers share a tendency to use process quality as a heuristic substitute in their assessment of the trustworthiness of the service provider. This will again lead to process quality having a more obvious effect on post-consumption behaviour when outcome quality is unfavourable rather than when outcome quality is favourable (Hui et al. 2004). An essential condition to understanding the complaint post-interaction behaviour is to understand the service process and the type of drivers that are important for the service quality.

4.2.2 Process theories and complaint behaviour

The complaint process describes the customer's complaint behaviour and the interaction with the surrounding resources. The complaint process exists as hidden structures in a chain of related complaint activities. The complaint process may include multiple, cumulative, conjunctive and iterative progressions of convergent, parallel and divergent streams of activities that may unfold as the complaint process develops over time (based on the process description of Flavell 1972; Van den Daele 1974; Van den Daele 1969). For a detailed discussion see Van de Ven (1992).

To understand how and why a complaint process unfolds over time, inspiration may be found in a dynamic epistemological perspective and in process theories. A process development can be described as a sequence of changed events that unfold over the duration of an entity's existence (Van de Ven and Poole 1991), which include identification, action, reaction and termination. The process of sequence is a description of how things change over time. Van de Ven (1992) identifies four different families of process theories: life cycle, teleology, dialectics, and evolution theories. These theories explain why observed events occur in particular sequence progressions when specific circumstances or

conditions occur. Based on the distinct characteristic of the complaint process, e.g., usually a given cause starts the process, I believe that life cycle and dialectic theories may be fruitful to apply in customer complaint behaviour.

The life cycle theory (Ansoff 1984; Miles and Kimberly 1980; Van de Ven 1992) takes for granted that change is inborn and fundamental. The life cycle theory applied to customer complaint behaviour, regulates the process of change and drives the complaint from a given point, the cause of complaint, toward a subsequent end which is already anticipated when the complaint behaviour starts. What lies latent in the early stage of the complaint behaviour becomes progressively more mature, complex and distinguished. Different contextual events and processes may influence how the customers express themselves, but it will always be within the inborn logic. A life cycle theory will frequently operate on the basis of institutional rules that require developmental activities in a prescribed sequence (Van de Ven 1992). The life cycle theory describes the process as different stages: (i) a set of starting conditions, (ii) an emergent process of change, and (iii) a functional end-point (Van de Ven 1992). A representative example of the life cycle theory is written guidelines describing different stages in which the complainer must go through, e.g., to seek redress from the service provider.

The dialectic theory (Engels et al. 1940; Holt 2002; Van de Ven 1992) believes that the development of a complaint process is based on argumentation that focuses on resolving contradictions. The dialectic theory is present in a pluralistic world of colliding events, forces, or contradictory values which compete with each other for domination and control (Van de Ven 1992). Stability and change in the process development are described as forces competing to sustain the balance of the status quo. The opposition may be internal and emerge from emotional sub-processes, external and emerge from the influences of employees or other customers, or have multiple conflicting goals.

Both process theories may provide fruitful insights into understanding complaint behaviour, although they have different perspectives. Life cycle theory is a predictive theory and describes the required stage sequence, while the dialectic theory is an explanatory theory. Dialectic theory focuses on the means of action and reaction of complaint behaviour and explains how change

and development occur along with indicators that make it possible to identify key development constructs.

4.2.3 Critical incident technique

The critical incident technique is a commonly used method that captures the factors or situations influencing the customer during the service interaction (Bitner et al. 1990; Edvardsson and Strandvik 2000; Flanagan 1954; Gremler 2004; Stauss and Weinlich 1997). Critical incident technique is also used to identify the source of the complaint behaviour (Goetzinger et al. 2006; Kim and Smith 2005; Meuter et al. 2000; Reynolds and Harris 2006). For research purposes, the technique tackles two tasks: the information given about the general frame of reference to describe the incident and the inductive development of main and subcategories (Gremler 2004).

The critical incident technique relies on a set of procedures to collect, content analyze, and classify observations of human behaviour (Flanagan 1954). Flanagan (1954, p. 327) defined critical incident technique as "any human activity that is sufficient complete in itself to permit interferences and prediction to be made about the person performing the act". Bitner et al. (1990) and Grove and Fisk (1997) describe it as an incident that makes a significant contribution, either positively or negatively, to an activity or phenomenon. One of the advantages of critical incident technique is that the method can be used to generate an accurate and in-depth record of events (Grove and Fisk 1997).

To understand the dynamics and the causes of complaint behaviour, it is possible to consider different units of interaction or interaction levels in the relationship (Holmlund 1996). Holmlund (1996) refers in her model to different aggregation levels and time frames for interactions among parties and classifies them into five types of interactions: actions, episodes, sequences, relationships and partner base. These interactions are on five different aggregation levels and are hierarchically ranked from a single individual exchange to the portfolio of relationships of a service provider. This categorisation makes actions as a subcategory of episodes and sequences as a category on a higher level than episodes. The most detailed type of interaction is action, which is where the customers interrelate with the service providers and their resources. This categorisation catches the dynamics by showing how interactions on a lower level are able to affect interactions on a higher hieratical level in the relationship

and visa versa (Holmlund and Strandvik 1999). Roos and Gustafsson (2007) emphasise that dynamism in service perception implies the service definition fluctuating over time from the customer's point of view and therefore it has to be viewed as part of the relationship. To understand the dynamics, therefore, it is not enough to look at a single incident or a chain of single incidents, but rather incidents within the context of a relationship.

The customer's unfavourable experience leads to a decision of whether or not to complain. The source or starting point of the complaint and subsequent fluctuations in the customer's relationship in the context, is referred to as the trigger (Roos and Gustafsson 2007). Previous studies have suggested that triggers can be classified in terms of the customers' own lives (situational triggers), the market impact (influential triggers), and traditional critical incidents (reactional triggers) (Gustafsson et al. 2005; Roos 1999; Roos et al. 2004; Roos et al. 2006). As previous mentioned, this dissertation will emphasise the reactional triggers in describing customer complaint behaviour.

4.2.4 Complaint triggers

The customer complaint behaviour may be trigged by many different factors, although two categories are prominent: (i) the customer's perception of a negative critical incident (e.g. a core service failure, service encounter failure or response to a failure) and (ii) a low customer evaluation that is below the acceptance zone even though there is no single incident that causes the evaluation.

The first category is when the customer perceives a negative critical incident or a series of negative incidents that becomes critical. A negative critical incident is defined as an incident that will change the customer's attitude and/or behaviour towards the service company in a negative direction. A negative critical incident can emerge from many types of episodes. There are two types of perceived negative critical incidents: (i) an actual service failure experienced and revealed by the customer caused by unavailability of the service, slow service or errors in delivery (Bitner et al. 1990) and (ii) an incident perceived as negative by the customer, although it is not a real service failure because the service process is carried out according to the service blueprint. Consequently, customers may perceive a negative critical incident as service failure even though the service process was performed precisely according to the service blueprint. A negative

critical incident occurs, therefore, when it is perceived as such by the customer, regardless of whether or not it was a failure according to the service blueprint. An actual service failure is when the service process becomes different from the service blueprint or intended service process. Although, a variation from the blueprint might not be considered a service failure by the customer (Michel 2001).

The second category that may trigger a complaint behaviour is when the promise from the service provider (Grönroos 2007) or the value proposition (Vargo and Lusch 2004a) is inconsistent with the customer's acceptance zone of the overall service experience. This is independent of whether or not the service provider is to blame. Other researchers have described factors that may evoke a complaint behaviour such as customer expectations formed by a company's communication, prior experience, personal needs, (Parasuraman et al. 1985) and a company's image (Grönroos 1988).

The negative critical incident and the evaluation of its consequences is the basis for the negative impression that results in an unfavourable service experience. Negative impression can be defined as a state of cognitive and affective discomfort caused by insufficient return relative to the resources (operand and operant) used by the customer at any part of the service interaction process and the value-in-use evaluation. Although many types of resources may be used, the usual resources in complaint behaviour are competence (knowledge and skills), experience, finance, time, self-confidence, energy, etc., whereas return is the benefit obtained from the service provider or other stakeholders. Customers are by definition included in the complaint process when they have experienced something that triggers a negative impression, as showed in figure 4.
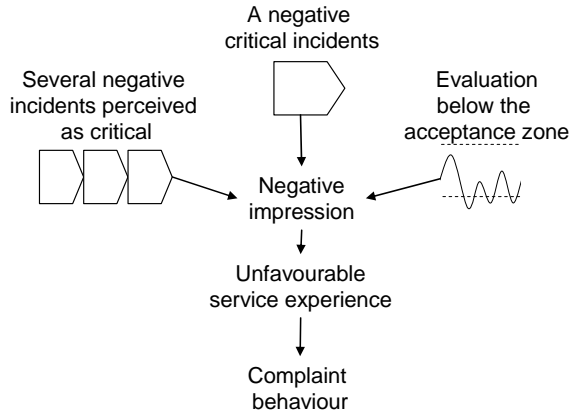
Figure 4: The critical activities and interactions leading to complaint behaviour

4.3 Why some customers do not complain

A well-documented finding in complaint behaviour literature states that a majority of customers do not voice their complaints to a service provider (Best and Andreasen 1977; Day and Bodur 1978; Keaveney 1995; McCollough et al. 2000; Singh and Pandya 1991; Stephens and Gwinner 1998). The Technical Assistance Research Program (1986) reports that only one customer out of 20 complains. Reasons for not complaining include inadequate levels of dissatisfaction (Halstead 2002; Singh and Pandya 1991), lack of customer motivation and ability to complain (Blodgett et al. 1993; Huppertz 2003), the product's or service's relative unimportance means that it is not 'worth complaining about' (Andreasen 1988; Huppertz 2003), the expectation that complaining would result in a poor outcome (Tax et al. 1998), personality (Davidow and Dacin 1997), and not knowing where and/or how to complain (Bearden and Teel 1983; Day et al. 1981).

There are contextual reasons for not engaging in complaint behaviour. This may include lack of time, an inability to get in touch with customer service, or a lack of access to an appropriate complaint channel. In terms of resources, a failure to complain might be due to a lack of knowledge (not knowing how to complain or being uncertain about the standard of service that might be expected from the service provider) or a lack of skills (such as an inability to argue their reasons for complaining).

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4.4 Complaint behaviour environment

4.4.1 The complaint macro environment

The complaint macro-system is used in this dissertation as a description of a sequence of one or several episodes or activities (Holmlund 1996). A complaint process is based on the premise that reality consists of negative impressions caused by events as they are perceived or understood in the customer's consciousness. The negative impression experienced is specific to the given customer and dependent on the context. To understand the complaint macro process, it is necessary to include the value co-creation process. Vargo and Lusch (2008a) describe value as idiosyncratic, experiential, contextual and meaning-laden. The same description may also be used for the complaint process outcome.

The complaint process begins with a trigger caused by a service activity or interaction. Consequently, the complaint process may run simultaneously but separately from the co-creation process, although both processes are interwoven in the service interaction. To unfold the activities that create the negative impressions, it is possible to divide the service co-creation process into time-based phases (Ballantyne and Varey 2006). The co-creation process may contain interdependent activities applying different kinds of service interaction platforms. Each of the activities or the relation with the service platforms may cause and be perceived as a negative critical incident. Often during and after the service interaction phase the customer perceives the value-in-use. This can be illustrated by a holiday experience. The customer searches through the internet website and catalogues of the tour operator and gets an impression of the value proposition. During the service interaction, the customer interacts with the tour operator and his network resources. Different phases of the holiday draw on different interaction platforms, such as the service environment (the hotel room, the airplane, etc.), service employees and technical facilities (booking systems, internet at the hotel, etc). During the holiday (the service interaction) and after the return home, the customer makes a continuing evaluation and forms his or her service experience. In the end, all the linked-activities have the potential to affect the customers' service experience and possible complaint behaviour. The outcome of the first activity in the service interaction constitutes the basis of the evaluation performed by the customer in the second activity and so on.

As showed in figure 5, the co-creation process contains several orderly-linked activities, where one is perceived as a negative critical incident. This negative critical incident triggers the complaint process and creates the negative impression. This complaint process may continue during the service interaction phase and the post evaluation phase, and if not solved properly, it may continue a long time after the service process is determined.
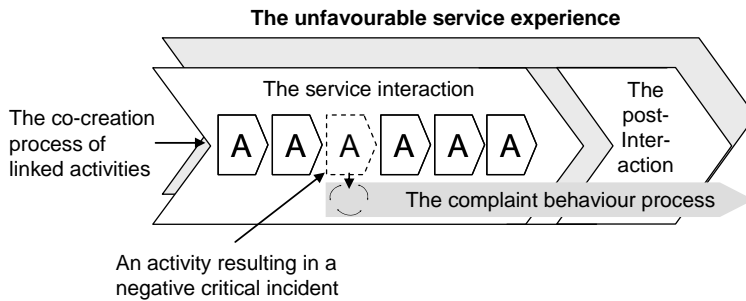

Figure 5: The complaint behaviour process
Source: Tronvoll 2008c

4.4.2 The complaint micro environment

The complaint micro-system is used as a description of what takes place during an activity. The customer will use information and resources for transforming the negative impressions during the complaint process, starting from the point of cause through to the post-interaction outcome. This can be illustrated by figure 6 (based on Ljungberg 2002): (i) "negative impression in" represents everything that goes into the complaint process and has triggered an activity, (ii) assessable information influences the complaint process, (iii) resources necessary for performing the activity, and (iv) "impression out" is the result of transformation and stands for everything that comes out of the partial complaint process and subsequently triggers the next complaint activity in the process.
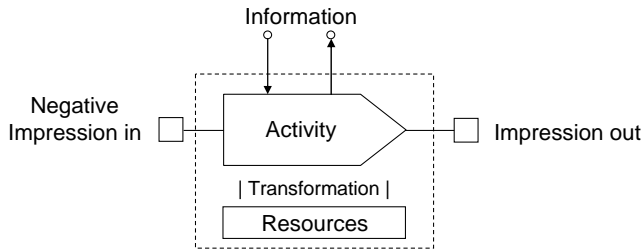
Figure 6: The core characteristics of a complaint process
Source: Tronvoll 2008c

Without a "negative impression in" the complaint process will not start. In addition to "negative impression in", resources and information, or lack of it, will influence the complaint process. Information that enters the complaint process may support and control the direction of the process, e.g., the service recovery actions from the service provider. Information might be used to coordinate different activities and direct the process in certain directions. Resources have normally been disregarded in the complaint process, although it has been identified as an antecedent to customer complaint behaviour (Andreasen 1988; Crosier et al. 1999; Richins 1983b; Tronvoll 2007a). Competence is, for most customers, an important resource in carrying out the complaint activities (Hogarth and English 2002; Kolodinsky and Aleong 1990). The transformation is the result of activity and resources meeting. Transformation takes place through various tasks being carried out that are performed by resources. The environment or context influences the complaint process and makes it even more complex. Through exchange of information, other customers, and situational aspects etc., complaint activities are linked with the environment and have an impact on "impression out" and the quality of the complaint process. If the reaction from the service provider is appropriate for the situation and perceived as positive by the customer, "the impression out" will be favourable and the customer will probably not engage in complaint behaviour. If the reaction is not positive, the "impression out" will be unfavourable. Depending on the context, the customer's knowledge, and skills, some customers will engage in complaint activities.

4.5 Article III: Customer Complaint Behaviour from the Perspective of the Service-Dominant Logic of Marketing

Customer complaint behaviour has received increasing attention during the past years. The focus has been on motivation for complaining, characteristics of

complainers and particular types of complaint behaviour. Most research of customer complaint behaviour, however, has been treated as an isolated static phenomenon (1987; Richins 1983a; Singh 1990b) located in a post-purchased behaviour (Gilly and Gelb 1982; Stephens 2000).

Article III treats customer complaint behaviour from a dynamic perspective and draws upon the service-dominant logic of marketing (Vargo and Lusch 2004a). This constitutes a shift from the marketing notion of an isolated transaction towards a dynamic conception of a marketing exchange that extends over time and includes the service of co-creation, value-in-use and post-interaction activities. The article describes customer complaint behaviour as a dynamic adjustment process that occurs during the service interaction and may include post-interaction activities related to the evaluation of value-in-use. The article further suggests that there is no universal complaint model, but rather it depends on the customer's main service interaction platform. Finally, the article discusses managerial implications and suggests further research.

4.6 A new conceptual model of complaint behaviour

If a service experience is unfavourable, the customer may engage in various complaint activities. To describe this dynamic behaviour during and after the service interaction, a new conceptual model of complaint behaviour is suggested. The existing customer complaint behaviour models are mainly based on a static perspective and emphasise the complaint behaviour outcome after purchase or consumption (Day and Landon Jr. 1977b; Singh 1988). In addition, many researchers have based their model on dissatisfaction. Although dissatisfaction may be necessary for complaining to occur, the degree of dissatisfaction shows restricted association with the probability to complain (Day 1984; Oliver 1987; Singh and Howell 1985). Undoubtedly, other factors influence complaining and models that are based on dissatisfaction are unlikely to achieve much effect. One of the most common complaint models is suggested by (Singh 1988) and is based on the occurrence of dissatisfaction. Singh's complaint model consists of a three-dimension response: (i) private response, (ii) voice response and (iii) third-party response. A more thorough examination and discussion on existing complaint models can be found in article VI.

Based on table 5 Epistemological changes in the customer complaint behaviour understanding and my definition of complaint behaviour in chapter 4.1, a new conceptual model of complaint behaviour is suggested. This is shown in figure 7. The focus of the model is the negative impression generated during the service interaction. The customer may hold three different thresholds of complaint behaviour depending on strength and type of negative impression, the context and the customer's resources. The three thresholds are as follows: (i) the customer does not engage in any complaint behaviour (complaint behaviour threshold), (ii) the customer makes an expression in different communicative ways (communicative threshold), and (iii) the customer accomplishes complaint actions (action threshold).

Taking context and resource factors into account, and if the negative impression does not exceed the 'complaint threshold', the customer will not engage in complaint behaviour and the relationship will, at least on a short-term basis, continue as if nothing had happened. If the complaint exceeds the complaint behaviour threshold, the customer will engage in 'communication complaint behaviour' and/or 'action complaint behaviour'. This schema facilitates a categorisation of a wide range of complaint responses over time. Complaint behaviour in these two categories can be manifested separately, or in combination, at various stages in the complaint process. The conceptual model of customer complaint behaviour embraces the entire feedback and complaint behaviour processes during and after service interaction. The model proposes three categories of behaviour in the complaint process, according to the complaint thresholds: (i) no complaint behaviour, (ii) communication complaint behaviour, and (iii) action complaint behaviour.
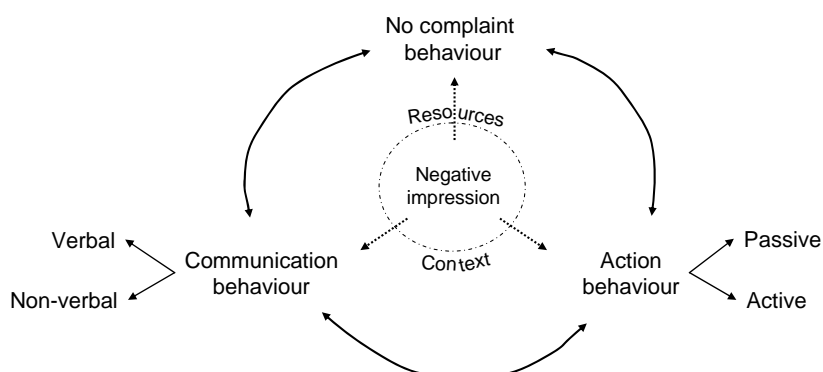

Figure 7: A new customer complaint model
Source: Tronvoll 2008c

4.7 Article IV: A New Model of Customer Complaint Behaviour from the Perspective of Service-Dominant Logic

Most existing models treat complaint behaviour as a static, post-purchase phenomenon (Day and Landon Jr. 1977b; Hirschman 1970; 1987; Richins 1983a; Singh 1988; Stephens 2000). This retrospective view of customer complaint behaviour is derived from the traditional goods-dominant logic of marketing.

Article IV proposes a new conceptual model of customer complaint behaviour in which complaint behaviour is seen as a dynamic process in accordance with the emerging service-dominant logic perspective of marketing. The complaint process describes the customer's complaint behaviour and the surrounding resources. The complaint model posits three categories of complaint behaviour resulting from a customer's negative impression of a service: (i) no complaint behaviour, (ii) communication complaint behaviour, and (iii) action complaint behaviour. The two latter categories are divided into new subcategories of verbal and non-verbal communication and passive and active action behaviour.

4.8 Emotional sub-processes in complaint behaviour

The role of emotions in service research and complaint behaviour has been given more attention as a central element in understanding consumers' behaviour and experiences (Oliver 1997; Richins 1997; Wong 2004). Research has shown that emotions have an important impact on word-of-mouth communication, attitudes to the service provider, customer loyalty, repurchase intentions, and complaining behaviours (Allen et al. 1992; Barsky and Nash 2002; Davidow 2003; Folkes et al. 1987; Liljander and Strandvik 1997; Wong 2004).

An unfavourable service experience is likely to be associated with remembering the negative emotions experienced at the time of the event (Bower 1981; Bower et al. 1981). The recollection of such negative emotions is therefore likely to influence judgments about the service interaction and expectations regarding similar service interactions. The negative emotions have thus been posited as mediators in the relationship between cognitive evaluations and constructs such as perceived service performance and complaint behaviour (Oliver 1993; Oliver and Westbrook 1993). Oliver (1997) has suggested that emotional responses in consumption experiences should be seen in terms of the consequences of

specific events. Bagozzi et al. (1995), adopted a similar approach in discussing 'goal-directed emotions'.

To understand the emotional sub-processes leading to complaint behaviour, it is of interest to focus on the negative emotions as a *pre-complaint construct* that becomes an antecedent to complaint behaviour. Smith and Bolton (2002) contend that negative emotions are provoked by negative critical incidents. As such, an unfavourable service experience can provoke negative emotions, which might lead to complaint actions.

Nolen-Hoeksema (1987) posited negative emotions in terms of an underlying 'attributional structure'. According to this view, once an 'attribution' has been formed, a customer tends to perceive future events in a manner that confirms the attributional structure already established in the customer's mind (Keltner et al. 1993; Taylor 1994). Furthermore, negative emotions are the most complex typology of emotions and can account for the majority of the variance of reported emotional experiences (Berenbaum et al. 1995; Diener et al. 1995; 1992; Watson and Clark 1991).

Negative emotions play an important role in the sub-processes of complaint behaviour. Recent research reveals that a negative emotion is present in 97% of the cases when a customer experiences a negative critical incident (Tronvoll 2008b).

4.9 Article V: The effects of negative emotions on customer complaint behaviour

Most research attention on the service experience of customers has emphasised the cognitive aspects of various service constructs (Bearden and Teel 1983; Oliver 1980; Oliver and DeSarbo 1988). Several researchers, however, have called for further research on the role of emotions in service encounters, including how emotions should be measured and how emotions are related to each other (Bagozzi et al. 1999). Mattsson et al. (2004), have noted that emotions play a significant role in determining two aspects: (i) whether a customer will complain and (ii) the actual language articulated in the complaint. Given the importance of negative emotions in generating complaints, there is clearly a need for a thorough exploration of the emotional aspects of unfavourable service experiences.

Article V investigates the role of negative emotions in the service interaction and tries to (i) identify a set of negative emotions experienced in unfavourable service experiences, (ii) examine the patterns of these negative emotions and (iii) link these negative emotions to complaint behaviour. The article reveals that 20 observed negative emotions are reduced to a second-order construct with five latent categories of negative emotions: shame, sadness, fear, anger, and frustration. These categories coincide with three categories of negative emotions in the agency dimension: other-attributed, self-attributed and situational-attributed. Finally, the study finds that the negative emotion of frustration is the best predictor of complaint behaviour.

5. Contribution and Further Research

This chapter will conclude the dissertation and summarise the contributions. First, a summary and a model describing the contributions are introduced. Then there is a description of the three areas of contribution: (i) the dynamic process of complaint behaviour, (ii) the influence of context in complaint behaviour and (iii) the emotional effects of complaint behaviour. Second, some suggestions for future research will be presented.

5.1 Contribution

The main aim of this dissertation is to enhance the knowledge of the dynamic behavioural processes in customer complaint behaviour. Previous research within complaint behaviour has mainly focused on motivation, antecedents, or the outcome response of complaint behaviour. This dissertation has contributed to understanding the dynamic aspects of customer complaint behaviour and how factors such as context and emotions influence complaint behaviour. These three main contributions may be conceptualised as shown in figure 8. Figure 8 describes an episode with several orderly-linked activities, where one of the activities is perceived by the customer as a negative critical incident. This negative critical incident triggers the complaint behaviour and becomes a generator of negative impressions. Once the complaint process is triggered, different complaint activities may start. Depending on the contextual and individual factors, etc., a sub-process of negative emotions begins. The negative impression may further trigger complaint responses, which can be either communication complaint behaviour or action complaint behaviour. The complaint process runs simultaneously with the value co-creation process.
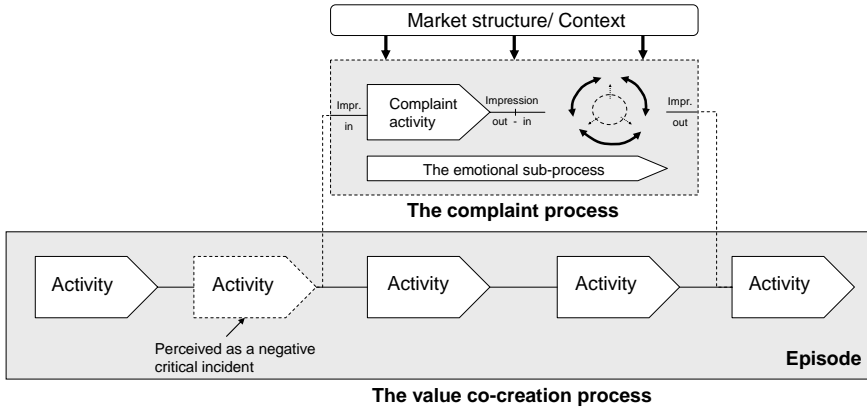
Figure 8: Model of research contributions

The contribution of this dissertation may be summarised as the following: (i) an extended understanding of the dynamic process of customer complaint behaviour, (ii) the influence of context, i.e., market structure on complaint behaviour and (iii) the emotional effects on complaint behaviour.

5.1.1. The dynamic process of complaint behaviour

The first contribution considers the paradigmatic feature of service research and the dynamic aspects of customer complaint behaviour. The dynamic aspects are described in three of the appended articles (Tronvoll 2008b; 2008c; Tronvoll et al. 2008a). Article II describes the paradigmatic framework; the latter contrasts the existing complaint behaviour models by using the lens of a dynamic perspective.

In the on-going discussion of the future of service research, there is a need to create an epistemological framework for understanding the paradigmatic belongings for service research studies including customer complaint behaviour. Article I (Tronvoll et al. 2008a) contributes with a framework to classify, analyze and understand paradigms and can be used to guide paradigmatic and methodological analyses of service research. An epistemological quadrant of normative, interpretative, monologic and dialogic paradigms is created for categorising research studies. An analysis of the field shows that many scholars use a normative and static approach when it comes to research questions, research design, measurement and analysis. Even though service research is a multi-methodical discipline, the majority of the research

output is characterised by methods that capture the static situation or delimited processes. To embrace service as a dynamic phenomenon, research needs to focus on service interactions, experiences, processes and relationships. One of the contributions of this dissertation is to show the fruitfulness of a shift in the research approach - from static to dynamic epistemological paradigms. This could be the starting point for exploration and reaching a better understanding of the dynamic aspects of customer complaint behaviour.

To date, customer complaint behaviour has often been viewed in a goods-dominant logic perspective, i.e., where there is an exchange of ownership (Lovelock and Gummesson 2004). In service industries where exchange of ownership is absent, complaint behaviour has to be understood as action and reaction - as a dynamic adjustment process that occurs during the service interaction, rather as a post-purchase activity (Tronvoll 2007b).

Viewing customer complaint behaviour in a dynamic framework enables the service provider to focus on feedback and dialogue with the customer as part of a service-adjustment process during the service interaction and the post-interaction process. Subsequently, it enables the provider to remedy the customer's frustration immediately after a negative critical incident has occurred. If a problem is dealt with immediately, it is easier to solve and thus prevent a possible complaint response. Existing models of customer complaint behaviour are not able to portray the dynamic behavioural process because the models are outcome-oriented. A complaint model is proposed in article IV to follow the customer's behaviour, which has the ability to observe the behavioural activities (Tronvoll 2008c). The proposed model suggests new categories and sub-categories of complaint behaviour emphasising communication and action behaviour. The model holds three thresholds for complaint behaviour and emphasises three different behaviour categories in the complaint process: no complaint behaviour, communication complaint behaviour and action complaint behaviour (Tronvoll 2008c). Communication complaint behaviour and action complaint behaviour contain a wide range of responses in which the customer may engage over time. These two types of responses may be engaged separately or in combination. Communication complaint behaviour is a fundamental enabler in the co-creation process and thus an important enabler in the complaint process. The communicative behaviour is a central enabler for knowledge and learning and will provide essential input in the service recovery process. The customer has to

communicate to other entities often through dialogue, whether they are service employees, ICT systems or other customers. If the dialogue in the adjustment process is not successful the customer might engage in communication and behavioural activities such as negative word-of–mouth comments, seeking redress, third-party complaints, exit from the relationship with the provider, or other complaint actions. The way customers behave in a complaint process is important for any service provider, since it will influence future retention and loyalty. Complaint behaviour is based on the premise that reality consists of impressions and events as they are perceived or understood in the customer's consciousness. A negative impression that is experienced by the customer is specific to that customer and dependent on the context.

5.1.2 The influence of context in complaint behaviour

The second contribution of this dissertation is related to the contextual issues influencing customer complaint behaviour such as market structure, as described in article I (Tronvoll 2007a). Different contextual situations influence complaint behaviour either to encourage or inhibit the complaint process. Article I shows that the monopoly market structure where exit is very high or "impossible" will influence the complaint behaviour in a way that rearranges the typical complaint behaviour. Previous studies have shown that the highest complaint frequency comes from upper socio-economic groups (Bearden et al. 1980; Grønhaug and Zaltman 1980). This was established in the early complaint behaviour literature. The theoretical framework assumed that complainers representing the "qualitative elite" would regulate service providers (Hirschman 1970). This view received substantial empirical support, although it cited studies of competitive or loose monopolistic market structures. The empirical study of a monopolistic market provides a different picture. Consumers from the lower socio-economic groups had the highest complaint frequency, i.e., consumers with the lowest incomes, those outside the labour market, those with the most modest standards of accommodation, and those who live alone.

5.1.3 The emotional effects on complaint behaviour

The third contribution is related to the sub-processes of emotions that influence complaint behaviour (Tronvoll 2008b). The empirical study reveals that negative emotions can be clustered into certain categories that form specific patterns. The article confirmed the validity of 20 negative emotions and

grouped them into the latent categories of 'shame', 'sadness', 'fear', 'anger', and 'frustration'. These categories of negative emotions could further be positioned along the agency dimensions of 'self-attributed' or internal oriented, 'other-attributed' or external oriented, and 'situational-attributed' (Weiner 1995). The distribution approximated an orthogonal matrix with 'self-attributed' and 'other-attributed' at opposite poles of one dimension and 'situational-attributed' representing a second dimension that was approximately orthogonal to the first. Anger and frustration, which were the two most frequently experienced categories of negative emotions, are typical of 'other-attributed'. These emotions are provoked by the actions of others (providers and/or other customers) that prevent the fulfilment of customers' needs. In contrast, guilt and shame, which were the least experienced negative emotions in this study, are self-attributed emotions. These emotions are caused by customers' actions that embarrass or cause inconvenience to the service provider.

There is a significant relationship between negative emotions and complaint behaviour, with frustration being the latent negative emotion that is the best predictor of such behaviour. Frustration relates to the obstructions causing the situation and the expectations of the customers, and describes an interference with the occurrence of an instigated goal-response at its proper time in the behaviour sequence. If the goal is not fulfilled, frustration is experienced because satisfaction is not reached.

The frustration-aggression hypothesis (Dollard et al. 1939) may explain how frustration leads to complaint behaviour and proposes that frustrating incidents lead directly to aggressive behaviour. According to this view, complaining to the company is a form of aggressive behaviour whereby frustrated customers attempt to 'get back' at the service company. This explains the prominent role of frustration in provoking complaint behaviour towards the company. In contrast, customers who experience self-attributed negative emotions are more likely to attribute them to causes other than the service company's performance; such customers are less likely to feel and act in an aggressive fashion towards the company and are more hesitant to share their experiences in public. Hence, this may explain why some customers are less likely to complain.

5.2 Further Research

The research on customer complaint behaviour is still in its early stage of development and therefore needs to attract more research.

First, there is a need for more knowledge about the complaint behavioural processes. The need for knowledge applies to both (i) the dynamic process that focuses on triggers and fluctuations of the complaint behaviour during the service interaction and (ii) how a negative critical incident influences the relationship over a certain period of time. More knowledge is needed about the triggers in the dynamic process and what takes place during the service interaction that triggers the negative impression. More knowledge is particularly needed about what restricts and/or encourages negative impressions to become a communicative and/or action complaint behaviour. In other words, what makes the customer decide whether or not to complain during the service interaction? Insight may also be revealed as to why a customer chooses a set of complaint responses. Little research has been conducted to reveal the long-term impact of a negative critical incident or complaint behaviour in the relationship. To follow a customer over a certain period of time and thereby observe the long-term behavioural fluctuations will give further insight into the complaint behaviour processes.

Second, future complaint research could focus on more extensive analyses using, e.g., the epistemological framework developed in article II. If service research with its sub-areas such as complaint behaviour continues to grow and emerge as a powerful scientific research discipline, it needs more discussion and debate on the epistemological foundation of the research field. In doing so, there is an implied obligation to use different perspectives in framing, defining and solving research problems, including using different epistemological points of departure. Research with an epistemological anchor in the dynamic paradigms, may use many of the theories already applied in complaint behaviour to obtain a deeper insight into the behavioural processes. Most of these theories are borrowed from the social science field and consequently embrace human activities. Hence, they are suitable for supporting dynamic complaint behaviour.

The future research of complaint behaviour should not be limited only to theoretical framing and development of complaint behaviour research, but should also courageously enter the methodological areas. To obtain empirical

evidence of the behavioural complaint processes, new methods that capture the dynamic activities, episodes and sequences are required. This is especially important in the quantitative research design, because the dynamic techniques are most limited in this area. Using existing methods in a new way or developing new methods could encourage complaint research to enter new frontiers.

Third, more knowledge is needed about the contextual environment and how this influences complaint behaviour. It is of special interest to study how changing contextual environments restrict or encourage complaint behaviour such as changing access to complaint channels. Research has also revealed that colour, design, interior, etc., influence behaviour, but no research to my knowledge has focused on such issues within complaint behaviour research.

Finally, more knowledge is required on what I have called the sub-processes of complaint behaviour. These sub-processes such as emotional processes evidently influence complaint behaviour. Identifying and analysing different sub-processes will add more knowledge to customer complaint behaviour research.

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Customer Complaint Behaviour in Service

It is vital for service providers to obtain feedback from their customers. This is especially important when a customer has perceived an unfavourable service experience. One way to receive feedback from these customers is to encourage and facilitate the complaint process.

Scholarly knowledge about complaint behaviour gives the service provider valuable insight into service problems and how to improve service offerings, service processes and interactions to increase customer satisfaction, loyalty and profit. Customers who have an unfavourable service experience should therefore be encouraged to complain, because if they do not, the provider risks losing the customer and thus future revenue.

The main aim of this dissertation is to enhance the knowledge of the dynamic behavioural processes in customer complaint behaviour. The dissertation will contribute to conceptualise different aspects of customer complaint behaviour. In addition, the dissertation will give an empirically grounded understanding of contextual and emotional aspects that may help to recognize the complexity of the complaint behaviour process.

The contribution of this dissertation is a portrayal of different models describing the dynamic process of complaint behaviour including a new customer complaint behaviour model. Customer complaint behaviour is viewed as action and reaction, i.e., as a dynamic adjustment process that occurs during and/or after the service interaction, rather as a post-purchase activity. In order to capture these adjustments, a new conceptual complaint model is suggested which holds three thresholds for complaint behaviour and emphasises three different behavioural categories in the complaint process. Furthermore, the dissertation gives an explanation of contextual and emotional issues that influence the complaint behaviour. The dissertation also includes an epistemological framework to anchor the paradigmatic belongings of service research as a basis for the design of studies in the area of customer complaint behaviour.