Customer participation in service recovery

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Abstract: In recent years, customer participation has become an important element in not only the service production process but also in the service recovery process. In literature, customer participation has been seen as a moderating factor that moderates the relationship between the factors influencing the customer experience and the dimensions of the customer experience. Service recovery research has mainly focused on the firm’s response to a service failure, meaning that customer participation in service recovery has gained little research attention.

This study draws on the customer experience research model proposed by Chahal and Dutta (2014). The aim of this study is to analyse customers’ experience of participation in service recovery. The main difference between this study and the small number of previous studies concerning customer participation in service recovery is that this study examines real life service recovery processes in which customers participate, while previous studies consist of scenario-based and staged examples of customer participation. In this qualitative study, seven young adults (ages 18 to 34) are interviewed about their experience of participation in service recovery. The study is limited to online services.

The importance of a successful service recovery is emphasized in previous literature. Chahal and Dutta (2014) suggest that quality is a core determinant of customer experience and the findings in this study also suggest that the quality of the service recovery is an important factor that influences customer experience of participation. Informants with a high degree of participation experience a lower service recovery quality, since the problems are often difficult to solve and the customers do not receive any compensation or apology. The findings also suggest that customers experienced e.g. frustration, insecurity, disappointment, hopefulness and involvement when participating in service recovery. The respondents often reflected on the service failure. Those who felt responsible for the failure were more willing to participate in the service recovery and had a more positive experience of participation. Customers highly involved in service recovery seem to have a stronger relationship to other customers, since they contacted other customer in order to solve the problem.

This study contributes by giving real life examples of customers’ experience of participation in service recovery and thereby giving new insights into an unexplored research area. This study implies that firms should give their customers different service recovery options and correct information in order to enhance the experience. Firms should also motivate their customers to provide the firm with information regarding service failure and service recovery, in order to prevent future service failures.

Keywords: customer experience, customer participation, service recovery
## CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research problem

1.2 Aim of the study

1.3 Delimitations

1.4 Key concepts

1.5 Structure of the thesis

2 CUSTOMERS’ EXPERIENCE WITH SERVICE

2.1 Customer experience as a concept

2.2 A brief history of the customer experience concept

2.3 Types of customer experience characterisations

2.4 Definition

2.5 Customer experience research model

2.5.1 Factors influencing customer experience

2.5.2 Dimensions of customer experience

2.5.3 Customer involvement – the moderating factor

2.5.4 Outcomes

3 CUSTOMER PARTICIPATION AND SERVICE RECOVERY

3.1 Customer participation

3.1.1 Definition

3.1.2 Previous research

3.2 Service recovery

3.2.1 Definition

3.2.2 Previous research

3.2.3 Perceived justice

3.3 Customer participation in service recovery

3.3.1 Definition

3.3.2 Previous research

3.3.3 Theoretical framework

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Interview approach

4.2 Sample

4.3 Interview process and guide
APPENDICES

Appendix 1  Interview guide................................................................................................................79

TABLES

Table 1    Types of customer experience characterisations......................................................9
Table 2    Customer participation in service recovery..............................................................24
Table 3    Description of the respondents and their service encounters...............................31
Table 4    Summary of factors influencing customer experience..............................................43
Table 5    Summary of customer experience dimensions.........................................................50
Table 6    Summary of the holistic satisfaction............................................................................52

FIGURES

Figure 1    Customer experience proposed research model......................................................11
Figure 2    Young adults’ experiences of participation in service recovery.............................53
1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, customer participation has become an important component in not only the service production process but also in the service recovery process. Customers are to a higher degree participating in the service recovery process by diagnosing problems and finding solutions to service failures themselves. This is made possible by companies providing their customers with online help centres and service manuals that list the most common service failures and ways of solving the problems. By reading service guides or scanning through websites one can notice that companies tend to focus on how helpful their service manuals or online help centres are in terms of solving the service problems. Hence, by focusing on the outcome, i.e. how well the solutions provided helped the customers solve the problem, customers’ experiences regarding their participation in service recovery are often overlooked. In addition, by handing over a large part of the service recovery responsibility to customers, companies will be left with little information – or no information – about how customers in reality participate in the service recovery and how customers solve problems.

Customer participation in service recovery is not only neglected by companies, but also in the research. This thesis uses elements from previous research regarding customer participation, customer experience, and service recovery in order to study how customers experience participation in service recovery.

The fields of marketing are according to Vargo and Lusch (2004), and Lusch and Vargo (2006) moving towards a service-dominant logic (SDL) paradigm, where customer participation (i.e. customers’ contribution to the service delivery and production) is an essential part of the value creation process. The shift from goods-dominant logic to service-dominant logic in marketing (Vargo and Lusch 2004) has meant that firms are to a larger extent encouraging customers to participate in order to gain competitive effectiveness and greater service value (Bendapudi and Leone 2003; Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008). Furthermore, customer participation can also be valuable for the customers, since they can benefit from such as lower prices and faster speed (Claycomb, Lengnick-Hall, and Inks 2001). Previous research about customer participation has mainly focused on the economic advantages of customer participation from a business point of view, the management of participating customers, and the incentives for customer participation (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008). However, customers’ responses have also started to gain interest in research.
The introduction of service-dominant logic has also lead to an increased emphasis on customer experience with service (Helkkula 2011). Hence, customers’ experience with service has over the last decade gained significant research attention in service marketing research and in management practice (McColl-Kennedy, Gustafsson, Jaakkola, Klaus, Radnor, Perks, and Friman 2015). Due to the increased competition in the global market, scholars and companies are starting to focus more strongly on the customer in order to find and reach competitive advantages (Gentile, Spiller, and Noci 2007).

Service recovery is the focus of another stream of marketing research and it is generally defined as the actions taken by an organisation in response to a service failure (Grönroos 1988). Ideally, service quality should be constantly high, which means that service failures would not occur (Grönroos 2007). However, it is in reality impossible to guarantee a service that is completely free of failure (Fisk, Brown, and Bitner 1993). A service can fail in numerous ways: employees, systems or customers can all be contributors to a failure. Regardless of the type or cause of failure, a firm’s response to service failure can either re-establish customer satisfaction and strengthen loyalty or worsen the failure and cause a loss of the customer (Smith, Bolton, and Wagner 1999; Patterson, Cowley, and Prasongsukarn 2006). Hence, a successful service recovery is important in order to secure customer satisfaction, reduce the spread of negative word-of-mouth, and enhance firm performance (Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekar 1998; Zeithaml and Bitner 2003; Dong, Evans and Zou 2008). An effective service recovery has even proven to be able to transform irritated and dissatisfied customers to loyal customers (Boshoff 1997; Boshoff and Leong 1998; Michel 2001).

1.1 Research problem

The degree of customer participation in service delivery and production has, as mentioned, increased over the past decades. Services with a high degree of customer participation can be considered to be more complex due to the fact that there are many contact points between the customer and the service provider; as the level of complexity increases, so does also the probability of service failure (Heidenreich, Wittkowski, Handrich, and Falk 2014). The higher risk of failure could suggest that the importance of service recovery increases. Furthermore, the application of service recovery can from a service-dominant perspective be a far more reaching issue than formerly assumed (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008), because all firms are according to the service-dominant
logic service firms in nature, while goods are distribution mechanisms or platforms for service provision (Vargo and Lusch 2004; Lusch and Vargo 2006; Grönroos 2006).

Customers participate in service recovery, for example by applying their specialized skills and knowledge in order to find a solution to service failure (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008). User manuals for technical products often have a section where possible problems and their solutions are listed (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008). Many service providers have help centres that can be used to solve possible problems. Netflix (2015) that is the world’s leading Internet television network, helps its users to resolve their issues themselves via the online help centre that can be found on the company website (www.netflix.com). Netflix’ (2015) help centre provides information about the most common account and device issues and it offers a solution to these problems. Customers can therefore diagnose and resolve the problems themselves, with little direct involvement from the company.

As mentioned, in literature service recovery has generally focused on the firm’s response to a service failure, meaning that the customer’s role in the service recovery process has gained very little research attention (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008). This is quite surprising, considering that research has demonstrated several possible positive outcomes resulting from both customer participation and effective service recovery. Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008) were to my knowledge the first ones to see the possibilities of combining the two research streams: customer participation and service recovery.

In their articles both Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008) and Heidenreich, Wittkowski, Handrich, and Falk (2014) notice that there is a research gap when it comes to customer participation in service recovery. Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008) did therefore choose to study the effect that customer participation in service recovery has on future participation and co-creation behaviour. Heidenreich et al. (2014) analyse the implications of customer co-creation in service failure situations. Furthermore, they examine how effective different service recovery strategies are to restore customer satisfaction in a service co-creation context. Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008) suggest that future research could further examine the customer perspective of participation in service recovery. In addition, McColl-Kennedy et al. (2015) state that customers have a broadened role in creating experiences. There is, however, according to McColl-Kennedy et al. (2015) little research combining customer participation and customer experience. Hence, they suggest that future research in this area could help firms to determine what resources are needed to achieve a positive customer experience.
I have therefore decided to combine the emerging research area of the customer experience aspect in customer participation with the research stream of service recovery, in order to attempt to bridge the gap of research suggested by Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008) and Heidenreich et al. (2014). I chose to take the customer perspective in my study and analyse how customers experience participation in service recovery. The customer perspective is chosen in order to be able to study the customer’s role in the service recovery process. In addition, this study examines real life service recovery processes in which customers participate, while previous studies consist of scenario-based and staged examples of customer participation. Hence, this study contributes by providing a deeper understanding of customer participation in service recovery.

1.2 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to analyse customer experience of participation in service recovery. In doing so, the study contributes to the gap in research regarding the customer participation in service recovery. The study presents the following research question:

*How do customers experience participation in service recovery?*

1.3 Delimitations

This study aims to examine customer experience of participation in service recovery. Hence, the study is conducted from a customer’s point of view and limited to business-to-consumer perspective. This study focuses solely on cases in which customers participate in service recovery. Hence, cases with no customer participation in service recovery are excluded.

In addition, this study is limited to online services and the customer experience in this study concerns online shopping and online computer services. The sample was limited to young adults (ages 18 to 34) since individuals in this age group according to a report by Statistics Finland (published 26.11.2015) have the highest prevalence of internet usage. The report suggests that 100 percent of individuals in this age group had used internet in the past three months. None of the other age groups reached 100 percent. Individuals in this age group also are the most frequent online shoppers according to the study. Young adults are likely to have experience of online service and customer participation and are therefore chosen to be informants.
1.4 Key concepts

The key concepts used in this thesis are customer experience, customer participation, service recovery, and customer participation in service recovery. The definitions of these concepts are the following:

*Customer experience* is “the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company.” (Meyer and Schwager 2007, p. 118)

*Customer participation* is “the degree to which the customer is involved in producing and delivering the service” (Dabholkar 1990, p. 484)

*Service recovery* is the actions taken by an organisation in response to a service failure (Grönroos 1988).

*Customer participation in service recovery* is “the degree to which the customer is involved in taking actions to respond to a service failure” (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008, p. 126).

1.5 Structure of the thesis

The theoretical framework of this thesis is presented in chapters two and three. The concept of customers’ experience with service is presented in the second chapter. The third chapter consists of a literature review and theoretical framework, in which customer participation and service recovery are defined and linked together. The importance of customer participation and service recovery is highlighted in the beginning of the literature review. The concept of customer participation in service recovery is then discussed in the latter part of the literature review. The methodology used in this thesis is described in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter presents the findings and the conclusion can be found in Chapter six.
2 CUSTOMERS’ EXPERIENCE WITH SERVICE

This chapter starts by introducing the general concept of customer experience, which is followed by a brief presentation of its history. The third section then explains the different types of customer experience characterisations, while the fourth section discusses the different definitions. The fifth section presents and explains the customer experience research model used in this thesis.

2.1 Customer experience as a concept

Experience can be interpreted both as a verb and a noun. In addition, experience can according to several English dictionaries be viewed either as an affective and process-based phenomenon or as an outcome. This has in turn lead to various definitions of the experience construct within marketing literature. The different ontological and epistemological views of the experience construct mean that customer experience can be characterised in several different ways (which will be further specified in the next section). Furthermore, the experience phenomenon is used differently depending on in which marketing research stream it is used. However, service marketers tend to use customer experience or service experience and they often use these two terms interchangeably since both terms refer to customers’ experiences with service. (Lipkin and Heinonen 2014)

The difference between experience and perception can also be necessary to point out in order to clarify the experience construct. In their article Heinonen, Strandvik, Mickelsson, Edvardsson, Sundström, and Andersson (2010, p. 542) explain the difference as follows: “Even though both experience and perception refer to a person’s subjective understanding of some external object or event, ‘experience’ contains an element of activity and reflection that is not innate in ‘perception’. We can thus view ‘perception’ as the act of subjectively registering information and forming initial impressions about it, while ‘experience’ is the process of realizing how these impressions relate to oneself and how one understands and feels about them”.

2.2 A brief history of the customer experience concept

Customer experience as a concept was introduced in the 1980s as an experimental approach within consumer behaviour research. Emotion was for example included as a variable in customer experience literature, whereas the traditional consumer behaviour literature only viewed the consumer as a rational decision maker. The article “The experiential aspects of consumption: Consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun” by Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982) is seen as a pioneering article within the customer experience literature. It was however not until a decade later when the concept of customer experience became a prevalent research area. Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) book “Experience Economy”, which introduced experience as a new economic offering, is also viewed as pioneering work within the customer experience literature. Hereafter, the researchers have studied the concept of customer experience in order to find new ways of value-creation for both customers and companies. (Gentile, Spiller, and Noci 2007)

2.3 Types of customer experience characterisations

There are according to Helkkula (2011) three main ways of characterising customer experience. These three are phenomenological, process-based, and outcome-based customer experiences. These will now be explained and are further summarized in Table 1 that can be found on the following page.

The first type of customer experience characterisation is phenomenological customer experience. The individual customer experience is the focal point of phenomenological customer experience. The individuality of the customer experience suggests that the experience is subjective, internal, event and context specific. However, individual customer experiences can also be social, because individuals are seldom completely isolated. The experience can be related to either a direct or indirect connection with the service or service provider. (Helkkula 2010; Helkkula 2011).

The second type of characterisation is process-based customer experience. This type focuses on the so called stages or phases of the service process, i.e. architectural elements of the customer experience process. The chronological order of the stages and transformations are often noted in the process-based characterisations of customer experience. (Helkkula 2010; Helkkula 2011)
Outcome-based customer experience is the third and final type of customer experience characterisation. Helkkula (2011, p. 379) summarizes the outcome-based characterisation as follows: “In summary, the outcome-based characterisations of service experience posit the experience as one element in a model linking a number of variables or attributes to outcomes. The focus is not on an individual person, but on the aggregated service experience of multiple respondents. The outcome-based characterisations usually focus on the immediate result, rather than a longitudinal process. The context of service experience includes different kinds of service settings.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Phenomenological</th>
<th>Process-based</th>
<th>Outcome-based</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focal point</strong></td>
<td>Individual service experience</td>
<td>Architectural elements of service experience</td>
<td>Aggregated service experience of multiple customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>Internal, subjective, context-specific, event-specific experiences</td>
<td>The chronological order of phases or stages, i.e. the architectural elements</td>
<td>One element in a model links variables or attributes to outcome.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Indirect or direct connections</td>
<td>Transformations and changes</td>
<td>Hence, the content varies depending on variables, attributes, and theoretical foundation.</td>
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<td>Individual and social</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Practical or imaginary encounter</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>Different events and settings</td>
<td>Different phases or stages and settings</td>
<td>Different service settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject</strong></td>
<td>Any relevant actor in the service encounter</td>
<td>Customer</td>
<td>Aggregate data of multiple customers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: adapted from Helkkula (2011, p. 383)
2.4 Definition

Customer experience can be defined in several different ways, depending on how it is characterised and from which viewpoint it is seen. Different perspectives and definitions will therefore now be discussed in order to clarify the definition used in this thesis.

In their article Ding, Huang, and Verma (2011) suggest that customer experience is an important intangible asset. According to them, this intangible asset consists of service system interaction and responses that occur in response to some stimulation. McColl-Kennedy et al. (2015, p. 431) on the other hand suggest that customer experience is “commonly defined as holistic in nature, involving the customer’s cognitive, affective, emotional, social and physical responses to any direct or indirect contact with the service provider, brand or product, across multiple touch points during the entire customer journey”. This means that the customer experience consists of internal and subjective responses that occur when the customer establishes direct and indirect contacts with a service provider (Meyer and Schwager 2007, p. 118). Furthermore, it means that customer experience consists of two types of elements: service provider controlled and non-service provider controlled elements (McColl-Kennedy et al. 2015). Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), have a similar viewpoint since they suggest that customers can co-create their own unique experience with the service provider, meaning that instead of selling experiences, service providers provide contexts and artefacts that help customers to co-create their own experiences.

This thesis is conducted from the customer point of view and focuses on individual customers’ experience with service. The informants in this study have both direct or indirect contact with the online service providers. Customer experience is according to Meyer and Schwager (2007, p.118) defined as “the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company”. The definition of customer experience given by Meyer and Schwager (2007, p.118) will be used in this thesis, due to its compliance with the focal point of this thesis.
2.5 Customer experience research model

The research model of customer experience prosed by Chahal and Dutta (2014) can be used to gain a deeper understanding of customer experience. Chahal and Dutta’s (2014) model will be used as a framework in order to study and analyse customer experiences of participation in service recovery. The model is therefore explained in more detail in this section.

![Customer experience proposed research model]

Source: Chahal and Dutta (2014: 374)

Figure 1 Customer experience proposed research model

2.5.1 Factors influencing customer experience

This section describes the four factors that according to Chahal and Dutta (2014) influence customer experience.

Core determinant

The core determinant of customer experience is according to Chahal and Dutta (2014) service quality. They base this assumption on the fact that service quality is considered to be the most important factor in relation to customer experience. Furthermore, they use Parasuraman, Zeitmal and Berry’s (1988) description of service quality and suggest that service quality can be seen as the gap between customers’ expectation and their actual perceptions about service performance in reference to tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. (Chahal and Dutta 2014)
Supportive factors
In their study, Conway and Willcocks (1997) suggest that there are a set of supportive factors that influence the customer experience. Chahal and Dutta (2014) acknowledge the influence of these factors and therefore include the following five supportive factors into their model: access, choice, information, redress, and representation. Providing the customer with easy access to the service, the freedom of choice and correct information are according to both Conway and Willcocks (1997) and Chahal and Dutta (2014) important since these factors have an influence on the experience. Conway and Willcocks (1997) suggest that the element of redress can be important in the development of individual expectations. Redress is similar to service recovery, because Chahal and Dutta (2014, p. 369) suggest that redress “refers to remedial action for service failure across service delivery systems. Effective remedial actions always pave the way for good/favourable experiences and expectations.”

Contextual factors
The contextual determinants in Chahal and Dutta’s (2014) model are based upon the ideas by Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros, and Schlesinger (2009) and Pareigis, Edvardsson and Enquist (2011). The earlier mentioned authors suggest that there are contextual factors influencing the customer experience. Chahal and Dutta (2014) summarize the factors identified in previous studies and arrive at four contextual determinants influencing customer experience. These four determinants are according to Chahal and Dutta (2014) past experience, level of perceived risk, distress, preference and personality.

Socio-characteristics
The fourth and final factor that influences customer experience is according to Chahal and Dutta (2014) the socio-characteristics of the customer. In their article, they suggest the following: “Socio-economic status and associated groups such as relatives, friends and acquaintances significantly influence customer experience.” (Chahal and Dutta 2014, p. 375)
2.5.2 Dimensions of customer experience

Chahal and Dutta (2014) suggest that there are five different dimensions significantly contributing to the creation of customer experience. The sensory, affective, cognitive, physical, and social/relational dimensions can according to the authors be viewed as experience types that contribute to the overall customer experience.

The sensory dimension comprises of sense-related experiences that appeal to the customer’s five senses (Schmitt 1999, 2000). The cognitive dimension, on the other hand, appeal to the customer’s intellect (Schmitt 1999, 2000). The physical dimension refers to action-related experiences, such as physical experiences, interactions and lifestyles (Schmitt 1999, 2000). Customers are according to Verhoef et al. (2009) using services together with both strangers and friends or family. The service experience is therefore influenced by a social/relational dimension. Verhoef et al. (2009) also suggest that there is an affective dimension that influence the experience. The affective dimension consists of moods, emotions and subjective states, such as liking and disliking, pleasure and pain, and hope and dread (Verhoef et al. 2009).

2.5.3 Customer involvement – the moderating factor

Chahal and Dutta (2014) suggest that customer involvement moderates the relationship between determinants of customer experience and dimensions of customer experience. Chahal and Dutta (2014) use previous studies by for example Hsu and Tsou (2011) and Oliva, Oliver, and MacMillan (1992) to arrive at this statement. Oliva, Oliver, and MacMillan (1992) suggest that a customer’s loyalty is likely to increase if the customer is highly involved in the service or goods purchase. Customer experience can according to Hsu and Tsou (2011) vary with customer involvement. Hsu and Tsou (2011) for example suggest that a highly involved customer can gain stronger experiences from the service. Hsu and Tsou (2011) further remarked that a customer, who has a low involvement is likely to have only a moderate level of experience.

2.5.4 Outcomes

In the last part of the model customer experience is linked to outcomes. Chahal and Dutta (2014) use the links established in previous literature to create different hypotheses about how customer experience can lead to both favourable and unfavourable outcomes. Chahal and Dutta (2014) suggest that a favourable customer experience will lead to an
enhanced customer satisfaction. An unfavourable experience will on the other hand result in customer dissatisfaction. Chahal and Dutta (2014) further state that customer satisfaction influences customer loyalty. Hence, a satisfied customer is more likely to become loyal. However, a dissatisfied customer is more likely to voice complaints and spread negative word of mouth (Chahal and Dutta 2014). In addition, a greatly dissatisfied customer can according to Chahal and Dutta (2014) discontinue patronage. Chahal and Dutta (2014) final hypothesis regarding outcomes concerns brand equity. The authors suggest that all favourable outcomes (e.g. customer satisfaction and loyalty) have a positive influence on brand equity.

Chahal and Dutta (2014) therefore suggest that the outcomes can be divided into two categories: positive outcomes and negative outcomes. Positive outcomes are customer satisfaction, loyalty, positive word of mouth, and brand equity. The negative outcomes are according to Chahal and Dutta (2014) dissatisfaction, negative word of mouth, voicing of complaints, and discontinuing of patronage or switching.
3 CUSTOMER PARTICIPATION AND SERVICE RECOVERY

This chapter begins with an initial presentation of the two concepts customer participation and service recovery. Both concepts are defined and relevant customer participation and service recovery literature is presented. The latter part of the chapter connects the two concepts and a definition of customer participation in service recovery is given. Finally, the theoretical framework used in this thesis is presented.

3.1 Customer participation

Both the marketplace and marketing have seen significant changes over the past four decades and these changes have increased the collaboration between sellers and customers (Wikström 1996; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004; Mustak, Jaakkola, and Halinen 2013). Hence, customer participation has been an important research topic, not only in service marketing and management research, but also in other streams of marketing research (Mustak, Jaakkola, and Halinen 2013). However, the widespread research attention has also lead to various definitions (Dong, Sivakumar, Evans, and Zou 2015) and I will therefore start by specifying what the term customer participation means in this thesis.

3.1.1 Definition

Dabholkar (1990, p. 484) defines customer participation as “the degree to which the customer is involved in producing and delivering the service”. Meuter and Bitner (1998) additionally divided customer participation in to three classes depending on the level of involvement. The degree of customer participation ranges from firm production to joint production to customer production (Meuter and Bitner 1998). Firm production is according to Meuter and Bitner (1998 p. 14) defined as “a method of service delivery where a service is produced entirely by the firm.” Even though this method of service delivery previous was considered to be the most efficient and effective (see e.g. Mills and Morris 1986; Chase 1977) that might no longer be the case. Firm production can from a service-dominant logic perspective be questioned since the customer always is considered to be a co-creator of value (Vargo and Lusch 2004). This means that the firm is dependent on some degree of customer participation, suggesting that the lowest level of customer participation in this study can be defined as when the service delivery is produced mostly, but not entirely, by the organization and its employees. The second
level of participation is according to Meuter and Bitner (1998) joint production, meaning that both customers and employees participate in the service delivery. The third and final class – customer production – can in its purest form be considered to be when the firm is entirely excluded from the service delivery (Meuter and Bitner 1998).

As mentioned, customer participation is used in various research streams, Mustak, Jaakkola, and Halinen (2013) therefore underline the importance of authors stating if they are referring to customer participation in the value creation process, or the offering creation process. Research has to a large extent focused on the co-production aspect of customer participation and recent studies (e.g. Lusch, Vargo, and O’Brien 2007; Grönroos and Ravald 2011) have suggested that customers through participation co-create both tangible and intangible resource, which accrue value through integration in the usage or consumption process (Mustak, Jaakkola and Halinen 2013). Co-production relates to the specific activities the customer engages in during the co-creation process and is therefore a component of co-creation since co-creation refers to the value the customer receives, either through consumption or experience (Lusch and Vargo 2006). Customer participation will in this thesis focus on the co-production aspect, because according to the service-dominant logic a customer is always a value co-creator but he or she can be considered to be a co-producer only when undertaking certain activities in the production and delivery of the service.

3.1.2 Previous research

As mentioned, previous customer participation research can be divided into three main research streams: (1) the economic advantages of customer participation from a business point of view, (2) the management of participating customers, and (3) the incentives for customer participation (Bitner, Faranda, Hubbert, and Zeithaml 1997; Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008).

The first research stream’s focal point was the economic benefits that firms could gain through customer participation (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008). Lovelock and Young (1979) already in the late 1970s suggest that the possibility of increased productivity should encourage service firms to involve their customers in production. Further research examined the benefits, such as productivity gains and improved service performance, of substituting portions of employee labour with customer participation (Mills, Chase and Margulies 1983; Mills and Morris 1986).
The second stream of research examined customer participation from a customer perspective and looked beyond the economic implications. Bendapudi and Leone (2003) for example examined the effects of customer participation on customer satisfaction, while Dabholkar (1990) and Claycomb, Lengnick-Hall, and Inks (2001) studied the relationship between customer participation and perceived service quality.

Customer participation is studied from a customer perspective in the third research stream. However, the focus is different since the third stream examine customers’ motivation to participate (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008). Research in this stream focuses on different incentives that can motivate the customer to participate. The possible incentives that motivate customers to participate are according to this research stream: reduction of price (Fitzsimmons 1985) and increase of customer control (Bateson 1985) from a self-service perspective, reduction of perceived waiting time (Dabholkar 1990), increased customization of the product or service (Etgar 2008) and enhanced customer satisfaction (Meuter et al. 2000).

Mustak, Jaakkola, and Halinen (2013) also divide previous customer participation research into three similar categories. They however use the emphases in conceptualizations as base for the categorization. Mustak, Jaakkola, and Halinen (2013, p. 348) therefore suggest that the categories consist of studies that have conceptualized customer participation as (1) “Customer interference and/or contribution of labor in service production system that affects a firm’s productivity”, (2) “Customer contributions of a broad range of resources and/or behaviors during the service process that affect the service outcome” and (3) “Customer contributions before, during, and after usage to create resources through which value can be created”. Furthermore, Mustak, Jaakkola, and Halinen (2013) also distinguish between different topics in customer participation. The main topic areas under customer participation research are according to them the following: concept/theory/framework development, management of customer participation, strategic issues, productivity and offering quality, psychological aspects, technological and communicational aspects, and customization, innovation and development of new offerings.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this review of previous research is that the focus and conceptualization of customer participation has evolved rather vastly over the last four decades. Starting with concept of customer inference in service production and a focus on the economic implications (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008) and finally moving
towards a notion of customers being integral creators of several value creation resources (Lusch and Vargo 2006; Mustak, Jaakkola, and Halinen 2013).

3.2 Service recovery

Service quality would in an ideal world be constantly high, which means that service failures would not occur (Grönroos 2007). However, no service firm, no matter the degree of customer orientation or quality, can in reality entirely avoid service failure and it is impossible to guarantee a completely error-free service (Fisk, Brown, and Bitner 1993; Kelly and Davis 1994; Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008). Employee mistakes, system breakdowns, customer misunderstandings or mistakes are just a few of the possible causes for service failure (Grönroos 2007). Service recovery is important regardless of the cause of failure because it is chance for the service provider to prove its service commitment. A firm’s response to service failure can either restore satisfaction and reinforce loyalty or worsen the failure and cause a loss of the customer (Smith, Bolton, and Wagner 1999; Patterson, Cowley, and Prasongsukarn 2006). Hence, a successful service recovery is vital since it can increase customer satisfaction, reduce the spread of negative word-of-mouth, and enhance performance (Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekaran 1998; Tax and Brown 1998; Zeithaml and Bitner 2003; Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008).

3.2.1 Definition

Smith, Bolton, and Wagner (1999) use social exchange and equity theories to explain service failure. A failed service encounter is according to them an exchange, where the customer perceives a loss (utilitarian loss involving economic resource or symbolic loss involving psychological or social resources) due to a failure. In case of a service failure, the service provider tries to offset the customer's loss by recovering from the failure (Smith, Bolton, and Wagner 1999). Service recovery is therefore according to Grönroos (1988) the actions taken by an organisation in response to a service failure. Service recovery therefore includes all the efforts and activities employed to correct and restore the losses caused by failure (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008). Tax and Brown (2000, p. 272) further specifies these activities and efforts in the following definition: “Service recovery is a process that identifies service failures, effectively resolves customer problems, classifies their root cause(s), and yields data that can be integrated with other measures of performance to assess and improve the service system.”
3.2.2 Previous research

The concept of service recovery was introduced in order to help firms handle and manage service failures in a service-oriented manner (Hart, Heskett, and Sasser Jr 1989). Before the introduction of service recovery, complaints handling was the traditional way of handling service failures. Complaints handling is however non-service-oriented since the customers are required to make formal complaints that the firm analyse and handle in an administrative way (Grönroos 2007). Complaints handling focuses on internal efficiency and short-term cost savings, ignoring the customer satisfaction and causing loss of customers. Service recovery, on the other hand, emphases external efficiency and therefore recognizing that good quality, satisfied and loyal customers can improve long-term business profitability (Grönroos 2007).

3.2.3 Perceived justice

Equity theory, i.e. individuals’ perceptions of a situation’s or decision’s fairness (Adams 1963), has been central in the leading theoretical perspective of service recovery (Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekaran 1998; Smith, Bolton and Wagner 1999; Patterson, Cowley, and Prasongsukarn 2006). Equity theory suggests that individuals compare their outputs to their inputs to the ratio of the other party; a positive difference can result in feelings of regret or guilt, while a negative difference can result in disappointment or anger but in both cases the individual will attempt to reach a state of equilibrium (Patterson, Cowley, and Prasongsukarn 2006).

An adaption of equity theories and social exchange theories has resulted in justice theory, a theory that has become a central framework in service recovery research (Tax and Brown 2000; Mattila 2001). The importance of perceived justice has been recognized ever since the early 1960s, when Homans (1961) introduced the concept of distributive justice in social psychology. The concept of perceived justice (also known as perceived fairness) has however been a part of service recovery research since the late 1990s. Perceived justice of a service encounter or service recovery has since then been a frequently used theory within the service recovery literature, mainly because it can be used to understand customers’ evaluations of service recovery efforts and outcome (Mattila 2001). Perceived justice is in addition considered to be a major determinant of customers’ satisfaction with the service encounter after a service failure (Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekaran 1998; Tax and Brown 1998; Smith, Bolton, and Wagner 1999; Goodwin and Ross 1992; McCollough, Berry, and Yadav 2000). The term perceived
justice is used in the majority of studies but Grönroos (2007) suggests that perceived fairness is a more appropriate term, considering that the term justice has a legal meaning. The term perceived justice is however used in this thesis due to the fact that it is more common.

Perceived justice is considered to consist of three dimensions of justice: distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice (Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekaran 1998). Distributive justice focuses on the allocation of benefits and costs (Deutsch 1975; Deutsch 1985) and thereby perceived fairness of the outcome (Smith, Bolton, and Wagner 1999). Hence, distributive justice in service recovery encompass the firm’s allocation of compensation (e.g. refund, discount, or coupons) in response to an injustice caused by service failure (Smith, Bolton, and Wagner 1999; Mattila 2001). Grönroos (2007, p. 127) defines it as “the degree to which the outcome of the service recovery equals what the customer thinks he or she deserved or needed, and the level of compensation and apology.”

Procedural justice is according to Lind and Tyler (1988) the perceived justice of the means in decision making and conflict resolution. In terms of service recovery, procedural justice is perceived fairness of the process used to correct the service failure (Mattila 2001). Accessibility, speed, information provision, and cognitive control are some examples of important determinants of customer perception of procedural justice (Goodwin and Ross 1992; Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekaran 1998). Hence, procedural justice can be seen as the degree customers feel they can influence the service recovery, and the timeliness and convenience of the service recovery process (Grönroos 2007).

The third dimension, interactional justice, involves the treatment of customers throughout the process, for example in the manner information is exchanged with customer and outcomes are communicated to the customer (Bies and Moag 1986; Bies and Shapiro 1987). Hence, interactional justice is in a service recovery setting the interactional treatment (e.g. perceived courtesy, politeness, apology and general helpfulness) the customer receives during a service recovery process (Mattila 2001; Wirtz and Mattila 2004). It is important to understand that customers assess the justice in more than one dimension even though distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice perceived all represent different aspects of the service recovery process and its outcome (Grönroos 2007).
3.3 Customer participation in service recovery

Customer participation in service recovery is a fairly new research topic. Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008) were the first authors to integrate customer participation and service recovery, thereby developing the new construct of customer participation in service recovery.

3.3.1 Definition

Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008) combined the definitions of participation (given by Dabholkar 1990) and the definition of service recovery (given by Grönroos 1988) in order to define customer participation in service recovery. They therefore define customer participation in service recovery as “the degree to which the customer is involved in taking actions to respond to a service failure” (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008, p. 126).

3.3.2 Previous research

There are to my knowledge only two studies examining customer participation in service recovery. The first study was conducted in year 2008 by Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008), while the second study was conducted six years later by Heidenreich et al. (2014). Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008) is more relevant to this thesis since they were the ones to develop the new construct of customer participation in service recovery. I therefore choose to explain their study in more detail and only briefly discuss the study by Heidenreich et al. (2014).

Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008) start by developing the new construct of customer participation in service recovery. As mentioned, they define customer participation in service recovery as “the degree to which the customer is involved in taking actions to respond to a service failure” (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008, p. 126). Furthermore, they categorize customer participation in service recovery into three categories based on Meuter and Bitner’s (1998) framework of customer participation. Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008) present the three categories as firm recovery, joint recovery, and customer recovery. Firm recovery occurs “when the recovery efforts are delivered entirely or mostly by the organization and its employees; customers may only have physical presence or merely offer basic and necessary information” (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008, p. 126). Hence, firm recovery means that the degree of customer participation ranges from zero to low. The second category, joint recovery, is a service recovery process in which both
customers and employees participate (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008). The third category, customer recovery, is a situation that occurs “when the recovery actions are taken entirely by customers, with no contribution from the firm or its employees” (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008, p. 126).

Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008) do not only develop a new construct, they also develop a theoretical framework in order to study what the effects of customer participation in service recovery are. The authors examine what kind of effect customer participation in service recovery has on customer ability, role clarity, customers’ perceived value in future co-creation, and their intention toward future co-creation. This is done by conducting a quantitative study with experiments consisting of scenario-based role-playing. Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008) chose this method in order to minimize the retrospective self-report biases (e.g. gaps in memory and tendencies of rationalization) and in order to gain control over variables. The sample consisted of 223 valid responses from undergraduate students. The results obtained in the study suggest that customers participating in service recovery in self-service technology contexts often are more satisfied with the service recovery and have a high intention to co-create value also in the future. In addition, the customers find the roles to be clearer, the perceived value of future co-creation to be higher. (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008).

Heidenreich et al. (2014) studied failed co-created services’ consequences. Previous co-creation research mainly focuses on the positive aspects, while Heidenreich et al. (2014) decide to mainly concentrate on the risks of co-created services. The part of their study that is relevant for this thesis is the authors’ examination of different service recovery strategies effectiveness in a co-creation context. This study is also a quantitative study with scenario-based experience. However, these researchers chose to program two Internet-based services: Plane (a platform for online flight-booking) and Rail Journey (an online railway-ticketing service) through which the 244 participants were divided into six groups with different scenarios, e.g. low/high co-creation in service delivery and no/non-co-created/co-created service recovery. Hence, employing a 2(high vs. low level of co-creation in service delivery) x 3(type of service recovery: no service recovery vs. non-co-created service recovery vs. co-created service recovery) between subject’s design. The results suggest that the level of participation in co-creation in service recovery should be similar to the level of co-creation during the service production and delivery. (Heidenreich et al. 2014)
3.3.3 Theoretical framework

Customer participation has lacked a conceptual clarity because it has been described in so many various terms and been used in several different research streams (Mustak, Jaakkola, and Halinen 2013; Dong et al. 2015). Following Dong et al. (2015) I still choose to use the phrase customer participation in this thesis since it is a broad concept that covers a wide range of the customer roles and behaviours but also the spectrums firm, joint, and customer production.

As mentioned, the definition of customer participation used in this thesis is that customer participation is “the degree to which the customer is involved in producing and delivering the service” (Dabholkar 1990, p. 484). Service recovery is, on the other hand, seen as process (Tax and Brown 2000) consisting of the actions taken by an organisation in response to a service failure (Grönroos 1988). By combining these definitions, I arrive at the same definition as Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008), i.e. customer participation is “the degree to which the customer is involved in taking actions to respond to a service failure” (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008, p. 126).

Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008) decided to divide the customer participation into three categories (i.e. firm, joint, and customer recovery) based on the customers’ and employees’ levels of participation in the service recovery process. Heidenreich et al. (2014) also distinguished between three types of service recovery (i.e. no, non-co-created, and co-created service recovery). I chose to follow Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008) and construct three categories based on the level of participation. However, instead of using Meuter and Bitner’s (1998) framework of firm, joint and customer production I chose to combine Bitner, Faranda, Hubbert, and Zeithami’s (1997) framework with Meuter and Bitner’s (1998) framework. Bitner, et al. (1997) also distinguish between three levels of customer participation but these are referred to as low, moderate, and high.

At the low levels, the service provider takes the majority of actions. This study focuses on customer participation in service recovery and cases with no customer participation is therefore excluded. Hence, even at low levels the customer participation is assumed to exceed zero, since all the informants in this study have experienced customer participation in service recovery. The second category moderate participation in service recovery is similar to what Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008) refer to as joint recovery. Hence, both customers and the service providers take actions in the service recovery process. In
the third and final situation, customers take the majority or all of the actions in the service recovery process. A summary of the categories can be found in table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of customer participation in service recovery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovery actions are taken mostly by the service provider and its employees, with only little contribution from the customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderate</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovery actions are taken by both the customers and the service provider.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovery actions are taken mostly by the customers, with only little or no contribution from the firm or its employees.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These levels will now be exemplified in order to further clarify the different levels of customer participation in service recovery. A low degree of customer participation means that the service provider takes the majority of actions, an example is therefore that a customer calls a customer service and helps the service provider to diagnose the problem, in order for the service provider to resolve it. The problem can for example be an internet connection that is not working. The service provider is however able to fix it as long as the customer helps to diagnose the problem. On the other hand, if a customer calls a customer service and together with the service provider both diagnose and resolve the problem, the level of customer participation increases, meaning that the degree is moderate. In the case of the broken internet connection, this means that the customer is for example requested to change some settings on a device, while receiving direct telephone advice from the service provider.

The previously mentioned example of Netflix’ (2015) online help centre can be categorized as a high degree of customer participation in service recovery. It is in this case the service provider that has set up the help centre with possible problems and solutions, but the customer resolves the problem without any direct help from the service provider. In this case, the service provider is not even aware of the problem since the customer diagnose and resolves it on his or her own. Another example of a high degree
of customer participation in service recovery is when all the recovery actions are taken by the customer, with no help from the service provider. This for example occurs when the customer turns to online forums, written by for example experts or other customers, and the customer uses the information from them to solve the problem. In this case the information is not provided by the service provided. Hence, the service provider is not aware of the service failure and are not taking part in the service recovery process.
4 METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study will be presented in this chapter. A qualitative research approach has been chosen in order to answer the research question. The aim of this study is to examine customers’ experience of participation in service recovery and in-depth interviews have been conducted in order to answer the research question. The chosen method is further described and discussed in the part 4.1. The sample and sampling methods are presented in 4.2. A table presenting the respondents can also be found in the same chapter. The interview process and the interview guide are explained in part 4.3, while the data analysis is presented in part 4.4. An overview of quality of data and methods used to improve the quality is presented in the final part of the chapter (4.5).

4.1 Interview approach

Patton (2002, p. 340) states the following “The fact is that we cannot observe everything. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intensions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presences of the observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and what meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things.” An experience involves feelings and thoughts, things that according to Patton (2002) cannot be observed. It can be difficult for a researcher to be present when a customer participates in service recovery because service failure and service recovery can be difficult to foresee. Hence, in order to answer the research question (“How do customers experience participation in a service recovery?”) customers will be asked about the experience since the elements of it is difficult to observe and because the unpredictable timing of participation in service recovery to a large degree make it difficult for the research to be present. Interviewing can therefore let the researcher enter the customer’s perspective (Patton 2002) and thereby gain knowledge about their experiences.

The researcher must obtain information of high quality in order to answer the research question. Hence, it is important that the researcher chooses an appropriate approach to data collection through interviews. There are according to Patton (2002) three types of interviews that have slightly different purposes and all three have their strengths and weaknesses. These three alternatives are: (1) the informational conversational interview,
(2) the general interview guide approach, and (3) the standardized open-ended interviews.

The first alternative, the informational conversational interview, consists of spontaneous questions that arise from the direct context. The interview has therefore a natural flow, suggesting that the interviewee is perhaps not even aware that he or she is being interviewed. This approach can be categorized as an unstructured interview, hence it is an open-ended interview technique that allows the respondent to tell stories and talk freely without any interference. The strength of this approach is its flexibility, however the flexibility and spontaneity also come with a price, which is time. Hence, the weakness is that obtaining systematic information and analysing the data can be rather time-consuming.

The general interview guide approach, which is the second alternative, requires a bit more preparation since the interviewer before the interview establishes a checklist with certain topics that he or she will cover during the interview. This approach can therefore be categorized as a semi-structured interview. The interviewer focuses on the predetermined subjects but can also freely ask questions that are relevant to that topic. The interview guide ensures that all respondents are asked about the same things, making it less time-consuming than the informal conversational interview. However, the lower level of spontaneity can still reduce the possibility of finding all relevant issues.

The third and final alternative, the standardized open-ended interview, requires much preparation since all the questions asked in the interview are determined before the interview takes place. The questions are in addition carefully worded and organized, suggesting that the approach can be categorized as a structured interview. The standardized open-ended interview is highly time-effective, due to the clear focus of the interviews. The answers are also easy to compare, making the data analysis quite simple. The strengths of this method is its time-effectiveness and the reduced chance of misunderstandings. However, the lack of flexibility has its drawbacks. The interviewer cannot make individual adjustments or pursue unanticipated topics, which can have a negative effect on the naturalness and reduce the relevance of the issues. (Patton 2002, pp. 341-347)

Taking the strengths and weakness of every approach into account, the most suitable approach for thesis is the general interview guide approach. The informal conversational interview can be considered to be too time-consuming in this case. The study will also
compare the answers from respondents that experience different levels of participation. The informational conversational interview is therefore not optimal since spontaneity of the approach suggests the respondents are not asked the same questions, making comparisons difficult. The standardized open-ended interview is on the hand perhaps too inflexible for this thesis. The topic of this thesis is relative unexplored, meaning that there is a chance that customers during the interview can present unforeseen aspects of experience and participation. The standard open-ended interview approach would not allow the interviewer to pursue these potentially relevant issues and it is therefore not the best alternative. The interview guide, which lets the interviewer keep the focus but still allows some flexibility, can therefore be seen as the most appropriate method for this study. The interview guide used in this study can be found in the appendix 1 on page 78.

4.2 Sample

Choosing the right method is important, but so is also the accessibility of data. Silverman (2006) therefore suggests that the researcher should try to keep the data gathering process simple and use material that is easy to collect. This study aims to understand how customers experience participation in service recovery, it is therefore important to get access to customers who have actively participated in service recovery. However, it is difficult to predict a service failure, meaning that data gathering process has not taken place at the same as the service recovery process. Customers are instead interviewed regarding service recovery processes that have taken place in the last six months.

The sample size in interviews are often determined by the level of depth (Patton 2002). The researcher can according to Patton (2002) gather detailed data by choosing a small sample and conducting in-depth interviews with various open-ended questions. On the other hand, a larger sample and fewer questions suggests that the level of depth will be lower (Patton 2002). Hence, the sample size depends on what the researcher wants to achieve with his or her study. Patton (2002) therefore concludes that there are not any rules for the sample sizes. A high level of depth and detailed data is preferred in this study since it aims to reach a deep level of understanding of customers’ experience of participation in service recovery. Hence, a small sample size is chosen and the sample consists of six respondents. More information about the respondents can be found in table 3 on page 28.

The sample population was chosen to only include people in the ages of 18 to 34, who reside in Finland. This limitation was based upon the choice to only include online
services, because according to a study made by the Statistics Finland (published 26.11.2015), individuals in this age group have the highest prevalence of internet usage. According to the study, 100 percent of individuals in this age had used internet in the past three months. None of the other age groups reached 100 percent. Individuals in this age group also are the most frequent online shoppers according to the study. Hence, choosing this sample increased the chance of the respondent’s experience of online service and therefore also experience of participation in service recovery regarding internet services.

Purposeful sampling is a technique commonly used in qualitative research to identify and select information-rich cases that are particularly well-informed about or experienced with the topic of interest (Patton 2002). Responds should, in addition to being knowledgeable and experienced, be willing to participate and be able to communicate their experiences (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, and Hoagwood 2013).

The sampling strategy used in this study is typical case, because the respondents chosen are likely to represent a typical customer that participates in service recovery. Since this study has quite strict criteria (only including young adults who have used online services, which then failed leading to customer participation in service recovery) criterion sampling can also be seen a sampling strategy used in this thesis. Patton (2002) states that criterion sampling means that you study all cases that meet a predetermined criterion.

4.3 Interview process and guide

The first question in an interview should according to Patton (2002) be a question that require minimum recall and interpretation. Furthermore, it can be helpful for the respondent to verbally relive the experience before describing feelings and opinions regarding the experience. Hence, the interviewer should preferably start by asking questions concerning the behaviour and experience before moving on to questions regarding opinions, values, feelings, or emotions. The respondents in this study were therefore asked to start by describing the service that failed. This question requires little recall and interpretations since it allows the respondent to in present terms describe the service provider and the service. Patton’s (2002) advice regarding the structure and timing of questions are followed throughout the interview guide, as can be seen from the interview guide on page 78 in the appendix. The first section of questions mainly
concerns the behaviour and experience while the latter sections are about the respondent’s opinions, values, feelings, and emotions.

Patton (2002) also recommends that the interviewer should proceed with caution when it comes to questions about knowledge, because if asked too abruptly these questions can be perceived as threatening. Knowledge questions in this study were therefore asked in the latter part of the interview and were timed and worded carefully in order for the respondent to feel comfortable. Background questions can on the other hand be perceived as uncomfortable or boring. Hence, Patton (2002) suggests to minimize background questions and place them strategically. Beginning with background questions can for example make the respondent’s first impression of the interview unfavourable and that can have a negative effect on the rest of the interview. Patton (2002) therefore recommends to ask background questions at the end of the interview, which was done in this study.

Seven interviews were conducted and they lasted between 28 minutes and 1 hour 13 minutes. The interviews were first recorded and then transcribed, in order to prepare the collected data for analysis (Saunders et al. 2009). All interviews were conducted in Swedish, since it was the mother tongue of both the interviewer and all respondents. All direct quotes in thesis are therefore the interviewer’s own translations from Swedish to English. No separate claims regarding own translations are made later on in this thesis. To clarify, only the interview guide and the quotes have been translated, not the entire interviews.

Some of the respondents asked if they could remain anonymous in this study. In addition, the publication of the respondents’ names in this case is not considered to add any significant value to the study or its result. Hence, all the names of the all respondents have been excluded and they have instead been given fictitious names. The respondents are hence referred to as Alice, Bella, Carla, Diana, Emily, Finn, and Greg. The names of the service providers are also excluded because they have not been given the chance to tell their side of the story, since this study is conducted from a customer point of view. Hence, it does not seem fair to publish their names without asking for permission or their point of view. The service providers’ business is therefore only described in general term in order for them to remain anonymous as well. A description of the respondents and their service encounters can be found in table 3 on the next page.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Participation*</th>
<th>Description of service and service failure</th>
<th>Service recovery process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>23 female</td>
<td>A consumer electronics product was ordered</td>
<td>The respondent diagnosed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>high</td>
<td>online was not customized for Finland. Some</td>
<td>the problem herself by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>features could therefore not be used. No</td>
<td>searching online and then</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>information about customization provided.</td>
<td>contacted the seller. The</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>seller acknowledged the</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>problem but did not</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>solve it nor update the</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Bella</td>
<td>24 female</td>
<td>A product order from an online camera shop</td>
<td>The respondent initially</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>was delivered not delivered in the original</td>
<td>searched online for more</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>packaging, making the customer uncertain of</td>
<td>information and then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>its quality. No packaging information</td>
<td>contacted the seller. The</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>provided.</td>
<td>seller verbally insured</td>
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<td></td>
<td>the quality but did not</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>take further actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Carla</td>
<td>24 female</td>
<td>A fashion item was ordered online but the</td>
<td>Free return policy and</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>product received was not the same as the one</td>
<td>refund. However, the</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ordered. The right product could not be</td>
<td>respondent did not receive</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>reordered since it was sold out.</td>
<td>any compensation or</td>
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<td></td>
<td>apology. The product</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ordered was not</td>
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<td></td>
<td>delivered.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>23 female</td>
<td>The online user account had stopped working</td>
<td>The service provider’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>high</td>
<td>making the service impossible to use.</td>
<td>help centre did not have</td>
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<td>warranty had expired.</td>
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<td>The respondent used online</td>
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<td>forums to find a solution</td>
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<td>and fixed the problem</td>
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<td>herself.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>24 female</td>
<td>A website builder used to create a own website</td>
<td>Online chat and help centre</td>
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<td>high</td>
<td>did not work and the respondent could not</td>
<td>was available but the</td>
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<td>launch the website on time.</td>
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<td>not work. The respondent</td>
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<td>problem herself.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Finn</td>
<td>27 male</td>
<td>A computer hardware product ordered online</td>
<td>The respondent called the</td>
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<td>low</td>
<td>was not working, making the rest of the</td>
<td>customer service and</td>
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<td>computer impossible to use.</td>
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<td>diagnose the problem and</td>
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<td>then replaced the product</td>
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<td>for free.</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>33 male</td>
<td>Car parts ordered from an online shop did</td>
<td>Free return and refund</td>
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<td>high</td>
<td>was not similar to the original ones, even</td>
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<td>though the online shop only sells original</td>
<td>low price the respondent</td>
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<td>parts. No information about the difference</td>
<td>instead spent hours to</td>
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<td>was provided.</td>
<td>find the right parts from</td>
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<td>other service providers.</td>
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*degree of customer participation in service recovery
4.4 Analysis of data

The data analysis process followed the instructions given by Spiggle (1994) and Silverman (2005). The first step of the data analysis process was to organize the collected data. The data was organized by conducting a transcription of the recorded interviews. Silverman (2005) recommends that the interviewer listens to the recording several times. The voice recording was therefore studied multiple times. After the data was organized it was reviewed by studying the transcriptions. After reviewing the data material, it was transformed using the different manipulation operations of qualitative data suggested by Spiggle (1994), i.e. categorization, abstraction, comparison, integration, dimensionalization, iteration, and refutation.

The categorization of data was done through identification of data that represents a more general phenomenon. The data was then abstracted, meaning that it was categorized on a higher and more abstract level. This was done by dividing previously identified categories into more general classes. A comparison was done, meaning that different incidents were compared with each other and their differences and similarities were explored. Integration requires that different categories are even further explored and connected together, i.e. integrated. Dimensionalization can be seen as a supporting operation to abstraction and comparison since it identifies characteristics and attributes of a category along dimensions. Iteration was included in the analysis process, meaning that researcher throughout the analysis process moved back and forth between the different research stages. The final operation included in the analysis of data was refutation. Refutations means that researcher questions the findings and quality of the study. (Spiggle 1994)

4.5 Quality of research

Quality of research regarding a qualitative study is often considered to be determined by its credibility, transferability dependability, confirmability, and integrity (Wallendorf and Belk 1989). All these five aspects will therefore now be explained and reviewed.

4.5.1 Credibility

Credibility is according to Silverman (2006) the author’s ability to convince the reader that conclusion is a result of careful investigation of all the data. Hence, credibility is about considering “what was done during data collection, in the formation of an
interpretation, and in the presentation of the final interpretation to readers” (Wallendorf and Belk 1989, p. 72). Wallendorf and Belk (1989) suggest that the credibility can be assessed and enhanced by for example prolonging the engagement, observe persistently, using different methods, theories, and sources, analysing negative cases, and through debriefing by peers. Gummesson (2000) underlines the importance of explaining the study and the choices (e.g. choice of questions, methods, and data) made in order to justify them. Communication, simplicity, and clarity help the reader to follow the research process, which in turn enhances the credibility (Gummesson 2000).

The credibility of this study is enhanced by providing a motivation for the choices made, for example concerning choice of research question, theory, method and data.

4.5.2 Transferability

Transferability is the extent to which the findings are applicable in other contexts (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Transferability can according to Wallendorf and Belk (1989) be assessed and enhanced by data triangulation across sites through for example purposive sampling, search of limiting exceptions (i.e. establishing the conditions in which the emerging findings (do not) work), and emergent design.

4.5.3 Dependability

Dependability has various definitions. Dependability is according Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Wallendorf and Belk (1989) to attain the same results when replicating the study with same or similar respondents. Storbacka, Polsa and Sääksjärvi (2011, p. 38) on the other hand suggest that dependability is the “extent to which there is consistency of explanations”. Establishing dependability can be done by repeating the study and thereby overcoming time periods’ cross-sectional biases (Wallendorf and Belk 1989).

4.5.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is to establish that the determinants of the findings are the respondents and conditions. The findings’ determinants can therefore not be interests, motivations, biases or the researcher’s perspective. Triangulation and reflexive journals can for example enhance the confirmability. (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Wallendorf and Belk 1989)
4.5.5 *Integrity*

Wallendorf and Belk (1989) argue that respondents can give false information and lie to the researcher in order to be liked or to maintain their image. The respondents’ evasions and lies diminishes the study’s integrity because integrity suggest that the interpretations are not affected by the respondents’ misinformation (Wallendorf and Belk 1989). Triangulation, proper interviewing technique, prolonged engagement, construction of trust and rapport, and protection the informant’s identity are examples of techniques that can be used in order to overcome the issue of misinformation and thereby achieve enhancement of integrity (Wallendorf and Belk 1989).
5 FINDINGS

This study aims at understanding how customers experience participation in service recovery. The findings are divided into four sections. The first section relates to the factors influencing the customer experience. Knowing the factors that influence customer experience can be helpful since they can contribute to a better understanding of how customers experience the participation in service recovery. The second section examines customer participation as a moderating factor. Findings specifically regarding how customer experience participation in service recovery can be found in the third section. The fourth section on the other hand looks at what the consequences of the different experiences are and hence presents the holistic satisfaction, that can be both positive and negative. The findings are finally summarized and comprised into a figure (i.e. Figure 2, page 52) that presents young adults experience of participation in service recovery.

5.1 Factors influencing customer experience

The factors influencing customer experience can be divided into three categories: core factors, supportive factors, and contextual factors.

5.1.1 Quality of service recovery – the core factor

The quality of service recovery is generally dependent on the service providers’ ability to respond quickly, acknowledge and solve the problem, apologize to the customer, give reasonable compensation and take actions to prevent future service failures (Grönroos 2007). However, according to the respondents in this study, customer participation in service recovery offers both opportunities and risks in terms of service recovery quality. Hence, both the possibilities to improve quality of service recovery and pitfalls will be discussed in this section.

All of the seven respondents confirmed that the service provider had taken some action in order to be able to respond to a failure, acknowledge the problem and provide solutions. There was however a difference in the extent to which the companies provided their customer with a quick response and solution. The free return and refund policy is an example of a quite quick response to a failure. By providing the customer with a return form that he or she can fill in, if the product ordered does not fulfil the expectations, the
company foresees potential service failures and can thereby offer the customer a possibility to quickly correct the service failure.

Both Carla (interview 28.11.2015) and Greg (interview 26.11.2015), who were offered free return and refund, appreciated that they could send back their items without any monetary cost and get their money back. However, Greg did not even bother sending it back.

“Free return, refund, and the company asks why you return the order, that’s great! However, in this case the product was too cheap and I was too lazy, so I decided not to make the effort of sending the parts back.”

(Greg, interview 26.11.2015)

Hence, according to Greg it would not be worth the time to fill in the refund form and go to the post office to send them back (interview 26.11.2015). Carla did also mention the time it took to return the product, because she had to print the form herself (interview 28.11.2015). The rate of returned products is presumably lowered by having the customers print the return and refund form themselves, thus increasing the barrier to return the product by increasing customer effort. However, having customers print their own return and refund forms can have a negative effect on the quality of the service recovery since it prolongs the service recovery process by adding a step where customers have to take actions themselves.

Greg (interview 26.11.2015) mentioned that the refund form he received also included a section where he could inform the company about the reason why he returned the goods ordered online. The company had provided him with different alternatives that he could choose from. Although, he could also write a personal explanation or leave it blank. Carla (interview 28.11.2015) was also asked to tell the company why she returned the product that she had bought from their online shop. Carla appreciated that she could give an explanation since it felt like the company cared about her experience and opinion. In addition, she said that she has noticed that online fashion stores actually use some of the information filled in return forms. According to her, the size and fit of a fashion item, such as clothing and shoes, are not so easy to assess when not trying them on. Hence, in order to make it easier for the customers to choose between sizes there are size guides that tell if previous customers thought the size of a product was smaller, larger or similar
to the standard size. This information can according to Carla be easily obtained by using data from return forms, because they often ask if the product was returned due to its size. Hence, this section indicates that by asking the customer what went wrong, the company shows that it is trying to prevent future service failures.

Giving the customer reasonable compensation is according to Grönroos (2007) also an important part of the service recovery. Carla (interview 28.11.2016) did however not get any compensation from the company that sent her the wrong product. Since the product she actually had ordered was sold out she felt that the service only had taken her time and not giving her anything in return. She did not even receive an apology from the company.

“I returned the product and the money was refunded in a reasonable time but I did not get any compensation and they did not even apologize for their mistake.”

(Carla, interview 28.11.2015)

Hence, by not completing the service recovery process by offering compensation and apologizing, the company did not provide a high quality service recovery process. In Carla’s (interview 28.11.2015) case, she will mainly remember the disappointment of not getting the product she ordered. She will also remember the effort she made to send it back and not get anything in return. Carla will therefore look back at the service experience as a waste of time since she did not gain anything from using the service. Carla did therefore feel that she had been given unfair treatment, which is true according to justice theory. According to distributive justice in service recovery, Carla was not given the compensation nor apology that she thinks she deserved. The firm’s allocation of compensation in response to the injustice caused by the service failure was in this case poor.

Providing the customers with a customer service or contact details can be seen as a more indirect way of responding to a service failure. Alice (interview 29.11.2015), Bella (interview 29.11.2015) and Finn (interview 2.12.2015) decided to personally contact the service providers in order to let them know that a service failure had occurred and to solve the problem. They all three contacted the customer service.
Bella (interview 29.11.2015) contacted the customer service since the product did not come in the original packaging. She tried to google the reason behind the choice of packaging and found out that the product she had received could have been refurbished. She felt disappointed by the news since she had thought she had ordered a brand new product. Bella therefore contacted the customer service by e-mailing them. She did however receive an unfriendly response.

“The company was not all understanding and all they did was defend themselves. I think that they could have informed their customers about the different packaging and possible refurbishment already in the product details on their website. If the information was given from the start, then there would not be any problem. They could at least have used a friendlier tone when I contacted them about feeling disappointed with their service and the product.”

(Bella, interview 29.11.2015)

Bella (interview 29.11.2015) experienced the service quality of the service recovery to be extremely poor. The service provider did not understand nor acknowledge problem. The customer service did only defend the company instead of apologizing to the customer and solving the problem. No compensation was given and the company did not take any actions to prevent future service failures because the packaging information was not added to the product description.

Finn (interviewed 2.12.2015) did, contrary to Alice and Bella, experience high quality service recovery. He called the customer service and they responded quickly. Finn’s problem was acknowledged and solved very quickly. The hardware that did not function properly was replaced with a new and functioning device the very next day. Finn was impressed by the service recovery due to how fast, good and easy it was.

Diana (interview 26.11.2015) and Emily (interview 1.12.2015) had the opportunity to use a help centre in order to solve the problem. Hence, the service providers had prepared for service failures by setting up a help centre. However, the help centres were not useful for the respondents since it could not provide them with the right solutions.
“The company had a help centre and a chat. The chat was openly available for all customer and I found a customer who had the same problem as me. The customer, who was in the same boat as me, had asked the company for a solution and the company had replied. I tried applying the solution provided by the company but it did not work.”

(Emily, interview 1.12.2015)

Emily (interview 1.12.2015) actually found a question and answer that matched her problem but it was not helpful since the answer provided by the company did not work. Hence, the company acknowledged the problem but they did not solve it. Emily (interview 1.12.2015) therefore decided to use different forums to find a solution. Diana (interview 26.11.2015) could on the other hand not even find any information on the help centre regarding the problem that she experienced. Instead of using the contact information provided in the help centre she decided to try to find a solution by reading discussions on different online forums. By doing so she did not have to wait for the company to give her answer.

As mentioned, the quality of service recovery is generally dependent on the service providers’ ability to respond quickly, acknowledge and solve the problem, apologize to the customer, give reasonable compensation and take actions to prevent future service failures (Grönroos 2007). Not surprisingly, a quick response does not seem to be a problem. After all, several of the respondents choose a high degree of participation due to its speed.

However, the respondents with a high degree of participation in the service recovery could witness that a high degree of customer participation seems to make it more difficult for the company to fulfil the rest of the aspects of service quality in service recovery. To acknowledge and solve the problem, apologizing to the customer, give reasonable compensation and take actions to prevent future service failures seem to be difficult if the customer is highly involved in the service recovery. For example, the company cannot take any of these service recovery actions if a service fails and the customer decides to solve the problem himself or herself, without letting the company know that a service failure has occurred.
5.1.2 Supportive factors

While the quality of service recovery can be seen to enhance the distributive justice, the supportive factors can be seen to help increase the procedural justice of the service recovery process. Goodwin and Ross (1992) and Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekaran (1998) suggest that the access, information, and cognitive control influences the procedural justice of the service recovery process. Hence, the supportive factors (access, choice and information) influence the customer experience by making customers feel they can influence the service recovery, and the timeliness and convenience of the service recovery process (Grönroos 2007). Supportive factors can according to Chahal and Dutta (2014) be used to gain a deeper understanding of the customer experience.

Access

Conway and Willcocks (1997) suggest that easy access can enhance the experience. The respondents did indeed underline the importance of having easy access to service recovery options. The interviewees for example appreciated that it was easy to contact a customer service centre or to easily access a help centre. Both Greg (26.11.2015) and Carla (28.11.2015) were given the opportunity to of free return and refund. Carla had to print the return form herself. Hence, her access to the return process was limited since she had to have access to a printer. Greg, on the other hand, received the return form with the package, making it easier to return the product. However, both Greg and Carla suggested that it was important that the return point (i.e. the place where they could send the package back to the service provider) was close to their home.

“It was great that you could go to the closest return point. I did therefore not have to walk that far in order to return the product.”

(Carla, interview 28.11.2015)

Choice

The opportunity to choose between different options regarding the service recovery process would have been appreciated by the respondents. However, the respondents did not have the opportunity to choose between different service recovery process options.

Alice (interview 29.11.2015) could choose between e-mailing the company or calling the customer service in order to let the service provider know about the service failure. She was not sure that she would get Swedish service if she called the customer service. Alice
therefore decided to send an e-mail to the service provider, hoping that someone could answer her question in Swedish. The company replied after a few days but the person responding to Alice’s e-mail could not help her, so she was referred to the customer service. Hence, Alice reluctantly called the customer service but they could still not answer her question. After a fairly long e-mail conversation and a few phone calls later, the problem still remained unsolved and Alice decided to give up. The choices offered by the company was therefore not sufficient since the problem could not be solved.

Carla (interview 28.11.2015) and Greg (26.11.2015) were given clear instructions regarding how to return the products that did not meet their expectations. Hence, they were not given any alternative way of participating in the service recovery process. However, they could not think of an alternative service recovery and were therefore quite satisfied with the service recovery process offered by the service provider.

Emily (interview 1.12.2015) was also with only one alternative to participate in the service recovery. She would on the other hand have preferred if she was given different alternatives. Emily states that she would rather e-mail the company, instead of posting a question on the online chat.

**Information**

The reason behind several of the service failures that the respondents experienced was lack of information. However, the respondents did not mention any insufficiency of information regarding the service recovery process. The instructions on how to proceed when a service failure occurred was reasonably clear for all the respondents. Alice (interview 29.11.2015), Bella (interview 29.11.2015), Carla (interview 28.11.2015) and Greg (interview 26.11.2015) were all four interviewed regarding the service failure that occurred when they purchased products online. These customers were in all four cases provided with information regarding the return process.

Carla (interview 28.11.2015) was particularly satisfied with the information the company provided with her regarding the return and refund process. The company had according to her used its free return and refund policy as a sales argument in its commercials. The company website has clear instructions regarding the return and refund process and the customer can access this information before ordering products. The customers are hence (even previous to the purchase) aware of what they should do if they are not satisfied with the product that the service provider delivers.
“The online store has a help section where you can choose a help topic. One of the topics listed is “Returns”. By clicking on “Returns” you get detailed information about the return and refund process. There is even a picture that describes the different steps of the return and refund process. The guide is very easy to understand. You will also get the same instructions when your package arrives, so there is nearly no room for misinterpretation or mistakes.”

Carla (interview 28.11.2015)

5.1.3 Contextual factors

The contextual factors that influence the dimensions of the customer experience are (1) past experience, (2) preference and personality, and (3) ability.

Past experience

Past experience referrers to the customer’s previous experience regarding the concerned service or similar services, service failures and participation in service failures. If a customer has past experience regarding a service, he or she are likely to have certain expectations.

Carla (interview 28.11.2015) orders clothes and fashion accessories online quite frequently. Carla suggests that almost all online shops have similar service recovery process (referring to returning the products that did not fulfil her expectations and receiving refund). However, this particular service failure was unfamiliar to her. The service provider had notified her that her product was successfully order and sent to her address. The order specification that she received together with the package was also correct, but the actual product was not the same as the one she had ordered and as the one that was also listed on the invoice. Hence, since the company was to blame for the product mix-up Carla expected that the company would take more responsibility and give her some compensation. The lack of past experience regarding this certain type of service failure altered her expectations regarding the service recovery process.

Preference and personality

Preference and personality referrers to the customer’s preference regarding participation in service recovery.
Greg (interview 26.11.2015) considers himself to be introvert and does therefore not prefer to interact directly with the company. Hence, do not want call the company and talk to some of the service provider’s employees. Emily (interview 1.12.2015), on the other hand, prefers to have personal contact with the service provider. The human factor is important to her and she would therefore like to know the name of the person she has contact with regarding the service recovery.

**Ability**
The customer’s ability to participate in service recovery can be viewed as a contextual factor. The customers are often required to have certain knowledge in order to be able to participate. Emily (interview 1.12.2015) was for example required to have a certain basic knowledge about the service in order to be able to diagnose the problem. Without this knowledge she would not have been able to diagnose and solve the problem. However, since she had not used a similar service before she did only have basic knowledge. With a greater knowledge about the service she would perhaps have solved the problem more easily, making the service recovery process simpler and the experience of participation would therefore have been improved. Hence, Emily had the required knowledge to participate but with she still had to do some research in order to be able to solve the problem.

### 5.1.4 Summary of the factors influencing customer experience

As mentioned, the factors influencing the customer experience can be divided into three categories: core factors, supportive factors, and contextual factors. The factors found in this study are summarized in the table 4, which can be found below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determinants</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Core factor:</strong> Quality of service recovery (quick response, problem acknowledgement, problem solution, apology, compensation, and actions to prevent future service failures)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supportive factors:</strong> Access (easily accessible recovery), choice (different options), information (correct and clear instructions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contextual factors:</strong> Past experience (positive previous experience and memories), preference and personality (attitudes, values, social relationships, and habits) and ability (knowledge and skills)</td>
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</table>
5.2 Customer participation as a moderating factor

Customer participation can be seen as a moderating factor that moderates the relationship between the factors that influence the customer experience and the dimensions of customer experience. The supportive factors (access, choice and information) and the contextual factors (past experience, preference and personality, and ability) influence the degree to which the customer participates in the service recovery process. While the degree of customer participation (high, moderate or low) influence the dimensions of customer experience.

Customer participation is as mentioned divided into three categories based upon the level of participation. Bitner, Faranda, and Hubbert’s (1997) framework is combined with Meuter and Bitner’s (1998) framework in order to arrive at the three levels of participation. The degrees of participation are therefore low, moderate and high. A low degree of customer participation suggests that recovery actions are taken mostly by the service provider and its employees, with only little contribution from the customers. A moderate degree of customer participation occurs when recovery actions are taken by both the customers and the service provider. The degree of participation is considered to be high when recovery actions are taken mostly by the customers, with only little or no contribution from the firm or its employees.

5.2.1 Influence of supportive and conceptual factors on participation

According to the respondents both supportive and conceptual factors influenced their choice of participation in service recovery. This quote from Emily (interview 1.12.2015) illustrates how personality and information can influence the degree of participation.

“Being from Ostrobothnia often means that you try to fix most things and problems yourselves before asking for help. You therefore try to diagnose the problem and find a solution yourself before you reach out to the company for help. [...] That is why I first tried to find a solution on the company’s website since the most frequently asked questions were posted on the site. [...] The suggested solutions posted in the help centre did however not work, instead we tried to search for a solution on different online forums, even though the company also had a chat where you could ask questions.”

(Emily, interview 2.12.2015)
Emily (interview 2.12.2015) suggests that personality influences the customers’ behaviour. She has her mind set on fixing arising problem herself, without asking for any help, unless it is absolutely necessary. Emily did therefore not tell the company that the solution provided on the help centre was not working. Instead she chose to try to find a solution online. She did not even ask other customers for help but she used the solutions already provided by other customers.

The degree of participation does not seem to be determined by only one of these factors alone. Multiple conceptual and supportive factors can together influence the degree of participation. Emily (interview 2.12.2015) for example suggests that access, previous experience and preference also had an influence on her level of participation in the service recovery process. When discussing other possible choices of contacting the company to solve the problem, Emily states that she considered to call the company in order to get a more personal service. Hence, she would prefer a service recovery that allows her to interact with the service provider’s employees. However, since the company is quite large she has the perception that it might not even be possible to call the company. Emily suggests that calling larger companies means that you always have to wait quite a while before someone answers. Due to her previous experience regarding company call centres’ waiting time she chose not to phone the company. The waiting time is on the other hand linked to access. Hence, since the assumed waiting time limits the access to the call centre, suggesting that access also influences Emily's degree of participation.

### 5.2.2 Influence of customer participation on dimensions of experience

The level of customer participation (high, moderate or low) can according to the informants influence the dimensions of experience (affective, cognitive, and social/relational).

Bella (interview 29.11.2015) participated in the recovery by e-mailing the company regarding the service failure. Her participation can be considered to be moderate since the company answered all the e-mails she sent. Hence, recovery actions were taken by both the company and the customer. The recovery actions taken by Bella were however quite active, while the service provider only took passive recovery actions. Bella had hoped that her active participation would result in a solution to her problem. In reality, Bella’s efforts did not lead to anything. The fact that her participation was not rewarded
influenced the affective dimension of her experience. She was for example frustrated for wasting her time by participating in a service recovery that failed.

Carla (interview 28.11.2015) participated in the recovery to a moderate degree. The company provided her with the tools needed to participate. The fact that the company had a plan for the service recovery and thereby took part of the recovery actions influenced the cognitive dimension of the experience. Carla thought that it would have been difficult for the firm to take further recovery actions in the early stage of the recovery process (i.e. in the process of returning the products). She did however think that the service provider could have done more after she had participated by returning the products and explaining to the company that she did not receive the product she had ordered.

“ [...] on the other hand, I cannot think of anything that the company could have done differently to make the return process smoother. They could, however, have apologised and given me some form of compensation.”

(Carla interview 28.11.2015)

Emily (interview 1.12.2015) decided to use online conversations between other customers in order to solve the problem when the service provider’s solutions did not work. Emily had a high level of participation in the service recovery process. The information given in the interview suggests that her level of participation in service recovery influenced the social and relation dimension of experience since the company’s failed service recovery forced her to participate more and thereby use the connections between customers in order to solve her problem. Hence, the contact between customers that participated to a high degree increased, while the contact with the company decreased due to the false solution.

5.3 Dimensions of customer experience

The customer experience can according to Chahal and Dutta (2014) be divided into different dimensions. The customer experience is divided into three categories, based upon the information provided by Chahal and Dutta (2014) and the data from the interviews. These three dimensions are the affective dimension, the cognitive dimension
and the social/relational dimension. These three dimensions will now be analysed and discussed in detail.

5.3.1 Affective

The affective dimension of the customer experience comprises of the customer feelings regarding the experience (Chahal and Dutta 2014; Schmitt 1999, 2000). The respondents mentioned a variety of feelings when talking about their experience of participation in service recovery.

Six of the seven respondents did at some point of the service recovery process experience that participation caused them frustration. Frustration and dissatisfaction was most apparent among the respondents who believed that they did not get enough support from the service provider, for example in solving the problem.

The product Carla (interview 28.11.2015) had ordered had significant affective value and it was therefore a huge disappoint that the service failed. The following quote illustrates the disappointment the service failure caused.

“The product I had ordered was an anniversary present from my husband. It arrived a few days before our anniversary. I decided to not open it immediately and instead open it on our wedding day. I was so disappointed when I opened the package. There was a watch inside the package, but it was not the one I had ordered. It definitely took me some time to get over the disappointment of not getting the anniversary present I wanted.”

(Carla interview 28.11.2015)

The fact that she had to put effort in to correcting the mistake committed by the service provider made her very frustrated and even more disappointed. The fact that the service provider was not able to provide her with the right product in the end resulted in long lasting feelings of dissatisfaction, disappointment and frustration.

Anger and insecurity was also mentioned by some of the respondents during the interviews. Bella (interview 29.11.2015) was disappointed and angry at the company for
not providing her with sufficient information. The following quote illustrates some of the feelings she felt regarding her participation in service recovery.

I sent an angry e-mail, in which I voiced my complaints regarding the product they had sent me. I did actually send a lot of e-mails to the company. The company was however very unsympathetic. [...] Their e-mails were written in an unfriendly manner. I finally gave up and accepted the product I was dissatisfied with. [...] I felt very unsecure.

(Bella, interview 29.11.2015)

Luckily, the respondents did not only have negative feeling towards their participation in service recovery. Finn (interview 2.12.2015) was very satisfied with his participation and the overall service recovery process. He felt welcomed to contact the customer service, due to their friendly response.

At later stages in the service recovery process several of the respondents said that they felt hopeful and more involved. Hence, when the initial feelings of insecurity and doubt had settled it and a solutions felt closer the customers seemed to have increasingly positive feelings towards their participation in the service recovery process.

5.3.2 Cognitive

The cognitive dimension refers to the thoughts the customers had regarding the experience (Chahal and Dutta 2014). The respondents said that they had thought about the cause of service failure and the service recovery process.

Some of the respondents considered themselves to be the main contributors to the service failure. Hence, blaming themselves for the failure and not the service provider. These customers, who pictured themselves as part of the problem, were more willing to participate in the service recovery. Hence, their negative feelings regarding the service recovery was not aimed towards company, but towards their own mistakes. On the other hand, customers that considered the company was to blame for the service failure were more reluctant to participate in the service recovery. They also felt more negative feelings and it was often directed towards the service provider.
Greg (interview 26.11.2015) had done some research on forums before ordering the car parts and could conclude that the part is currently not manufactured in the same way as before, due to environmental aspects.

“By reading different threads on online forums, I had found out that there was a risk that I would not get the original parts. The only chance of getting the original parts would be if the company still had parts from 1980’s left. The old manufacturing process is now illegal due to the environmental harm it causes. Hence, due to a new production process, the colour of the new parts is not similar to the colour of the original ones. [...] The company did however not mention the colour difference on the website, so they probably assume that the customer knows it.”

(Greg, interview 26.11.2015)

He was therefore aware of the risk of receiving a part that was not exactly similar to the original one, but still hoped it would look exactly the same. When the service failed, he used his knowledge regarding the new manufacturing technique and reasoned that the company was not to direct responsible for the failure. Since the service provider in addition targeted professional customer, which he was not, he reasoned that a professional buyer could be more certain regarding the features of the parts, since they are know more about the available assortment. He took responsibility for the service failure and decided to try to solve the problem himself, without involving the service provider. He was still satisfied with the service provider, even though it was frustrating to try to find the parts elsewhere. Hence, his frustration was not aimed towards the service provider, but towards himself for ordering the wrong parts to start with.

5.3.3 Social/relational

Customers often use services together with others (Verhoef et al. 2009) they therefore interact with both the service provider, other customer and perhaps even with a third party (such as friends or family). Hence, Chahal and Dutta (2014) suggest that the customer experience also have a social/relational dimension.

In a service recovery process with a high degree of customer participation, the degree of company participation decreases as the degree of customer participation increases. This
means that a customer with a high degree of participation is less likely to socially interact with the company. On the other hand, the customer might instead interact with other customers in order to solve the problem. By searching for a solution on online forums Emily (interview 1.12.2015) used other customers’ knowledge in order to solve the problem. The solution was however already posted on the forum meaning that she did not interact with any other customer. She did therefore not establish any social contact or relational bond with other customers.

“I would have preferred the possibility of e-mailing the company regarding the problem. There was a lot people asking questions in the chat function and there was an employee, who was trying to answer the questions as fast as possible. Writing an e-mail would have felt much more personal, because the person would address you with your name and it would feel more like they actually cared about you, listened to you, and understood you. Both the help centre and the chat seemed so impersonal.”

(Emily, interview 1.12.2015)

5.3.4 Summary of the customer experience dimensions

The three customer experience dimensions studied in this thesis are the affective dimension, the cognitive dimension and the social/relational dimension. The dimensions found in this study are summarized in the table below, i.e. Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer experience dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affective:</strong> feelings (frustration, disappointment, dissatisfaction, anger, insecurity, satisfaction, hopefulness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive:</strong> thoughts (responsibility, cause of failure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social/relational:</strong> contact with service provider (indirect or direct), contact with customers (online forums)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4 Holistic satisfaction

As mentioned, a firm’s response to service failure can either restore satisfaction and reinforce loyalty or worsen the failure and cause a loss of the customer (Smith, Bolton, and Wagner 1999; Patterson, Cowley, and Prasongsukarn 2006). A successful service recovery is therefore vital since it can increase customer satisfaction, reduce the spread of negative word-of-mouth, and enhance performance (Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekaran 1998; Zeithaml and Bitner 2003; Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008).

5.4.1 Customer satisfaction

Finn (interview 2.12.2015) had positive experience of participation in service recovery because his problem was solved quickly through a high quality service recovery. Finn was therefore satisfied with both the service recovery process and the service. Greg (interview 26.11.2015) thought that the service recovery process offered by the service provider was good (even though he chose not to take advantage of the options that were offered). Greg will continue to purchase his car parts from the same retailer, since he is still satisfied with their service.

5.4.2 Customer dissatisfaction

Bella (interview 29.11.2015), felt anger and disappointment when participating in the service recovery. Bella was very dissatisfied with both the service and the service recovery. She has told her friends about the service failure, thereby spreading negative word of mouth. During the interview she stated that she will not buy anything from the same online shop again. The service provider has therefore lost a customer and perhaps even some potential customers due to the spread of negative word of mouth.

Emily (interview 1.12.2015) was also greatly disappointed and dissatisfied. However, the switching costs were so high that she decided to continue using the service. Hence, due to high switching costs she decided to continue to use the service.

“If the company would have provided me with the right solution to the problem and if they would have participated more actively, I would not have lost my trust in them.”

(Emily, interview 1.12.2015)
Even though Emily states that she has lost her trust in the company she still hopes that they will improve their service so that similar service failure will not occur in the future.

5.4.3 Summarizing the holistic satisfaction

Previous service recovery literature has found that a firm’s response to service failure can influence the holistic satisfaction in different ways: both positively and negatively (see e.g. Smith, Bolton, and Wagner 1999; Patterson, Cowley, and Prasongsukarn 2006). The findings regarding the holistic satisfaction have in this been based upon the data provided by the respondents and results from previous studies. The findings in this can be summarized by dividing the holistic satisfaction into two groups: satisfied customers and dissatisfied customers. The features of the two groups are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6 Summary of the holistic satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holistic satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied customer: restored satisfaction, reinforced loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied customer: higher dissatisfaction, negative word-of-mouth, loss of customer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5 Customer experience of participation in service recovery

The findings in this regarding customer experience of participation is summarized in the Figure 2. The figure is based on the data provided by the young adults interviewed in this study together with results from previous studies. The customer experience research model by Chahal and Dutta (2014) has for example influenced the figure since it has been used a framework in order to gain a deeper understanding of customer experience.
Figure 2  Young adults’ experiences of participation in service recovery
6 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the study was to investigate how customers experience their participation in service recovery. Chahal and Dutta (2014) customer experience research model was used in order to study and analyse customer experiences of participation in service recovery. The model created by Chahal and Dutta (2014) is based on previous customer experience literature and the model can, and has therefore been used in order to gain a deeper understanding of customer experience. The findings in this study suggest that the quality of the service recovery is the main factor influencing how customers experience their participation. The quality of the service recovery was often lower when the degree of customer participation was high. The low quality was explained by the fact that many of the vital steps in the service recovery process became more difficult to apply as the level customer participation increased. Customers with a high degree of participation did not notify the service providers when a service failure occurred. Since the service providers were not aware of the service failure, it was not possible for them to do something about it. Hence, the quality was low since the service provider did not get the chance to apologize to the customer or give compensation. At the same time, the service provider lost the chance of receiving information about the service failure that could help to prevent service failures in the future.

According to the informants, both contextual and supportive factors influence the customer experience. These factors did also influence the degree to which the customers participate in the service recovery process. Hence, the experience of participation is influenced by the customers’ previous experiences, their preferences and personalities and in addition their ability.

The customer experience was studied from three different dimensions: affective, cognitive and social/relational. The affective dimension focused on the customers’ feelings regarding their participation in the service recovery. In the initial part of the service recovery process the customers often felt insecure. In the latter part of the recovery, when a solution was closer, several of the respondents were both hopeful and engaged. However, if a high degree of participation resulted in a failed service recovery, then the customers felt both disappointment and dissatisfaction. Nearly all of the respondents stated that their participation caused them frustration. This can however be explained by the fact that several of the service recovery processes had flaws, such as unfriendly staff or false solutions.
According to the cognitive dimension, customers thought about and reflected on the service failure. Some of the customer felt guilt regarding the service failure since they thought that they were partly responsible for the failure. These customers, who believed they were to blame for the service failure, could more easily accept that they needed to participate in the service recovery process. Hence, since it was their fault, they reasoned that they were responsible for correcting the mistake. On the other hand, the customers, who blamed the service provider for the failure seemed to participate more reluctantly.

Findings regarding the social and relational dimension suggest that highly involved customers had less direct contact with the service provider, compared to customers with a low degree of participation. Instead, customers with a high degree of participation seem to have more contact with other customers. Other customers were in some cases more helpful than the company and it therefore became more natural for highly involved customers to contact and help other customers.

The customer experience of participation in service recovery can according to the findings in this study be considered to influence the holistic satisfaction. A customer that is satisfied with his or her participation in the service recovery and satisfied with the service recovery seem to experience a restored satisfaction and reinforced loyalty. A dissatisfied customer can on the other hand become increasingly dissatisfied with the service and the service provider. Some of the highly dissatisfied respondents voiced their negative feelings to their friends and family, thereby spreading negative word of mouth. They also stated that they would no longer use the service provider’s services.

6.1 Theoretical implications

Research regarding service recovery has generally focused on the firm’s response to a service failure, meaning that the customer’s role in the service recovery process has gained little research attention (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008). Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008) were to my knowledge the first ones to see the possibilities of combining the two research streams customer participation and service recovery. Customer participation in service recovery is therefore a quite unexplored research area. Hence, this study contributes by giving insights to an unmapped part of marketing research.
This study is a clear addition to the existing research regarding participation in service recovery. The largest difference between this study and the previous studies is that this study examines real life service recovery processes in which customers participate, while previous studies consist of scenario-based and staged examples of customer participation. It therefore gives insights into customer participation in a service recovery and customer experience of participation in service recovery.

6.2 Managerial implications

According to the informants, a high degree of customer participation in service recovery seem to have a negative effect on the quality of the service recovery. The service firm will not get the necessary information needed to provide its customers with a satisfactory service recovery if customers do not notify the company when a service failure occurs. In addition, the firm will not get the valuable information it needs to prevent similar service failures in the future. It is therefore in the service firm’s best interests to motivate its customer to at least let them know when a service failure occurs, and what kind of failure occurred.

The findings in this study suggest that there is not a universal service recovery process that can fit all customers, because the experience of participation is influenced by the customers’ previous experiences, their preferences and personalities and in addition their ability. Hence, offering different possibilities of participation in service recovery is important in order for the customer to be satisfied with both the service and the service recovery. The company should for example acknowledge the supportive factors when designing the service recovery process. This means that the service provider should provide sufficient information about the service recovery process, easily accessible service recovery opportunities, and different options, in order for customers, no matter contextual factors, to find a solution that satisfies them.

The customers in this study often felt frustrated when participating in the service recovery process. One of the reasons for the frustration was that the company had developed a service recovery process that did not work. The solution to the service failure that the company had provided on their help centre was in some cases not working. Hence, making sure that the solutions posted online are accurate is important, since it perhaps can lower the dissatisfaction. It is therefore still important that the service
providers ask whether their solutions were helpful. In addition, it is important for the service provider to ask how the customer experienced his or her participation in service recovery in order to ensure customer satisfaction. Several of the informants in this study turned to external online forums for answers when the company could not provide the right solutions. The service provider could therefore use the information on online forums in order to collect information about service failures and customer participation in service recovery.

6.3 Limitations and suggestions for future research

There are only few studies conducted regarding customer participation in service recovery. The possibilities for future research are therefore countless. The limitations in this study also suggest that there are many undiscovered areas to study.

This study is limited to online service and the sample consisted of young adults (ages 18-34). The sample consists of seven respondents, all from Finland. The study is conducted from the customer point of view. The results in this study are not generalizable. I encourage future research to get a deeper understanding of how customers participate in service recovery. This will give service providers important data when they seek to enhance customer participation in service recovery.
SVENSK SAMMANFATTNING

Kundmedverkan i serviceåterhämtning

1 INLEDNING


I praktiken kan kundmedverkan i serviceåterhämtning gå till så att företaget listar de vanliga felen som kunderna kan påträffa gällande servicen i exempelvis en servicemanual eller ett hjälpcenter på nätet. Därmed kan kunderna diagnostisera felet själva samt lösa det genom att vidta de av företaget föreslagna åtgärderna. (Dong, Evans och Zou 2008)

1.1 Problemområde

Även om kundmedverkan i serviceåterhämtning inte är något nytt så finns det inte särskilt mycket forskning inom området. Den forskning som finns i nuläget består främst av en sammansättning av två olika forskningsgrenar, nämligen kundmedverkan och serviceåterhämtning. I denna avhandling tillkommer dessutom forskning gällande kundupplevelser för att ge en insyn i hur kunderna upplever sin medverkan i serviceåterhämtning. Det finns i nuläget ingen forskning eller information om hur kunderna upplever sin medverkan. Företagen frågar ofta bara om deras hjälpcenter var till nytta, vilket innebär att företaget enbart får reda på om de inkluderat de rätta problemen och lösningarna. Företagen inriktar sig därmed bara på själva resultatet, det
vill säga om problemet blev löst eller ej, och inte på hur kunden upplevde själva serviceåterhämtningen när han eller hon stod för större delen av problemlösningen.

1.2 Syfte och forskningsfråga

Syftet med denna studie och studiens forskningsfråga grundar sig på den ovannämnda bristen på insyn i kundernas upplevelse av medverkan i serviceåterhämtning. Syftet med denna studie är således att undersöka hur kunder upplever sin medverkan i serviceåterhämtning. Forskningsfrågan är därför följande: Hur upplever kunder sin medverkan i serviceåterhämtning?

1.3 Begränsningar


1.4 Huvudkoncept

Huvudkoncepten i denna studie används i flera olika forskningsinriktningar, vilket innebär att definitionerna är många. Av denna orsak listas definitionerna nedan.

Kundupplevelse (eng. customer experience) är ”den interna och subjektiva reaktion kunden uppvisar till följd av en indirekt eller direkt kontakt med ett företag” (egen översättning, Meyer och Schwager 2007: 118).

Kundmedverkan (eng. customer participation) är ”den grad till vilken kunden är involverad i att skapa och utföra en tjänst” (egen översättning, Dabholkar 1990: 484).

Serviceåterhämtning (eng. service recovery) är de handlingar som en organisation vidtar till följd av ett servicemisslyckande (Grönroos 1988).

Kundmedverkan i serviceåterhämtning (eng. customer participation in service recovery) är ”den grad till vilken kunden är involverad i åtgärderna som vidtas vid ett servicemisslyckande” (egen översättning, Dong, Evans och Zou 2008: 126).
KUNDERS SERVICEUPPLEVELSER

Upplevelser används inom flera olika marknadsföringsområden och begreppet tenderar därmed ha olika betydelser beroende på i vilket sammanhang det används. I detta kapitel kommer därför de olika definitionerna samt karaktäriseringarna att diskuteras. Slutligen kommer även Chahal och Duttas (2014) forskningmodell att presenteras för att ge en djupare förståelse av kundupplevelser.

2.1 Tre typer av karaktärisering av kundupplevelser


2.2 Definition


2.3 Forskningsmodell för kundupplevelser

Chahal och Dutta (2014) har skapat en forskningsmodell som kan användas för att få en djupare förståelse av kundupplevelser. Modellen visar hur kundupplevelsen skapas och formas och även vad den kan resultatera i.
2.3.1 **Faktorer som inverkar på kundupplevelsen**


2.3.2 **Dimensioner av kundupplevelsen**


2.3.3 **Kunddeltagande**


2.3.4 **Utfall**

3 KUNDMEDVERKAN OCH SERVICEÅTERHÄMTNING

3.1 Kundmedverkan

Kundmedverkan har blivit ett intressant ämne att studera eftersom både marknaderna och marknadsföringen uppvisar ett ökat samarbete mellan säljare och kunder. Tidigare forskning gällande kundmedverkan kan delas in i tre forskningsströmmar: (1) ekonomiska fördelar med kundmedverkan från ett företagsperspektiv, (2) hantering av kunder som medverkar, och (3) incitament för kunder att medverka. Under de senaste fyra årtiondena har synen på kundmedverkan förändrats radikalt, från att vara ett störande element till att bli ett uppskattat sätt att skapa värde.


3.2 Serviceåterhämtning

3.3 Kundmedverkan i serviceåterhämtning


4 METODOLOGI

4.1 Angreppssätt

En upplevelse innehåller både känslor och tankar, vilket enligt Patton (2002) inte går att observera. Man kan däremot studera en upplevelse genom intervjuer, eftersom kunden
genom dessa intervjuer kan dela med sig av sina känslor och tankar (Patton 2002). För att svara på forskningsfrågan om hur kunder upplever sin medverkan i en gemensamt skapat serviceåterhämtning så har intervjuer därmed valts som undersökningsmetod. För att sedan få information av så hög kvalitet som möjligt så har intervju med intervjuguide valts som intervjutyp eftersom den tillåter en viss del av flexibilitet, vilket kan anses vara viktigt i detta fall, eftersom forskningsområdet är så pass nytt att respondenten kan lyfta fram oförutsedda aspekter som intervjuaren kanske vill följa upp. Intervjuguiden består dock av en lista med på förhand bestämda ämnen, vilket gör att intervjuaren kan fokusera på områden som berör forskningsfrågan.

4.2 Urval


4.3 Intervjuprocess och -guide


Sju intervjuer genomfördes och de varade mellan 28 minuter och 1 timme och 13 minuter. Intervjuerna spelades in och transskriberades sedan för att underlätta analysen av insamlade data (Saunders et al. 2009). Alla intervjuer gjordes på svenska eftersom det var både respondenternas och intervjuarens moderstånd.
4.4 Analys


4.5 Undersökningens kvalitet


Syftet med denna studie är att förstå hur kunder deltar i serviceåterhämtning och hur de upplever sin medverkan. Resultatet av studien är indelat i fyra olika sektioner, som alla relaterar till studiens syfte. För att skapa en bättre förståelse av hur kunden upplever sin medverkan i serviceåterhämtning så introduceras de faktorer som inverkar på kundupplevelsen. I den andra sektionen undersöks kunddeltagandets funktion som relationsmoderator mellan faktorerna som inverkar på kundupplevelsen och dimensionerna av kundupplevelsen. Kundens upplevelse av medverkan i serviceåterhämtning lyfts fram i den tredje sektionen medan den fjärde sektionen består
av kundernas holistiska tillfredsställelse. Resultaten är slutligen sammanställda i en figur som visar kunders upplevelser av medverkan i serviceåterhämtning.

5 RESULTAT

5.1 Faktorer som påverkar kundupplevelsen

Det finns tre typer av faktorer som kan anses ha en inverkan på kundupplevelsen: centrala faktorer, stödjande faktorer och kontextuella faktorer.

5.1.1 Servicekvaliteten - den centrala faktorn


Resultatet tyder på att vissa steg i serviceåterhämtningsprocessen, som inverkar på serviceåterhämtningens kvalitet, lätt kan bli exkluderade när kunden till en hög grad medverkar i serviceåterhämtningen. Detta sker exempelvis om kontakten mellan
företaget och kunden uteblir på grund av att kunden vänder sig till andra intressenter eller källor för att lösa problemet. Företaget blir i vissa fall inte ens varse om att ett misslyckande skett, vilket i sin tur leder till att de inte kan vidta de åtgärder som krävs för att skapa en lyckad serviceåterhämtningsprocess.

5.1.2 Stödjande faktorer

De tre stödjande faktorerna är tillgång, val och information. Med tillgång menas i det här fallet tillgången till möjliga serviceåterhämtningssökhavanden. Respondenterna påpekade exempelvis tillgängligheten till kundservice och hjälpcentrar som en faktor som påverkade deras kundupplevelse. Gällande näthandel så var tillgången till returneringsställen (platser dit kunden kan skicka tillbaka produkter) en viktig faktor för respondenterna. Respondenterna uppfinnade även att de erbjuds olika valmöjligheter gällande serviceåterhämtningens utförande, både gällande i vilken utsträckning de var delaktiga i serviceåterhämtningen och på vilket sätt de deltar.


5.1.3 Kontextuella faktorer

Tidigare erfarenheter, preferens, personlighet och förmåga kan klassas som kontextuella faktorer som inverkar på kundupplevelsen. Enligt flera respondenters så innebar tidigare erfarenheter, personlighet samt förmåga att de hade vissa förväntningar gällande serviceåterhämtningens tillvägagångssätt samt utförande.

5.2 Kunddeltagande – en relationsmoderator

Kunddeltagande kan anses fungera som en relationsmoderator mellan faktorer som påverkar kundupplevelsen och kundupplevelsens dimensioner. De stödjande faktorerna
(tillgång, val och information) och de kontextuella faktorerna (tidigare erfarenheter, preferens, personlighet och förmåga) inverkar på den grad till vilken kunden deltar i serviceåterhämtningsprocessen. Graden av kunddeltagande i serviceåterhämtningen (låg, moderat eller hög) har i sin tur en inverkan på kundupplevelsens dimensioner.

Studiens resultat tyder på att de stödjande och kontextuella faktorerna tillsammans påverkar kundens grad av deltagande. Emily (intervju 2.12.2015) lyfte exempelvis fram att tillgång, tidigare erfarenhet, preferens samt personlighet och förmåga inverkade på hennes grad av deltagande i serviceåterhämtningen.

5.3 Kundupplevelsens dimensioner


Med den **kognitiva dimensionen** avses de tankar kunden har gällande upplevelsen (Chahal och Dutta 2014). Av intervjuerna framgick det att kunderna reflekterade över vad som gick snett. De kunder som kom fram till att de själva skulle ha kunnat göra något annorlunda för att undvika servicemisslyckande tenderade att lättare kunna acceptera en högre grad av medverkan i serviceåterhämtningen. Flera av respondenterna ansåg även att det skulle vara svårt att i praktiken skapa en serviceåterhämtning där kunderna
inte medverkade. Med sitt praktiska tänkande rättfärdigade kunderna sin medverkan i serviceåterhämtningen.


### 5.4 Holistisk tillfredsställelse

Serviceåterhämtning kan inverka både positivt och negativt på en kunds tillfredsställelse. En lyckad serviceåterhämtning kan nämligen göra kunden nöjd och förstärka lojaliteten medan en misslyckad serviceåterhämtning kan leda till att kunden övergår till konkurrenterna (Smith, Bolton och Wagner 1999). Respondenterna kunde lätt delas i två kategorier, nöjda kunder och missnöjda kunder, baserat på deras tillfredsställelse gällande deras kundupplevelser av medverkan i den samskapade serviceåterhämtningen.

även att hon inte kommer köpa något från företaget igen. Nöjda kunder är följaktligen åter tillfredsställda medan missnöjda kunder till och med kan gå förlorade.

5.5 Kundupplevelse av medverkan i serviceåterhämtning

De fyra föregående sektionerna kan sammanfattas i nedanstående figur som visar kundupplevelser av medverkan i serviceåterhämtning.
Syftet med denna studie var att undersöka hur kunder upplever sin medverkan i serviceåterhämtning. Enligt resultaten i denna studie så är serviceåterhämtningens kvalitet den faktor som främst inverkar på hur kunden upplever sin medverkan serviceåterhämtningen. Det framgick att kvaliteten ofta sjönk när kunddeltagandet ökade, detta berodde på att flera vitala steg i serviceåterhämtningsprocessen försvårades i och med att kundens grad av medverkan ökade. En hög grad av kundmedverkan betydde i vissa fall att företag gick miste om chansen att be om ursäkt av kunden och ge kompensation. Företagen förlorade samtidigt möjligheten att få nödvändig information om hur de i framtiden kunde undvika liknande misslyckanden. Det vore således i företagens intresse att hitta en lösning som ger företaget information om servicemisslyckande så att de kan vidta de åtgärder som krävs för att bibehålla en serviceåterhämtning av hög kvalitet.


Kundens upplevelse av serviceåterhämtningen kan enligt resultatet som erhölls från datamaterialet insamlat under intervjuerna anses inverka på den holistiska tillfredsställelsen. En kund som är nöjd med sin medverkan i serviceåterhämtningen och även är nöjd med själva serviceåterhämtningen kan slutligen uppleva återupprättad tillfredsställelse samt förstärkt lojalitet. En missnöjd kund kan däremot bli ännu mera missnöjd med tjänsten och tjänsteleverantören. Det framkom även att missnöjda kunder spred negativt rykte och till och med avslutade sin kundrelation på grund av den sammantaget dåliga upplevelsen.
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**INTERVIEWS**

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APPENDIX 1  INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview guide (translated from Swedish to English)

Description of the service and the service failure

- Describe the service
- What was the problem / what went wrong?
- How did the problem arise / what caused the problem?
- How did you become aware of the service failure?
- How did the company become aware of the service failure?
- What were the consequences of the service failure?

Service recovery and experience of participation in service recovery

- How was the problem solved?
- How did you participate in the service recovery?
- What were the result / consequences of your participation?
- How did you experience your participation?
- Are you satisfied with the actions taken by the service provider?
  - Why?
- Would you have preferred a higher degree of firm participation?
  - Why?
  - If yes, how would you like them to participate more?
- Are you satisfied with the actions taken by yourself?
  - Why?
- Would you have preferred a higher degree of customer participation?
  - Why?
  - If yes, how would you like to participate more?
- Are you satisfied with the overall service recovery process?
  - Why?
- How could your experience of participation in service recovery process be improved?
  - What could the service provider have done differently?
  - What could you have done differently?

Background

- Past experience and ability: Have you used similar services previously?
  - Do you have experience of service failures?
  - Do you have previous experience of participation in service recovery?