

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The results of this study were presented and discussed at length in the previous chapter in an effort to either answer or reject the stated research questions. Possible explanations were also offered for the results that were reported.

In this chapter the results will be summarised and conclusions will be drawn. Lastly this study will offer specific recommendations in an effort to further improve the customer experience of students at the North-West University.

7.2 Summary of research questions and findings

A summary of the five different research questions and the main findings is provided in Table 7.1, as well as the conclusion as to whether the different research questions are therefore answered or rejected.

Table 7.1: Summary of research questions and findings

Research question no	1
Research question formulated	Will there be a significant association between the perceived customer experience encounter levels as delivered by administrative staff and received by the undergraduate students?
Main findings	<p>The students' customer service experience at the different admissions offices of Academic Administration at the NWU, is "average" in most cases. A significant Phi coefficient-value of 0.465 was calculated, and the students' customer service experience were "average" in most cases. In total 33.90% reported an average experience, and another 30.60% an above-average experience. In total 36.70% reported an average experience, and another 30.70% an above-average experience</p> <p>A highly significant Phi-value of 0.482 was reported for the registrations/records-offices, and the majority of the groups reporting an average experience. In total 33.90% reported an average experience, and another 30.60% an above-average experience.</p> <p>A Phi-value (0.371) was reported at the examinations department, but it is still considered to be of a positive association. Six of the groups reported an above average experience, which is more than the previous academic administration departments. On average 29.90% of the respondents reported an average customer experience, and 56.50% reported an above average or exceptional customer experience.</p> <p>A slightly smaller Phi-value was found (0.392) at the faculty administrative office, and the experiences of the student groups were divided between average and above average experiences. On average 30.60% of the respondents reported an average customer experience, and 54.90% reported an above average or exceptional customer experience.</p> <p>All student groups reported an average or above average experience at their relevant Distribution Centres. The Phi-value was a positive 0.340.</p>

A highly significant Phi-value of 0.597 was determined, clearly indicates visible association between the waiting time of students at the different campuses and learning models.

In general 56.60% of the students reported an answering time of one minute or shorter. The Phi-value was 0.380, which is within the range of a positive association between the values.

A highly significant Phi-value of 0.506 was found, with two groups of students reporting that it took on average longer than a week to get their administrative problems resolved. On the other end of the scale, four groups reported that the majority of their problems were resolved immediately.

One group of students indicated that they had to contact administrative staff members more than three times before their problems were resolved, while eight other groups indicated that one visit was sufficient to get their problems resolved. A total of 56.80% of all the students reported that their problems were resolved within three days or less after it was reported. A significant Phi-value of 0.447 was reported.

At four different campuses' administrative desks the majority of students reported that there were no staff members present during lunch times. On the service desks of the other learning models/campuses the majority of students confirmed the availability of administrative staff during lunch times.

Only 22.90% of all student respondents indicated that they did not attempt to contact administrative staff during tea times, indicating a need that there should be staff members available at these times.

Exactly fifty percent of the one group of campus students reported that there were no staff members available after hours during peak times, but at all the other campuses and learning models the majority of students indicated that administrative staff members were available during these times.

The majority of students (64.30%) indicated that they did attempt to contact the NWU on Saturdays during peak times for administrative issues, and the largest groups of students from one campus indicated that there was no service available.

	<p>There were three student groups that reported they did observe additional staff members at service desks during long queues, but the other groups did not.</p> <p>From the results it is evident that there are marked differences in the perceived customer experience encounter levels as encountered by the undergraduate students of the different campuses and learning models of the NWU.</p>
Conclusion	The research question is <u>answered</u> .

Research question no	2
Research question formulated	Will there be an association between a positive customer experience encountered by students, and the students' loyalty, intentions to study further and their advocacy intentions?
Main findings	<p>Nearly half of the students (49.80%) indicated that they received prompt and professional service from the administrative support staff members. The Phi-value was 0.368.</p> <p>The majority of all students (57.80%) indicated that they considered the customer service they received as good value for money, and worth what they paid for. On average 73.60%% of the respondents reported a good or excellent value for money when rating their studies, the related costs and the perceived customer experience levels. The reported Phi-value was 0.438.</p> <p>The majority of all students (36.70%) indicated that they were very loyal towards the NWU, while the second-largest group (34.10%) considered themselves as loyal. The reported Phi-value was a positive 0.356.</p> <p>Nearly two-thirds of all students (66.00%) indicated a positive chance of own further studies. A positive Phi-value of 0.413 was recorded.</p> <p>More than half of all student participants (51.80%) indicated that they would definitely recommend the NWU to other prospective students, with a positively associated Phi-value of 0.494. The majority of students from six learning models/campuses confirmed their strong advocacy level, while the majority of students from the other four groups agreed with the statement that they would actively recommend the NWU to other prospective students.</p>

	The results to test this research question was discussed in section 6.6, and it was indicated that there was indeed a strong, positive correlation between a positive customer experience as encountered by students, and their loyalty, as well as their intentions to continue their studies at the NWU, and their intention to actively endorse or promote the NWU to friends and family members (advocacy intentions).
Conclusion	The research question is <u>answered</u> .

Research question no	3
Research question formulated	Will the administrative staff members strive to deliver satisfactory customer experience levels and will there be a strong association between their own customer experience levels, loyalty and advocacy intentions?
Main findings	<p>The majority of staff members rated their colleagues' service level as average (35.70%), with another 32.80% rating the customer service levels at the administrative departments as above average, and another 22.40% regarded the service levels as exceptional. Just over 7% gave no rating, most likely due to a lack of interaction with other departments. The admissions office got the most average ratings (44.00%), the examinations office the most above average ratings (42.90%) and the faculties' administrative managers and staff the most exceptional ratings (28.90%).</p> <p>Exactly three quarters of all the administrative staff members strongly agreed with the statement that they would actively recommend the NWU to prospective students, with another 21.00% also agreeing with the concept of customer advocacy.</p> <p>The majority of administrative staff members (56.60%) indicated that they considered students as customers, with another 6.10% confirming the higher level of customer advocacy. A total of 25.30% of staff members selected "other", which might indicate that they did not completely understand the question, or had a different perspective not provided for in this question. Only three percent confirmed that they see students "just as another student".</p>

	It was shown in section 6.7 that there were also a strong, positive correlation between staff members' intention to deliver satisfactory customer experience levels and also between it, their own loyalty and own customer advocacy levels.
Conclusion	The research question is <u>answered</u> .

Research question no	4
Research question formulated	Will there be an association between the perceived customer experience encounter levels of younger, on-campus students and older, off-campus students?
Main findings	<p>There are significant differences in the age group distribution of on-and off-campus students, with 92.70% of all on-campus students younger than 26 years, and 71.90% of all off-campus students older than 30 years.</p> <p>The majority of on-and off-campus students (47.20% and 55.10% respectively) reported that they received a prompt and professional service from the administrative support staff at the NWU, which can be considered as a satisfactory customer experience.</p> <p>Due to the reasons provided in section 6.8, there was not a significant difference in the perceived customer experience levels between younger, on-campus students and older, off-campus students. It could therefore be concluded that all student populations have the same CEM desires, irrespective of their ages. The significantly low Phi-value of 0.106 also confirms that the fourth research question can be rejected</p>
Conclusion	The research question is <u>rejected</u> .

Research question no	5
Research question formulated	Will the proposed NWU-PERF service quality measurement tool be a reliable and valid instrument to determine the participants' perceptions about customer service levels at the NWU as delivered by the academic administration departments?
Main findings	<p>The results of the principal axis factor analysis with Oblimin rotation are reported in Table 6.47 as a pattern matrix. The first column refers to the question numbers as it appears in the questionnaire, the second and third column refer to the HedPERF variable numbers and factor loadings</p> <p>Two factors were extracted for both the staff and student populations. The two extracted factors for students and staff differed to a smaller degree and the factor scores were therefore not comparable. These two factors could be identified as indicators of personal and impersonal service experiences and were reported in separate columns for the students and staff members.</p> <p>The KMO measure of sampling (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) is used to test if the correlations between the variables are large enough, while the Bartlett's test of Sphericity determines if the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. The results indicate that the factor model is appropriate for factor analysis. The percentage variance explained by the two factors is also almost 70% for both staff and students. The KMO-values of 0.925 and 0.972 indicates a highly satisfactory factor analysis, as both values are higher than 0.9.</p> <p>Crombach alpha coefficients for both staff and students of larger than 0.8 were reported for both factors, indicating the reliability of the measuring instrument. The interpretability and reliability of the identified factors proved to be an indication of the relevance of the measuring instrument for customer satisfaction in HEIs</p> <p>The NWU-PERF service quality tool was found to be a reliable and valid instrument to determine participants' perceptions about customer service levels at the NWU in the academic administration environment, as was reported in section 6.9. This instrument should therefore be used frequently to consistently improve service levels at the NWU.</p>
Conclusion	The research question is <u>answered</u> .

The results discussed in detail in the previous chapter answered four of the five research questions (no's 1-3 and 5), while there were valid reasons provided why the results of this study did not answer the fourth research question.

It was confirmed that there are marked differences in the perceived customer experience encounter levels as encountered by the undergraduate students of the different campuses and learning models of the NWU; that there was a strong, positive correlation between a positive customer experience as encountered by students and their loyalty, as well as their intentions to continue their studies at the NWU, and their intention to actively endorse or promote the NWU to friends and family members (advocacy intentions); there was also a strong, positive correlation between staff members' intention to deliver satisfactory customer experience levels and also between it, their own loyalty and own customer advocacy levels; and that the NWU-PERF service quality tool is a reliable and valid instrument to determine participants' perceptions about customer service levels at the NWU in the administrative support environment.

It was confirmed that there is not a significant difference in the perceived customer experience levels between younger, on-campus students and older, off-campus students and that all student populations have the same need for satisfactory customer experience levels.

7.3 Recommendations

When the contents of the literature study and the results of the research model of this study are analysed, the following specific recommendations can be made in an effort to further enhance or improve the customer experience level of students at the NWU to ensure that all learning models and modes of delivery are able to render excellent services, which should lead to satisfied and loyal customer advocates:

7.3.1 Use the standardized service quality measuring model NWU-PERF and adapt it for all service-related departments at the NWU

The NWU-PERF was developed in this study (as discussed in paragraph 6.9 with the answering of research question five) by using some administrative statements of the HEdPERF service quality model, as well as other aspects. It should be used as a basis to measure the quality of all support services and departments at the NWU, but adapted with department-specific questions to include the following service departments:

- Financial Aid Bureaux (for on- and off-campus students)
- Financial Administration (for on- and off-campus students)
- Library Services (for on- and off-campus students)
- Security and Protection Services (for on-campus students)

- Graduation Ceremonies (for on- and off-campus students)
- Marketing and Communications Department (for on- and off-campus students)
- Students' Representative Council (for on- and off-campus students)
- Office of the Dean of Student Affairs (for on-campus students)
- Study Material Distribution Centre (for on- and off-campus students)
- Mail Room and Courier Services (for on- and off-campus students)
- Residential Services and Hostels (for on-campus students)
- Campus Medical Services and Clinic (for on-campus students)
- Sports Facilities and Sports Clubs (for on-campus students)

7.3.2 Draw up service level agreements between service departments and faculties

Due to the fact that several visible associations were reported between the customer experience levels at different service departments it is recommended that practical and quantifiable service level agreements (SLAs) should be draw up between the departments, but also between them and the different faculties in order to serve the different customer groups (students, parents, alumni, and other stakeholders) more effectively. This should include measurable service levels and turnaround times, or guaranteed time frames within which a request or complaint should be satisfactory resolved. These service levels should be publicly known, and even advertised on the NWU website and in marketing brochures, as it could create a lot of credibility, but also keep staff members committed if they know that it is advertised publicly. Possible remedial steps should also be indicated and enforced in the case where the SLA is breached. This could include financial penalties to rectify problems.

7.3.3 Design and implement formal policies, processes and procedures to ensure that all staff and service departments on all campuses of the NWU applies a customer-centric approach towards all their customers in all activities

The NWU's *policy for feedback about teaching and learning by students* is not sufficient to address the NWU institutional plan's aim to *be an institution with a client focus embedded in quality*, as it only makes provision for the measuring of quality in the classroom.

The NWU should create and adopt a policy to address all quality-related experiences for the students (including all support departments and services), or adopt the *policy for feedback about teaching and learning by students* to be broader.

A practical example of such a proposed extension of policies, processes and procedures to ensure a more customer-centric approach could be to allow students of all campuses and

modes of deliveries to make use of any service point for enquiries and even for registrations, including those at study centres.

Another example of a more pro-active customer-centric administrative approach may be to ask students during the registration process to indicate whether they would like to receive their results via their preferred electronic channel (e-mail, SMS, secure web or fax) as soon as they have been verified. This *push*-activity at the earliest possible opportunity could be experienced in more positive light as the current *pull*-activity where students need to call in until they can get their results. It will also lessen the burden on administrative staff that needs to spend hours on the phone explaining when the results are ready, or providing the actual results. The same principle can be applied for other administrative enquiries.

Administrative managers should also anticipate and establish the practical needs of students that will enhance and improve a positive customer experience on the one hand, but also lead to a more effective working environment for staff members. This could include aspects like providing the full academic records to students who just completed their studies in their preferred language or languages, as most of them would need it to apply for a job, and unnecessary queues times can be eliminated by providing it pro-actively.

Furthermore, it is recommended that all service departments analyse and record all their formal work processes, reengineer those processes where necessary to ensure a customer-driven approach, and then draw up a formal work process document on the standardised NWU-template. This manual should be used in practice and updated on a frequent basis. This includes practical arrangements or policies to have skeleton staff available at service points during lunch and tea times, as well as during weekends and for longer hours during peak periods – a need that was clearly illustrated during this study.

7.3.4 Utilize the e-learning platform (e-Fundi) more effectively for on-and off-campus students to improve service levels

The NWU's e-Fundi learning platform is currently primarily being used for academic purposes on campuses and modes of delivery where students have internet-access. It should be developed to also address more administrative issues and assist students with administrative enquiries and problems in a real-time environment, but its core activities should also be improved by developing more interactive "e-study guides". It should also become an appropriate and efficient quality measuring instrument for students and should be developed and used more frequently for this purpose. An effort should also be made to make it more available for off-campus students who choose to make use of it by creating WiFi hotspots at the study centres. This will also assist to implement new technologies like e-books or tablet in order for the students to operate in a more in a cost-effective and practical manner.

7.3.5 Develop suitable and usable Web 2.0-applications for students in the near future

The e-Fundi learning platform should also make provision for Web 2.0-applications in the medium term, to include applications that students will use in the near future. In South Africa band-width and access to the internet currently prohibits local students from utilizing Web 2.0-applications in the same way their American counterparts can do, but the new Seacom data cable and other developments can change the picture and then local students may also benefit more from Web 2.0-applications, including using programmes like Facebook, YouTube, Second Life and Twitter to communicate with the University – even for administrative matters.

7.3.6 Develop and implement a mobile learning platform

The use of a mobile learning platform (also referred to as M-learning) should be further investigated and implemented as soon as possible, as it is a more available and affordable technology for both on-and off-campus students. As was seen from the demographic results, virtually all on-and off-campus students have access to cellular phones and utilize them, while access to computers and the internet is more restricted.

Ideally this should be seamlessly integrated into the e-Fundi learning platform. This tool should also be made available as a supplementary or additional measuring instrument to determine service quality about administrative issues by means of SMSs and the responses generated.

7.3.7 Develop practical tools to assist off-campus administrative service departments and improve their customer service levels

Due to the fact that visible associations were reported between the customer experience levels at some of the service departments of off-campus programmes, it is recommended that practical, and logistical solutions should be implemented at these programmes/modes of delivery (e.g. bar-coding management system of assignments) in order to offer the same service levels to other programmes with similar customers/students. A good example is the Advanced Certificate in Education programme (ACE), which is offered by all three campuses as a distance programme. These students have similar needs and restraints (given their rural location), while the administrative staff at the different campuses faces similar challenges to manage several practical processes. In most cases, students will hand in their assignments, which can be up to 50,000 in a short span of time outside the classroom, or mail it in. Hand-held bar code scanners/readers will not only minimize the risk of losing assignments, but also create more credibility for administrative staff, who sometimes look unprofessional when trying to deal with the bulk of the work. Standardization makes a lot of sense - also from a cost-implication perspective.

7.3.8 Develop and implement an integrated electronic document management system

The lack of an integrated electronic document management system makes it difficult for administrative staff on all campuses to provide a quality service to students. During the application process, student files have to be processed by several parties, including the faculties. This implies that the hard-copy file with all the documents relevant to the application process, has to be sent across the campus and is not accessible everywhere. There is also not an integrated process to keep track of all incoming and outgoing correspondence, making it very difficult for administrative staff to be up to date on the progress regarding a complaint they were not involved with initially. Such an integrated electronic document management system should be able to keep track of all these documents, and be visible to all authorized staff.

7.3.9 Implement customer-friendly office hours for administrative departments

One very simple, but frustrating problem for the students is the unavailability of some administrative offices during lunch hours or after working hours. Most working, off-campus students can only contact the University during their lunch breaks or after hours, while on-campus students with full time-tables can only visit these offices during lunch times. All administrative offices should remain open during lunch hours, as well as after hours for a short period of time (e.g. until 17:30). This can easily be managed by spreading the starting, lunch and going home times of administrative staff and still be in line with the Labour Relations Act's requirements in terms of scheduled lunch breaks. These arrangements should preferably be standardized and clearly communicated to students. Most administrative offices make provision for extra, temporary staff and longer hours and over Saturdays during peak periods like student registrations. This should also be standardized, extended and communicated to all stakeholders. This recommendation is in line with that of Sohail *et al.* (2003:180), who find in their study at Malaysian HEIs that it could lead to more satisfied students and a higher level of student retention.

7.3.10 Extend/standardize the quality customer service training programme

In the structured interviews with the registrars it became evident that the campuses where administrative staff members were exposed to quality customer service training programme also experienced better customer experience levels by the students. The existing quality customer service training programme being presented by Kwelanga Training (or something similar) should form part of all new appointees' induction training programmes for all campuses and modes of delivery, while all staff members involved with customers should be re-trained on an annual basis- even if the training programme needs to be adapted and

extended to make provision for higher NQF-levels. The recommendations of Edelman (2006:11) should be kept in mind:

- Training should be relevant to real working situations.
- It should be delivered in a practical and cost-effective format.
- The instructors should be dynamic and well-informed.

7.3.11 Create a central customer service centre for the NWU with multiple channels

In 2002 a proposal to create a central customer service centre at the then PU for CHE was initially approved, but later rejected due to several reasons (the proposed organogram and structure are shown in the Appendices 8 and 9 at the end of this thesis). Given the findings of this study, it is recommended that the NWU re-investigate this issue. It is believed that a central, multi-faceted customer service centre can improve the service levels of especially the off-campus programmes and make the University more accessible for students in rural areas. All communication channels should be utilized, including:

- Walk-in customers
- Telephonic enquiries
- E-mail enquiries
- Faxed enquiries
- Internet self-help environment with FAQs, call-back technology and real-time chat.

7.3.12 Standardize the ratio of administrative staff to students

The ratio of administrative staff to students differs across the campuses and modes of delivery and could be partly responsible for the differences in experienced customer service levels. Although it will be a costly exercise to address this, the NWU management will have to address it in the shortest possible affordable time span. An increase in customer satisfaction, loyalty and advocacy (as argued in this study) will produce a far greater return on investment over the long term by ensuring a possible increase in post-graduate students and a continuous inflow of new undergraduate students as a result of continuous referrals by satisfied and loyal alumni.

7.3.13 Investigate the creation of a centralised service environment for open and distance learning (ODL) programmes

All three campuses currently present and manage off-campus programmes – and in many cases the same programme, e.g. the Advanced Certificate in Education. On the Potchefstroom Campus there are at least six different off-campus programmes, all with a different learning model (contact approach) and in most cases different administrative staff.

In many cases different off-campus programmes rent different facilities in the same towns all over South Africa to serve as study centres. This implies duplication of contracts with service providers, temporary staff to manage the centre's, technical equipment like TVs and DVD-players and increased, unnecessary costs and risks. Recently the Potchefstroom Campus was still renting a facility for its Telematic Nursing programme in Mafikeng, near to the Mafikeng Campus that has facilities available without any costs.

A centralised service environment responsible for the delivery and management of all off-campus or open and distance learning programmes (ODL) may lead to the following benefits:

- Sharing of skills, experience and knowledge of staff.
- Balancing out the application of under and over-utilized staff, and in the process getting more value out of some, while protecting others from burn-out.
- Better application of scales of economy, and thus cost savings for service departments.
- Better service to off-campus students, especially those in rural areas.
- More loyal off-campus students, increasing the positive effect of word-of-mouth.
- Off-campus students enrolling for further qualifications.
- Addressing some of the above-mentioned recommendations, including the central customer service centre, correcting the ratio of administrative staff to students and the standardization of the quality customer service training programme.

7.3.14 Create a centralised and active alumni association

Currently some campuses have an alumni association and distribute electronic newsletters and organises central and regional reunions from time to time. An active alumni association in the HEI environment can be compared to a profitable and beneficial loyalty programme in the commercial environment, but not fall in the same trap as corporate loyalty programmes which are only mono-directional. An alumni-relations-programme must be designed and driven according to the needs of the alumni and can include aspects like a career centre, newsletters, Facebook-sites, centralized and de-centralized reunions and sharing of personal details of fellow-students where prior permission has been obtained. When the programme is based on the needs of the alumni, and two-way communication channels have been established, the University will eventually begin to reap the benefits of such a programme, including effective and continuous word-of-mouth, enrolment for post-graduate studies, a continuous flow of new quality undergraduate applicants from their family members and friends that holds the same values and qualities and even funding of bursary programmes

and other possible sponsorships when the alumni's careers prosper and they are able to put something back into the University, or ready to enrol their own children at their alma mater.

It is vital to ensure that as many as possible graduates be recruited to join the alumni association, but that their data (including preferred mode of communication) should be accurately captured and utilized. Frequent and effective communication with them would be mutually beneficial and although it is virtually impossible to connect a monetary value to the possible benefits of their word-of-mouth referrals, there can be no doubt that there is room for improvement and that this valuable tool should be used more effectively by the NWU and other HEIs.

7.4 Limitations of the study

It was not possible to include all students of the NWU, due to the large numbers of off-campus students involved in the various cooperation agreement programmes presented by the NWU and its partners all over Southern Africa. The same argument restricted access to the post-graduate students of the NWU.

Other limitations include the fact that not all the sample elements were selected by using probability sampling techniques only, and that respondents could have been biased in their completion of the questionnaires by indicating the ideal customer interface experiences and not necessarily their actual experiences.

Another possible constraint of this study which could have occurred during the completion of the questionnaire was that respondents could have answered the questions by indicating the ideal customer experience or the answer that they anticipated to be the correct or ideal response. This could be because they feel loyal towards the NWU, or the relevant staff member/s or department/s, and did not want to portray them in a negative manner. On the other hand it was also possible that respondents who were upset about other problems at the NWU gave a more negative response to specific issues that were not true or honest. Respondents' interpretation of the Likert-scales could also have been different and this could have led to diverse answers to the same experience or situation. It was also possible that the field worker/s did not convey the instructions correctly and that some of the respondents therefore misinterpreted some of the questions, the Likert-scale and other parts of the questionnaire.

7.5 Recommendations for further research

It is proposed that the NWU-PERF and HedPERF service quality model should also be tested at other HEIs in South Africa to determine whether these models are suitable, reliable and valid to be used at different HEIs to determine students' perception about their customer experiences.

It is also necessary to extend the research to also measure and determine the customer experience levels at other service environments at HEIs, including service departments like financial administration, the library, residences, the cafeteria, and security services.

It might also be valuable to determine what other experiences on campus will enhance a positive customer advocacy. This can include activities and facilities like the graduation ceremonies, availability of bursaries and loans, world-class sporting facilities, and a well-organised student life.

The customer experience levels of other stakeholders should also be measured and determined. This could include the parents of undergraduate students, bursary providers in the private and public sector, officials from the department of education, and alumni.

A more challenging, but necessary research project might be to determine the customer experience level of students in the classroom environment. In the literature review chapters of this study it was shown that there is broad consensus about the concept of the “student as customer” in the support services or administrative environment. The question should be asked whether students can also be considered as customers in classroom, and how they experience the interaction in the academic environment and how it affects their satisfaction, loyalty and advocacy intentions.

7.6 Conclusion

A new service quality measuring instrument, suitable for the HEI administrative environment, the NWU-PERF service quality model, was constructed and tested. It was found to be reliable and valid and able to establish the customer experience level of undergraduate students in the administrative environment at the NWU. This model is shown in Figure 7.1, and is based on the results obtained from this study. It is illustrated by using the Spearman RHO-test.

The correlations between the different factors confirm the components of the Integrated Customer Experience Management at the NWU, as it illustrates a visible and high correlation between the constructed NWU-PERF model and customer advocacy ($r=0,513$), and the effectiveness of problem resolution from the administrative staff ($r=0,568$ for the time it took to resolve a problem, and $r=0,556$ for the shorter number of attempts to resolve a problem).

By using the elements of this model in a standardized questionnaire in different HEI service environments, it should be possible to determine the customer experience levels of students, and whether it will contribute to loyalty, customer retention (further studies) and advocacy.

If correctly applied, this model can contribute towards a greater awareness and further improvement of service levels rendered by administrative staff at the NWU, in order to enhance the customer experience of the students in an administrative level. This could lead

to more satisfied and loyal students (as customers) with a stronger intention to further their own studies, as well as an increased customer advocacy level. The NWU can also benefit from applying this valuable element of the relationship marketing domain in practice, as it could lead to more committed, satisfied and loyal staff members and students, and a natural growth in student numbers, also at the post-graduate level.

Figure 7.1: The proposed NWU-PERF service quality model for the North-West University

