

Load shedding got you feeling a little powerless?



It is known that essential services such as water, electricity and healthcare are crucial to the well-being of people in society. However, research has shown that power outages are almost unavoidable and can have dire effects on people's quality of life. South Africa is experiencing a unique situation in which customers are faced with unplanned power outages and a failure of supply from a government service provider trading as a monopoly (Eskom). This makes for a tough situation with difficult decisions for customers. Do customers switch to a more expensive solution in using renewable energy sources or do they remain with Eskom and continue to have the uncertainty of supply?

Substantial research has been conducted on the effects of a service failure on a customer's intention to switch and effects of service recovery efforts after a service failure impacts a customer's post-purchase behaviour. However, little research has been conducted on the effects of a service failure on a customer's quality of life. A research study was conducted by Tuscany Kitch, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), conducted a study in order to investigate the effects of load shedding on a South African customer's quality of life and feelings of power.

An online survey was conducted and distributed to a Qualtrics panel where 369 responses were collected. The data revealed that as a situational state (such as load shedding) becomes more unwanted, South African customer's quality of life as well as feelings of power would decrease. Furthermore, a customer's decreased feelings of

power (as a result of the unwanted situational state such as load shedding) will have a negative effect on a customer's quality of life.

It is therefore recommended that organisations try their best to avoid service failure at all costs by effectively monitoring the performance of their employees. This can be done through the implementation of a key performance indicators (KPIs) system. However, when and if a service failure does occur, organisations need to ensure that they are communicating with their customers on the impacts of the service failure as well as on the measures that have been put in place to rectify the failure. It is further recommended that organisations communicate a means of compensation with their customers in order to ensure future business.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2020 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Tuscany Kitch under the supervision of [Dr L van der Westhuizen](#).