
Impact of after-sales service on consumer behavioural intentions

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Abstract: Technology in the industry has improved the processes, products and customer experience. Due to this, the importance of after sales service is increasing. The aim of this study is to identify the impact of after-sales service quality delivery on customers' overall satisfaction in the retail sector. Also, the impact of overall satisfaction on word of mouth and repurchase intention. A sample of 330 responses were collected through questionnaire by purposive sampling technique from the customers who had purchased an electronic equipment (UPS or air conditioner). EFA, CFA and SEM analyses were performed to measure the relationships among constructs with the help of SPSS and Amos. The result revealed that after-sales service quality delivery affects customer overall satisfaction which leads to repurchase intention and word-of-mouth. This study helps the retail and marketing managers as it allows them to differentiate their offerings in order to develop the long-term relationship with their customers. This paper especially caters to the retail sector which is dynamic and where customers are highly involved.

Keywords: after-sales services; customer satisfaction; repurchase intention; word of mouth; delivery; technology.

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1 Introduction

Service quality is one of main components for competitive advantage, which reveals that service quality possesses a strategic role for companies. Service quality dimensions have been widely used to determine which factors enhance the buyer-seller relationship like satisfaction (Zeithaml, 2000). Service quality is not only important in pure service sector but indeed it is an important determinant for all sectors where service is a considerable part of the augmented product (Rigopoulou, et al., 2008). Certainly, service quality is an important determinant of being competitive in any industry as practically the total product-offering is a combination of tangible and intangible part. To be distinctive from others, companies highly invest on supplementary services. Hence, after-sales service holds an important position in the product offered (Rosen and Surprenant, 1998).

In the current business environment, to attain long-run progress, organisations need to concentrate on their clients. To fulfil a customer's needs, firms should understand consumer behaviour (Sandhu et al., 2013). According to Armistead and Clark (1992) after-sales services is the critical component to create consumer loyalty particularly for durable goods. After-sales service plays a vital role to build consumer loyalty and to strengthen the buyer-seller relationship (Banerjee and Singh, 2013). According to Sandhu et al. (2013) there is a direct relationship between quality service and after sales service. After-sales service is a critical element which assumes a major part in expanding consumer loyalty and client preferences. Banerjee and Singh (2013) stated that 85% of respondents think that they get great after sales services benefits and this will encourage them to purchase same item once more.

This paper argued that after-sales service is significant to overall 'product-mix' provided by the retail industries as it enhances the satisfaction level and affects their behavioural intentions. After-sales service plays a critical role in building relationship with the customer; hence, it should be examined more thoroughly while considering the theory of service quality. Further, the topic of service quality delivery has been extensively discussed in the literature section which indicates that the relation of 'product-service mixture offering' has been relatively neglected.

The main objective of the study is to see the impact of service quality of 'delivery' which is actually the first after-sales service provided to the consumer has an impact on overall satisfaction and also its impact on their behavioural intentions, i.e., repurchase intention and WOM. This study specifically focused the retail industry in which electric appliances, urgent power supply (UPS) and air conditioner are under consideration.

The paper is structured as follows. Next section lays out literature review which leads to methodology and then data analysis. Lastly, conclusion and recommendations of the study has been explained.

2 Literature review

2.1 Retailing and after-sales services

According to Rigopoulou et al. (2008) and Gross (1965), retailing addresses the final consumer and the purpose of retailing is to sell the merchandise directly to the consumer. This is the process which enhances the value-based buyer relationship. In the study by Peterson and Balasubramanian (2002), it is being stated that retailing is basically the interface between consumer and the firm and there is a need to continuously explore the ways which contributes in the value of the firm (retailing). Numerous authors suggested that satisfaction leads to high retail earnings (Rigopoulou et al., 2008). This satisfaction can be increased by providing the value-added benefits and services to the consumer. The objective of providing the value-adding elements to the total offering is to build the strong relationship with the customers.

According to Vitasek (2005), the terminology of ‘after-sales service’ has been used most widely to describe services that are provided to the consumer after the product has been sold. These services are also called field services (Simmons, 2001). ‘After-sales support’ (Agnihotri et al., 2002), ‘technical support’ and just ‘services’ are the other terms found in the literature that describes the same (Goffin and New, 2001). Few other terminologies like ‘product support activities’ was used by Lele and Karmarkar (1983) and ‘customer support’ was used by Loomba (1998). Moreover, the term ‘after-sales service’ has been used under the two perspectives in the literature. One perspective is related to the firms that provide services. After-sales services considered as one of the several supplementary services provided by them (Oliva and Kallenberg, 2003). The second perspective is related to the firms that provide tangible goods where after-sales service is related as operational activities (Gaiardelli et al., 2007). Such services can be transportation and delivery, installation, product-related training and repairing service.

2.2 Delivery service quality

According to the view proposed by Oliva and Kallenberg (2003), the relationship between the seller and the buyer does not end at the store when buying a tangible product but goes beyond this for as long as the offering lasts. Along this, ‘delivery’ is the first service that has to be offered to the consumer after the sales. Delivery service quality refers as the quality of the delivery in terms of timely, safe, reliable and correct transportation of the good from the retail store to customer’s premises (Rigopoulou, 2008). Activities which are associated with quality are politeness, accuracy, flexibility and overall customer-centred behaviour.

The retailer has to ensure that the delivery of the product timely. Also, the quality of product packaging is an essential part and it must not be torn off or compromised. When a company provides good service quality of delivery, it creates a positive impact on consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Sandhu et al., 2013). The attitude of the consumer towards the quality elements provided by the firm, leads to positive word of mouth and

enhances the firm – seller relationship. This makes the consumer more loyal and committed. According to Boulding et al. (1993) and Zeithaml et al. (1996), service quality influences WOM and loyalty. When the consumer receives quality delivery of the goods, it substantially adds to the satisfaction of consumers. Hence it can be stated that:

H₁ Quality delivery has a significant impact on overall satisfaction.

2.3 Overall satisfaction, WOM and repurchase intention

Customer becomes satisfied if the commitments made by the seller are fulfilled timely and as per expectations. Satisfaction creates eagerness in customer's mind which has a strong relationship towards repurchase intention. Now customers no longer demand only the product but they also require a satisfactory service package with the product (Banerjee and Singh, 2013). Customer satisfaction is the critical aspect that every firm wants to earn by providing a competitive product mix and is the key construct that helps the firms in retaining the customers in long run. This customer satisfaction is actually attained as a result of a post-usage or post-use evaluation by the consumer (Oliver, 1997). At the point when customers' needs are fulfilled, there is a high chance that the consumer will repurchase the brand (Mittal and Kamakura, 2001). Repurchase intention means that your customer wants to repurchase the same product he/she is using and he/she has an intention to buy it again from the same vendor because he/she is satisfied with vendors (Rigopoulou et al., 2008).

The overall satisfaction influences consumer's intention to repurchase the product and not to switch the vendor. Many research frameworks in the literature emphasise that WOM is the consequence of customer satisfaction (Anderson and Mittal, 2000; Bolton et al., 2004). The positive attitude and perception of the customer achieved through the satisfaction leads to word-of-mouth communication and intention to buy the product again (Rigopoulou et al., 2008).

After-sales services play a significant role in shaping consumers' satisfaction and the resulting repurchase rate. Considering the fact that a client who is experiencing issues with after sales and services will tend to switch to other competing products, it is appropriate to reason that after-sales services has strong effect on consumer's perception of quality product (Oko and Onuoha, 2013). After-sales services works as catalyst which improves word of mouth among satisfied customers and enhances buyer recognition, devotion, turn over and this improve corporate productivity (Hawkins et al., 2001; Oko and Onuoha, 2013). If the company offers good services, it creates positive attitude among customers which leads towards positive word of mouth and recommendations to others by the satisfied customer and customers become loyal and committed Rigopoulou et al. (2008). Boulding et al. (1993) and Zeithaml et al. (1996) confirmed that service quality affects word-of-mouth communication, recommendations and loyalty. According to Anderson and Sullivan (1993) and Cronin and Taylor (1992), consumer's behavioural intention is influenced by the level of customer satisfaction. Zeithaml et al. (1996) stated that positive behavioural intentions are usually in the form of recommendations and willingness to purchase company's product. Referrals are the one major form of word of mouth communication (Wheiler, 1987). According to Rigopoulou et al. (2008), word-of-mouth communication is very effective and sometimes very spontaneous that's why it is a desirable marketing output. Companies desire this output as it manifests the level of satisfaction. Drawing upon the aforementioned arguments, it can be stated that:

H₂ Overall satisfaction has a significant impact on repurchase intention.

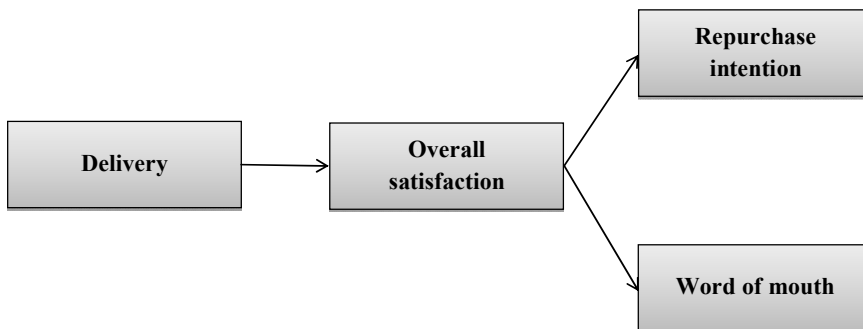
H₃ Overall satisfaction has a significant impact on word of mouth.

3 Research methodology

3.1 Measuring instrument

To see the impact of quality of delivery on consumer's overall satisfaction and on their behavioural intentions, primary data was collected through adapted questionnaire, based on Likert scale, ranges from 1–5 anchored 'fully satisfied' and 'completely dissatisfied' or 'strongly agree' and 'strongly disagree'. The questionnaire was based on two parts; demographics and items related to constructs (variables). For the responses, purposive sampling was employed by the researcher. For the target audience, the questionnaire was placed online through a Google doc link which was sent through email to the consumer who purchased the electronic appliance, i.e., UPS or air conditioner in the past three to four months. The e-mail addresses were randomly taken from a retailer's database. Also, few responses were gathered in hard copy forms. In total, 400 respondents were approached for the responses. Total 330 questionnaires were returned out of the 400 questionnaires emailed to the consumers. While 49 responses were further removed from earlier received 330 responses to ensure absence of outliers from the final data for analysis.

Figure 1 Research model



3.2 Data analysis tools

After the data screening process and removal of outliers, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed by using the option of varimax in order to transform the items in variable (Raza and Hanif, 2013). Reliability analysis was then performed in order to check the internal consistency of the variables. EFA and reliability was performed by using the statistical software SPSS 22.0. Next confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was

used to check the model fitness. After ensuring the desired model fitness, SEM was applied to measure the relationship between the constructs using Amos 22.

4 Data analysis

Table 1 demonstrates the demographic profile of respondents. In total, 55.8% were male and 44.1% were female. Majority of the respondents belongs to the age group from 25 to 34 years which is 47.7% of the total sample. Moreover, 39.0% of the respondents had an income in between the range of PKR 30,000 to PKR 59,000. Out of the total sample size, 67.3% of the respondents claimed that they received after-sales service from their retailers when they purchased the product (air conditioner or UPS).

Table 1 Demographic profile of respondents

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender		
Male	157	55.8
Female	124	44.1
Age		
25–34	134	47.7
35–44	119	42.3
45 and above	28	10
Income level		
PKR 15,000 to PKR 29,999 (approx. \$129–259\$)	67	23.84
PKR 30,000 to PKR 59,999 (approx. \$259–519\$)	110	39
PKR 60,000 and above (approx. \$519 above)	104	36.9
Does your electronic brand (UPS or air conditioner) provide after sales services in against of purchasing new product?		
No	92	37.7
Yes	189	67.3

Source: Author's estimation

5 Explanatory factor analysis and reliability

Table 2 represents the EFA factor loadings and reliability of the constructs. Factor analysis was performed to distinguish the fundamental variables by using SPSS 22.0. Factor loading represents the intensity to predict the variable that should be greater than 0.5. According to Hu and Bentler (1999) and Aslam et al. (2016), the value of Cronbach's alpha should be greater than 0.6.

Table 2 Exploratory factor analysis

<i>Items</i>	<i>Adapted source</i>	<i>Factor loadings</i>
<i>Delivery (cronbach's $\alpha = 0.741$)</i>		
Reliability in delivery times.	Rigopoulou et al. (2008)	0.647
Quality of the product packaging when delivered.		0.760
The quality of the product itself when delivered.		0.742
Kindness and friendliness of the delivery personnel.		0.630
<i>Overall satisfaction (cronbach's $\alpha = 0.600$)</i>		
My satisfaction with the after sales and services of the retailer.	Vázquez-Casielles et al. (2009)	0.734
My satisfaction towards retailer will be increased if retailer properly responds on complains and resolve them timely.		0.641
My satisfaction from the cooperation of the retailer in the context of the particular purchase.	Rigopoulou et al. (2008)	0.671
<i>Repurchase intention (cronbach's $\alpha = 0.611$)</i>		
I intend to continue with this retailer in the future.	Vázquez-Casielles et al. (2009)	0.510
I hope my relationship with this retailer will be long-lasting.		0.715
If I had to choose again, I would choose this retailer again.		0.723
<i>Word of mouth (cronbach's $\alpha = 0.610$)</i>		
Level of intention to recommend the retailer to friends and relatives.	Kim et al. (2001)	0.699
Level of intention to recommend to other people that the retailer should provide the best service.		0.597
Level of intention to recommend the retailer to other people.		0.617

Source: Author's estimation

6 Construct reliability and CFA

After ensuring the satisfactory results of EFA, CFA was performed by using Amos 22 by selecting the option of pattern matrix builder. Table 3 represents the CFA factor loadings, construct reliability and average variance extracted.

7 Model fitness

For the result of path analysis, various indices of the model should be checked. The value of χ^2/df is found to be 1.347, which should be in range of 1:3 (Aslam et al., 2016). Values of GFI, AGFI, NFI, IFI and RFI should be greater than 0.9, as above than this value

considered good (Hair et al., 2010). The value of RMSEA is 0.032, which should be less than 0.08. Table 4 represents the overall values of the model fitness.

Table 3 Confirmatory factor analysis

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Standardised loadings</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Delivery	D1	0.72	0.812	0.519
	D2	0.71		
	D3	0.7		
	D4	0.75		
Overall satisfaction	S1	0.70	0.757	0.511
	S2	0.69		
	S3	0.75		
Repurchase intention	P1	0.73	0.791	0.558
	P2	0.75		
	P3	0.76		
Word of mouth	W1	0.74	0.757	0.509
	W2	0.71		
	W3	0.69		

Source: Author's estimation

Table 4 Model fit

<i>Fit indices</i>	<i>Recommended level to fit</i>	<i>Model value</i>
Absolute fit measures		
χ^2		136.053
df		101
χ^2/df	< 3 ^a	1.347
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	> 0.9 ^a	0.954
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	< 0.08 ^b	0.032
Incremental fit measures		
Adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	> 0.90 ^a	0.931
Normed fit index (NFI)	> 0.90 ^a	0.931
Comparative fit index (CFI)	> 0.90 ^a	0.981
Incremental fit index (IFI)	> 0.90 ^a	0.981
Relative fit index (RFI)	> 0.90 ^a	0.907
Parsimony fit measures		
Parsimony comparative fit index (PCFI)	> 0.50 ^a	0.728
Parsimony normed fit index (PNFI)	> 0.50 ^a	0.691

Source: Bagozzi and Yi (1988), Browne and Cudeck (1993) and Arif et al. (2016)

8 Hypothesis testing

Table 5 represents the results of path analysis. Result shows that there is a significant relationship between delivery and overall satisfaction. Significant relationship was also found in between overall satisfaction and repurchase intention. Overall satisfaction has a significant impact on word-of-mouth. The value of R-square of satisfaction was found 0.69 whereas for purchase intention and WOM was 0.82 and 0.73 respectively.

Table 5 SEM results

<i>Path</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Results</i>
Delivery ----> overall satisfaction	0.714	0.106	6.761	***	Supported
Overall satisfaction ----> repurchase intention	0.948	0.161	5.887	***	Supported
Overall satisfaction ----> word of mouth	0.804	0.143	5.615	***	Supported

Note: *** represents p-value < 0.01.

Source: Author's estimation

9 Conclusions and managerial implications

The main purpose of the study was to examine the impact of after-sales service quality delivery on customer satisfaction and on their behavioural intention, specifically on 'repurchase intention' and 'word of mouth' in retailing context.

In the view of retailing context, it reveals that after-sale service quality delivery has an impact on overall satisfaction which consequently influences behavioural expectations, i.e., word-of-mouth and repurchase intention. In other words, sales service quality improves the relationship of the consumer with the retailer and generates satisfaction. Improved sales service quality gives a sense of pleasure to the customer which in turn strengthen the relationship between the buyer and the seller. The findings confirm that after sale service quality delivery plays a strategic role in value-adding process to the customers. To create differentiation in overall offerings, sales service quality delivery can be provided to the customer in order to have the satisfied consumer. This differentiation of quality delivery can boost up the sales of the retailer products in the long run. By providing the quality delivery of the product companies can retain and create a strong bond with the customer.

According to the significant result found between overall satisfaction and word of mouth, it can be contended that once the customer is satisfied with the after-sale service quality delivery of the product, it organically motivates the consumer to spread positive word for the retailer. This helps the retailer in a way that satisfied customers recommend the retailer to their friends and relatives and they remain loyal customers of that particular retailer. Overall satisfaction also improves the behaviour of the customer for the future purchase from the same retailer.

The findings suggest retailers to improve the nature and the range or the part of after-sale service. This study clearly raises the significance of quality delivery of the product after the sales. Retailers are actually the key partners of the companies; they can get benefit from the customer-company relationship as the overall satisfaction leads to positive behavioural intentions. Therefore, managers should pay attention to the retailers

attitude related to the after-sale service quality delivery as this leads to future purchase and further recommendations.

The findings of the study reveal that quality delivery of the product is critical and it is a major contributing component to overall satisfaction and resulting positive behavioural intentions. Thus, the key to retain the client is in putting all the efforts to strengthen the sales service quality delivery as it is also an ideal relative conduct to satisfy the clients.

10 Future recommendations

This study has few limitations that could be addressed in the future. It is recommended to the future researchers to consider the other cities of Pakistan since this study only focused Karachi, Pakistan. Cross cultural study can also be conducted in order to see the cultural behaviour of the consumer in the retailing context. This study highlights the importance of quality delivery in retailing context therefore the future studies can undertake other sectors to have the exclusive view points. Other after-sales service dimensions can also be assessed like ‘installation’ of the product to determine the behavioural intentions of the customer. This study only tested the direct relationships between the construct, in future mediation analysis can be performed for further insights. Likewise, future studies may be on different factors which affect customer purchasing process in the same industry. The service industry is vast research domain and interest in this is expanding among practitioners and researchers. Therefore, there is a critical need to further explore and test the service industry because little work has been done in this research and after-sales and service has expended the scope of this area.

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