

Factors Affecting Service Acceptance in Organizational Buying of Services: An Empirical Examination

** Dipanjan Kumar Dey*

Abstract

Business-to-business service transactions is a topic that needs extensive research in India. Looking into the fact that services form a major part of India's gross domestic product (GDP), there was a need for research that can contribute towards explaining service transactions. The present study attempted to understand the various factors that may influence the service acceptance factors in all services transactions in a business-to-business context for Indian firms. Information was collected from a random sample of managers across various sectors via survey methodology using a structured questionnaire. Factor analysis and logistic regression analysis were performed for data analysis. The findings showed that the factors of service delivery and service fairness were significantly affecting service acceptance of organizations in a business-to-business setting. Surprisingly, the findings revealed that ubiquitous service quality does not affect service acceptance, thus implying that it has become a bare necessity nowadays. Thus, managers involved in industrial services sales can focus on service fairness and delivery for better differentiation of their services from competition.

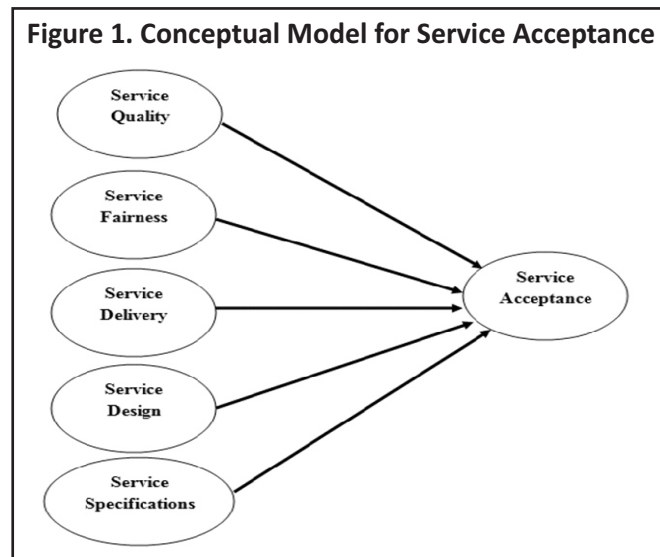
Keywords: organizational buying, service acceptance, quality, design, fairness, specifications, delivery

Paper Submission Date : October 15, 2013 ; **Paper sent back for Revision :** December 29, 2013 ; **Paper Acceptance Date :** March 1, 2014

Service acceptance is a concept that has been widely researched in the context of information technology related services (Lee, 2010 ; Lee & Rao, 2009). However, the concept of service acceptance has been seldom explored in the literature concerning the services marketing perspective. There is a good enough reason driven by business sense to investigate the concept of service acceptance in a service marketing specific setting. Particularly, the concept could be extremely useful in understanding business-to-business transactions since service level agreements are in place for these types of transactions involving different organizations (Goo, Kishore, Rao, & Nam, 2009 ; Xu, 2012). Many business organizations nowadays out source jobs (which are non-core to the company) to other organizations, who can perform them professionally, thus saving resources (Feeny, Lacity, & Willcocks, 2012; Sundaram & Geetha, 2008). This is one of the factors contributing to the rapid growth of the business services industry in the recent years. It is a well-known fact supported by literature that the rules for buying goods do not work when applied to the buying of services (Holschbach & Hofmann, 2011).

Many prior studies have demonstrated that the purchasing of business services is essentially different from purchasing goods (Azadegan & Ashenbaum, 2009; Fitzsimmons, Noh, & Thies, 1998; Jackson, Neidell, & Lunsford, 1995; Stock & Zinszer, 1987). As compared to products, services literature has a predominant focus on consumer services (Smeltzer & Ogden, 2002 ; van der Valk & Rozemeijer, 2009; van Iwaarden & van der Valk, 2013). In this respect, the present study is an attempt to explore the possibilities of application of various well-known concepts of services marketing to the construct of service acceptance. Such a study is warranted in the present scenario where markets are dynamically changing within a short span of time. Additionally, with the rise in competition for a limited number of available contracts in a business-to-business scenario, the present study empirically proves the importance of certain service related aspects over others. As a result, managers, especially

** Assistant Professor, Department of Marketing and Strategy, IBS Business School Hyderabad (ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education (IFHE)), Survey No. 156/157; Dontanapally Village, Shankarpally Mandal, R. R. District, Hyderabad - 501 203.
E-mail: dipanjan.dey@gmail.com*



the ones dealing with service transactions in the industry, could benefit from this study.

Literature Review

When organizations go in for purchase of business services, they do not essentially buy that service from the service providers, but they are actually buying the benefits those services provide them and in the process, co-create value (Aarikka-Stenroos & Jaakkola, 2012). The value of the services to the buyers is not produced in the back offices, neither in the financial understandings with them, but value is created for the buyers in the value generating process (Gronroos, 2007). To be clearer, whether buyers of these business services are benefitted or not is very important as and when they make use of the solutions purchased for use in their offerings to their concerned markets. Hence, when any organizational buyer purchases business services, to accept these services from the providers, it has to consider a host of factors that include technology, relationship management, and quality aspects (Holschbach & Hofmann, 2011; Kim, Pae, Han, & Srivastava, 2010). In developing the conceptual model (shown in Figure 1), literature on the various constructs of interest from the services marketing literature was reviewed and is defined accordingly. The theoretical grounds of existing studies supporting the relationships in the conceptual framework are discussed that help in understanding the hypotheses developed for the present study.

➤ **Service Acceptance** : Service acceptance in an organizational buying setting can be defined as the concurrence of the services provided by the seller to the purchasing organization. In the current business and market dynamics structure that is undergoing rapid changes due to the advent of high competition, latest technologies, ever increasing input costs, and falling profit margins, it is imperative for the providers to have an idea about which are the things that a business buyer looks into for favorable service acceptance (Valk & Rozemeijer, 2009). Past studies show that the studies done so far on service purchase in organizations have mostly concentrated on separate pockets of factors, which may influence service acceptance by organizations in purchase of business services (Hallikas, Immonen, Pynnönen, & Mikkonen, 2012 ; Van der Valk & Wynstra, 2012). The present study is an attempt to develop a model that interprets all these factors that may be considered as critical in service acceptance criterion by any organization whenever they are going for a business service purchase. Simply put, this study is an attempt to understand the service acceptance factors from an organizational buyer's perspective.

➤ **Service Quality** : Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985) empirically identified five dimensions of service quality in their seminal work on SERVQUAL. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) proposed the perceptions

minus expectations measure of service quality. However, recent work by authors (Carvalho, Brito, & Cabral, 2010 ; Tombs & McColl - Kennedy, 2013; van Dun, Bloemer, & Henseler, 2011) has proven the robustness of perceptions only in terms of measures. It has been found that service quality affects the trust, commitment, and loyalty in a business-to-business setting (Caceres & Paparoidamis, 2007). Furthermore, business services in terms of services quality context is no different from consumer marketing (Chenet, Dagger, & O'Sullivan, 2010; Durvasula, Lysonski, & Mehta, 1999). In a business-to-business setting, service quality is associated with creation of value by the seller for the buying organization (Cameran, Moizer, & Pettinicchio, 2010). Hence, when service acceptance is considered, the underlying dimension of service quality may be influencing the buying organization when services are transacted. Hence, we expect that service quality may be one of the critical factors affecting service acceptance. This leads to putting forward the following hypothesis:

➔ **Hypothesis 1:** Higher perceived service quality by the buyer results in higher service acceptance for an organizational buying scenario.

➔ **Service Fairness :** Service fairness is the level of justice in a service company's behavior as perceived by a customer (Seiders & Berry, 1998). Fairness plays a significant role in influencing loyalty of purchasers towards suppliers when the condition of asymmetric interdependence exists in a business-to-business setting (Jambulingam, Kathuria, & Nevin, 2011). Customers value perceptions about fairness in services while making transactions (Martin, Ponder, & Lueg, 2009 ; Xia, Kukar-Kinney, & Monroe, 2010). The fairness element of services influences the evaluative and relational elements of service consumption by consumers (Rotemberg, 2011 ; Xia et al., 2010). Brady and Cronin Jr. (2001) argued about the various service fairness dimensions like distributive, procedural, and interactional justice influencing customer perceptions about the service provider. Thus, service fairness may prove to be a critical aspect in organizational buying as the following hypothesis proposes:

➔ **Hypothesis 2:** Higher perceived service fairness by the buyer results in higher service acceptance for an organizational buying scenario.

➔ **Service Design :** Shostack (1982) defined service design as an activity that involves planning and organizing people, infrastructure, communication, and material components of a service in order to improve the interaction between service providers and customers. The same author harped on the complexity of service design in terms of the need for data collection, people to be assigned responsibilities, and definition issues (Shostack, 1984). The design of the service may involve a re-organization of the activities performed by the service provider and/or the redesign of the activities of the buying organization. From the service organization's perspective, designing a service means defining an appropriate mix of physical and non-physical components (Goldstein, Johnston, Duffy, & Rao, 2002). It is important to take into consideration the degree of complexity, relationship management perspectives, and orientation towards processes involved in designing service elements (Ponsignon, Smart, & Maull, 2011). Other factors that should be taken into consideration for service design include: relational aspects, value creation, and inculcating the experiences of the involved stakeholders (Kimbell, 2011). From a service acceptance point of view, how a service is designed may play a crucial role in whether the service is accepted by the buying organization. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

➔ **Hypothesis 3:** Perceived inclusion in service design by the buyer significantly affects in increasing the service acceptance phenomenon for organizational buying.

➔ **Service Specifications :** Service specifications are considered as one of the basic elements of service processes (Ulkuniemi & Pekkarinen, 2011), one that comprises of the description of the service type being provided, the characteristics of the service being provided, and the time dimension being provided (Van Raaij & Pruyn, 1998). The degree of customer involvement in selection of service specifications is of prime importance for consideration

and may heavily influence the outcome of the transaction happening between the service provider and the buyer (Swan, Bowers, & Grover, 2002). The specification step involves three basic steps in the service process (Voss, Parasuraman, & Grewal, 1998). Leigh and Rethans (1984) emphasized on the importance of industrial buyers' negotiation in the industrial sales process, and the same argument holds true for service purchases as well. Cermak, File, and Prince (2011) reported about the importance of customer involvement in service specifications decision processes. van der Valk, Wynstra, and Axelsson (2009) argued regarding the customizations in the service specifications made with respect to the buyer – supplier interactions process. Service acceptance may be greatly influenced by the importance accorded to service specifications by the involved organizations during the transaction process. Thus, it is proposed that:

➔ **Hypothesis 4:** Perceived ease in understanding the service specifications by the buyer leads to higher service acceptance in an organizational buying scenario.

➔ **Service Delivery :** Service delivery is largely influenced by social dynamics of service encounter (Solomon, Surprenant, Czepiel, & Gutman, 1985). Shostack (1985) incorporated the elements of physical surroundings and technology, whereas Surprenant and Solomon (1987) defined it as a dyadic interaction between the service provider and customer. During the service delivery process, the customer forms a perception that is largely based on emotional and intangible content of the service encounter (Lemmink & Mattson, 2002). In an organizational service consumption setting, service personnel of the provider and social aspects of the delivery process play a much greater role (Paulin, Ferguson, & Payaud, 2000). The ability of the service contact personnel is of critical importance for the service delivery process in an organizational context (Mattson, 2000). Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler (2011) argued regarding the importance of the three interlinked groups, that is, customers, company, and company employees during service delivery processes and its influence on overall relations. Kindström (2010) argued about the importance that must be accorded to service delivery to achieve success in business transactions. Additionally, Chen, Tsou, and Huang (2009) reported about the importance of service delivery in achieving the desired firm performance indicators of the buying firms. Thus, one can say that service acceptance may be influenced by the service delivery elements in a business-to-business environment. Thus, it is proposed that:

➔ **Hypothesis 5:** Perceived satisfaction of the buyer in service delivery leads to higher service acceptance in an organizational buying scenario.

Measurement and Data

➔ **The Industry :** For the present study, general security services industry was chosen for empirical analysis as it embodies certain common features considered crucial for business-to-business service purchasing taken from literature. Furthermore, general security services are services that are essentially outsourced nowadays as I observed by my visits to different organizations on numerous occasions. Focus on a single industry allowed this study to mould the items in the instrument as per the industry characteristics. This in turn entails more accurate responses as the respondents can then identify more easily with the instrument being used for data collection (Hartline & Jones, 1996).

➔ **Operationalization of Constructs :** The questionnaire was designed with relevant constructs measures primarily based on scales taken from research done earlier. Certain changes were made to take into account the specific requirements of the security services being purchased in current research settings. Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996) had done the research in services marketing based on self-reported measures of the constructs. The same approach was used in this study as well. As has been discussed earlier, only the perceptions of buyers were measured. In general, a 7- point Likert type scale was used, wherein 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*.

➤ **Service Quality** : For measurement of service quality, the scale of service quality developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) and adopted by Jayawardhena, Souchon, Farrell, and Glanville (2007) was adopted. The said authors demonstrated the construct validity and nomological validity of this scale. This scale contains five items relating to measures of tangibles, reliability, assurance, and empathy dimensions of service quality.

➤ **Service Fairness** : Berry (1998) argued about the interactional, procedural, and distributive justice for measure of service fairness. For measurement of service fairness as a construct, the scale used by Andaleeb and Basu (1994) was adopted. It consisted of all the three dimensions of service fairness that have been described above. The scale consists of five items.

➤ **Service Delivery** : The scale used for this construct was adopted from Jayawardhena et al. (2007). The scale used is for a service encounter but has been proxied for service delivery. The construct validity was measured and was found to be satisfactory. The scale consists of four dimensions of professionalism, civility, competence, and friendliness for measuring service encounter perceptions and were represented by six items in the questionnaire.

➤ **Service Design** : The items used for the scale of service design are primarily based on the work done by Tax and Stuart (1997). It takes into consideration different dimensions for measuring service design construct. These dimensions are namely the training imparted to service personnel, the variety on offer, and finally, the degree of customization provided by the service provider.

➤ **Service Specifications** : The scale for service specifications was developed primarily on the conceptual framework proposed by Swan, Bowers, and Grover (2002). This construct has four dimensions and four items wherein one item is sub - divided into three parts.

➤ **Service Acceptance** : Taking into consideration the items for the above-mentioned constructs, the degree of service acceptance based on the levels of service received from the respective suppliers was ascertained. This was done on a dichotomous scale provided with the options of either high or low service acceptance.

Sample and Data Collection

The target population for this study consists of organizational people involved in buying of security services for their firms. The sampling frame consisted of organizations mentioned as members of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI). A random sample of 480 organizations across various sectors was selected, and their websites were used to narrow down to the concerned person. This is based on the argument that all the private organizations outsource their general security services requirement to security service providing agencies. A structured questionnaire was sent out using the Internet as a medium for getting in touch with the target respondents accompanied with a covering letter so that the respondents could easily provide the details. Follow up e-mails were sent to increase the response rate. Data collection lasted for four months time (April to August 2013). One hundred and fifteen filled-in questionnaires were received at a response rate of about 24%. Respondents belonged to a variety of industries that included banking, financial services, manufacturing, HR services, education providers, and retailers (Refer to Figure 2).

Analysis and Results

This study tries to find out the various factors that can influence an organization's service acceptance factors; even the moderate number of variables used for the study would present a very complex structure of separate correlations. Hence, exploratory factor analysis technique was used to see whether these variables could be

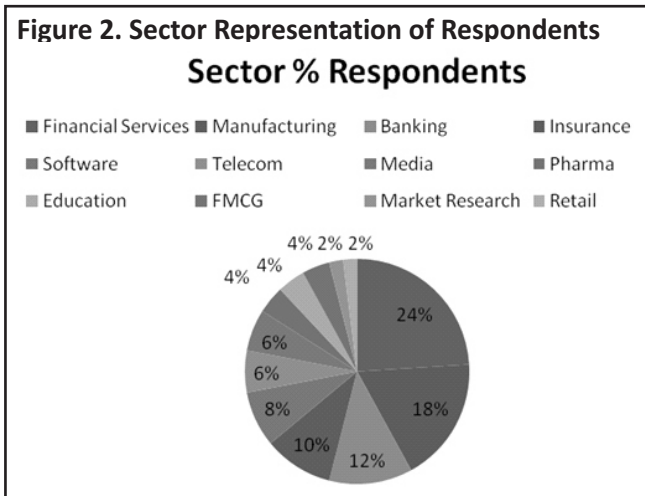


Table 1. Rotated Component Matrix Showing Loading of Variables on the Factors

Rotated Component Matrix (VARIMAX)						
		Component				
	Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1	Physical facilities of the provider are visually appealing.			0.862		
2	The appearance of the physical facilities of the provider is in keeping with the type of services provided.			0.653		
3	The provider is sympathetic and reassuring during any problems.			0.539		
4	The provider is dependable.			0.845		
5	The employees of the provider do not give personal attention.			0.747		
6	The provider is fair in treatment.	0.935				
7	The provider has customers' best interest in mind.	0.443				
8	The provider charges a fair price for the services.	0.787				
9	It's alright if the provider at times takes undue advantage of our requirements.	0.841				
10	The price of labor is fair in services provided.	0.871				
11	The provider focuses on not being forceful.		0.812			
12	The provider is not patronizing during communication.		0.778			
13	The provider is courteous.		0.697			
14	The provider has built a friendly relationship with us.		0.629			
15	The provider is informative during interactions.		0.579			
16	The provider is in possession of required qualifications for performing the service.		0.765			
17	We ourselves selected the service requirements without any help from the provider.					0.814
18	There is an exchange of information about service requirements with the provider.					0.733
19	We are satisfied with the service specifications being given by the provider.					0.84
20	We require a high degree of customization for the services being provided.				0.829	
21	The provider does not provide us with many process varieties.				0.546	
22	The service personnel are adequately trained.				0.721	
23	The service personnel are not responsible for the services delivery.				0.775	

Table 2. Reliability Measures of the Instrument Items that were used

Scales/Factors	Item Description	Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)
Service Quality	Physical facilities of the provider are visually appealing.	0.808
	The appearance of the physical facilities of the provider is in keeping with the type of services provided.	
	The provider is sympathetic and reassuring during any problems.	
	The provider is dependable.	
	The employees of the provider do not give personal attention.	0.849
Service Fairness	The provider is fair in treatment.	
	The provider has customers' best interest in mind.	
	The provider charges a fair price for the services.	
	It's alright if the provider at times takes undue advantage of our requirements.	0.813
Service Delivery	The price of labor is fair in services provided.	
	The provider focuses on not being forceful.	
	The provider is not patronizing during communication.	
	The provider is courteous.	0.782
	The provider has built a friendly relationship with us.	
	The provider is informative during interactions.	
	The provider is in possession of required qualifications for performing the service.	
Service Specification	We ourselves selected the service requirements without any help from the provider.	0.736
	There is an exchange of information about service requirements with the provider.	
	We are satisfied with the service specifications being given by the provider.	
Service Design	We require a high degree of customization for the services being provided.	
	The provider does not provide us with many process varieties.	0.736
	The service personnel are adequately trained.	
	The service personnel are not responsible for the services delivery.	

grouped into the factors described into the model proposed for the purpose of parsimony (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Varimax rotation technique was applied to simplify the factor structures and increase the interpretability of the obtained factor solution.

Bartlett's test of sphericity shows a significant value that implies that there is a significant relationship among the variables chosen for factor analysis. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy (0.614) is also above the threshold value of 0.5, thereby indicating that the data were fit for factor analysis. The extracted five factors explained 64.6% of the variance of the input variables, which is deemed sufficient as per the existing literature. Varimax rotation was applied to improve the interpretation (Hair et al. 2006). The Table 1 describes the varimax rotated factor loadings on the five identified factors (refer to Table 3 for a description of the variables). The factors thus extracted from the factor analysis process are: Service Quality, Service Fairness, Service Delivery, Service Specification, and Service Design.

A marked pattern of variables with high loadings for each factor is evident. When cross checked with the available literature, the five factors named above relate to the concepts discussed in this paper with adequate content validity. The dimensionality of each scale is supported by high factor loadings of each variable on only one factor. Thus, the findings prove the convergent and discriminant validity of the items used in the scale. The reliability of the summated scales was measured using Cronbach's alpha that is reported in the Table 2. All the reliabilities are above the recommended level of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2006). Keeping in mind the sensitivity of organizational buying (Jackson et al., 1995; Stock & Zinszer, 1987), the dependent variable was divided into two

Table 3. Logistic Regression Results Showing the Estimated Coefficients

Factors	Estimated Coefficient	Standard Errors	Significance (<i>p</i> - value)	Estimated Odds Ratios
Service Quality	-0.081	0.894	0.928	0.92
Service Fairness	1.238	0.748	0.048**	3.44
Service Delivery	1.511	0.879	0.036 **	4.53
Service Specification	-0.06	0.738	0.935	0.94
Service Design	0.563	0.723	0.439	1.75

** indicates 5 % level of significance, Pseudo R sq: 0.2040, change in -2LL: 34.258 (sig @ 1%)

separate groups of high and low service acceptance. The conceptual problems of linear regression with a dichotomous dependent variable have been well highlighted in the literature (Pampel, 2000). Keeping this in mind, the present study used logistic regression for testing the hypotheses. The dependent variable of service acceptance was regressed on the factor scores obtained for each of the five factors for the observations in the sample. Equation 1 shown below represents the mathematical form of the proposed model for the purpose of empirical testing.

$$\text{Logit } (p_i) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\text{Service Quality}) + \beta_2 (\text{Service Fairness}) + \beta_3 (\text{Service Delivery}) + \beta_4 (\text{Service Specification}) + \beta_5 (\text{Service Design}) + r_i \text{ --- (1)}$$

where,

p_i = probability of observing the response for an individual i having higher service acceptance,

$\text{Logit } (p_i) = \log [p_i / (1 - p_i)] = \log \text{ odds of observing the response capable of taking any real value,}$

$\beta_0, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_5$ = intercepts and slopes estimated and r_i = residual for individual i ,

The Table 3 depicts the results of the multiple logistic regression. The overall model's significance is proven by significant changes in the -2-Log likelihood values. The factors of Service Fairness and Service Delivery are significant at the 5% level of significance. Odds ratios indicate that with an increase in Service Fairness and Service Delivery, the odds of higher service acceptance go up substantially, thereby implying their importance.

Discussion

The findings of this study have various implications regarding the prospects of improving service acceptance among the organizational buyers. This paper tries to fill in the research gap that exists in understanding of service acceptance in organizational buying. The findings reveal that out of the five proposed hypotheses, two were proven correct statistically. The research reveals that service quality, which is so very critical in every aspect of service, is not able to improve the chances of the provider towards higher service acceptance by its organizational consumers. The probable reason is that with the passage of time, and especially in industrial purchases, the quality being up to the desired standards has become implicit and has become a basic requirement. The factors like service specifications and service design also fail to make an impact upon improving the chances of service acceptance for the organizational buyers. This may be probably due to the inadequate sensitivity of the managers towards these two aspects of services that are considered to be more associated with the initial service blueprinting stages. As a result, they may not have been considered significant enough to relate with acceptance of services.

Service delivery can improve the chances of higher service acceptance as the findings indicate, thus proving hypothesis no. 5. This is very important for the practitioners as it indicates that with the necessary qualifications, being courteous and friendly in interactions during delivery and by possessing an adaptable attitude towards the buyers, one can differentiate from one's competitors and be able to improve upon the chances of service acceptance from one's buying clientele. This finding additionally reinforces the involvement of interactions playing a crucial role in acceptance of services by the buyers. Service delivery is related largely in managing the promises made

while service transactions were processed. Hence, one can argue that for improving service acceptance, the importance of logistical management is magnified. Additionally, service acceptance may be temporal in nature, that is, recent events may have a higher impact on affecting it. Since service delivery is an aspect that is closely related to the temporal aspects; hence, it may very well be the reason that is proving to be of significant nature.

Service fairness is significant in improving the chances of service acceptance among clients, thus proving hypothesis no. 2. This indicates that if a customer is treated fairly, is charged a fair price, and interests of the customers are taken into account, then the provider firm significantly improves its chances of getting higher service acceptance as compared to its competitors. Service fairness is affected largely in the perceptions carried over by the buyers of services. Hence, it is of utmost importance to create a positive perception about the fairness in services being transacted by the seller organization on the buyers. As existing literature has indicated, fairness is exemplified by the presence of interdependence in a buyer – supplier relationship. Hence, selling organizations must include buyer's perspectives and include their experiences into account to manage the perceptions relating to fairness in the service transactions.

Managerial Implications

This study has various important implications from a managerial viewpoint. From the perspective of business-to-business services, sellers have to improve their sensitivity towards service elements of delivery and fairness, while at the same time maintaining service quality. It means managers must keep promises regarding service delivery up to the desired levels of the buyers. Any failure to do so may result in business shifting towards competition. Similarly, sellers must treat buyers with respect, irrespective of transaction volumes or contract terms. As the results prove, in the long term, service fairness could become a crucial factor in differentiating an organization's services from the competition. Succinctly, service fairness and service delivery are the key elements that can help a service provider to differentiate itself from the clutter of competition and help it to acquire and retain customers in the long run.

Conclusion

This paper is essentially a starting point for empirical validation of the concept of service acceptance for organizational buying from the buyer's perspective. In the future, the model can be subjected to further theoretical refinements. The paper contends that various factors have a significant impact on service acceptance from the organizational buyer's point of view. In addition, the degree of importance of these factors for service acceptance is different for various industries. However, this study would be extremely beneficial for the Indian services' sector looking into the fact that majority of the GDP is driven by the services sector in India. Hence, a study such as this can contribute in garnering additional clients and retaining the existing client base for those industries involved in business-to-business service transactions.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

This study was conducted for the general security services industry hence, generalizability to the entire services industry needs to be enhanced by applying the proposed model to other service transactions in a business-to-business scenario. Since it is a cross-sectional study, hence, the limitation of only associations being proven is present. A longitudinal study that can dwell into causations can be much more effective in reinforcing the findings from this study. Furthermore, the sample size - because of various limitations of the research - is moderate. Hence, the findings, although logical, can still be challenged.

References

- Aarikka-Stenroos, L., & Jaakkola, E. (2012). Value co-creation in knowledge intensive business services: A dyadic perspective on the joint problem solving process. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 41(1), 15-26. DOI: 10.1016/j.indmarman.2011.11.008
- Andaleeb, S. & Basu, A. K. (1994). Technical complexity and consumer knowledge as moderators of service quality evaluation in the automobile service industry. *Journal of Retailing*, 70 (4), 376 - 381. DOI: 10.1016/0022-4359(94)90005-1
- Azadegan, A., & Ashenbaum, B. (2009). E-procurement in services: The lagging application of innovation. *International Journal of Procurement Management*, 2 (1), 25-40. DOI: 10.1504/IJPM.2009.021728
- Brady, M., & Cronin Jr., J. J. (2001). Some new thoughts on conceptualizing perceived service quality: A hierarchical approach. *Journal of Marketing*, 65 (3), 34 - 49.
- Caceres, R. C., & Paparoidamis, N. G. (2007). Service quality, relationship satisfaction, trust, commitment and business-to-business loyalty. *European Journal of Marketing*, 41 (7/8), 836 - 867. DOI: 10.1108/03090560710752429
- Cameran, M., Moizer, P., & Pettinicchio, A. (2010). Customer satisfaction, corporate image, and service quality in professional services. *The Service Industries Journal*, 30 (3), 421- 435. DOI:10.1080/02642060802236111
- Carvalho, C., Brito, C., & Cabral, J. S. (2010). Towards a conceptual model for assessing the quality of public services. *International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing*, 7(1), 69 - 86. DOI : 10.1007/s12208-010-0046-5
- Cermak, D. S., File, K. M., & Prince, R. A. (2011). Customer participation in service specification and delivery. *Journal of Applied Business Research*, 10 (2), 90 - 97.
- Chen, J.- S., Tsou, H. T., & Huang, A. Y. - H. (2009). Service delivery innovation : Antecedents and impact on firm performance. *Journal of Service Research*, 12(1), 36 - 55. DOI: 10.1177/1094670509338619
- Chenet, P., Dagger, T. S., & O'Sullivan, D. (2010). Service quality, trust, commitment and service differentiation in business relationships. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 24 (5), 336 - 346. DOI: 10.1108/08876041011060440
- Durvasula, S., Lysons, S., & Mehta, S. C. (1999). Testing the SERVQUAL scale in the business-to-business sector: The case of ocean freight shipping service. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 13 (2), 132 - 150. DOI: 10.1108/08876049910266040
- Feeny, D., Lacity, M., & Willcocks, L. P. (2012). Taking the measure of outsourcing providers. *MIT Sloan Management Review*. Retrieved from <http://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/taking-the-measure-of-outsourcing-providers/>
- Fitzsimmons, J. A., Noh, J., & Thies, E. (1998). Purchasing business services. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 13(4/5), 370-380. DOI:10.1108/08858629810226672
- Goldstein, S. M., Johnston, R., Duffy, J., & Rao, J. (2002). The service concept: The missing link in service design research? *Journal of Operations Management*, 20 (2), 121-134.
- Goo, J., Kishore, R., Rao, H. R., & Nam, K. (2009). The role of service level agreements in relational management of information technology outsourcing: An empirical study. *MIS Quarterly*, 33(1), 119-145.
- Gronroos, C. (2007). *Service management and marketing: Customer management in service competition* (3rd edition, pp. 433- 434). U.K.: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- Hair, J., Black W., Babin B., Anderson R., & Tatham, R. (2006). *Multivariate data analysis* (p. 161). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc.
- Hallikas, J., Immonen, M., Pynnönen, M., & Mikkonen, K. (2012). Service purchasing and value creation: Towards systemic purchases. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 147 (A), 53-61. DOI: 10.1016/j.ijpe.2012.10.005

- Hartline, M. D., & Jones, K. C. (1996). Employee performance cues in a hotel service environment: Influence on perceived service quality, value, and word-of-mouth intentions. *Journal of Business Research*, 35 (3), 207-215. DOI: 10.1016/0148-2963(95)00126-3
- Holschbach, E., & Hofmann, E. (2011). Exploring quality management for business services from a buyer's perspective using multiple case study evidence. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 31(6), 648-685. DOI: 10.1108/01443571111131980
- Jackson, R. W., Neidell, L. A., & Lunsford, D. A. (1995). An empirical investigation of the differences in goods and services as perceived by organizational buyers. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 24 (2), 99-108. DOI: 10.1016/0019-8501(94)00037-W
- Jambulingam, T., Kathuria, R., & Nevin, J. R. (2011). Fairness-trust-loyalty relationship under varying conditions of supplier-buyer interdependence. *The Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 19(1), 39-56.
- Jayawardhena, C., Souchon, A. L., Farrell, A. M., & Glanville, K. (2007). Outcomes of service encounter quality in a business-to-business context. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 36 (5), 575-588.
- Kim, N., Pae, J. H., Han, J. K., & Srivastava, R. K. (2010). Utilization of business technologies: Managing relationship-based benefits for buying and supplying firms. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 39 (3), 473-484. DOI: 10.1016/j.indmarman.2008.11.004
- Kimbrell, L. (2011). Designing for service as one way of designing services. *International Journal of Design*, 5 (2), 41-52.
- Kindström, D. (2010). Towards a service-based business model: Key aspects for future competitive advantage. *European Management Journal*, 28 (6), 479-490.
- Lee, J.-W. (2010). Online support service quality, online learning acceptance, and student satisfaction. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 13 (4), 277-283.
- Lee, J., & Rao, H. (2009). Task complexity and different decision criteria for online service acceptance: A comparison of two e-government compliance service domains. *Decision Support Systems*, 47(4), 424 - 435. DOI: 10.1016/j.dss.2009.04.009
- Leigh, T. W., & Rethans, A. J. (1984). A script-theoretic analysis of industrial purchasing behavior. *Journal of Marketing*, 48 (4), 22-32.
- Lemmink, J., & Mattsson, J. (2002). Employee behavior, feelings of warmth and customer perception in service encounters. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 30 (1), 18-33. DOI:10.1108/09590550210415239
- Martin, W. C., Ponder, N., & Lueg, J. E. (2009). Price fairness perceptions and customer loyalty in a retail context. *Journal of Business Research*, 62 (6), 588-593. DOI: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2008.05.017
- Mattson, J. (2000). Learning how to manage technology in service internationalization. *Service Industries Journal*, 20 (1), 22 - 40. DOI:10.1080/02642060000000002
- Pampel, F. (2000). *Logistic regression - A primer*. Paper Series No. 07 -132 (pp. 3-6). Sage Publications, New Delhi.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A. & Berry, L. L. (1985). A conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research. *Journal of Marketing*, 49 (4), 41-50.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 64 (1), 12 -40.
- Paulin, M., Ferguson, R. J., & Payaud, M. (2000). Business effectiveness and professional service personnel Relational or transactional managers? *European Journal of Marketing*, 34 (3/4), 453 - 472. DOI:10.1108/03090560010311966

- Ponsignon, F., Smart, P. A., & Maull, R. S. (2011). Service delivery system design: characteristics and contingencies. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 31(3), 324-349. DOI: 10.1108/01443571111111946
- Rotemberg, J. J. (2011). Fair pricing. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 9(5), 952-981.
- Seiders, K., & Berry, L. (1998). Service fairness: What is it and why it matters. *Academy of Management Executive*, 12(2), 8-20. DOI: 10.5465/AME.1998.650513
- Shostack, G. L. (1982). How to design a service. *European Journal of Marketing*, 16(1), 49-63.
- Shostack, G. L. (1984). Designing services that deliver. *Harvard Business Review*, 62(1), 133-139.
- Shostack, G. L. (1985). *The service encounter* (pp. 243 - 254). MA: Lexington Books.
- Smeltzer, L. R., & Ogden, J. A. (2002). Purchasing professionals' perceived differences between purchasing materials and purchasing services. *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 38(4), 54-70.
- Solomon, M. R., Surprenant, C., Czepiel, J. A., & Gutman, E. G. (1985). A role theory perspective on dyadic interactions: The service encounter. *Journal of Marketing*, 49(1), 99-111.
- Stock, J. R., & Zinszer, P. H. (1987). The industrial purchase decision for professional services. *Journal of Business Research*, 15(1), 1-16.
- Sundaram, N., & Geetha, S. (2008). Marketing mix strategies adopted by selected Indian business outsources. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 38(4), 22-37, 55.
- Surprenant, C. F., & Solomon, M. R. (1987). Predictability and personalization in the service encounter. *The Journal of Marketing*, 51(2), 86-96.
- Swan, J. E., Bowers, M. R., & Grover, R. (2002). Customer involvement in the selection of service specifications. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 16(1), 88-103. DOI: 10.1108/08876040210419433
- Tax, S. S., & Stuart, I. (1997). Designing and implementing new services: The challenges of integrating service systems. *Journal of Retailing*, 73(1), 105-134.
- Tombs, A. G., & McColl-Kennedy, J. R. (2013). Third party customers infecting other customers for better or for worse. *Psychology & Marketing*, 30(3), 277-292.
- Ulkuniemi, P., & Pekkari, S. (2011). Creating value for the business service buyer through modularity. *International Journal of Services and Operations Management*, 8(2), 127-141.
- van der Valk, W., & Rozemeijer, F. (2009). Buying business services: Towards a structured service purchasing process. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 23(1), 3-10. DOI:10.1108/08876040910933048
- van der Valk, W., Wynstra, F., & Axelsson, B. (2009). Effective buyer-supplier interaction patterns in ongoing service exchange. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 29(8), 807-833. DOI:10.1108/01443570910977706
- van der Valk, W., & Wynstra, F. (2012). Buyersupplier interaction in business-to-business services: A typology test using case research. *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, 18(3), 137-147. DOI: 10.1016/j.pursup.2012.03.003
- van Dun, Z., Bloemer, J., & Henseler, J. (2011). Perceived customer contact centre quality: Conceptual foundation and scale development. *Service Industries Journal*, 31(8), 1347-1363. DOI: 10.1080/02642060903437584
- van Iwaarden, J., & van der Valk, W. (2013). Controlling outsourced service delivery: Managing service quality in business service triads. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 24(9/10), 1046 - 1061. DOI:10.1080/14783363.2013.776766
- Van Raaij, W. F., & Pruyn, A. T. H. (1998). Customer control and evaluation of service validity and reliability. *Psychology & Marketing*, 15(8), 811-832.

- Voss, G. B., Parasuraman, A., & Grewal, D. (1998). The roles of price, performance, and expectations in determining satisfaction in service exchanges. *Journal of Marketing*, 62 (4), 46-61.
- Wilson, A., Zeithaml, V. A., Bitner, M.J., Gremler, D. D. (2011). *Services marketing: Integrating customer focus across the firm* (pp. 402 - 428). New Delhi : Tata McGraw-Hill.
- Xia, L., Kukar-Kinney, M., & Monroe, K. B. (2010). Effects of consumers' efforts on price and promotion fairness perceptions. *Journal of Retailing*, 86 (1), 1-10. DOI: 10.1016/j.jretai.2009.10.003
- Xu, X. (2012). From cloud computing to cloud manufacturing. *Robotics and Computer-Integrated Manufacturing*, 28 (1), 75 - 86. doi>10.1016/j.rcim.2011.07.002
- Zeithaml, V. A., Berry, L. L., & Parasuraman, A. (1996). The behavioral consequences of service quality. *Journal of Marketing*, 60 (2), 31-46.