Relationship between Service Quality of Courier Service providers & Re-purchase Intention of Online Buyers

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Abstract

This paper reviews the relationship between the service quality of courier service providers and the re-purchase intention of online buyers with special reference to Instagram platform users in Sri Lanka. During the past few years due to Covid - 19 pandemic, many customers move towards online purchasing. Hence, the authors tried to identify this trend as a good opportunity for entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka. The authors focused on courier service providers in Sri Lanka as they play a major role in online business activities as an intermediary party. This study employed quantitative method and primary data was collected from Instagram users especially those who have brought products through online manners from the online stores in Instagram. Further, convenience sampling method was used to collect data and it was able to gain 193 responses which indicated a 77% response rate. Moreover, to analyze the collected data, SPSS 25 version was used. The results gained by the correlation analysis were able to prove that there is a positive relationship between the service quality of courier service providers and the re-purchase intention of online buyers who have purchased products from the online shopping stores in the Instagram platform. Further, it revealed that each service quality dimensions has a positive relationship with the repurchase intention of online buyers. Nevertheless, the contribution of the findings in this study will be beneficial, especially for SMEs who are struggling on the online platforms and also for courier service providers in Sri Lanka to enhance their service quality for future development and let them have a chance to rethink their about capabilities to overcome future challenges.

Keywords: Service quality, Re-purchase intention, online buyers, Instagram

01. Introduction

Traditional living style changes with time due to a variety of reasons. The changes let new opportunities and it encourages entrepreneurs to exploit them and cater new products and services to society. Especially, due to COVID-19's effects, most countries put in place strict

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regulations that reduced the population's ability to engage in physical activity, and due to these constraints, consumers, especially those who live in urban areas, have primarily turned to online shopping as a mean of making purchases (Dar et al., 2023). Further, with the rapid development of technology the world moves towards a virtual platform. The turbulent business environment should be treated as a virtual one which is useful to transfer data, information, knowledge, goods, and services based on modern infrastructures, and these infrastructures enable them to satisfy the requirements of the new business environment as well (Dragoi et al., 2013). Behind the success of virtual enterprises, it can be identified some other supportive services like delivery services. The ever-increasing growth of the e-commerce market has created significant potential for firms in the supply chain, such as courier service companies that provide parcel delivery services (Siali et al., 2018).

Working with new technology is useful to both entrepreneurs and customers in the selling and buying process of products. In the 21st century, most business organizations engaged with the utilization of new technology and maintain their own websites and social media pages. From the customer's perspective, the availability of e-commerce platforms as a shopping medium provides many advantages like shopping conveniently, comparing products and prices effectively, and arranging the delivery of the product immediately (Chang & Chou, 2012). Therefore, e – businessmen need to consider delivering online orders with the support of a courier service provider in a fast and suitable manner. Delivery services, according to e-retailers, are one of the most important aspects influencing a consumer's decision to shop with them or for repurchases (Morganti et al., 2014).

Focusing on how to deliver the goods that are ordered online is one of the key factors for the growth of e-commerce (Morganti et al., 2014) because the products which are purchased through online manner must be physically delivered to the customers. When gaining their ordered products through courier services, customers had to face several problems. According to Morganti, et al. (2014), e-consumers have experienced problems such as delivery at home when nobody was there, a delay in the delivery, delivery costs that were too high, the lack of a way of tracking delivery status, and the need to collect the product from a distant collection point. Therefore, it is important to focus on the service quality of courier service providers at present because identifying the relationship between the service quality of courier service providers and the repurchase intention of online buyers is useful for enterprises who are conducting their business activities via virtual platforms and for the courier service providers to enhance their service quality aspects as well.

Handling customer trust, satisfaction, and loyalty attitudes to e-commerce services is crucial for the long-term survival of many businesses (Kura, 2011). With the online buying behavior of people, business organizations expand further with other supportive parties. Especially the demand for courier services increased with this pandemic situation as people were unable to move to shops physically. Recently, the number of parcel delivery services used by business firms to consumers has grown rapidly as many consumers are willing to use online shopping (Hayashi et al., 2014). The difference between two situations where people buying products physically and ordering products via the internet make different feelings on both parties as the seller wants to ensure whether their customer is truly satisfied with their products and whether the delivery service provider handover it carefully while the customer waiting till his or her order can gain as soon as possible with the perceived quality. Hence, it is necessary to consider service quality perceived by clients as it is a crucial factor in the process of co-creating sustainable services, customer expectations, and needs, and allowing service providers to

improve them (Ejdys & Gulc, 2020). Therefore, delivery service providers also have a great responsibility in delivering the right product to the right customer at the right time. In the case of physical goods, the spread of online shopping has generated significant demand for dedicated delivery services to the end consumer (Morganti et al., 2014). Having a well-satisfied customer is essential for any type of business. Yan (2006) clearly explained the cost of acquiring one new consumer by stating that "it is five times more than keeping an old consumer. Therefore, keeping an existing consumer creates better effects of revenue and profit with less effort for the industry (Chang & Chou, 2012). Further, the development of a technology-oriented courier service requires a different approach toward the definition and measurement of trust in service about service quality and the future intentions of customers (Eidys & Gulc, 2020). In focusing about the scope of this study, it is limited to the online buyers who are purchasing products via the Instagram platform and trying to identify whether there is a positive relationship between the service quality of courier service providers and the repurchase intention of these buyers from the online stores in Instagram, where they already bought products. Moreover, the respondents were contacted and gathered data using Google Forms-powered online survey.

1.1. Problem Statement

With the rapid development of information and communication technology, people adopted to change their lifestyle and move with it. Even it was identified by a research study conducted in Saudi Arabia that, as more people have access to the Internet, both internationally and domestically in Saudi Arabia, e-commerce services are becoming more and more popular (Kura, 2011). Within the past few years due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation, most of the business also moved towards online stores. However, when working within the online platform, most of the retailers had to deliver their products to the customers with the support of an intermediary party. According to Dar et al. (2023) within the pandemic situation, individuals had to stay at home and rely on internet shopping; there will likely be a major increase in the demand for courier services. The demand for courier service-providing firms increased within the past few years and now they play a major role within this turbulent business environment. Despite this fact, it is useful to identify whether the service provided by these courier service companies has any relationship with the online re-purchase intention of the buyers who are buying products via online shopping stores. When searching for previous empirical studies, the researchers could identify that most of the studies focused on customer satisfaction, loyalty, and ways to develop courier service firms (Hayashi et al., 2014; Kura, 2011). Moreover, even within the Sri Lankan context most of the studies focused on customer satisfaction and brand loyalty, and most of them are focused on hotels, restaurants, and the banking industry. (Ukkwatte & Abeysekera, 2016; Pasha & Razashah, 2018). There is a need for more research studies on online buying, particularly for academics and marketers to comprehend the aspects that influence customers' intention to buy online. In addition to that, it is crucial to comprehend how they influence consumers' intentions to buy and ultimately, their intentions to buy again in developing nations (Machi et al., 2022). Further, Tandon et al. (2017) have emphasized that models established in Western nations must be evaluated across these varied cultures because developing markets have diverse institutional environments in terms of their socioeconomic and regulatory features and, to close this knowledge gap, they study key aspects of website service quality that influence customers' propensity to make repeat purchases. Even Dar et al. (2023) have emphasized that future researchers regarding courier service providers are urged to broaden the scope and keep up with new developments in the ecommerce and courier industries. Hence, by considering all these facts, the researchers decided to identify whether there is a positive relationship between the service quality of courier service providers and the re-purchase intention of online buyers especially who are purchasing products from the online shopping stores available on Instagram platform in Sri Lanka.

02. Literature Review

2.1. Service Quality of Courier Service Providers

A comparison of the customer expectations of the service and the performance of the company can be identified as the quality of the service. If the performance of the company is higher related to customer expectations, positive or higher service quality can be determined (Ennew, 2007; Yusra & Agus, 2020). A rise of virtual businesses can be seen today with the use of information technology by the limitations of traveling due to Covid 19 pandemic situation. Then, delivery became an essential service to the customers, and the quality of the delivery is also important to organizations to find the path to a sustainable competitive advantage (Bejleri & Fishta, 2017). Regarding the delivery service, if the performance of the delivery service is higher related to the customer expectations, positive or higher delivery service quality can be determined (Beileri & Fishta, 2017; Finkle & Timothy, 2019). Regarding the service quality of delivery service providers, five dimensions have been identified with the support of previous empirical studies. To measure the delivery service quality the authors have used Availability of service, Responsiveness of service, Reliability of service, Completeness of service, and Professionalism of service. Availability in delivery service can be seen in several ways. First, delivery service should be available to the area where the customer lives or where the customer is expecting. Second, the delivery service should be available at the required time of the customer, and third, the delivery service should cover the goods or items requested by the customer (Munusamy et al., 2010; Yusra & Agus, 2020; Zeithaml et al., 2002).

The willingness of employees to help customers and provide the prompted services can be identified as the 'responsiveness'. Staff members who have been assigned to customer services should always be ready to help the customers and they should help the customer with happiness and dedication (Akilimalissiga et al., 2017; Wasantha, 2016). Moreover, employees should act quickly to complete the requirement of the customer and they should always be ready to respond. Finally, responsiveness includes providing services without any delay (Otsetova, 2017). Regarding the delivery service, a delivery person should always help customers to deliver the item to the right location without any delay, and delivery persons are responsible for listing the customers and doing the needful subject to their job role (Otsetova, 2017).

Reliability is providing the required service to the customers dependably, accurately, and in a promised manner. Moreover, treating the problems faced by the consumers is also needed under reliability. The consumer should have a reliable service regarding required service which will be given as prompted or as advertised and employees will be able to solve the problems faced by them (Ennew, 2007; Sutrisno et al., 2019). Regarding the delivery service, regular standards of the company and best practices recognized for delivery should be followed by the employees, and features of the delivery service should be kept as promised in advertising (N. et al., 2019). For every service, there should be a process designed by the organization or a process recognized generally by the industry (locally or globally). When providing a service to the customer, such a whole process needs to be implemented and the process should be

performed until the last step is completed (Munusamy et al., 2010). Regarding the delivery services, the process generally starts with order acceptance and it includes, packing the goods, shipping the goods, receiving the goods from the regional warehouse, assigning the good to a delivery partner, contacting the customer, and handing over the good to the customer. If all steps of the process have been completed, a complete delivery service can be accepted (Akilimalissiga et al., 2017; Yusra & Agus, 2020).

For every service, there are expected or predefined sets of skills that should be achieved by the person whom the service is providing (N. et al., 2019; Wasantha, 2016). For example, a person who delivers the goods to the customer should have map reading skills, speak the languages which are generally spoken in the country (English, Sinhala, and Tamil), approach the customer with professional communication, answer the sub-related questions asked by the customer, etc. The professional skills and qualifications lead the employee to offer high-quality service to the customer (N. et al., 2019). Moreover, Customer satisfaction can be defined as how products or services of the organization can fulfill customer expectations. Based on to which extent or how far customer expectations are fulfilled by the organization, the level of customer satisfaction is decided (Angelova & Zeqiri, 2011; Zhu et al., 2010).

2..2. Re-purchase Intention of Online Buyers

First, it is important to determine the term; purchase intention. Intention means the desire of the person and then purchase intention is the desire of the customer to purchase the products or services of the organization (Hellier et al., 2003; Suhaily & Soelasih, 2017). The purchase intention of the customer can be influenced by several factors. The intention to purchase the goods for the first time can be enhanced by advertising the product attractively, recommending the product to other customers, by direct marketing and other marketing and advertising tools (Chen et al., 2016; Hellier et al., 2003; Suhaily & Soelasih, 2017). The term; re-purchase intention can be defined as the intention of the customer to purchase the good or obtain the service again and again (Ong et al., 2014). According to Wibowo et al. (2023), when customers are satisfied, they are more likely to make further purchases, stick with the brand or shop they purchased from, and recommend it to others. When the purchase intention of the customer is high, a strong connection or relationship between the organization and the customer can be built. Moreover, these types of customers can be considered a valuable asset to the company which can ensure that the revenue of the organization will be grown in the future continuously (Chen et al., 2016; Hellier et al., 2003; Suhaily & Soelasih, 2017).

2.3. Service quality and Re-Purchases Intention

This can be discussed in general terms and using each element of delivery service quality. When considering the term generally, regarding the delivery service, if the performance of the delivery service is higher related to the customer expectations, positive or higher delivery service quality can be determined (Ali & Bhasin, 2019; Dehnavi et al., 2014; Nguyen & g, 2018). If the expectations of the customer are fulfilled by the delivery service, there is a positive feeling towards the organization in the mind of the customer. Then, there is a higher possibility of choosing the same brand or same organization by their customer for future purchases also. Then, in general terms, there is a higher influence of delivery service quality on re-purchases intention (Ali & Bhasin, 2019; Dehnavi et al., 2014; Nguyen & G, 2018).

Considering the specific elements of delivery quality, its influence on re-purchase intention can be identified as follows. When the delivery service is available at any time and when it is available for any location of the country, customers may feel that it is comfortable to order and consume the goods. Then, to obtain comfort in every purchase, the customer will purchase from the same seller again (Munusamy et al., 2010; Yusra & Agus, 2020). Responsiveness can be identified as it can make feel the customer that the organization is caring for them and organization is responding to them properly. The customer may like to order the goods again from the same seller (Ennew, 2007). Further, keeping the trust and confidentiality of the customer can also influence him or her to rely on the brand for a long time (Ennew, 2007). Moreover, Completeness can enhance the positive feeling toward order completion and customer care of the organization, which can also motivate the customer to purchase again (Akilimalissiga et al., 2017). The skills possessed by rather employees is a sign of the quality of the final output and customer can purchase it even if she/he does not have technical knowledge about the product with a higher level of trust (Akilimalissiga et al., 2017).

2.4. Conceptualization

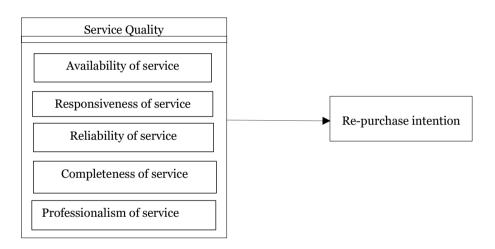


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.5. Hypotheses Development

In light of the above evidence, the following hypotheses have been established.

H1a: There is a positive relationship between Availability and Re-Purchase Intention

H1b: There is a positive relationship between Responsiveness and Re-Purchase Intention

H1c: There is a positive relationship between Reliability and Re-Purchase Intention

H1d: There is a positive relationship between Completeness and Re-Purchase Intention

H1e: There is a positive relationship between Professionalism and Re-Purchase Intention

H1: There is a positive relationship between the service quality of courier service providers and re-purchase Intention

03. Methodology

A research approach can be defined as the chosen way of treating and analyzing the selected data and is generally classified as either quantitative or qualitative (Yin, 1993, Liyanage, 2017). As this research was designed to find out the relationship between service qualities & repurchase intention of online buyers, a qualitative method of research could not be applied but rather a quantitative approach will be adopted. Research approaches can be divided into two types as Deductive research approach and Inductive research approach. In this study, the researcher used a deductive approach. The logic behind deductive implication is that, when the premises are true, the conclusion must also be true. The generalizability of this approach is conducted from the general to the specific. And the collected data is used to evaluate propositions or hypotheses related to an existing theory. This study's theoretical population is online buyers in Sri Lanka and the study population is online buyers who have brought products from sellers on Instagram platform. Hence, a unit of analysis can be recognized as Instagram users especially who have brought products through online manners from the sellers in Instagram.

In this study, the researchers measured service quality (Independent variable) using dimensions proposed by Li et al. (2006), which focuses on the five service quality dimensions for the parcel delivery industry. Further Re – purchase intention (Dependent variable) was measured using validated instruments used in prior relevant research studies. In collecting primary data, the authors used a structured questionnaire. Due to the ease of obtaining data, surveys were conducted by creating Google Forms and distributed over the Instagram platform using a convenience sampling approach. Even the study conducted by Pasha and Razashah (2018) about identifying the effect of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction, has used the convenience sampling method as a sampling technique. Further, the researcher used 250 structured questionnaires, which were distributed via the Instagram platform after sending a few screening questions. This was done to ensure that the respondents were qualified to provide usable and accurate data for this research. The qualified respondents were then requested to answer and submit the Google form. And all these data were gathered from the 15th of December 2022 to the 15th of February 2023. This questionnaire consists of 2 sections. The questions consist within the 1st section of the questionnaire were to investigate the demographic characteristics of the respondents. And section 2 of this questionnaire consisted of questions in the form of a 5-point Likert scale. These 5 points are allocated for the strongly agree option while 4 points for agree, 3 points for neutral, 2 points for disagree, and 1 point for strongly disagree. The questions which are included within 2nd section of the questionnaire cover all the constructs used within this study. Moreover, the authors used secondary data by refereeing to previous journal articles, newspaper articles, annual reports, books, the internet, etc. Further, the minimum sample size is 83 according to the (Erdfelder, 2007) developed G power test. 250 questionnaires were distributed among online buyers on the Instagram platform and 193 responses were received indicating a 77% response rate. Finally, the data were analyzed by using SPSS 25 version.

04. Data analysis

As illustrated in Table 1, most of the respondents are between the ages of 21-30 as it represents the highest percentage at 70.5% while 4.1% gain for two options which indicated people whose ages lie between 41 to 50 and above 50. Further, 70% of respondents are female and the rest is

male (30%). 51.3% of the respondents are married while 47.2% are single and only 1.6% have mentioned that they are divorced/separated. In considering the occupations of these respondents, most of them are working as private sector employees as it gains the highest percentage (36%) while the least percentage indicated under other category as 1%. The next highest percentage under the occupation category is indicated under the government employee option as it represents 17%. Moreover, the authors focused on the online shopping frequency of the respondents. Most of the respondents do shopping via online platforms once a month as it represents 49.7% while the minimum percentage indicated under the option of "about once a day" (4.7%).

4.1. Sample composition

Table 1: Sample composition

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Age group	17 - 20	16	8.3	
	21 - 30	136	70.5	
	31 – 40	25	13	
	41 - 50	8	4.1	
	Above 50	8	4.1	
Gender	Male	58	30	
	Female	135	70	
Marital status	Single	91	47.2	
	Married	99	51.3	
	Divorced/Separated	3	1.6	
Occupation	Professional	29	15	
	Government Employee	32	17	
	Private Sector Employee	70	36	
	Self-Employed	20	10.3	
	House wife	9	4.7	
	Student	31	16	
	Other	2	1	
Online shopping	once a month	96	49.7	
frequency	Few times a month	65	33.7	
	Few times a week	23	11.9	
	About once a day	9	4.7	

4.2. Reliability

Table 2: Reliability statistics

	rable 2. Reliability statistics	
Construct	Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha
Service Quality		.912
	Availability of service	.833
	Responsiveness of service	.833
	Reliability of service	.759
	Completeness of service	.814
	Professionalism of service	.856
Re-purchase intention		.846

The reliability of the constructs used in a study can be determined through Cronbach alpha values. According to Table 2, the highest reliability is represented under the dimension of Professionalism of service (.856) while the lowest value is indicated under Reliability of service (.759). Further, (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) emphasized that a threshold level of 0.6 or the highest value is required to demonstrate a satisfactory level of reliability. According to the results gained in this study, it can be concluded that all constructs meet the threshold value and there are no concerns about low internal consistency among the constructs.

4.3. Relationship between Service Quality and Re-purchase intention

As illustrated in Table 3, there is a positive correlation between Service Quality and Re-Purchase Intention as the Pearson Correlation value represented is equal to 0.627. Moreover, H1 stated that there is a positive relationship between Service Quality and Re-purchase Intention. The hypothesis is supported by the results indicated in Table 3, as it indicated a positive value (+0.627). Therefore, developed hypothesis can be accepted. It means that there is a positive relationship between Service Quality and Re-purchase Intention.

Table 3: Relationship between Service Quality and Re-purchase intention

	1	ž 1
		Re-purchase intention
Service Quality	Pearson Correlation	.627**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	193

4.4. Relationship between Service Quality Dimensions and Re-purchase intention

According to Table 4, the highest correlation can be identified between Professionalism and Re-purchase intention as its Pearson Correlation value is equal to 0.633. And the lowest correlation can be identified between Availability and Re-purchase Intention (value = 0.457). Moreover, the results in Table 4 proved that H1a, H1b, H1c, H1d, and H1e can be accepted as all the Pearson correlation values between Service Quality Dimensions and Re-purchase intention are positive and significant.

Table 4: Relationship between Service Quality Dimensions and Re-purchase intention

		Avail:	Respon:	Relia:	Comple:	Prof:
Re-	Pearson	·457**	·544 ^{**}	·533 ^{**}	.526**	.633**
purchase intention	Correlation Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	193	193	193	193	193

05. Discussion of Findings and Implication

The quality of the service is important for both, consumers and service providers. And any company needs to concentrate on improving its delivery service (Fornell and Wernerfelt, 1988). According to Table 3, the coefficient correlation between service quality and repurchase intention is 0.627 at the 95% significance level. This correlation analysis has shown that there

is a strong correlation between the service quality of delivery services and the repurchase intention of online buyers in Sri Lanka. Chang and Chou (2012); Suhartantoa et al. (2018); also proved this relationship from past research. Considering service quality dimensions, Availability, Responsiveness, Reliability, Completeness, and Professionalism show positive relationships with the repurchase intention (Table 4).

The professionalism of the service has the strongest relationship with repurchase intention. It is followed by the responsiveness and repurchases intention of online buyers. For instance, in the hotel industry, Ali et al. (2021) found that service quality dimensions, including professionalism and responsiveness, significantly influenced customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. In the e-commerce context, Alalwan et al. (2017) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis and concluded that service quality positively affected customer satisfaction, trust, and repurchase intention because professionalism in delivery service can lead to increased trust and confidence in the retailer and the delivery service provider. Customers are more likely to view the retailer and delivery service provider as reliable and trustworthy when they consistently demonstrate professionalism. This can result in higher customer satisfaction and increased loyalty, which can lead to increased re-purchase intention. On the other hand, when delivery service providers demonstrate unprofessional behavior, such as being unreliable, disrespectful, or inefficient, it can negatively impact the customer experience and decrease the likelihood of the customer making a repeat purchase. Ali and Bhasin (2019) investigated the effects of delivery service quality on customer satisfaction and repurchase intention in the e-commerce context. Their findings indicated that negative experiences, including unprofessional behavior such as late deliveries, rude behavior, and mishandling of packages, significantly lowered customer satisfaction and reduced repurchase intention. Negative experiences can lead to decreased trust and confidence in the retailer and the delivery service provider and can damage the retailer's reputation. Therefore, it is important for delivery service providers to prioritize professionalism in their interactions with customers to increase customer satisfaction, loyalty, and ultimately, re-purchase intention. Moreover, the lowest positive relationship is with availability and repurchases intention.

5.1. Implications of the Study

This study provides several practical implications for online business owners, delivery service providers, policymakers, and future researchers. The study highlights the importance of service quality in influencing repurchase intention. Delivery service providers and online business owners can use the findings to identify specific dimensions of service quality (such as professionalism, responsiveness, reliability, etc.) that require improvement. By focusing on these dimensions, they can enhance their overall service quality and increase the likelihood of repeat purchases. This study will help academics involved in teaching business, marketing, or service management courses as they can incorporate the findings of this study into their curriculum. The study's implications on service quality, professionalism, and customer satisfaction can be integrated into lectures, case studies, and discussions to enhance students' understanding of these concepts. Policymakers can utilize these findings to develop or refine policies and regulations related to service quality standards, consumer protection, and professional conduct in the delivery service industry. The study highlights the importance of professionalism, responsiveness, and reliability, which can guide policy decisions aimed at promoting these qualities among service providers.

06. Conclusion

The relationship between the service quality of delivery service providers and the re-purchase intention of online buyers is an important aspect of e-commerce. Research has shown that there is a strong correlation between service quality and customer loyalty, which can lead to increased re-purchase intention. When delivery service providers offer high-quality services. such as on-time delivery, proper handling of goods, and responsive customer service, it can increase the perceived value of the online buying experience. This can lead to greater satisfaction with the delivery experience, which can, in turn, increase the likelihood of the customer making a repeat purchase. In addition, a positive delivery experience can also enhance the overall reputation of the online retailer, leading to a greater level of trust and confidence among customers. This can further increase their re-purchase intention and encourage them to recommend the retailer to others. Conversely, a poor delivery experience can have a negative impact on the customer's perception of the online retailer and delivery service provider, leading to decreased re-purchase intention and potential damage to the retailer's reputation. Therefore, it is crucial for online retailers and delivery service providers to prioritize the quality of their delivery services to ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty, ultimately leading to increased re-purchase intention.

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