



## Examining the Effect of Service Quality and Perceived Value on Repurchase Intention with the Mediating Role of Brand Preference

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the impact of service quality and perceived value on repurchase intention, considering the mediating role of brand preference among customers of Asia Insurance Company. The research adopted a descriptive-survey design with an applied purpose. Data were collected using a standardized questionnaire. The statistical population comprised Asia Insurance customers in Mazandaran Province, Iran. Based on Cochran's formula for an indefinite population, a sample of 196 participants was selected through convenience sampling. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 24 for descriptive statistics and SmartPLS 3 for inferential statistics and structural equation modeling. The findings revealed that service quality exerts a significant positive effect on both brand preference ( $\beta = 0.422$ ,  $t = 5.266$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and repurchase intention ( $\beta = 0.336$ ,  $t = 3.847$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, perceived value significantly influences brand preference ( $\beta = 0.585$ ,  $t = 8.168$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and repurchase intention ( $\beta = 0.481$ ,  $t = 5.626$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Brand preference also demonstrated a significant positive effect on repurchase intention ( $\beta = 0.314$ ,  $t = 3.630$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Sobel test results confirmed the mediating role of brand preference in the relationship between service quality and repurchase intention ( $Z = 2.59$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), as well as between perceived value and repurchase intention ( $Z = 2.15$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). These findings indicate that insurance companies seeking to enhance customer repurchase intention should not only focus on improving service quality and creating perceived value but also place particular emphasis on strengthening brand preference as a transmission mechanism through which these variables exert their effects.

**KEYWORDS:** service quality, perceived value, repurchase intention, brand preference

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## 1. Introduction

In the era of intense competition within service markets, customer retention has emerged as a key strategy for achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Rezaqoli et al., 2024). The insurance industry, as a vital economic sector, faces numerous challenges in attracting and retaining customers. This is primarily due to the intangible nature of insurance services and the complexity of service delivery processes, which necessitate the establishment of trust and perceived value in customers' minds (Havandi, 2016). Within this context, constructs such as service quality, perceived value, and brand preference have garnered significant scholarly attention as determinants of consumer behavior.

Service quality, as a cornerstone of competition in the service sector, plays a pivotal role in shaping customers' positive attitudes (Parasuraman et al., 1991). Empirical studies have demonstrated that delivering high-quality services not only enhances customer satisfaction but also serves as a prerequisite for fostering brand loyalty and brand preference (Zahravandian, 2024). In this regard, Klaus Oppeng et al. (2023), in a study conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa's over-the-counter herbal market, emphasized that service quality influences consumer behavior by cultivating brand trust and a positive brand image.

Perceived value, conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing functional, emotional, social, and conditional dimensions, is recognized as a critical factor in consumers' purchase decisions (Sheth et al., 1991). Zeithaml (1988) defined perceived value as the consumer's overall assessment of a product's utility based on perceptions of what is received relative to what is given. Recent research has indicated that perceived value not only exerts a direct effect on customer satisfaction but also influences repurchase intention indirectly by reinforcing brand preference (Hu et al., 2021; Tri, 2020).

Brand preference, reflecting the behavioral inclination of buyers toward a specific brand, functions as a bridge between customer perceptions and actual purchase behavior (Ebrahimpour et al., 2020). Studies have shown that brand preference is not only shaped by cognitive factors such as quality and value but also operates as an independent antecedent of consumer behavior (Pirjamadi et al., 2022). In this vein, Tri (2020), in a Vietnamese context, confirmed that brand preference serves as a key mediating mechanism in the relationships between brand trust, perceived value, and repurchase intention.

Repurchase intention, as an indicator of behavioral loyalty, constitutes one of the primary objectives of corporate marketing strategies (Mohammadi, 2020). This construct extends beyond momentary satisfaction, representing the customer's willingness to repeatedly purchase from a specific brand in the future. Research has demonstrated that repurchase intention is influenced by multiple factors, including service quality, perceived value, and brand preference (Rezaqoli et al., 2024; Cuong, 2020).

Despite extensive research in consumer behavior, a significant research gap persists regarding the transmission mechanism through which service quality and perceived value influence repurchase intention via brand preference—particularly within the insurance industry, where services possess

unique characteristics such as intangibility and complexity. Prior studies have predominantly focused on direct relationships among these variables, while the mediating role of brand preference has not been comprehensively examined (Cheraghi, 2021; Alghorayer, 2020). Furthermore, existing research in Iran has primarily concentrated on retail and general service contexts, with limited investigations conducted within the insurance sector, especially in Mazandaran Province.

Addressing this research gap, the present study examines the mediating role of brand preference in the relationships between service quality and perceived value with repurchase intention among customers of Asia Insurance Company in Mazandaran Province. The findings of this research can assist insurance company managers in designing effective strategies to enhance customer loyalty and improve competitive performance.

## **2. Theoretical Foundations and Research Framework**

### **2.1. Service Quality**

Service quality, as a central construct in services marketing, presents unique measurement and improvement challenges due to the distinctive characteristics of services—namely intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability, and perishability (Parasuraman et al., 1991). Conceptually, service quality represents the cognitive comparison customers make between the level of service they expect to receive and the actual service performance they experience (Parasuraman et al., 1991).

The SERVQUAL model stands as one of the most widely applied frameworks for assessing service quality, built upon five core dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance (Parasuraman et al., 1991). Tangibles refer to physical facilities, equipment, and personnel appearance; reliability denotes the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately; responsiveness reflects employees' willingness to help customers and provide prompt service; empathy pertains to the capacity for delivering caring, individualized attention to customers; and assurance encompasses employees' knowledge, courtesy, and ability to inspire trust and confidence.

Empirical research has demonstrated that service quality not only exerts a direct influence on customer satisfaction but also affects post-purchase behaviors—including repurchase intention—through mechanisms such as trust formation and brand image enhancement (Alghorayer, 2020). Within the insurance industry, service quality holds particular significance during post-sale interactions and claims settlement processes. Positive experiences at these critical touchpoints can substantially influence customer loyalty, as the intangible nature of insurance products places greater emphasis on service delivery quality as a determinant of customer evaluations (Rezaqoli et al., 2024).

### **2.2. Perceived Value**

Perceived value, as a multidimensional construct, is defined as the customer's mental trade-off between the benefits received and the costs incurred (Zeithaml, 1988). This concept has been examined through multiple theoretical perspectives: a unidimensional view that conceptualizes

value merely as an exchange between quality and price, and a multidimensional view that encompasses a broader spectrum of value dimensions (Sánchez et al., 2006).

Sheth et al. (1991), in their theory of consumption values, identified five primary value dimensions: functional value (pertaining to the utilitarian and practical purposes of a product), social value (relating to the image an individual projects to others through product consumption), emotional value (associated with feelings evoked by product usage), epistemic value (concerning curiosity and the desire for knowledge or novelty), and conditional value (linked to specific situational circumstances of consumption). Holbrook (1999) subsequently proposed a more comprehensive framework that generates value along three bipolar dimensions—extrinsic versus intrinsic, self-oriented versus other-oriented, and active versus reactive—resulting in an eight-dimensional typology of consumer value.

Within the insurance industry, perceived value extends beyond a simple price-to-quality ratio to encompass factors such as psychological security, claims settlement speed, contractual transparency, and responsiveness during crisis situations (Ebrahimpour et al., 2020). Empirical studies have demonstrated that perceived value functions as a robust predictor of consumer behavior, exerting significant influence on customer loyalty, repurchase intention, and resistance to brand switching (Hu et al., 2021). In contexts characterized by service intangibility—as in insurance—perceived value becomes particularly salient, as customers rely heavily on holistic assessments of benefits relative to sacrifices when evaluating service offerings.

### 2.3. Brand Preference

Brand preference, defined as the behavioral inclination reflecting a buyer's attitude toward a specific brand, functions as an intermediate state between inputs (perceptions and beliefs) and outputs (actual purchase behavior) within consumer choice models (Ebrahimpour et al., 2020). Fishbein's (1967) model, grounded in expectancy-value theory, conceptualizes brand preference as a function of consumers' cognitive beliefs regarding the weighted attributes of a brand.

However, this model has faced several criticisms, including its exclusive focus on cognitive beliefs while neglecting emotional responses, limited applicability to non-durable goods, and diminished predictive power due to the incorporation of weights within an algebraic equation (Ebrahimpour et al., 2020). In contrast, contemporary approaches conceptualize brand preference not merely as an outcome of cognitive information processing but also as a consequence of consumers' experiential and emotional engagements with the brand (Pirjamadi et al., 2022).

Empirical research has demonstrated that brand preference is influenced by multiple antecedents, including service quality, perceived value, brand trust, and brand experience (Tri, 2020). Moreover, brand preference itself operates as a critical precursor to repurchase intention and behavioral loyalty (Gülnil et al., 2018). Within the insurance industry, brand preference assumes particular significance given that insurance purchase decisions are often associated with perceived risk; consequently, consumers tend to favor brands toward which they harbor greater trust and preference when making risk-laden decisions.

## 2.4. Repurchase Intention

Repurchase intention is defined as the consumer's conscious plan to exert effort toward purchasing a specific product or service in the future (Mohammadi, 2020). This construct is classified as a core element of the buyer's cognitive behavior and serves as a vital predictor of the consumer purchase process. It is important to distinguish repurchase intention from actual purchase behavior: intention reflects the consumer's likelihood or propensity to repurchase rather than a definitive purchase act, yet it demonstrates a strong positive correlation with actual repurchase behavior.

Multiple factors influence repurchase intention, including customer satisfaction, service quality, perceived value, brand trust, and brand preference (Mostafaei, 2021). The literature emphasizes that repurchase intention is shaped by individual perceptions, and unpredictable situational factors may alter consumers' intentions prior to actual purchase (Mohammadi, 2020). In the insurance industry, repurchase intention holds particular strategic importance because personal insurance policies are typically renewed on an annual basis, providing customers with recurring opportunities to switch providers during each renewal cycle. Consequently, fostering strong repurchase intention constitutes a critical objective for insurance firms seeking to maintain customer retention and achieve long-term profitability.

## 2.5. Research Theoretical Framework

Based on the literature review and theoretical foundations, the conceptual framework of the present study rests on the premise that service quality and perceived value exert not only direct effects on repurchase intention but also indirect effects through the reinforcement of brand preference. This theoretical framework has been developed by integrating theories related to consumer behavior, customer value, and brand loyalty.

The conceptual model of the present research encompasses four primary constructs: two independent variables (service quality and perceived value), one mediating variable (brand preference), and one dependent variable (repurchase intention). This model has been developed based on prior research, including studies by Tri (2020) and Rezaqoli et al. (2024), with particular emphasis on the mediating role of brand preference in transmitting the effects of service quality and perceived value to repurchase intention. The proposed framework posits that customers' evaluations of service quality and perceived value shape their brand preference, which subsequently serves as a proximal determinant of their intention to repurchase from the same insurance provider. This mediation pathway is especially relevant in the insurance context, where intangible service attributes necessitate cognitive and affective bridges—such as brand preference—to translate service experiences into future behavioral intentions.

## 3. Research Methodology

This study adopts an applied research design with a descriptive-survey approach to data collection. The statistical population comprised all customers of Asia Insurance Company in Mazandaran Province, Iran. Due to the geographical dispersion of customers and the diversity of insurance services offered, the exact population size was considered indefinite. Consequently, Cochran's formula for indefinite populations was employed to determine the required sample size:

$$n = (Z^2 \times p \times q) / d^2$$

where  $Z = 1.96$  (corresponding to a 95% confidence level),  $p = 0.5$  (maximum variance),  $q = 0.5$ , and  $d = 0.07$  (acceptable margin of error). Substituting these values yielded a minimum sample size of 196 participants, who were selected using convenience sampling.

Data were collected through a standardized 20-item questionnaire structured across five sections: demographic characteristics (4 items), service quality (5 items), perceived value (6 items), brand preference (4 items), and repurchase intention (5 items). All measurement items were operationalized using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). Content validity was established through review and approval by the thesis supervisor and marketing domain experts. Reliability was assessed via a pilot test administered to 30 respondents; Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.87 for the entire instrument, with subscale values ranging from 0.73 to 0.91, indicating acceptable to excellent internal consistency.

Data analysis employed both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics—including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations—were utilized to characterize the demographic profile of the sample and were computed using SPSS version 24. For inferential analysis, partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was implemented via SmartPLS 3 software to test the hypothesized relationships within the conceptual framework.

The measurement model was evaluated against three primary criteria: (1) composite reliability (CR > 0.70) to assess internal consistency; (2) convergent validity, determined by average variance extracted (AVE > 0.50); and (3) discriminant validity, verified using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (the square root of each construct's AVE should exceed its inter-construct correlations). The structural model was assessed using path coefficients ( $\beta$ ), corresponding t-statistics ( $t > 1.96$  for significance at  $p < 0.05$ ), coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), and Stone-Geisser's  $Q^2$  predictive relevance criterion ( $Q^2 > 0$ ). Mediation hypotheses were tested using the Sobel test, with a Z-value exceeding 1.96 indicating a statistically significant indirect effect at the 95% confidence level.

#### 4. Results and Findings

A total of 196 valid questionnaires were collected and analyzed. Demographic analysis revealed that 61.2% of respondents were male and 38.8% were female. Regarding marital status, 75.5% were married and 24.5% were single. Educational attainment distribution was as follows: 56.6% held a bachelor's degree, 21.9% held an associate degree, 18.4% held a master's or doctoral degree, and 3.1% held a high school diploma. Age distribution indicated that 32.7% of participants were aged 39–46 years, 32.1% were aged 31–38 years, 29.1% were aged 47 years and above, and 6.1% were aged 23–30 years.

Measurement Model Assessment: Confirmatory factor analysis results demonstrated that all item factor loadings exceeded 0.70 and were statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$ , confirming adequate convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.81 for service quality, 0.91 for perceived value, 0.73 for brand preference, and 0.80 for repurchase intention. Composite reliability (CR) values were 0.87, 0.93, 0.83, and 0.86, respectively—all surpassing the recommended threshold of

### Examining the Effect of Service Quality and Perceived Value on Repurchase Intention with the Mediating Role of Brand Preference

0.70. Average variance extracted (AVE) values were 0.58 for service quality, 0.71 for perceived value, 0.54 for brand preference, and 0.57 for repurchase intention, all exceeding the 0.50 criterion for convergent validity. Discriminant validity was verified using the Fornell-Larcker criterion: the square roots of the AVE for each construct (reported on the diagonal) exceeded the inter-construct correlations (off-diagonal values), thereby confirming adequate discriminant validity of the measurement model.

**Structural Model Assessment:** Structural equation modeling results indicated that the research model exhibited satisfactory explanatory power and predictive relevance. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was 0.507 for brand preference and 0.809 for repurchase intention, signifying that the independent variables collectively explained 50.7% and 80.9% of the variance in these dependent constructs, respectively. Stone-Geisser's  $Q^2$  predictive relevance values were 0.25 for brand preference and 0.31 for repurchase intention—both greater than zero, confirming the model's adequate predictive capability. Path analysis results (detailed in Table 1) revealed statistically significant relationships among all hypothesized constructs, with all path coefficients significant at  $p < 0.001$ . Specifically, service quality and perceived value demonstrated significant positive effects on both brand preference and repurchase intention, while brand preference exerted a significant positive influence on repurchase intention. The Sobel test further confirmed the mediating role of brand preference in the relationships between service quality and repurchase intention ( $Z = 2.59$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), as well as between perceived value and repurchase intention ( $Z = 2.15$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

**Hypothesis Testing:** Table 1 presents the results of the hypothesis tests derived from structural equation modeling analysis.

**Table1.** Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	t-Statistic	p-value	Result
H <sub>1</sub>	Service quality → Brand preference	0.422	5.266	< 0.001	Supported
H <sub>2</sub>	Service quality → Repurchase intention	0.336	3.847	< 0.001	Supported
H <sub>3</sub>	Perceived value → Brand preference	0.585	8.168	< 0.001	Supported
H <sub>4</sub>	Perceived value → Repurchase intention	0.481	5.626	< 0.001	Supported
H <sub>5</sub>	Brand preference → Repurchase intention	0.314	3.630	< 0.001	Supported

All five research hypotheses were empirically supported. Service quality demonstrated significant positive effects on both brand preference ( $\beta = 0.422$ ,  $t = 5.266$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and repurchase intention ( $\beta = 0.336$ ,  $t = 3.847$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, perceived value exerted significant positive influences on brand preference ( $\beta = 0.585$ ,  $t = 8.168$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and repurchase intention ( $\beta = 0.481$ ,  $t = 5.626$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Furthermore, brand preference significantly and positively affected repurchase

### Examining the Effect of Service Quality and Perceived Value on Repurchase Intention with the Mediating Role of Brand Preference

intention ( $\beta = 0.314$ ,  $t = 3.630$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), confirming its role as a proximal antecedent of behavioral intention in the insurance context. These findings collectively establish that both service quality and perceived value function as critical drivers of customer retention, operating through both direct pathways and an indirect pathway mediated by brand preference.

The Sobel test was employed to examine the mediating hypotheses. Table 2 presents the Sobel test results.

**Table 2.** Sobel Test Results for Mediation Effects

Mediation Pathway	Indirect Effect	Standard Error	Z-value	p-value	Result
Service quality → Brand preference → Repurchase intention	0.133	0.051	2.59	< 0.01	Supported
Perceived value → Brand preference → Repurchase intention	0.184	0.086	2.15	< 0.05	Supported

To determine the magnitude of the mediation effects, the Variance Accounted For (VAF) index was employed. The results indicated that 39% of the effect of service quality on repurchase intention is transmitted indirectly through brand preference, while 17% of the effect of perceived value on repurchase intention operates through the mediating role of brand preference.

These VAF values confirm partial mediation in both pathways. Specifically, brand preference accounts for a substantial portion (39%) of the total effect of service quality on repurchase intention, suggesting that service quality influences future purchase intentions both directly and indirectly—primarily by shaping customers' brand preference. In contrast, the mediating effect of brand preference in the relationship between perceived value and repurchase intention, while statistically significant, accounts for a smaller proportion (17%) of the total effect, indicating that perceived value exerts a stronger direct influence on repurchase intention alongside its indirect pathway through brand preference. These findings highlight the differential transmission mechanisms through which service quality and perceived value shape customer retention behaviors in the insurance context.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that service quality exerts a significant positive effect on both brand preference and repurchase intention, consistent with the results reported by Zahravandian (2024), Klaus Oppeng et al. (2023), and Hu et al. (2021). This finding indicates that customers who experience positive service interactions with Asia Insurance Company exhibit stronger brand preference relative to competitors and greater willingness to repurchase. Within the insurance industry—characterized by the intangible nature of services—service quality across various touchpoints, including consultation, policy issuance, and particularly claims settlement, plays a decisive role in shaping favorable customer attitudes.

**Examining the Effect of Service Quality and Perceived Value on Repurchase Intention with the Mediating Role of Brand Preference**

The significant positive influence of perceived value on brand preference and repurchase intention aligns with prior research by Tri (2020), Cuong (2020), and Amosi and Zaki-pour (2021). This result suggests that insurance customers prefer a particular brand and intend to repurchase when they perceive that the benefits received from the service—encompassing both tangible and intangible advantages—outweigh the costs incurred (including premium payments and psychological or temporal expenditures). Accordingly, insurance companies should focus not only on delivering high-quality services but also on cultivating perceived value through contractual transparency, expedited claims processing, and value-added services.

The positive effect of brand preference on repurchase intention corroborates findings by Cheraghi (2021), Alghorayer (2020), and Gülnil et al. (2018). This result underscores brand preference as a stable psychological state that functions as a bridge between customer perceptions and actual purchase behavior. Customers who develop a preference for a specific insurance brand are more likely to select that same brand during subsequent policy renewal cycles.

A particularly significant finding of this research is the confirmation of brand preference's mediating role in the relationships between service quality and repurchase intention, as well as between perceived value and repurchase intention—consistent with studies by Fadaei Bazghaleh and Gharibi (2021), Mostafaei (2021), and Tri (2020). These results indicate that service quality and perceived value influence repurchase intention through both direct pathways and an indirect pathway mediated by brand preference. In other words, brand preference operates as a transmission mechanism through which service experiences and value perceptions are translated into actual customer behavior. This finding holds particular strategic importance, as it suggests that insurance companies seeking to enhance repurchase intention must not only improve service quality and create perceived value but also deliberately strengthen brand preference as an independent strategic objective.

**Limitations and Future Research Directions:** This study has several limitations. First, the use of convenience sampling may constrain the generalizability of findings. Second, the research focused exclusively on a single insurance company within one Iranian province (Mazandaran), potentially limiting external validity. Third, potential moderating variables—such as individual customer characteristics—were not examined. Future research is recommended to employ probability sampling techniques, conduct comparative analyses across multiple insurance providers at the national level, and investigate the moderating roles of demographic and psychological factors.

**Managerial Implications:** The findings yield several practical implications for insurance company managers. First, firms should prioritize continuous improvement of service quality across all customer touchpoints, with particular emphasis on critical stages such as claims settlement. Second, cultivating perceived value through transparency, responsive service delivery, and value-added offerings can significantly reinforce brand preference. Third, strengthening brand preference through effective branding strategies, targeted marketing communications, and the creation of positive customer experiences should be pursued as an independent strategic initiative to enhance repurchase intention and foster long-term customer retention.

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**Examining the Effect of Service Quality and Perceived Value on Repurchase Intention with the Mediating Role of Brand Preference**

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**Examining the Effect of Service Quality and Perceived Value on Repurchase Intention with the Mediating Role of Brand Preference**

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**ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

Authenticity of the texts, honesty and fidelity has been observed.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Author/s confirmed no conflict of interest.