

Service Convenience: A Systematic Literature Review

Ryzki Pratama, Iskandar Muda, Sambas Ade Kesuma

Department of Accounting, Faculty of Economic and Business

Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

Purpose: Service convenience explores how consumers perceive the time and effort associated with purchasing or using a service. It examines the impact of convenience on customer satisfaction, loyalty, and behavioral intentions, often considering various dimensions like access, search, and transaction convenience. The reviews also investigate how service convenience interacts with other factors like service quality, perceived value, and customer satisfaction. Therefore, this paper seeks to analyze the dispersed academic literature on service convenience research. This paper reviews the existing literature on service convenience and examines the directions in which the past studies have focused. It highlights the gap in existing literature to identify future research directions in service convenience domain. Through this review, this study aims to gain insights into various aspects including research methodology, framework, trends, important factors related to service convenience. **Design/methodology/approach:** Data were collected from an objective overview of service convenience research. This study used a systematic literature review approach. A total of 13 papers were published between 2012 and 2024. Selected from the Scopus database, and Emerald Insight, following specific criteria outlined in the PRISMA process. **Findings:** In the context of customer satisfaction research, analysis often reveals that satisfaction can be organized into several main themes. Here are five variables that frequently appear in on customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, behavioral intentions, often considering various dimensions like access, search, and transaction convenience. The analysis shows a significant spike in convenience-based accounting research from 2012 to 2024, indicating growing interest in the topic.

Keywords: service convenience, systematic literature review, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, behavioral intentions

Introduction

Service convenience was introduced theoretically as a multidimensional construct (Seiders, Berry, & Gresham, 2000), encompassing the dimensions of decision, access, transaction, benefit, and post-benefit convenience (Berry, Seiders, & Grewal, 2002). Subsequently, service convenience dimensions have been shown to influence such outcome variables as satisfaction, repurchase visits/spending and referral (Seiders, Voss, Grewal, & Godfrey, 2005; Seiders, Voss, Godfrey, & Grewal, 2007), offering service convenience, defined as a consumer's perception of minimized time and effort to obtain a service (Berry et al., 2002). This demand for

Ryzki Pratama, Master in Accounting, Department of Accounting, Faculty of Economic and Business University of North Sumatera, Medan, Indonesia.

Iskandar Muda, Professor in Accounting, Department of Accounting, Faculty of Economic and Business University of North Sumatera, Medan, Indonesia.

Sambas Ade Kesuma, Doctor in Accounting, Department of Accounting, Faculty of Economic and Business University of North Sumatera, Medan, Indonesia.

service convenience is highly relevant for service providers: It influences the service firms that consumers choose to (re)patronize and their perceptions of the service experience. It contributes to customers' experience along with their sense of satisfaction, and therefore represents a key research priority (Ostrom et al., 2015).

The conceptual literature on service convenience assumes that the relationship between service convenience and customer satisfaction is moderated by customer characteristics (Berry et al., 2002). Empirical research has not tested this, however, nor identified which customer psychographic and sociodemographic characteristics might be significant. Our study provides empirical results that document how customer characteristics like time pressure, shopping enjoyment, age, household size, and income affect the link between a major consumer trend (service convenience) and a major driver of profitability (satisfaction). To provide a comprehensive and systematic assessment of service convenience, a systematic literature review (SLR) proves to be the optimal approach. Convenience is recognized to be increasingly vital to consumers; in recent times, businesses have applied more means to deliver convenience in line with the strategy to better manage its customers. Many consumers shop online to minimize their efforts (Beauchamp & Ponder, 2010). E-retailers are more convenient than traditional retail stores as consumers have more flexibility in terms of time, location, and payment modes (Beauchamp & Ponder, 2010). Since consumers have a paucity of time because of their engagement in different activities, they prefer shopping through online platforms as an alternative to traditional shopping to save time and effort. In the present scenario, online purchasing has become the key factor for customer convenience (Jiang, Yang, & Jun, 2013). Decision convenience is salient before the service exchange and entails the decision of which service provider to patronize to obtain a good or service; hence availability of information about the service provider facilitate and its competitors determine this dimension (Seiders et al., 2007). This dimension is equally applicable to the mall context as consumers can ascertain whether they are able to find information about the mall, and whether it offers what they need. Access convenience is critical as nothing happens until the consumer gets in touch with the service provider (Keh & Pang, 2010). Access convenience is determined by the service provider's physical location, operating hours, and remote contact options (Berry et al., 2002). The properties of this dimension remain valid for the mall context. Benefit convenience involves the customer's experience of the core benefits of the service and is contended to vary in importance across service categories and may be less important for services high in hedonic value as opposed to utilitarian value (Seiders et al., 2007). A key benefit of the mall is the provision of a variety of shops under one roof. In the mall context, this dimension is considered valid and pertains to the ease of finding particular stores and availability of assistance or advice by the mall operator. In the mall setting, this can be rendered as the ability of the mall to offer one-stop shopping and whether consumers can complete their purchases quickly. Post-benefit convenience is omitted here as it occurs when the customer contacts the service provider after the sale is complete to initiate requests for maintenance, upgrades, or the handling of product exchanges. In the mall context, this facet appears to be less applicable. In general, convenience is applicable in a mall setting as it offers spatial and temporal utility to facilitate possession utility, and can be designed correspondingly to attract patronage (Clulow & Reimers, 2009). Temporal utility pertains to the consumer's ability to buy or save time while spatial utility infers proximity in location which gives rise to efficiency (Yale & Venkatesh, 1986). These types of utility are reflected in the various dimensions of convenience mentioned previously. Using SLR mitigates bias compared to traditional approaches, yielding more objective results (Sandgren et al., 2023). (Yale and Venkatesh, 1986) claim that convenience comprises largely economic and temporal dimensions, with the former being indicative of the value of time, and the latter the consumer's ability to buy or save time. Studies on convenience in services remain relatively sparse; however, recent work by

Seiders et al. (2007) shows that the construct consists of five major dimensions namely: decision, access, transaction, benefit, and post-benefit convenience. This study aims to provide a holistic view of service convenience research streams by addressing two key questions:

RQ1. What is the current state of service convenience research?

RQ2. What specific topics does service convenience research address?

Answering these questions will yield objective and reliable insights into service convenience. Accordingly, future research directions will be proposed based on the SLR findings. In addition to the introduction, Section 2 discusses the content related to customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and behavioral intentions, while Section 3 explains the methodology. Section 4 presents the results and Section 5 shows the conclusions.

Literature Review

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the evaluation that the service experienced by the consumer was at least as good as it was intended to be (Kautish Khare, et al., 2021). The established behavior of the consumer is affected by the service inconvenience, conversely, when the services offered surpasses their expectations the consumers feel satisfied (Keaveney, 1995). (Szymanski and Henard, 2001) mentioned that positive disconfirmation (i.e. experience > expectation) leads to satisfaction while negative disconfirmation (i.e. experience < expectation) leads to dissatisfaction. Customer satisfaction is often described as a comparison between pre-purchase expectations and the actual performance of the product (Jun Yang & Kim 2004). Accordingly, the e-tailer can achieve customer satisfaction by enhancing service convenience (Koo, Kim & Lee, 2008). Earlier researchers have suggested definite significant associations related to service convenience; for example, customer satisfaction is rightly affected by service convenience (Seiders et al., 2000; Berry et al., 2002; Colwell et al., 2008) and in turn satisfaction makes loyal customers (Fornell et al., 1996; Chow et al., 2007, Bakar, Nedelea, & Wardhani, 2021). Customer satisfaction is a post-consumption evaluation containing both cognitive and affective elements (Mano & Oliver, 1993). This concept of satisfaction is referred to as the “two-appraisal” model. Similar to prior research on convenience, satisfaction is conceptualised as a cumulative, global evaluation based on experience with a firm over time (Colwell et al., 2008; Seiders et al., 2005). Additionally, the latest studies on convenience have found that customer satisfaction is directly affected by service convenience types (Seiders et al., 2000; 2007). Service convenience affects customer satisfaction by the quality-of-service offerings. Customers can be satisfied with the offering of better service convenience (Roy Lassar & Shekhar, 2016). Customer satisfaction is a precedent for e-loyalty and consequence of the organization’s service quality. Consumer satisfaction will increase if the service providers enhance the convenience.

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty at times has been operationalized as a behavioural measure and at other times as an attitude. Attitudinal loyalty is customers’ favourable inclination towards a service relative to other firms offering the same service (Dilham & Sofiyah, 2018). If an alternative brand with better attributes and a cheaper price is available in the market, such customers are likely to defect. Behavioural loyalty is strong commitment of customers to purchase the product/service despite the availability of alternatives in the market. It represents the actual purchase behaviour of customers. The concept of customer loyalty is understood as a combination of customers’ favourable attitude and the behaviour or repurchases. It is revealed through the willingness of customers to recommend that

product/service to others and repeat purchases. Therefore, this study considers customer loyalty as combination of attitudinal and behavioural loyalty. Loyalty can be said to be a loyalty that arises without compulsion, but arising from self-awareness, the concept of customer loyalty is more interpreted by behavior than attitude. Loyalty is more referring to the form of the behavior of decision-making units to make a continuous purchase of goods or services of a selected company (Sangadji & Sopiah, 2013). A similar statement reveals that customer loyalty is a commitment that is held firmly to buy or resubscribe products or services on an ongoing basis (Kotler & Keller, 2020). Customer loyalty is an attitude that will encourage behavior to make purchases of products or services of a company that includes aspects of feelings therein, especially those who buy regularly and repeatedly with high consistency, but not only re-buy goods and services, but also have a commitment and a positive attitude towards the company that offers such products/services. Customer loyalty is a deeply held commitment to rebuy or re-use a preferred product/service consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior (Oliver, 1999). Customer loyalty is the behavior of making regular purchases, buying across product and service lines, and recommending to others, all of which stem from a positive attitude toward the company (Griffin, 2005). Customer loyalty can be understood through two main dimensions:

- Attitudinal loyalty: Customers' feelings, preferences, and emotional commitment to a brand.
- Behavioral loyalty: Customers' actual behavior in making repeat purchases or continuing to use a service in the long term.

Types of customer loyalty according to (Dick & Basu, 1994):

True loyalty (true loyalty): high in attitude and behavior; latent loyalty (latent loyalty): high in attitude but low in behavior (e.g. due to access barriers); pseudo loyalty (spurious loyalty): high in behavior but low in attitude (e.g. due to promotion or coercion); and non-loyalty: low in attitude and behavior.

Behavioral Intentions

Behavioral intentions are an outcome of the satisfaction process. Behavioral intentions can be grouped into two categories: economic behaviors and social behaviors. Economic behavioral intentions are customer behaviors that impact the financial aspects of the firm such as repeat purchase behavior, willingness to pay more, and switching behavior (Lyon & Powers, 2004). Consumers and organizations engage in behaviors that build relationships before, during, and after service encounters. Such relationships will be important for repeat consumption, which is especially important when consumers enter into contractual relationships involving ongoing interactions, such as mobile phone contracts and health club memberships. Behavioral intention represents the repurchase intentions, word of mouth, loyalty complaining behavior, and price sensitivity. In many studies, positive word of mouth, willingness to recommend, and repurchase intentions are used to measure behavioral intentions (Kuruuzum & Koksall, 2010). Behavioral intention is an indication of an individual's readiness to perform a given behavior. It is considered to be the immediate antecedent of behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Characteristics of behavioral intention:

- Empirical: Can be measured through surveys or questionnaires based on the intensity or intention of the individual.
- Systematic and logical: Formed from the process of thinking and rational consideration of benefits, risks, and social norms.
- Relevant and contextual: Linked to specific behavior in a specific context, for example purchase intention,

donation intention, intention to use technology.

Research Method

This study follows the PRISMA process to improve the quality of SLR as recommended by (Martiny et al. 2021). We conducted an information search using article titles, abstracts, and keywords from Scopus and Emerald Insight databases. We designed keywords carefully to improve the search results, with the keywords: “Service Convenience” or “SERVCON” or “Systematic Literature Review SERVCON”. Scopus and Emerald Insight databases have provided 700 results (period: 2024). Then, we provided criteria to filter the results, including: subject area, document type, language: English; and source type: journal.

Then, we provide criteria to evaluate the quality of articles, including the relevance of the articles to our research goals; clarity of method; detailed analysis; comprehensiveness of results; and full-text articles. The results are limited to 14 articles. Next we searched for additional data from publishers IOP Publishing, and IEEE Xplore to ensure completeness of the data. With search keywords such as Scopus sources, results from IOP Publishing and IEEE Xplore Link only returned conference papers and books, which are inconsistent with the recommended quality criteria for SLR (Schaltegger et al., 2022).

Results

After conducting a search from several sources, the author selected several articles for further review.

Table 1

Mapping Articles

No.	Year	Researcher name	Title	Variables	Results
1.	2023	InesGüsser-Fachbach, Gernot Lechner, Tomas B. Ramos, Mark Reimann	Repair Service Convenience in a Circular Economy: The Perspective of Customers and Repair Companies	Dependent variables: Customer decision to repair Independent variable: 1. Quality of repair services 2. Company resources repair	1. Factors that reduce comfort repair services: Lack of information regarding services product improvements and capabilities to fixed inappropriate store opening hours, and long waiting times. 2. Limitations faced by repair companies: Shortage of skilled labor, long delivery times for spare parts, and limited financial resources for promotion.
2.	2023	Fika Laily Vitalaya, Sambas Ade Kesuma, Keulana Erwin	Integration of the E-Service Quality Model and Service Convenience Model to Measure E-Payment Performance (Empirical Study at Immigration Offices in Medan)	Dependent variables: E-payment performance Independent variables: 1. E-service quality -Efficiency -System availability -Privacy -Contact 2. Service convenience Decision convenience	1. That eSQ has a positive and significant effect on e-payment performance at the Medan Immigration Office. 2. The influence of SERVCON on e-payment performance at the Medan Immigration Office shows a path coefficient value (0.225), t statistics (2.511) > 1.64, and P value (0.012) < 0.05. These results mean that SERVCON has a positive and significant influence on e-payment performance at the Medan Immigration Office. 3. Emphasizes the importance of efficiency in e-services to improve the performance of e-payments in the public sector. In addition, this study highlights that the convenience aspect of services, although influential,

3.	2012	Jung-Yu Lai, Sony Wibowo,	How Service Convenience Influences Information System Success	Dependent variable: Information system Success -Dependability -Usefulness of Independent variables: 1. Information quality 2. System quality 3. Is SERVCON	requires further attention to improve overall user experience. 1. The comfort of the system that users feel can lead them to interact with the system and directly affect the reliability of the system. 2. Each SERVCON factor needs to be implemented well to get the best results. 3. The research results show that the SERVCON construct has an influence which is large compared to other constructs (information and system quality). 1. Service quality has a positive effect on satisfaction customer. 2. Service convenience has a positive impact on customer satisfaction. 3. Price and fairness also have a significant influence on customer satisfaction. 4. Customer satisfaction has a direct and significant influence on loyalty.
4.	2014	Vinita Kaura, Ch. S. Durga Prasad, Sourabh Sharma	Service Quality, Service Convenience, Price and Fairness, Customer Loyalty, and the Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction	Dependent variables: Customer loyalty Independent variable: 1. Service quality 2. Service convenience 3. Price and fairness	1. Service quality has a positive effect on satisfaction customer. 2. Service convenience has a positive impact on customer satisfaction. 3. Price and fairness also have a significant influence on customer satisfaction. 4. Customer satisfaction has a direct and significant influence on loyalty.
5.	2014	Amir Khazaei, Hadi Manjiri, Ebrahim Samiey, Hossein Najafi	The Effect of Service Customer Convenience Satisfaction and Behavioral Responses in Bank Industry	Dependent variables: Service convenience Independent variables: 1. Customer satisfaction 2. Behavioral responses 3. Intention to switch 4. Word of mouth	1. Convenience of service has a positive impact on customer satisfaction and behavioral responses. 2. Customer satisfaction has a positive effect towards word of mouth and intention to switch.
6.	2018-2019	Xueqin Wang, Yiik Diew Man, Chee Chong Theo	Decomposing Service Conveniences in Self—An Integrated Collection Application of the SERVCON and Kano Models	Dependent variables: 1. Consumer satisfaction with self-pickup services. 2. The adoption rate of contactless logistics technology. Independent variable 1. Elements of service convenience, such as ease of access and speed of service 2. Features offered in self-pickup services, such as pickup time	1. This research integrates the model SERVCON and Kano to analyze convenience of service in taking itself. The results show that service convenience can be broken down into 11 attributes that include access, benefits, transactions, and post-benefit convenience, all of which have an impact on satisfaction. 2. The research results provide insight for service provider to design and improve user experience in self-pickup service. 3. Service providers can prioritize certain attributes to increase satisfaction customers and drive service adoption.
7.	2020	Sanjit Kumar Roy, Vaibhav Shekhar, Ali Quazi, Mohammed Quadruple	Consumer Engagement Behaviors: Do Service Convenience and Organizational Characteristics Matter?	Dependent variables: Consumer Engagement Behaviors (CEBs) Independent variables: 1. Service convenience 2. Characteristics of organization	1. The research likely found that service convenience has a positive influence which is significant to engagement behavior consumers. Consumers who feel that services are easily accessible and convenient tend to more engaged in interactions with brands. 2. Organizational characteristics, such as brand equity, store atmosphere, and employee responsiveness, as well may

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| 8. | 2024 | Helena Ferreira-Barbosa, Baby Sabino, Vania Loureiro | Perceived Value, Service Quality and Service Convenience on Behavioral Intentions in Fitness Centers: A Comparison Between Customers With and Without Personal Training | <p>Dependent variable: Behavioral intentions</p> <p>Independent variables:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perceived value. 2. Service quality 3. Service convenience | <p>be found to have a significant effect towards consumer engagement. Organization which has positive characteristics.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research may find that the value which is perceived to have a positive influence is significant to behavioral intention customer. 2. Convenience of service may indicate positive influence on behavioral intentions. <p>Customers who feel that the service is easy accessible and comfortable tend to have more intention to subscribe.</p> |
| 9. | 2018 | Milad Kalantari Shahijan, Sajad Rezaei, Muslim Amen | Qualities of Effective Cruise Marketing Strategy Cruisers' Experience, Service Convenience, Values, Satisfaction and Revisit Intention | <p>Dependent variables: Revisit intention (intention to return)</p> <p>Independent variables:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cruisers' experience 2. Service convenience 3. Values 4. Satisfaction | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Customers who have a positive experience during a cruise are more likely to plan a return trip. 2. Customers' perceived value from the cruise experience can contribute significantly to their intention to return. <p>Customers who feel that they received good value from their experience are more likely to recommend the service to others and plan future trips.</p> |
| 10. | 2014 | Alison Elizabeth Lloyd, Ricky Y. K. Chan, Leslie S. C. Yep, Andrew Chan | Time Buying and Time Saving: Effects on service Convenience and the Shopping Experience at the Mall | <p>Dependent variable:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Service convenience 2. Shopping experience <p>Independent variables:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time buying 2. Time saving | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The research likely found that service convenience has a positive influence which is significant to engagement behavior consumers. <p>Consumers who feel that services are easily accessible and convenient tend to more engaged in interactions with brands.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Organizational characteristics, such as brand equity, store atmosphere, and employee responsiveness, as well may be found to have a significant effect towards consumer engagement. <p>Organization which has positive characteristics.</p> |
| 11. | 2017 | Sabine Benoit, Sonja Klose, Andrew Ettinger | Linking Services Convenience to Satisfaction: Dimensions and Key Moderators | <p>Dependent variables: Satisfaction</p> <p>Independent variables: Service convenience</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research may find that service convenience has a positive influence which is significant to customer satisfaction. <p>Customers who feel comfortable in the services they receive tend to be better satisfied with their overall experience.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The research results can show that various dimensions of service convenience (such as convenience of access, convenience of process, and physical comfort) contribute significantly significant to customer satisfaction. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Convenience of access: Customers who feel easy access to services tends to be more satisfied. -Process convenience: The service process that efficient and easy to improve satisfaction. -Physical comfort: The physical environment that comfort can |

12.	2024	Vandana, Sachin Kumar, Vinod Kumar	Examining the Impact of Online Service Convenience for User Engagement and Intention to Continuously Use E-resources: Mediating Role of Attitude	Dependent variables: 1. User engagement 2. Intention to continuously use e-resources Independent variables: Online service convenience	contribute to the experience positive. 1. That the convenience of online services has significant positive influence on user engagement. Users who feel comfortable in using online services tend to be more involved, which can be measured through frequency of use, time spent, and interactions with content. 2. That various aspects of service convenience online (such as ease of access, speed services, and ease of navigation) contribute significantly to user engagement and intent to continue using e-resources. 1. Research may find that comfort factor has a positive influence significant impact on intention to purchase back. Customers who feel convenience in online shopping tend to have more intention to do future purchases. 2. The research results can show that various comfort factors (such as convenience of access, convenience of process purchase, delivery convenience, and payment convenience) contribute significantly significant impact on intention to purchase return. 1. Service quality directly has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. This shows that the better the service provided, the better high customer satisfaction. 2. Customer satisfaction has a strong influence towards customer loyalty, which confirms that satisfied customers tend to be loyal. 3. Service quality also affects direct customer loyalty, however, influences indirectly through customer satisfaction stronger. 4. These results show that customer satisfaction mediates partial connection between service quality and customer loyalty in PT. Prima Mixindo Utama.
13.	2022	C. Colin Crispin, Dr. C. Dhayalan.	Convenience Factors and Repurchase Intention in E-shopping: Moderate Effect of Prior Purchase Experience	Dependent variables: Repurchase intention Independent variables: Convenience factors Moderator variables: Prior purchase experience	
14.	2020	Dad Dear Sir, From Dear Mr. Firmansyah, Nindy Aryantika	Satisfaction as a Mediator Impact Quality of Service Toward Customer Loyalty (Study on PT. Prima Mixindo Utama Sukabumi City)	Dependent variables: Customer loyalty Independent variables: Service quality Mediating variable: Customer satisfaction	

The following sections show the SLR analysis results using 14 related articles. Based on the recommendations of Lennox and Wu 2017, we present service convenience publications by year.

Table 2

Number of Publications Per Year

Year	Author(s)	No. of publications
2012	Jung-Yu Lai, Sony Wibisono (2012)	1
2014	Vinita Kaura, Ch. S. Durga Prasad, Sourabh Sharma (2014); Amir Khazaei, Hadi Manjiri, Ebrahim Samley, Hossein Najafi (2014); Alison Elizabeth Lloyd, Ricky Y. K. Chan, Leslie S.	3

	C. Yip, Andrew Chan (2014)	
2017	Sabine Benoit, Sonja Klose, Andreas Ettinger (2017)	1
2018	Milad Kalantari Shahijan, Sajad Rajaei, Muslim Amin (2018)	1
2019	Xueqin Wang, Yiik Die Wong, Chee-Chong Teo (2019)	1
2020	Sanjit Kumar, Roy Vaibhav, Shekhar Ali Quazi, Mohammed Quaddus (2020); Dadang Saepuloh, Deri Firmansyah, Nindy Aryantika (2020)	2
2022	C. Colin Crispin, Dr. C. Dhayalan (2022)	1
2023	Ines Gusser-Fachbach, Gernot Lechner, Tomas B. Ramos, Marc Reiman (2023); Fika Laily Vitalaya, Sambas Ade Kesuma, Keulana Erwin (2023)	2
2024	Helena Ferreira-Barbosa, Bebiana Sabino, Vania Loureiro (2024); Vandana, Sachin Kumar, Vinod Kumar (2024)	2
		14

In particular, 2014 saw a surge in research activity, highlighting the growing interest in service convenience as a research topic. This surge in research activity underscores the growing interest in service convenience as a research topic. But in 2017 to 2019 interest in this research decreased.

Discussion

The importance of convenience in repair decisions is demonstrated in this study: It is discussed in an objective review of service convenience research. This study uses a systematic literature review approach. A total of 13 papers were published between 2012 and 2024. The main feature of repair services is that the decision to use the service follows a feeling of annoyance because the product suddenly breaks down and now action is required. This is a major difference with most retail services and new product purchases, as such situations are most often motivated by new trends or sensory stimuli, i.e. positive feelings (Roozen & Katidis, 2019). The characteristics of repair service convenience can be allocated to the service convenience dimensions of Berry et al. (2002). This implies that the overall dimensions can be transferred to the repair context and only individual scale items need to be adjusted. Since the repair service process in repair companies for different types of products is very similar, repair service convenience can be characterized in general without a specific product focus. According to customer participants, there are weaknesses, limitations, and shortcomings of repair service convenience across all service convenience dimension. Uncertainty is a problem that is not only determinant for repair services but for almost all services since the concept of a service itself results in a variability of quality and intangibility (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2015). Furthermore, this uncertainty also has a significant impact on the return flow of a circular economy and thus, on the supply with returned products: Uncertainty about whether one has access to spare parts, tools, and information affects not only repairs but also remanufacturing or refurbishing. There is, for instance, uncertainty about the availability of cores in remanufacturing (Goodall et al., 2014). The results suggest that consumers' expectations of convenience do not match what repair companies can actually deliver. In this context, it is necessary to reduce unrealistic expectations of customers in terms of expected service. This relates to the level of service customers believe they are likely to receive (Zeithaml et al., 1993). In the focus group interviews, it was generally found that individuals with more experience with repair services have more realistic expectations. This finding underscores the need to provide more information about repair services, especially for inexperienced customers. Another way to align customer expectations with the service provided is to adjust the repair company's business model as much as possible, especially in terms of convenience. In doing so, however, repair service providers face the classic trade-off between time, cost, quality, and flexibility in supply chain/operations management (Boyer & Lewis, 2002). They must perform repairs quickly, cost-

effectively, and with the highest quality while remaining flexible, e.g., in terms of covering peak demand. The barriers discussed in improving the ease of repair services in this study suggest that one solution is to improve the operations of repair companies. In some developing countries, for example, the repair sector has become a significant industry, partly due to the increasing export of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) from Western Europe and the United States. Stakeholders in this emerging sector offer innovative solutions, for example, in terms of knowledge sharing through learning and collaboration.

Finally, it is important to underline that the focus is not only on increasing the ease of repair services, but also on circular products/materials in general. This could increase the market share of circular services/materials, as this share is driven—in addition to price—by ease. Especially since circular products compete with new products (Agnieszka D. Hunka et al., 2021), circular services/materials need to minimize the gap to new products in terms of ease, in order for consumers to retain the services provided.

Conclusion

In this study, repair service convenience was characterized to gain a better understanding of customer's perceptions related with repair activities, which in addition tackles the need to focus on users and appropriate services in a circular economy. In addition, ways to increase convenience in the repair business-to-consumer context were investigated. The analysis revealed that currently repair services have many weaknesses in terms of convenience, and also repair companies face several barriers against overcoming these weaknesses. If the goal is to increase convenience—thus making repair services more competitive compared to new purchases to increase repair demand and to contribute to the transformation to a circular economy—interventions from, for example, the local government as well as collaborations with other initiatives like repair cafès, repair networks, or the municipality itself are required. This also highlights the necessity of collaborating with different stakeholders (customers, repair companies, initiatives, and local government) for the transition towards a circular economy. It can be concluded that the influence of ease of access, ease of search, and ease of ordering has a significant effect on customer satisfaction. However, ease of evaluation and ease of logistics and ease of reverse logistics have an insignificant effect on customer satisfaction. This study has a unique contribution in the field of ease of service for customers. In addition, this study shows that increasing service quality has an effect on customer satisfaction. In particular, the year 2014 witnessed a surge in research activity, highlighting the increasing interest in ease of service as a research topic. This surge in research activity underscores the increasing interest in ease of service as a research topic. However, in 2017 to 2019, interest in this research declined.

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