Impact of Price on Customer Satisfaction; mediating role of Consumer Buying Behaviour in Telecom Sector

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Abstract

The study, conducted with the aim to find out the mediating role of consumer buying behaviour. 68.5 percent respondents represent the young generation of the country, 36 percent students participated in the response. As per results, 46 percent respondents' family contain 1-5 members. 567 respondents represents the population of Pakistan. Smart PLS 3.2.7 has been used in the study. In order to measure scale and model bootstrapping, Algorithm, Fornell and Larker criterion (Discriminant Validity) and HTMT (sensitivity of multicollinearity) ratio has been used along with rule of thumbs set of scholars related to results founded. Study filled the gap of mediation of CBB. Research findings involve a direct relationship of price with customer satisfaction. Positive relationship between price and consumer buying behaviour, and positive mediating role of consumer buying behaviour between price and customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Price (**P**), Consumer Buying Behaviour (**CBB**), and Customer Satisfaction (**CS**).

1. Introduction

Aslam and Frooghi (2018) conclude that the population of the Pakistan consider price as an important factor while taking any purchase decision related to valuable items. According to Darmawan (2018) price has a positive impact on purchase behavior of consumers. In addition, Shah, Husnain, and Shah (2018) conducted qualitative research on the fators leading consumers towards a purchase decision. As per their findings along with the cultural, social, trust, brand image, price has a vital role on purchase decision. (Aslam, Arif, Farhat and Khursheed, 2018), find the positive influencing role of price towards customer satisfaction. In the telecom sector of Bangladesh financial fator along with the technological and quality of services, has greater influence on customer satisfation (Mannan, Mohiuddin, Chowdhury and Sarker, 2017). One step ahead (Jabbar, 2018) conducted study in Indonesia, stated that price has positive influence on customer satisfaction through buying intension.

According to Kotler, Armstrong, Agnihotri and Haque (2010) in order to

purchase any valuable items apart from daily items. They must pass through the consumer buying process. Furthermore, before result of post purchase behavior, a person should buy any products/services. Although a couple of work has been done on the relationship of price towards customer satisfaction in the telcom sector of Pakistan (Hafeeza and Hasnu, 2010); (Khan and Afsheen, 2012); (Ahmad and Ahmad, 2014). The study, conducted with the objective to find the mediating relationship of CBB with price and customer satisfaction.

According to Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (2018) there are 152 million subsribers in telceom industry of Pakistan, the rate was increased with greater pace since last 3 yeas. Pakistan has received the $92 millions foreign direct investment in extending 3G – 4G. Major chunk of FDI comes from Zong, and China is the main contributor (Dodhy, 2017). According to Chen, Hung and Huang (2009) consumer behaviours easily change and shift from one service provider to another.

Now a days telecom companies are facing major issue's to meet the demands of consumers. Information is widely avaliable, by government policy consumers are allowed to keep 5 network Sims. Most of the consumer holds all of the network Sims and they randomly use on the basis of packages offered. More often currently craze of 4G increased and witnessed in youngester of the country. Furthermore, Pakistan is a country having a greater population of youth. Moreover, challenges for telecom companies to enable consumers to keep activate their Sims, despite of switching to another. This study conducted to find out the impact of price over consumer buying behavior, and mediating effect of it.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Price (P) to Consumer Buying Behaviour (CBB)

According to Darmawan (2018) results apart from product quality, brand image, and social factors, price has a positive impact on purchase behavior. Aslam and Frooghi (2018) found that individuals in Pakistan consider price as a major factor in the purchase decision, hence price plays a vital role in switching from one service provider to another. Shah, Husnain and Shah (2018) conducted qualitative research and conclude that along with the other factors including family and friends, brand image, quality of services, prices also has influence on consumer behavior. In addition Sata (2013) also found the positive affiliation among price and consumer buying decision. Makwana, Sharma and Swaranjeet, Arora (2014) investigated that in the telecom sector of India, along with the value added services, price have a huge influence on consumer behavior in switching service provider. According to Shujaat, Syed, and Ahmed (2015) apart from service quality, promotions and other services, price has greater impact on consumer behavior in youngsters of Pakistan. Wollenberg, and Thuong (2014) studied the smartphone market in Vietnam and find that price has direct as well as indirect impacts on purchase decisions. Apart from telecommunication sector, in other industries

and sector, price has direct and positive influence on consumer buying behavior.

According to Mohammed and Murova (2019) investigated the US Yogurt market, and conclude the direct relationship of price with consumer buying decision. In addition Konuk (2017) found the positive influence of price along with satisfaction and trust towards consumer purchases. According to Thakur and Soni (2018)'s findings in FMCG sector of India price also have significant impact on consumer buying behavior. Furthermore, Showrav and Iqbal (2018) stated that marketing mix has an impartant influence on consumer buying behavior in the cosmetic industry of Bangladesh. According to Sisodiya and Sharma (2018) findings, there is a great influence of marketing mix on consumer buying behavior in FMCG sector of India.

H_1: *Price has direct influence on consumer buying behaviour.*

2.2 Price (P) to Customer Satisfaction (CS)

According to Kotler, et al. (2010) CS "is the extent to which a product perceived performance matches the buyer's expectations. Aslam, et al. (2018) stated that price has a significant correlation with CS. According to Mannan, Mohiuddin, Chowdhury and Sarker (2017) in the telecom sector of Bangladesh, CS is largely influenced by financial factors, followed by technological and service aspects. In addition Senguo, Xixiang and Kilang (2017) investigated the telecommunication sector of Tanzania and found the strong relationship between price and customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, beliefs that the success of the sector is behind price fairness and CS. Ulubaşoğlu, Şenel and Burnaz (2017) investigated that in telecommunication sector of Turkish, price, play vital role to motivate customers to switch form one network to another. Hanif, Hafeez and Riaz (2010) stated that prices have higher influence on CS as compared to customer services. According to Afzal, et al. (2013) findings price was the main factor behind CS, if prices fluctuates customers switch to other service providers. Rahman, (2014) also found the positive relationship between price and CS. In addition, Khan and Afsheen (2012) beliefs that price has greater influence on CS as compared to other variables. Hafeeza and Hasnu (2010) also find the positive relationship of price along with service quality on CS.

Apart form telecom sector, in restaurant, banking, online and retail services price has significant relationship with customer satisfaction (Raji and Zainal, 2016); (Lin, Wu and Chang, 2011); (Hanaysha, 2016); (Vinita and Sharma, 2015); (Fernandoi, Yajid, Khatibi and Azam, 2018); (Rendón, Vásquez, Arias and Valencia-Arias, 2017); (Kaura, Prasad, and Sourabh Sharma, 2014); (Sabir, Ghafoor, Hafeez, Akhtar and Rehman, 2014); (Tuan, 2012); (Basir, Modding, Kamase and Hasan, 2015); (Subaebasni, Risnawaty and Wicaksono, 2019); (Erjavec, Dmitrović and Bržan, 2016); (Khan, Hussain and Yaqoob, 2013); (Sabir, Irfan, Akhtar, Pervez and Rehman, 2014), (Suhartanto and Noor, 2012); (Chouhan, 2019); (Nuseir and Madanat, 2015).

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H₂: Price has direct influence on customer satisfaction.

2.3 Mediating Role of Consumer Buying Behavior:

According to Kotler, et al. (2010) CBB is "the buying behavior of final consumers-individuals, and households that buy goods and services for personal consumption." The individuals passess through the steps given in figure – 01. Although some of the stages can be skipped or reversed if the things are used in daily routine, like vegetables, salts. While individuals face complex situations and to buy new things they will pass through all of the

stages given in figure – 01. More specifically related to purchase decision "(the buyer's decision about which brand to purchase)". There are two factors which come in between purchase intension and purchase decision Kotler, et al. (2010).

Factor – 01: Attitude of others. Factor – 02: unexpected situational factors. This factor involves various things like disappointment of friends, decrease in price of competitors, increase in income. According to Kotler, et al. (2010) the consumer purchases are influenced by numerous factors, including cultural, personal, social, and psychological.
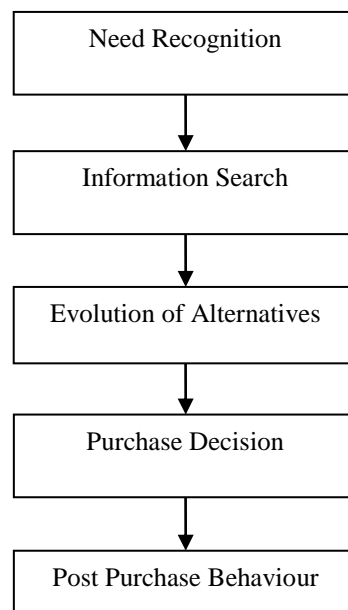

Figure – 01: Buyer Decision Making Process

Note: (Kotler, Armstrong, Agnihotri, & Haque, 2010)

Hence, keeping in view the process mentioned in above figure. It's dignosed that in order to have cellular services, the user must pass through all of the steps mentioned. It's important either to be satisfied, dissatisfied, or delighted with any cellular service provider, we

should have bought the service after that outcome will appear in terms of post purchase behavior.

According to Jabbar (2018) findings the price has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction through buying intension. In

addition, Susanto (2013) investigated that customer satisfaction comes after customer purchase decision. Moreover, he explored the positive relationship of customer purchase decision on customer satisfaction. Shih, Yu and Tseng (2015) also found the positive relationship between CBB and CS. According to Kanten and Darma (2017) CBB has positive and oppulance influence on CS and strategies of marketing. Furthermore, the positive and significant influence of customer satisfaction over purchase intension was hughlidgted by Espejel, Fandos and Flavian (2008); (Evanschitzky, Groening, Mittal and Wunderlich (2011); (Hanzaee and Rezaeyeh (2013). Moreover, Park, Back, Bufquin and Shapoval (2018); (Saleem, Ghafar, Ibrahim, Yousuf and Ahmed, 2015).

H_3: The relationship between price and customer satisfaction mediated by consumer buying decision/behaviour.

H_4: Consumer buying behaviour has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction.

2.3 Conceptual framework

Figure – 02

The above figure shows the direct relationship of price to consumer buying behaviour and customer satisfaction. And consumer buying behaviour interlink the relationship between price and customer satisfaction.
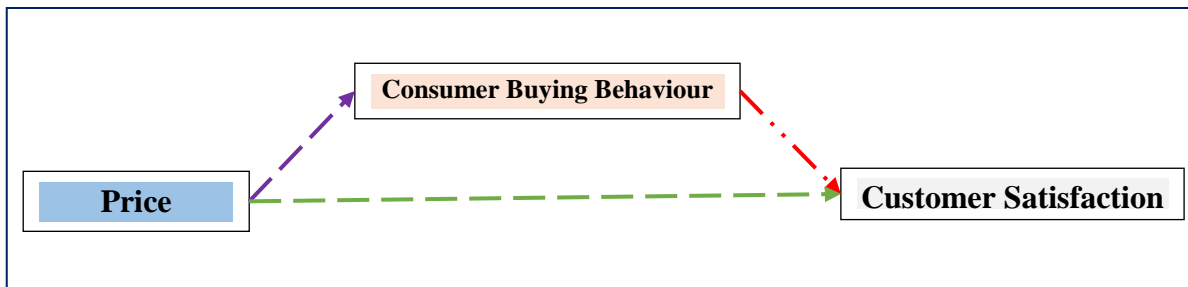
3. Research Methodology

3.1 Sample

In the total sample of 567 respondents represents the population of Pakistan. The structured questionnaire has been taken from work of Oladepo and Abimbola (2014). For the ease of respondents' customers have been presented to respondents in both form online as well as offline. For online respondents Google Form has been created. The questionnaire has been spread through WhatsApp, email, and Facebook.

Table – 1: Demographical Information

Variables: Total									N= 567
Controls	**Gender**		**Age**					**Working Sector**		
	Male	*Female*	*10- 20*	*21- 30*	*31- 40*	*41- 50*	*41- 50*	*Government*	*Private*	*Student*
Variance	386 (68%)	181 (32%)	35 (6%)	388 (68.5%)	95 (17%)	26 (4.5%)	23 (4%)	123 (21.5%)	241 (42.5%)	203 (36%)

Controls	**Education**				**Family Members**			
	Basic Edu	*Bachelors*	*Masters*	*PhD*	*1-5*	*6-10*	*11-15*	*16-20* 8 (1.5%)
Variance	79 (14%)	227 (40%)	253 (44.5%)	8 (1.5%)	317 (56%)	189 (33%)	53 (9.5%)	
Mostly used Mobile Phones	Apple 105(18.5%)	Samsung 223 (39.5%)	Oppo 108 (19%)	Huawei 74 (13%)	Xiaomi 37(6.5%	Nokia 11(2%)	Other's 9(1.5%)	
Mostly preferred mode of Communication	WhatsApp 267 (47%)		SMS/Call 238 (42%)		Facebook 46 (8%)		Other 16(3%)	
Best Service Provider	Mobilink 231(41%)		Zong 184(32.5%)		Telenor 34(6%)	Ufone 103(18%)	Warid 15(2.6%)	

Note: round off the used while convert into percentage.

Table – 01: contains the information of respondents relate to their demographics, and basic information related to the use of the service, and mode of communication. As exhibited above 68 percent of respondents were male, and remaining 32 percent female. 68.5 percent of respondent fall in age of 21 – 30. 42.5 percent respondents have jobs in the private sector. 44.5 percent of respondents have a master degree. 56 percent shows that in a family have 1 – 5 members. One basic question asked about the use of smartphone, in response 39.5 percent selected they were using Samsung mobile phones. Hence, it's cleared that Samsung has a greater share of the market, and become leader in Pakistan. Another question asked about the mode of communication. The 47 percent respondents preferred WhatsApp and 42 percent

SMS/Call. In order to get insights about the best service provider 41 percent declared that Mobilink is best among others. It exhibited that Mobilink is a leader in the telecom sector of Pakistan.

3.2. Measures

3.2.1 Price

For the measurement of price variable 5 items adapted. The scale was developed by Oladepo and Abimbola (2014). The reliability and validity of the scale mentioned in table – 02.

3.2.2 Customer satisfaction

The scale was adapted from the work of Oladepo and Abimbola (2014). In total 4 items used to measure CS. The scale against this variable developed by Oladepo and Abimbola

4.3 Results

(2014). The reliability and validity of the scale mentioned in table – 02.

3.2.3 Consumer Buying Behaviour

The 4 item scale used to measure this variable. The scale was developed by Ahmad and Ahmad (2014) and reliability measured was 0.74. The reliability and validity of the scale mentioned in table – 02.

3.3 Analytical Techniques:

We have used PLS-SEM 3.2.7 in the study, which is updated version of Partial least squares. There are various motivations to use PLS-SEM. Major reasons include detailed analysis about variables and items used in the scale Hair, Sarstedt and Ringle (2012). Furthermore, the PLS method is considers well established (McDonald, 1996).

Table – 2 Measurement Model

	Items	Loading[a]	AVE[b]	CR[c]	CA[d]
Consumer Buying Behavior	QBD1	0.782	0.536	0.822	0.711
	QBD2	0.663			
	QBD3	0.743			
	QBD4	0.736			
Customer Satisfaction	QCS1	0.874	0.808	0.944	0.921
	QCS2	0.918			
	QCS3	0.918			
	QCS4	0.885			
Price	QP1	0.666	0.558	0.86	0.795
	QP2	0.552			
	QP3	0.822			
	QP4	0.891			
	QP5	0.756			

Note:

a) According to Chin, (2010) items value >0.5 shows the reliability of indicator.

b) According to Bagozzi and Yi (1988) the value of AVE >0.5 exhibits the reliability of convergent.

c) According to Gefen, Straub and Boudreau (2000) composite reliability>0.7 shows the internal consisitency.

d) According to Nunnally (1978) CA>0.7 show the standard of higher reliability.

In order to measure the reliability and validity of the scale used in the study measured as per standards suggested by various scholars. According to Hinton, Brownlow, McMurray and Cozens (2004), the value of *Cronbach Alpha* within range of 0.7 – 0.9 consider having high reliability. According to Bagozzi and Yi (1988), average variance extracted must be >0.5. hence all the variables used along with their items are as per stnadards.

Table – 3 Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

	Consumer Buying Behavior	**Customer Satisfaction**	**Price**
Consumer Buying Behavior	*0.732		
Customer Satisfaction	0.586	*0.899	
Price	0.558	0.615	*0.747

* The highlighted values represents the square root of average variance extracted of latent variables used in the study.

In order to examine the discriminant validity Fornell and Larker, test has been used. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981) square root of AVE should be greater than 0.5. Furthermore, the value of AVE should be higher than the correlation among latent variables. Results shown in the table are as per rule of thumb defined.

Table – 4 Heterotrait – Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Consumer Buying Behavior	**Customer Satisfaction**	**Price**
Consumer Buying Behavior			
Customer Satisfaction	0.704		
Price	0.721	0.686	

In order to measure the issue of the multicollinearity HTMT ratio has been used in the study. According to Gold, Malhotra and Segars (2001) and Teo, Srivastava and Jiang (2008) the results of HTMT should not be >0.9. Kline (2011) cutoff 0.85 as a rule of thumb for multicolinearity. Hence the results in table meet both rules of thumb.

Table – 5 Latent Variable Correlations

	Consumer Buying Behavior	**Customer Satisfaction**	**Price**

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Consumer Buying Behavior	1	0.586	0.558
Customer Satisfaction	0.586	1	0.615
Price	0.558	0.615	1

Table – 5: exhibits the relationship among variables. 0.586 shows the positive relationship in CBB and CS. 0.558 between CBB and P. While 0.615 shows the positive relationship between CS and P.

Table – 6: Hypothesis construct analysis

	Beta	Mean	SD	t value	p value	Decision
H1: *Price -> Consumer Buying Behavior*	0.558	0.559	0.025	22.65	**0.000	Supported
H2: *Price -> Customer Satisfaction*	0.418	0.419	0.037	11.164	**0.000	Supported
H3: *Price -> Consumer Buying Behavior -> Customer Satisfaction*	0.197	0.198	0.023	8.666	**0.000	Supported
H4: *Consumer Buying Behavior -> Customer Satisfaction*	0.353	0.354	0.038	9.28	**0.000	Supported

*Note: **p <0.01(one-tailed test)*

Table – 6: exhibited the positive coefficient (beta) and standard deviation (SD), t-statistics (t vale) p value and decision either supported or not.

1st Hypothesis (H1): was developed earlier in the study stated that there is positive relationship between price and consumer buying behaviour. The positive (beta=0.558, t value=22.65 and p value=0.000) results supported the decision. Hypothesis followed the rule of thumb t value>2, and p value<0.01. Results founded in the study supported the work of Aslam and Frooghi (2018); (Darmawan, 2018); (Makwana, et al. 2014); (Shah, Husnain and Shah, 2018); (Sata, 2013) and Shujaat, Syed and Ahmed (2015).

2nd Hypothesis (H2): constructed above states that there is positive direct relationship between P and CS. The positive (beta=0.418, t value=11.164 and p value=0.000) supported the construct of hypothesis as it follows the rule of thumb t value>2, and p value<0.01. Hence the results are significant. Moreover, the study supported the work of Shah, Husnain and Shah (2018); (Aslam, et al. 2018); (Mannan, et al. 2017); (Senguo, Xixiang and Kilang, 2017); (Ulubaşoğlu, Şenel and Burnaz, 2017); (Hanif, Hafeez and Riaz, 2010); (Afzal, et al., 2013); (Rahman M. , 2014); (Khan and Afsheen, 2012) and Hafeeza and Hasnu (2010).

3rd Hypothesis (H3): was the mediating role of CBB between dependent (P) and the independent variable (CS). The results in the table show positive coefficient of (beta=0.197, t value=8.666 and p value=0.000). The value founded are as per standard t value>2, and p value<0.01. Hence, the results supported the

hypothesis, and the work of Jabbar (2018) and Kanten and Darma (2017).

4th Hypothesis (H4): was constructed against the direct relationship of CBB and CS. The results in the table show positive coefficient of (beta=0.353, t value=9.28 and p value=0.000). The value founded are as per standard t value>2, and p value<0.01. Hence, the results favor the hypothesis, and study of Susanto (2013) and Shih, Yu, and Tseng (2015).

Table – 7 Analysis of R²

	R²	Adjusted R²	t value	p value	Decision
Consumer Buying Behavior	0.313	0.310	11.299	0.000	Supported
Customer Satisfaction	0.464	0.462	12.234	0.000	Supported

Table – 7 show the value of R^2, which is also called the coefficient of determination (Chin, 1998). The value of 0.313 or 31.3 percent exhibits that the changes in CBB incurs becaue of P, while 46.6 percent variation in CS incur because of P and CBB. The path from P – CBB has been supprted by t value 11.299>2 and p vlue 0.000<0.01. In addition, another path Price – CBB – CS has been founded with t value 12.234>2 and p value 0.000<0.01. Hence, both paths were founded significant in the study.

Structural Model
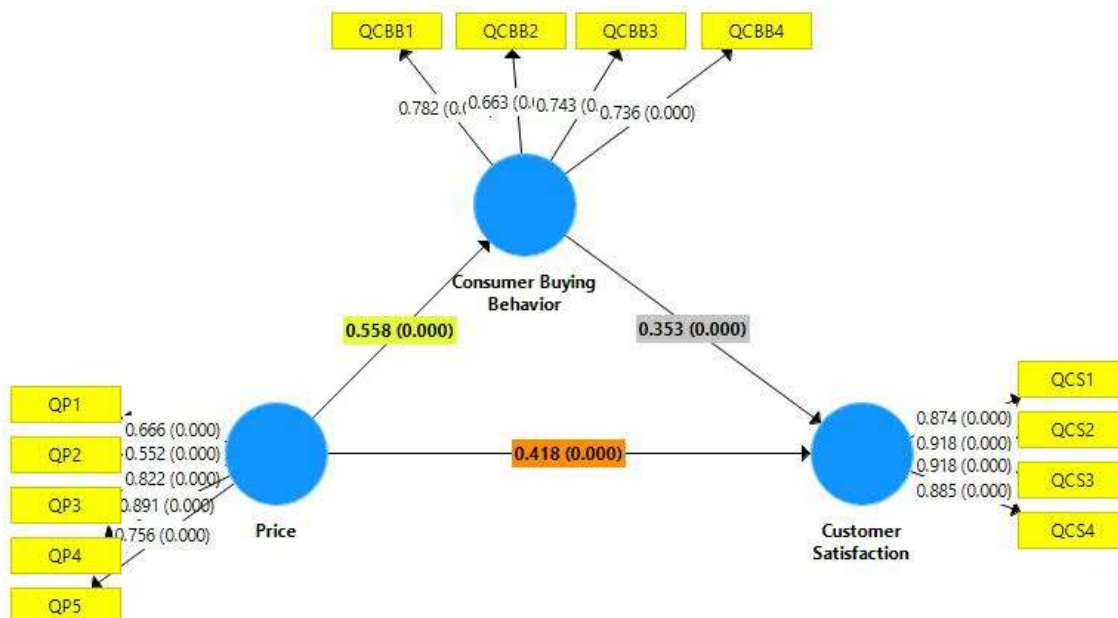
Note: Figure – 03

Method of bootstrapping has been used for the generation of graph. The highlighted values show the coefficient beta value, and p values of individual questions were also exhibited between blue circle and yellow rectangle including their coefficient values.

4. Discussion and Recommendation

The study was conducted to find out the indirect relationship between price and customer satisfaction. The founded results supported the mediating relationship of consumer buying behaviour played between price and customer satisfaction (Jabbar, 2018), (Kanten and Darma, 2017). And the direct relationship of consumer purchase behavior towards customer satisfaction (Susanto, 2013), (Shih, Yu and Tseng, 2015).

There are various ground realities of the study. Albeit the price has been diagnosed since long in the literature, but its impact is still significant in various industries and sectors. At first study support that price play vital role in switching behaviour from one service to another. At second telecom operating companies should offer packages and call rate at cheap rate. At third results indicate that 68.5 percent population is youth hence, companies should offer them packages as per their insights. At fourth 47 percent population use WhatsApp as their mean of communication, hence, companies should offer social packages. At sixth mobile phone companies should use embodied social application.

At seventh there is gap of social application which can be filled with many other applications like Facebook is heavy software as compare to WhatsApp. At eighth applications should be user friendly as per results, 36 percent population of country represented by students. At ninth study filled the gap of the mediating role of consumer buying behaviour towards customer satisfaction. At tenth this study is also applicable in other industries and sectors including FMCG, banking, Retail, and Hospitality.

5. Limitations and future directions

The study was conducted only in limited areas of Pakistan, including (Islamabad, Peshawar, Karachi, Lahore and Sukkur). This Study slightly touched the rural areas of the country just Sukkur city and surroundings. This work can be extended further by involving more of the rural areas of Pakistan, so that the actual figure of buying decision can be found. Study can be widened in less developed countries and other developing countries like Pakistan. Furthermore the mediating role of CBB can be studied with customer satisfaction and post-purchase behaviour. In addition to service quality as well as gender can be used with CBB and CS.

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