

A Study on the Effect of Logistics Service Quality and Price Recognition on Customer Trust and Satisfaction in Overseas Direct Purchasing

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify what consumers think is most important with respect to overseas purchasing agencies and to analyze the effect of logistics service quality and price recognition on customer trust and satisfaction when they use overseas purchasing agencies. The questionnaire consisted of the status of consumers on using overseas purchasing agencies, logistics service factors, price recognition factors, the trust factor, customer satisfaction factor, and demographic characteristics. 265 out of 300 distributed copies were collected, and this study used 220 copies in total for analysis after excluding the questionnaires whose answers said the respondents had not used ODP. The main analysis was used as reliability analysis, factor analysis, and regression analysis. First, because the usage rate of ODP agency websites was relatively high among young people and women, ODP agency websites could provide more unique products targeting young people and conduct promotional activities. Second, consumers learn about ODP agency websites mostly through Internet search, and thus, online advertising is expected to play a big role in attracting new customers. Third, In the future, ODP usage by consumers who want to spend reasonably is expected to continue growing. Fourth, logistics service professionalism and security of use were found to be important in ODP, suggesting that it would be necessary to put in place a strategy that enhances customer trust and satisfaction by taking more efforts in the delivery process to ensure that an ordered product arrives safely. Fifth, ODP agencies need to establish a professional system that ensures professional and secured logistics service quality to customers and continue to promote this system to consumers. Based on a deeper literature review and an in-depth interview with consumers who have used ODP before, it would also be necessary to identify actual problems and come up with solutions for these problems.

Keywords: Logistics Service Quality, Price Recognition, Customer Trust, Customer Satisfaction, Overseas Direct Purchasing.

1. INTRODUCTION

As the number of consumers who value reasonable spending has been growing recently, there is increasing interest in overseas direct purchasing (ODP) where a consumer purchases the same product overseas at a lower price than in Korea amid the ongoing economic downturn. ODP is a new slang word that refers to the act of consumption where an individual purchases goods directly from overseas via online shopping malls (Won-Suk OH & Jing-Hua LI, 2015).

Eun-Kyung Kim, (2015) defined ODP as a form of transaction where a consumer in Korea purchases goods sold in overseas open markets or online shopping malls through e-commerce using the Internet or mobile communication and receives the goods through logistics to Korea.

The volume of ODP in Korea, which has grown since 2010, stood at 15.86 million transactions and 1.52 billion dollars in 2015 and is expected to reach up to 20.7 billion dollars in 2020 (Kwang-Suk Kim, 2015).

Behind these figures, there are a growing number of economical consumers who are looking for goods at affordable prices, and the ODP market is booming because Internet-based mobile shopping is spreading across the country. More notably, ODP is on the rise especially among young people who are trying to find quality goods and their own individuality along with the spread of value-based economical consumption (The Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2015).

According to the Korea Consumer Agency (Korea Consumer Agency, 2014), ODP consumers experience that goods purchased through ODP are about 30% cheaper than those purchased in Korea. The excessively high prices of goods imported via retailers to Korea have led to consumer mistrust towards the retailing industry in Korea, which has triggered a rise in the adoption of ODP (Won-Gi Lim, 2014).

In addition, consumer needs for a variety of goods have been growing as living standards improve, and online shopping has become much easier along with advancements related to the Internet and smartphones. According to the Korea Consumer Agency (Korea Consumer Agency, 2014), the reason the number of consumers using ODP has grown is not only limited to its price advantage but also includes the tendency of consumers who prefer the experience of buying and using new products (Eun-Kyung Kim, 2015).

Korea is not the only country that has seen the growth in ODP consumers. Because people around the globe can easily buy goods through the Internet and their smartphones wherever they are, ODP is a universal phenomenon, although there is some level of difference depending on the country.

ODP, which has grown annually as demonstrated above, could be broadly divided into three forms (Korea Consumer Agency, 2014); the first form (ODP) is where consumers buy products directly from overseas online shopping malls without going through intermediary agencies and receive them directly through logistics to Korea; the second form (overseas purchasing agency) is where consumers having some difficulty with ODP in terms of language and the purchasing procedure use purchasing agencies to buy overseas goods and receive them through logistics, and the third form (overseas logistics agency) is where consumers receive goods purchased through ODP that are difficult to delivery directly to their address in Korea via an overseas logistics agency. Among these, overseas purchasing agencies are one of the most widely used services, where purchasing agency websites place an order on behalf of consumers who experience difficulty with ODP and deliver goods easily to those consumers. Owing to the growing

consumer demand, the number of overseas shopping mall purchasing agencies is increasing gradually, and the number of consumers using purchasing agencies is consistently rising each year. In this regard, one of the factors that could have the biggest effect on consumers when they use overseas shopping mall purchasing agencies would be the logistics service.

Until now, studies on ODP have been mainly focused on the service quality of ODP websites, the intent of using ODP, and the conflicts arising from the use of ODP. In addition, many studies on Chinese consumers have been published recently.

There are, however, few studies that assess logistics service quality and price recognition, which are examined by this study. In this regard, this study aims to identify what consumers think is most important with respect to overseas purchasing agencies and to analyze the effect of logistics service quality and price recognition on customer trust and satisfaction when they use overseas purchasing agencies.

2. MODELING AND SAMPLING

Establishment of Models and Hypotheses

A company could secure a distinctive competitive edge by providing logistics services of an extraordinary quality to customers (Mentzer, Flint & Hult, 2001), and the level of logistics service quality is directly linked to customer satisfaction (Bienstock, John, Mentzer & Monroe, 1997).

Se-Yul Lim, Mi-Hyun Rye & Seung-Sin Lee, (2010) argued that the level of dissatisfaction with refund and exchange was quite high when people used online shopping mall purchasing agencies to buy clothes from overseas markets, and the experience of not being able to wear the purchased clothes just in time as the season changed and passed by because of the long logistics time also increased the level of dissatisfaction.

Zhou, (2014) defined logistics service quality factors in overseas direct purchasing as professionalism, security, accuracy, speed, convenience, and personnel friendliness and analyzed how they affected customer trust and satisfaction. Mi-ryong Song, (2015) categorized the service quality of import shopping mall agencies as purchasing agency service quality and logistics agency service quality. Further, the author regarded trustworthiness of the logistics process, professionalism of the logistics company, appropriateness of the logistics price, and safety of the shipped goods as factors for assessing logistics agency service quality.

Dai Gaole, (2015) incorporated on-time delivery, refunds, safety, and logistics charges into logistics quality in the ODP market.

Do-Won Kang, (2003) suggested logistics quality, order quality, customer service, and logistics price as factors to assess the logistics quality and then examined correlations between these factors and customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. Mentzer, Flint, & Hult, (2001) examined logistics quality factors such as personnel contact quality, order release quantity, information quality, order procedure, order accuracy, order conditions, order quality, order discrepancy handling, and on-time delivery.

Jong-Won Park, (2003) also analyzed correlations between logistics service quality factors and customer satisfaction. Their results showed that logistics quality, order quality, customer service, and logistics price—logistics service quality factors—had a significant effect on the satisfaction of shopping mall users.

Kyoung-Hoon Kim, (2013) analyzed the effect of logistics quality on trust and satisfaction and assessed logisticsment quality based on logistics quality, order quality, customer service, logistics price, and logistics information management.

Da-Lin Sun, (2014) assessed online shopping malls' logistics service quality and consumers' perceived risk and examined their effects on customer trust, satisfaction, and loyalty.

Javenpaa & Todd, (1997); Farquhar, Langmann & Balfour, (1998) argued that logistics service quality would be important as one of the success factors of online shopping malls. Ki-Yeon Kim, (2015) suggested that because customers' perceived risk affected customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth intention of ODP websites, it would be important to put in place a system that could reduce risk, provide unique products, and set the price at a reasonable level.

The relationship between satisfaction and trust in online e-commerce is an integrated evaluation where trust holds a higher place than satisfaction, and satisfaction is an important source of trust. Customer satisfaction could raise trust in the provider (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003).

Trust should be established among participants if the Internet is to serve as the sustainable foundation for e-commerce (Furnell & Karweni, 1999).

Omar, Nazri, Abu, & Omar, (2009) stated that because customer satisfaction had the most powerful effect on trust, primary efforts should be made to satisfy customers to gain their trust.

Morgan & Hunt, (1994) defined trust as a basic component for relational quality and as an essential concept to maintain long-term relationships with customers. Chul-Ho Cho, (2005) presented order convenience, logistics information provision, service personnel quality, and on-time delivery as trust determinants. Hyeong-Yu Jang & Ki-Han Jung, (2004) suggested reputation, scale, and website quality as preceding variables that affected trust.

This study intends to verify the effect of logistics service quality and price recognition on trust and customer satisfaction in ODP. Based on the literature review above, this study proposes models and hypotheses.

Sampling and Design of Questionnaire

The questionnaire designed for this study consisted of the status of consumers on using overseas purchasing agencies, logistics service factors, price recognition factors, the trust factor, customer satisfaction factor, and demographic characteristics.

The questionnaire survey was conducted by simultaneously using face-to-face and online survey methods with consumers who had experienced ODP earlier. Under the online survey method, this study posted the questionnaire on online communities or major portal cafes, where people using overseas purchasing agency websites gathered and thus, data was collected from them.

265 out of 300 distributed copies were collected, and this study used 220 copies in total for analysis after excluding the questionnaires whose answers said the respondents had not used ODP and those whose answers that were not given in sincerity. PASW Statistics 18, a statistical software package for social

sciences, was used to perform reliability analysis, factor analysis, and regression analysis on the collected data.

3. RESULTS

General Characteristics of the Subjects

Table 1 shows the general characteristics of the subjects in this study. The total number of respondents was 220: women accounted for 73.2%, those in their 20s accounted for 47.7%, college graduates accounted for 59.5%, and those earning KRW 2.01 to 3 million accounted for 38.6% of the total respondents.

Table 1
General characteristics of the research subjects

	<i>Demographic Characteristics</i>	<i>Number of People</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Gender	Male	59	26.8
	Female	161	73.2
Age (years)	Teens	9	4.1
	20s	105	47.7
	30s	81	36.8
	40s	25	11.4
Education	High school graduation	22	10.0
	University student	61	27.7
	University graduation	131	59.5
	Graduate school graduation	6	2.7
Monthly Income (KRW)	1 to 2 million	41	18.6
	2 to 3 million	85	38.6
	3 to 4 million	57	25.9
	4 to 6 million	23	10.5
	More than 6 million	14	6.4
Total		220	100.0

Status of ODP Usage

Table 2 describes the status of ODP usage, more specifically, the usage period of ODP agency websites. 43.2% respondents used ODP less than once a year, and 32.3% of the respondents used ODP once or twice in a year. In terms of the annual average number of uses, ODP was used once by 46.4% of the users, while it was used twice to five times by 36.8% of the users. Regarding the country from which products were purchased using ODP agency websites, the US accounted for 33.2%, followed by China with 22.3%, and Japan with 21.4%. Meanwhile, in terms of the category of goods purchased through ODP, clothes/fashion/general merchandise accounted for 36.8%, followed by cosmetics/perfumes, which accounted for 17.3% of the total goods purchased. In addition, with regard to the motivation to use ODP websites, 39.5% of the respondents said that it was cheaper prices than those in Korea, followed by 23.2% of the respondents who cited fast and easy delivery, and 18.2% of the respondents who cited customs clearance agency service.

Table 2
Status of ODP usage

	<i>Usage Characteristics</i>	<i>Number of People</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Usage period of ODP agency websites	Less than once a year	95	43.2
	1-2 years	71	32.3
	2-3 years	32	14.5
	3-4 years	10	4.5
	4-5 years	7	3.2
	More than 5 years	5	2.3
Annual average number of uses	Once	102	46.4
	Twice to five times	81	36.8
	Five to Ten times	33	15.0
	More than 10 times	4	1.8
Country from which products were purchased using ODP agency websites	Japan	47	21.4
	China	49	22.3
	USA	73	33.2
	England	15	6.8
	Germany	10	4.5
	Italy	5	2.3
	Etc	21	9.5
The category of goods purchased through ODP	Books	16	7.3
	Computer/Peripherals	21	9.5
	Clothes/Fashion/General merchandise	81	36.8
	Home Appliances/Electronics/Communication	3	1.4
	Grocery/Health Food	31	14.1
	Cosmetics/Perfumes	38	17.3
	Music/Video/Musical Instruments	17	7.7
	Etc	13	5.9
Motivation to use ODP websites	The respondents who cited fast and easy delivery	51	23.2
	Cheap delivery	22	10.0
	Respondents who cited customs clearance agency service.	40	18.2
	Separated delivery/Integrated delivery	9	4.1
	Cheaper prices than those in Korea	87	39.5
	Etc	11	5.0
Purchase costs through ODP websites	Less than \$100	81	36.8
	100 to \$200	76	34.5
	200 to \$300	42	19.1
	300 to \$400	13	5.9
	More than \$400	8	3.6

Reliability and Validity Verification

This study used principle component analysis (PCA) to extract factors and varimax -an orthogonal rotation technique useful in verifying mutual independence between different factors-for factor rotations.

The results of those analysis, summarized in Table 3, based on the factor analysis of logistics quality, a total of 18 variables were extracted and grouped into three factors. Based on the literature review, Factor 1 was defined as “delivery professionalism,” Factor 2 as “convenience of use”, and Factor 3 as “security of use”. The aggregate explanatory power of these three extracted factors turned out to be 64.0%. For the price recognition factor, a total of 10 variables were extracted; Factor 1 was defined as “membership discount,” Factor 2 as “promotional events,” and Factor 3 as “affordability as compared to Korea,” and the explanatory power of these three factors was found to be 57.8%. The trust factor and customer satisfaction factor showed 61.1% and 59.8% explanatory power, respectively. Based on the reliability analysis results on logistics quality factors—price recognition factors, the trust factor, and the customer satisfaction factor—values of Cronbach’s α were above 0.6 in all three cases. The factors were, therefore, deemed to have enough reliability.

Table 3
Verification of reliability and feasibility

<i>Category</i>	<i>Factor</i>	<i>Number of Factors</i>	<i>Cronbach's α</i>	<i>Eigenvalue</i>	<i>Dispersion</i>
Logistics quality factor	Delivery professionalism	10	.839	5.264	27.708
	Convenience of use	5	.816	2.577	23.564
	Security of use	3	.744	2.419	12.731
Price recognition factor	Membership discount	4	.625	4.046	25.286
	Promotional events	3	.690	2.163	21.126
	Affordability as compared to Korea	3	.719	1.554	11.432
Trust factor		5	.838	3.055	61.108
Customer satisfaction factor		6	.773	2.822	59.823

Hypothesis Verification

To begin with, this study performed a regression analysis to verify Hypothesis 1 “logistics quality factors in ODP have a significant effect on trust.”

As shown in Table 4, the results showed that the F value was 5.517, and the *p* value was 0.000, which was less than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, this regression equation could be regarded as valid. When it came to each variable’s significance towards the regression coefficient, it was found that “delivery professionalism” and “security of use” had a significant positive (+) correlation, while “convenience of use” had no statistical significance. These results demonstrated that when people used ODP, they were concerned about delivery professionalism, regarding whether the goods could be delivered speedily, accurately, and safely, and security related to personal information protection and the payment system, which were more important to them than convenience of use.

Table 4
Testing of Hypothesis 1

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>t-statistic</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Result</i>
Trust	Constant	.424	.188	2.248	.026	
	Delivery professionalism	.600	.053	11.350	.000	Accepted
	Convenience of use	.010	.041	.238	.812	Rejected
	Security of use	.280	.047	5.959	.000	Accepted

R²: .109 Adjusted R²: .089 F: 5.517 *p*-value: .000

Table 5 shows the results of verification on Hypothesis 2 “price recognition factors in ODP have a significant effect on trust.” The *p*-value was 0.000, less than the significance level of 0.05, and therefore, all regression equations could be regarded as valid. Regarding each variable’s significance towards the regression coefficient, “promotional events” and “affordability as compared to Korea” had a significant positive (+) correlation, and the hypothesis was adopted. Membership discount, however, turned out to have no statistical significance on trust. In other words, it was confirmed that an important factor in ODP came from being able to buy goods at a cheaper price from the overseas market than in Korea.

Table 5
Testing of Hypothesis 2

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>t-statistic</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Result</i>
Trust	Constant	1.297	.294	4.410	.000	
	Membership discount	.088	.070	1.267	.206	Rejected
	Promotional events	.209	.071	2.946	.004	Accepted
	Affordability as compared to Korea	.336	.068	4.961	.000	Accepted

R²: .214 Adjusted R²: .203 F: 19.501 *p*-value: .000

As shown in Table 6, Hypothesis 3 “trust on ODP has a significant effect on customer satisfaction” was verified. The results showed that the *p*-value was 0.000, less than the significance level of 0.05, and demonstrated that all equations could be regarded as valid. In addition, trust turned out to have a significant positive (+) effect on customer satisfaction, and the hypothesis was adopted.

Table 6
Testing of Hypothesis 3

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>t-statistic</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Result</i>
Customer satisfaction	Constant	1.380	.143	9.681	.000	
	Trust	.602	.041	14.858	.000	Accepted

R²: .504 Adjusted R²: .502 F: 220.479 *p*-value: .000

4. CONCLUSION

This study intended to identify the effect of logistics service quality and price recognition factors on customer trust and satisfaction based on a survey wherein the respondents had experienced ODP. The

empirical research showed that hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were all verified as statistically significant. Based on these results, the following implications could be suggested.

First, because the usage rate of ODP agency websites was relatively high among young people and women, ODP agency websites could provide more unique products targeting young people and conduct promotional activities. In addition, it was found that most of the subjects used those websites once a year on an average, and there were more customers who had used ODP agency websites for less than a year. These findings indicate that ODP is still at a stage where it is establishing its place in Korea, and the ODP agency market in Korea is expected to grow further in the future.

Second, consumers learn about ODP agency websites mostly through Internet search, and thus, online advertising is expected to play a big role in attracting new customers. The largest portion of ODP occurs for US products; however, it should not be overlooked that Japan, China, and Europe also account for significant shares and that their shares have been on the increase.

Third, it was found that price recognition, where the overseas prices were perceived as cheaper than those in Korea, was a major reason consumers engaged in ODP. In the future, ODP usage by consumers who want to spend reasonably is expected to continue growing.

Fourth, logistics service professionalism and security of use were found to be important in ODP, suggesting that it would be necessary to put in place a strategy that enhances customer trust and satisfaction by taking more efforts in the delivery process to ensure that an ordered product arrives safely. This stems from consumers' perception that ODP agencies have a relatively high level of risk and uncertainty compared to ordinary shopping malls. In other words, these results reflect consumers' perception that they are worried their product could be damaged because of a relatively long delivery route and they need reliable and secured information, considering their concern that it would be difficult to refund or exchange their product if the wrong product is delivered. As such, ODP agencies should incorporate these findings in their operations and pay closer attention to managing products ordered by consumers as well as consumers.

Fifth, ODP agencies need to establish a professional system that ensures professional and secured logistics service quality to customers and continue to promote this system to consumers. In addition, while the hypothesis for convenience of use among other logistics service quality factors was not validated, it would be important to provide various language services, so that consumers could easily find the products they want, or to help them find detailed information about products and delivery status because most consumers experiencing difficulty with ODP choose purchasing agency shopping malls and entrust them with order and delivery.

There are some limitations to this study. First, there could have been an error of convenience sampling because the proportion of women was fairly high in the extracted sample and the sample size itself could not be considered large enough. In addition, because the research model focused on logistics service quality and price recognition, insufficient attention was given to examining difficulties and proposing ways to improve actual ODP practices. Further, there is a possibility that more important factors might have been not included in this study. Finally, there may also be a limitation in the analysis regarding the identification and explanation of causal relationships between various potential variables. Future studies on this topic would need to provide a more extensive and systematic questionnaire survey to address the limitations described above. Furthermore, it is necessary to present factors affecting ODP based on a deeper literature

review and to establish a sophisticated research model. Based on an in-depth interview with consumers who have used ODP before, it would also be necessary to identify actual problems and come up with solutions for these problems.

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