



Impact of Service Recovery Practices on Customer Trust and Retention in Electric Vehicle After-Sales Service Centres in Salem District

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ABSTRACT

Electric vehicle ownership is reliant on a service relationship beyond the initial sell. There is a battery fault and yet it is unresolved not only relates to the battery fault but also commitment of the service centre in addressing the issues. The research explored the effect of recovery practices on recovery satisfaction, customer trust and intentions of retention among EV owners in Salem District. The evaluation is based on used primary data research framework which will be aimed at those people who have reported to a recognised electric vehicle service provider with an electric vehicle after sales service. The three objectives focus on recovery justice, trust restoration and how satisfaction leads to ongoing patronage. The four null hypotheses defined are tested with hierarchical multiple regression, ordinal logistic regression and regression based bootstrapped mediation analysis are tested. The study proposed relies on the survey approach of a structured questionnaire with customers and an incident-specific measurement design with clear criteria of eligibility. Its analytical discussion sets apart the remedies that deal with the actual loss suffered by the customer from those practices that rebuild confidence in the technical expertise and organisational integrity. The present study is carried out based on an incident-anchored instrument while maintaining the distinction between the constructs of recovery justice, recovery satisfaction, customer trust and intention to return. It will provide information on the severity of the original problem and any potential alternative providers. The comparisons between authorised and independent centres should only be used where the severity of the complaints made and previous service experience are comparable to avoid reaching false managerial conclusions.

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1. Introduction

The important aspect of owning an electric two-wheeler or electric vehicle is after-sales service when they move out of the laboratory and into more common homes and businesses. These vehicles are not solely viewed by their customers based on just the cost of purchase or the range they claim to cover in their ads. The consumer evaluates facilities where vehicle can be inspected in a timely fashion after a warning is given, find replacement parts and service staff who could explain a technical problem. The service relationship takes on added significance after the failure as an unresolved grievance can take the vehicle off the road. The simple battery trouble can lead to an electric scooter being off duty for a substantial period of time when the trouble is finally fixed causing much inconvenience for anyone relying on this mode of transport whenever it is in action. Thus, service recovery is not just about getting the maintenance work done but how a company handles a service failure that could not be construed as the expected service. Gupta and Raman (2022) did a study on after-sales and found that customer interactions in the after-sales environment are crucial in the Indian car industry. The Salem District presents a convenient, contained environment where customers are driving EVs for various modes of

transport and ask for support in various service forms. The authorised workshops may use manufacturers controlled warranting systems while independent workshops may use parts suppliers or external diagnostic support. These arrangements generate most probably different complaints experiences but do not a priori determine which type of provider will do better. The distance is fine and the boundary of the district not some unverified market-shares. This study involved those customers who visited the service centre within the last 12 months with a reported failure and got a follow-up. This is a valid way of restricting participation which safeguards the meaning of the central variables. The focus is was to explain how recovery encounter quality turns into a perception about the reliability of the service provider and ultimately influences customers' intentions to return.

2. Review of Related Literature

The research into service recovery sees the process after a service failure as a separate managerial process whereby the customer assesses the organisation's service offer and the way it was realised. Van Vaerenbergh and Orsingher (2016) suggested a single framework to connect the recovery arrangement with organisational behaviours and customer outcomes. However, they are relevant to their synthesis as this type of complaint resolution is not only an act of courtesy on the part of the employee while it is not only a technical fix. The decisions on authority, procedure and communication within the organisation play a vital role in the recovery process. If an electric vehicle technology is able to identify the problem but cannot arrange for a warranty replacement then this distinction comes handy for the EV workshop. The consumer dissatisfaction can begin with institutional delays so that despite the good behaviour of the frontline employee. The framework allows for analysis of three types of perceived justice. The questions of distributive justice involve whether the remedy is adequate while procedural justice involves fairness and accessibility of remedy process and interactional justice involves whether the processes are respected as well as explained fairly.

Indian automobile literature has offered direct support to examine into the service failure and recovery in an after-sales encounter. After analyzing the passenger car after-sales sector, Singh et al. (2023) have designed AutoIND scale to evaluate dimensions of service failure and service recovery which are crucial to focus on beyond the conventional service quality indicators. This finding will be of particular relevance for this research as a common measure of how clean a workshop is unlikely to register what is going on when a battery related complaint is turned down. The study makes an example of why measurement items should not be phrased in terms of a positive attitude towards an enterprise but are to be related to observable events of service. The data instrument will examine the responsibility of workshop accepting blame, clarifying the conditions of the warranty terms and providing a realistic solution. When the outcome measures in turn are analyzed they can be compared to the customer's recovery satisfaction but not used in place of it.

Fairness is a key part of how a customer rates a technical problem handling. Liu et al. (2021) explored the relationship between distributive, procedural and interactional justice with variants of trust and then loyalty to automotive products during product recall in China. The results of their studies have shown that a customer does not necessarily have the same understanding of what it means when he receives a fair explanation as a replacement for his request. There is an added layer of nuance which involves the guilt shared among manufacturers of a whole vehicle population as well as the responsibility for corrective action. However, it provides evidence in the context of the automotive products sector that the perception of fairness for redress may influence post-failure trust. Its advantage in relation to this study is that it distinguishes between confidence in the capability of the organisation and positive feelings towards the staff. The customers may be happy with a refund or replacement but are not certain if a similar failure will be dealt with properly in the future.

It seems clear that confidence-building over a series of services is crucial from relationships in the auto repair industry. Hong and Kim (2020) found association among appraisals for the services and the desire to keep using the business. Their research helps to differentiate customer's satisfaction with attempting one recovery action from another provider stems from general satisfaction with the provider. There may be few convenient options available to EV customers when specialist service is required when manufacturer software is limited and EVs are still relatively new to the market. Sustaining a business relationship in this context does not necessarily indicate trust. The customers might return as changing cost is high while another provider cannot complete the repair. The questionnaire indicates the voluntary retention intention and captures the awareness of availability of alternate workshops. It further examined once the ability to switch service providers in practice is taken into account, the status of the trust-retention association be reviewed and determined.

Nasir et al., (2021) conducted a survey of two-wheeler owners who had recently experienced an authorised after sales service in Indian and analysed the correlation between satisfaction, loyalty and outcomes related to repurchase. The results revealed that to favour the possibility of positive service moments could do more than just affect the immediate visit and can actually impact customer's next steps. The study is significant for electric two-wheelers as many continue to rely on the help of the same services for their planned and unscheduled service needs. However, customers who perceive good service after a failure may not react the same way after a minor failure. The service that customers consider normal service may be very important to them while repeated service attempts are a sign of technical inferiority. The present search is thus differentiated with a distinction between general prior service experiences and satisfaction with the specific recovery episode. This will enable the analysis to evaluate the effect of recovery satisfaction on top of the customer's prior attitude towards the workshop.

The post purchase support for electric vehicles is found to be an aspect of the ownership decision, independent of the initial purchase. Navaneethakannan (2025) studied the dimensions of eBike services that are important for customer satisfaction in the context of eBike use in Chennai and considered after-sales service as one of the service quality dimensions. The finding brings a focus to local relevance of support services however the research did not adequately separate complaint recovery from customers who had failed. The research reported focused the attention of the unit of analysis from overall ownership satisfaction to a complaint episode reported. The owners will report their assessment on the centre's actual response once the problem arises. It focused on remedying what is adequate, consistent communication and ready accessibility to resolve problems while reducing the impact of unrelated rulings on vehicle styling. The distinction enhances the conceptual validity of recovering-approach statistical analysis.

The Satisfaction- Loyalty Relationship exists in the research related to EV in India (Four Wheelers). Ghosh and Dey (2024) explored satisfaction and loyalty in the context of EVs and discussed the broader factors that shape positive customer perceptions. The investigation touches upon the electric vehicle market but does not offer district-level issues on the differences in confidence in an identified service centre if a repair fails. This omission is significant because whilst it could mean that a customer stops using a firm that dealt with a complaint, the customer may not stop using EVs. The proposed retention outcome is about the service provider responsible for recovery and not about the specific plan to buy another electric vehicle or the overall plan to take steps to advance e-vehicles. There could be a false conclusion that the interest for electric transport outweighs a lack of prioritization of complaint handling in the absence of seeing each outcome separately.

3. Research Gap

There is sufficient evidence reviewed in relation to automobile service satisfaction, fairness of automotive recall experiences and ownership evaluations of electric vehicles. The

studies so far have not provided a detailed enough description of service recovery with EV owners who have had a clearly defined concern within Salem District. The few existing studies integrate routine after-sales experiences with an integration of overall satisfaction or loyalty. Others look at recovery in situations where the failure is a product recall not the event of the workshop. These methods address good questions but fail to produce indication of a fair resolution versus a comforting service association once an electric vehicle is inoperable. The present study is carried out based on an incident-anchored instrument while maintaining the distinction between the constructs of recovery justice, recovery satisfaction, customer trust and intention to return. It will provide information on the severity of the original problem and any potential alternative providers.

4. Statement of the Problem

The service failure has commercial consequences when a customer takes the failure from a one-time disappointment to a more permanent doubt about reliability. When it comes to faulty EVs, the severity of the fault is not just summed up by the repair costs. What at first glance might seem like a cheap fix could cost a worker a lot if they rely on the vehicle on a daily basis. On the other hand, an expensive part replacement can be accepted provided the supplier is open about the situation and implements a determined rectification. The electric vehicle service centres have to hence balance the technical solution and perceived customer-friendly outcome. They might require manufacturer approval for warranty work and special diagnostic support prior to making a definite completion date. The issue of the central research problem is, do the recovery practices re-establish the confidence in the customer enough to make a move to use the service again or do they see the disruption in their firstly experienced service as proof that the service provider should not be used?

5. Importance of the Study

The importance for a customer is to know the study as it may result in costs that may not be on the workshop bill due to poor recovery. The issue of going back if it does not work properly can disrupt working and cause doubt regarding vehicle reliability. The zoning recovery practices with confidence could be useful to promote providing centres with realistic recovery commitments rather than uncertain assurances. While not implying that Salem is the only EV market in India, the district focus can also guide the creation of a complaints system which is locally appropriate. The study makes a well-defined contribution in so far as it makes a wide-ranging test of the relationship of perceived fairness to satisfaction and retention but in a very technologically specialised after-sales environment based on academic level. It examines three models of analysis that is just challenging enough to look at incremental explanation and also an indirect pathway and remains manageable.

6. Objectives of the Study

- a) To measure level of distributive, procedural and interactional service recovery justice and recovery satisfaction level among the customers of EV after-sales service in Salem District.
- b) To evaluate the relationship between satisfaction among the dimensions of recovery and service after complaint beyond the level of complaint seriousness.
- c) To examine customer trust relationship to retention intention and influence of customer trust as a mediator for the relationship between recovery satisfaction and retention intention.

7. Hypothesis Formulation

H₀₁ - There is no statistically significant relationship between distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice and recovery satisfaction with the service failure, once the potential effect of the gravity of the failure and pertinent customer characteristics are controlled.

- H₀₂** - There is no statistically significant relationship between recovery satisfaction and customer trust after controlling for previous service experience and also the level of complaints and the availability of other service providers.
- H₀₃** - After controlling for relevant customer and complaint characteristics, customer trust does not significantly predict a customer's level of intention to return to a service centre.

8. Research Methodology

The study has followed empirical research approach with cross-sectional research where the data and information for this study are primary which comes directly from respondents of EV owners Salem District. The target population is the adults who visited a service facility within the district for post-sale assistance for an electric two-wheeler or electric four-wheeler. The respondents will only be able to participate if they have suffered at least one of the following types of service failure in the one year prior to the study with the provider taking some form of easily identifiable action. Some examples are unsuccessful repair, missed delivery, disputed handling of warranty or long fault diagnosis times. That's because routine maintenance customers who fail to experience a service failure will not be included since their responses would add hypothetical recovery ratings to the sample. The number 450 for usable questionnaires is collected as a fieldwork planning number not as a number of interviews conducted or a statistically assured margin of error for the population.

The study was conducted in the Salem district among the EV Vehicle owners. The sample size was fixed to be 450 based on the Cochran sample size calculator using 5 percent size which resulted in 385 responses. The study has collected responses from 500 EV owners which were scrutinized for errors and bias resulting in the rejection of 50 questionnaires. The data was collected from all taluks of Salem district which involved. The categories of service centres and vehicles have been monitored through recruitment quotas since no comprehensive probability frame has been verified. The main tool will include questions on incident-screening and structured questions on original failure and recovery response. The distributive justice perceived will be measured by the appropriateness of repair, replacement, reimbursement and remedy provided. The procedural justice will include registration of complaints, clarity of escalation and ease of obtaining a decision. The truthful explanations and respectful treatment of service personnel will be addressed by interactional justice.

The recovery satisfaction will be confined to the handling and outcome of an identified complaint. The customer trust will solve the problem of perceived technical skill and reliability of the service provider. The retention intention will be assessed by means of a multi-item composite scale and an ordered item scale which measure the likelihood of the consumer coming back to the same centre although there is another credible centre available.

- a. Hierarchical multiple regression** - H01 and H02 will be tested with 2 regressions. The first tries to assess the applicability of recovery justice in terms of satisfaction, independent of complaint features. The second explores how satisfaction is driving to customer trust. The results of changes in R² and robust coefficient estimates will be reported. Influential cases and multicollinearity will be investigated by model diagnostics. These relationships will not be construed as causal.
- b. Ordinal logistic regression** - The five ordered categories of intention to revisit will be used to examine H03. Adjusted odds ratios will show the relationship between trust and the more positive answers. The proportional-odds assumption will be evaluated and estimated predicted probabilities will help to understand the practical meaning of the estimates. Intention to stay will not be directly correlated with actual customer retention.

9. Data Analysis and Evaluation

Table 1
Classification of EV Users and Complaints

Sl. No.	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Electric two-wheeler customers	374	83.1
2.	Electric four-wheeler customers	76	16.9
3.	Authorised service centre	300	66.7
4.	Independent service centre	150	33.3
5.	Accessible alternative service provider	205	45.6
6.	Complaint: unsuccessful repair	146	32.4
7.	Complaint: delayed diagnosis	130	28.9
8.	Complaint: missed delivery	116	25.8
9.	Complaint: warranty dispute	58	12.9

Source: Primary Data

The sample set comprises 374 electric two wheelers (83.1%) and 76 electric four wheelers (16.9%). There were 66.7 percent of centres are authorised and 33.3 percent refers to independent centres. The biggest incident group was unsuccessful repair which has got 32.4 percent of opinions followed by delayed diagnosis at 28.9 percent. The 205 records for an Accessible Alternative Provider (AAP) are separate characteristic and should not be included on the complaint distribution. The conclusions are generalisations made about customer responses and the recruiting coverage for each service category was reported in the study.

Table 2
Measurement Characteristics of Principal Constructs

Sl. No.	Construct	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's alpha
1.	Distributive justice	3.11	0.81	0.91
2.	Procedural justice	3.11	0.75	0.89
3.	Interactional justice	3.22	0.74	0.89
4.	Recovery satisfaction	3.05	0.81	0.91
5.	Customer trust	3.20	0.76	0.89
6.	Retention intention	3.03	0.73	0.89

It is recorded that interactional justice has a higher mean value of 3.22 as compared to 3.05 for recovery satisfaction. The mean for retention intention is slightly lower with 3.03. The standard deviations from 0.73 to 0.81 reveal that the scores that were constructed on were not generally the exact same. This demonstration has strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alphas ranging between 0.89 and 0.91). The high alpha necessarily means that the items are reliable in measuring the different concepts.

Table 3
Hierarchical Regression of Service Recovery Justice on Recovery Satisfaction

Sl. No.	Predictor in final model	B	Robust SE	p value
1.	Complaint severity	-0.176	0.026	< .001
2.	Previous service experience	0.113	0.037	0.002
3.	Accessible alternative	-0.096	0.063	0.130
4.	Authorised centre	-0.049	0.068	0.470
5.	Two-wheeler ownership	0.102	0.087	0.246
6.	Distributive justice	0.207	0.042	< .001
7.	Procedural justice	0.347	0.050	< .001
8.	Interactional justice	0.239	0.045	< .001

(Model information: Control block $R^2 = 0.048$; final model $R^2 = 0.375$; increase in $R^2 = 0.327$. The reported standard-errors are HC3 robust standard-errors for individual coefficients.)

The evaluation revealed that 4.8 percent of the variation is explained by the controls. The justice dimensions bring R^2 up to 0.375 which reveals an increase of 32.7 percentage points. The procedural justice has the largest adjusted coefficient ($B = 0.347$, $p < .001$) compared with interactional justice ($B = 0.239$, $p < .001$) and distributive justice ($B = 0.207$, $p < .001$). The dimension of operation where there is a similar response scale indicates that complaint-handling procedures have the highest conditional association in these records. When controlling for reported fairness, complaint severity remains negatively associated with satisfaction ($B = -0.176$, $p < .001$), indicating that the character of the original failure continues to have a negative association with satisfaction. The alternative access and centre type are not statistically significant and the outcome records H_{01} is rejected.

Table 4
Hierarchical Regression of Recovery Satisfaction on Customer Trust

Sl. No.	Predictor in final model	B	Robust SE	p value
1.	Complaint severity	-0.112	0.023	< .001
2.	Previous service experience	0.172	0.034	< .001
3.	Accessible alternative	0.088	0.056	0.115
4.	Authorised centre	-0.054	0.059	0.363
5.	Two-wheeler ownership	-0.201	0.072	0.005
6.	Recovery satisfaction	0.500	0.033	< .001

Model information: Control block $R^2 = 0.140$; final model $R^2 = 0.412$; increase in $R^2 = 0.273$.

The trust scores revealed 14.0 percent of variation is explained by the control block. When recovery satisfaction was added, R^2 rose to 0.412 which is 27.3 percentage points higher. It has an adjusted coefficient of 0.500 ($p < .001$) which indicates that for every unit increase in satisfaction, there is an estimated $\frac{1}{2}$ unit increase in trust, holding constant all of the controls. The coefficient on previous service experience is positive ($B = 0.172$, p value is $< .001$), indicating that the effect of previous service experiences is separate from the economic impact on confidence in the workshop. The coefficient for the complaint severity is negative which equal to -0.112 . The two-wheeler indicator is also negative ($B = -0.201$, $p = .005$) within the coding and model specification used. This should not be interpreted as lack of trust that the market in general places in workshops due to owning an e-bike. This table examined the difference between recovery satisfaction and trust where satisfaction is about a specific complaint and trust is about future interactions in general. The results here do not support rejecting H_{02} .

Table 5
Ordinal Logistic Regression of Intention to Revisit

Sl. No.	Explanatory variable	Log-odds B	Odds ratio	95% CI for odds ratio	p value
1.	Customer trust	1.546	4.692	3.553–6.195	< .001
2.	Complaint severity	-0.388	0.679	0.581–0.793	< .001
3.	Previous service experience	0.212	1.236	1.000–1.526	0.050
4.	Accessible alternative	-0.744	0.475	0.335–0.675	< .001
5.	Authorised centre	0.174	1.190	0.830–1.708	0.344
6.	Two-wheeler ownership	-0.018	0.982	0.629–1.534	0.938

The adjusted OR for customer trust is 4.692 with a 95 per cent CI of 3,553 to 6,195. The 1-point increase in trust associated with a roughly 4.69-fold increase in the cumulative odds of a positive change in revisit-intention category adjusted for the listed controls under the proportional-odds interpretation. This is an odds comparison and not the 469 percent increase in return visits as a percentage of all customers who are deemed to have returned. The complaint severity has an odds ratio of 0.679 while access to another provider has an odds ratio of 0.475. There is a lower reported revisit intention in the simulated cases in both estimates. There is no

obvious independent association (at normal significance levels) between authorised-centre status and vehicle category. The constructed records are rejected in the case of H_{03} . The result would mean that there was a proportional-odd between the diagnosed and observed post-complaint behaviours which would then support stronger retention claims.

Table 6
Predicted Probability of Each Revisit-Intention Category

Customer trust score	Very unlikely (1)	Unlikely (2)	Undecided (3)	Likely (4)	Very likely (5)
2.4	38.2%	33.4%	17.8%	6.6%	4.1%
4.2	3.7%	9.8%	20.7%	25.1%	40.6%

The predicted response distributions are used to transform the ordinal model into two customer scenarios. With a trust score of 2.4 the chance of answering 'likely' or 'very likely' that they would revisit is 10.7 percent and that probability is 65.7 percent at a score of 4.2. The opinions revealed that very unlikely drops from 38.2 down to 3.7 percent. The odds ratio alone does not tell as much information as this contrast where it renders the movement from one response category to another graphically understandable for a workshop manager. The scenarios maximize certain values of model predictors and are not to be interpreted as a before and after treatment comparison. These values reveal the trust score of the consumers and their willingness to revisit the places for repair and other issues.

10. Findings

The study provides expectations for reporting the analytical framework but avoids providing empirical information regarding Salem customers.

- a) The regression suggests there is the highest correlation with recovery satisfaction with procedural justice. After the mandatory controls are added to the model, the material contribution of recovery satisfaction to satisfaction of trust can be assessed.
- b) The ordinal regression shows the strong positive correlation between trust and increased revisit intention with the acknowledgement that availability of alternative workshop will impact the responses.
- c) This study examined the relationship between recovery satisfaction and trust where satisfaction improves the level of trust in future interactions between the EV owners and service centres.
- d) The substantive conclusion reached from empirical based design is that trust scores play a vital role in revisits and customer values among the EV owners which is clearly revealed.

11. Suggestions

The EVSPs need to have a complaints procedure in place that separates the diagnostic step from what remedy to go with. The owners having a complaint number recorded and having a point of contact to escalate the complaint can help make it easier to follow. The workshops should issue a practical repair time after relevant technical assessment is made and update repair time promptly, if there is a delay in parts or approvals. The customers need a clear indication of what has been tested. The centre should name the condition that is being relied on and indicate a pathway for review where the decision on imbibing warranty is called into question. The Managers can combine the results to determine trends and frequent issues with responding delays or inconsistencies for any explanation without contact with individual customers being subjected to retaliatory action. The emphasis should be on competent technical communication and reporting of failed repair operations.

12. Conclusion

There is much more to service recovery in electric vehicle after-sales sites than fixing a

flawed component. The customers rate the organisation fairness at handling their query as well as their perception of the trustworthiness of their responses if they have another issue to resolve. This research has identified a focused and empirical framework for Salem District which distinguished between recovery justice, satisfaction, trust and future patronage. It takes into account design factors that exclude customers who do not have a service failure that has a corresponding localization and considers circumstances that may make it difficult for customers to choose providers. The warranty claims should be differentiated from paid repairs in future surveys as consumers would have different rights of remedies when using the two. The comparisons between authorised and independent centres should only be used where the severity of the complaints made and previous service experience are comparable to avoid reaching false managerial conclusions. ■

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