Original Research

Personality or Quality: Influencing Factors in Customers' Intention to Revisit Beauty Salons in Iran

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Abstract

In the last two decades, research on investigating factors influencing the consumer repurchase intention has advanced and become an important topic in the marketing society and literature. The objective of this paper is to compare the weight of service providers' personality traits and service quality performances they provide to uncover the primary factor influencing a clients' intention to revisit their beauty salon in a long-term relationship. The SERVQUAL model of service quality and Mini-Marker model of personality were employed to substantiate the hypothesized relationship. Based on 453 valid respondents from beauty salons' visitors, empirical finding remarkably indicate that the hairstylist's personality was the primary reason for clients to revisit beauty salons. The results demonstrate that the factors such as agreeableness, intellect, conscientiousness and extraversion respectively have been prioritized as the most effective reasons for re-visitation in the view of customers. From the service quality side, the dimension of tangibility is ranked as the first reason to revisit the beauty salon. Overall, the outcome of this study can be applied to beauty salons' management process in the line with building a strong long-term customer relationship and in return sustain profitability.

Keywords: SERVQUAL, Big-Five personality traits, Mini-Marker model, repurchase intention, beauty salon, Iran.

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Introduction

The beauty sector is one of the most flourishing service industries in many countries including Iran (Statista, 2020). The growing number of beauty salons, training schools, and hairstylists and the increase in demand for a variety of services in Iran, support the growth and importance of this market (statistics center of Iran, 2019). Therefore, to have a successful business, this market must be seriously studied and explored. Similar to other service sectors, beauty salons are also a customer-oriented market (Brady & Cronin, 2001). Building a strong long-term customer relationship will enhance the capability of satisfying the needs of both salon and clients, helping beauty salons to be more successful in the market (Hellier et al., 2003; Stankevich, 2017).

In the service sector, there are factors such as quality of provided services and service provider personality that create and improve the long-term relationship by influencing customer choice and repurchase intention (Lin et al., 2001; Webber et al., 2012). In the case of beauty salons, knowing the factors behind the clients' willingness to revisit their beauty salon is very important to both salon owners and managers. By identifying the factors that lead to a particular revisit intention of hair salon and hairstylists, we can better understand why and how the people act in a certain way. In so doing, marketers can easily design appropriate strategies to compete successfully by maintaining the customers as a valuable source.

There are issues that have yet to be addressed in research studies investigating the factors influencing customer willingness to revisit and repurchase in the service industries. First, most of the research on service industries empirically (Lin et al., 2001; Webber et al., 2012) studied the importance of service provider personality and provided service quality as the two effective factors influencing customer decision making toward repurchasing. No empirical research has been conducted to weigh these factors in order to realize the primary factor influencing customer repurchase decision making in a single study. Second, despite some of these studies investigated factors affecting customer willingness to choose in various service industries (e.g., Ferguson et al,, 2005; Schneider et al., 2009; Webber 2011), no similar study, using a sample from Iran, has been carried out measuring these factors in the beauty sector. Third, most research studied customer willingness to choose have focused on one-time interaction (Pugh, 2001; Tan et al., 2004) and short-term relationships (Robert et al., 1987; Gutek et al., 1999; Rogelberg et al., 1999). Whereas our research focuses on longer-term engagements between a service provider and his/her customer (Webber el at., 2012) focusing on hair stylists and hair salons.

Therefore, this paper aims to compare the weight of "provided service quality" and 'service provider personality" as the two of the main factors that influence customers' decision-making process to choose and revisit their favorite hairstylist and beauty salons. To reach this goal the SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988) and Mini-Marker Personality Traits (Saucier, 1994) models were used to answer the research question:

"From the clients' point of view, which of the "service quality" or "hairstylist's personality" factors is considered as the heavier factor that influences customer choice to have a continual visit."

In the first section of this research, previous studies and investigations relating to service quality, personality, and repurchase intention is reviewed. Research hypothesis is also designed at this stage. During the second section, research methodology including sample and data collection techniques is explained. In the third section, results from a survey questionnaire are analyzed and presented. Finally, discussions, managerial implication, limitation, conclusion of the study are discussed in the last section of the paper.

Literature review and hypothesis development

The Big-Five personality traits

Personality can be referred to the characteristics of the person that account for consistent patterns of feeling, thinking, behaving, and acting (Cervone & Pervin, 2015). For years, the structure, characteristics, process, and progress of human behavior have been explained by different personality theories (e.g. cognitive theory, psychoanalytic theory, trait theory, phenomenological theory, learning theory, and the theory of social cognitive). Sine this study employed personality traits to evaluate the service providers' personality; it addresses only the structure of service providers' personality. Among mentioned theories, the trait theory particularly emphasizes exploring the fundamental structure of personality. Trait theorists, who believe traits are the essential units of personality, assume that each person has broad talents and capabilities which called traits that cause him/her to behave and act in a specific way (Pervin, 1993).

To explain human personality, Eysenck's early research developed the Big-Two model using neuroticism and extraversion dimensions as the stem of personality. Later, the psychoticism was added as the third dimension of personality model (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975). The basics of the Big-Five model (FFM) began from Norman's (1963) paper who suggested the five dimensions include agreeableness, extraversion, emotional stability, conscientiousness, and culture as the new classification of personality attributes using factor analyzing technique. In another attempt, focused on the Eysenck and Norman suggestion, Costa and McCrae (1985) reported that the fundamental units of human personality were neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. To measure these factors, they also developed six subcategories of each Big Five personality trait called the NEO Personality Inventory.

Over the years, the personality theorists showed that the five dimensions include extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience are the robust and basic dimensions to express the human personality (Costa & McCrae, 1985; Digman, 1990; McCrae & John, 1992; Pervin, 1993; Cellar et al., 1996; Salgado, 1997). For short, these dimensions are also called OCEAN given the first alphabet of each (John, 1990; Pervin, 1993).

The extraversion factor (also called surgency) mainly describes the intensity of activity level, the capacity to enjoy and interpersonal interaction. Being talkative, energetic, active, social, optimistic, and oriented are well-known characteristics associated with this factor (Pervin, 1993). Agreeableness represents the degree to which a person can get along with others by being good-natured, forgiving, compassionate, cooperative,

understanding, and trusting (Pervin, 1993). Frequently, being kind, unselfish, generous, warm, forgiving, and trustful are the traits associated with this dimension (McCrae & John, 1992; Pervin, 1993). The conscientiousness factor of personality chiefly evaluates the degree to which a person is responsible, dependable, persistent, and achievement oriented. Commonly, traits related to conscientiousness are being responsible, planning, hardworking, careful, focused, organized, and self-disciplined (Barrick & Mount, 1991; McCrae & John, 1992). The neuroticism factor or emotional stability mainly evaluates the level of emotional instability of a person. Traits associated with this dimension usually known as being worried, moody, depressed, touchy, and unstable (Barrick & Mount, 1991; McCrae & John, 1992). Openness to experience (also called Intellect or Culture) is the dimension of personality that appraises the level of having wide interests and being imaginative and insightful (Pervin, 1993). Having creativity, imagination, intelligence and curiosity are traits commonly associated with the openness dimension (Barrick & Mount, 1991; McCrae &John, 1992; Pervin, 1993).

Over time, different questionnaires such as NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI) or NEO-PIR (McCrae & Costa, 1992) have been developed to measure the five constructs on personality trait theory. In research, the bipolar and unipolar adjective markers have been proposed by Goldberg (1992). A brief version of Goldberg unipolar adjective markers with reasonable reliability and validity, called "Mini- Marker", was developed by Saucier (1994). The dimensions of Mini-Marker Personality Traits are extroversion (Ext), agreeableness (Agr), conscientiousness (Con), neuroticism (Neu) , and intellect (Int). These are employed in this study to represent the personality traits. The ranges and components of personality dimensions have varied from study to study. Table 1 presents the higher and lower level of each component of Mini-Marker (Saucier, 1994).

Table 1. Mini-Marker personality traits dimensions

Lower End	Dimensions	Higher End
Silent, Unenergetic, Unsociable, Unassertive, Inactive, Unadventurous	Extraversion	Talkative, Energetic, Sociable, Assertive, Active, Adventurous
Unselfish, Cold ,Rude, Distrustful, Unkind, Stingy, Disagreeable, Inflexible, Unfair	Agreeableness	Selfish, Warm, Polite, Trustful, Kind, Generous, Agreeable, Flexible, Fair
Disorganized, Unreliable, Lazy, Frivolous, Impractical, Rash, Careless, Negligent	Conscientiousness	Organized, Reliable, Hardworking, Serious, Practical, Cautious, Thorough, Conscientious
Calm, Tense, Unstable, Moody, Unemotional, Insecure, Disconnected	Neuroticism	Angry, Relaxed, Stable Steady, Emotional, Secure, Connected
Unintelligent, Uncreative, Imperceptive, Unsophisticated	Intellect	Intelligent, Creative, Curios, perceptive, Sophisticated

Source: Saucier (1994)

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Service quality

The service quality has been progressively recognized as a crucial factor in the success of any business (Hossain & Leo, 2009; Kim-Soon et al., 2014). Since service quality is known as a multidimensional construct, the definition and number of dimensions have always been varied from researcher to researcher (Rezaei et al., 2011; Haghighat, 2017).

In the last decade, researchers have been defining quality from a customer's perspective due to the growth and increased importance of the service sector in these days (Lin el at. 2001). In reviewing marketing literature, it is clear that among all classifications of service quality dimensions, proposed by other researchers, a widely used definition of service quality is to meet customers' expectations (e.g. Sasser et al., 1978; Gronroos, 1978; Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1982), the work of Parasuraman, et al. (1985, 1988). The research developed an instrument based on a gap model (Parasuraman, et al, 1985) called SERVQUAL. This model suggests the perception of service quality derived from the gap between customers' expectations and their perceptions of actual performance (Pikkemaat & Peters, 2006).

Both SERVQUAL versions, the original (Parasuraman, et al, 1988) and revised version (Parasuraman, et al, 1991, 1994) contain five dimensions namely tangibles (Tan), reliability (Rel), responsiveness (Res), assurance (Ass), and empathy (Emp). In SERVQUAL, the dimension of tangibles evaluates the degree of the appearance of personnel and a company's physical facilities. The reliability factor assesses the ability of an organization or firm to deliver the service that was already promised. The responsiveness measures the willingness to assist customers and provide a quick service. The assurance dimension represents the ability of employees to inspire confidence, showing also their level of knowledge. Finally, empathy evaluates the individualized attention that the organizations provide to their customers (Parasuraman, et al, 1988). The SERVQUAL remains the leading instrument to measure service quality (Roslan et al., 2015; Gencer & Akkucuk, 2017), even though it has been criticized by certain scholars (e.g. Carman, 1990; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Teas, 1993; Landrum et al., 2007).

Repurchase intention

Repurchase intention is an objective, observable and simple predictor of future purchasing behavior that defines the degree to which customers are willing to purchase and use the same product or service over time (Jones & Taylor, 2007; Lin & Liang, 2011). Furthermore, the author's defined a repurchase intention as to a likelihood or willingness of consumers, having already completed an initial buy and then decided to use and purchase from the same service unit or company in the future (Kuan et al., 2008). The repurchase intention is also defined as loyalty toward a commercial brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). From the customer view, it is reported that a repurchase intention might be the result of customer commitment and attitude towards repurchasing a specific product (Samand, 2014). Based on context, in this study 'revisit intention' is used as 'repurchase intention'.

Service provider personality and repurchase intention

In service marketing, the primary interaction created between customers and service providers plays a crucial role in the customers' evaluation of quality and effectiveness of the service (Schneider et al., 1998) which consequently leads to the customers satisfaction, loyalty and eventual repurchasing (Webber & Klimoski, 2004). Also, the research revealed that the existing relationship between a service provider and consumers has an appositive impact on customer intention to repurchase (Preis, 2003). Therefore, as the initial influence in interactions between consumers and service providers, personality can affect the degree of intention to repurchase as well (Rezaei el at, 2011).

Various researches have been carried out studying the relationship between service provider personality and consumer repurchase intention using personality traits in different sectors, such as the transportation sector (Saleh & Yarahmadi, 2013), public industry (Rezaei, el at, 2011) food industry (Hurley, 1998) and the sector of hospitality (Kim, 2008). In the beauty sector, Webber et al. (2012) determined the extent to which personality traits mediate the hairstylist personality/service quality relationship in beauty salons by controlling for customer personality.

Service quality and repurchase intention

Service quality dimensions have been widely found as crucial influencers in the formation of consumers' purchase intentions (Taylor & Baker, 1994). In terms of sales and long-term customer loyalty and retention, organizations that deliver high-quality services have always been leaders in the competitive market (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Eklöf & Westlund, 2002). Wu et al., (2012) found that service quality has a positive impact on repurchase intention. Therefore, there is a close relationship between service qualities and repurchase intention (Hellier et al., 2003).

Evidence from conducted research demonstrated that those service providers who offer and deliver superior services are luckier to have greater customer satisfaction, reach higher volumes of purchases, and more return visits by their previous customers (Borucki & Burke 1999; Liao & Chuang, 2004). In line with this and from other research, it is found that customers who experience good quality service are more likely to return and remain customers of the organization (Webber & Klimoski, 2004).

To explore the factors influencing customer willingness to choose, numerous studies have examined the dimensions of service quality in a wide range of service sectors such as hospitality (Mok et al., 2013; Wilson, 2020), transportation (Furqon et al., 2019), healthcare (Andaleeb, 2001; Fatima et al., 2018), education (Ali et al., 2016; Hasan et al., 2008), and entertainment (Shonk & Chelladurai, 2008). For the same purpose, these dimensions have been applied in service sectors such as the beauty industry and its subsectors. For example, Khan and Tabassum (2010) studied different attributes of customer's preference, evaluated the service quality level, the extent of customer satisfaction, revealing the final factors that create customer satisfaction in the hairstyle salons, using the SERVQUAL approach.

From recent literature, factors influencing customer decision to choose and repurchase based on service provider personality and quality have been studied in a wide range of sectors and subsectors. Although the dimensions of personality and service quality have

been rarely or mediatory examined for hairstylist profession and beauty salons (Khan & Tabassum, 2010; Webber et al., 2012), these dimensions have not yet been studied and compared to each other to determine the primary factor influencing the clients' intention to revisit their beauty salons in a long-term relationship. Therefore, this study hypothesizes:

H: "Service quality" and "service provider personality" do not equally influence the client's decision to revisit the beauty salon.

Methodology

Instrument and measures

The instrument of this study was developed and administered based on guidelines and fundamental structures for designing an effective international marketing instrument (Brisling et al., 1973; Singh, 1995). The questionnaire was originally designed in English and then translated into Persian due to the language of respondents, and again translated back into English by a native Persian speaker in order to ensure that it corresponded with the English version (Brisling et al., 1973). The survey questionnaire consisted of items for measuring the dimensions of service quality, service provider personality, as well as demographic questions.

Sample and data collection

An empirical study was conducted in the summer of 2020, using data collected from clients of beauty salons in Esfahan, Iran, by self-administered questionnaires. The target population consisted of clients who had not changed their hairstylists and beauty salons within the previous six months. In total, 550 questionnaires were distributed to potential respondents, approached by an assistant through Google form using a convenient sampling technique over a three month period. After receiving 500 questionnaires which shows a satisfactory response rate of 91 %, those participants who had changed their hairstylists and salons in last six months were eliminated from the analysis. Therefore, 47 questionnaires were removed (9.4%) and 453 valid questionnaires were used for further analysis (90.6%). The characteristics of the respondents are summarized in Table 2.

A majority (60.4 per cent) of the respondents were female. In terms of education, 44.2 per cent of the respondents held a bachelor degree, 27.2 per cent held a master degree, 12.8 per cent had a high school diploma, 6.8 per cent held a PhD degree, and 2.2 per cent had under diploma education. The majority (44.8 per cent) of respondents were between 20-29 years old. Furthermore, most of the respondents were single (64.2 per cent). More than 90.6 per cent of the respondents had not changed their hairstylist and beauty salons within the previous six months.

Table 2. Respondents' profile

Profile Category		Frequency (N=500)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	198	39.6
	Female	302	60.4
Age	<20	11	2.2
	20-29	224	44.8
	30-39	176	35.2
	40-49	48	9.6
	>50	41	8.2
Education	Under Diploma	11	2.2
	Diploma	64	12.8
	Associated Degree	34	6.8
	Bachelor	221	44.2
	Master	136	27.2
	PhD	34	6.8
Marital Status	Single	321	64.2
	Married	179	35.8
Continual Visiting	Yes	47	9.4
	No	453	90.6

Service quality

Respecting the views of Cronin and Taylor (1992) and Brady et al. (2005), the present study measured service quality with a "performance" measure rather than a "gap" measure. For the present study, the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, et al. (1988) is adopted for evaluation of service quality using 13 items categorized into five dimensions namely:

- reliability (3 items),

- responsiveness (2 items),

- assurance (2 items),

- empathy (2 items), and

- tangibles (4 items).

Respondents were asked to state their perception of the salon service quality with respect to each of the items using a five-point Likert-type scale for their responses from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Big-Five personality traits

As previously discussed, the Big-Five personality dimensions were considered in the service provider personality measure of this study. Borrowing from Mini-Marker Personality Traits (Saucier, 1994), 16 items consisting of:

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- extraverted (3 items),

- agreeableness (4 items),

- conscientiousness (4 items),

- emotional stability (3 items), and

- intellect (2 items)

were used to measure the scales of personality dimensions adopting five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Data analysis

In order to detect whether using parametric or non-parametric analysis, the skewness and kurtosis of the variables is used to check the normality of the data. The results showed that most of the variables are fairly normal since the skewness and kurtosis of the variables were within rules of being ±3.3 as the upper threshold suggested by Sposito et al. (1983). Moreover, although the normality of the variables in terms of skewness and kurtosis can be approved, their distribution might not be statistically normal. Therefore, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was utilized to statistically test the normality of data. Since the result of the test showed the probability value of the test below 0.001, the distribution of the data was not statistically normal. Therefore, non-parametric tests were used for the rest of the analysis.

To compare the influencer factors for customers to choose their hairstylist (five personality factors and five quality factors) the Friedman test, as the non-parametric test, was used. Moreover, the post-hoc analysis of Bonferroni (Dunn-Bonferroni) test was implemented for the pairwise comparison of the factors to a better understanding of which factors are statistically different from another. In order to test the hypothesis, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test as the non-parametric test was utilized. All the analyses in this study were carried out by SPSS V. 25 with the confidence levels of 95%.

Results

Descriptive analysis

The descriptive statistics of the data including the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis values is provided in Table 3.

It can be observed that among all the variables, Neuroticism (Neu-1) had the lowest mean of 3.17, and Empathy (Emp-1) had the highest mean at 4.30. The maximum and minimum standard deviations (S.D.) were 0.98 and 0.68 respectively.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of questionnaire variables

Variables	Mean	S.D.	Sk.	Ku.
Ext-1	3.86	0.85	-0.46	0.03
Ext-2	4.10	0.77	-1.14	2.25
Ext-3	4.08	0.80	-1.00	1.50
Agr-1	4.07	0.71	-0.89	2.29
Agr-2	3.64	0.78	-0.12	0.11
Agr-3	3.45	0.85	-0.17	-0.02
Agr-4	3.70	0.81	-0.18	-0.02
Con-1	3.72	0.97	-0.69	0.26
Con-2	3.63	0.90	-0.31	0.14
Con-3	3.97	0.82	-0.96	1.59
Con-4	3.94	0.78	-0.42	-0.12
Neu-1	3.28	0.88	0.12	0.07
Neu-2	3.17	0.89	-0.18	-0.10
Neu-3	3.68	0.80	-0.07	-0.46
Int-1	3.68	0.84	-0.25	-0.10
Int-2	3.72	0.86	-0.33	0.17
Rel-1	4.01	0.93	-1.38	2.32
Rel-2	4.17	0.74	-0.89	1.16
Rel-3	4.19	0.75	-1.08	1.69
Res-1	4.19	0.68	-0.64	0.81
Res-2	4.02	0.68	-0.67	1.25
Ass-1	3.98	0.84	-0.97	1.41
Ass-2	4.17	0.71	-1.17	3.21
Emp-1	4.30	0.76	-1.59	4.47
Emp-2	4.22	0.74	-1.38	4.06
Tan-1	4.05	0.75	-0.57	0.83
Tan-2	3.71	0.98	-0.62	-0.09
Tan-3	3.48	0.97	-0.15	-0.61
Tan-4	3.93	0.82	-0.90	1.44

Note: Ext = extroversion; Agr = agreeableness; Con = conscientiousness; Neu = neuroticism, and Int = intellect; Tan = tangibles; Rel = reliability; Res = responsiveness e Ass = assurance; Emp = empathy S.D. = standard deviation; Sk. = Skewness; Ku. = Kurtosis.

The results of the reliability test in Table 4 reveal that the value of Cronbach's α of constructs is ranged from 0.65 to 0.87 which confirms the acceptable range (George & Mallery, 2003). Moreover, most of the reliability values are greater than 0.7 (usual acceptance level respecting Nunnally, 1981). Therefore, the reliability of each construct is considerably acceptable and is worthy of further analysis. However, the Neuroticism variable is removed due to the alpha Cronbach of below 0.6.

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Table 4. Reliability of variables

Variables	alpha Cronbach
Personality	
Extraversion	0.870
Agreeableness	0.824
Conscientiousness	0.774
Neuroticism	-
Intellect	0.649
Quality	
Reliability	0.673
Responsiveness	0.704
Assurance	0.851
Empathy	0.876
Tangibles	0.845

Note: - Dropped due to low alpha Cronbach

Statistical analysis

The Friedman test as the non-parametric test was utilized to answer which of the factors of service quality and hairstylist personality is considered as the stronger factor that influences customer choice to have continual visiting. The result of this analysis (Table 5) revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the factors influencing customers' choice ($\chi2$ (8) = 253.978, p = 0.000). The most important factor was Agreeableness (Mean Rank = 6.49) and the least important factor was Empathy (Mean Rank = 3.20). As can be seen, all the factors of quality and the Extraversion factor of personality have the same median value (2.0) that indicates an equal level of influence for the customers.

Table 5. The Mean Rank comparison between all the factors of quality and personality

Factor	Mean Rank *	Percentiles		
		25th	50th (Median)	75th
Agreeableness	6.49	2.00	2.25	2.75
Intellect	6.36	2.00	2.50	3.00
Conscientiousness	5.90	1.75	2.25	2.50
Tangibles	5.80	1.80	2.20	2.80
Extraversion	4.75	1.33	2.00	2.33
Assurance	4.27	1.50	2.00	2.00
Responsiveness	4.23	1.50	2.00	2.00
Reliability	4.00	1.33	2.00	2.00
Empathy	3.20	1.00	2.00	2.00
$\chi2$ (df) = 253.978 (8), p = 0.000 ***				

Note * = Friedman statistic; $\chi2$ (df) = Chi-square value (degrees of freedom); *** = p-value <0.001

The results of the Friedman test for each of the quality and personality factors separately, showed that among the quality factors Tangibles (Mean Rank = 3.92) and

among the personality factors Agreeableness (Mean Rank = 2.77) were the most influential factors, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. The Mean rank comparison between each factors of quality and personality

Factor	Mean Rank *	Percentiles		
		25th	50th (Median)	75th
Personality				
Agreeableness	2.77	2.00	2.25	2.75
Intellect	2.74	2.00	2.50	3.00
Conscientiousness	2.46	1.75	2.25	2.50
Extraversion	2.03	1.33	2.00	2.33
$\chi 2$ (df) = 37.921 (3), p = 0.000 ***				
Quality				
Tangibles	3.92	1.80	2.20	2.80
Responsiveness	2.97	1.50	2.00	2.00
Assurance	2.96	1.50	2.00	2.00
Reliability	2.79	1.33	2.00	2.00
Empathy	2.35	1.00	2.00	2.00
$\chi 2$ (df) = 102.258 (4), p = 0.000 ***				

Note * = Friedman statistic; $\chi 2$ (df) = Chi-square value (degrees of freedom); *** = p-value <0.001

As can be seen (Figure 1) the Mean rank of personality for Agreeableness is greater than other factors. Moreover, the distribution of each factor is different from others (graphically explanation), in which the frequency of strongly agree or agreement with the Agreeableness and Intellect factors for the customers is higher than other factors. Contradictory, the frequency of strongly disagree or disagreement with the Extraversion factor for the customers is higher than other factors. This is while the distributions of other factors are almost the same.
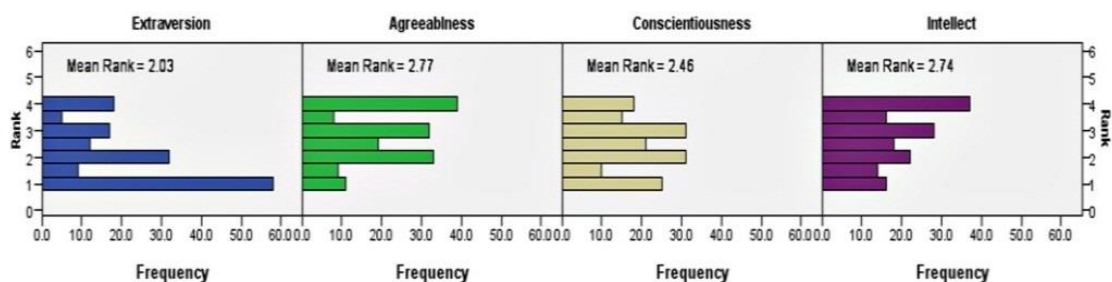

Figure. 1. The graphical view of Friedman pairwise comparison for personality factors

From Figure 2, it is obvious that the Mean rank of quality for Tangibles is greater than other factors. Moreover, the distribution of Tangibles factor is different from others (graphically explanation), in which the frequency of strongly agree or agreement with the Tangibles factor for the customers is higher than other factors. This is while the distributions of other factors are almost the same.
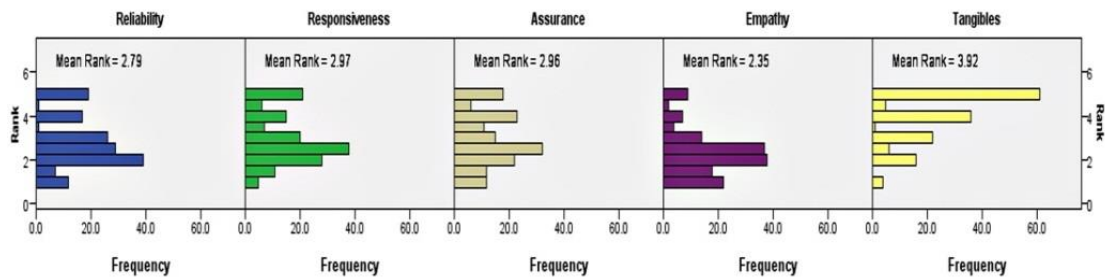
Figure. 2. The graphical view of Friedman pairwise comparison for quality factors

The results of Post-Hoc analysis of Bonferroni (Dunn-Bonferroni) test for the pairwise comparison of the factors of the quality and personality are shown in Table 7 and Figures 3. These results illustrate that Tangibles had a statistically significant difference with other quality factors (p < 0.001). The Empathy had significant difference with Assurance (p < 0.050) and Responsiveness (p < 0.001). Among the personality factors, Extraversion had a statistically significant difference with other factors (p < 0.050, 0.001).

Table 7. The Post-Hoc analysis of pairwise comparison for the quality and personality factors

Pair of factors	Z-value *	Adj. P-value
Quality		
Empathy-Reliability	0.440	0.155
Empathy-Assurance	0.603	0.009 **
Empathy-Responsiveness	0.619	0.007 **
Empathy-Tangibles	-1.566	0.000 ***
Reliability-Assurance	-0.162	1.000
Reliability-Responsiveness	-0.179	1.000
Reliability-Tangibles	-1.126	0.000 ***
Assurance-Responsiveness	0.017	1.000
Assurance-Tangibles	-0.964	0.000 ***
Responsiveness-Tangibles	-0.947	0.000 ***
Personality		
Extraversion- Conscientiousness	-0.437	0.020 **
Extraversion-Intellect	-0.715	0.000 ***
Extraversion-Agreeableness	-0.742	0.000 ***
Conscientiousness-Intellect	-0.278	0.367
Conscientiousness-Agreeableness	0.305	0.242
Intellect-Agreeableness	0.026	1.000

Note: * = Bonferroni (Dunn-Bonferroni) test; Asymptotic significance (2-tailed); ** = p-value < 0.05; *** = p-value < 0.001. Significance values have been adjusted by the Bonferroni correction for multiple tests
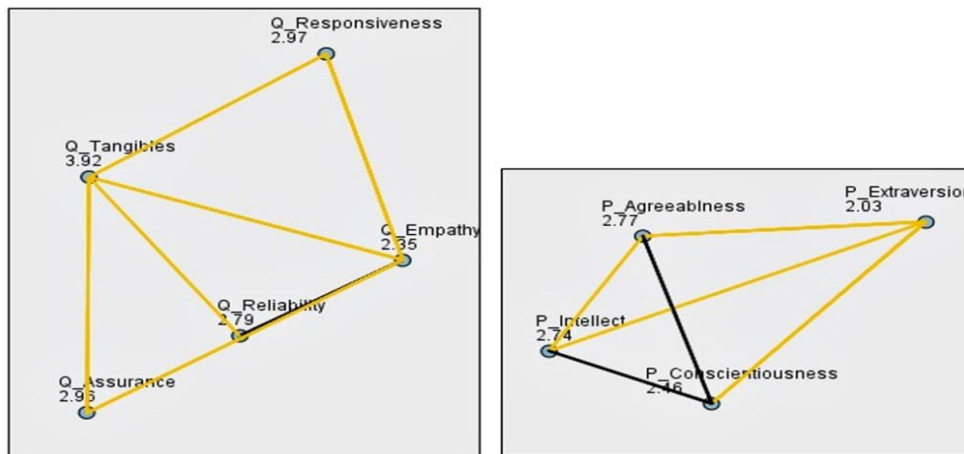
Figure. 3. The graphical view of Post-Hoc analysis of pairwise comparison for the quality factors (left) and personality factors (right)

The result of testing the hypothesis via a Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test (Table 8) reveals that quality and personality have statistically different influence on the customers' choice ($Z = -13.796$, $p < 0.001$). That is, in terms of ranking, personality (Mean Rank = 243.79) had a higher level of influence than quality for customers of beauty salons (Mean Rank = 142.12). Accordingly, the hypothesis of this study is supported.

Table 8. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test

Comparison ᵹ	Mean Rank Median		NNR †	NPR ††	Z-value	P-value
	Personality	Quality				
Personality	243.79	142.12	87	360	-13.79	0.000
vs.						***
Quality	2.37	2.07				

Note: ᵹ = Personality – Quality; NNR = Number of Negative Ranks; NPR = Number of Positive Ranks; † = Personality < Quality; †† = Personality > Quality; Number of Ties = 6; Asymptotic significance (6-tailed); *** = p-value <0.001.
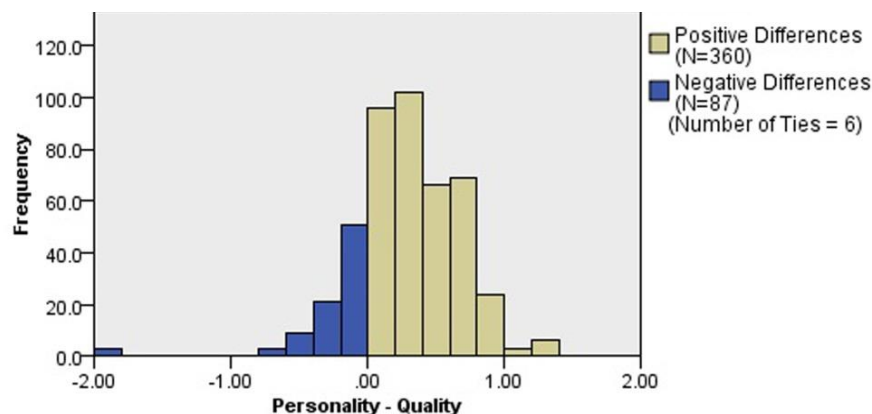

Figure. 4. The graphical view of Wilcoxon signed-rank test

Furthermore, the number of positive ranks (N = 360) is greater than negative ranks (N = 87), meaning that the number of the personality ranks mines number of the quality ranks are greater than zero, therefore, personality > quality (see Figure 4).

Discussion

There are many factors influencing customer choice and repurchase intention in the service sector. In service marketing, conducted research showed that service provider personality and level of service quality plays an important role in the customers repurchase intention (Bettencourt et al., 2001; Webber et al., 2012). Unfortunately, no research has been carried out to simultaneously weigh the effect of the service provider personality and provided service quality on customer decision-making towards repurchasing in the service marketing. Further, no similar study has been conducted to compare these factors in the beauty services, focusing on longer-term relationship between a service provider and customers. This study aims to address this gap in the relevant research literature by comparing the weight of both service provider personality and provided service quality in the beauty salons.

The finding revealed that, for the customers, the service provider personality is a stronger factor than provided service quality to their revisit intention. Specifically, the results showed that the agreeableness, intellect, conscientiousness, and extraversion factors have respectively been prioritized as the most effective re-visitation reasons in the view of customers. Therefore, personality traits such as kindness, generosity, agreeableness, trustworthiness, intellectuality, and creativity are heavier to influence customer decision making than other factors such as energetic and hardworking factors. From the service quality side, although the result demonstrated that tangibility components such as salon appearances, attractiveness, and quality of materials are ranked as the first re-visitation reasons, the service quality factors such as responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and reliability have been also highlighted as effecting factors that can influence the client decision to revisit. Despite all quality factors' important roles, empathy has received a lower score among all variables.

Managerial implications

All marketing decisions are based on assumptions and knowledge of consumer behavior toward the market (Hawkins et al., 1998). To facilitate a better understanding of factors influencing customer repurchasing intention, the finding of this research can be used as a reference for beauty salon managers and hairstylists in Iran.

It has been largely highlighted that attracting a new customer, expends five to eight times more effort than maintaining a current customer. Furthermore, existing customers are considered as a vital value to the success of any business due to the power that they have to attract new customers (Schneider et al., 1998). Building a strategy to have the sustaining effective customer relationship is crucial for the service providers. Since this research shows that customers paid more attention to the service provider personality than provided service quality in beauty salons, one approach to building strong effective customer relationships would be to hire, and also promote hairstylists who have a high level of agreeableness and intellect than conscientiousness and extraversion traits

respectively. Although the role of all five personality traits is effective, hiring hairstylists who are kind, warm, honest, unselfish, carious, and creative can significantly facilitate the success of the beauty salon.

But it must not be forgotten that service quality has already been recognized as a prerequisite for all service organizations (Chang et al., 2020). Therefore, like other service providers, it is critical for beauty salon owners to provide the best quality responses to customer expectations in the service operations. In line with this and in order to increase prosperity, the finding of this research recommends that beauty salon managers should focus more on the tangible assets compared to other service quality dimensions.

Limitations and further suggestions

Like any research, there are a few limitations in this study. Firstly, due to the cost and time restriction, the prohibition of beauty salon activities during pandemic (COVID-19), coupled with the data collection period in Iran, this study adopted a non-random sampling method (convenient sampling) rather than a random sampling method. Future work with random sampling methods such as a stratified sampling method (category of age, gender or culture) on various beauty salons is expected.

Secondly, since all the items of the questionnaire and the dimensions of variables are extracted from the previous related studies in service industries, it caused this study to meet low reliability of questionnaire which consequently eliminated a dimension from the analysis. Therefore, it is still necessary to appropriately modify the items and dimensions to reach an adequate level of reliability in future research. Thus, it is recommended to adopt different views of both personality traits and service quality dimensions (Sureshchandar et al., 2002; Kim et al., 2004) for similar research in the future.

Finally, this paper is carried out using a small sample size from a big city in Iran. Therefore, it is suggested that for future works the sample size covers multiple beauty salons from different cities to reach an intensive validity of generalization.

Conclusion

The growing number of beauty salons, training schools, hairstylists and increasing demand for a variety of services, cater to the growth and importance of this industry (statistics centre of Iran, 2019). Understanding the reasons behind the client's choice is very important to salon owners and marketers as much as it is to other social scientists. There are many factors, such as quality of services and service provider personality that influence customer choice and affect repurchase intention in the service sector. This paper is to weigh the service provider personality and provided service quality as two different factors influencing purchase intention using the Mini-Marker model of personality and the SERVQUAL model of service quality. Based on 453 valid respondents who had never changed their beauty salon in the last 6 months in Esfahan city, Iran, the empirical finding indicated that the service provider personality is the initiate and main reason for clients to revisit the beauty salon. The results suggest that the salons' managers must focus more on service provider personality and tangible assets of service quality's dimensions to

build strong(er) customer relationship. It is expected from the researcher to work on random sampling technique, high level of reliability of questionnaire, and larger sample size in the future works.

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Appendices
English questionnaire

Respondent's Detail				
Age				
☐ Below 20	☐ 20-29	☐ 30-39	☐ 40-49	☐ Above 50
Gender				
☐ Male		☐ Female		
Education				
☐ Under Diploma	☐ Diploma	☐ Associated Degree	☐ Bachelor	☐ Master ☐ PhD
Marital Statues				
☐ Single		☐ Married		
Continual Visiting				
I have not changed my hairstylist and beauty salon in last 6 months.				
☐ Yes		☐ No		

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Construct Measures
Big-Five Personality Trait – Modified Mini-Marker scale (Saucier, 1994) and identified personality trait into 5 categories with 16 items.
My hair stylist is…
Extraversion
Active and Energetic Social and talkative Self -Assertive
Agreeableness
Kind and Warm Generous Agreeable and Unselfish Trustful and Honest
Conscientiousness
Organized and Planful Reliable Hardworking Serious and Focused
Neuroticism
Emotional Relaxed and Calm Stable and Not Moody
Intellect
Creative and Smart Curios and Eager

Service Quality – Modified SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman et al., 1988) and identified service quality into 5 categories with 13 items.
My hairstylist…
Reliability
Handles reservation efficiently.
Gives what I paid for.
Works exactly according to my need and request.
Responsiveness
Is always willing to answer my questions
Responds quickly to solve my problems
Assurance
Assurance
Has desirable knowledge about his/her work.
Is skillful and professional.
Empathy
Treats me with respect.
Is always polite when answering my questions.
Tangibles
Offers high quality materials.
Has a pleasant and attractive salon.
Has a appealing front desks and armchairs.
Wears clean and neat uniform.