The mediating role of student-post purchase regret in brand switching intention

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KEYWORDS

Brand switching intention,
Commitment,
Post-purchased student regret,
Service dominant,
Tuition.

ABSTRACT

Post-purchased student regret and brand-switching intention have recently become a vital issue for most universities, especially the financially autonomic ones. There is fierce competition among universities with the vital aim to attract and keep students with them. Thus, the paper aims to search out "The mediating role of student-post purchase regret in university brand switching intention". Quantitative research was conducted with a non-probability sample. The data was collected from six-hundred university students in three financial autonomy Vietnamese universities and was processed by SmartPLS 4.0 software. Research results show that service-dominant has a negative effect on student's post-purchase regret and perceived commitment is negatively correlated to student's post-purchase regret. In addition, tuition unfairness also negatively impacts students' post-purchase regret. On the contrary, students' post-purchase regret is positively correlated to university switching intention. The findings also indicate that students' post-purchase regret plays a mediating role between all independent and dependent variables. The findings help educational policymakers or managers interfere timely with the current situation of their university and they can change or adjust their development-oriented strategies rightly to be appropriate for the current competitive situation.

1. Introduction

In the academic context, students' switching intention has become a vital issue for most universities, especially in Vietnam due to the current open enrollment methods. This makes more opportunities for the approach of learning at universities easier for high school students to reach their university dream. The more chances for high school students, the more challenges for academic educators.

From the perspective of learning, students have a total right to decide which university to ensure their future learning and they also may cease the relationship if they no longer expect it. Therefore, it makes fierce competition among universities to attract and keep students studying until their graduation (Roelofs & Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Most researchers claim that there is an inmate relationship between regret and brand-switching intention (Salimi et al., 2022). However, finding out

the causes and solutions for limiting the university student's brand-switching intention, especially in Vietnam, still leaves unclosed. Furthermore, the literature on brand-switching intention has been previously researched but there is very little research that has been done in the field of brand-switching intention in higher education, especially, university brand-switching intention.

It is evident that although students may regret the universitythey have chosen and make a quick switching decision, there are still many other factors on which they may base to consider whether to change to another university or not before making the change. Thus, the paper aims to search out "The mediating role of student-post purchase regret in university brand switching intention".

The data for the research is based on the survey of six-hundred university students in three financial autonomy Vietnamese universities, including one Vietnam national university and two private universities. These three universities are chosen for a survey because these are the typical financial autonomy universities in the age of educational socialization, challenging the fierce competition in an academic environment and having the same purpose of keeping students studying until graduation.

The findings help educational leaders or managers interfere timely with the current situation of their university such as academic services, academic programs, or student's feelings towards what they are provided by the university and so forth. Since then, they can change or adjust their development-oriented strategies rightly to appropriate the current situation.

2. Conceptual background

2.1. Service Dominant and student's post-purchase regret

Service dominance is the mutual exchange of understanding value co-creation between the consumers and the firm in creating customer value. It is originating from marketing with the aim of value creation. According to Merz et al. (2009), services were defined to be intangible (lack a tactile quality of goods), inseparable (simultaneously produced and consumed), heterogeneous (cannot be standardized), and perishable (cannot be produced ahead of demand and inventoried). Another viewpoint claims that service is a strategic tool for marketing and that is the interactive process of doing something for someone. Furthermore, from another perspective, Ballantyne & Varey (2008) stated that service is also the application of resources for the benefit of another party.

Competitive advantage is created by service as the central role. Customers prefer firms that provide them with better resource integration activities, pleasurable interaction, and desired-outcome achievement. Moreover, service spreads from "one-to-one" to "many-to-many" communications. Customer reactions let firm managers know the level of service performance. Service plays the dominant role in customers' preferences and especially, in academic surroundings, service helps universities to avoid student post-purchase regret. Consequently, the authors suggest:

H1: Service dominance will positively affect students' post-purchase regret.

2.2. Perceived commitment and student's post-purchase regret

The commitment was the process of building long-term relationships effectively (Anastasiadou et al., 2019). It is a psychological perception expressing an attitude of a continuous relationship with a business partner and plays a vital factor that facilitates cooperative behavior and brings outcomes strengthening firms' productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness. Companies with favorable reputations benefit from building trust and identification among customers, which, in turn, positively influences customer commitment. Commitment includes three components such as an instrument of some investment, an attitudinal component described as affective commitment, and a temporal dimension. When consumers perceived commitment, they felt satisfied and loyalty to the organization increased.

In the context of higher education, commitment is the most prominent theoretical framework that explains why students fail to attain educational outcomes including self-regulation and student engagement. Preliminary findings show that organizational background and commitment, such as frameworks, regulations, procedures, and governance, influenced personal decisions to believe and

use learning tools (Klein et al., 2019). Research results in Indian universities show that when students perceived commitment, their satisfaction and loyalty increased, so post-purchase consumer regret decreased. Therefore, the authors propose:

H2: Low perceived commitment will positively affect students' post-purchase regret.

2.3. Tuition and student's post-purchase regret

A tuition fee is a payment that universities charge students for education. It was used to fund the universities and cover the costs such as course offerings and teaching, facility-related costs, and also to promote and develop education and services. Normally tuition fee is meant an amount that covers the costs of studying, either some part or the whole study program, but it can also be a small registration fee. The value parents agree to pay should be reasonable for their purposes. Research at universities in Indonesia shows that student families are willing to pay tuition fees within their income range if the curriculum is of high quality (Nadapdap & Manik, 2021). It was believed to have encouraged a consumerist attitude toward higher education. Students may be affected if the legislation regarding tuition fees changes.

There was an adverse effect caused by the increase in tuition fees. Some promising students drop out because their parents cannot afford to pay for the differences. When they can't pay the tuition, most community college students transfer to other universities or institutions based on their low tuition (Nilsson & Westin, 2022). Intuition policy, if the university offers scholarships for their student, it may encourage them because students with higher scholarship amounts at the bachelor's degree level are more likely to pursue a professional degree. Hence, the hypothesis is supposed:

H3: Tuition will positively affect post-purchase consumer regret.

2.4. Mediating role of Student's Post-purchase regret

There are two possible reasons for service users' regret. The first reason is that the service is not used, and the second reason is that the service is used. Using the service but finding it to be inadequate leads to disappointment. These emotions shape consumer thinking and behavior, causing people to have a negative attitude toward future purchases or repurchases, which leads to service-switching intentions.

When students feel that the service is not being provided well or that the university's commitments are not being met as expected, the unfairness of tuition fees will cause them to regret their choice of university (Bleemer, Z. et al., 2021). Furthermore, several previous studies have shown that post-purchase regret is a mediator for users' switching intentions. The following hypotheses are proposed as a result of this:

H4: Post-purchase regret in students has a mediator effect on the influence of service dominance on university switching intention.

H5: Post-purchase regret by students acts as a mediator of the influence of perceived commitment on university switching intention.

H6: Post-purchase regret has a mediator effect on tuition's influence on university switching intention.

2.5. Brand switching intention

Switching means ceasing the relationship with the service provider (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004). There is a variety of reference information on which consumers base to evaluate a brand such as price standards, contrasting effects of dual brands, and previous satisfaction experiences. In analyzing firms' failures as determinants of consumer switching intentions, Anton et al. (2005) stated that service quality failures, unfair prices, low perceived commitment, and anger incidents affected positively switching intentions and switching cost, involvement, and alternative attractiveness are considered as moderators. Commitment plays a vital role in the relationship between customers and a firm. Whereas affective commitment is about personal interaction, reciprocity, and trust, calculative commitment is coined by switching cost.

People always tend to express their behavioral responses when they feel regretful and disappointed about the products or services that they have chosen. Zeelenberg & Pieters (2004) claimed that regret is more associated with both word-of-mouth and complaining behavior, respectively.

Put another way, Medvec et al. (1995) asked

their correspondents what they say they regret more, those things that they did but wish they hadn't, those things they didn't do but wish they had? The result indicated that they experienced more regret over those things they did not do but wish they had done.

Based on the research about regret and switching intention, Nhat et al. (2019) claimed that the greater the experiences of regret, the higher the chances that consumers will switch the brand. Therefore, the hypothesis is suggested as:

H7: Post-purchase consumer regret will positively affect university switching intention

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection

The aim of the research explore the antecedents affecting students' regret and their switching intention. The data for the research was based on the survey of four hundred and seventy-five university students in three financial autonomy Vietnamese universities, including one Vietnam national university and two private universities. These three universities were chosen for a survey because these are the typical financial autonomy universities in the age of educational socialization,

Table 1. Learner–content interaction (LCI) (Quadir et al., 2022)

SEV1	make me feel at ease during our dealings
SEV2	try to build a relationship with me
SEV3	encourage two-way communication with me
SEV4	show special interest in engaging me
SEV5	do not try to take advantage of me
SEV6	do not make me pressured in any circumstance
SEV7	do not provide me with incorrect information in any way
SEV8	do not try to lie to me
SEV9	make an effort to understand my personal needs
SEV10	be sensitive to my situation
SEV11	make an effort to recognize which offering is most appropriate for me
SEV12	assist me with the most effort
SEV13	seek to identify my expectation
SEV14	facilitate me to express ideas or suggestions
SEV15	encourage me to shape the service I receive
SEV16	help me to express my experience
SEV17	let me interact with them in a friendly way
COM1	maintain a frequent and constant relationship with me
COM2	give me full and useful information about its products
COM3	committed to me as a customer
COM4	flexible in adapting its offer to my specific needs
INT1	The tuition I pay for my university is fair.
INT2	The service I receive from my university is good value for money.
REG1	I regret the choice I made.
REG2	I feel sorry for my decision.
REG3	I should have chosen the choice.
SWINT1	I plan to switch to my university next month.
SWINT2	Possibility of switching universities within the next six months.
SWINT3	Likelihood of switching universities within the next six months.
SWINT4	I used to think about transferring to my current university.
SWINT5	I don't intend to switch my current university next six months.

challenging with the fierce competition in an academic environment and having the same purpose of keeping students studying until graduation.

The questionnaire was checked with a small group of students (n = 10) to see if any questions were difficult to respond to due to sentences or the usage of scientific terms or equations and to keep improving questionnaire validity. Quantitative research was conducted with a non-probability sample. The minimum sample size in partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) would be at least 10 times the number of structural paths. Since there were four potential paths, the

sample size needed to be larger than 40. In this study, four hundred and seventy-five responses accepted the PLS-SEM requirements.

3.2. Measure of constructs

All constructs of the research are based on the research of Quadir et al. (2022). There are five variables, including Brand switching intention (SWINT), Student's Post-purchase regret (REG), Tuition (INT), Perceived commitment (COM), and Service-Dominant (SEV). Brand switching intention has five items; student's Post-purchase

Table 2. Measurement model estimation

Latent variable	Manifest variable	Outer Weight	Outer loading	rho_A	CR value	Cronbach's alpha (α)	AVE
Service dominant	SEV1	0.077	0.842				
	SEV2	0.074	0.911				
	SEV3	0.085	0.915				
	SEV4	0.071	0.746				
	SEV5	0.073	0.900				
	SEV6	0.072	0.897				
	SEV7	0.062	0.871				
	SEV8	0.062	0.848			0.906	
	SEV9	0.072	0.877	0.908	0.908		0.722
	SEV10	0.076	0.896				
	SEV11	0.071	0.896				
	SEV12	0.051	0.816				
	SEV13	0.056	0.831				
	SEV14	0.074	0.864				
	SEV15	0.078	0.842				
	SEV16	0.057	0.752				
	SEV17	0.064	0.706				
Perceived commitment	COM1	0.331	0.787				
	COM2	0.402	0.831	0.791	0.851	0.770	0.590
	COM3	0.247	0.706				
	COM4	0.311	0.741				
Tuition unfairness	INT1	0.468	0.851	0.798	0.883	0.798	0.791
	INT2	0.650	0.926				
Student's Post-purchase regret	REG1	0.367	0.959			0.938	
	REG2	0.355	0.960	0.938	0.909		0.886
	REG3	0.340	0.905				
University switching intention	SWINT1	0.312	0.767				
	SWINT2	0.187	0.754			0.849	
	SWINT3	0.230	0.780	0.849	0.874		0.582
	SWINT4	0.355	0.803				
	SWINT5	0.220	0.708				

regret has three items; tuition has two items; perceived commitment has four items; and Service Dominant has 17 items.

3.3. Data analysis

Because this research had been exploratory, PLS-SEM would be thought to be the best approach for such studies, PLS-SEM is appropriate for small numbers of samples (Hair et al., 2014). The research model was reflective. To assess measurement items, the indicator loadings must first be investigated. Loadings larger than 0.708 have been recommended because they indicated that the construct reports more than half of the variance, implying adequate reliability.

The second step is to assess the dependability of internal consistency. The most common method was composite reliability (CR). The overall reliability is higher than 0.70 but also less than 0.95. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency reliability that employs the same threshold values as CR but produces lower

values (Hair et al., 2014). Rho A was proposed as a substitute; it was an approximation of construct reliability that typically falls between Cronbach's alpha and the CR. As a result, rho A recommended at 0.70-0.90, which may be a good compromise if the factor model is correct. If the factor model is correct, rho A was from 0.70 to 0.90 may be a good compromise.

The third step would be to assess the convergent validity, the item's outer loading, and the extracted mean variance (AVE). These acceptable of these criteria have to be greater or equal to 0.50 (Hair et al., 2014). The fourth phase would be to assess discriminant validity, which relates to how empirically distinct one construct is from others in the structural model. The cutoff point should be between 0.65 and 0.85. Finally, goodness-of-fit indices were applied to both the measurement and structural models to evaluate model fit.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results of the measurement model

Table 3. Results of Discriminant validity

	COM	INT	REG	SER	SWINT
COM	0.768				
INT	0.394***	0.889***			
REG	-0.366***	-0.430***	0.942***		
SEV	0.482***	0.238***	-0.297***	0.850	
SWINT	-0.126***	-0.152***	0.446***	-0.093***	0.763

*Note: ** implies a significant at p < 0.01; *** implies a significant at p < 0.001*

Table 4. Result of structural model evaluation

$R^2_{SWINT} = 0.701$

|	Path coefficient	t-value	p-value	The confidence interval at 95%		Conclusions
				2,5%	97,50%	
Direct effect						
H1: COM → REG	-0.170	2.848	0.004	-0.294	-0.057	Accept
H2: INT → REG	-0.330	6.672	0.000	-0.427	-0.232	Accept
H3: REG → SWINT	0.446	12.112	0.000	0.374	0.519	Accept
H4: SEV → REG	-0.137	2.443	0.015	-0.247	-0.027	Accept
Indirect effect						
H5: COM→ REG → SWINT	-0.076	2.666	0.008	0.040	-0.025	Accept
H6: SEV → REG → SWINT	-0.061	2.378	0.000	0.009	-0.012	Accept
H7: INT → REG → SWINT	-0.147	5.494	0.017	0.049	-0.098	Accept
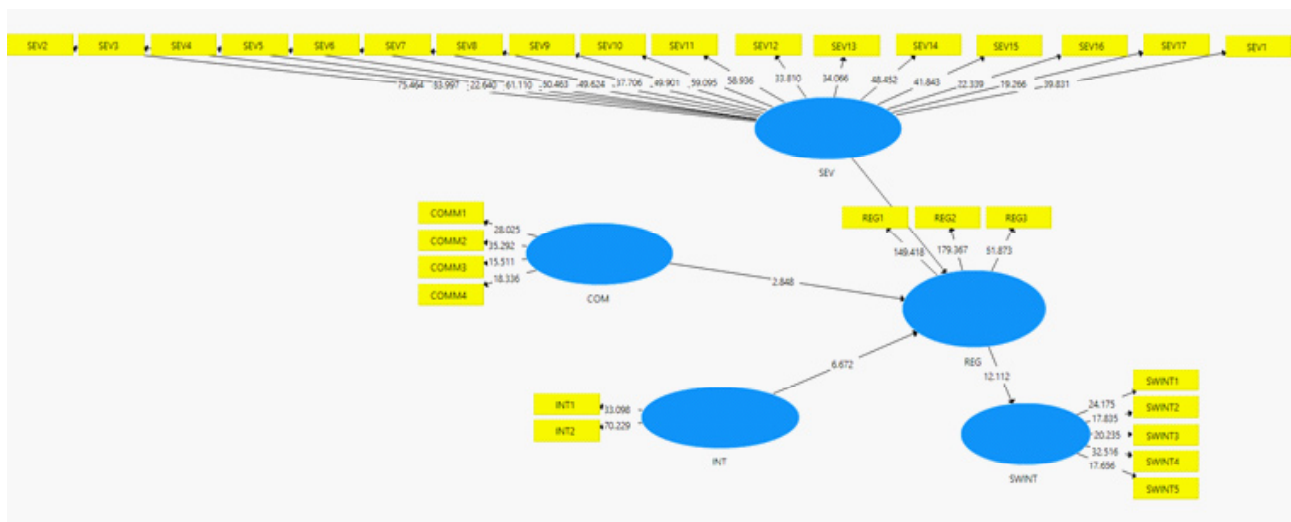
Figure 1. Path model analysis results

The research results show that all items had CR range from 0.851 to 0.938, Cronbach's alpha range from 0.770 to 0.938, rho_A range from 0.791 to 0.938, and AVE range from 0.722 to 0.886, which meet the thresholds.

4.2. Results of Discriminant validity

The second step examines the Discriminant validity of the model. The research findings indicated that there was no violation of discriminant validity.

4.3. Results of Structural model evaluation

Research results show that service-dominant (SEV) had a negative effect on student's post-purchase regret (REG), perceived commitment (COM) was negatively correlated to student's post-purchase regret (REG), tuition unfairness (INT) was a negative impact on student's post-purchase regret (REG). The results also show that students' post-purchase regret (REG) was positively correlated to university switching intention (SWINT).

Results also show that student's post-purchase regret (REG) had negative effects on the relation between service-dominant (SEV) and university switching intention (SWINT), perceived commitment (COM) and university switching intention (SWINT), tuition unfairness (INT) and university switching intention (SWINT).

5. Conclusions and management implications

5.1. Conclusions

The result also showed that when perceived commitment increased, students' post-purchase regret decreased. This result was identical to the study of Yousaf et al. (2018). Students' satisfaction and loyalty increased when they perceived commitment, and post-purchase student regret decreased. Besides, when tuition unfairness increased, students' post-purchase regret decreased. This finding was in line with the results of Bleemer, Z. et al. (2021). It was thought to have encouraged a consumerist attitude toward higher education. Students may be impacted if the tuition fee legislation increase. Because their parents cannot afford to pay the difference, promising students drop out. The results demonstrated that all hypotheses are supported. The proposed model has successfully met the research objectives and identified the mediating role of tudent-post-purchase regret in university brand switching intention. Research shows that service dominance, perceived commitment, and tuition unfairness has a direct and negative impact on students' post-purchase regret. The one with the greatest impact is tuition unfairness. The authors also supported the idea that students' post-purchase regret has a favorable effect on their intention to switch universities. Thus, the research results confirm the hypothesis of H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6 and H7 and

are similar to the previous research.

The core findings indicate that there is a decrease in intention to switch universities when students believe that services and commitments are made with reasonable tuition rates. This result is consistent with previous studies, helping to clarify an empirical study on the research topic for the case of Vietnam.

5.2. Management implications

The goal of this study is to investigate University switching intention. The results of the study show that to reduce students' intention to switch, the factors to focus on are student's post-purchase regret, service-dominant, perceived commitment, tuition unfairness. The result shows that service-dominant has a negative relationship with students' post-purchase regret. The leader of universities needs to focus on the following points:

Create a welcoming learning environment by making it safe, supportive, and learner participation-friendly. Ensure that the facilities, libraries, labs, and study spaces completely meet the needs of the students.

Besides, students should have a welcoming learning space. The universities can establish a secure learning space that values and promotes student participation. Make sure the facilities, libraries, labs, and study spaces are all designed with students in mind.

Study programs are created to meet the needs of students and take into account advancements in the industry. Update the curriculum to make sure that the most recent information and practical skills are actively transmitted.

Make sure the lecturer is of the highest caliber and is qualified professionally. Hire and develop excellent faculty. Improve faculty members' abilities in teaching, research, and communication by providing ongoing training and development.

Utilize technological tools and platforms for educational purposes to enhance learning. To create flexible and interactive learning environments, create learning management systems (LMS), mobile applications, and online tools.

Create extracurricular activities: To increase the learning and communication opportunities for students, organize extracurricular activities like conferences, competitions, scientific seminars, and cultural events.

Build relationships with businesses and organizations to offer internships and opportunities for students to interact with real-world situations. Create corporate partnerships. This enables them to build networks and apply their knowledge in a practical setting.

Continually Evaluate and Improve: Conduct periodic reviews of service quality and learning processes. Based on feedback from students and faculty and businesses, adjust strategies and continuously improve.

Promote personal development: Offer personal development, soft skills, and leadership courses to help students develop holistically, and confidently when they graduate.

The result also indicates that perceived commitment is negatively correlated to students' post-purchase regret. From the perspective of management, due to the fierce competition in the field of college and university entrance and to attract and keep students studying until their graduation, the findings assist educational policymakers, managers and the entire staff interfere timely the current situation of their university based on commitment. Furthermore, the top management immediately can change or adjust their development-oriented strategies rightly to be appropriate for the current competitive situation of their university's academic faculties and staff.

The result demonstrates that tuition unfairness is negatively correlated to students' post-purchase regret. Universities must improve their support of study loans and scholarships. Make scholarships available to deserving or underprivileged students, collaborate with organizations or financial institutions to offer study loan options with lowered interest rates. Consider ways to reduce the additional costs of learning, such as extracurricular activities, learning materials, and textbooks. offers textbooks, e-libraries, and other affordable or free online resources. Create alliances with local businesses and organizations to help students find internships, jobs, and financial aid. Enhance operational effectiveness and resource utilization to improve university financial management. To ensure effectiveness and relevance in tuition management, carefully monitor the financial solutions that are put in place and adjust them in response to feedback from the student community.

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