RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF IN-STORE LOGISTICS ON REPURCHASE INTENTIONS OF CONSUMERS IN HANOI

PhD. Pham Thi Huyen*

Abstract: ***In-store logistics is considered an activity that reflects the overall quality of the logistics system within a business, while also directly impacting consumer satisfaction, which in turn leads to purchasing behavior and repurchases. This affirms that focusing on efforts to effectively implement in-store logistics plays a crucial role in meeting customer needs while ensuring the operational efficiency of the business. The objective of this study is to examine the impact of in-store logistics, including "product", "shelf management", and "return", on "repurchase intention" in supermarkets in Hanoi, through the mediating role of "customer satisfaction". Based on this, the article aims to provide suggestions for retail managers to properly focus on in-store logistics, minimize potential negative impacts, and turn them into driving forces for an effective retail experience.***

• Keywords: *retail, in-store logistics, satisfaction, repurchase intention.*

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1. Introduction

In-store logistics - including processes that start with receiving goods at the retail store, storing the goods, preparing the products, serving customers, and concluding when the products are delivered at the checkout counter - can directly provide value to customers. However, there are currently few studies focusing on in-store logistics, especially from the customer's perspective, despite its potential to help retailers differentiate customer experiences and create competitive advantages.

Based on a review of related literature and theories, this study aims to investigate the role of in-store logistics in customer satisfaction, which then leads to repurchase intentions, with a particular focus on the customer as the end consumer. The study is built on the S-O-R model, which asserts that distinct attributes of external environmental factors (Stimulus - S) influence the internal state (Organism - O) of the consumer, driving them to respond with behavior (Response - R) (Zhai et al., 2019). Accordingly, the results of the "in-store logistics" serve as external stimuli (S); based on these stimuli, customers form an internal emotional state - that is, "Satisfaction" (O). "Repurchase intention" represents the customer's response (R) after being satisfied with the outcomes of in-store logistics. Therefore, the proposed research model in this study will focus on evaluating the impact of in-store logistics on consumer repurchase intention, with customer satisfaction acting as a mediator. The research findings aim to provide suggestions for retail managers on how to properly focus on in-store logistics, minimize potential negative impacts, and turn them into driving forces for an effective retail experience.

2. Theoretical framework and research model

2.1. In-store Logistics

According to Bouzaabia et al. (2013), Ltifi and Gharbi (2015), and Najib & Saefuloh (2021), in-store logistics reflects a retailer's ability to satisfy customers by ensuring factors such as Product accessibility, Product information, Shelf stock-out, Shopping aids and Return. According to Moussaoui et al. (2022) and Garrouche et al. (2011), inherent logistics factors such as product accessibility, ease of product search, long product shelf life, full shelves, and complete information about product characteristics can positively influence overall customer satisfaction. On the other hand, customers tend to respond negatively when encountering issues during the shopping process, such as products with near expiration dates, long wait times at checkout, etc. These issues prevent customers from receiving the promised service and lead to dissatisfaction. Therefore, according to the authors, customers' perceptions of in-store logistics outcomes are reflected in three key aspects: Products availability, Shelf Management, and Convenience in checkout.

Based on the aforementioned theories, this study identifies three fundamental factors reflecting the outcomes of in-store logistics: Products (ensuring

* *Thuongmai University; email: huyen.pt@tmu.edu.vn*

diversity, accessibility, and providing complete product information), Shelf Management (ensuring product availability by frequently updating stock levels and restocking items in a timely manner), and Return (ensure customers can easily and conveniently return or exchange products).

2.2. Repurchase Intention

Hellier et al. (2003) define repurchase intention as a personal decision made after evaluating previous purchase transactions, with the intention of repurchasing the same service or from the same provider based on considerations and possible situations. Repurchase intention is a positive evaluation of previous activities that leads to the intention of repurchasing. Hawkins & Mothersbaugh (2010) suggest that individuals driven by this intention are willing to repurchase to meet their needs, leading to increased purchasing behavior, which creates commitment to reuse the service or brand loyalty.

Repurchase intention can be realized by establishing and managing customer relationships through adjusting organizational services and continuously providing value and enhancing customer satisfaction. Therefore, in aiming to foster repurchase intention, companies should not only focus on simple repurchases through promotional activities but also try to elicit customer commitment and a positive attitude toward the companies. By creating a comfortable shopping environment, retailers can stimulate customers to spend more, which in turn increases the quantity of products sold. It also encourages customers to stay longer in the store and explore other products on display, all of which contribute to stimulating reppurchase intentions (Turley & Milliman, 2000).

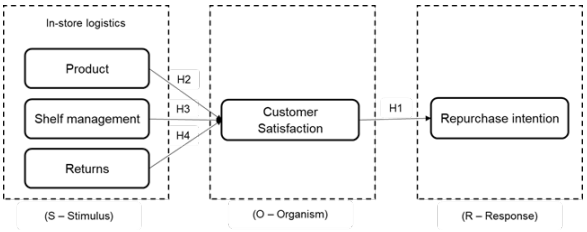
2.3. Research Model

The SOR model, proposed by Mehrabian and Russell in 1974, asserts that certain external aspects can serve as stimuli (Stimulus - S) that affect the internal state of the subject (Organism - O), leading to a specific behavioral response (Response - R) (Zhai et al., 2019). This model suggests that external stimuli do not directly influence behavior but follow an indirect path where external stimuli affect the internal state of the subject, leading to their final behavioral outcome.

The SOR model is widely accepted and used in many studies, especially those on consumer behavior in retail contexts (Chang et al., 2011). Nguyen Quyet Thang & Pham Phuong Thao (2022) argue that the shopping environment, which contains stimuli (S), is the agent that causes changes to the internal state of the subject (O), leading to either an approach or avoidance response (R) toward the store or behaviors such as store searching and purchase intentions (including repurchase intentions).

Based on the SOR model, in this study, the result of "in-store logistics" are reflected through three aspects: Products, Shelf Management, and Return, which serve as external stimuli (S). Based on these stimuli, customers will form an internal emotional state - "satisfaction" (O). "Repurchase intention" represents the customers' response (R) after being satisfied with the outcomes of in-store logistics. Therefore, this study employs the SOR model to develop a research model including five factors: Products, Shelf Management, Return, Customer Satisfaction, and Repurchase Intention. The study focuses on exploring the relationships between Products, Shelf Management, and Return and their impact on Customer Satisfaction, as well as the relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Repurchase Intention (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Research model



Source: by Author

2.4. Research Hypotheses

Satisfaction and Repurchase Intention

In recent years, repurchase intention has garnered significant attention from researchers. Various studies across different industries, such as retail, food delivery, mobile e-book applications, e-commerce, and smart tourism, have shown that customer satisfaction influences repurchase intention (Lin et al., 2023). Chatzoglou et al. (2022) also emphasize that customer satisfaction is directly connected to their intention to repurchase. Customer satisfaction (post-purchase) plays a significant role in shaping the intention to purchase again. Satisfaction refers to customers' emotional response when evaluating their experiences during the consumption of a product or service. It represents how customers feel after comparing the actual performance (or result) they experience with their expectations. Customer satisfaction is one of the primary objectives companies should focus on to maintain long-term relationships with customers because it is a key driver of sustainable business development and affects customers' repurchase intention (Chatzoglou et al., 2022). Therefore, the research hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Satisfaction has a direct and positive effect on customers' repurchase intention

In-store Logistics and Satisfaction

As previously discussed, the results of in-store logistics reflect a retailer's ability to satisfy customers based on three factors: Products, Shelf Management, and Return.

Products: The product factor is reflected in ensuring diversity, accessibility, and providing comprehensive product information. According to Moussaoui et al. (2022), Garrouche et al. (2011), meeting product requirements is an essential aspect of ensuring customer satisfaction. Product variety plays a critical role in creating customer satisfaction in retail. Morales et al. (2013) state that consumer decisions are positively related to product diversity, while Marques et al. (2013) conclude that product variety is the most significant factor influencing customer satisfaction. Additionally, the product information provided by the retailer influences how customers perceive the retail service. With sufficient information, customers can make better purchasing decisions, creating value for them and enhancing their satisfaction (Mentzer et al., 1989). Therefore, the research hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Customers' perceptions of the product factor have a direct and positive effect on customer satisfaction

Shelf Management: Shelf management involves timely restocking of products without obstructing customers' access to other products. Products must be available for customers to assess and decide whether to purchase. Stockouts or the unavailability of products on shelves (even though they may be available in the retailer's warehouse) are signs of ineffective in-store logistics (Mentzer et al., 1989). Various negative consequences of stockouts have been reported, such as the impact on store image, customer satisfaction, loyalty, and even the store's profitability. Stockouts on retail shelves often degrade the customer experience (Moussaoui et al., 2022; Garrouche et al., 2011). Therefore, the research hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Customers' perceptions of shelf management have a direct and positive effect on customer satisfaction

Returns: According to Dabholkar et al. (1996), Bouzaabia et al. (2013), Karl et al. (2022), customers' concerns about returns (returnable goods or packaging that can be returned to the retailer) can influence customer satisfaction and their future shopping destination choices. Customers expect a dedicated service desk to handle defective products or returns, with clean and accessible return containers. Therefore, the research hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Customers' perceptions of return have a direct and positive effect on customer satisfaction

3. Research methodology

3.1. Measures

The measurement scales in this study were derived from previous research to select the most appropriate scales for 3 independent variables (Products, Shelf Management, and Return), 1 mediating variable (Customer Satisfaction), and 1 dependent variable (Repurchase Intention), as shown in Table 1. The variable "Product" consists of 6 scales inherited from the study of Garrouche et al. (2011) and 1 scale from Moussaoui et al. (2022). The variable "Shelf Management" includes 4 scales from Garrouche et al. (2011). The variable "Return" includes 2 scales from Bouzaabia et al. (2013) and 1 scale from Karl et al. (2022). The variable "Customer Satisfaction" has 4 scales from Chatzoglou et al. (2022) and 2 scales from Moussaoui (2022). The variable "Repurchase Intention" contains 4 scales from Chatzoglou et al. (2022). The scales were translated from English to Vietnamese, followed by back-translation to ensure accuracy (Giao & Vương, 2019).

Table 1. Variables of the research model

Variables	Code	Sources	Number of items
Product	P	Garrouche et al. (2011), Moussaoui et al. (2022)	7
Shelf Management	S	Garrouche et al. (2011)	4
Return	R	Bouzaabia et al. (2013), Karl et al. (2022)	3
Customer Satisfaction	CS	Chatzoglou et al. (2022), Moussaoui et al. (2022)	6
Repurchase Intention	RI	Chatzoglou et al. (2022)	4

Source: by Author

3.2. Data Collection Method

According to data from the Hanoi Department of Industry and Trade, there are 135 supermarkets operating in Hanoi in 2023. These supermarkets, with diverse product offerings and modern shopping environments, provide a new shopping experience for customers, which also requires unique logistics management, particularly in-store logistics. Due to research limitations, this study focuses on understanding the impact of in-store logistics on repurchase intention among customers of retail supermarkets in Hanoi. This is also the target group for the survey.

The survey questionnaire consists of two main parts: Part 1 includes 5 questions to gather demographic information about the respondents. Part 2 contains 24 questions to collect customer evaluations of the impact of in-store logistics on their repurchase intention. The questions are structured as closed-ended, using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

For the sample size, the research uses Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to assess the measurement and structural models.

This method does not require data to follow a normal distribution and can be used with smaller sample sizes. A sample size of 100-200 is sufficient for PLS-SEM analysis (Giao & Vương, 2019). As a complete list of customers from retail supermarkets in Hanoi was not available, a non-probability convenience sampling technique was applied to collect the research sample. Surveys were conducted both online (via google forms) and offline (paper surveys distributed to customers in supermarkets). After two months of surveying (9, 10/2024), a total of 347 responses were collected. After reviewing and excluding 15 invalid responses, 332 valid responses were retained. This sample size meets the minimum requirement for ensuring the reliability of the analysis results.

Characteristics of the Sample: *Gender:* 120 male (36.14%) and 212 female (63.86%); *Age:* 136 (40.97%): 1997 - 2012, 98 (29.52%): 1981 - 1996, 69 (20.78%): 1965 - 1980, and 29 (8.73%): 1946 - 1964; *Education Level:* 32 (9.64%): college or hight school, 258 (77.71%): bachelor, and 42 (12.65%): masters, PhD; *Income:* 98 (27.84%): < 10 million VND, 105 (29.83%): 11 - 20 million VND, 112 (31.82%): 21 - 30 million VND, 32 (9.09%): 31 - 40 million VND, and 5 (1.41%): > 41 million VND; *Shopping Frequency:* 68 (20.48%): 1/month, 168 (50.6%): 2-3/month, 42 (12.65%): 2-3/week, and 54 (16.26%): 1/week.

3.3. Data Processing Method

The PLS-SEM method using SmartPLS 4.0 software, is employed to evaluate the model and test the research hypotheses based on the survey data. When applying PLS-SEM, the research model is assessed in two steps: Measurement Model: This is done by assessing reliability and validity of the scale, calculate the value of the scale, as well the distinction of variables. Structural Model: This includes tests for multicollinearity, path coefficients, R^2, and effect size (f^2) (Hair et al., 2016).

4. Findings

4.1. Assessing measurement model

According to Hair et al. (2016), to assess the measurement model in PLS-SEM, the factors need to be assessed: the quality of the observed variables, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

According to Hair et al. (2016), the quality of observed variables is assessed through the outer loading criteria. The recommendation is to retain an observed variable if the outer loading is greater than or equal to 0.7. If the outer loading falls between 0.4 and 0.7, the decision to retain or remove the variable depends on the research purpose and other indicators such as Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). If both CR and AVE meet the required thresholds, an observed variable with an outer loading between 0.4 and 0.7 can be retained, provided it is considered meaningful in the research context. In this study, the observed variable P2 (The deadline of product consumption in which you were interested was appropriate) had an outer loading of 0.674. However, both the CR and AVE meet the required criteria, and the content of variable P2 was deemed important in reflecting the logistics in the store. Therefore, P2 was retained. However, observed variable P1, with an outer loading of 0.716, was isolated into a separate group, and thus was removed from the model. After removing P1, the model was reanalyzed, and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Measurement model assessing results

		Outer loading	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Product	P2	0.679	0.829	0.875	0.539
	P3	0.738			
	P4	0.735			
	P5	0.790			
	P6	0.750			
	P7	0.710			
Shelf Management	S1	0.798	0.822	0.882	0.651
	S2	0.838			
	S3	0.785			
	S4	0.804			
Return	R1	0.809	0.836	0.901	0.752
	R2	0.898			
	R3	0.893			
Customer Satisfaction	CS1	0.813	0.918	0.936	0.709
	CS2	0.858			
	CS3	0.875			
	CS4	0.843			
	CS5	0.834			
	CS6	0.827			
Repurchase Intention	RI1	0.892	0.898	0.929	0.766
	RI2	0.896			
	RI3	0.861			
	RI4	0.850			

Source: Survey results

Reliability is assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Both coefficients are considered reliable if they exceed 0.7 (Hair et al., 2016). The results in Table 2 show that the Cronbach's Alpha and CR coefficients for all variables fall within the acceptable range, indicating that the measurement scales for each variable are highly reliable.

Convergent validity of the measurement scales is assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to Hair et al. (2016), a measurement scale is considered to have convergent validity if its AVE is greater than 0.5. The results in Table 2 show that the AVE values for all variables are within the acceptable range, confirming that the measurement scales exhibit convergent validity.

Table 3. Discriminant validity

Fornell & Larcker						HTMT				
	CS	P	R	RI	S	CS	P	R	RI	S
CS	0.842					CS				
P	0.719	0.734				P	0.822			
R	0.618	0.561	0.867			R	0.698	0.673		
RI	0.809	0.642	0.576	0.875		RI	0.890	0.742	0.661	
S	0.702	0.719	0.601	0.610	0.807	S	0.803	0.869	0.717	0.702

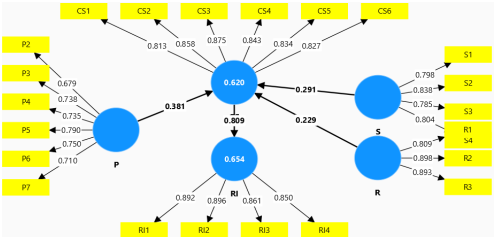
Source: Survey results

Discriminant validity indicates the extent to which a construct is distinct from other constructs in the model. To check for discriminant validity, the square root index of AVE (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and the HTMT index (Henseler et al., 2015) indices can be

used. Discriminant validity is ensured when the square root index of AVE for a latent variable is greater than its correlations with all other latent variables in the model. Additionally, the HTMT value should be less than 0.85 according to Kline (2015), or less than 0.9 as recommended by Henseler et al. (2015). The results in Table 3 show that the square root index of AVE for each latent variable is greater than the correlations with all other variables. This indicates that each latent variable in the model better explains the variance of its own scales than the variance of the other latent variables. Furthermore, the HTMT values for each pair of constructs are below 0.9, confirming that the discriminant validity criteria have been met (Henseler et al., 2015). Therefore, the measurement model exhibits discriminant validity.

In conclusion, the measurement scales in the model meet the necessary criteria, which confirms the robustness of the measurement model.

Figure 2. Measurement model



Source: Survey results

4.2. Assessing structural model

The assessment of the structural model in this study was carried out according to the approach of Hair et al. (2016), which includes assessing the criteria: checking for multicollinearity, path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2).

Table 4. Structural Model evaluation and hypothesis testing results

	VIF	Original sample (O)	T statistics	P values	f-square	R-square adjusted	Supported
CS -> RI	1.000	0.809	32.503	0.000	1.890		Yes
P -> CS	2.184	0.381	6.792	0.000	0.175		Yes
R -> CS	1.655	0.229	4.610	0.000	0.084		Yes
S -> CS	2.346	0.291	5.045	0.000	0.095		Yes
CS						0.616	
RI						0.653	

Source: Survey results

To ensure that the model does not suffer from multicollinearity, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) must be less than 5 (Hair et al., 2016). The results indicate that all VIF values range from 1.000 to 2.346, confirming that there is no multicollinearity in this study.

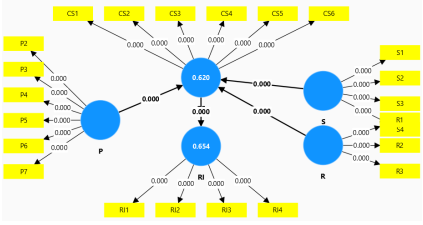
To assess the significance of direct relationships in the model, the analysis of path coefficients is conducted. The Bootstrapping procedure was performed with a magnification factor of 5000 subsamples. Bootstrapping allows for the calculation of t-values and p-values for all path coefficients in the structural model. If the t-value exceeds the critical value, the path coefficient is considered statistically significant. Typically, the critical values for two-tailed tests are 1.65 (10% significance level), 1.96 (5% significance level), and 2.57 (1% significance level). Besides the t-value, p-values are commonly used to assess statistical significance, with a p-value less than 0.05 indicating significance (Hair et al., 2016). Table 4 shows the results of hypothesis testing, indicating that all hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, and H4) have t-values and p-values within the accepted limits. Additionally, all path coefficients are positive, which means that the relationships in the model are positive. The order of impact on the Customer Satisfaction (CS) variable, from strongest to weakest, is as follows: P (0.381), S (0.291), and R (0.229).

R square (R^2) indicates how well the independent variables explain the variation in a dependent variable within the model. According to Hair et al. (2016), R^2 ranges from 0 to 1, with values closer to 1 indicating a high level of explanation, and values closer to 0 indicating a low level of explanation. In SmartPLS, the software also provides R-square adjusted, which reflects a more accurate explanation of the independent variables' impact. R^2 adjusted for Customer Satisfaction (CS) is 0.616, and for Repurchase Intention (RI) is 0.653, indicating a substantial explanatory power according to Cohen (1988). Thus, the independent variables P, S, and R explain 61.6% of the variation in Customer Satisfaction (CS) and 65.3% of the variation in Repurchase Intention (RI).

Effect size (f^2) measures the impact of an independent variable on a dependent variable. According to Cohen (1988), f2 at the values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 respectively represent insignificant, moderate, and strong effect sizes. The results in Table 4 show that Customer Satisfaction (CS) has the largest and most positive impact on Repurchase Intention (RI) with $f^2 = 1.890$. Among the factors influencing Customer Satisfaction, the Product (P) variable has a medium impact ($f^2 = 0.175$), while Shelf Management (S) and Return" (R) have small effects ($f^2 = 0.095$ and $f^2 = 0.084$).

In conclusion, the structural model evaluation demonstrates that all the key criteria have been met.

Figure 3. Structural model



Source: Survey results

5. Discussion

This study aims to examine the impact of in-store logistics on customers' repurchase intentions, with a focus on three key aspects: Product (P), Shelf Management (S), and Return (R), mediated by Customer Satisfaction (CS). The research findings are expected to provide valuable insights for retail managers, guiding them to effectively focus on in-store logistics operations, minimize potential negative impacts, and transform them into drivers of a better retail experience.

As the retail market in Vietnam, especially in major cities like Hanoi, continues to grow rapidly, many retail businesses are implementing strategies and solutions to increase their market share by focusing on customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is one of the primary objectives for companies seeking to maintain long-term customer relationships. Satisfied customers (after their purchase) are more likely to develop repurchase intentions. The results of this study support all four hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4), which confirm the impact of in-store logistics on customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions. The research model explains 61.6% of the variance in Customer Satisfaction (CS) and 65.3% of the variance in Repurchase Intention (RI). These findings are consistent with and exceed previous research on customer satisfaction (Bouzaabia et al., 2013; Moussaoui et al., 2022; Garouch et al., 2011; Ltifi & Gharbi, 2015) and repurchase intentions (Chatzoglou, 2022).

This study empirically and conceptually demonstrates the direct and causal relationship between Customer Satisfaction (CS) and Repurchase Intention (RI), with a path coefficient of 0.653 and an effect size of 1.890, both of which are very high according to Cohen (1988). Moreover, the study reveals that the Product (P) , which includes ensuring product diversity and providing comprehensive product information, has the strongest impact on customer satisfaction. Following this, Shelf Management (S), which involves ensuring products are always replenished and available, has a secondary impact. Finally, Return (R), which ensure that customers can easily and conveniently return or exchange products, also contribute positively to customer satisfaction. These findings suggest that retail companies, particularly supermarkets, can enhance customer satisfaction by improving in-store logistics, specifically in terms of product, shelf management, and return processes, which in turn drives repurchase intentions among consumers.

Conclusion

In the context of Vietnam, there are many studies related to the retail sector; however, research on logistics theory and its application in retail, especially concerning in-store logistics, is still limited, with few published studies on the topic. This paper aims to systematize the theoretical foundations of in-store logistics in retail and propose a model that evaluates its impact on consumers' repurchase intentions. The findings from this study offer useful suggestions for retail managers, emphasizing the importance of in-store logistics and how to minimize potential negative impacts, turning them into drivers of effective retail experiences.

Despite the valuable insights obtained, the study does have limitations. First, it does not assess the mediating effect of Customer Satisfaction (CS) on Repurchase Intention (RI). Second, the study focuses on testing the roles of three key aspects of in-store logistics - Product (P), Shelf Management (S), and Return (R) - on customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions. Future research could explore the mediating role of Customer Satisfaction and/or expand the scope to include other aspects of in-store logistics, such as "payment convenience" or "shopping convenience".

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