



# How Perceived Service Quality Drives Customer Retention: Evidence of Partial Mediation by Customer Trust in B2B Logistics

Budi Prakoso<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Business Logistics Study Program, School of Logistics and Transport, Universitas Logistik dan Bisnis Internasional, Bandung, Indonesia

## Abstract

Customer retention constitutes a critical strategic outcome in B2B logistics, where relationship continuity depends on both service performance and relational confidence. This study investigates the effect of perceived service quality on customer retention, with customer trust positioned as a mediating variable, in the enterprise logistics context of PT Pos Indonesia. A quantitative explanatory approach was employed using cross-sectional survey data collected from 200 enterprise customers. The data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings reveal that perceived service quality exerts a positive and significant effect on customer trust and customer retention, while customer trust also has a positive and significant effect on customer retention. Furthermore, customer trust significantly mediates the relationship between perceived service quality and customer retention. Since both the direct and indirect effects remain significant, the mediating role of customer trust is classified as partial mediation. These results demonstrate that customer retention in B2B logistics is shaped through two complementary mechanisms: the direct operational value of superior service quality and the indirect relational pathway established through trust. The study contributes to the service and relationship marketing literature by clarifying this dual-pathway mechanism in underexplored enterprise logistics setting.

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### Correspondence:

Budi Prakoso  
(budiprakoso@ulbi.ac.id)

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## 1. INTRODUCTION



In increasingly competitive service markets, customer retention has become a central strategic objective because maintaining existing customers is generally more cost-efficient and more conducive to long-term performance than relying predominantly on new customer acquisition. In business-to-business (B2B) settings, retention is especially important because customer relationships are embedded in repeated exchanges, contractual commitments, and long-term value creation processes that directly affect revenue continuity and organizational performance (Gao et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2023; Mittal et al., 2023). This logic is particularly relevant in logistics services, where customers evaluate providers not only on transactional outcomes but also on their ability to deliver reliability, responsiveness, and continuity in ongoing service relationships.

The relevance of customer retention becomes even more pronounced in enterprise logistics, where service failures may disrupt supply chains, reduce operational efficiency,

and encourage switching behavior among business customers. In the Indonesian context, this issue is strategically important because the courier and logistics industries have continued to expand in recent years. The courier industry has grown by an average of 15.63% over the last five years, while the logistics market size has reached IDR 3,165 trillion. However, despite this favorable industry trajectory, PT Pos Indonesia has experienced fluctuating courier-business performance and relatively low target achievement compared with market potential, indicating that industry growth does not automatically translate into organizational performance (PT Pos Indonesia, 2024). More specifically, courier revenue constitutes the largest contribution among the company's business portfolios, and Regional 2 Jakarta contributes the largest share of national courier revenue as well as the largest contribution from the enterprise segment, making retention in this segment strategically critical for the company.

This strategic importance is reinforced by the empirical situation faced by PT Pos Indonesia in the enterprise-customer segment. Although enterprise customers in Regional 2 Jakarta contribute substantially to national courier revenue, the region did not achieve its enterprise revenue target during the five-year period under review; in 2024, total target achievement stood at only 43.66% (PT Pos Indonesia, 2024). This condition suggests that the problem is not merely one of market opportunity, but of sustaining transaction intensity and shipment volume among existing enterprise customers. In enterprise logistics, where customers transact under formal contracts that specify price, service level, duration, and compensation mechanisms, customer retention reflects the continuity of an ongoing business relationship rather than a single purchase decision (PT Pos Indonesia, 2024). Accordingly, understanding the drivers of retention in this context is both managerially and theoretically important.

Among the factors that may explain customer retention, perceived service quality has consistently been identified as one of the most influential. Perceived service quality refers to a customer's overall evaluative judgment regarding the excellence or superiority of a service based on the comparison between expectations and experienced performance. In enterprise logistics, such evaluations are shaped by repeated encounters involving pick-up punctuality, delivery timeliness, shipment security, reporting accuracy, responsiveness, and problem resolution. When the service delivered by the provider is perceived to be consistent with, or better than, the agreed service standards, customers are more likely to continue the relationship (Lin et al., 2023; Minh et al., 2024; Sugiato et al., 2023). At the same time, favorable service-quality evaluations may strengthen customer trust, which is essential in B2B logistics relationships because customers depend on providers to perform activities that directly affect operational continuity and contractual fulfillment. Prior studies have therefore suggested that perceived service quality not only affects retention directly but also influences retention indirectly through customer trust (Alam et al., 2021; Al-Muani et al., 2024; Kusumawati et al., 2021; Reyes-Reinoso et al., 2023).

However, despite the recognized importance of these relationships, three gaps remain. First, there is an empirical gap: PT Pos Indonesia's enterprise segment in Regional 2 Jakarta remains strategically important yet continues to underperform in target achievement, despite operating in a growing industry and under formal service agreements designed to manage customer relationships (PT Pos Indonesia, 2024). Second, there is a research gap: prior studies have reported varying findings regarding the relationships among perceived service quality, customer trust, and customer retention, and much of the recent evidence comes from consumer settings or broader service environments rather than contract-based B2B logistics. Third, there is a contextual gap: limited empirical evidence explains how perceived service quality drives customer retention in Indonesian enterprise logistics, particularly within a state-owned logistics company where customers evaluate service delivery against strict service level agreements and relationship continuity depends heavily on both operational reliability and relational confidence (PT Pos Indonesia, 2024). This study addresses these gaps by examining the direct effect of perceived service quality on customer retention and the indirect effect transmitted through customer trust among

enterprise customers of PT Pos Indonesia. In doing so, the study contributes by clarifying the dual pathway through which service quality affects retention in a B2B logistics context and by providing evidence from an underexamined organizational setting (Alam et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2023; Minh et al., 2024).

### **1.1. Literature Review**

Customer retention in business markets is not merely a transactional outcome, but also a relational and strategic one, particularly in service contexts characterized by repeated exchanges, performance risk, and long-term dependence. In B2B logistics, customers evaluate providers not only on whether shipments are completed, but also on whether the provider consistently demonstrates reliability, responsiveness, information quality, and operational continuity over time. Recent studies indicate that firms in service and logistics environments increasingly view retention as an outcome of continued value realization and relationship quality rather than as a simple consequence of repeated purchase behavior. This perspective is especially relevant in logistics services, where service failures may affect downstream operations, contractual commitments, and switching decisions (Hussain et al., 2024; Lin et al., 2023).

Within this relational perspective, the present study focuses on three closely connected constructs, namely perceived service quality, customer trust, and customer retention. Although these constructs are theoretically related, they remain conceptually distinct. Perceived service quality reflects the customer's evaluation of the excellence or superiority of the service delivered, customer trust reflects the customer's confidence that the provider is reliable, competent, and acts with integrity, and customer retention reflects the customer's intention and commitment to continue the relationship over time. This distinction is important because service quality functions primarily as an evaluative judgment, trust functions as a relational belief, and retention functions as a behavioral or relational outcome. In logistics settings, this sequence is theoretically plausible because customers first interpret service performance, then infer whether the provider is trustworthy, and finally decide whether the relationship should be maintained (Arabelen & Kaya, 2021; Hussain et al., 2024).

### **1.2. Perceived Service Quality**

Perceived service quality refers to a customer's overall assessment of the excellence or superiority of a service in relation to expectations and experienced performance. In service marketing, this construct is commonly understood as a multidimensional cognitive evaluation shaped by factors such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and other context-specific attributes of service delivery. In logistics services, however, the content of perceived service quality is often more operationally specific and includes dimensions such as timeliness, delivery accuracy, information visibility, condition of goods, responsiveness to problems, and the reliability of logistics processes. Arabelen and Kaya (2021) emphasize that there is still no universally agreed measurement model for logistics service quality, because the construct is highly contextual and should be adapted to the nature of the service relationship and industry setting.

This contextual character is especially important in enterprise logistics. Business customers are less likely to evaluate logistics providers only on broad service impressions; rather, they assess whether the provider consistently fulfills service standards that matter for their operations. Accordingly, perceived service quality in B2B logistics can be understood as an integrated judgment of whether the logistics provider delivers accurate, timely, secure, and responsive service in a manner consistent with contractual and operational expectations. This view is consistent with Lin et al. (Lin et al., 2023), who show that logistics service quality remains a key explanatory factor in downstream relational outcomes, especially in shaping customer satisfaction and re-use intention in logistics service settings.

### **1.3. Customer Trust**

Customer trust is commonly defined as the willingness of a customer to rely on a service provider based on confidence in the provider's reliability, integrity, and competence. In service relationships, trust reduces perceived uncertainty and helps customers maintain exchange relationships even when future outcomes cannot be fully guaranteed. In B2B contexts, trust becomes particularly important because customers often depend on the provider for repeated performance across multiple transactions, and the consequences of provider failure may extend beyond a single service encounter. For that reason, trust is widely recognized as a central mechanism through which service experiences are translated into stronger relational outcomes (Hussain et al., 2024).

In logistics services, trust is especially salient because customers frequently depend on providers to handle time-sensitive shipments, commercially important goods, and service recovery processes. When service performance is consistent, transparent, and dependable, customers are more likely to conclude that the provider is competent and trustworthy. Conversely, when logistics performance is erratic or communication is weak, customers may perceive greater risk and become less willing to maintain the relationship. Thus, trust functions as an essential relational bridge between operational performance and longer-term customer behavior in logistics settings (Arabelen & Kaya, 2021; Lin et al., 2023).

### **1.4. Customer Retention**

Customer retention refers to the continuity of an ongoing relationship between the customer and the service provider over time. In business markets, retention is not limited to repurchase intention alone; it also includes the willingness to continue using the provider, renew contractual engagement, prioritize the provider over alternatives, and maintain the relationship despite competing offers. Recent research continues to frame retention as a strategically important relational outcome because it reflects the provider's success in sustaining value delivery, reducing churn, and preserving long-term revenue streams. In B2B settings in particular, retention is associated with enduring relational confidence, continued usage, and the customer's willingness to maintain organizational commitment to the provider relationship (Hussain et al., 2024).

For the present study, customer retention is therefore treated as the sustained intention and tendency of enterprise customers to continue the business relationship with PT Pos Indonesia. This includes the willingness to reuse the service, maintain the provider as a preferred logistics partner, and continue the relationship over time. Conceptually, retention must be distinguished from perceived service quality: service quality is an evaluative perception of service performance, whereas retention is a relational outcome reflecting the customer's decision to preserve the relationship. High service evaluations may contribute to retention, but they do not in themselves constitute retention (Arabelen & Kaya, 2021).

### **1.5. Hypothesis Development**

#### **a. Perceived Service Quality and Customer Trust**

Perceived service quality is expected to positively influence customer trust because service evaluations provide customers with observable evidence regarding the provider's capability and dependability. When logistics services are delivered accurately, on time, and in a responsive and transparent manner, customers are more likely to conclude that the provider is competent, reliable, and committed to fulfilling its service promises. In enterprise logistics relationships, this evaluative process is especially important because customers face operational risk and therefore rely heavily on performance-based signals when deciding whether a provider deserves trust. Recent studies support this logic by showing that favorable service-quality perceptions strengthen trust and related relational outcomes across logistics and service settings (Hussain et al., 2024; Lin et al., 2023). Accordingly, the first hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H1: Perceived Service Quality has a positive effect on Customer Trust.

### **b. Customer Trust and Customer Retention**

Customer trust is expected to positively influence customer retention because trust lowers perceived risk, strengthens relational confidence, and increases the customer's willingness to maintain the relationship over time. In B2B service relationships, trust helps customers believe that the provider will continue to behave competently and fairly in future exchanges. This belief reduces the attractiveness of switching and increases the likelihood that the customer will preserve the existing relationship. Prior research in service and business-market contexts consistently suggests that trust contributes to longer-term outcomes such as loyalty, relationship continuity, and retention, even though the strength of that effect may vary across settings (Hussain et al., 2024). Accordingly, the second hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H2: Customer Trust has a positive effect on Customer Retention.

### **c. Perceived Service Quality and Customer Retention**

Perceived service quality is also expected to directly influence customer retention. In logistics relationships, customers often make continuation decisions based on the provider's demonstrated ability to meet operational expectations, maintain service consistency, and minimize disruptions. High perceived service quality can therefore strengthen retention even without passing entirely through relational mechanisms such as trust, because customers may continue using a provider simply because the provider performs well and supports business continuity. Recent logistics studies also indicate that service quality contributes to re-use intention and other retention-oriented outcomes (Lin et al., 2023). Accordingly, the third hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H3: Perceived Service Quality has a positive effect on Customer Retention.

### **d. The Mediating Role of Customer Trust**

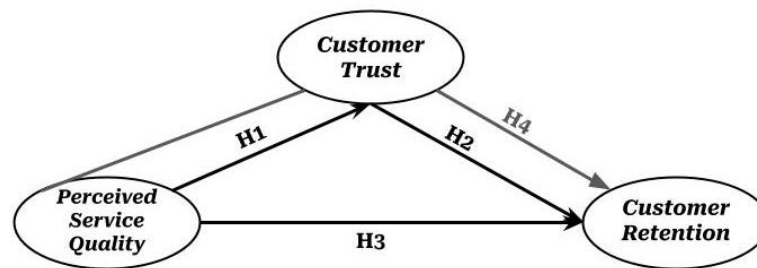
Although perceived service quality may directly influence customer retention, its effect is also likely to operate indirectly through customer trust. Customers do not respond to service performance only at a functional level; they also interpret that performance as an indicator of whether the provider is dependable and worthy of continued reliance. In enterprise logistics, repeated evidence of timely, accurate, and responsive service can build trust, and that trust can then motivate the customer to maintain the relationship. Theoretically, this implies a mediation mechanism in which service quality shapes retention partly by strengthening the customer's confidence in the provider. This argument is consistent with recent service and logistics literature showing that relational beliefs help translate favorable service experiences into sustained customer behavior (Hussain et al., 2024; Lin et al., 2023). Accordingly, the fourth hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H4: Customer Trust mediates the relationship between Perceived Service Quality and Customer Retention.

## **1.6. Conceptual Framework**

Based on the preceding review, this study proposes a model in which Perceived Service Quality affects Customer Retention both directly and indirectly through Customer Trust. The framework positions perceived service quality as the principal evaluative antecedent, customer trust as the relational mediator, and customer retention as the final outcome. This model is consistent with the logic of enterprise logistics relationships, where customers evaluate service performance, form judgments about the provider's trustworthiness, and then determine whether the relationship should be continued (Arabelen & Kaya, 2021; Lin et al., 2023). The visualization of the conceptual framework of this research is attached in Figure 1.





**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework  
Source: Developed by Author (2025)

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative explanatory design using a cross-sectional survey to examine the direct effect of perceived service quality on customer retention and the indirect effect transmitted through customer trust among enterprise customers of PT Pos Indonesia. A cross-sectional design is appropriate when the objective is to test theoretically specified relationships among latent constructs using data collected at a single point in time rather than through repeated observation across periods (Saunders et al., 2023). In the present study, this design was selected because the research seeks to explain the structural relationships among Perceived Service Quality, Customer Trust, and Customer Retention in a contract-based B2B logistics context.

The unit of analysis was the individual person in charge (PIC) representing each enterprise customer organization. This choice is methodologically appropriate because PICs are organizational representatives who directly manage service interactions, evaluate logistics performance, and participate in decisions regarding the continuation of the business relationship with PT Pos Indonesia. Data were collected in 2024.

### 2.2. Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique

The population of this study comprised enterprise customers of PT Pos Indonesia with active formal business relationships during the study period. Each enterprise customer was represented by one PIC responsible for service coordination, business communication, and service performance evaluation. In survey research, the population refers to the full set of elements to which the researcher intends to generalize the findings, whereas the sample is a subset selected to represent that population (Clark et al., 2021; Malhotra, 2020).

The final sample consisted of 200 respondents. The study applied probability sampling with simple random sampling, because the respondents were randomly selected from an identifiable internal customer list provided by PT Pos Indonesia. In simple random sampling, each element in the sampling frame has an equal and independent probability of being selected, thereby reducing selection bias and strengthening the representativeness of the sample (Clark et al., 2021). Because the sampling frame contains confidential company data, it is not disclosed publicly.

From a structural equation modeling perspective, the sample size is also adequate for the present study. Hair et al. (2022) emphasize that sample adequacy should be evaluated with reference to model complexity and estimation objectives, while Collier (2020) notes that a sample of around 200 respondents is generally acceptable for SEM applications involving moderate model complexity. Accordingly, the sample of 200 respondents was considered sufficient to estimate the proposed model.

### 2.3. Data Collection Procedure

Primary data were collected using a structured online questionnaire created in Google Form and distributed directly via WhatsApp to the selected respondents. Online survey administration is appropriate for standardized quantitative data collection because it facilitates efficient distribution, supports response completeness, and reduces manual data-entry error (Saunders et al., 2023). In this study, the questionnaire link was sent to 200 respondents from June – July 2024, 200 responses were received, and all 200 responses were usable for analysis, yielding a response rate of 100%.

The use of a structured questionnaire was appropriate because the constructs examined in this study were operationalized through predefined indicators measured on a seven-point semantic differential scale. This scale was selected because it allows respondents to express evaluative judgments across a graduated continuum, which is suitable for capturing perceptions of service quality, trust, and retention-related tendencies in B2B service settings (Malhotra, 2020; Saunders et al., 2023).

### 2.4. Measurement of Variables

This study examined three latent variables: Perceived Service Quality (PSQ) as the exogenous variable, Customer Trust (CT) as the mediating variable, and Customer Retention (CR) as the endogenous variable. All three constructs were modeled as first-order reflective constructs, meaning that the indicators were treated as manifestations of their respective latent variables rather than as formative components. Hair et al. (2022) explain that reflective specification is appropriate when indicators are assumed to reflect a common underlying construct and are therefore expected to covary.

Perceived service quality was measured using indicators adapted from prior logistics service quality studies, including dimensions such as timeliness, responsiveness, delivery accuracy, service reliability, and shipment handling quality (Minh et al., 2024; Park et al., 2009; Valaei et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2024). Customer trust was measured using indicators reflecting confidence in the provider's reliability, integrity, competence, and service security (Alam et al., 2021; Al-Dmour et al., 2019; Ejdy & Gulc, 2020). Customer retention was measured using indicators capturing continued usage intention, contract continuation, preference for the provider, and advocacy-related behavior (Li et al., 2023; Minh et al., 2024; Omidvar et al., 2024). All items were evaluated using a seven-point semantic differential scale, with higher scores indicating more positive evaluations.

### 2.5. Pilot Study and Preliminary Instrument Assessment

Before the main survey was conducted, the questionnaire was pretested on 30 respondents to assess item clarity, validity, and reliability. Pilot testing is an important step in questionnaire-based research because it helps identify ambiguous wording, weak items, and potential measurement problems before the main data collection is undertaken (Malhotra, 2020; Saunders et al., 2023). In the present study, the pilot study was used to ensure that the questionnaire items were understandable, contextually relevant, and suitable for enterprise respondents.

The pilot study also served as the basis for preliminary validity and reliability assessment. At the main-study stage, the measurement model was further evaluated using the standard criteria for reflective constructs, including outer loadings, internal consistency reliability, and convergent validity. Hair et al. (2022) note that reflective measurement assessment should focus on whether the indicators adequately represent the latent construct, whether the construct demonstrates internal consistency, and whether the indicators converge on the intended concept. The preliminary validity and reliability results are shown in table below.

**Table 1** Preliminary Validity and Reliability Results

| Variable | Indicator | Validity           |                  |                    | Reliability     |                                          |
|----------|-----------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------|
|          |           | Calculated r-value | Critical r-value | Significance Level | Validity Status | Cronbach's Alpha      Reliability Status |
| PSQ      | PSQ01     | 0.729              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           | 0.955      Reliable                      |
|          | PSQ02     | 0.918              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
|          | PSQ03     | 0.688              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
|          | PSQ04     | 0.773              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
|          | PSQ05     | 0.914              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
|          | PSQ06     | 0.926              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
|          | PSQ07     | 0.918              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
|          | PSQ08     | 0.902              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
|          | PSQ09     | 0.462              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
|          | PSQ10     | 0.888              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
|          | PSQ11     | 0.936              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
|          | PSQ12     | 0.946              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
|          | PSQ13     | 0.813              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
| CT       | CT01      | 0.896              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           | 0.903      Reliable                      |
|          | CT02      | 0.918              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
|          | CT03      | 0.914              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
|          | CT04      | 0.744              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
|          | CT05      | 0.897              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
| CR       | CR01      | 0.958              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           | 0.959      Reliable                      |
|          | CR02      | 0.955              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
|          | CR03      | 0.975              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |
|          | CR04      | 0.889              | 0.361            | 0.000              | Valid           |                                          |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

## 2.6. Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. PLS-SEM was selected for three reasons. First, the study is prediction-oriented, as it seeks to explain the extent to which perceived service quality and customer trust account for variation in customer retention. Second, the structural model includes a mediation relationship, making PLS-SEM suitable for estimating both direct and indirect effects simultaneously. Third, the study aims to test a theoretically grounded model in a specific and relatively underexamined B2B logistics context, where explanatory and predictive relevance are more important than covariance reproduction alone. Recent methodological literature confirms that PLS-SEM is especially suitable for research emphasizing prediction, mediation analysis, and theory development in applied business settings (Richter & Tudoran, 2024; Sarstedt & Moisesescu, 2024).

The analysis proceeded in two stages. First, the measurement model was assessed by examining outer loadings, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Second, the structural model was evaluated by examining path coefficients, coefficients of determination, and the significance of direct and indirect effects using bootstrapping. Hair et al. (2022) recommend this two-stage procedure as the standard analytical sequence in reflective PLS-SEM applications.

Because the study relied on self-reported survey data collected from a single respondent per organization at one point in time, the possibility of common method bias



was assessed explicitly. One commonly used diagnostic in PLS-SEM is the full collinearity variance inflation factor (VIF) approach. Kock (2021) explains that the highest full collinearity VIF is commonly compared against a threshold of 3.3, and values above that level may indicate possible common method bias. Hair et al. (2022) also emphasize the importance of assessing collinearity in structural models to avoid biased parameter estimates.

In this study, common method bias was examined using VIF values generated in SmartPLS. The initial assessment indicated that several indicators showed excessively high outer VIF values, and the inner VIF values of the model also required attention. Accordingly, indicators associated with excessive collinearity were reviewed and eliminated before the final model estimation. The outer VIF value results are shown in table below.

**Table 2** Outer VIF Value Results

| Indicator | VIF Values        |                  |
|-----------|-------------------|------------------|
|           | Before Eleminated | After Eleminated |
| PSQ01     | 21.225            | eleminated       |
| PSQ02     | 44.881            | eleminated       |
| PSQ03     | 13.885            | eleminated       |
| PSQ04     | 8.676             | eleminated       |
| PSQ05     | 20.618            | 6.327            |
| PSQ06     | 15.242            | 9.387            |
| PSQ07     | 32.810            | eleminated       |
| PSQ08     | 11.479            | 4.923            |
| PSQ09     | 1.684             | eleminated       |
| PSQ10     | 10.031            | 5.090            |
| PSQ11     | 45.006            | eleminated       |
| PSQ12     | 38.419            | eleminated       |
| PSQ13     | 4.780             | eleminated       |
| CT01      | 6.830             | 4.011            |
| CT02      | 12.467            | eleminated       |
| CT03      | 8.670             | 4.011            |
| CT04      | 1.490             | eleminated       |
| CT05      | 3.291             | eleminated       |
| CR01      | 8.532             | 8.074            |
| CR02      | 11.611            | 7.154            |
| CR03      | 13.101            | eleminated       |
| CR04      | 3.305             | 2.500            |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

After this refinement, the inner VIF values decreased to 3.168, which is below the conservative threshold of 3.3 suggested by Kock (2021). Therefore, common method bias at the construct level was considered to have been reduced to an acceptable level. The inner VIF value results are shown in table below.

**Table 3** Inner VIF Value Results

| Before Elemination |       |       | After Elemination |     |       |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------------------|-----|-------|
|                    | CR    | CT    | PSQ               |     |       |
| CR                 |       |       |                   | CR  |       |
| CT                 | 5.604 |       |                   | CT  | 3.168 |
| PSQ                | 5.604 | 1.000 |                   | PSQ | 3.168 |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Based on the results of the inner and outer VIF values, the eliminated indicators will not be reused in the evaluation of the structural model.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Results

##### a. Respondent Profile

A total of 200 valid responses were included in the analysis. The respondent profile indicates that the sample was dominated by male respondents (57%), while female respondents accounted for 44%. In terms of age, the largest group was 24–33 years (52%), followed by 34–43 years (30%), indicating that the respondents were primarily in their productive professional years. Most respondents held a bachelor's degree (65%), and the largest occupational group was staff/operator level (50%), followed by supervisor/assistant manager level (26%). In terms of tenure, the largest groups had worked for their companies for 5–10 years (27%), 1–3 years (26%), and 3–5 years (26%). Regarding industry type, the respondents were concentrated in finance (32%), banking (19%), insurance (19%), and telecommunications (17%). Most of the represented companies had been established for more than 10 years (53%), followed by 5–10 years (39%). Overall, these characteristics indicate that the respondents were sufficiently experienced and organizationally embedded to provide informed evaluations of PT Pos Indonesia's enterprise logistics services. The profile of respondents in this study is attached in the table below.

**Table 4** Respondents Profile

| No. | Variable                         | Category                         | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1   | Gender                           | Male                             | 113       | 57             |
|     |                                  | Female                           | 87        | 44             |
| 2   | Age                              | ≤ 23 years                       | 10        | 5              |
|     |                                  | 24–33 years                      | 103       | 52             |
|     |                                  | 34–43 years                      | 59        | 30             |
|     |                                  | 44–53 years                      | 20        | 10             |
|     |                                  | ≥ 53 years                       | 8         | 4              |
| 3   | Highest Educational Attainment   | Senior High School or Equivalent | 24        | 12             |
|     |                                  | Diploma                          | 21        | 11             |
|     |                                  | Bachelor's Degree                | 129       | 65             |
|     |                                  | Master's Degree                  | 22        | 11             |
|     |                                  | Doctoral Degree                  | 4         | 2              |
| 4   | Position in the Company          | Director                         | 6         | 3              |
|     |                                  | General Manager/Vice President   | 15        | 8              |
|     |                                  | Manager                          | 27        | 14             |
|     |                                  | Supervisor/Assistant Manager     | 52        | 26             |
|     |                                  | Staff/Operator                   | 100       | 50             |
| 5   | Length of Service in the Company | ≤ 1 year                         | 8         | 4              |
|     |                                  | 1–3 years                        | 52        | 26             |
|     |                                  | 3–5 years                        | 52        | 26             |
|     |                                  | 5–10 years                       | 53        | 27             |
|     |                                  | ≥ 10 years                       | 35        | 18             |
| 6   | Type of Business                 | Finance                          | 64        | 32             |
|     |                                  | Banking                          | 38        | 19             |
|     |                                  | Insurance                        | 37        | 19             |
|     |                                  | Telecommunications               | 34        | 17             |
|     |                                  | Logistics Services               | 12        | 6              |
|     |                                  | Technology                       | 5         | 3              |
|     |                                  | Government Institution           | 4         | 2              |
|     |                                  | Manufacturing                    | 3         | 2              |
| 7   | Company Age                      | Military                         | 3         | 2              |
|     |                                  | ≤ 1 year                         | 0         | 0              |

| No. | Variable | Category   | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----|----------|------------|-----------|----------------|
|     |          | 1–3 years  | 1         | 1              |
|     |          | 3–5 years  | 16        | 8              |
|     |          | 5–10 years | 77        | 39             |
|     |          | ≥ 10 years | 106       | 53             |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

### b. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics show that all three constructs were evaluated positively by the respondents. Perceived Service Quality (PSQ) had a mean score of 78.71 with a standard deviation of 13.100, Customer Trust (CT) had a mean of 30.74 with a standard deviation of 4.480, and Customer Retention (CR) had a mean of 23.99 with a standard deviation of 4.511. These results suggest that respondents generally perceived PT Pos Indonesia's enterprise logistics services favorably, while the relatively moderate standard deviations indicate an acceptable spread of responses across the sample. Descriptive analysis is useful at this stage because it provides an initial empirical overview of the central tendency and variability of the constructs before the structural relationships are tested (Saunders et al., 2023). The descriptive statistic results in this study are attached in the table below.

**Table 5** Descriptive Statistic Results

|                    | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|-----|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
| PSQ                | 200 | 32      | 91      | 78.71 | 13.100         |
| CT                 | 200 | 19      | 35      | 30.74 | 4.480          |
| CR                 | 200 | 9       | 28      | 23.99 | 4.511          |
| Valid N (listwise) | 200 |         |         |       |                |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

### c. Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was first assessed through convergent validity and internal consistency reliability. The results show that all retained indicators had high outer loadings, ranging from 0.891 to 0.968. Specifically, the PSQ indicators ranged from 0.937 to 0.968, the CT indicators ranged from 0.965 to 0.967, and the CR indicators ranged from 0.891 to 0.963. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were 0.897 for PSQ, 0.933 for CT, and 0.876 for CR, all of which exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.50. The composite reliability values were also high, namely 0.972 for PSQ, 0.965 for CT, and 0.955 for CR, indicating strong internal consistency. According to Hair et al. (2022), AVE values above 0.50 and composite reliability values between 0.70 and 0.95 generally indicate adequate convergent validity and construct reliability, although values above 0.95 should also be interpreted carefully because they may signal redundancy among indicators. In the present study, the retained indicators satisfy the required measurement criteria and support the adequacy of the reflective measurement model. The convergent validity and composite reliability results in this study is attached in the table 6.

**Table 6** Convergent Validity and Composite Reliability Results

| Variable | Indicator | Outer Loading | AVE   | Composite Reliability |
|----------|-----------|---------------|-------|-----------------------|
| PSQ      | PSQ05     | 0.944         | 0.897 | 0.972                 |
|          | PSQ06     | 0.968         |       |                       |
|          | PSQ08     | 0.939         |       |                       |
|          | PSQ10     | 0.937         |       |                       |
| CT       | CT01      | 0.967         | 0.933 | 0.965                 |
|          | CT03      | 0.965         |       |                       |
| CR       | CR01      | 0.963         | 0.876 | 0.955                 |
|          | CR02      | 0.952         |       |                       |
|          | CR04      | 0.891         |       |                       |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Discriminant validity was then evaluated using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). The HTMT value between CR and CT was 0.867, between PSQ and CT was 0.875, and between PSQ and CR was 0.899. Following Hair et al. (2022), HTMT values below 0.90 are still acceptable, which indicates that the constructs in this study achieved discriminant validity at an acceptable level. Nevertheless, the HTMT value between PSQ and CR was very close to the upper threshold, suggesting that these two constructs are empirically related quite strongly. Therefore, although discriminant validity can still be considered acceptable, the closeness of the PSQ–CR HTMT ratio should be acknowledged cautiously and discussed as a potential indication of conceptual proximity rather than complete redundancy. This reporting is particularly important given the reviewer’s concern regarding the empirical overlap between perceived service quality and customer retention. The HTMT ratio results in this study are attached in the table 7.

**Table 7.** The HTMT Ratio Results

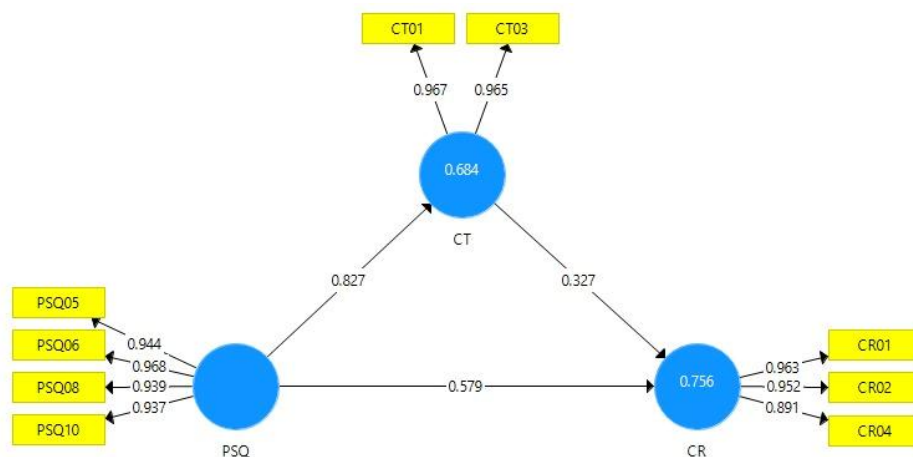
|     | CR    | CT    | PSQ |
|-----|-------|-------|-----|
| CR  |       |       |     |
| CT  | 0.867 |       |     |
| PSQ | 0.899 | 0.875 |     |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

#### d. Structural Model Evaluation

The explanatory power of the structural model was assessed using the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ). The results show that Customer Trust (CT) had an  $R^2$  value of 0.684 and an adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.683, indicating that Perceived Service Quality explained 68.4% of the variance in Customer Trust. Customer Retention (CR) had an  $R^2$  value of 0.756 and an adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.754, indicating that Perceived Service Quality and Customer Trust jointly explained 75.6% of the variance in Customer Retention. According to Hair et al. (2022),  $R^2$  values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 may be interpreted as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. On that basis, the  $R^2$  values in this study indicate that the structural model has substantial explanatory power, particularly for customer retention.

Predictive relevance was evaluated using  $Q^2$ . The  $Q^2$  value for Customer Trust was 0.635, while the  $Q^2$  value for Customer Retention was 0.652. Because both values were greater than zero, the model can be considered to have predictive relevance for both endogenous constructs. Hair et al. (2022) state that  $Q^2$  values above zero indicate that the model has predictive relevance, whereas larger values reflect stronger predictive capability. Accordingly, the present findings suggest that the model is not only explanatory but also demonstrates satisfactory predictive relevance for the two endogenous variables. The structural model evaluation illustration in this study is attached in the figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Structural Model  
Source: Data Processed (2025)

The effect size of each exogenous relationship was assessed using  $f^2$ . The effect of PSQ on CT produced an  $f^2$  value of 2.168, indicating a very large substantive contribution. The effect of PSQ on CR yielded an  $f^2$  value of 0.435, which can be interpreted as a large effect, whereas the effect of CT on CR yielded an  $f^2$  value of 0.139, which falls within the small-to-medium range. According to Hair et al. (2022),  $f^2$  values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects, respectively. These results imply that perceived service quality is the dominant predictor in the model, especially in shaping customer trust, while customer trust still contributes meaningfully to customer retention, although with a comparatively smaller effect. The  $R^2$  and  $Q^2$  values in this study are attached in the table below.

**Table 8.** The  $R^2$  and  $Q^2$  Values

|    | $R^2$ | $R^2$ Adjusted | $Q^2$ |
|----|-------|----------------|-------|
| CR | 0.756 | 0.754          | 0.652 |
| CT | 0.684 | 0.683          | 0.635 |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

### e. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in PLS-SEM. As explained by Hair et al. (2022), bootstrapping enables the estimation of the statistical significance of path coefficients by generating empirical standard errors through repeated resampling. The results show that all hypothesized direct relationships were positive and statistically significant. First, the effect of Perceived Service Quality on Customer Trust was positive and significant ( $\beta = 0.827$ ;  $t = 37.771$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), thereby supporting H1. Second, Customer Trust had a positive and significant effect on Customer Retention ( $\beta = 0.327$ ;  $t = 2.981$ ;  $p = 0.003$ ), supporting H2. Third, Perceived Service Quality also had a positive and significant direct effect on Customer Retention ( $\beta = 0.579$ ;  $t = 4.811$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H3. These findings indicate that perceived service quality plays a central role in the model, both as an antecedent of trust and as a direct driver of retention. The hypothesis testing results in this study are attached in the table below.

**Table 9.** Hypothesis Testing Results

| Hypot hesis | Variable Relation ship | Original sample (O) | Sample mean (M) | Std. deviation (STDEV) | T statistics ( O/STDEV ) | P values | $F^2$ |
|-------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------|-------|
| H1          | PSQ -> CT              | 0.827               | 0.831           | 0.022                  | 37.771                   | 0.000    | 2.168 |
| H2          | CT -> CR               | 0.327               | 0.342           | 0.110                  | 2.981                    | 0.003    | 0.139 |
| H3          | PSQ -> CR              | 0.579               | 0.563           | 0.120                  | 4.811                    | 0.000    | 0.435 |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

### f. Mediation Testing

The mediation effect of Customer Trust in the relationship between Perceived Service Quality and Customer Retention was also significant ( $\beta = 0.271$ ;  $t = 2.867$ ;  $p = 0.004$ ), thereby supporting H4. Formally, mediation was assessed by examining the indirect pathway from PSQ to CR through CT, consistent with SEM's capability to estimate indirect effects within the same structural system and evaluate their statistical significance using bootstrapping (Hair et al., 2022). Because the direct effect of PSQ on CR remained significant even after the mediator was included in the model, and the indirect effect through CT was also significant, Customer Trust is interpreted as a partial mediator rather than a full mediator. This means that perceived service quality influences customer retention through two simultaneous mechanisms: first, directly, because high-quality logistics service itself encourages customers to maintain the relationship; and second, indirectly, because favorable service experiences strengthen trust, which in turn reinforces retention. This pattern is theoretically meaningful in enterprise logistics, where customers are likely to



continue the relationship not only because the provider performs well operationally, but also because consistent service quality builds relational confidence over time. The mediation testing results in this study are attached in the table below.

**Table 10** (Title)

| Hypot<br>thesis | Variable<br>Relationship | Original<br>sample (O) | Sample<br>mean (M) | Std.<br>deviation<br>(STDEV) | T statistics<br>( O/STDEV ) | P<br>values | F <sub>2</sub> |
|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| H4              | PSQ -> CT -><br>CR       | 0.271                  | 0.284              | 0.094                        | 2.867                       | 0.004       | -              |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

### 3.2. Discussion

#### a. The Effect of Perceived Service Quality on Customer Trust

The results indicate that Perceived Service Quality has a positive and significant effect on Customer Trust, thereby supporting H1. This finding suggests that when enterprise customers perceive PT Pos Indonesia's logistics services as reliable, responsive, accurate, and consistent with agreed service standards, they are more likely to develop confidence in the company's competence and dependability. In a B2B logistics setting, this result is theoretically reasonable because service performance functions not only as an operational outcome but also as a relational signal through which customers infer whether the provider is trustworthy. This finding is consistent with recent logistics and service research showing that favorable evaluations of logistics service quality contribute to stronger trust and relational confidence among customers (Lin et al., 2023; Ngo et al., 2025). In the context of enterprise logistics, where customers depend on service providers to support business continuity and fulfillment accuracy, repeated evidence of good service quality appears to reduce uncertainty and strengthen confidence in the provider.

From a theoretical perspective, this result reinforces the argument that trust does not emerge independently of service experience, but is built through repeated encounters in which the provider demonstrates reliability and competence. The strong coefficient of PSQ on CT in this study indicates that enterprise customers interpret service quality as a key basis for judging whether the provider can be relied upon in future exchanges. This interpretation is also in line with broader B2B relationship literature, which emphasizes that business customers develop relational confidence when providers consistently create value through effective and dependable service delivery (Arthur et al., 2024; Gounaris & Almoraish, 2024). Thus, in the present study, perceived service quality serves as a foundational antecedent of customer trust in the enterprise logistics relationship.

#### b. The Effect of Customer Trust on Customer Retention

The findings further show that Customer Trust has a positive and significant effect on Customer Retention, supporting H2. This result implies that enterprise customers are more likely to maintain their relationship with PT Pos Indonesia when they believe that the company is reliable, competent, and able to fulfill its service commitments consistently. In B2B logistics, trust plays an especially important role because customers are often exposed to operational and contractual risk, and therefore require confidence that the provider will continue to perform effectively over time. The finding is consistent with recent studies showing that trust remains an important relational mechanism in shaping retention, loyalty, and continuity of exchange in service and B2B contexts (Arthur et al., 2024; Hussain et al., 2024).

This result also indicates that customer retention in enterprise logistics cannot be understood solely as a consequence of satisfactory operational performance. Rather, retention is also shaped by the customer's relational belief that the provider can be depended upon in future interactions. In practical terms, this means that even when service performance is important, customers may be more willing to sustain the relationship when

consistent performance has already been translated into trust. The present finding therefore supports the view that trust functions as a stabilizing force in long-term B2B relationships by lowering perceived risk and reinforcing the customer's willingness to continue the service relationship.

#### **c. The Effect of Perceived Service Quality on Customer Retention**

The results also demonstrate that Perceived Service Quality has a positive and significant direct effect on Customer Retention, supporting H3. This finding shows that enterprise customers are inclined to continue using PT Pos Indonesia's services when they perceive the logistics service to be of high quality. In other words, beyond its influence on trust, service quality itself directly encourages relationship continuity. This result is consistent with recent logistics studies indicating that high service quality contributes to continued use, re-use intention, and retention-oriented behavior because customers tend to remain with providers that consistently support operational efficiency and minimize service disruption (Lin et al., 2023; Minh et al., 2024).

The direct effect of perceived service quality on retention is especially meaningful in the present B2B logistics context. Enterprise customers often evaluate service providers in terms of timeliness, shipment accuracy, problem resolution, reporting quality, and the provider's ability to meet service-level commitments. When these service dimensions are perceived positively, customers have a practical incentive to preserve the relationship because switching to another provider may introduce uncertainty, transaction costs, and operational risk. This finding therefore suggests that perceived service quality is not only a relational input, but also an immediate strategic driver of retention in enterprise logistics.

#### **d. The Mediating Role of Customer Trust**

The mediation analysis shows that Customer Trust significantly mediates the relationship between Perceived Service Quality and Customer Retention, thereby supporting H4. Because both the direct effect of Perceived Service Quality on Customer Retention and the indirect effect through Customer Trust were significant, the mediation is interpreted as partial mediation. This means that perceived service quality affects retention through two simultaneous pathways: a direct pathway, in which high-quality logistics service encourages customers to continue the relationship because of its immediate operational value, and an indirect pathway, in which favorable service experiences strengthen trust, which in turn reinforces retention. This interpretation is consistent with the logic of structural equation modeling in mediation analysis and with recent service studies showing that relational beliefs often transmit part, but not all, of the effect of service-related antecedents on longer-term behavioral outcomes (Hair et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2025).

The finding of partial rather than full mediation is theoretically important. It indicates that trust is a meaningful relational mechanism, but not the only mechanism through which service quality promotes retention. In the enterprise logistics setting, customers may continue the relationship directly because the provider performs well in operational terms, even before deeper relational trust is fully formed. At the same time, consistently strong service quality builds trust, and that trust provides an additional reason for the customer to maintain the relationship. This dual-pathway explanation strengthens the contribution of the study, because it shows that customer retention in B2B logistics is shaped by both functional performance logic and relational confidence logic, rather than by either one alone.

#### **e. Theoretical Implications**

This study offers several theoretical implications. First, it strengthens the service and relationship marketing literature by showing that the link between service quality and retention in B2B logistics is not purely direct, but also operates through customer trust. Second, it clarifies the conceptual distinction among the three focal constructs. Perceived service quality functions as an evaluative judgment of service excellence, customer trust

functions as a relational belief, and customer retention functions as a behavioral or relational outcome. The empirical results support this sequence and therefore reinforce the argument that logistics service relationships should be understood as both operational and relational in nature. Third, by focusing on enterprise customers in a contract-based logistics environment, the study extends recent retention research into a more specific B2B setting where operational reliability and long-term relational confidence are simultaneously essential (Gounaris & Almoraish, 2024; Minh et al., 2024).

The findings also generate important managerial implications for PT Pos Indonesia. Because perceived service quality emerged as the strongest driver in the model, management should prioritize improvements in the service dimensions most visible to enterprise customers, particularly delivery timeliness, pick-up punctuality, shipment security, reporting accuracy, responsiveness, and complaint resolution. These aspects are likely to influence retention both directly and indirectly through trust. In addition, because customer trust was shown to play a significant mediating role, the company should not focus only on technical service execution, but also on trust-building mechanisms such as transparent communication, consistent fulfillment of service-level agreements, proactive problem handling, and reliable account management.

The partial mediation result further implies that operational quality and relational management must be strengthened simultaneously. A strategy focused only on trust-building without improving service execution would be insufficient, while a strategy focused only on operational performance without building relational confidence may also limit retention outcomes. Accordingly, PT Pos Indonesia should integrate service quality improvement with relationship-strengthening initiatives in order to enhance customer retention more effectively. In enterprise logistics, customers remain not only because a provider performs well, but also because that performance builds the confidence necessary for long-term partnership continuity.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This study examined the effect of Perceived Service Quality on Customer Retention with Customer Trust as a mediating variable in the context of enterprise logistics services at PT Pos Indonesia. The findings show that Perceived Service Quality has a positive and significant effect on Customer Trust, Customer Trust has a positive and significant effect on Customer Retention, and Perceived Service Quality also has a positive and significant direct effect on Customer Retention. In addition, Customer Trust significantly mediates the relationship between Perceived Service Quality and Customer Retention. Because both the direct effect of Perceived Service Quality on Customer Retention and the indirect effect through Customer Trust were significant, the mediation is interpreted as partial mediation. These findings indicate that customer retention in B2B logistics is shaped through two complementary mechanisms: first, through the direct operational value of high-quality service delivery; and second, through the relational confidence that develops when customers perceive the provider as reliable, competent, and trustworthy. In this respect, the study contributes to the service and relationship marketing literature by clarifying that retention in enterprise logistics is not driven solely by functional performance or solely by relational factors, but by the interaction of both.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study employed a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to draw strong causal inferences because all variables were measured at a single point in time. Second, the study was conducted in a single-company context, namely PT Pos Indonesia, so the findings should be generalized cautiously to other logistics providers, industries, or national settings with different competitive structures and service arrangements. Third, the study relied on self-reported survey data from a single respondent per organization, which may increase the possibility of common method bias, even though

procedural and statistical controls were applied during the analysis stage. Fourth, although the results supported acceptable discriminant validity, the empirical proximity between Perceived Service Quality and Customer Retention suggests that these constructs are closely related in this context and should continue to be interpreted carefully in future model development. These limitations are important because recent methodological and service research continues to stress the need for caution when interpreting cross-sectional self-report evidence in relational models and when extending findings beyond the immediate study setting (Hair et al., 2022; Hussain et al., 2024).

Future research may extend this study in several directions. First, subsequent studies should consider using a longitudinal design in order to capture how service quality perceptions, trust, and retention evolve over time in ongoing B2B logistics relationships. Second, future researchers may conduct multi-company or cross-regional comparative studies to improve the generalizability of the findings and to assess whether the observed relationships remain stable across different logistics providers and business environments. Third, future studies may incorporate additional explanatory variables or boundary conditions, such as customer satisfaction, switching costs, technological capability, relationship length, or service recovery quality, in order to develop a more comprehensive explanation of customer retention in logistics services. Fourth, researchers may also examine whether the relationships identified in this study differ across customer categories, contract types, or industry segments through multi-group analysis. Such directions are relevant because recent logistics and retention studies suggest that service quality effects may vary depending on technological context, service design, and relational conditions, indicating that customer retention in logistics remains a highly contextual phenomenon (Lin et al., 2023; Minh et al., 2024).

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