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The mediating role of trust in the effect of guanxi and service quality on repurchase intention

I Putu Agus Wenta Pharamadita

Faculty of Economics and Business, Udayana University, Denpasar, Indonesia

Email: pharamadita.2380611018@student.unud.ac.id

I Gst. Ayu Kt. Giantari

Faculty of Economics and Business, Udayana University, Denpasar, Indonesia

Email: ayugiantari@unud.ac.id

Ni Wayan Ekawati

Faculty of Economics and Business, Udayana University, Denpasar, Indonesia


Email: nekawati@unud.ac.id

I Gst. Ngurah Jaya Agung Widagda

Faculty of Economics and Business, Udayana University, Denpasar, Indonesia

Email: agjayawidagda@unud.ac.id

Abstract--Repurchase intention refers to consumer behavior that arises in response to a particular object, reflecting the consumer's intention to make a repeat purchase. The emergence of issues related to repurchase intention among conventional grocery store customers in Tabanan underscores the importance of this study. The objective of this research is to examine the mediating role of trust in the effect of guanxi and service quality on repurchase intention. This study is grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response Theory as the grand theoretical framework. This research was conducted among customers of conventional grocery stores in Tabanan. A non-probability sampling method was applied, specifically purposive sampling, with total 140 respondents. Data collection was carried out through surveys using questionnaires, distributed both offline and online via Google Forms. The data analysis technique utilized in this study is SEM-PLS approach. The analysis results indicate that guanxi has a positive and significant effect on both trust and repurchase intention. Likewise, service quality exerts a positive and significant effect on trust and repurchase intention. Furthermore, trust positively and significantly

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Corresponding author: Pharamadita, I.P.A.W., Email: pharamadita.2380611018@student.unud.ac.id
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influences repurchase intention. Trust also plays a partial and significant mediating role in the relationship between both guanxi and service quality with repurchase intention. The findings of this study can be reference to companies to develop more effective marketing strategies that foster customer loyalty and repurchase behavior by emphasizing the importance of guanxi, service quality, and trust in influencing consumer decision-making.

Keywords---Repurchase intention, Guanxi, Service Quality, Trust.

1. Introduction

Conventional grocery stores play a vital role in meeting the basic needs of the community, particularly in both urban and rural areas. The rapid growth of conventional grocery stores is evident from the increasing numbers of outlet and the wide variety of product offered (Putra, 2023). The rapid proliferation of e-commerce and modern supermarkets present conventional grocery stores with increasingly complex challenges in retaining and maintaining and increasing consumer purchase intention. Based on the result of a preliminary survey, the number of consumer visits to several conventional grocery stores in Tabanan declined in 2023 and 2024, as shown in Figure 1.

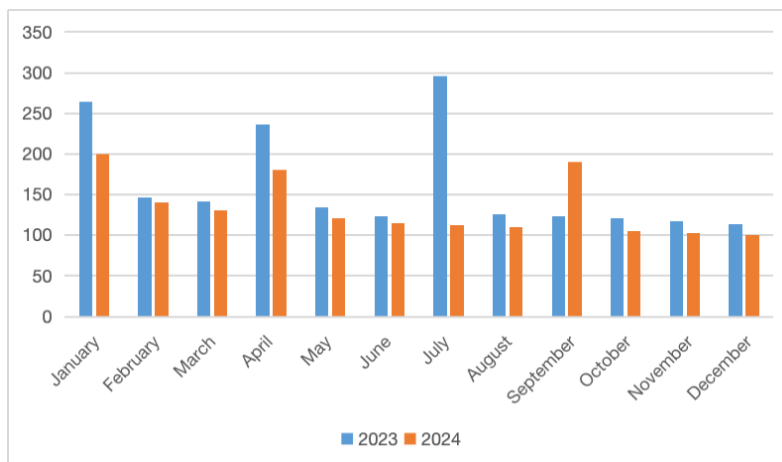


Fig. 1. Consumer Arrivals Shopping at Conventional Grocery Stores Tabanan in 2023 and 2024

Source: Preliminary data survey

Research by Martha et al. (2019) highlighted a decline in transactions within traditional markets, particularly among conventional stores in Tabanan. This finding was corroborated by a preliminary survey of several conventional grocery stores in the area, reinforcing the indication of an issues with consumer purchase intention at their establishments. The pre-survey, administered to 30 consumers of conventional grocery stores in Tabanan, revealed significant challenges concerning repurchase intention. There is only 33.3 percent of respondents expressed an intention to shop again. This starkly illustrates the considerable

hurdles conventional grocery stores face in customer retention. Despite these challenges, other data points suggest potential avenues for improvement. A substantial 83.3 percent of respondents felt that positive personal relationships with store staff enhanced their shopping comfort. Furthermore, 90 percent of respondents cited prompt and responsive service as a key reason for choosing these grocery stores. Trust in store owners also registered quite high, with 86.7 percent of respondents affirming its influence on their purchasing decisions.

The data highlight the importance of understanding repurchase intention and identifying the underlying issues experienced by customers. Repurchase intention is a form of consumer behavior that arises in response to an object, reflecting the consumer's desire to make a repeat purchase (Kotler & Keller, 2016:137). The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory posits that environmental cues influence an individual's cognitive and emotional responses, which in turn shape consumer behavior (Hendyantoro, 2024).

In the context of the S-O-R Theory, the stimulus is associated with *guanxi*. Individuals who have strong *guanxi*, which is a close interpersonal relationship with a seller or company, may believe that such an interaction will lead to beneficial outcomes or positive experiences (Thalib, 2023). *Guanxi* is assumed to influence repurchase intention, however, prior studies have revealed a research gap that warrants further exploration. A study by Li et al. (2019) found that the relationship between *guanxi* and repurchase intention was not statistically significant. These findings indicate the need for further investigation into potential supporting factors or mediators that may strengthen the effect of *guanxi* on repurchase intention.

Service Quality reflects a customer's evaluation of a company's ability to deliver high-quality services that exceed their expectations. Several previous studies have found that service quality has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention (Naharul & Kadi (2022) and Zebua (2022)). However, a study by Lestari & Novitaningtyas (2021) presented contrasting results, revealing no significant relationship between service quality and repurchase intention. This inconsistency in findings suggests the presence of a research gap, highlighting the need for more in-depth investigation to better understand the relationship between service quality and repurchase intention.

The two factors that are thought to have an influence on repurchase intention, namely *Guanxi* and service quality, still have gaps where there are several studies that found no direct relationship, as well as inconsistent results between the relationship. It means, a factor is needed to bridge the gaps that occur. S-O-R theory assumed that the cause of change on human behavior is based on stimulus quality that communicates with organisms. Within this framework, trust can be positioned as a mediating variable in the relationship between *guanxi* and service quality with repurchase intention. A study conducted by Wu (2020) found that trust effectively mediates the influence of *guanxi* on repurchase intention. Shen (2020) obtained results that there is a positive and significant effect of *Guanxi* on trust.

High service quality directly enhances repurchase intention; however, when customer also exhibit a high level of trust in the company, the effect of service quality on repurchase intention becomes even stronger. A study by Rahman & Supriadi (2022) found that customer trust partially mediates the relationship between service quality and repurchase intention. These findings are further supported by research conducted by Saidani et.al. (2019) and Alamsyah (2018), which both demonstrated that customer trust has a positive and significant influence on repurchase intention. The gap of the previous research is investigate through this research by conducting an in-depth investigation into trust as a mediating variable.

1.1 S-O-R Theory

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory, developed by Mehrabian dan Russell in 1974, is a foundational concept in environmental psychology. It posits that environmental stimuli influence an individual's cognitive and emotional states (the organism), which then determine their behavioral response (Hendyantoro, 2024). **Stimulus (S)** refers to external factors that influence individuals and their psychological conditions. **Organism (O)** is an individual's cognitive and emotional state, which can include perceptions and feelings (Vidyanata, 2022). The Organism represents the internal process and structure between external stimuli and an individual's final action, reaction, or response. Subsequently, **Response (R)** refers to the individual's ultimate behavioral response to the stimulus (Vidyanata, 2022).

In the S-O-R framework, stimulus is related to guanxi. The culture of guanxi, characterized by intimate personal relationships, mutual trust, and the cultivation of harmony, is considered highly important in business interactions and continuity, even more so than formal rules (Jessica & Rusliyawati, 2023). Good service quality will directly increase purchase intention; however, if customers also possess a high level of trust in the company, the effect of service quality on purchase intention will be amplified (Rahman & Supriadi, 2022).

1.2 Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior pertains to the study on how individuals, groups and organizations select purchase, use, and dispose of goods, service, ideas or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants (Kotler and Keller , 2016: 179). The customer behavior model explains that stimuli or impulses originate from information regarding products, prices, locations and promotions. Trust acts as a crucial link between guanxi, service quality and repurchase intention in consumer behavior. Both guanxi and service quality provide consumers with personal connections and quality. This information fosters trust, which then influences consumer's intention to make repeat purchases by building confidence and a sense of security. Essentially, trust is the mediator that translates positive guanxi and service quality into repurchase intention.

1.3 Repurchase Intention

Consumers repurchase intention is a consumer behavior that arises as a response to an object, reflecting the consumer's desire to make a repeat purchase (Al Hafizi & Ali, 2021). Prasetya & Susilo (2022) explain that repurchase intention contributes to supporting a company's products when customers feel a sense of involvement with the company. Repurchase intention refers to a customer's tendency to buy a product or service again. It is influenced by external factors, the decision-making process, and the emotional involvement the customer has with the product or brand. This suggests that customer engagement is essential in generating repurchase intention. However, this relationship still requires further empirical validation across different cases and studies.

1.4 Guanxi

Guanxi refers to the strong personal relationships established between a company and its customers or business partners. These relationships are built through mutual assistance and the exchange of value, aiming to foster loyalty and shared benefits. The cultural concept of *guanxi*, encompassing close personal relationships, mutual trust, and the cultivation of harmony, is considered profoundly important in business interactions and continuity, often superseding formal regulations (Jessica & Rusliyawati, 2023). Individuals possessing strong *guanxi* with a vendor or company may believe these interactions will yield benefits or positive experiences, such as acquiring quality products, superior service, or more competitive pricing (Thalib, 2023).

Guanxi operates through elements like *xinyong* (trust) and *mianzi* (face/self-esteem), along with *guanxi* (emotional attachment), all of which influence purchase intention. However, *guanxi* appears to be more critical during the consumer's purchase decision process. This suggests that relationships incorporating an emotional dimension, beyond mere trust, are more effective in motivating purchases (Kuei & Thao, 2019). Guanxi has been recognized as a significant effect on repurchase intention, with empirical studies demonstrating its positive impact (Kuei & Thao (2019); Wu & Lai (2021); Bilal et al. (2021); Wu (2020); Li et al. (2019)).

Guanxi builds trust through personal relationships that reflect reliability and commitment. The relationship between *guanxi* and trust is proposed in hypothesis, which states that *guanxi* has a positive and significant effect on trust. This hypothesis is supported by empirical studies conducted by Wu (2020); Shen et al. (2020); Zhou (2022); Butt et al. (2020); Barbalet (2021), thus a hypothesis was formulated:

H₁ : Guanxi has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention.

H₃ : Guanxi has a positive and significant effect on trust.

1.5 Service Quality

Service is a critical factor in achieving customer satisfaction (Ritonga et al., 2020). When a high level of satisfaction is reached, businesses can prevent customer attrition, reduce price sensitivity and enhance their business reputation (Rufani

et al., 2023). Service quality is defined as the entirety of features and characteristics of a product or service that rely on its ability to fulfill stated or implied needs. Good service quality not only impacts customer satisfaction but also contributes to customer loyalty such as repurchase intention.

A study by Naharul & Kadi (2022) found that service quality has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention. Similar findings were also reported in study by Resa & Fiska (2020); Zebua (2022); Wijayanti & Almaidah (2021); Alfatiha & Budiarmo (2020); Triyoko (2022). High-service quality builds customer trust by demonstrating reliability, responsiveness, security, empathy and assurance of quality, all of which contribute to increased loyalty and customer satisfaction. Service Quality has been consistently found to have a positive and significant relationship with Trust (Widagdo & Ali (2022); Sahri & Sukma (2024); Erpurini et al. (2022); Riyani (2021)), therefore, the subsequent hypothesis is formulated:

H₂ : Service quality has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention.

H₄ : Service quality has a positive and significant effect on trust.

1.6 Trust

According to Zhang et al. (2018), trust refers to the belief in integrity, benevolence, competence and capabilities. Trust serves as a fundamental element that influences customer's decision in conducting transactions (Setyoparwati, 2019). Ridwan et al. (2020) define consumer trust as the belief or confidence that consumers hold toward a particular brand, product or service. Trust not only directly encourages customers to make repeat purchases, but also reinforces the impact of emotional experiences on repurchase intention (Gunawan & Widagda, 2025). **Harrigan et al. (2021)** found that trust has a positive and significant effect on **repurchase intention**. Several other studies have also confirmed a positive and significant relationship between **trust** and **repurchase intention** (Santo & Marques, 2022; Qalati et al., 2021; Manzoor et al., 2020). Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H₅ : Trust has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention.

1.7 Mediating Effect

The S-O-R theory posits that changes in human behavior are driven by external stimuli that influence internal psychological processes (organisms), which in turn lead to behavioral responses. Within this framework, guanxi and service quality serve as external stimuli, trust represents the internal psychological process and repurchase intention is the resulting behavioral response. Thus, trust can be positioned as a mediating variable in the influence of guanxi and service quality on repurchase intention. The findings of studies conducted by Daud & Simamora (2023); Bhattacharya et al. (2023) and Ilhamalimy et al. (2021) indicate that trust can function as a mediating variable influencing repurchase intention. Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H₆: Trust positively and significantly mediates the effect of guanxi on repurchase intention.

H₇: Trust positively and significantly mediates the effect of service quality on repurchase intention

2. Research Methods

2.1 Sample and Sampling Method

Determining the sample uses the purposive sampling with the criteria for respondents in this research sample are (1) Respondents must have shopped at least twice at a conventional grocery store in Tabanan, (2) Respondents must reside in Tabanan to ensure the study accurately reflect the purchasing habits and influences within the defined geographical area, (3) respondents must possess a minimum educational qualification of high school (SMA/SMK) or equivalent to ensure respondents have a sufficient level of comprehension and general knowledge to accurately understand and response to the questionnaire. The minimum sample size required is five times the number of research indicators (Sugiyono, 2017: 129). There are 28 indicators in this research, the sample used must be minimum of 140.

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

Data were collected through questionnaires that distribute offline through physical handout to customers at conventional grocery stores in Tabanan and online via Google Form platform. The source of questionnaire indicators is explained as follows.

Table 1. Source of Questionnaire Indicators

Construct	Number of Items	Source
Repurchase Intention	4	Putri <i>et al.</i> (2023); Mulyandi (2022)
Guanxi	5	Harianto (2022) ; Wu (2020)
Service Quality	15	Rufani <i>et al.</i> (2023)
Trust	4	Ridwan <i>et al.</i> (2020)

The answer to each question is rated by Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) and analysis using PLS-SEM with the SmartPLS software analysis tool. Validity and reliability test is the first analysis of the measurement indicators of questioner and then continue to evaluate the model's validity, evaluate the structural model and hypothesis testing.

2.3 Research Framework

The study is to analyze the effect of inclusive leadership on work engagement mediated by organizational commitment. The conceptual can be depicted in Figure 2. as follows:

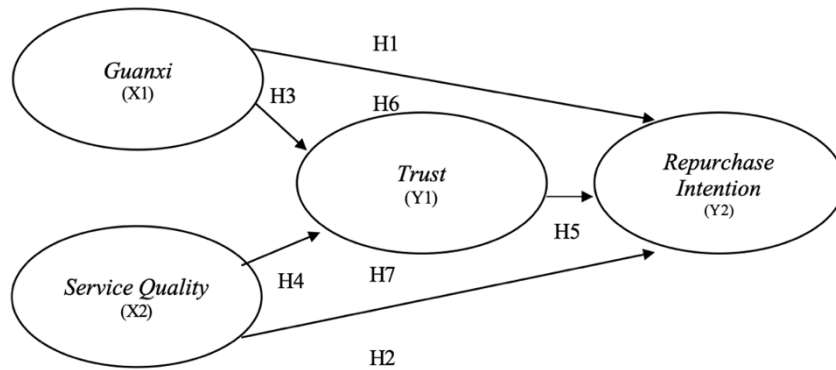


Fig. 2. Research Framework

3. Research Result

The study involved 140 respondents from customers of conventional grocery stores in Tabanan. The survey data reveal that 66.43% are female, suggesting women predominantly handle household grocery shopping. According to age, the respondents of this study were predominantly in the 24-45 range, namely 73.6% or 103 respondents, indicating that productive, family-oriented individuals likely make most purchasing decisions. Private sector employees form the largest occupational group at 40.71% or 57 respondents, pointing to a consumer base with stable incomes and regular consumption patterns. The dominant income bracket is between Rp. 3,000,000- Rp. 4,000,000 representing 45.71% or 64 respondents which suggests the store primarily serves lower-middle-class consumers who value both quality and good service, while also being price-sensitive.

3.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is used to determine the response criteria of respondents collected through questionnaires based on scores from the Likert scale and adjusted by calculating interval values. The average of each proposed indicator describes the respondent's overall perception.

Table 2. Variable Class Interval Category

Class Interval	Category			
	Y2	X1	X2	Y1
1.00-1.79	Very Low	Very Poor	Very Poor	Very Low
>1.80-2.49	Low	Poor	Poor	Low
>2.50-3.29	Medium	Fair	Fair	Medium
>3.30-4.19	High	Good	Good	High
>4.20-5.00	Very High	Very Good	Very Good	Very High

The average value of each variable is presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Description of Research Variable values

Variable	Average Value
Repurchase Intention (Y2)	3.82
Guanxi (X1)	3.60
Service Quality (X2)	3.55
Trust (Y1)	3.46

According to Table 3, it can be inferred that all variables are examined in this study within the range 3.46-3.82 for average value. The highest average is owned by repurchase intention which shown that respondents in this study rated the conventional grocery stores in Tabanan highly regarding their repurchase intention. Average value of guanxi shown that respondents in this study have a **favorable perception of the strong personal relationships** fostered by conventional grocery stores in Tabanan. Service Quality is also shown that respondents rated conventional grocery stores in Tabanan have good service quality. Trust rated high by respondents that indicated conventional grocery stores in Tabanan building trust with consumers.

3.2 Inferential Statistical Analysis (PLS-SEM Analysis)

Following this, a thorough evaluation was conducted to confirm the measurement model's validity and reliability using Convergent validity, Discriminant Validity and Composite Reliability tests. The result confirmed that all indicators accurately and consistently measured their respective latent variables.

Table 4. Convergent Validity and Composite Reliability Test

	Variable	Outer Loading	Criteria	Explanation
	Repurchase Intention (Y2)	0.863 - 0.892	> 0.5	Valid
	Trust (Y1)	0.826 - 0.949	> 0.5	Valid
	Guanxi (X1)	0.912 - 0.985	> 0.5	Valid
Convergent Validity	Service Quality (X2)	0.913 - 0.978	> 0.5	Valid
	Variable	AVE	Criteria	Explanation
	Repurchase Intention (Y2)	0.777	> 0.5	Valid
	Trust (Y1)	0.830	> 0.5	Valid
	Guanxi (X1)	0.922	> 0.5	Valid
	Service Quality (X2)	0.836	> 0.5	Valid
Composite Reliability	Variable	Composite Reliability	Criteria	Explanation
	Repurchase Intention (Y2)	0.905	> 0.7	Reliable
	Trust (Y1)	0.931	> 0.7	Reliable
	Guanxi (X1)	0.979	> 0.7	Reliable
	Service Quality (X2)	0.986	> 0.7	Reliable

Table 4 indicates that all items and variables have met the criteria for convergent validity, which means that it provides an idea of the extent to which the construct

measured by an instrument can be considered empirically valid. The result also shown that composite reliability values for each construct exceed 0.70, which means that all constructs had acceptable reliability values at the recommended level. In terms of composite reliability, the constructs in model have acceptable reliability and meets the criteria. To further assess validity, a discriminant validity test will compare cross-loading values between indicators within the same construct and those from different construct.

Tabel 5. Discriminant Validity – Cross Loading

	Assurance	Empathy	Guanxi	Reliability	Repurchase Intention	Responsiveness	Service Quality	Tangibles	Trust
X1.1	0,645	0,711	0,975	0,661	0,655	0,634	0,678	0,638	0,607
X1.2	0,576	0,661	0,952	0,593	0,687	0,578	0,616	0,579	0,662
X1.3	0,601	0,672	0,985	0,612	0,637	0,569	0,630	0,600	0,612
X1.4	0,649	0,709	0,912	0,644	0,695	0,634	0,674	0,635	0,668
X1.5	0,595	0,666	0,976	0,615	0,640	0,572	0,626	0,591	0,609
X2.1.1	0,909	0,869	0,557	0,892	0,617	0,844	0,912	0,913	0,640
X2.1.2	0,844	0,861	0,597	0,789	0,644	0,752	0,863	0,942	0,648
X2.1.3	0,902	0,922	0,625	0,836	0,710	0,795	0,907	0,950	0,656
X2.2.1	0,853	0,903	0,645	0,928	0,676	0,878	0,904	0,825	0,670
X2.2.2	0,912	0,925	0,657	0,972	0,677	0,921	0,951	0,855	0,679
X2.2.3	0,929	0,854	0,547	0,940	0,586	0,864	0,923	0,872	0,610
X2.3.1	0,842	0,870	0,594	0,882	0,651	0,978	0,903	0,812	0,632
X2.3.2	0,872	0,829	0,543	0,899	0,594	0,934	0,889	0,782	0,609
X2.3.3	0,880	0,917	0,642	0,902	0,670	0,947	0,926	0,845	0,676
X2.4.1	0,955	0,913	0,617	0,963	0,652	0,920	0,948	0,849	0,672
X2.4.2	0,919	0,917	0,623	0,835	0,697	0,803	0,911	0,947	0,678
X2.4.3	0,958	0,878	0,571	0,938	0,616	0,846	0,929	0,889	0,627
X2.5.1	0,931	0,940	0,679	0,962	0,705	0,904	0,929	0,859	0,705
X2.5.2	0,829	0,934	0,680	0,849	0,703	0,873	0,892	0,842	0,700
X2.5.3	0,901	0,926	0,637	0,828	0,720	0,784	0,904	0,948	0,671
Y1.1	0,668	0,720	0,666	0,665	0,761	0,655	0,697	0,674	0,949
Y1.2	0,555	0,601	0,421	0,540	0,549	0,524	0,571	0,552	0,826
Y1.3	0,642	0,671	0,629	0,649	0,658	0,606	0,657	0,622	0,939
Y1.4	0,667	0,701	0,655	0,649	0,689	0,648	0,687	0,667	0,925
Y2.1	0,592	0,632	0,515	0,601	0,881	0,569	0,613	0,578	0,543
Y2.2	0,660	0,743	0,728	0,645	0,892	0,665	0,699	0,681	0,727
Y2.3	0,587	0,655	0,639	0,556	0,863	0,549	0,612	0,623	0,722
Y2.4	0,596	0,632	0,520	0,601	0,890	0,568	0,613	0,578	0,564

Table 5 demonstrates that the cross-loading value of the indicators within each construct are higher than their loadings on other constructs. This result shows that all construct have become good comparators for the model. Accordingly, the model satisfies the criteria for discriminant validity.

Table 6. Evaluation Result of Goodness of Fit Model

Structure Model	Endogen Variable	R ²
1	Repurchase Intention	0.575
2	Trust	0,652
Qualification:	$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R_1^2)(1 - R_2^2)$	
	$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - 0.575)(1 - 0.652)$	
	$Q^2 = 1 - (0.425)(0.348)$	
	$Q^2 = 0.852$	

The result in Table 6 shows that 58% of the variance in Repurchase intention is explained by Guanxi and Service Quality, with 42% attribute to factors outside the model. The R₂ Trust is at 0.652 it can be interpreted that 62% of the variance is explained by the Guanxi and Service Quality variables and 38% attribute to factors outside the model. Based on Table 6, the Q² value is 0.852 (Q² > 0) that means the model in this study has a relevant predictive value where the model can explain by 85% of the information within the data. The model result confirms the validity and reliability of the construct, allowing for subsequent hypothesis testing.

3.3 Hypothesis Testing

PLS-SEM method on the bootstrapping feature is used to test all the hypothesis. The output from PLS-SEM is presented in Figure 3 below.



Fig. 3. Outer Model

The next step is hypothesis testing and the criteria used in the test are:

H_0 is accepted if the T-statistics \leq t-table (1,96) or P-value $>$ α (0,05)

H_a is accepted if the T-statistics $>$ t-table (1,96) or P-value \leq α (0,05)

The result shows that all the hypotheses were accepted. A summary of the hypothesis test result can be shown in Table 7 below:

Table 7. Summary of Hypothesis Test Result

Hypothesis	Connection	Original Sample (β)	T-statistics	P-value	Explanation
H ₁	X1 -> Y2	0.264	4,397	0,000	Accepted
H ₂	X2 -> Y2	0.295	4.230	0,000	Accepted
H ₃	X1 -> Y1	0.321	3.960	0,000	Accepted
H ₄	X2 -> Y1	0.504	6.207	0,000	Accepted
H ₅	Y1 -> Y2	0.349	4.595	0.000	Accepted
H ₆	X1 -> Y1 -> Y2	0.112	2.953	0.004	Accepted
H ₇	X1 -> Y2 -> Y2	0.176	3.540	0.001	Accepted

Table 7. showing that of the seven hypothesis that have been formulated, all the hypothesis were acceptable.

4. Discussion

4.1 H1: Guanxi has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention.

Based on p-value 0.000 that is lower than 0.05 and T-statistics value 4.397 which is greater than 1.96 shown that guanxi has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention. These findings align with consumer behavior models, showing that consumers respond to marketing stimuli like product information, pricing, location, and promotions. The study specifically highlights how **warm and friendly social interactions (guanxi) foster relational closeness and comfort**, ultimately boosting **repurchase intention**. This outcome also supports the **Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory**, where guanxi acts as a stimulus. Customers with strong guanxi and trust feel comfortable, secure, and loyal, prompting repeat purchases. In Tabanan's conventional grocery stores, this is evident in the owners' **hospitality and flexible pricing**, which cultivate strong personal and emotional ties with customers. These results are consistent with previous research by Kuei & Thao (2019), Wu & Lai (2021), Bilal et al. (2021), Wu (2020), and Li et al. (2019).

4.1 H2: Service Quality has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention

The statistical test show that service quality has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention based on p-value 0.000 which is lower than 0.05 and T-statistics value 4.230 that greater than 1.96. High-quality service, particularly the **friendliness and assurance** provided by sellers, is crucial for creating a comfortable shopping environment and facilitating flexible bargaining. This positive atmosphere strengthens customer-seller relationships, ultimately boosting **repurchase intention**. These findings also support the **SOR theory** that high-quality service acts as a stimulus, triggering **trust** within the customer (organism), which then influences their response of **repurchase intention**. This research further corroborates previous studies by Naharul & Kadi (2022), Resa Nurlaela & Fiska Ananda (2020), Zebua (2022), Wijayanti & Almaidah (2021), Alfatiha & Budiarmo (2020), and Triyoko (2022).

4.3 H3: Guanxi has a positive and significant effect on trust.

Guanxi has a positive effect on trust, by showing T-statistics value 3.960 which is greater than T-Table 1.96. Based on the data, it can be concluded that the better the *guanxi* (warm and friendly interpersonal relationships) established by conventional grocery stores in Tabanan with their customers, the higher the level of customer trust in these stores. This friendly demeanor and personal approach serve as a crucial foundation for building and strengthening customer trust. Consumer behaviour models suggest that purchasing decisions begin with **stimuli** from sources like products, prices, locations, and promotions. In Tabanan's conventional grocery stores, "**guanxi**" (**warm, friendly, and relationship-building interactions from the store owner**) acts as a crucial interpersonal stimulus. This social stimulus, though not always tangible, significantly influences consumer decision-making, particularly in direct interaction-based services like traditional grocery stores. The findings of this study also support the SOR Theory. Guanxi, as the stimulus, triggers the

formation of the organism-referring to the customer's internal psychological process in the form of trust. This research further corroborates previous studies by Wu (2020); Shen *et al.* (2020); Zhou (2022); Butt *et al.* (2020); Barbalet (2021)

4.4 H4: Service quality has a positive and significant effect on trust

Hypothesis testing revealed a statistically significant positive influence of *guanxi* on trust. This finding suggests that enhanced service quality provided by traditional grocery stores in Tabanan correlates with an increase in customer trust. Consumer behavior theory posits that the purchasing decision process initiates with consumer exposure to stimuli. In this context, the friendliness of sellers (people) and the consistency of service (process) observed in traditional grocery stores in Tabanan represent tangible manifestations of service quality, acting as initial stimuli for consumers. These results corroborate previous research by Widagdo & Ali (2022), Sahri & Sukma (2024), Erpurini *et al.* (2022), and Riyani (2021), all of which similarly demonstrate a positive and significant relationship between service quality and trust.

4.5 H5: Trust has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention.

Hypothesis testing confirms that trust significantly and positively influences repurchase intention, shown on p-value 0.000 which is lower than 0.05 and T-statistics value 4.595 which is greater than 1.96. This means that as customer trust in traditional grocery stores in Tabanan increases, so does their intention to make repeat purchases. Customers who believe these stores are consistently available and reliable feel secure and comfortable in meeting their daily needs. This trust is built on consistent service, easy access, product availability, and an emotional bond fostered by price flexibility and direct bargaining, all of which assure customers that the store will always meet their expectations.

In consumer behavior, trust acts as a crucial psychological response to various stimuli, including price, product, location, promotion, and service elements like "people" and "process." When customers experience consistent service, reliable sellers, and readily available products, this positive psychological response—trust—is formed. This trust then strongly influences their evaluation of the store and becomes a key determinant of repurchase intention. This finding aligns with the SOR theory, where trust (organism) is an internal psychological response to stimuli (such as "*guanxi*" and service quality), subsequently driving the behavioral response of repurchase intention. These results are further supported by prior research from Wang *et al.* (2022), Harrigan *et al.* (2021), Santo and Marques (2022), Qalati *et al.* (2021), Manzoor *et al.* (2020), and Wanda and Susanto (2024), all of whom affirm the positive and significant effect of trust on repurchase intention.

4.6 H6: Trust positively and significantly mediates the effect of *guanxi* on repurchase intention.

Hypothesis testing demonstrates that trust significantly and positively mediates the indirect influence of *guanxi* on repurchase intention. This is proven by the result of statistical test showing that p-value 0.000 which is lower than 0.05 and

T-statistics value 2.953 that greater than 1.96. This indicates that as guanxi improves and customers develop higher levels of trust, their repurchase intention at traditional grocery stores in Tabanan will increase. The warm interactions and emotional closeness fostered by friendly store owners, representing guanxi, build customer trust by assuring them of consistent service and product availability. This high level of trust, reinforced by flexible pricing through bargaining, makes customers feel secure and comfortable, ultimately driving their decision to make repeat purchases. Thus, trust serves as a vital mediator, translating good social relationships into customer loyalty.

This finding aligns with the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory in consumer behavior, where guanxi or social interaction acts as a stimulus, leading to the psychological response of trust or organism, which in turn drives the behavioral response of repurchase intention. This is consistent with previous research by Wu (2020), Wu et al. (2021), Daud & Simamora (2023), Bhattacharya et al. (2023), and Ilhamalimy et al. (2021), all of whom highlight trust's mediating role between guanxi and repurchase intention. This underscores the universal importance of social relationships in fostering customer loyalty, even in diverse contexts like traditional grocery stores in Tabanan compared to social commerce platforms.

4.7 H7: Trust positively and significantly mediates the effect of service quality on repurchase intention

Hypothesis testing demonstrates that trust significantly and positively mediates the indirect influence of service quality on repurchase intention. This is proven by the result of statistical test showing that p-value 0.000 which is lower than 0.05 and T-statistics value 3.540 that greater than 1.96. This means that as the service quality provided by traditional grocery stores in Tabanan improves and customers develop higher levels of trust, their intention to make repeat purchases will also increase. From a consumer behavior perspective, perceived service quality such as seller friendliness and easy transactions acts as a stimulus that customers process. This psychological processing, influenced by individual characteristics and past experiences, builds trust. This trust then becomes a crucial cognitive factor that drives the decision to repurchase. This finding aligns with the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory, where positive perceptions of service quality as stimulus lead to the formation of trust or organism, which in turn drives repurchase intention as response. This results are consistent with previous research by Rahman & Supriadi (2022), Saidani et al. (2019), Tasya & Dwiyanto (2022), and Alamsyah (2018), all of whom highlight trust's essential mediating role between service quality and repurchase intention across various retail contexts.

5. Conclusion

The Findings of this research clearly indicate that guanxi and service quality both exert a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention. Furthermore, both guanxi and service quality also demonstrate a positive and significant effect on trust. Most importantly, the research established that trust role as a significant mediator, positively and significantly channeling the indirect effect of both guanxi

and service quality towards increasing repurchase intention. This means that when traditional grocery stores in Tabanan improve their service quality and foster stronger personal relationship with customers, it not only directly encourages repurchased, but also leads to higher levels of trust, which in turn further drives customers to return for future purchases.

These findings are highly relevant to the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory and general principles of consumer behavior. In this framework, service quality and guanxi serve as the initial stimuli received by consumers. These external cues are then processed by the consumer, leading to an internal psychological state or organism, which in this study is trust. A strong sense of trust, cultivated through positive interactions and reliable service, then directly influences the desired response from the consumer: increased repurchase intention. Therefore, the research demonstrates that by focusing on improving the "stimuli" of service quality and guanxi, traditional grocery stores can directly influence repurchase intention and also effectively influence the "organism" of trust, ultimately amplifying the "response" of sustained customer loyalty and increasing repurchase intention.

This study, while conducted according to scientific procedures, has limitations. Firstly, it only surveyed customers of traditional grocery stores in Tabanan, using a mix of online and offline questionnaires, meaning the findings may not be generalizable to all customers across Bali Province. Secondly, the research employed a cross-sectional method, collecting data at a single point in time. This approach prevents the observation of changes or variable dynamics over time, which a more robust longitudinal study, capable of analyzing developments and causal relationships in greater depth, would have allowed.

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