

THE INFLUENCE OF INVENTORY MANAGEMENT ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: A CASE STUDY OF MUKWANO GROUP OF COMPANIES

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DECLARATION

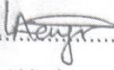
I, SIFA KUBALEZAGA NADEGE hereby declare that this Research Report has been written by me and has never been submitted in for any award of degree in this University or any other institution of higher learning. All information presented is as a result of my personal work and where references have been used, due acknowledgement has been made.

Signed 

Date.....09/04/2026.....

APPROVAL

This is to certify that this research dissertation titled "The influence of inventory management on customer satisfaction. A case study of mukwano group of companies" has been written under my supervision and is now ready for submission with my approval

Signature..........

Date.....09/04/2026.....

Ms Lorraine Akinyi

DEDICATION

The current study has been made in honor of my parents who have been a constant source of morality, spirituality, and finance through all phases of my academic pursuits. Their encouragement, sacrifices, and support have immensely helped me become a better scholar.

I dedicate my work to my father Mr. Pierre Kubalezaga Kubali and mother Mrs. Safi Longi Christine for the support they gave me during my studies.

I also take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my mentor who provided immense guidance and encouragement during the research period. Your support and encouragement have immensely contributed to the completion of the current study. I pray to Allah Almighty to bless you immensely for your support and kindness.

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My sincere gratitude goes to the Lord Almighty for His guidance, mercy, and grace that made it possible for me to accomplish this report and to remain healthy during all the years I have been pursuing my studies. None of these would be possible without His blessings.

I express my deepest appreciation to Ms. Lorraine Akinyi, my supervisor, who gave me her guidance and motivation in completing this report. Her valuable advice, patience, and commitment greatly contributed to the successful completion of this work.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of inventory management on customer satisfaction at Mukwano Group of Companies. The general objective was to assess the effect of inventory management practices on customer satisfaction, guided by three specific objectives: to examine the effect of inventory accuracy on customer satisfaction, to assess the effect of inventory order fulfillment and product availability on customer satisfaction, and to evaluate the impact of inventory control practices on customer satisfaction.

A descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were collected at one point in time from a sample of 80 respondents selected from a population of 100, determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table. The subjects who participated in this study included logistics and warehousing workers, production and supply chain workers, and retail customers. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were employed. Data collected through the use of structured questionnaires was classified as quantitative, whereas data collected through interviews with managers and supervisors were classified as qualitative. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, using SPSS software.

From the findings of the research, it is evident that an accurate inventory helps increase customer satisfaction by ensuring the availability of goods, reducing incidences of out-of-stock situations, receiving fewer complains, and completing orders reliably. It is also worth noting that one of the discoveries from this study is the presence of a positive relationship between the completion of orders on time, product availability, and customer satisfaction. Order delays and stockouts have been found to affect customer satisfaction and loyalty negatively.

In addition, it was noted that effective inventory management was one of the key elements that played a vital role in influencing customer satisfaction. In particular, the study recommended the use of computerized inventory management techniques, improved techniques of predicting demand, conducting inventory audits, as well as improving the level of training for the employees. These findings contribute to the existing literature on the impact of inventory management on customer satisfaction in Uganda.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, problem statement, objectives, research questions, scope, and significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

In general, inventory management is crucial for organizations because it ensures proper inventory control, resulting in the achievement of the desired levels of inventory and the ability to satisfy customers (Kumar & Rajesh, 2021). The inventory control process includes inventory accuracy, inventory turnover, and other procedures aimed at improving performance and providing effective services (Agyabeng-Mensah et al., 2020). As highlighted by Saha and Ray (2022), companies around the world have increasingly adopted new technologies, including real-time tracking and forecasting systems, to ensure that they achieve low levels of stockout and increase the proportion of orders fulfilled.

In terms of the continent as a whole, businesses operating in Africa have started to realize the significance of inventory control in order to maintain efficiency and competitiveness. Recent research indicates that numerous businesses in Africa are using modern inventory control techniques to deal with issues related to fluctuating demand, interruptions in the supply chain, and increased logistical expenses (Bediako et al., 2023). In the case of businesses based in nations like South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya, they are employing inventory optimization software that enhances their stock control and minimizes the risk of excessive stocks and stockouts, thereby affecting consumer confidence and loyalty.

East African organizations have increased their efforts in inventory management to increase efficiency and service level in an environment characterized by competition. According to research findings, East African organizations have embraced practices such as demand forecasting, inventory management computer software and just in time practices as part of strategies meant to improve the availability and service level provided by businesses (Zhang et al., 2021). Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda in particular have experienced rapid growth in both manufacturing and retail sectors. In this respect, organizations have recognized the importance of inventory management in reducing costs and increasing customer satisfaction (Rahman, 2022).

Inventory management has been established as an essential aspect for businesses in Uganda in the manufacturing and distribution sectors. As stated by Mogale (2023), organizations in Uganda have encountered issues including unreliable supply chain networks, varying demand rates, and limited use of technology, leading to shortages and delays. Nevertheless, successful organizations have come to realize the significance of effective inventory management.

For individual businesses, the Mukwano Group of Companies, which is one of the largest manufacturers and distributors in Uganda, depends on effective inventory management to preserve its competitive advantage in the market. As one of the companies that have diversified into manufacturing products for various industries, including edible oil, detergents, and packed products, Mukwano requires proper stock control and record-keeping.

Customer satisfaction goes hand in hand with the efficiency of inventory management since prompt supply of goods, minimization of stock-outs, and proper order delivery improve customer satisfaction (Agyabeng-Mensah et al., 2020). In the ever-growing competition in the manufacturing industry, it will be imperative for the Mukwano Group of Companies to implement effective strategies in inventory management so as to not only satisfy customers' demands but also remain market leaders. Thus, the present study aims at investigating how inventory management affects customer satisfaction in Mukwano Group of Companies.

1.2 Problem Statement

Inventory management and its impact on customer satisfaction has been identified as a major challenge by many manufacturing and distribution firms in Uganda, such as Mukwano Group of Companies. Although inventory management has been recognized as an important area, it has continued to suffer from a number of problems like poor records, low inventory turnover, and poor control measures. Poor record keeping results in overstocking or under stocking, which consequently causes high inventory costs and stock out situations, respectively, culminating into dissatisfied customers (Okello et al., 2021). Similarly, poor control measures may be linked to the poor performance in terms of inventory, while poor inventory turnover results in the obsolescence of goods. Given that businesses operate in highly competitive markets today, there is no doubt that there is need to conduct research on the extent to which inventory management practices have influenced customer satisfaction in Mukwano Group of Companies.

1.3 General objective of the study

The purpose of this study was to assess the effect of inventory management on customer satisfaction at Mukwano Group of Companies.

1.4 Specific objectives

- i. To examine the effect of inventory accuracy on customer satisfaction at Mukwano Group of Companies.
- ii. To assess the effect of inventory order fulfillment and availability on customer satisfaction at Mukwano Group of Companies.
- iii. To assess inventory control practices and customer satisfaction at Mukwano Group of Companies.

1.5 Research questions

- i. What is the effect of inventory accuracy on customer satisfaction at Mukwano Group of Companies?
- ii. What is the effect of inventory order fulfillment and availability on customer satisfaction at Mukwano Group of Companies?
- iii. How do inventory control practices influence customer satisfaction at Mukwano Group of Companies?

1.6 Scope of the study

1.6.1 Subject scope

The study focused on inventory management dimensions specifically inventory accuracy, inventory turnover, and inventory control practices and their influence on customer satisfaction at Mukwano Group of Companies. Through analysis of these dimensions, the study managed to give insight as to what inventory practices would best suit customers' needs, ensure minimum stockout levels and timely delivery.

1.6.2 Geographic scope

The study was undertaken in Mukwano Group of Companies in Kampala, Uganda. This firm is known to be among the leading manufacturing companies in this region. Hence it was appropriate to conduct an analysis of its inventory practices in order to gauge their effects on customers' satisfaction. Reason for choosing Mukwano Group is its key role in Uganda's manufacturing industry.

1.6.3 Time scope

This research considered the time frame between 2020 and 2025. The chosen time frame is ideal since it takes into account recent changes in the area of inventory management and customers' satisfaction both before, during, and after the coronavirus pandemic that affected supply chains globally. Additionally, including

employees who have worked for three years allows respondents to have enough knowledge about inventory management.

1.7 Significance of the study

The research is important because of many reasons. Firstly, it will bring out the effects that can be derived from inventory management activities such as efficiency, turnovers, and controls on customer satisfaction in manufacturing and distributing firms. This research will make firms understand the link between the two concepts, thus identifying weaknesses within their inventory management systems.

These results will help the managers of the Mukwano Group of Companies improve the processes regarding the company's inventory. Using the insights gained through the analysis of the information presented by the study, managers will be able to avoid stockouts and reduce the expenses on the inventory. Thus, customers will benefit greatly.

It is hoped that the results of the research will add up to academic knowledge and be helpful to other researchers working on supply chain management and customer satisfaction in Uganda and other parts of the world.

Finally, the research will be helpful to policymakers and practitioners in suggesting best practices in inventory management. The results from the research will help the policy makers in formulating policies related to inventory management within manufacturing firms, while the practitioners will benefit by using the information provided for their competitive advantage in the market place.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

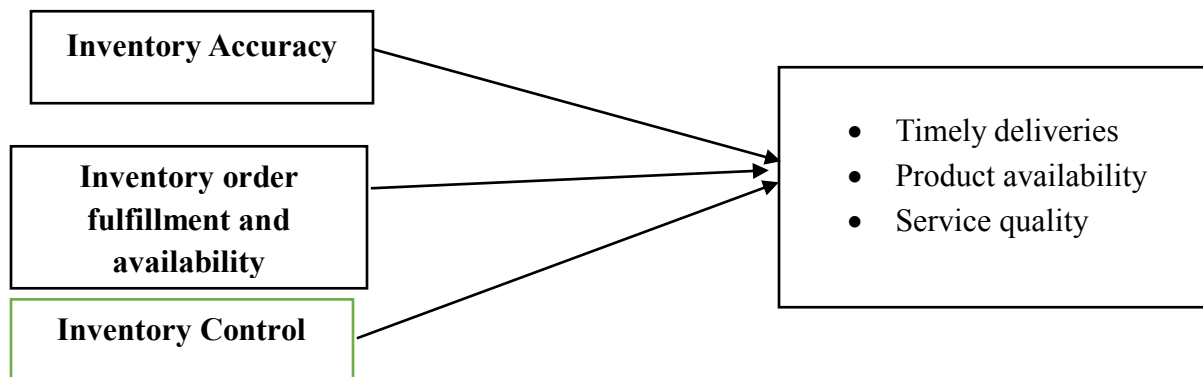
2.0 Introduction

A summary and critique of literature concerning inventory management and its effect on customer satisfaction is discussed in this chapter. Literature is reviewed to achieve the study's objectives through discussion of empirical and theoretical literature relevant to inventory management, inventory turnover, and inventory control in relation to customer satisfaction. The conceptual framework depicting the link between independent and dependent variables is the first part of this chapter; then comes the theoretical framework behind the study. From this chapter, knowledge gaps are revealed; besides, understanding how efficient inventory management contributes to increased customer satisfaction is established.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Independent variable

Inventory management



Source: Adapted from Richard (2024) and modified by the researcher

2.2 Theoretical framework

The basis for this research is the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory formulated by Barney (1991). The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory states that the organizational resources and capabilities held within an organization constitute the main drivers of competitive advantage and high organizational performance. This theory suggests that companies which have been successful at securing, developing, and exploiting VRIN resources would tend to perform better in the long run. Within this framework, efficient inventory management system can be regarded as one of the important resources held by organizations (Barney, 1991).

As far as this study is concerned, inventory accuracy is one of those organizational capabilities that fit well into the RBV model because it uses the firm's internal capabilities to achieve better results. With accurate information, companies can order and restock their products based on logical decisions, thus preventing overstock and shortage. As a result, companies become more responsive and control the situation effectively; this way, they are able to meet customer needs faster, which helps generate competitive advantages (Wernerfelt, 1984).

In the same way, inventory turnover can be analyzed using the resource-based view, since it is a measure of the extent to which the business is able to effectively exploit its inventory resources in order to realize benefits. This is because high inventory turnover implies effective working capital management and rapid response to changes in market demands; which are capabilities that are valuable and hard-to-imitate. Businesses with optimal inventory turnovers show high levels of operational flexibility; which improves customer satisfaction and performance (Grant, 1991).

Furthermore, the practice of controlling inventories, including reorder point setting, safety stock, and stock movement analysis is also strategic in nature and enables businesses to conduct operations efficiently. They are used to keep inventory at optimal levels so as to strike a balance between cost efficiency and customer service. Using the resource-based view, organizations that effectively manage and combine

these controls create distinct operational advantages that are not easily imitated by competitors; thus, improving their results (Peteraf, 1993).

Thus, the concept of Resource-Based View theory is applied in this study based on the importance of inventory management skills such as accuracy, turnover, and controls in delivering customers' satisfaction. The management of such resources will be beneficial to the firm since the company will incur lower costs, improve its services, and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991).

2.3 The effect of inventory accuracy on customer satisfaction

Accurate inventory records have been found to be a determinant of product availability and timely delivery hence enhancing customer satisfaction in several empirical works. The studies conducted by Destro (2023), among others, reveal that inventory discrepancies in terms of the inventory records and the real situation on the ground often result in understocking and overstocking of products, making it difficult for the company to respond to the needs of its customers (Shabani et al., 2021). In the study conducted by Shabani et al. (2021) using data from stores, higher IRI was found to be associated with reduced sales performances as well as availability, translating to lower satisfaction levels for customers as those facing stock outs would feel dissatisfied with the services hence opt for other suppliers. Similarly, empirical evidence demonstrates that through cycle counting, reconciliation, and traceability of products, IRI can be minimized leading to increased availability of products and hence higher customer satisfaction levels.

There is also evidence through studies conducted in real-world settings that technologies that lead to better accuracy in inventory levels are associated with improved consumer performance. Multiple field studies have found that using item-level tracking and providing real-time access to inventory leads to much better accuracy levels, usually increasing from average pre-automation figures (60-80%) to 90% and above, and that such increases result in fewer stockouts, faster fulfillment, and improved order accuracy indices that customers perceive directly (Accenture/GS1 industry reports; Unhelkar, 2022). Quasi-experiments conducted in regard to RFID and

real-time technologies showed that firms employing these measures achieved much lower levels of out-of-stocks and higher customer satisfaction indicators, thus providing evidence of causality between inventory accuracy availability satisfaction (Unhelkar, 2022). The results of the technology research are relevant to Mukwano since they demonstrate that improving the accuracy of inventory records can help achieve better consumer service indices.

Contextual evidence derived from developing countries is an added advantage to the feasibility of the above-mentioned mechanisms in the developing country due to their prevalence in the environment. Several studies conducted on supply chains related to the provision of public health services and consumption in Africa have found that record errors, coupled with poor reconciliation processes, contribute to increased time lags and decreased perceived responsiveness, ultimately resulting in reduced satisfaction and trust in the suppliers (Business Perspectives, 2021). The above-mentioned empirical research was able to link survey results regarding customer satisfaction with objective stock levels using accurate record keeping as the mechanism for driving perceived satisfaction levels. In the case of the Mukwano Group of Companies, an FMCG distributor based in Uganda, the above-mentioned international evidence shows that enhanced accuracy of inventory records through proper accounting and use of specific technologies could enhance product availability and hence customer satisfaction/loyalty.

In summary, the academic literature on customer satisfaction highlights several organizational practices that act as moderators between inventory accuracy and customer satisfaction. Frequent cycle counting, training employees to ensure accuracy in their work, reconciliation with suppliers, and the ability to integrate POS with the main inventory system enhances the connection between increased accuracy and customers' gains (Destro, 2023). In other words, it is not enough for an organization simply to be accurate without processes that will help to translate the accuracy into quicker replenishment and proper order fulfillment. Hence, based on the above-mentioned information from the literature, the empirical evidence

indicates that the company should simultaneously implement measures aimed at measuring and decreasing the IRI, ensuring greater visibility through the use of POS and RFID, and coordinating replenishment and distribution processes.

2.4 Inventory order fulfillment and availability on customer satisfaction

Fulfillment of inventory orders and product availability are crucial factors affecting customer satisfaction, especially within fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industries. Numerous empirical studies demonstrate that high levels of fulfillment, characterized by the timeliness, precision, and efficiency of orders, greatly affect customer satisfaction by guaranteeing that customers get their products when they need them. If companies can ensure that their inventories are well managed, their orders are picked, packed, and delivered without delays, customers will experience quality service. Literature shows that good order fulfillment plays a crucial role in reducing stockouts and backorders, which play a pivotal role in improving satisfaction (Ubolo et al., 2024). Within an FMCG context, where products like those found in Mukwano's lines of goods are continuously required, fulfillment guarantees availability and convenience.

Additional empirical literature also indicates that the availability of products, or how available the products are to be purchased at any time, is positively correlated with high customer satisfaction levels. Availability is an indicator of effective supply chain management, accurate demand forecasting, and replenishment. Availability is viewed by customers as being synonymous with good customer service, especially in industries where the demand is constant and urgent. Empirical supply chain research indicates that organizations with high availability records experience increased fill rates, enhanced customer loyalty, and repeated customer purchases (WJARR, 2024). On the other hand, reduced availability or out-of-stock products frustrate customers, lower customer satisfaction, and encourage them to seek out rival firms. In this context, Mukwano must ensure that the availability of its edible and household products is constantly high.

Moreover, research indicates the risks associated with low order fulfillment responsiveness. High turnover or high demand situations notwithstanding, inefficiencies within the fulfillment process, such as long lead times for replenishment, delivery problems, and inefficient distributor communications, can lower customer satisfaction. Research conducted in emerging markets has found that fulfillment problems typically arise from issues with visibility of inventories, delays caused by suppliers, and lack of proper safety stock procedures (Breivik, 2019). When customers receive only part of an order or experience delay, they see the supplier as unreliable and thus are dissatisfied and unlikely to purchase again from them.

On the other hand, empirical evidence indicates that overstocking and over-availability that do not match demand could also damage customer perceptions. In retail stores, high amounts of unsold products result in outdated products, overextended inventory space, and heavy discounting; all these elements could potentially diminish perceptions of quality. According to empirical research, customer dissatisfaction is more likely in companies that lack efficient management of freshness, relevancy, and quality control of products in stock (Rodriguez et al., 2024). As such, availability should be managed strategically in order to ensure that relevant products arrive on time.

From empirical interventions, it is evident that the incorporation of technology in the fulfillment process has led to an increase in the level of customer satisfaction. Companies that employ automated systems for managing their inventories and making predictions for demand have shown remarkable results regarding accuracy, order cycle times, and consistency in stocks. From the analysis of empirical intervention in FMCGs and retail, customer satisfaction is higher due to reliability and transparency (WJARR, 2024). For Mukwano, incorporation of technology would lead to accurate order fulfillment.

According to research, the successful delivery of order fulfillment and availability of products are not merely operational tasks but also strategic initiatives that help in contributing to overall customer satisfaction. Companies capable of managing these two components through accurate forecasting, replenishment, and order fulfillment processes can easily obtain a high degree of customer satisfaction and loyalty. As far as Mukwano is concerned, it becomes imperative on the company's part to keep track of its success rate when it comes to order fulfillment and product availability.

2.5 Inventory control practices and customer satisfaction

Empirical studies on inventory control practices (cycle counting, safety stock policies, reorder point systems, supplier coordination, and technological controls) consistently find that robust control systems lead to higher service levels and better customer satisfaction. Research done on retail and distribution suggests that the firms implementing cycle counting and replenishment systems in an orderly manner witness lesser instances of stockout and order accuracy resulting into better customer reliability (Shabani et al., 2021). Multi-channel retailers can benefit from such research which highlights that centralized approach towards inventory management using POS, forecasting, and reconciliations generates better customer satisfaction compared to decentralized approach (Unhelkar, 2022).

There are corroborating studies in developing countries' situations as well as in the public sector's supply chains, which highlight that certain control activities are more crucial in the situations with higher logistical restrictions. Such activities include inventory control actions like reconciling inventory periodically with vendors, bin location management, and appropriate safety stock determination, as highlighted by studies conducted in the Nigerian Public Health supply chain and FMCG companies. These help minimize stockout problems and maximize customer/user satisfaction (Linuwih, 2024). Studies evaluating interventions in specific cases, such as changing from periodic to focused cycle counting and root cause analysis of discrepancies, tend to produce quick results, owing to the fact that the resources are concentrated on the areas with high discrepancies (Destro, 2023).

Technology application in control strategy implementation produces some empirical findings. It has been found through studies that the impact of ERP implementation, barcodes/RFIDs, and automatic reorder notifications on order accuracy and delivery times is positive because they reduce the occurrence of errors and quicken deliveries. These improve customer satisfaction, reducing complaints (Unhelkar, 2024). Nevertheless, empirical research suggests that there must be specific factors for companies to reap positive outcomes from their investment in technology. The success of the technology application requires process discipline, training, and supplier cooperation.

As per the empirical literature, some of the control measures that could be implemented by the Mukwano Group of Companies include performing cycle counts often in the regions where there is more discrepancy, connecting the data from POS and inventory to the centralized planning division, tagging of selected goods, and improving the supplier reconciliation process. As per the empirical literature, the above-listed combination of control measures will lead to decreased discrepancies in inventory records, less stock-out situations, reduced lead times, and accurate orders. All these factors are seen as better service quality by the customers and thus improve their satisfaction and loyalty (Shabani et al., 2021).

In addition, empirical researches have proven that the success of the inventory management process affects not only the quality of service delivery but also the overall experience of customers in manufacturing and logistics industries. As for the examples of Indian manufacturing firms, Kumar and Rajesh (2021) discovered that companies that used real-time inventory management systems and combined it with safety stock policies recorded 30% fewer orders as they had more products in their stock to fulfill customers' needs; therefore, the rate of customer retention increased. As far as the operations of FMCG firms in African countries were concerned, Agyapong et al. (2023) noted that order point mechanisms that were applied to meet customer demands rather than to deliver goods based on forecasted data made delivery cycles shorter and improved customer satisfaction rates.

Also, it has been empirically proven that supplier coordination plays a pivotal part in ensuring successful results of inventory control. For instance, according to the research by Okafor and Chukwu (2022), in relation to beverage supply chains within Nigeria, the use of supplier-controlled inventory systems and vendor-supported forecasting helps to minimize any interruptions in supply and avoid stock mismatches, which enhances customer satisfaction and improves the availability of products. Likewise, in East Africa, the process of supplier coordination for the purpose of establishing reorder points and arranging deliveries ensures that emergency orders are avoided, with logistic expenses being reduced while providing customers with steady supply and timely deliveries (Mutiso & Wanyoike, 2024).

Lastly, new research emphasizes the need for adequate training of employees and process discipline in realizing all the gains offered by inventory management software. According to Bose and Prasad (2023), companies that used barcode/RFID technology along with regular training of their employees regarding reconciliation techniques were able to experience almost twice the decline in order discrepancies when compared to those that used only the technology. Empirical evidence from Ugandan manufacturing firms shows that process discipline, such as having a cycle-counting routine and procedures for identifying and resolving discrepancies, enhances the accuracy of inventory records and, therefore, customer orders (Kaggwa et al., 2024). For companies like the Mukwano Group of Companies, adopting technology together with training may offer maximum value to customer satisfaction.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the methodology that was used in conducting the research was presented. This included research design, target population for the research, sampling procedures, data collection methods and tools, and data analysis procedures.

3.2 Research design

The methodology employed a descriptive research approach that combined qualitative and quantitative research designs. This research design was used since information concerning the inventory management practice and customer satisfaction was gathered at only one point in time. The quantitative research design assisted in determining the connection between inventory management and customer satisfaction, whereas the qualitative research design enabled the researcher to gain deep insights into the opinions of respondents about inventory management and its impact on customer satisfaction in Mukwano Group of Companies.

3.3 Study population

The research was conducted among a target population made up of direct workers and customers in the Mukwano Group of Companies. As indicated by the official profile of the company, Mukwano had more than 3,000 direct workers in its operations within Uganda (Mukwano Group of Companies, 2024). Among the total number of employees, the research identified two essential departments that are vital in the process of product transportation from production to the delivery point, namely the logistics and warehousing department and production and supply chain management. Apart from the employees, the other population of interest involved the retail

customers who engaged in buying and distributing Mukwano products through supermarkets, shops, and other local retailers.

3.4 Sample size

Considering the vast number of bases through which Mukwano Group of Companies operates, a sample size of 80 participants was chosen from a population of 100 participants via the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. Respondents were sampled from relevant groups proportionately. Thirty-two were sampled from the logistics and warehousing employees, 24 from the production and supply chain employees, and 24 retail customers. These samples gave both employee and customer views on the issues being investigated, making them relevant to the Mukwano operational environment.

3.5 Sampling techniques and procedures

Sampling approaches used in the study included probability and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, simple random sampling approach was adopted whereby the researchers randomly chose employees from logistics and production departments. The aim was to give every individual an equal opportunity of selection. For non-probability sampling, purposive sampling approach was adopted. This involved selection of customers and company staff members who had adequate knowledge on inventory management practices.

3.6 Methods of collecting data

Data collection approaches applied in the study included qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data was collected using structured questionnaires while qualitative data was collected through interviews.

3.6.1 Questionnaire method

A questionnaire approach was adopted to gather the quantitative information from both staff members and clients. The questionnaire approach was chosen as it enabled the collection of data that could be easily coded for analysis. Moreover, it was cost-effective as it saved both time and money, and respondents could fill out the questionnaires at their own convenience.

3.6.2 Interview method

The interviewees were the managers and supervisors from both the logistics department and the supply chain department. Through interviews, more detailed information was acquired regarding inventory control system and stock control system, as well as their impact on the level of customer satisfaction with respect to availability, delivery times, and product quality.

3.7 Data collection instruments

3.7.1 Questionnaire

Data collection was done by use of a structured questionnaire that had questions of open and closed nature. Closed questions aided quantitative data analysis while open questions gave room for opinion expression.

3.7.2 Interview guide

The researcher also created an interview guide that was used while conducting interviews with managers and supervisors, making sure that the guide included all the necessary issues regarding inventory management and customer satisfaction.

3.8 Procedure of data collection

The following introductory letter from Uganda Christian University was submitted to the Mukwano Group of Companies to seek permission to carry out the research. After receiving permission, the questionnaires were issued to the respondents selected, and

collected after a period of one week. The interviews were carried out in accordance with the set time schedule for convenience.

3.9 Data analysis

The data collected was coded for easy analysis. The quantitative data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics, which include frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings were presented using graphs and charts.

On the other hand, qualitative data collected through interviews was thematically analyzed by grouping the responses according to different themes.

3.10 Limitations of the study

Even though the researcher attempted to undertake an exhaustive investigation, the following constraints were faced:

Lack of access to information. Some of the data relating to inventory management at Mukwano Group of Companies was classified as confidential, hence hindering its accessibility.

Time limitation. The research took place under stringent time limitations, thereby limiting the ability to collect adequate data.

Respondent bias. Some of the respondents supplied socially desirable responses instead of their true opinions.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses, analyzes, and interprets the results obtained from the study entitled “Effect of Inventory Management on Customers’ Satisfaction: Case Study at Mukwano Group of Companies.” Data for the study were obtained through the use of structured questionnaires among the employees of Mukwano Group of Companies. The analyses start by looking into the response rate, then move to the demographics of the participants, and finally to the descriptive statistics.

4.2 Response rate

A total of 80 questionnaires were distributed to employees of Mukwano Group of Companies. Out of these, 70 were returned fully completed, representing a response rate of 87.5%.

Table 4.1: Response rate

Description	Number	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires distributed	80	100
Questionnaires returned	70	87.5
Questionnaires not returned	10	12.5

Source: Field Data (2026)

The response rate of 87.5% is considered excellent and adequate for statistical analysis. It indicates that the findings are reliable and representative of the study population.

4.3 Demographic characteristics of respondents (N = 70)

4.3.1 Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	32	45.7
Female	38	54.3
Total	70	100

The results show that 54.3% of respondents were female, while 45.7% were male. This indicates a slightly higher female representation in the study.

4.3.2 Age group

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
21-30 years	22	31.4
31-40 years	20	28.6
41-50 years	23	32.9
Above 50 years	5	7.1
Total	70	100

The majority of respondents (32.9%) were aged 41-50 years, followed by 21-30 years (31.4%). This suggests that most employees are mature and experienced individuals capable of understanding inventory management systems.

4.3.3 Level of education

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Secondary	2	2.9
Certificate	20	28.6
Diploma	30	42.9
Bachelor's	15	21.4
Master's	3	4.2
Total	70	100

Most respondents (42.9%) hold a Diploma qualification, indicating that employees possess sufficient academic background to understand inventory processes and customer service systems.

4.3.4 Department of Respondents

Department	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Procurement	5	7.1
Production	10	14.3
Warehousing	10	14.3
Sales/Marketing	30	42.9
Customer Service	15	21.4
Total	70	100

As shown in the table below, the distribution of participants based on their departments in the firm is illustrated. There are a total of 70 participants, and the highest number of participants belong to the Sales/Marketing department, representing 30 people or 42.9%. It means that almost half of the participants are engaged in income generation processes for the organization through product sales, service promotion, and relationship maintenance. Their insights are necessary to understand elements of the research concerning the firm's performance and customer relations.

After the Sales/Marketing group, Customer Service accounts for 15 respondents, accounting for 21.4% of the total population. These respondents will be instrumental in ensuring clients' satisfaction and in resolving any issues or complaints. Having respondents from this department will allow the research to determine how organizational activities can impact the experience of end users, possibly affecting the performance results.

Both Production and Warehousing will have 10 respondents each, or 14.3% of the total sample size. The production department's contribution lies in the understanding of how the product is created within the organization. Likewise, the warehousing

department's involvement will help understand the process of managing and storing goods or products within the organization. These respondents will be essential when researching the factors influencing organizational performance.

Lastly, the Procurement department has the least number of respondents, which amounts to only 5 respondents, representing 7.1% of the entire sample size. The procurement team is involved in securing the raw materials, interacting with the suppliers, and controlling costs. Despite having fewer numbers compared to other departments, the information provided by them is equally important in knowing how the acquisition of resources impacts the operations of the organization.

4.3.5 Years of working experience

Years of Service	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-5 years	24	34.3
6-10 years	40	57.1
Above 10 years	6	8.6
Total	70	100

As far as years of working experience is concerned, it appears that the largest number of the participants in the research, that is, 57.1% (40 out of 70 individuals), has experience ranging from 6 to 10 years, 34.3% (24 people) have worked at organizations within 1 to 5 years, whereas only 8.6% (6 respondents) have experience in excess of 10 years. Hence, it can be seen that most of the respondents are moderate professionals who possess an adequate knowledge about the organizational context in which they work but do not have much organizational tenure. In this connection, it should be noted that the results of the current research have been generated by moderately experienced professionals having sufficient organizational insight to voice out their opinions about the organization.

4.4 Inventory Accuracy and Customer Satisfaction

Table 4.2: Inventory Accuracy (N = 70)

Statement	SD f (%)	D f (%)	NS f (%)	A f (%)	SA f (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
Accurate inventory records ensure timely product availability	2 (2.9%)	3 (4.3%)	5 (7.1%)	25 (35.7%)	35 (50.0%)	4.26	0.89
Inventory accuracy reduces customer complaints	3 (4.3%)	4 (5.7%)	6 (8.6%)	27 (38.6%)	30 (42.9%)	4.10	0.95
Accurate stock levels help avoid stockouts	2 (2.9%)	3 (4.3%)	4 (5.7%)	28 (40.0%)	33 (47.1%)	4.24	0.87
Proper inventory tracking enables quick response	1 (1.4%)	4 (5.7%)	5 (7.1%)	29 (41.4%)	31 (44.3%)	4.21	0.82
Inventory accuracy improves order reliability	2 (2.9%)	2 (2.9%)	6 (8.6%)	30 (42.9%)	30 (42.9%)	4.20	0.84
Mistakes in inventory records negatively affect customers	1 (1.4%)	3 (4.3%)	4 (5.7%)	24 (34.3%)	38 (54.3%)	4.36	0.78

Source: Field data 2026

Based on the results shown in Table 4.2, it is evident that inventory data plays an important role in the provision of timely availability of products. The percentage agreement for this statement is at 85.7%, with 35.7% agreement and 50.0% strong agreement, providing a mean of 4.26 and standard deviation of 0.89. This means that through having accurate inventory information, businesses will be able to offer their products to the customer at appropriate times, ensuring efficiency and reducing any form of delay.

The accuracy of inventories is yet another factor that contributes to reducing customer complaints. Approximately 38.6% of the respondents answered in affirmative and 42.9% answered strongly in agreement, thereby giving a mean value of 4.10, with a slightly higher standard deviation value of 0.95. This reveals the importance of maintaining accuracy of stock as it will result in fewer mistakes during order processing, thereby ensuring customer satisfaction. It is quite clear that there is some level of understanding regarding the significance of maintaining stock accuracy amongst the organizations' employees.

The importance of having accurate stock levels is that it helps prevent stockouts, which is shown by the average value of 4.24 and the standard deviation of 0.87. Approximately 47.1% of the participants strongly agreed that maintaining accurate stock records does not lead to stockout conditions, whereas 40% of them agreed. This shows that if an organization has the ability to control its inventory well, it will always ensure there is a sufficient amount of stock available at any time.

Fourthly, correct inventory management aids in achieving fast responses and reliable ordering, but any errors in recording will hurt the consumers. The mean values fall within the range of 4.20 to 4.36, whereas the standard deviations are below 1, which means there is high agreement among the respondents. In essence, most of the respondents agreed that making any errors in the inventory will make customers unhappy, but correct inventory management can result in fast responses and reliable ordering.

4.5 Inventory order fulfillment and availability

Table 4.3: Order Fulfillment and Availability (N = 70)

Statement	SD f (%)	D f (%)	NS f (%)	A f (%)	SA f (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
Timely order fulfillment enhances satisfaction	2 (2.9%)	3 (4.3%)	5 (7.1%)	26 (37.1%)	34 (48.6%)	4.24	0.88
Product availability maintains customer loyalty	1 (1.4%)	3 (4.3%)	6 (8.6%)	28 (40.0%)	32 (45.7%)	4.24	0.83
Delays reduce customer satisfaction	2 (2.9%)	2 (2.9%)	5 (7.1%)	25 (35.7%)	36 (51.4%)	4.30	0.81
Adequate inventory ensures right products on time	2 (2.9%)	4 (5.7%)	4 (5.7%)	29 (41.4%)	31 (44.3%)	4.19	0.90
Efficient order processing reduces lead time	3 (4.3%)	4 (5.7%)	6 (8.6%)	27 (38.6%)	30 (42.9%)	4.10	0.95
Frequent stockouts reduce customer trust	1 (1.4%)	3 (4.3%)	4 (5.7%)	26 (37.1%)	36 (51.4%)	4.33	0.80

Source: Field data 2026

It is clear from the information contained in Table 4.3 that order fulfillment in good time contributes to increased customer satisfaction. This can be inferred from the fact that 85.7% of the respondents indicated their agreement with this statement. On the other hand, there was only 7.2% of those who indicated disagreement with this assertion. The fact that the average rating was 4.24 and the standard deviation was 0.88 shows that there was high agreement among the respondents on this issue.

Product availability is important in retaining customers, according to the findings. This can be attributed to the fact that a majority of the respondents (85.7%) agreed with the notion that having products available in stock contributes to customer retention. Only a few respondents showed some disagreement with the statement, showing that it was reliable. This assertion can be backed up by the average of 4.24 and the standard deviation of 0.83.

Moreover, it is evident that the survey results underscore the detrimental effects of delay and stockouts on customer satisfaction and trust. Specifically, over 87% of respondents believe that delay negatively affects customer satisfaction. Likewise, more than 88.5% agree that stockouts lead to a loss of customer trust. The high mean score of 4.33 and the lower standard deviation of 0.80 for the stockout statement imply that these elements are fundamental in determining customer perceptions. Organizations that often experience delay and stockout problems face serious consequences in terms of tarnished reputation and customer mistrust.

Finally, the findings presented in Table 4 reveal that effective inventory management plays an important role in operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. For instance, respondents largely agree (mean = 4.19) that the organization should make sure that the correct products are available on time. Also, efficient order processing is important for operational efficiency (mean = 4.10). Although the standard deviations are comparatively higher (0.90 and 0.95), the findings suggest that effective inventory management systems are critical for business operations.

4.6 Inventory Control Practices and Customer Satisfaction

Table 4.4: Inventory Control Practices (N = 70)

Statement	SD f (%)	D f (%)	NS f (%)	A f (%)	SA f (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
Effective inventory control reduces stock shortages	2 (2.9%)	3 (4.3%)	5 (7.1%)	28 (40.0%)	32 (45.7%)	4.21	0.86
Proper storage improves product quality	1 (1.4%)	3 (4.3%)	6 (8.6%)	27 (38.6%)	33 (47.1%)	4.26	0.80
Efficient control minimizes delays	2 (2.9%)	4 (5.7%)	5 (7.1%)	29 (41.4%)	30 (42.9%)	4.16	0.89
Good control maintains consistent supply	1 (1.4%)	2 (2.9%)	5 (7.1%)	30 (42.9%)	32 (45.7%)	4.29	0.77
Systematic inventory checks improve service delivery	2 (2.9%)	3 (4.3%)	4 (5.7%)	28 (40.0%)	33 (47.1%)	4.24	0.84
Weak control leads to dissatisfaction	1 (1.4%)	2 (2.9%)	3 (4.3%)	25 (35.7%)	39 (55.7%)	4.41	0.75

Source: Primary data

From the table below, it is clear that there are significant results concerning the relationship between inventory control and customer satisfaction. First, it is evident that good inventory control helps avoid stock shortage cases. According to the data collected from 70 respondents, a mean value of 4.21 and a standard deviation of 0.86 suggest that 85.7% of the participants acknowledge the role of inventory control in avoiding stock shortage issues. It means that firms that have efficient inventory controls are likely to avoid such issues and consequently increase customer satisfaction.

Second, proper storage of goods is an essential practice in improving customer satisfaction. As per the results obtained from 70 respondents, the mean value of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 0.80 show that 85.7% of the participants agree that proper storage increases customer satisfaction. In other words, respondents believe that proper storage leads to higher quality standards for goods that ultimately enhance customer satisfaction.

The efficiency in inventory control also contributes to the minimization of delays and the maintenance of a constant supply. For example, 84.3% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that efficient inventory control minimizes delays, while 88.6% agreed or strongly agreed that good inventory control provides a constant supply, with the mean scores being 4.16 and 4.29, respectively. It should be noted that such results prove that the availability of goods is one of the main factors which determine the degree of customer satisfaction. A constant supply allows providing the product to customers without any breaks and making them satisfied.

Finally, it should be noted that there is evidence which proves the influence of inventory check-ups and inefficiency of inventory control on customer service. The majority (87.1%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that inventory check-ups improve service delivery, while 91.4% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that inefficient inventory control results in customer dissatisfaction. In addition, the highest mean (4.41) in the second case and very low standard deviation (0.75) clearly show the negative influence of poor inventory control on customer service quality.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a synopsis, analysis, conclusions, and recommendations for the research paper titled “The Effect of Inventory Management on Customer Satisfaction: A Case Study of Mukwano Group of Companies.” This chapter is informed by the results outlined in Chapter Four, which it interprets and provides recommendations on how to improve the inventory management process and increase customer satisfaction. These recommendations conform to the objectives of this research study, which include: (a) analyzing the effect of inventory accuracy on customer satisfaction, (b) examining the effect of order fulfillment and product availability on customer satisfaction, and (c) investigating the effect of inventory control practices on customer satisfaction.

5.2 Summary of findings

5.2.1 Inventory accuracy and customer satisfaction

The results of this research clearly indicate that the accuracy of the inventory greatly affects customer satisfaction. Most respondents stated that accurate inventory records would guarantee prompt product availability, lower number of customer complaints, minimize cases of stock out, allow for prompt handling of customer requests, and make orders reliable. On the other hand, inaccurate inventory records are believed to lower customer satisfaction.

This finding is consistent with the theoretical assertions by Christopher (2016), which state that accurate flow of information is crucial to the responsiveness of the supply chain process and its customer service capabilities. Kotler & Keller (2016) also argue that customer satisfaction depends greatly on whether or not the firm can provide promised service levels.

The results are in agreement with Heizer, Render, & Munson (2017), who assert that accurate records of inventories eliminate inefficient operations and help avoid discrepancies with stocks that cause customers' dissatisfaction. Thus, it is possible to state that the results received from the survey correspond with previous research findings proving that stock tracking and accurate inventory records are critical components of service quality and satisfaction.

5.2.2 Order Fulfillment and Product Availability

It was revealed that inventory order fulfillment and product availability have a significant impact on customer satisfaction. Specifically, customers stated that timely order fulfillment, high inventories, and product availability increase their loyalty and satisfaction. At the same time, delivery delays and stockouts correlate strongly with decreased trust and satisfaction of customers.

The results align with the findings identified by Mentzer et al. (2001), where order reliability and product availability have been seen as dimensions of logistics service quality. In addition to that, Stock & Lambert (2001) emphasize that proper order processing, managing inventory, and proper planning is key to improving logistics service quality.

The results also confirm the service quality framework provided by Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1988). The two dimensions of the service quality framework, according to the above authors, include reliability and responsiveness, both of which are important factors when talking about customer satisfaction. Proper and timely deliveries contribute towards reliability, thereby contributing towards customer trust and loyalty.

5.2.3 Inventory control practices and customer satisfaction

From the results of the study, it is evident that having proper inventory control measures like conducting stock counts and storage ensures increased customer satisfaction. This is because when there are good controls, there will be no stock shortage, product quality will improve due to proper storage and delivery of products

within the stipulated time. On the other hand, poor inventory controls are a key cause of customer dissatisfaction.

This finding is in agreement with Wild (2017) who claims that an effective inventory control system increases efficiency and eliminates service failure. Likewise, Bowersox, Closs, and Cooper (2013) posit that inventory control systems improve coordination in the supply chain and ensures delivery of products to customers.

5.3 Discussion of findings

In conclusion, the study confirms that the process of managing inventories positively affects customer satisfaction. Inventories being correctly managed provide customers with the needed products, thus increasing their satisfaction levels. This finding supports previous literature which holds that businesses having an accurate system of managing their inventories achieve high levels of customer satisfaction (Christopher, 2016).

Customers always want to receive the purchased goods on time and be assured that the product ordered is in stock. Failure in doing this results in loss of customers. This result corroborates the findings from Slack et al. (2019) who assert that having good systems of inventory and order management is very important in remaining competitive in the market.

Having adequate processes of inventory management including regular checking of inventory and ensuring proper storage contributes significantly to maintaining supply and quality of products. Inadequate inventory management as indicated in this study results in many problems including delays, lack of sufficient stock, and unsatisfied customers. This result agrees with the theories of supply chain management which posit that good internal controls of inventory management lower risks and improve services (Chopra & Meindl, 2020).

All in all, it can be seen from the above discussion that there is a clear relationship between the Mukwano Group of Companies' commitment to inventory systems and the level of customer satisfaction. The respondents in all departments recognize the link between the management of the inventory and service delivery.

5.4 Conclusions

From the study findings, it can be concluded that:

Keeping track of inventories increases the likelihood of having products in stock. This eliminates complaints, prevents out of stock problems, and ensures reliable orders.

Timeliness of order processing and availability of goods are crucial for maintaining high levels of customer trust and loyalty. Order delays and stock-outs negatively affect customer perceptions.

Regular inventory checks, efficient stock keeping, and adequate controls reduce any delays and help keep the quality of the products intact. Poor controls result in customer dissatisfaction.

It is shown in the study that the knowledge about inventory systems held by employees affects service delivery.

5.5 Recommendations

In light of the findings of the research, the following are the recommendations provided by the study:

Firstly, the company should introduce digital methods for managing its inventories, as well as conducting inventory audits to eliminate any discrepancies during the process of fulfilling orders to reduce customers' grievances.

Demand forecast should be used effectively along with inventory management techniques to ensure that the items are constantly supplied in the markets for satisfying customers' demands.

Checking the inventory, proper storage of goods, and monitoring the whole process are highly recommended since such actions will help ensure good quality of products and reduce the chances of shortages while improving customer service.

It is also suggested to conduct training sessions on a regular basis as they can increase the knowledge of staff regarding inventory management practices. Employees will realize how important their actions are to satisfying customers' needs.

Finally, introducing IT tools into the inventory management process would have a very positive effect on customer satisfaction.

5.6 Areas for Further Research

However, the scope of this study was limited to only inventory management and customer satisfaction. Further research may include:

1. The influence of inventory management on profitability and financial performance.
2. Multiple company comparisons of inventory management within a certain industry.
3. The influence of technology on accurate inventory management.
4. The effect of motivated employees on efficient inventory management and successful customer service results.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

My name is Sifa Kubalezaga Nadege, a student at Uganda Christian University pursuing a degree in Business Administration. My research project is entitled “The Effect of Inventory Management on Customer Satisfaction: A Study of the Mukwano Group of Companies.” This survey form is intended to collect data for purely academic reasons. Your answers will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes. I kindly request you to answer the questions honestly.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

(Please tick ✓ the appropriate box)

1. Gender of respondent

- Male Female

2. Age group

- 21-30 years 31-40 years 41-50 years Above 50 years

3. Level of education

- Primary Secondary Certificate
 Diploma Bachelor’s Master’s
 Others (specify)

4. Department/Category of respondent

- Procurement Production
 Warehousing Sales/Marketing
 Customer Service Other (specify).....

5. Number of years working with/related to Mukwano Group of Companies

- Less than 1 year 1-5 years 6-10 years Over 10 years

SECTION B: INFLUENCE OF INVENTORY MANAGEMENT ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Scale: 5 = Strongly Agree 4 = Agree 3 = Not Sure 2 = Disagree 1 = Strongly Disagree

A. Inventory accuracy on customer satisfaction

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Accurate inventory records ensure timely product availability for customers.					
Inventory accuracy reduces customer complaints related to missing or wrong items.					
Accurate stock levels help avoid stockouts, improving customer satisfaction.					
Proper inventory tracking enables quick response to customer demands.					
Inventory accuracy improves order reliability for customers.					
Mistakes in inventory records negatively affect customer experience.					

B Inventory order fulfillment and availability on customer satisfaction

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Timely order fulfillment enhances customer satisfaction at Mukwano.					
Product availability helps maintain customer loyalty.					
Delays in order fulfillment reduce customer satisfaction.					
Adequate inventory levels ensure customers receive the right products on time.					
Efficient order processing reduces lead time for customers.					
Frequent stockouts negatively affect customer trust in the company.					

C. Inventory control practices on customer satisfaction

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Effective inventory control reduces the risk of stock shortages.					
Use of proper storage and handling improves product quality delivered to customers.					
Efficient inventory control minimizes delays in meeting customer orders.					
Good inventory control practices help maintain consistent product supply.					
Systematic inventory checks improve service delivery to customers.					
Weak inventory control leads to customer dissatisfaction.					

Thank you