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## RETAIL LOCATION STRATEGIES IN EMERGING MARKET

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In recent years, the Ukrainian retail sector has emerged as one of the most dynamic and rapidly expanding segments of the national economy. This growth has been driven by increasing consumer demand, urbanization, and the gradual integration of global retail practices into the local market. Despite these developments, the

scientific exploration of retail logistics, particularly location strategy, remains relatively limited in Ukraine.

This gap in the literature and practice is explained by several key factors. Firstly, the modern retail infrastructure in Ukraine is still relatively young, with supermarket chains, convenience stores, and shopping malls gaining momentum only in the last two decades. Secondly, domestic retail chains often lack the analytical tools and institutional experience necessary for the optimal selection of store locations. Thirdly, many international chains entering the Ukrainian market are unfamiliar with regional consumer behavior, infrastructure constraints, and economic variability, requiring them to adapt their strategies to local conditions. Moreover, the retail landscape is highly volatile, influenced by geopolitical risks, economic shocks, and evolving digital technologies [1–3].

A significant indicator of Ukraine's potential in the global retail arena is its past ranking in the Global Retail Development Index (GRDI) developed by A.T. Kearney. The GRDI evaluates emerging markets based on factors such as market attractiveness, risk, and retail saturation. Ukraine's rise to 11th place in the index in 2004 (up from 20th in 2003) highlighted the country's growing relevance in the global retail investment landscape.

Although recent crises have affected investor confidence, the long-term structural indicators, including consumer population size, urban concentration, and digital payment adoption, still offer substantial growth opportunities for retailers who can navigate the complexity of the Ukrainian market.

In this context, one of the most critical strategic decisions for retail and service enterprises is the choice of store location. While elements such as pricing policy, product assortment, and promotional tactics can be adjusted flexibly over time, location decisions are largely irreversible and involve long-term capital investments. Location affects visibility, foot traffic, logistics efficiency, and access to target customer segments. A poor location choice can lead to suboptimal performance or even business failure, regardless of how well the store is managed. Therefore, the scientific modeling of retail location choice plays an indispensable role in strategic planning and

competitive positioning [2–4].

The problem of optimal store location has been widely studied in the fields of operations research, regional science, urban economics, and marketing analytics. Classical location theories such as the Hotelling model, Weber's least-cost theory, and the central place theory provided early theoretical foundations.

However, these models often rely on assumptions that may not reflect real-world retail environments, particularly in transitional and emerging markets like Ukraine. Over the past two decades, more sophisticated models have emerged that integrate consumer behavior, market competition, and spatial interaction. Among these, the Maximum Capture Model (MCM) and the Multiplicative Competitive Interaction (MCI) model have proven to be particularly useful in quantifying the attractiveness of retail outlets and forecasting consumer choice.

Recent research has emphasized the need to include behavioral and perceptual attributes in location models. One prominent approach is the integration of store-choice attributes into spatial competition frameworks. Colome and Serra (2003) proposed a revised Maximum Capture Model in which store attributes such as price perception, product variety, accessibility, and service quality are integrated using the MCI formulation. This allows for a more realistic estimation of market share and consumer capture potential under competitive conditions [1, 3, 5]. The MCI model assumes that the attractiveness of a store is a multiplicative function of its attributes, adjusted by parameters that reflect consumer sensitivity to each factor.

The objective of the current study is to adapt this integrated methodology for the Ukrainian retail market and to identify which store attributes have the greatest impact on consumer store choice in local conditions [3–7].

To achieve this, a multi-stage research design is implemented:

– The first stage involves the development and distribution of a structured consumer survey. This survey collects data on consumer preferences related to store selection, including criteria such as price levels, product range, store cleanliness, proximity, parking availability, and staff behavior;

– the second stage applies factor analysis techniques to group related variables

into latent factors, or surrogate variables. These factors may represent broader dimensions such as «perceived convenience», «value for money», or «brand reputation»;

– the third stage incorporates these surrogate variables into the MCI model to simulate consumer choice behavior;

– the fourth stage involves calibrating the MCI model using regression analysis or maximum likelihood estimation to determine the weights and sensitivities of each factor;

– finally, the calibrated model is applied to the Maximum Capture Problem to identify optimal store locations that maximize market coverage.

This approach offers several notable advantages that enhance its applicability in both academic research and business practice. Firstly, it enables the integration of a wide range of non-spatial variables, such as perceived service quality, brand loyalty, in-store experience, and consumer trust-factors that play a critical role in influencing modern consumer behavior but are often overlooked in traditional location models. Secondly, it effectively captures consumer heterogeneity by incorporating individual differences in preferences, priorities, and socio-demographic profiles. This level of granularity allows for a more nuanced understanding of market segments and supports the development of differentiated location strategies tailored to specific target audiences. Moreover, the model provides a quantifiable and replicable framework for evaluating alternative store locations based on measurable criteria, thereby reducing reliance on subjective judgment or managerial intuition.

Another strength of this approach lies in its ability to simulate various competitive scenarios, including market saturation, the entry of new competitors, or changes in consumer mobility patterns. This feature supports more informed strategic decision-making in a wide range of applications, such as expansion planning into new regions, repositioning of existing stores, downsizing, or even store closure analysis. Through sensitivity analysis and scenario testing, decision-makers can better anticipate the impact of external shocks or policy changes on the performance of retail locations.

In the Ukrainian context, the value of such a model is especially pronounced.

Retail development in Ukraine is shaped by stark regional disparities in income levels, urban density, consumer habits, and infrastructure availability. For example, store location strategies that prove successful in Kyiv may be entirely inappropriate for smaller cities or rural areas, where accessibility, affordability, and cultural preferences differ significantly. Furthermore, the quality and availability of transportation networks, the condition of commercial real estate, and patterns of urban sprawl also affect the optimal distribution of retail outlets. As consumer expectations continue to evolve – driven by digital transformation, convenience culture, and social responsibility – models that can dynamically incorporate these shifts into location planning become indispensable tools for maintaining competitiveness.

Beyond academic interest, the findings of this study have substantial practical implications for both private and public sector stakeholders. Retailers can apply the model to optimize investment allocation by prioritizing high-potential locations and avoiding areas with limited market absorption capacity. It can also assist in anticipating competitor actions and adjusting pricing, marketing, or assortment strategies accordingly. In addition, improved location planning can help expand market reach to underserved populations in peri-urban and suburban zones, contributing to more inclusive retail coverage. Public planners and municipal authorities may also benefit from the model's outputs when designing zoning regulations, organizing public transport links, planning commercial districts, or supporting small business development.

Furthermore, as the boundaries between physical and digital commerce continue to blur, optimal location strategies must increasingly account for the integration of physical stores with logistics infrastructure such as fulfillment centers, pickup stations, and urban warehouses. Location modeling should also consider the role of stores as hybrid spaces for sales, experience, service, and brand communication. Future research and development efforts could focus on enhancing the model’s precision through real-time data integration, geographic information systems (GIS), and artificial intelligence tools, enabling adaptive, data-driven decision-making in a rapidly evolving market landscape.

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## ANALYSIS OF METHODS FOR ORGANISING OF SMALL-BATCH CARGO DELIVERY

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The current stage of global economic development is characterised by an increase in the complexity of logistical supply chains, heightened competition, and the necessity for rapid responses to changing market needs. Transport logistics is one of the key factors in ensuring business efficiency and competitiveness. A significant number of problems in the organisation of small-batch cargo delivery are due to the high intensity of flows, the need to process a large number of orders, and the complexity of route optimisation. The rapid growth of e-commerce during the COVID-19 pandemic led to an increase in demand for delivery services, particularly for small orders, which often require an individual approach to transportation [1].

At the same time, quarantine restrictions and disruptions to traditional logistical supply chains since the start of military actions on the territory of Ukraine have exacerbated problems associated with the organisation of small-batch cargo delivery, such as increased delivery times, increased transportation costs, and the need to ensure