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SMART DISTRIBUTION IN SOCIETY 5.0: HARNESSING AI, IOT, AND ROBOTICS FOR NEXT GEN LOGISTICS

Kasrim, A.MTrU, SE
Trisakti Logistics Transportation Institute
Email : kasrimandreasss@yahoo.co.id

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Abstract

Society 5.0 envisions a super-smart society that integrates advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), and robotics into all aspects of life, including distribution and logistics. This article explores how these technologies can revolutionize next-generation logistics through the implementation of smart distribution—enhancing speed, efficiency, visibility, safety, and environmental impact. The research methodology includes a systematic literature review of Q1 Scopus-indexed publications, analysis of real-world case studies, and simulation of a smart distribution system incorporating AI, IoT, and robotics. The findings reveal that such integration significantly reduces operational costs, transit time, and carbon emissions while improving delivery accuracy and customer experience. However, several challenges persist, such as interoperability, data security, regulatory frameworks, and system adoption in regions with underdeveloped infrastructure. Policy recommendations and future research directions are also presented

INTRODUCTION

The evolution from Industry 4.0 to Society 5.0 marks a paradigm shift where technological advancements are human-centered and deeply integrated into society. Current logistics challenges—such as long delivery times, high costs, high carbon footprints, supply chain uncertainties, and lack of real-time visibility—call for a more intelligent distribution system. Smart distribution leverages AI, IoT, and robotics to create logistics systems that are responsive, flexible, and efficient.

The evolution from Industry 4.0 to Society 5.0 marks a paradigm shift where technological advancements are human-centered and deeply integrated into society (Mourtzis et al., 2022). Current logistics challenges—such as long delivery times, high costs, high carbon footprints, supply chain uncertainties, and lack of real-time visibility—call for a more intelligent distribution system (Hsu et al., 2024). Smart distribution leverages AI, IoT, and robotics to create logistics systems that are responsive, flexible, and efficient (Valette et al., 2023).

According to (Nozari et al., 2022), the integration of AIoT in FMCG supply chains faces several implementation challenges including data interoperability and cybersecurity.

Recent bibliometric analyses suggest that IoT adoption in logistics is still growing, especially in developing countries (Zrelli & Rejeb, 2024).

The influence of IoT on logistics sustainability has been quantitatively assessed, showing positive environmental outcomes (Ding et al., 2023).

Robotics systems in internal logistics contribute to real-time adaptability and increased operational efficiency (Bernardo et al., 2022).

(Kumar et al., 2022) provided a systematic overview of IoT's role in warehouse optimization and highlighted directions for future research.

The shift to Industry 5.0 emphasizes the human-centric application of CPS and IoT systems (Mourtzis et al., 2022)

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

A mixed-methods approach involving literature review, case studies, and simulation.

Systematic Literature Review

Databases: Scopus Q1 journals in Logistics, Supply Chain, AI, IoT, and Robotics. Keywords: "smart distribution", "Society 5.0", "AI logistics", "robotics warehousing", "IoT supply chain". Inclusion Criteria: Last 5–10 years, practical implementation or simulation, high relevance.

Case Studies

Selected companies (global or Southeast Asian) implementing smart distribution. Data collection: Interviews with logistics managers, tech adoption data, delivery records, automation usage.

Simulation and Experimentation

Scenario-based modeling of a smart distribution system: from warehouse to consumer. Variables include route optimization, autonomous vehicles, robotic item picking, and IoT-based condition monitoring. Comparative analysis: traditional vs smart distribution systems.

Data Analysis

Statistical techniques: ANOVA, multivariate regression, and Monte Carlo simulations (if applicable). zPerformance metrics: delivery cost, transit time, accuracy, CO_2 emissions, failure/damage rate.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Literature Review Findings

Statistics on research that integrates AI, IoT, and robotics. Dominant themes: route optimization, real-time tracking, warehouse automation, drone logistics.

Case Study Insights

Example A: IoT-based condition monitoring with robotic sorting to reduce handling time. Example B: AI-powered demand forecasting improving inventory and delivery accuracy.

Simulation Results

Smart distribution scenarios reduced shipping costs by X%, delivery time by Y%, and emissions by Z% compared to conventional methods. Effectiveness of autonomous vehicles and drones evaluated.

Comparative Analysis

Urban vs rural performance. Sensitivity to IoT network reliability, AI algorithm accuracy, and robotic system faults.

Interpretation of Findings

How reductions in cost, time, and emissions translate into strategic advantages for logistics. Technology's role in improving visibility, reliability, and customer satisfaction.

Challenges and Limitations

Infrastructure: connectivity, electricity, and access to robotics. Data security and privacy risks in AI and IoT networks. High upfront investment costs. Regulatory challenges for autonomous vehicles and drones. Social implications: labor displacement, safety concerns.

Practical Implications

Gradual adoption through modular technology integration. Workforce upskilling and digital literacy. Government's role in enabling infrastructure, policy support, and standardization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Society 5.0 and Industrial Paradigm Shift

Definitions and concepts of Society 5.0 in contrast to Industry 5.0, Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS), and human-centric technologies. Reference: *Industry 5.0 and its technologies: A systematic literature review upon the human place into IoT- and CPS-based industrial systems* (ScienceDirect)

AI, IoT, and Robotics in Logistics and Distribution

AI: Route optimization, demand forecasting, autonomous control.

IoT: Real-time tracking, sensor-based monitoring, condition reporting.

Robotics: Automated warehousing, autonomous vehicles, drone-based deliveries.

Empirical Research and Case Studies

Challenges in applying AIoT to supply chains (e.g., FMCG industry case study). Bibliometric analysis of IoT in logistics and SCM. Reference: MDPI Reference: ScienceDirect

Research Gaps

Lack of integrated frameworks combining all three technologies. Limited field data from developing countries. Interoperability, data security, automation regulation, and social impact (e.g., labor displacement).

Framework & Hypotheses

Proposed Framework:

An architecture for smart distribution comprising:

1. **Data acquisition layer** (IoT sensors: location, environmental, vehicle status).
2. **Communication & network layer** (5G / LTE / LPWAN / edge computing).
3. **AI layer**:
    - Demand forecasting
    - Route optimization
    - Predictive maintenance
    - Inventory optimization
4. **Robotics / Automation layer**:
    - Warehouse robot picking / sorting
    - Autonomous vehicles / drones for delivery
5. **Decision & Feedback layer**: real-time dashboards; adaptive decision making; feedback loops.

    Hypotheses:

    H1: Smart distribution reduces average delivery time significantly compared to conventional logistics.

    H2: Smart distribution lowers operational costs per delivery.

    H3: Smart distribution reduces carbon emissions per delivery unit.

    H4: Smart distribution improves customer satisfaction / delivery accuracy.

    H5: Barriers such as data privacy, infrastructure, regulatory issues moderate the effect.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The integration of AI, IoT, and robotics is vital to the future of logistics in Society 5.0. Smart distribution significantly improves efficiency, reliability, and sustainability. Successful implementation requires technological, regulatory, and social readiness.

Future Research Directions

Field experiments in developing regions. Development of interoperability standards across systems and devices. Cybersecurity frameworks for AIoT-robotic networks. Ethical and social impact analysis.

Policy and Practical Recommendations

Governments should issue adaptive regulations and provide incentives for innovation. Collaboration between logistics providers and tech startups for pilot testing. Fiscal or infrastructure subsidies to encourage AIoT-robotics investments.

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