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**Handling online customer complaints and organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt**

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**Abstract**

*The study investigated the relationship between handling online customer complaints and organizational competitiveness of online retail firms in Port Harcourt. Port Harcourt residents of 2,500,000 people formed the population of the study and a sample size of 400 was arrived at with the help of Taro Yameni formula. The data used for the study were distributed and retrieved through a structured questionnaire. Three null hypotheses were tested using the spearman's rank order correlation coefficient with the aid of SPSS version 23. From the findings of the study, it revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between handling online customer complaints and organizational competitiveness. Specifically, the findings showed that handling online customer complaints via its dimensions of Responsiveness, Compensation and customer interaction positively correlates organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt. In conclusion, it is noted that responsiveness, compensation and customer interaction of this online retail stores positively and significantly enhance and contributes to the organizational competitiveness of this firms. Hence, the study recommends that for online retail stores in Port Harcourt to gain competitive advantage in this fierce competitive marketplace, dedicated effort should be placed online complaint handling activities as these have strong positive relationship with organizational competitiveness; online retail stores should endeavor to get more recommendations from their customers continuously to know if their compensation tactics are effective and timely, as this was found to have the highest correlation with organizational competitiveness; online retail stores should pay special attention in handling any complaint and attempt to break the silence of dissatisfied customers.*

**Keywords:** Handling Online Customer Complaints, Compensation, Customer Interaction, Organizational Competitiveness, Responsiveness,

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**1. Introduction**

Presently, modernization has greatly brought about consumer dynamics and the introduction of information technology has created different avenues of how organization operates their business activities. These changes can be seen in other sectors of the economy such as aviation, transportation, banking, telecommunication, education amongst others. Consumers are constantly searching for companies with competitive ability to meet their needs and exceed their expectations. Electronic commerce is an

online marketing strategy that gives firms the opportunity to sell their products and services online. Complaints is a major problem that firms encounter from customers and these complaints exist because customers experience dissatisfaction when they transact with firms either online or offline. Complaints are something no company can control, due to the dynamism of consumer demands and choices, it is almost so difficult for firm to completely satisfy customers or meet their needs entirely.



A customer being dissatisfied usually arises due to poor product quality; delayed responses to handling customer complaints, lack of service recovery, incompetent employees, and poor internet services (Shams et al., 2020). Handling customer complaints online is a major part of the service industry, without an adequate process, no firm will achieve customer satisfaction. Customer complaints online cannot be avoided by the organizations because it is a necessary evil (Ashwini and Kane, 2014). For firms to handle and manage these necessary evils called, customer complaint, and proper online handling strategy is the best approach to engage in (Susskind, 2005). Online retail stores in Port Harcourt are mostly sluggish in handling customer's complaints promptly. Online customer complaint is a customer's display of disappointment towards a company's product, service during an online purchase situation (Nakibin et al., 2011). Online Customer complaint is a formal or informal way a customer reporting a problem about a firm's product or service in an online platform (Tronvoll, 2012). Online retail stores in Port Harcourt have not been meeting the needs and the expectations of customers in terms of online service delivery and product quality. Customers of this online retail stores complain so much about their negative experiences with these firms and this has changed their perceptions and buying products online. Furthermore, there have been issues of "what I ordered versus what I got", these have been one common negative encounter with these firms and has really given these online retail stores a negative name in Port Harcourt.

Researchers have not really conceptualized online customer complaint handling as a strategy for these online retail stores in Port Harcourt in order to maximize the opportunity and compete favorably in the marketplace. Previous studies done in online customer complaints focused more

on complaints and their customer perception and behavioral response (Guo et al., 2016; Schaefer and Schamari, 2016), few studies considered customer complaints handled in an online bases (Mattila, Hanks, and Wang, 2014; Bacile et al., 2018; Hogreve, Bilstein, and Hoerner, 2019). Hence, the study will adopt responsiveness, compensation, and customer interaction as dimension of handling online customer complaint and organizational competitiveness as the dependent variable for this study. Based on this background, this study intends to explore the relationship between handling online customer complaint and organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

It has been seen that most customers change their patronage at every point in time, and the online retail store customers are not exempted. This is actually due to the fact that the companies do not handle and resolve customer's complaints effectively. When customer encounters some challenges in their online patronage and the organization finds it difficult to resolve or fix the problem, these customers tend to shift or move their loyalty to other competitors in the industry.

Prompt online handling of customer complaints is seen as a measure of organizational competitiveness, which shows that the organization has a speedy recovery approach so as to avoid loss of firm's profitable customers. However, serving customers satisfactorily should come as first impression as firm has to do it right the first time. Prompt handling of customer's complaints online is one major strategy for the sustainability of firms in today's competitive marketplace.

Furthermore, firms operating with poor quality technology base are likely to lead to service failure. Which most times lead to poor network issues, poor attention to customers' requests online, failure of electronic-payment and delays in online



transactions, among others. And customers of these online retail stores in Port Harcourt do not find this funny, and it has led to switching to other competitors. It further affects the service quality of most online retail stores in Port Harcourt and it often times trigger complaints. Customers of this firms complain so much about the problem of what they “ordered versus what they got and it has been a major challenge facing these online retail stores in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. From the previous studies reviewed, a research gap was identified on the relationship between handling online customer complaints and organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

At this point, the researcher seeks to check whether handling online customer complaint can solve the problem of organizational competitiveness in the online retail sectors in Port Harcourt Nigeria. Hence, the aim of this study is to determine the extent to which handling online customer complaint affects organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt.

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

### **2.1. Concept of Handling Online Customer Complaint**

Customers become so triggered when products or services they purchased fail to meet up with their expectations (Breen, 2009). A complaint can be seen as when an organization's products or services do not match the expectations of customers (Barlow & Moller, 2008; Stauss & Seidel, 2024). Complaint is also seen as when the product or service performs lower than what the customers expects. Handling online customer complaints is one best thing to do, in order to help the firm remain in business. A complaint is a display of dissatisfaction that a customer expresses when he or she is not treated well or when the organization's services and products are below customers' expectations. Complaint is also a situation where

customers express a display of dissatisfaction towards an organization's products or services. Hakiri, (2012), posits that customer's attempt to complain is a way of changing a situation that is seen as unsatisfactory by the customer. Sabadie and Allazl, 2005 stated that customer complain is an expression from the customer to the concerned firm. Handling online complaints is the process of managing customer's complaints in the internet. It has to do with taking care of the complaints to ensure that it does not occur again (Agu, 2014). Handling customer's complaint online is a process of correcting the service shortfall experienced by the customer in an online platform.

### **2.2 Dimensions of Handling Online Customer Complaints**

#### **2.2.1 Responsiveness**

Responsiveness can be seen as the swift readiness and the actions an organization put in place to tackle particular market information regarding customer complaints (Hult, 2005). Responsiveness is a service recovery strategy, where timeliness and speed is given utmost priority in resolving a customer's complaint (Agu, 2021). Organization's responsiveness is also strategy used by the company during service failure to correct or resolve a mistake made by the service provider (Liao, 2007). It is worthy to note that reactions of discontent submitted by customers are merely due to dissatisfaction with the firm's product and the firm itself. When organization fails to respond immediately to this dissatisfaction, it creates more issues for them, because some customers might decide to take the issue up with the relevant authorities which cause or substantial compensation or damages to the organization's corporate image. It is important for organizations to listen to the complaints of their customers, respond to them quickly so as to help them maintain their reputation and corporate image, and not to give competitors the chance to dominate its market share.



### **2.2.2 Compensation**

Compensation is a type of service recovery strategy that organizations use to correct a service failure. In order for organizations to satisfy customers after complaints, the responses of the service provider are mandatory and crucial and this is where compensating the customers comes in (Mattila et al, 2011; Seawright et al, 2008). However, in order for firms to be proactive in their service recovery, they must go beyond just offering the customer apologies to giving something of value in order to cushion the extent of the service damage (Ateke & Onwujiariri, 2014). Problems due to service failures can easily be announced by these customers, so it is the responsibility of the firm to quickly arrest the situation, by offering quality commitment (Seawright, 2008). Organizations can intervene to correct the issues and restore the relationship between the customer and the service provider by engaging in product refunds, returning the money, product replacement or refurbishing, and offering discounts on a future purchase (Akbar, Mat-Som, Wadood, & Alzaidiyeen, 2010). Customers also expects compensation for the damages and time wasted the failure may have caused them and the costs they paid in obtaining a solution for that service failure is also known as service recovery action (La, & Kandampully, 2004).

### **2.2.3 Customer Interaction**

Interaction is crucial in any relationship, without which, no relationship can stand the test of time. It is one vital element that helps in the success of any business organization. Interaction in an organization is all about communication between customers-employees or customer-customer, this communication is an important aspect of doing business in any organization. Customer interaction is the process of showing concern towards a customer. It is a friendly expression of care that a firm gives to their customer to show

concern and empathy. Schutz (1966), pointed out that customers always have this expectation to interact and relate with the service-provider (employees). Interacting with customers calls for acceptance, emotions and control by the customers. Interactions during service delivery have shown a huge impact on customer experiences with the firm. Customer interaction could be used to gain competitive advantage over other firms and compete favorably in the marketplace.

### **2.3 Concept of Organizational Competitiveness**

Organization today is in a fix, where is continuous competition faced by marketers in the market place. These have actually made it difficult for the telecommunication industry in Port Harcourt to achieve their marketing goals. Organizational competitiveness is seen as the business tactics in terms of product quality, customer retention, timeliness and efficiency that organizations put in place in order to compete favorably in the marketplace (Liu, 2013). Srivastava, Franklin, and Martinette (2013), posits that for organization to compete favorably in the marketplace, they must ensure that there is a constant attention on human asset and employee's work life. The sources of competitive advantage are also like the marketing activities of the organization. Organizations use the following strategies such as, innovation, low cost, quality product, enhanced process, efficiency, human capital assets to gain competitive advantage (Rijamampianina et al., 2003). Organizational competitiveness refers to a process where a company performs better than their competitors in the same industry, in terms of sales volume, market share, profit level, product quality, efficiency, among others (Lall, 2001; Red-well & Hamilton, 2020). Organizational competitiveness is the potential a firm has to favorably contend with other firms in the business environment (Porter, 1990).



### **2.3.1 Handling Online Customer Complaint and Organizational Competitiveness**

Handling customer's complaint online is one of the greatest online marketing strategies that can help firms gain massive competitive advantage. Handling online customers' complaints is about negative experience encountered by the organizations online customers and this gives the organization the opportunity to handle and fix this experience speedily. When customer complaints are not properly fixed, it can negatively affect the level of customer retention, the profitability of the firm, and the organizational corporate image (Setyani et al., 2019). Tax & Brown (2000), noted that when organization have a better and effective complaint handling system, where complaints are resolved almost immediately, the organization will have an increased and better customer loyalty and repeat purchase. Osman et al. (2015). Some complaints do also come to the organization directly, some complaints rather tell the firm their negative experiences, tends to escalate the issue to the entire public.

### **2.3.2 Responsiveness and Organizational Competitiveness**

Responsiveness is about how fast a firm is in handling customer's complaints. Responsiveness is a two-way traffic, where one party sends a message or complaint out and the other party receives the message and acts on it immediately (Marx and Kritzinger 2002). From the marketing point of view, responsiveness directly influences a lasting relationship between the customers and the company (Renburg & Cant, 2003). Providing information online through responsiveness by organization helps in enhancing customers' retention and loyalty (Poovalingam & Veerasany. 2007). According to Homburg and Furst (2005), responsiveness complaint handling in an online platform is an effective system of complaints resolution that brings about customer loyalty and satisfaction in the

airline industry. Previous studies have showed that responsiveness plays an important role in handling complaints online and this brings about satisfied and loyal customers (Karamata *et al.*, 2017; Dwikesumasari & Ervianty, 2017; Dennett *et al.*, 2000). It is revealed in the online retail stores, that responding to customer's complaints is a key element leads to customer satisfaction and loyalty (Gomez et al., 2006; Chow & Tsui, 2017). Effective service quality leads to customer loyalty and this effectiveness in service quality offered through being hospitable and responsive to customer's (Servera-Frances & Piqueras-Tomas, 2019; Lee, 2017; Metwally, 2013). Hence, hypothesis was formulated on the basis of previous literature revealed.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between responsiveness and organizational competitiveness in online retail stores in Port Harcourt.

### **2.3.3 Compensation and Organizational Competitiveness**

Compensation is about going the extra to attend to a customer's complaints, in order to reduce customer's negative image towards the organization. (Nikbin et al, 2010). Compensation is a strategy used by firm to change the negative experience of customers. Consumers often looks at receiving compensation for the damages made by the service providers in the course of serving the customers (Nikbin et al, 2010). Compensation is a process where a company assigns physical resources to correct the mistakes done by them and also to resolve the issue by returning the money or replacing the product (Nikbin et al, 2010). The best forms of compensation are refunds and replacements. Customers appreciate this a lot because; it relieves them of all the anger they exhibited during the negative outcome. For example, Hoffman, Kelley and Chung, (2003) all found that refunding customer money could lead to loyalty and retention. Despite the fact that organizations appreciate the





need to manage complaints and are trying their best, satisfying the customer after a service failure has really not improved as such (Michel et al., 2009). Organizations should ensure that there is an access for dissatisfied customers to complain about their negative experience, so that the problem can be solved and they retain the customer. Hence, this hypothesis was formulated:

**H02:** There is no significant relationship between compensation and organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt.

### **2.3.4 Customers Interaction and Organizational Competitiveness**

Customer interaction is a strategy that could trigger more patronage because it enables customers to interact and socialize with other customers and employees who might have the same interest (Dhalakia, 1999). Interaction is based on relationship which helps in examining interpersonal conservation between customers and employees. Barnes (1997) posited that customer interaction brings about repeat purchase, which in turn impacts positively on organization's competitiveness. Patrick & Vesna (2010) suggest that ability to enhance customer interaction quality with customers is very necessary to improve relationship quality as well as customer loyalty. Sanjaya, Yingzi, Ali & Swathi (2011) investigated how patients' loyalty and confidence in their doctors are influenced by doctors' interaction behavior with them, namely, listening and explaining to the patients. Results showed that the doctor-patient relationship positively improved the interaction behavior of service providers, i.e. doctors. This doctor-patient relationship helped in the quick recovery of these patients. It also helps the firms to offer solutions that are directly linked to the customers' needs.

Interacting with customers can help in determining the needs and wants of the customers. Based on this, the following hypothesis was formed:

**H03:** There is no significant relationship between customer interaction and organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Population of the Study**

The population of the study comprises of the customers of these five (5) online retail stores and the Port Harcourt population was used, with an estimate of 2,500,000 residents as at January, 2025 ([www.takemetonaija.com](http://www.takemetonaija.com)). The sample size of the study is 400 drawn from the study population using the Taro Yemini formula. The study designed a structured questionnaire as the instrument used to generate data for the study, while the spearman's rank order correlation coefficient with the aid of SPSS version 23 was applied in testing the formulated hypotheses.

However, the customers of the firms will form the respondents of the study because; they have had to interface with these firms in their interactions while using the firm's website to make purchases of different items. See chart below:

**Figure 3.1.1: List of Major Online Retail Stores in Port Harcourt**

S/No	Description	Location
1	Jumia	Port Harcourt
2	Konga	Port Harcourt
3	Jiji	Port Harcourt
4	Spar	Port Harcourt
5	Market Square	Port Harcourt

**Source: Survey Research, 2025**



#### 4. Results and Interpretation

**Table 4. 1: Questionnaire distribution results**

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage %
Distributed	400	100
Retrieved	365	91
Not retrieved	35	9
Retrieved usable	341	93.4
Retrieved not usable	24	6.6

**Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025**

Table 4.1, illustrates how the copies of distribution and retrieval process of the questionnaire was administered. A total of four hundred (400) copies of questionnaire were distributed, where three hundred and sixty-five (365) copies which records a feedback rate of 91% were retrieved and 35 which records 9% were not retrieved. From the 365 retrieved only 341 which records 93.4% were useful, and 24 which records 6.6% were not useful.

**Table 4. 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents**

Gender	Number	Percentage (%)
Male	111	32.6
Female	230	67.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025**

Table 4. 2, reveals that female respondents are more than the male respondents in the study. The female respondents represented 67.4% which corresponds to 230 respondents, while remaining male category accounted for 32.6%, with a 111-correspondent rate. This shows that a larger number of females engage in responding than the male counterpart.

**Table 4. 3: Highest Educational Qualification of Respondents**

Details	Frequency	Percentage %
PHD/DBA	22	6.5
M.SC/MBA	45	13.2
Degree/HND	142	41.6
OND/NCE	105	30.8
O'level	27	7.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025.**

Table 3, indicates that 6.5% of the respondents have obtained PHD/DBA, those with MSC/MBA recorded (13.2%), those with first degree and HND accounted for 41.6%, those with OND/NCE recorded 30.8% of the respondents, while those with O'level recorded 7.9% respectively.

**Table 4 4: Age Distribution of Respondents.**

Age (years)	Number	Percentage
18-25	101	29.6
26-35	109	32
36-45	71	20.8
46 and above	60	17.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025**



The table 4.4 above indicates that respondents between the ages of 18-25 constituted 29.6%, of the population, 32% of the respondents were between 26-35 years. 20.8% of the respondents were between the ages of 36-45 years, while 17.6% of the respondents, and fall within age bracket of 46 years and above.

### Test of Hypothesis One

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between responsiveness and organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt.

**Table 4. 5: Correlation between of responsiveness and organizational competitiveness.**

			Responsiveness	Organizational Competitiveness
Spearman's rho	Responsiveness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.914
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	341	341
	Organizational Competitiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.914	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	341	341

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Source: Field Survey Data, 2025, SPSS 23 Output**

From table 4.5, the correlation coefficient (r) value of 0.914, shows that there is a positive relationship between responsiveness and organizational competitiveness with a probability value of 0.000 which is less than then level of significance PV (0.000) <0.005. We there reject the null hypothesis and concluded that responsiveness is significantly influenced by organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt.

### Test of Hypothesis Two

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between compensation and organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt.

**Table 4.6: Correlation relationship between of compensation and organizational competitiveness.**

			Compensation	Organizational Competitiveness
Spearman's rho	Compensation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.865
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	341	341
	Organizational Competitiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.865	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	341	341

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Source: Field Survey Data, 2025, SPSS 23 Output**





From table 4.6, the correlation coefficient (r) value of 0.865, shows that there is a positive relationship between compensation and organizational competitiveness with a probability value of 0.000 which is less than then level of significance PV (0.000) <0.005. We there reject the null hypothesis and concluded that compensation has a positive organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt.

### Test of Hypothesis Three

**H<sub>05</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between customer interaction and organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt.

**Table 4. 7: Correlation showing the relationship between of customer interaction and Organizational Competitiveness.**

			Customer Interaction	Organizational Competitiveness
Spearman's rho	Customer Interaction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.929
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	341	341
	Organizational Competitiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.929	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	341	341

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Source: Field Survey Data, 2025, SPSS 23 Output**

From table 4.7, the correlation coefficient (r) value of 0.929, shows that there is a positive relationship between customer interaction and organizational competitiveness with a probability value of 0.000 which is less than then level of significance PV (0.000) <0.005. We there reject the null hypothesis and concluded that customer interaction has a positive organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt.

### Summary of Results generated for the tested Hypotheses

H <sub>0</sub>	Hypotheses Statement	Results	Decision
H <sub>01</sub>	There is no significant relationship between responsiveness and organizational competitiveness	Rho=0.914	Rejected
H <sub>02</sub>	There is no significant relationship between compensation and organizational competitiveness	Rho=0.865	Rejected
H <sub>03</sub>	There is no significant relationship between customer interaction and organizational competitiveness	Rho=0.929	Rejected

### 4.1 Discussion of Findings

#### **H<sub>01</sub>: Responsiveness positively and significantly correlates with organizational competitiveness**

Overall, the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient focuses on responsiveness as being major attribute of handling online customer complaint used in examining organizational competitiveness. It was anticipated that responsiveness would appeal wider portion

of the representative in organizational competitiveness. Nevertheless, it is important that firms offer effective innovative responsive approach to tackle issues of complaints from customers, in order to enhance their organizational competitiveness. The significant relationship between responsiveness and organizational competitiveness shows that application of effective and quick response to customer's complaints can appeal to the

mind of customers and also persuade them to repeat purchase.

Hypothesis one was designed to investigate the relationship that exist between responsiveness and organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt. The result of the data showed that correlation coefficient generated 0.914 with a p-value of 0.000 which has lesser level of significance (0.05). Considering the decision rule, it showed that responsiveness has a strong positive relationship with organization competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt at 0.914. From the p-value which is less than the significance level of 0.05, the hypothesis one stated above was rejected, showing that, there is no significant relationship between responsiveness and organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt. From related literature, Homburg and Furst (2005) noted that, delivering quality responsiveness towards handling complaints, and efficient system of complaints resolution bring about customer satisfaction and loyalty in the airline industry. The conclusion in their study is similar to several other studies carried out regarding responsiveness in complaint handling which is a key element for the customer satisfaction in case of the airline industry (Etemad-Sajadi & Bohrer, 2019; Lee, 2017). Previous scholars have similar opinion that firms that are responsive to complaints brings satisfied customers closer, and these satisfied customers bring about increase of such economic aspects which includes, sales, growth, and profitability of the airline industry (Karamata et al., 2017; Dwikesumasari & Ervianty, 2017; Dennett et al., 2000). Prentice et al. (2017), in their study revealed that, timely response to complaints positively influences customer satisfaction that leads to loyalty and retention.

#### **4.2 Compensation positively correlates with organizational competitiveness**

Hypothesis two was formulated to evaluate the significant relationship that correlates between compensation and organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt. The result from the correlation coefficient yielded 0.865 and p-value of 0.000 which is lesser than (0.05) significance level. This however shows that, compensation has a positive and strong relationship with organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt at 0.865.

Also, looking at the p-value which is lesser than 0.05 significance level, we therefore reject the proposed hypothesis. This further indicates a significant relationship between compensation and organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt. The finding here is in agreement with previous scholarly studies such as: Hoffman, Kelley and Chung, (2003) who found out in their study that a cash refund to customers has a lot to do in improving customer retention. Gyung, Wang, and Mattila (2010), also noted that from the theory of fairness, that consumers always look out for compensation when they encounter service failures. Their study for asserted that consumers see compensation's fairness from the angle of certain elements such as speedy service recovery, courteousness, empathy, gentility, calmness, civility, concern and ability to be neutral when resolving the issue, which also has a great impact on customers' perception of justice. Ateke and Onwujiariri (2014), also found that giving customers valuable items in exchange for additional gift, goes a long way in enhancing and resolving complaints.



#### **4.3 Customer interaction positively correlates with organizational competitiveness.**

Hypothesis three was further developed to examine customer interaction significantly relates with organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt. While the correlation coefficient result brought forth 0.929 and p-value of 0.000 which is seen to be lesser than (0.05), significant level. The decision rule, which shows that customer interaction, has a positive relationship with organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt at 0.929. And the p-value which is less than the significance level of 0.05, we rejected the proposed hypothesis that, there is no significant relationship between customer interaction and organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt. It then indicates that customer interaction significantly relates with and organizational competitiveness of online retail stores in Port Harcourt. The finding is also in line with the work of previous scholars such as: Sanjaya, Yingzi, Ali & Swathi (2011) the study looked at how patients' loyalty and confidence in their doctors were influenced by doctors' interaction behavior with them, this had a long way in enhancing their healing process. Results confirm that the doctor-patient relationship is enhanced by the interaction behavior between doctors and their patients.

#### **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study examined the effects of several constructs of handling online complaint and all the dimensions (responsiveness, compensation and customer interaction, on organizational competitiveness) of online retail stores in Port Harcourt, and the result is believed to also extend to other online retail stores outside Port Harcourt. From the findings, handling online customer complaint adopted by online retail stores to a large extent influences measure of

organizational competitiveness; The result of the analysis therefore shows that the attributes of handling online complaint significantly influence organizational competitiveness, thus it was revealed that handling online complaint positively and significantly relates with organizational competitiveness. The null hypotheses formulated for the study were all rejected and alternative hypotheses consequently accepted.

#### **Recommendations**

From the findings of the study and the conclusion of the study, the following were recommended for the study:

1. For online retail stores in Port Harcourt to gain competitive advantage in this fierce competitive marketplace, dedicated effort should be placed on complaint handling activities as these have strong positive relationship with organizational competitiveness
2. Online retail stores should endeavour to get more recommendations from their customers continuously to know if their compensation tactics are effective and timely, as this was found to have the highest correlation with organizational competitiveness.
3. Online retail stores should pay special attention in handling any complaint and attempt to break the silence of dissatisfied customers.
4. Online retail stores employees can be engaged through customer care trainings in order to achieve a positive change on the direction of online complaint handling and consumers patronage behavior.

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