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## CUSTOMER RESPONSIVENESS AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF SELECTED SMALL AND MEDIUM-SCALE ENTERPRISES IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

Customer responsiveness has become an important consideration in achieving customer satisfaction, particularly among small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) operating in highly competitive business environments. This study examined the effect of customer responsiveness on customer satisfaction among selected SMEs in Ondo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study assessed the effects of prompt response to customer complaints and speed of service delivery on customer satisfaction. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design, while structured questionnaires were used to collect data from customers of selected SMEs in Ondo State. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings revealed that customer responsiveness significantly influenced customer satisfaction. The regression model produced an R-value of 0.513 and an  $R^2$  of 0.263, indicating that the dimensions of customer responsiveness jointly explained 26.3% of the variation in customer satisfaction. Speed of service delivery had a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.440$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), while prompt response to customer complaints also had a positive and significant effect ( $\beta = 0.246$ ,  $p = 0.022$ ). The study concludes that timely service delivery and prompt handling of customer complaints are important factors in enhancing customer satisfaction among SMEs in Ondo State. It therefore recommends that SMEs strengthen their complaint-handling mechanisms, reduce service delays and establish effective systems for responding promptly to customers' needs and concerns.

**KEYWORDS:** Customer Responsiveness, Customer Satisfaction, Prompt Response, Service Delivery, Smes, Ondo State.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction has emerged as an important concern of the business these days due to the increased competition, the customers' demands and the availability of various alternatives of products and service providers. In addition to the quality of the products and services that they receive from businesses, customers are also increasingly interested in how businesses respond to their enquiries, requests, complaints and feedback. As such, organizations that can respond quickly and appropriately to customers are more likely to become more highly satisfied with the customers and to sustain those customer relationships. (Nadube & Barango-Tariah, 2020; Umukoro & Momoh, 2021) Customer responsiveness refers to the willingness and ability of an organization to respond promptly and appropriately to customers' needs, enquiries, requests and complaints. It is indicative of the time a business takes to respond and solve its client's issues. In service oriented organizations, responsiveness is especially crucial as customers may assess an organization based on the outcome of the services provided and the way the services are provided (Umukoro & Momoh, 2021).

Nadube and Barango-Tariah (2020) studied corporate responsiveness and satisfaction of customers in stock broking firms in Port Harcourt. The results they discovered suggested that there was a positive and statistically significant correlation between corporate responsiveness and customer satisfaction. The authors also found responsiveness to be moderately correlated with perceived quality and perceived value. The results point to the fact that organizations which respond well to customers are more likely to attain customer satisfaction. Effective customer service has also been highlighted as a key aspect in Nigeria's business environment. Umukoro and Momoh (2021) studied the role of effective customer service in the growth and sustainability of SMEs in Nigeria. They pointed out that poor customer service can undermine business survival and stressed the importance of business owners in acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure customers' quality service. Likewise, complaints and feedback from customers are crucial sources of data that can help to improve customer satisfaction. Customers use complaints and feedback to convey their experiences and expectations to an organisation. Complaint management helps organisations recognise service failures, communicate with customer and take corrective action.

Oranusi et al (2018) examined the customer complaints and complaints management and customer satisfaction in some banks in Anambra State. Their results suggest that the

resolution time of complaints, the responsiveness to complaints, the communication of service failures, the complaints handling process, service recovery and its impact significantly influenced customer satisfaction. This is an example of how the way organizations deal with customers who are dissatisfied can affect their satisfaction with the organization. Evidence from Ondo State also suggests that service delivery is related to customer satisfaction. Kayode and Taiwo (2025) studied service delivery and customer satisfaction of SMEs in Owo Local Government Area, Ondo state. Olorunleke (2022) conducted a cross-sectional survey of 384 respondents to the research questions: whether there is a relationship between service delivery and customer satisfaction and the role of customer complaint management in enhancing customer satisfaction, among banks in Akure, Ondo State. The findings of the study confirm that the management of customer complaints has become an important problem in the local banking environment. The results of this study suggest customer responsiveness and service delivery and complaint management are factors that affect the customer satisfaction.

Most of the previous studies, however, have been on other states in Nigeria or specific institutions in Ondo State and more specifically Owo and Akure. A general empirical study of customer responsiveness and customer satisfaction is needed in Ondo State, therefore. The present investigation thus concentrates specifically on the Ondo State of Nigeria with the purpose of exploring to what extent customer responsiveness has an impact on the satisfaction of the customers.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Customers' satisfaction is becoming a critical issue in the success and competitiveness of business. People who receive inadequate service, who have a slow reaction from the service provider or who are not given the services they want when they file complaints may grow dissatisfied and end up switching to a different service provider. For businesses operating in Ondo State, effective responsiveness to customers is therefore important for maintaining patronage and building long-term relationships. Although customer responsiveness is critical to the success of businesses, there are issues related to delayed response to customer enquiries, poor handling of complaints, lack of communication, inability to provide timely information and poor feedback mechanisms. This can lead to customer dissatisfaction and impact customer retention.

There is some empirical evidence available in the literature on the correlation between responsiveness and customer satisfaction. For example, Nadube and Barango-Tariah (2020)

reported a significant correlation between corporate responsiveness and customer satisfaction in the stockbroking firms in Port Harcourt. The study was, however, outside Ondo state and in the stockbroking industry. Oranusi et al. (2018) also discovered that responsiveness to complaints, communication of service failure, complaint handling procedure and service recovery were significant factors that affected customer satisfaction. The study, however, was not conducted in all the banks in Anambra State, therefore, it does not give the direct evidence of the businesses in Ondo State. An element of this issue has been started with studies that have taken place in Ondo State. Olorunleke (2022) studied customers complaint handling and customer satisfaction in banks in Akure, Ondo State. Likewise, Kayode and Taiwo (2025) studied service delivery and customer satisfaction of the SMEs in Owo Local Government Area and obtained a significant relationship between service delivery and customer satisfaction of the SMEs.

There are however some limitations with these Ondo State studies. The first difference is that Olorunleke (2022) studied the banks in Akure whereas Kayode and Taiwo (2025) studied SMEs in Owo Local Government Area. Thus, little evidence is available for businesses statewide in Ondo. Second, most of the previous research has been done on related but different constructs such as customer complaint management or service delivery in general. Hence, it is important to subjectively investigate the customer responsiveness as a unique organizational practice and its effects on customer satisfaction. Third, the available literature is not enough to evidence the importance of responsiveness on customer's satisfaction in various businesses in Ondo State. Therefore, the problem of this study is the lack of empirical assessment of the extent to which customer responsiveness affects customer satisfaction of the businesses in Ondo State. The study aims to supply empirical proof which may help companies enhance their responsiveness and create strategies for boosting customer satisfaction.

The objective of the study are:

1. Determine the effect of prompt response to customer complaints on customer satisfaction in ondo state;
2. Assess the influence of speed of service delivery on customer satisfaction in ondo state;

## **2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW**

### **2.1.1 Customer Responsiveness**

The responsiveness of the organization is how willing and ready the organization is to respond to customer needs and offer solutions in time. It encompasses the speedy attention to enquiries, quick resolution of complaints, effective communication and timely provision of services. Responsiveness is a key element because customers are likely to rate organisations based on their responsiveness. Even if an organisation offers a good product, their customers can still be unhappy if there are delays in service or if the customers' responses are poor. There is empirical evidence to support this argument as Nadube and Barango-Tariah (2020) state that there is a strong and positive relationship between corporate responsiveness and customer satisfaction. Customer responsiveness is the aptitude of an organisation in responding quickly to customers needs, enquiries, requests and complaints. It involves the speed, readiness and appropriateness with which an organization provides assistance to its customers. This are measured by prompt response to customer complaints and Speed of Service Delivery

#### **2.1.1.1 Prompt Response to Customer Complaints**

Prompt response to customer complaints refers to the ability and willingness of a business to acknowledge, attend to and resolve customer complaints within a reasonable period. It involves listening to customers, understanding the nature of their problems, providing appropriate explanations and taking corrective action. A prompt response communicates to customers that the business values their concerns and is committed to correcting service failures. For SMEs, prompt complaint response is particularly important because customers who experience unresolved problems may develop negative perceptions of the business and may decide to patronize competing businesses. On the other hand, when complaints are acknowledged and resolved quickly, customers may regain confidence in the business and remain willing to continue the relationship. Oranusi et al. (2018) found that responsiveness to customer complaints significantly influenced customer satisfaction among selected banks in Anambra State, indicating that the manner and speed with which organizations handle complaints can affect customers' satisfaction. In the context of SMEs in Ondo State, prompt response to customer complaints may involve acknowledging complaints immediately, providing clear explanations, investigating the cause of the problem, offering appropriate solutions and informing customers about the progress of their complaints. Therefore, the ability of SMEs to respond promptly to complaints can be regarded as an important dimension of customer responsiveness and a potential determinant of customer satisfaction.

### **2.1.1.2 Speed of Service Delivery**

In business, speed of service delivery is the degree to which the business delivers its products and/or services to customers within the time stated or promised. It is about the wait time customers experience for attention, transaction completion, delivery of products and receiving services. In general, customers are expecting businesses to be efficient and timely. Speed of service delivery can be crucial for small and medium enterprises as they often depend on their customer's convenience and time needed to get a product or service. Unpredictable order processing delays and non-compliance with delivery timelines can lead to customer dissatisfaction and frustration. On the other hand, if the delivery of services is done on time and efficiently, it will generate a good customer experience and increase customers' willingness to return to the business.

The timely service is consistent with the finding of Oranusi et al. (2018) which identified one of the factors that affect customers' satisfaction is the time taken to solve customer complaints. Likewise, Umukoro and Momoh (2021) pointed out that good customer service was essential to SMEs growth and sustainability in Nigeria. They propose that SMEs must be effective in service provision and meet the needs of their customers in a customer-centric way that will foster ongoing patronage. In an Ondo State SME environment, speed of service delivery can therefore be measured by the time taken to attend to customers, speed of order processing, keeping to guaranteed delivery dates, waiting time and promptness of delivery of requested services. A business that is able to provide services within the expected time is likely to have positive customer experiences and improve customer satisfaction (Oranusi et al., 2018; Umukoro & Momoh, 2021).

### **2.1.2 Customer Satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction is the customer's judgment that the performance of a product or service is at or above the standard that he/she expects from the product or service. Satisfaction is defined as the customer's sense of whether the benefits and experiences that he or she gets from an organization match or exceed the expectations. On the other hand, displeasure could be caused by performance that is less than expected. Customer satisfaction is the degree to which customers feel that products, services and experiences provided by an organisation meet or exceed their expectations. A happy customer will stay loyal to an organisation, word-of-mouth and have a good attitude towards the product or services that it offers. Hence, the level of customer satisfaction can be considered as one of the key measures of the organization's success.

## **2.2 Theoretical Review**

### **2.2.1 Relationship Marketing Theory**

Theory of Relationship Marketing is the theoretical framework to describe how companies build and maintain long-term relationships with their customers. The theory, formulated by Berry (1983), states that marketing goes beyond just trying to attract new customers to trying to create, sustain, and improve on long-lasting relationships with the already existing customers. It is about trust, communication, satisfaction and interaction rather than transitory transactions. This theory is applied in the context of a small scale tailor shop which identifies the importance of personal interaction, trust building and follow up as enhancing the relationship between the tailor and the client. Relationship marketing activities have the potential of increasing loyalty and retention, since the tailors who maintain contact with their clients, record their measurements and give them updates or new design ideas are involved in relationship marketing activities (Ndubisi, 2007). The first and second objectives of the study (analyzing the extent of the CRM practices being adopted and to find out the impact of CRM on customer retention and customer loyalty) are particularly relevant to the issue of relationship marketing. In nature, the tailoring business is very personal and regular customer business. Therefore, when the relationship between the tailor and the client extends beyond the act of sewing into an emotional and interpersonal bond, it's best to keep the customers loyal. According to the theory of relationship marketing, more often than not, it is cheaper to keep a customer than to get a new one (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990). This is in line with the principal aim of CRM, which is to realise the maximum lifetime customer value by ensuring customer satisfaction on a regular basis. If a customer is pleased with the product they get from the tailoring business, they will be able to give the word to other customers, thereby increasing business and profits. There have been some criticisms, however, indicating that relationship marketing is "resource intensive" (Grönroos, 1994) and that the technology and capital required may not be available to small tailoring businesses due to lack of technology or capital. Despite these limitations, the theory is quite practical in its application since it is the foundation of the importance of personal interaction and the creation of joint value to inservice differentiation.

## **2.3 Empirical Review**

Nadube and Barango-Tariah (2020) studied Corporate Responsiveness and Customer Satisfaction of Stock Broking Firms in Port Harcourt. The study used an explanatory/cross-sectional survey research design. The respondents were 75 of the population which comprised stockbroking firms in Port Harcourt. Data analysis was done by Pearson Product

Moment Correlation. The results showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between corporate responsiveness and customer satisfaction. The study aimed to suggest some remedies to the stockbroking companies to enhance their responsiveness level with regard to achieving customer satisfaction. The study is very relevant because it indicates that responsiveness has the potential to affect customers' satisfaction. But the study carried out was in Port Harcourt not Ondo State. The present study thus broadened the scope of the investigation to Ondo State.

Momoh and Umukoro (2021) studied Effective Customer Service as a tool for growth and sustainability of Small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria. This study was a literature review. The authors emphasized that the role of effective customer service is crucial for the growth and sustainability of SMEs and that the lack of effective customer service can lead to the failure of businesses. They suggested enhanced entrepreneurs' CS knowledge and skills. The study offers conceptual support, but failed to provide empirical evidence for the relationship between customer responsiveness and customer satisfaction. It also did not restrict its attention to the Ondo State alone, but to Nigeria generally.

Oranusi et al. (2018) studied Customer Complaints and Feedback Management and Customer Satisfaction on selected banks in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study focused on complaint resolution turnaround time, responsiveness to complaints, employee courtesy, communication of service failures, processes for handling complaint and service recovery. Results indicated that the complaint resolution time, responsiveness, communication of service failures, complaint-handling processes and service recovery had significant effect on customer satisfaction. There is relevance in the study because it shows the significance of responsiveness in customer relationship management. But the study was restricted to banks in Anambra State. This study is focused on the specific enterprises in Ondo State.

Olorunleke (2022) studied the Customer's Complaint Management and Customer Satisfaction of Banks in Akure, Ondo State. The study was done specifically in Akure, Ondo State and focused on the relationship between Customer complaint management and Customer satisfaction between the various sampled respondents. The study identified customer satisfaction as an essential measure of business performance and looked at the role of complaint management for attaining customer satisfaction. The study is significant for this study because evidence from Ondo State was obtained. But it had a limited scope, that of complaint management, and was aimed at banks in Akure. It did not look into the responsiveness of customers as a total construct or businesses in all the wards of Ondo State.

Kayode and Taiwo (2025) studied Service Delivery and Customer Satisfaction of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Ondo State, Nigeria. This study was specifically targeted towards SMEs in Owo Local Government Area. A cross sectional survey design was used and 384 respondents selected by purposive sampling. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data and descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data. The study found that there was significant relationship between service delivery and customer satisfaction for SMEs in Owo. It is a very recent study conducted in Ondo state and the results of the study is very relevant as it gave empirical evidence that service delivery is linked to Customer satisfaction. But it was confined to Owo Local Government Area of Edo. This study aims to expand the geographical reach to some selected businesses in Ondo State and narrow down the study to customer responsiveness.

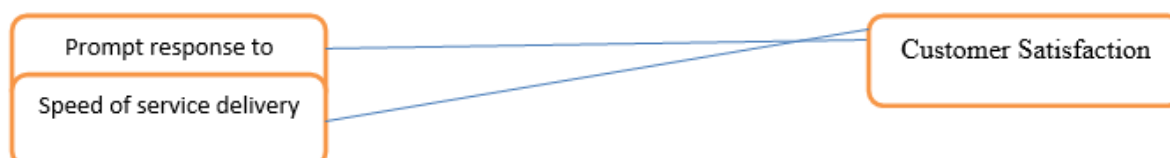
## **2.4 GAP IN LITERATURE**

While the study by Nadube and Barango-Tariah (2020) was done in Port Harcourt, that of Oranusi et al. (2018) was done in Anambra State. As a result, it cannot automatically be assumed that their results apply to Ondo State. While Olorunleke (2022) did research in Ondo State (Akure), his research was confined to banks. Likewise, while Kayode and Taiwo did their study in Ondo State, their study was confined to Owo Local Government. As a consequence, there still remains a geographical gap concerning customer responsiveness and customer satisfaction in Ondo State.

Previous studies have mainly been carried out in stockbroking firms, banks and SMEs. In particular, Nadube and Barango-Tariah (2020) researched stockbroking firms, Oranusi et al. (2018) and Olorunleke (2022) researched banks, while Kayode and Taiwo researched SMEs in Owo. This calls for further research on customer responsiveness among selected businesses in Ondo State with a wide variety of business activities. Previous studies have looked at related areas such as corporate responsiveness, customer complaint management, service delivery and effective customer service. However, very little research has been done on the concept of customer responsiveness using dimensions such as prompt response to enquiries, complaint response, speed of service and communication. While there seems to be a significant relationship between service delivery and customer satisfaction in Owo, the research was confined to one Local Government. Again, while Olorunleke's research was done in Akure, his study only concentrated on banks. There is therefore insufficient empirical research on customer responsiveness and customer satisfaction among selected businesses in Ondo State.

It becomes evident therefore that one of the major gaps is that sufficient research has not yet been done to determine how specific dimensions of customer responsiveness affect customer satisfaction among businesses in Ondo State.. The current study aims to fill this gap through the examination of customer responsiveness and customer satisfaction among selected businesses in Ondo State, Nigeria.

## 2.5 Conceptual Framework



## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

Cross-sectional survey research design was utilized in this study to assess the effect of customer responsiveness on customer satisfaction within selected small and medium-sized enterprises in Ondo State, Nigeria. The study centered on the customers of selected SMEs within customer-oriented sectors such as retailing, hospitality, restaurants, fashion, beauty, and other service enterprises. Multistage sampling technique was used to randomly pick the respondents within selected commercial areas within Ondo State including Akure, Owo, Ondo and Akoko areas. Sample size was calculated using Taro Yamane formula at 5% margin of error. The primary data collection instrument used in this study is the structured questionnaire which was issued to customers of selected SMEs. Customer responsiveness was assessed using four dimensions namely; responsiveness to customers' inquiries, promptness of responding to customer complaints, speed of service delivery and customer communication. On the other hand, customer satisfaction was measured using four constructs namely overall satisfaction, expectations fulfillment, repeat patronage and willingness to recommend. The questionnaire used for data collection was pre-tested by marketing and business administration experts to validate the instrument. Further, a pilot test was carried out to measure reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's Alpha where the minimum acceptable value should not be less than 0.70. SPSS was the software used in analysis of data. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the data while Multiple Regression Analysis were used to ascertain the relationship and effect of customer responsiveness on customer satisfaction. The hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance. Ethical consideration was taken into account in this study.

#### 4.0 Discussion of findings

##### 4.1 Effect of Customer Responsiveness on Customer Satisfaction

|                                     |            |                             |                   |                            |                   |          |        |                         |            |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|--------|-------------------------|------------|
|                                     |            |                             |                   |                            |                   |          |        |                         |            |
| ANOVAa                              |            |                             |                   |                            |                   |          |        |                         |            |
| Model Summaryb                      |            |                             |                   |                            |                   |          |        |                         |            |
| Model                               | R          | R Square                    | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics |          |        |                         |            |
|                                     |            |                             |                   |                            | R Square Change   | F Change | df1    | df2                     | Sig. Chang |
| 1                                   | .513a      | .263                        | .241              | .73749                     | .263              | 11.964   | 2      | 67                      | .000       |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), PRC, SSD |            |                             |                   |                            |                   |          |        |                         |            |
| b. Dependent Variable: CS           |            |                             |                   |                            |                   |          |        |                         |            |
| Model                               |            | Sum of Squares              | df                | Mean Square                |                   |          | F      | Sig.                    |            |
| 1                                   | Regression | 13.014                      | 2                 | 6.507                      |                   |          | 11.964 | .000b                   |            |
|                                     | Residual   | 36.440                      | 67                | .544                       |                   |          |        |                         |            |
|                                     | Total      | 49.454                      | 69                |                            |                   |          |        |                         |            |
| a. Dependent Variable: CS           |            |                             |                   |                            |                   |          |        |                         |            |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), PRC, SSD |            |                             |                   |                            |                   |          |        |                         |            |
| Coefficientsa                       |            |                             |                   |                            |                   |          |        |                         |            |
| Model                               |            | Unstandardized Coefficients |                   | Standardized Coefficients  |                   | t        | Sig.   | Collinearity Statistics |            |
|                                     |            | B                           | Std. Error        | Beta                       |                   |          |        | Tolerance               |            |
| 1                                   | (Constant) | 11.343                      | .945              |                            |                   | 12.006   | .000   |                         |            |
|                                     | SSD        | .188                        | .045              | .440                       |                   | 4.194    | .000   | .998                    |            |
|                                     | PRC        | .102                        | .043              | .246                       |                   | 2.342    | .022   | .998                    |            |
| a. Dependent Variable: CS           |            |                             |                   |                            |                   |          |        |                         |            |
| Collinearity Diagnosticsa           |            |                             |                   |                            |                   |          |        |                         |            |
| Model                               | Dimension  | Eigenvalue                  | Condition Index   | Variance Proportions       |                   |          |        |                         |            |
|                                     |            |                             |                   | (Constant)                 |                   |          | SSD    | PRC                     |            |
| 1                                   | 1          | 2.974                       | 1.000             | .00                        |                   |          | .00    | .00                     |            |
|                                     | 2          | .020                        | 12.143            | .01                        |                   |          | .28    | .68                     |            |

|                           |   |      |        |     |     |     |
|---------------------------|---|------|--------|-----|-----|-----|
|                           | 3 | .006 | 22.909 | .99 | .72 | .32 |
| a. Dependent Variable: CS |   |      |        |     |     |     |

The impact of customer responsiveness on customer satisfaction among a subset of small and medium-sized businesses in Ondo State, Nigeria, was investigated using multiple regression analysis. Customer satisfaction (CS) was the dependent variable, and customer responsiveness was operationalized through two dimensions: speed of service delivery (SSD) and rapid response to customers (PRC). Customer responsiveness and customer happiness have a modest link, according to the model summary's R-value of 0.513. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of 0.263 shows that timely customer service and speed of service delivery together account for 26.3% of the variation in customer satisfaction.

. After accounting for the number of predictors and sample size, the adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.241 shows that the model explains around 24.1% of the variation in customer satisfaction. Other factors not included in the model account for the remaining 73.7%. The regression model is statistically significant, according to the ANOVA result ( $F(2, 67) = 11.964, p < .001$ ). This demonstrates that customer satisfaction is highly predicted by the aspects of customer responsiveness when combined. The overall claim that customer responsiveness and customer satisfaction among the chosen SMEs are related is thus empirically supported by the findings.

The coefficient results offer more information on the two dimensions' respective contributions. Customer satisfaction is positively and statistically significantly impacted by speed of service delivery (SSD) ( $B = 0.188, \beta = 0.440, t = 4.194, p < .001$ ). This implies that higher customer satisfaction is linked to faster service delivery by SMEs. Out of the two predictors, SSD contributes more to customer satisfaction, according to the standardized beta coefficient of 0.440. Therefore, when SMEs are able to deliver services quickly and minimize needless delays, customers are more likely to express higher levels of satisfaction. Similar to this, Prompt Response to Customers (PRC) has a positive and statistically significant effect on customer satisfaction ( $B = 0.102, \beta = 0.246, t = 2.342, p = .022$ ). This effect is statistically significant because the p-value of .022 is less than 0.05. The positive coefficient suggests that SMEs are more likely to achieve higher customer satisfaction if they respond promptly to customers' inquiries, requests, complaints, or concerns; however, the standardized beta of 0.246 indicates that PRC has a relatively weaker effect than Speed of Service Delivery ( $\beta = 0.440$ ).

Overall, the results demonstrate that among a subset of SMEs in Ondo State, customer satisfaction is strongly impacted by customer response. Customer satisfaction is significantly increased by both prompt response to customers and speed of service delivery. However, compared to Prompt Response to Customers ( $\beta = 0.246$ ), Speed of Service Delivery has a greater impact, as seen by its larger standardized beta value ( $\beta = 0.440$ ). This result implies that customer responsiveness is more than just a SME's capacity to promptly recognize or address clients. Effective responsiveness, on the other hand, entails reacting quickly and converting such promptness into timely service delivery. Customers are consequently more likely to be satisfied with SMEs who shorten wait times, handle customer demands effectively, and deliver services on time.

## **5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study looked at how customer responsiveness affected customer satisfaction in a sample of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in Nigeria's Ondo State. Prompt Response to Customers (PRC) and Speed of Service Delivery (SSD) were used to assess customer responsiveness. The model as a whole was statistically significant ( $F(2, 67) = 11.964, p < .001$ ).

In particular, customer satisfaction was positively and significantly impacted by both speed of service delivery ( $\beta = .440, t = 4.194, p < .001$ ) and prompt response to customers ( $\beta = .246, t = 2.342, p = .022$ ). Customer satisfaction was found to be more strongly predicted by service delivery speed.

According to the study's findings, among a subset of SMEs in Ondo State, customer responsiveness is a significant factor in determining customer satisfaction. Higher customer satisfaction is largely influenced by both quick service delivery and timely customer reaction. Customers place a high value on receiving services in an acceptable amount of time, according to the stronger influence of service delivery speed, and timely responses show that the business is aware of their requirements and problems. As a result, SMEs are more likely to produce positive customer experiences and improve their relationships with clients when they combine prompt service delivery with timely communication.

According to the results, SMEs should reduce needless delays and set clear service delivery criteria in order to increase the speed and effectiveness of their service delivery. Additionally, they should make sure that complaints, requests, and questions from clients are promptly addressed. Workers should receive adequate training in resolving complaints, communicating with customers, and providing effective service. To enable quicker client connection, SMEs

could further implement reasonably priced digital technologies like WhatsApp Business and other communication platforms. Additionally, businesses should often get input from customers to determine what needs to be improved. Finally, since customer responsiveness only accounts for 26.3% of the variation in customer satisfaction, SMEs should combine responsiveness with other characteristics of service quality, such as dependability, product quality, and polite employee behavior.

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