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EDITORIAL

Governance, management and entrepreneurship are the major challenges that contemporary organisations in particular, and world economy in general, face. Hence, this volume focuses on developing strategies for enhanced governance, effective management and better entrepreneurial practice for the wellbeing of *ALL*. Thus, Adewumi et al, examine relationship between firm-level governance and the likelihood of corporate failure in Nigeria and the UK. They conclude that increased board gender diversity (BGD) lowers manufacturing companies' risk of failing as a business. Thus, they advised having an adequate number of independent directors. Conflict management is vital to every organisation. In view of this, Adewale and Emiola investigate the extent to which conflict handling techniques and employee competence improve organisation's performance with interest on customer retention and quick service delivery. The study concludes that to boost customer loyalty and service efficiency, organisations must refine conflict management strategies and invest in continuous development of employee skills. Parts of their contribution to this edition, Francis et al study the effect of effective gender diversity management on organisational performance in the Nigerian business context. The study recommends establishment of formal policies and programmes that promote gender diversity and inclusivity within an organisation. Karofi et al consider the need of unemployment reduction. As such, they recommend for comprehensive approach to entrepreneurship development, emphasising the need for targeted policies that enhance job creation potential. To Abdurrahman, the end target of business is survival. Therefore, his study recommends SMEs to use personal saving, loans from friends, donation and contributions as bootstrapping techniques to enhance financial performance and survival.

Just like Francis et al, Omofowa and Akhidue-Ogogo consider inclusivity vital for effective management. This motivates them to investigate determinants of work incivility on alienation sensitivity in organisation, in South-South Nigerian manufacturing companies. Consequently, they recommend adoption of an inclusive policy that portrays best practices in a healthy work environment. Nonetheless, to serve a purpose, organisations need marketing strategies. In view of this, Azamzu et al examine a link between entrepreneurial marketing and performance of SMEs in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The study concludes that, SMEs must adopt entrepreneurial marketing practices to maximise value and improve overall performance. Fraud deters progress. Hence, Osifo et al focus on opportunity red flags and likelihood of fraud detection in Nigeria. The study recommends forensic accounting services be given the needed legal teething in Nigeria. In response to human resource management, Ekwoaba and Ayodele recommend SMEs to constantly provide hygienic training sessions for employees and invest in technologies, to ensure staff acquaintance with tele-work tools for effective communication. Beauty and Magnus consider the importance of entrepreneurship education. Therefore, they reiterate vitality of the introduction of entrepreneurship education on institutions' curriculum. It is helpful in training and motivating students toward

entrepreneurial behavior. Ndubuisi like Adewale and Emiola, underscores the importance of effective conflict management on organisational performance.

Business today is influenced by innovation in all ramifications. Therefore, Ishaq writes on Islamic financial innovation and diversity of *shariah* interpretations: challenges and way forward. However, no matter the level of innovativeness, poor audit affects performance. Thereof, Ibrahim et al conceptually investigate the moderating role of audit quality on the relationship between corporate governance and firm performance. Part of innovation is Business Process Reengineering (BPR). This instigates Abideen to study relationship between BPR and organizational sustainability in Selected Deposit Money Banks in Abeokuta Metropolis, Ogun State, Nigeria. Workforce diversification is another aspect of innovative human resource management. As a result, Onumoh et al felt motivated to investigate gender diversity and intellectual capital efficiency of listed consumer goods firms in Nigeria, moderated by executive compensation. To reiterate the importance of innovation, Sabo et al search the effect of innovation on women entrepreneurs' performance, in consideration of the moderating effect of organisational culture. Risk is inherent to every business. So, Usman and Muhammad discover how management committee attributes influence the value of listed deposit money banks, in consideration of the mediating effect of profitability. On their part, Ali et al consider the need of finding the influence of CEO tenure and blockholders' ownership on corporate social responsibility.

Nonetheless, management of environmental factors is critical for business success. Therefore, Ibrahim et al assess how external business environments affect the growth of women entrepreneurs in South-West Nigeria. Part of the management's role is ensuring employee satisfaction. Absence of job satisfaction leads to employee turnover. Thence, Masoud et al study job satisfaction and employee turnover in the Nigerian health sector, focusing on Gbagada General Hospital, Gbagada, Lagos. Unerringly, poorly managed organisational politics affects employee satisfaction. As such, Kanene and Faruk recommend effective leadership practices, equitable reward systems and transparent communication to mitigate the negative effects of organisational politics on employee satisfaction. In addition, uncertainty affects both employee satisfaction and productivity. Therefore, Peter et al investigate relationship between uncertainty avoidance index and employee productivity in Kwara State public service. Innovative organisations tend to be agile. Thence, Mukhtar et al recommend SMEs to invest in robust market intelligence systems to effectively monitor and anticipate environmental changes. In another study, Mukhtar et al recommend SMEs particularly in Bauchi State to invest in digital infrastructure, such as media visibility among others, to enhance operational efficiency and maintain competitiveness. Still on SMEs performance, Gawuna et al recommend SMEs to pay more attention to external environmental factors, to exploit the untapped opportunities prevailing in the contemporary marketing settings, be proactive and take considerable level of risks to survive.

Sustainability is endangered without investment. Therefore, Iroro conducts a critical review of investment indicators and economic growth, from the Nigerian perspective. However,

stability in every spheres augments investment. Hence, Abdullahi's study recommends incidence of tax leakages, avoidance and evasion should all be reduced to make the stabilisation power of automatic fiscal stabilisers more effective. Meanwhile, Kunle et al investigate the determinants of the manufacturing sector-which mainly relates to investment-output in Nigeria. However, investor requires competent employee. On this, Abogunrin et al recommend comprehensive training strategies, continuous professional development, and policy reforms to support a skilled and efficient workforce. Finally, Adewumi et al recommend continuous monitoring and adaptation of corporate governance practices for stability and effectiveness among Nigerian Deposit Money Banks in particular, and entire organisations, in general.

In conclusion, this edition sets to provide solutions to organisations' problems, bordering around governance, management and entrepreneurship. When the recommendations are implemented, organisations and broader economic environment would be well off.

Editorial Secretary,

Muhammad Baffa Sani, PhD

For: Editor-in-Chief.

IMPACT OF CONFLICT HANDLING AND EMPLOYEE COMPETENCE ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the extent to which conflict handling techniques and employee competence in improving organization performance with interest in customer retention and quick service delivery. Utilizing a quantitative research methodology, data were collected through a field survey targeting 250 customers of Shoprite Store in Ilorin Kwara State. The data were analysed using the descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 29). The findings reveal that conflict handling techniques significantly influence customer retention, explaining 77.5% of its variance, while employee competence accounts for 59.9% of the variance in service delivery speed. These results underscore the importance of both conflict resolution and employee competence in enhancing organizational performance. The study concludes that to boost customer loyalty and service efficiency, organizations must refine their conflict management strategies and invest in the continuous development of employee skills. It is also recommended that organizations integrate supportive technology and cultivate a culture that encourages ongoing improvement and effective conflict resolution. Such a holistic approach will enable organizations to leverage these factors for better overall performance.

Keywords: Competence, Conflict Handling, Customer Retention, Employee Development, Quick Service Delivery, Organizational Performance.

Introduction

In today's fiercely competitive business landscape, organizations are continually striving to enhance their organizational performance, which encompasses customer retention, operational efficiency, and overall competitiveness. Central to achieving these outcomes are the dual challenges of effective conflict handling and employee competence, both of which play a crucial role in sustaining high performance standards. While these factors significantly influence customer satisfaction and retention, their collective impact on organizational

performance remains a critical area for exploration.

Conflict handling is a pivotal aspect of customer relationship management and has direct implications for organizational performance. Conflicts with customers often arise from service failures, unmet expectations, or miscommunication, and how these conflicts are managed can profoundly affect a company's performance metrics, such as customer satisfaction, loyalty, and financial outcomes. Effective conflict resolution not only addresses immediate issues but also rebuilds trust and strengthens customer relationships,

ultimately contributing to organizational stability and growth. Ndubisi (2007) highlighted that organizations skilled in managing conflicts achieve better customer retention rates, a key component of organizational performance. Similarly, Rahim (2023) emphasizes the strategic importance of conflict management within relationship marketing, where resolving disputes effectively can transform customer dissatisfaction into loyalty. These findings underscore that conflict handling techniques go beyond resolving complaints—they drive customer engagement and retention, which are critical determinants of long-term performance. Without robust conflict resolution practices, organizations risk eroding customer trust, damaging their brand reputation, and experiencing declines in operational efficiency.

Employee competence is another cornerstone of organizational performance, directly influencing service quality, delivery speed, and customer satisfaction. Competent employees are better equipped to meet customer needs efficiently, reducing service bottlenecks and enhancing operational productivity. Bowen and Ford (2002) argue that the skill level of employees significantly affects service outcomes, with higher competence levels correlating with faster and more accurate service delivery. Further evidence from Homburg, Wieseke, and Bornemann (2009) shows a strong link between employee competence and service delivery speed, emphasizing the importance of continuous training and development to maintain high performance standards. For organizations, investing in employee competence is not merely a tool for improving customer satisfaction but also a strategic initiative to boost productivity,

innovation, and financial performance. When employees can navigate complex service challenges effectively, they contribute directly to operational excellence—a critical driver of organizational performance.

The interaction between conflict handling and employee competence represents a multifaceted pathway to enhanced organizational performance. While employee competence ensures service efficiency, conflict handling mitigates service disruptions and preserves customer loyalty. Albrecht et al. (2015) suggest that integrating these factors is essential for achieving comprehensive performance outcomes. For example, competent employees can resolve conflicts more effectively, ensuring seamless service delivery and reducing customer churn. However, these benefits are rarely realized in isolation. The effectiveness of conflict handling and employee competence is often moderated by other organizational factors, such as technological support and organizational culture. Bitner et al. (1994) argue that while employee competence is crucial, its impact is amplified by supportive technologies and a culture that prioritizes service excellence. Consequently, organizations must adopt a holistic approach that combines skilled employees, effective conflict management strategies, and enabling resources to achieve sustained performance improvements.

Despite the acknowledged importance of conflict handling and employee competence in influencing customer satisfaction and retention, there remains a gap in understanding their collective and synergistic impact on broader organizational performance. This study

addresses this gap by examining how these factors contribute to performance metrics, including operational efficiency, customer retention, and financial outcomes. By investigating this relationship, the study aims to provide actionable insights for organizations striving to enhance their competitive edge and achieve sustained high performance.

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To assess the impact of conflict handling techniques on customer retention
- ii. To evaluate the role of employee competence in conflict handling on quick service delivery

Literature Review

Concept of Conflict Handling Techniques

Conflict handling techniques significantly influence organizational outcomes, with both positive and negative impacts. Effectively managed conflicts can foster innovation, strengthen relationships, and enhance productivity; for instance, resolving team disputes collaboratively can uncover inefficiencies and improve workflows. Similarly, addressing customer complaints empathetically, as seen when an airline restored loyalty after delays with clear communication and compensation, can enhance trust and reputation. However, poor conflict management can lead to reduced morale, decreased collaboration, and reputational damage. For example, unresolved workplace disputes often drive employee turnover, while mishandling customer grievances, such as dismissing complaints, risks negative reviews and lost

sales. Thus, adopting thoughtful conflict resolution strategies is critical for sustaining organizational performance and resilience. Therefore, employing appropriate conflict handling techniques is crucial for maintaining a harmonious work environment and achieving organizational objectives.

Conflict handling techniques are defined by various theoretical frameworks that offer insights into managing disputes constructively. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) is one such framework, which categorizes conflict resolution styles into five modes: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating (Thomas & Kilmann, 1978). Each mode represents a different approach to addressing conflicts based on the degree of assertiveness and cooperativeness. For instance, the collaborating mode seeks a win-win solution by addressing the underlying needs of all parties, while the avoiding mode entails evading the conflict, often to prevent escalation.

Another influential framework is Rahim's Conflict Management Styles, which identifies five styles: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising (Rahim, 2023). This model emphasizes the importance of balancing assertiveness with cooperativeness to find effective conflict resolution strategies. Integrating and obliging styles focus on cooperation and finding mutually acceptable solutions, while dominating and avoiding styles reflect varying degrees of assertiveness and non-involvement.

The impact of conflict handling techniques on organizational outcomes is well-documented in the literature. Effective

conflict resolution strategies can enhance customer retention, improve team dynamics, and contribute to overall organizational success. For example, studies have shown that collaborative conflict resolution approaches, which involve open communication and joint problem-solving, can lead to higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Chumpitaz & Paparoidamis, 2020; Graca et al., 2015). By addressing conflicts constructively, organizations can foster positive relationships, build trust, and prevent the negative effects of unresolved disputes.

Best practices for conflict management include adopting a proactive approach to conflict resolution, providing training on conflict handling techniques, and creating a supportive environment that encourages open dialogue. Implementing regular conflict management training helps employees develop the skills needed to handle disputes effectively and reduce the potential for conflicts to escalate (Mwikali, 2016). Additionally, establishing clear conflict resolution processes and promoting a culture of transparency can facilitate timely and effective conflict resolution.

This paper adopts the collaborative approach from the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) due to its emphasis on achieving win-win solutions through open communication and addressing the underlying needs of all parties. This technique aligns with the study's focus on enhancing organizational outcomes, such as customer retention and team dynamics, by fostering trust and preventing disputes from escalating. Collaborative conflict resolution is particularly suitable for achieving long-term organizational success, as supported by

studies like Chumpitaz and Paparoidamis (2020), which demonstrate its effectiveness in improving customer satisfaction and loyalty. Its proactive nature also aligns with best practices, such as providing training on conflict handling techniques and creating an environment of transparency and open dialogue.

Employee Competence

Employee competence is a crucial factor in achieving organizational success and maintaining a competitive edge in today's dynamic business environment. It encompasses the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that employees possess and apply in their roles to effectively perform job responsibilities and contribute to organizational goals. The concept of employee competence extends beyond basic job qualifications to include the capacity to adapt to new challenges, innovate, and drive performance improvements.

Understanding employee competence involves exploring various frameworks and models that define and measure these capabilities. One widely recognized framework is the Competency Model, which identifies the key competencies required for different roles and levels within an organization. This model emphasizes not only technical skills but also soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, and leadership abilities (Dean, 2017). Competency-based approaches help organizations align employee skills with job requirements, facilitating more effective recruitment, training, and performance management processes.

The relationship between employee competence and service delivery is a critical

area of focus. Competent employees are essential for optimizing service efficiency, enhancing customer satisfaction, and achieving high performance standards. Research by Heskett et al. (1997) highlights that employees with well-developed competencies are better equipped to handle tasks efficiently, reduce service delays, and improve overall operational performance. Skilled employees can provide higher-quality service, address customer needs effectively, and contribute to a positive customer experience, ultimately impacting service delivery outcomes.

Developing employee competence is an ongoing process that involves various strategies and practices. Continuous professional development is a key aspect, encompassing training programs, workshops, and educational opportunities that help employees acquire new skills and knowledge relevant to their roles (Zepeda, 2019). Performance management systems also play a significant role in fostering competence by setting clear expectations, providing feedback, and supporting employee growth through coaching and development initiatives. These strategies ensure that employees remain up-to-date with industry standards and are capable of meeting evolving job requirements.

Organizations that invest in employee competence benefit from improved productivity, enhanced service quality, and greater innovation. Competent employees are more likely to contribute to process improvements, identify opportunities for innovation, and drive organizational success. However, it is essential for organizations to address challenges related to competence development, such as providing adequate

resources for training and ensuring alignment between employee competencies and organizational goals.

Competence and Service Delivery

The relationship between employee competence and service delivery is well-established in the literature. Competent employees are crucial for delivering high-quality and efficient service. Research by Bowen and Ford (2002) emphasizes that employee competence directly affects service delivery speed and quality. Skilled employees are better equipped to handle customer inquiries, resolve issues promptly, and provide consistent service, all of which contribute to enhanced customer satisfaction. Further, a study by Homburg, Wieseke, and Bornemann (2009) found that employee competence significantly impacts service efficiency. Employees with higher levels of expertise and skills are able to perform tasks more quickly and accurately, leading to faster response times and improved service outcomes. This efficiency is crucial for maintaining a competitive edge and ensuring customer satisfaction in fast-paced service environments.

Developing employee competence is essential for sustaining high levels of performance and service delivery. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is a key strategy for enhancing employee skills and knowledge. CPD involves ongoing training and education that helps employees stay updated with industry trends and improve their competencies over time (Eraut, 2004). This approach ensures that employees remain proficient in their roles and can adapt to changes in the business environment.

Training programs are another critical component of competence development. These programs provide employees with specific skills and knowledge needed for their roles, ranging from technical training to customer service skills (Jacobs, 2003). Effective training programs are designed to address the specific needs of employees and align with organizational goals, thereby enhancing their competence and performance.

Performance management systems also play a crucial role in developing and maintaining employee competence. These systems involve setting performance goals, providing regular feedback, and evaluating employee performance against established benchmarks (Vuong & Nguyen, 2022). By implementing performance management systems, organizations can identify competence gaps, provide targeted development opportunities, and ensure that employees continue to meet performance standards.

Customer Retention

Customer retention is a critical component of organizational performance and long-term success. It refers to the ability of a company to retain its customers over time, ensuring their continued patronage and fostering loyalty. Effective customer retention strategies not only enhance customer satisfaction but also contribute to overall business profitability and stability.

The significance of customer retention cannot be overstated. Retaining existing customers is often more cost-effective than acquiring new ones, as it involves lower marketing and operational costs (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). Moreover, loyal customers are more likely to make

repeat purchases, refer others, and contribute to positive word-of-mouth, all of which can drive revenue growth and strengthen the company's market position (Heskett et al., 1994).

To enhance customer retention, organizations employ various strategies. Loyalty programs are one of the most common methods. These programs offer rewards and incentives to customers based on their purchasing behavior, encouraging them to continue buying from the company (Kivetz & Simonson, 2003). Recent research by Malthouse et al. (2022) indicates that well-designed loyalty programs can significantly boost customer retention by providing meaningful rewards and recognizing customer loyalty.

Personalized services also play a crucial role in retaining customers. Personalization involves tailoring products, services, and communications to meet the specific needs and preferences of individual customers (Ricotta & Costabile, 2007). This approach enhances the customer experience by making interactions more relevant and engaging, thereby increasing the likelihood of repeat business. Studies by Rane et al., (2023) show that personalized service not only improves customer satisfaction but also fosters deeper emotional connections, which are essential for long-term retention.

Theoretical Review

Competency-Based Model

Another key theory is the Competency-Based Model, which emphasizes the importance of specific competencies in determining job performance and organizational success. The Competency-Based Model, as outlined by Spencer and Spencer (1993), identifies

critical competencies that contribute to effective job performance, including both technical skills and behavioral attributes. This model is integral to the present study, as it provides a framework for understanding how employee competence influences service delivery. The model suggests that employees who possess the right mix of skills, knowledge, and behaviors are better equipped to perform their roles efficiently, which directly impacts service speed and quality (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). The study's finding that employee competence significantly affects service delivery is supported by this model, highlighting the need for organizations to focus on developing and leveraging the competencies of their workforce to enhance operational performance and customer satisfaction.

This theory was adopted for this study because it provides a theoretical framework to understand the relationship between employee competence and service delivery. As outlined by Spencer and Spencer (1993), this model emphasizes that the right mix of skills, knowledge, and behaviors is crucial for effective job performance. It directly supports the study's focus by explaining how employee competence influences service speed, quality, and overall organizational outcomes. The model's premise that developing workforce competencies enhances operational performance aligns with the study's findings, reinforcing the importance of investing in employee skill development to achieve superior service delivery and customer satisfaction.

Empirical Review

Kim et al. (2021) examined the relationship between employee competence and service quality in the retail sector. Their

study revealed that higher levels of employee competence, including both technical skills and interpersonal abilities, directly contribute to improved service quality and operational efficiency.

Ahmed and Sinha (2020) investigated the impact of different conflict handling strategies on customer satisfaction in the service industry. Their study found that effective conflict resolution techniques, particularly those involving collaborative and problem-solving approaches, significantly enhance customer satisfaction and retention.

Carter and Green (2022) explored the combined effects of conflict management and employee competence development on organizational performance. Their study highlighted that organizations that integrate effective conflict management strategies with robust competence development programs achieve higher levels of employee engagement, customer satisfaction, and overall performance.

Nelsen (2015) investigated the relationship between relationship marketing and customer loyalty at Monash University Malaysia. The study used a quantitative research technique to collect data from 220 Malaysian bank customers. Multiple regression analysis was employed to assess the impact of four key relationship marketing components—trust, commitment, communication, and conflict resolution—on customer loyalty. The findings indicated that these variables significantly affect customer loyalty and collectively explain a substantial portion of its variation. Additionally, the study found that these components are closely interrelated.

Methodology

This study targeted a population of Shoprite customers in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria, selecting a sample of 250 participants through a purposive sampling method. The inclusion criteria focused on individuals who had interacted with Shoprite's services within the past six months, ensuring relevance and recency of their experiences. This approach enhances the reliability of the sample by capturing opinions from active customers who can provide accurate insights into the service delivery and conflict handling techniques observed. The sample size of 250 is justified as it balances practicality with sufficient representation for meaningful analysis, aligning with similar studies in retail settings to ensure generalizability of findings. The choice of a survey research method was justified by its effectiveness in capturing a broad range of opinions and experiences from a large population, making it ideal for understanding customer perceptions and behaviors on a substantial scale. An online questionnaire was selected due to its efficiency and cost-effectiveness in reaching a geographically dispersed audience,

allowing respondents to provide feedback conveniently and anonymously. The sample size of 250 was determined using Godden's (2007) formula, which ensures statistical validity and reliability by providing a scientifically grounded approach to determining the appropriate sample size for accurate representation and generalizability of the findings.

Data analysis was carried out using both inferential and descriptive statistics, facilitated by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and describe the basic features of the data, providing a clear overview of the sample characteristics and survey responses. Inferential statistics were employed to draw conclusions and make predictions about the larger population based on the sample data, allowing for hypothesis testing and the assessment of relationships between variables. Utilizing SPSS version 23 ensures that the data analysis is conducted with advanced statistical tools and techniques, enhancing the precision and credibility of the results.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents		
	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender		
Female	127	50.8
Male	123	49.2
Total	250	100
Age Distribution		
18 – 25 years	108	43.2
26 – 30years	88	35.2
31 – 35years	54	21.6

Total	250	100
Marital Status		
Single	163	65.2
Married	87	34.8
Total	250	100
Education		
OND/NCE	53	21.2
HND/ B.Sc	173	69.2
M.Sc./ MBA	24	9.6
Total	250	100
Frequency of Patronage		
Daily	81	32.4
Weekly	134	53.6
Monthly	35	14.0
Total	250	100

Field Survey (2024)

The sample consists of 50.8% female and 49.2% male respondents, indicating a balanced representation of genders. This equilibrium suggests that the findings will reflect diverse perspectives, potentially offering a holistic view of how relationship marketing impacts organizational performance across different gender demographics. The age distribution reveals that a significant proportion of respondents are relatively young, with 43.2% between 18 and 25 years and 35.2% between 26 and 30 years. Only 21.6% are between 31 and 35 years. This youthful demographic might influence the relationship marketing strategies, as younger individuals may have different expectations and behaviors compared to older age groups. Understanding these differences can help tailor relationship marketing efforts to better suit the needs and preferences of younger

consumers, potentially enhancing organizational performance.

A majority of respondents are single (65.2%), while 34.8% are married. This distribution suggests that relationship marketing strategies might need to consider the social and lifestyle differences between single and married individuals. Single respondents may have different consumer behaviors and engagement patterns, which could impact how relationship marketing initiatives are designed and executed to optimize organizational performance.

The educational background of respondents shows that a large portion (69.2%) holds an HND or B.Sc degree, while 21.2% have OND/NCE, and 9.6% have advanced degrees like M.Sc. or MBA. This distribution indicates a highly educated respondent base, which could imply a more informed and critical perspective on relationship marketing practices. The high

level of education may influence expectations regarding the quality and sophistication of relationship marketing strategies, potentially affecting how organizational performance is perceived and measured.

The frequency of patronage data reveals that 53.6% of respondents engage

with the organization weekly, 32.4% daily, and 14% monthly. The predominance of weekly patrons suggests a strong level of customer engagement, which is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of relationship marketing. Daily patrons are likely to be highly loyal, while monthly patrons might be less engaged.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀₁ conflict handling techniques do not substantially contribute to customer retention.

Table 2: Model Summary and Anova

	B	Std. Error	T	P-Value
(Constant)`	26.364		11.928	.000
Conflict handling	2.022	2.210 .086	23.619	.000
Model Summary: R=.756 R²=.775, Adjusted R²=.600 F=557.880 P=.000				

Field Survey (2024)

The results indicate that conflict handling techniques significantly contribute to customer retention, as evidenced by a high R value of .756 and R² value of .775, suggesting that approximately 77.5% of the variation in customer retention is explained by conflict handling. The Adjusted R² of .600 further supports the model's robustness, accounting for potential overfitting. The F-statistic of 557.880 and a P-value of .000 indicate the overall model is statistically significant. The T-value of 23.619 with a P-

value of .000 for the conflict handling variable confirms its substantial impact on customer retention. These findings reject the null hypothesis (H₀₁), demonstrating that effective conflict handling is crucial for maintaining customer relationships and enhancing organizational performance. This implies that businesses should prioritize and refine their conflict resolution strategies to foster customer loyalty, thereby positively influencing their overall performance.

H₀₂: Competence in conflict handling does not significantly contribute to quick service delivery

Model Summary and Anova

	B	Std. Error	T	P-Value
(Constant)`	2.098		11.594	.000
Competence	.486	.181 .044	11.029	.000

Model Summary: $R=.589$ $R^2=.599$, **Adjusted $R^2=.356$** $F=121.647$ $P=.000$

Field Survey (2024)

The results reveal that competence in conflict handling significantly contributes to quick service delivery, as indicated by an R value of .589 and R^2 value of .599, suggesting that 59.9% of the variance in quick service delivery can be explained by competence. The Adjusted R^2 of .356, although lower, still indicates a moderately strong relationship, with some caution advised regarding potential model fit issues. The F -statistic of 121.647 and a P -value of .000 demonstrate that the overall model is statistically significant. The T -value of 11.029 with a P -value of .000 for the competence variable confirms its significant impact on service delivery speed. These findings reject the null hypothesis, showing that competence plays a vital role in ensuring quick service delivery.

Discussion of Findings

In actualizing the first objective, the results demonstrate that conflict handling techniques play a significant role in customer retention, with the model's R^2 value of .775 indicating that these techniques account for 77.5% of the variation in customer retention. The high T -value and the statistically significant P -value reinforce the substantial impact of conflict handling on maintaining customer relationships. The null hypothesis was thus rejected, confirming that effective conflict resolution is essential for sustaining customer loyalty and enhancing organizational performance. These findings are consistent with existing research that underscores the importance of conflict handling in customer relationship

management. For example, a study by Ndubisi (2007) found that proficient conflict resolution strategies significantly improve customer satisfaction and retention, highlighting the necessity of managing disputes effectively to maintain strong customer relationships. Similarly, Rahim (2011) emphasizes that conflict management is a critical component of relationship marketing, where the ability to handle, disputes can lead to long-term customer loyalty and repeat business.

In achieving the second objective, the results reveal that competence significantly contributes to quick service delivery, with an R^2 value of .599 indicating that competence explains nearly 60% of the variance in service speed. The strong T -value and statistically significant P -value confirm that competence is a key factor in achieving faster service delivery, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that improving employee competence directly enhances the efficiency of service delivery, which is crucial for organizational performance. Similarly, Bowen and Ford (2002) demonstrated that competence in service employees is directly linked to faster service times and higher customer satisfaction, reinforcing the idea that skilled employees are essential for meeting customer expectations in a timely manner. In agreement with these findings, Lee, Lee, and Kang (2012) also highlighted the significance of competence in service delivery, noting that organizations with highly competent employees are better positioned to respond swiftly to customer

needs, thereby enhancing service quality and speed. This study supports the notion that competence is not only about individual skills but also about how these skills are applied to streamline service processes.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study reveals several important conclusions regarding the impact of conflict handling techniques and employee competence on organizational performance. First, it concludes that conflict handling techniques have a significant effect on customer retention. The strong R^2 value of .775 underscores the importance of effective conflict resolution in maintaining customer loyalty and enhancing overall organizational performance. This finding indicates that proficient conflict management plays a crucial role in ensuring that customers remain satisfied and committed to the organization.

Second, the study highlights that employee competence is a major determinant of quick service delivery. The R^2 value of .599 suggests that nearly 60% of the variance in the speed of service delivery can be attributed to employee competence. This indicates that having skilled and capable employees is essential for delivering services efficiently and meeting customer expectations in a timely manner.

However, while employee competence is crucial for service speed, the study acknowledges that its impact may be influenced by additional factors such as technological support and the service environment. This recognition points to the need for a comprehensive approach where competence is supported by the right tools and systems to fully optimize service delivery. Integrating competence with

effective technology and a conducive service environment is necessary to maximize the benefits of skilled employees.

Finally, the study concludes that both conflict handling and employee competence are vital drivers of organizational performance. Effective conflict resolution enhances customer retention, while high employee competence contributes to faster service delivery.

Based on the study's conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

- i. **Enhance Conflict Handling Strategies:** Organizations should invest in training programs that equip employees with advanced conflict resolution skills. This includes techniques for managing customer complaints, negotiating effectively, and turning potential disputes into opportunities for strengthening customer relationships.
- ii. **Invest in Competence Development:** To ensure quick service delivery, organizations should prioritize continuous skill development for their employees. This includes offering specialized training in service delivery, customer interaction, and problem-solving.
- iii. **Leverage Technology to Support Competence:** While competence is critical, its effectiveness can be enhanced by the right technological tools. Organizations should invest in technology that supports quick service delivery, such as customer relationship management (CRM) systems, automated service

processes, and real-time communication platforms.

By implementing these recommendations, organizations can enhance their ability to

retain customers and deliver services quickly and efficiently, thereby strengthening their overall performance and competitive advantage.

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