

E-SERVICE CONVENIENCE AND CONSUMER LOYALTY AMONG CUSTOMERS OF JUMIA E-RETAIL STORE IN OGUN STATE: A MODERATING ROLE OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH (E-WOM)

BY

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Abstract

One of the principal motivations behind customers' choice of online retail stores is convenience derived from shopping there. Despite the fast growth of online shopping in Nigeria, this is still relatively slow as compared with developed nations. So many e-retail outlets in the country are hacked by fraudsters for misrepresentation and defrauding customers thus resulting in transaction inconvenience. Hence, this study examined the moderating role of e-wom in the relationship between e-service convenience and customer loyalty. The population consists of customers of Jumia in Ogun State. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to select sample size of 254 respondents. The study employed the Moderated Hierarchical Regression Model (MHRM) to model the inter-relationships among the variables. The study used STATA 15.0 software. Findings revealed that e-wom has a moderating influence on the relationship between the usage of the e-service convenience and customer loyalty. This is evidenced in that intending customers are keenly interested in experience of existing customers such as complaint, recommendation on social media influences purchase decision. To be more specific, the e-retailers in Ogun State are advised to be mindful of their encounter with intending, and existing customers as it has tendency of advancing to word of mouth expression on the internet.

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Introduction

Globally, electronic business transaction is becoming trendier and Nigeria is not left out. The huge rate at which Nigerians embrace information technology has been one of the success story of online retail outlets in Nigeria. For instance, Jumia, a retail outlet that was established in 2012 grew significantly as one of the leading online stores and a household name in the country (Ogbuji & Udom, 2018). Despite the country is being a developing nation, Digital2020 (Kemp, 2020) reported 85.49 million internet users in January 2020, with an annual increase of about 2.2 million (representing 2.6 %) from 2019 figure. Similarly, in the first quarter of the year, Jumia which is one of the e-commerce outlets in the country recorded 6.4 million active customers (Jumia, 2020). This expansion of market share of e-businesses could be largely attributed to e-service convenience experienced by e-customers.

Customers' loyalty as an important aspect of service marketing has gained concern of so many scholar (Ali et al., 2018). The advent of e-commerce has widened the choices of consumers such that they could choose between online purchase and patronizing the traditional stores. Customers are attracted to online stores because of convenience and efficiency. However, they are exposed to risk of uncertainty and product reliability (Dai et al., 2013). Most often customers encounter problem of disparity between the product ordered for and the actual condition and quality of

product delivered. However, their loyalty is sharpened by how the organization satisfy their needs and as such it can be concluded that customers satisfaction ultimately affects customers repetitive patronage and loyalty to online retail outlets (Hult, Nidhi, Morgeson, & Zhang, 2019). Recently, e-loyalty has been attributed to customers' experience of service convenience derived from the websites as good experience encourages customers to revisit the online stores. Role of convenience in business survival cannot be overemphasized or underestimated as it influences customers' attitude towards the store (Daud, Tulung, & Gunawan, 2019). As such, online stores need to provide user-friendly interface, improved internet bandwidth, effective feedback mechanism. The stores also need to provide variety of payment techniques such as cash-on-delivery, electronic wallets, online payment etc. nevertheless, there should be proper packaging, accurate, and timely delivery of the goods ordered online (Pham, Tran, Misra, Maskeliunas, & Damaševičius, 2018).

Since the commencement of operations by Jumia, there has been wide adoption of online purchase by customers in the country. However, customers of the retail outlet are faced with problems of breach of trust by the outlet, substandard goods delivered and delay in delivery (Ekwueme & Nehemiah, 2017). Most of the customers of online retail outlets such as Jiji, Jumia, Ali-Express, Konga and Amazon encounter problems while navigating the sites to find information about the product offerings, the actual colour, specification and size (Babatunde, Abikoye, & Falaju, 2019). Customers of online retail outlets in Nigeria also encounter the problem of returning goods with default as the transaction is done online and the customers need to wait for the e-retail outlet to retrieve the product back when it has default or it is different from the one ordered for (Ayegba, Suleiman, & Dominic, 2018).

One of the major gaps identified in previous studies is that most of those studies conducted in Nigeria and specifically on E-retail outlets only focused on service convenience and customers' loyalty. However, the moderating effects of e-wom have been neglected in the previous investigations. Aside a company's offering and convenience derived by customers while shopping online, there are other factors which moderate the relationship. For instance, if the experience of old-time customers offerings of the competitor are more appealing or they offer discount and more enticing promotional and delivery packages, customers are more likely to switch to the competitors. However, this situation has not been examined in most studies conducted on the selected e-retail outlets in Nigeria. The unfavourable e-wom on services may account for reasons intending customers would only shuffle the internet for a product offering on the website in other to search for alternatives that are attractive irrespective of the service convenience derived. Hence, this current study, the moderating role of attractive alternative in determining the impact of service convenience on consumer behaviour.

Despite the fast growth of online shopping in Nigeria, this is still relatively low as compared with developed nations such as UK. Most customers prefer patronizing conventional mortal and bricks stores in the country (Olotewo, 2017). There is wide gap in the number of online customers in the advanced and developing nations as not all the population in Nigeria has full access to the internet. Also, the high rate of crime in the country has made online customers fear online transaction with e-retail outlets. So many e-retail outlets in the country are hacked by fraudsters for misrepresentation and defrauding customers thus resulting in transaction inconvenience (Ekwueme & Nehemiah, 2017; Olotewo, 2017).

Literature Review

E-service convenience is an integral part of e-marketing and e-business, and it has been studied in many industries such as banking, home delivery services, tourism and airlines (Bi & Kim, 2020; Duarte, Costa e Silva, & Ferreira, 2018; Mehmood & Najmi, 2017; Mpinganjira, 2015). There is a general view that customers of online stores are more interested in the ease at which they can transact business online with retail outlets (Jiang et al., 2011). Customers need to experience convenience in all the stages of business transactions online from pre-purchase stages (access, search, evaluation), purchase stage (transaction, possession) and post-purchase stage (post-possession convenience) (Bi & Kim, 2020; Jiang, Yang, & Jun, 2013; Pham et al., 2018). The experience affects their views about online services provided by the e-retail outlets. Since online customers are more concerned about the time and effort expended in transaction than their view of convenience is about the non-monetary cost associated with such transaction (Mpinganjira, 2015).

The study of (Daud et al., 2019) identified four dimensions of e-service convenience (access, search, transaction, and post-purchase convenience). On the other hand (Mehmood & Najmi, 2017) concluded identified five dimensions. However, this present study recognizes the arguments of Jiang et al. (2011) and adopts their indicators of e-service convenience. This study also considers e-service convenience as a multi-dimensional and diverse construct, which entails access, search, evaluation, transaction, possession, and post-possession convenience.

E-wom enhances interaction among customers (both existing and intending customers). The information gathered from the e-wom influences both purchase intention and customer loyalty (Fernando, Bangsawan, & Rouly, 2020; Muniweera, Balawardhana, Rajapaksha, Chamara, & Jayasuriya, 2020). Word of Mouth (WOM) as an indirect marketing tool promotes marketing of products or services as producers can listen to and read customers' feedback, complaint, and post-purchase experience. With the advent of e-commerce, e-wom has been able to incorporate both influencer marketing and online consumers. Since consumption decisions are influenced by so many factors of which information sharing is sacrosanct, e-wom cannot be overemphasized in e-service marketing literature. During the process of decision making, an intending customer tends to seek for information online about a particular product/brand and as such e-wom proffers the needed information (Sahoo, Sodagiri, & Sangwan, 2020).

Since the last decade, the increasing trend of e-commerce and virtual communication has shifted the attention of organizations and scholars to the impact of e-recommendation by customers on product or services of firms as it becomes easier for internet users and bloggers to express their experience about a product or service on the internet through different means such as blogs, webpages etc. (Muniweera et al., 2020). E-wom has become influential in determining the consumers behaviour toward a particular brand/product as they tend to seek for information about the product from peer shoppers before they take actual purchase decision (Fernando et al., 2020; Kesumayuda, Mahrinasari, & Rouly, 2020).

The improvement in information technology has resulted in Industry 4.0 which has given rise to Marketing 4.0 where both online and offline means of communication are being used by consumers and companies to interact with each other (Ngan & Chinh, 2020; Tanprajna & Ellyawati, 2020). The monitoring of trend of consumers' communication and behaviour should

be taken serious by marketers of nowadays since it takes more than marketers and personal preference of customers to influence their buying decisions. Aside these two, consumers are also influenced by the existing consumers' online comment and references (Tanprajna & Ellyawati, 2020).

Transaction Cost Economies

The theoretical underpinning of the transaction cost economies is that both traditional and online marketers earn profit by reducing transaction cost related to asset specificity, doubt and transaction occurrence (T S H Teo & Yu, 2005; Ting-Peng & Jin-Shiang, 1998). These transaction costs are costs associated with making an exchange and play pivot role in business dealings (Williamson, 1981, 2016). Other studies have examined the relationship between information available on the internet and transaction cost, they opined that this information availability can reduce information asymmetry associated to transaction cost, thus leading to a reduced transaction cost and transparent transaction, online stores with such a reduced transaction cost will be more preferable by customers (T S H Teo & Yu, 2005; Ting-Peng & Jin-Shiang, 1998). The proponent of TCE, Coase (1937) opined that there is partiality in information flow between active economic actors in economic activities tends to be partial, as economic actors are rational and opportunists (Williamson, 1981, 1987).

Online purchase results in service convenience by reducing transaction cost to be incurred in the process of exchange, this implies that online service convenience could result in customers satisfaction when compared with traditional purchase. This convenience could be in forms of provision of powerful search engines, product samples (Thompson S.H. Teo, Wang, & Leong, 2004). Researchers have simultaneously examined service convenience as a means of reducing transaction cost and improving the relationship between it and consumers' behaviour (customers' satisfaction and customers' loyalty) (Colwell, Aung, Kanetkar, & Holden, 2008; Duarte et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2013; Kaura, 2013; Mpinganjira, 2015; Salehi, Abdollahbeigi, & Charmchian, 2012).

Empirical Review

There are numerous research in the consumers' behaviour literature looking into the antecedents of customer loyalty. These researches differ from each other either in terms of concepts, coverage or methodology used. In the field of consumers' behaviour, customers' loyalty has been viewed as a key factor in attaining competitive edge and sustaining the organization (Kim, Kim, & Hwang, 2020). Therefore, attempts has been made by many studies to investigate the antecedents of customers' loyalty (Baena-Arroyo, García-Fernández, Gálvez-Ruiz, & Grimaldi-Puyana, 2020; Cheng, Gaur, & Abdul Rahim, 2020b; Krishnan, 2020; Prentice & Nguyen, 2020). For example, empirical investigation by some researchers have showed a positive relationship between e-service convenience and customers' loyalty (Baena-Arroyo et al., 2020).

According to (Prentice & Nguyen, 2020), customers' engagement exerted a significant influence on the association between service experience and customers' loyalty among customers of hotels in Australia. The study employed SEM estimation technique and virtual snowball sampling technique were employed with a total valid respondent of 380. The study also found a significant effect of artificial intelligence on customers' loyalty. Service experience was also found to have

a mediating role on customers' loyalty. The findings are similar to that of (Prentice, Wang, & Lin, 2018) that customers' engagement significantly affect customers' loyalty.

Employing Spearman's rank correlation coefficient estimation technique, (Omoifo, 2020) concluded that transaction convenience positively influences customers' patronage in Money deposit banks in Port-Harcourt, Nigeria. Other findings on the relationship between the two variables have revealed positive and significant relationship. In the case of 263 Sepah Bank, (Khazaei, Manjiri, Samiey, & Najafi, 2014) examined the relationship between service convenience, customers' satisfaction. The empirical results of SEM showed positive relationship among the variables. Implication of the findings is that organisations need to ensure customers' satisfaction and service convenience (in form of decision, access, transaction, benefit, and post benefit convenience) to gain customers' retention in service industry.

In Spain, (Krishnan, 2020) prescribed that the major dimensions and measurements of customers' loyalty among customers of shopping malls Chennai City using Principal components analysis. The study found seven key factors of loyalty which are competition, elegance, movie affinity, attractive number of shops, multi dimension product availability, theme-based approach, and entertainment. The study also emphasized the importance of the three major dimensions of customers' loyalty which are behavioural, and attitudinal.

Abumalloh et al. (2020) investigated the major drivers of customers' loyalty among female customers of online shops. The study employed partial least squares and SEM estimation techniques. The study found significant relationship between website quality and satisfaction. Satisfaction and trust were also found to influence loyalty significantly and positively. The study confirms previous findings of (Nilashi, Jannach, bin Ibrahim, Esfahani, & Ahmadi, 2016) that recommendation quality is important in improving customers' trust.

(Kushwaha & Kaushal, 2020) investigated the antecedents of consumer' online behavior in India. The result of the systematic review of literature revealed that online buying behavior of consumers are influenced by price, service quality and branded products. The study also revealed direct and positive impact of service quality on e-satisfaction and e-loyalty. However, future studies could also include other antecedents such as perceived ease of use, and service convenience. Furthermore, consumers' characteristics such as education, income and browsing behavior on the internet could also be considered in future studies.

Paul, Sankaranarayanan, and Mekoth (2016) examined the drivers and consequences of customers' satisfaction among 225 (125 from small retail outlets and 100 from large retail outlets) customers of retail stores in India using convenience sampling technique, exploratory factors analysis and OLS estimation technique. The result of the OLS revealed social desirability, social ambience, shopping economy, family shopping, staff friendliness, and deal proneness have positive and significant influence on customers' satisfaction in the large retail outlets. Surprisingly, the study is among the very few ones that found shopping convenience to have harmful effect on satisfaction. Further studies could consider customers' shopping orientation, characteristics and store preference.

Previous studies in different marketing fields have predicted that customers loyalty and satisfaction are major outcomes of e-service convenience (Kushwaha & Kaushal, 2020; Liu, Huang, & Chen, 2014). Repetitive purchase is also positively affected by these multidimensional e-service convenience construct (Pham et al., 2018). Evidence have revealed that high level of service convenience has two main consequences for customers including consumers' loyalty and customers' satisfaction (Baena-Arroyo et al., 2020; Cheng et al., 2020). Therefore, both constructs should be included in studies on the relationship between e-service convenience and consumers' behaviour.

Moderating role of e-wom

In Sukabumi City, Lestari and Gunawan (2021) investigated the influence of EWOM of bloggers on TikTok social media plat form on Brand image and buying interest of 100 customers in Scarlett Whitening products. The result of the Path Analysis revealed that e-wom influences both brand image and consumer buying interest. However, further studies could consider the drivers of e-wom and the population should also be expanded to include other social media platforms for the purpose of generalizability of findings.

Wiraandryana, Agung, and Sri (2021) examined the mediating role of trust in the relationship between e-wom and purchasing decisions of 110 customers of two wedding organizer business in Denpasar City in Bali using purposive sampling technique. The result of the Path Analysis estimation technique revealed that e-wom is a strong determinant of trust and purchasing decision. Similarly, the result also revealed that trust is a strong positive determinant of purchasing decision and a mediating variable in the relationship between e-wom and purchasing decision. The result of the study is similar to the findings of Kunja (2018) that e-wom has a consequential effect on purchasing decision. Similarly, Dewi and Sudiksa (2019) also concluded that trust can be considered as a strong mediator of the relationship between e-wom and purchasing decision. However, further studies could include other drivers of purchasing decision, other population with larger sample size for generalizability.

Li and Jaharuddin (2021) investigated the determinant of purchase intention among 280 consumers of organic foods in China using SEM and SPSS Process regression estimation techniques. The findings revealed that WOM significantly moderates the influence of purchase intention on purchase decision. However further studies could explore other moderators of intention-behaviour relationship aside WOM. In 2020, Thomas and Kanje investigated the effect of motivation on e-wom behaviour among 278 tourists at three Airports in Tanzania. The result of SEM revealed that e-wom behaviour of the tourists are positively influenced by entertainment motivation. However, the scope of the study was only limited to vacationers who visited three Airports in Tanzania, further studies could consider other travelers such as business tourists, and international students.

Mohammed and Al-swidi (2021) influence of corporate social responsibility actions on positive e-wom among 389 visitors of hotels in islands of Penang and Langkawi in Malaysia using convenience sampling technique. The result of the Co-Variance based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM) analysis revealed that stakeholder-related corporate social responsibility and environment-related corporate social responsibility positively and significantly affects customers' e-WOM. Furthermore, customers' affective commitment played a significant

mediating role in the CSR-e-WOM relationship. The study is in line with the submission of Hur et al. (2018) that customers' strong commitment to the organization is as a result of their perception of the CSR of the organization.

An, Chung, and Muk (2020) investigated the drivers of purchase intention among 293 young American consumers of foreign pop music using SEM. The study revealed that intention to share on social media (WOM) and intention to join the fan page significantly influences purchase intention positively. The study is in line with the findings of Kim and Johnson (2016) that WOM on social media stimulates present and future purchase decision. However, the study only focused on Generation Z, other population set such as Generation Y who are lovers of traditional music could be considered in future research works.

Aut, Romero, and Ruiz-equihua (2020) analysed the effects of community identification and firm identification on content creation, offline and online WOM among 491 users of online travel agencies. The result of the PLS analysis revealed that content creation positively influences both online and offline WOM. Similarly, self-enhancement moderately influenced the relationships. Further studies could be replicated in other context and geographical locations.

Eneizan et al. (2020) investigated the influence of ease of use, e-WOM, trust, and usefulness on online shopping among 109 users of Opensooq website in Jordan using convenience sapling technique. The result of the PLS-SEM analysis revealed that e-WOM has positive and significant effect on trust. Furthermore, trust revealed a positive and significant effect on online purchasing. The study is in line with the findings of El Gohary (2012) that online information spread vastly than offline negative wom. However, future studies could expand the sample size and change the context of the study.

Methodology

The survey research design was employed to determine the moderating role of e-wom on the relationship between e-service convenience and customer loyalty among customers of Jumia in Ogun State. The choice of Ogun State for this study is based on the Google trend report, which submits that the state is the number one in the list of states that are interested in Jumia, over the last 12 months as at March, 2021(Retrieved from trend.google.com).

Since the population of the customers are large and unknown, non-probability (Purposive) sampling technique was adopted to select the respondents. The choice of purposive sampling technique was to ensure that only the customers of Jumia who are residents in Ogun State and have patronized the e-retail outlet at least once were selected. Out of 400 questionnaires which were self-administered, 254 were filled and returned, which represents about 64% response rate. Questionnaire items on E-service convenience were obtained from the studies of (Berry et al., 2002; Jiang et al., 2011a). Scale for customers' loyalty were adapted from the studies of (Almarashdeh et al., 2019; Bi & Kim, 2020; Hult et al., 2019; Urueña & Hidalgo, 2015). Items on e-wom were adapted from the study of Bansal et al. (2005).

Data analysis and Results

Validity and Reliability test

Table 1 depicts the result of the Cronbach Alpha reliability test and EFA factor loading for construct validity. An alpha value of less than 0.60 represents weak reliability of the instrument, while alpha values over 0.7 indicate that all scales can be considered reliable (Sekaran, 2003; Hair, Money, Samuel and Page, 2007; Inda *et al.*, 2009). The result depicts that all the Cronbach alpha values are more significant than 0.60 and nearly 1.0, which means that the items are reliable (Churchill, 1979; Sekaran, 2003).

The results of the exploratory factor analysis depict that all the items were more significant than 0.30, and they were accepted since factor loading values more significant than (+) 0.30 are minimally acceptable (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham, 2006).

Table 1: Reliability and Validity results

Constructs	(Cronbach's alpha (α))	Item details	Factor loading
Customer loyalty	(0.8870)	CL1	0.9976
		CL2	0.5723
		CL3	0.9971
E-service convenience	(0.7416)	ES1	0.7898
		ES2	0.5488
		ES3	0.7581
E-wom	(0.7508)	EWOM1	0.8722
		EWOM2	0.5510
		EWOM3	0.8088

Model testing

The efficacy of the proposed model was analyzed using STATA 15.0 and the statistical analysis method adopted for this study was Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA). The study adopted the 3-step hierarchical regression analysis proposed by (Sharma, Durand, & Gur-Arie, 1981) which adopted the assumption of hierarchical regression model by adding interaction effects to the last equation in a sequential order (Aiken, West, & Reno, 1991; Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983). Hence, this study involves three stages of equation:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon \tag{1}$$

Equation 1 depicts the effects of the independent variable (E-service convenience) and the dependent variable (customer loyalty);

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon \tag{2}$$

Equation 2 depicts the direct effects of the independent variable (e-service convenience), the moderating variable (e-wom) and the dependent variable (customer loyalty);

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon \tag{3}$$

Finally, equation 3 depicts the direct effects of the independent variable (e-service convenience), the moderating variable (e-wom), the interaction between the independent and moderating

variables (e-service convenience * e-wom) and the dependent variable (customer loyalty). The results of the MRA is as presented in Table 3.

Model 1 in Table 3 showed the linear relationship between the independent variable (e-service convenience) and the dependent variable (customer loyalty). The result revealed a positive and significant effect of e-service convenience on customer loyalty with a coefficient of +0.731, a ρ -value of 0.000, and a standard error of 0.0664. the ρ -value obtained is less than 0.01, hence, it can be concluded that the β_1 value obtained is significant at 99% confidence interval. This indicates that e-service convenience could enhance customer loyalty. Model 2 depicts that the moderating variable (e-wom) has a positive and significant effect on the dependent variable (customer loyalty) with a β_2 value of 0.561 which is significant at 1% level of significance. This indicated that a unit increase in e-service convenience result in about 0.561 (on the average) increase in customer loyalty.

Model 3 depicts the interactive influence of e-wom on the effects of e-service convenience on customer loyalty, which showed a significant β_3 value of -0.418 at a 1% level of significance. So it can be stated that e-wom has a moderating influence on the relationship between the e-service convenience and customer loyalty. The introduction of interaction term in Model 3 also increased the R-squared value from 0.707 to 0.881. Based on the significant values of β_2 and β_3 , it can be concluded that the moderator (e-wom) was a quasi-moderator in the relationship between the independent variable (e-service convenience) and the dependent variable (customer loyalty) (Sharma et al, 1981). It is a quasi-moderator because it affects the forms of the relationship by interacting with the predictor variable (e-service convenience) and directly affecting the criterion variable (customer loyalty) (Haniff, Ab Halim, and Abdul Manaf, 2016; Sharma et al, 1981).

Table 2 Results of the Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA)

VARIABLES	(1) Customer loyalty	(2) Customer loyalty	(3) Customer loyalty
E-service convenience	0.731*** (0.0664)	0.549*** (0.0449)	2.091*** (0.0857)
E-wom		0.561*** (0.0310)	1.759*** (0.0658)
c.E -service convenience#c.E-wom			-0.418*** (0.0219)
Constant	0.947*** (0.178)	0.0698 (0.127)	-4.089*** (0.232)
Observations	254	254	254
R-squared	0.325	0.707	0.881

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Conclusion

This study examined the moderating effect of e-wom on the relationship between e-service convenience and customer loyalty among customers of Jumia e-retail stores in Ogun State. This study has confirmed that e-service convenience derived by customers of the online store could cause an increase in their loyalty, so there should not be any form of inconvenience of time and effort while making online transaction with the store. This is in line with previous studies (Baena-Arroyo et al., 2020; Cheng et al., 2020b; Kushwaha & Kaushal, 2020; Pham et al., 2018) that found positive as well as significant impact of e-service convenience on customer loyalty.

The findings support the submission of some recent studies which found empirical evidence in favour of the argument that a greater level of e-service convenience generates a greater contribution to consumer behaviour (Ayegba et al., 2018; Olasanmi, 2019; Shankar & Rishi, 2020) as it reduces switching behaviour (Minghong, Xianjun, Xiaoli, & Jing, 2020), and provide better customer loyalty (Cheng et al., 2020b). However, Ali, Noor, and Mahmood (2016) opined that perceived service convenience may be insignificant in determining e-loyalty of customers.

This study also highlights that e-wom has a direct and positive relationship with customer loyalty (WiraAndryana & Sri Ardani, 2021). This finding implies that, aside e-service convenience, e-wom can also be a determinant of consumer behaviour in form of enhanced buying interest (An et al., 2020; Lestari & Gunawan, 2021; Wiraandryana et al., 2021). Given that e-wom among customer represents the testimony of their encounter with the organization, the product offering or customer relationship management during and after the business transaction, organisations need to pay cognizance to its important. This finding validates previous studies (Li & Jaharuddin, 2021; Wiraandryana et al., 2021).

Third, the moderating effect of e-wom on e-service convenience and customer loyalty is significant. The effect of customer loyalty changes as level of e-service convenience and e-wom changes. The present study contributes to the field of e-service marketing by introducing e-wom as a quasi-moderator in the relationship between e-service convenience and customer loyalty. In particular, e-wom moderates the effects of e-service convenience on customer loyalty.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

This study extended the frontier of knowledge by employing transaction cost economies in e-service marketing field, the findings of this study increase support for the use of TCE as developed by Coase in 1937, in terms of its established positive effect of e-service convenience as a means of gaining customer loyalty through time and effort convenience (Kaura, 2013; Mpinganjira, 2015). In particular, this study fills existing gap in literature by including e-wom as a quasi-moderator of e-service convenience-customer loyalty relationship. Positive e-wom is an informal marketing strategy, but only few studies have investigated its moderating role on the relationship between e-service convenience and customer loyalty.

Practical implication

This study has important managerial implications since it helps the e-retail stores in Nigeria to increase their chances of gaining competitive advantage in e-service marketing sector. This study

suggests that e-retail stores in Ogun State should take into account dimensions of e-service convenience that can ease online purchase process in order to facilitate customer loyalty among the customers. To be more specific, the e-retailers in Ogun State are advised to be mindful of their encounter with intending, and existing customers as it has tendency of advancing to word of mouth expression on the internet, hence influencing customer loyalty.

Limitation and future research avenues

There are several notable limitations in the study that should be considered in future research. First, the focus of this study has been on e-retail stores, future studies may focus on the other side of the coin by focusing on bricks-and-mortar stores sector. We encourage future studies to examine how e-wom have moderated the impact of service convenience on other dimensions of consumer behaviour (e.g purchase decision, switching behaviour).

Secondly, this study included a sample of Jumia in Ogun State which is just a fraction of the e-retail stores, other studies could consider other fractions such as JiJi, Konga etc. Last but not least, future studies are encouraged to do a comparative analysis of the study in different States or regions.

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