

E-OPINION AND DINING DECISIONS: A STUDY OF ONLINE REVIEW IMPACT ON FOOD AND BEVERAGE ESTABLISHMENT IN P.H METROPOLIS

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Abstract

A descriptive and correlational research design is adopted for this study, aimed at investigating the impact of online reviews on food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt. The population comprises of 2,500 registered food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt, obtained from the Port Harcourt Chamber of Commerce and the Rivers State Ministry of Commerce and Industry. These establishments include restaurants, cafes, bars, and other food service providers. A sample size of 385 is determined using the Yamane (1967) formula. An impressive response rate of 96% representing 368 usable copies of questionnaire was obtained and formed the bases for analysis. A stratified random sampling technique is employed to select respondents from different categories of food and beverage establishments, ensuring representation from various sectors of the industry. Validity is ensured through expert review and pilot testing of the questionnaire. The data instruments were validated using Cronbach alpha's test, whereupon all variables surpassed the benchmark 0.7, indicating high internal consistency. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and inferential statistics (regression analysis and ANOVA). The questionnaire were administered to managers of food and beverage establishments. The results of test of hypotheses show that online review has a significant impact on the surveyed F&B Establishment performance. Thus, the study concluded online reviews significantly impact food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt, influencing their visibility, brand reputation, and competitive advantage and recommends that F&B establishments should prioritize online review management, responding promptly to reviews and encouraging satisfied customers to share their experiences.

Keywords: E-opinion, Dining decisions, Online Review Impact, Food and Beverage Establishment

Introduction

The food and beverage (F&B) sector in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, is growing, with consumers increasingly using online reviews to decide where to dine (Adeyemi, Ojo & Udoh, 2020). Online review is a form of electronic word-of-mouth where customers share their experiences, opinions, and ratings about a product, service, or business, such as a restaurant or food establishment, on digital platforms like social media, review websites, or mobile apps, influencing others' purchasing decisions and shaping the business' online reputation. However, the impact of these reviews on local F&B establishments is not well understood. The major problem is that many F&B businesses in Port Harcourt lack awareness of how online reviews affect consumer dining decisions, potentially losing customers due to poor online reputation management. As the F&B industry in Port Harcourt continues to evolve, e-WOM will remain a critical factor in shaping customer decisions. F&B operators must stay ahead of the curve by leveraging social media, responding to online reviews, and prioritizing online reputation management.

Reviews have an undeniable impact on food and beverage establishment and other hospitality businesses. In fact, according to Nwankwo and Adegbola, (2020) restaurants are the number one most affected industry when it comes to customer feedback, with 94% of people reading reviews online before deciding where to eat. It makes sense - guests want to know that they are going to have a great experience in terms of food and drink quality, customer service, atmosphere and facilities, and they want reassurance that their hard-earned money is not going to go to waste. Charles (2021) revealed that 78% of potential customers use Tripadvisor to research restaurants in

their local area, making it one of the top review platforms for hospitality brands, with Google and Facebook also being popular choices for diners to use to share their thoughts.

The proliferation of online review platforms like TripAdvisor, Yelp, and Google Reviews has revolutionized consumer behavior, especially in the food and beverage (F&B) sector (Lu et al., 2018). In Port Harcourt, Nigeria, a city with a growing internet penetration rate, online reviews are increasingly influencing dining decisions. Consumers in Port Harcourt often check reviews for food quality, service, and ambiance before visiting restaurants or cafes (Adeyemi et al., 2020). This trend is driven by the trust consumers place in peer reviews over traditional advertising. Studies show that 87% of customers read online reviews before visiting a business, and positive reviews can boost revenue by 5-9% (Ibrahim, 2023; Lu et al., 2018). In Port Harcourt's competitive F&B scene, managing online reputation is becoming vital for businesses to attract and retain customers. The increasing influence of online reviews has given rise to a new generation of diners who are increasingly reliant on digital opinions to inform their food choices (Udeh, 2024)). This "review generation" is characterized by a desire for authenticity, transparency, and social validation, and F&B operators in Port Harcourt must adapt to these changing consumer preferences to stay competitive. As the importance of online reviews continues to grow, businesses must adapt to this new landscape and develop strategies to effectively manage their online presence. By doing so, they can harness the power of online reviews to drive business growth and improve customer satisfaction.

Online reviews have become a key source of information for diners seeking recommendations, advice, and validation (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2016). In Port Harcourt, where the F&B scene is characterized by a diverse range of cuisines and dining options, online reviews play a critical role in helping customers navigate the complex culinary landscape. A study by BrightLocal (2022) found that 71% of consumers say that positive reviews increase their likelihood of dining at a particular establishment, while 54% say that negative reviews decrease their likelihood. In Port Harcourt's F&B landscape, online reviews have become a form of social proof, where customers rely on the opinions of others to inform their dining decisions (Cialdini, 2009). This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in Nigeria, where collectivist cultural values emphasize the importance of community and social influence. As a result, F&B operators in Port Harcourt must prioritize building a strong online reputation, leveraging social proof to attract and retain customers.

Gretzel and Yoo, (2014) argued that online reviews has significantly shape consumer perceptions and choices. For instance, a 1-star increase on Yelp can boost revenue (Lu et al., 2018). In contrast, negative reviews can deter customers, and ignoring reviews can worsen perceptions. Thus for Port Harcourt's F&B businesses, understanding and managing online reviews is key to staying competitive. Online customer reviews are valuable as they allow potential consumers to get in-depth information from others for a relatively low cost and little effort. With one click, they can solve an information asymmetry problem in which service providers are better informed than customers. The internet allows customers to share their views and feedback cheaply and efficiently with a large audience (Eze, Okoro, & Nwosu, 2019).

Despite the growing importance of online reviews, there is a dearth of research on their impact on dining decisions in Port Harcourt's F&B landscape. While studies have explored the role of online reviews on consumer decision making and in other contexts, such as hospitality and tourism, the specific context of Port Harcourt's F&B industry remains understudied. This study aims to fill this knowledge gap by investigating the impact of online review on food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt Metropolis. This study sought to achieve the following as specific objectives. (1) To investigate online review impact on brand visibility of food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt, Rivers. (2) To examine online review impact on brand reputation of food and beverage

establishments in Port Harcourt, Rivers. (3) To find out online review impact on competitive advantage of food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt, Rivers.

Statement of the problem

The food and beverage (F&B) sector in Port Harcourt is vibrant, with diverse dining options ranging from local eateries to upscale restaurants. However, many local businesses lack awareness of how online reviews impact consumer behavior. Eze et al. (2019) noted that Nigerian consumers increasingly rely on online reviews for dining choices, but there's limited research on how this affects local F&B establishments.

The rise of online review platforms like TripAdvisor, Yelp, and Google Reviews has transformed how consumers choose food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt. Positive reviews can boost business, while negative ones can deter customers (Lu et al., 2018). Moreover, with the proliferation of social media and online review platforms, customers are no longer passive recipients of marketing messages, but active participants in shaping the narrative of the F&B landscape. Consumers use reviews to reduce the likelihood that a purchase will lead to disappointment or, at the very least, reduce the severity of a potential disappointment. Monitoring your reviews allows you to track trends in comments about your food and drink, meaning you can make the necessary improvements and give your customers what they really want. 90% of guests confirm that the reviews they read on Tripadvisor match their dining experience, proving why they trust the words of other customers when it comes to your food.

Responding to online reviews is crucial for F&B operators in Port Harcourt, as it demonstrates a commitment to customer satisfaction and improves online reputation (Min et al., 2015). A study by ReviewTrackers (2022) found that 53% of customers expect businesses to respond to online reviews, highlighting the importance of timely and effective review management. Previous studies (e.g., Lu et al., 2018; Kuk & Ye, 2020) examined online review impacts in other contexts, showing reviews influence consumer choices. Locally, some studies (Eze et al., 2019) looked at online reviews in Nigeria, but specifics for Port Harcourt's F&B sector are lacking which constitute a gap in research and thus created the need for this study.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Online Review Impact

In the current digital age, online platforms have become a novel business element that benefits both platform operators, businesses and consumers (Wang, Li, & Li, 2015). Nowadays, most Food and Beverage Establishment have established online presence, and the majority of consumer purchase decisions are made on these platforms. Many Food and Beverage Establishment have innovated by allowing customers to share their feedback on their dining experience with other consumers in the form of online reviews on the platform. This approach can enhance potential consumers' trust in the restaurant. The higher the level of trust, the more likely consumers are to achieve their purchase intentions (**I-Ching, & Jing-Yi, 2024**). High-quality reviews provide valuable insights into the restaurant's facilities, services, and overall experience, enabling customers to make more informed decisions. Reviews reduce uncertainty by offering firsthand insights into the experiences of other customers. Helps customers filter through numerous choices by evaluating feedback, ratings, and detailed experiences. Increases brand loyalty and creates a transparent relationship. According to **Ruytenbeek, Verschraegen, and Decock, (2021)** online reviews matter because they:

1. Authentic feedback from real guests, helping potential guests make informed decisions.
2. Highlight hotel's strengths and weaknesses, allowing hotel managers to identify areas for improvement.
3. Significantly influence booking decisions, with many guests relying on reviews to choose a hotel.
4. Hotels with excellent online reviews can gain a competitive advantage, attracting more guests and increasing revenue.

Dimensions of Online Review Impact

The proliferation of social media and online review platforms has created a new era of informed consumers in Port Harcourt's F&B landscape. With the ability to access reviews and ratings from fellow diners, customers are increasingly relying on e-WOM to inform their dining decisions. This trend is particularly pronounced in Port Harcourt, where the F&B industry is characterized by a diverse range of cuisines and dining options. **Qin-Min (2022)** opined that the dimensions of online review impact are often described into three unique characteristics which include brand visibility, reputation, and competitive advantage.

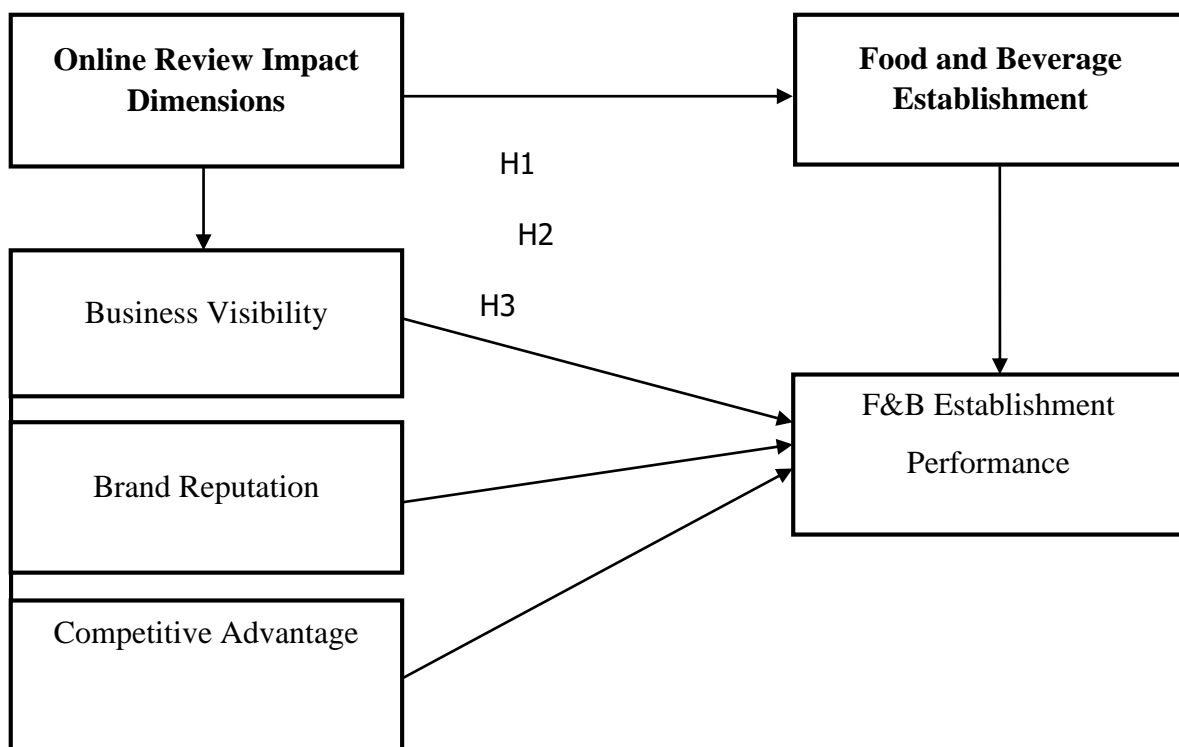


Figure 1: Online Review Impact (Qin-Min, 2022)

Brand Visibility

Online reviews have become a crucial factor in increasing the visibility of F&B establishments in Port Harcourt's competitive landscape. When customers post reviews about their dining experiences, it creates a digital footprint that can be easily accessed by potential customers searching for recommendations. Positive online reviews can significantly enhance a restaurant's visibility, making it more discoverable on search engines and review platforms (Ibrahim, 2023). This increased visibility can drive more customers to the establishment, ultimately boosting sales and revenue. F&B establishments in Port Harcourt can leverage online reviews to increase their visibility and credibility by encouraging satisfied customers to share their experiences. This can be done through email campaigns, social media promotions, or in-store incentives. By harnessing the power of online reviews, F&B establishments in Port Harcourt can increase their visibility, driving business growth and improving customer satisfaction.

Reputation Management

Online reviews play a critical role in reputation management. A single negative review can damage a restaurant's reputation and deter potential customers, while positive reviews can enhance its reputation and attract new customers. Effective reputation management involves monitoring online reviews, responding promptly to customer feedback, and addressing any concerns or complaints (Min et al., 2015). F&B establishments in Port Harcourt can leverage online review platforms to demonstrate their commitment to customer satisfaction and build trust with potential customers. Online reviews can also provide valuable insights into customer preferences and expectations, helping F&B establishments identify areas for improvement (Lu et al., 2013). By responding to online reviews and addressing customer concerns, F&B establishments can demonstrate their commitment to quality and customer satisfaction. The impact of online reviews on reputation management is particularly significant in Port Harcourt's competitive F&B landscape (Gretzel & Yoo, 2014). F&B establishments that prioritize online reputation management are more likely to attract and retain customers, driving business growth and improving customer satisfaction. Online reviews can also influence a restaurant's reputation among its peers and competitors (Litvin et al., 2008). F&B establishments with high ratings and positive reviews are more likely to be recognized as industry leaders and attract top talent. To maximize the impact of online reviews on reputation management, F&B establishments in Port Harcourt should prioritize customer satisfaction, respond promptly to customer feedback, and leverage online review platforms to demonstrate their commitment to quality.

Competitive Advantage

Online reviews can provide a competitive advantage for F&B establishments in Port Harcourt. Establishments with high ratings and positive reviews are more likely to attract customers and drive sales, while those with low ratings and negative reviews may struggle to compete. Online reviews can provide valuable insights into customer preferences and expectations, helping F&B establishments identify areas for improvement and differentiate themselves from competitors (Lu et al., 2013). The impact of online reviews on competitive advantage is particularly significant in Port Harcourt's competitive F&B landscape (Gretzel & Yoo, 2014). F&B establishments that prioritize online reputation management and leverage online reviews are more likely to attract and retain customers, driving business growth and improving customer satisfaction. Online reviews can also influence a restaurant's reputation among its peers and competitors (Litvin et al., 2018). F&B establishments with high ratings and positive reviews are more likely to be recognized as industry leaders and attract top talent. To maximize the impact of online reviews on competitive advantage, F&B establishments in Port Harcourt should prioritize customer satisfaction, respond promptly to customer feedback, and leverage online review platforms to demonstrate their commitment to quality (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2020). By harnessing the power of online reviews, F&B establishments in Port Harcourt can gain a competitive advantage, drive business growth, and improve customer satisfaction.

F&B Establishments

The food and beverage industry is a significant sector in Port Harcourt, contributing to the city's economy and providing employment opportunities for many residents. According to Akintoye et al. (2015), the food and beverage industry encompasses various establishments that prepare and serve food and drinks to customers, including restaurants, cafes, bars, and hotels. In Port Harcourt, the industry is characterized by a mix of traditional and modern establishments, catering to diverse tastes and preferences (Ezeh & Obi, 2018). The industry is driven by the city's growing population, increasing disposable incomes, and changing lifestyles (Adeyemi et al., 2017). Port Harcourt is home to a vibrant food culture, with popular local dishes like Afang soup, Bitterleaf soup, and Fresh Fish Pepper Soup (Okonkwo et al., 2019). The city's food and beverage establishments are concentrated in areas like D-line, Amadi, and Old GRA, which are popular tourist and business destinations (Nwosu

et al., 2020). The food and beverage industry in Port Harcourt faces several challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, high operating costs, and stiff competition (Umeh et al., 2018). Despite these challenges, the industry remains a significant contributor to the city's economy, providing employment opportunities for many residents (Adeyemi et al., 2017). The industry is also driven by innovation, with many establishments adopting modern cooking techniques and digital marketing strategies to attract customers (Ezeh & Obi, 2018)

Online Review impact and F&B Beverage Establishment

Online reviews have become a crucial factor in the success of food and beverage establishments. With the rise of social media and review platforms, customers are increasingly relying on online reviews to make informed decisions about where to dine. A good online review can attract new customers, while a bad one can deter them. The impact of online reviews on food and beverage establishments is also linked to brand visibility. Online reviews increase the visibility of a restaurant, making it more likely to appear in search results and attract new customers. This is especially important for small and medium-sized establishments that may not have large marketing budgets. A restaurant with consistently positive reviews is seen as reputable and trustworthy, which can lead to customer loyalty and retention. On the other hand, negative reviews can damage a restaurant's reputation and drive customers away. Responding promptly and professionally to online reviews is crucial in maintaining a positive reputation. The competitive advantage of a food and beverage establishment is also influenced by online reviews. Restaurants with high online ratings and reviews are more likely to attract customers and outperform their competitors. This is because customers are more likely to choose a restaurant with good reviews over one with poor or no reviews. From the review of related literature, we developed the following hypotheses below:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between online review and the visibility of food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt, Rivers.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between online review on brand reputation of food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt, Rivers.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between online review and competitive advantage of food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt, Rivers.

Theoretical Review

Signaling Theory (Spence, 1973)

Signaling Theory explains how one party conveys information to another in situations with information asymmetry. In markets, businesses signal quality to consumers via observable actions/attributes. Online reviews are signals of a business's quality/performance. Positive reviews signal high quality; negative reviews signal issues. Consumers rely on these signals to make decisions. Businesses can manage these signals for benefit. In F&B, reviews impact reputation and patronage. Signaling Theory fits as online reviews act as signals impacting F&B establishments' reputation and business in Port Harcourt. Understanding this helps F&B businesses manage online reputation for growth. Michael Spence's Signaling Theory explains how one party (the sender) conveys information about itself to another party (the receiver) in situations with information asymmetry. The sender sends a signal - an observable action or attribute - to influence the receiver's perception. This theory originated in economics to explain job market behaviors but has been applied across fields like marketing and management. In contexts like food and beverage (F&B) establishments, online reviews serve as signals. Consumers (receivers) look for cues about an establishment's quality. Reviews (signals) help reduce uncertainty about the F&B experience. Positive reviews typically signal high quality, while negative ones signal potential issues. The theory posits that senders (F&B establishments) can manage these signals for benefit. By responding to reviews or encouraging satisfied customers to post, establishments influence perceptions. In competitive markets like Port Harcourt's F&B scene, leveraging these signals can impact business outcomes.

Empirical Review

The review of related empirical studies showed that no research study is directly related to the present study. However, some were found relevant. Zhang et al. (2019) - The Impact of Online Reviews on Restaurant Sales. Quantitative survey study of 385 customers of restaurants in major cities in China. Cronbach's alpha = 0.85, validity ensured through expert review. Online reviews significantly influence restaurant sales, with a 1-point increase in review rating leading to a 5-9% increase in sales.

Filieri et al. (2020) - Influence of Online Reviews on Consumer Purchase Decisions in the Hospitality Industry. Mixed-methods study of 420 hotel customers in Italy and analysis of 1,200 online reviews. Cronbach's alpha = 0.92, validity ensured through triangulation of data. Online reviews significantly influence hotel booking decisions, with review valence and volume being key factors.

Kim et al. (2018) - Online Reviews and Restaurant Performance: An Empirical Investigation. Quantitative analysis of secondary data from 1,200 restaurants in the United States. R-squared = 0.78, validity ensured through data screening and cleaning. Online reviews significantly impact restaurant performance, with a 1% increase in review rating leading to a 0.54% increase in restaurant revenue.

Methodology

A descriptive and correlational research design is adopted for this study, aimed at investigating the impact of online reviews on food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt. This design is used to gather data on the current state of online reviews and their relationship with the industry. The population comprises approximately 2,500 registered food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt, obtained from the Port Harcourt Chamber of Commerce and the Rivers State Ministry of Commerce and Industry. These establishments include restaurants, cafes, bars, and other food service providers. A sample size of 385 is determined using the Yamane (1967) formula, with a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level. An impressive response rate of 96% representing 368 usable copies of questionnaire was obtained and formed the bases for analysis. A stratified random sampling technique is employed to select respondents from different categories of food and beverage establishments, ensuring representation from various sectors of the industry. Validity is ensured through expert review and pilot testing of the questionnaire, while reliability is assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.88, indicating high internal consistency. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and inferential statistics (regression analysis and ANOVA). The questionnaire were administered to managers or owners of food and beverage establishments, and data were collected on their perceptions of online reviews, visibility, brand reputation, and competitive advantage.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

Cronbach Alpha was applied to measure the reliability of the concepts of the study variables. All scales were found to exceed a minimum boundary of 0.7 as recommended by Cronbach (1970) and Nunnally (1978). The actual results of the scale reliability analysis of the variables are reported in table 1.

Table 1: Shows the reliability measure of online review impact and food and beverage establishments performance (n=385)

S/ N	ITEM	NO. OF ITEMS	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
1	Brand Visibility	4	.862
2	Brand Reputation	4	.918
3	Competitive Advantage	4	.960
4	F&B Beverage Establishment Performance	5	.894

Source: SPSS 25.0 window output (based on 2026 field survey data).

Result of Findings

Research Question 1: To what extent does online review impact on brand visibility of food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt, Rivers?

Table 2: Computation of mean responses of online review impact on brand visibility of food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt.

Brand Visibility	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Online reviews increase the visibility of food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt.	368	3.85	.477	.031
Food and beverage establishments with positive online reviews are more likely to be discovered by potential customers.	368	3.64	.363	.024
Online reviews improve the search engine rankings of food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt.	368	3.71	.473	.031
Positive online reviews increase the likelihood of customers visiting a food and beverage establishment in Port Harcourt	368	3.59	.801	.052

Source: SPSS output (Base on questionnaires' data 2026)

Analysis in Table 2 showed that all questionnaire items have mean score above the criterion mean of 2.50 indicating an acceptance of online review impact on brand visibility of food and beverage establishments. In summary, with a grand mean of 3.70, the respondents confirmed that online review impact on brand visibility of food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt is to a very high extent.

Research Question 2

To what extent does online review impact on brand reputation of food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt, Rivers?

Table 3: Computation of mean responses of online review impact on brand reputation of food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt

Table 3: Analyses of Items on Online Reviews Impacts

Brand Reputation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Online reviews significantly impact the brand reputation of food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt.	368	3.76	.562	.036
Positive online reviews enhance the brand image of food and beverage establishments	368	3.55	.477	.031
Negative online reviews damage the brand reputation of food and beverage establishments.	368	3.86	.362	.023
Responding to online reviews improves the brand reputation of food and beverage establishments.	368	3.60	.467	.030

Source: SPSS version 25.0 output (2026)

Table 3 showed that all questionnaire items had mean scores surpassing the criterion mean of 2.50 indicating an acceptance that **online review impact on brand reputation of food and beverage establishments**. In summary, with a grand mean of 3.69, the respondents confirmed that the **online review impact on brand reputation of food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt** is to a very high extent.

Research Question 3

To what extent does online review impact on competitive advantage of food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt, Rivers?

Table 4: Computation of mean responses of online review impact on competitive advantage of food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt.

Table 4: Analyses of Items Online Reviews Impacts

Competitive Advantage	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Food and beverage establishments with higher online review ratings have a competitive advantage over those with lower ratings.	368	3.84	.480	.031
Online reviews influence customers' decisions to choose one food and beverage establishment over another.	368	3.69	.417	.027
Positive online reviews increase customer loyalty to food and beverage establishments.	368	3.81	.473	.031
Food and beverage establishments with low online review ratings struggle to compete with better-reviewed competitors.	368	3.76	.804	.052

Source: SPSS version 25.0 output (2026)

Table 3 showed that all questionnaire items have mean score above the criterion mean of 2.50 indicating acceptance of **online review impact on competitive advantage of food and beverage establishments**. In summary, with a grand mean of 3.78, the respondents confirmed that Food and beverage establishments with higher online review ratings have a competitive advantage over those with lower ratings.

Test of hypothesis

The aim of this section is to present the results of data analysis based on the study's framework. This paper used an inferential statistics (**regression analysis**) to ascertain the relationship **online review impact and food and beverage establishment variables**. Here's the model for the analysis.

First model: $FBEP = F(BV, BR, CA) + \varepsilon$ 1a

$FBEP = B_0 + B_1(BV)_1 + (BR)_2 + (CA)_3 + 0.05$1b

Table 5: Regression Analysis of Online Review Impact on F&B Establishment Performance

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	St-Error of the estimate	Sig. F Change
1. F&B Establishment Performance and Brand Visibility	.874a	.764	.702	.4343	0.00
2. F&B Establishment Performance and Brand Reputation	.810a	.656.	.653	.50668	0.00
3. F&B Establishment Performance and Competitive Advantage	.776a	.603	.553	.08878	0.00

Dependent variable: F&B Establishment Performance **p<0.001

A relatively large portion of variance exists to explain the behaviour of the dependent variable. Observe from table 5 for brand visibility and F&B Establishment performance ($R^2=0.76, P< 0.01$), brand reputation and F&B Establishment performance ($R^2= 0.65, P< 0.01$), competitive advantages and F&B Establishment performance ($R^2= 0.60, P< 0.01$), imply that online review impact surveyed

explain about 76 percent, 65 percent, and 60 percent variations respectively in F&B Establishment performance. Therefore, online review has a significant impact on the surveyed F&B Establishment performance.

ANOVA test

Table 6: ANOVA on Online Review Impact and F&B Establishment Performance.

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	F-critical
Online Review Impact					
Between Groups	0.683	2	0.3415	0.460	3.00
Within Groups	271.422	366	0.7416		
Total	272.105	368			
F&B Establishment Performance					
Between Groups	1.352	2	0.676	1.774	3.00
Within Groups	139.333	366	0.381		
Total	140.685	368			

Source: Field survey data, 2026

Since F_{cal} equals 0.460, F_{tab} (0.05) equals 3.00 at a degree of freedom of 2 and 366, we conclude that there is no significant difference between the opinions of managers of Food and Beverages Firms and Customers in the assessment of online review impact. Also, F_{cal} 1.774 < F_{tab} 3.00 at a degree of freedom of 2 and 366, thus there is no significant difference between the opinions of managers of Food and Beverages Firms and Customers in the assessment of F&B Establishment Performance.

Discussions

This study examined the impact of online review on food and beverage establishment in P.H metropolis. The empirical tests conducted in the study showed that online review has strong, positive and statistically significant impact on food and beverage establishment in P.H metropolis. These findings support reports of previous study by Nwankwo, S., & Adegbola, T. (2020) who revealed that positive online reviews can significantly enhance a restaurant's visibility, making it more discoverable on search engines and review platforms.

The current findings also support the view of **I-Ching, & Jing-Yi, (2024)** that high-quality reviews provide valuable insights into the restaurant's facilities, services, and overall experience, enabling customers to make more informed decisions. They assert that reviews reduce uncertainty by offering firsthand insights into the experiences of other customers.

In addition, our findings corroborate that of Eze, U. et al. (2019) that F&B establishments with high ratings and positive reviews are more likely to be recognized as industry leaders and attract top talent. They argued that to maximize the impact of online reviews on reputation management, F&B establishments in Port Harcourt should prioritize customer satisfaction, respond promptly to customer feedback, and leverage online review platforms to demonstrate their commitment to quality. Our findings also support the findings of Hennig-Thurau et al., (2020) who maintained that by harnessing the power of online reviews, F&B establishments in Port Harcourt can gain a competitive advantage, drive business growth, and improve customer satisfaction.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Online reviews significantly impact food and beverage establishments in Port Harcourt, influencing their visibility, brand reputation, and competitive advantage. Positive reviews enhance visibility,

improve reputation, and drive business growth, while negative reviews can damage reputation and deter customers. Based on the findings of the study, we proffer the following recommendation:

1. F&B establishments should prioritize online review management, responding promptly to reviews and encouraging satisfied customers to share their experiences.
2. F&B establishments should monitor online reviews, address negative feedback, and leverage positive reviews to build a strong brand image.
3. F&B establishments should focus on delivering high-quality products and services, encouraging satisfied customers to leave reviews and building a strong online reputation to stay competitive

Contributions of the Study

By understanding the impact of online reviews on customer decision-making, businesses can develop effective strategies to manage their online reputation, improve customer engagement, and drive sales. Policymakers can also leverage these insights to promote the growth of the F&B industry in Port Harcourt, and create a more customer-centric dining experience. Moreover, this study contributes to the broader literature on online reviews and customer decision-making, providing a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between digital opinions and dining decisions. As the F&B industry continues to evolve, understanding the role of online reviews will remain a critical component of business strategy, making this study a timely and relevant contribution to the field.

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