

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

TO ASSESS CUSTOMER PERCEPTION OF SERVICE QUALITY
DELIVERY IN ECG

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DELIVERY IN ECG

BY

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Business, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast
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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature..... Date.....

Name: Judith Konadu Peprah

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Signature..... Date.....

Name: Prof. F. O. Boachie-Mensah

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the customer service quality of the Electricity Company of Ghana at the Manhyia District. Questionnaires were distributed to a sample of customers and management based on convenience sampling. A total of 95 questionnaires were distributed to customers and 71 questionnaires were distributed to management. Based on these samples, inference on the total population was done. Some of the pertinent questions posed in these questionnaires to the customers included whether they were satisfied with the services of ECG and their reasons for their position, and whether they are aware that ECG faces challenges. A total of 71 responses representing 74.74% indicated their dissatisfaction of the service quality of ECG. Their reasons for their dissatisfaction included slow response of ECG to fix faults, long queues at ECG premises for prepaid recharge and credit billing, and also inconsistent power supply. However, a large portion of the customers ((81%) agreed that ECG as a company faces challenges. An important question posed to Management was whether ECG should have more competitors in the distribution of electricity. 56.34% of the total participants agreed to ECG having more competitors. Management agreed to the existence of problems in their operations. It came to light that many of the problems faced by customers have already been considered with proposed solutions talked about. Some of the solutions included introducing prepaid scratch which will be available at many convenient places all over the Manhyia district to solve the problem of long queues, the introduction of a live maintenance team to help attend to faults at a much faster rate, and increase in private sector participation in the distribution of power.

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DEDICATION

To God Almighty and my family: Mr. Asiamah, Yaa and Afua.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

Service quality involves a comparison of expectations with performance. According to Lewis and Booms (1983), service quality is a measure of how well a delivered service matches the customer's expectations based on what he/she has paid for. Generally, the customer is requesting a service at the service interface where the service encounter is being realized, and then the service is being provided by the provider and at the same time delivered to or consumed by the customer. The main reason to focus on quality is to meet customer needs while remaining economically competitive. This means satisfying customer needs is very important for the company's survival.

Over the years, there has been a hue and cry from the public over services delivered by the energy sector, more especially from the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG). It is imperative to find out how satisfied or otherwise customers really are about the services provided by the ECG.

Poor service quality could frustrate important changes in energy service delivery. Policymakers, payers, managers, and others must confront current and potential quality-of-care problems with the same vigor and sophistication that they are directing to issues of cost. This message applies to public and private sectors alike and to the state and governments. Trying to balance cost-cutting initiatives with efforts to maintain and improve the quality and availability of utility care is a major challenge and requires good

information from policymakers, consumers, and others to use in judging whether we are on the right course or not within the energy sector.

Despite the attention paid to improving quality of service, many companies have been disappointed by the results. Firms recognized for higher quality of service delivery have sometimes run into financial difficulties, in part because they spent too lavishly on quality improvement efforts (Lovelock C et. al., 2004).

Perception of service quality delivery in Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) is quite eminent and needs vigorous examination to determine and address challenges affecting ECG in delivering effective and quality service to its customers. Providing superb delivery to customers has long been a component of the long term strategies of power distribution companies, i.e. Northern Electrification Department (NED) of the Volta River Authority and the ECG. Several steps have been taken since the independence of Ghana to bring electricity services to the door step of customers by many governments and stakeholders. Funds have been generated internally and externally from donor organizations and countries to help extend electricity supply to the rural areas in order to enhance access to electricity supply.

Traditionally, access to electricity supply in the southern sector of Ghana (Ashanti, Eastern, Volta, Greater Accra, Central, and Western) has been the responsibility of the Electricity Company of Ghana. ECG is an autonomous company and owned by the government. Since its incorporation in the 1960's as the then Electricity Department of the Public Utility Workers Union (PUWU), its sole mandate has been to ensure electricity service delivery to customers. Presently, the then Electricity Department

(Corporation) has evolved to the ECG but still in the business of electricity delivery to customers. Currently, the population of Ghana has grown tremendously to the extent that the resources of ECG are not enough to match up to the rate proportionally. Access to electricity supply especially in the rural areas is virtually impossible. Owing to this, the National Electrification Scheme (NES) introduced by the PNDC administration was to facilitate the expansion of electricity.

Providing quality service to the customers of ECG has long been a major component of the company's customer charter. This service delivery drive is accompanied in varied ways. This includes prompt response to complaints of faults, metering of customers and the general sense of being there for the customer. Recently the company has introduced the call center service which is available all the times. Intensive education and sensitization has been embarked upon to improve upon the service delivery to customers.

The extension of electricity has been the responsibility of ECG and the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum (MoEnP). In recent times, however, donor agencies and countries have joined the course to help with the rural electrification project. Past and present governments have contributed to the expansion of electricity to hitherto inaccessible localities in Ghana. Projects are awarded on contracts to third party companies who are supervised through the collaboration between engineers of ECG and MoEnP. When the government (the owner of the project) is satisfied with the work done by the contractor, commissioning is done and handed over to the ECG for maintenance and management. Supply to rural areas within a period of thirty

years (1985 – 2015). The scheme is purely government facilitated and receives support from donor organizations and countries (MoEnP Manual).

Statement of the Problem

Service delivery entails more than what it literally means. It is a sensitive area which ultimately determines the continued existence or otherwise of any service oriented organization. Quality electricity service delivery has become an issue of great concern to the nation and power sector management. It has been argued that it is one of the major challenges facing the sector. The electricity industry is becoming increasingly diversified with other sources of electricity, i.e. wind, thermal, solar and nuclear which are relatively expensive comparatively. The importance of service quality to customers cannot be overemphasized as quality service is possibly the foremost determinant of success in the industry.

Ghana requires a secure electricity supply to meet expected future demand which is an essential requirement for economic development as envisaged under the government's growth and poverty reduction strategy. The existing installed capacity of almost 2000 MW inclusive of the emergency power plants will have to be more than double in order to meet the peak power demand anticipated in 2020. But the existing fuel mix for grid power generation in Ghana will not be able to securely meet the future supply requirements for transforming the Ghanaian economy into a middle income status. Thereby, it is perceived that quality service is a big challenge to ECG. Both industrial and domestic customers continue to complain as this has impacted negatively on socio-economic activities.

The only alternative to avert supply disruptions is to explore other energy sources such as nuclear energy for electricity generation which of course has been a big problem since energy experts are dearth in the country. In recent times, the other two sources of power supply to augment Akosombo hydroelectric power supply has also broken down as a result of poor supply of gas, i.e. Asogli Thermal plant and that of Takoradi. This poor state of affairs has affected quality service to the customers of ECG. It is on this basis that the topic under the study becomes worthy of researching into. The study looks at how customers perceive the services rendered by ECG, and to recommend some strategies in the form of suggestions that will boost the service quality of ECG to appease its valued customers.

Objectives

The general objective of this study was to find out whether or not ECG service delivery is acceptable to its consumers. Some specific objectives achieved include; Identifying the main problems and challenges of services quality delivery in ECG (Manhyia District); assessing how clients perceive the quality of service in the utility industry (ECG); and finding out the real challenges affecting the ECG Customer Service Department at the Manhyia District.

Significance of the Study

The study primarily serves as a springboard for other studies into the field of Service Quality Delivery in Ghana, especially in ECG. It is further hoped that the information gathered from this research is of benefit to Energy sector, government institutions, academia and researchers in general.

Furthermore, the research affords the management of Electricity Company of Ghana another opportunity to critically evaluate its Service Quality delivery strategy and make the necessary recommendations to it.

Organization of Chapters

The study is organized into five chapters as follows: chapter one is a general introduction that gives a broad overview of the entire study.

The second chapter, the literature review, expatiates on relevant issues on service quality delivery with its associated problems and challenges and also working theories on service quality delivery.

Chapter three is devoted to research methodology, design, and method of data gathering. In chapter four, analysis of data through research investigations and findings is done. The final chapter provides a summary, draws conclusions and provides recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature review relates to the study of the challenges of providing service quality delivery in Electricity Company. It reviews several models used by the researcher in understanding service quality.

Theoretical Review

Service quality has become the success mantra in all sectors ranging from health care to retailing. The need to understand the service dimension of each sector is extremely essential as it forms the basis of evaluation of service itself. If the service provider is able to comprehend customer's evaluation criteria and design its service strategy accordingly and execute it, then the efficiency level is enhanced, resulting in customer's satisfaction. This is the ultimate objective of all the service providers as it has been proven by earlier researchers that getting new customers is time consuming and involves higher costs than retaining the existing customer.

Service quality has long been studied by researchers in the field of business management. Dabholker et al (2000) made marketers aware that to retain customers and to survive in the market, they need to provide quality services. Edwardson et al (2000) emphasized that every interaction of the customer and service provider made an impact in building service quality.

However, they have reached no consensus concerning how the service quality is best conceptualized or operationalized. In presenting the literature that reflects this lack of consensus, it is first necessary to focus on the definitions and characteristics of service and service quality.

A plan by the Ghanaian government to transform the country into a middle-income nation has targeted the power sector as a key area for reform. Structural and regulatory reforms are hoped to encourage private investment in the development of the power industry. Energy sector activities have been earmarked for change to bring them in line with international standards. The government has also committed itself to the development of a West African Power Pool (WAPP), where generation capacities and inter-country connections can be expanded among the 16 West African nations. However, developments in the form of 'dumsor' and rising electricity tariffs have generated much dissatisfaction among the populace in Ghana.

In 1994, Ghana's total generating capacity was about 1,187 megawatts, and annual production totaled approximately 4,490 million kilowatts. The main source of supply is the Volta River Authority with six 127-megawatt turbines. The authority's power plant at Akosombo provides the bulk of all electricity consumed in Ghana, some 60 percent of which is purchased by Valco for its smelter. The power plant also meets most of the energy needs of Togo and Benin, which amounted to an estimated equivalent of 180,000 tons of oil in 1991. The balance of Ghana's electricity is produced by diesel units owned by the Electricity Corporation of Ghana, by mining companies, and by a 160-megawatt hydroelectric plant at Kpong, about 40 kilometers downstream from Akosombo.

A third dam at Bui on the Black Volta River is being constructed, with the aim of increasing power supplies in northern Ghana or selling power to Cote D'Ivoire and Burkina Faso (Burkina, formerly Upper Volta). There were problems formerly in raising the funds needed for the 450-megawatt

generating plant. Other sites with the potential for power generation, on the Pra River, the Tano River, the White Volta River, and the Ankobra River, would also require substantial investment.

The SERVQUAL Model

In 1988, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry introduced the SERVQUAL (or PZB model) as an instrument for measuring the SQ performance. The PZB model is well-known to date as 22 items/five dimensions model, focusing on the reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness (RATER) as the key dimensions/determinants of SQ (Lee, 2000). SERVQUAL aims to measure the difference between perceptions (performance) and expectations of the five dimensions following the disconfirmation model. Hom (2000) defines disconfirmation as the evaluation of perceived performance according to one or more comparison standards.

Disconfirmation can have a positive effect (generally implying a satisfying result), a negative effect (generally implying a dissatisfying result), or a zero effect'. In essence the latter, focuses on the gap between performance and expectations stated by the customers (Robinson, 1999).

The SERVQUAL instrument is constituted from three parts: a 22 item-scale questionnaire is applied to consumers (Robinson, 1999). More specifically, SERVQUAL contains 22 statements related to consumers' perceptions as well as 22 statements based on their expectations (Burch et al., 2004). The customers are asked to rate their perceptions and expectations in 'a 7-point-Likert-scale' ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) (Robinson, 1999). The survey's results are collected and categorized into each of the five dimensions (RATER) (Francechini et al., 1998). In that way, using

their scores from the 7-point-Likert-scale, the gaps between perceptions minus expectations are determined as follow (Robinson, 1999).

In addition, the third part of SERVQUAL asks customers to weigh the 22 items according to their importance, in ‘a scale out of 100’ (Burch et al., 2004). As a result, an average score is identified for each of the 5 dimensions as well as ‘an overall SQ score’ is determined using the mean score of the LATER. Thus, if the gap is positive, the SQ is regarded to be better than expected if zero, SQ is good while the gap is negative, improvements are needed (Robinson, 1999).

However, Parasuraman et al.’s SERVQUAL was critiqued by various scholars. Dotchin and Oakland (1994) stated that the dimensionality of SERVQUAL depend on the context which is applied and cannot be generalized in any service industry. In addition, Caruana and Pitt (1997) argued that gathering data for both perceptions. Moreover, Tan and Pawitra (2001) mentioned that SERVQUAL is not an instrument, so as innovation to be achieved. Finally, Imrie et al. (2002) posited that cultural assumptions are not taken into consideration when the instrument is applied in countries with different cultures and conventions.

The Integrated Model of Service Quality Measurement (IMSQM)

Yang (2003) introduced the IMSQM going further from the traditional frameworks of SERVQUAL/SERVPERF. He proposed that the judgment of SQ is not based solely on the service outcome but also on the process of service delivery. IMSQM is constituted from various logical steps which lead in suggestions of decision-making related to SQ concerns – Figure 1.

IMSQM proposes that critical SQ dimensions are determined from the beliefs of both key customers and front-line employees. The beliefs of these two groups are used to construct a questionnaire, which is applied to the customers in order for their perceptions to be identified. In addition, the model suggests the incorporation of several methods such as the importance – satisfaction model (Table 1) in order for the analysis of the questionnaires to be achieved.

The importance-satisfaction model, as proposed by Yang (2003), is used to map the areas for improvement, focusing on the attributes where an organization should locate its efforts related to the service quality improvements.

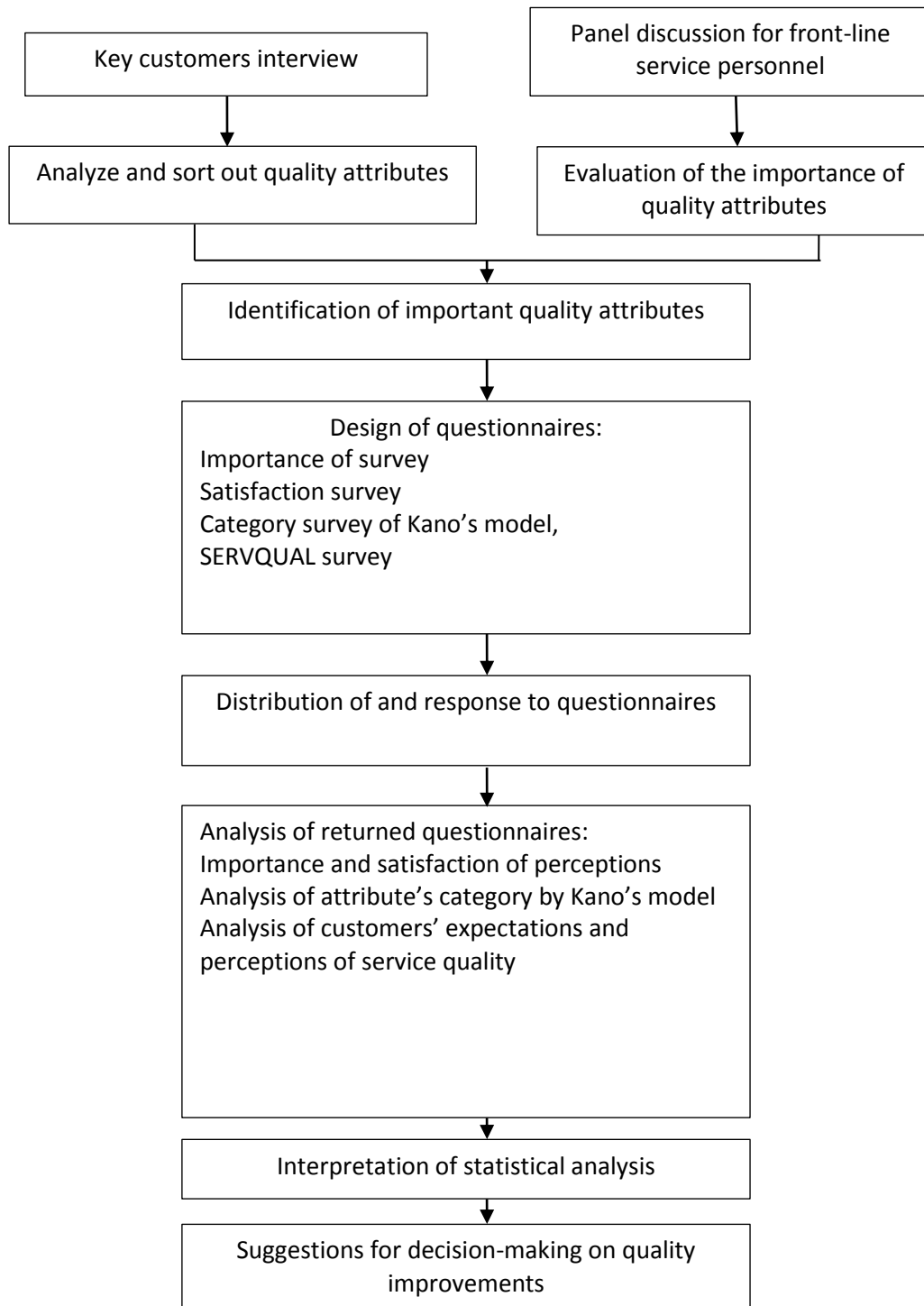


Figure 1: The Integrated Model of SQ Measurement (Adopted from Yang (2003))

Table 11: The Importance-Satisfaction Model (Adopted from Yang (2003))

high	□	□
	Surplus	Excellent
mean		
	□	□
	Care-free	To be improved
low		
	low	high
	mean	Degree of importance

Supply Chain (SC) in the attainment of Service Quality

As mentioned by Peters (1999), organizations seek to understand the importance of looking backwards (suppliers) and forwards (customers) within the SC. In this regard, organizations are able to identify shortfalls related to their operations. As suggested by Wilson (2000), the SC is a multifaceted function which involves various elements. Therefore, organizations should examine every sole ingredient of their SC, in order to have an accurate vision about the performance. Peters (1999) argues that it is difficult to ‘inspect the SQ into the processes’ of SC. However, they can control the process itself. Sinha et al. (1999) propose that using the proper measures within the supply chain context, organizations are able to observe and check frequently their processes in order for improvement to be achieved.

Customer relationship management (CRM) in service quality

In the early of 1990s, organizations differentiated their strategies concentrating more on their efforts related to marketing and customer practices. The importance of contribution of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in the improvement of SQ has led organizations to create

customer databases and to measure the defects such as attitudes, complaints and needs of their current as well as potential consumers. Using these measures, high SQ can be achieved (Zineldin, 2006). Ahn et al. (2003), in their study pointed out that customers' information should be used in a systematic way, in the form of indicators and measures. These measures should be updated regularly, in order to enable enterprises to examine the performance of their SQ as well as its improvement.

Empirical Review

Dealing with those conceptual and empirical works invites other researchers to give comments and feedbacks, which can be assumed as limitations that need to be solved. Most comments can be concluded into two major needs; the need to develop industry specific measures of service quality (Babakus & Boller, 1992) and the need to develop an instrument specifically for the focal service (Karatepe et al., 2005). In present practices most researchers tend to alter the items to suit with the specific context or study (Babakus & Boller, 2002; Carman, 1990; McAlexander et al. 1994) and this continued when involved with the instrument where most of the researchers developed their new instruments of the researchers measure service quality by replicating or adopting Parasurman et al.'s (1988) SERVQUAL model (see, for example, Angur et al., 1999; Athanassopoulos, 1997; Blanchard and Galloway, 1994; Donthu and Yoo, 1998; Llyod-Walker and Cheung, 1998; Marshall and Smith, 1999; McDougall and Levesque, 1994; Newman and Cowling, 1996; Yavas and Benkenstein, 2001).

Due to this scenario, a few researchers try to avoid from directly using the SERVQUAL model such as Avkiran (1994), developed a multi-

dimensional instrument for measuring customer-perceived quality and Bahia & Nantel (2000), and based on expert opinions revealed six dimensions of service quality. They remarked that this practice either to measure the service quality or still using the SERVQUAL model but with few extension of dimensions introduced.

As can be inferred from the statement of its purpose, this study builds upon these works and, by applying an iterative procedure, develops a service quality instrument specifically for local authorities in West Malaysia. Preliminary survey before the actual survey has been carried-out among the senior officers in selected local authorities. Feedback showed that a tailor-made service quality measure is needed whereby it should focus on the country/culture which the study was carried-out. This statement is supported by other studies mentioned that country/culture play an important role when it comes to measuring service quality especially to identify the instruments or dimensions.

Supply of Electricity

In the year 2000, it was estimated that electricity accounted for about 11% of the total energy consumed. Ghana also relies on some level of imports from neighbouring La Cote D'Ivoire to supplement domestic supply especially during peak hours.

The electricity supply mix in the country was expected to change by the year 2010 from the largely hydro-based system to a largely thermal-based one, relying on natural gas as the main source of fuel. This transition would be made possible by the West African Gas Pipeline Project, which is expected to transport natural gas from Nigeria through Benin and Togo to Ghana.

Nature of Service

A service is any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another which is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be tied to a physical product. Generally, a company's offering to customers often include some services. The service component can be a minor or a major part of the total offering. As such, there is rarely such a thing as a pure service or pure good. In trying to distinguish between goods and services, it may be more appropriate to consider the notion of a goods-service continuum, seeking to alter the balance of tangible and intangible elements associated with their offering. Gronroos (1984) posits that five categories of service offerings can be distinguished which are explained as follows.

The offering consists of pure tangible good, such as soap, toothpaste or salt – no services accompany the product.

The offering consists of tangible good accompanied by one or more services – the sales of technologically sophisticated products such as computers and cars are often dependent on the quality and availability of accompanying customer services (e.g. display rooms, delivery, repair and maintenance, user training programs, installation advice and warrant fulfillment). In that sense, car manufacturers such as Mercedes and Ford are more service intensive than manufacturing intensive, with a rising proportion of their revenues coming from the financial services (e.g. leasing packages, purchase loans) they offer to buyers.

Many service providers also supply physical product along with their basic service. A hybrid offer consists of equal parts of goods and services.

Examples include restaurants that provide both food and service, and retailers supply a range of manufactured goods in relation to their special role as channel intermediaries.

A service with accompanying minor goods consists of a major service along with additional services and supporting goods. For example, airline passengers primarily buy transportation service, but the trip also includes some tangible such as food, drinks, headphones and an airline magazine. The services also require a capital-intensive good, aircraft – but the primary offer is a service.

The offering is a pure service, consisting primarily of a service such as a haircut, babysitting or financial services and schools.

Characteristics of a service

A company must consider five main service characteristics when designing marketing programs according to Sabine (2010). These are intangibility, inseparability, variability, perishability and lack of ownership. Each of these characteristics are looked at in the detail as follows.

Intangibility: Service intangibility means that service cannot be readily displayed, so they cannot be seen, tasted, felt, heard or smelled before they are bought. A buyer can examine in detail before purchase: the colour, features and performance of an audio hi-fi system that he or she wishes to buy. In contrast, a person getting a haircut cannot see the result before purchase. Airline passengers have nothing but a ticket and the promise that they and their luggage will arrive safely at the intended destination, hopefully at the same time. Because service offerings lack tangible characteristics that the buyer can evaluate before purchase, uncertainty is increased. To reduce uncertainty, buyers look for ‘signals’ of service quality. They draw conclusion

about quality from the place, people, equipment, communication material and price that they can see.

Therefore, the service provider's task is to 'manage the evidence' – they try to provide concrete evidence of the benefit offered. Whereas product marketers are challenged to add intangible (e.g. fast delivery, extended warranty, after-sales service) to their tangible offers, service marketers try to add tangible cues suggesting high quality to their intangible offers.

Inseparability: Physical goods are produced, put into inventory, distributed through multiple intermediaries, later sold to users and, still later, consumed. In contrast, services are first sold, then produced and consumed at the same time and in the same place. Service inseparability means that services cannot be separated from their providers, whether the providers are people or machines. If a service employee provides the service, then the employee is a part of the service. A rock concert is an example. The pop group or band is the service. It cannot deliver the service without the members of the band being present. A school or college teacher is a part of the education service provided and has to be present to deliver the service to students.

Moreover, the rock groups cannot deliver the service without the consumers (the audience) being present. A teacher cannot conduct the teaching session if there are not students attending class. Because the customer is also present as the service is produced, provider-customer interaction is a special feature of services marketing. Both the provider and the client affect the service outcome. How a doctor treats her patient or how a legal adviser relates to his/her client, for example, influences the client's judgment of the overall service delivered. The extent to which a teacher is able to develop a

rapport with her student will influence the quality of their learning experience. Thus, it is important for service staff to be trained to interact well with clients.

A second feature of the inseparability of services is that other customers are present or involved. The concert audience, students in the class, other passengers in a train, and customers in restaurant, all are present while an individual consumer is consuming the service. Their behavior can determine the satisfaction that the service delivers to the individual customer. For example, an unruly crowd in the restaurant would spoil the atmosphere for other customers dining there and reduce satisfaction. The implication for management would be to ensure at all times that customers involved in the service do not interfere with each other's satisfaction.

Variability: As services involve people in production and consumption, there is considerable potential for variability. Service variability means that the quality of services depends on who provides the service, as well as when, where and how they are provided. As such, service quality is difficult to control. For example, some hotels have a reputation for providing better service than others. Within a given hotel, one registration-desk employee may be cheerful and efficient, whereas another, standing just a few meters away, may be unpleasant and slow. The ability to satisfy customers depends ultimately on the behavior of frontline service employees. A brilliant marketing strategy will achieve little if they do their job badly and deliver poor-quality service. Service firms can take several steps towards quality control. First, they invest in good hiring and training producers. Airlines, banks and hotel, for example, invest large sums of money in recruiting them to give good service. They train their front-line people so that they are

empowered to take actions or do what is necessary to ensure those customers are treated well and to deal with customer complaints satisfactorily. However, training in many companies often boils down to a little more than pep talks. In order for training to make a real difference to employee's behavior, companies ensure that training focuses on helping employees to develop essential skills to do their jobs well.

Perishability: Service perishability means that services cannot be stored for later sales or use. Some dentists and general practitioners charge patients for missed appointments because the service value existed only at that point in time and disappeared when the patient did not show up. The perishability of services is not a problem when demand is steady. However, when demand fluctuates, service firms often have different problems. For example, public transportation companies have to own much more equipment because of rush-hour demand than they would if demand were even throughout the day. Service firms can use several strategies for producing a better match between demand and supply. On the demand side, differential pricing – that is, charging different price at different times will shift some demand from peak periods to off-peak periods.

The Service Industry

Global competition has become a predominant reality for today's organizations and the aggressive environment that they operate in is even more challenging and dynamic. The competitive landscapes have been strengthened by the impacts of expanding Information Technology (IT), increasing demands of sophisticated customers, shortening of product life-cycles and the improvement of production capabilities. These aspects have led

various organizations in shifting their endeavors so as to differentiate their strategies. Sinha et al (1999) avers that in light of these challenges, enterprises attempt to add value on their consumers in this heating sun of competition. In such a competitive scenario only those companies which attempt to exceed their consumers' increasing expectations will succeed in the highly aggressive environment that they operate.

As mentioned by Kotler (2000), "It is not enough to satisfy customers". In the light of this, organizations will succeed only by delivering valuable services to their customers. Zineldin (2006) also states that the superiority of providing valuable services is translated as quality in the customers' eyes. According to Brown et al. (2005), the 'moments-of-truth' are critical for an organization. Thus, providing quality excellence is considered to be a great issue in their success into the marketplace.

Concept of Service Quality

Service Quality (SQ) is defined as the effort given by an organization in order to meet and satisfy the expectations and requirements which customers anticipate. Thus, SQ is approached as 'customer-oriented' despite the fact that this is not the rule (Edvardson, 1998). Loyalty and satisfaction are highly correlated means within the SQ concept. If an organization succeeds to create a base of trustful and satisfied consumers, it will manage to raise its sales, to decrease its costs, to progress multifaceted levels of its structure (Yavas et al. [1997]). Consequently, SQ provides a key competitive weapon in the attempts of enterprises to grow and to differentiate their offerings contrary to their competitors (Yang, 2003).

According to Herson & Nitecki (2001), service quality has been defined from, at least, four perspectives:

- Excellence – Although the mark of an uncompromising student and high achievement, the attributes of excellence may change dramatically and rapidly. Excellence is often externally defined.
- Value – It incorporates multiple attributes, but quality and value are different constructs – the latter the perception of meeting or exceeding expectations whereas the former stressing benefit to the recipient.
- Conformance to specifications – It facilitates precise measurement, but users of a service may not know or care about internal specifications.
- Meeting and/or exceeding expectations. This definition is all-encompassing and applies across service industries, but expectations change and may be shaped by experiences with other service providers.

Managing Service Quality

Service quality is a way to manage business processes in order to ensure total satisfaction to the customer on all levels (internal and external). It is an approach that leads to an increase of competitiveness, effectiveness and flexibility of the entire company. Goetsch et al (2006) mentioned that, in order for service quality to be achieved, the measure, people and processes within the organization are needed. Therefore, in order for the organization to be customer-focused and provide total quality to its external customers, these three legs should be managed properly. As mentioned by Dale et al (1994), “Quality has to be managed, it will not just happen”. Numerous frameworks have been introduced in order for quality to be managed properly. The two

most well-known models are the Total Quality Management (TQM) and the International Standards Organization (ISO) 9000 series.

TQM is a framework which aims to provide advances in the fields of ‘competitiveness’, efficiency and ‘flexibility’ within an enterprise (Oakland, 1993). It is regarded as a crucial path in the processes of scheduling, organizing and visualizing every quality action a company takes. In addition, TQM involves every entity at each element throughout an organization. In that way, it enhances continuous improvement (Oakland, 1993). According to Goetsch et al. (2006), “ISO 9000 is an international quality standard for goods and services”. ISO 9000 series is concerned with the standardization of internal processes employed by an organization, so as to manage and improve its SQ effectively (Dick et al., 2001). ISO 9000 demands accountability and documentation of the quality processes (Masternak et al., [1995]) and SQ measurement as well (Singh et al., 2006).

Importance of Service Quality Assessment

Service quality is generally understood as the gap between consumers’ expectations about a service and their subsequent perception of service performance (Williams [1999] & Parasuraman et al. [1985]). The regular Service quality assessment enables organizations to align to the changing customer’s needs (Dutka & Frankel, 1993).

Most service organizations today realize that delivering excellent service is important to the success of their business, and the power industry is no exception. Indeed, the improvement of product and service quality has been widely discussed in the literature as an appropriate competitive strategy for achieving sustainable competitive advantage. This requires management to

continuously examine current processes against the demands of customers in the marketplace and then update their operations in line with market requirements (Wilds & Parks, 2004).

Improving service quality will intensify customers' satisfaction (Kim et al., 2005), help to retain existing customers and attract new ones (Rahman, 2006), lead to both market expansion and gains in market share (Lee & Lin, 2005), and improve profit (Mohsin, 2007). The importance of service quality to the success of business is best concluded in this sound statement: "Excellent service is a profit strategy because it results in more new customers, more business with existing customers, fewer lost customers, more insulation from price competition, and fewer mistakes requiring re-performance of services" (Shepherd, 1999).

To achieve the fruits of improvements in quality, it has to be investigated with an understanding of its competitive implications (Porter, 1987). The importance of service quality necessitates examining service quality in the context of strategic management of firms (Powell, 1995; Pruett & Thomas, 1996). This led many firms to pursue service quality as a way to differentiate themselves from their competitors, thus gaining competitive advantage (Karatepe et al. 2005).

Benefits of Service Quality

Benefits arising from a high quality service are reflected in a more competitive positioning on the market, but also in a better business result. This statement can be proved by measuring the increase of profitability and market share. The results of a research carried out in the USA on a sample of 2600 companies in the period between 1987 and 2002 show a direct connection

between the level of quality of goods and services and their financial performances.

As a matter of fact, it was observed that all indicators of success of a company, like market share, return on investments and property turnover coefficient show significantly more value in companies with a higher level of goods and services (Grzanic, 2007).

The efficiency of the whole system is possible only if we monitor and analyze the demands of the customers, as well as define and control the process and implement constant improvements. Quality is a complex term, made up of several elements and criteria (Grzanic, 2007). All quality elements or criteria are equally important in order to obtain one hundred percent quality. If only one element of quality is missing, the complete quality of product or service is impossible to obtain.

Besides the general elements of quality, the product or service has to satisfy specific elements of quality, according to the demands of the profession in their pertaining activity. Today, quality is the result of growing and increasingly diverse needs of the consumers, along with a highly increasing competition, market globalization and the development of modern technology.

Measuring Service Quality

Problems in service quality measurement arise from a lack of clear and measurable parameters for the determination of quality. It is not the case with product quality, since products have specific and measurable indicators like durability, number of defective products, which make it relatively easy to determine the level of quality.

The importance of SQ led numerous scholars including Gronroos (1984) and Edvardson (1998) to identify the SQ determinants. Research conducted by Parasuraman et al. (1985) is regarded to be the most valuable to date. This research introduced a conceptual model of SQ and identified the determinants illustrated in Table 1 as follows.

Table 2: The SQ determinants as proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985)

Dimension	Definition
Availability	Product or service is easily available
Guarantee	The personnel is polite, kind and educated
Communication	Clients receive information on all products and services and their changes in the language they can understand
Expertise	The personnel has the necessary knowledge and skills to produce and sell products or provide services
Standard	Products and services are up to the standard
Behaviour	Kindness, good manners and care of the personnel towards clients
Flaw	Each quality that is not defined and affects the satisfaction of the client
Duration	Performance, service result or product last longer
Engagement	The personnel shows understanding and gives individual attention to each client
Humanity	Product or service are provided so as to preserve dignity and self-respect of the client
Effects	Product or service produces the expected effect
Reliability	Capability to sell products or provide services in a discreet and reliable manner
Responsibility	Definite duration of product sale or providing of services
Safety	Product or service are provided in the safest possible way, without any kind of risk or danger

As stated by Yang (2003), enterprises are able to gain beneficial advantages if they use People Management within the SQ concept. As he suggested, firms are in position to identify which are the quality attributes believed crucial for customers. In this light, Caruana et al. (1997) posited that PM is SQ has been principally based on the form of asking customers of their perceptions as well as their expectations about the service that they actually receive. Yang (2003) highlighted the most common methods used in measuring the SQ and judging its performance.

Summarizing these methods, he mentioned that customer surveys, customer interviews and customer value workshops are the most frequently used. One of the most valuable frameworks of measuring the SQ performance is Parasuraman et al's SERVQUAL.

The Dimensions of Quality

Quality, in its highest state, exists in five distinct dimensions. These include (1) experience; (2) measurement; (3) relationships and systems thinking; (4) inter-connectivity and paradigm loci; and (5) value sharing as stated by Cronin et al (1992). The recent quality movement to “delight the customer” highlights the fifth dimension, value sharing. However, although value sharing provides the foundation for the integration of all other dimensions, it does not exist in a vacuum. “Customer delight” cannot exist or continue on a sustained basis without the utilization of the other four dimensions of quality. In fact, these dimensions are so integrated that they are holographic: each dimension reflects all the other dimensions. Since these dimensions provide the structure for the service quality, a basic understanding

of them is essential. The summary of these dimensions along with the Five Dimensions of Quality (Oliver, 1996) is presented next.

The experimental dimension. In this single dimension, things are actually done. “Vision becomes reality”. Unless it is integrated with the other dimensions, it remains a string of incidents, such as a stream of consciousness story. However, when integrated with the other dimensions, it becomes the tool of actualization. Its power is that unless it is fulfilled, plans remain plans and are not put into action. Experience provides the “footprint” of the system in place. By measuring and understanding that “footprint” one can evaluate whether the system is doing what is needed.

The measurement dimension. In this dimension, two aspects are observed – one recognizes not only that something was done, but also how well or how poorly it was done and its impact. This dimension provides one with knowledge of system. It is knowledge of the system that builds trust in the system and further facilitates “driving out fear” as everyone in the organization understands their role in the system. The level of measurement is one indication of the level of the extent to which the organization understands and fulfills quality. There are five levels of measurement, which reflect the five dimensions of quality (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

The relationship and systems thinking dimensions. This dimension (three dimensions) permits us to observe a correlation between activities and results of activities. It helps us see the interrelationship among people, plant and equipment, processes, policies and procedures, and environment. It permits us to standardize systems so that organizational learning is retained. It gives us the power to identify leverage points where action can be taken to

generate improvements so that we can “improve constantly and forever the system of production and service... and thus constantly decrease costs (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). This dimension also utilizes the power of interpersonal relationships to “build a long-term relationship of loyalty and trust” with suppliers (including employees) so that one can avoid “awarding business on the basis of price tag.

The inter-connectivity dimension. This dimension is approached by looking at the same information through a new paradigm, a new set of eyes, a new set of rules, a new frame of reference. This new perception may be inconsistent with the traditional view, but the power of the paradigm shift is that it provides its own logic. Within that new logic, the new paradigm provides a perfectly valid means of understanding and interpreting the information. This ability to “adopt the new philosophy” provides a powerful foundation for innovation and change in an organization. Inter-connectivity is enhanced through a “vigorous program of education and self-improvement”, which expands frame of reference and provides a broader pool of knowledge and experience from which the organization can draw (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

The value sharing dimension. Leadership encompasses all five dimensions. It is the only management model which does embrace all five dimensions. Effective use of all five dimensions through leadership can expedite corporate and cultural change to break down barriers and provide a complete foundation for continuous improvement efforts. It is only through leadership that the organization can marshal its human resources to “put everybody in the company to work to accomplish the transformation”. As

employees are empowered through their internal desire to delight customers and through provision of the necessary resources to accomplish that desire, they become leaders in their own right in ensuring that the vision of the organization is fulfilled (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). The leadership process is simple, yet powerful. The leader develops a vision for the organization and shares it with the other participants. Then all participants engage in sharing vision, resources (human/time resources, information/knowledge resources, and financial/capital resources), and value. All of this is bound together by the vision and its logical implementation.

In the leadership model, leadership begins and ends with shared vision. Shared vision becomes the lifeblood of leadership. When vision fades, so does leadership. Vision is driven by the underlying paradigm of the participants, which becomes the logic by which the activities of the participants are understood. In the value sharing paradigm, the vision of an organization is a description of the common good that is derived from the relationship among its participants. Consequently, the vision cannot be fully defined until an understanding is reached as to who the participants are, since, in the quality process, it is the fulfillment of the needs of these participants which drives the quality improvement process (Cronin&Taylor,1992).

Fulfilling Service Quality

Service quality does not exist in a vacuum. Rather it exists in relation to the entire environment in which the organization exists. To be effective, service quality must reflect the dynamics of that environment. This five-step process is as follows: (1) cultivate a consecration culture in which delighting internal and external customers becomes the driving force; (2) plan the

paradigm and let the paradigm drive the behavior (the Plan stage); (3) employ experience in order to bring vision into actualization and to facilitate organizational learning (the Do stage); (4) manage measurement, because “you get what you measure” (the Study stage); and (5) reinforce relationships to help others become “sustaining members” of the organization and to standardize processes that work well (Gronroos, 1984).

Cultivate a Consecration Culture (Create the Environment for Service Quality). Joel and Barkes say that the quality paradigm is essential to excel in the 1990's, but by the turn of the century will be a necessary condition for even being in business (Barker & Joel, [1990]). This is a natural consequence of firm after firm turning its focus to “delighting the customer.” This value sharing paradigm is the only paradigm which has the power to build and sustain long-term relationships with customers so that they become “sustaining members” of the organization. As more and more firms adopt the value sharing paradigm, firms which are content with mere “customer satisfaction” will find their support base deteriorating as customers move their loyalty to firms whose total focus is toward not just satisfying, but delighting, their external and internal customers.

Plan the Paradigm (the Plan step). Paradigm logic is becoming one of the most powerful tools of service quality and cultural change. While a new paradigm may be inconsistent with the traditional view, it provides its own logic. It provides a perfectly valid means for understanding and interpreting behavior. The power of the paradigm stems from the fact that it drives behavior, rather than being driven by behavior. Behavior which appears inconsistent with one paradigm may be fully compatible with another

paradigm. Since the paradigm is the source of logic for the behavior, a paradigm which is consistent with the vision of the organization has great power to drive the actualization of the vision (Gronroos, 1984).

Manage Measurement (the Study step). In some organizations, measurement is mismanaged, producing results inconsistent with the true needs of the organization. For example, the computer consulting firm that began measuring “quality” by the number of lines its computer programmers wrote in a day were actually encouraging longer, more memory consumptive programs which were actually inconsistent with the needs of their customers. Measurements of paradigms (fourth dimension measurements) can provide significant leverage for shifting corporate culture, as illustrated by the bereavement policy example. In contrast, measurement and control of behavior (a first dimension measure) can actually be counterproductive.

Reinforce Relationships (the Act step). Since it is long-term relationships that provide the sustaining lifeblood of the organization, these relationships need to be constantly nourished and reinforced. These relationships are built and strengthened through the firm’s willingness to share value with its internal and external participants (Gronroos, 1984).

The Distinction between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

A review of the emerging literature suggests that there appears to be a relative consensus among marketing researchers that service quality and customer satisfaction are separate constructs which is unique and share a close relationship. Table 2 identifies a number of key elements that distinguish customer satisfaction from service quality.

Table 3: The Distinction between Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality

Customer satisfaction	Service quality
Customer satisfaction can result from any dimension, whether or not it is quality related.	The dimensions underlying quality judgments are rather specific
Customer satisfaction judgments can be formed by a large number of no quality issues, such as needs, equity, and perceptions of fairness.	Expectations for quality are based on ideals or perceptions of excellence
Customer satisfaction is believed to have antecedents	Service quality has less conceptual more conceptual antecedents.
Satisfaction judgments do require experience with the service or provider.	Quality perceptions do not require experience with the service or provider

Customer Satisfaction

Before businesses begin to create tools to measure the level of satisfaction, it is important to develop a clear understanding of what exactly the customer wants. A business needs to know what its customers expect from the products and services it provides. Customer expectations are the customer-defined attributes of product or service a business must meet or exceed to achieve customer satisfaction. Customer Expectations are of two types – Expressed and Implied (Dutka, 1995). Expressed Customer Expectations. These are those requirements that are written down in the contract and agreed upon by both parties. Examples are product specifications and delivery

requirements. Supplier's performance against these requirements is most of the times directly measurable.

Implied Customer Expectations. These are not written or spoken but are the ones the customer would expect the supplier to meet nevertheless. For example, a customer would expect the service representative who calls on him to be knowledgeable and competent to solve a problem on the spot.

There are many reasons why customer expectations are likely to change over time. Process improvements, advent of new technology, changes in customer's priorities, and improved quality of service provided by competitors are just a few examples. The customer is always right. Suppliers' job is to provide the customer what he/she wants and when he/she wants it. Customer satisfaction is customers' perception and expectation that a supplier has met or exceeded. It is therefore important to periodically update our knowledge of customer expectations (Dutka, 1995).

What constitutes Satisfaction?

A business cannot create customer satisfaction just by meeting customer's requirements fully because these have to be met in any case. However falling short is certain to create dissatisfaction (Naumann & Giel, 1995).

Major attributes of customer satisfaction can be summarized as:

- Product Quality
- Product Packaging
- Keeping delivery commitments
- Price

Methods for Identifying Customer expectation

Customer expectations can be identified using various methods. Depending upon the customer base and available resources, a business can choose a method that is most effective in measuring the customers' perceptions. The purpose of the exercise is to identify priorities for improvement. A business must develop a method or combination of methods that helps to continually improve service (Naumaan & Giel, 1995).

A bad experience during a service encounter will mar the entire perceived experience, which will result in not only a lack of repeat visit but also a negative word-of-mouth publicity for the organization. Research has shown that a customer who is not satisfied will typically inform about eight to ten people about his/her experience. A service organization that does not deliver quality service is, therefore, likely to suffer reduced patronage and bad publicity and thereby loses its customers to competitors. The cliché here is that most customers (about 97% of micro level customers) have no other alternative to the electricity service since ECG is enjoying autonomy. The other 3% belonging to the macro level i.e. mines have competitors, like the Ghana Grid Company Limited (GridCo), and therefore can consider taking their source of electricity supply (ECG Manual).

Service quality remains a very subjective concept; every service comes with a packaged product. Gronroos (1982) distinguished between technical quality and functional quality as the components of the service image delivery. Technical quality is what the customer actually receives from the service provider such as quality of electricity supply. Functional quality, on the other hand, is how the technical component of the service is transferred to the

consumer e.g. the attitudes and behavior of frontline staff. Kotler et al. (2003) identified a third component of quality – societal (ethical) quality. According to them, societal quality is credence quality which consumers cannot evaluate in advance of purchase. In this vein, organizations concerned about quality service must combine, balance and juggle the tangible and intangible products.

From the early era of service management, researchers and practitioners traditionally had been focusing their attention on the notion of “moment of truth” which reflected the importance of handling each customer interaction with great care. It was emphasize that every interaction with the customer and service provider made an impact in building customer perceived quality (Edvardson & Strandvik, 2000). Finding published in literatures and popular press anecdotes about companies that characterize service excellence epitomize benefits of delivering quality service (Parasuraman, 2002). Marketers hence realized that to retain customers and to survive in markets, they need to provide quality services. So a service organization that shall provide quality services to its customers should adopt a broad perspective in defining and examining their service offerings and eventually assess customers’ evaluation of their services (Brown & Swartz, 1989).

By adopting this proves the customer’s service quality evaluations can assist in controlling the effective assessment of their service encounter and thereby satisfy their customers (Brady & Robertson, 2001). Therefore, measurement of service quality and following its management is of an overall importance for service organizations. Academicians for the past few decades have continued their pursuit in developing a better understanding of the enigmatic nature of service quality issues. To date, several definitions,

measurement models, dimensionalities, and format of the measurement construct have been penned (Robinson, 1999). Studies suggest that service quality can be measured by comparing a service firm's performance and what the consumers feel a service firm should provide. However, this concept was argued and it was suggested that service quality should be measured only with the perceptions of a service firm's performance (Dabholkar et al., 2000). Based on these two concepts, two service quality measurement models SERVQUAL (of Parasuraman et al., 1988) and SERVPERF (of Cronin & Taylor, 1992) have emerged as the most cited and most debated (Carrillat et al., 2007).

Research has indicated that service quality has been increasingly recognized as a critical factor in the success of any business and the energy sector in this case is no exception. Service quality has been widely used to evaluate the performance of energy services. The electricity sector understands that customers will be loyal if they receive greater value than from competitors (Dawes & Swailes, 1999) and on the other hand, they can earn high profits if they are able to position themselves better than their competitors within a specific market (Daviese et al., 1995).

Therefore, organizations need focus on service quality as a core competitive strategy (Chaoprasert & Elsey, 2004). Moreover, electricity distributors all over the world offer similar kinds of services, and try to quickly match their competitors' innovations (e.g. in India). It can be noted that customers can perceive differences in the quality of service (Chaoprasert & Elsey, 2004). Moreover, customers evaluate organization's performance mainly on the basis of their personal contact and interaction (Gronroos, 1990).

Defining service quality and its components in a form that is actionable in the workplace is an important endeavor that any business company cannot take lightly. Moreover, many scholars agree that service quality can be decomposed into two major dimensions. The first is referred to by Zeithaml et al. (1985) as “outcome quality” and the second by Gronroos (1984) as “technical quality”. However, the first dimension is concerned with what the service delivers and on the other hand; the second dimension is concerned with how the service is delivered. That is the process that the customer went through to get to the outcome of the service. The topic of measuring service quality has been studied extensively in the past fifteen (15) years. The study of McCelary and Weaver (1982) indicated that good service is defined on the basis of identification of measurement behaviors that are important to customers. Zemke Albrecht (1985) suggested that services play an important role in defining a restaurant’s competition strategies and identified systems and strategies for managing. Both the service management and the marketing literatures suggest that there is strong theoretical underpinning among customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and profitability.

The study of Newman and Cowling (1996) reports that two British banks used the SERVQUAL model improved quality of service as well as both banks enjoying substantial increases in profit. Moreover Zeithaml (2000) also found evidence about the influences of service quality on profits and Heskett et al. (1997) argued that a “direct and strong” relationship exists among service quality customer satisfaction and profitability. Vimi and Mohd (2008) undertook a study of the determinants of performance in the India retail energy industry based on perception of customer satisfaction. The findings of

the study reinforce that customer satisfaction is linked with performance of the banks. Berry (1980) along with Boom and Bitner (1981) argued that due to intangible nature of services, customers use elements associated with the physical environment when evaluating service quality.

Levitt (1981) proposes that customers use appearances to make judgments about realities. Hostage (1975) believes that a service firm's contact personnel comprise the major determinant of service, while Lewis and Booms (1983) propose that services quality resides in the ability of the service firm to satisfy its customer needs i.e. customer satisfaction. Fisk et al. (1993) in tracking the extensive literature on service quality stated that "The single most researched area in services marketing to date is service quality parallels the focus on quality, total quality management, and satisfaction in business" (Fisk et al, 1993, p. 77). This concept has attracted a lot of interest and further triggered a series of debates, especially in the area of marketing literature due to the difficulties both in defining and measuring it, and further, with no overall consensus emerging on either (Wisniewski, 2001a; 2001b).

To be globally competitive and successful, Indian organizations will have to practice international business strategies as well as international human resource strategies because ultimately it is the human resource that provide competitive edge that is difficult to imitate. Human aspect of management can contribute substantially to better employee relations and higher productivity, says A. V. Ramana Rao in his article "Higher productivity through better HRM" (Indian management, May, 1999). He feels that human being is wanting in nature and human demands are infinite, so an organization needs to analyze properly which needs of its employees profitability by taking

care of its people. Mr. R. K. Rao in his article “management by values” (personnel today, vol. xx, no. 3, oct-dec; 1999) has mentioned the importance of ethics in an organization and management. According to him an organization that follows a set of guiding beliefs and communicates those ethical values to its employees to follow them and thus institutionalize as a culture, can win and sustain loyalty of the customers for longer periods of time.

Also, such organizational culture has a positive impact on the performance of its employees. True cost of employee turnover has long been underappreciated and underestimated by human resource managers and all stakeholders entangled in the issue (Mohanty, 2009). Internal marketing concept in organization has long been viewed by several researchers. Garvin (1988) and Zemke (1989) examined internal service quality from different perspectives; they shared a fundamental underlying belief that the organizations attempting to deliver service quality to their external customers must do so by serving the needs of their internal customers first.

Berry (1981), Gronroos (1990) and Gummesson (1990) stated that if a management wanted its employees to deliver an outstanding level of service to customers, it must be prepared to do a great job with its employees. Gronroos (1981) stated that internal marketing should create an internal environment which supports customer consciousness among staff. Wolf and Zwick (2008) found that employee involvement and financial incentives and inducement were often honored as efficient way for increasing the organization productivity. They revealed that employee job involvement lifted up the organizational productivity, but monetary incentive scheme did not do so.

Schneider and Bowen (1993) postulated that by recruiting and selecting right people, training them to work in the market segment allocated to them, rewarding them according to the objective achieved by them would get benefits to the organization. Efficient service deliveries were the result of the quality of employee improvement and welfare, including environment for work, training and development, job design, and attention to the employee interests.

The outcome of the analysis pointed out that the service approach reflecting the magnitude of employee development derived employee outcomes such as efficiency and productivity and employee job satisfaction. The outcomes of employees due to such activities were significantly correlated with the customer satisfaction and, thus, with the business performance, but only some associations to financial performance were significant. Delaney and Huselid (1996) categorized the human resource management practices into the factors that improved employee skills, motivated and inspired the employees, and arrangement design of the workplace.

They concluded that at least the following four human resource management dimensions could be acknowledged in his work, these were, employee feedback, their training and development, workplace design, and the employee pay system.

The Challenges to Service Quality Improvement

The literature identifies the following challenges to service quality improvement opinion by Evanson Northwest Healthcare Cooperation (ENH) in related Organization which are important to the current research work.

Limitations on Quality Measures: While the use of quantitative measures to assess quality is a sign of progress, much work remains to be done before such measures reach their full potential as tools for quality measurement, improvement, and oversight. Quality measurement advocates must develop reliable measures and then convince relevant decision makers of their reliability in order to shape future quality improvement efforts.

The Lack of Incentives for Quality Improvement: A second insight of opinion and subsequent briefs offer about the challenges facing quality improvement efforts concerns financial incentives. Organizations might try to increase the attractiveness of their facilities to entice customers who might otherwise choose another company. They might increase the attractiveness of their systems and improve customer service to entice potential customers. To the extent that providing services is profitable. Providers are often rewarded for increasing the quantity of services they provide.

The Difficulty of Achieving Quality Improvement: A third type of quality-related challenge the ENH's opinion illustrates is the sometimes weak connection between quality improvement efforts and quality improvement results. In some cases, quality improvement efforts fail because they are less than fully implemented. Managers may seek to encourage change but may ultimately fail. The ENH opinion illustrates this difficulty through its discussion of post-merger clinical protocols. While ENH presented evidence of the adoption of critical pathways to support its quality related arguments, "the evidence does not clearly show whether the critical pathways are always being followed." If this conclusion is correct, it is possible that the evidence

was simply lacking, but it is also possible that the creation of protocols failed to significantly change providers' behavior.

This article has not attempted to analyze all of the quality-related evidence and arguments presented in the ENH case. It has used some of the evidence and arguments presented in the ENH case. It has used some of the evidence and arguments presented in the case to analyze the relationship between mergers and quality against the backdrop of the service quality improvement movement. The main limitation was the fact that it has not provided a detailed legal analysis of the ENH case, such an analysis is beyond the scope of the article.

Next the issue of service quality improvement in government institutions, especially those of the rural areas, was addressed using networking. In the article by Kerry Kemp (2002), one leading question was addressed. How can service quality in rural area branch of ECG be improved using networking? It is worth nothing that this article is very important to the current research because the targeted areas, i.e. rural area branch of ECG are the same. For the purpose of that article, a rural network was defined as a formal arrangement among rural power service providers (and possibly VRA and Gridco, and other entities) that uses the resources of more than one existing organization and specifies the objectives and methods by which various collaborative functions will be achieved. Four key quality-related areas that rural networks can address were identified: Ensuring quality in local communities, offering reliable options for local business, recruiting and retaining service delivery professionals, and ensuring that rural areas are not left behind (Kemp, 2002).

Detail insight was given as regards to the concept of service quality improvement. Service quality improvement, according to Kemp, is seen as a forward-looking process that allows health care providers to use a collaborative approach to strive for excellence. It is based on the idea that problems in quality generally arise not from negligence or recklessness on the part of individual workers but from the systems in which these individuals operate. It is therefore critical to create an institutional culture that values and supports a quality improvement. The following steps were identified: Establish an aim for quality improvement, form a quality improvement team (system leadership, technical expertise, and day-to-day leadership), establish measures of quality improvement, and develop and test changes.

On the question of how networking can improve service quality (networking activities include a formal rural health network, and other collaborations), seven important points were brought to light in the research article. In order to develop a culture of service quality improvement, mounting a quality improvement effort requires the creation of an institutional culture that facilitates and supports these efforts. This entails educating health care providers and consumers as well as creating a climate of trust and collaboration.

Overcoming fears that Quality Improvement is impossible: Networks and collaborative relationships with organizations such as PRO/QIOs or state hospital associations can help implement effective quality improvement initiatives that need not be burdensome. Sharing information, expertise, and resources, groundwork of trust is essential for rural health networks to enhance

the sharing of critical information, expertise, and resources related to quality improvement.

Obtaining education, training, and technical assistance: A simple way for rural community hospitals to obtain essential education, training, and technical assistance related to quality improvement is by participating in a formal rural networker partnering with organizations such as a Medicare PRO/QIO or a state hospital association. **Obtaining financial support for improvement initiatives:** In addition to technical assistance, rural hospitals need financial support for quality improvement efforts. As collaborative entities, rural networks are more likely than individual institutions to be awarded grants from a variety of federal, state, county, and private sources.

Collecting, analyzing, and reporting data: One of the challenges that rural hospitals face in analyzing data is conducting studies that have statistical validity. Rural networks can help accomplish this by increasing the scale of studies, addressing volume issues, and amalgamating data for groups of hospitals.

Developing Rural Quality Indicators: Rural networks with sufficient pooled resources can develop measurable indicators of rural quality to be used for improvement efforts. As of early 2002, about 90 clients in 25 states were using the RWHC Quality Indicators Program. The study revealed a number of challenges facing rural hospitals, which form the basis of this work:

Lack of personnel, skills, and experience: Because most rural community hospitals are small, they may not have personnel with experience or skills in quality improvement. With limited resources, many employees at a rural hospital are doing two or three jobs.

Lack of infrastructure to collect and analyze data: Once again, many rural settings lack even the most rudimentary data systems and have a limited ability to collect and analyze data. Without the resources for systematic collection and analysis of at least a minimum set of data, a quality improvement program has little chance of success.

Data problems related to Quality measurement: Quality measurement requires selecting items that occur frequently enough to ensure statistical reliability. A low population density means that health care providers' serve relatively small numbers of patients – thus sample size are too small to ensure statistically valid studies.

Providers' concerns about objectivity and confidentiality: Because of the insular nature of rural communities, providers are likely to have interconnected business or personal relationships. This may make their decisions related to peer review, credentialing, and other procedures lack objectivity.

A limited Research Base: Few quality improvement research studies have been conducted in rural settings; therefore, the quality improvement data and evidence-based standards developed in urban areas are not always applicable. To allow rural providers to perform certain procedures without compromising quality, research on quality standards in settings with lower volumes is needed.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter covers the research methodology that was used in collecting the data necessary to obtain responses to the research question and achieve the objectives of the study. Qualitative method was used in the data analysis. In general the data is analyzed on broad topics and broken down for better interpretation and understanding. This method enables the researcher to draw independent conclusions from the study.

Research Design

A meaningful research work of this nature depends extensively on varied methods and techniques to be adopted by the researcher to arrive at satisfactory findings. The study design is descriptive survey. A descriptive study seeks to find answers to questions through assessing opinions or attitudes of individuals towards events or procedures (Cohen, Manon & Morrison, 1995). According to Befring (1994), descriptive analysis comprises principles, methods, and techniques to present questionnaire, compile and construe empirical data.

Descriptive statistics tell what is unlike inferential statistics which tries to determine cause and effect hence it is an appropriate approach in this study. In this study, since the opinions of customers and management are used to reach a conclusion about the research topic, descriptive statistics served as an apt option.

Brief Profile of Electricity Company of Ghana

The ECG was incorporated under the companies code, 1963 (Act 179) limited by shares on the 21st day of February, 1997. The primary objective of the company is to supply electrical energy to people in its areas of operation. In discharging its various duties, the company also executes programs of national electrification on behalf of the government. All assets and liabilities of the former Electricity Corporation of Ghana and its predecessor the Electricity Division were vested in the company.

A government-appointed Board of directors governs ECG. It is responsible for formulating policies. ECG's Managing Director, as well as the Chief Executive of VRA, is a member of the Board. Over the past decade, ECG has been supported by foreign power utilities through performance contracts with ESB consultants of Ireland on organizational restructuring and development which has been ongoing since the mid-1980s and more recently a consortium of Electricity de France (EdF) and SAUR to establish and operationalize the ECG's Directorate for Customer Services.

ECG's vision statement is "to be among the leading electricity distribution company in Africa". It can be inferred from the vision statement that ECG is committed to operating at internationally accepted standards. The Company's mission statement is "Electricity Company of Ghana Limited provides quality electrical services to support economic growth and development of Ghana."

In 1987, ECG's distribution activities were restricted to the six southern regions of the country following the establishment of the Northern Electricity Department (NED). The electricity company of Ghana is to provide

inhabitants in the country with electric power either through hydro or thermal energy or any other energy source that the country deems feasible and good.

Population

The population of the study includes all customers which the Manhyia District serves directly numbering up to 4000 people. Because there is very rarely enough time or money to gather information from everyone or everything in a population, the goal becomes finding a representative sample (or subset) of in that population.

Sample size and sampling procedure

Convenience sampling approach was used to select the respondents due to the fact that it is fast and inexpensive. Cochran (1963:75) developed the equation (4.1) to yield a representative sample for proportions. For a finite population the sample size obtained can be adjusted using equation (4.2). Given the population to be 4000, the sample size was computed taking into consideration a precision level of ±10%, Confidence level of 95% and maximum variability (p) of 0.5.

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2} \dots \dots \dots (4.1)$$

When n_0 is the sample, Z^2 is the abscissa of the normal curve that cut off an area at the tail. e is the desired level of precision, p is the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population, $\wedge q = 1 - p$

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + \frac{(n_0 - 1)}{N}} \dots \dots \dots (4.2)$$

Where n is the sample size and N is the population size.

$$n_0 = \frac{(1.96^2)(0.5^2)}{(0.1^2)} = 96.04 \approx 97(\text{rounded up})$$

$$n = \frac{97}{1 + \frac{96}{4000}} = 94.73 \approx 95(\text{roundedup})$$

This means that at least 95 customers must give responses to the questionnaires for the survey. Additional information was obtained from workers using questionnaires. Using the aforementioned assumptions, the sample of workers from a population of 261 is given by:

$$n = \frac{97}{1 + \frac{97-1}{261}} = 70.916 \approx 71(\text{roundedup})$$

At least 71 questionnaires were issued to workers to obtain responses. In all, at least 166 respondents were expected. Questionnaires were distributed at the premises of the ECG to allow quick feedback and efficient collection. To make sure that this condition was satisfied, 100 questionnaires were distributed to customers and 75 to management.

Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaire

The questionnaires were designed to cover the objectives of the study. Structured questionnaires were used to conduct field surveys on various aspects of the topic. Structured questionnaires containing close and open ended questions were administered to respondents to obtain primary data and were retrieved within an appropriate time.

These were questions designed for the employees and customers of Electricity Company of Ghana, Manhyia District Kumasi. The questions were basically centered on the topic. The style of the questions comprises open-ended, close-ended and multiple-choice questions. The questionnaires were used to complement, add validity and reliability to the study.

Primary information

The primary sources of information were essentially questionnaires. This information was vital and very concise and relevant to the study as it gives insight on the real situation on the ground.

Data Analysis Procedure

After sorting out the questionnaires, the data were computed and analyzed using the Microsoft Office Excel Package version 2007. The program is supposed to produce pie and bar charts for the responses of each variable. The statistical analysis such as frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the data.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

In this chapter, analysis of the primary data obtained from questionnaires is done and the results interpreted.

Analysis and interpretation of Data from Customers’ questionnaires

Eighty Six (86) responses from customers (representing 90.52%) agreed that they cherish the services provided by the ECG. However, out of these only 4 persons agreed that they were enjoying the service worth of whatever amount they pay for. Table 4 addresses the issues about the perception of dissatisfaction of customers.

Respondents of the questionnaires were asked if they shared the much anticipated dissatisfaction of the populace in terms of service quality provision. Table 4 confirms these views as a total of 71 responses agreed to being dissatisfied as opposed to 24 responses who stated otherwise.

Table 4: Customers’ response to satisfaction with service quality delivery

Customer Satisfaction	Number of responses
Satisfied	24
Dissatisfied	71
Total	95

Source: Opinions from questionnaires

Reasons given for the dissatisfaction converge to sporadic power supply, poor attitude of personnel, late or non-arrival of bills to facilitate prompt payments, and inefficient network which creates long queues at the premises of ECG.

The issue of monopoly enjoyed by the ECG and the inelastic demand for power supplied by ECG was brought up. Out of the 95 responses, 64 affirm the perception that ECG provides poor service quality because the demand of its produce is inelastic and the supply of power is a monopoly.

Question 8 in the questionnaire sought to inquire if ECG should have more competitors. Many customers representing a significant percentage (90.53%) answered in the affirmative and posit that such an action will improve the service delivery of ECG.

Although a wide majority of respondents agree that the ECG is faced with a myriad of challenges, they believe that customer satisfaction is a mere business statement of ECG and not necessarily its implementation. These are shown according to Table 5 and Table 6 found below.

Table 5: Customers’ awareness that ECG faces challenges

Agree	Disagree	Total
77	18	95

Source: Opinions from questionnaires

Table 6: Customers’ perception of ECG’s commitment to ensure customer satisfaction

Position on whether ECG is committed to ensure customer satisfaction	Percentage
Yes	57.89%
No	42.11%
Total	100%

Source: Field survey (2014)

Analysis and interpretation of data from management's questionnaires

Sixty-Four (64) responses (representing 90.14%) agree that service quality is very necessary to ensure the growth every company of which ECG is no exception. In order for this to be so, the delivered service should match the customer's expectations based on what has been paid for.

Fifty-Nine (59) responses (representing 83.1%) agree that ECG is has not been able to ensure total satisfaction of the customer at all levels. Of the 59 responses, 48 (81.36%) believe that given the challenges, the performance of Manhyia ECG is satisfactory. Among the reasons given for this is the fact that ECG does not manufacture the power but are supplied by VRA. And whereby the supply is inefficient, they have no choice but to distribute it so that all the customers will get fair share of power and this result in intermittent power. 11 responses from the 59 however feel that some of the problems can be solved but little has been done so far.

Some of the inefficiencies in the system including late delivery of bills and quality of bills; poor attitude to work; system losses; and difficulty in meter acquisition can be resolved by the company. 10 responses also stated that the output of ECG (Manhyia) to achieve maximum customer satisfaction is high. They suggested that the high dissatisfaction of customers can be due to inadequate education on the way the ECG operates. For instance, most people are unaware that ECG purchases power from the VRA and IPP and then distribute the power, whatever given, to the customers. The amount of power given them by these power producing bodies do not always match the demand hence the inability of the ECG to give incessant power to consumers. One of

the respondents stated that as compared to other electricity distribution companies that of Manhyia is high with a current rating of 76%.

Question 9 in the questionnaire sought to inquire if management does continuous examination of processes against the demands of customers in terms of service quality. 64 responses (representing 90.14%) answered in the affirmative. This is shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Continuous examination of process in terms of service quality at Manhyia

Management’s position on whether continuous examination of service quality is done at Manhyia	Number of respondents
Yes	64
No	7
Total	71

Source: Field Survey, (2014)

Management is almost evenly divided on whether customer satisfaction is a mere business statement of ECG and not necessarily its implementation. 35 responses (49.3%) agreed that was the case while the rest disagreed. This is seen from Table 8 that follows:

Table 8: Customer Satisfaction – a mere business statement of ECG

Yes	No	Total
35	36	71

Source: Field Survey, (2014)

Sixty-Six (66) respondents representing 92.96% stated that the ECG is indeed faced with many challenges in its operations. Management also agree that the low level of service quality delivery can be attributed to the demand of its produce is inelastic and the supply of power is a monopoly. Table 9 shows

that 56.34% of the responses think that some of the problems could be overcome if the ECG gets more competitors especially participation of the private sector.

Table 9: Competitors for ECG

Yes	No	Total
56.34%	43.66%	100%

Source: Field Survey, (2014)

Other solutions to some of the challenges faced by ECG (Manhyia District) in its operations include introducing live line maintenance team in the company's operations to attend to fault readily; the generation, transmission as well as distribution of electricity should be done by the ECG; increase in private sector participation and also increase in monitoring and supervision of staff jobs; improvement in the attitude to work on the part of the ECG staff; provision of customer service enquiry desk to ensure that customers are not left stranded at the ECG premises; introducing state of the art equipment and efficient network systems to help bring queuing to the barest minimum; and prepaid units should be on scratch cards for customers to also help solve the problem of queuing at the ECG premises.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study focused on investigating the service quality delivery of the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) at Manhyia district. Sampling was done to be able to infer the level of satisfaction among the entire population of customers. The data was obtained by administering questionnaires. Also, opinions from management about the service quality of the ECG at Manhyia were also sought. This was to gain technical knowledge about the services of the ECG and to know practical problems as well as potential solutions.

Upon analyzing the data from the questionnaires, it became evident that customers are generally dissatisfied with the services provided by the ECG at Manhyia. Some of the reasons for this dissatisfaction include inconsistent power supply, and long queues which waste a lot of time at the office premises. Some propositions to solve some of these issues on the customers' part include competition in the provision of electricity as most of the customers have stayed as such since there are no alternatives to electricity power. Some of the reasons given for the dissatisfaction such as inconsistency of electricity supply are unfounded. The ECG does not generate power on its own but rather distributes electricity given to it by GRIDco. Most of the time, it is not given enough power to distribute to its customers. Dissatisfaction of this nature can therefore be addressed through education of the customers of the ECG at Manhyia about the position of the ECG in the power supply process.

Responses from the Management of ECG (Manhyia) indicate an acknowledgement of some of the problems raised by the customers. There is also an indication of work towards solving some of the issues which can be addressed by the Management of ECG at Manhyia. Some proposed solutions to the various concerns raised by customers are the introduction of a live maintenance team to attend to faults readily. To fix the situation of long queues, the introduction of prepaid scratch cards was proposed. These prepaid cards can then be sold at different convenient locations around the Manhyia district and this will drastically reduce if not eliminate the long queues encountered by customers who want to purchase prepaid units. Public education about the operations of the ECG should be carried out so that customers get a better understanding of how ECG operates as well as its challenges. Through education, customers will get to know that ECG does not generate power but are supplied from other companies and this explains why power cannot be continuous as they only distribute the power that they receive.

In sum, service quality is of cardinal importance and in the operations of every company of which ECG is no exception. The observations from this study indicate a dissatisfaction and hence Management needs to setup its operations to improve on or try to solve the various problems raised to enhance the progressive growth of the ECG at large.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire for Customers

The researcher is an MBA student at the University of Cape Coast and the research is to meet the partial requirement for the fulfillment of the award. You are please required to answer the following questionnaire. You are assured that all information given will be treated with maximum confidence. Please do not write your name.

1. Service quality is a measure of how well a delivered service matches customers' expectations. Do you cherish the services provided by E.C.G.?
a. Yes b. No
2. If yes, do you equally enjoy the service worth of whatever amount you pay for?
a. Yes b. No
3. A cross section of the public appears quite disappointed about the attitude of E.C.G. in the area of service quality. Do you share the same view?
a. Yes b. No
4. The perception is that E.C.G. provides poor service quality because the demand of its produce is inelastic and the supply of power is a monopoly. Do you agree?
a. Yes b. No
5. Poor service quality of E.C.G. could be attributed to
a. Unqualified personnel b. Poor attitude of personnel

10. Customer satisfaction is a mere business statement of E.C.G. and not necessarily implementing it. Do you agree?

- (a) Yes (b) No

11. E.C.G. faces numerous challenges in providing service quality.

- (a) Agree (b) Disagree

12. The perception is that E.C.G. provides poor service quality because the demand of its produce is inelastic and the supply of power is a monopoly. Do you agree?

- (a) Yes (b) No

13. Do you suggest E.C.G. should have more competitors?

- (a) Yes (b) No

14. If yes, can that improve the company's service quality in your opinion?

- (a) Yes (b) No

15. In some organizations, measurement is mismanaged, producing results inconsistent with the true needs of the organization. Are there suggested solutions to quality service delivery in ECG?

- (a) Yes (b) No

16. If yes, please specify:

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