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## Assessing the Effect of Quality Customer Services Delivery in Selected Traditional Catering Establishments, Bolgatanga Township of Ghana

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### ABSTRACT

*This research work assesses the the effect of quality customer services delivery on selected traditional Catering establishments (Chop Bars) in Bolgatanga Township of Ghana. The researcher adopted a simple random sampling technique to choose 30 respondents from the contacted customers in the various chop bars at the time of the study. The study revealed that the exterior characteristics of chop bars in Bolgatanga Township on the following basis; the parking convenience and the cleanliness of chop bars were fair, while the attractiveness were averagely rated. The interior characteristics of the chop bar revealed the internal decoration of the chop bars was rated average, the lighting of the chop bars was rated very good, the cleanliness of eating area as good, while the comfort of furniture in chop bars was also rated very good. The quality of food served in chop bars also revealed that the freshness of food served by chop bars were very good and the menu variety of the chop bars was as fair, while the packaging of the food were considered good. It was recommended that chop bars in Bolgatanga Township should ensure that they take steps to improve and sustain employee satisfaction in order to achieve customer satisfaction and also chop bar operators should take steps to address customers' challenges in order to improve their service demands.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Traditional Catering Establishment, customer satisfaction, Quality, Customer Service,*

### INTRODUCTION

Customers are imperative for the success of every business endeavour. The progress of every business largely depends on how it is valued by its customers. Peppers & Rogers (2012) asserted that both present and future value placed on a business is very important for its proper functioning. Ackah et al. (2013) concurred that, the value a customer places on a business is considered as an asset to the organization. This means organizations would have to provide the best of products and services to its customers to maintain the customer. This should be supported by convenient promotions presented at the right time for the customers. This had made it necessary to improve efficiency strategies including a change of its social and economic environment. The industry is considered as efficient if it provides quality customer services or meets the expectations of its customers.

The quality of services provided to a larger extent, influences the repurchasing ability of a both current and potential customers. Empirically, it has been revealed that dissatisfied customers

influence the purchasing ability of other customers by sharing their bitter experience. Poor customer service therefore reduces business performance since the customer base of the organization is reduced (Otu, Appiah& Botchway, 2012).

An important determinant of a customer's desire to repurchase food is the service quality rendered while location and ambiance were least rated as indicated by Namkung& Jang (2007). Provision of delicious food and customer service as well as considering a right place or ambiance alone is not enough to increase the customer base of a business. Belman (2000) revealed that design and concept of the place were rated high as compared to delivery of the food itself.

This necessitated a case study on the effect of customer service delivery on traditional eateries at some selected chop bars in Bolgatanga Township.

Customer satisfaction has become a struggle for businesses due to changing attitudes of customers'. Customers in general are demanding, price conscious, less forgiving, and very selective due to many substitute products available to them as a result of competition at the market. Many banks in recent times have developed the attitude of building a strong customer-worker relationship to ensure business continuity and customer loyalty (Ackah et al, 2013).

Chop bars in Bolgatanga are noted for their high economic activities as they render food services to customers' in both public and private sectors as well as tourists. The level of competition is notably high which demands the quality service and good customer relations of workers in order to stay in business. Customer service is an imperative factor for businesses within the same industry to have a competitive advantage over the others. High customer dissatisfaction hinders the significant growth of a business. Research reveals that most food enterprises in Bolgatanga have existed for ten years and above but have failed to grow due to an increase in customer dissatisfaction.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, a customer who is also known as a client, buyer, or purchaser is a person or an organization that buys something from a shop/store or business establishment on regular basis. A customer is also a current or potential buyer or user of the products of an individual or organization as explained by Adjoa et al (2012). This is done in most cases by buying or renting of goods or services.

The meaning of services, concurring to Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) are deeds, forms and exhibitions. In addition, Grönroos (2003) characterized services as a process comprising a chain of more or less intangible activities that ordinarily, but not fundamentally continuously, which occurs by an interaction between the client and benefit representative and/or physical assets or products and/or frameworks of the benefit supplier, which are aimed to solve client problems. Largely, services incorporate all financial exercises whose outputs are not physical items or development and are by and large expended at the time they are delivered and adds value in shapes that are basically intangible concerns to first buyer (Adjoa et al, 2012). Services are exercises that require individual contact. They are commodities that diminish in use, hence they cannot be kept for a longer period. Each service has made substantial components. For example, banks provide statements, airlines provide tickets, and restaurants provide foods (Oyetunji, Baguri& Otis, 2014).

Customers are the soul of any trade so the more joyful they are the superior for the trade. The relationship between client fulfillment and benefit quality is far from being obviously true. . A few analysts contended that service quality is the forerunner of client fulfillment, whereas others contended the inverse relationship. In promoting writing, service quality and client satisfaction have been conceptualized as unmistakable, but closely related constructs. There's a positive relationship between the two builds (Beerli, Martin, & Quintana, 2004). Jamal and Naser (2003) expressed that benefit quality is the predecessor of client fulfillment. Be that as it may, they found that there's no critical relationship between client fulfillment and unmistakable viewpoints of service environment. The discoveries of Ackah et al (2013) appears that averagely most clients were fulfilled with the banks administrations with Most of the clients crediting it on the attractiveness of the bank's physical representation, unwavering quality of benefit conveyance and the bank responsiveness to the customer's needs.

Moreover, the results of Ndikubwimana and Adele (2016) appear that the bank's physical situations and offices are conducive to conveying great service, and the clients are fulfilled with the tangible perspectives related with the service which they are arranged to reflect this fulfillment in their behaviour.

The study assesses the effect of quality customer service delivery among chop bars in Bolgatanga Township to identify customer service gaps that need to be filled. This will provide the district with a guide for improving service quality to facilitate customer loyalty and business growth.

## **2 MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **2.1 Research Design**

The researcher used qualitative research approach for the study. Harwell (2005) described qualitative research as inductive, where the researcher may construct theories, explanations, and conceptualizations from details provided by a participant which the researchers cannot ignore their experiences, perceptions, and biases to the research.

This research used qualitative technique of data collection to maximally capture the opinions, feelings, and experiences of respondents about the factors affecting their commitment in their respective organisations.

#### **Study Area (Bolgatanga Municipality)**

The Bolgatanga Municipality was established in 2004 by Legislative Instrument (LI) 1797 (2004). Located in the centre of the Upper East Region, approximately, between latitudes 10°30' and 10°50' North and longitudes 0°30' and 1°00' West, it is also the regional capital. Bolgatanga Municipality is bordered to the north by the Bongo District, south and east by the Talensi and Nabdam Districts, and to the west by the Kassena-Nankana Municipality. It covers a total land area of 729 square kilometers. It was the first of three municipalities to be established in the Upper East Region (the others are Bawku and Kasena-Nankana Municipalities), which together with ten other districts constitute the Upper East Region of Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). The municipality had a total population of about 131,550 according to the 2010

population and housing census. Also, municipality has a total of 30 chop bars (Bolgatanga Municipal Assembly, 2014).

### Population of the Study

Population of a research is the total number of all the individual(s) who have certain characteristics and are of interest to a researcher. According to Sinyolo (2012), a population is a full set of cases or elements from which a sample is taken which may comprise objects, animals, people or other units. The population was all customers who come in contact with the chop bars at any given point in time.

### Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for the study consisted six Chop Bars were five respondents (customers) from each chop bar at the time of contact was expected to answer the questionnaire. In all, 30 customers were contacted for the research. A simple random sampling was used to select 30 customers. This method was used because it ensured that everyone in the population had an equal chance of being selected. The goal of the sampling method used was to obtain a sample that is a representative of the population.

### Research Instruments

In this study, questionnaires were the main instrument adopted for the study. This was because the respondents were out there and it was cheaper. Questionnaires were chosen for the study because the respondents will feel more comfortable in filling at their leisure time. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents when they come in contact with the chop bar.

### Validity and Reliability of Data

The validity of the instrument was ensured through the finding of the preliminary studies. The items of the questionnaire were based on the responses from the preliminary survey. The questionnaires were submitted to the researcher's supervisor for discussion and the ambiguous ones were modified

### Data Analysis

In this study, data was coded and entered into computer software called Statistical Package for Service Solution (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages counts were used and the results presented in tables and graphs

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table 1: Gender of Respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	17	56.7
Female	13	43.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From Table 1, the data revealed that 56.7% were males while 43.3% were females. This shows that majority of the respondents were males. It can be deduced that, males normally spend some time in chop bars as compare with their female counterparts in the Bolgatanga.

**Table 2: Age of Respondents**

Age (years)	Frequency	Percent
18-25	6	20.0
26-30	13	43.3
31-35	4	13.3
36-40	0	0.0
41-45	2	6.7
46-50	3	10.0
51 +	2	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 2, shows the ages of respondents which portrays that six respondents representing 20% were between the ages of 18-25 years, 13 respondents representing 43.3% was between the age of 26-30 years, four respondents representing 13.3% were between the ages of 31-35 years, two respondents representing 6.7% each were between the ages of 41- 45 years and 51 years and above, while three respondents representing 10% were between the ages of 46-50 years.

**Table 3: Educational level of Respondents**

Educational level	Frequency	Percent
No education	7	23.3
JHS	3	10.0
SHS	9	30.0
Tertiary	11	36.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The data in Table 3 portrays that seven respondents representing 23.3% of the respondents had no formal education, three respondents representing 10.0% of the respondents had JHS level of education as their highest educational level, and nine respondents representing 30.0% also completed SHS while 11 respondents representing 36.7% of respondents completed their tertiary education. This shows that majority of respondents have attained tertiary educational knowledge.

**Table 4: Occupation of Respondents**

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Teaching	3	10.0
Nursing	6	20.0
Farming	1	3.3
Student	2	6.7
Other	18	60.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017



Analysis from Table 4 revealed that three respondents representing 10.0% of the respondents were teachers; six respondents representing 20.0% of respondents were in the nursing profession, while one respondent representing 3.3% of the respondent was a farmer, and two respondents representing 6.7% of the respondents were also students. However, 18 respondents representing 60% were into other fields. This research portrays that nursing and other fields were majority.

**Table 5: Frequency of visiting the Chop bar**

Frequency of visit	Frequency	Percent
This is my first visit	4	13.3
Daily	9	30.0
Once a week	11	36.7
Once a month	3	10.0
Twice a month	3	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017

In Table 5, the data revealed that four respondents representing 13.3% were at their first visit, while 9 respondents representing 30.0% visit the chop bars on daily basis. Also, 11 respondents representing 36.7% visit the chop bars once a week, while three respondents representing 10.0% each visit once a month and twice a month.

**Table 6: Meal eaten at Chop bar**

Meal	Frequency	Percent
Breakfast	3	10.0
Lunch	16	53.3
Dinner	11	36.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As shown in Table 6, three respondents representing 10.0% go to chop bars to have breakfast while 16 respondents amounting 53.3% go there to have lunch and 11 respondents representing 36.7% goes to chop bars to have dinner. This finding is not supervising because most people in Ghana always take breakfast at home before going to work.

**Table 7: Exterior characteristics of Chop bars**

Exterior characteristics	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Very good
Parking convenience	3 (10.0%)	7 (23.3%)	5 (16.7%)	5 (16.7%)	10 (33.3%)
Cleanliness	8 (26.7%)	9 (30.0%)	3 (10.0%)	5 (16.7%)	5 (16.7%)
Attractiveness	4 (13.3%)	3 (10.0%)	16 (53.3%)	3 (10.0%)	4 (13.3%)

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From Table 7, three respondents representing 10% rate the parking convenience of chop bars as poor, seven respondents representing 23.3% rated it as fair, and five respondents representing

16.7% each rated it as average and good while 10 respondents representing 33.3% rated it as very good.

With respect to cleanliness of chop bars majority of nine respondents representing 30% rated it as fair and minority rated of three respondents representing 10% it as average. However, eight respondents representing 26.7% rated it as poor while five respondents representing 16.7% each rated it as good and very good.

Also, the attractiveness of chop bars saw four respondents representing 13.3% rating it as poor and three respondents representing 10% each rating the attractiveness as fair and good while majority of 16 respondents representing 53.3% and four respondents representing 13.3% rating it as average and very good respectively.

**Table 8: Interior characteristics of Chop bars**

Interior characteristics	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Very good
Decoration	2 (6.7%)	8 (26.7%)	14 (46.7%)	4 (13.3%)	2 (6.7%)
Lighting	3 (10.0%)	7 (23.3%)	5 (16.7%)	5 (16.7%)	10 (33.3%)
Cleanliness of eating area	3 (10.0%)	4 (13.3%)	4 (13.3%)	13 (43.3%)	6 (20.0%)
Comfortability of furniture	4 (13.3%)	3 (10.0%)	3 (10.0%)	5 (16.7%)	15 (50.0%)

**Source: Field Survey, 2017**

From Table 8, the internal decoration of chop bars saw two respondents representing 6.7% rated it as poor, eight respondents representing 26.7% rated it as fair, 14 respondents representing 46.7% rated it as average, and four respondents representing 13.3% rated it as good while two respondents representing 6.7% rated it as very good. The lighting of the chop bars revealed the following findings. Three respondents representing 10% rate it as poor, seven respondents representing 23.3% rated it as fair, and five respondents representing 16.7% each rated it as average and good, while 10 respondents representing 33.3% said the lighting was very good.

With respect to the cleanliness of eating area majority of 13 respondents representing 43.3% were of the view that, it is good, follow by six respondents representing 20% indicating it is very good, while four respondents representing 13.3% each said it is fair and average and three respondents representing 10% was of the with view that the cleanliness was poor. Comfort of furniture in chop bars was also analyzed. From the analysis, four respondents representing 13.3% rated it as poor, while three respondents representing 10% each rated it as fair and average. However, five respondents representing 16.7% and 15 respondents representing 50% indicated the comfort of furniture in chop bars were good and very good respectively.

**Table 9: Quality of Food served in Chop bars**

Quality of Food	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Very good
Presentation (freshness)	3 (10.0%)	7 (23.3%)	5 (16.7%)	5 (16.7%)	10 (33.3%)
Menu variety	8 (26.7%)	9 (30.0%)	3 (10.0%)	5 (16.7%)	5 (16.7%)
Packaging	3 (10.0%)	4 (13.3%)	4 (13.3%)	13 (43.3%)	6 (20.0%)

**Source: Field Survey, 2017**

From Table 9, the freshness of food served by chop bars saw three respondents representing 10% rated it as poor, seven respondents representing 23.3% rated it as fair, and five respondents representing 16.7% each rated it as average and good, while 10 respondents representing 33.3% rated it as very good.

The menu variety of the chop bars revealed the following findings. Eight respondents representing 26.7% rate it as poor, nine respondents representing 30% rated it as fair, and three respondents representing 10% rated it as average, while five respondents representing 16.7% each said the menu variety was good and very good.

With respect to the packaging of the food revealed three respondents representing 10% were of the view that, the packaging was poor, four respondents representing 13.3% each indicated it was fair and average, while 13 respondents representing 43.3% and six respondents representing 20% said it was good and very good respectively.

## CONCLUSION

The study can be concluded that the majority of customers were satisfied overall with exterior and interior characteristics of chop bars in Bolgatanga Township and the quality of food served. Increasing the quality of foods served to customers increases the level of overall satisfaction with foods and food services of the chop bars.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions of the study, analysis and findings of the research the following recommendations are made:

- i. Traditional Catering Establishment Staff in Bolgatanga Township should ensure that they take steps to improve and sustain employee satisfaction in order to achieve customer satisfaction. This should go a long way in helping retain existing customers and attracting new customers.
- ii. In addition, the Chop bars operators have to improve their communication with customers in order to create an open environment where customers can have their grievances and concerns aired and resolved effectively.



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