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Public Perception on Emergency Services Delivery: A Case Study of the National Ambulance Service

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Abstract:

Government is responsible for enacting policies that establish public agencies supposedly intended to provide services to citizens or the public. These agencies have a direct relationship with the populace as citizens serve as its major stakeholders. One of the ways of evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of these agencies is to assess public perceptions towards these agencies. The paper sought to determine the public perception towards emergency services in the country specifically with the National Ambulance Service, a public agency established to provide pre-hospital and emergency care to the citizens of Ghana. The survey was conducted with one hundred respondents who received questionnaires with each questionnaire containing a total of twenty-six (26) questions to solicit feedback and were grouped into four (4) sections. At the end of the study the researcher found that people held negative perceptions towards the National Ambulance service. Analysis of results also showed a considerable lack of knowledge about ambulance service by the populace. This calls for aggressive mass education of the public in correcting such negative perceptions. A significant relationship was also observed in the level of education of the respondents and their level of awareness of existence of the service which buttress the need for more education of the population on the knowledge and existence of the service. Findings from the survey will go a long way in guiding public administrators in taking measures improve the services provided by the agency and in doing this improve people's perceptions towards the service.

Keywords: Government, public, citizens, ambulance, National ambulance, service

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of Study

With the increasing complexity of modern life, the importance of public service delivery has been increasing and this has necessitated interventions by the state in the day-to-day activities of the citizens (Shafritz et al, 2011). Also, with the emergence of the scientific and industrial revolutions, people's needs and the means of production have increased and become more complex and sophisticated that national, state and local governmental agencies are entrusted with the provision of such necessary structures (Laudon et al, 2014).

Government through public agencies undertakes tremendous measures to protect its citizens from an increasing number of potential life-threatening health hazards. In attaining this objective, most governments utilize their already scarce resources in preventive and preparedness programs since these are key in helping to safeguard the lives of the population. Emergency medical services (EMS) systems is a fundamental part of any public health care system as their primary function is to deliver emergency medical care in all emergencies, including disasters.

The history of EMS dates as far back in 1500BC in biblical times as recounted in the story of the Good Samaritan who bounded an injured traveler's wounds with oil and wine at the side of the road before transporting him to an inn to be taken care of (Luke 10:34, NIV). In 1797 Romans and Greeks used chariots to remove injured soldiers from the battlefield. Chief physician Baron Dominique-Jean

Larry in Napoleon's army is however credited with the institution of the first pre-hospital system designed to triage and transport the injured from the field to aid stations. In 1865 and 1869 civilian ambulance services in the United States began in Cincinnati and New York City, respectively.

Military conflicts such as World War I, the Korea/Vietnam provided the incentive for several innovations for treating and transporting the injured. Among the most obvious of these are the use of aircraft for medical transport and the application of splints by Sir Hugh Owen-Thomas.

It was not until the late 1960s to early 1970s that modern-day EMS was created, with coordinated transport and pre-hospital interventions, to provide earlier, more intensive care to the community. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) was shown to be efficacious in 1996 and shortly thereafter achievements in Belfast led to the development of model programs in EMS. It was in Belfast that hospital-based mobile coronary care unit ambulances were being used to treat pre-hospital cardiac patients (Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, 2003).

Moore (1999) defines an Emergency Medical Service (EMS) as "a comprehensive system which provides the arrangements of personnel, facilities and equipment for the effective, coordinated and timely delivery of health and safety services to victims of sudden illness or injury. The sole aim of any EMS system is to provide timely care to accident or trauma victims to prevent needless mortality and morbidity (Al-Shaqsi, 2010). Emergency Medical Services may also be known as First Aid Squad, Paramedic Service or Ambulance Service. Today's global EMS has advanced so much as it acts as the first point of contact for most people in emergency situations and represents an initial step for accessing secondary and tertiary services (Ibid).

There exist no single or universal model for EMS system as the organization and the management of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is largely determined by the nation's political, geographical or cultural context and the organization responsible for the delivery of medical care.

The mode of emergency health care delivery in pre-hospital environment since 1970 has however, evolved around two main models of EMS with distinct features. These are the Anglo-American and the Franco-German model and today, most EMS systems around the world have varied compositions from each model (Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, 2003). Countries adopting the Anglo-American model like Ghana utilize Non physicians, such as Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) or paramedics (EMT-Ps), whereby they initiate emergency care in the field and transport critically ill or injured patients to hospitals where emergency physicians (EPs) provide definitive emergency care. The Franco-German Model involves bringing emergency care to the patient, delivering emergency physicians and technology to the scene in order to provide higher level of care as patients are triaged and admitted immediately to in-patient services. The principal distinction between the two models is that the Anglo-American model is thought of as 'bringing the patient to the hospital' whereas the Franco-German model is thought of as 'bringing the hospital to the patient'.

Razzak J.A and Kellermann A.L (2002) in their paper indicated that enhancing a health system's responsiveness to people's expectations enhances utilization of services by the populace. Also comparing emergency care to primary health care, they explained that emergency medical care focuses on providing immediate medical interventions to patients in life-threatening injuries to stabilize them. Emergency services in Africa as well as most developed countries faces myriad challenges ranging from the lack of financial and material resources to negative perceptions of citizens towards the services provided. In Ghana, most people commonly confuse a hearse with an ambulance as they perceive Ambulances to be used in transporting the dead and as such tend to shun patronizing the service. High accident rates due to poor conditions of transport and the nature of the roads, domestic and natural disasters threaten the lives of most Ghanaians on annual basis. There is a growing demand for emergency medical services in Africa and around the world. The medical emergencies and disasters such as the Melcom building collapse in Achimota and the Kotoka International Airport plane-landing crush, that have befallen the country over the years have necessitated the need for Ghana to initiate an Emergency Medical service. Former President John A. Kufour in his Sessional Address in 1999 emphasized the urgent need for ambulance services as part of the emergency response system. Moreover, with the immense burden on the health system of the country, the government since 2001 has been investing in emergency systems to reduce mortality and morbidity and to attain the Millennium Development Goal Five (M. Osei-Ampofo et al. 2012).

The National Ambulance Service (NAS) was established in 2004 as one of the Agencies under the Ministry of Health. This was as a resultant of the aftermath of the 2001 May 9th Stadium disaster at the Accra Sports Stadium. The Accra Sports Stadium disaster occurred during a league match between two renowned football clubs in Ghana, Accra Hearts of Oak and Kumasi Asante Kotoko. One hundred and twenty-six (126) Ghanaian football fans who went to witness a colorful soccer match between the two glamorous clubs in Ghana lost their lives when the game turned rowdy (M. Osei-Ampofo et al. 2012). The State at the time had to set up a five-member presidential commission of inquiry headed by Sam Okudjeto, former head of the Ghana Bar Association to probe into the incident and presented a report to the government (www.mordenghana.com).

The commission held the police liable for over-reacting with reckless behaviour and indiscriminate firing of plastic bullets and tear gas. It also blamed some officers of dishonesty and indefensible laxity. The report similarly indicated that the medical staff had already left the stadium, as the incident happened towards the end of the match while some gates were locked, preventing people from escaping (www.graphic.com.gh).

Among the many recommendations made by the Commission of Inquiry, was for the improvements of stadium security and first aid facilities, and for the establishment of Nationwide Rapid Response Teams. A team was then tasked to draft a policy for the formation of an emergency medical response team (www.graphic.com.gh).

Prior to this incident, various emergency situations in the country were left in the hands of private emergency agencies, individuals and families who in distress situations make frantic efforts to access health care turn to taxis and to public bus transport which is usually referred to as "trotro".

Also, in existence before the National Ambulance service in providing emergency services to the populace was St John Ambulance Ghana, which was established by the British Police in 1937 and by an Act of Parliament in 1959, ACT 57 of 1959 to support the organization. St. John Ambulance is subverted under the Ministry of Health, operating as a First Aid Training and Service delivery organization in medical emergency. It is an international non-governmental organization and a member of the 42 Establishments of the Order of St John in the world with thousands of volunteers in all ten regions of Ghana. Unlike the National Ambulance Service, services provided by St. John Ambulance attract a fee, which is based on the health condition of the patient and the distance involved.

The National Ambulance Service which was formed as a product of collaboration between the Ministry of Health and the Ghana National Fire Service of the Ministry of Interior, is charged with the mandate of providing Nation Wide Comprehensive quality pre-hospital emergency care to all people leaving in Ghana and its surrounding environs, thus improving accessibility to health care (NAS report, 2008 Annual Report).

The National Ambulance Service (NAS) is to ensure quality patient care by administering an effective, nationwide system of coordinated emergency medical care, injury prevention, inter/intra hospital transfer, and disaster medical response.

NAS moved into full-scale operations in 2006, having graduated from the pilot phase between 2004-2005 (NAS report, 2006 Annual Report). There has been a scaling up of Ambulance stations from seven (7) in three Regions to nineteen (19) in five regions and now to one hundred and thirty-nine stations (139), spread across the nation. Presently there are at least not less than five stations in a region, as the service seeks to accomplish its vision by establishing at least an ambulance station in each district. See appendix for a complete list of stations and locations.

Among the West African countries Ghana is part of the few countries to start emergency medicine training programme and to train emergency physicians locally. The Ghana College of Surgeons and Physicians (GCPS), Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and The National Ambulance Service (NAS) are the few tertiary institutions in Ghana that have recognized Emergency Medicine as a field of specialist and train emergency medical technicians (M. Osei-Ampofo et al. 2012). EMTs are trained to acquire knowledge in Basic Life Support (BLS), Intermediate Life Support (ILS) or Advanced Life Support (ALS) to provide rapid assessments and treatment of the sick prior to transporting them to a healthcare facility for further evaluation. Considerable knowledge, skill, and judgment are required to provide quality ambulatory emergency

medical services, thus trainee EMT's spend between one to two years in training to acquire such necessary skills. The National Ambulance Service also undertakes a 1-year intermediate EMT training programme. The training programme includes graduates from universities and Basic EMTs who have worked in the field for a number of years and meet established requirements.

The services provided by the National Ambulance Service have proved to be relevant to the nation as communities and the populations have come to learn of their existence and demand for the service grows rapidly with each passing year. Nonetheless, much needs to be done, as a lot more people are unaware of the existence of such an agency or the procedure to accessing such services.

Issues of concern after implementation of any program or project, such as the establishment of emergency medical services (EMS) system are whether the system is effective and whether it really benefits the general public (Yiang et. Al 2005). Therefore, evaluation of EMS effectiveness has attracted much attention. It is thus the prime purpose of public administrators to monitor and evaluate such programmes to learn and adapt, in order to maximize the value of the intervention and to inform day-to-day management and decisions. Key questions that public administrators seek to address in monitoring and evaluating a project or program includes:

- Extent to which a project execution is consistent with the design or plan?
- Are we making progress toward achieving the set targets and objectives?
- What services are provided, to whom, when, how often, for how long, and in what context?
- How well are the services/ products provided?

These questions generally attempt to evaluate a specific system by measuring it against three components: structure, process, and outcome. The study however, focuses to a large extent on the outcome of the service as shown directly by citizen knowledge, usage and patient satisfaction of the services provided. It is for this reason that perception index of the population is to be attained to enable government agencies evaluate and restructure services provided to the populace as early as possible.

The paper seeks to investigate the perception of the Ghanaian public in public agencies and in this instance the National Ambulance Service in which the pool of society's resources has been entrusted. Public sector agencies and administrators are bounded by ethical codes of conduct that holds them accountable for their actions and in performing their duties with the highest professionalism as possible. The failure of governments and public agencies in doing this in parts of the world especially in Africa have led to mistrust, bribery and corruption which in turn leads to civil unrest in societies. Thus, it is eminent on governments at specific times just as in the case of population census, also to evaluate the perception of the population on its performance. The relationship between the people and government is of significant importance to the growth of a nation and is said to be an evolving phenomenon. The research therefore seeks to determine how much knowledge the Ghanaian public have about public agencies established to provide varied services to citizens and also to identify their level of contentment to these services provided.

Various studies and researches conducted in Africa corroborate with the notion of the prevalence high levels of illiteracy in our societies, this the researcher believes invariable contributes to citizens being less informed thus less participation in public agency services and final decline in effectiveness and efficiency of public agencies service delivery and subsequently in the material conditions of the people. A decade after the inception of the National Ambulance Service into the country it is imperative on public administrators to conduct researches to monitor and evaluate the activities of the agency to access its impact on the lives of the citizens for which it was established.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Despite the tremendous number of efforts and resources and the meticulous planning that various governments have invested in the bid of providing a comprehensive pre-hospital medical service to the citizens, there seem to be various varieties of perceptions within the Ghanaian public that complicates matters for the EMS and makes such contributions of government go unnoticed by majority of the populace. Two of such strong perceptions are the "Ambulance as Hearse" and "Ambulance driver". It is believed by the researcher that most Ghanaians often fall victim to

misrepresenting an ambulance for a hearse and such erroneous and misleading perceptions tend to affect citizens' patronage to these essential services provided by the state. Similarly, yes, emergency medical technicians often "drive" ambulances but that is just a fraction of the wide range of activities that they perform. Regardless of that, the EMT driver is taken through a complete defensive driving program in addition to the EMS training program and this distinguishes them from the ordinary drivers on the streets. The Emergency Medical Services is an incredibly essential component of the national security organs of the country yet an area that is usually misunderstood by the Ghanaian public. The research seeks to explore and attempt to generate initial rough understanding of citizen behavior or perception towards the National Ambulance Service and also to examine the impact of the agency on the lives of the citizens over a decade after its inception. Yiang et. al (2005) in their study recognized the issues of effectiveness and benefits that the general public derive from emergency medical services system as a major issue of concern after implementing any program or project. Similarly, Albert Bandura (2001) in his "Bobo Doll Experiment" stated that people build their opinions and develop behaviors about a phenomenon by making observations and from day-day happenings in their environment. It is these concerns of effectiveness, trust, satisfactory level of service provided by the emergency service agency that the current study seeks to understand. Perception is one of the oldest fields in psychology that falls under higher-order cognition which studies or explains other phenomena's such as learning, memory, expectation and attention. Worcester (2009) defines public opinion as the "collective view of a defined population". The public interest is the universal and sole motivation behind public policies and programs; as such Public Administrators, Chief Executives, Medical Directors and Police Officers seldom propose programs that will not be in the public's interest. Public administrators utilize various research methods to learn something about a group of people, how much a program will cost, whether a program solved a particular problem or assess the severity of an issue or whether clients are satisfied with a program or service. Public administrators are accountable to politicians, citizens, program clients and the courts for public service. Data is a significant way to refer to information and public administrators relies on data and researches such as data from the current study to make better decisions, to monitor them and to examine their effects.

1.3. Relevance of the Study

Government agencies have a lot to gain by identifying citizens' perception about the services they provide. Ascertaining the level of citizens' interest or disdain in a particular government program or policy can be conducted to obtain this objective. In achieving democratic accountability in a country, it is incumbent on governments to ensure significant representation of the people in the governance process. Citizens should be sensitized of their need to be involved in the governance process as citizens' participation helps keep leaders in check and makes them accountable. Public institutions have citizens or the general public of the country as one of their major stakeholders who have a vested interest in the day-to-day operations of the firm and the subsequent long-term operations of the firm. They experience the effects of corporate behaviors and evaluate such behaviors on their interests or reconcile the effects of those behaviors with their expectations.

Studies have suggested that the ways in which citizens perceive public agencies and the services provided by these agencies have a significant effect on the development on the agency itself and the people in turn receive improved services. When an agency is able to discover citizens' impressions of the service they provide, it affords them the opportunity to make adjustments to programs to benefit the citizens since they are the consumers of public policies. Citizen perceptions are sometimes often more powerful than reality when it comes to public service agencies especially in Ghana with the high rate of illiteracy, people most often than not hold strongly to perceived thoughts than to reality. Governments and public agencies have a lot to benefit if they access citizen's perceptions on the services being provided by them in order to make adjustments to improve service delivery since lack of it or a negative perception of service provided can lead to public mistrust in government which has the propensity to lead to strikes, civil unrest and conflicts. Conflict resolutions have been one of the most difficult challenges of African governance and as such it is every government's nightmare as its effects are very dire and calamitous. Principal relevance of the study includes:

- To examine the importance of the public holds towards the services provided by the National Ambulance service so as to either amend its operations to suit the citizens or to terminate the agency to save cost to the nation.
- To measure the progress and effectiveness of the services provided by the National Ambulance service through the citizens' perspective. Since the citizens are the major beneficiaries of services provided by the Ambulance service it is necessary to evaluate the level of satisfaction they derive from the effectiveness of public servants in the agency.
- This study thus affords Ghana and the National Ambulance Service the ability to access the agency's contribution to citizens or whether the program is solving its intended need.

1.4. Aims and Objectives

The research aims to:

- Explore citizens' knowledge on the existence of the National Ambulance Service
- Examine the kind of perception (positive or negative) the public holds towards the national Ambulance service
- Identify the relationship between demographic (Age, Level of Education and Sector of Employment) of citizens on the level of awareness of EMS
- Examine the role of level of education on the perception of EMS

1.5. Research Questions

- What do the public know about the National Ambulance Service?
- Does the public utilize the services provided by the National Ambulance Service?
- What is the public's opinion about the services provided by the National Ambulance Service?
- What is the public's opinion on the employees of the National Ambulance Service?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an integrative view of past studies that relates to the issue or subject under discussion and includes a critical analysis of the relationship among different work and the current study. This is to provide up-to-date understanding of the research topic and its significance. It is also to identify the various models, concepts, framework or approaches used by various researchers on the topic and to identify relationships between concepts and viewpoints for further attention.

2.2. Operational Definition

Emergency medical Technicians (EMT): Trained personnel required to provide pre-hospital care at the scene of an accident.

- Perception: peoples held ideologies about a phenomenon or thing

2.3. Review of Related Literature

The outcome of EMS is shown directly by patient satisfaction and the effects of care or treatment protocols on the health status of the patients, thus Citizens express their interest or displeasure in services provided by the public sector by either utilizing such services or discontinues usage, either ways government agencies will need to be alert to observe such changes in the preferences of the citizens if it wants to win the trust of its citizens (H. Chang, G. T. Yiang, C. W. Hsu, et al 2005).

Several scholars and researchers have undertaken studies to investigate the perception of public-on-public sector agencies. Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute on behalf of the London Ambulance Service conducted a research on the perceptions of the London Ambulance Service. The research amongst other things was aimed at understanding Londer's perceptions on the ambulance service and to explore the current levels of knowledge. They also sought to establish perception of the London Ambulance Service in relation to other healthcare providers and to identify cultural barriers that minority groups have and how it influences satisfaction with the service. All of these are certain

to inform future communications for stakeholder education and public education. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed by the research institution to undertake this study. A quantitative telephone survey was conducted on 1,010 Londoners, eight focused discussion groups with the general public and five in-depth face-to-face interviews with homeless people were undertaken in the field. The researchers also set quotas on gender, age, ethnicity, social grade, and on location in order to obtain a representative sample of the population. Results from the study indicated that a third (33%) of Londoners said they would speak highly of the Ambulance Service without being asked. Furthermore, the found that the more informed people were, the more likely they are to be an advocate of the service which emphasized the need of ensuring that all groups are informed. Finally, the research revealed that almost all the people (92%) who had used the ambulance service said they were satisfied with the service. Implications of the research meant that the London Ambulance Service will have to raise its profile among young people and the Black and Minority Ethnic groups especially by engaging with the Bangladeshi community to ensure that the service it provides meets the needs of this group. Furthermore, the research reveals the need of the London Ambulance to keep minority communities informed, engage with them, and be sensitive to the needs of such communities since the research report indicated that the more informed people are the more positive, they tend to feel about the service.

Barimah K.B and Mensah J. (2013) conducted a similar project on the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) of Ghana. Their research was part of a larger evaluation project on Ghana's National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation and the Global Network. The NHIS, which was established by the government in 2003 with the aim of making health care affordable to Ghanaians and eventually to replace the cash-and-carry system of health delivery. After a decade of establishing the NHIS, the Bill and Melina Gates foundation, the Global network and the researchers thought it valuable to evaluate the perceptions of the public towards the services provided by the agency. Their paper collated views of NHIS administrators, members/enrollees and healthcare providers on activities of the scheme. Qualitative data was collected from focused group discussions in two major regions in the country, and these were the Brong Ahafo and the Upper East Regions respectfully.

Their findings suggested that the NHIS had improved access to health care, however, they highlighted that concerns about fraud and corruption in relation to the service needed to be addressed, should the scheme be financially viable.

Again, Sajjad Hussain and Ahsan Akhtar Naz (2015) researched into the perception of Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122) among general public of Punjab, Pakistan. Rescue 1122 was launched from Lahore in 2004 and was extended to all districts of Punjab and also to provinces of the country including Khyber Pakhtunkhaw; Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir. They adopted Survey as methodology to analyze the perception of Rescue 1122 in the minds of residents of Punjab. Lahore was selected for the survey study mainly because it is considered the heart of Pakistan, having people belonging to all areas of the country. A questionnaire was developed, which carried 25 open-ended questions and the population with 500 participants was chosen on nonrandom sampling basis. A total of four hundred and ninety-one (491) participants replied to the questionnaire, and majority of the respondents gave positive opinion about provision of emergency services in their regions. The youth gave more positive opinion about the Service as compared to senior citizens, whereas the people belonging to urban areas especially the females were more aware of about the functioning of Rescue 1122 as compared to the same age group living in rural areas. Sajjad Hussain and Ahsan Akhtar Naz (2015), however, recommended that more females should be encouraged in the department. A significant number of the respondents also opinionated about minimum corruption chances in Rescue 1122 as compared to other departments. Overall, the gratification level was observed up to the mark and the hypothesis set by the investigators proved true.

H. Chang, G. T. Yiang, C. W. Hsu, et al (2005) evaluated the effectiveness of emergency medical services (EMS) in Taiwan from the standpoint of the general public. Their prospective study was carried out from January 1, 2003 through December 31, 2003 using telephone interviews in four different cities. Findings from their study revealed that of the people interviewed, 25.2% had called the emergency phone number 119 and 48.4% said that emergency medical technicians (EMTs) did

not perform pre-hospital procedures. The study also revealed that 59.6% were satisfied and 10.6% were unsatisfied with the service of EMTs, and 41.5% were satisfied and 7.0% were unsatisfied with the service of the EMS system.

In all a total of four thousand and fifty-five (4055) calls were made and the percentage of people who knew to phone 119 when someone collapses was 83%; however, only 35.2% knew they could call 119 if they felt sick or were injured. In addition to that, the results indicated that fifty-one percent 51% of interviewees would be concerned if the EMTs did not perform pre-hospital procedures on the scene or during transport, but only 11% would sue EMTs if cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) were omitted. In their discussion, the authors thought public perception was not the best way to evaluate the performance of an EMS in a designated area because people are not aware of the standards of an EMS, but they however recognized the worth of knowledge that can be generated from such source. In their conclusion they discovered that most Taiwanese were not satisfied with the service of the EMS system. Only a few people were willing to do CPR on strangers. Students, especially high school students, should be targeted to study CPR and do CPR on strangers.

Also, Eran Vigoda-Gadot (2006) examined citizens' perceptions of organizational politics and ethics in public administration systems, that is, how the external organizational environment including customers, clients and general public viewed organizational politics. The author focused on relationship between perceptions and several key outcomes of modern bureaucracy such as satisfaction with services trust in governmental institutions, and the resulting voice orientations and actions by the public. The data for the study was gathered from a half-decade's worth of national surveys in Israel. The researcher demonstrates the importance of citizens' perceptions of ethics with the direct relationship between ethics and both political efficiency and political participation. Also, from the study the authors found that citizen perceptions of internal politics and ethics in the administrative branches of democracies may thus prove beneficial in explaining trust in governance, as well as voice orientations such as political efficacy and political participation. Furthermore, the study established a mediating role of satisfaction and trust in the relationship between the independent variables and voice orientations. The research focused primarily on the way public agencies are managed to which the author postulates to have a significant effect on citizens' perception. The current studies' sole aim however, is to explore on the myriad factors that affect citizen perception on public and not just on the politics and ethics in public administration.

Most researchers tend to be usually concerned about investigating outcomes and effectiveness of ambulance services and public agencies at large. Even though such investigations are significant, attention should also be directed at population attitudes and knowledge about the ambulance service or public sector agencies since it is in their interest that these agencies exist. For this purpose, Alana Prosser, Jessica Prosser and Denese Playford PhD (2013) conducted a study into rural residence' perception about the coverage, cost and access of ambulance services. The aim of the study was to see if education was required for a sample population representative of rural Australia in regards to cost and coverage. A knowledge, attitude and practice survey were utilized, which was voluntarily self-completed by a sample population recruited opportunistically from a Health and public area in the city of Geraldton, including the Emergency Department, a General Practice Clinic, a physiotherapy Clinic and a shopping Centre. Results from the Two Hundred and Twenty-Nine (229) surveys conducted indicated that 30.1% of the sample population had no coverage, in that they were not pensioners, had no private health insurance and did not possess St John country cover. Aboriginal people were more likely than non-Aboriginal people to be without cover. Though Ninety-Six (96%) of people believed that everyone should be covered, fifty-six (56%) of participants did not know who administers rural ambulance coverage and 59% did not know the average call out fee for an emergency call. The majority did not consider costs when using an ambulance. The research result illustrates considerable lack of knowledge about ambulance cover and suggested that public education about ambulance services would be beneficial.

In another study, Miguel de Franca Doria (2010) sought better understanding of the process and factors that affect public perception of drinking water since it could contribute to improvements in water management, consumer services, acceptability of water reuse and risk communication. The researcher examined diverse factors that affect public perceptions of water quality mostly including

risk perception, attitude towards water chemicals, familiarity with specific water properties, trust in suppliers, contextual cues provided by the supply system, interpersonal sources, information provided by mass media and past problems attributed to water quality. The research revealed that in many surveys, satisfaction with organoleptic is usually high in absolute terms but it is often low when compared with other aspects of the water supply service. The article also indicated that survey research generally indicates that most people in countries with reliable supplies perceive tap water risks as small.

Both studies are geared towards the improvements and quality of service delivery to citizens. The current study like the one conducted by the author also tries to determine the factors that influence public perception on the services provided by public agencies.

Furthermore, Health watch Suffolk and the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust in their desire to engage patients, to hear their thoughts and to best meet their aspirations undertook a study to seek the view of patients and their families as to their perceptions and experience of the East of England Ambulance in Suffolk. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were adopted in undertaking the study. Questionnaire survey and telephone interviews were adopted, whereby a survey was created and uploaded online to gather responses with one URL. Out of the over Four Thousand (4,000) surveys that were printed and distributed, Three Hundred and Thirty-Seven people responded to the survey. Results indicated that 228 out of 337 (68%) of the respondents had called an ambulance at least on one occasion. Also, 117 (74%) of respondents responded that they would call an ambulance for life threatening emergency and 29 (21%) said they would an ambulance in any medical emergency. One Hundred and Eighty-Seven (187) of respondents representing 55% said they were unaware that the ambulance service gives healthcare advice. Another 46 respondents representing (14.07%) of participants were unaware that the ambulance service has targets to meet in terms of response times to certain category of calls. One interesting finding was that twenty (20) individuals were not aware of the service, while Thirty-Three (33) people said they did not know how to access it. Following these findings, several recommendations were proposed to reform practices and the future emergency care services including education campaigns and need to review the effectiveness of current campaigns amongst several others.

Yet still, in another paper Van de Walle, S. and Geert Bouckaert focused on causality of public service performance and its impact on trust in government. The authors believed that the existing levels of trust in government by the people have an impact on the perception of government performance. Their study was based on the hypotheses that better performing public services, will lead to increased satisfaction among users and this will in turn ensure a higher level of trust in government. In the paper they used the term performance as incorporating both process and output/outcome. In the article they drew a framework for research on performance-trust relation, where they developed a number of alternative models to explain this relation. These included disconnection, dominant impact, multiple influences, reversed causality and lastly moderated reversed causality. The Results indicated that citizens do not consider all public agencies as being public, and influence of these agencies' performance on evaluations of government can therefore not be taken for granted.' It also revealed that some agencies or bodies may feature stronger in citizens' image of Government, which makes that government not just a summation of agencies and that performance, is not the only criterion citizens use to evaluate government.

Both papers primarily center on the issue of trust of the citizens' in government, as a vital feature in public sector administration. The current work however, focus more on the causal agents that leads to either a positive or negative perception on government agencies or how such perceptions could be improved or corrected.

Finally, in relation to the current research is seen in the work of Michael Bratton, Robert Mattes and E. Gyimah-Boadi (2005), which explored public opinion in the parts of Africa that have recently experienced political and economic reforms. The authors in their book "public opinion, democracy, and market reform in Africa" sort to explore the nature of public opinion, its origin, content and outcomes and also asked some basic questions as to why citizens think, feel and react as they do? They also tried to find out why public opinions vary cross-nationally and among different social opinion and groups within countries? The authors present two vignettes to illustrate regime

paths taken by African countries and to distinctive patterns of popular response. On the basis of case comparisons, they explored the systematically the role of public opinion in the evolution of democratic and market regimes in Africa. In their methodology the authors discussed Afrobarometer research surveys in relation to previous similar works conducted in Africa and beyond. They observed that public opinion can either be a causal or consequential effect of regime change and as such can be a dependent or independent variable.

Public agencies can never escape public opinions and perception, as they operate in the interest of the citizens and are held accountable to the citizens. Most scholars such as these take keen interest in public opinions and perceptions. Whereas the authors looked at past literature and vignette the current study focuses on the collation of current data from the public to determine the nature of public perceptions on public agencies.

Rhys Andrews and Steven van de Walle (2012) examined the relationship between a range of New Public Management (NPM) practices and citizens' perception of service efficiency, responsiveness, equity and effectiveness in English local governments. Their study was theorized on the theory of the New Public Management in the 1980s which saw large and monopolistic public bureaucracies as inherently inefficient and sought ways to cut back public sector budget and to identify tools and techniques to enable public managers deliver quality services at a lower cost. The aim of their paper was to examine whether the effects of NPM practices vary for citizens' perceptions of efficiency, responsiveness, equity and effectiveness. They find that public-private relationships have a negative relationship with citizens' perceptions of all four dimensions of local service performance, but that an entrepreneurial strategic orientation exhibits a positive association with all four. They also find that deprivation and social class diversity, in particular, both exhibit a strong negative relationship with all four measures of citizens' perceptions. The authors again learned that performance management is also likely to positively rather than negatively influence citizens' perceptions of local public services.

The research conducted by the authors is amongst many of such studies undertaken to investigate the perception of the public in public agencies. It goes a long way to support the significance of the current study. Their research was conducted in Europe in England and goes the extra mile to look at perception of the public-on-public agencies from four different levels and serves as an incentive to carry out a similar research in the west of Africa.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses systematic ways that were utilized in undertaking the study. Research methodology as defined by Rajasekar et al. (2013) is a science of studying how research is carried out and essentially, the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena. It provides in-depth information on the research design and procedure, population chosen, sample and sample selection procedure, statistical analysis procedure and instrumentation. Additionally, discussions on the limitations and challenges associated with the project execution.

3.2. Design and Procedure

The researcher adopted both the quantitative and qualitative methodology for undertaking the research. A structured survey questionnaire was developed and distributed to prospective subjects of the study to solicit response. Participants were required to provide answers to both open and closed ended questions after which responses to the close-ended questions were subjected to statistical analysis for results. The close-ended questions required respondents to choose from a list of responses one or more appropriate answer, while the open-ended questions required respondents to provide answers to questions in their own words. This was done to elicit deep insight into research questions and have a clear understanding of the reasons or the "why" to participants' response. Participants were required to give voluntary informed consent and be over the age of 18.

A total of one hundred (100) questionnaires was printed and distributed to respondents to solicit feedback. This was done to have a close representation of the sample to the entire population. During the data collection stage, the researcher had to leave the questionnaire with some respondents for a day in order not to impose on respondents and also to allow them time to provide detail answers to open ended questions. Issues on confidentiality, anonymity, ethical considerations and privacy were captured in a cover letter attached to questionnaires distributed. Data collection took place between 13:00 and 18:00 hours within selected weekdays.

3.3. Population

The entire population of the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) represented the population for the study. Several reasons contributed to the settling on students of the university as the population. This was in large due to the nature of the research question, potential cost of transportation to the said university and also due to convenience. It was also chiefly selected because of it being the premier Public Administration University in the country essentially established to train public servant workers in administrative procedures. GIMPA is also situated in the capital of the county, which has the most Ambulance stations. The presence of the service is presumed to be well felt by the populace since significant number of ambulance stations and the headquarters of the service are established in the Greater Accra Region. The population of the university, which stands at about thirty thousand (30,000), represented the population of the study. It is from this population that participants for the study were sampled.

The Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration was set as the population for the study in order to also enable the researcher to access information from a much broader and mixed cultural population.

3.4. Sample and Selection

A representative part of the population was needed to be drawn for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population. The School of Public Service and Governance represented the sample frame. Simple random sampling technique was utilized to select participants for the study. This was done since it was difficult and almost impossible to ascertain the perception of all identified members in the population within the time frame of the study. In all, a total of one hundred subjects was randomly selected and presented with questionnaires for feedback. Enough data was collected in the study in order to make sure that the data was concise.

3.5. Statistical Analysis Procedure

The answers provided by participants were subjected to statistical analysis for results using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v.20) to analyze data collected. SPSS is a reliable and widely used software program utilized by market researchers, health researchers, government, education researchers, marketing organizations, survey companies, data miners and others. Among the myriad reasons available to researchers for utilizing several statistical software packages, the three fundamental reasons for deciding on SPSS for this project was due to its effective data management ability, its offer of a wider range of options and for its better output organization. SPSS makes data analysis quicker and it offers a great range of methods, graphs and charts with easy interpretations.

The analysis conducted using the SPSS included descriptive analysis, which was mostly made up of frequency data for general analysis of the demographics of participants. Further analysis was done using the cross-tab function under SPSS to compare data between various variables. Regression and correlation analysis was finally used to measure relationships between various variables in the questionnaire, all tailored towards answering the objectives of the study.

3.6. Instrumentation

A structured questionnaire was developed to undertake the study. The questionnaire contained scores of open-ended questions to elicit a much more descriptive response from participants. A total of twenty-six (26) questions was presented to respondents to solicit feedback and

was grouped into four (4) sections. Section A of the questionnaire required participants' basic demographic information which included age, sex, level of education and the sector of employment they belonged. Section B of the questionnaire sought feedback from respondents on their knowledge about the National Ambulance Service and consisted of eleven (11) research questions. Section C of the questionnaire was devoted to enquiring about participant perception towards the service and the organization which also comprised of six (6) research questions targeted at soliciting such feedback from respondents. Focus was shifted to the perception of citizens towards employees in the National Ambulance service in section D which consisted also of five (5) carefully crafted research questions. Sections C and D of the questionnaire was conducted using the Likert Scale Rating, in which participants responded to series of statements about a topic, in terms of the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement. All questions in this section were closed ended or use fixed choice response formats, thus are designed to measure options (Bowling, 1997).

In order to improve on the response rate of participants, the questionnaire layout and format was designed to look attractive and sturdy while ample space between items was ensured. A cover letter was also prepared to indicate the importance of the study and the value of respondent's participation to improve upon the response rate.

4. Results and Analysis

This section presents results from data collected in chapter three and their analysis accordingly. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 90% was considered complete and acceptable for the analysis. This was due to the fact that five questionnaires were considered incomplete and with errors, and as such was rejected. Also, five questionnaires were not returned by the respondents for analysis. Data analysis in this section is grouped into two main areas namely, Demographic analysis and also grouped into two main areas, namely Descriptive analysis and Regression analysis.

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

4.1.1. Frequencies

4.1.1.1. Demographics

4.1.1.1.1. Gender

Table 1 below illustrates demographic information obtained from the analyses. From Table 1 we observe that out of the 90 questionnaires that were analyzed 48 of the respondents were males representing 53.3% while 41 of respondents were females representing 45.6%. This simple shows that more males as to females responded to the questionnaire.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Male	48	53.3	53.3	54.4
	Female	41	45.6	45.6	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 1: Demographic – Gender

4.1.1.1.2. Age

Table 2 also shows demographic information obtained from the analyses. From table below it is observed that the most respondents to the questionnaires were the youth between the ages of 25-30 representing as much as 51.1% and the least groups were adults between the ages of 50-59 represented by a lower percentage of 2.2%.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24	3	3.3	3.3	3.3
	25-30	46	51.1	51.1	54.4
	31-39	33	36.7	36.7	91.1
	40-49	6	6.7	6.7	97.8
	50-59	2	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Demographic - Age

4.1.1.1.3. Educational Background

Table 3 below illustrates demographic information obtained from the analyses and reveals that most of the respondents who undertook the survey were postgraduates of the school of governance representing 42.2%. The least of the respondents were the Diploma students representing 13.3%.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	certificate	19	21.1	21.1	21.1
	Diploma	12	13.3	13.3	34.4
	Undergraduate	21	23.3	23.3	57.8
	Postgraduate	38	42.2	42.2	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Demographic: Educational Background

4.1.1.1.4. Sector of Employment

Lastly on the demographic of the respondents, the descriptive analyses below reveal that 33.3%, 45.6%, and 21.1% of the respondents were from the public sector, private sector and unemployed sector respectively.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Public sector	30	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Private sector	41	45.6	45.6	78.9
	Unemployed	19	21.1	21.1	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Demographic: Sector of Employment

4.1.1.2. Citizen Knowledge of Ems in Ghana

4.1.1.2.1. Existence Service

The study indicated that majority of the participants were aware of the existence of a government ambulance service. This is shown by 84.4% responding positively which represents a 'YES' response from 76 participants. However, 2.2% representing 2 people were indifferent about the existence of such a service, whereas as 13.3% stated categorically that they did not know of the existence of the service. This is indicated in the table below:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	76	84.4	84.4	84.4
	No	12	13.3	13.3	97.8
	I don't know	2	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Existence of the Service

It is expected that once knowledge of the existence of EMS in Ghana was positive among the respondents, the name of the organization providing such services would easily be known. However, the result proved different from expectation, pooling only 20% of respondents giving the correct name. The remaining 80% either came close to giving the correct name or a totally wrong name. This shows that the fact that participants knew about the existence of EMS in Ghana did not have much information on them. As high as 36% of respondents left the column for name of the organization blank. Also, as observed in Table 6 below, even though majority of respondents responded positively to the knowledge of existence of the service, as many as 38 respondents representing 42.2% did not know the short code to dialing the ambulance service in Table 1.6. Table 1.6 reveals that 38.9% of the respondents provided the right short code (193). Also, even though Table 8 below indicates as much 36.6% describing the use of an ambulance accurately, a significant percentage of 18.9% could not provide the use of the ambulance.

These are illustrated in the various tables 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7 below:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Ambulance	1	1.1	1.1	2.2
	Ambulance service	3	3.3	3.3	5.6
	Blank	33	36.7	36.7	42.2
	Ghana ambulance service	23	25.6	25.6	67.8
	Ghana national ambulance service	2	2.2	2.2	70.0
	National ambulance service	2	2.2	1.1	72.3
	National ambulance	2	2.2	2.2	74.4
	National ambulance service	18	20.0	20.0	94.4
	St john	4	4.4	4.4	98.9
	St john ambulance	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 6: Citizen Knowledge, Name of the Service

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	139	5	5.6	5.6	5.6
	193	35	38.9	38.9	44.4
	911	12	13.3	13.3	57.8
	I don't know	38	42.2	42.2	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 7: Citizen Knowledge: Emergency Short Code

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Blank	17	18.9	18.9	18.9
	Carry dead people	6	6.7	6.7	25.6
	Carry sick and dead people	6	6.7	6.7	32.2
	Carry sick people	31	34.4	34.4	66.7
	Carrying dead bodies	1	1.1	1.1	67.8
	Carrying sick people	2	2.2	2.2	70.0
	Emergencies	1	1.1	1.1	71.1
	Emergencies	20	22.2	22.2	93.3
	Emergencies but improve service	1	1.1	1.1	94.4
	Saving lives	2	2.2	2.2	96.7
	Treat the sick	2	2.2	2.2	98.9
	Used for carry the dead	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 8: Citizen Knowledge: Use of Ambulances

4.1.1.3. Public Perceptions on EMS

Table 9 shows that 71.1% of respondents perceived an ambulance to be a best choice of transporting an injured person to the hospital as opposed to a taxi. However, as many as 35.6% of respondents perceived that an ambulance would take more than 1-15mins to respond to a distress call as represented in Table 10. Also, from Table 11 as high as 61.1% of respondents perceived that an ambulance was used in transporting the dead. These are illustrated in tables.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Strongly agree	64	71.1	71.1	72.2
	Agree	15	16.7	16.7	88.9
	Disagree	5	5.6	5.6	94.4
	Strongly disagree	5	5.6	5.6	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 9: Public Perceptions on Ems (Mode of Transport)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	13	14.4	14.4	14.4
	Agree	14	15.6	15.6	30.0
	Disagree	30	33.3	33.3	63.3
	Strongly disagree	32	35.6	35.6	98.9
	I don't know	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 10: Public Perceptions on Ems (Response Time)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	22	24.4	24.4	24.4
	Agree	33	36.7	36.7	61.1
	Disagree	15	16.7	16.7	77.8
	Strongly disagree	17	18.9	18.9	96.7
	I don't know	3	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 11: Public Perception of the Service (Usage)

4.1.1.4. Public Perception of the Employees

Table 12 and 2.2 below illustrates results of data analyzed with respect to participants' view on the service delivery and reputation of staff of the National Ambulance service. Table 12 shows a high percentage of 45.6% perceiving that staff of the National Ambulance service offers high quality medical care. Likewise, Table 13 shows a percentage of 42.2 respondents having positive perception on staff of the National Ambulance Service.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	11	12.2	12.2	12.2
	Agree	41	45.6	45.6	57.8
	Disagree	17	18.9	18.9	76.7
	Strongly disagree	7	7.8	7.8	84.4
	I don't know	14	15.6	15.6	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 12: Public Perception of the Service (Service Delivery)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	10	11.1	11.1	11.1
	Agree	38	42.2	42.2	53.3
	Disagree	23	25.6	25.6	78.9
	Strongly disagree	6	6.7	6.7	85.6
	I don't know	13	14.4	14.4	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 13: Public Perception of the Service (Reputation)

4.2. Regression Analysis

4.2.1. Correlation between Age, Educational Background and Sector of Employment on Awareness of EMS

From Table 14 below, a coefficient of .063 was obtained with an R value of .251. However, the p value of .063 is higher than the acceptable significance level of 0.05. This means that there is a relationship between the ages of participants their responses in term of awareness of EMS in Ghana. This is however, not a significant relationship and cannot be relied upon. Furthermore, the R value of .251 represents a 25% influence of age on the level of awareness of participants. Table 15 with an R value of .037 indicates a significant relationship between educational background of respondents and their awareness of EMS in Ghana. However, the negative (-.098) R value observed in Table 17 below

indicates a negative relationship between the sector of employment of respondents and their level of awareness of EMS in Ghana.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.251 ^a	.063	.052	.427

Table 14: Correlation between Age and Awareness of Ems

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.192 ^a	.037	.026	.433

Table 15: Correlation between Educational Background and Awareness of the Service

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.313 ^a	-.098	.088	.419

Table 16: Correlation between Sector of Employment and Awareness

4.2.2. Correlation between Level of Education and Public Perception of Ems

Table 17 below shows a positive significant correlation between level of education and public perception. This means that the level of perception of EMS in Ghana was highly influenced by the level of education of the respondents, which is represented by an R value of .000 ($R^2=.000$)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.017 ^a	.000	-.011	.844

Table 17: Relationship between Levels of Education on Public Perception of Ems

4.3. Discussion

The results realized from the analysis of the data collected from respondents will be analyzed in relation to the various objectives that the survey was conducted to investigate. Each of the objectives will be considered and compared against results obtained to determine whether objectives of the research were duly satisfied and also as to other additional information that was observed from the study.

4.3.1. Objective 1: Explore Citizens' Knowledge on the Existence of the National Ambulance Service

Initial analysis conducted on respondent's knowledge and awareness of the existence of a government ambulance service indicated that, generally most respondents were aware of such services. This is illustrated in over 84.4% of the population responding positively to having been aware of the existence of the ambulance service in Table 5. However, subsequent analyses revealed that participants had very little knowledge of the very basic but relevant information of the service. 13.3% stated categorically that they did not know of the existence of the service. Table 6 also reaffirms the objective that participants had little knowledge of National Ambulance Service indicating that 80% of the respondents could not provide the name of the government ambulance service. Also, in Table 6 it is observed that majority of respondents as many as 38 respondents representing 42.2% did not know the short code to dialing the ambulance service, as compared to 38.9% of the respondents providing the right short code (193). This is corroborated in a study conducted by H. Chang, G. T. Yiang, C. W. Hsu, et al (2005), who in their study evaluated the effectiveness of emergency medical services in Taiwan from the standpoint of the general public. Their study revealed that after a total of four thousand and fifty-five (4055) calls were made, only 35.2% knew they could call 119 if they felt sick or were injured. This is also illustrated in the works of Alana Prosser, Jessica Prosser and Denese Playford PhD (2013) who in their study into rural residence' perception about the coverage, cost and access of ambulance services found that from the

Two Hundred and Twenty-Nine (229) surveys conducted, 59% did not know the average call out fee for an emergency call. Furthermore, in another research by Healthwatch Suffolk and the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust in their desire to engage patients, to hear their thoughts and to best meet their perceptions and experience of the East of England Ambulance in Suffolk found that out of the Three Hundred and Thirty-Seven people that responded to their survey, One Hundred and Eighty-Seven (187) of respondents representing 55% said they were unaware that the ambulance service gives healthcare advice. Another 46 respondents representing (14.07%) of participants were unaware that the ambulance service had targets to meet in terms of response times to certain category of calls, while twenty (20) individuals were not aware of the service, with Thirty-Three (33) people saying they did not know how to access it. These research results illustrate from the various studies represents considerable lack of knowledge about ambulance service by various populace.

4.3.2. Objective 2: Examine the Kind of Perception (Positive or Negative) the Public Holds Towards the National Ambulance Service

Results from descriptive analyses indicate that respondents hold to a large extent negative perception towards the National Ambulance Service. In as much as most respondents strongly agreed by 71% in Table 9 with the ambulance rather than taxis conveying an injured person through traffic to the hospital, majority of them 68.9% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that an ambulance will attend to them between 1-15mins in time of an emergency in Table 10. Interestingly also, results in Table 11 showed that 61.1% of the respondents perceived an ambulance to be used in transporting dead persons. These perceptions tend to negatively affect citizens interest and subsequent usage in the services provided by the National Ambulance Service.

This is contradicted by the study conducted by Barimah K.B and Mensah J. (2013) on the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) of Ghana, which showed that people perceived the NHIA to have improved access to health care service delivery. This objective is again contradicted by findings from the research conducted by Again, Sajjad Hussain and Ahsan Akhtar Naz (2015) on the perception of Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122) among general public of Punjab, Pakistan. Out of four hundred and ninety-one (491) participants who replied to the questionnaire, majority of the respondents gave positive opinion about provision of emergency services in their regions. They also found that youth gave more positive opinion about the Service as compared to senior citizens.

4.3.3. Objective 3: Identify the Relationship between Demographic (Age, Level of Education and Sector of Employment) of Citizens on the Level of Awareness of EMS

Correlational results from the analysis of data indicated that there is a correlation between age of the respondents and their level of awareness of the existence of emergency services in the country. This is illustrated by the correlation value (R) of .251 and a significant value of .063 in Table 14 in the results chapter. This simply means that the age of the respondents not affect level of awareness but the effect is not significant. Finding from the survey by Sajjad Hussain and Ahsan Akhtar Naz (2015) also confirms this objective with their earlier result which indicates that the youth gave more positive opinion about the Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122) as compared to senior citizens, whereas the people belonging to urban areas especially the females were more aware about the functioning of Rescue 1122 as compared to the same age group living in rural areas.

The analysis also reveals a significant relationship between educational background of respondents and their awareness of EMS, depicted in Table 15. Here again results from the research by Healthwatch Suffolk and the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust on perceptions and experience of the East of England Ambulance in Suffolk found that the more informed people were, the more likely they are to be an advocate of the service which emphasized the need of ensuring that all groups are informed and supports our finding that level of knowledge which is classified in educational backgrounds in the current study does influence people's perceptions about EMS in Ghana.

However, there is a negative relationship between the sector of employment of respondents and their level of awareness of EMS in Ghana. What this means is that there is no relationship between

the sector of employment of the respondents and their level of awareness of the respondent in EMS in Ghana.

4.3.4. Objective 4: Examine the Role of Level of Education on the Perception of EMS

Table 17 below shows a positive significant correlation between level of education and public perception. This means that the level of perception of EMS in Ghana was highly influenced by the level of education of the respondents, which is represented by an R value of .000 ($R^2=.000$). Results from the research by Healthwatch Suffolk and the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust on perceptions and experience of the East of England Ambulance in Suffolk again corroborates this finding that the more informed people were, the more likely they are to be an advocate of the service which emphasized the need of ensuring that all groups are informed and supports our finding that level of knowledge which is classified in educational backgrounds in the current study does influence people's perceptions about EMS in Ghana.

5. Conclusion

The study set out to find out the perception of the public towards the public services and in this case the National Ambulance Service. The researcher recognized the effects of public perceptions on the usage of public agencies and sort to explore the phenomenon based on citizens' knowledge on the existence of the service, examine the kind of perceptions public hold towards the service, identify relationships between demographics of citizens and the level of awareness of the service and lastly to examine the role of the level of education on perceptions of the EMS.

Analysis of results showed a considerable lack of knowledge about ambulance service by the populace. Results also showed a rather negative perception of the populace towards the National Ambulance service. In addition, we discover from the analysis that age and level of education have an impact of effect on the level of awareness of the existence of the EMS, whereas sector of employment does not have any impact or effect on the level of awareness of the existence of the EMS in Ghana. Lastly, we observed from the analysis of the data, a positive significant correlation between level of education and public perception.

6. Recommendation

Results from the research undoubtedly have enormous benefits to the country, and enhancing a health system's responsiveness to people's expectations leads to improved utilization of services and better outcomes as well as increasing patronage of citizens. Rigorous education should be conducted to get the people adequately informed about the existence and the kind of service provided by the National ambulance service. This education should be targeted mainly at the rural areas since, such places are usually most deprived and contain many vulnerable groups who need the services most. The current study has in its small way refuted and corroborated results from studies conducted by researchers on perceptions of citizens on public agencies. Subsequent researchers in undertaking similar studies should endeavor to utilize larger sample sizes to obtain a feedback from a larger group of people. This probably means that the study should be conducted as an applied research and not necessarily for academic purposes or as a basic research.

It would also be of immense significance to consider various analyses on the data collected to throw a much broader understating of the variables under discussion.

7. Limitation

Despite the success of the research, it was however not devoid of several impediments. It was observed that, though students agreed to undertake the survey, they did not put much effort into considering each question critically. This resulted in the rejection of a few questionnaires due to the fact that they were not filled appropriately. Some respondents also failed to return the questionnaire. All these shortfalls in the data collection stage, one way or the other has an effect on results which the current study did not take into consideration.

Time factor also prevented the researcher from utilizing a much larger sample size in undertaking the study. Several other analytical procedures could not be carried out in the data

analysis stage due to time factor. As such it is recommended that further studies should be mindful of time factor and utilize it judiciously.

Furthermore, cost of the project work posed a grave challenge in conducting the service. Cost of transportation, printing of documents, photocopies and binding of research work required a huge sum of money which had an effect of some factors considered in undertaking the study.

Also, since the National Ambulance Service is quite a new organization, there wasn't that much literature on the service. Access to information proved difficult than was anticipated in the earlier stages of the study.

Finally, it was realized from the study that most of the previous works done on the research topic was mostly conducted outside the current social context. What this means is that once the research was conducted in different countries that share different belief systems and cultures, differences were going to be recorded in previous and current results. As sociologist Robertson (1987) has noted: Americans eat oysters but not snails, French eat snails but not locusts, The Zulus eat locusts but not fish, The Jews eat fish but not pork, The Hindus eat pork but not beef, The Russians eat beef but not snakes, The Chinese eat snakes but not people, The Jale of New Guinea find people delicious. This illustrates the extent to which culture may affect researches carried out in different countries. In trying to correct this limitation, researchers should make an effort to operationally define significant aspects of the study in the context of the society where the study is being carried out.

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