

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**THE EFFECT OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF
PUBLIC AGENCIES IN GHANA; A CASE STUDY OF THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

AGENCY

BY

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**THIS LONG ESSAY IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the Master of Art (Management and Administration) degree and that, to the best of my knowledge, contains no work published previously by another person. This work does not contain any project that has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this was supervised in accordance with procedures laid down by the University.

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DR. OBI BERKO DAMOAH
(SUPERVISOR)

DATE

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my wife, Comfort Donkor and my only daughter, Treasure Magajalem Nkanbonam.

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I am grateful to God for bringing me this far in life and in my educational journey. He has been my shield and protection.

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ABSTRACT

The management of any business entity, be it for profit or non-profit, is deemed the most perilous faction of a firm's survival in whatever market it operates. Both private and public agencies have the same challenge of making sure the firm's success rests on a reliable team of experts who is capable of arresting challenges thrown at the agency as well as helping to levitate the company in the face of competition. The issue of political interference however stares in the faces of various agencies around the world and its impact is experiential in the general output of these companies. In light of this, the study was embarked on to investigate the exact impact political interferences have on the administration and operation of public agencies in Ghana—with the Youth Employment Agency serving as a focus. The study employed the quantitative, together with the qualitative methods, to collect data from 20 respondents who are all employees of the Youth Employment Agency. The research brought to the fore elements that prove the presence of political interference in the agency and these include recruitment processes, procurement processes, transfer policies, and regulations. The findings further showed a guillotining effect on various aspects of the agency's operations, such as a constant reduction in productivity, reduced work quality, loss of national resources and policy modules derailing from implementation courses. Thus, the study recommends that the agency implements periodic appraisal exercises to check effectiveness of officials. It also recommends the need for documented checks in the system to protect officials from being influenced by figures of authority. The employment of private audit firms should be necessitated strictly to keep the agency in check and lastly, the study recommends the legislative arm of government enact even more strict laws, spelling out specific autonomous operations to cover all public agencies from external influences. *Keywords:* NYEP, YEA, SOEs, Unemployment, Interference

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study

An essential determinant for the survival and the constant growth of any entity, be it from the private or public sector, is the maintenance of high-quality products and/or services being rendered. Every firm in existence, whether for profit making or a non-profit entity is built on some sort of continuous guidelines which can be referred to as mission statements. These statements seek to relate input of the firm with the delivery to its customers or the general public. With the issue of customer satisfaction and retention being viewed as a prime concept, organisations around the world deem it a priority to apply series of management principles which will aid in the attainment of set organisational goals in order to remain in business. Decision-making processes for these organisations are very critical to the wellbeing of the entity and for that matter given the utmost attention. With reference to Herbert's (2001) focus on administrative decision making, he concluded that decision-making is the core of administration; in that, the language of theory of administration should be derived from the logic and psychology of human preference. Decision-making processes in any private organisation or firm significantly affects the quality of service delivery to customers or the general public. This, however, has not been the case for our counterparts in the public sector as most institutions in this sector are basically not influenced by the quality of services rendered. This has been a social canker for a long time; probably because the public sector organisations are normally not seen to be faced with the threat of competition by agencies or organisations providing similar services to the public.

The definition of “Youth” varies among nations across the globe, depending on many diverse parameters such as the culture, traditions, social behaviour, customs and topographical location of the country. With respect to the definition from the United Nations, a youth is a person between the ages 15 and 24. The national youth policy of Ghana describes the youth as individuals between 15 and 35 years. The unemployment rate of a country, according to the CIA’s World Fact book (2014), comprises the rate of the country’s labour force that is unemployed.

The percentage rate of unemployment in Ghana measures the number of active employment seekers as a percentage of the total labour force. From the definitions, the World Development Database pitched the rate of youth employment in Ghana at 15.9% in 2012, with 45% being Junior High School graduates and the rest of the 55% constituting traditional apprentices (10%), formal vocational schools (5%), and technical schools (7%). The NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) category comprises 33% of all Junior High School graduates. Ghana’s population and housing census organised in 2010 postulates that 71.5% of the youth aged 15 years and above (15,308,425) were either employed and unemployed (economically active) or unemployed and not available to work (economically inactive). A whopping 94.2% of the economically active population were employed while the rest of the 5.8% were unemployed. A large percentage (83.8%) of the unemployed population were first time job seekers; with women (7.3%) being more susceptible to unemployment than men (6.5%). The rate of economically active women was 50.8% while that of the men was 52.2%.

It is rather important from the onset to note that political involvement or interference in the public sector is not entirely always in the negative sense as we may make it seem. Political

intrusion in institutions' regulations may be categorised into proper or improper intrusion. Proper political intrusion comprises activities that furnish regulators with appropriate information concerning the impact of regulatory measures on the firms. Proper intrusion also aids in holding regulators accountable for their choices under the law, providing political authorities salient information to be used in policy making, as well as aiding in following due procedures. These are to ensure that confidence is instilled in the public with regards to regulators implementing established laws devoid of bias.

The attention of this study is on the negative use of political involvement and its effects on public sector performance. An improper interference seeks to violate procedures, bias regulatory decision making, and also includes regulatory decisions that violate the letter or spirit of laws and policies that regulation is designed to implement. According to Prewitt (2010), interference is indicated by efforts to shape statistical products to achieve political advantage.

A highlight on political agencies or organisations doesn't show any variances as compared to the private businesses. These organisations are also made up of similar management structures which see to the operations of the entity but this time around, in accordance with some intentions or the visions of the incumbent government of the nation. A further delve into operations of public entities and agencies show that politicians and bureaucrats are two very critical agents responsible for the attainment of goals in these organisations. These bureaucrats are employed with the necessary skills to liaise with the politicians in that field to implement agreed policies which fall in line with the vision of the government in an agency's operation. The political association for such organisations may allow the conclusion that failures to reach some level of satisfaction or the agency's inability to deliver as stipulated may be a cost to citizen welfare or a

general capital loss to the state. The World Bank (2007) postulated that failure to deliver projects managed by the government undermines citizen's welfare and leads to a substantial loss to the state's coffers. According Banerjee et al (2007), the extent of these failures varies within and across countries; thereby driving national and global inequalities. Bureaucracy is the term used to manage the helm of operations in political agencies and thus, the issue of what goes into bureaucratic order is always highlighted once there is a failure in service delivery.

Bureaucracy can be described is formal administration characterized by the utilization of impersonality of social relations and technical competence, division of labour, hierarchy of authority, as well as rules and regulations. The essence of bureaucracy is for large organisations to be managed effectively to attain efficiency and also to be more accountable to stakeholders. The term can simply be explained as the systematic organisation of administrative activities in order to achieve efficient, effective and economical delivery of service by both private and public entities. In similar understanding, Merton (1957) agrees that bureaucracy is the wheel on which public entities can be managed efficiently, but does not fail to point that excessive bureaucratic order renders public organisations less efficient and self-serving, unable to succeed in achieving their core mandate and less sensitive to service users and other stakeholders. Max Weber expoused that bureaucracy is the most ideal and logical type of administration that is geared towards achieving positive results; though this is an ideal method, its dysfunction is its excessive application in corporate spaces by office holders. It is well understood that these public office holders are bureaucrats who are, by one way or the other, employed by the government to carry out operations. Thus, an abuse of office may, to a large extent, be due to some handling or interference of politics.

A reference to the system of job creation in Ghana unveils many responsibilities in this direction to the government as in the case of any other economy. The 2010 Population and Housing Census suggests 93% of economically active individuals are employed in the private sector with 86.1% being in the private informal sector and the rest of the 7.0% being in the private formal sector. Hence, being the country's largest employer. Trailing behind these figures is the public sector accounting for a mere 6.3% of employment. Till date, the private informal sector continues to be the employer with the most workforce in Ghana. Ghana faces developmental challenges in youth unemployment and measures have been taken by the government to tackle this issue while improving employment opportunities for the youth.

First, in order to help address youth employment, with respect to the important role of job creation in the country's human resource development programme, there was a restructuring of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. This ministry was renamed the Ministry of Personal Development and Employment in 200, and subsequently becoming the Department of Manpower, Youth and Employment. There was also the reorganisation of policies and programmes which was aimed at supporting the overall youth employment issues. Secondly, in reacting to the outcomes of the 2001 exercise, labour market policy was put in place with the introduction of the Skills Training and Employment Placement (STEP) Programme. This STEP has trained 27,500 people throughout the second implementation phase of the programme at a total cost of ₵26.4 billion (US\$ 3million) fully funded by the state. This stage included a microfinance component of ₵11.5 billion. The third revision of the programme of reforms in the education sector was aimed at increasing access and participation in the education of young people.

Subsequently, there have been other major steps in programme enacting and implementation to alleviate youth unemployment in Ghana. Two of these programmes are: the Capital Youth Foundation and the National Youth Volunteer Service. (*Ministerial Impact Report of GYEEDA, 2013*).

According to Iyer and Mani (2012), our understanding of the interactions between politicians and bureaucrats is very limited; both in terms of their causes and their consequences. To be able to understand the delivery of public service, it is however significant to understand the incentive environment in which these public agents operate; both formal incentives and informal interactions that happen between them and their political handlers. This study seeks to directly look into the general effects such interference from political agents has on these organisations in question; with emphasis on the operations of the Youth Employment Agency in Ghana.

1.1 Rationale of the Research

The alarming unemployment rate in the country, especially among the youth, has enough implications on the state. Over the years, there have been positive concerns for the challenges it poses to the nation. There have been attempts by individuals, corporate, and government entities to address this issue; several remedies have been resorted to in the quest for a solution for this canker. This is primarily because there is the general notion that equipping the youth of a nation puts the future of the nation on a better foundation. According to records from the World Fact Book of the United States Central Intelligence Agency (2014), the youth of a nation constitutes the bulk of the nation's labour force and is basically the voting populace as identified. Thus, giving the youth employment may only have a direct relationship to the development of the country. The government of Ghana, in October 2006, introduced and instituted the National

Youth Employment programme with the prime focus of addressing the country's youth unemployment challenges. The programme was designed to empower the youth of Ghana to contribute to the nation's growth and sustainability. This programme had been designed from its inception to strictly offer employment to the nation's unemployed youth and to provide them with employable skills and essential working experience. With respect to the personnel of this great initiative, NYEP has been targeted at the age group between 18 years and 35 years who are literate, illiterate, able-bodied and or otherwise. The then government of the country, after introducing the programme, informed that funding for the programme will be sourced from the government and other foreign bodies, such as the World Bank, who also have similar intentions towards the youth.

YEA was a government initiative and was built with the conviction to be passed on among the successive governments; it was therefore developed under nine modules in 2006 and room was made for other modules to be included as time elapsed. Job creation remains one of Ghana's priorities in the nation's development agenda; and as it has been identified by the National Youth Policy, the introduction of NYEP can be recorded as a substantive breakthrough as records show that the programme was able to employ exactly 95,000 youth under the various modules in the first year of implementation.

Despite the policy's idea of reducing the unemployment rate among the youth of Ghana, there are some challenges and many bottlenecks to the great initiative as evident in the records of 10.62% youth unemployment rate (that is only for the ages 15-24) in our 2010 population and housing census. The programme is periodically seen to suffer some mishandling from public officials in that every successive government may make its own changes to the initiative; even

though with the same motive, there seem to be the play of some political forces in its administration more frequently than it was planned for. A typical highlight will be its name change from NYEP to Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Development Agency (GYEEDA) in 2014; and a recent alteration to Youth Employment Agency (YEA). The rationale of this study is to ascertain the impact political interference has on the administration and output of the Youth Employment Agency. Most studies have focused on the bureaucratic orders and measures binding and clouding the service delivery of public agencies but very few of them narrow it on the core of this subject matter. That is, the political interference of the incumbent government that gives rise to these delays in service delivery, and as a result having a great effect on the performance of the organisation. This study examines the impact political interference has on political agencies in Ghana with the National Youth Employment Agency in view.

1.2 Research Objectives

The principal objective for this study is to investigate the impact of political interference on the administration and operation of the Youth Employment Agency as a political institution in Ghana. In achieving this general objective, the study will adopt the following specific objectives:

- i. To determine the elements of political interference which impacts on public agencies in Ghana.
- ii. To determine the effects of political interference on the performance of the agencies specifically;
 - a. National objectives
 - b. Team targets
 - c. Individual employee targets

- iii. To propose and to make recommendations for the sake of policy reforms and for organisational assessments.

1.3 Research Questions

The objectives raised above under the research study was guided by the following research questions;

- i. What are the basic elements of political interference that can be seen to impact on the delivery of public agencies in Ghana?
- ii. What are the effects of political interferences on public agencies in the areas of national objectives, team targets and individual employee targets?
- iii. What other recommendations can be suggested for the sake of policy reformations and organisational assessment?

1.4 Significance of the study

The importance of this study could be examined along three strands; academia and research, policy formulation, and industrial and corporate practice. For the players in the educational arena, this study contributes to literature on the management and administration of public entities by putting forward not only a comprehensive report that utilizes both quantitative and qualitative assessment in analyzing practices that has impact on the output of the firm, but also important service delivery component of performance mostly ignored in this area of literature.

This research intends to find out whether the interference of politics in our various political or public agencies has over the years had a positive or rather a negative impact on the delivery and

growth of these organisations. To figure out whether there exists in the minds of the bureaucrats the desire to satisfy their given responsibilities of the nation or only to adhere to the demands of the government that employed them in their positions.

The research will act as a point of reference for the government, policymakers and other stakeholders to guide them on how to effectively implement the mandate of the National Youth Employment Programme as a means of addressing the issue of job creation in the country. It will also act as a backdrop to future researchers and academicians with interest in similar topics.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study covers the impact of political interference on the National Youth Employment Programme. It will examine the management and administration of the programme and focus on how the government interferes in the daily business of the firm. This project will also analyse the existing limitations to the government or checks and balances laid down to aid in better administration. Due to some resource constraints, the study will limit its findings to the operations at the head office.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

One of the challenges the researcher encountered was the barriers that plagued the collection of data from prospective respondents of this study. As a result, the researcher limited this study to views and opinions of selected respondents in the selected organisation. The researcher also anticipated the incompleteness of questionnaires due to the unwillingness of some respondents; thereby causing a failure in the completion of the data collection instrument. The implication was that it limited the number of respondents in the study despite the education given to them by the

researcher about the potential benefits of the study to them. In order to address this issue, the questionnaires were shared among the participants; while being given enough time to complete them. Moreover, the researcher went through all the data collection instruments to ensure all items have been answered and assist those that have difficulties to complete the questionnaire.

1.6 Organisation of the study

The study has been categorised under five (5) distinct chapters to facilitate comprehension. Chapter one introduces the study by looking at the background to political agencies and how they come to being as well as political interferences, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, the research questions, justification of the study, scope of the study and the organisation of the study. Chapter Two is the review of relevant literature on which the study revolves. Chapter three and four outlines the details of the research methodology, presents the analyzed data with its interpretation of the findings, as well as, discussion on the research findings. Chapter five features recommendations based on the significant findings as well as summary of the study and useful conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is a review of related research on the area, public entity management, and its presumed interference by the government. The first section provides a review of political agencies in Ghana and how they are administered or allowed to function. Secondly, the chapter reviews the government's role in the creation of jobs and its effect on the country. There is then the review of the focus of the study, the Youth Employment Agency as a public agency and highlight is put on the effects government interference has on the outcome of the agency.

2.1 Political Interference

Interference can be indicated by efforts and actions implemented in order to achieve political advantage. It can also be illustrated by the adjustment of statistics in a bid to influence differentials in the decennial census. The system of intrusion in the operation and administration of an organisation to benefit your interests can be referred to as political interference.

Political interference occurs when political figures meddle in decision-making processes in public administrative procedures such as organizing, planning, directing, staffing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting, as well as, allocation and use of public funds. As stated by Dixit and Pindyck (1994), politics plays a role in the supply of roads, schools, hospitals in the developing countries. Among various leadership challenges facing developing democratic countries, especially African countries, is the political interference in administrations (Wangwe, 2012).

Political interference also refers to influences imparted on the administrative system of public sector organisations by members of the higher echelons of government.

Managers and administrators of firms, agencies, and organisations alike serve as agents managing and administering the firm's activities and operations on behalf of owners or principals of the company or firm. These could be individuals, institutions or government. Current literature espoused subjects spanning on the issue of political interference in decision-making process of both state-owned and private enterprises, as well as the over regulation of such institutions. Generally, suggestions have been made that the key channel through which politicians and governments control firms' actions in the bid to seek personal and political goals are political interference and interventions (Chang & Wong, 2002). According to Vining and Boardman (1992), this downplays the achievement process of shareholder worth maximization. In general, current literature asserts the existence of political interference in the governance of public-owned firms and private-owned firms alike.

2.2 The Theory Political Interference

According to the agency theory postulated by Jensen and Meckling (1976), agents—managers and administrators may implement rules reflecting the desires of delegated authority of principals to the detriment of the agents' interests; thereby resulting in a conflict of interest known as agency problem. Owners usually institute distinct measures to monitor and evaluate management decisions, whereas providing motivation for management to act in the interest of the owners. On the bases of this same theory from Jensen and Meckling, political interference in corporations—be it state-owned or private are usually allowed due to the desire of governments to ensure that decisions made by management are in tandem with the interest of the government and the interest of the general public. This, therefore, indicates with specifications that the subject of

interest will be the satisfaction of the public or society. A study posited that the government and political leaders are agents of the public (Ernst, 2004). The government and other political authorities may therefore focus on self-interest agendas rather than issues of public interest (Downs, 1957). Salley (2009) also argues with indications that most governments interfere with the management decisions of state-owned enterprises with the aim of ensuring that decisions are made in accordance with the interest of political authorities against public interest. In the same vein, Chen (2004) posited that the government may employ political power to influence decision making of firms in the bid to please the public—another political objective. Political interference in decision-making operations of public sector organisations can be done in the form of political representation of company boards, direct control (Salley, 2009) and corporate and board members appointments (Wong, 2004). In order for interference to take place, there should be loopholes in certain management decisions that will facilitate interference. Some of these decisions are investment planning, employment decisions (Salley, 2009), pricing of products and services (Kumar, 2014; Wong, 2004), goals, and objectives (Kornai, 2001; Roe, 2003). Political interference is not exclusive to public firms as it is present in decision making in private firms (Bortolotti & Faccio, 2006).

The incidence of political interference can take place in every firm since the government plays important roles in the business environment of each firm (McGregor, 2001; Salley, 2009). The government in any country and corporate organisations thrive on an interdependent relationship to facilitate efficient operations for both entities. Hillman (2005) suggests that government is a key dependent variable to firms such that it creates unlimited uncertainty to firms. Cognisant of the fact that every firm is at the mercy of the government in the business sense, most authorities in firms seek to create favourable relationships with government and political authorities in a bid

to influence political actions to their advantage. This behaviour of managers is consistent with the resource dependency theory (Salley, 2009) that states that firms seek influential relationships with external influencers that are likely to cause uncertainty to their operations (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Hillman, 2005 & Salleh, 2009). Influential political affiliations with firms can be beneficial on one hand, and problematic on the other hand to corporate institutions (Sokolov & Solanko, 2017). To gain competitive advantage over other firms, business usually need the support of government; in the same vein, government would need support from business in their bid to attain political and social objectives—provision of employment and social amenities. This is possible in that firms with strong relationship with the government may appoint politicians who may in turn influence the government in making decisions that may favour the firm (Hillman, 2005). This action of the firm is an opportunity cost for benefits like low transaction cost, low taxation, high market value, good will, government bailouts and most importantly, reduced uncertainty among others (Hillman, 2005; Fisman 2001; Facci, Masulis & McConnel, 2006). Firms allow government to interfere in their policymaking processes in the interest of political authority and government allows firms to have a say in their policies. This relationship usually conflict with shareholder interest. (Wong, 2004). For instance, firm managements may replace professionals on their boards with political appointees (Fan et al., 2007) who may channel firms' liquid access to politically motivated accounts and projects (Mironov & Zhuravskaya, 2016; Sokolov & Solanko, 2017). This kind of political interference may cause issues such as firm's financial management thereby leading to a collapse of the firm.

2.3 Performance

Performance refers to behaviour and result (Brumbach, 1988); behaviour comes from the performer of an action—transforming the performance from abstraction to action. Aside behaviour being the instrument for results, behaviour is an outcome on its own as it is the result of physical and mental effort put into tasks. Bates and Holton (1995) asserted that performance is a multi-disciplinary construct with a factor-varying measurement. Determining whether the objective of measurement is to either assess performance outcomes or assess behaviour is very critical. Kane (1996), however, argues that performance is the impact an individual makes and it is autonomous—different from purpose. Campbell (1990) supports this assertion by positing that performance is behaviour and must therefore be differentiated from outcomes since those can be influenced by systems factors.

Byars and Rue (2004) espoused that performance implies the degree of achievement of the responsibilities of an employee. It reflects on the efficiency of that employee on the job. Performance is measured in terms of results unlike efforts—which refers to the energy put into a job. Job performance is the net effect of an employee's effort as influenced by abilities and task perceptions. Consequently, performance can be referred to as a variable resulting from the interrelationships between effort, abilities and role perceptions. Motivation-related efforts describe the amount of physical or mental energy an individual exerts in undergoing a task. The personal characteristics employed in performing a task are known as abilities and they do not fluctuate over short periods. Role perceptions refer to channels through which individuals put their efforts in a job setting. These comprise the activities and behaviour, people believe, are necessary in executing their assigned tasks in a work setting. A certain level of proficiency must be in existence in each of the performance components in order to achieve an acceptable level of performance. In similar vein, an upper boundary can be placed on performance by the level of

proficiency in any performance component. Though employees may possess excellent skills and invest tremendous effort in their role performance, lacking understanding of the task at hand will create a dissatisfied manager. Thus, much energy is expended on a wrong course. Performance can also be interpreted as a combination of variables like ability, expectations, motivation, and working conditions (Briscoe & Schuler, 2004). Certain factors have more influence on employee performance than other factors, thereby impacting output quality. Dowling et al. (1999) posited that performance attainers are motivated by support from their superiors, nature of task, the working environment and the corporate culture of the organisation. Additionally, Chandra and Frank (2004) suggested that performance appraisal systems are formulated to assess employee performance and to suggest improvement measures that are important for the progress of the company (Choudhary & Puranik, 2014). These are however implemented by managements that plan on instituting motivational packages as rewards for exceptional performance.

2.4 Organisational Performance

Examining organisational performance through the lens of financial indicators, it has come to the fore that the subjects of interest to owners of businesses are typically sales or revenue, Earnings Before Tax (EBIT), Return on Investment (ROI), and profit Earnings Per Share (EPS). The importance of knowing an organisation in performance terms has been proven in the global markets. This knowledge is an avenue that helps to attract future investment and professionals and increase share value within the competitive market (Kagioglou et al. 2001; Katou & Budhwar, 2006). Therefore, organisational performance is critical to business owners—whether it is a manufacturing or service rendering organisation.

Rainey and Steinbauer (1999) defined performance as the ability of a firm to achieve set objectives and the ways in which formulated standards are used to ensure the achievement of

these aims. Collaborative efforts from all members of staff of a firm towards the achievement of set objectives result in performance. According to Etzioni (2001), the objectives of a firm refers to the perfect state the firm strives to achieve, and it acts as the livewire of the firm. Ultimately, a firm's performance is evaluated based on the stage of its perfect state goal. Since public sector goals are not geared towards profits but towards public satisfaction, metrics such as efficiency, effectiveness and issues relating to the economy drive these goals; it is a complex situation to assess performance in this sector. Moreover, comparison is complex in public sectors as the sector objectives are implemented to focus on a wide variety of stakeholders with competing demands and also highly ambiguous (Boschken, 1994). As a result, the institutional setting of a public sector should be put into perspective when evaluating performance.

2.5 Public Sector Performance

Customer expectation or the public anticipated satisfaction for government agencies in the public sector has changed significantly in our contemporary world with existing harsh economic conditions, especially, in developing countries. Concurrently, a gap in perception about service delivery has been created by the transformed interactions and expectations; agencies have been challenged to be more transparent about policy implementation and the processes, provide better customer service for citizens and respond quicker to issues.

The public sector of a nation refers to the section of the economy that is under the control of the state—regional, local, and financed by the government with public funds. These sectors include the security sector, the health sector, public education sector, road sector and so on. The public sector is usually in charge of production, distribution, and appointments of duties by the government. The public agency may be a permanent or a semi-permanent organisation in the

machinery of a particular government that is responsible for the oversight and administration of specific functions. There are usually a variety of agencies under the same government although their functions may differ, these agencies are not likely to be seen as ministries and the other types of public bodies which fall under the jurisdiction of the government. Government or public agencies are established by legislation based on the rationale which deemed it necessary for its creation. These autonomous bodies, as independent as they may be, are accountable to the incumbent government of the country. Based on such notions, they become a public necessity without question, deliver utmost services intended for the purpose of its establishment, and demand reformation when parameters indicate that there is some under performance. A benefit of public sector duty is that it is critical to human life and quality of life. It is evident that social needs are important and hence the need for the public sector is paramount to everything else; the private sector is not interested in performing these roles as they do not provide any economic benefit. Additionally, it would pose a huge risk for the people if these services are provided by the private sector (Scutaru, 2009).

The only way the efficiency in the public sector and the private sector could be compared would be if they have the same objectives. However, the two sectors cannot be fully compared even with the same objectives since the public sector projects take social issues other than economic benefits (Stoian & Ene, 2003):

- Ensuring that a firm sets low prices for products in a bid to redistribute incomes.
- Ensuring that locally manufactured products and equipment are used by public agencies.
- Establishing that the institutions and/or public companies do not cut down on staff population even when it is necessary so as not to increase unemployment.

- Ensuring that buildings are put up in economically disadvantaged areas to balance regional development.
- Ensuring state-owned firms use local technology order to reduce the economic dependence on foreign companies.

Several parameters characterize performance in the public sector; these are: efficiency, accountability, fiscal strength, consumer satisfaction, effectiveness, revenue autonomy, fiscal health, and responsiveness, quality of service, financial soundness, financial outcome, and financial performance.

2.5.1 The formulation and implementation of the National Youth Employment Programme

With the general unemployment rates of the nation reaching skyrocket heights, it has been a prime focus for every government of the day to instigate and implement strategies with the purpose of arresting the effects this canker may cause. In doing this, plans are simultaneously issued to attack the unemployment plague itself. The NYEP has succeeded in tandem with other unemployment intervention programme enough to be identified as effective with respect to the purpose for which it was formulated. The programme, among others, has chalked many successes with respect to the number of employment opportunities created under the many different modules it is comprised of over its years of existence.

It is clear from the discussions raised so far that this intervention that was implemented is comprised of offering work and volunteer opportunities for young people as well as self-employment by young people. The main objectives of the intervention is to unearth and avail job prospects for the you in the country and by so doing, establish sustainable economic lifestyle for

the hitherto unemployed youth. The implementation process involved the use of ten models and in 2010, it was implemented in all 138 metropolitans, municipal, sub-metros and districts in the country. National, regional and district level employment taskforces were employed in the implementation of the NYEP. Areas which needed promotion of employment potentials were identified by district employment working groups and one or more of the NYEP modules were implemented. Some of the beneficiaries received a weekly stipend while beneficiaries who were involved in self-employment activities were assisted in acquiring capital assets. The NYEP was anticipated to benefit more than 200,000 young persons between 2010 and 2011 (Baffour-Awuah, 2014).

2.5.2 The Effectiveness of the NYEP as Ghana's Initiative to Creating Jobs

During the maiden stage of the programme, a total of 200,000 new jobs (including 78,195 placed in the youth employment programme) were generated in 2006; as compared to 125,000 jobs created in 2005. This contributed to a decrease in the level of unemployment from 11.1% in 2005 to 10% in 2006. This impact was attributed to the implementation of the NYEP and the improved marketing atmosphere. It is suggested that in 2006, the NYEP eased the process of job search by the unemployed youth in the agricultural (13,069), forestry, health (auxiliary nursing: 10, 850) , education, resource mobilization (26,760), waste and sanitation (4,550) sectors, as well as, internship opportunities (2,800). Though the NYEP was impactful—457,779 youth had been engaged in the NYEP by June 2017 (Baffour-Awuah, 2014), its sustenance beyond the medium term became onerous.

A study by Gyampo (2010), asserted the importance of governance and representative democracy is intended for political leaders to initiate and implement beneficial policies in the

interest of the people while dealing with the dilemmas of poverty and under-development. According to Gyampo, since 1992, political authorities have developed and implement development policies with limited input of the youth though the youth constitute the bulk of the nation's labour force and electoral population. As a result, the NYEP has been plagued with various challenges, most of which could have been prevented if there was youth inclusion in policymaking and implementation. A significant drawback of the programme was the fact that it offered employment to just about 108,000 Ghanaian youths—amounting to less than 2% of Ghanaian youth (ISSER, 2010). This renders the programme an inappreciable effort at seeking the interest of the youth in relation to employment.

In addition, funding for the NYEP was inadequate and always late since its inception in 2006. Taking into perspective September 2010, funding had not been released the whole of that year. This led to undue delays in payment of allowances (Attipoe-Fittz, 2010). Also, the government pledged that an amount of GHS 100 billion would be released annually as a subvention for the NYEP, yet it had never been fulfilled. A sum of the fraction of this amount is however paid annually to defray cost. With the beneficiaries under the no formal education module receiving GHS 50, SHS graduates receiving GHS 80, diploma graduates receiving GHS 100, and first-degree graduates receiving GHS 150 all monthly as at July 2010, it is evident that the stipend is woefully inadequate. This unfair remuneration has dampened the spirits of some of the beneficiaries thereby causing them to quit in search of better alternatives (Attipoe-Fittz, 2010).

In contrast to the expectations of the implementation of the NYEP, it does not provide sustenance in relation to employment for the youth (Donkoh, 2010). The NYEP allots a maximum period of 2 years to each beneficiary and if they are not able to gain employment

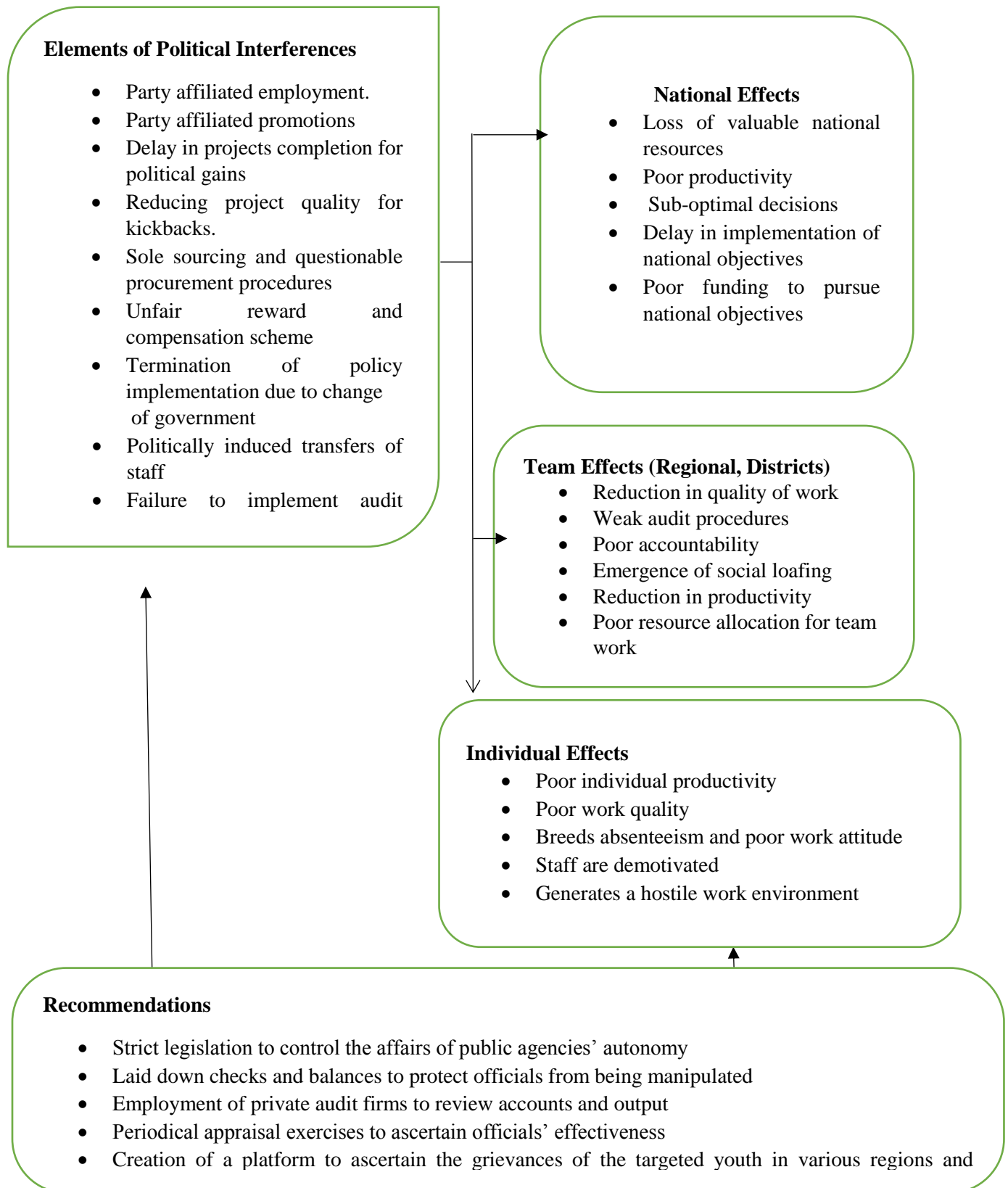
elsewhere by the end of this two-year period, they go back to being unemployed. More than 90% of the beneficiaries that enrolled and completed between 2009 and 2010 could not only secure employment but could not also afford further education (Attipoe-Fittz, 2010).

2.6 Conceptual Framework

In the literature discussed, we indicated some evidence of the detrimental effects on the performance of the agencies caused by politically based activities in public agencies. These issues of political interference is reality within the Ghanaian public agencies; coming to light on the back of reports of employment based on nepotism, promotions based on political affiliations and not on peoples' competencies have surfaced. (Eib, 2015).

A conceptual framework was drawn in Figure 2.1 to indicate the hypothetical relationships between the performance of a public firm and political interference.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework



2.7 Empirical Review

Very few empirical studies have examined the relationship between political interference and the performance or output of public sector organisations. There have been inconsistent measures in the construct of such related studies.

In a research on project implementations in Nigeria and the political interference that plagues them, participants involved in the study rated the influence of legislators on project success. A categorical scale was used to measure political interference where significant influence was measured as 1 and insignificant influence was measured as 0. Rogger (2013) discovered that political influence slowed down the rate of project completion and project quality by 47% and 67% respectively in terms of political interference-performance relationship. Reducing rates of project completion, quality of projects and the loss of valuable resources renders the firm worse off since goals are not achieved. This was corroborated by Schwartz (2003), whose skeptical approach to accountability in the public sector posited that political authority pursue personal good at the expense of the common interest of the public. A similar project undertaken in Ghana, in 1987 proved that an intrusion or influence of the government in the peaceful operations and management of policies or programme reduces the percentage of its intended outcome by an approximate 40 percent. The study goes on to highlight a major effect of this interference being the project completion timeline disturbance. This poses great challenges to the assessment of the policy or programme and its objectives to the society or community of operations.

In a similar study, 60% of participants confirmed experiencing political interference from policymakers on scientific findings of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (UCS, 2008). Also, the study by the UCS discovered that sources of political influence came from both

within and outside the firm; thereby confirming that politically related members of the firm are likely conduits for political interference. Internal controls, audit procedures and accountability are some administrative sectors of the company that are most susceptible to political interference (Salawu & Agbeja, 2007).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter throws light on the methodology that was employed for the purpose of which this study was embarked upon. The research design, types of data, population and sample size, data collection instruments and data analysis methods are the themes which were examined in this chapter.

3.1 Research Design

A research design refers to the method a researcher employs to gather data in a consistent way. It comprises the structure of the population, estimation and analysis of the data collected (De Vaus, 2001). A research design is therefore classified as the arrangement used in providing answers to research questions (Orodho, 2003).

In the words of Saunders et al (2009), a research design shows an overall plan of how the researcher expects to answer his research questions. The research design adopted was both qualitative and quantitative survey method. The methodology brought out numerous research methods adopted in collecting information on assessing the effect that political interference has on the public sector service delivery. The design helps in guiding the researcher in planning and implementing the study in a way that is likely to achieve the intended goals.

3.2 Sources of Data

The researcher employed a diverse method for his data collection procedure in order to achieve detailed information about the study. In view of this, data was obtained from both primary and

secondary sources. The researcher gathered information from the internet as well as journals which have their subjects revolving around management on political agencies, youth employment and associated issues. For the primary data, there was interview schedules arranged with the staff (bureaucrats) especially management of the YEA on topics of how the institution is managed.

3.4 Population and Sampling

Population is the entire aggregation of items from which samples can be drawn. The most basic sampling decision that had to be made was who or what the population of interest is. In any field of inquiry, every item under the microscopic lens of the researcher make up the population. There is a presumption that once the population is covered, the probability of error is slim, and the highest accuracy is attained. The whole group of interest of the researcher is known as the population. However, the researcher usually selects a small number from the population for study purposes. With reference to our case study, the population that has been focused on for the study comprises the entire current management staff of YEA in all the districts in the country. The study however paid much reverence to the activities in the capital region, Accra, by the YEA.

In statistics, a sample refers to a representative of a population which is examined to access information about the entire population (Webster, 1985). Since the entire population could not be used for the study, a subset of the population was selected randomly from the customers, as well the staff, to answer the questionnaire in aid of the anticipated outcome. According to Quinlan (2011), a sample is a subset that is representative of a larger population in a way. For this reason and with the adoption of the simple random sampling technique, the researcher settled on exactly

20 respondents from the head office of the agency who are officials employed by the government to administer policies of the agency. A simple random sampling is said to be an unbiased surveying technique. By employing this method, the study will do away with any unbiased nature of selection.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

The data was obtained, edited and analyzed to produce meaningful information. Only correct and vital information was identified and used to draw conclusions. The researcher employed the written method for the analysis of the data. By this, findings from the questionnaire and that from secondary sources were analyzed simultaneously to make meaning.

The researcher thoroughly edited data that was collected from the field. Responses were crosschecked to ensure consistency and coherence. Quantitative data was graphically presented for easy interpretation and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, data gathered from the field regarding the research questions identified for the purpose of the study is discussed and analyzed. With reference to these research questions, a questionnaire with the theme, “Effect of Political Interference on The Performance of Public Agencies in Ghana” was built to be answered by a randomly selected sample of respondents who are a true representation of the population of our case study, the Youth Employment Agency. A total of 20 questionnaires were sent out to be answered by respondents and to the researcher’s luck, all 20 were returned completed, and usable for the study. This represents a 100% response rate which indicates a popular interest in our topic of research and as a result, was above the industry standard of 40%-60% (Lewis, 2003).

The presentation is arranged in line with the study’s research objectives that guided the study, which included: determining the elements of political interference which impact on public agencies in Ghana, determining the effects of political interference on the performance of the agencies (national objectives, team targets and individual employee targets), and finally proposing recommendations for the sake of policy reforms and for organisational assessments.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are first unveiled to present a vivid picture of the type of people that were respondents for the study. Therefore, the researcher has the study’s demographics as the Section A part of the chapter and the Section B comprises analysis of the research objectives.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section of the presentation describes the demographic characteristics of the respondents such as age and gender.

Table 4.1. Gender of Respondents

	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
MALE	9	45%
FEMALE	11	55%
TOTAL	20	100%

Source; Field Data, 2019

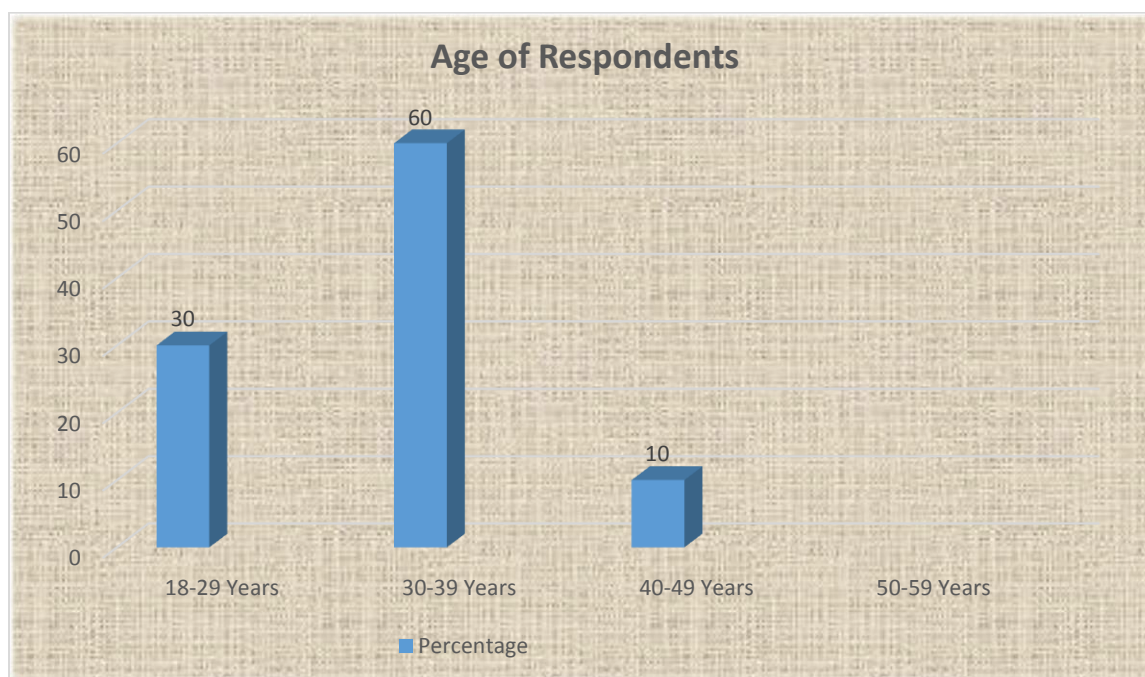
Table 4.1 above shows a presentation showing 45% of the respondents represented by men and a significant 55% of women. The results suggested that the members of staff of our case study, Youth Employment Agency, that were involved in this research were predominantly female. For these basic findings and the sample being a clear representation of the population, the researcher ascertains that there is a likelihood of there being more female employees than there are male employees in the organisation.

4.1.2 Age of Respondents

The Figure 4.1 below shows the age distribution of respondents who assisted in this study. It was revealed that 60%, that is exactly 12 respondents, were between the ages of 30 and 39 years; this formed the modal age for the survey. Quite a substantial number of 6 respondents, which represented 30% of the population sample were between the ages of 18-29. The remaining 10% were between the ages of 40 and 49 years. The survey did not capture any respondent between

the ages of 50-59. It can therefore be deduced, on the basis of probability, that few employees may be between the ages 50-59 currently in the Youth Employment Agency. It can also be noted from the data collected that majority of the respondents were within the ages of 30 and 39 years; subsequently followed by those within the ages of 18 and 29 years. These age groups can be identified as the active working age category of our economy as highlighted by the UN in 2018 and as such expected to be extra effective in work delivery.

Figure 4.2 Age of Respondents



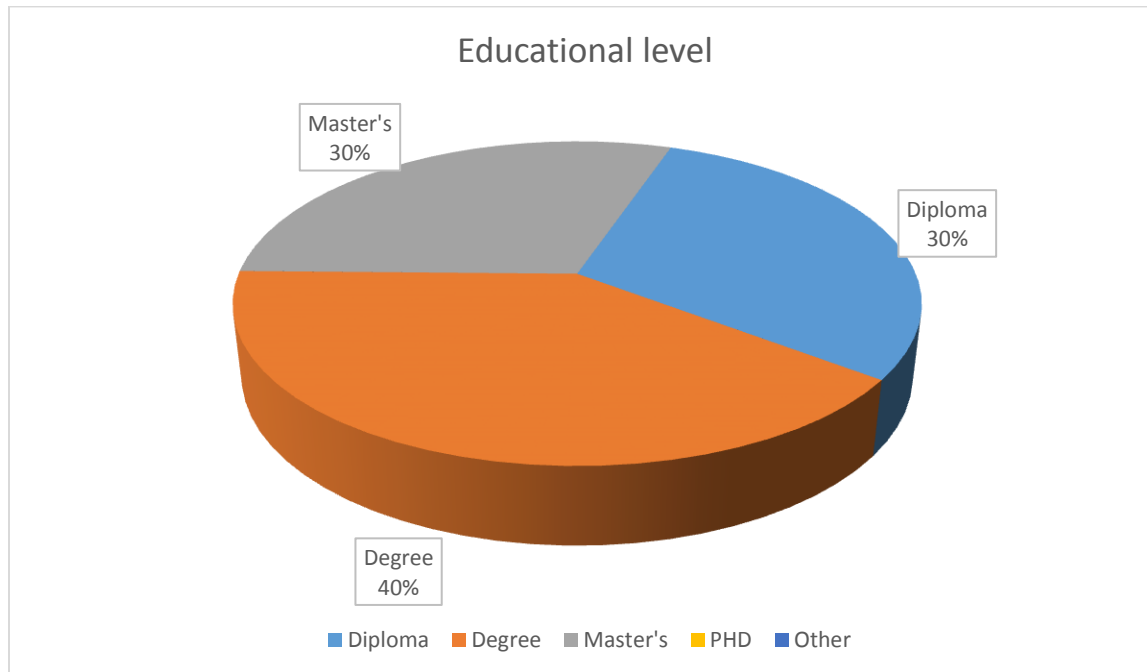
Source; Field Data, 2019

4.1.3 Educational Level

Figure 4.2 below indicates that majority of the respondents (40%) are first degree graduates, 30% of the respondents are Master's degree graduates with the remaining 30% (6) being diploma certificate graduates. This implies that most of the staff at the Youth Employment Agency are well educated as the agency requires a high level of occupational training especially needed as an

essence to assist with the objective of the government. This also makes candidates for the survey suitable since per their level of educational qualification, it can be assumed that they are knowledgeable enough to offer intelligent and relevant information to authenticate the findings of the study.

Figure 4.3 Educational Level



Source; Field Data, 2019

4.1.4 Working Experience

Table 4.2 Respondent’s Working Experience at YEA

Period	Frequency	Percentage	
Less than 1 year	1	5%	
1-5 years	10	50%	
5-10 years	2	10%	
More than 10 years	7	35%	
Total	20	100%	

Source; Field Data, 2019

Table 4.2 above graphically represents respondents’ period of experience in the Youth Employment Agency. 35% of the total sample were recorded to have been employees of the agency for more than a decade. This group of people are, to a large extent, very significant for the purpose of our study and the theme behind this research since they had enough experience to share about the operations of the agency. They had been through, at least, two changes of government (of different political parties) and may know the practices there after every election period. A respondent agreed that he had only been in the firm for less than a year which will then prove that there had been a recent recruitment even though we are not in an election year. 10 respondents, making up 50% of the total sample, were confirmed to have been with the agency for a period between 1 and 5 years. Lastly, 10% of the respondents indicated that they had been

with the agency for the period between 5-10 years. The results suggested that about 95% of the respondents had very good work experience of over a year.

SECTION B

4.2 Analysis of Research Objective

This study had exactly three research objectives with the second objective categorised into three sections. In correspondence to the stated research objectives, the researcher outlined three exact research questions to guide the project study. The results of the findings, with regard to each research question, are presented and discussed in the section below.

4.2.1 Research Question 1

For the first research question of the study, which focused on elements of political interferences, responses retrieved from the field were analyzed. The questionnaires for the staff of the Youth Employment Agency were used to solicit for the necessary information needed regarding activities that suggested political interferences and their impacts are presented in the table 4.3 below.

This study identified 11 variables that may be sources of political interference. For the purpose of interpretation, the researcher adopted the mean value score and the standard deviation as his statistical parameters to analyze the varied responses from respondents. In this section, the mean scores are accepted at values greater than 2.5 since on the 5-point Likert scale, 2.5 equally divides the level of agreement and, 4 and 5 represent agreeable answer and 1 and 2 represents disagreeable answer. This means that if the mean value for any variable is greater than 2.5, respondents generally agree to the reality of that variable.

Table 4.3 Results on Elements of Political Interference by Staff of YEA

	Mean	Std. Deviation
<i>Recruitment</i>	4.1	0.3670
<i>Manipulated information dissemination</i>	4.05	0.3556
<i>Project delays</i>	3.95	0.3326
<i>Change of officials due to change of government</i>	3.85	0.3097
<i>Promotions</i>	3.8	0.2982
<i>Poor transfer policies</i>	3.6	0.2523
<i>Poor quality projects due to demands by politicians</i>	3.3	0.1835
<i>Unsatisfactory procurement to favour cronies</i>	3.25	0.1721
<i>Poor auditing</i>	2.45	0.0115
<i>Unfair rewards and compensation</i>	2.10	0.0917
<i>Unpunished corrupt staff</i>	2.0	0.1147

Source; Field Data, 2019

From the Table 4.3 above, it can be realised that the mean values range from points 2.0 to 4.1 on the 5-point Likert scale, where 1 signifies the strongest level of disagreement and 5 being the strongest level of agreement. Based on these deductions, it can be noticed that respondents strongly agreed with a mean value of 4.1 and a narrow standard deviation with reference to the derived data of 0.3670. This indicates that ‘recruitment processes’ in the firm are plagued with the most and obvious issues of political interferences in the Youth Employment Agency.

The second prevalent event that suggests political interference from the respondents' responses was 'manipulated information dissemination'. This issue also recorded a mean value of 4.05 and a standard deviation of 0.3556 from the data gathered. Other identified elements of political interferences from the study includes; 'project undue delays due to change in government', 'change of officials due to a change in government', 'promotions', 'poor transfer policies', 'poor quality projects due to demands by politicians' and 'unsatisfactory procurement in the bid to favour cronies'. All these variables of which mean values greater than 2.5 were recorded, suggested that they are alarming elements of political interferences.

On the other hand, some issues like 'unpunished corrupt staff', 'unfair rewards and compensation', and 'poor auditing' recorded mean values of agreement less than 2.5; which suggested that there are fewer events of such issues and cannot be randomly qualified to be political interference in the agency. It is also to solidly mean that corruption is not a practice which is condoned or excused in the agency; employees are fairly motivated in terms of rewards or compensation materials and also auditing recommendations are implemented stringently.

4.2.2 Research Question 2a

Table 4.4 National Effects of Political Interferences

	Mean	Std. Deviation
<i>Policy formulation is affected with political involvement</i>	4.15	0.3785
<i>Reduction of national productivity for the programme</i>	4.0	0.3441
<i>Loss of valuable national resources</i>	3.75	0.2867
<i>Policies on modules have derailed for its implementation</i>	3.65	0.2638
<i>Lack of funding for policy implementation</i>	1.85	0.1491

Source; Field Data, 2019

The results, as demonstrated in Table 4.4, sought to find the effects of political interferences on the programme at the national level. As evident in the table, respondents agreed with respect to some higher mean values that political interference heavily affects the national objective of the programme which makes it significantly alarming issue that has to be apprehended. With a mean value of 4.15 and a meaningfully slim standard deviation of 0.378, the respondents agreed that ‘policy formulation’ for the entire programme is affected due to political involvement. Other effects included ‘loss of valuable national resources’, ‘reduction of national productivity’, and a ‘derailment of policies on modules during implementation’. This explains such extremes; in effect, political interference can go since its motive deliberately contradicts the objective of the programme. As stated by Chang & Wong, (2002), political interference and interventions in firms’ decision making is the key channel for politicians and government to control the actions of firms towards their political and personal goals.

On the other hand, and with rather a lower mean value of 1.85 which is below the average, respondents disagreed that ‘lack of funding for policy implementation’ is an effect due to political interference. As far as the results of this study is concerned, should any issue of this sort occur, it wouldn’t be as a result of political interference. It can however be understood that policy implementation receives the needed funds accordingly and on time for the sake of the programme.

4.2.2.1 Research Question 2b

Table 4.5 Regional or Team Effects of Political Interference

	Mean	Std. Deviation
<i>Resource allocation is affected in the regional levels</i>	2.65	0.0344
<i>Team cooperation and synergy is affected</i>	2.85	0.0802
<i>Poor accountability at the regional levels</i>	3.55	0.2408
<i>Audit procedures become ineffective</i>	3.7	0.2752
<i>Work quality is reduced</i>	3.9	0.3218

Source; Field data, 2019

Majority of the respondents as seen from Table 4.5 above, indicated in their survey that effects of political interference at the regional level of the YEA is quite upsetting. The responses received in this section showed that every respondent agreed to all the suggested effects presented in the survey as no record was made for a mean below the average 2.5; a figure which was supposed to indicate as least a ‘not in agreement’ stand. The highest effect according to the responses of respondents is seen as ‘reduced work quality’, which goes a long way to affect the entire national objective of the programme. Similarly, respondents agreed that ‘audit procedures become

ineffective’ when the issue of political involvement intrudes in their operations. In relation to the issue of audit, there is a higher record of ‘poor accountability at the regional levels’ of the YEA.

4.2.2.2 Research 2c

Table 4.6 Individual Effects of Political Interference

	Mean	Std. Deviation
<i>Employee attitude to work is affected</i>	4.2	0.3900
<i>Individual work quality is affected</i>	3.4	0.2064
<i>Reduced productivity periodically</i>	3.8	0.2982
<i>Employees lose confident in the work environment</i>	2.55	0.01147
<i>Employees feel unsecure in the workplace</i>	2.3	0.0458

Source; Field Data, 2019

The results above show that the general goal of the YEA is being affected due to the challenges individuals in the organisation are faced; which can be entirely traced to political interferences. With the issue of political involvement in the face of employees, the study shows that the employees’ attitude to work is significantly affected. This may be as a result of loss of trust by employees in the organised mechanism or operation they pay reverence to and as a result, may not give their all. This attitude may also emanate from workers who may have been employed through same dubious political means and feel they have superiors in their favour.

From the presentation above, ‘individual work quality’ was obviously affected as employee attitude towards work was negative. With this, teams are unable to meet their respective targets

and gives room for ‘reduced productivity’ as indicated in the survey. From a different perspective, respondents weakly agreed that they ‘feel insecure at the workplace’; as shown in the Table with a mean value below average of 2.3. This disagreement could only signify that the feeling of insecurity with an individual’s role isn’t a general issue but a problem for few employees who may be underperforming.

The survey therefore included some suggested recommendations in relation to the current state or issues of political interferences inhibiting the operations of the YEA programme. The respondents’ results are presented in the Table 4.7.

Based on the assumption of the current state of the YEA programme, the researcher was able to retrieve responses which suggested that the whole policy framework needs a review. Respondents who were associated with this survey and are employees of the programme agreed to every suggested recommendation. The severity of the issue stands on the fact that the study recorded higher mean values of between 3.8 to 4.7. With reference to Table 4.7, employees agreed exceedingly that there should be the ‘employment of private audit firms to review operations and accounts of the agency’. The researcher would like to agree that coming from the respondents themselves, this recommendation when adopted and fused into the programme will bring some serenity to the operations of the organisation in all spheres. That notwithstanding, there should also be a platform created which is an embodiment of the various stakeholders and departments that will ascertain the grievances of the agency.

There may be the existence of some laws that protect the various public agencies from being influenced externally but the results of the study still emphasised on the inclusion of some even stricter laws to help the Youth Employment Agency to be more independent in its operations.

The respondents also agreed that the policies of the programme should include some periodical appraisal exercises that will see to checking the effectiveness of the workers or officials in general. This will aide curb the challenges political interference poses to the objective of the YEA programme.

4.2.3 Research Question 3

Table 4.8 Recommendations to be considered

	Mean	Std. Deviation
<i>There should be a platform created to ascertain the grievances of the agency</i>	4.7	0.5047
<i>There should be strict laws to protect public agencies from interferences</i>	4.0	0.3441
<i>Employment of private audit firms to review operations and accounts of the agency</i>	4.85	0.5391
<i>Documented checks to protect officials from being influenced</i>	3.8	0.2982
<i>Periodical appraisal exercises to ascertain officials' effectiveness</i>	3.95	0.3326

Source; Field data, 2019

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

This study was embarked on to evaluate the effect political interference has on public agencies in Ghana, with focus on the Youth Employment Agency (YEA). This section of the study presents the summary of research findings, conclusions and recommendations from the researcher based on the findings. These will assist the government or stakeholders in restructuring the system that governs public agencies to address the issue of political interferences.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The summary of findings is presented in the order the research questions answered.

5.1.1 Elements of Political Interferences in the Youth Employment Agency

The research findings from the survey indicated that there are various activities that can qualify and be identified as the presence of political interference in the operations and management of the Youth Employment Agency. Among these events are: the recruitment processes of the agency, promotions, projects undue delays to completion due to changes in government, records of poor quality projects due to demands by politicians, procurement processes, , transfers policies and regulations, change of officials anytime there is a change in government and manipulated information dissemination. Aside all these events being crucial findings of this study, respondents agreed the most to the issue of recruitment processes as it was observed that almost

all the employees confirmed this. Some of the respondents even revealed that people or authorities in the ruling party had most of their people in the system. The results of the survey in this section suggested that the issue of recruitment in general was something almost everybody wanted to be reexamined.

Some respondents also unveiled that very often, staff members are transferred from their positions immediately there is a change in government. And from the words of one respondent, ‘staff of the agency suffer whenever there was a change in government’; a phenomenon that signifies a system of instability due to political interference. This, according to them, breeds the feeling of utmost insecurity at work especially during election years when you are obviously not aware of what the elections outcome will be and what circumstances one will find himself/herself when elections are over. These situations may lead to issues or happenings of corruption in a high propensity in our public agencies. That notwithstanding, it was also revealed from the outcome of the survey that staff members who indulge in corruption, do not go unpunished. It was also revealed that rewards and compensation system of the firm is least interfered with politically as most of the respondents did not agree to the assertion of “unfair rewards and compensation”.

There was also the revelation of projects which are to be undertaken, suffering undue delays due to changes in government consistently. As identified by many of the respondents, most processes, especially projects, are deliberately stalled for some intentional interest of politicians. This makes operations and management of the agency very tottering leading to the challenges of poor-quality output and a relatively reduced productivity during these periods.

5.1.2 Effects of Political Interferences on YEA National Objectives

The study, through the questionnaires administered to its respondents, assessed the effects of political interference on public agencies, with YEA as a focus. With this, respondents unveiled the effects this canker poses on the entire national objectives, regional objectives or team objectives, and on individual objectives as well.

With the agency's national objectives, the respondents revealed for the purpose of the study that interference from external control like politicians, doesn't do the firm any good but locks the wheel of progress indefinitely. It was observed from the outcome of the study that some major and disturbing effects of these elements of political interference to the national objectives included; reduction in quality of national productivity, loss of valuable national resources, policy formulation processes being affected negatively and policies on modules being derailed for its implementation. It is obvious for the reasons of policy formulation that there will surely be some interference since these regulations and laws are enacted by the legislative arm of the government; however, a substantive control of this form of interference will go a long way to help the programme to effectively operate.

The claim of a reduced national productivity according to respondents, was an annual prevalence which hits operations and distorts the national goal. The issue of job insecurities, over confidence of some employees who think they have their parties in power can be attributed to as factors of this challenge. This does not only affect productivity as national resources are also lost to this effect. As objectives are set and the appropriate funding is respectfully allocated, an interference

of this nature only amounts to a loss in national resources and a derailment in policy implementation.

The study however indicated that funding for policy implementation as a subject was always timely, allocated for its purpose, and wasn't affected for any reason at all. This, however, proves that interference in other sections of the programme will only breed the issue of mismanagement of allocated funds.

5.1.3 Effects of Political Interferences on YEA Regional/Team Objectives

The outcome of the study showed that human behaviour is an important determinant in the management of this programme. According to respondents, political interference heavily affects their team cooperation and synergy. When this occurs, individuals in the various regions are unable to work together as teams and there is the issue of every staff member trying to prove his/her worth to be noticed without involving the team. Other employees are then seen to be lagging behind which will only pull the efforts of others down. For this effect, work done is automatically of reduced quality and productivity runs low systematically.

The findings of the study further identified that resource allocation is affected as well as audit procedures become ineffective. Accountability in the regional levels run poor as employees are of the view that the 'action' only exists in the national level of the programme.

5.1.4 Effects of Political Interferences on YEA Individual Objectives

The subject of political interference affecting the national progress of the YEA programme picks its roots from the individual objectives being affected. The study realised that political involvement in the face of employees drastically affect their attitude to work. Staff members

seeing the corrupt mode of recruitment which obviously favours the people whose party is in power results in a loss of trust in the system. When this happens, employees do not put in their best to help attain the goal of the firm; thereby bringing about reduced productivity periodically.

The study also realised that work quality is reduced when the attitude of employees is affected negatively. Some respondents also revealed that they lose confidence in the work environment for reasons being a loss of trust for the entire system of operations.

5.2 Recommendations

Using the research conducted as the basis, the researcher may make the following recommendations to NYEP/YEA and its stakeholders:

The study revealed that operations of the programme lays bare and reachable to the manipulative hands of people in authority and politicians which does not fare well for the sake of the objectives of the programme and needs some actions to apprehend this situation. For this reason, the researcher recommends that the legislative arm of the government should enact even stricter laws with specific inclusion of sections of autonomous operations by these public agencies in the country, which cannot be compromised by external influences or party in power. These laws should be spelled out to the government of the day to ensure a sovereign management by the staff of the public agency.

Even though there was minimal agreement on the side of respondents on poor auditing procedures, they agreed to a recommendation suggesting that there should be employment of private audit firms; the researcher would like to recommend that this is to be merged with the

processes of the programme at various stages of any project being undertaken. This will help in addition of value to work done, as well as, bringing some serenity to the operations of the firm.

To address challenges like employees' attitude to work being significantly affected, loss of confidence on the side of employees, and employee insecurity in the workplace, the researcher recommends that there should be a platform created which will be a representation of the various stakeholders and departments of the programme to sit on issues affecting the agency. There can be a periodic survey administered in the name of gathering all grievances existing in the operations of the agency. This will go a long way to help the programme.

It is also recommended that the policies of the programme include in its outfit some periodical appraisal exercises that will check the effectiveness of the workers or officials in general. This, in effect, will help arrest the issues modelled by political involvement to the objectives of the YEA programme.

Lastly, it has emerged from the study that the agency's recruitment process is heavily influenced by people whose party is in power, information dissemination is affected by the external influences, destructive project delays due to interference by some authority figures and many more. For these reasons and based on the views of respondents, the researcher recommends that there should be some documented checks fused into the system to protect officials of the YEA from being influenced in any form by party officials or people in power.

5.3 Conclusion

The study assessed the effect of political interference on the performance of public agencies in Ghana with the Youth Employment Agency as a case study. The revelations of the study in

general has proven that the issue of political interference is deeply rooted in the Youth Employment Agency; and same conclusion can be made for most of the public agencies in the country. The effect of this scourge is an obvious backwards pull of the progress of the programme as it has been evident in the findings that essential segments of the programme are cripplingly affected. Especially, a highlight on constant reduction in productivity, the loss of national resources, reduced work quality by employees and policies on modules derailing from its implementation course just to mention a few, proves that the Youth Employment Agency, like any other public agency suffering from political interferences is not performing to expectations. The system of management and operations of the YEA will need a critical evaluation to help improve upon the performance of the programme.

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APPENDICES

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STAFF

THE EFFECT OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC AGENCIES IN GHANA; A CASE STUDY OF THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AGENCY

Introduction

Dear Respondent,

I really appreciate your acceptance to complete this questionnaire for my research work.

As a final year student of the University of Ghana, I am required to submit a thesis to my department in pursuant of my MA degree programme on the topic *“The Effect of Political Interference on the Performance of Public Agencies in Ghana”*. Your organisation was considered as the case study for this research. I would therefore be glad if you can kindly assist me by answering the questions below. Be assured that every information and data provided will strictly be used for academic purposes only and will be given the highest level of confidentiality. Many thanks in advance for your cooperation and prompt response.

Please, respond to the questions by ticking (✓) inside the boxes or writing in the spaces provided as deemed appropriate.

Section A: Biographical Data

1. Please indicate your gender

Male

2. Female Age 18 – 29 30 – 39 40 – 49 50 – 59

3. Indicate the highest educational level attained

Diploma

Degree

Masters

PhD

4. Other.....Working experience in this agency.

Less than 1 year

1 – 5 years

5 – 10 years

5. More than 10 years.

6. Please confirm the religion you belong to;

Christian

Muslim

Traditionalist

Other

SECTION B: ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE

Kindly answer the questions below by ticking (✓) the option you agree with or writing in the spaces provided as deemed appropriate.

SN	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Recruitment in this agency is done fairly without party intrusion or influence					
2.	Promotions in this agency takes place on merit without political involvement					
3.	Most projects undertaken by					

	the agency have suffered undue delays due change in government					
4.	Quality of projects suffer due to demands by politicians for kickbacks in return					
5.	Procurement in the agency is done fairly and satisfactorily without favouring cronies and party affiliates					
6.	Rewards and compensation to staff are given fairly without discrimination					
7.	All policies and projects initiated by the previous administrations have been successfully implemented and/or completed by successive administrations					
8.	Transfers policies or system in existence at the agency is free and fair without interference by politics					
9.	Audit recommendations are implemented without fear or favour					
10.	Staff found to have indulge in corrupt practices after investigations are prosecuted without political hindrance					
11.	Policy implementation					

	processes are just and seen as reasonable to every official					
12.	There is always an immediate change in officials and employees anytime there is a change in government					
13.	Goals of the agency are periodically affected especially during and immediately after general elections					
14.	Officials follow strict directions from an external source disregarding the objectives of the agency					
15.	Information dissemination is always manipulated to suit political positions					

16. Based on your own opinion, do you have reasons to justify that there exist some political interferences in the Youth Employment Agency? Yes No

17. If Yes, please share with us why?

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SECTION C: EFFECTS OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE

Kindly answer the questions below by ticking (√) the option you agree with or writing in the spaces provided as deemed appropriate.

National Effects

SN	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
18.	Policy formulation for the programme is affected with political involvement					
19.	Policies on modules for the programme have derailed for its implementation					
20.	There has been loss of valuable national resources over the years due to political involvement					
21.	National productivity has reduced drastically due political involvement in policy making					
22.	Policy implementation has received its corresponding funding requirements from the government					

Regional or Team Effects

SN	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
23.	Resource allocation to the team is affected and tends to affect productivity					

24.	Team cooperation and synergy is affected by political involvement					
25.	There exists the issue of poor accountability due to some political involvement in procurement processes					
26.	Effective audit procedures are instigated for the purpose of accountability					
27.	Work quality is reduced year after year especially year after General elections					

Individual Effects

SN	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
28.	Employees attitude to work is affected especially attendance and punctuality to work					
29.	Individual work quality is affected					
30.	Work productivity is periodically reduced especially the year after General elections					
31.	Employees are confident and motivated in their working environment					
32.	Employees feel secured and safe in their workplace					

SECTION D: RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

Kindly answer the questions below by ticking (√) the option you agree with or writing in the spaces provided as deemed appropriate.

SN	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
33.	For the purpose of the programme, there should be a creation of a platform to ascertain the grievances of staff in the agency.					
34.	Do you agree that there should be even more strict laws to protect public agencies from interferences?					
35.	There should be the employment of private audit firms to review operations and accounts of the agency					
36.	Documented checks to protect officials from being influenced					
37.	There should be some periodical appraisal exercises to ascertain officials' effectiveness					

38. In your own opinion, kindly suggest your own recommendation apart from the above if any.

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