

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, KUMASI

**ASSESSING THE PERCEPTION OF VOCATIONAL CATERING STUDENTS ON
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN BRONG-AHAFO**



JANE DERY

AUGUST, 2017

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**A Dissertation in the Department of HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM EDUCATION,
Faculty of VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, submitted to the School of Graduate
Studies, University of Education, Winneba, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for award of the Master of Technology Catering and Hospitality) degree**

AUGUST, 2017

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

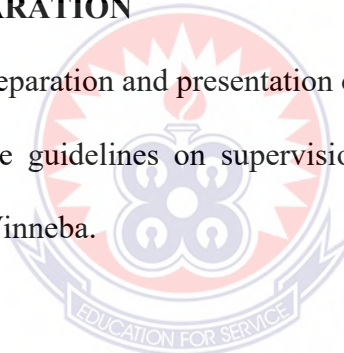
I, Jane Dery declare that this dissertation, with the exception of the quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in parts or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation was supervised by me in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.



NAME OF SUPERVISOR: Dr. Mrs. Ellen Olu

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Kwame Ntow-Gyan



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ABSTRACT

Research has shown that, vocational education presents an intriguing opportunity to investigate economic and social issues and give insight into the distinctiveness of a society. This study assessed the perception of Vocational Catering Students on Vocational Education in Brong-Ahafo Region. The study adopted a survey research design, seven vocational schools and 117 students were selected randomly for the study. The data for the study was gathered through questionnaire and analyzed with statistical measurement tools such as means, independent sampled T-test, frequencies and percentages. The study found out that, high employment opportunity after school, passion of becoming caterers, society and the environment in which students lived served as the major factors that influence students' choice to pursue vocational education. Gender was the only variation factor on how students viewed catering education. Students were of the view that, there are a lot of job varieties to be employed in after studying vocational catering course. However, students felt the cost of catering education is high. It is recommended that frantic efforts should be made in reducing the cost of catering vocational education by retooling vocational schools with tools and equipment to reduce the cost borne by students.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The role of education in facilitating social and economic progress has long been recognised. Education improves functional and analytical ability and helps in opening up opportunities for individuals and groups to achieve greater access to labour markets and livelihoods. A better educated labour force is essential in meeting the labour supply requirements of faster growth (International Labour Office, 2010). Education is not only an instrument of enhancing efficiency but also an effective tool for widening and upgrading the overall quality of individual and society at large.

The 2011 World Youth report suggests the need for the youth to be appropriately skilled in order to facilitate their entry into the labour market. The report recommends that, training systems should not only prepare the youth for entry into work, but rather provide pathways for continual learning over a lifetime in response to the changing technological and global economic requirements (United Nations, 2011). This is in line with the principles of vocational education.

The field of technical and vocational education presents an intriguing opportunity to investigate economic and social issues. Clarke and Winch (2007), hold the view that, the approach to vocational education can give insight into the peculiarities of a society. McGrath (2012) posits that, vocational education and training encompasses ‘the myriad forms of learning that aims at participation in the worlds of work’. Vocational education involves the concepts of knowledge, learning, education, work and employment, with the understanding that the field is dynamic (McGrath, 2012). Vocational education is seen as one of the major routes to gain access to the labour market. On a contingency measure,

vocational education is seen as offering post war restructuring, human development, technological advancement and national development across the globe.

Bathmaker (2013) considers vocational education as an ‘umbrella term’. He posits that, such education is associated with the learning of practical and technical knowledge in a formal education setting. That is, an education that offers a hands on deck experience to the learner by providing the skill and knowledge that ushers the individual to the world of work (Akoojee, 2007; McGrath, 2012; Paes de Carvalho, 2012; Billet, 2014).

In Ghana, vocational education encompasses the field of catering, leather work, bead making, sewing, paper craft, gourd and calabash work, pottery and ceramic, graphic design, picture making, textiles, basketry and sculpture (Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD), 2001). The general objective for vocational education in Ghana is the acquisition of basic skills and attitudes associated with these vocations, develop entrepreneurial skills that will be used for establishing small scale industry, develop the capacity for handling and using tools and materials for production as well as, develop creative ways for producing and judging the qualities of product (CRDD, 2001). This type of education is given prominence right from the basic level in Ghana. The rationale is for the country to rapidly open up opportunity for work. It also becomes equally important for individuals to learn different vocations so that they can seek employment as trained persons or can otherwise set up their own businesses and finally, earn an income; employ other persons and pay them wages and salaries (CRDD, 2001; Technical and Vocational Education Division (TVED), 2008).

The rationale as set by the TVED (2008) of the Ghana Education Service (GES) indicates that, the study of catering in the Technical and Vocational Institutes is intended to provide young persons with the requisite skills as a predisposition to the technical pursuits at the advanced levels. Young persons who are not able to advance can also be

self-employed. The course offers the trainees the chance to acquire valuable technical and vocational skills that will open up a wide range of opportunities for productive work.

As identified by the Technical and Vocational Education Division (TVED) (2008) of the Ghana Education Service (GES), the general aim of the catering vocational course is to assist students in acquiring the requisite knowledge, culinary attitudes in cooking craft and vocational education and training. Also, the course is aimed at aiding students in acquiring the competency in cooking hygienically and presenting dishes attractively. Not only this, but also to develop positive attitudes towards the application of practical skills, safe use of tools, judicious use of materials and time in the kitchen and on site as well as proper care and maintenance of tools and equipment. It is thought of that, this will facilitate the integration of knowledge and skills in cooking and presentation of dishes of national and international sort.

In spite of the importance of Technical, Vocational, Education Training (TVET) in Ghana and elsewhere, TVET is bedevilled with research gap especially in Sub Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2013). The issue of low standing of vocational education continues to be an enduring problem (Billet 2014); issues surrounding the differences between earnings of holders of vocational qualifications as opposed to university graduates has become an ever increasing challenge as most graduates from technical backgrounds like the polytechnics and technical universities are only trained for lower and middle managerial positions (Hillmert & Jacob, 2003); Ghana is no exception to this, why middle manpower and not managerial positions?

These among other factors do influence how vocational catering students perceive the very educational programme they are pursuing hence the need to look into how students in Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana perceive vocational catering education.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

A reconnaissance survey conducted in Sunyani Technical University to determine the calibre of students who seek admission into the institution suggested that students who pursued vocational courses at the lower level kept dwindling. Among the possible causes to this trend suggest that the current challenges such as low progression to higher education, engagement in manual labour and social as well as societal stigma were the seeming factors (Hillmert & Jacob, 2003; Wheelahan, 2007; Rose, 2012; Bathmaker, 2013)

If this trend continues, the future of vocational education essentially catering is bleak. This research work seeks to identify the perception of vocational catering students in the Brong-Ahafo Region on the educational programme they are pursuing.

1.3 Objectives to the Study

This research seeks to assess the perception of vocational catering students on vocational catering education. Specifically, this thesis will;

1. identify perceptions of catering students in the Brong-Ahafo region;
2. examine the factors that influence students' choice to pursue catering in vocational education;
3. explore solutions on students' perceptions of vocational catering education.

1.4 Research Questions

- 1) What perceptions do vocational catering students in Brong-Ahafo Region have on vocational education?
- 2) What factors influence students' choice to pursue vocational education?
- 3) What are the possible solutions to vocational catering education?

1.5 Justification of the Study

This study will provide information for stakeholders of vocational education especially the Ministry of Education, Technical Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service, vocational oriented institutions, parents and guardians as well as students on how students perceive the very education they are pursuing. This will help in policy formulation and strategy development.

This study will help assess how vocational catering students in the Brong-Ahafo region of Ghana perceive vocational catering education. The results of this research will be a reference to students on what they can do to take advantage of opportunities presented by vocational education.

More so, the study will contribute to available literature on vocational catering education by bringing to bare factors, perceptions, and attitudes that influence students' perceptions on vocational education. This is of essence because the students' perception on vocational catering education is the context within which this study is conducted. This will add a voice to the on-going debate among researchers; (Lavender et al, 2012; Awang et al, 2011; Hartl 2009; Ohiwerei & Nwosu, 2009; Al-sad, 2007) on the need to analyse educational curricula from the angle of students as falling short of the literature.

This study will be of essence as information obtained will serve as baseline information for further studies on the vocational catering studies and also for monitoring changes in students' attitude towards vocational education over time.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

The focus of this study is basically to assess the perception of vocational catering students on vocational catering education in Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana.

1.7 Definition of Terms

In this study, the following key terms are defined as follows:

1. ***Vocational / Technical education*** - is education that prepares people to work in a trade, a craft, as a technician, or in support roles in professions which are usually based on manual or practical activities related to a specific trade or occupation.
2. ***Catering education*** – is an educational programme that trains students on the preparation and service of food and drinks to a group of people or individuals.
3. ***Perceptions***: catering students' views, attitudes, and reactions to vocational catering education.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

This study is divided into five main chapters; the first chapter is the introductory part to the study. It considers the background information to the study, the problem statement, research questions, objectives, and justification for conducting this study, delimitations of the study and definition of key terms.

Review of relevant literature on vocational catering education and related issues constitute the second chapter of the study. Topics reviewed include vocational education in Ghana, students and vocational catering education, catering as a field of study, factors influencing the choice for vocational catering education, perception of students on vocational catering education. The theoretical and conceptual underpinnings guiding this work are also discussed under this chapter.

The third chapter provides detailed information on the methodology adopted for the study. This includes information on the profile of the study area, study design, data sources, sampling procedures, fieldwork issues, data analysis, and presentations.

The fourth chapter presents a detailed discussion of the results of the data analysis. It looks at the vocational catering education in Brong-Ahafo against the specific objectives of the study. The fifth and final chapter summarizes the major findings from the study, concludes and goes further to make relevant recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature on vocational catering education. It specifically examines what constitute vocational education, the factors that influence students' choice for vocational education and the perception of vocational students on vocational education. The chapter will also consider possible solutions to perceptions of vocational students on vocational education. Finally, theoretical underpinnings on perception and its possible impact on catering vocational education will be considered under this chapter.

2.1 Technical and Vocational Education

Education is one of the means through which knowledge, skills and attitudes are instilled in a nation. Nation states around the globe equip teachers at various levels of teacher education with knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be able to pass on to the citizenry in this era of science and technology. Education comes in diverse forms for which vocational education is an aspect. Clarke and Winch (2007) posit that, the approach to vocational education can give insight into the peculiarities of a society. The field of technical and vocational education presents an intriguing opportunity to investigate economic and social issues.

From Harris, (2014) vocational education refers to the range of learning experiences relevant to work which can occur in a variety of settings. Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council in Barbados, defines technical and vocational students, job seekers, the employed and the self-employed for the world of work education and training as 'education to prepare people –and business' (TVET Council, 2014, Oketch

(2007). However, Asoegwu (2004), considers vocational education as the form of education designed to develop skills, abilities, understanding, attitudes, work habits and appreciation, encompassing knowledge and information needed by workers to enter and make progress in employment. This definition as expressed by Asoegwu (2004) has made it clear that, vocational education is skill oriented and this will be the focus of this work.

Uwameiye (1999), observed that, when nations are faced with unemployment issues, the first step towards providing solution is to introduce vocational education into the national education system. This shows a clear indication of the value of vocational education in nation building.

2.2 History of Vocational Education

Pannabecker (1995) suggests that, public criticism on American public schools in the United States of America for not offering students any education of value, led to public schools abandoning classical curriculum for a new curriculum that was "manual training movement" oriented. This new orientation of education included vocational education, business education, home economics, and agriculture.

‘Vocationalisation’ of African school curriculum has had endorsement from organisations such as UNESCO. In their state of education in Africa report, UNESCO stated that, its activities “should aim at including vocational subjects in general education curricula to facilitate the young generation to obtain generic technological knowledge and key pre-vocational skills” (UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa, 1995). Despite such optimistic claims the benefits of diversifying the secondary school curriculum remains unclear.

Since the 1950’s, Ghana has made a number of attempts to reform the educational system put in place by the British colonial administration, driven by the desire to make it

more relevant to the needs of the nation as a developing to middle income country. Following independence from Britain in 1957, the Government of Ghana's strong commitment to developing human resources was consolidated by the 1961 Education Act that made education free and compulsory at the basic level. By 1970 Ghana had one of the most highly developed education systems in West Africa (EIU, 1996).

The severity of Ghana's economic problems peaked in 1983 at which time the Government of Ghana launched the Economic Recovery Program with financial assistance from the World Bank and international donor agencies. As an integral part of its plan for economic recovery, the government initiated the 1987 Education Reform Program (ERP) to reverse the decline in the education system. A key feature of the 1987 ERP was the diversification of the secondary school curriculum to include technical and vocational subjects.

The government of Ghana has passed an Act of Parliament that has established the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET) to have an overall responsibility for skills development in the country. This represents the integrated approach to all vocational courses within the Ghana education system.

2.3 Nature of Vocational Education

The nature and curriculum on vocational education varies from one country to the other in relation to other classical forms of education (Billet 2014). Literature on TVET has always portrayed the German context of vocational education as the type with high status (Kerchhoff, 2001; Hillbert & Jacob, 2003; Clarke & Winch, 2007, Triventi, 2013, Harris, 2014). Triventi (2013) indicates that, the stratified nature of the German system makes it distinct from other vocational system of education. The environment in which

German students pursue TVET and operate with their vocational qualifications is very distinct to the realities in many other contexts.

Wheelahan (2007) is of the view that, the basic question that should determine how TVET should be viewed should be whether it widens or limits opportunities for young people. According to Wheelahan (2007) the structure of TVET should be analysed through its content, structure and subsequent qualifications which excludes those who pursue it (thus the working class) from access to powerful knowledge. To make her case, Wheelahan uses Bernstein's theories of knowledge structures to argue that, although TVET does provide students' knowledge, it is of the mundane kind, which can only be applied to certain contexts and events, not the powerful esoteric knowledge which can be transferred and applied to different settings (Wheelahan, 2007). To her, the increasingly globalised world we live in makes it imperative to expose students to esoteric knowledge for competitive advantages in the work place. To sum it, Wheelahan (2007) opined the focus on skills to undertake a particular job serves to short-change students, preparing them for very narrow job options and limiting their future opportunities.

Notwithstanding this, the positive arguments for skill acquisition in the vocational education system supports the rational as set by TVED (2008), of the Ghana Education Service (GES). It explains in clear terms that, the study of catering in the technical and Vocational Institutes is intended to provide young persons with the requisite skills as a predisposition to the technical pursuits at the advanced levels. Young persons who cannot advance can also be self-employed. The course offers the trainees the chance to acquire valuable technical and vocational skills that will open up a wide range of opportunities for productive work.

As identified by TVED of GES, the general aim of the catering vocational syllabus is to:

- acquire the requisite knowledge, culinary attitudes in cooking craft and vocational education and training.
- acquire the competency in cooking hygienically and presenting dishes attractively.
- develop positive attitudes towards application of practical skills, safe use of tools, judicious use of materials and time in the kitchen and on site, proper care and maintenance of tools and equipment.

The course is planned as an integration of knowledge and skills in cooking and presenting national and international dishes (CRDD, 2001).

2.4 Challenges of Vocational Education in Ghana

Vocational and technical education in Ghana faces a lot of challenges as in other countries. In 2003, the government of Ghana commissioned a body to review the general educational system for strategic planning for the year 2003-2015. The committee reported deficiency in the current public educational system because of the clear neglect of the vocational and technical education sub-sector; as the reforms ignored it (Government of Ghana (GOG), 2003).

This has resulted in poor condition of the infrastructure and training facilities of the institutions, inadequate number of institutions, and outdated training content. Consequently, the quantity and quality of the stock of trained national workforce have been affected.

The committee also found out that while government manages and resources over 500 Senior High Schools in the country as of then, 21 technical and 29 vocational institutions were managed and resourced by both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment, the two main bodies responsible

for education and training in the country. A clear disregard for vocational education by stakeholders.

Not only these but also, vocational and technical education is considered more expensive as compared to general education. The Ministry of Education spends only one percent of its annual budget, and the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employments spends 12% of its budget on vocational technical education sub-sector in spite of the fact that vocational and technical education is much more expensive as a result of the practical components (Allsop, Attah, Cammack & Woods, 2010; Boateng, 2012).

The negative cloud of perception on vocational and technical education in Ghana is another challenge. Most people hold the perception that it is an avenue for students who are not able to function within an academic setting; this perception is compounded by a lack of progression routes from vocational and technical education into higher education. A study in 2002 on public TVET teachers found that none of the 87 respondents wanted their own children and wards to study TVET programmes (Anamuah-Mensah, 2004).

Aside inadequate financing and negative perceptions, the socio-economic environment and the contextual framework within which vocational education is delivered in Ghana is characterised in general by other factors such as huge numbers of poorly educated, unskilled and unemployed youth, uncoordinated, unregulated and fragmented delivery systems, low quality gender and economic inequities, weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and poor management and ill-adapted organisational structures, no significant governmental involvement in apprenticeship training either (African Union, 2007; Boateng 2012).

2.5 Addressing the Challenges Confronting Vocational and Technical Education in Ghana

Ghana's Vision 2020 and the Education Strategic Plan, 2003-2015 recognise the need for imperative action to deal with the challenges identified. Some of the priorities identified in the work of Boateng (2012) to ameliorate the challenges suggests:

- To make vocational and technical education demand-driven and relevant to the needs of Ghanaian industries. This will be achieved by reviewing and updating programs to bring them in line with modern trends and practices in the industry. This is the ultimate aim of TVET programmes.
- The need to formalise apprenticeship training by the government and other stakeholders, by establishing a National Apprenticeship Training Board with membership from various sectors of the economy, to regulate apprentice-training in terms of registration of apprenticeship providers, content, duration of training programs, and certification.
- A desire for major shift in the educational policy in favour of vocational and technical education, this will help build the country's stock of human resource and give employable skills to the nation's youth.
- The deliberate effort to rehabilitate and upgrade the Technical and Vocational Institutes to levels of model institutions within a span of 10years.
- The need to synchronise all pre-tertiary vocational and technical education under the office of the president which will be spearheaded by the yet to be established National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET).
- The need for a national policy framework to ensure a nationally coordinated vocational and technical education system.

- The creation of linkage between vocational technical institutions (academia) and industries (work) in order to bring training more in tune with the requirements of industry and commerce.

2.6 Declining Interest in Vocational Programs

Vocational education prospered through most of the twentieth century. However, as early as 1990, it was reported that there was a nationwide crisis in declining enrolment for vocational education programs in second cycle institutions and schools (Gray, 1990). This declining national trend in secondary school student enrolment in vocational education programs has continued through the last decade (Foster, 1997) and currently stands at 4.4% according to the National Centre for Education Statistics (2001).

As stated, most education was vocational in nature through the greater part of the 20th century. In the early part of the century, most schools were vocational oriented, with the larger percentage of students (approximately 80%) enrolled in vocational education courses and a smaller percentage (approximately 20%) enrolled in college preparation courses (Gray, 1996). Since the 1960s, there has been a declining interest in vocational education by students (Gray, 1996). Foster (1997) has observed similar trend in the United States of America as enrolment in vocational courses keeps declining in a low rate of 4.4% of the student population.

Most of these students will graduate and enter the job market with few or no job skills (Gray et al. 1995). This is because globally, the impending critical shortage of highly trained and skilled employees throughout many industries, coupled with a declining enrolment in vocational education courses, does not augur well for the future of most economies; and also for their intentions of not furthering their education but plan to enter the job market with whatever immature qualification they have acquire.

In the view of Lynch (2000) there are many reasons for the decline in vocational education; notable among such reasons are that:

- Programs are often targeted primarily to educationally disadvantaged students;
- Programs are not seen as meeting the needs of students, employers and the community;
- Vocational education competed against other curriculum programs-especially college preparatory-for a shrinking student population;
- Vocational education suffered from an image of a dumbed-down curriculum;
- Confusion with school-to-work programs which became unpopular with many critics of education;
- An elitist view that says any formal context of education for work is not appropriate for students aspiring to a four-year college or university; and a general perception that vocational education will hinder rather than enhance youth's future career and educational choices (Lynch, 2000).

More to the possible factors leading to the decline in the interest in vocational education is shortage in vocational teachers. Even though Dykman (1993) hold an oppose view that "there is little data to support a claim of a vocational teacher shortage. Researchers like Lynch (1996) and Boesel et al (1994) all support the view that there is an appreciable decline in vocational school enrolment.

2.7 Perception Theories

Human behavior is tailored around perception; depending on how individuals perceive issues and circumstances either positively or negatively far and large affects the reaction to be taken Bem (1965, 1972). Examples of such theories are the cognitive dissonance perception theory and self-perception theory.

2.7.1 Cognitive Dissonance Perception Theory

This is an uncomfortable state of mind that occurs when an individual realizes that he/she is acting in ways that are inconsistent with his or her attitudes; or that perhaps two or more attitudes of the individual are not in tune. For example, those who hold strong opinions about catering vocational education will feel some dissonance if they are to make a choice between secondary education and vocational education.

When one experiences a disconnection between behavior and attitudes, cognitive dissonance theory predicts that he /she is then highly motivated to restore a sense of equilibrium. As identified by Aronson (1968) and Festinger (1957) a number of direct mechanisms to reduce the attitude-behavior discrepancy will be identified. Examples of those mechanisms are as follows:

- An individual can change either the discrepant attitude or the behavior in order to bring them into consistency with each other;
- Again, one can seek out new information to support the discrepant attitude or behavior. Students who feels secondary education is superior to vocational education may seek evidence.
- Individuals can undermine the inconsistency; that is, decide that the inconsistency really is not important; a mechanism referred to as trivialization.

2.7.2 Self-Perception Theory

As an alternative to the cognitive dissonance theory in explaining how attitudes are shaped, Bem (1965, 1972) proposed the self perception theory which is counterintuitive. Common knowledge would assume that, a person's personality and attitudes drive his/her actions; however, self-perception theory shows that this is not always the case. In simple terms, this theory assumes that "we are what we do." According to self-perception theory,

individuals interpret their own actions the way they interpret others' actions, and their actions are often socially influenced and not produced out of the individuals own free will, as it is expected.

The radical element of Bem's theory is the hypothesis that behavior causes attitudes, as opposed to the more conventional notion that attitudes shape behavior.

Self-perception theory assumes a process of inferring attitudes based on observing one's own behavior. The theory asserts that a person functions as an observer of his/her own behavior, and then makes attributions to either an external (situational) or internal (dispositional) source.

Self-perception theory to a greater extent explain how catering vocational students perceive the very education they are pursuing based on both external (situational) or internal (dispositional) source. What other view as well as what the students hold about vocational education will form their perception on the very education they are pursuing.

Chartrand, et al. (2003) assumes that behavioural responses are represented mentally and can be automatically activated during the normal course of perception; can such responses influence how a person behaves or perceive outcomes? There is a long history of theories arguing for this very possibility. For example, William Carpenter in the 1860s developed the principle of ideomotor action in which simply thinking about an action is sufficient to imitate unconsciously. This research suggests that the knowledge that is activated in response to perceiving a given action can also lead to the performance of that same action.

Incidentally activated knowledge affects behaviour until recently; it has been largely assumed that although judgments and feelings can be shaped by factors outside of people's awareness, complex social behaviour is determined by people's conscious and deliberately made choices. This assumption is part of a rich tradition of rational-choice

theories of behaviour as well as the humanistic tradition within psychology, both of which assume that people more or less carefully and intentionally weigh where to lead to the performance of that action. This argument builds on previous theory and research suggesting which indicates that behavioural representations can be automatically activated in memory during perception, and, once activated, can guide actual behaviour.

2.8 Perception of Students on Catering Vocational Education

A study by Chiariello (1988) posit that, literature on vocational education points to a fact that a problem existed in attracting students with interest in vocational institutions and the educational programs. In spite of the fact that there is enormous need for vocational education, the study suggests the need for a change in the nature of vocational education to reorient students.

This assertion was supported by Chambliss and Chiariello (1988) that students perceived a need for considerable change in the current vocational education programs.

As found by Chambliss and Chiariello (1988), respondents were of the view that, there was a need for change in the quality and diversity of vocational education programs. They also indicated a desire for more opportunities for work experience. More so, the respondents held the view that, there was strong support for more interdisciplinary and communication skills training in vocational education as such could reengineer how vocational education could be perceived positively by students.

Home Economics education is recognised as the most important precondition for families and household to improve their lives and to prevent poverty. However in Ghana today, students with poor grades are selected by the computerized school selection programme to read vocational and home economics. This has created the impression that home economics is the preserve of the academically weak students. Interest shown by

some school administrators in vocational subject also leaves much to be desired. They perceive home economics as a low-status course as well as a female oriented programme (Brow, 2010).

2.9 Factors that Influence Students' Perception on and Choice of Catering

Vocational Education

Research has shown that, there are many reasons that account for the perceptions that people hold on issues and phenomena. Like all other perception studies, studies conducted over the last two decades suggest that, the environment and what people do to a greater extent influence such notion; same can be talked of students of catering in vocational education and other vocational systems. A study conducted by Al-sad (2007) on factors that influence students' perception on vocational education revealed that, low status of Technical Education and Vocational Training in society are some of the influencing factors on vocational education. Family ties could not influence how students perceived vocational education as suggested by Al-sad (2007).

Not only this but also Awang et al (2011) suggest the value placed on Technical and Vocational Education and general education as being equal, social status and application of course content are important influencing factors on how students view vocational and technical education. Ohiwerei and Nwosu (2009) found out that political and economic condition of a country, career which pays more and peer groups are the factors which has effects on students attitude towards Technical and Vocational Education.

Among other studies, Lavender et al (2012), Hartl (2009), Al-sad (2007) Ohiwerei and Nwosu (2009) investigated the impact of parental influence on student's attitude towards Technical and Vocational Education. Findings of their research posit that Parents'

educational level, occupation and income levels have significant impact on students' choice towards Technical and Vocational Education. Lavender et al (2012) also supports the view that parents influence the choice and perception of vocational education as parents' place of living impacted on their children's selection of VET as career.

Opinion shared by researchers such as Ozioma (2011), Indoshi et al (2010), Ohiwerei and Nwosu (2009), Kassotakis (1978) on the future career and employment impact on students' choice was that students have the perception that career related to technical and vocational education is not secured, pays less and have low status in society. To Lavender et al (2012), Ozioma (2011), Ohiwerei and Nwosu (2009) opine that selection of VET for career depends upon the gender of students.

Students have the perception that technical and vocational education is for students from Poor socio-economic background (Awang et al, 2011; Ozioma, 2011; Pimpa, 2007). Peers influence is most important factor that influence students' choice for selection of subjects (Indoshi et al 2010; Al-sad 2007). Peer has been identified as an important factor that plays a role on attitude of students on any decision. Indoshi et al (2010), Al-sad (2007) support this assertion in their research. Some students select subjects and programmes based on their friends' choice.

Another factor that suggests influencing variables in relation to student's perception and choice is teachers of student's previous school. Pimpa (2007), Ohiwerei and Nwosu (2009) Indoshi et al (2010) posit that teachers of previous schools and career counsellors plays an important role for developing positive attitude of students towards Technical and Vocational education.

The grades that students obtained by and large serves as an influencing factor. According to Lavender et al (2012), previous school grades and schools achievements impact on student's attitude towards Technical and Vocational Education. Students with

low grades join Technical and Vocational Education. This trend as observed by Lavender et al (2012) confirms a study by Ozioma (2011) that in considering these factors, grade is an important factor.

Finally, socioeconomic status of family have significant impact on student's attitude towards Technical and Vocational Education; a confirmation by Awang et al (2011), Ozioma (2011), Pimpa (2007). Their findings reveal that students have perception that Technical and Vocational education is for students from Poor socioeconomic background. Not only this, but also, Lavender et al (2012) holds the view that parents place of living impact on their children for selection VET as career.

2.10 Conceptual Model for the Study

There are a number of vocational schools in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana but beyond the second cycle level, the numbers in relation to vocational student population diminishes. Has it got to do with the perception they hold on the very education they are perusing?

As indicated above, there are many factors that influence how students perceive the educational programme they are enrolled on of which catering vocational education is no exception. A model used in study conducted in Pakistan to determine the variables which impact on student's attitude towards Technical and Vocational Education by Ayub (2015) is adapted for this study.

The model has three components which is premised on independent and dependent variables. The independent variables consider how demographic factors and agents of social institutions such as parents, teachers, and peers among other factors influence students views in the education they are acquiring. The dependent component of the model identify how the independent variables can influence the attitude of students

towards the educational programme; thus how the demographic factors and agents of social institutions affect students' attitude towards catering vocational education. This model is underpinned by Bem's 1972 self-perception theory which assumes a process of inferring attitudes based on observing one's own behavior (Bem, 1972). The theory asserts that a person functions as an observer of his/her own behavior, and then makes attributions to either an external (situational) or internal (dispositional) source.

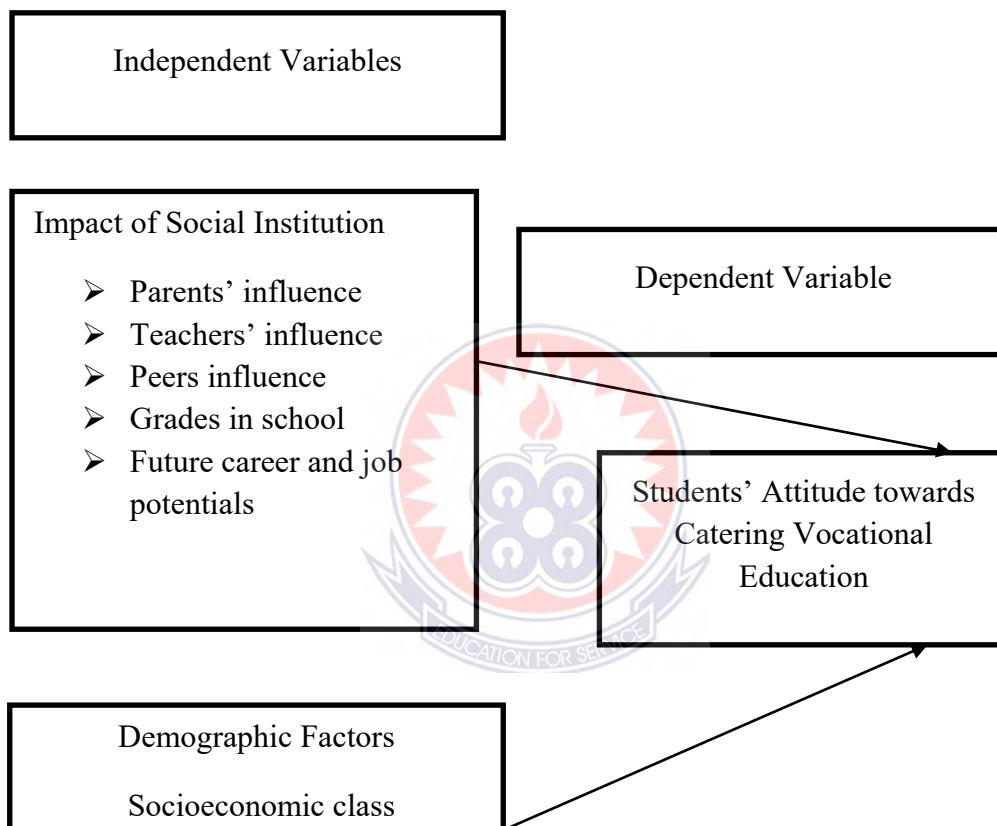


Figure 1. Model of factors that influence the perception of catering vocational education; adapted from Ayub (2015).

The model is appropriate for this study as the objectives stated in this study can be answered by applying this model and the theoretical underpinning as it lays credence to the topic. The varied principles of perception prove that the attitude of individuals are predisposed to events based on how they perceive events and situations. Also, the model is

not rigid as it can be applied in seeking information on certain factors that can lead to how individuals react to social phenomenon.

2.11 Importance of Vocational Education

The purpose of education is to provide adequate knowledge and skills to local communities to cope with professions and provide social values in enhancing economic growth. Alam (2008) is of the view that without economic growth, social freedom cannot be achieved and hence the need for education which has practical orientation. Moreover, if education programs offered do not provide the needed prerequisite skills and knowledge which will lead to employment opportunities, parents and guardians will perceive that investment in education as not worthwhile, because their wards did not stand to benefit from such educational programs like catering vocational education (Alam, 2008; Jeong, 1999)

After a successful completion of catering vocational education, graduates will enjoy benefits from employment chances, improved earnings, capacity for lifelong learning, and job satisfaction (Wolter & Weber, 2005).

It can also be said that having VET training increases the competitive advantage for young women to find employment, by increasing their skills and knowledge and making them more competent job applicants compared to others not having professional training background. Vocational education increases the options and possibilities of graduates with vocational background to choose in a competitive labour market (Kolev & Suarez-Robles, 2010). Other empirical findings as indicated by Posti-Ahokas and Palojoki (2014) indicates Tanzania female vocational students hold the view on their education as being very future-oriented, optimistic and an avenue to learn more. They also had the view

that vocational education can help them to support their families as it can help them attain a decent and meaningful life as well as offering hope (Posti-Ahokas & Palojoki, 2014).

Not only this but also an effective vocational education offers students with greater general openness and ability to learn and upgrade their skills later in life. A study conducted by Beicht and Walden (2005) to assess the subjective current and future benefits for further VET suggests personal development, improvements in efficiency on the job, networking, improved perspectiveness for better or more interesting employment, chances to move up the career ladder, better earnings among others as the benefits of vocational education training.

According to Kolev and Suarez-Robles (2010), enlarging capabilities of the citizenry through vocational training enables individuals to get rid of unwanted activities that will make them social deviants. Powell (2012) posits that South-African vocational students felt their training highlighted the feelings of pride and capabilities to aspire. To them, they had greater opportunities in life compared to their parents who did not have the opportunities to educate and acquire skills for themselves. They further underlined the importance of the possibility of having a satisfying job and the possibility 'to start over' after hardships.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology followed in carrying out the study. It specifically focuses on the description of the study area, study design and target population. The chapter also describes the sampling procedure adopted for the study, research instruments, data collection procedures, processing and analysis as well as its presentation.

3.1 The Study Area

The study was conducted in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. The region is located at the centre of Ghana, and the second largest in terms of land size with Sunyani as the capital. It covers an area of approximately 39,557 square kilometres representing about 16.6% of Ghana's total land area of 238,533 square kilometres. The region is bounded to the north by the Northern Region, South by the Ashanti and western Regions, West by the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, East by the Eastern Region as well as the Volta Lake.

The major ethnic groups are Akan, Ewe, Mo, Nafana and Nchumuro. The region can boast of a wide range of natural resources including the Tano River, Forest, Tourist sites like the Kintampo Water Falls, Gold Mines among others. The region is mostly an agrarian. All levels of education is found in the Region, this has led to the rise of literacy rate in Region. However, the level of TVET education as compared to other forms of education has remained all- time- low. Comparatively, the number of vocational institutions in the region as compared to secondary schools is low. There are eleven schools in the region as of April, 2017 that has registered with the National Vocational Training Institute (N.V.T.I.).

3.2 Study Design

A survey method of research design was adopted for the study. A survey method research design according to Creswell (2012 p. 376) is a research design in quantitative research in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviours, or characteristics of the population. Specifically, the across-sectional survey design in which the researcher collects data at one point in time was adopted for the study. This design has the advantage of measuring current attitudes or practices. It also provides information in a short amount of time, such as the time required for administering the survey and collecting the information. A cross-sectional study examine current attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or practices.

The survey design specifically was employed as it allows for issues about a target population to be studied by taking a cross section of the population. This type of design is very useful in obtaining an overall picture of phenomenon as it stands at the time of the study. It is also a very simple design which allows for one time investigation of the target population (Creswell, 2012; Kumar 2005). Comparing the strengths, this design is less time consuming in relation to longitudinal studies and was deemed suitable for this study which sought to do a one-time evaluation of vocational catering education in Brong-Ahafo.

3.3 Data for the Study

Data for this study was sourced from the Brong-Ahafo Regional Education Office of N.V.T.I.; these constituted the secondary data. The primary data was obtained from the sampled schools.

3.4 Target Population

The target population for the study comprised all Vocational Catering Schools in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana that are registered and write examinations with N.V.T.I. These institutions are the vocational catering institutions that operate under a guided curriculum and other co-curricular activities are regulated by the ministry of education. The students are the people that the outcome of the vocational catering education will impact directly; hence the need to target them for the study. Their perceptions be it positive or negatively has influence on the future of the very educational system they have enrolled on.

3.5 Sample Size Determination

Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black (1998) postulates that, the issue of how large a sample size should be is unanswered. However, Hair et al, (1998) share in the view that based on a large sample distribution theory, a reliable estimates can be obtained from samples between 100 to 150 respondents. This makes the arrived sampled size appropriate for the study. Data obtained from the regional office of N.V.T.I. as of May, 2017 which indicates that eleven (11) vocational schools offer catering. This suggests the suitability of using the formula in calculating the sample size for the study.

3.6 Sampling Procedure

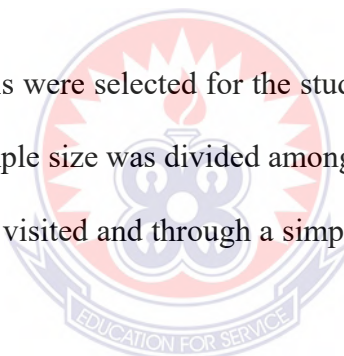
The simple random sampling technique was adopted for the study. The current register for schools that write exams with N.V.T.I. was used. Seven (7) schools were selected through the lottery system for the study. These schools show a fair representation for catering vocational institutions in the region.

Table 1: Sample Size by Selected Institutions

No	Name of Institution	Location	Sample
1.	Community Development Vocational/Technical Institute	Sunyani	20
2.	Community Development Vocational/Technical Institute	Nsuatre	16
3.	Community Development Vocational/Technical Institute	Bechem	16
4.	Community Development Vocational/Technical Institute	Kintampo	17
5.	Social Welfare Vocational Training Institute	Sunyani	21
6.	Twene Amanfo Vocational	Sunyani	18
7.	Yamfo Vocational Training Institute	Yamfo	14
Total			122

Source: Field work, 2017

A total of 122 pupils were selected for the study. This supports the view shared by Hair et al, (1998). The sample size was divided among seven vocational schools that offer catering. The schools were visited and through a simple random sample, the students were selected for the study.



3.7 Instruments for Data Collection

The questionnaires used for the study had five (5) main parts and contained both close-ended and open-ended questions. The close-ended questions had options that respondents selected from while the open-ended questions made room for the respondents to give their own opinions to the questions posed. Creswell (2012 p. 220) indicates that, “the advantage of this type of questioning is that, the researcher’s predetermined closed-ended responses can get useful information to support theories and concepts in the literature while the open-ended responses permit the researcher to explore reasons for the

closed-ended responses and identify any comments respondents might have that are beyond the responses to the closed-ended questions”.

The first part elicited the perceptions of vocational catering students on vocational education. Part two of the instrument examined the factors that influenced students’ choice to pursue vocational catering education. The third part of the instrument evaluated how students viewed vocational education in terms of future job earning potential. A 4 point - Likert scale containing 26 items were used to measure these perceptions. These perception variables have been used by different authors undertaking similar studies (Harris, 2014; Triventi, 2013; Boateng, 2012 and Al-sad, 2007). Solutions on students’ perceptions that posed challenge to the programme was sought at the forth part of the instrument. The final part of the instrument gathered information on the socio-characteristics of the respondents

3.8 Data Collection

Questionnaires were administered to respondents in the various schools selected for the study. Two field assistants were selected to assist in the data collection process.

3.9 Ethical Issues

The ethical dimensions of the research should never be overlooked (Creswell, 2012). This research, took into account issues of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. Neuman (2007) posits that researchers must not force people into participating in a research. Participation must be voluntary. The researcher sought the informed consent of the respondents before undertaking the research. The justification for the study was explained in clear terms to them, however, respondents who declined participation were not compelled to take part.

Again, the issue of anonymity was also ensured. The privacy of respondents was not disclosed since respondent’s identity after information as gathered has remained intact,

a practise supported by (Creswell, 2012). Respondents were assured of their anonymity since names and other personal details were not associated with specific responses given.

To Neuman (2007), even if a researcher cannot guarantee anonymity, he or she should always protect participant's confidentiality. For this study, respondents were assured of their confidentiality; the information they provided was not to be divulged to any third party other than its intended purpose, which was an academic exercise.

3.10 Fieldwork Challenges

One clear area of concern was the unavailability of the final year student. Majority of them had completed their final exams and had gone home during the period of data collection. The researcher and the Field Assistants had to collaborate with the management of the schools in ensuring that students come to school on the day of data collection to get a fairer representation of the population.

Again, most of the respondents did not believe that it was an academic exercise but were of the view that the research was a money making venture for the researcher and hence the need to part with money or material item before they took part in the exercise. This, the researcher and her team with the help of teachers in the institution helped in explaining into detail the rationale for the study.

3.11 Data Processing and Analysis

A total of 122 questionnaires were administered, after editing and coding, 117 instruments were found useable for the analysis and 5 discarded. The response rate for the survey was 95.9%. The data was analysed with the help of Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS) – IBM Statistics version 21.

A comparative analysis based on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and the objectives of the study was run along other analysis based on the objectives set.

The findings were presented on tables to reflect the means, independent sampled T-test, frequencies and percentages.

3.12 Summary

This chapter considered the context within which the study was conducted. It examined the study area, the research design, procedures followed in sampling, collecting and analysing the data.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected and a discussion of the results in line with the objectives of the study. It commences with a description of the background characteristics of respondents, perception on vocational catering education, factors that influence students' choice to pursue vocational education, views on vocational education in terms of future job earning potential and finally the analysis on the differences in students' perception is considered.

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The socio-demographic characteristics considered in this study were gender, age, marital status, previous education, catering related job experience. The summarized results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographics of Respondents

Demographics		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	102	87.2
	Male	15	12.8
Age	16-20	59	50.4
	21-25	37	31.6
	26-30	21	17.9
Marital Status	Single	107	91.5
	Ever Married	10	8.5
Previous Education	Basic	64	54.7

Table 2 Continued

	SHS	53	45.3
Catering related job experience	Yes	81	69.2
	No	36	30.8

Field Work, 2017

It can be observed from Table 2 that, majority (87.2%) of the respondents are females a demographic characteristic associated with most catering institutions however, 17.9% of the students involved in the study were between the ages of 25 and 31; a trend which needs to be supported since it makes vocational education for all ages. Majority (91.5 %) of the students were single however, majority of them have experienced catering related jobs of a sort.

4.2 Perceptions on Vocational Catering Education

The views that individuals hold on a phenomenon to a greater extent influence their reactions and actions towards the entity. Vocational catering students in Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana were asked to indicate their perception on the very education they are pursuing. The findings are presented on Table below.

Table 3: Students' Perception on Vocational Catering Education

Perception on Vocational Catering Education	Std.	
	Mean	Deviation
Students from Vocational Education are seen as professionals	1.57	.82
Vocational Catering Education is Broad	1.78	.87

Table 3 continued

Vocational Education provides the needed skills required to attain job	1.79	.76
Catering is meant for females	3.10	1.02
Variety of jobs awaits students who offer vocational catering education	2.11	.99
Catering is restrictive in nature in terms of job placement	2.58	1.03
Catering is very expensive	1.62	.89
Catering is an easy programme to pass	2.70	1.13
Catering is for academically weak students	3.27	.93
Vocational education is for the physically challenged	2.55	1.03

Field Work, 2017

Mean of means = 2.30 Average Standard deviation = .94

Scale: 1.0–1.49 = Strongly Agreed, 1.50–2.49 = Agreed, 2.50–3.49 = Disagreed, 3.50–4.49 = Strongly Disagreed

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics on the perception of vocational catering students on vocational catering education. Ten items; professionalism, skill acquisition, job availability restrictiveness, gender bias and disability among other factors were used to gauge students' perception. The items in Table 3 recorded a mean of means of 2.30 and a standard deviation of .94. This is an indication that, on a whole, vocational catering students in Brong-Ahafo agreed that these variables do influence their perception on vocational catering education. However, there are variations in the degree of agreement. The following are the major results for the individual items.

With respect to vocational catering students being seen as professionals, students agreed (M=1.57) that catering students are professionals. This implies that vocational

catering students are of the view that, they are being thought to fit into an identified work area. Vocational education increases the options and possibilities of graduates with vocational background to choose in a competitive labour market (Kolev & Suarez-Robles, 2010). Also, students agreed ($M=1.62$) that catering is very expensive. This might be as a result of the practical nature of the vocational catering programme which requires every student to have a set of different tools and equipment as compared to the Science programmes and other vocational courses where the institutions do provide the necessary tools and equipment. This support the views of Allsop et al, (2010) and Boateng (2012); vocational and technical education is considered more expensive as compared to general education. The Ministry of Education spends only one percent of its annual budget, and the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employments spends 12% of its budget on vocational technical education sub-sector in spite of the fact that vocational and technical education is much more expensive as a result of the practical components (Allsop, Attah, Cammack & Woods, 2010; Boateng, 2012).

Again, in relation to the broad nature of catering education, students agreed ($M=1.78$) that, vocational catering education is broad. As compared to other programmes, catering encompasses Hygiene and Safety, Cookery Theory, Cookery Practical, Bookkeeping, Nutrition, Preservation, Commodities, Food and Beverage and Entrepreneurship. Students were of the view that, Vocational Catering Education provides the needed skills required of catering students attaining job. This was in a mean agreement of $M=1.79$. Allsop et al, (2010) support this perception.

However, students disagreed ($M=3.27$) that, catering is meant for academically weak students; a view contrary to that of Brow (2010). Not only this, the students also disagreed ($M=2.10$) to the assertion that, catering is meant for females and thereby making the programme being biased towards females; a view shared by the general public. A case

in consideration is the interest shown by some school administrators in vocational programmes who perceive vocational catering education as female oriented programme (Brow, 2010). However this view is in contrast to views shared by researchers such as Lavender et al (2012), Ozioma (2011), Ohiwerei and Nwosu (2009) who opine that selection of VET for career depends upon the gender of students.

More so, the view shared by a section of students who are not into catering educational programmes that, it is an easy programme to pass was rejected and hence was disagreed (M=2.70) by vocational catering students in Brong-Ahafo. This is contrary to the views shared by Brow, (2010). Finally, the respondents disagreed (M=2.58) that, catering as an educational programme was restrictive in nature. This implies that, the students have psyched themselves that upon completion of their programme, there is the opportunity for them to divert to other sectors of the Ghanaian economy.

On a whole, respondents perceived to a greater extent, a positive perception on vocational catering education as they agreed to all positive perception variables and disagreed to the negative perception variables on vocational catering education.

4.3 Factors that Influence Students' Choice to Pursue Vocational Education

Students were to indicate the possible factors that could influence them in opting for Vocational catering as an option of educational programme that they are pursuing.

Table 4: Factors that Influence Students' Choice to Pursue Vocational Education

Influencing factors on the choice for Vocational Education	Mean	Std. Deviation
The cost of vocational education is low	3.39	.79
Vocational education is the preserve of academically weak students	3.13	1.03
Students choose vocational education because their friends are doing it	3.16	.78
Families of poor homes persuade their wards to do vocational education	2.68	1.10
Students pursue catering because members of their family are into catering	2.68	.99
Individuals with passion of being caterers offer vocational education	1.70	.84
High employment opportunities	1.67	.75
Societal or environmental influences	2.52	1.03
Passion for being caterers in the future	1.76	.76

Field Work, 2017

Mean of means = 2.52 Average Standard deviation = 0.89

Scale: 1.0–1.49 = Strongly Agreed, 1.50–2.49 = Agreed, 2.50–3.49 = Disagreed, 3.50–4.49 = Strongly Disagreed

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics on the factors that influence students' choice to pursue vocational education. Nine items; cost, educational background, peer influence, family background, family tides, passion, employment opportunities among other factors were used to gauge the factors that do influence their choice to pursue vocational catering education. The items in Table 4 recorded a mean of means of 2.52 and a standard deviation of .89. This is an indication that, on a whole, vocational catering students in Brong-Ahafo agreed that these variables could serve as factors that influence

their choice for vocational catering education as against other courses. However, there are variations in the degree of agreement. The following are the major results for the individual items.

Students felt that, vocational catering education as a course offers a high employment opportunity and did agree ($M= 1.67$) that this could serve as a reason to settling on vocational education. This view is contrary to that of researchers such as Ozioma (2011), Indoshi et al (2010), Ohiwerei and Nwosu (2009) who opine that, the future career and employment impact on students' choice was that students have the perception that career related to technical and vocational education is not secured, pays less and have low status in society. This means that students involved in their study would not have considered this as a factor which students from the Brong-Ahafo opposes.

Also, students agreed ($M= 1.70$) that, individuals with passion of being caterers do offer vocational education and this could be a bases for offering the course. With a mean score of ($M= 2.52$), respondents were of the view that society and the environment in which they live can also serve as a factor in opting for vocational catering education. Al-sad (2007) Ohiwerei and Nwosu (2009) hold similar views (Awang et al, 2011; Ozioma, 2011; Pimpa, 2007). It is also evident that, the respondents disagreed with the assertion; the cost of vocational catering education is low as they felt the cost was rather high ($M= 3.39$). This could be attributed to the fact that it is a practical based which requires weekly spending. More so, with a mean value of 3.16, students disagreed that, student choose vocational education because of peer influence. This view was entirely different from the views of Indoshi et al (2010) and Al-sad (2007) that peers influence is the most important factor that influences students' choice for selection of subjects.

Finally, it was clear that, students disagreed ($M= 3.13$) is the preserve of the academically weak students. It can be implied that, vocational catering students proud

themselves as being academically good like all other students pursuing other programmes. Awang et al (2011) suggest the value placed on Technical and Vocational Education and general education as being equal, social status and application of course content are important as these are the rational set for effective educational curriculum be it Technical, Vocational or General.

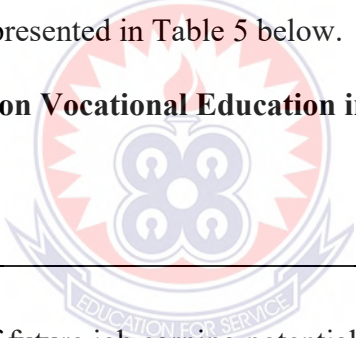
The factors as identified were all to a greater extent agreed upon by the respondents that they are possible factors that could influence their choice for the course be it positively or negatively.

4.4 Views on Vocational Education in Terms of Future Job Earning Potential

The views of students was sought in relation to future job earnings after studying catering.

The views as expressed is presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Students' Views on Vocational Education in Terms of Future Job Earning Potential



	Mean	Std. Deviation
Students' views in terms of future job earning potential		
Variety of jobs awaits students who offer vocational education	1.82	.81
Catering related jobs have low status in society	2.97	1.03
It is very difficult acquiring jobs after vocational catering education	3.23	.95
Salaries paid for catering jobs are low	2.02	1.00
Vocational education will not give you an opportunity to hold supervisory or managerial position	3.17	.91
Catering jobs hardly offer the opportunity to further education	2.37	1.02
Employees in catering related jobs are seen as people with self-esteem	1.92	.86

Field Work, 2017

Mean of means = 2.5 Average Standard deviation = .94

Scale: 1.0–1.49 = Strongly Agreed, 1.50–2.49 = Agreed, 2.50–3.49 = Disagreed, 3.50–4.49 = Strongly Disagreed

Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics on the views of catering students on vocational catering education in terms of future job earning potentials. Seven items; jobs variety, status in the society, jobs acquisition, salary, educational opportunity and self-esteem etc. were used to identify the views of catering students on the future job earning potentials of the educational programme they are studying. The items in Table 5 recorded a mean of means of 2.5 and a standard deviation of 0.94. This is an indication that, on a whole, vocational catering students in Brong-Ahafo agreed that these variables could serve as a clue on job availability after completing catering programmes after graduation from vocational catering institutions. The following are the major results for the individual items.

Obtaining employment at the end of course of study has been the goal of students. Respondents to a greater extent agreed ($M= 1.82$) that, there are a lot of job varieties to be employed in after studying vocational catering course. The hospitality industry is broad and it ranges from Accommodation, Food to Beverage. It is clear that the students are aware of this and has served as a motivation in pursuing catering. This supports the goals of Technical and

Vocational Education and Training Council in Barbados; ‘education to prepare people – students, job seekers, the employed and the self-employed - for the world of work and business’ (TVET Council, 2014 cited in Harris, 2014).

Again, respondents agreed ($M= 1.92$) employees in catering related jobs are seen as people with self-esteem. This to a greater extent enthruse them to like the programme. However, students agreed ($M= 2.02$) that the salaries paid to catering related jobs are low.

This to a greater extent support why such people take delight in receiving tips during service delivery. It was also evident from the study that, students agreed ($M= 2.37$) there is barrier to educational progression in the future when people pursue catering as an educational option. This to a greater extent is a worrying assumption.

Just as respondents agreed there are variety of jobs that awaits catering graduates, they however disagreed ($M= 3.23$) it is very difficult in acquiring jobs after completion of the course. Students can start self-enterprising project that will fetch them income.

Finally, respondents rejected ($M= 3.17$) the assertion that vocational education will not offer them the opportunity to hold supervisory or managerial positions. This is as a result of the fact that students can pursue HND, BTech, MTech and even DTech which will offer them such positions.

Students expressed varying views on the opportunity to be employed after studying catering. On a whole, students did agree that they will secure job when they are trained as catering professionals.

4.5 Variations in the Perception of Vocational Catering Students on their Perception of Vocational Catering Programme.

As regards the variations in the perceptions of vocational Catering education, four (4) variables; gender, marital status, previous education and job experience. The findings are presented on Table 6 - 9.

Table 6: Independent Samples Test for Gender of Respondents

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	F	Sig. value
Female	102	23.11	3.45	-0.017			0.15
Male	15	23.13	2.32		115	2.008	

Field Work, 2017

A mean of 23.11 (SD = 3.45) indicates that female vocational catering students appear to have a lower perception as compared to male vocational catering students (M = 23.13, SD = 2.23). The independent samples t-test was used to establish the level of significance of the difference in the mean values between the genders of respondents. A Levene's Test of equality of variances indicated that (F = 2.008, sig. > 0.05), therefore equal variances are assumed. The test shows that there is a significant difference in the perception of male and female students about vocational catering students (t= -0.017, df = 115, sig < 0.05). Therefore, it is clear that there are significant difference in how vocational catering students perceive vocational catering education based on their gender. This could be attributable to societal perception that Catering is a female dominated profession; a view shared by Brow (2010) that, home economics and related courses are female oriented programme.

Other empirical findings as indicated by Posti-Ahokas and Palojoki (2014) indicates Tanzania female vocational students hold the view on their education as being very future-oriented, optimistic and an avenue to learn more. To support this assertion is view of Tanzania female vocational students as presented by Posti-Ahokas and Palojoki (2014) that vocational education can help them to support their families, attain a decent and meaningful life as well as offering hope.

Table 7: Independent Samples Test for Marital Status

Marital Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	F	Sig. value
Single	107	23.26	3.28	1.454	10.56	.061	0.80
Ever Married	10	21.60	3.47				

Field Work, 2017

A mean of 23.26 (SD = 3.28) indicates that vocational catering students who are not married appear to have higher perception as compared to ever married vocational catering students (M = 21.60, SD = 3.47). The independent samples t-test was used to establish the level of significance of the difference in the mean values between the genders of respondents. A Levene's Test of equality of variances indicated that (F = .061, sig. > 0.05), therefore equal variances are not assumed. The test shows that there is no significant difference in the perception of single and ever married vocational catering students about vocational catering education (t= 1.454, df = 10.56, sig < 0.05). Therefore, it is established that; on marital grounds, there are no significant difference in how vocational catering students perceive vocational catering education.

Table 8: Independent Samples Test for Previous Education

Previous Education	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	F	Sig. value
Basic	64	23.39	3.29	0.968			
SHS	53	22.79	3.35		110.20	.332	0.56

Field Work, 2017

A mean of 23.39 (SD = 3.29) indicates that vocational catering students who attended basic education appear to have higher perception as compared to vocational catering students who have ever attended Senior High School (M = 22.79, SD = 3.35). The independent samples t-test was used to establish the level of significance of the

difference in the mean values between the previous education of respondents. A Levene's Test of equality of variances indicated that ($F = .332$, $\text{sig.} > 0.05$), therefore equal variances are not assumed. The test shows that there is no significant difference in the perception of vocational catering students based on their previous education about vocational catering education ($t = 0.967$, $\text{df} = 110.20$, $\text{sig} < 0.05$). Therefore, it is established that, there are no significant difference in how vocational catering students perceive vocational catering education based on their previous education

Table 9: Independent Samples Test for Catering Job Experience

Job Experience	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	F	Sig. value
Yes	81	23.41	3.48		81.117	1.375	0.23
No	36	22.44	2.85	1.591			

Field Work, 2017

A mean of 23.41 (SD = 3.48) indicates that vocational catering students who have worked in catering related jobs appear to have higher perception as compared to vocational catering students with no such experience (M = 22.44, SD = 2.85). The independent samples t-test was used to establish the level of significance of the difference in the mean values between the vocational catering students' experience with catering related jobs. A Levene's Test of equality of variances indicated that ($F = 1.375$, $\text{sig.} > 0.05$), therefore equal variances are not assumed. The test shows that there is no significant difference in the perception of vocational catering students based on experiences with catering related jobs about vocational catering education ($t = 1.591$, $\text{df} = 81.117$, $\text{sig} < 0.05$). Therefore, it is established that, there are no significant difference in how vocational catering students perceive vocational catering education based on their experiences in and with catering related jobs.

It can be established from the above analysis that, the gender of respondents was the only variable that showed significant variation in the perception views expressed. This might be as a result of the female biases by society towards vocational catering education.

4.6 Students' Perceptions on Improving Vocational Catering Education

This section deals with how students perceive vocational education to be improved. Eight variables as identified in the literature was presented for student to indicate their probability in improving catering education. The results has been presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Improving Vocational Catering Education

Solution	Scale
More qualified catering teachers, apprenticeship training, regulate apprentice-training,	Most probable
Reduction in the cost of programme, rebranding of vocational education, standard examination for all	Probable
Provision of tools and equipment for practical training, promoting catering as a high prestige programme	Somewhat probable

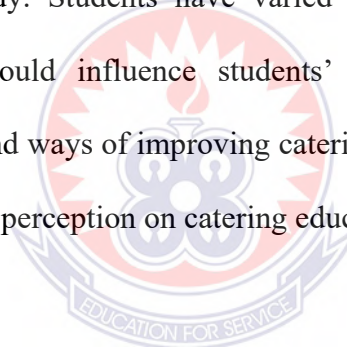
Fieldwork, 2017

Students indicated that, having more qualified catering teachers, enough apprenticeship training and regulating apprentice-training as the most probable. This view of students is in consonance to the work of Boateng (2012) to ameliorate the challenges facing vocational education. There is the need to formalise apprenticeship training by the government and other stakeholders, by establishing a National Apprenticeship Training Boateng (2012).

Also, the reduction in the cost of programme, rebranding of vocational education and standard examination for all catering students was considered as the probable way of improving catering education. TVET in Ghana, needs rebranding, for people to understand how important it is to our national development. It is now commonplace for university graduates to spend 2-5 years after their education, looking for non-existent employment (Laing, 2017 – cotvet.org)

Finally, students perceived the provision of tools and equipment for practical training and promoting catering as a high prestige programme was considered somewhat probable means of improving vocational catering education.

This chapter presented the analysis of findings from the field based on the research questions set for the study. Students have varied perceptions on vocational catering education, factors that could influence students' choice to pursue catering as an educational programme, and ways of improving catering education as well as variations in the perception of students' perception on catering education.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. It summarises the major findings of the study and draws conclusions based on the results. Recommendations are then made towards improving vocational catering education in Brong-Ahafo and Ghana as a whole.

5.1 Summary

The field of technical and vocational education presents an intriguing opportunity to investigate economic and social issues. Clarke and Winch (2007), hold the view that, the approach to vocational education can give insight into the peculiarities of a society. McGrath (2012) posits that, vocational education and training encompasses ‘the myriad forms of learning that aims at participation in the worlds of work’. Vocational education involves the concepts of knowledge, learning, education, work and employment, with the understanding that the field is dynamic (McGrath, 2012). Vocational education is seen as one of the major routes to gain access to the labour market.

However, the number of students who pursue vocational courses especially catering at the lower level of vocational education keeps dwindling. Among the possible causes to this trend of challenges are low progression to higher education, engagement in manual labour and social as well as societal stigma were the seeming factors (Hillmert & Jacob, 2003; Wheelahan, 2007; Rose, 2012; Bathmaker, 2013).

If this trend continues, the future of vocational education essentially catering is bleak. This research work sought to identify the perception of vocational catering students in the Brong-Ahafo Region on the educational programme they are pursuing.

In order to find answers to the research questions that were formulated to guide the study, a survey method of research design was adopted for the study. The study covered seven catering institutions in Brong-Ahafo Region who write with N.V.T.I. (Community Development Vocational/Technical Institute - Sunyani, Community Development Vocational/Technical Institute - Nsuatre, Community Development Vocational/Technical Institute - Bechem, Community Development Vocational/Technical Institute - Kintampo, Social Welfare Vocational Training Institute - Sunyani, Twene Amanfo Vocational - Sunyani and Yamfo Vocational Training Institute - Yamfo). In all 122 responses from respondents were involved in the analysis of this study; however, 117 responses were involved in the analysis after editing. The simple random sampling procedure was used to select the respondents.

Questionnaire was the main instrument used to gather the requisite data for the study. The instrument was subjected to reliability and validity test even though the variables had been used by other researchers. The data gathered from the respondents were analysed with statistical tools such as independent sampled T-test, means and standard deviations and percentages.

5.2 Main Findings

The major findings on the perception of catering students on vocational catering education are: vocational catering students are of the perception that catering students are pursuing professional programme as they are being thought to fit into an identified work area. Also, students are of the view that catering is very expensive considering the practical nature of catering which requires every student to have a set of different tools and equipment as compared to other programmes where institutions do provide such tools and equipment

Catering is considered as broad; as compared to other programmes, catering encompasses Hygiene and Safety, Cookery Theory, Cookery Practical, Bookkeeping, Nutrition, Preservation, Commodities, Food and Beverage and Entrepreneurship. Students were of the view that, Vocational Catering Education provides the needed skills required of catering students attaining job.

However, students disagreed that, catering is meant for academically weak students. Not only this, the students also disagreed catering is meant for females and thereby making the programme being biased towards females; a view shared by the general public. More so, the view shared by a section of students who are not into catering educational programmes that, it is an easy programme to pass was rejected and hence was disagreed.

Finally, the respondents disagreed that, catering as an educational programme was restrictive in nature. This implies that, the students have psyched themselves that upon completion of their programme, there is the opportunity for them to divert to other sectors of the Ghanaian economy.

In relation to factors that influence students' choice to pursue vocational education, factors such as high employment opportunity after school, passion of becoming caterers, society and the environment in which they lived could influence their choice.

However, factors such as persuasion from families with poor background, peer influence and academic performance could not influence students' choice for pursuing vocational education.

The gender of respondents was the only variable out of the socio-demographic characteristic considered for the study could serve as a variation in comparing students' perception on vocational catering education.

On the future job potential earnings, respondents to a greater extent agreed that, there are a lot of job varieties to be employed in after studying vocational catering course. Again, respondents agreed employees in catering related jobs are seen as people with self-esteem. However, students agreed that the salaries paid to catering related jobs are low

On the way to improve catering education, students indicated that, having more qualified catering teachers, apprenticeship training and regulating apprentice-training as the most probable.

Also, the reduction in the cost of programme, rebranding of vocational education and standard examination for all catering students was considered as the probable way of improving catering education.

Meanwhile, the provision of tools and equipment for practical training and promoting catering as a high prestige programme was considered somewhat probable means of improving vocational catering education.

Finally, majority of the students had experienced catering related job of a sort.

5.3 Conclusions

The following conclusions could be drawn from the findings of the study: Catering students consider themselves as pursuing professional programme as they are trained for a field of study. Catering is seen as an expensive programme; considering the practical nature of it. Catering is also considered as a broad programme compared with other programmes of study.

Students disagreed that, catering is meant for academically weak students.

Employment opportunity, passion as well as society and environment could influence students' choice for vocational catering education. These to some extent affirms the

assumption of Ayub (2015) on the factors that influence the perception of catering vocational education. Salaries paid to catering related jobs are seen to be low.

Having more qualified catering teachers, apprenticeship training and regulating apprentice-training as the most probable.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, below are some recommendations:

- Frantic efforts should be made in reducing the cost of catering vocational education by retooling vocational schools with tools and equipment to reduce the cost borne by students
- It is recommended that, to be employed in the hospitality industry, one should have a catering background of a sort. This will boost the chance of catering students getting employed.
- Finally, there should be conscious effort by National Board for Professional and Technical Examination (NABPTEX) and N.V.T.I. should sensitise the public on the value of vocational education as a sure way to getting employment after school.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

This study was conducted on vocational catering students in Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. It is suggested that comparative study should be conducted in other regions to establish the views of other students. This will help in taking a holistic view of vocational catering education from students' purview on the way forward.

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APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, KUMASI

DEPARTMENT OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM EDUCATION

MASTER OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION IN CATERING AND

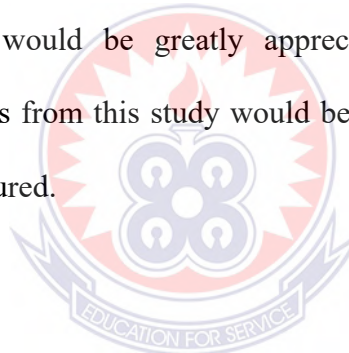
HOSPITALITY

(Assessing the perception of vocational catering students on vocational education in Brong-Ahafo)

Introduction:

The aim of this questionnaire is to assess the perception of vocational catering students on vocational education. It would be greatly appreciated if you could complete this questionnaire. The findings from this study would be used solely for academic purposes. Your confidentiality is assured.

Thank You.



The following questions are in relation to the perception of vocational catering students on vocational education on a scale of 1 to 4. Please read each item carefully and tick (✓) the appropriate number that indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

Scale: 1 = Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3 =Disagree 4 = Strongly Disagree

Perceptions on vocational catering education	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)
1. Students who successfully come out from Vocational Education are seen as professionals.				
2. Vocational catering education is broad				
3. Vocational education provides the needed skills required for job attainment				
4. Catering is meant for females				
5. Variety of jobs awaits students who offer Vocational catering education				
6. Catering is restrictive in nature in terms of job placement				
7. Catering is very expensive				
8. Catering is an easy programme to pass				
9. Catering is for academically weak students				
10. Vocational education is designed for the physically challenge in the society				

	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)
Factors that influence students choice to pursue vocational education				
1. Vocational education is cheap				
2. Vocational education is readily available to academically weak students				
3. Students choose vocational education because their friends are doing same				
4. Families of poor homes forces\encourage their wards to do vocational education				
5. Students pursue catering because members of their family are into catering				
6. Individuals with passion of being caterers offer vocational education				
7. Easy employment attainment is a motivation for most students who choose vocational education				
8. Society\Environment influences students to choose vocational education				
9. Individuals with a passion of being caterers offer vocational education				

	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)
Views on vocational education in terms of future job earning potential				
1. Variety of jobs awaits students who offer vocational education				
2. Catering related jobs have low status in society				
3. It is very difficult acquiring jobs after vocational catering education				
4. Salaries paid for catering jobs are low				
5. Vocational education will not give you an opportunity to hold supervisory\managerial positions				
6. Catering jobs hardly offer the opportunity to further education				
7. Employees in the catering job are seen as people with self-esteem				

8. Solutions on perceptions of vocational catering education

Indicate which of the following suggestions as the probable means of ensuring improvement in catering education.

- (1) Reduction in the cost of programme
- (2) More qualified catering teachers
- (3) Apprenticeship training

- (4) Rebranding of vocational education
- (5) Standard examination for all
- (6) Regulate apprentice-training
- (7) Provision of tools and equipment for practical training
- (8) Promoting catering as a high prestige programme

Solution	Scale
	Most probable
	Probable
	Somewhat probable

DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

9. Gender of respondent Female () Male ()
10. Age of respondent 16-20 () 21-25 () 26-30 () 31 and above
11. Marital status Single () Married () Divorced ()
12. Previous education Basic () SHS () Other specify
13. Do you have any catering related job experience Yes () No ()