



# **In-service Training, the Impact on Catering Officers' Performance Mediated by Service Innovation Performance in Ghana**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**This research examined in-service training, the impact on catering officers' performance mediated by service innovation performance. The study employed survey research approach with structured questionnaires. The study used 284 participants. Structural equation modelling supported with maximum estimator with AMOS was used to establish the relationship between the variables. This result reveals a significant relationship between the employees' perception of access to training, benefits of training, support for training and employee's performance. There was mediation effect of service innovation performance between the relationship among the constructs. This research provides important management and theoretical implications for the hospitality industry.**

**Keywords:** in-service, training, innovation, performance, catering services, hospitality and tourism, structural equation modelling.

## **INTRODUCTION**

All over the world modern business are in the stage of employing dynamic strategies that could meticulously increase effectiveness and efficiency of their human resource capability for higher productivity (Kombo, & Kakuba, 2020) and one of these strategies is training. According to (Fan & Wei, 2010) effective training and development for employees in business organizations produce high level personnel and has the potential of expanding the growth of the business organization since employees would be trained on matters that affects the growth and development of the business organization. As proposed by Campbell & Kuncel (2001) indicated that training is one of approaches that saves business organization and promotes their existence as a form of interventions in the area of HRD. There are several ways of seeing training in an organization as indicated by Jacobs (2014). Training could typically focus on specific content for a specialized group of people, technical staff, and create specific awareness for a group of people within the organization. There are different ways that business organizations could use in training their employees such as the usage of services of approach, methods,

medium as well as the location based on the nature of the situation at hand (Ahadi & Jacobs, 2017). In most real-life situations not all training needs of the employees occurred in off-the-job settings, both the classrooms and online programs. However, some of the training needs of the employees occurred on the job, usually called on-the-job training or in-service training. This type of employee training has been considered important because of its high rate of employee performance and which has also helped in job retention in most business organizations (Dinero, 2005; Jacobs, 2014). As proposed by Ahadi & Jacobs (2017) on the job training is one of the effective ways of tapping the skills of employees in an organization and as a result, it has been received and recognized by many practitioners in the field of human resource management. The on-the-job training is where employees are given the needed opportunities to learn on the task, they performed without necessarily being sent on study leave in acquiring new skills and on the job, training is essential for the hospitality and tourism staff. The hospitality industry especially has different workforce which includes but not limited to these who may or may not have strong educational background such as a valet, cleaning personnel and restaurant attendance, check-in clerks, concierge providers, the catering officers, and the general managers. These group of people serves as a reflection of a restaurants, cafeteria and hotel's hospitality culture providing various service especially food services to large number of persons and as a result everyone needs to be trained from top to bottom on certain specific values and standards. In the case of this study the in-service training for the employees must be well tailored specifically towards the work of the people, especially the catering officers. For instance, training on personal hygiene, safety and security for the catering staff is needed on regularly basis to prevent food contamination or poison and this would reduce lot of burden on the organization since none of such instance would occur and this would make such business relevant in this changing market (Mirrezaei et al., 2018). Having effective training tailored to a specific area in the work of the employees can positively increase their and even enhance employee job satisfaction (Ahmadi, 2014). Also, in the event of any unseen danger in the hotel or restaurants guests usually look to staff to direct them to avert any calamity and this is because the staff knows the lay of the organization well compared to the guests.

Employee job performance is known to include factors such as in-service training and motivation among other important variables that drive productivity (Saeed and Asghar 2012; Iqbal et al., 2020). In-services training provides employees with the needed skills, knowledge, and attitude to individuals to accomplish their assigned task properly (Iqbal et al., 2020) and such training are usually directed to and for obtaining a specific knowledge and skills to execute an assigned task effectively. The training provides employees with useful and competent skills in performing their jobs (Donkor & Banki 2017). The motivation of in-service training for hospitality and catering officers is to build an environment that leads to effective delivery of their services. The hospitality and tourism industry are one of the keys sectors that includes all the economic activities that directly or indirectly contribute to, or depend upon, travel and tourism. This industry sector includes, hotels and resorts, restaurants & catering and since the hospitality industry shows the act of kindness in welcoming and looking after the basic needs of guests or strangers, mainly in relation to food, drink, and accommodation (Tuhin, 2011). The industry is a broad category of fields within the service industry that includes lodging, food and drink service, event planning, theme parks, travel, and tourism. It includes hotels, tourism agencies, restaurants, and bars (Narteh, 2013). This study focuses on employees in the catering services. This area provides a significant contribution to the nation's economy. They provide

and create jobs; they serve as a source of innovation and entrepreneurial spirit; they harness individual creative effort; and they create competition and are the seed bed for businesses of the future. Although industry is contributing immensely to the development of the economy, it is limited by sufficient training and development for its employees. The industry has rich strategies that stimulate collective action, but such strategies are not fully implemented to the later such includes relevant training for employees to enhance their performance by investing significant employee wellbeing (ILO,2020). The purpose of this study is to examine the role of in-service training and its impact on catering officers' performance and below are the specific objectives of the study.

1. To investigate how (a) perceived access, (b) perceived benefits, and (c) perceived support for training impact service innovation performance.
2. To assess the impact of (a) perceived access, (b) perceived benefits, and (c) perceived support for training on the performance of catering staff.
3. To explore whether service innovation performance mediates the relationship between (a) perceived access, (b) perceived benefits, and (c) perceived support for training, and the performance of catering staff.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Background and Research Hypotheses**

Business organizations have the motive of generating a high level of productivity for organizational growth and one of the key factors to ensuring this high-level productivity is through capacity, skills, and competencies building. These are very important for employees to work effectively and efficiently. This is possible when human resource management of organizations empower its operations by ensuring proper planning and implementers of relevant training policies for its employees to improve the performance of the employees (Hidayat & Budiartma, 2018). Training enhances employee's performance (Bhardwaj, 2014; Cheraghi & Schøtt, 2015). The next section discusses the background and proposed hypotheses for the study.

### **Theoretical Framework of the Study**

This study examines in-service training, the impact on catering officers' performance mediated by service innovation performance in the hospitality and catering industry. Training and development programs are meant to upgrade employees on the job for effective and efficient performance. Although, training has much role of the employees, few studies have examined how training (in-service) could impact the performance of employees especially those in the hospitality and catering industry to examine quality of service and general performance of employees (Dhar, 2015; Shen & Tang, 2018). A study conducted by Dhar (2015) examined the indirect relationship that exist between training and quality of service whilst Shen & Tang (2018) in their study examined the role of training factors such as benefits of training, the opportunity for training and perceived support for training without considering the mediation role of service innovation performance. This study seeks to examine the mediation role of service innovation performance on the relationship between training factors on employee performance and the theory supporting the study is social exchange as it is in support of the study (Bashir & Long, 2015; Blau, 1960). As proposed by Newman et al. (2011) training and development opportunities provided by an employer can be considered a social exchange between the employing organization and its employees for the purposes of improving

performance. Training and development opportunities are a dual-purpose benefit for both employees and employers (Ocen et al., 2017; Shore et al., 2006). The users of the social exchange theory believe that organization ability to continuously providing employees with continuous training opportunities can be said as a form of incentives which suggest that organization cares about their wellbeing and appreciates their contributions towards the growth of the organization (Aryee, Budhwar, Chen, 2002; Mansour et al., 2020). The follows of the social exchange theory believes that training opportunities does not only improve the employee's performance but to a large extent cover the socio-emotional aspects of the relationship that exist between the organization and its employees. Bashir & Long (2015) indicated that the term social exchange involves the act of voluntary action, which is performed by an organization for their employees, with the purpose of expecting higher productivity and better behavioral outcomes from employees. When management or owners of business organization see the need to improve the wellbeing of their employees, through effective policies, then the employees would in turn give up positive and better behavioral outcomes towards the growth of the organization (Arasanmi et al., 2011; Arasanmi & Krishna, 2019). It is based on this theory that the investigators developed the ideas for this study (establishing the relationship that exists between in-service training on staff performance mediated by service innovation performance).

## Research Hypotheses

### Perceived Access to Training:

Organizational growth is highly dependent on the kind of opportunities available for employees to upgrade themselves. training and developmental competencies are very necessary for employees to increase their level of potential.

The perceived access to training refers to where employees have full accessibility to all training needs and opportunities to acquire new knowledge, skills and competencies, attitudes and behaviors required for improved performance (Waqanimaravu & Arasanmi, 2020). The training is usually given to the employees to boost their level of confidence in the performance of their assigned roles in the organization. The accessibility to training needs include opportunities to attend popular and productive on-the-job and off-the-job training (in-service) to improve the skills of the employees for adequate delivery of their mandate. Thus, when employees are perceived to have greater access to training needs, it increases their training participation rate which makes it more attractive to employees to acquire new skills in their job

(James & Waldron, 2011). In order words, employees are demotivated when there is lack or inadequate training needs available to them. In the hospitality and catering industry, quality service is their hall mark and as result basic training on organizational practices regarding how to treat clients, quality of services, the usage of exclusive discounts and credit sales all have a way to improve the performance of the industry (Karlan & Valdivia, 2011). Organizational performance is highly based on the kind of skills and know-how of the employees with regards to their role (Blume, Ford, Baldwin, & Huang, 2009; Shen & Tang, 2018). It is based on the need for in-service and its impact on performance, hence the need of this hypothesis as follows.

- *Hypothesis one: There is a positive relationship between access to training and catering staff performance.*

### **Perceived Benefits of Training:**

The reason for investing significant amounts of money and other forms of resources in training and development for employees is to increase performance (Kuchеров & Manokhina, 2017; Lauzier & Mercier, 2018; Steele-Johnson et al., 2010). However, when the intended motive of the investment is not met with an increased level of affective organizational commitment and performance among the employees, then there is no guarantee that management would commit to the training needs of the employees, since there would be no associated benefits because of the training (Abd Rahman et al., 2013; Dirani, 2012). As indicated by Yang, Sanders & Bumatay (2012) perceived benefits derive from training and developmental programs for employees is the kind of perceptions that the positive and favorable outcomes that is derived through attending relevant training session. It is usually based on the individual, job-related, and career benefits as indicated by (Nordhaug, 1989). The individual benefits are the skills and knowledge acquired from training and required for effective employee job performance. Job benefits comprise attaining exchanges within and among team members, while the career benefits may include training outcomes that are useful for future career prospects and personal development (Noe & Wilk, 1993; Tooksoon, 2011). Organization ability to have relevant training for employees enable them to have a strong belief regarding training benefits which affects their attitudes towards the work (Al Emadi & Marquardt, 2007) and significantly influence their performance (Memon et al., 2016). Based on available research evidence in support of the link between the benefits of training and employee performance, the next hypothesis is formulated as follows.

- *Hypothesis two: There is a positive relationship between the perceived benefits of training and catering staff performance.*

### **Perceived Support for Training:**

Perceived support for training is considered to be an assistance extended by an organization to its employees to motivate them to develop high level of positive attitude toward training participation and the post-training usage of gained skills in the workplace (Waqanimaravu, & Arasanmi, 2020). Organizations' ability to invest heavily in training and development for employees suggests how employees are valued by their superiors. When employees have belief and confidence in their employers with regards to support for training it increases the employees' commitments towards their task (Ocen et al., 2017; Teck-Hong & Yong-Kean, 2012). Studies have shown that employees support for training positively influences employees' performance (Brunetto, Farr-Wharton, & Shacklock, 2012; Teck-Hong & YongKean, 2012) and the transfer of skills and gained knowledge (Arasanmi et al., 2011; Arasanmi & Ojo, 2019) that would improve service innovation performance (Shen & Tang, 2018). There are several studies that have indicated the positive impact of training support on employee's performance as motivator for greater works (Park, Kang, & Kim, 2018; Tian, Cordery, & Gamble, 2010). In the case of the hospitality and catering industry, regular training is essential to increase employees' commitment, motivation level, and the skill required for providing quality service to customers. Based on this, it can be concluded that when employees have higher perceptions of support for training, it increases their performance level significantly. Hence this hypothesis is formulated as follows.

- *Hypothesis three: There is a positive relationship between support for training and catering staff performance.*

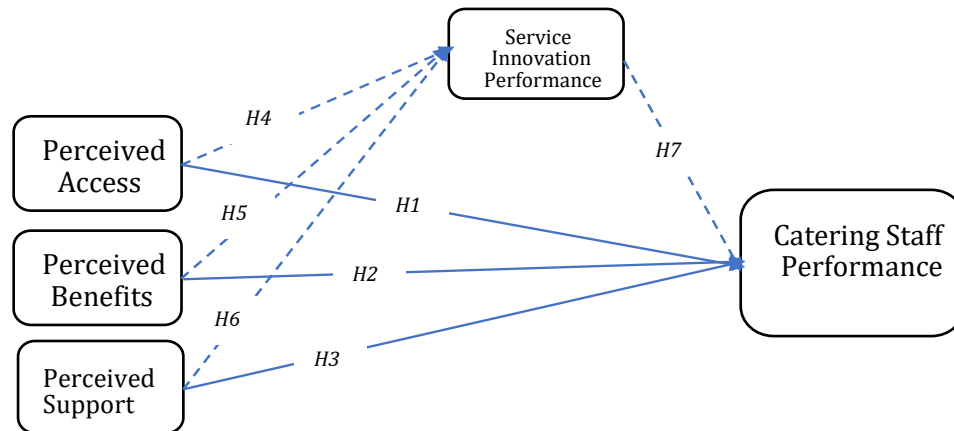
### **Service Innovation Performance As A Mediator Variable:**

Service innovation performance is one of the key variables that enhances productivity in business operations. In modern business activities, most economies are moving steadily from the traditional production of goods to that of enhancing quality of services, thus becoming predominantly a service economy (Hu, Horng, & Sun, 2009). This kind of service is mainly from an idea, practice, process or product that is regarded as new by an individual or group, and that transforms a new problem-solving notion into an application to solve a particular issue (Rogers, 2010). Being innovative is the heartbeat of modern business especially in this era of COVID-19 when most economies are on the edge of collapsing. In the case of the hospitality and catering industry, service innovation is a key factor for the survival of the organizations operations, because it allows them to improve the quality of products, increase sales and profits, cut costs, meet the changing needs of customers, obtain greater market share, and differentiate themselves from competitors in today's competitive environment (Chang et al., 2011; Ottenbacher & Gnoth, 2005).

In modern hospitality and catering services, innovation has a significant role in the performance of the employees. However, most of these innovative ideas are because of the kind of training and education that one has on the job. Effective training for employees generates several benefits for the hospitality and catering industry, such as improved service quality (Dhar, 2015), staffs' increased job satisfaction (Chiang, Back, & Canter, 2005) and productivity (Kilic & Okumus, 2005) and decreased turnover intentions (Cho et al., 2006). However, limited research attention has been paid to examine the mediation role of service innovation performance on the relationship between training factors and employee's performance. Chang et al. (2011) in their study indicated the need to investigate how innovations can be fostered through human resource management practices (through selecting and training) in hospitality firms and showed that extensive training of frontline employees is of particular importance in encouraging innovations in the organizations for greater performance. In the context of our study, frontline employees as those individuals directly involved in customer-facing roles within the hospitality and catering industry. The front lines employees in the hospitality industry are those who directly interact with customers. In line with this rationale, and the three dimensions of training, these hypotheses are formulated as follows.

- *Hypothesis four: There is a positive relationship between perceived access and service innovation performance.*
- *Hypothesis five: There is a positive relationship between perceived benefits and service innovation performance.*
- *Hypothesis six: There is a positive relationship between perceived support and service innovation performance.*
- *Hypothesis seven: Service innovation performance mediates the positive relationship between perceived access of training and service innovation performance.*
- *Hypothesis eight: Service innovation performance mediates the positive relationship between perceived benefits from training and catering staff performance.*
- *Hypothesis nine: Service innovation performance mediates the positive relationship between perceived support and catering staff performance.*

It is based on the above reviews that this conceptual framework is adopted for the study as shown in Figure1.



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the study. Dotted lines represent mediation effects**

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Convenient sampling technique was used for the study and employees participated on a voluntary basis. The participants, after filling in the research instrument returned the completed questionnaire to the investigator for further analysis.

### Participants

The study involved frontline employees selected from the hospitality and catering industry in Greater Accra, Ghana. In this study frontline employees as those individuals directly involved in customer-facing roles within the hospitality and catering industry. These roles typically include positions such as waitstaff, chefs, kitchen staff, concierge, receptionists, and other personnel directly responsible for delivering services to guests or customers. A total of 379 questionnaires were distributed to general managers using both paper questionnaire and through electronically, using an online platform of selected organizations for subsequent distribution to their employees. The study focused on frontline employees working within various sectors of the hospitality and catering industry, including hotels, restaurants, event catering, and related service providers. These segments were chosen to capture a diverse range of job roles and experiences within the industry, allowing for a comprehensive examination of training practices, staff performance, and service innovation performance. The study initially contacted 420 participants of which 379 participants agreed to participate in the study, however 284 of them followed through and participated as planned. This yielded a response rate of 75 percent.

### Eligibility of the Participants

To participate, individuals needed to meet specific eligibility criteria. The qualifying questions included: (1) Did you receive in-service catering training in the past year? (2) Are you currently employed as a catering officer in Ghana? ;(3) Have you been involved in implementing catering service innovation initiatives?

### Research Instrument

The research instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire, administered through a self-administered questionnaire approach. The questionnaire consisted of two main sections: (1) Demographic Profile of the Respondents: This section included questions related

to respondents' demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, education, nationality, and more. (2) Variables Relating to the Research Interest: This section encompassed variables relevant to the research focus, including aspects related to hospitality and catering training practices, staff performance, and employees' service innovation performance. The research questions in this study were derived from previous studies. The training items were adopted from (Dhar's, 2015) which has three main dimensions namely: (1) perceived accessibility to training which has 12 items and six items measuring staffs perceived support for training. The service innovation performance items were developed from Matear et al. (2004) and Scott & Bruce (1994). The service innovation performance was measured with six items adopted from Hu, Horng, and Sun's (2009) study, which investigates the influence of hospitality and catering staff knowledge sharing on employees' service innovation performance. Employee performance items were adopted from (Wongleedee, 2020) measured with four items. In all 23 items were involved in this study and all items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1-strongly disagree through to 5-strongly agree.

### Statistical Analysis

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 26.0) tool was supported with descriptive techniques (mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis) to provide participants profile, correlations among constructs, Cronbach alpha( $\alpha$ ) analysis for each construct. Also, confirmatory factor analysis through structural equation modelling (SEM) approach supported by Analysis of moment of structures (AMOS 23.0) was used to examine the interrelationship among the constructs with maximum likelihood estimation algorithm. The SEM is an advanced multivariate statistical technique that combines multiple regressions with CFA to establish interrelated dependence relationships among constructs. through the CFA, constructs validity (convergent validity and discriminant validity) and reliability were examined before test for a significant relationship in the structural model (Ifinedo, 2006). Model fit indices such as goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the normed fit index (NFI) etc. were used to determine the adequacy of the model.

## RESULTS

### Demographic Profile of Participants

The results obtained suggest that 19.01% were males and the remaining 80.99% female. The results showed that 11.27% were between the ages of 18-20 years, 14.44% were between 21-30; 30.63% within 31-40 years; 23.59% within 41-50 years; 14.44% between 51-60 years whilst 5.63% were above age 60 years. It could be observed that, 33.8% of the participants were secondary school leavers; 36.62% were technical/ vocational graduates; 22.89% were graduates from tertiary institution whilst 6.69% were post graduate leavers. Also, most of the participants have 10-19 working experience; followed by those who have between 1-9 years' working experience. The results suggest that 34.51% were single whilst the remaining 65.49% represented married employees.

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

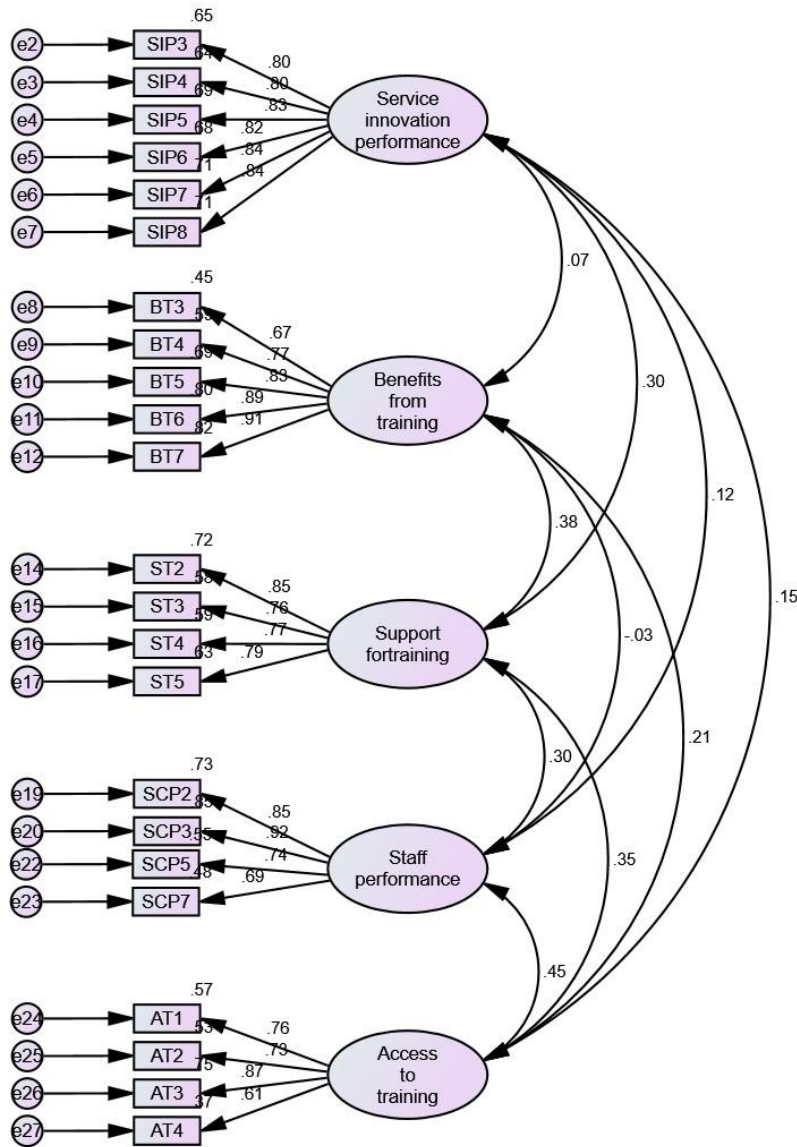
The means, standard deviations, and correlations (see Figure 2 for detail) among the variables are presented in Table 1. The first step in analyzing the data was the analysis of the measurement model through a CFA.



**Table 1 Descriptive statistics**

| Construct; N=284                 |      |      | Correlation |          |         |         |       |
|----------------------------------|------|------|-------------|----------|---------|---------|-------|
| Variables                        | Mean | SD   | 1           | 2        | 3       | 4       | 5     |
| 1 Service innovation performance | 3.94 | 0.06 | 1.000       |          |         |         |       |
| 2 Benefits from training         | 3.26 | 0.24 | 0.075**     | 1.000    |         |         |       |
| 3 Support for training           | 3.79 | 0.17 | 0.305**     | 0.376**  | 1.000   |         |       |
| 4 Catering Staff performance     | 3.85 | 0.07 | 0.122**     | -0.033** | 0.302** | 1.000   |       |
| 5 Access to training             | 3.93 | 0.10 | 0.148**     | 0.209**  | 0.354** | 0.449** | 1.000 |

Note: \*\* denotes significance level of 0.01



**Figure 2: Correlation among constructs**

### Construct's Reliability and Validity

The reliabilities of the items/ constructs were examined using the composite reliability and Cronbach alpha( $\alpha$ ) in examining the internal consistency. The reliability results for all the constructs were above the recommended value of 0.70 for both composite and Cronbach alpha

as displayed in Table 2, hence indicating good reliability level (Hair et al.,2010). Also, the validity was measured in two main dimensions (convergent and discriminant validity), convergent was measured based on the standardized loading. As indicated in the Table 2, all factor loadings for the study items ranged from 0.616 to 0.922 above the recommended value above 0.50, hence convergent validity is achieved (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988).

**Table 2: Overall reliability of the constructs and factor loadings of indicators.**

| <i>Item</i>                           | <i>CR</i> | <i>AVE</i> | <i>Cronbach alpha(<math>\alpha</math>)</i> | <i>Factor loadings</i> |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------------|--|------------------------|
| <i>Service innovation performance</i> |           |            |  |                        |
| SIP3                                  | 0.927     | 0.679      | 0.927                                      | 0.803                  |
| SIP4                                  |           |            |  | 0.799                  |
| SIP5                                  |           |            |  | 0.833                  |
| SIP6                                  |           |            |  | 0.824                  |
| SIP7                                  |           |            |  | 0.841                  |
| SIP8                                  |           |            |  | 0.843                  |
| <i>Benefits from training</i>         |           |            |  |                        |
| BT3                                   | 0.910     | 0.671      | 0.911                                      | 0.673                  |
| BT4                                   |           |            |  | 0.769                  |
| BT5                                   |           |            |  | 0.832                  |
| BT6                                   |           |            |  | 0.892                  |
| BT7                                   |           |            |  | 0.908                  |
| <i>Support for training</i>           |           |            |  |                        |
| ST2                                   | 0.872     | 0.630      | 0.761                                      | 0.858                  |
| ST3                                   |           |            |  | 0.765                  |
| ST4                                   |           |            |  | 0.755                  |
| ST5                                   |           |            |  | 0.794                  |
| <i>Catering Staff performance</i>     |           |            |  |                        |
| SCP2                                  | 0.881     | 0.652      | 0.878                                      | 0.853                  |
| SCP3                                  |           |            |  | 0.922                  |
| SCP5                                  |           |            |  | 0.743                  |
| SCP7                                  |           |            |  | 0.691                  |
| <i>Access to training</i>             |           |            |  |                        |
| AT1                                   | 0.833     | 0.558      | 0.829                                      | 0.748                  |
| AT2                                   |           |            |  | 0.731                  |
| AT3                                   |           |            |  | 0.872                  |
| AT4                                   |           |            |  | 0.616                  |

Note: CR is the Composite Reliability; AVE is the Average Variance Extracted

In this study, the discriminant validity for the constructs was examined comparing the average variance extracted with the correlation between the constructs. According to (Fornell & Larcker ,1981) suggested that the AVE value of every construct should be greater than the squared correlation coefficient with other constructs. Table 3 displays the discriminant validity results, as all the AVE in the leading diagonals were above any correlation in the results, indicating that a common method bias was not considered a problem in this study or collinearity is absent among the constructs (Hair et al., 2010).

**Table 3: Discriminant validity.**

| <i>Construct</i>                  | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. Service innovation performance | 0.679    |          |          |          |          |
| 2. Benefits from training         | 0.075**  | 0.671    |          |          |          |
| 3. Support for training           | 0.305**  | 0.376**  | 0.630    |          |          |
| 4. Staff performance              | 0.122**  | -0.033** | 0.302**  | 0.652    |          |
| 5. Access to training             | 0.148**  | 0.209**  | 0.354**  | 0.449**  | 0.558    |

Note. The numbers in the cells of diagonal line are AVE. The numbers in the cells of off diagonal line are squared correlation coefficients of one factor with another factor. \*\* denotes significance level of 0.01.

### Structural Equation Model (SEM)

The adequacy of the proposed model was assessed based on a series of model fit indices. The outcomes of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis is presented in Table 4 which suggest that the model exhibit a good fit based on the obtained model fit indices ( $\chi^2/df=1.541$ ), GFI=0.957, CFI=0.970, AGFI=0.888, NFI= 0.926, SRMR=0.049, RMSEA=0.040.). The results suggest that all the measures' coefficient as were above the recommended threshold values, therefore confirming that all measures are adequate, hence test of formulated could be examined.

**Table 4: Summary of model fit indices**

| Measure                 | Estimate | Threshold       | Interpretation |
|-------------------------|----------|-----------------|----------------|
| Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) | 339.128  | --              | --             |
| df                      | 220      | --              | --             |
| $\chi^2/df$             | 1.541    | Between 1 and 3 | Excellent      |
| CFI                     | 0.970    | >0.95           | Excellent      |
| GFI                     | 0.957    | >0.970          | Excellent      |
| AGFI                    | 0.888    | >0.90           | Very Good      |
| NFI                     | 0.926    | >0.950          | Very Good      |
| SRMR                    | 0.049    | <0.08           | Excellent      |
| RMSEA                   | 0.044    | <0.06           | Excellent      |
| PClose                  | 0.870    | >0.05           | Excellent      |

Note: Model values meeting the threshold signifies acceptance level

### Hypotheses Testing

#### Direct Effect:

- *Hypothesis one postulates the positive relationship between access to training and catering staff performance.*

The results for the path estimates are shown in Table 5. As evidence access to training has positive and significant influence on staff performance ( $\beta=0.506^{**}$ ), hence hypothesis 1 is supporting. This result signifies that when employees have readily available training opportunities, it leads to a noticeable and valuable enhancement in their job performance. Thus, investing in training programs has a clear and meaningful impact on how well employees carry out their duties, ultimately benefiting the organization through improved skills and competencies among its staff.

- *Hypothesis two postulates a positive relationship between the perceived benefits of training and catering staff performance*

Benefits from training influences staff performance in a positive manner ( $\beta=0.188^{***}$ ). This is an indication that the perception of the advantages gained from training has a notable and meaningful impact on the performance of catering staff. Thus, when employees believe that training brings them significant benefits, such as improved skills, knowledge, or career prospects, their job performance tends to reflect this positive influence. In essence, their perception of the benefits of training plays a vital role in motivating and enhancing their performance in catering roles.

- *Hypothesis three examines the positive relationship between support for training and catering staff performance.*

Support for training has positive and significant influence on staff performance ( $\beta=0.1900$ ). This result suggests that the level of support provided for training initiatives directly and noticeably affects the performance of catering staff. In other words, when employees receive substantial support, such as resources, encouragement, and opportunities for skill development, their job performance significantly improves.

- *Hypothesis four, postulates the positive and significant influence of perceived access on service innovation performance.*

The result as shown suggests that perceived access showed significant and positive influence on service innovation performance ( $\beta=0.192^{***}$ ). Thus, when employees perceive they have easy access to resources, information, or tools relevant to service innovation, it leads to a beneficial impact on their ability to innovate. In other words, the perception of accessibility to necessary elements positively influences their performance in generating innovative solutions or improvements in service delivery.

- *Hypothesis five examines the positive relationship between perceived benefits and service innovation performance.*

The result obtained suggests that perceived benefit has positive and significant influence on service innovation performance ( $\beta=0.284^{**}$ ). The result implies that when employees perceive that they gain valuable benefits from engaging in service innovation activities, it not only has a favorable impact on their performance but also the influence is meaningful and noteworthy. Essentially, recognizing the advantages and rewards of participating in innovation efforts motivates and significantly enhances their ability to contribute to service innovation within the organization.

- *Hypothesis six states that there is positive relationship between perceived support and service innovation performance.*

The results indicated that perceived support has positive and significant influence on service innovation performance ( $\beta=0.264^{***}$ ). The result implies that when employees perceive that they receive substantial support, such as resources, encouragement, or guidance, for their involvement in service innovation, it leads to a beneficial impact on their performance in generating innovative ideas and solutions.

### **Indirect Effects:**

- *Hypothesis seven postulates service innovation performance mediates the positive relationship between perceived access of training and service innovation performance.*

Service innovation performance mediates the relationship between perceived access and staff performance. Therefore, it can be stated that service innovation performance acts as a partial mediator in this study 0.001312 (0.410\*0.0032). This result implies that service innovation performance serves as an intermediary factor between employees' perceived access to resources or opportunities and their overall staff performance. Thus, when employees believe they have good access to necessary elements for innovation, it positively affects their innovation performance, which, in turn, leads to improved staff performance. Therefore, service innovation performance mediates in explaining how perceived access influences staff performance within an organization.

- *Hypothesis eight examines how service innovation performance mediates the positive relationship between perceived benefits from training and catering staff performance.*

As evidenced in the result service innovation performance mediates the relationship between perceived benefits and staff performance and has partially mediation effects 0.0005952 (0.186\*0.0032). This result implies that service innovation performance plays a critical role in explaining how employees' perception of the benefits of their work relates to their overall staff performance. Thus, service innovation performance acts as a mediator and partially explains this relationship.

- *Hypothesis nine postulates the positive and mediating role of innovation performance on the relationship between perceived support and catering staff performance*

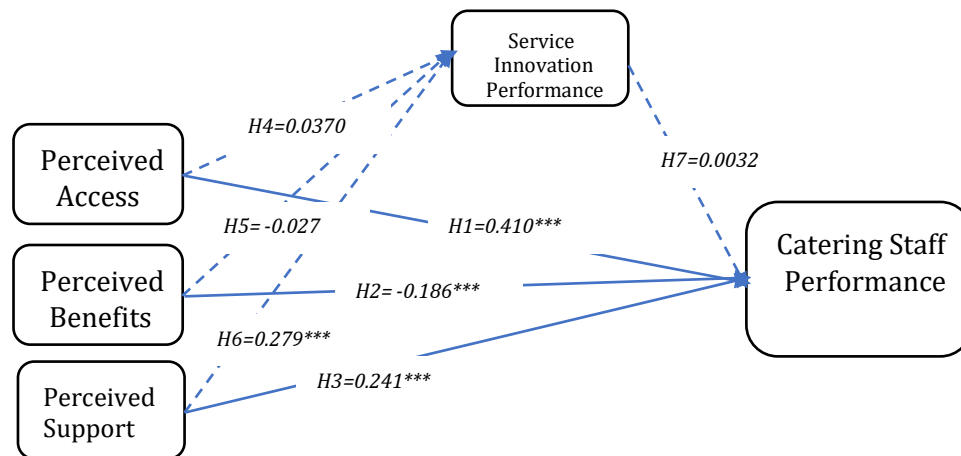
The result suggest that service innovation performance fully mediates the relationship between support and staff performance 0.00077(0.241\*0.0032), hence the hypothesis is supporting as evidenced in the Table 5. This hypothesis signifies that service innovation performance serves as a complete mediator in explaining the relationship between the support employees receive and their overall staff performance. Thus, when employees perceive substantial support, it directly and entirely influences their service innovation performance, which in turn fully accounts for the influence on their overall staff performance. The values for path estimates can also be seen in Fig. 3 showing the results of the proposed hypotheses as shown in appendix.

**Table 5: Path estimates of structural models.**

| Path                           |          |                        | Direct effect model ( $\beta$ ) | Full mediation( $\beta$ ) | Partial mediation( $\beta$ ) |
|--------------------------------|----------|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Staff performance              | <-<br>-- | Access to training     | 0.506***                        |                           | 0.410(5.905***)              |
| Staff performance              | <-<br>-- | Benefits from training | 0.188***                        |                           | 0.186(-2.955**)              |
| Staff performance              | <-<br>-- | Support for training   | 0.190***                        |                           | 0.241(3.471***)              |
| Service innovation performance | <-<br>-- | Benefits from training | 0.284***                        | 0.036                     | 0.765(14.414***)             |
| Service innovation performance | <-<br>-- | Support for training   | 0.264***                        | 0.243***                  | 0.296(4.089***)              |

|                                |          |                                |          |       |                  |
|--------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|----------|-------|------------------|
| Service innovation performance | <-<br>-- | Access to training             | 0.192*** | 0.081 | 0.755(13.806***) |
| Staff performance              | <-<br>-- | Service innovation performance |          | 0.000 | 0.0032           |

Note: \*\*p-value < 0.01; \*\*\*p-value < 0.001;  $\beta$  is the Standardized path coefficients value



**Figure 3: Extracted Path results (Standardized weights) of structural model**

## DISCUSSIONS

The motive of every organization is to achieve the best from its employees for higher productivity, to achieve a sustainable competitive edge. It is important to upgrade the skills of employees to a level that enable them to perform effectively to improve the performance of the organization (Chi, Wu, & Lin, 2008; Yi-Chun & Jacobs, 2008). The hospitality and tourism industry is one of the key sectors that contribute significantly to the growth and development of the economy and as result require relevant training and development program for the staff performance (Cravo, 2010; Cunningham, 2011). According to (Cope, 2003) indicated that effective learning and training capabilities of employees promote success to the organization.

In this study, the researchers examined the role of in-service training, the impact on catering officers' performance mediated by service innovation performance in Greater-Accra, Ghana. The findings of the study suggest that the perception access to training has a positive and significant impact on staff performance. In this sense, the impact of perceived benefits has positive and significant influence on staff hospitality and catering performance. Also, perceived support has positive and significant influence on staff performance offered by hospitality and catering employees provides valid proof for extending the theory that the perception of training related activities acts as a base for an effective employee-employee social exchange relationship as indicated by (Balkin & Richebe, 2007). Studies have shown that providing relevant training and development for employees serves as a tool for influencing service innovation performance and, subsequently, affects the employee's performance (Lambert et al., 2009; Owens, 2006).

Although, it has been recognized in the hospitality and catering industry provides significant services to attract and retaining customers for business operations, few studies have been conducted in developing economies like Ghana that has highlighted many issues with the services operations. This research seeks to examine or redress this kind of challenges affecting the hospitality and catering services in Ghana. This research contributes significantly to the body of research, especially in the hospitality and catering industry. This result put forward a model that examines the relationship that exists between training variables and staff performance mediated through by innovation performance. Although many studies have been conducted in the past specially in the developed countries in the study area, to the author's knowledge only few studies have been done in western Africa economies and none to the knowledge of the author in Ghana, taking the study variables into consideration in the hospitality and catering industry.

The result demonstrated that employee perceived access to training needs positively influence their performance. This is an indication that when employees have access to relevant training on their job it upgrades and develops their required skills, which leads to a feeling of loyalty toward their organization. This result is consistent with previous studies that shown similar results (Brunetto et al. (2012), Ehrhardt et al. (2011), and Teck-Hong and Yong-Kean (2012) an indication that management ought to invest significantly in training to increase employee's performance.

Also, from the results obtained it was realized that the benefits employees perceived from attending a training program on their job has positive and significant relationship with the performance of their task. This suggests that when employees perceived to receiving some kind of benefits from training as part of their tasks, it is likely to develop the enthusiasm of the employees for better performance by way of increasing their commitment level (Dhar, 2015). This result is consistent with previous studies that link benefit derived from training with organizational commitment (Ehrhardt et al., 2011; Teck-Hong & Yong-Kean, 2012).

Furthermore, it was found that perceived support for training has a positive relationship with the staff performance. This result is in line with previous studies that suggested a positive and significant relationship between training support and performance (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003; Bartlett, 2001). Employees can give their best to the organization when they get significant support from their management. It is the role of management to ensuing that management specially at the Human Resource department to build a supportive environment that promotes employees to actively participate in training programs.

Although, studies have shown the direct impact of training on employees' innovativeness and its influence on organizational performance (Tan, & Nasurdin, 2011). The study result was in the opposite showing insignificant relationship between the two variables. Organizational innovation has been viewed as an essential weapon for organizations to compete in this competitive business environment and this as a result direct investment in training and development of human capital and technology (Tan & Nasurdin, 2010).

According to (Chen, 2017) perceived benefit from training has positive and significant influence on service innovation performance. Such results are consistent with previous studies in human

resource management which normally emphasis on training employees to give their best to the organization by way of been creative and innovative in their field of work to boost productivity (Tharenou et al., 2007). However, the result obtained did not support the hypothesis.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

In conclusion, this research examined in-service training on staff performance mediated by service innovation performance using the hospitality and catering industry in the Ghanaian context. The study formulated and tested nine research hypotheses, and all shown positive and statistically significant relationship. Hence all hypotheses were supporting. This study has added to the body of research especially examining the mediation effect of service innovation performance in the hospitality and catering industry. The result demonstrated the mediation effects of service innovation performance on the relationship between the various training related aspects (perceived accessibility to training, perceived support for training, and perceived benefits from training) and staff performance. The result shown that innovation performance partially mediates the relationship between access for training, benefits for training and employee performance whilst innovation fully mediates the relationship that exist between support for training and employee performance. The findings of this study validate the applicability of theories developed in previous studies. Hence, based on these findings, the hospitality and catering industry ought to have relevant training and development programs that would have significant influence on the performance of the employees. These findings also suggest that training-related initiatives taken by an organization are appreciated and recognized by all employees and management to serve its intended purpose.

### **PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The result indicates that top management of the hospitality and catering industry have the responsibility of ensuring that they have relevant training sessions couple with innovative programs to enhance their performance. Training and development opportunities serve as a catalyst to help employees reduce their errors levels and raise their productivity levels, which is necessary in modern business activities (Glaveli & Karassavidou, 2011; Rosli & Mahmood, 2013).

The management of the hospitality and catering business consider training and innovative activities to be a long-term investment to enhance the productivity of the employees. There must be sufficient allocation of funds into the promotion of training and development activities. The performance of the organization as a whole ought to be examined or evaluated in various ways, such as through customer surveys, peer surveys, and supervisor evaluations. From the best knowledge of the author's this research work is the first to examine in -service training, the impact on catering officers' performance mediated by service innovation performance using the hospitality and catering industry as a case study.

### **LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

As every study has limitations, this research work is not exceptional. It has several limitations. First, the findings of this study are survey based and cross-sectional in nature using only limited participants for the study. This makes it hard to establish that the relationships unearthed between the different factors are causal in nature. Hence, this study recommends that longitudinal and large sample size be used for future studies.



This study adopted a survey-based approach (quantitative research), and future studies should adopt qualitative design approach to have more insights of study area and get a clearer and more elaborate picture of the relationships shared between the various factors considered in this study. Other variables, either direct or indirect, must be considered in the study to understand the relationship for decision purposes. Some exemplified variables might include organizational leadership and quality skills, organizational structures, employee demand and basic organizational characteristics such age of firm, nature of business, etc.

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