

## **The Challenges in Analyzing Project Management Principles in Service Delivery in the Issuance of Driver's License (A Case Study the Driver's and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) of Ghana.)**

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### **Abstract**

*Project management is the discipline of planning, organizing, securing, managing, leading and controlling resources to achieve specific goals (kshama, 2018). Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority is a semi-autonomous public sector organization that promote good driving standards and establish methods for the training and testing of driving instructors and drivers of motor vehicle and riders of motor cycles in Ghana. Of recent, there have been a lot of road accidents as a result of poor driving practices. This study is to address some of the contributing factors by analyzing the project management principles in the service organization by focusing on the process of issuing driver's license by DVLA. Several literatures assess the concept of driving license.*

*300 respondents made up of employee and customers of the firm were sampled for the study. The mix method was employed in collection of data whilst the purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques were used. The findings of the study indicate that an applicant is eligible for a driver's license if he/she is 18 years and above and must have attended an accredited driving school.*

*The study found that, there are delays in the operations of DVLA due to the manual process they employ, the trend been currently used to register applicant and book them for exam and driving test as well as the time wasted in the printing and issuance of driver's license. Customers are very dissatisfied with the manure of operation especially customer service and accessibility to information in the company.*

**Keywords:** Applicants, Driver and Vehicle licensing Authority, Probationary, Satisfaction, Semi-autonomous.

### **Introduction**

Many organizations around the world keep failing, resulting in loss of millions of dollars due to poor service delivery. This persisting challenge has led many project management professionals to attempt to identify the critical factors that needs to be tackle head-on to produce a successful project management outcome. Smit and Cronje (2002) were of the view that firms are challenged with rapid growth in products, rising complexity and a threat from global competitions due to advancement in technological innovations. With focus for organizations to effectively secure their own position in the competitive market, accurate strategies are developed and implemented from the corporate level through principles in project management, which serves as an effective tool to attain competitive advantage.

The Driver and vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) is a semi-autonomous public sector organization under the Ministry of Transportation that promote good driving standards and establish methods for the training and testing of driving instructions and drivers of motor vehicles and riders of motor cycles and the issuance of driver's license in the country. In that view, DVLA is endorsed as the only official firm with the purpose to support high-quality driving values and road worthy vehicles. Its task also comprises of ensuring the safety of vehicles and to provide other related factors that promote effective driving and reduce the rate of accidents on the road (Parliament of the Republic of Ghana Act 569.1999).

To better provide high quality of service delivery, productivity and customer satisfaction in their operations, DVLA introduced a computer-based technology system with the partnership of a private

firm known as the Authority and Fleet Technology Limited. This development was done by the DVLA to eliminate the manual process used in training and to provide a more flexible training system where applicants go through a theory driving test. The manual process which was used by the firm was confronted with several challenges including fraud, human interference and influence and poor service delivery. The adopted technology seeks to address such challenges and ensuring value for money, transparency and accountability in the administration of the test. This technology system will go a long way of reducing road accidents, since drivers will be trained in accordance with the limit of road usage.

Furthermore, most empirical work conducted has not examined the challenges face in the service delivery in the operations of DVLA creating a huge research gap that needs to be investigated. The study therefore seeks to assess the challenges of service delivery in the issuance of license at the Driver's and Vehicle licensing Authority and the role of project management principles.

### **Research questions**

- What is the procedure involved in the issuance of driving license at DVLA?
- What are the challenges associated with the issuance of driving license?
- What is the trend analysis in the issuance of driving license at DVLA?
- What is the satisfaction level of customers in regards to DVLA customer service?

### **Literature review**

This chapter focuses on the theoretical review which analyze the concept of project management and its principles, the types of driving license issued and the reviews of the challenges that DVLA faces in the issuance process.

### **Concept of project management**

Project management is a discipline of planning, controlling, organizing and managing the different types of resources to achieve the specified project goals (Laslo 2010). Project management ensures all stages of the project follow a systematic approach of careful planning, monitoring and measuring (Murphy and Ledwith 2007).

### **Project management in the service sector- DVLA**

#### **Classes/types of licenses**

Every country has its system of issuing driving license, but in both developed and developing nations, most of these licenses are classified into six parts, which include the class (1,2,3,4 ,5 & 6). These classes of license allow drivers to drive both light and heavy vehicles. For instance, the class 1 driver's license allows the driver to drive light motor vehicles like moped, motor bikes among others while the class 2 allows drivers to drive vehicles like saloon cars and other light vehicles. Moreover, classes 3,4,5 & 6 allows their holders to drive heavy vehicles like pick-ups, articulators, trailers among other heavy vehicles. According to Gutter (2000), from class 3 to 6 licenses gives drivers the permission to use heavy vehicles that are mostly different depending on the class of the license.

Depending on the country, most licenses are issued from the age of 16 but in Ghana, license are issued from the age of 18 by law and includes all classes of license. Before an applicant can be successful in acquiring a license, then the applicant would have gone through these three stages- learners license, restricted license and full license. (Dioff, 2001).

#### **Endorsements**

In addition to the six classes, driving some types of vehicles or service machinery requires license endorsements in most developed countries. These can be gained once the appropriate course for the endorsement has been completed. Before an applicant is endorsed, the applicant must be knowledgeable in the carrying goods that are hazardous, the use of the forklift and must be instructor for using a roller and recovery vehicles.

### **Concept of driving licensing**

Having an official form of identification is imperative in the both developed and developing countries for the legal, travel and government purposes. The increases in illegal immigration and security concerns have caused officials to evaluate the role of driver's licenses as forms of identification with legal and illegal immigrants (Shults & Ali, 2010). Traditionally driver's licenses have been granted to legal citizens; however, several countries have adopted systems making it easier for legal immigrants to qualify for distinct certificate to drive. This has sparked a national debate regarding the proper use of driver's licenses as identification (Daily Graphic, 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2010).

In some developing countries like Ghana, South Africa, Kenya and Zambia, driver's licenses are often required for travels within, purchasing items such as alcohol or cigarettes confirming one's identity when using a debit or credit card (Anti & Sarpong, 2010). Many countries including Ghana, issue state IDs for those with no driver's license to serve the same identification purposes as a driver's license because it is almost impossible to conduct daily business without identification.

### **Driving licensing system in Ghana**

In Ghana, issuing license is considered officially a state matter. In each region, driving license is issued by the regional transport Offices (RTOs). Unfortunately, prior driver education is not mandatory for getting a driver license. All matters related to driver education and licensing in Ghana are presently regulated by the Road Traffic Act 2004, Act 683. As per sub-section (1) of section- 4 of the Road Traffic Act 2004, Act 683, a motorcycle with engine capacity not exceeding 50 cc and without gear (provided parents/guardian consent obtained) may be driven in a public place by a person after attaining the age of 18 years. This is potentially hazardous as young drivers are more involved in crashes and two-wheeler drivers are among the vulnerable road users.

### **Empirical review**

There have been several empirical reviews on the issuance of driving license in several countries (both developed and developing nation). For instance, due to the competitive nature of every citizen in United States of America to acquire a driving license, most firms who have been authorized to issue driving license are challenged with rapid growth in products, rising complexity and a threat from global competitions due to advancement in technological innovations (Jiot, 2004). Another similar study by Giotter (2005) confirms that with focus for organizations that have been authorized to issue driving license in Australia, and to effectively secure their own position in the competitive market, accurate strategies are developed and implemented from the corporate level through principles in project management, which serves as an effective tool to attain competitive advantage.

### **methodology of study**

The study was based on a research design that blends both qualitative and quantitative techniques in its data gathering and its analysis. According to Hiloer (2004), the research design provides the researcher the technical techniques that will be used in the analysis and to provide the researcher with solutions in a research. These techniques ensure that the researcher is able to gather sufficient information from its targeted respondents. The qualitative approach was used in gathering data from respondents through questionnaires while the quantitative approach was used in gathering data through interviews.

These methods were also used because of the nature in providing an explicit rendering of data from the respondents. In addition, observations of the business of operations of DVLA were made possible due to the use of these techniques. Observation is useful for generating in-depth descriptions of the organizations or events, for obtaining information that is otherwise inaccessible, and for conducting research when other methods are inadequate.

The research was based on both secondary and primary data. The primary data was gotten from the questionnaire and interviews that were administered to respondents during the field work the study made use of secondary sources of information from DVLA. These sources include archived data on staffs and customers of DVLA. Data was collected based on trends of driver's licenses been issued in a specific year, level of customer satisfaction, types of licenses, the procedure of obtaining driving

license and the challenges faced by DVLA on issuing driver's license. Data collected from the secondary sources significantly complement primary data and enhance the interpretation of the results (Batsa, 2008).

Due to the nature of the study, two separate sampling techniques were selected based on the staff and customers of the organization. The sampling techniques employed in this study are purposive sampling and simple random sampling. Lead (2005) defines purposive sampling as a type of sampling technique that involves the selection of particular types of respondents for the completion of a research work. In this regard, 300 respondents who are customers of the DVLA were selected for the completion of the study.

The research instrument that was employed for the study was questionnaire. The questionnaire encompassed both closed-end and open-ended questions. The questionnaires are structured in way that will reflect the significance of the research questions. The questionnaire to the study was administrated by the researcher and based on the sample selected, the research instrument was administered within a three (3) weeks. This period was selected because it afforded both the researcher and the respondents' ample time to complete the questionnaire.

All the data that was gathered from the field work through the administration of the questionnaire was coded and analyzed. The data gathered from the interviews were summarized to make a meaningful statement and the raw data were entered into tables and graphs were drawn to show the pattern of the data.

## **Results and discussion**

The previous section was on the research methodology where the various research techniques as well as sampling types and the target population were identified and discussed. This section reports on the results on the interviews conducted and questionnaire administered during the field work undertaken to analysis the project management principles in the service delivery of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority of Ghana.

### **Qualitative data**

Table on qualitative data collection methods

Methods	Brief explanations
Interview	This involves asking questions, listening to and recording answers from individuals or groups on structured and semi-structured format
observation	The researcher gets close enough to study subjects to understand and access tacit knowledge of the subject and in their respective fields.

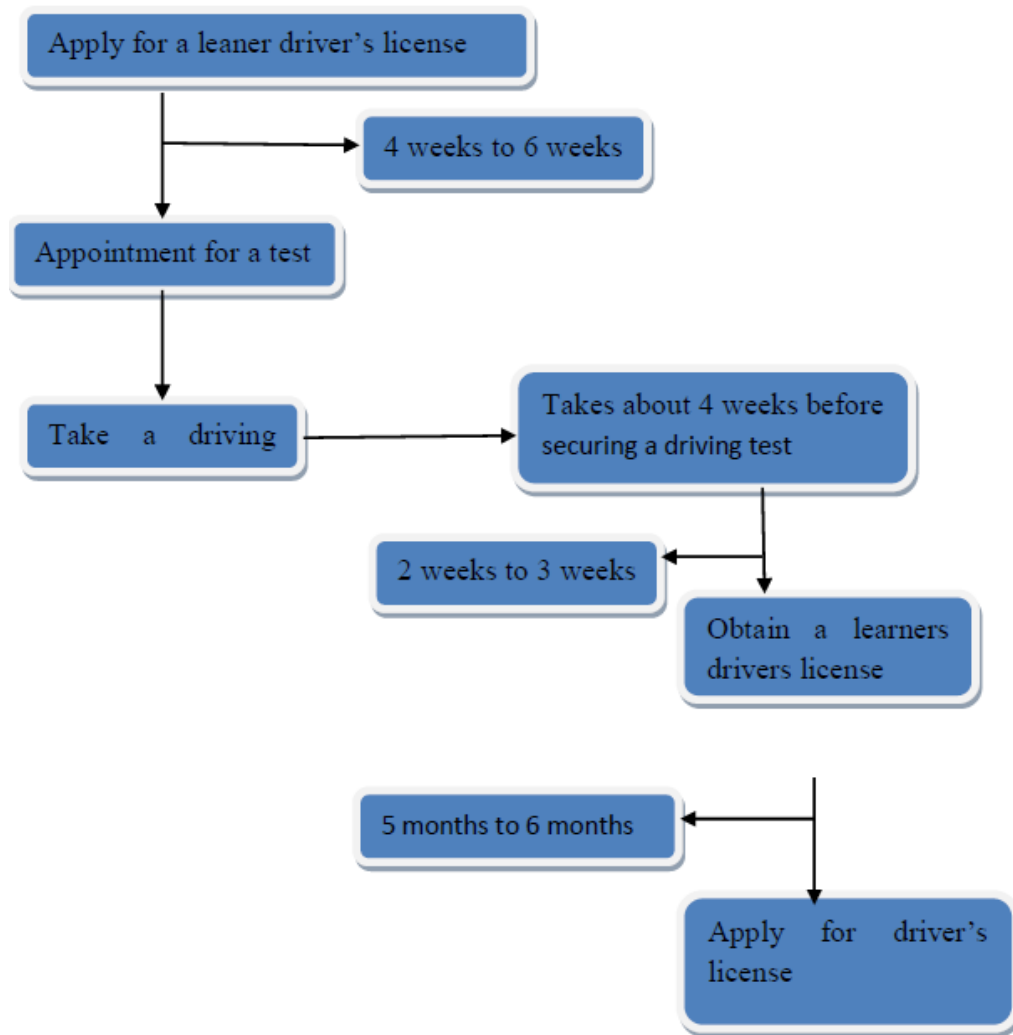
### **Analysis of data from interviews**

#### **Manual operations of DVLA**

From the onset of the DVLA, the operations of the firm were manually handed by employees. The researcher conducted interviews and observed employees to ascertain the challenges the firm faces.

#### **Flow chart depicting manual operations and durations**

The chart below illustrates the procedure an applicant goes through before obtaining a driver's license by the manual process.



Source: DVLA ARCHIVES.

### Interview

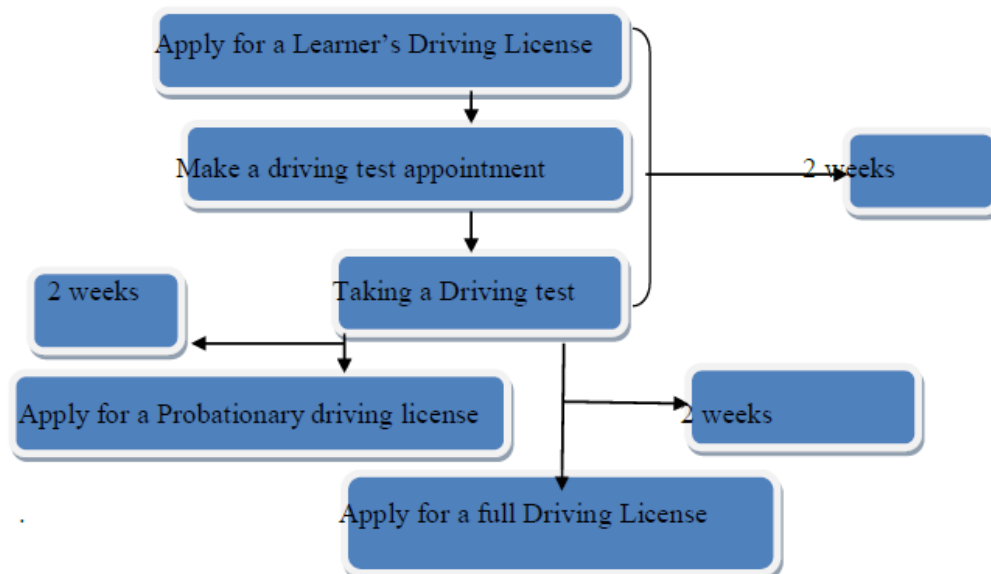
Based on the interview with Mr. David Mensah, and other officials with the license issuance department on the steps and the procedure in obtaining drives license. The following are the information gathered.

It is mandated by law that an applicant must be 18 year of to be able to acquire a license. The official further stated that before an applicant apply for a driver's license, the applicant must first obtain a learners' permit through a recognized driving school. The applicant then makes an appointment for a driving test which takes a span of two weeks for completion.

Furthermore, Mr. Mensah and his colleges explained that after an applicant has completed the driving lesson, the applicant must go through an eye test. A probation driving license is given to the applicant when the sight status is cleared. When an individual successfully completes the driving test, the applicant is been issued with a certificate of competence, which validates the applicant obtaining for a full driver's license. In all, applicants pay appropriate fees in each step they go through to an official bank account of DVLA.

The learner's driving license is used for a period of three months before obtaining a full driving license. A successful applicant of the test leads to a full driver's license, which is mostly valid for a period of six years and renewed every two years. Also, the same procedure can be applied when duplicating for a lost or deface card, a police report and an application for repayment is presented at the regional office of DVLA.

Computerize system flow chart to meet customer satisfaction needs.



Source: DVLA ARCHIVES.

For DVLA to ensure customer satisfaction and meeting customers targets there is the need for the organization to adopt a simple flow chart through a computerize system of operation that will ensure that customers' needs are met. As illustrates in figure 2; the period to apply for a license and taking a driving test takes 2 weeks only as compared to the two months it takes. This is due to the fact that, when two weeks is applied for applicants to obtain their learner driving license, it will prevent the illegal practice of middle men and eliminate duping of innocent applicant. It should be noted that, most of these applicants pass through the 'back door' or middlemen due to the long periods it takes officials of DVLA to process the driving license for the applicants.

Moreover, the period between taking the driving test and apply for a probationary driving license should take a week instead of the 4 weeks. This will create satisfaction of customers and enhance the productivity of DVLA. In addition, it takes close to 2 months to obtain a full driver's license, but with the new flowchart for DVLA, it was reduced to 2weeks. It should be noted that, it is the mission and objective of DVLA to see to it that an applicant obtains their license within a period of 3 months. But it has been the norm that it takes some applicants almost 6 to 9 months before obtaining a probation learners license. Therefore, when this procedure is implemented, it will ensure that DVLA achieves its objectives and mission as well. Also, the use of this chart will ensure that, customer satisfactions are met and staffs in the licensing department will be able to meet the 3 months deadline.

### Quantitative data

Table on quantitative data collection methods

Methods	Brief explanations
Survey	In the survey, a Checklist was used to identify behaviour, characteristics and other entities
Questionnaires	A structured checklist was used to gather data

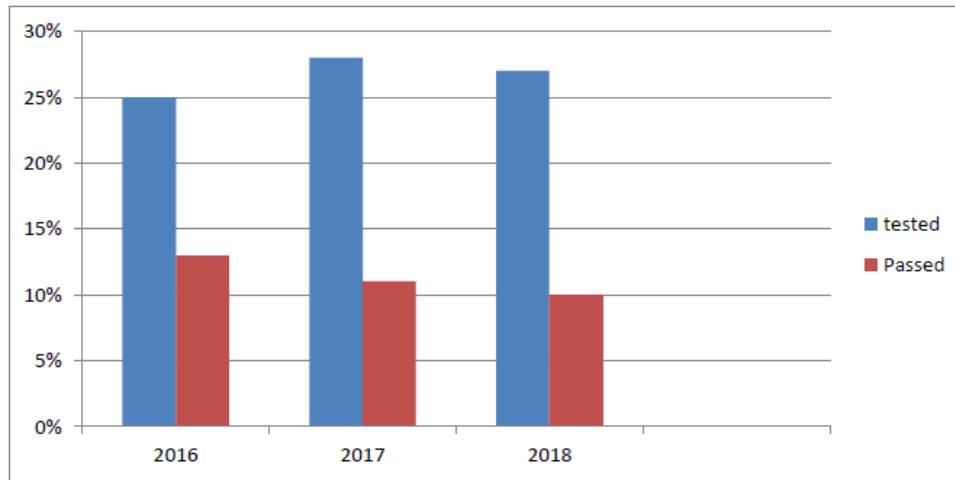
### Loopholes identified during issuance of driver's license at DVLA

During the data gathering, it was found that when applicants apply for the learner's license, it took almost two weeks before they can book an appointment for a driving test instead of the normal 2 to 3 days. Also, when an applicant successful passes the driving test, the applicant is supposed to get the temporary license within one week. However, it was found that an applicant waits as long as 2 to 3 months before their license can be ready.

Additionally, it was found that, officials of the DVLA do not follow the laid down procedures for obtaining a license. DVLA services are based on "first come, first serve". But it was found that, some

officials of DVLA collude with middlemen and take huge sum of money from customers who do not want to partake in the driving test, thereby causing the delay of the applicant who passes through the normal procedure.

**Applicant who registered and issued with a driver's license in 2016-2018 in the first quarter**



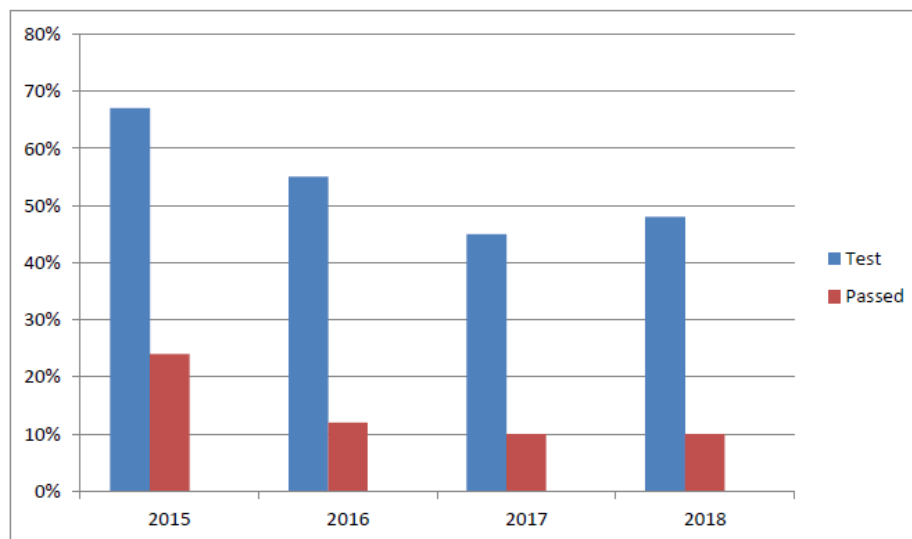
Source: Archived data

The above chart depicts the applicants that registered for a driver's license and were issued with it. The data illustrate a quarterly issuance of license from 2016 to 2018 which implies that the total of 4,589 applied for license in 2016. 1,239 representing 27% registered for the exams but only 13% were competent for a driver's license. Also, in 2017, 4,542 represented by 23.5% registered for the exams and 12.7% were issued with a driver's license, likewise in 2018, there were 4,101 represented by 23.2% registered for the exams and 10% were successful and issued with driver's license.

It can be concluded that, within the Accra district, large number of applicants who registered for an examination for a driver's license failed their exams. Based on the data gathered from officials of DVLA as to why most applicants fails their driving test, they stated that most of the applicants do not prepare adequately for the test and most also failed due to the fact that they do not understand the rules of the road.

Additionally, it can be seen from the data represented that, the trend of driver's license issued follows a downwards trends where it rises and fall within intervals. This rise can be contributed to the massive education by governmental bodies like the Metro Transport Unit, patrol unit of the Ghana police service that ensured that every driver on the road should have a driving permit. In addition, the decline can also be attributed to the unpreparedness of applicants before taking the driving test. It can also be as a result of lack of availability of learning materials for applicants.

### Trend of applicants who apply for a driver's license



Source: field data

### Level of customers' satisfaction with service delivery of DVLA

Furthermore, questionnaires were randomly distributed among 300 customers of DVLA at the Accra regional office and the outcomes are illustrated below.

#### Satisfaction of DVLA customers

Variables	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neutral
Are the service at DVLA reliable	--	12.1%	76.2%	11.7%	--
Are the officials at DVLA fast in giving information relating to any service	8.0%	15.9%	76.2%	--	--
Do the officials at DVLA have a positive attitude when i seek for their assistance?	40.1%	15.7%	--	44.2%	--
Does it take a longer time to access the service at DVLA	23.30%	16.70%	60%	--	--

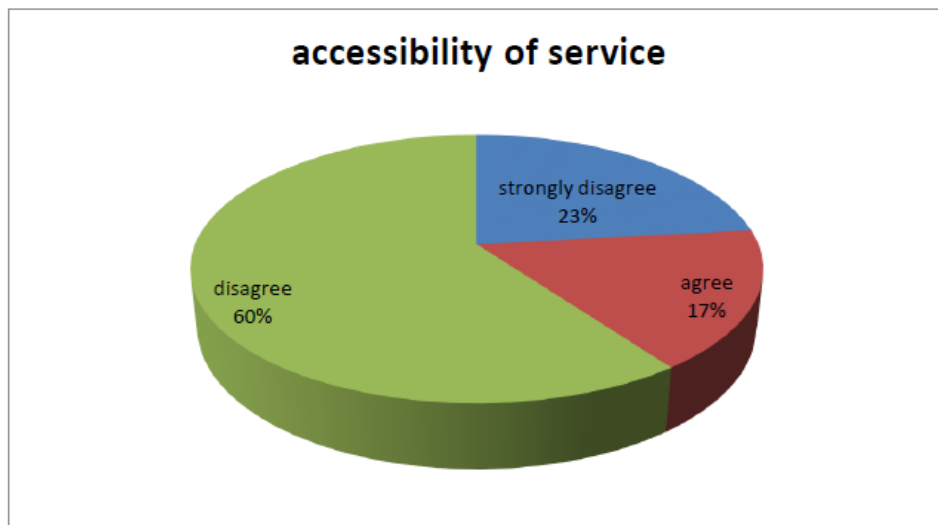
The table above illustrates the satisfaction level of customers at DVLA. The customers added that the services of the firm are not reliable and this was agreed by 76.2% of respondents. The customers explained that they were asked to come for their permanent driver's license within three months, but took them almost 6 to 7 months before having access to it.

Furthermore, 76.2% of the customers added that officials of the firm are not fast in their service delivery. With this aspect, the customers explained that, it can sometimes take almost 3 to 4 hours before their photograph can be taken. Also 35% of the customers who came for their permanent driver's license stated that, instead of 3 months grace period issued to them, it took them eight months before their license were issued to them. In addition, 41% of the customers stated that it took them almost a year before their license was issued to them.

However, 40.1% of the customers confirmed that, the officials of the firm have a positive attitude when their assistance is needed. Also, 44.2% of the customers strongly disagreed to the fact that the firm's officials have a positive attitude towards their customers. One particular customer further explained that *"some officials hardly 'smile' to them and are very unfriendly"*. Conclusively, *all the customers confirmed that it takes a longer time to have access to the services of the firm*.



### Accessibility of service at DVLA



Source: field data

Based on the data gathered from the customers of DVLA, it could be deduced that most of the customers of the firm are not satisfied with the service delivery of DVLA. For instance, 18 respondents representing 60% are not satisfied with service with regards to accessibility. Most of these customers stated that, it takes them a longer time before officials of the firm attends to them. Moreover, 68% of the customers also complained that, they had to spend the whole day at the office before their picture could be taken for a new license. Also, 52% of the customers also added that, it could take them almost 2-3 hours before having access to their data due to the fact, their data had to be searched manually. This implied that, the organization lacks electronic display of customers' data. Additionally, one particular customer stated that *"I have passed through all the procedure of acquiring a new license, but they are telling me today that they cannot find my documents, so I have to go through the process again"*.

### Challenges facing DVLA in service delivery

Secondary data gathered from officials within the procurement department and the printing department on the challenges DVLA faces on effective service delivery, particular with the issuance of driver's license card. Based on the data gathered from the respondents at the printing department, they stated that the organization uses eight printing machines, responsible for printing all driver's license card to all ten regions in Ghana. The officials added that most of these machines are obsolete and not in good condition, and currently only two of the printers are serving the entire country. They further explain that, due to the large number of people who request for new license card and replaced of their expired card, it makes it very difficult for the organization to meet it deadline, hence resulting in poor customer service.

Furthermore, when officials at the procurement department were consulted on why they have not replaced the broken machines, they also added that there has been an advertisement published in the daily newspapers, but no suppliers have been able to meet the requirement of DVLA procurement policy. The officials added that, they recently received one supplier from South Africa, but they are working towards it.

Moreover, another challenges the officials vaulted out was the high cost of raw materials for the card production and printing. "in some cases, these materials have to source from remote locations and inflated with currency depreciate and taxation, making it very expensive", as stated by one of the officials. Moreover, they further explain that the challenge is been compounded by lack of sound financial backing which could enable the plastic card to be stock in bulk materials, which will enhance cost cuts.

Additionally, another challenge mentioned is a third-party challenge. DVLA is in contract with a printing press that prints the driver's license card. According to statement from officials DVLA, it

takes a longer time for this printing press to deliver the request of DVLA. They further added that, when most of the cards are delivered, it come with fault, for instance, an applicant surname can be change to another and distorted images of some of the picture.

## **Recommendations and conclusion**

### **Summary of the major findings**

Discussion on the summary of the finding is based on the research objectives which assess the analysis of the procedures involved in the issuance of driving license. Based on the data gathered at the firm, an applicant must be above 18 years and must have attended an accredited driving school. Afterwards, the applicant is sent to a licensing officer for a driving test. After a successful pass, the applicant is given a certificate of competency, before proceeding to complete the driver's license application form. After application, the applicant writes an examination and goes for an eye test, where he/she is issued with a learner's permit for a period of three months to test his/ her eligibility to drive on the road, after passing the exams and the eye test.

Another objective is to identify weakness in delays associated with the issuance of license. Based on the data gathered from the respondents, out of the eight available printing machines for the printing license cards, only two of the machines are in operation, which makes it difficult for the organization to meet its three months deadline for collection of license cards. Another finding was the challenge of the third party. DVLA had contracted a printing press that prints the details of applicants on plastic cards. It was found that when this third party submits the cards, the information that are displayed on the cards are distorted there by creating the delay in the issuance.

Furthermore, there is the issue of establishing the trend analysis in the issuance of the driving license. Based on the data from the regional office of the firm in Accra, 14,368 customers registered for a test to acquire a driver's license and out of these customers, 8138 passed the examination and were issued with a driver's license in 2015.

Conclusively, the trend of driver's license issued particularly in Accra follows a steady trend where it rises and falls within intervals. More applicants register for the exams and only a few are able to pass for the acquisition of the driver's license.

The last objective was to determine the satisfaction level of customers with regards to DVLA customer service. Based on the data gathered from selected customers, the satisfaction level of customers was not encouraging. Most customers stated that it took them longer periods before they were attended to. Also, some of the customers were of the view that the service been render by the firm is unreliable which were agreed by 66% of respondents. In all, majority of respondent were not impressed by the way and manure the company transact it business and as such if there was another competitor, they could have opted for them.

### **Conclusion**

The research seeks to focus on analyzing the procedures involve in the issuance of driving license at DVLA. The Driver and vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) is a semi-autonomous public sector organization under the Ministry of Transportation that promote good driving standards and establish methods for the training and testing of driving instructions and drivers of motor vehicles and riders of motor cycles and the issuance of driver's license in the country. In that view, DVLA is endorsed as the only official firm with the purpose to support high-quality driving values and road worthy vehicles. Its task also comprises of ensuring the safety of vehicles and to provide other related factors that promote effective driving and reduce the rate of accidents on the road. Of recent, there have been a lot of road accidents in the country, as a result of poor driving practices. Report from the Ministry of Transport states that there have been almost 3000 fake driver's licenses that were confiscated by DVLA officials in Accra.

This situation could be attributed to the cumbersome procedures involved in the acquisition of driver's license. A driver's license allows the holder to drive a moped, some agricultural equipment and all-terrain vehicles as well as cars. Upon passing the respective test for each stage of the system, the successful applicant is issued a temporary driving license to begin driving immediately while their permanent license is been prepared for collection within a specified period of time (Fitcher,2000). the

permanent license contains a unique identifying number, date of birth and photograph of the holder. Most driving licenses are issued by the state agency like DVLA for Ghana and Britain.

## Recommendations

Based on the summary of the finding and conclusions, the following recommendation are made;

- Managements of DVLA should ensure effective customer service, instead of the long procedure involve in acquiring a license. the firm should establish their own driving schools so that new applicants seeking to acquiring driving license will rather attend instead of attending driving schools which are not accredited.
- In connection with driving schools, the company should ensure proper supervision and ensure that the schools meet all requirement necessary for operating a driving school. The company should ensure that all driving instructors in driving schools have at least 5 years driving experience.
- The organization needs to acquire new printing machines for their operations and allocate each region its own printers that will serve that region. DVLA should make each region enquired enough to handle its own operation which should be monitor from headquarters.
- The company should find out why a large number of applicants fail their exams but yet since find a way of getting their driver's license through the assistance of middlemen 'goro boys'.
- Lastly, it is recommended that, management of DVLA train their employees in the area of customer service, since most of the customers complain about the way and manner employees handle them when they have an appointment with them.

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