UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION (UniMAC)
INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

BEYOND THE PRESS RELEASE: UNPACKING THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF TRANSPARENCY AND TRUST IN A PUBLIC UTILITY (ELECTRICITY COMPANY OF GHANA)

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

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DECLARATIONS

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Miriam Wasila Dauda, declare that this thesis, except quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere. Therefore, I bear the responsibility for any shortcomings.

.... DATE: 8/12/2025..............................

Miriam Wasila Dauda

(Student)

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned supervisor, declare that I supervised the preparation and presentation of this work in accordance with the guidelines for the supervision of MA theses as laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC).

.... DATE: 8/12/2025..............................

DR RHODALENE AMARTEY

(Lead Supervisor)

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God, whose gift of life and strength sustained me throughout this journey. To my husband, whose unwavering support and understanding anchored me at every stage. To my supervisor, Dr. Rhodalene Amartey, whose guidance and invaluable contributions shaped this thesis. And to all who supported me in diverse ways, I remain sincerely grateful.

ABSTRACT

Public trust is an important intangible asset for public utility companies, particularly the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG), yet there is a considerable lack in the qualitative research into how opposing stakeholder groups in developing countries perceive transparency. This qualitative single-case study bridges this gap through a dual-perspective investigation of how customers' and employees lived experiences shape their perceptions of trust and transparency. Employing an interpretivist paradigm, primary data was collected via four focus group discussions with customers and seven in-depth interviews with ECG employees, analyzed through comparative thematic analysis and interpreted using Social Exchange Theory and Organizational Justice Theory. The findings reveal a profound "perception gap.": customers reported deep distrust driven by opaque billing practices and reactive communication (procedural injustice), while employees describe operational constraints and unreciprocated efforts amid public hostility. The study concludes that, in the case of a public utility monopoly, a negative cost-benefit analysis results in coercive dependency rather than relationship termination, leading to ingrained skepticism. This study contends that trust is not developed through daily contacts, and that fair charging (distributive justice), respect in service (interactional justice), and clarity in communication are identified as the core currency of legitimacy for ECG.

Keywords: *Transparency, Trust, Lived Experience, Social Exchange Theory (SET), Organizational Justice Theory, Perception Gap, Public Utility, Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG)*

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The modern economy and civil society are fundamentally reliant on the dependable and efficient operation of the public utility institutions. In Ghana, there are few entities that have a central position in the day-to-day life of citizens and the functioning of businesses, as the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) does. As the country's main electricity distributor, ECG's activities, such as the reliability of services, accuracy of billing, and communication, directly affect public perception of its competence and integrity. Consequently, the relationship between ECG and its various stakeholders, namely, its customers and employees, is a critical determinant of the public trust.

Trust is not only a desirable social good, but it is an important intangible asset that forms the basis of an organisation's operational legitimacy, long-term stability and contribution to the wider economic health of the nation. (Mansaray et al., 2021.), (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2014a)

Historically, research on organisational transparency has focused on official corporate communications and formal disclosure. While this form of disclosure is an important part of accountability, it provides an incomplete picture of how stakeholders actually experience an organization. Moreover, this view does not consider the subjective and nuanced contributions through which individuals interpret the actions of a company (B. Rawlins, 2008). To truly understand how trust is built or destroyed it is essential to get behind the official narrative and explore the authentic “lived experiences” of those who interact with the organization on a daily basis, from both external and internal perspectives. This study seeks to fill this gap by undertaking a deep, qualitative study into ECG to unpack these dual perspectives and their deep effect on trust.

1.1.1 Profile of Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG)

ECG (Electricity Company of Ghana) is the distribution company of electricity in Ghana owned by the state. It was first established as the Electricity Department in 1947 and was later changed by Government Decree (NLCD 125) to the Electricity Corporation of Ghana in 1967. The company was incorporated in 1963 and became a limited company when shares were first sold in February of 1997. EGC relinquished responsibility for power supply to Volta River Authority on an interim basis in July 1987. Today, ECG is a limited liability company owned entirely by the Government of Ghana and is the major electricity distribution utility in Ghana.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

A major, multifaceted research gap exists with respect to the investigation of the in-depth, qualitative study of how organizational transparency is experienced by both internal and external stakeholders at the same time. There are three main deficiencies that this study addresses:

1.2.1 Methodological Gap

Existing research on the topic of transparency and trust tends to use quantitative methods, measuring a correlation between the amount of information disclosed and the levels of trust through relying on surveys and statistical analysis (B. Rawlins, 2008). While of value, there is a distinct absence of qualitative studies that compare and contrast the perspectives of different stakeholder groups using complementary methods. Research does not often place the “lived experience” of the customer in relation to the employee to grasp points of convergence and divergence. (Creswell & Poth, 2018) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

This study addresses this gap by taking a mixed qualitative approach (focus groups and interviews) and using the interpretivist paradigm to capture these rich, socially constructed meanings.

1.2.2 Contextual Gap

There is still a dearth of study about the internal and external dynamics of transparency and trust among a public utility in a developing nation. Much of the seminal literature lies in the private sector of developed economies (Bushman & Smith, 2001). However, Ghana's socio-political and economic context, with its history of power instability ("dumsor"), complex relationship between a state-owned enterprise (SOE) and its citizenry, and a diverse customer base, is a unique environment that affects the perception of stakeholders.

SOEs face challenges when located in contexts like Ghana are unique (Appuhami & Bhuyan, 2015). This study fills this contextual void by delivering an in-depth, two-sided, dualistic look at ECG by examining how the same operating realities are experienced and understood by both service providers (employees) and service users (customers).

1.2.3 Theoretical Gap

While frameworks such as Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), (Homans, 1958), and established models of trust (Rousseau et al., 1998) present a good foundation for understanding reciprocity and trust, they are hardly ever applied to analyse the perception gap between an organisation's internal members and its external stakeholders. They can be greatly enriched by a better understanding of the subjective experiences that motivate these relational exchanges.

Existing literature often conceptualises trust as a one-dimensional result of exchange, neglecting the way in which stakeholders make the distinction between the fairness of the outcome (e.g. the amount of the bill), the process (e.g. the calculation of the bill) and the interpersonal treatment (e.g. the behaviour of staff).

This study aims to fill this gap by combining Organisational Justice Theory (Greenberg, 1987; Colquitt, 2001) with SET. By using this dual theoretical framework, the research intends to give empirical texture to these theories: to show how different perceptions of distributive, procedural and interactional justice contribute to the "perception gap" between internal and external stakeholders.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 Main Objective

The main research objective is to examine how the lived experiences of stakeholders (customers and employees) with the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) shape their perceptions of its transparency and their level of trust.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Examine how ECG's customers define and interpret ECG's transparency regarding their personal engagement with the company, specifically regarding billing, service provision, and public communication.
2. Examine how the employees of the company, ECG, perceive the authenticity of the company's transparency efforts from an insider perspective.

3. Identify the similarities and differences between the customers' and the employees' lived experiences and perceptions of ECG's transparency.
4. Analyse how these dual lived experiences contribute to the development, maintenance, or erosion of trust in the company.

1.4 Research Questions

Primary Research Question

1. How do the lived experiences of stakeholders (customers and employees) with the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) influence the way they perceive its transparency and their level of trust?
2. How do customers of ECG define and interpret its transparency based on their direct interactions?
3. How do employees of ECG perceive the company's transparency efforts and the challenges in communicating them?
4. What are the key similarities and differences between the perceptions of customers and employees regarding ECG's transparency?
5. How do these convergent and divergent experiences contribute to the formation or erosion of trust in ECG?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study holds significant theoretical and practical value across various domains.

1.4.1 Theoretical Contributions

The research will help develop a more nuanced understanding of the link between transparency and trust, by bridging the divide between the internal and external. By adding the employee perspective, it will enrich the Social Exchange Theory by showing how the same "exchange" can be understood in terms of costs and rewards differently by providers and recipients, thus providing a model to analyse the perception gaps in trust formation.

1.4.2 Practical Contributions

The findings will provide ECG with a granular, 360 degree diagnostic of its relationships with stakeholders. By understanding both customer frustrations and employee challenges, ECG is able to develop better, more internally coherent strategies for communication and service delivery. This dual perspective offers a stronger foundation to build a foundation of authentic trust than customer feedback alone.

1.5 Scope of the Study

Scope of this study defines the boundaries within which this study is being conducted for clarity and focus. By defining geographical area, unit of analysis, participants and thematic focus, the study provides a framework for the generation of contextually grounded insights.

i. The study will be carried out in the Metropolitan area of Accra, Ghana, an area that provides a wide diversity of residential and commercial customers, and an important number of ECG employees.
ii. The sole case is the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG). The findings are meant to give an in-depth, contextualised understanding of this particular organisation.
iii. The research will study the experiences of two main stakeholder groups: current customers of ECG and employees of different departments.

1.6 Methodological Approach

The methodology is an in-depth and single case study of ECG which is ideal to investigate complex social phenomena with their real-world context (Yin Robert, 2018). Primary data was be gathered by two complementary approaches: focus group discussions with customers, in order to ensure the collection of shared norms and experiences, and semi-structured, in-depth interviews with employees, in order to investigate the internal perspectives in a confidential setting.

The dual approach allowed for a comparative analysis of the lived experiences of both groups of stakeholders. Social Exchange Theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) and Organizational Justice Theory will served as a combined analytical lenses, offering a comprehensive framework for interpreting data in terms of reciprocity, costs, rewards, and multi-dimensional fairness.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

In order to ensure that the research is academically rigorous and that the findings are properly contextualised, it is important to recognise the limitations of this research. These constraints, which stem from the methodology and scope taken, set the limits of the conclusions.

Geographical and Sampling Scope

The research was occasioned within the Accra metropolitan area of a purposive sample of thirteen (13) customers and seven (7) employees. While this sample size provided rich, saturation-level data that was suitable for a qualitative inquiry, the findings are context-specific. The experiences of customers in Accra, who have to deal with urbanisation and high density infrastructure, could be quite different to those in rural or peri-urban areas in Ghana, where ECG operates. Consequently, the results are analytically generalisable to similar situations but not statistically generalisable to ECG stakeholders on the whole national population.

Methodological Constraints

The focus group discussion for customers has the inherent danger of "groupthink" (i.e., where dominating voices may impose the majority or dominance upon a group). While the moderator did actively encourage diverse points of view, some minority opinions might have been put down. On the other hand there is a danger of self-censorship or 'social desirability bias', which is likely to cause employees to present the company in a more positive light through loyalty or fear of implications despite assurances of anonymity, when using in-depth Interviews.

Subjective vs. Objective Reality

As an interpretivist study, the findings reflect the subjective "social reality" of the participants as opposed to an objective technical audit. For example, the fact that customers feel that they are being cheated by prepaid meters is a strong indicator of trust, but this study did not technically check the calibration of the meters to determine whether this perception is actually accurate. The study captures how stakeholders feel and think about the organisation which is the primary driver of trust regardless of the technical facts.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This thesis is structured into five chapters.

i. ***Chapter One***: Introduction lays the foundation, introducing the research topic, problem statement, research questions, objectives, significance, scope, and methodological direction.
ii. ***Chapter Two:*** Literature Review provides a comprehensive overview of the literature on organizational transparency, public trust, and Social Exchange Theory.

iii. ***Chapter Three***: Methodology details the research design, including the justification for the interpretivist paradigm and case study approach, sampling strategy, data collection methods, and procedures for data analysis and ensuring trustworthiness.

iv. ***Chapter Four:*** Data Analysis and Findings presents the results derived from the thematic analysis of interview and focused group discussion data and documentary evidence.

v. ***Chapter Five:*** Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations synthesizes the findings in relation to the literature and research questions, discussing theoretical and practical implications and offering recommendations.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a comprehensive introduction to the research. It has situated the study within the critical relationship between organizational transparency and public trust, using ECG as its case. The chapter identified methodological, contextual, and theoretical gaps in the literature to formulate the problem statement. The research questions, objectives, significance, scope, and a brief overview of the methodological approach and research limitations were clearly outlined. Finally, a roadmap for the thesis was provided.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will be a review of theoretical as well as empirical literature that will support this study. Its main objective is to develop a viable conceptual framework of comprehending the multifaceted and usually non-linear association between the disclosed information in organisations and the trust that the general population places in them. Since the study focuses on both external customers and internal employees, the review will take a broader scope than that of the conventional meaning by examining the dynamics of interaction between the two groups of stakeholders.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The basic concepts are laid down in Section 2.1, which reviews the seminal definitions of trust, the multi-dimensionality of transparency and the fundamental and essential internal-external divide. In section 2.2, an empirical study dedicated to the quality of the services of ECG was reviewed, which puts the customer perception landscape in the context of the given case study. Lastly, the chapter is summed up in Section 2.3, which places the Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Organisational Justice Theory as the theoretical framework by which the connections between the utility and its employees, as well as its customers, will be viewed.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

2.1.1 Foundational Concepts: Transparency and Trust

Trust is broadly defined as a psychological state involving the acceptance of vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another (Denise M. Rousseau et al., 1998). This definition, synthesised from a multidisciplinary perspective, highlights a willingness to take risks in a relationship. (Kramer, 1999) notes that trust is a central focus in modern organisational theory, with ongoing debate between rational choice perspectives (where trust is a calculated risk) and relational perspectives (where trust is based on social bonds and norms).

Transparency, in an organisational context, is more than just providing information. (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016) offer a comprehensive framework, defining organisational transparency as a function of three key dimensions: disclosure (the availability of information), clarity (the comprehensibility of that information), and accuracy (the truthfulness of the information). This multi-dimensional view moves beyond simple openness to encompass the quality and usability of the information shared.

Transparency is a key precondition for trust, according to a recurring topic in literature. Numerous studies offer factual evidence for a clear and beneficial association. (B. R. Rawlins, 2008; Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016) Conducted a study on employees and found a strong, statistically significant correlation between overall organisational transparency and employee trust. This suggests that as organisations become more transparent, trust from their employees is likely to increase. Similarly, (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016) posit that greater transparency, as defined by their three-dimensional model, facilitates higher stakeholder trust. In a leadership context, particularly during a crisis, transparency and regular communication are identified as crucial for building trust and engaging employees (Erickson, 2021).

However, the relationship is not always straightforward. The impact of transparency can be highly dependent on the context and the audience. (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2014b) discovered in an online experiment that the effect of government transparency on citizens' perceived trustworthiness is moderated by the citizens' prior knowledge and predisposition to trust. For instance:

- Transparency had a positive effect on trust for citizens with low prior knowledge and a low predisposition to trust.
- It had no significant effect on those with high prior knowledge, who rely less on new information to form judgments.
- Interestingly, it had a negative effect on the perceived competence of the organisation for citizens who had high trust but low knowledge.

This demonstrates that transparency is not a ***"one-size-fits-all"*** solution for building trust; its effectiveness depends on the characteristics of the stakeholder.

Further complicating the picture, a study by (Cramer et al., 2008) on content-based art recommender systems, it was found that explaining the reasoning behind a recommendation (a form of transparency) increased user acceptance of that specific recommendation. However, it did not improve the users' overall trust in the system itself. This crucial finding separates the acceptance of an output from trust in the underlying entity, suggesting that transparency's effects can be specific and limited.

The role of transparency extends into the public sphere and institutional governance. (Brown et al., 2014) Explore the interplay between transparency, whistleblowing, and public trust. Their research challenges the notion that calls for transparency and support for whistleblowing are simply products of distrust. Instead, they find that these mechanisms are seen by the public as complementary components that sustain and contribute to trust. Their findings support a multi-pronged policy approach where transparency initiatives and robust whistleblowing protections work together, not as substitutes, to foster public confidence in institutions.

Stakeholder trust and organisational transparency are clearly and generally positively correlated, according to the literature. Foundational research defines trust as a willingness to be vulnerable (Denise M. Rousseau et al., 1998) and transparency as a function of disclosure, clarity, and accuracy (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016). Empirical evidence shows that higher transparency often leads to higher trust, whether in employee relations (B. R. Rawlins, 2008) or public institutions (Brown et al., 2014).

However, research also highlights that the relationship is complex and heavily moderated by context and individual factors. The effect of transparency can be weakened by a stakeholder's prior knowledge (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2014b) and may influence acceptance without necessarily building deeper trust in the system itself (Cramer et al., 2008).

Ultimately, while transparency is a cornerstone for building and maintaining trust (Kramer, 1999)(Erickson, 2021) organizations must adopt a nuanced approach, recognising that it is a critical but not solitary element in the complex architecture of trust.

2.1.2 The Internal-External Divide in Transparency and Trust

While foundational concepts of trust and transparency apply broadly, a deeper understanding requires acknowledging the critical distinction between an organisation's internal and external stakeholders. An organization's relationship with its employees is fundamentally different from its relationship with its customers, yet these two domains are deeply interconnected in the formation of public trust.

A significant stream of literature recognizes a frequent disconnect between an organisation's external communications and its internal realities, a phenomenon often termed "organizational hypocrisy" or the "say-do gap" (Dong & Kim, 2003). This gap arises when employees perceive a contradiction between the organization's espoused values (e.g., "customer-centricity," "integrity") and their own lived, operational experience within the company. When external transparency efforts are not supported by consistent internal practices and communication, employees may view them as inauthentic, leading to cynicism and disengagement (Fassin & Buelens, 2011). This internal perception of inauthenticity is a critical, yet often overlooked, factor in the overall trust equation.

This internal perception has direct external consequences. The Service-Profit Chain model provides a compelling framework, positing that customer trust and loyalty are contingent upon employee satisfaction and engagement (Heskett & Schlesinger, 1997). The theory argues that an organisation must first build trust and provide value to its employees ("internal service quality"). Engaged and well-informed employees are then better equipped and more motivated to deliver superior service, which in turn fosters customer trust. In this view, employees are not just functionaries; they are the primary conduits through which an organisation's claims of transparency and trustworthiness are either validated or invalidated in the eyes of the customer during service encounters.

Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) offers a robust lens for analysing these parallel, yet distinct, relationships. For employees, social exchange is complex, involving effort, commitment, and loyalty in return for compensation, security, fair treatment, and respectful internal communication. This forms a “psychological contract”, an unwritten set of expectations between the employee and the organisation (Rousseau, 1995).

For customers, the exchange is more transactional: payment in exchange for a reliable, safe, and respectable service. A breakdown in either exchange can erode trust, but a discrepancy between them, where employees feel the internal psychological contract is violated while the company projects an image of customer commitment, can reveal the deep-seated issues that create a perception gap and ultimately undermine public trust.

This study, therefore, positions itself to explore both sides of this dynamic exchange within ECG.

2.2 Review of Related Study

Research on stakeholder perceptions in Ghana’s electricity sector has primarily adopted quantitative frameworks focused on customer satisfaction metrics. Studies by (Mansaray et al., 2021) and (Arthur et al., 2016) provide valuable insights into service quality assessment at the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG), while revealing critical limitations that inform this research direction.

(Mansaray et al., 2021) conducted a national study of ECG using systematic sampling and the SERVQUAL model, finding poor performance in assurance (2.3/5.0), reliability (2.5/5.0), and tangibles (2.7/5.0). (Arthur et al., 2016), examining ECG’s Obuasi branch, similarly documented substantial gaps between customer expectations and perceptions across all service dimensions, with assurance (-0.81) and reliability (-0.80) showing the largest deficits. Their regression analysis even revealed a counterintuitive negative relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

These studies approached transparency and trust as derivative constructs emerging from service quality metrics rather than as independent phenomena shaped by lived experiences. Neither research explicitly conceptualizes transparency as a distinct construct or examines its relationship to trust formation. Dimensions like “assurance” and “responsiveness” serve as proxy indicators for organizational trustworthiness, reflecting a broader tendency to quantify complex trust dynamics through measurable service attributes (Grönroos, 1984).

While (Mansaray et al., 2021) sampled employees, they failed to analyze employee perspectives separately or contrast them with customer views. (Arthur et al., 2016) focused exclusively on customer metrics without exploring operational realities that might explain their counterintuitive findings. This methodological constraint obscures internal dynamics that shape service delivery, when (Mansaray et al., 2021) identified procurement non-compliance as a root cause, they did not investigate how employees navigate these constraints or communicate them to customers.

Also, quantitative methodologies limited their capacity to capture lived experiences. By reducing complex service encounters to Likert-scale ratings, these studies missed the narrative dimensions of customer-employee interactions that build or erode trust (Krishnamurthy et al., 2010). Neither examined the dissonance between official communications and on-ground realities, when (Mansaray et al., 2021) observed ECG’s relatively high empathy score (3.8/5.0), they did not investigate whether this reflected genuine human connection or superficial compliance with corporate protocols.

These limitations highlights this research rational of adopting a dual qualitative perspective approach. According to the Social Exchange Theory, trust emerges from repeated interactions where parties assess both outcomes and intentions (Blau, 2017). To understand ECG's trust deficit, we must examine both customer experiences and employee realities, and to find out where these narratives converge or diverge. Where previous studies treated ECG's failures as technical problems to be quantified, this thesis examines them as relational ruptures understood through lived experiences that official communications often obscure. By analyzing the perception gap between stakeholders, this research addresses the disconnect between formal procedures and experiential realities.

2.3 Theoretical Framework and Relevance to Study

To analyze the transparency-trust dynamic between ECG and its stakeholders, this study adopts a dual theoretical framework comprising Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Organizational Justice Theory. While SET explains the motivation behind relationships (reciprocity and cost-benefit), Justice Theory provides the granular tools to evaluate the perceived fairness of those exchanges.

2.3.1 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory, rooted in the work of Homans (1958) and Blau (1964), posits that social behavior is the result of an exchange process. The purpose of this exchange is to maximize benefits and minimize costs. In the context of this study, SET provides the lens for understanding the reciprocal obligations between ECG and its stakeholders.

For Customers, the exchange involves financial payment in return for reliable power and service. Trust is maintained when the "rewards" (service stability) outweigh the "costs" (tariffs, stress).

For Employees, the exchange involves labor and commitment in return for fair compensation and organizational support (the “psychological contract”).

Reciprocity: The core tenet of SET is reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). If one party provides a benefit, the other is obligated to return it. Conversely, “negative reciprocity” occurs when a perceived injury is met with a withdrawal of trust or cooperation.

2.3.2 Organizational Justice Theory

While SET outlines the mechanism of exchange, Organizational Justice Theory explains how stakeholders evaluate the fairness of that exchange. Originating from Adams’ (1965) Equity Theory and expanded by (Greenberg 1987) and (Colquitt 2001), this theory is critical for understanding why customers or employees may feel “cheated” or “valued.” It comprises three distinct dimensions relevant to this study:

Distributive Justice

This refers to the perceived fairness of the outcomes or resource allocation. For ECG customers, distributive justice relates to the equity of the billing (Is the bill accurate for the power consumed?) and the reliability of supply (Am I getting the power I paid for?). For employees, it relates to the fairness of their workload relative to their resources. When outcomes are perceived as unfair (e.g., “over-billing”), trust is immediately compromised.

Procedural Justice

This refers to the perceived fairness of the processes used to determine outcomes. It is not just about the result (the bill), but how the result was calculated. In the context of transparency, procedural justice is paramount. If the “black box” of the prepaid meter is opaque, or if the process for resolving complaints is cumbersome and bureaucratic, stakeholders perceive a lack of procedural justice. Research suggests that people are more willing to accept negative outcomes (e.g., a tariff hike) if they believe the process leading to it was transparent and fair (Lind & Tyler, 1988).

Interactional Justice

This refers to the quality of the interpersonal treatment received during the execution of procedures. It includes dignity, respect, and politeness (Bies & Moag, 1986). For ECG, this dimension captures the "lived experience" of the customer service encounter. Even if the bill is accurate (Distributive) and the system is working (Procedural), a rude or dismissive interaction with a frontline employee constitutes a failure of Interactional Justice, which can destroy trust regardless of technical performance.

2.3.3 Integrating the Theories

By integrating these two theories, this study constructs a robust framework for analysis. SET explains the breakdown of the relationship as a failure of reciprocity (the "why"), while Justice Theory dissects the specific dimensions of that failure (the "how"). For example, a customer may withdraw trust (SET outcome) because they perceive the billing system as opaque (Procedural Injustice) or the staff as rude (Interactional Injustice). This combination allows for a precise diagnostic of the "perception gap" between stakeholders.

2.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a review of scholarly literature, establishing foundational definitions of trust and transparency. It confirmed that while research supports a positive link between the two, the relationship is complex and mediated by the internal-external stakeholder divide and concepts like organizational hypocrisy. Furthermore, a review of related empirical work by Mansaray et al. (2021) provided context on service quality dimensions relevant to ECG.

Finally, the chapter established the study’s theoretical framework, integrating Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Organizational Justice Theory. While SET frames the stakeholder relationship as a reciprocal exchange of costs and rewards, Justice Theory provides the specific dimensions, Distributive, Procedural, and Interactional, needed to evaluate the perceived fairness of that exchange. This dual framework sets the stage for a granular comparative analysis of the lived experiences of ECG’s customers and employees.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter Introduction

In this chapter, the methodological framework of this study has been outlined. It gives a detailed explanation of the research paradigm, method, and design adopted to explore the lived experiences of the stakeholders, customers and employees of the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) in transparency and trust. The chapter starts by providing a rationale as to why an interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative research strategy are chosen. It has then gone further to explain the single-case study design, the purposive sampling methods in both groups of stakeholders, and the supplementary methods used in collecting data: focus group discussion and in-depth interviews. The chapter then goes on to give a step-by-step explanation of the comparative thematic analysis procedure that was employed in interpreting the data. Lastly, it addresses the issues of ethical considerations and actions taken to make the research results dependable.

3.2 Research Paradigm and Philosophies

This study is situated within an interpretivist paradigm (Interpretivism (Interpretivist) Research Philosophy - Research-Methodology). Interpretivism posits that social reality is not an objective, external phenomenon but is, in fact, socially constructed through the subjective meanings that individuals ascribe to their experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This paradigm is fundamentally concerned with understanding the world from the perspective of the research participants.

To fully justify this choice, it is essential to understand the paradigm's core philosophical assumptions: its ontology, epistemology, and axiology, and how they align with the goals of this research.

The paradigm's ontology (the nature of reality) is one of relativism. It asserts that reality is not single and objective, but consists of multiple, subjective realities constructed in the minds of individuals through their unique experiences and interpretations (Hu & Chang, 2017).

This ontological position is foundational to the current research because it does not seek a single, objective "*truth*" about ECGs' transparency. Instead, it aims to uncover the multiple, socially constructed realities of both customers and employees. The "lived experience" of a customer frustrated by a high bill and that of an employee dealing with systemic constraints are different but equally valid realities, and this study embraces both.

Flowing from this ontology is the study's epistemology (the relationship between the researcher and the researched), which is transactional and subjectivist.

This position holds that knowledge is not discovered by a detached, objective observer but is co-created through the interaction between the researcher and the participants (Yvonna S. Lincoln & Egon G. Guba, 1985).

Epistemologically, this justifies the use of semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The researcher is not a neutral collector of facts but an active listener and interpreter who probes, clarifies, and engages with the participant to build a rich, shared understanding. The goal is not objective measurement but an empathetic understanding of how customers make sense of their world and their relationship with ECG.

Finally, the paradigm's axiology (the role of values) acknowledges that research is value-laden. Unlike positivism, which strives for value-free objectivity, interpretivism recognises that the researcher's values, as well as those of the participants, are an inherent and unavoidable part of the research process (Saunders, M. N. K., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, 2023).

This axiological position is crucial because the core concepts of this study, “trust,” “transparency,” and “fairness,” are inherently value-driven. The research does not attempt to strip these values away but instead seeks to understand them. The researcher’s role is to interpret these value-based experiences faithfully, while reflexively acknowledging how her own perspective shapes that interpretation.

Given that the main aim of this study is to explore the feelings, perceptions, and interpretations that constitute the “*lived experience*,” these philosophical commitments make the interpretivist paradigm the only appropriate foundation. It moves the inquiry beyond measuring what customers think to understanding why they think and feel the way they do about their relationship with ECG.

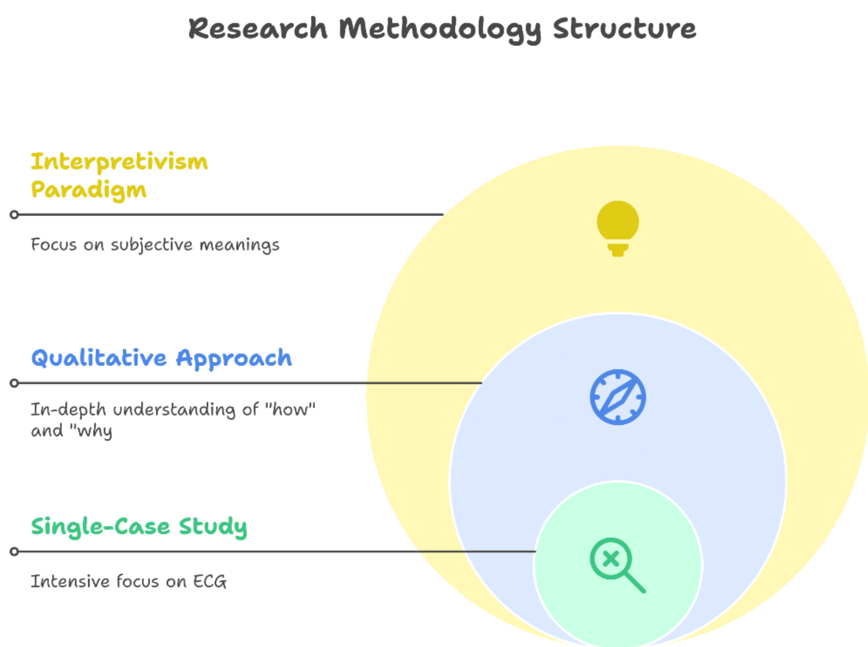

Figure 1: Research Methodology Structure

3.3 Research Approach

3.3.1 Qualitative Research Approach

Flowing from the interpretivist paradigm, a qualitative research approach was adopted. As established in the problem statement, quantitative methods, while useful for identifying correlations, are ill-suited for capturing the depth and nuance of human experience (Hu & Chang, 2017). A qualitative approach allows for a rich, in-depth exploration of the "how" and "why" behind customer perceptions of transparency and trust. It provides the flexibility needed to uncover unanticipated themes and to understand the complex interplay of emotions, personal histories, and social context that shape the customer-company relationship.

3.3.2 Single-Case Study Design

The specific research design is an in-depth, single-case study focusing on the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG). A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin Robert, 2018). This design was selected for several reasons:

i. It allows for an intensive, holistic examination of the transparency-trust dynamic within one specific organization, yielding a level of detail that would be impossible in a multi-site survey.

ii. ECG operates in a unique socio-economic and political context, as highlighted in Chapter One. A case study design allows for a thorough exploration of how this specific context shapes stakeholder experiences.

iii. It is particularly well-suited for exploring the internal and external dynamics of a single organisation, allowing for a deep analysis of the perception gap between service providers and users.

iv. ECG serves as an instrumental case. While the findings are not statistically generalizable, they provide a powerful, real-world illustration of theoretical concepts, which can generate insights and propositions for future research in similar contexts.

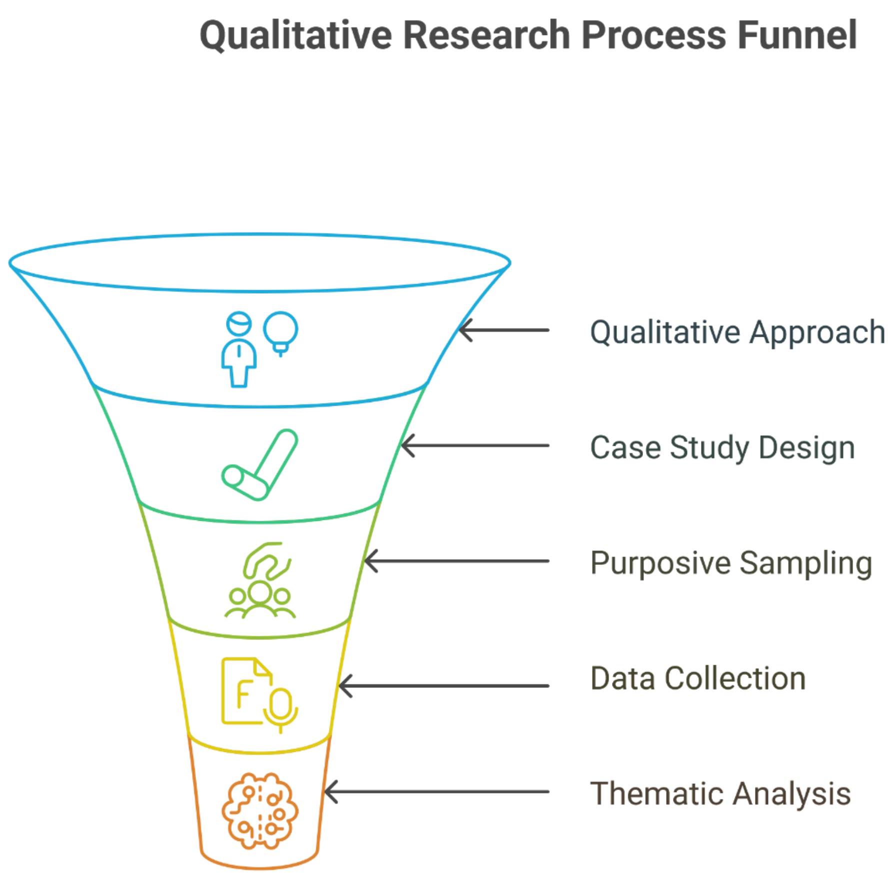

Figure 2: Research Process

3.3.3 Sampling Strategy

To capture the distinct perspectives of the two stakeholders, a dual purposive sampling strategy was employed. Purposive sampling involves intentionally selecting participants who have first-hand experience with the phenomenon under investigation and who can provide rich, relevant information (Patton, M. 2015) . The goal was not to create a statistically representative sample, but to capture a diverse range of perspectives on customer experience with ECG.

In qualitative research, sample size is typically determined by the principle of data saturation. This is the point at which no new themes or insights emerge from additional data collection (Guest et al., 2006).

3.3.3.1 Sampling of Customers for Focus Group

A purposive sampling strategy was used to recruit participants for ***two (2)*** focus group discussions. The goal was to create diverse groups that could generate rich, interactive dialogue. Participants were selected based on the following criteria to ensure a breadth of experiences:

i. Duration of Customer Relationship
ii. Demographic Diversity
iii. Geographical Location

3.3.3.2 Sampling of Employees for Interviews

A purposive sampling strategy was also used to select ***7 (seven)*** ECG employees for individual, in-depth interviews. The selection aimed to capture a range of internal perspectives by recruiting participants from different functional roles, including:

i. Customer-Facing Staff
ii. Technical or Operational Staff

iii. A mix of managerial and non-managerial roles was sought

3.3.4 Data Collection Method

This study employed a mixed-qualitative design, using two complementary data collection methods tailored to each stakeholder group to maximize the richness of the data

3.3.4.1 Focus Group Discussions (Customers)

For the customer group, focus group discussions (FGDs) were the primary data collection method. FGDs are ideal for exploring shared norms and common experiences (Krueger & Casey, 2015). This method allowed customers to build on each other's narratives and reveal collective understandings in a dynamic setting. A semi-structured guide was used to facilitate the discussion.

3.3.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews (Employees)

For the employee group, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used. This individual format was more appropriate for exploring internal organizational dynamics, providing a confidential space for employees to speak candidly about potentially sensitive topics (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). A semi-structured interview guide was used to ensure consistency while allowing flexibility

3.3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The data collected from both focus groups and interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. This is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). a dual theoretical framework comprising Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Organizational Justice Theory. Social Exchange Theory served as the lens for interpreting stakeholder interactions in terms of costs, rewards, and reciprocity (e.g., examining whether the "social contract" of service-for-payment was perceived as broken).

Organizational Justice Theory provided the framework for analyzing the specific dimensions of fairness, allowing the researcher to categorize complaints into distributive (fairness of the bill), procedural (transparency of the billing process), and interactional (quality of staff behavior) justice.

The thematic analysis followed a systematic, six-phase process adapted from(Braun & Clarke, 2006):

i. Familiarization with the Data: This involved repeatedly reading the transcribed interviews to gain an understanding of the content.
ii. Generating Initial Codes (Open Coding): Meaningful units of text were systematically identified and labelled with codes that captured their essence.
iii. Searching for Themes (Axial Coding): The initial codes were collated and grouped into broader, more substantive categories or potential themes based on patterns and relationships.
iv. Reviewing Themes: The potential themes were reviewed and refined, ensuring they were coherent, distinct, and accurately represented the data. Some themes were merged, while others were separated.
v. Defining and Naming Themes (Selective Coding): The final themes were defined and given concise, descriptive names that captured their core meaning.
vi. Producing the Report: The final analysis involved weaving together the thematic narrative with illustrative quotes from the transcripts, connecting the findings back to the research questions and objectives.

To analyse the data from using complementary methods, the analysis process was conducted in three (3) distinct stages to ensure a rigorous and comparative analysis:

i. **Within-Group Analysis (Customers)**

The transcripts from the customer focus group discussions were analyzed thematically to identify the key themes emerging from the external stakeholder perspective.

ii. **Within-Group Analysis (Employees)**

The transcripts from the employee interviews were thematically analyzed separately to identify the key themes emerging from the internal stakeholder perspective.

iii. **Cross-Group Comparative Analysis:**

In the final stage, the themes identified from both groups were systematically compared and contrasted. This comparative analysis focused on identifying points of convergence and divergence to address the research objective of understanding the similarities and differences between the two groups.

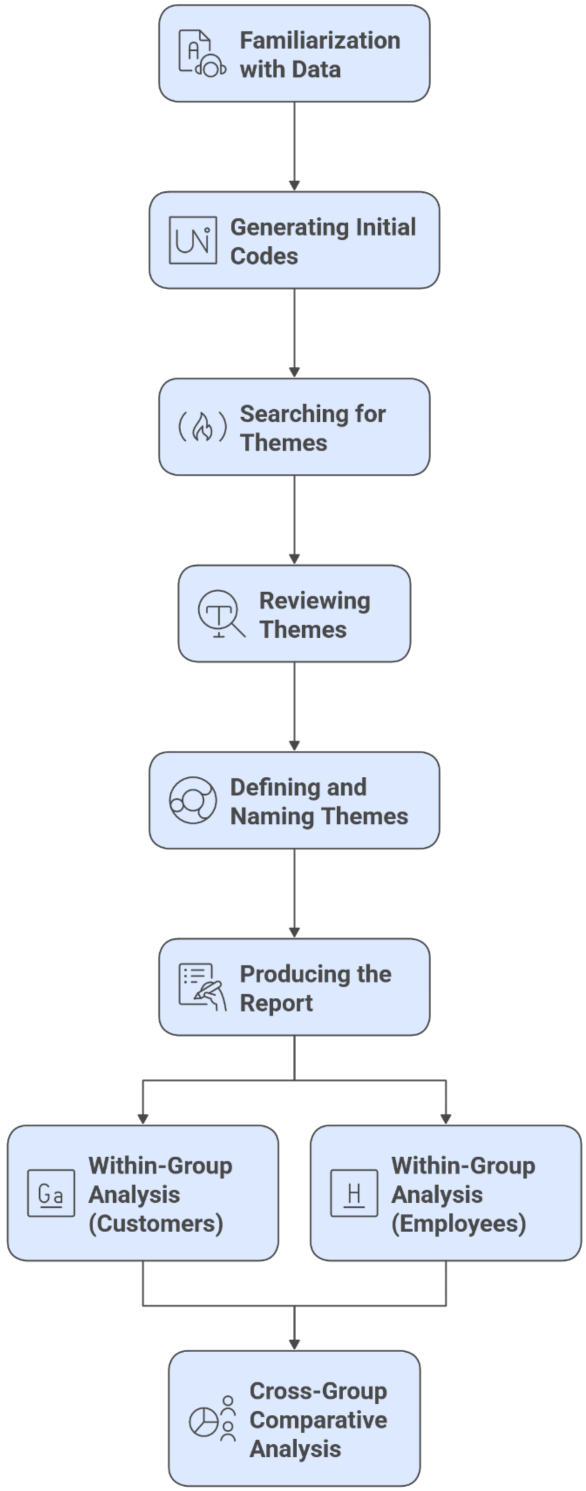

Figure 3: Thematic Analysis Process

3.3.6 Ethical Considerations

Rigorous ethical standards were maintained throughout the research process. The following measures were implemented to protect the rights and welfare of the participants:

i. Before each interview, participants were provided with a clear explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights. Written or verbal consent to participate and be recorded was obtained.
ii. Participants were informed that their involvement was completely voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without penalty.
iii. To protect participant identities, all names and identifying details were removed from the transcripts. The data is stored securely and will only be accessible to the researcher.
iv. The interview questions were designed to be non-intrusive and focused on professional experiences, minimising any potential for psychological discomfort.

3.3.6 Authenticity and Trustworthiness of the Study

In qualitative research, rigor is established through trustworthiness. This study employed Member checking (Yvonna S. Lincoln & Egon G. Guba, 1985) , where data, interpretations, or findings were presented to participants to verify their accuracy and credibility, and the criteria developed by (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) to ensure the quality of the findings:

i. To ensure the findings are a credible representation of the participants' experiences, direct quotes were used extensively in the analysis to ground the themes firmly in the data.
ii. While not generalizable, the study aims for transferability by providing "thick description." This involves a detailed account of the research context, participants, and methodology, allowing readers to judge the applicability of the findings to other contexts.

iii. The research process has been documented transparently in this chapter, creating a clear audit trail from data collection to analysis. This allows another researcher to follow the process and understand how the conclusions were reached.

iv. The findings are rooted in the participants' narratives rather than the researcher's biases. By using an established analytical framework (thematic analysis) and grounding interpretations in direct evidence from the data, the confirmability of the results is enhanced.

3.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a detailed justification for the methodological choices made in this study. It established the research within an interpretivist paradigm, utilising a qualitative, single-case study design.

The chapter outlined the dual purposive sampling strategy for recruiting both customers and employees. It then detailed the mixed-qualitative data collection approach, using focus group discussions for customers and in-depth interviews for employees.

Also, it described the three-stage comparative thematic analysis procedure. Finally, it affirmed the study's commitment to ethical principles and outlined the strategies employed to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter represents the empirical findings of the study as a detailed qualitative analysis of the experience of stakeholders in the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG). The main goal of the research was to move beyond theoretical understandings of ‘transparency’ and ‘trust’ and to examine the ways in which these notions are built, negotiated and undone in the everyday lived experiences of individuals involved with the organisation (ECG). Guided by the interpretivist paradigm, the inquiry aimed at answering the principal research question: How do the lived experiences of stakeholders, both customer and employees, affect their perception of ECG’s transparency and level of trust?

The results reported herein are the outcome of a rigorous comparative thematic analysis of primary data obtained by adopting a mixed qualitative approach. The data set consists of transcripts from four focus group discussions with customers, reflecting the view from the outside, and seven in-depth semi-structured interviews with employees, reflecting the view from the operational reality inside the company.

To present a coherent narrative to address the specific objectives of the study, this chapter has been organised into four logical sections. First, Section 4.2 profiles the study participants so as to contextualise data sources. Section 4.3 contains the “External Perspective”, which describes the themes that emerged from the customer focus groups in terms of communication, billing and service delivery. Section 4.4 presents the “Internal Perspective,” discussing the themes from the interviews with employees related to operational challenges and internal transparency. Finally, Section 4.5 brings these different perspectives together in a comparative analysis to identify the points of convergence and divergence in order to shed some light on the critical "perception gap" that exists between service providers and service users. This chapter also examines the theoretical and practical implications and assists in emphasizing connotations of social exchange and justice theories, and also the role of practical and managerial implications of ECG. The chapter goes on to discuss these findings, analysing arguments in the light of existing scientific research.

4.2 Profile of Participants

To put the findings presented in this chapter into perspective, this section describes the demographic and experiential backgrounds of the study participants. As described in the methodology, a purposive sampling approach was used to recruit two different types of participants, namely, external stakeholders (customers) and internal stakeholders (employees). This dual sampling approach ensured that the data reflected the full spectrum of perspectives of ECG's operations, from the user experience in terms of billing and outages to the operational reality of service delivery and strategic communication.

4.2.1 Customer Focus Group Participants

The external perspective was acquired through four different focus group discussions (FGDs) with a total of 13 participants. These individuals were selected from different neighbourhoods in the Accra metropolitan area in order to ensure that they represented different residential and commercial settings. Participants came from various occupational backgrounds, including small business owners, teachers, corporate employees and retirees, thus representing a range of socioeconomic perspectives on the use of services and billing.

The sample involved customers with significantly different lengths of engagement with ECG. Tenure varied from about five years to more than twenty years. This variation was significant in the analysis process; long term customers provided historical comparisons between the times of postpaid meters and today's digital systems and newer customers had new insights into current app based services. The groups were designed to encourage active dialogue and participants were meant to debate common and dissimilar experiences of service reliability and customer care.

4.2.2 Employee Interview Participants

To know what is going on inside, in-depth semi-structured interviews were held with eight (8) employees of the Electricity Company of Ghana. The selection of employees was aimed at capturing the entire spectrum of service delivery, and so both "frontline" and "strategic" voices were represented.

The sample comprised field personnel, such as an artisan and a linesman, who interact physically with the infrastructure and get exposed to direct and public reaction. It also included operational staff from the Fault Section and Call Centre, which handles the logistics of service restoration and remote support. To obtain a strategic and policy-level view, the sample included a marketing officer and a manager who has significant decision-making oversight.

Tenure among these participants ranged a great deal, from new recruits with less than a year of experience to veterans with more than two decades of service. This mix meant that the study was able to capture the new frustrations of staff working the system for the first time, as well as the institutional memories of senior staff who have experienced the evolution of the organisation over time.

4.3 Findings from Customer Focus Groups: The External Perspective

This part of the study describes the results received from the four focus group discussions with ECG customers. It represents the "external" view, which reflects the experiences of people who rely on the utility for daily domestic and economic activities. The themes presented herein have arisen organically from the collective narratives, deliberations and consensus reached within the groups rather than being predetermined.

4.3.1 From Codes to Themes: Thematic Analysis of Customer Data

The themes of customer groups were obtained using a systematic and inductive thematic analysis of the focus group transcripts. The analytical procedure moved from open coding (identifying specific and meaningful phrases and ideas contained in the raw text) to axial coding (grouping the first codes into larger conceptual categories) and selective coding (integrating categories into overall themes). Table 1 below provides a transparent audit trail of this analytical process, illustrating how the raw data were synthesised into the four final themes representing the external perspective.

Table 1: Thematic Analysis of Customer Focus Group Data

OPEN CODING (Illustrative Quotes)	**AXIAL CODING** (Conceptual Categories)	**SELECTIVE CODING** (Final Themes)
"Transparency to me... is communication... honest communication." (EV, FGD 1) | *"Just be open and frank with us... instead of leaving us in the dark."* (FGD 4) | *"Tell us the specific areas... stop the vague kind of communication."* (EV, FGD 1) | *"They should be doers of their words."* (FGD 1)	**Defining Transparency as Truthfulness and Timeliness**	**Theme 1: The Demand for "Real" and Proactive Communication**
"The prepaid meter is a mystery... a black box." (EL, FGD 2) | *"We don't know how the computation is done."* (RM, FGD 3) | *"It feels like the meter is programmed to cheat us."* (FGD 4) | *"My bill... kept going up... until it got to 7,000 Ghana cedis."* (UNS, FGD 3)	**Suspicion and Opaque Billing Mechanisms**	**Theme 2: The "Black Box" of Billing and Metering**
"I lost the TV to them [due to unstable voltage]." (EV, FGD 1) | *"The room is so hot... I have to forego my sleep."* (RM, FGD 3) | *"Loss of productive hours... I'm losing a lot of*	**The Multi-dimensional Cost of Service Failure**	**Theme 3: The Cost of Inefficiency: Financial and Psychological**

business." (EL, FGD 2) | *"The facial expression alone... puts you off."* (UNS, FGD 3)		
"Strictly value for money. I'm paying this amount, you offer me this quality." (FGD 1) | *"If you want to be served well, serve others well."* (FGD 3) | *"We pay, they provide the service. Simple."* (FGD 4) | *"We are paying... we deserve better services."* (FGD 1)	**Expectations of Reciprocity and Transactional Fairness**	**Theme 4: The Ideal Relationship as Value-for-Money**

Source: Field Data (2025)

4.3.2 Theme 1: The Demand for "Real" and Proactive Communication

The first main theme is the conceptualization of transparency by the customers collectively. For an external stakeholder, transparency is not limited to the existence of technical data on a website, but above all, it is about veracity and anticipation. Across all the focus groups, the participants expressed a strong level of dissatisfaction with communication that seemed "vague" or just reactive.

Participants stressed that true transparency involves reporting the hard truth before a crisis. One participant in FGD 1 stated that transparency is equivalent to "honest communication . . . you tell me this is what you are going to do, and then I expect that you do exactly that". The lived experience of communication was generally characterized by silence during outages or by non-specific and widespread announcements (e.g. "this area and its environs"), which left customers "in the dark".

When ECG communicated proactively, as by sending out app notifications about scheduled maintenance, they were cited as an unusual, but significant, facilitator of trust. Nevertheless, the general feeling was that the company often left customers “in the dark” (FGD 4), which gave rise to a perception that the organisation obscured the actual state of its infrastructure. As a result, to the customer, transparency is a proxy for respect; its absence is understood as a disregard for the customer’s imperative to plan their lives.

4.3.3 Theme 2: The “Black Box” of Billing and Metering

The highest level of distrust was revealed in the customer deliberations related to the billing system, specifically regarding the new smart/prepaid meters. This theme is conceptualised as a “Black Box,” a system where input (payment) is assumed to bring about output (consumption cost) without transparency relating to the operation from within.

Participants described words like “mystery,” “confused”, and “cheated” to define their experiences with billing. In FGD 2, a participant characterised the billing system as “more or less like a black box”. “You can’t really tell whether your consumption actually leads to the amount you are paying”. Similar sentiments became evident in FGD 3, where one of the participants described a traumatic incident of receiving a bill for an unexplained 7,000 Ghana Cedis, which would lead to disconnection and the decision to circumvent the system altogether out of frustration.

The introduction of prepaid meters, designed to increase transparency, perversely increased suspicion. Customers complained of credit depletion at “alarming” rates with no explanation. The inability to get a clear itemised breakdown of deductions (levies, taxes, service charges) engendered a sense of financial exploitation. As long as the billing mechanism is opaque, the default human lived experience of the customer is going to be one of vulnerability, not one of control.

4.3.4 Theme 3: The Cost of Inefficiency: Financial and Psychological

This theme summarises the way customers perceive the "cost" of their relationship to ECG. The empirical data show that the financial liabilities of poor service range much further than the monthly electricity bill. Participants described significant economic costs (damaged appliances, lost business productivity) and psychological costs (stress, discomfort, sleep deprivation) articulately.

In FGD 2, a participant recorded a loss of a television set due to unstable voltage and therefore a direct financial loss associated with the inefficiency of the company. In FGD 3, one mother emphasised the human cost by describing the distress of a baby crying in the heat during a power outage, which forced her to "forego sleep." Other participants cited the anxiety of missing academic deadlines and the omnipresent stress of having to plan life around an unreliable power supply.

These narratives reflect that when viewed as a social exchange between customer and utility, the customer feels his or her "input" (payment, suffering, damaged assets) to be significantly greater than the "output" (unreliable power). The dismissive nature experienced at some customer service desks, which were described as ('rude' or 'unwelcoming' in FGD 3), adds further costs to the process and makes the redress process an emotionally draining experience.

4.3.5 Theme 4: The Ideal Relationship as Value-for-Money

Despite the frustrations, the final theme shows that customers do not hold unrealistic expectations. They do not expect perfection, but are simply seeking fairness. The ideal relationship is always put in terms of a transactional but reciprocal exchange: Value-for-Money.

Participants in FGD 1 and 4 used words like “simple contract” and “fair exchange” to express their preference. The consensus was unequivocal: “I pay in full, I expect smooth service” (FGD 1). There is a distinct acceptance of higher tariffs for reliability purposes. As stated in FGD 3, a reciprocal relationship is similar to “being in love . . . if you want to be served well, serve others well.” This theme highlights a critical opportunity for ECG. Customers look at the relationship through the prism of a contractual agreement. They feel that they are fulfilling their obligations (payment) and expect ECG’s reciprocation in terms of stability and respect. The current lived experience is not what this ideal looks like; however, the roadmap to rebuilding trust is clear to them: simple, reliable service that is commensurate with the financial commitment they make.

4.4 Findings from Employee Interviews: The Internal Perspective

This section presents the findings derived from the in-depth interviews with ECG employees. It represents the “internal” view, the operational reality of those tasked with generating, transmitting, and billing for power. These themes capture the complexities, frustrations, and strategic efforts involved in managing the organisation’s relationship with the public.

4.4.1 From Codes to Themes: Thematic Analysis of Employee Data

The themes for the employee group were derived through a systematic thematic analysis of the individual interview transcripts. The analysis sought to identify patterns in how employees perceive their own transparency, the challenges they face, and their interpretation of customer trust.

Table 4 below illustrates the progression from raw data (open codes) to the final themes representing the internal perspective.

Table 2: Thematic Analysis of Employee Interview Data

OPEN CODING (Illustrative Quotes)	**AXIAL CODING** (Conceptual Categories)	**SELECTIVE CODING** (Final Themes)
"They try to... say all sort of jargon, insult... to you." (E1) | *"The customers... refuse to understand."* (E1) | *"It is a machine. Anything can happen... but the person will be like, no."* (E1) | *"They don't care about the means... they just need light."* (E1)	**The Gap Between Technical Reality and Customer Expectation**	**Theme 1: The Burden of Technical Communication**
"Now ECG is not the one giving them meter... they have to go to a third party." (E1) | *"Most consumers don't normally trust the third party."* (E2) | *"Political influence... put their hands in so many of our activities."* (E1) | *"We don't have that system that indicates that this town is off."* (E6)	**External and Systemic Constraints on Trust**	**Theme 2: Structural Barriers to Trust (Third Parties and Systems)**

"We are the ones serving them... there is no conflict." (E2) | *"The customer... they don't like to pay... stealing our power."* (E4) | *"We want to actually delight our customers."* (E4) | *"We are doing a fair exchange."* (E4)	**Defensiveness and Perceived Reciprocity**	**Theme 3: The Internal-External Disconnect on "Fairness"**
"Our transparency is top notch." (E4, Marketing) | *"We communicate... very, very clear and accurate."* (E4) | *"Immediately they see you... they start to insult you."* (E2, Linesman) | *"It's difficult to convince the public."* (E5)	**Contrasting Views within the Organisation**	**Theme 4: Strategic Optimism vs. Operational Reality**

Source: Field Data (2025)

4.4.2 Theme 1: The Burden of Technical Communication

A recurrent idea found among the employees surveyed, particularly those holding technical and field jobs, relates to the challenge of communicating technical realities to a lay audience. These employees self-perceive as being transparent about defects (for example a burnt transformer or damaged pole), but argue that customers "refuse to understand" (E1), or willfully ignore such explanations, and are only interested in the end product of power delivery.

One field technician reported, "When we are trying to be plain and trying to tell the person the actual problem . . . they feel uncomfortable . . . they don't want to listen to your side of the [story]." They just need light" (E1). This observation suggests that while employees have associated transparency with a detailed explanation of the technical process, customers associate transparency with the provision of a satisfactory result. Employees feel burdened by the expectation that they can preclude mechanical failures, emphasising that "It's an equipment. Anything can happen to it at any time" (E1). The frustration incurred in trying to explain these faults results in a sense of futility in communication.

4.4.3 Theme 2: Structural Barriers to Trust (Third Parties and Systems)

Employees often stated that the possible factors not under their direct control were major hindrances to trust establishment. A salient sub-theme was the introduction of third-party vendors for meter installation and credit vending. Respondents recognised that this change in organisation has destroyed the direct relationship with the customer. As one interviewee said, "Most consumers don't normally trust the third party . . . they wish they could pay to the company directly" (E2). Consequently, this situation places ECG employees in the role of being responsible for the inefficiencies or corruption perceived in the external contractors.

In addition, systemic limitations hinder transparency. One employee exposed a critical lack of real-time visibility: "We don't have that system that indicates that this town is off." It is the customer who will be calling you" (E6). This admission shows that the "proactive communication" required by customers is often not technically feasible because the utility relies on customers to identify the faults first. Political interference was also cited as a barrier, where unauthorised meters were distributed by politicians and caused chaos in billing, which had to be sorted out by the employees (E1).

4.4.4 Theme 3: The Internal-External Disconnect on "Fairness"

In stark contrast with customers' perception of how the relationship is "unfair" and "exploitative," employees overwhelmingly feel the exchange is equitable, or even skewed against the company.

From an internal perspective, the company delivers on its mandate by delivering power and maintaining infrastructure in often challenging conditions.

Employees claimed that they make a lot of efforts to serve, as they describe the relationship as "very good" (E4) since "without the customers, there wouldn't be any ECG" (E2). However, they consider customers who make illegal connections or pay bills as violators of the social contract. A marketing officer stated, "Customers sometimes feel they don't like to pay, you've been unfair to us by stealing our power" (E4). This represents a fundamental disconnect: customers feel cheated by the billing system, while employees feel cheated by the public's behaviour (theft and non-payment).

4.4.5 Theme 4: Strategic Optimism vs. Operational Reality

A clear split developed in the employee group itself, between strategic/management positions and operational/field positions. The Marketing Officer (E4), who represents the strategic view, defined ECG's transparency as "*top notch*" and stated that "*messages are very clear*." This view of communication is a well-managed strategic function whose intent is to "delight our customers."

Conversely, field staff (E1, E2) presented a much harsher reality of hostility, insults and physical threats. One linesman said, *"Right away they see you . . . they begin to insult you"* (E2). While the corporate office believes that they communicate clearly through apps and press releases, the people on the ground are experiencing the raw anger of customers who feel unheard. This internal split hints that the company's high-level transparency strategies may not be properly translated into the day-to-day reality on the ground.

5.3 Implications of the findings

The conclusions that can be drawn from this study have huge implications not only for organisational theory itself, but also for the practical administration of public utilities. By grounding the ideas of transparency and trust in the comparative lived experiences of stakeholders, the research provides rich insights that may enhance future academic inquiry and strategic decision-making at ECG.

5.3.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to and enriches the existing literature in two primary ways:

Enriching Social Exchange Theory (SET) in a Monopolistic Context

Conventional Social Exchange Theory states that relationships will end when perceived costs exceed benefits. However, the current research is an extension of SET to the context of the applicability of SET in a public utility monopoly with no exit option. The empirical data show that under such compelled dependence, a negative cost-benefit appraisal generates entrenched hostility and toxic loyalty rather than severance. The inability to break free of an expensive relationship adds to the psychological weight of customers, turning dissatisfaction into a deep sense of powerlessness. Moreover, the "reciprocity" of the two distinct stakeholder groups being simultaneously subjected to SET highlights the subjective nature of "reciprocity." It means that a perceived "fair exchange" is not an objective truth, but a point of view; employees might consider a supply of service to be equitable while customers might consider it an unjust taking of value.

Validating the Mediating Role of Lived Experience

The findings complicate the linear models commonly employed to describe the transparency-trust relationship. It supports the claims of scholars such as (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2014b) by showing that transparency interventions (e.g. mobile applications, digital meters) are not objective inputs that automatically produce trust. Instead, lived experience is a key mediation. For example, the introduction of smart meters, which were supposed to promote transparency, was experienced by customers in terms of the rapid depletion of their credit, so trust was lost. This shows the subjective meanings of organisational actions as perceived by stakeholders, rather than the actions themselves are the dominant mechanisms for building or breaking trust.

Combining SET and Justice Theory

The current study highlights the theoretical value of combining Social Exchange Theory and Organizational Justice Theory. While SET provides a general framework for assessing *costs vs. rewards*, often this is not granular enough to explain why certain costs are viewed as advantageous by stakeholders. The application of Justice Theory shows that "*cost*" is not limited to financial aspects (e.g., bill amount) but also procedural aspects (e.g., opacity of the meter), and interactional aspects (e.g., discourtesy of staff). This combined framework is a stronger model for trust within monopolies to be understood: When customers are unable to change things (distributive justice is fixed in the context of monopolies' pricing), their trust is hypersensitive to procedural justice and interactional justice. Consequently, this synthesis contributes to a better understanding of the negotiation of trust in market-less situations.

5.3.2 Practical and Managerial Implications for ECG

The study provides a transformative roadmap to move the transparency and public trust of ECG beyond current barriers to establish sustainable and genuine customer relationships

Demystifying the "Black Box" of Billing

The greatest barrier to trust found is the opaque nature of the billing system. ECG needs to prioritise data transparency. Management should introduce features in the mobile application and physical receipts that provide an itemised breakdown of consumption, daily usage rates, and specific tariff levies, instead of a lump sum deduction. Based on the suggestions of the customers, the company should launch wide public education campaigns to encourage people to manually calculate and confirm their meter readings and regain their sense of control.

Closing the "Say-Do" Gap through Internal Alignment

To protect the brand and its workforce, it is crucial that ECG's leadership gets outside marketing promises and internal operational realities aligned. The study revealed that field staff often face hostility because they lack the resources or real-time information to deliver on the *"customer delight"* promised by headquarters. Investments in real-time monitoring systems, able to identify faults before customers report them, and having sufficient safety and logistical support for people in the field are imperative. Without adequate support, providing a world class customer experience is untenable.

Re-evaluating the Third-Party Vendor Model

Customers and employees alike cited trust in third party vendors for metering and credit sales as a major cause of friction and distrust. ECG should review this approach, as it can either be more diligently digitised to prevent human error and corruption, or the sensitive processes can be centralised (for example, meter procurement) to ensure accountability and re-establish direct lines of trust with the customer.

From Broadcasting to Engagement

Finally, the communication strategy needs to change from "broadcasting" to "engagement." Customers were asking specifically for localised information instead of vague announcements. Implementing a system for ticket tracking, enabling the customers to track the status of individual complaints in real-time through an application or a SMS would meet the demand for proactive transparency and reduce uncertainty that currently feeds mistrust.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the empirical results of the study, providing an in-depth analysis of the transparency-trust dynamic at ECG using the twin lens of customers and employees. By systematically coding and analysing data from customer focus groups and employee interviews, the study created a map to understand different lived experiences that outline the stakeholder relationship.

From the outside in, customers expressed a profound distrust born of opacity of billing practices (the "Black Box"), a feeling of harm, both monetary and psychological, fueled by inefficiencies, and a desire for proactive and honest communication, not nebulous announcements.

From the inside, employees revealed an operational reality screaming with limitations, technical, third-party interference, and the emotional burden of managing a hostile public. While strategic roles saw transparency as strong, frontline staff saw a disconnect between corporate messaging and the realities of service delivery.

Crucially, comparative analysis revealed a deep "perception gap." Although both groups place emphasis on stability, their understanding of the concepts of fairness and transparency are diametrically opposed. Employees see a fair delivery of service under trying conditions while customers see it as an exploitative breach of contract. This relationship can be theoretically aligned with Social Exchange Theory which states that it is characterized by failed reciprocity in a coercive monopoly where the inability to exit reinforces perceived costs and locks in distrust. The following chapter will address the further implications of these findings and provide some recommendations for bridging this divide.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Chapter Introduction

The chapter presents a synthesis of the results of the inquiry, and it draws conclusions from a rigorous qualitative analysis of the experiences of stakeholders at the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG). The investigation aimed to move beyond traditional quantitative measures of organisational success in order to scrutinise the lived experiences of day-to-day interaction with the utility (ECG). Employing a dual perspective, which included both external consumers and internal employees, the study aimed at shedding light on how trust and transparency are built, negotiated, and often eroded in practice.

The analysis shows a complex landscape in which there is a significant "perception gap." While all the stakeholders have a basic desire for a reliable power supply and effective communication, their actual experiences are quite different. Consumers experience a relationship with the characteristics of opaque billing ("the Black Box"), reactive communication and unequal exchange, while the employees themselves report constraints imposed by technical limitations, external interference and a lack of public cooperation.

This chapter provides an interpretation of salient themes in relation to the research questions and assesses the theoretical and practical implications of the findings, and offers concrete recommendations for ECG management and policymakers based on stakeholder testimony.

5.2 Discussion of Key Findings

This section explains how the main themes identified in Chapter Four fit into the research objectives and the current academic literature. The findings present a troubled stakeholder relationship, which is reinforced by divergent definitions of transparency and different perceptions of operational reality.

5.2.1 Defining Transparency: The Conflict between "Disclosure" and "Clarity"

The first research goal was to investigate the way that consumers and employees conceptualise and interpret transparency. Findings reveal a basic contradiction. For ECG employees, especially management, transparency is largely equated with disclosure, the dissemination of information via formal channels such as applications, press releases, and radio announcements. Employees measure transparency based on the amount and availability of these communications.

On the other hand, consumers understand transparency as clarity and accuracy (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016). A generic announcement about maintenance in *"Accra and its environs"* is disclosure for customers, but it is not specific and timely enough to be actionable. Thus, consumers perceive it to be vague obfuscation, rather than transparency. This supports the literature that indicates that mere provision of information does not foster trust when the information is seen to be irrelevant or unintelligible by the stakeholder (B. Rawlins, 2008). The analysis shows that, as long as ECG focuses on broadcasting (disclosure) whilst customers are seeking specific truth (clarity), trust will continue to elude them.

5.2.2 The Internal-External Divide: Organisational Hypocrisy and the "Say-Do" Gap

The second objective examined the authenticity of the transparency initiatives by ECG. Comparing data about employee interviews with customer experiences brings into focus a phenomenon called "organisational hypocrisy" or the "say-do gap" (Christensen et al., 2020). While the marketing department will say that customer satisfaction is of utmost importance and the company is at the pinnacle of transparency, field staff are telling stories of reality that is limited by resources, lack of real-time monitoring systems, and frequent customer complaints.

This difference between organisational rhetoric *(What we say: "We delight customers")* and operational reality *(What we do: "We rely on customers to report faults")* is a credibility deficit. Frontline personnel, unable to live up to the high expectations given to them by headquarters, take the brunt of customer hostility. This observation provides support for the Service-Profit Chain theory (Heskett & Schlesinger, 1997), which contends that external customer trust cannot be sustained in the absence of internal alignment and employee empowerment. In this situation, the absence of internal coherence undercuts the external brand promise.

5.2.3 The "Perception Gap" as a Cause of Distrust

Comparative analysis in Chapter Four identified a significant "perception gap" as the main source of mistrust, especially with respect to the billing system. This disparity is a major failure in social exchange.

Employee Reality: Employees perceive billing as a mathematical reality, as a means of debt recovery. They view increases in bills as a logical result of previous expenditure or debt transfer.

Customer Reality: Customers view the billing system as a "Black Box" or "mystery" created to defraud them.

This discord makes the exchange seem unfair. When customers feel they cannot check the "price" of the service (because of opaque meters), they come to the conclusion that the connection is exploitative. Trust, which is defined as a willingness to be vulnerable (Denise M. Rousseau et al., 1998), collapses when customers perceive the exploitation of their vulnerability (pre-payment). The study shows that the erosion of trust at ECG occurs not only due to service failures (such as power outages) but the perception of service failures as being carried out in a malicious or exploitative way rather than a technical mistake.

5.3 Practical Recommendations

Drawing on the analysis of both consumer and employee lived experiences, this study identifies four critical areas where ECG needs to intervene to move from performative transparency to a true and trust-building relational model.

5.3.1 Enhancing Informational Justice and Billing Clarity

The opacity of the billing system is the biggest inhibitor of trust. Management should focus on clarity and control of the user.

5.3.1.1 Implement Itemised Digital Billing

Require itemised consumption data in all customer touchpoints (apps, SMS, receipts). This should include daily use, specific tariffs and regulatory charges with no lump sum deductions.

5.3.1.2 Launch Public Verification Campaigns

Implement sustained public education programs that make it easier for customers to calculate their meter readings and verify their bills for more procedural control.

5.3.2 Addressing the Operational "Say-Do" Gap

The gap between corporate promises and reality is a gap that destroys customer trust and employee morale. Internal alignment must be ensured by management.

5.3.2.1 Prioritise Frontline Resource Allocation

Invest in real-time information systems for field staff so that they have instant access to customer history, network status and fault reports.

5.3.2.2 Provide Logistical and Safety Support

Provide appropriate safety equipment, transport and equipment to enable staff to meet service commitments and minimise staff - customer conflict.

5.3.4 Re-Thinking the Third-Party Service Model

Reliance on third-party vendors for critical, trust-sensitive services such as metering, credit sales, etc., breeds friction, inaccuracy, and perceived corruption.

5.3.4.1 Centralise Sensitive Customer Processes

Conduct a comprehensive review of the vendor strategy to:

a. Centralise critical processes (for example, new meter acquisition) for direct accountability, **or**

b. Implement more stringent protocols of digitisation to eliminate human error and corruption.

5.3.5 Shifting from Mass Broadcasting to Localised Engagement

Vague, mass announcements often do not deliver as expected by customers, who are looking for timely, relevant and localised information, and this adds to uncertainty.

5.3.5.1 Implement Real-Time Complaint Tracking

Introduce a mandatory ticket tracking system (app or SMS) that gives the customer the ability to track the status of complaints and timelines for resolution.

5.3.5.2 Localise Outage Communication

Use of a geo-fenced communication strategy that ensures that service interruption notices are location-specific and include specific restoration timelines (boosts informational justice).

5.4 Implications of the findings

The conclusions from this study have important implications for both organisational theory and the actual administration of public utilities. By anchoring the ideas of transparency and trust in comparative lived experiences of stakeholders, the study provides a nuanced understanding that can be used by future scholarly inquiry and to inform ECG's strategic decision-making.

5.5 Conclusion

This study aimed to fill an important gap in the academic literature concerning the relationship between organisational transparency and public trust, especially in the context of a challenging environment of a public utility monopoly in a developing nation. By approaching the research in a non-quantitative way and questioning the official corporate discourse, the investigation adopted a paradigm of interpretivism to investigate the real, lived experiences of the stakeholders that make up the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG): its consumers and employees.

The empirical findings drew a complex landscape with a significant "perception gap." Through comparative analysis of customer focus groups and employee interviews, the two unique realities were identified. Lived experiences of consumers marked by high levels of scepticism about opaque billing systems (the so-called "Black Box"), frustration with reactive communication and a sense of unfair exchange in the context of transaction. On the other hand, employees were found to struggle with operational hardships, held back by technical limitations, external pressures, and the pressure to serve a hostile public audience.

Theoretically, this research makes a great contribution by combining Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Organizational Justice Theory. SET clarifies the procedures relating to the relational structure, it explains how coercive dependency inherent in a monopoly multiplies the psychological costs in failed reciprocity, whereas Justice Theory provides the terms of nuance needed to diagnose individual breakdowns. The research proves that the issue of trust erosion is driven by lack of procedural justice (opaque billing), distributive justice (perceived poor value-for-money) and interactional justice (disrespectful service interaction).

In conclusion, the research suggests that for a public utility like ECG to build and maintain trust is less dependent on “press releases,” mobile applications, or corporate slogans, and more dependent on the management of daily human interactions. The findings are a strong signal that equitable billing, respectful service, and communicating truthfully are not soft measures and disposable, but the basis of trust. Only by creating a bridge between the perception gap and, therefore, closer alignment of internal realities and external expectations, ECG can achieve the legitimacy and public collaboration that are so important for sustainable long-term success.

5.6 Recommendations for Future Research

The limitations and results of this study indicate a number of areas for future academic research. Building on the qualitative foundation established here, the following proposals are offered in an attempt to shed some light on the complex nature of trust in public utilities.

Quantitative Validation (National Survey)

To overcome the generalisability limitation, future research should conduct a large-scale quantitative survey with a representative sample of Ghana. Employs the themes identified herein (e.g. the “Black Box” of billing, the “Say-Do” gap) as variables to test the statistical prevalence of such perceptions and to examine correlations between specific transparency mechanisms (such as the use of apps) and levels of trust on a national scale.

Comparative Geographical Analysis

Given the focus of the study in Accra, it is appropriate to conduct a comparative study that will include rural and peri-urban areas. The priorities and lived experiences of rural customers (who may care more for access and stability than for digital transparency) may be quite different from the urban demographic, thus demonstrating whether “demand for transparency” is universal or context-specific.

The “Internal Culture” and Service-Profit Chain Study

Although this research touched on the employee perspective, a dedicated inspection of ECG’s organisational culture is needed. Future research could question the Service - Profit Chain in detail, delving into how the degree of internal transparency (denoting management - to - staff communication) directly affects the employee morale and subsequent customer interactions. Understanding the internal customer experience is critical to diagnosing the root causes of the service failures that are identified publicly.

Cross-Sector Comparative Analysis (Monopoly vs. Competition)

Finally, in order to test theoretical implications concerning coercive dependency, a comparative analysis between ECG (a monopoly) and the telecommunications industry (a competitive market) would be interesting. By providing a contrast in customer perceptions of transparency and trust of these different market structures, researchers can isolate the variable of “consumer choice” and examine empirically how the ability to switch providers modifies Social Exchange dynamics.

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APPENDIX

Focus Group Discussion Guide

1. Introduction and Ground Rules (Moderator Script)

Hello, everyone. Thank you for being here today. My name is Miriam Wasila Dauda, and I am a student at The University of Media Arts and Culture. I am conducting a study to understand customer experiences with the Electricity Company of Ghana.

This is not a test or a trick question session. There are no right or wrong answers. I just want to hear your honest opinions and experiences. Please feel free to share your thoughts, even if they are different from what others have said.

I will be recording our conversation to make sure I don't miss anything. Your names will not be used in my research, and everything you say will be kept confidential.

Before we begin, do you have any questions for me?

I would like us to note a few guidelines.

- Please speak one at a time so that we can hear each other clearly.
- Feel free to agree or disagree with others, but please be respectful.
- I may ask a follow-up question to clarify your points, but my goal is to let you lead the conversation.

PART A

Warm-up and General Perceptions

- Let's go around the room. Could each of you share how long you have been an ECG customer and one word that comes to mind when you think about the company?
- In general, what's your overall impression of the service provided by ECG?

PART B

Collective Experiences of Transparency

- When you hear the word **'transparency'** in relation to ECG, what does that mean to you as a group? What does it look like in practice?
- Can you share a story about a time when ECG's communication was a significant factor, either for better or worse? For example, when there was a major power outage or a change in tariffs.
- How do you typically get information from ECG? (e.g., social media, news, radio, neighbors). How does the source of the information influence whether you believe it?

Probing Questions:

- (If a participant mentions a rumor) "How did you feel when you heard that? Did you trust the information?
- Why do you think the company chooses to communicate in that way?
- What do you think is a fair way for a utility company to share important information with its customers?

PART C

Collective Perceptions of Trust

- On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is "no trust at all" and 10 is "complete trust," where would you place your trust in ECG? Why?
- Think about a time when you or someone you know had a major problem with their electricity service (e.g., a wrong bill, a long-term outage). How did that situation affect your trust in the company?
- In your opinion, what actions could ECG take to improve its relationship and build greater trust with customers?

Probing Questions:

- What would need to happen for your trust rating to go up?
- "Do you believe the company's actions match its promises?

PART D

Social Exchange and the Customer-Company Relationship

- When you pay your electricity bill, what do you feel you are giving to the company? And what do you expect to receive in return?
- Do you feel there is a **'fair exchange'** between you and ECG? Why or why not?
- If you had the chance to speak directly with an ECG representative, what would you tell them about the relationship?

Probing Questions:

- What are some of the 'costs' you feel as a customer, beyond the financial cost?
- What would a 'reciprocal' relationship with ECG look like?

PART E

Closing Questions

- Is there anything else you want to add about your experiences or feelings towards ECG that we haven't covered today?
- Thank you all again for your time and honest feedback. Your participation is very valuable.

Employees Interview Guide

Interview Guide: Employee Perceptions of Transparency and Trust

Hello, my name is Miriam Wasila Dauda, and I am a student at University of Meida Arts and Communication. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today.

The purpose of this interview is to understand your experiences as an employee of the Electricity Company of Ghana. I am interested in your perceptions of how the company communicates with its customers and how that communication influences customer trust.

This interview will take about 20 minutes to complete. Your participation is completely voluntary. All your responses will be kept confidential, and your name and role will not be used in my research. I will be recording the audio of our conversation to ensure I capture everything accurately. Only I will have access to these recordings.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Do I have your permission to record this interview?"

SECTION A

Warm-up Questions

- Can you tell me about your role at ECG and how long you have been with the company?
- What is a typical day like for you in your role?

SECTION B

Exploring Transparency (Core Questions)

- From your perspective, how does ECG communicate information to its customers? What are the main channels used?
- Can you describe a time when you felt ECG was very transparent with its customers? What happened?
- What are the biggest challenges you face when trying to be transparent with customers?
- Do you feel the information you are given to share with customers is clear and accurate? Please explain.

Probing Questions:

- What kind of information do customers most often ask for?
- In what situations do you feel you are not able to be as transparent as you'd like to be?
- Does corporate policy or management decisions affect your ability to communicate openly? How so?
- What do you think customers' expectations are when it comes to transparency?

SECTION C

Examining Trust (Core Questions)

- In your opinion, what is the level of trust between customers and ECG? Why do you think that is?
- Can you recall a specific event or company action that you think has helped build customer trust?
- On the other hand, can you describe an incident that may have damaged customer trust? What were the reasons for it?
- How do customer complaints and feedback influence trust?

Probing Questions:

- How do you personally handle situations where a customer’s trust has been broken?
- What role do you think communication plays in building or breaking trust?
- Do you believe the company’s actions align with what it communicates to the public?

SECTION D

The Employee-Customer Relationship (Connecting to Social Exchange Theory)

- How would you describe the relationship between ECG and its customers?
- What do you believe are the company’s responsibilities to its customers? What do you believe are the customers’ responsibilities to the company?
- When you interact with a customer, do you feel like you are engaging in a fair and balanced exchange of information and service? Why or why not?

- What, in your opinion, would make the relationship between ECG and its customers a “good” one?

Probing Questions:

- When a customer lodges a complaint, do you feel the company is providing a fair response to their effort?
- Can you think of a situation where you felt the exchange was unfair for either the customer or the company?
- How does your role contribute to the quality of the relationship with customers?

SECTION E

Closing Questions

- Is there anything else about the relationship between ECG and its customers that you think is important for me to know?
- Thank you again for your time and insights. They are very valuable to my research.

Sample Interview Transcripts

INTERVIEW 1

PART 1

So for the purpose of the interview, I just want to understand your experiences as an employee of ECG Ghana.

Just interested in your perception of how the company communicates to its customers and how the communication influences customer trust.

So I want your opinion just that.

It would take just about 20 minutes to complete and the participation is completely voluntary.

Responses are confidential.

It's just for my research work.

I will not even publish your name.

I will not use your name.

And your responses are not going to be given to anybody.

And I will also be recording the audio of the conversation to ensure everything is captured accurately.

Please, are you clear?

OK.

Thank you very much.

So first, I would like to find out about your role at ECG and how long you've been with the company.

My role is an artisan, a field personel there working in a place like this.

Artisan?

Yeah, a full person there.

The responses are not important.

So how long have you been with ECG?

Let me see, we went for training.

Before you go as an employer, as a staff, you have to go, especially as a field personel, you have to go for training.

I went for training like almost eight months, besides.

From eight months you will be posted to your actual places and for that I've been like eight months, nine months, eight, let me say ten months.

Approximately you've been with the company for

So from your perspective, how does ECG communicate information to its customers?

What was the main channel it uses?

Like, our communications, you know, we've done it in so many ways.

Some are on our social platforms, in which we have a section that communicates on the platform.

Not everybody is... Can you please be a bit audible for me?

Not everybody that goes on social media to talk about the company, unless you have been given the opportunity to do so.

And also, unlike we communicating to our customers based on resolving their faults and doing maintenance for them, we normally do that announcement on radio stations.

and sometimes take vans to the communes even if you are going to do an operation over there and do an announcement for them.

And also those who might be facing individual problems with their electricity.

We have a platform, we have a number.

I would like to find out, since you've been with the company, can you describe a time when you

Are there times when you feel like ECG is always transparent or has been very transparent to the customers?

Can you give an example of exactly what happened?

Oh, ECG is always transparent because we don't even try to know who the person is before we attempt to know.

It is that you need to just get our contact, communicate with our communication center.

Then you put it on the platform.

We try to contact you before attending to you.

And you give us the details of what you are actually facing with your school experiences.

So that we attend to you and make sure that you feel comfortable before you leave your premises.

So what are the biggest challenges you face?

Sometimes you try to be as plain as possible to customers, like you just said.

ECG is always transparent.

What are some of the challenges you face when you are trying to be very plain and transparent to customers?

When we are trying to be plain and trying to tell the person the actual problem on ground, sometimes, because of the technical aspect of the field, they try to, like,

feel uncomfortable maybe for you trying to explain to them the technical aspects that is happening so that you have to like on case let me say in case there is a bend transformer as a bend transformer it needs to be replaced

needs to be replaced and you have to make a request so that they bring and when it comes it comes with a boot trap you have to make an arrangement for that one too so within this thing within this kind of program you have to make an arrangement for all those things that will take a very long time sometimes I don't know that if you might get the boot track

to bring the transformer, or even the transformer that has been got bent, if there's actually a transformer there to replace it.

When they're trying to explain these things, you see, they'll be like, the customers will be like, saying all of jargon, insult, and sort of things to you.

But being part of the company, there are company rules that any customer or anybody that insults you or tries to intimidate you, you don't need to.

You have to be cool with him or her to make sure that what you are here, what you are there for, the person will just try to do it for the person so that everything goes well.

So the challenges are basically understanding from the customers.

Pay the issue on that.

But do you think that sometimes the customers misunderstand

most of the time.

And do you think that the information is always accurate enough for them to understand or maybe there's another way that information can be

You know, unlike the very first scenario I gave, like a bent transformer, you can't really see that there's even a bent transformer with even a bent pole, which all these things needs to be replaced.

In this case, it's physical evidence.

But the person will be like, no, why should it get bent?

It's an equipment.

Anything can happen.

Thunder strikes every blessed day when it rains.

There are a whole lot of problems that I call the transformer to fix.

Equipment is a machine.

Anything can happen to it at any time.

That's why we also provide means for those things.

So it's basically the fact that customers just do not try to understand some of these things.

Is there any situation since you started working that you feel that you want to be very transparent, but you've not been able to?

For so far, no.

I've not faced such situations.

Those who I face, let me say, most of them are educated people.

So when you try to explain certain things to them, they try to

understands you or gives you the ability to express yourself.

So that means that since they work for the company, you will be as transparent as possible with every situation.

Can you say the same for the company as well?

Not just for the company?

For the company, yes.

So are there any corporate policy or management decisions that affect your ability to communicate

Yeah.

For every company, me precisely, this is not my first company.

New working.

For every company, there's always a restriction on company information.

You can't be speaking, talk anything like, you have a meeting, then you come out to talk to the public of every word and every secret they said.

No, they don't agree to that.

We have policies protecting the company itself and the individual personalities.

So what do you think are the customer expectations when it comes to transparency?

What do customers expect from this?

The only thing they expect from my observation for this 10 miles is that they don't care about the means and ways for you to give them light.

They just need light.

So whatever you do, they don't care.

So you don't think that the customers have some expectations when it comes to the company being transparent?

They always have their expectations, because they purchase power.

So they need to have power 24 hours.

So what do you think those specific expectations are, maybe one or two?

I was asking if you think that the customers have some

expectations when it comes to ECG's communication about transparency.

Do you think that they have some specific... Oh, they have expectations.

Unlike when the light is being off and they call you, you have to attend to them.

They expect that if even you could not make it possible, they have to hear some vital information from you, the situation at the ground.

And most of the time, we also do that.

What do you think is the level of trust between ECG and customers?

Let me say seven.

Seven?

Yeah.

Okay, so why?

Let me say seven because for transparent, you know that anytime they call, if only they call and the call center get there on time, we are able to attend to them.

They are able to attend.

They are always... So they always feel glad and most of the time when they come to the office to even do something else.

They like how they are working on this compared to other districts.

You are talking specifically about your ant.

It will hit your finger.

What is that?

So for the three, most of the time you deal with your monetary issue.

Now in the ECG, I try not to take in cash.

You see those always, you know, when a customer is dealing with the company, wants to take cash to the company, then he knows that I have paid to the company with anything you attend.

The company will attend to it, but now AC is not taking any cash from them because they have to do everything online or go to third party vendors.

Sometimes they say they don't trust those people because it's not within the company, it's outside the company.

And if there is any misplacement of funds, how to trace it, it's always an issue for them.

And also concerning those who would like to apply for new service, now ACG is not the one giving them meter.

They have to go to a third party.

They pay them money to the third party.

Because now ACG, most of its workers have been given to third party, which they used to, they ourselves used to give out meter to customers when they apply, which was even faster than now it is.

because of political intervention.

So uncle, please, can we end it here?

It's left with just a few questions.

By the way, these kids are behaving right now.

And I think that you are also, just let me take this.

So that maybe when you have time, we can do the rest on the phone.

When are you leaving Kamus tomorrow?

I hope that we are safe by then.

Tomorrow my sister will be around.

Thank you very much.

Just a few questions and then we'll be done.

So please, can you get me a few people?

Let me talk to my other colleague.

PART 2

Continuing from where we left off.

So in this section we are looking at questions on trust between customers of ECG.

So in your opinion what is the level of trust between customers and ECG and why do you think so?

Probably it might be like, let me say medium, if I would rate it from 1 to 10, I would say like 5.

Because recently most of our activities like our payment models, our payment models and staff have been given to a third party.

Most consumers don't normally trust the third party based on payment.

They wish they could pay to the company directly and let the company give them a receipt.

But here's the case.

They have to go to somebody to purchase power from.

And even if they have to pay some bill to the ECG, the company, they have to go to a third party to pay to.

So they are of this kind of losing trust in the company's operation.

Who are some of the third parties?

The third parties are people being authorised by the ECG people to sell like

power to cost the vending point.

Okay.

I see.

So do you think that's, that's the only reason why you are rating it at five, only the third party?

Yeah, yeah.

No third party, not only vending, a lot of third parties, meters installations, meters, how you often give out meters.

Now it's a third party that installed it.

For how long?

Oh, it will be like for me, I've known like two years now.

Oh, I see.

Oh, I see.

This explains something one of the customers said when she was trying to install her meter.

Then this should go a long way to probably help.

people need to do a lot of education so that they know that it’s third party and you also really have to all this one i’m saying i have to remove it from the recording and you also really have to let the customers understand and then educate your third party because she said you let’s finish then i’ll tell her i’ll tell you okay all right okay so thank you very much for that em so can you recall a specific event

or a specific action by the company or company ECG that you think has helped to build customer trust?

Like giving out our customer service number to our customers in case they face any challenges within their premises and localities

they should call, they can call the customer service and report their issues so that we attend to them.

So we have created a medium for them to communicate with us directly in case they face any challenges.

Is there any other you would want to add?

Oh no, I’m just asking.

And also, we do in case you are going for like

going to offline within specific places we normally announce on social media and on our platforms across the globe.

So on the other hand, can you describe an incident that you think may have damaged customer trust?

and and and the reasons for it is there any incident that you can describe that you think could have or may have damaged customer trust okay let me see folks you know most are is is associated with power power power power i like

On the other side, people would say, now it's easy to purchase power with your phone online.

But most of the time, when they apply for Mita, they have to go through a whole lot of stress before the issue.

So a customer is bored, fed up with the process and stuff.

trying to, sometimes to, you know, as we accompany them with third party, you might possess everything.

But when it gets to the third party, for the individual to proceed with these things, you don't know what is happening there.

So most of the time, they normally complain, most of the time it's our meter issues.

How they find it difficult in getting meters to buy power and stuff.

Thank you.

So, how do you think that customer complaints and feedback and the feedback that they get, how does it influence trust?

Oh, they do, they do.

So how, how do you think their complaints and the feedback that they get influence the trust?

Because, because, let me put a scenario like this.

and your light goes off and you even call the customer service and within 12 hours it's been called and the light comes back and they even call you back for confirmation it's your light back it's even it's it's some kind of tragedy Did they do all that?

Did they call?

They do call the number that appears on the platform you call that specific person to find out if actually it's light is back

If there's two, three numbers that you call them.

So normally the copay also provides some kind of credit to them for the staff to call them.

Oh, I see.

All right.

So, um,

Do you believe that your company's action aligns with what it communicates to the public?

Yes, yes, yes.

So if you want to rate it?

I would say eight.

Eight, okay.

So what are some of the reasons?

Because the reason I say eight is that, because normally what is being written on our platform, that's what we go by.

And let me say our customer relationship, no.

Day in and day out, we talk to them, pay their issues.

So we have many platforms in which we communicate with them and respond to them based on their complaints.

So you believe that the company's actions are in line with what they tell their public?

Yeah.

So what role do you think communication plays in building trust and in breaking trust?

Communication is very important in any occasion even not specifically for the company precise but when you are dealing with we are all human we are dealing with human beings you have to let the person understand

everything you are going through and how it goes by, so that he might know his or her way.

Unlike when we are coming to do maintenance on our network, we can't just wake up off the network without telling the public so that they will plan ahead that day.

So we do announce a day

or sometimes two days before the maintenance, the outage, to make sure we are aware.

We tell the customers that this day and this time, there will be lights out because of these issues of plant maintenance.

So we don't just wake up to off the light.

We just try to announce to them, let them understand so that they also plan their daily activities.

So how do you think that that helps to build trust?

It helps to build trust because they will know that, oh,

ECG, what they communicate to us, they go according to that one.

So they don't do things aside what has been announced to the public.

So for our announcement, normally when they see that this announcement is out, they trust that surely this announcement will come to pass.

So how does communication break trust?

It breaks trust because when we miscommunicate, now and then it actually breaks trust.

Unlike, let me see, this one is an impromptu issue.

It happened last time at Oya River, Special Ice.

We have a substation, a mobile substation there, where a car, two cars crashed into the substation.

You know, this one is an urgent issue.

People might not know.

And within that period, you can't communicate to everybody.

All of a sudden, every place goes off.

You know, people will actually, they will try to...

talk about it, they will say no announcement, we just stood there, we just off light.

But it was due to an issue, incident.

So if somebody is to take it very like the other side of the story, you might be like, we are doing anything, we do off our light anyhow, anytime you want.

So in this case, when somebody is far away from where the incident happened, it might be like, these people, they do off-light anyhow they want.

So this one, you know, that's their way of life.

But don't you think that sometimes your announcements are not like you don't always follow through with the communication.

That is why people think that you just offer it anyhow because they don't hear.

They hardly hear.

So either maybe the announcement that people give that you don't follow through to make sure that the people get it.

Or maybe you don't give the announcement at all, so people don't really receive it because people have that perception.

For the announcement that we do give, it's just that maybe by the time we are giving the announcement, that person in particular may not be around.

Let me say, we are going for this connection.

We are going for revenue mobilization at this particular area.

Everyone will go there in a day or two days before that day.

It will go around six, go and make announcement, the morning six to seven, six to seven and eight, to make announcement around the community.

Then in the evening, come back in the evening, then do the announcement.

Before the next day, or the next two days, they follow up with the activity.

But you know communication there for the our platform there, you know, you can it's not 100% you can assure that it's 100% because not everybody has smartphone and Besides to those Those who are not having smartphone might not able even get here the announcement on their website the social media And if the person is not home at that period too, he might not

So how do you think you can reach everybody?

Reach everybody.

These are our means of communicating with the public.

We know that people go to social media day in and day out.

Even if they don't go on social, but within their surroundings, they will be at home early in the morning, like six, seven.

If all this period, the person is not available, I don't know.

For me, I don't know any option I can give out for the real customer.

If we come early morning like 6 to make an announcement and evening like 7 or 8 to make an announcement.

Some people do shift work early morning like 6.

If the person is still at work, the person will close off the shift like 8 or 9 and then come home.

and then go back again in the evening.

Like maybe the nurses, the people who work in the factories, who run 24 hours.

So you also, at the end of the message, I do like, they do add down to that.

They should share with their other colleagues around them.

So that everybody gets to it, yeah.

Okay.

It looks like a lot of people still don't get to hear.

Because people have the opinion that

The light just goes off on and on.

But true, true, true.

I mean, sometimes I'll be in the house and our lights will just go off.

Sometimes I'll go to the platform to see if they announced any plant maintenance, but I don't see anything.

We do have type of maintenance.

You know, we have... You might feed them off a secondary transformer.

You have to have primary transformer and secondary transformer.

The secondary transformer serves the individuals.

So that one, it might happen within a locality.

It doesn't go far within a small place.

It doesn't go far.

So that one, it might be a result of somebody internal fault or something might happen on the line within that locality.

Only those people around.

So that one, it doesn't require, most of the time, it doesn't require an announcement because it's an impromptu issue.

So that's why we give our telephone numbers out to the public for them to, in case of that incident, you just call to inform that this is what is happening at your site.

So that we come to your site.

So sometimes you even realize on our platform, somebody will call and say,

Only him or her is not having, but the surrounding people.

So you come directly to the person's house.

Sometimes you find out that it's from the person's internal problem.

So you have to inform to inform his or her electrician.

Or sometimes they lose contact from the pool.

So that we just amend it for the person.

So sometimes individual problems.

So we give our numbers to the public.

How would you describe the relationship between ECG and its customers?

How would you describe it?

In which aspects?

Yeah, so just basically the relationship.

How do you think?

You know, relationship... As me, I'm talking to you, Nana.

I'm of operations.

I deal with line maintenance activities.

I don't personally deal with customers directly.

Me, I deal with those... I deal with the transformers.

I don't deal with customized individuals.

But without communication with customers,

I didn't say communication.

I said relationship.

Relationship.

Our relationship with customers.

The relationship of the company that you work in, in general.

What can you say about it?

But their relationship with customers, beside me, I would say is good.

Okay.

Because they open doors for everybody.

Okay.

To express their views.

We are human beings.

Some people try to misbehave at any time.

But we give room for anybody at any issue facing some... Some people try to misbehave as in customers or ECG workers or both?

Both.

Because, let me say, this activity is going on recently.

Revenue mobilization.

You go and meet a customer who is owing a very huge amount.

And the person is not even making an attempt to pay.

And it would be like, why should he use light and pay?

Oh, really?

Let me say, just last week, this Friday, an incident happened like that.

A customer was owing the company.

They discovered that he had even done an illegal attack to what he was owing.

So they tried to

The policeman was walking around.

He held the staff's neck with his shirt and was dragging the guy.

If the guy off the light, he would know what he was doing.

As long as he slapped the staff.

Because the staffs are not allowed to touch a customer.

The staff never touched the lady.

But he slapped in front of the policeman.

He slapped the boy in front of the policeman.

So they kindly did their work, disconnected him and left.

When he came to the office, and he was like, he already did it last year, he did an illegal, they caught him, they gave him the bill of 2000, he paid.

So in his perception, he was like, the bill they gave him to pay, he paid it to a staff, it was not in the system.

So when he went to the system, they told him that this is the issue.

Last year, this time, you did an illegal, you paid an amount of this.

and you pay to your company.

And this time around, you have done it again.

They came to disconnect you.

You have even slapped the staff.

So they were like, they were arresting you.

Because a staff is not allowed to touch a customer.

And you touch him, you break our constitution.

They might sack you or give you indefinite suspension.

So their customers, they were about to even arrest, they arrested him out of your company, their yard.

And he was like, he was crying that it was out of mistake, what they want.

But you see, looking at this now, are we fair or we are not fair?

Oh no, in this case, well, I think that the person, the leading question didn't behave well.

And even the incident had happened last, let me say, six months ago, and it's still in court.

A colleague was going to resolve a fault for a certain community.

And I was like, yeah, you call something, you call drop out.

It was not close in due to some, the spring was kind of weak.

So it was like, let's off, let's off the feeder and try to do it and put it on.

You said you call something, you call something what?

Drop out.

Okay.

Exposing fuse jail.

So as they up there something, the guy was to climb.

The community people came around and was like, they are coming to steal their transform.

So they never, they show them their ID card.

They show them any evidence of even the ECG car was there.

And it's like, no, and they started beating them.

They beat them up.

And their light was off.

Their light was off.

People are trying to help them.

But the staff never touch any of them.

But the staff even got hurt.

So this was some of the things we faced in Florida.

Wow.

When customers try, don't understand what's going on underground.

And you're trying to even explain, they don't want to listen to your side of story.

They just need light.

It all boils down to the fact that you have

We synthesize them but still people like they have already made their money.

There's NCCE.

If you guys can collaborate with NCCE and you can give them some funding, NCCE can do that job for you.

Because I think NCCE is everywhere.

It's just a suggestion.

you have a lot of sensitization to be i mean i have spoken to like 12 castanets you see most of the time too you don't have it in the town you have in the rural areas yes mcc that's why i said ncc they they are there they have that linkage with the rural areas

and they know how to reach the people they know who is the person that can rally the people the traditional leaders they know because they have been passed yes so they know how to get to those people to get to the grassroots so baby you have you have you have a lot of work because now

I know that they are doing that because we have the section for those communications.

You have to collaborate with NCC because it looks like your unit that is doing that they don't know how to do it as well as NCC so they should collaborate with them.

It's a good suggestion though.

Let's go.

so that we can finish the mosquitoes here.

So what do you believe the company's responsibility to customers are?

And what do you think are the customers' responsibility to the company?

The company's responsibility is to provide them with efficient, reliable, and let me say quality power supply.

And the customer, I think they are responding that they should pay their bills.

They should try their match, but to pay their bills to make sure that the company runs its activities smoothly because everything needs finance.

So if you are using power and you don’t pay, it’s like you don’t want the company activities to go on smoothly.

So the customer

The first one is also to pay their bills and also help us monitor our network.

Let me say monitor like how when their light goes off, they should report it at how they see it so that we can first track their response.

So they shouldn’t keep it to themselves.

They should just call our lines that have been shared out.

They shouldn’t say that’s what it is.

They’re like that.

They should call.

Our responsibility is to provide them with their quality and reliable energy.

But they need to, they have to, anytime their light goes off, they have to call us and inform because

We can’t be at anywhere.

Sometimes, something might happen at individual houses.

So you believe that the responsibility is just only providing the energy, reliable, quality energy, is it just that towards customers?

No, not only energy, also protect them.

Because our lines are very dangerous.

Protect them, provide protective equipment around the lines to protect the customers from harm, safety.

To ensure that anybody using energy should be safe from it.

That's why you put energy savings.

These are meters that have energy saving parameters.

Let me say, when you have low voltage, these are smart meters.

When you have low voltage, the meter goes off.

It doesn't affect your equipment.

So we provide this quality with our insurance safety of our customers and their equipment.

So when you interact with the customer, do you engage?

Do you feel like you're engaging in a fair and balanced?

So, I mean, you said earlier that you don't really interact with customers like that, but the few customers that you have interacted with, do you feel that you are

engaging in a fair and balanced exchange of information and services.

Yes, yes, yes.

Okay, so why?

Because unlike a customer... If you can give me an example.

A customer like, let me see, a customer reported, we're done even done with our work, a customer reported that his light is off.

So when we went to check, everything was, our self-sufficiency was okay.

But we realized that there was a problem down there, our panels.

So we explained to the customer, this is the problem.

So we have to work on it before we give them quality power.

So the customer agreed and we worked on it.

And he actually saw everything like, oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, this is very dangerous.

So we have to, then we worked on it.

And we know that we were afraid to the customer because he reported the issue according to how he reported.

We look at it and we worked according to that and made it and make sure that I had everything of his thing.

And it was okay.

We asked her that everything is okay.

She said yes, everything is okay.

So do you have an example of an action that wasn't fair?

Wasn't fair?

Yeah.

Like an issue that happened to my colleagues at Suta.

Solving a problem at Suta.

So apart from this example that you have given, when you interact with, like so far all the customers you've interacted with, you feel that you are engaging in a fair exchange of information?

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Because any work we do, we report back to the customer to find out if he's actually content with it.

So the customer also gives us positive feedback.

Okay, so how does your role contribute to quality of relationship with customers?

How does it contribute to the relationship, to the quality of relationship with customers?

Oh, actually, a customer, unlike our ID cards, we wear.

Because when a customer sees you, you have to see their qualities.

and a professional who is coming to work for his soil.

So our identity normally speaks about our

So what you do as a technician, how can you link it to the quality of relationship with customers?

So how do you think that it helps with the quality of relationship between your company and the customer?

The house, in the case, let me see, a customer report like a rotten pole in front of his brother.

Do the poles get rotten?

Yeah, they do.

Normally, if it’s not well treated.

Normally, they treat the poles.

But if it’s not well treated, and also you see a customer, sometimes a pole is in front of his brother, you go and smelt under.

You suppose not smelt under.

They will go and smear it.

You will see that cement and that of cement is not compatible.

So it will start getting rotten.

Sometimes when tension comes, the place is firm.

So if you want it to go, it doesn’t go.

It doesn’t tilt.

the concrete truck so you have to break.

So you’ve made it in such a way that when the extension it tilts?

Yeah.

So that’s why the place has to be, although it’s hard but it has to be somehow soft.

Like the normal ground?

So we don’t encourage people to cement around our poles.

Why did you do that?

You know, customer, you might say it's in front of a utility corridor.

Now, people are saying utility corridors are for them.

So, did you finish answering the question?

I cut him with another question.

So, let me say, as my role as a technician, I... Because if any customer comes to report his problem, like, let me say,

a broken pole or a tilted pole.

We go with the person to see how the situation is on the ground.

So the person will show that, oh, we have come to look at the situation and it will be worked on.

So sometimes we go there and if there is immediate materials there we have to use, we just go for the materials and attend to the problem for the customer and make sure that the customer is satisfied.

When a customer also calls that his face is off, we go to the substation to check if actually the fuse that is gone is from his premises.

So we go there, if it's from his premises, we call and confirm his or her location.

We get to the location and make sure that the person gets it licensed.

Is there any other issue?

Are you okay with it?

yeah so i was just trying to relate to how it helps to build customer confidence from the narration that you are giving maybe i'll try to get it i wanted you to say directly directly by giving a narration around it

anyway so um i think that basically uh that's it and so i want to find out is there any other thing i mean is there anything else about the relationship between ecg and customers that you think is important for me to know that i haven't asked

Communication there is very important for the company and its customers.

But here's the case, sometimes the customers... Let me see, some of them are very stubborn, let me see.

And I'm the one who normally try to understand what's going on.

They just put their dead ears.

Do you think that it is also because of how ECG communicates?

No, some of them is like...

You know, some of us, where we grew up, some of us like, so far as you have pictured something, you have to get it, no, that's your right, but sometimes situations happen.

Unforeseen circumstances happen.

And it's an equipment.

And anything can happen to it at any time.

So sometimes when you try to explain to the person, he will not understand.

It's not that he will not understand, he will try his best not to understand you.

He will try his best not to understand.

This is the funniest thing I've heard in a long time.

He will try his best not to understand.

Unlike the situation that happened there, my colleagues were trying to explain the situation on the ground today, but they paid that yes.

Because one, and there was an issue, because the person who triggered the issue was lying.

He hasn't paid his bill and he's using unauthorized meter.

And they came and caught him.

Unauthorized meter?

Yeah, they have shape meters around.

The politicians put shape meters around.

What's that?

It's a meter.

It's just energy.

It's not registered in our system.

They use it for free.

It's not being captured in our system.

There are meters that the assemblymen and politicians give out to rural areas based on campaigns to win them over power.

But if they have to use meters and they don’t have to pay them, what are the meters for?

It’s an unauthorized meter.

Sometimes you communicate with them to bring their Kana card and with the meter video to register them but they don’t come.

Wow.

Because if you go to the assembly man, any politician has given the person the meter.

And now everything we talk about is politician-politician.

And the reason why our ECG works is because of the political influence in the company.

I’ve made it very hard for it to communicate with its customers.

Political influence, let me say that.

Wow.

Because the politicians,

engage, put their hands in so many of our activities.

Especially our power purchases.

Because the distribution meters that are not even regulated.

You are tired, so when you talk smaller, your voice will go low.

Let me say, if they want to put this in there, before they even distribute this meter, they have to register them and transfer the database to ECG.

But they don’t register, they just distribute them out for the customers.

So we have to go around again.

But what is the use of a meter apart from the fact that it captures your users so that you pay bills?

What else is a meter?

It protects your equipment too.

Oh, so the people who don't have meters?

So if any fault is on the line, it will get directly to the houses.

Oh, okay, because I see that some people they don't have meters.

So if you don't have anything happening on the line,

directly to spoil your equipment.

Oh, I see.

Oh, I see.

It's for protection.

I thought it was just there to measure.

No, no, no.

It's also for protection.

Oh.

That's one of our rules.

I do some for ensuring our customers' safety.

Oh, okay.

Please, can I use the torch?

Something was flying in there.

We just have to make sure that it’s an insect and not...

I hope we are done.

Yes, we are done.

We are done.

Thank you.

Thank you so much for all your insights.