

Master's Thesis

Fostering a Serving Culture of the Public Service Delivery in Kiribati

by

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CERTIFICATION PAGE

I, FINAUGA TITETA TOUAITI (Student ID 51220639) hereby declare that the contents of this master's thesis are original and true, and have not been submitted to any other university or educational institution for the award of degree or diploma.

All the information derived from other published and unpublished sources has been cited and acknowledged appropriately.

FINAUGA Titeta Touaiti

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ABSTRACT

In the late 1980s, the public sector in Kiribati was reformed with a focus on assessing the government's role in the economic sector. Previous research has clearly proven that during these reforms, the adoption of a foreign model in our Kiribati local system proved to be dysfunctional owing to existing variances in economic development levels of the administration within the country. Although previous studies have examined reforms that were undertaken by only assessing the role of the government in the economic sector, national job evaluation, review of the National Conditions of Service, human resource development, and renewing the spirit of public enterprising no research has been carried out on how to enhance the overall productivity of civil servants in Kiribati's public sector. The current government administration has prioritized ensuring and improving their performance to a certain level that is expected from them to contribute to the overall productivity of public service delivery. The evolution of the public sector over the last four decades little has changed since then, due to other reforming attempts have been made in the meantime. This study examines, for the first time, how the serving culture can be fostered in Kiribati's public sector underpinning customer service, which is the main consideration of the Kiribati government. Serving culture is simply means competence, performance, high productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency translating into achieving the overall productivity of the service delivery in Kiribati's public service. There are two main research questions that this study aims to address: i) What are the issues and causes of the poor customer service delivery across Kiribati's public service? ii) How can the overall productivity of the service delivery in Kiribati's public sector be achieved? To collect data and information, we used both a qualitative method and a quantitative method. The former consisted of conducting semi-structured interviews with the five immediate supervisors, while the latter of distributing questionnaires among the 38 employees. The findings of this study provide guidance to

the entire public servants in Kiribati on identifying issues of customer service and their root causes. They can be used in future research after seeing the improvement of the overall service delivery in Kiribati's public service, as well as developing related area of study if any gaps are seen as an outcome of this research. Finally, this work compares the level of customer service delivery prior to and after the completion of a customer service training by all civil servants. The main conclusion of this study is that the overall productivity of public service delivery in Kiribati can be improved by fostering a serving culture.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss how the service delivery by civil servants in Kiribati became an issue, and what has caused these issues after the public service was operationalized under British colonial rule until decolonization. Additionally, it will state the justifications and objectives of the study.

Kiribati has its unique culture that was inherited by its nationals before the country gained its independence on the 12th of July 1979. Prior to this date, its public service was operationalized under British colonial rule. Throughout the British administration, civil servants' performance was considered of high standard by higher authority's officials. This was partly due to stringent supervision, monitoring, and setting of a high standard of conduct by British officials that every local civil servant had to comply with. Kiribati's public service is partially based on British legacy, whereby, foreign countries also took part in developing strategies and policies. This legacy still influences the organizational culture prevailing in the public sector.

Later, when Kiribati was decolonized and gained its full autonomy, the local administration who took over the rule of the country and who imprinted a different direction to the public service. This development has mainly prioritized economic development aiming to improve the well-being of people and, as such, it does not automatically contradict upholding a healthy organizational culture and strong leadership. In addition, minimal attention has been directed to upholding a productive organizational culture to serve its strategic goals and promoting strong leadership which used to be an integral part of the colonial administration. Therefore, this has had profound effects on how Kiribati's public service has operated since gaining independence in 1979.

Civil servants' behavior can be described as relaxed and lacking a sense of urgency, which has a profoundly negative impact on the public service delivery performance. Such behavior reflects the environment in which the local people grow up and develop, with its specific traditions. In simple terms, life in Kiribati is not challenging compared to that in western or other developed countries, as the local population can still survive even without a single cent. This induces a mentality that life is not competitive, which people often bring to the workplace once they are appointed as government employees.

In fact, there is no mechanism in place to regularly monitor and assess professional performance, as well as to address poor performance and negligence of job responsibilities. Simultaneously, there is lack relationship built between leaders and employees. This could be proven by how leaders and employees closely interact, due to the unique attitudes and behaviors which has led to the lack of commitment and poor performance. According to Tsai (2011), when the interaction between leadership and employees is good, the latter will communicate and collaborate more with the team and will be encouraged to help accomplish the organization's mission and objectives.

This study aims to support one of the government's priorities for the next 20 years as part of its vision for Kiribati, namely improving the quality of the public service delivery. However, civil servants have different attitudes toward work, whereby some of them are very committed but may be lacking in other areas such as people skills, while some are very productive, but the outcome of their work does not comply with the required quality standards. Such challenges mandate a comprehensive study to establish how a serving culture can be fostered in Kiribati's public sector, to help enhance its overall productivity.

Our research focused on employees and their immediate supervisors as leaders. One of the responsibilities of the latter is counselling their subordinates if they are not delivering a quality service to the public. Leaders are expected to address any misconducts they take note of before reporting them to the Senior Responsible Officer (Head of the Ministry) who would consider recommendations from leaders for further disciplinary measures.

Serving culture simply means how civil servants performed in an effective, efficient, and productive manner to serve customers (namely, citizens). In Kiribati's public sector, this needs to integrate essential cultural, business and Christianity values. Performing the serving culture and integrating these values will enhance and uplift the service delivery to achieve the goals, visions, and priorities of Kiribati's Public Service.

Fostering the serving culture of the Kiribati's public service is undertaken to achieve the overall productivity of the service delivery in the Kiribati Public Service. The existing literature suggests that, to promote and foster a serving culture, leaders should inculcate the right kind of culture for having an effective workplace and performance (Schein, 2004). Moreover, leaders making use of personal power based on skills, competencies, and other personal attributes rather than of positional power will inspire and motivate employees to become more productive, efficient, and effective in the workplace (Daft, 2008). However, there has been no research on how this can be achieved in Kiribati's public service and this study aimed to accomplish this by addressing the following two research questions:

- 1) What are the issues and causes of poor customer service delivery across Kiribati's public service?

2) How can the overall productivity of service delivery in Kiribati's public service be achieved?

In chapter 2, I will discuss the practices as well as the current and previous reforms of Kiribati's public sector that aimed to enhance the overall productivity of the service delivery. Chapter 3 will review the literature in relation to fostering a serving culture of the public sector in Kiribati. Chapter 4 will describe the methodologies used, while also addressing relevant ethical aspects. Chapter 5 will analyze the data collected and chapter 6 will summarize the findings and discuss theoretical and practical implications, as well as research limitations. The list of consulted references and the appendices are found at the end of this work.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will present an in-depth review of the literature about developing a serving culture in Kiribati's public sector. The research consulted supports the theoretical framework of this study.

Leaders have a significant role in implementing, enforcing, and monitoring customer service training across the public sector. The outcome of the customer service training is anticipated to foster the serving culture of the Public Service Delivery in Kiribati. However, aside from the customer service training, leaders should embed the refinement of an organizational culture across the Public Service. Cultural changes may vary in an organization depending on the individual's personalities, but leaders will have the ability to adapt to such changes and to be able to adjust these organizational changes. Schein (2004) clearly explained, one of the most important roles of leadership is to create and instill the culture of an organization through shared experiences and by imposing their beliefs, values, and assumptions at the outset. This process requires using charisma as a mechanism to convey messages across, to capture the subordinates' attention, and to communicate major assumptions and values in a vivid and clear manner. As the organization grows, its culture will also evolve, and leaders should be able to manage any culture changes. As such, leaders at all levels within an organization should familiarize themselves with the concept of culture. (Judith, 2011) According to "Canel et al (2018)", culture is also one of the important tools for managing organizational change, as it provides a framework for understanding the relevant environment. It is an important responsibility for leaders to maintain an effective organizational culture, and to modify it as required (Judith, 2011). From Schein's (2004) point of view, having a strong culture is necessary for effective and lasting performance, and the stronger the culture, the more

effective the organization will be. Therefore, developing a quality- or customer-oriented culture acted as a guiding principle of this study.

Kiribati's government is currently reforming the public service by implementing performance management measures, including the shift from permanent to contract appointment. The statistical analysis of primary data in a study conducted by Dobre (2014) in Romania showed that the dimensions of organizational culture have a positive impact on the performance management practices. Yildiz (2014) mentioned that organizational culture also has a significant impact on the organizational performance. In the case of Taiwan's organizations, Ming-Fong (2021), emphasized that organizational culture is associated with organizational performance.

A study by "Gliddon et al. (2009)" described how a performance management system can support an organization to grow or become more efficient by motivating employees through combined evaluation, development, reward, and promotion. Ward and Osho (2006) stated that culture influences the shape of an organization at all levels and the customer's satisfaction rating. Further to that, the two authors suggested that organizational culture can yield greater customer satisfaction when employees and management share the same cultural values, attitudes, beliefs, norms, and customs.

The Commonwealth Secretariat, through its Governance Program, assists member countries including Kiribati by designing a capacity development training that focuses on improving workforce performance (Trivedi, 2018). This program identifies four fatal flaws that often affect the government performance management system (GPMS) and that need to be addressed to enhance the public sector's performance and productivity. In summary, these flaws include: the lack of an incentive system which assigns upfront accountability for results based on which incentives are offered; the lack of prioritization

of objectives and key performance indicators; the lack of agreement on how to measure deviation from targets—most government assessment procedures continue to use single-point targets as measures of success, and finally, the lack of comprehensive evaluation of organizational performance—most performance measurement activities in governmental institutions are partial or not very detailed. The focus is either on a project, a particular policy or on a few selected government departments (Trivedi, 2018).

Moreover, The World Bank’s report, “Improving the Public Sector Performance: Through Innovation and Inter-Agency Coordination,” cited by Kunicova (2018), argues that elevating the public sector performance is possible in many low- and middle -income countries. The report collected 15 inspiring country case studies of reforms and showed that such changes do not necessarily require extensive financial investment or complex information technology systems. What seems to be required, instead is some interconnected drivers of success, which are the following:

- Political leadership: this is needed because few, if any, of the innovations are a purely technocratic exercise. Leaders need to find ways to collaborate with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders to overcome natural opposition.
- Institutional capacity: for reforms to be durable, sustainable institutions are ultimately needed.
- Increased transparency: this can help deliver change in the public sector performance by breaking down government silos and ensuring inter-agency sharing, publishing, or disseminating of performance management information. Transparency can also be a powerful driver for changing the incentive system.

Furthermore, “Curristine et al. (2007)”, explained that the member-countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have been under

pressure to improve the public sector performance, and at the same time are facing increased expenditure which limit the implementation of relevant initiatives. Empirical evidence from this study showed that OECD countries have therefore adopted various relevant approaches to reforming key institutional policies, such as increasing devolution and decentralization, strengthening competitive advantages, transforming workforce structure and size, revising Human Resources Management (HRM) policies or introducing results-oriented approaches to budgeting and management. By introducing such reforms, OECD countries aimed at ensuring greater efficiency and effectiveness of the public service (MacCarthaigh, 2008).

“Klein et al. (2013)” showed that the effectiveness of an organization is related to its type of culture, and that culture norms are correlated with the prevailing type of leadership. “Hui et al. (2001)” pointed out that organizational members can be trained to effectively lead their colleagues to provide better-quality service to customers. Having the leaderships involve in customer service means employees will have someone to emulate. Additionally, this instills a heightened sense of belonging and ownership, making it easier to genuinely care for customers (Newman, 2016).

Government ministries should undertake the responsibility of improving the overall productivity of the public service, and of implementing an organizational culture and a performance management system that support this goal. For instance, if an employee’s performance is satisfactory at work, but the leadership demonstrated is not transparent, along with the enforcement of the organizational culture, the employee’s performance will deteriorate. As a result, it may reduce the quality of the service the individual helps deliver as part of a team, by hindering other employees’ work. The absence of a performance monitoring and assessment mechanism allows for the

occurrence of employees' negligence. Poor relationships between leaders and employees also affect efficiency and productivity.

There are generally two important factors to be considered: firstly, the system, policies and sometimes the legal framework which are weak and do not clearly mandate a certain level of performance. Secondly, it is the employees' attitudes and behaviors. This second factor could be counterbalanced by the promotion of a shared values. As defined by "Silber et al. (2009)", organizational culture refers to shared values, the way we do things, or the rituals and stories shared when bringing someone new into the organization. Code of Conduct across the public service. As pointed out by O'Riordan (2015), the core values expected to be abided by public servants, such as impartiality, loyalty, equity, accountability, and fairness, were identified over one hundred and fifty years ago.

Schein (2004) stated that managing change is the process by which leaders set out to solve specific organizational problems that may or may not involve cultural elements. "Shraeder et al. (2005)" also maintained that leaders' actions can also trigger the need for changing an organization's culture. Therefore, customer service delivery across the public service could be enhanced if leaders also did their part. To reiterate Schein's theoretical framework (2004), leaders are the ones that initiate change through shared values and experiences, as well as embed an organizational culture. This author also suggests that leaders must recognize their own roles not only in creating an organizational culture but also their responsibilities in embedding and developing the culture, agreeing that organizational culture and leadership are equally important in determining the effectiveness of an institution. Based on Schein's (2004) findings, leaders should contribute to the delivery of the customer service training by identifying any gaps in the

existing training package, as well as by ensuring that the training has been delivered clearly and comprehensively to the entire workforce concerned.

Additionally, leaders should explore more interacting and engaging alternatives for employees to communicate with, motivating employees, and managing them, rather than exercising their positional power. According to Daft (2008), if leaders make use of their expert and referent powers instead of their positional powers, employees will be more inclined to have the courage and motivation to endeavor to accomplish what a leader expects of them. Expert power is often understood as the leader's skills and knowledge relevant to the tasks performed by their followers, while the referent power is referring to their personality traits. This way, good relationships can be built between supervisors and their subordinates who will be more likely to commit to achieving the organization's goals and vision.

Additionally, the enforcement of what knowledge, skills, customer-oriented attitudes has been acquired through customer service training is vital. Since the customer service quality is measured in a holistic way by reference to cultural, business and Christianity values, these values should be emphasized more and merged with the organizational culture. In his book, Weber (2001) proved that Protestantism ethics engendered the spirit of capitalism. In other words, practicing the Christianity values as part of daily working norms may contribute to productivity and efficiency. Embedding these three values in the organizational culture will lead to productive, effective, and efficient customer service delivery. According to "Metz et al. (2020)", achieving an effective customer service could not be realized without a strong organizational culture that integrates the objectives of an organization. Adams and Alkhafaji (2006) specified that understanding organizational culture by civil servants is essential in building an

effective employee foundation and in obtaining customer satisfaction within or outside of an organization.

Improving customer's perception of the service is one important factor to consider in service delivery. A study by "Hartline et al. (1996)" mentioned that, to do this, leaders must increase employees' self-efficacy and job satisfaction, and to reduce their role conflict and ambiguity. Kim (2012) also stated that the employees' motivation to work in public service may increase their professional satisfaction and commitment to their job. Supervisor's supportive behaviors such as by listening attentively, giving recognition and being positive about employee's attempts to contribute during the change process, will determine how individuals respond to change. As suggested by Fishman and Kavanaugh (1989, as cited in "Belias et al. (2014)", the culture of an organization and how people respond to change is influenced substantially by the behaviors of leaders.

Shaping the organizational culture is instrumental not just in promoting certain attitudes and behaviors within civil servants, but also in strengthening and improving customer service. These are the essential prerequisites in supporting the effort of other employees involved in the services provided to customers to maintain a high standards of customer service delivery. Tsai (2011) emphasizes that, organizational cultures were significantly correlated with leadership behavior and job satisfaction, and leadership behavior was significantly correlated with job satisfaction.

CHAPTER 3: CONTEXT

In this chapter, the discussion will focus more on the current practices and policies in Kiribati's public service, as well as on the reforms that it has been recently undergoing to enhance the standard of performance for all civil servants.

In the late 1980s, the public sector in Kiribati was reformed with a focus on assessing the government's role in the economic sector. Previous research has clearly proven that during these reforms, the adoption of a foreign model in our Kiribati local system proved to be dysfunctional owing to existing variances in economic development levels of the administration within the country. In 2001, reforms in Kiribati's public service, produced by the Public Service Office, were presented at the Kiribati Update by the National Center for Development Studies at the Australian National University and the University of the South Pacific, Kiribati Center. These reforms focused primarily on the national job evaluation exercise, the review of the National Conditions of Service, the human resources development, the budgeting process, and the renewal of the spirit of public enterprising based on the key principle of raising the performance level. These reform programs were anticipated to help improve the staff's morale and satisfaction, which in turn would benefit in uplifting the efficiency and productivity of the public service. However, most of these reforms are still in progress.

In 2016, when the same leading government was appointed called Tobwaan Kiribati Party, the revival of the previous administration's reforms before 2016 in uplifting the efficiency and productivity of the Public Service is now one of the priorities for the current leading government, but it is mainstreamed to minimizing customer complaints. This led to the establishment of the National Customer Service Center in 2016 who developed and implemented a customer service training across the government

ministries. This training is still a current practice whose purpose is to motivate and encourage civil servants, to instill a sense of responsibility and commitment in them, and to strengthen the morale values that underpin service delivery quality.

The contents of the training presentation encompass the following: the definition of a customer, customers' complaints and goals, key behaviors of excellent customer service, roadblocks in communication, behavioral change model, the code of conduct for civil servants, office setting and dress codes, and the three values essential in customer service delivery, which are the cultural, business, and Christianity ones.

Since this training is an innovation implemented across the government ministries, civil servants need to firstly be aware of what exactly is meant by 'customer'. They were informed that there are two types of customers, the internal and external ones. Knowing their definitions and being able to differentiate the two types is essential to understanding what customer complaints and the goals are. Clients may complain about the quality of the service or product acquired, which may refer to inaccurate information conveyed, lack of assistance, delays in providing responses, as well as not keeping promises made. The goal is to increase efficiency and productivity of the service delivery, which will contribute to minimizing customer complaints.

The key behaviors of an excellent customer service refer to being proactive, focusing on the outcome, prioritizing tasks, preparing, and planning, seeking to understand before being understood and finding a win-win solution. The roadblocks in communication are one of the barriers identified to have been affecting the quality of public service delivery. They involved the language used, distance, interfering noise, distraction by other people, misunderstanding, lack of interest, and discomfort with the topic.

The change model taught civil servants how behavioral changes can complement service delivery by covering four stages: the unconscious incompetence (“we do not know we do something wrong”), conscious incompetence (“we are now aware of what we do, but still cannot change it”), consciously competence (“now we can do it, but must work hard for it”), and unconscious competence (“we are now doing the new behavior automatically”). The code of conduct was taught by using the acronym NICE HEART, which stands for Neat, Impartial, Confidential, Effective and Efficient, Honest, Ethical, Accountable, Respect and Transparency. Public employees are expected to comply with this code of conduct whenever they serve both internal and external customers.

The office setting should be customer friendly; each ministry should ensure their waiting area is clean and tidy, accommodates people with special needs, and is well-equipped with sufficient notices and guidelines to help customers be fully aware of the preparation requirements needed to lodge in their complaints. Each office should provide working materials such as laptops, tables, and chairs, and ensure a healthy working environment. Dressing code was an important subject as civil servants had not used to follow the office dressing standard.

Cultural values refer to Kiribati’s customary respect for the elderly that requires them to be served with priority, as well as communicating and interacting respectfully as this is understood in the local culture. Business values focus on cost-effectiveness in the service delivery (“time is money”), competent and honest information of the customers, and timely service delivery. Lastly, the Christianity values imply showing sympathy to the needy and the sick, offering special attention, love, and equal opportunities to all.

Despite the implementation of this training, the public service has not yet reached its goals. This is proven by the number of customer complaints which keeps increasing

annually, and by the fact that only minor complaints have been resolved. Outstanding complaints refer to pending queries made to ministries for which the response time has been prolonged without any progress made. Leaders in each ministry should understand the importance of the customer service training and should focus on enforcing and improving it.

However, the current situation is obviously the contrary, and complaints about poor customer service delivery are evidence that leaders are not fulfilling their roles by counselling underperforming staff and reminding them of the importance of customer service in the public sector.

Kiribati has policies that guide each civil servant once appointed. One of these policies is the National Conditions of Service, which states clearly all the possible consequences of poor performance and lack of commitment. However, this is not sufficient, as leaders or Senior Responsible Officers lack the ability to monitor staff and impose disciplinary measures as necessary. As a result, civil servants never feel the need to improve their own performance.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methods by which the research questions will be addressed, and the sample population targeted for data collection, as well as discussing ethical considerations.

As shown by Cohen (2007), using a mixed methodology for empirical data collection helps generate reliable findings. Creswell (2014) defined a mixed methodology as the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data in research. In this study, the qualitative method used implied conducting semi-structured interviews with supervisors, while the quantitative one referred to distributing questionnaires to employees.

The sample population was the staff of the Public Service Office, which has a total of 43 employees according to the Establishment Register 2022 and comprises five divisions supervised by Heads of Divisions (HoDs). We, therefore, included five immediate supervisors and 38 subordinates. The Public Service Office was chosen because it is the agency implementing the customer service training, and centralizing customer complaints.

4.1. Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations relevant to this study related to anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of information disclosed by the persons and organization involved in the research, as well as collecting informed consent and gaining access to information. The respondents have the right to decide whether to participate or not in answering the questionnaires or interviews. The ethical aspects were addressed in the following way in this study.

4.1.1. Right to privacy

The right to privacy as defined by Cohen (2007) means that a person may choose not to take part in research, not to answer questions, not to be interviewed, not to have their home intruded into, not to answer telephone calls or emails, and being able to engage in private behaviors in their own private place without fear of being surveilled. In this study, respondents' right to not answer questionnaire items or interview questions was upheld.

4.1.2. Anonymity

Anonymity means maintaining the confidentiality of personal identification details. To protect anonymity, password protection and document encryption can be used when sending information through internet. Cohen (2007) also indicated the use of aliases and of codes instead of people's identifying details as other ways to preserve anonymity.

4.1.3. Confidentiality

By collecting data from respondents, a researcher may come in possession of confidential information. Hence, it is very important for all parties to sign a non-disclosure make agreement.

4.1.4. Informed consent

Before investigating or collecting information about respondents, it is crucial to clearly inform them about the purpose of the study and to make sure they fully understood it. They have the right to refuse answering questionnaires or interviews, therefore, stating a very clear purpose and content of the research will enable a person (s) or organization to make an informed decision to participate.

4.1.5. Gaining access to information

Gaining access to information refers to accessing information through official website, official documents that needs approval from higher authorities. Thus, as a researcher, would probably seek approval first and to await endorsement to retrieving to such information.

4.2. Analytical Approaches

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze the data. As part of the qualitative one, inductive thematic coding was used, while the quantitative method implied using descriptive statistics and inductive thematic coding.

4.2.1. Qualitative method (interviews)

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five immediate supervisors. The following approaches were used to qualitatively analyze the data collected this way.

4.2.1.1. Data transcription

Data transcription will take place once the data or information are well organized. During the interview process, an interviewer will take notes as well as audio-recording. After obtaining the information from an interviewee, the transcription will take place. According to Creswell (2014), organizing data will involve transcribing interviews, by using scanning materials, typing up field notes, cataloguing all the visual materials, as well as sorting and arranging data into different types depending on the sources of information.

4.2.1.2. Coding data

After all data has been transcribed, the coding process will take place. Kerlinger, (1970, as cited in Cohen, 2007) defined coding as the translation of responses to questions and respondent information to codes organized in specific categories for the purpose of

analysis. Creswell (2014) also defined coding as the process of organizing data by bracketing chunks (texts or image segments) and writing words representing categories on the margins. During the coding process, thematic coding, which is known as thematic analysis, will be used to analyze data. According to “Maguire et al. (2017)”, thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within the qualitative data collected. Braun and Clarke (2006, as cited in “Maguire et al. (2017)”) distinguished six phases in the thematic analysis.

In the first step, the researcher becomes familiar with the entire body of data. The second step implies generating initial codes by organizing data in a systematic and meaningful way. The third step involves searching for themes by examining the codes. The fourth step is reviewing the themes by modifying and developing the preliminary ones that have been identified in the previous step. The fifth step, which is defining the themes, involves the refinement of final themes with the aim of identifying their essence, then followed by the final step which is producing the write up.

In this analytical approach, an inductive thematic coding will be used. As defined by “Medelyan et al. (2021)”, inductive thematic coding, also named open coding, creates codes from scratch based on the qualitative data themselves, such as the survey responses.

4.2.2. Quantitative method (questionnaire)

Questionnaire distribution is used to collect data and information from a particular workplace targeting 38 employees. To quantitatively analyze these data, a researcher will use the descriptive statistical analysis and the inductive thematic coding. It is important to note that for some of the questionnaire items, a researcher is using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative questions, whereby responses to the latter are rated on a Likert scale. To analyze that part of the quantitative data, a researcher will adopt a similar

analytical approach as applied in analyzing the qualitative data, namely the inductive thematic coding.

According to Creswell (2014), descriptive analysis means analyzing data to identify variables relevant to the study and includes describing the results through means, standard deviations, and range of scores. The goal of using the descriptive statistical analysis is to summarize data in a manner that allows easy descriptions or interpretations of results. The descriptive statistical analysis is very important to measuring the central tendency and variability. The central tendency can be measured as a mean, while the variability can be measured using the standard deviation and the range of scores.

In this analytical approach, the researcher will use the three methods to interpret and explain the outcome of the collected data. The mean is described as determining the average score of the respondents, while the standard deviation measures the dispersal or the range of scores calculated as the square root of the variance. Lastly, the range of scores shows the distance between the highest and the lowest scores. Upon the completion of the data analysis, interpretation and explanation of the findings will be undertaken.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter analyses the qualitative and quantitative data collected in this study. Firstly, it looks at the qualitative data from interviews with five immediate supervisors using the inductive thematic coding process. Secondly, it uses the descriptive statistical analysis for the quantitative data collected through questionnaires distributed to 38 employees and the inductive thematic coding process for the qualitative part of these questionnaires. Additionally, a synthesis will be performed between the quantitative and qualitative data from the questionnaires and between the data from the interview responses with the five immediate supervisors and the questionnaire data of the 38 employees.

5.1. Qualitative data from the interviews with the five immediate supervisors

To qualitatively analyze the data, the steps of the inductive thematic coding process is shown in table 1. As mentioned earlier, there are six steps in thematic coding; however, in this section, I will only focus on steps 2 and 6 (refer to appendix IV for the other steps taken).

5.1.1. Inductive thematic coding process

Table 1: Generation of initial codes

Interview Questions	Initial Codes
1. What are some of the occurring problems related to poor customer service in your respective ministry?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Employees' attitudes and behaviors (4 occurrences)- Attendance (1 occurrence)- Staff shortage (1 occurrence)- Poor communication (1 occurrence)- Office set-up (1 occurrence)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delay in providing responses (1 occurrence) - Using outdated systems (1 occurrence)
2. How do you deal with these common problems causing poor customer service delivery in your respective Ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Counselling (3 occurrences) - Applying disciplinary measures (3 occurrences) - Encouraging behavioral change (2 occurrences) - Enforcing policies (1 occurrences) - Monitoring attendance (1 occurrence) - Recruiting the right number of staff (1 occurrence) - Introducing new systems (1 occurrence)
3. As an immediate supervisor, what is your role in the customer service training?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revising the customer service training package (4 occurrences) - Sharing ideas (1 occurrence) - Ensuring customer service is well implemented (1 occurrence) - Looking for additional advanced training for the staff (1 occurrence) - Looking for innovations to contribute to employees' performance (1 occurrence) - Providing and enabling environment for employees (1 occurrence)
4. What is the rationale for developing a customer service training?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve customer service (4 occurrences)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve employees' performance (1 occurrence) - Enforce customer service (1 occurrence) - Ensure customer service is sustained and maintained (1 occurrence) - Transform the public service (1 occurrence)
<p>5. Aside from customer service training, what other possible ways has your ministry explored to enhance the overall productivity of Kiribati's public service delivery?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motivating and engaging staff to undertake additional activities (4 occurrences) - Having conducive national conditions of service (1 occurrence) - Adopting the whole government approach (1 occurrence) - Induction program on customer service (1 occurrence) - Providing equipment (1 occurrence) - Staff undertaking customer service training (1 occurrence) - Receiving feedback from ministries through surveys (1 occurrence) - Observing employees' behaviors (1 occurrence)
<p>6. How do you think the incorporation of cultural, business and Christianity values in the customer service training can contribute to the overall</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will improve customer service delivery (5 occurrences)

productivity of public service delivery?	
7. How often is customer service training conducted in your ministry?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once in a year (3 occurrences) - Depends on the ministry's request (2 occurrences) - Twice in a year (1 occurrence) - Quarterly (1 x occurrences)
8. After customer service training was conducted at your ministry, how has this improved customer service delivery?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvement seen in dressing, customers' sitting environment (3 occurrences) - Gradually slacking down (3 occurrences) - Feedback is needed (1 occurrence)
9. Why do you think customer service training is important in the public service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To cater for the public needs (4 occurrences) - To minimize customer complaints (3 occurrences) - To remind the employees how they need to perform (1 occurrence) - To remind us about our main roles and responsibilities (1 occurrence) - To smoothen customer service delivery (1 occurrence) - To maintain a learning-focused attitude (beginner's mindset) (1 occurrence) - To fulfill the government's political manifesto and Kiribati's vision for the next 20 years (1 occurrence)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To economize and control unnecessary expenses (1 occurrence)
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5.1.1.1. Common issues of poor customer service delivery

During the interviews with the five immediate supervisors, most of them indicated that employees' attitudes and behaviors affected the service delivery. These refer to the way they serve customers, neglect the assigned tasks and responsibilities, lack commitment to work, lack understanding of their main roles and responsibilities as well as inability to serve customers according to their specific needs due to the hatred they have on that customer they must serve. These attitudes and behaviors were observed not only at the specific workplace, but across the entire public service (4 occurrences).

Additionally, poor attendance (1 occurrence) is also a common factor that has contributed to poor customer service delivery, resulting in staff shortage (1 occurrence) especially at the front counter. The way they convey messages to customers has led to poor communication (1 occurrence). For instance, if customers arrived to seek assistance, they would not be able to see them especially at the front counters, because of how the office is set-up (1 occurrence). The delay in providing responses to customers has contributed to the increase in customer complaints (1 occurrence). This is due to using an outdated system where everything must be first sent to the Secretary who is the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) whom he/she will delegate to responsible divisions as needed (1 occurrence). The solutions proposed by the responsible personnel in these divisions must then be approved by the SRO.

5.1.1.2. Possible ways to tackle the problems of the customer service delivery

The five interviewed supervisors had different approaches to dealing with the common issues of poor customer service delivery. Changing employees' inadequate attitudes and behaviors is a long-term endeavor and it can be achieved gradually. Counselling and applying disciplinary measures are the most effective approaches in this sense (3 occurrences). Counselling the employees is crucial and it implies getting to know each employee, collecting, and observing their department, as well as understanding their situations and the circumstances they are facing at a given time (3 occurrences).

During counselling sessions, an employer will be able to set all the allegations made against an employee based on the issues of poor customer service delivery caused. However, they will also emphasize that continuing to make the same mistakes will lead to disciplinary measures (3 occurrences) being imposed, as required by Kiribati's National Conditions of Service. In addition to that, encouraging behavioral change by engaging them and making them feel valued would motivate employees to improve themselves. (2 occurrences). As stated by the interviewees, enforcement of existing policies through monitoring of attendance and imposing disciplinary measures are possible ways to encounter such issues of poor performance. (1 occurrence). However, enforcing existing policies is not effective if this is not reinforced by senior officials too (1 occurrence).

Moreover, recruiting the right number of employees is also another way that can address the staffing shortage in which immediate supervisors will be able to know how to fully man the workplace especially with frontline officers. (1 occurrence). However, this has prevented this from being achieved due to budget constraints and the number of staffing that has been registered in the Establishment Register which cannot be changed, unless proposal is made by the Ministry to add a greater number of staffs required.

Furthermore, implementing a new operating system is crucial to changing Kiribati's public service (1 occurrence). However, this seems to be impossible due to its complexity and long-term action needed.

5.1.1.3. Role of immediate supervisors in the customer service training and delivery

Kiribati Public Service Office is the agency overseeing the delivery of the overall public service delivery and implementing the customer service across the entire sector, through its responsible division. Immediate supervisors from different divisions have contributed to the improvement of the training contents by sharing and merging ideas (4 occurrences and 1 occurrence). The first version was produced after an overseas Technical Assistance team held their training. Aside from ensuring the implementation of customer service across the government ministries is searching for possible advanced training on customer service for employees as a way of building their capacities toward the customer service training (1 occurrence), providing innovations to contribute to the employee's performance (1 occurrence) as well as providing an enabling working environment (1 occurrence).

5.1.1.4. Purpose of developing the customer service training

When this government Tobwaan Kiribati Party took seat in 2016, one of their priorities was to ensure excellent customer service delivery across the ministries after seeing an increase in customer complaints. It thus established the National Customer Service Centre in charge with developing a customer service training. Compared to the colonial days, the service delivery in Kiribati has deteriorated because of the local population's mentality lacking a sense of urgency.

Delivering customer service training will contribute to delivering an excellent service (4 occurrences), leading to the transformation of the current culture in Kiribati's public service.

5.1.1.5. Possible ways to enhance the overall productivity of Kiribati's customer service delivery

Motivating and engaging employees to do outside or informal activities such as landscaping, enrolling in health programs based on sports competitions between ministries or weight loss challenges are other approaches explored to enhance the overall productivity of Kiribati's customer service delivery. These programs have been implemented one year ago with the aim of making the staff feel valued as well as improving their health which can also greatly impact their work performance (4 occurrences). The National Conditions of Service have been modified to make them more supportive of all civil servants (1 occurrence). Furthermore, networks have been established between counterparts in different ministries as the most effective way of attending to complaints on a timely manner (1 occurrence).

Since the quality of the customer service delivery needs to be maintained, it is crucial to include relevant training in induction programs (1 occurrence). Making observations and studying the behavior of employees who are under the supervision of responsible immediate supervisors contributed to identify the needs in terms of equipping them with appropriate working materials such as laptops or computers (1 occurrence). Aside from the local training, the employees have also undertaken short-term customer service trainings overseas, for continuous professional development and contextualized learning (1 occurrence). Lastly, is receiving feedbacks from ministries through surveys to determine the performance of that ministry (1 occurrence).

5.1.1.6. Incorporating cultural, business and Christianity values

Adopting a holistic approach by incorporating cultural, business, and Christianity values in the training will greatly support an improved overall productivity of Kiribati's public service delivery, if employees applied as part of their daily working norms (5 occurrences). Kiribati people being dignified through having unique culture, living Christianity beliefs, as well as adopting commercial aspects in terms of utilizing time wisely. (5 occurrences) Translating the Christianity values into their work means showing respect to the customers, being time aware and being faithful in performing their different roles and responsibilities. As a result, the service delivery can be operationalized in a consistent manner.

5.1.1.7. The need for customer service training within or across the government ministries

The customer service training is usually conducted once a year on a schedule basis in government ministries (3 occurrences) to ensure that it is well implemented (3 occurrences). Additionally, it can also be conducted on a ministry's request as a refresher (2 occurrences). However, the training can be conducted more than twice in a year depending on the ministry's needs and request. The ministry's request is based on the need to improve the service delivery if it is seen necessary, or it is seen that the customer service delivery does not meet the required standard as expected from employees to perform.

5.1.1.8. The status of the customer service delivery within or across government ministries after the implementation of the customer service training

The outcome of the training delivered has been moderate. Some improvements made refer to an optimized sitting environment for customers that is also more

accommodating of disabled people (3 occurrences), adopting a proper work dressing code that makes it easier for customers to identify the staff as officials, as well as improvements to the service delivery (3 occurrences). However, employees' attitudes and behaviors dominate the way they should provide an excellent customer service delivery. Improvements in providing quality customer service is gradually slacking down (3 occurrences); employees implement what they have learned through the training in the beginning but are not able to maintain the changes over a longer term (3 occurrences). As shown by one interviewee's response, feedback is highly needed from ministries to determine whether there is improvement in the customer service after the implementation of the training.

5.1.1.9. The importance of customer service training in Kiribati's Public Service

Customer service training is very vital to the entirety of Kiribati's public service. The main purpose of establishing public service and training is efficiency and effectiveness. It is very significant to achieve the overall productivity of service delivery in Kiribati's public service, improving customer service to the public to improve customer satisfaction in different ways, such as serving them on a timely manner with consistent advice, providing them with prompt response politely, and how employees convey messages using effective communication (4 occurrences). Achieving the objectives will minimize customer complaints (3 occurrences). Complaints will never arise if civil servants provide good customer service in an effective and efficient manner. Regarding its significance to employees, it will stand as a reminder of their performances along with their main roles and responsibilities (1 occurrences and 1 occurrence), to smoothen the service delivery to the public (1 occurrence) and have a consistent undertaking for new recruits on customer service delivery with the members of the organization (1 occurrence). It is crucial to fulfil the government's political manifesto and Kiribati's

Vision for 20 years (1 occurrence) as well as economizing and controlling unnecessary expenses that might occur because of employees' carelessness, which might have cost implications to the ministry (1 occurrence).

5.2 Questionnaire Data (Employees)

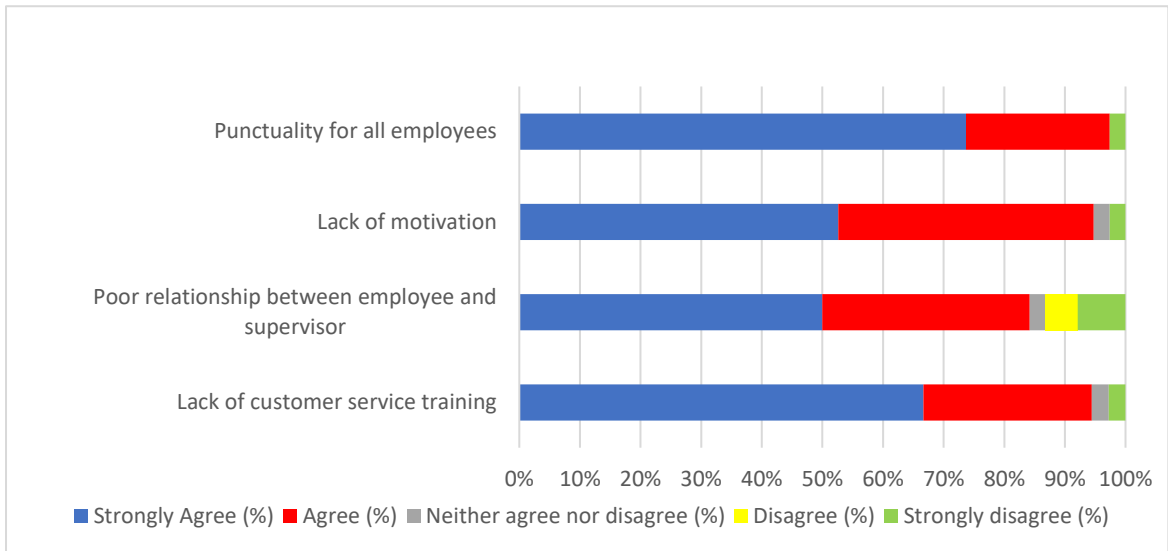
Analyzing the data from questionnaire distributed to employees consists of two parts: first, analyzing the quantitative part of the questionnaire; and second, analyzing the qualitative part of the questionnaire. the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data is synthesized.

5.2.1. Quantitative part of the questionnaire data (Employees)

This section will cover two parts: the first is using descriptive statistical analysis for the numerical data collected on a Likert scale and calculating the mean, the standard deviation, and the range of scores. The other part will be the data analysis using inductive thematic coding. Most of the 38 subordinates who answered the questionnaire were 82% are females, while the remaining were 18% are males.

The quantitative analysis of the questionnaire data will first look to identify the possible issues of Kiribati's poor public customer service, the roles of the leadership in the customer service training and delivery, the ways in which the customer service training can contribute to enhancing the overall productivity of the public service and the outcome of the customer service training delivered across the public service.

Figure 1: Results of poor customer service delivery in Kiribati’s public service



The above result illustrates the percentage of responses from the sample populations based on the issues of poor customer service delivery in the Kiribati public service. There are four major issues of poor customer service delivery selected for these respondents to provide their observations. Therefore, as shown in Figure 1, most respondents strongly agreed that the main issues with poor customer service were the attendance of employees, followed by lack of customer service training, lack of motivation, and the poor relationship between an employee and supervisor. However, only a small portion of these respondents strongly disagreed that the punctuality of all employees should not be one of the issues associated with poor customer service delivery in the Kiribati Public Service.

Table 2: Mean, standard deviation, and range of scores for the issues of customer service delivery in Kiribati’s public service

Questions	Total	Mean	Standard deviation
Lack of customer service training	36	4.56	4.10
Poor relationship between employees and supervisor	38	4.13	3.79
Lack of motivation	38	4.42	3.97

	Range of scores
Strongly agree	4.21-5.00
Agree	3.41-4.20
Neither agree nor disagree	2.61-3.40
Disagree	1.81-2.60

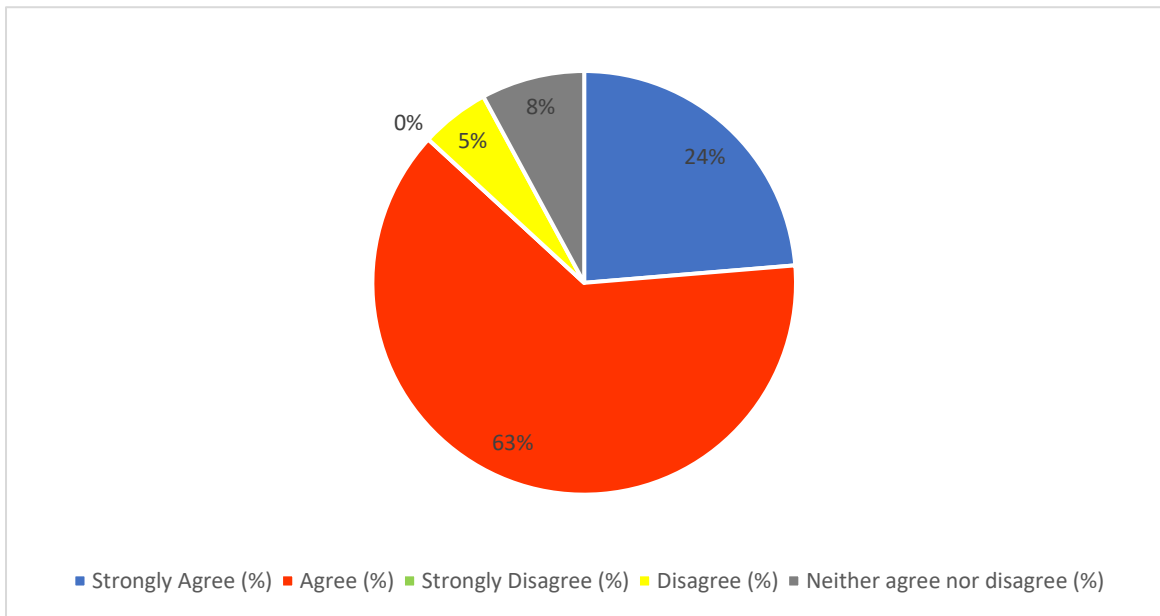
Lack of punctuality in all employees	38	4.66	4.19	Strongly disagree	1.00-1.80
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For information, only 36 people responded to sub question 1, while the other sub questions were answered by all participants. The mean of the respondents' answers for the four questions falls within 4.21-5.00, meaning they strongly agreed regarding the types of issues listed in the questionnaire. About the standard deviation, it is clearly proven that these respondents were all having the same rating of strongly agreed given that the standard deviations were below the average, so they were all clustered around the average scores.

5.2.1.1. Leadership's roles in the customer service training and delivery

The respondents were asked to rate if the leadership fulfilled its roles in the customer service training and delivery and how satisfied they were about this. Identifying the leadership's roles means that employees are expected to know if their immediate supervisors have been enforcing the completion of the customer service training, monitoring how well it is being implemented, and revising its contents based on their observations, as well as setting good examples of service delivery. Figure 2 shows the analytical results for identifying the roles of the leadership in the customer service training and delivery.

Figure 2: The leadership’s roles in the customer service training and delivery



As seen in Figure 2, the respondents with the higher percentage in agreement that the leadership roles demonstrated by their immediate supervisors in the aspect of the customer service training have shown how they merge ideas to the contents of the customer service training, how they monitor, enforce, and ensure a smooth implementation of the training throughout the government ministries. To the extent of how they deliver their service, these respondents also agreed that they have been showing and setting good examples to employees through their communication attitude, their approaches, and how they make them work together as a team. However, the minority of these respondents were in complete disagreement that these immediate supervisors have played important roles in customer service training and delivery.

Table 3: Mean, standard deviation, and range of scores for the leadership’s roles

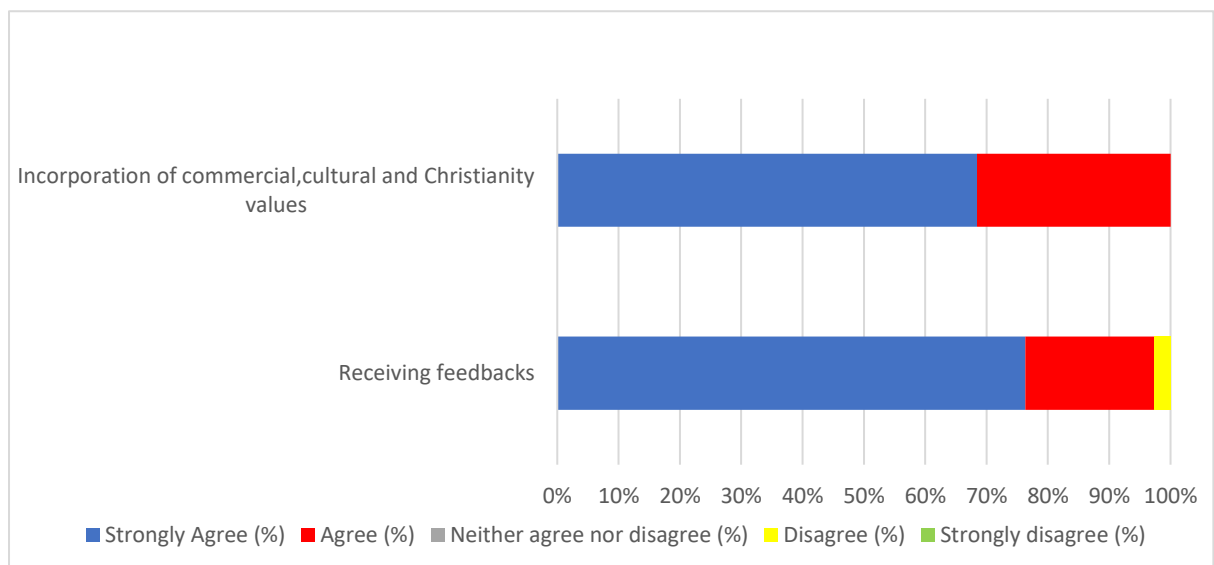
Question	Total	Mean	Standard deviation		Range of scores
Has leadership fulfilled its roles in customer	38	4.05	3.59	Strongly agree	4.21-5.00
				Agree	3.41-4.20
				Neither agree	2.61-3.40

service training and delivery?			
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nor disagree	
Disagree	1.81-2.60
Strongly disagree	1.00-1.80

Table 3 further illustrates the results of the percentage of the respondents with respect to this question using the descriptive analysis of the means, standard deviation, and range of scores. According to the respondent’s ratings based on the leadership roles played in customer service training and delivery, 4.05 was the mean score that was achieved; therefore, these respondents showed agreement. This can be proven against the range of scores that falls in the category of the strong agreement of 4.21–5.00. In terms of the standard deviation, it is below the average score of 4.05; hence, we can conclude that the respondents strongly agreed to confirm that immediate supervisors have been significantly demonstrating their leadership roles in customer service training and delivery.

Figure 3: Ways to improve the customer service delivery in Kiribati’s public service



In exploring other ways to boost the overall productivity of the customer service delivery in the Kiribati public service, there were two factors highlighted in the questionnaire for the respondents to rate and these were receiving feedback and the incorporation of commercial, cultural, and Christian values. In general, Figure 3 clearly demonstrates the percentage of most of the respondents that were in agreement and strong agreement that these two factors, if taken into consideration, would bring a great impact in boosting the overall productivity of the service delivery across the government ministries. However, receiving feedback can be considered as a minor factor that would not impact the enhancement of the customer service delivery to entire government ministries.

Table 4: Mean, standard deviation, and range of scores for ways to enhance the overall productivity of the customer service delivery

Questions	Total	Mean	Standard deviation
Receiving feedback	38	4.71	4.22
Incorporation of cultural, business and Christianity values	38	4.68	4.18

	Range of scores
Strongly agree	4.21-5.00
Agree	2.41-4.20
Neither agree nor disagree	2.61-3.40
Disagree	1.81-2.60
Strongly disagree	1.00-1.80

Table 4 depicts the results of ways to boost the overall productivity of the customer service delivery in the Kiribati Public Service in terms of receiving feedback from immediate supervisors and incorporating the values of commerce, culture, and Christianity. As a result, it can be concluded that the mean score for these two factors,

falls within the range of scores of 4.21–5.00, which implies strong agreement, followed by the standard deviations which are lower than the mean score. Consequently, these two factors were anticipated to contribute to improving the overall productivity of the customer service delivery if it is considered as part of the reform to the entire public service. These questions were responded to by all respondents.

5.2.1.2. Identifying the outcome of the training implementation

To identify the outcome of the completed customer service training, the respondents were asked to rate its contents, as well as to indicate whether it has enhanced their service delivery.

Figure 4: Understanding the contents of the customer service training

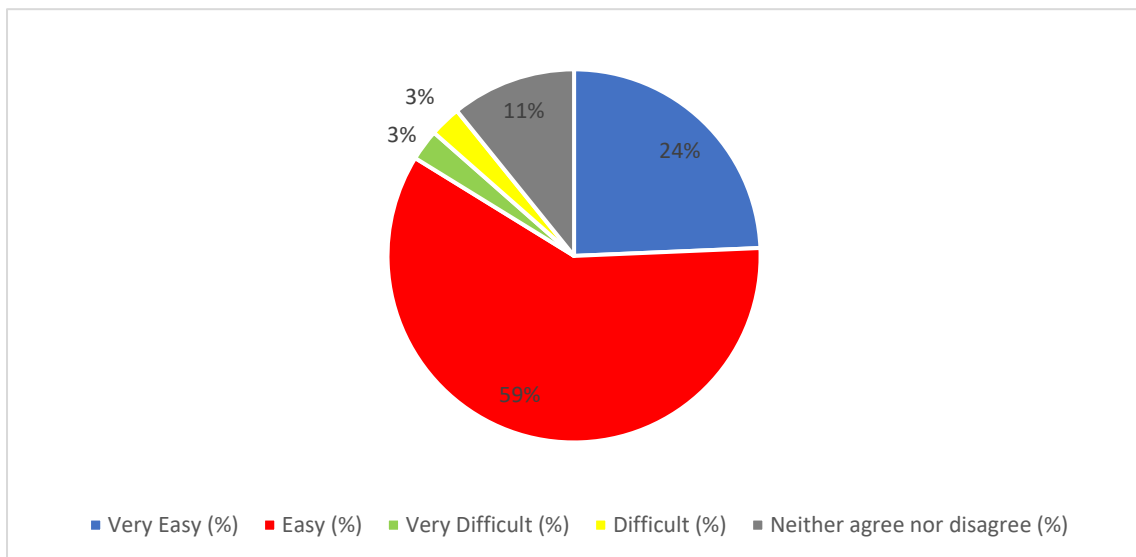


Figure 4 shows the percentage ratings made by the respondents based on the contents of the customer service training package. It can be clearly seen that the highest percentage ratings by these respondents found it easier to fully understand the contents of the customer service training package. Thus, it gives a clear indication that the customer service training package will also be easier to implement across the Kiribati Public Service.

Table 5: Mean, standard deviation, and range of scores for understanding the contents of the customer service training

Question	Total	Mean	Standard deviation
How do you find the contents of the customer service training?	37	4	3.56

	Range of scores
Very easy	4.21-5.00
Easy	3.41-4.20
Neither agree nor disagree	2.61-3.40
Difficult	1.81-2.60
Very difficult	1.00-1.80

Table 5 shows the respondents' ratings based on the contents of the customer service training package. Of the 38 respondents, only 37 answered this question with a mean score of 4 and standard deviation of 3.56. Therefore, the overall rating for the contents of the customer service training package made by these respondents is found to be very easy to understand and follow. This can be seen in the range of scores table that the mean of 4 falls within the category range of 4.21–5.00.

Figure 5: Improvements in the customer service delivery post training completion

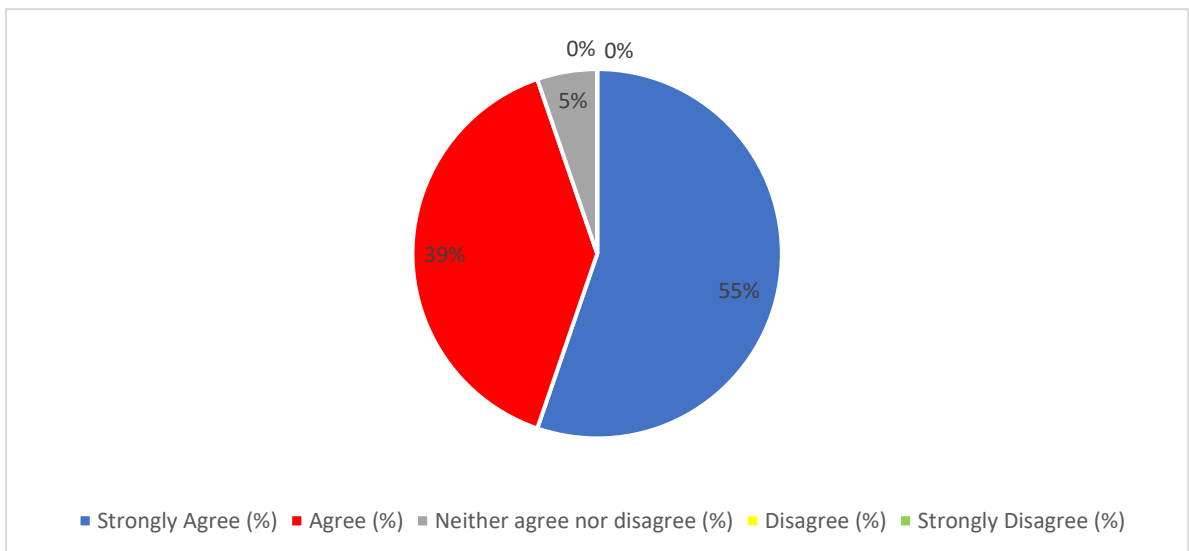


Figure 5 illustrates the percentage of the respondents' ratings with respect to the improvement of their customer service delivery after the implementation of customer

service training. According to their responses, the customer service delivery for these respondents has improved after the implementation of the customer service training. This is anticipated to likely have occurred given their ratings provided about the contents of the customer service training as shown in Figure 4.

Table 6: Mean, standard deviation, and range of scores for an improved customer service delivery post training delivery

Question	Total	Mean	Standard deviation
Has the customer service training enhanced your customer service delivery?	38	4.5	4.01

	Range of scores
Strongly agree	4.21-5.00
Agree	3.41-4.20
Neither agree nor disagree	2.61-3.40
Disagree	1.81-2.60
Strongly disagree	1.00-1.80

Table 6 shows that all the respondents answered this question. This table shows that the mean score for this question is 4.5 with a standard deviation of 4.01, falling within the category range of 4.21–5.00. Overall, the respondents were in strong agreement that their customer service delivery improved after the implementation of customer service training.

5.2.2. Qualitative part of the questionnaire data (Employees)

In this section, I will use the inductive thematic coding process to analyze the qualitative data, focusing only on the second and fifth steps out of the six previously outlined (refer to appendix V for the other steps taken).

Table 7: Generation of initial codes

Research Question 1: What are the issues and causes of poor customer service delivery in Kiribati's Public Service.	
Questionnaire items	Initial codes
Can you name other causes of poor customer service delivery that you have encountered than those mentioned above? Name as many as you can.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Employees' attitudes and behaviors (24 occurrences) - Lack of knowledge and skills (13 occurrences) - Unconducive environment for customers and employees (13 occurrences) - Poor communication (8 occurrences) - Absenteeism (7 occurrences) - Using outdated systems (7 occurrences) - Unattended calls (4 occurrences) - Job negligence (2 occurrences) - Personal problems (2 occurrences) -Lack of employees' engagement (2 occurrences)

Research Question 2: How can the overall productivity of service delivery by Kiribati's public service be achieved? To identify the outcome of the customer service training implementation	
Questionnaire items	Initial codes
In what ways has the customer service training enhanced your customer service delivery?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Enabled them to gradually change their attitude and behavior (20 occurrences) - Reminded them of the importance of delivering a better customer service (10 occurrences) - Made them able to learn ways of dealing with different kinds of customers (8 occurrences) - Helped them become proactive (5 occurrences) - Improved their communication skills (5 occurrences)
In what ways has leadership fulfilled its roles in customer service training and delivery?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and enforcing customer service training and delivery (13 occurrences) - Being role models (12 occurrences) -Through their communication attitude (10 occurrences)

	- Promoting teamwork spirit (5 occurrences)
In what other ways can customer service training enhance the overall productivity of Kiribati's public service?	Delivering customer service training to all employees in the entire public service (17 occurrences) - Taking regular refresher training on customer service (6 occurrences) - Importance of the change model in customer service training (4 occurrences) - Quality customer service being enforced by senior officials (2 occurrences) -Employees becoming more committed to their work (2 occurrences) - In relation to individual performance (1 occurrence)

5.2.2.1. Other causes of poor customer service delivery in Kiribati's public service

The data analysis showed that most of the employees were aware of what good customer service is, but they were not willing to deliver it (24 occurrences). In fact, they have been acting inappropriately when serving their customers by acting rude, using inappropriate language when serving them, not practicing good moral values, lacking passion for work and not being considerate of their colleagues' conversations with their own customers (24 occurrences). Additionally, the lack of knowledge and skills also contributes to the poor customer service delivery (13 occurrences). This involved lack of or insufficient understanding of their job description, lack of competencies to perform their jobs, repeated errors, wrong advice, and incompetency to use tools such as Microsoft office, which may slow the response time to a customer and hinder efficiency (13 occurrences).

Unconducive environment for employees and customers (13 occurrences) was defined as being unsafe, inadequately equipped (unsuitable computers, office chairs and tables), poor office arrangements leading to employees' dissatisfaction with work as well as an improper waiting area for customers, especially for the disabled ones (13

occurrences). Poor communication leads to customers feeling confused (8 occurrences), incoming calls are often left to ring for more than three times or are sometimes not answered at all (4 occurrences), and using an outdated system causes delay in providing feedback to clients (7 occurrences).

Respondents also mentioned that neglecting their jobs could be linked to the excess use of alcohol and kava (2 occurrences). The local population is used to drinking kava on any given day of the week and, as a result, they may be unable to attend work. Absenteeism is sometimes also related to domestic problems and is at an average of three days per week (2 occurrences), followed by the lack of employee's engagement at work which could also make them feel unvalued or uncertain about their jobs at the workplace (2 occurrences).

5.2.2.2. In what ways does leadership roles played in customer service training and delivery

According to the responses made by the respondents, leadership roles has been played in the customer service training and delivery through the monitoring and enforcement of the customer service training and delivery within the ministry and to the entire government ministries (13 occurrences). How they monitor and enforce the customer service training and delivery is to ensure that the training should be well implemented across the entire government ministries (13 occurrences). In addition to that, employees should focus on providing quality customer service to both internal and external clients. (13 occurrences).

Seeing the leadership roles from the other angle aside from their monitoring and enforcement, supervisors should model punctuality (12 occurrences), how they deal with each employee in terms of their poor conduct at work, and most importantly is through

their communication attitude (10 occurrences) respectful communication with everyone regardless of their position inside the organization. (10 occurrences). Another way in which these leaders played in the customer service training has enabled employees to identify behaviors that are not appropriate in handling customer complaints. It also taught them how to communicate with difficult customers, such as aggressive ones, by having more patience, being empathetic, listening carefully and providing direct responses in a respectful manner. (5 occurrences). If a leader can work together as a team or in collaboration with one another, all the goals and visions of that workplace will be able to be achieved, and as a result, this will also contribute to minimizing customer complaints as well as developing smooth operation of that certain ministry or to the entire public service.

5.2.2.3. In what other ways can customer service training will boost the overall productivity of the service delivery in the KPS

To explore ways that can boost the overall productivity of the service delivery in the Kiribati public service, these respondents quoted that maintaining the customer service training to the entire public service should be stand as one of the on-going trainings (17 occurrences). The reason being is that most of the employees they only followed what has been taught during the training at first, then later on, they are gradually unpracticed what they have been taught in the training. This is commonly known; therefore, this attitude should be eliminated when the customer service training is maintained across the entire public service (17 occurrences). In this training, there are also counterparts from other ministries who can also conduct the training internally, so this is another way of maintaining the customer service training through our existing counterparts from other ministries (17 occurrences).

Another way is to have a regular refresher on the customer service training (6 occurrences), either from the implementing ministries or counterparts from other ministries to conduct the regular refresher training internally (6 occurrences). The outcome of these initiatives could change the mindset of each employee and enable them to get a general understanding about the importance of the change model in the customer service training (4 occurrences), and how they will be able to adopt and practice in providing their customer service. The overall productivity of the customer service delivery could also be enhanced and sustained if senior officials enforce the quality customer service (2 occurrences) to employees and even themselves as well. However, the entire public service can achieve the overall productivity of customer service delivery through the employees' commitment at work (2 occurrences), along with the individual performances (1 occurrence).

5.2.2.4. In what ways does customer service training has enhanced your customer service delivery

The outcome of the implementation of the customer service training to the entire public service has enabled employees to gradually change their attitude and behaviors (20 occurrences). This is through the way they provide their customer service by listening carefully to the customers need, learning the change models and how to apply during their daily working, having a common understanding on the customer service across the public service in executing their roles and responsibilities (20 occurrences). It also contributes to gaining the knowledge to point out the behavioral actions that are not appropriate in handling of the customer complaints (20 occurrences). Further to gradually changing the attitude and behaviors, it also acts as a reminder about the importance of delivering the better service delivery (10 occurrences), where at the end, it will contribute to minimizing customer complaints.

These respondents were also able to learn ways on how to deal with different kind of customers such as aggressive customers the name where we usually call customers with no patience at all (8 occurrences). Having the patience, being empathetic, listening carefully and providing direct responses in a respectful manner are the ways learnt from the customer service training. Moreover, being proactive is also another aspect learnt and has improved as the result of the customer service training (5 occurrences), and lastly, it has improved their communication skills when dealing with their internal and external customers (5 occurrences).

5.2.3. Comparison of qualitative and quantitative data of the questionnaire (Employees)

The comparison begins with the issues of poor customer service delivery in the Kiribati Public Service. In the quantitative part of the questionnaire, there were four issues of poor customer service delivery stated for employees to provide their observations. These issues were the punctuality of all employees, lack of motivation, poor relationship between employees and supervisors, and the lack of customer service training. For the qualitative part, these respondents were asked to state other factors of poor customer service delivery aside from what was mentioned in the quantitative part. To compare these data, respondents in the qualitative part have been providing additional factors of poor customer service delivery from what has been mentioned in the quantitative part. However, some of these factors were seen to have commonalities between them. These include the punctuality of all employees, which resulted in high absenteeism of employees, and the lack of customer service training, which caused poor communication when dealing with customers as well as having a well-designed conducive environment for customers and employees.

Subsequently, leadership roles played in customer service training and delivery. Respondents were asked to provide answers on other leadership roles played in customer

service training and delivery, in addition to what was mentioned in the quantitative part of the questionnaire. Instead, these respondents agreed that their immediate supervisors had been playing their leadership roles in customer service training and delivery, as shown in the quantitative part. The responses provided in the qualitative part of the questionnaire showed that the respondents agreed. This was in terms of how they monitor, enforce, enhance, and implement the customer service training across the public sector, whereas from another perspective, they had been acting as role models in their customer service delivery within and outside the workplace, but, most importantly, in utilizing their communication skills and the promotion of teamwork spirit. As stated by Schein (2004), using charisma as a mechanism to convey messages across, and to capture the subordinate's attention, to communicate major assumptions and values vividly and clearly.

Next, is to compare other ways in which customer service training could contribute to boosting the overall productivity of service delivery in the Kiribati public service. In the quantitative part of the questionnaire, there were only two factors provided for respondents to rate: The incorporation of cultural, business, and Christian values and receiving feedback from immediate supervisors. In the qualitative part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to provide other ways of customer service training that can contribute to the overall productivity of the service delivery in the Kiribati Public Service, aside from those mentioned in the quantitative data. The responses included maintaining the customer service delivery in the Kiribati Public Service, having a regular refresher on the customer service training, senior officials enforcing the quality customer service from employees, but most prominently encouraging and motivating employees' commitment at work as well as their individual performances. Apparently, these responses were found to have something in common in terms of senior officials or

immediate supervisors enforcing the quality of customer service if they can provide feedback on the employee's performance, as well as their commitment to work if they adopt a holistic approach of commercial, cultural, and Christianity values.

Lastly, to compare how the customer service training improved the service delivery. Based on the quantitative data, the respondents strongly agreed that their customer service had improved after the implementation of customer service training. According to their responses in the qualitative part of the questionnaire, they had been providing many ways on how their customer service delivery had been enhanced. Generally, their customer service delivery improved through being proactive when dealing with their assigned tasks and in serving their customers, knowing some of the techniques in dealing with aggressive customers, gaining knowledge in differentiating appropriate behavioral actions suitable in the workplace, and most importantly, it has gradually changed their attitude and behaviors. Therefore, this could be the outcome of having a comprehensive customer service training curriculum, which enabled employees to find it easier to understand and practice.

5.2.4. Comparison between immediate supervisors' (qualitative) and employees' (qualitative and quantitative) data

Comparing the supervisors' and subordinates' responses aims at looking how they evaluate each other's contribution to a poor customer service and their roles in improving it. The relationship between the 38 employees and the 5 immediate supervisors is significantly played through the assessment and evaluation on how immediate supervisors demonstrated their leadership roles in the customer service training, while how employees perform their customer service delivery. The comparison be mainly focusing on the similarities and differences between the responses in the qualitative and quantitative data. Both groups agreed that poor service quality is caused by employees' attitudes and

behaviors, their lack of punctuality and absenteeism, the lack of customer service training, poor communication, improper office set-up and slow response times. Supervisors stressed the staffing shortage, the uncondusive environment for employees and customers, the poor communication and using of the outdated system as the most common issues. At their turn, the employees stressed the lack of motivation, and poor relationships with their supervisors as significant problems. They expect their leaders to recruit the right number of staff to address the shortage, establish a conducive working environment for employees by providing essential equipment such as laptops, ensuring sanitization as well as improving the waiting area for customers, encourage employees to communicate openly with their supervisors on any professional matters, and strengthen the current system which is operating the entire public service. From the employees' perspective, they lack motivation because immediate supervisors are not able to engage them in making decisions and to help them feel valued, while also engaging in corrupt behaviors such as favoritism, and nepotism.

These different perceptions can be harmonized if supervisors provide the incentives for shouldering extra duties in the absence of the incumbents for more than 10 consecutive working days (charge allowance or acting allowance). The essential is that both employees and immediate supervisors need to do their part in order to see an improvement. While there is a policy already set in place which bounds all civil servants, known as the Kiribati National Conditions of Service, monitoring should be strengthened and enforced by supervisors, including by imposing disciplinary measures as stated in the policy.

Secondly, although employees have agreed that their immediate supervisors have significantly fulfilled their roles as leaders, there is still a need to look for other possible ways to sustain and maintain an excellent service delivery across all government

ministries. According to Daft (2008), making use of personal power is another way of motivating and encouraging civil servants to perform well; good relationships can be built this way, and leaders can gain commitment from employees in enhancing the overall productivity of Kiribati's public service delivery.

Employees and supervisors have the same understanding of the roles played by leadership in the customer service training and delivery. To consistently maintain the substantial roles demonstrated by supervisors, the revision of the customer service training package should be well constructed in a way that can suit the national particularities and its public service, as well as aiming at supporting the employees' skills development.

Furthermore, is the comparison on how the customer service training will boost the overall productivity of the service delivery in the Kiribati Public Service. Conversely, employees and immediate supervisors have different opinions on Employees expect their supervisors to be able to provide feedback on their performance and adopting the holistic approach of cultural, business and Christianity values will contribute to enhancing the overall productivity of service delivery in Kiribati's public service. Weber (2001) stated that Protestantism ethics engendered the spirit of capitalism. This author further elaborated that protestant generally rejected excessive spending, but they worked hard and focused on structuring their life. On the other hand, the immediate supervisors' point of view is that they have highly prioritized motivating and engaging employees to undertake outside activities as another way to increase their productivity. Kim (2012) stated that public service motivations may have a tendency in increasing public employees' satisfaction and commitment to their work in public organizations. Incorporating these ideas into supervisors' leadership style can also lead to increased productivity in addition to the customer service training. Additionally, establishing

networks between all government ministries focused on maintaining the quality of the customer service delivery, cooperating to solve various administrative matters, and having a coherent performance management of all employees will assuredly contribute to a heightened overall productivity of Kiribati' public service delivery.

Regarding the outcome of the customer service training, both groups declared that it has reminded them of their different roles and responsibilities, enhanced their individual performance and has gradually helped them change their attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. On the other hand, the target for the customer service training should be elevated to immediate supervisors and the same conditions will also be applied to them when they deviate from the contents of the customer service training.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the conclusion will be based on the summary of findings against the two research questions raised in this study, by analyzing the qualitative and quantitative data collected. The summary will also cover the theoretical and practical implications of this study, as well as its limitations.

6.1. Summary of findings

The data analysis, including the comparison between the responses of the five supervisors and the 38 employees, revealed that the main problem in Kiribati's poor public service delivery is the employees' attitudes and behaviors. These issues are like normal working norms demonstrated by each civil servants which has been pressurizing the effectiveness and productiveness of the public service delivery. However, the causes of this problem are the absence of a mechanism to monitor and assess civil servants' performance, and the inability of both immediate supervisors and senior managers to strengthen and enforce the existing policies.

In addition to remediating this deficiency, adopting a holistic approach by incorporating cultural, business, and Christianity values into the training will also contribute to fostering a service culture across Kiribati's public sector and enhancing the overall productivity. Furthermore, technological updates to streamline operations and more involvement from leadership in shaping an organizational culture conducive of effectiveness and efficacy are equally required.

6.2. Theoretical implications

In completing the study of fostering the serving culture of public service delivery in Kiribati, I found that the theoretical framework utilized in this research fully supports

the findings of my study. This can be seen through leaders creating and embedding working culture in the Kiribati Public Service by emphasizing the holistic approach of cultural, commercial, and Christian values that should be implemented and adopted when providing customer service to the public. Additionally, the demonstration of the roles of a good leader through the enhancement and monitoring of employee's performance in terms of their service delivery, imposing their personal powers instead of positional power can be demonstrated through their actions of showing good examples to employees, and has been creating a working culture of working together as a team to achieve goals and activities of the workplace.

The other aspect that has theoretical implications is that leaders are the ones that initiate change, recognizing their own roles not only in creating working culture but also in having the responsibility of embedding and developing culture to determine the effectiveness of an organization or workplace. This is related to my findings in which leaders had been providing initiatives that will enhance the performance of employees in the workplace and to be able to know their roles as civil servants, which involves providing quality service to the entire public.

As there are no previous studies on fostering the serving culture of the public service delivery in Kiribati, this study significantly contributes to the literature and extant literature reviews. However, this study's findings that highlight the improvement of service delivery in the Kiribati Public Service can inform future research.

6.3. Practical implications

There are various practical implications to this study. The first is the customer service training being reflected in the Kiribati National Condition of Services. This would enable employees to offer the best service delivery to the public.

The second is leaders' provision of feedback on employee performance and conducting outdoor activities. It is seen that the relationship between an employee and supervisors can be varied. Therefore, providing feedback as a role of a leader to employees can create and build good relationships. Moreover, leaders creating an enabling environment for employees in terms of providing equipment will contribute to the enhancement of service delivery from employees.

Additionally, providing customer service, and adopting a holistic approach to commercial, cultural, and Christian values is very vital. Adopting this holistic approach can imply that we truly know how to respect, utilize public funds wisely, and care for customers who required assistance. As employees are bound to the Kiribati National Condition of Services, having a conducive Kiribati Condition of Services will enable them to perform well at work knowing that all entitlements and privileges are covered in the National Condition of Services.

Furthermore, providing innovations and training programs to improve the capabilities of employees could be very difficult due to the limited funding and different training priorities. Lastly, the modification and revision of the content of the customer service training will suit the context of the Kiribati Public Service. The reason for modifying and revising the content of the customer service training is that employees' service delivery after the implementation of the customer service delivery since 2016 showed improvements.

This is very interesting, given that the main purpose of developing customer service training is to improve the productivity of the service delivery in the public service of Kiribati. This could not have happened if the training had not been widely conducted in the public service. However, despite having the implementation of customer service

training, employee performance, and the quality of gradually declined. For employees to maintain and sustain their excellent service delivery after the implementation of customer service training, feedback through open communication is highly recommended between an employee and supervisor, which may increase employee morale and satisfaction.

Customer service training only targets frontline officers; therefore, supervisors' inclusion in the same is necessary. Furthermore, customer service training should also reflect in the Kiribati National Condition of Service so civil servants will be liable to any disciplinary measures when found to be in breach of the contents of the customer service training, and the same will happen to supervisors when they deviate from the contents of the customer service training.

6.4. Research limitations

This study has the following limitations. In terms of methodological issues, the sampling population is not sufficiently large for generating data. This is due to targeting a specific ministry, which is the implementing agency, and part of its responsibilities is to plan reforms for the entire Public Service. Due to targeting one ministry, biases and conflicts could arise. Therefore, extending my sample population to other ministries is the best solution to get in-depth information based on achieving the overall productivity of the service delivery in the Kiribati Public Service.

Another limitation is the research design. Given that the foundation of this study is exploring a phenomenon that will assist in fostering the serving culture of the Public Service delivery in Kiribati, quantitative and qualitative methods were commonly used in previous studies. However, determining the appropriate method for conducting this study posed difficulties for the researcher. Using the appropriate approaches toward these methods has imposed difficulties for a researcher to take.

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Appendices

Appendix I. Semi-structured interview questions for immediate supervisors

Position:

Division:

Sex: F M

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying possible issues of poor customer service delivery in Kiribati's public service. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are some of the occurring issues of poor customer service delivery in your ministry? 2. How do you deal with these common issues of poor customer service delivery in your ministry?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the roles of leadership in the customer service training and delivery? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. As an immediate supervisor, what is your role in designing and delivering customer service training? 4. What is the rationale for developing a customer service training?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways can the customer service training improve the overall productivity of Kiribati's public service delivery? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Aside from the customer service training, what other possible ways has your ministry explored to improve the overall productivity of Kiribati's public service delivery? 6. How do you think the incorporation of cultural, business and Christianity values in the customer service training can contribute to the overall productivity of the public service delivery?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the outcome of the customer service training. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. How often is the customer service training conducted within your ministry? 8. How has the customer service training improved the customer service delivery within your ministry? 9. Why do you think the customer service training is very important for the public service?

Appendix II. Structured questionnaire items for employees

Division: Sex: F M Salary Level Range: L19-L10 L11-L5

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying possible issues of poor customer service delivery in Kiribati's public service. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The lack of customer service training leads to poor customer service delivery in Kiribati's public service Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 2. The poor relationship between you and your supervisor leads to your underperformance as a public service official. Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Your supervisor failing to motivate you leads to your underperformance as a public service official. Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Lack of punctuality for all employees can affect customer service delivery in the Kiribati Public Service. Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Can you name other causes of poor customer service delivery that you have noticed than those mentioned above? Name as many as you can.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the leadership's roles in customer service training and delivery? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. The leadership has fulfilled their roles in relation to the customer service training and delivery. Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> In what ways? 7. How satisfied are you with the way the leadership have played their roles in relation to the customer service training and delivery?

	<p>Satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Very dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways can the customer service training enhance the overall productivity of Kiribati 's public service? 	<p>8. Will receiving feedback from your immediate supervisor on your performance in work improve your service delivery?</p> <p>Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>9. Can incorporating cultural, business and Christianity values in the customer service training contribute to the overall productivity of the public service?</p> <p>Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>10. In what other ways can the customer service training improve the overall productivity of Kiribati 's public service?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying the outcome of the delivered customer service training. 	<p>11. How do you find the content of the customer service training?</p> <p>Very easy <input type="checkbox"/> Easy <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult <input type="checkbox"/> Very difficult <input type="checkbox"/> Neither easy nor difficult <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>12. The customer service training has improved your customer service delivery.</p> <p>Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>In what ways?</p>

Appendix III. Data Transcription

Interviewee # 1

<p>1. What are some of the occurring issues of the poor customer service delivery in your ministry?</p>	<p>Poor customer service delivery has been observed in all ministries. Some of the recurring issues are the delays in providing responses to customers, the employees' inadequate attitude and the faulty system in place. The latter can also influence an employee's attitude and the response time as everything needs to be circulated to the Senior Responsible Officer, then delegated to the responsible divisions. Any delay at an upper level thus cascades to the lower levels.</p>
<p>2. How do you deal with these common issues of poor customer service delivery in your ministry?</p>	<p>There is a need to establish a new system across the entire public service in which the responsible divisions or Head of Divisions do not need to wait for approval from the Senior Responsible Officer. In an optimized system, HoDs would work according to clear guidelines, such that they will be liable for all possible results, whether their division underperform or if it overspends. According to the information in the training, employees are accountable for 5% of the output, while the system for the remaining 95%. That is why a better system in the workplace will improve staff's attitude. If employees' misconduct, they will of course be reprimanded or terminated.</p>
<p>3. What is your role as an immediate supervisor in the customer service training?</p>	<p>Looking for additional advanced training for the staff, as well as revising the current training package to be more suitable to the context of public service. Ensuring that the customer service training is well implemented.</p>
<p>4. What is the rationale for developing a customer service training?</p>	<p>Improving the customer service across the government ministries.</p>
<p>5. Aside from the customer service training, what other possible ways has your ministry explored to enhance the overall productivity of Kiribati's public service?</p>	<p>After taking the training on customer service, employees respond to a survey that allows ministries to see if it has led to any improvements on their performance. Once reports have been received from other ministries, the agency implementing the training will develop a Cabinet Paper to inform Cabinets in other ministries about the training outcome. Based on the cabinets' recommendations, responsible ministries will be informed. However, there will be an independent body that will assess the ministry's performance, then they will report to the cabinet. On the other hand, the</p>

	implementing ministry is still awaiting the Public Service Bill to be approved.
6. How do you think the incorporation of cultural, business and Christianity values in the customer service training can contribute to the overall productivity of the public service?	<p>Cultural values promote respect which is essential to good customer service.</p> <p>Business values cultivate the awareness that time is money, so if time is wasted, public funds are also wasted.</p> <p>Christianity values require to be faithful to one's own work and to avoid gossiping at work.</p> <p>If these three values are applied as part of our daily working norms and in serving the customers, they will lead to the best results.</p>
7. How often is the customer service training conducted within your ministry?	Every year as well as on a ministry's request.
8. How has the customer service training improved service delivery within your ministry?	There seemed to be an improvement after the training completion. However, it seemed to be a short-term one, as the quality of the service delivery has gradually slacked down afterwards. This is seen because of the system in place, in which all employees are sticking the old system. The training only targets the frontline officers and there is a plan to include top positions as well.
9. Why do you think the customer service training is very important in the public service?	Customer service training is important to cater for the public needs, to smoothen the customer service delivery at the government ministries, to ensure public satisfaction and it also related to political matters.

Interviewee # 2

1. What are some of the occurring issues of the poor customer service delivery in your ministry?	Poor attendance and employees' attitude. Everyone has the required skills, but it depends on each employee's behavior how they execute their given tasks, so the common issues are poor attendance and their own attitude.
2. How do you deal with these common issues of poor customer service delivery in your ministry?	By enforcement of all standing procedures or policies such as the National Conditions of Service. There is weak monitoring and enforcement from senior positions. Counselling is also another way and, if they do not seem

	to improve, then sanctions will be imposed. Encouraging behavioral change is also another way, but it is the most difficult one. Now the ministry is exploring a transformational program that will help change the employees' mindset. This program is developed to tackle the problems by engaging and motivating them. The idea is that, if their performance is good, it will also result in providing good customer service. This program will start with the engagement of employees and their well-being.
3. What is your role as an immediate supervisor in the customer service training?	To look for new ways to motivate the employees and help improve their performance.
4. What is the rationale for developing a customer service training?	To address the problems in customer service and improve the employees' performance. Poor customer service is a result of their poor performance, so customer service training is very important as it acts as a reminder of what good performance means and it also expands how we can improve our performance and how we deliver our service.
5. Aside from the customer service training, what other possible ways has your ministry explored to enhance the overall productivity of Kiribati's public service?	Customer service training has been conducted in other ministries, but it is still not effective. As a way of enhancing the overall productivity of the customer service, a network has been established between HR counterparts. They have embarked on a soft approach which is the whole of government approach. This soft approach is to partner with ministries and at the same time to build their capacities in terms of their confidence. They will also establish a steering committee for transforming the public service in terms of their mindset, performance, and customer service. Many initiatives have been implemented but they have been later left idle or have been dissolved. This soft approach can in time lead to improved performance.
6. How do you think the incorporation of cultural, business and Christianity values in the customer service training can contribute to the overall	The three values have also been conveyed during every induction program; however, the employees do not apply them in their daily work, and the main reason for this is again their attitude. This can be changed if the culture of the public service is also changed. The output that employees give maybe is only 10% but the rest that they know which is 90% was kept by employees.

productivity of the public service?	
7. How often is the customer service training conducted within your ministry?	Customer service training has been held within their respective divisions twice a year. However, counselling or reminder needs to be circulated across government ministries and even within the ministry. Also, video recordings of the customer service training are needed. Formal training should not be regular, but it should be part of the system where performance standard should be emphasized. Of course, the training on customer service is necessary, but since all employees have been trained, it is the responsibility of the Head of Division to keep reminding the staffs, monitor their performance and enforce the customer service standards. If performance standard is well taught, it will also have an impact on our customer service delivery.
8. How has the customer service training improved service delivery within your ministry?	There has been some improvement on the customer service. However, everyone needs feedback to improve employees' performance and customer service delivery.
9. Why do you think the customer service training is very important in the public service?	Customer service training is very important because it reminds us of what kind of services we are to deliver. Customers judge our capabilities based on the customer service delivered. So, customer service training is well linked to our performance. Another important aspect of this training is understanding the importance of having a conducive environment for our customers.

Interviewee # 3

1. What are some of the occurring issues of the poor customer service delivery in your ministry?	Issues in customer service are related to how each ministry sets-up their workplace to serve customers. Employees' attitudes and behaviors can also have a great impact on the service delivery. Training has been carried out, but the main problem remains the behavior and attitude of each employee. If there is no passion in serving customers, they will feel it.
2. How do you deal with these common issues of poor customer service delivery in your ministry?	It is difficult to deal with the current culture of the ministry. It is a long-term effort required to change each employee's behavior. The lack of understanding in the ministry needs to be addressed. Employees need

	<p>counselling and meetings with their immediate supervisors in which they can share their real problems and to feel understood. They need to be offered trainings and shown that they are valued by engaging them. Training and retreat about the Ministry Strategic Plan for them to understand, to change their mindset. Also engaging resource people on integrity on other aspects as well as to transform the current culture in the public service.</p>
<p>3. What is your role as an immediate supervisor in the customer service training?</p>	<p>The training on customer service has been conducted in the responsible divisions, however, immediate supervisors' role is to encourage employees and to find other strategic ways to merge ideas and to advocate them to ensure having an excellent public service. Once this has been transformed, it will gradually change the service delivery within the ministry and even across the entire public service. Merging the customer service training with the administration's training package on National Condition of Service, Ministry Strategic Plan and Integrity.</p>
<p>4. What is the rationale for developing a customer service training?</p>	<p>Engaging the employees, doing in-house training to ensure the continuity of the training program. The training should also promote integrity as a moral value to counteract corrupt practices. To ensure they have a passion for their work. The training should be part of a transformative strategy with a long-term impact aimed at ensuring an excellent service delivery to the public.</p>
<p>5. Aside from the customer service training, what other possible ways has your ministry explored to enhance the overall productivity of Kiribati's public service?</p>	<p>Engaging the staff and making them feel valued. Behavioral change is one of the most difficult things to tackle. Informing new recruits through induction programs about their main roles and responsibilities and making sure they fully understand them. Engaging staffs in extracurricular activities such as landscaping. Counselling the members of the division. Now the ministry's new approach is engaging staffs which can drive their performance and will contribute to their productivity. Combating unproductive employee behaviors such as eating during working hours, spending time talking, which also reduce efficiency.</p>
<p>6. How do you think the incorporation of cultural, business and Christianity values in the customer service</p>	<p>Doing what is right as well as by knowing each staff and their capabilities. Counselling allows knowing their strengths and weaknesses. Their strengths can then be utilized in different ways that will contribute to the productivity of the service delivery. Encouraging them</p>

training can contribute to the overall productivity of the public service?	to do what is right and to live the right way should help them change. If we incorporate these three values in our attitude, it will have a great impact on our service delivery together with the passion that we have.
7. How often is the customer service training conducted within your ministry?	Once a year, but it is preferable to conduct training in phases as this will be more practical. If customer service is not conducted every year, but it needed to be part of the induction program.
8. How has the customer service training improved service delivery within your ministry?	It takes time to see changes but, for the time being, there has been some improvement in the frontline officers. This is because the training made them aware of their major roles and responsibilities and how to execute them. Their goal is to perform and to serve with passion and integrity which is what they have been encouraged and motivated to do.
9. Why do you think the customer service training is very important in the public service?	It is important because it reminds us of what our main role is in the public service aside from serving the public. Showing passion in serving customers is important since it is due to them that we have a job. We should also think that the customer service training is not just a written text, but employees should have a feeling toward it. The values and behaviors that employees should display need to be deeply embedded in the customer service training. Understanding the meaning and purpose of the training will enhance our service delivery.

Interviewee # 4

1. What are some of the occurring issues of the poor customer service delivery in your ministry?	Negligence of their promises to their customers. The way they communicate and convey messages to their customers has caused misunderstandings and customer complaints. Essentially, there is insufficient or poor communication between the employees and the customers.
2. How do you deal with these common issues of poor customer service delivery in your ministry?	During the monthly senior management meetings, the importance of good customer service is reminded. Another strategy they have adopted is reminding employees through informal communication. Ministry also worked in line with the National Conditions of Service which civil servants need to comply with. Monitoring of attendance and ensuring good

	performance at work. If they misconduct, they will be disciplined.
3. What is your role as an immediate supervisor in the customer service training?	To enforce customer service, to oversee and to ensure that customer service is well implemented to minimize complaints.
4. What is the rationale for developing a customer service training?	To enforce and to ensure that good customer service is well sustained and maintained.
5. Aside from the customer service training, what other possible ways has your ministry explored to enhance the overall productivity of Kiribati's public service?	There are different attitudes and behaviors that can be seen in employees. Observing and studying the behavior of each employee is very important to be able to tackle different attitudes which can also affect their service delivery. Some might not feel comfortable at the workplace due to the absence of equipment, especially laptops or computers. They have been motivating them in a way that they make them feel valued for their jobs. Counselling them, providing incentives as well as giving them more work when they are seen to just be sitting and doing nothing.
6. How do you think the incorporation of cultural, business and Christianity values in the customer service training can contribute to the overall productivity of the public service?	<p>Cultural values also contribute to customer service by the way employees behave, act, and talk especially to customers. If they do not show respect, it will also lead to poor customer service delivery.</p> <p>Christianity values also mean having respect. Therefore, in terms of the public service, the National Conditions of Service which is a policy everyone should comply with the policy. Lack of compliance will lead to disciplinary measures.</p> <p>Regarding business values, employees should know that if they leave things to the last minute or ignore doing them straight away, even though they know they are very important and urgent. However, it can also have cost implication for the government in which customers can take the matter to court. Saving on electricity consumption such as by turning off the lights, fans and aircons before leaving the office is also a way of implementing business values that need to be adopted in the public service.</p>

7. How often is the customer service training conducted within your ministry?	On a quarterly basis. However, sometimes it is difficult to conduct the training during working hours given that some of the employees are busy answering incoming calls and serving customers at the counter, so they utilize lunch hours for the training.
8. How has the customer service training improved service delivery within your ministry?	Even though the training has been carried out and they seemed to absorb and follow its contents, they later seem to forget again. But there is an improvement in the way they dress in the office from before the implementation of the customer service training. To ensure continuity, regular monitoring and enforcement are required.
9. Why do you think the customer service training is very important in the public service?	To ensure good customer service delivery to the public. To contribute to the fulfillment of the government's political manifesto and Kiribati's Vision for the next 20 years. It is also important because it acts as a reminder to minimize customer complaints. It will also contribute to economizing and controlling unnecessary expenses of the ministry.

Interviewee # 5

1. What are some of the occurring issues of the poor customer service delivery in your ministry?	Employees' attitude and staffing shortage especially in the frontline. Staffing shortage can cause delays in the service if the frontline staff is insufficient or some of them do not attend their jobs.
2. How do you deal with these common issues of poor customer service delivery in your ministry?	Regarding employees' attitude, they will be disciplined so that they learn that it is not appropriate and that they need to change it. Concerning the short number of staffs, the right number of people need to be recruited to manage the front counter as well as the incoming and outgoing calls.
3. What is your role as an immediate supervisor in the customer service training?	Ensuring an enabling environment for employees by providing them with equipment. Once they are fully equipped, it will also contribute to a more efficient customer service delivery, and to their productivity.
4. What is the rationale for developing a customer service training?	There is an issue in the customer service delivery within Kiribati's public service and the customer service training was developed to improve it.

<p>5. Aside from the customer service training, what other possible ways has your ministry explored to enhance the overall productivity of Kiribati's public service?</p>	<p>The answer to this question is related to that to the third question whereby ministry should support the employees by ensuring an enabling environment. This should be done by revising the policy. If the National Conditions of Service are improved and become more conducive for the employees by offering them privileges such as allowances, they will be motivated. They will do their best knowing that what they will be compensated well for their efforts.</p>
<p>6. How do you think the incorporation of cultural, business and Christianity values in the customer service training can contribute to the overall productivity of the public service?</p>	<p>Cultural, business and Christianity values involve love, respect, and time awareness. If these values are absorbed by employees, they will create the mentality to improve their customer service delivery.</p>
<p>7. How often is the customer service training conducted within your ministry?</p>	<p>There is a ministry implementing the customer service training, which is the Public Service Office. The training takes place once a year, and it also depends on the ministry's needs. They can request for customer service training.</p>
<p>10. How has the customer service training improved service delivery within your ministry?</p>	<p>There is an improvement in the customer service delivery, such as providing seats for clients and having a more welcoming attitude toward them.</p>
<p>8. Why do you think the customer service training is very important in the public service?</p>	<p>Customer service is very important because it is the main purpose of the public service. So, if the service delivery is good, it serves the purpose of fulfilling the needs of the public. It is also important because there are employees leaving the public service or retiring, while new recruits are added, so it ensures the continuity of a good customer service.</p>

Appendix IV- Inductive thematic coding process steps for qualitative data (Interview)

Step 3 & 4: Searching and Reviewing Themes

Research Questions	Sub-Questions	Searching for themes	Reviewing themes
1. What are the issues and causes of the poor customer service delivery across Kiribati's public service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some of the recurring issues of poor customer service in your ministry? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues of poor customer service delivery 	Common issues of poor customer service delivery
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you deal with these common issues of poor customer service delivery in your ministry? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handling common issues of poor customer service 	Possible solutions undertaken to tackle common issues of poor customer service delivery
2. How can the overall productivity of the service delivery in Kiribati's public service be achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your role in the customer service training as an immediate supervisor? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate supervisors' role in the customer service training 	Immediate supervisors' role in the customer service delivery and training
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the rationale for developing a customer service training? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of developing a customer service training 	Purpose of developing a customer service training
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aside from customer service training, what other possible ways has your ministry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible ways explored by the ministry to enhance the overall productivity of the 	Other strategic ways explored by the ministry to enhance the overall productivity of customer service

	explored to enhance the overall productivity of Kiribati 's public service?	customer service delivery in Kiribati's public service.	delivery in Kiribati's public service
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you think the incorporation of cultural, business and Christianity values in the customer service training can contribute to the overall productivity of service delivery in the Public Service? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing the overall productivity of service delivery in the public service through cultural, business and Christianity values. 	Enhancing the overall productivity of service delivery in Kiribati's public service through the application of cultural, business and Christianity values
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How often is the customer service training conducted within your ministry? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequency of conducting the customer service training within or across government ministries 	The need for customer service training within or across government ministries
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How has the customer service training improved customer service delivery within your ministry? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement of customer service delivery after the implementation of the customer service training 	Improvement of customer service delivery within or across government ministries after the implementation of the customer service training.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why do you think the customer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of the customer 	Importance of the customer service

	service training is very important in the public service?	service training in Kiribati's public service	training in Kiribati's public service.
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Step 5: Defining themes

Themes	Defining themes
1. Common issues of poor customer service delivery.	The essence of this theme is to determine the common factors that have contributed to poor customer service delivery across the government ministries/
2. Possible ways explored to address the common issues of poor customer service delivery.	From the above common issues, the ministry has explored possible ways to tackle these issues.
3. Immediate supervisors' role in the customer service delivery and training.	Immediate supervisors have played different roles in this training and in other aspects that have a great impact on the customer service delivery.
4. Purpose of developing a customer service training.	They have also identified the main purpose of developing a customer service training from different perspectives.
5. Possible ways explored by the Ministry to enhance the overall productivity of customer service delivery in Kiribati's public service.	Aside from the customer service training, they have also developed initiatives that have a great contribution to the enhancement of the customer service delivery within and across the government ministries.
6. Enhancing the overall productivity of customer service delivery in Kiribati's public service is possible through the application of cultural, business and Christianity values.	Kiribati's public service administration has made it a goal to improve the overall productivity of the service delivery across the government ministries. Therefore, they have the confidence that incorporating the cultural, business and Christianity values will contribute to achieving this goal.
7. The need for customer service training within or across government ministries.	Conducting the customer service training across government ministries is obligatory to ensure an excellent customer service in Kiribati's public service.
8. The status of the customer service delivery within or across government ministries after the implementation of the customer service training.	It is also important to know how the customer service delivery has been improved across government ministries after the implementation of the customer service training.

9. The importance of the customer service training in the Kiribati Public Service.	Knowing the importance of the customer service training in Kiribati's public service is crucial to ensure customer satisfaction and other goals that the government wants to achieve.
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Appendix V. Inductive thematic coding process steps for the qualitative data of the questionnaire

Steps 3 and 4: Searching for and reviewing themes

Research Questions	Sub-Questions	Searching for themes	Reviewing themes
1. What are the issues and causes of poor customer service delivery across Kiribati's public service?	Can you name other causes of the poor customer service delivery that you have noticed than those mentioned above? Name as many as you can.	Other causes of poor customer service delivery.	Other causes of poor customer service delivery.
2. How can the overall productivity of service delivery by Kiribati's public service be achieved?	In what ways has the leadership played its roles in the customer service training and delivery?	How is the leadership playing its roles in the customer service training and delivery?	Other ways in which the leadership played its roles in the customer service training and delivery?
	In what other ways can the customer service training enhance the overall productivity of Kiribati's public service?	Other ways in which the customer service training can enhance the overall productivity of Kiribati's public service?	Other ways in which the customer service training can contribute to enhancing the overall productivity of Kiribati's public service?
	In what ways has the customer service training enhanced your customer service delivery?	How has the customer service training enhanced your customer service delivery?	Other ways in which the customer service training has enhanced your customer service training?

Step 5: Defining themes

Themes	Defining themes
1. Other causes of poor customer service delivery	The main reason for this theme is to determine other causes of poor customer service delivery across the government ministries and even within the ministry participating in this study.
2. Other ways in which the leadership has played its roles in the customer service training and delivery?	From the above factors of poor customer service delivery, the leaders in that ministry have also played their roles in customer service training and delivery.
3. Other ways in which the customer service training can contribute to enhancing the overall productivity of Kiribati's public service delivery?	The customer service training has been implemented across government ministries and this has also contributed to the overall productivity of Kiribati's public service delivery.
4. Other ways in which the customer service training has enhanced your customer service delivery?	This ongoing training on customer service has contributed a lot to the enhancement of employees' customer service delivery in many ways.