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Lecturers and Administrators Perceptions of Quality Assurance in Ghanaian Public Universities

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Abstract:
The delivery of Quality Assurance and management practice in public universities in Ghana is mostly done by lecturers and administrators. Both the lecturers and administrators perceived quality assurance differently making it difficult to arrive at consensus. It is in line with this that the paper explored lectures and administrators' perceptions of quality assurance in Ghanaian public universities. The paper adopted qualitative approach. The data sources consisted of interviews with key informants and institutional policy documents. Documentary analysis was used primarily to answer the research questions about formal written QA policies, while interviews sought to build understanding of the knowledge and views of key people who developed and carried out these policies. The results show that the lecturers and the administrators from the various selected universities in the study perceived quality differently but all means the same. One fact that remains is that they are all aware of quality assurance and something that is operating in all the institutions. For instance, some perceived quality assurances as an on-going process and that changes can come as you move along and these changes are incorporated into the existing objectives of quality assurance to inform and improve practice. Others perceived quality as an institutional standard that needs to be conformed to by every individual. The study revealed that quality assurance in the various universities help in achieving quality in running academic activities thus, lecturing and provision of aids and relevant up-to-date materials for effective teaching and learning. It was concluded that quality assurance is perceived differently by both lecturers and administrators but means the same. The paper recommends that, the various universities should give adequate budgetary allocation for quality assurance programmes, and institute strong mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of quality assurance programmes. The relationships between the various stakeholders responsible for quality assurance in public universities should be strengthened to enable them work effectively and efficiently. The people should be encouraged and motivated to perform their roles to avoid any misunderstanding in the performance of their roles. Also, Government and Non-governmental organisations should give support and proper training to people in quality assurance to enable them understand issues of quality assurance practices. This will help to improve upon the quality assurance and management practices in public tertiary institutions in Ghana.

Keywords: Quality, quality assurance, distance education, management, practice

1. Introduction

In recent years, quality assurance in education has become an important factor in every country in the world (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). This is precipitated by the drastic impact from new educational paradigms, demands for accountability, socio-economic and political demands, international market competition and advances in information technology (Ahmed, 2010). In actual fact, these impacts do provide a heightened need for quality assurance in education in all countries in order to counter and face squarely such impacts.

Quality issues in education have become critical in the overall governance agenda of Ghanaian Universities. This was in response to national as well as global needs resulting from the fast-changing job market requirements.The quality of academic programmes and their delivery in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) became crucial factors in determining the competitiveness of their graduates. This was at a time when enrolment figures in Ghanaian and many African public universities had increased by 3 to 5 times compared with figures in early 1990s.

According to Safu (2005), enrolment figures in higher education institutions in Ghana grew from 11,857 in 1991/92 academic year to 63,576 in 2003/2004 academic year indicating a growth rate of 400 percent within twelve years. In the 2012/2013 academic year, the total enrolment increased to 842,587 (MoE, 2014).This phenomenon, described as a kind of massification by Mohamedbhai (2008) has serious implications for academic quality in higher education. Intense competition locally and globally, in the face of massification called for careful internal examination of the various academic processes and procedures. This was in recognition of the fact that universities and colleges are responsible for managing the academic standards and quality of their awards (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2005).

In the same vein, successive governments continue to demand that universities produce graduates that can exhibit quality performance at the work place to support the overall development plans of Ghana. Parents also continue to

look up to the universities to equip their sons and daughters with skills that will enable them to lead a life of quality on graduation. This is a major concern for academic (Lecturers) and non-academic (Administrators) in the pursuit of their respective roles to ensure quality in their performances. Indeed, the universities themselves tend to demand quality performance from both academic and non-academic staff. In the light of this, public universities in Ghana have established quality assurance units on their various campuses to monitor and supervise the quality of teaching and learning. Sequel to this, the University of Cape Coast (UCC) and other universities set up an Academic Planning and Quality Assurance Units to monitor and facilitate the various processes and procedures that would directly or indirectly affect academic standards and hence quality of graduates.

More significantly, a major concern for academic and non-academic staff in the pursuit of their respective roles is how to ensure quality in their performances. This fact emerged at two recent conferences organized, first, by the Faculty of Education, UCC in collaboration with the Monash University, Australia and, second, by the Ghana Association of University Administrators (GAUA). While the academics in the UCC-Monash conference expressed concern about challenges to quality education in relation to teaching and learning, the administrators were concerned about the quality of supervision and communication. These two cases have implications for the functions of the Academic Planning and Quality Assurance units in the universities. These implications are the need to improve the quality through the development of the strong faculty, engendering public trust and safeguarding the integrity of its academic awards as well as to ensure the developments and implementation of high quality and relevant programmes to make the demands of labour market locally and internationally and to promote the culture of Quality Assurance (QA) at all levels in the universities among others.

According to Ekhagure (2000), there are variants of the notions of quality regarding higher education provision and outcomes. Hence, there are correspondingly different quality indicators and quality assessment procedures. In view of this, every institution must have its own operational notion of quality, which will be related to its stated vision and mission, and how these are being realized (Ekhagure, 2000). Quality is therefore an extremely dynamic notion. In spite of this, quality is currently one of the key criteria for assessing the standings of Higher Education Institutions, globally.

Quality assurance units have been in existence for some time now. One wonders though how they are impacting on the performance of both academic and administrative staff in the universities. Although, some study exists that address aspects of quality assurance in Ghanaian Public Universities, these have mostly been based on quantitative methods and also skewed towards quality assurance in teaching and learning performance. Little research exist that uses qualitative methods to explore both academic staff and administrators' perspective of quality assurance in the universities. Also, how academic staff and administrators interpret the functions and benefits of the Quality Assurance Units in their Universities is not well documented. However, as stated above, since the studies made in respect are mainly in quantitative mode, the voices of those concerned with the operations of Quality Assurance are not heard. This creates a problem, a gap and embarking upon a study as envisaged would fill this gap.

2. Problem Statement

The academic autonomy of universities in Ghana has been upheld since their inception until as recently as the 1990s when concerns about the implied long-standing integrity came to a head. A number of reasons may be attributed to the perceived doubts about the hitherto iron clad preserve of universities. These include rapid growth in enrolment amidst declining budgets, proliferation of private higher educational institutions and pressure from rapidly changing labour market. According to Materu (2007), such events have combined to raise new concerns about quality in academic institutions.

One of the emerging global trends is that the competitiveness of universities to attract students and remain in business is contingent upon the calibre/competitiveness of their products on the job market. The latter hinges strongly on the quality of the academic programmes and how they are executed. The response to this new challenge globally has been phenomenal. Organisations like the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education in the UK; the European Association for Quality Assurance (EAQA) in Higher Education: Quality Assurance Programme (QAP) of Association of African Universities (AAU); and the International Network for the Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) are examples of international/regional efforts ensuring maintenance of higher academic standards. The AAU developed its QAP in the year 2000 and pledged its support to facilitate the establishment of institutional, national and sub-regional QA systems. It is therefore imperative to delve into the Quality Assurance Operations being carried out at the various Public Universities in Ghana.

3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the meanings that lecturers' and administrators' assign to the operations of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance Units in Ghanaian Public Universities. Specifically, the study addressed the following objectives:
- Explore lecturers and administrator's perception of quality.
- Explore how lecturers and administrators perceive indicators of quality performance in the university.

4. Research Questions

The following research questions have been designed to guide the research process:
- What are lecturers and administrator's perception of quality assurance?
- How do lecturers and administrators describe indicators of quality performance in the university?

5. Theoretical Underpinnings

The theoretical underpinning of this paper is McGregor's theory X and Y. This theory is deemed relevant to the study and placed it in a social context where meanings attached to notions of quality assurance have changed considerably over the years. I could have selected the total quality management (TQM) which concerns itself with the creation of an organisational system that fosters cooperation and learning for facilitating the implementation of process management practices among others as a theory for my conceptual framework but, I settled on McGregor's theory X and Y. The reason being that this theory depicts the behaviour of employees into two categories, the inherently lazy worker and the ambitious, self-motivated and self-control employee. However, in implementing quality assurance, there is the need for all concerned to be committed in achieving the goals of the quality assurance units of the public universities.

5.1. Theory X

In this theory, which has been proven counter-effective in most modern practice, management assumes employees are inherently lazy and will avoid work if they can and that they inherently dislike work. As a result of this, management believes that workers need to be closely supervised and comprehensive systems of controls developed. A hierarchical structure is needed with narrow span of control at each and every level. According to this theory, employees will show little ambition without an enticing incentive programme and will avoid responsibility whenever they can. According to Michael J. Papa, if the organizational goals are to be met, theory X managers rely heavily on threat and coercion to gain their employees' compliance. Beliefs of this theory lead to mistrust, highly restrictive supervision, and a punitive atmosphere. The Theory X manager tends to believe that everything must end in blaming someone. He or she thinks all prospective employees are only out for themselves. Usually, these managers feel the sole purpose of the employee's interest in the job is money. They will blame the person first in most situations, without questioning whether it may be the system, policy, or lack of training that deserves the blame. A Theory X manager believes that his or her employees do not really want to work, that they would rather avoid responsibility and that it is the manager's job to structure the work and energize the employee. One major flaw of this management style is that, it is much more likely to cause diseconomies of scale in large businesses.

5.2. Theory Y

In this theory, management assumes employees may be ambitious and self-motivated and exercise self-control. It is believed that employees enjoy their mental and physical work duties. According to them work is as natural as play. They possess the ability for creative problem solving, but their talents are underused in most organizations. Given the proper conditions, theory Y managers believe that employees will learn to seek out and accept responsibility and to exercise self-control and self-direction in accomplishing objectives to which they are committed. A Theory Y manager believes that, given the right conditions, most people will want to do well at work. They believe that the satisfaction of doing a good job is a strong motivation.

Many people interpret Theory Y as a positive set of beliefs about workers. A close reading of the human side of enterprise reveals that McGregor simply argues for managers to be open to a more positive view of workers and the possibilities that this creates. He thinks that Theory Y managers are more likely than Theory X managers to develop the climate of trust with employees that is required for human resource development. It is human resource development that is a crucial aspect of any organization. This would include managers communicating openly with subordinates, minimizing the difference between superior-subordinate relationships, creating a comfortable environment in which subordinates can develop and use their abilities. This climate would include the sharing of decision making so that subordinates have say in decisions that influence them.

Theory X and Theory Y relates to Maslow's hierarchy of needs in how human behaviour and motivation is the main priority in the workplace in order to maximize output. In relations to Theory Y the organization is trying to create the most symbiotic relationship between the managers and workers which relates to Maslow's hierarchy of needs of Self-Actualization and Esteem. For Self-Actualization the manager needs to promote the optimum workplace through morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, and acceptance of facts. It can relate to esteem when the manager is trying to promote self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, and respect by others.

6. Literature Review

6.1. Concept of Quality

Quality is a much-debated term. To some it is likely beauty that lies in the eye of the beholder. Those who believe in this are 'relativist', whereas those who believe quality can be specific attributes that can be identified, they are 'objectivist'. The word quality comes from the Latin word quails meaning 'what kind of'. With a variety of meanings and connotations, it has been referred to as a 'slippery concept' (Pfeffer & Coote, 1991). To illustrate the slippery and elusive nature of quality and the confusion associated with it many authors (Nigvekar, 1996; Warren et al., 1994; Sallis, 1996) have referred to the highly cited words of Pirsig (1974).

> Quality … you know what it is, yet you don't know what it is. But that's self-contradictory. But some things are better than others, that is, they have more quality. But when you try to say what the quality is apart from the things that have it, it all goes poof. There's nothing to talk about it. But if you can't say what quality is how do you know what it is, or how do you know that it even exists? If no one knows what it is, then for all practical purposes,

it doesn't exist at all. But for all practical purpose it really does exist… so round and round you go, spinning mental wheels and nowhere finding anyplace to get traction. What the hell is Quality? What is it? (p.171).

This implies that quality means different things to different people. In contributing to this elusive description of quality in higher education, Freeland (1991) explained that stakeholders describe quality in higher education as ambiguous with less precise features even though it is inherent. Stakeholders identify quality with excellence, fitness for a particular purpose, promotion of set targets or goals fulfilment of market and adjustment to global expectations. Bogue (1998) explained that depending on the context in which one looks at quality in higher education, quality may be measurable based on individual judgment, institutional judgment, peer judgment and labour market assessment. This view provides relative or subjective description as to what is quality in higher education.

Bogue (1998) further reinforces the description of quality given by Freeland (1991) and put quality into five categories that; there is quality in Higher Education if the products of Higher Education conform to the specifications set out by stakeholders; there is quality in Higher Education if the products of Higher Education are fit for use by the client of Higher Education; there is quality in Higher Education if, tertiary institutions achieve their missions and goals over a period of time; there is quality in Higher Education if there is continuous improvement in previous standards; and there is quality in Higher Education if tertiary education programmes and goals are reliable, durable and conform to environmental needs.

6.2. Defining Quality

The British standard institution (BSI) defines quality as "the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs' (BSI, 1991). According to Harvey and Green (1993) quality in higher education is described as relative, multidimensional and a contextually determined concept. They further identified three (3) key element of quality in higher education. Fitness for purpose which relates to a particular goal within the national framework for higher education, Value for money which is in relation to how effective and efficient higher education is provided and not necessarily about the cost, and Transformation related to how higher education attainment develops the capabilities of individuals for personal enrichment and contributes to socio-economic development.

From the perspective of Harvey and Green (1993) the products of higher education should experience improvement in their knowledge base and be able to contribute to the national agenda, it is only then that quality can be associated with higher education. Sustaining the stakeholders' views of quality, Harvey and Green (1993) went further and identified five discrete but interrelated ways of thinking about quality. Harvey and Green (1993) identified five different approaches to defining quality: in terms of exceptional (exceeding high standards and passing a required standard); in terms of consistency (exhibited through "zero defects" and getting right the first time", making quality a culture); as fitness for purpose (meaning the product or service meets the stated purpose, customer specifications and satisfaction); as value for money (through efficiency and effectiveness); and as transformative (in terms of qualitative change).

These different notions of quality have led Reeves and Bedner (1994) to conclude "… the search for a universal definition of quality and a statement of law like relationship has been unsuccessful". According to Gummesson (1990) it might be useful to create an insight into the many dimensions that form a fuzzy entity referred to as quality through social consensus rather than defining it. Garvin (1988) classified the various definitions of quality into five major groups:

- Transcendent definitions: these definitions are subjective and personal. They are eternal but go beyond measurement and logical description. They are related to concepts such as beauty and love.
- Product-based definitions. Quality is seen as a measurable variable. The basis for measurement is objective attributes of the product.
- User-based definitions. Quality is a means for customer satisfaction. This makes these definitions individual and partly subjective.
- Manufacturing-based definitions. Quality is seen as conformance to requirement and specifications.
- Value-based definitions. These definitions define quality in relation to cost. Quality is seen as providing value for costs (Lagrosen, Seyed-Hashemi & Leitner, 2004).

De Weert (1990) considers that historical and socio-political factors play key roles in defining the quality of higher education. Moreover, the quality of higher education is defined externally rather than internally (De Weert, 1990). According to Bers (2008), the quality of higher education is defined by the learning outcomes of students. The institutions should develop assessments for students' learning outcomes to meet their mission and goals. As De Weert (1990) states, quality can be defined by accomplishing institutional goals. Clark (1997) analyzes the problem that can emerge as a result of ongoing institutional quality development. The institutions will face issues such as expansion of the student body, the offering of new courses, the establishment of new programmes and how to find both financial and academic resources (Clark, 1997).

In their research Patrick and Stanley (1998) state that the measures of quality in higher education are based on teaching and research indicators. They define the quality assurance as encompassing the policies, the systems and the process oriented toward the improvement of teaching and learning in higher education institutions. Quality has a few central ideas around which the whole concept revolves: quality as absolute, quality as relative, quality as a process and quality as culture.

When we consider quality as absolute, it is given and considered as the highest possible standard. For example, the picture of 'Mona Lisa' by Da Vinci, the Egyptian Pyramids and the Taj Mahal are works of high standards and quality. In product terms, they are attached with high brand values, status and positional advantages. Educational institutions such as Oxford, Cambridge and Stand ford in the west have this absolute quality standard, though in the case of education it might

still be perceptual. Quality as relative suggests that the quality of a product or service can be described in relative terms. Quality here can be measured in terms of certain specifications. According to Mukhopadhyay (2005), the adherence to 'product specifications is actually the minimum conditions for quality, but not the sufficient condition. The sufficient condition is customer satisfaction and beyond' (p.19). Quality as a process suggests that in order to achieve quality of a product or service, it must undergo certain processes and conform to the procedural requirements. Thus, quality is the outcome of systems and procedures laid down for the purpose. The last one quality as a culture recognizes the importance of organizational view of quality as a process of transformation, where each entity is concerned and acknowledges the importance of quality. In educational institutions we are particularly concerned with the latter, though all other ideas of quality too have their respective places. Subsuming a wide range of discussions, Barnett (1992) quotes a suggestive definition by Barrow (1991) to define quality in higher education:

> ...a high evaluation accorded to an educative process, where it has been demonstrated that, through the process, the students' educational development has been enhanced not only have they achieved the particular objectives set for the course but in doing so they also fulfilled the general educational aims of autonomy of the ability to participate in reasoned discourse, of critical self-evaluation and of coming to a proper awareness of the ultimate contingency of all thought and action (p. 61).

From the above discussions, you will realize that the concept of quality is amorphous and contextual. It ranges from meaning standard to excellence. Standards can be defined in terms of a minimum "threshold by which performance is judged" (Ashcroft & Foreman-Peck, 1996, p.21). In this context, quality is assessment in terms of a set of norm-referenced standards that are built around what is expected at the minimum and beyond. At the other end of the continuum is the consideration of quality as excellence. Excellence is a performance stage of exclusiveness that is distinct from many others and stands out as demonstration of zero defect and highest level of satisfaction of the stakeholders. In higher education, the objective is to achieve the standard and move towards excellence.

Quality is a multi-dimensional concept, with no commonly accepted definition but generally measuring the level of realization of set standards or targets. Quality has become an essential intrinsic factor in institutional processes, including those of higher education. The related concept of quality assurancehas also become globally important in higher education discussions. More attention is being paid today to the issue of quality assurance in higher education than ever before. This is not surprising as stakeholders in higher education are now aware of the fundamental and global importance of quality and quality assurance in higher education. Stakeholders who are interested in quality assurance include

- The students, who are the primary recipients of higher education and who the quality of training they get defines their potential performance in later life;
- Parents, who often pay for the studies of their wards and consequently demand value-for-money education for them; governments that demand accountability from their higher education institutions,
- The employer who demands well trained graduates with competences to effectively operate in the 21st century,
- The institutions themselves, cognizant of the keen competitiveness in the global higher educational system, and the society that benefits or suffers the effect of good or poor-quality education. Therefore, quality issues have taken the centre stage in global higher education.

6.3. Concept of Quality Assurance

Quality, as a concept, has been defined differently by different stakeholders. This is because it is multi-dimensional and mean different thing to different stakeholders. Also, different countries may tend to define these terms differently. This document adopts the following definitions of quality, quality assurance, accreditation, and licensing from Materu (2007). Quality technically refers to "fitness for purpose". It encapsulates the concept of meeting commonly agreed precepts or standards. Such standards may be defined by law, an institution, a coordinating body or a professional society. In the diverse arena of higher education, fitness for purpose varies tremendously by field and programme. A broad range of factors affect quality in tertiary institutions including their vision and goals, the talent and expertise of the teaching staff, admission and assessment standards, the teaching and learning environment, the employability of its graduates (relevance to the labour market), the quality of the library and laboratories, management effectiveness, governance and leadership.

Quality as surance is a planned and systematic review process of an institution or programme to determine whether or not acceptable standards of education, scholarship, and infrastructure are being met, maintained and enhanced. A tertiary institution is only as good as the quality of its teaching staff. They are the heart of the institution in collaboration with the administrators and management that produces its graduates, its research products, and its service to the institution, community, and nation.

6.4. Accreditation as a Process of Quality Assurance

In order to meet the standard for quality assurance, an educational institution will have to go through the process of accreditation, audit, and licensing.

Accreditation is a process of self-study and external quality review used in higher education to scrutinize an institution and/or its programmes for quality standards and need for quality improvement. The process is designed to determine whether or not an institution has met or exceeded the published standards (set by an external body such as a government, national quality assurance agency, or a professional association) for accreditation, and whether it is achieving its mission and stated purpose. The process usually includes a self-evaluation, peer review and a site visit. Success results in the accreditation of a programme or an institution.

Audit is a process of review of an institution or programme to determine if its curriculum, staff, and infrastructure meet its stated aims and objectives. It is an evaluation of an institution or its programmes in relation to its own mission, goals, and stated standards. The assessors are looking primarily at the success of the institution in achieving its own goals. An audit focuses on accountability of institutions and programmes and usually involves a self-study, peer review and a site visit. Such an evaluation can be self-managed or conducted by external body. The key differences between an audit and accreditation is that the latter focuses on standards external to the institution, usually national and an assessment of the institution in terms of those standards. Audits focus on an institution's own standards and goals and its success in attaining them.

Licensing is a process for granting a new institution or programme permission to launch its activities. It is sometimes a phased process whereby an institution goes through various stages before been granted a full license. In Tanzania, for example, applications to set up new institutions go through four licensing stages, each with specific requirements: letter of interim authority; certificate of provisional registration; certificate of full registration; and finally, certificate of accreditation.

6.5. Academic Administrator's Roles in Public Universities

Successful operation of an educational institution requires competent administrators. Education administrators provide instructional leadership and manage the day-to-day activities in schools, preschools, day care centers and colleges and universities. They also direct the educational programmes of business, correctional institutions, museums and job training and community service organizations.

Education administrators set educational standards and goals and establish the policies and procedures required to achieve them. They also supervise managers, support staff, teachers, counsellors, librarian, coaches and other employees. They develop academic programmes, monitor students' educational progress, train and motivate teachers and other staff, manage career counselling and other students' services, administer record keeping, prepare budgets and perform many other duties. They also handle relations with parents, prospective and current students, employers, and the community. In a smaller organization such as a small day care center, one administrator may handle all these functions. In universities or large school systems, responsibilities are divided among many administrators, each with a specific function.

An academic administration is a branch of university or college employees responsible for the maintenance and supervision of the institution and separate from the faculty or academics, although some personnel may have joint responsibilities. Some type of separate administrative structure exists at almost all academic institutions, as fewer and fewer schools are governed by employees who are also involved in academic or scholarly work. Many administrators are academics with advanced degrees who no longer teach or conduct research actively. Key administrative responsibilities (and thus administrative units) in academic institutions include:

- Admissions
- Supervision of academic affairs such as hiring, promotion, tenure, and evaluation (with faculty input where appropriate);
- Maintenance of official records (typically supervised by a registrar in the US - In the UK the Registrar is in charge of all non-academic matters);
- Maintenance and audit of financial flows and records;
- Oversight of student life and activities, such as religious or cultural groups, career centers and public service centers.
- Library and archive management (by librarians and archivists);
- Maintenance and construction of campus buildings (the physical plant);
- Maintenance of the campus grounds;
- Safety and security of people and property on the campus (often organized as an office of public safety or campus police);
- Supervision and support of campus computers and network (information technology).
- Fundraising from private individuals and foundations ('development' or 'advancement')
- Research administration (including grants and contract administration, and institutional compliance with federal and state regulations)
- Public affairs (including relations with the media, the community, and local, state, and federal governments)

6.6. Contextualizing Quality Assurance in Ghana

Ghana, a West African country with a population of about 24 million, has 34 universities composed of 7 public and 27 private universities. Ghana has two agencies responsible for higher education, the National Council for Tertiary Education and the National Accreditation Board. The latter has the vision "ensuring high standards in higher education" and was established following the enactment of National Accreditation Board Law, 1993 (PNDCL 317) as a public service institution with the responsibility for the accreditation of programmes and institutions in the country. It was established "to contribute to the furtherance of the better management of tertiary education as the Quality Assurance Body". Its principal functions include:

- Accrediting both public and private (tertiary) institutions with regard to the contents and standards of their programmes.
- Determining in consultation with the appropriate institution or body, the programme and requirements for the proper operation of that institution and the maintenance of acceptable levels of academic or professional standard,
- Determining the equivalences of diplomas, certificates and other qualifications awarded by institutions in Ghana or elsewhere.

The Board defines accreditation as a system of according recognition to an educational institution for meeting satisfactory standards in performance, integrity and quality. The institution among other things, must have well-qualified staff in adequate numbers, a well-equipped and well-stocked library, adequate number of classrooms, lecture theatres, laboratories, workshops, with the requisite equipment, and adequate and reliable sources of funding.

The board is mandated to accredit all post-secondary institutions of higher or further learning, or professional studies that provide advanced academic and/or professional instruction and conduct research in the sciences, social sciences, humanities and career-focused programmes. The institutions include universities, university colleges, polytechnics, colleges, schools, institutions, academies, or tutorial colleges. Such institutions may be public or private. The Institutions to be accredited by NAB are those that have demonstrated their commitment to the maintenance of acceptable standards and have benefited from advice offered by assessors selected by NAB. The Board is empowered to set up committees and sub-committees with respect to; Institutional accreditation; Programmes accreditation; Monitoring and supervisory roles to ensure the maintenance of accepted standards and available of facilities.

The board assesses the institutions through the administration of questionnaires at the two levels of institutional and programme accreditation. The information derived from the questionnaires is used as basis for the assessment of an institution and its programmes. As part of the initial preparation for institutional accreditation, a sub-committee of the Board visits the institution for initial assessment. In case of programme assessment, a panel of assessors in specified areas is commissioned to assess the programmes. These experts are chosen from the academia (peers), professional association/bodies and individuals in practice.

6.7. Summary

Quality assurance is very important for higher education institutions in the 21st century and in Ghana, NAB accredits all higher education institutions in the country. Harmonization of quality assurance practices is essential for the growth of quality assurance in African universities. Therefore, building of human capacities in the area of quality assurance is crucial both in ensuring quality and achieving harmonization of quality assurance practices.

What can be seen in the foregoing reviews are various attempts to ensure quality assurance in education. A critical aspect observed in the literature review reveals that structures, policies and efforts are being put in place, but as to whether lecturers and administrators are using the structures and policies to achieve quality or otherwise is another issue which this study would seek to unravel.

7. Methodology

The purpose of the study is to explore the meaning that lecturers and administrators assign to activities of the academic planning and quality assurance units in their universities. Many researches have been conducted to ascertain whether quality is being provided in Africa and Ghana, most of which were done with the quantitative approach, but less research exists in the qualitative research, hence my interest and desire to go beyond numbers to use a qualitative method to seek a deeper truth.

My concern is not what goes on in the universities presently as to whether they are meeting the quality of education or not but to investigate the lived experiences of the participants who were selected for the study. Since the study looked at quality assurance operations in the various universities. The purpose of the study was to explore the meaning that lecturers and administrators assign to activities of the academic planning and quality assurance units in their universities.

7.1. Research Design

The design for the study was within the qualitative paradigm. Specifically, it is located within the phenomenology approach because the intention was to understand how lecturers and administrators perceive the phenomenon of quality assurance within the context of the operations of the quality assurance units of Ghanaian public universities. According to Creswell (2009), there are three types of research designs which are qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Each design has its own philosophical worldview, strategy of enquiry and the methods or procedures.

Qualitative research was adopted for this study and reason being that, it is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participants setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure. Those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honours an inductive style, and a focus on individual meaning and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation (Creswell, 2007).

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) describe qualitative research as "multimethod in focus involving an interpretive naturalistic approach to its subject matter... qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to

make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 2).

7.2. Phenomenology

There are many other qualitative research designs described in the literature. They come from different theoretical traditions and disciplines and some are extensions of the more popular ethnographic and phenomenological designs. Phenomenology answers the question: "what is it like to have a certain experience?" It seeks to understand the phenomenon of a lived experience- this may be related to an emotion, such as loneliness or depression, to a relationship, or to being part of an organization or group. The assumption behind phenomenology is that there is an essence to shared experience. It comes from the social sciences and requires the researcher to enter into an individual's life world and use the self to interpret the individuals or groups experience.

As a school of thought within the interpretive tradition, phenomenology has its roots in the works of philosophers such as Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Paul Sartre (1988) amongst others. Crotty (2005, p.51) defines phenomenology as a study that seeks to describe the meaning of the lived experiences of several individuals about a concept and explores the structures of consciousness that underlie human experience. Valle et al. (1989) observe that phenomenology's emphasis is on the world as lived by a person and not the world or reality as something separate from the person. Similarly, Fisher (2000) asserts that 'phenomenology undertakes the descriptive analysis of lived experiences, in particular of the essential structures of the experience' (p.20). Thus, phenomenology shares an interest in descriptions by placing primacy on the person undergoing the experience, with questions such as 'what is this experience like' for those experiencing the phenomenon.

Phenomenology, according to Stanley and Wise (1993), is concerned with the study of experience from the perspective of the individual. Epistemologically, the writers explain that phenomenological approaches are based in a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasize the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. In keeping with other approaches in qualitative research, the study aims to understand the case in depth, and in its natural setting, recognizing its complexity and its context. It also has a holistic focus, aiming to preserve and understand the wholeness and unity of the study. Therefore, the study is more a strategy than a method (Punch, 1998).

7.3. Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study was conducted in the three oldest public universities in Ghana, University of Ghana (UG), Legon-Accra, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi and University of Cape Coast (UCC), Cape Coast. The University of Ghana (UG), Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and University of Cape Coast (UCC) were purposively sampled because they are the three oldest universities in the country and had information on rich cases. A purposive sampling approach was used in the selection of twelve (12) participants. It comprised three (3) Directors, three (3) Administrators (Deputy Registrars in charge of Academics) and two (2) Lecturers from each of the three oldest Universities. The reason was to engage people who have the experiences or are experiencing QA in the Universities. In the case of the lecturers, the paper used judgmental sampling in selecting lecturers who have taught more than ten (10) years in their respective Universities.

In phenomenology, the sample size is less important than the richness of the information obtained from the participants (Creswell, 1998, 2003; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 2002; Patton, 2002). The depth of the information from each participant is more important than the number of participants since the intent of my study is not to generalise the findings to the entire population.

7.4. Research Instrumentation

Qualitative research, according to Crossley and Vulliamy (1997), lends itself to methods such as interviews, observations and documentary analysis. In this context and considering the research questions data were collected through interviews and documentary analysis. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) define interview as a "proposed conversation usually between two people but sometimes involving more that is directed by the one in order to get information from the other" (p.103). Although many interviews would turn out to be unproblematic, there are potential difficulties, problems and pitfalls that can arise. Some of these potential difficulties as stated by Myers and Newman (2007) are artificiality of the interview, lack of trust, lack of time, level of entry, elite bias etc.

Document analysis is something that happened concurrently with interviews as they provided the basis for refining interview questions. One should note the richness of documentary data for social research. The approach to document analysis defers to the point that "all documentary sources are the result of human activity, produced on the basis of certain ideas, theories or commonly accepted, taken-for-granted principles, and these are always located within the constraints of particular social, historical or administrative conditions and structures (Macdonald & Tipton, 1996; Finnegan, 1996). Discourse analysts point out that meaning varies according to social and institutional setting. Therefore, documents studied in isolation from their social context are deprived of their real meaning. Thus, an understanding of the social production and context of the document affects its interpretation. Similar considerations apply also to the social production of an archive: what is kept, where and for how long, and what is thrown away (Macdonald & Tipton, 1996:189; Punch, 1998:231).

7.5. Ethical Considerations

Notwithstanding all the main ethical issues in human subject research, there are three primary ethical principles that are traditionally cited when discussing ethical concerns in human subject research. These principles are available in

Belmont Report, written by The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioural Research in 1979.

The first ethical principle cited by the influential Belmont Report, is autonomy, which refers to the obligation on the part of the investigator to respect each participant as a person capable of making an informed decision regarding participation in the research study. The investigator must ensure that the participant has received a full disclosure of the nature of the study, the risks, benefits and alternatives, with an extended opportunity to ask questions. This principle of autonomy finds expression in the informed consent document.

The second ethical principle is beneficence, which refers to the obligation on the part of the investigator to attempt to maximize benefits for the individual participants and/or society, while minimizing risk of harm to the individual. An honest and thorough risk/benefit calculation must be performed.

The third ethical principle invoked in research is justice, which demands equitable selection of participants that is, avoiding participants' populations that may be unfairly coerced into participating, such as prisoners and institutionalised children. These principles of justice also require equality and distribution of benefit and burden among the population, group(s) likely to benefit from the research.

As Punch (2000) asserts, all social research involves consent, access and associated ethical issues, since it is based on data from people about people. Interviews of participants met the general protocols and procedures for interviewing and oral history (Douglas, Roberts & Thompson (1988)). The proposed study was ensured that informed consent is obtained from participants. They may need full information about the research including the reasons they have been chosen to participate. Participants' privacy, confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed. Consent forms and a covering letter was provided. Similarly, the university being used for the case study gave permission for access to archival material and documents useful to the study. The University was assured that findings will be used appropriately, as in their reporting and dissemination.

7.6. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection comprised documents (school magazines, bulletins, newsletters, policy statements) and responses in interviews. There are three types of interviews which are structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Out of the three, the semi-structured interview was conducted. The justification for selecting semi-structured interview was that semi-structured interview is the type of interview that tries to take best of both approaches, while minimizing the risks. It gives the interviewer the opportunity to add important insights as they arise during the course of conversation, while your prepared questions provide some focus as well (Myers, 2009). "The use of semi-structured interviews has become the principal means by which researchers have sought to achieve the active involvement of their respondents in the construction of data about their lives" (Graham, quoted in Reinharz, 1992:18).

7.7. Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed and read through them several times, identified major categories emerging from each transcript within the context of the research questions and finally identified major themes to guide discussions. The initial analysis involved noting patterns and consistencies in the subjective data, while also observing similarities and differences between individual narratives.

A further stage involves getting the participants to comment on the reading of their data in a subsequent interview. Hence the data becomes available for comment and reinterpretation (Middleton, 1993) which provides an understanding of the participants' culture as "multi-voiced dialogue" (Quartz, 1992a, p.190). In this instance, oral and other personal information are woven into the main narrative text of the project (Quartz, 1992).The Miles and Hubermann (1998) framework for qualitative data analysis was used which is consistent with the interpretivist approach. This approach offers a systematic approach to collecting, organising and analysing data from the respondents. The three components of this approach which occurred concurrently throughout the data analysis are data reduction, and "data display, which rests mainly on the operations of coding and memoing and drawing and verifying conclusions which assist in developing propositions. Initial coding that involves "putting tags, names or labels against the pieces of data" is referred to as "descriptive" codes. The systematic and constant making of comparisons is therefore essential to conceptual development at all levels in the analysis of qualitative data. The aim was to create narrative into which are woven the life experiences of lecturers and administrators and their experience of university life in quality assurance.

8. Results and Discussions

This section is concerned with the presentation and discussion of the results of the data that were collected in order to provide answers to the research questions. Particular attention is given to the various perspectives of quality assurance unit operations in Ghanaian public universities. First, the section explores lecturers and administrators understanding of quality followed by the discussion of how lecturers and administrators view the performance-related benefits associated with Quality Assurance Units in their universities.

8.1. Lecturers and Administrators Perception of Quality

Quality Assurance and management practice has become the most effective tool to mitigate and enhance the challenges pose to quality delivery of education in higher educational institutions in Ghana. However, there are no enough research findings to catalogue the quality assurance practices of all tertiary institutions to ensure that stakeholders maintain legitimacy with the labour market, National Accreditation Board, and professional bodies. Ensuring quality

assurance practices in higher education institutions has therefore, been a major concern for educationist, governments, policy makers, and quality practitioners over the years. Internationally and nationally, there is continuing debate as to what constitute quality assurance, proper role and forms of quality assurance in higher education.

The researcher sought to gain deeper understanding of lecturers and administrators' perception of quality assurance directorate in the various selected universities in Ghana. The researcher interviewed the respondents in this study from University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and University of Cape Coast. From the interviews, one of the respondents gave the following:

Well, we want to ensure that we are following the processes we have set for ourselves in the various universities. We want to ensure that the minimum quality that we expect in our operations, and when I say our operations, I mean teaching, learning, research and support services that enable these activities to go on successfully. What the minimum standard that we have set for ourselves we want to ensure that we achieve them as an institution. I think this should form part of our quality assurance.

Another respondent gave the following narratives on the perception of quality and the meaning of quality.

Quality in terms of teaching learning is improvement in teaching and learning. In fact, if one has the necessary resources to improve teaching and learning, then we can say that there is quality in teaching and learning. If the necessary resources are available.

In a related interview, the researcher sought to find out from the respondent how far the quality assurance directorate set out objectives and how the objectives have been achieved. The respondent noted that:

I will say that Quality Assurance is a process; it is not an event so as we go on, we continue improving and quality assurance only means improving so we can never say we have attained our goals. We continue trying to improve with the changing terms. So as the times are changing, people's thought are changing, we continue to improve towards what we ourselves are coming up with. So, it is a process not just an event so we do not just achieve this in a short period. We continue improving upon whatever we are achieving.

A respondent in a related interview had this to say:

Quality for me simply means the best part of an issue. When it comes to teaching and learning, like I said quality is the best part of an issue. When it comes to teaching and learning we expect or we are referring to the best part of one's output. Talking about the teacher or lecturer's output and that basically measured by the responses of the students through their performance. In my opinion the quality assurance unit is very useful. Because in addition to the university system quality assurance unit from time to time come in to remind us of things that we should do and they monitor. It makes meaning we really love it.

Another respondent was of the view that quality assurance is a requirement by NAB for any university to have a functioning quality assurance unit. From this discussion, we need to appreciate the fact that with globalization, there is both internal and external quality assurance and this has been integrated in tertiary educational system in Ghana with the establishment of the National Accreditation Board which imposes on tertiary institutions to establish quality assurance units to ensure quality which is subject to peer review by other institutions and confirmation visits by the National Accreditation Board. The respondent gave the following narrative:

Well from what I said, I cannot really tell whether there was an urgent need to establish quality assurance unit, but I think that once the university has certain goals and objectives and they want to make a kind of name for themselves, they need to have some kind of office that will be checking on some of these things and the quality assurance unit does something like that. So, it is very important. I was not here from the initial point but reading some of the documents like what the NAB requires, I believe that is what made them to establish one. They said that the quality assurance unit should be the unit that will inculcate the culture of quality within the university system and also ensure that the university's aims and objectives are being achieved.

The response above clearly indicate that the lecturers and the administrators from the various selected universities in the study perceived quality differently but all means the same. One fact that remains is that they are all aware of quality assurance and something that is operating in all the institutions. For instance, some perceived quality assurances as an on-going process and that changes can come as you move along and these changes are incorporated into the existing objectives of quality assurance to inform and improve practice. Others perceived quality as an institutional standard that needs to be conformed to by every individual.

Despite the lack of consensus over the concept of quality from the various scholars and the narratives so far, formal quality assurance has now become one of the central components of reform and policy instruments to be adopted by higher education institutions to the increasing expectations from both internal and external stakeholders all over the world. As Reichert (2008) puts it, quality assurance is so widespread and its vocabulary so pervasive nowadays in higher education policy and discourse that one forgets how relatively recent the enthronement of the term "quality" actually is. The quality revolution in higher education has underscored the expectation that universities must demonstrate that they are providing quality education and strives to improve it (Anderson, 2006).

Bogue's (1998) view that depending on the context in which one looks at quality in higher education, quality may be measurable based on individual judgment, institutional judgment, peer judgment and labour market assessment, supported the findings of this study. This view provides relative or subjective description as to what is quality in higher education.

Kapur and Crowley's (2008) findings supported this when they contended that quality in higher education is a dynamic concept which implies what is quality yesterday may not be quality today until some improvements are made. This makes quality in Higher Education a continuous process of transforming and adding value to learners and the

knowledge acquired by these learners to meet specific and broader needs of the society.

The findings of the study also confirm previous studies which posit that quality has discretional description depending on the stakeholder. Materu (2007) supported this and explains that each regulatory body of tertiary institution defines what it considers as quality to assure itself that the institutions are conforming to such standards. Materu (2007) went further and defines Quality Assurance as "a planned and systematic review process of an institution or programme to determine whether or not acceptable standards of education, scholarship and infrastructure are being met, maintained and enhanced. Also, quality as "fitness for purpose" meeting or conforming to generally accepted standards as defined by an institution, quality assurance bodies and appropriate academic and professional communities. This definition provided by Materu (2007) identifies the purpose of quality in higher education and the various stakeholders of quality in higher education delivery. This definition also presupposes that quality in higher education is about conforming to both internal and external standards in which regulators of tertiary education dictates the external standards.

Mishra's (2007) finding in contributing to quality assurance in higher education is in line with the results of this study when Mishra argues that quality in higher education depends on effective transmission of knowledge and skills of content, coverage and the depth of information available for reading, teaching and for problem solving which are all enhanced by the appropriate information technology. Furthermore, he argues that in determining quality electronic libraries, electronic teaching aids and intensive application of relevant software are crucially important.

From the above discussions, we can observe that quality is a construct and its meaning is contextual and relative to the individual. As Barnett (1999) puts it, what counts, as quality is never neutral and behind it is always a tacit idea of higher education. In other words, the various arguments on what constitutes quality are rooted in the values and assumptions of the different authors about the nature, purpose and fundamental processes of higher education. As Boyle and Bowden (1997) argued, in a context of purposeful organisations and enterprises quality can only be defined in relation to articulated values, purposes, desired processes, experiences and outcomes. Since the purpose of higher education varies and changes across time and context in response to changing environments, so too should the meaning of quality. In this regard, there is a strong support for envisaging quality in terms of 'fitness for purpose' in higher education.

8.2. Opinion of Lecturers and Administrators about How Functions of Quality Assurance Units Support Their Performance Advancements

Since the introduction of the concept of quality assurance into educational management philosophy and service delivery, quality assurance conversations have evolved from an initial questioning of whether new quality assurance reforms were needed to current debates on the most effective, comprehensive and sustainable approaches to quality assurance in higher education. Opinion of lectures and administrators was sought about the functions of quality assurance units and how it supports the performance advancements.

Our functions are varied as the departments in the institutions also vary. We expect each unit of the institution to have a quality assurance unit which ensures quality in the processes of that unit. So, for instance, if you take the teaching department you must have a quality assurance unit which ensures that teaching and learning are going on according to the standards that they have set themselves. If we take a supporting unit, let say for instance, the registry, we expect that there will be a quality assurance unit there which ensures that whatever they have set themselves is moving. So, you will realize that each section must have a quality assurance process which should be in line with the mission and vision of the institution so that we are all working together but we must work individually and bring together all our activities to ensure that we achieve the mission and vision of the institution which is the university. So, it is varied.

The research went further to find out from respondent's specific roles play towards achieving quality in running academic activities thus, lecturing and provision of aids and relevant up-to-date materials for effective teaching and learning. A respondent gave the following:

Our goal is to achieve at the end of the day. For what we will do to achieve the best for our students you know that our products go out and bear testimony, ample testimony of the good things we did here. The first thing we do is supervision. We from the Dean's outfit and from my own outfit, once a while we pop in to see what lecturers are doing and whatever we get we use it to make decision. We actually articulate the results we get into platform where we meet lecturers to discuss some of the shortfalls or some of the observations we made.

Another respondent was quick to add to the discussion. The respondent brought to the notice of the study that there is a quality assurance handbook in which a number of functions of the quality assurance directorate performs. The respondent made reference to the quality assurance handbook and noted that:

In our quality assurance document we say the functions are to monitor and ensure quality in the university's operations, coordinate the activities on all or of all campus quality assurance offices, organise regular training sessions for campus quality assurance office, supervise the quality assurance units in the performance of quality assurance work, ensure that the use of assessment instruments for the university's operations are adhered to, monitor the review of the university's policy documents, submit report on the directorate to the quality assurance committee and develop external quality process.

A respondent added this to the discussion:

We need to improve the quality of the quality assurance programme. I tell you what we do, we go round to give seminars to equip up our staff knowledge. On a number of times I have told people that the quality assurance unit is not a policing unit, we do not police. We do not come to arrest anybody or prosecute. No, we do not do that. We go round giving seminars, advising, educating them on what they can do with the resources they have. That is

what we do.

To consolidate the results of the study, the response from one of the respondents was added to the on-going discussion. The respondent noted that:

At least for this unit, we look at the academic side mostly. We do regular checks on the teaching output. That is one thing that we do always apart from that sometimes the university management may give us some add-up assignments to do. For instance, once we had to conduct a survey to find out whether students were really benefiting from sandwich programmes. For the academic side what we do is that within the semester we send out appraisal forms to both lecturers and students. The students evaluate the teaching and the course that they take. Thus, lecturers and the lecturers also comment on students' attitudes towards learning.

More information was sought from the respondents concerning the functions of the quality assurance units to support their enhancement performance. The respondent retorted that:

Well for this university, some of the functions are kind of decentralized. For instance, we have the planning unit; they also do a lot of quality assurance work. Most of the time when NAB visits the university we go with the planning unit. They give us the statistics of graduates that churn out and occasionally, they also do surveys to do studies to find out if our graduates are really employed and where they find themselves. We also have other units like the Audit Unit. So, our concentration is mainly on the academic and it is through this evaluation things that we do.

A respondent added this to the discussion.

Oh, we have to ensure that teaching aids or teaching learning materials are provided. We have to ensure that we have the best of teachers. Whenever some teachers those that are prepared … you know everybody can be a teacher but it is up to you to go and prepare. We need to ensure that a set of curricula is available, facilities in place, for example these days ICT centers.

The study revealed that quality assurance in the various universities help in achieving quality in running academic activities thus, lecturing and provision of aids and relevant up-to-date materials for effective teaching and learning. The results of the study are in line with the findings of Yorke (1997) and Blackmore (2004). The argument of Yorke (1997) that in higher education, quality assessment, quality assurance, and quality managements have been used simultaneously, is seen in this study. He further explained that quality assessment in higher education focuses on the internal environment, which has been done already whiles quality assurance focuses on the present internal and external environments with prevention of substance as the main purpose. Blackmore (2004) in contributing to the quality assurance discourse in higher education indicated that quality assurance includes planning, auditing, verification, and recording taking preventive actions and engaging in the evaluation of the process.

Putting everything together by the various authors, it is clear that one cannot discuss quality assurance in higher education without auditing and engagement in academic review. Academic review is the self-assessment and evaluation of the teaching, learning, research, service and outcomes based on defined examination of the curricula, structure, and effectiveness of a programme as well as the quality and activities of its faculty (Materu, 2007). Audit of an institution is the review to assume whether or not accountability is being achieved.

9. Conclusions

From the analysis, it was realized that there were clear quality assurance policies in the public universities in Ghana. The stakeholders were involved in curriculum design and revision, there were no adequate budgetary allocation for quality assurance programmes, and there were no mechanisms in place for monitoring and evaluation of quality assurance programmes. The findings revealed further that though, the Departments had an internal quality assurance policy in all the selected public universities, but there were no mechanisms in place for monitoring and evaluation of quality assurance programmes in the universities.

The results show that the quality assurance systems and practices in the context of Ghanaian tertiary institutions are rarely addressed. For example, there is a lack of evidence on whether student learning is significantly improving as a result of government policies focusing on the quality of higher education. Despite the progress that has been made through research and debate, there is still no universal consensus on how best to manage quality within higher education. Much of the researches conducted so far focus on how quality could be defined, on the design and relevance of various national quality assurance schemes, on appraising the applicability of industrial models to higher education, on the tension between improvement and accountability in both external and internal quality assurance approaches, and on the effects of such quality assurance processes in higher education in the context of developed countries (Harvey & Williams, 2010; Pratasavitskaya & Stensaker, 2010).

A review of the empirical research studies on quality assurance undertaken by Harvey and Williams (2010) suggests that it is not clear whether quality assurance systems have truly enhanced higher education. This shows that there is lack of universal agreement on the extent to which the adoption of quality assurance in developed countries has generated the desired improvements in the core educational processes of universities.

10. Recommendations

The paper recommends that, the various universities should give adequate budgetary allocation for quality assurance programmes, and institute strong mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of quality assurance programmes. The relationships between the various stakeholders responsible for quality assurance in public universities should be strengthened to enable them work effectively and efficiently. The people should be encouraged and motivated to perform

their roles to avoid any misunderstanding in the performance of their roles. Also, Government and Non-governmental organisations should give support and proper training to people in quality assurance to enable them understand issues of quality assurance practices. This will help to improve upon the quality assurance and management practices in public tertiary institutions in Ghana. The various stakeholders in higher education should consider further research on quality assurance in Ghanaian public universities.

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