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Evaluation of Effectiveness of Internal Quality Assurance System in Public Universities in Ghana

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Abstract

The study was to evaluate effectiveness of institutional Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) structure in Ghanaian public universities. The convergent parallel design within the mixed methods research paradigm based on the Context and Input levels of the CIPP evaluation model was adopted. A sample of 2,844 was drawn out of 125,799 staff and students of accredited public universities in Ghana. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used. Staff and students' questionnaire with Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0.81and 0.80 respectively and interview guide for administrators of IQA were used for data collection. Data were analysed using mean, standard deviation and narrative approach. The findings of the study indicated that quality assurance in the schools, colleges, faculties, departments and sections/units in public universities in Ghana was fairly effective. Students' progression were fairly effective ($\overline{X} = 14.66$, SD = 2.26); and staff progression activities were very effective ($\overline{X} = 9.63$, SD = 1.83). The study concluded that most members of the university community are not committed in ensuring the building of quality culture in public universities. It has been recommended that the university authorities should make it mandatory for every school, college, faculty, department and section/unit within the university to design and make their IQA structure more functional.

Keywords: Internal Quality Assurance, Public Universities, Effectiveness

Introduction

The rapid changes in the higher education context driven by political, economic and socio-cultural forces in the latter part of the 20th century have generated concern for quality (Becket & Brookes, 2008). Quality assurance is a systematic review of educational programmes to ensure that acceptable standards of education, scholarship and infrastructure are being maintained (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2004). Similarly, International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE, 2005) sees quality assurance as those attitudes, objects, actions and procedures, which through their existence and use ensure that appropriate academic standards are maintained and enhanced in each programme. Contained in these views of quality assurance are issues of maintenance and improvement of quality and standards, embedded in the

demands for accountability. This makes quality assurance a collective process by which university ensures that the quality of educational process is maintained to the standards it has set for itself. A quality assurance system in higher educational institution may be described as a totality of the policies, values/attitudes, procedures, structures, resources and actions devoted to ensure continuous improvement of quality of the educational processes.

Woodhouse (2004) claims that although quality itself has been discussed throughout recent higher education history, quality assurance has just become a profession moving into the 21st century, and INQAAHE has been a major part of that development. That does not mean quality assurance is a new idea in higher education management. Rather, it has now caught the attention of significant stakeholders in higher education, such as the governments, higher education institutions, industry bodies and international organisations.

Internal quality assurance systems are practices and procedures put in place within educational institutions to promote participation of all stakeholders in quality related activities to maximize its output. This is important as the institutions are able to set goals and targets, work hard to achieve them, and assess if these are being achieved. The government of Ghana established a national quality assurance agency, the National Accreditation Board (NAB), to regulate the quality of education provided by higher education institutions in Ghana. Generally, NAB's quality assurance involves both institutional and programme accreditation. As part of the requirements for a higher education institution in Ghana to have full accreditation, the institution should establish an Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) within a maximum of five years from its first partial accreditation. A well-established and functioning IQAU would, among others, heighten the level of clarity and focus on institutional functioning towards quality enhancement; facilitate the acculturation of quality within the institution through institutionalization of good practices; provide sound basis for decision making; act as a dynamic system for quality changes in the institution; and make the institution and its graduate globally competitive in programme and institutional rankings, in attracting prospective students and collaborators to the institution and in graduate placement on the job market (NAB, 2000).

With the student population growing at a faster rate than the available facilities in the majority of Ghanaian tertiary institutions, internal quality assurance is essential to ensure that the education processes within the institutions are efficient and effective. Internal quality assurance is not only becoming a policy priority for institutions, but a necessity for their existence (Bonsu & Amakyi, 2014). Internal quality assurance practices are also needed to ensure that all students who enter and leave the institutions obtain the best education within the available resources. Internationalization and globalization increase mobility of students and academics across national frontiers and it is important that the quality of an institution be recognized in another country (Mohamedbhai, 2008). When internal quality is assured, there is integral combination of quality student admission, high quality lecturing staff, and high quality programmes and resources. It is imperative therefore to ensure the relevance of programmes provided and the employability of student graduates within and outside the country.

Csizmadia (2006), in a study on the implementation of quality management in higher education institutions, applied institutional theory together with resource dependency to analyze quality management in Hungarian higher education. Csizmadia found that organizational complexity, leadership, and decision-making process influence the pace and scope of implementation of quality management in higher educational institutions. That is, the more complex the higher education institution, the slower the pace of quality management implemented. The study demonstrated the relevance of organizational theories in analyzing the practice of quality assurance in universities. Despite the progress made through research and debate on quality assurance, there is still no universal consensus on how best to manage quality within higher education (Becket & Brookes, 2008). Much of the research conducted so far focus on how quality could be defined, the design and relevance of various national quality assurance schemes, appraising the applicability of industrial models to higher education, tension between improvement and accountability in both internal and external quality assurance approaches, and the effects of such quality assurance processes in higher education in the context of developed countries (Pratasavitskaya & Stensaker, 2010).

With the rise in the number of higher educational institutions in Ghana, there is a general concern that the rapid expansion in the enrolment accompanied by inadequate resources; incompatibility of existing capacity and lack of

organizational arrangements may result in deterioration of academic quality and standards. As a response to the increasing concerns, the Ghana government established the National Accreditation Board (NAB) in 1993 with the enactment of PNDCL 317, 1993 and the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) by Act 454, 1993 to regulate quality of the education offered in higher education institutions in Ghana (NAB, 2000).

National Accreditation Board attaches great importance to institutional audit and the role of the internal quality assurance units (IQAU). IQAU is mandatory for all Institutions under NAB's mandate. If well established, the IQAU performs the role of the NAB in the respective institutions. IQAU is a unit created within an institution purposely to promote quality culture within that institution. The IQAU may undertake several functions depending on its assigned mandate by the institution and its capacity to do so.

Comprehensive evaluation models collect and report data from multiple perspectives. The Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) evaluation model reports from four parts which ask the following questions: What needs to be done? How should it be done? Is it being done? Did it succeed? (Stufflebeam, 1971). These four questions are answered through the CIPP model where context evaluations help prioritize goals, input evaluations assess different approaches, process evaluations assess the implementation of plans and product evaluations assess the outcomes (both intended and not intended). The CIPP Model offers a comprehensive way to gather and report evaluation data. This model has been used in countless educational and non-educational settings with recognizable results (Stufflebeam, 2000).

Many researchers have used the CIPP evaluation model for their study. Ghazali and Hasnida (2015) used the CIPP Model to evaluate the School-Based Assessment (SBA) in Malaysia. Zhang and Cheng (2012) employed the CIPP model to evaluate e-learning at the University of Hong Kong. The CIPP model is deemed appropriate to be used to evaluate the effectiveness of IQA system in the public universities in Ghana, as Ghana is also a member of the global university community whose quality should be recognized globally.

Statement of the Problem

Institutional self-monitoring and review is expected of all accredited higher education institutions in Ghana. The National Accreditation Board (NAB) requires all accredited higher education institutions in Ghana to establish an Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) within a maximum of five years from the date of first accreditation. Due to this requirement, Thaver (2008) argue that most accredited higher education institutions in Ghana have IQAU. Despite the existence of these IQAUs, NAB officials after their mandated periodic evaluation of higher educational institutions and their academic programmes, withdraw the accreditation of some institutions and some programmes for not meeting established standards. This often creates problems for students in these institutions and those offering such programmes.

Internal approaches to quality assurance for learning and teaching in universities have typically been based on an overly simplistic notion of quality assurance and/or a disorganised and unrelated set of elements and practices (Lee & Boyle, 2008). Empirically, however, not much research studies have been conducted on how Ghanaian universities are internally assuring quality of their programmes under the circumstances of rapid enrolment and programme expansion, and in the face of multitude of constraints including changes in student demographics. Gosling and D'Andrea (2001) observed that despite the enormous growth in national quality assurance processes, serious doubts remained about their effectiveness in achieving lasting quality improvement. This was supported by Harvey and Williams (2010) that it was not clear whether quality assurance systems had truly enhanced the quality of higher education. This suggests that there is lack of agreement on the extent to which quality assurance in education has generated the desired improvement in the core educational processes of universities.

Okae-Adjei (2012) conducted a study of the quality assurance practices of Koforidua Polytechnic (KP) in Ghana and concluded that KP has not been successful in establishing a quality culture. The study by Boateng (2014) on barriers to internal quality assurance in Ghanaian private tertiary institutions, involved 93 respondents made up of academic, administrative staff and students from four private higher educational institutions in Ghana. Failure to

link identification of quality objectives to the institutional strategic plan, lack of student involvement, poor or ineffective coordination, weaker emphasis on strategic planning and quality management as well as dominance culture not open to change and improvement were the findings of the study.

A study conducted by Seniwoliba and Yakubu (2015) on challenges to implementation of quality assurance in the University for Development Studies in Ghana, concluded that, staffing and offices; quality culture; physical and financial resources; commitment and support for quality assurance; and absence of a current policy plan, were the major observed challenges facing the implementation of quality assurance practices in the university.

Almost all the studies on quality assurance conducted in Ghana focused on the challenges and barriers to effective implementation of quality assurance. None of the studies on quality assurance in higher education in Ghana evaluated the quality assurance system to establish the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system in public universities in Ghana. This gap was what the current study set out to fill.

Research Questions

Guided by the use of Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) model, the following research questions were raised to guide the current study
1.   How effective is the internal quality assurance structure in public universities in Ghana?
2.   How effective do public universities in Ghana ensure students' progression?
3.   How effective do public universities in Ghana ensure staff progression?

Methodology

The study was an evaluation research that adopted the convergent parallel mixed methods design. In finding out the effectiveness of the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) System, the Stufflebeam's CIPP evaluation model was employed in this study. The study focused on the first two level of the model, that is, context and input.   Context evaluation focused on the Institutional QA policy and structure. The Input evaluation focused on student's entry, progression and exit policy, staff recruitment and promotion policy, programme design and approval policy, T/L facilities (Lecture halls, laboratories, libraries, ICT), research policy, and policy on community service.

The target population of 132,458 was from all public accredited universities in Ghana. This comprised administrators at the quality assurance directorate/unit, lecturers, general administrators and regular students in the 10 public universities in Ghana. The accessible population was 125,799 people made up of 120,796 regular students, 4,083 full-time academic staff, 910 general administrators and 10 administrators at the quality assurance directorate/unit.

Table 1: Distribution of Population and Sample for the Study

Stakeholders	Population	Sample Selected
Regular Students	120,796	2,560
Academic staff	4,083	200
General Administrators	910	80
Administrators at the quality assurance directorate/unit	10	4
Total	**125,799**	**2,844**

Four out of the ten public accredited universities were purposively selected. The use of purposive sampling was based on effective representation of all sectors (specialities) of the economy that public universities serve: energy, science and technology, education and wide range of programmes. All the four administrators in charge of the quality assurance directorate/unit in the four selected universities were purposively selected for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 50 lecturers from each of the four selected universities and 20

administrators from each of the selected universities. A total of 200 lecturers and 80 general administrators, and four administrators at the quality assurance directorate/unit were sampled for the study.

In selecting the students, simple random sampling technique was used to select eight departments from each selected university. A total of 32 departments was used for the study. In each selected department, 80 students were selected using the convenience sampling technique. The sample size for the study was 2844 people made up of 4 administrators of the quality assurance directorate/unit, 200 lecturers, 80 general administrators, and 2560 regular students.

Open ended interview and close ended questionnaire were used for data collection. The administrators of internal quality assurance directorates/units were interviewed, while the lecturers, administrators and regular students responded to questionnaires. The data collected was analysed by combining quantitative statistical results with qualitative narrations to better understand the views expressed by participants and to reach meaningful conclusions. Quantitative data are presented using percentages and means while narrative approach involving content analysis and quotations from respondents were used to analyse the qualitative data for the study.

Results

Research Question 1: *How effective is the internal quality assurance structure in public universities in Ghana?*

This research question was raised to assess how the actual operational structure of the IQA system in public universities in Ghana promote the quality assurance activities in the institutions. Responses from interviews with administrators of IQA directorates/units on the structure of the internal quality assurance directorate/units of public universities and responses from staff were analysed.

The public universities have a more complex IQA structure with some degree of autonomy. The structure of the IQAU of the four universities studied follow the second form of what the National Accreditation Board (NAB) proposed. According to NAB, an institution's IQAU can take the form of a more complex entity with some degree of autonomy headed by a proven reputable academic with, at least, Senior Lecturer status. NAB proposed the Head of the institution to be in-charge, followed by the Head of the IQAU, then a Coordinating body, followed by Functional areas (e.g. Admissions, Curriculum, etc.). A participant stated that:

> *The internal quality assurance directorate is headed by a director who is a professor and report to the Vice Chancellor directly. As IQAU we have five sections, a section to deal with accreditation, a section to deal with management information system, a section to deal with assessment and other sections. Every section is supposed to have a head, but at the moment only two people are doing the work of five people. This is making the IQA work difficult (ADMIN 1).*

The comment suggest that the public universities have not appointed the required number of personnel to be in charge of all the proposed sections under the IQAU, and few people are doing the work of many. This is affecting the effectiveness of the monitoring and coordination of quality activities that will bring about the needed quality culture expected in the universities. Other participants also made similar comments to support the fact that lack of personnel is making the internal quality assurance work not very effective. A participant asserted that:

> *We need a full complement of staff but we lack personnel. We have only two senior members who are in charge of all the things we have to do here, so we have a lot to do and it is difficult for us [ADMIN 2]*

Another participant indicated that:

> *There are a lot of work to be done to ensure that the IQA policy documents is fully implemented but as a monitoring and coordinating body, we need more qualified personnel to work with. Currently we are using people who are not much qualified and the national service persons to do the work (ADMIN 3)*

All the universities have a detailed QA structure in their QA policy documents, indicating roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in assuring quality in the services they provide. The IQAUs are to monitor and coordinates internal quality assurance activities for the achievement of set targets and goals in all sectors of the university. For the IQA system in the public universities to work effectively, schools, faculties, departments, sections and units in the universities are supposed to set-up IQA sub-committees. Most of these IQA sub-committees are non-functional. This is making the efforts to develop the desired quality culture in the universities difficult. A participant stated that:

> We have asked all colleges and departments in the university to set up quality committees (quality sub-unit). The only college, one out of the five, that is distance education, have establish the unit we are talking about. Even though they have established the unit, they are not living up to expectation (ADMIN 4).

Another participant indicated that:

> Faculties and departments are not setting up the IQA sub-units as expected of them. Some members of the university community see the quality assurance work in the university to be done by the few people who are working at the IQAU. This is affecting the effectiveness of assuring quality in the university (ADMIN 3).

From the comments from the IQAU administrator participants, the public universities have QA policy documents that direct the implementation of internal quality assurance in their respective institutions. There is lack of qualified personnel to help the IQAU to effectively play its role as a monitoring and coordinating unit to ensure that the desired quality is assured in the services and programmes provided by the institutions. Also, the non-functioning of IQA sub-units in the various sections in the institution is affecting the effectiveness of IQA structure to help assure quality in the institution.

In addition to the narrations from the interview with the administrators of IQAUs, other staff participants were asked to assess the effectiveness of approval, monitoring and periodic review of academic programmes which were part of IQA structure in the universities. Distribution of their responses are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Staff Assessment of Institutional QA structure

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Not Effective	11	4.3
Fairly Effective	162	63.5
Very Effective	82	32.2

Results from Table 2 show that majority of staff 162 (63.5%) perceive that the institutional structure of IQA in public universities is fairly effective, while 82 (32.2%) perceive it to be very effective. Only 11 (4.3%) of staff perceive institutional structure of IQA as not effective.

Mean and standard deviation of responses from lecturers and administrators on institutional structure of IQA were computed using the composite scores. These scores were categorised and judged as 8 – 12.0 = Not effective, 12.1 – 17.0 = fairly effective and 17.1 - 21.0 = Very effective (Boone Jr & Boone, 2012; Harwell & Gatti, 2001). The summary is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary result on Institutional QA Structure

Respondent	N	Composite Score		Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Standard Deviation
		Minimum	Maximum		
Staff	255	8	21	16.26	2.77

The mean score of ($\bar{X} = 16.26$, $SD = 2.77$) fall in the range of 12.1 – 17.0 representing fairly effective. This indicates that the staff participants for the current study were of the view that, institutional IQA structure is fairly

effective in the public universities in Ghana. This support the finding from the responses from the interview with IQAU administrators.

Research Question 2: *How effective do public universities in Ghana ensure students' progression?*

Research question two was raised to assess the effectiveness of the orientation given to students to help them know what is expected of them to enable them progress in their academic journey. Also, to assess the effectiveness of how students are assessed to help make informed decisions on their progression in their academic journey. Responses from students and staff were used. Means of the ratings were computed, categorised and judged as 6.0 – 8.0 = not effective, 8.1 – 14.0 = fairly effective, and 14.1 – 18.0 = very effective (Boone Jr & Boone, 2012; Harwell & Gatti, 2001). Distribution of stakeholders' assessment of effectiveness of orientation given to students on progression are presented in Tables 4 - 6.

Table 4: Students' Assessment of Orientation (for students)

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Not Effective	101	4.0
Fairly Effective	1468	57.7
Very Effective	976	38.3

Results from Table 4 show that 1468 (57.7%) of students view orientation given to students on their progression from one level to another as fairly effective, while 976 (38.3%) view it to be very effective. Whereas 101 (4.0%) of students were of the view that orientation across the levels was not effective.

Table 5: Staff Assessment of Orientation for students

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Not Effective	7	2.7
Fairly Effective	89	34.9
Very Effective	159	62.4

Results from Table 5 show that majority of staff 162 (62.4%) view orientation given to students as very effective, while 89 (34.9%) view it as fairly effective. On the other hand only 7(2.7%) of staff view orientation given to students as not effective.

Table 6: Summary result on Orientation for Students

Respondent	N	Composite Score		Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Standard Deviation
		Minimum	Maximum		
Students	2545	6	18	13.60	2.59
Staff	255	8	18	14.76	2.37
Overall				13.70	2.59

Results from Table 6 indicate that students ($\bar{X} = 13.6$, $SD = 2.59$) describe the orientation given to them for their progression as fairly effective, while staff ($\bar{X} = 14.76$, $SD = 2.37$) described the orientation given to students for their progression in their academic journey as very effective. Deduction from the results indicate, that the overall mean and standard deviation of $\bar{X} = 13.70$, $SD = 2.59$ meant that the general view of the participants for the study is that orientation given to students on their progression is fairly effective.

Table 7: Students' Assessment of How Students are assessed

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Not Effective	26	1.0
Fairly Effective	1154	45.4
Very Effective	1365	53.6

Results from Table 7 show that, 1365 (53.6%) of students indicated that how students' were assessed was very effective, while 1154 (45.4%) indicated that it was fairly effective. Only 26 (1.0%) indicated that it was not effective.

Table 8: Staff Assessment of How Students are assessed

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Not Effective	0	0.0
Fairly Effective	66	25.9
Very Effective	189	74.1

For the staff participants, result from table 8 indicate that majority 189 (74.1%) indicated that how students' were assessed is very effective, while 66 (25.9%) indicated that it was fairly effective.

Table 9: Summary result on how students' are assessed.

| | | Composite Score | | | Standard |
Respondent	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Deviation
Students	2545	6	18	14.55	2.27
Staff	255	10	18	15.76	1.88
Overall				14.66	2.26

Results from Table 9 indicate that both students ($\bar{X} = 14.55$, $SD = 2.27$) and staff ($\bar{X} = 15.76$, $SD = 1.88$) described how students were assessed as very effective. Deduction from the results indicate that, the overall mean and standard deviation of $\bar{X} = 14.66$, $SD = 2.26$ meant that the general view of the participants for the study was that students were assessed very effectively.

Research Question 3: *How effective do public universities in Ghana ensure staff progression?*

This research question sought to elicit from staff participants their views on activities and programmes the universities planned and organize to help them deliver on the job. Means of the ratings were computed, categorised and judged as 5.0 – 7.0 = not effective, 7.1 – 12.0 = fairly effective, and 12.1 – 15.0 = very effective for responses from items eliciting information on orientation, and 4.0 – 5.0 = not effective, 5.1 – 9.0 = fairly effective, and 9.1 – 12.0 = very effective for responses from items eliciting information on staff progression (Boone Jr & Boone, 2012; Harwell & Gatti, 2001). Distribution of staff assessment of effectiveness of orientation for staff is presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Staff Assessment of Orientation for staff

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Not Effective	19	7.5
Fairly Effective	166	65.1
Very Effective	70	27.4

Results from Table 10 show that 166 (65.1%) of staff indicated that the orientation given to them was fairly effective, while 70 (27.4%) indicated that was very effective. 19 (7.5%) indicated that it was not effective.

Table 11: Summary result on orientation of staff

| | | Composite Score | | | Standard |
Respondent	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Deviation
Staff	255	5	15	10.77	2.27

The result on Table 11 with staff ($\bar{X} = 10.77$, $SD = 2.27$), indicate that staff participants described orientation for newly recruited staff as fairly effective.

Table 12: Staff Assessment of staff progression

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Not Effective	17	6.7
Fairly Effective	77	30.2
Very Effective	161	63.1

Results from Table 12 show that 161 (63.1%) were of the view that activities planned and organized to help them in their progression was very effective, while 77 (30.2%) were of the view that it was fairly effective. 17 (6.7%) are of the view that it was not effective

Table 13: Summary result on staff progression

Respondent	N	Composite Score		Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Standard Deviation
		Minimum	Maximum		
Staff	9	5	12	9.63	1.83

The result in Table 13 shows that staff participants ($\bar{X} = 9.63$, $SD = 1.83$) perceive the in-service training and other planned activities for staff progression as very effective in public universities.

Discussion of Results

Structure of IQA system

This research evaluated the structure of the internal quality assurance of public universities. It was revealed that, the non-functional QA sub-units or QA committees at school, college, faculty, departmental and sectional levels negatively impacts on the effectiveness of assuring quality in the various public universities in Ghana. Some members of the university community perceive quality related issues as the responsibility of those working at the internal quality assurance directorate. The findings is in line with the view of Seniwoliba and Yakubu (2015) who conducted a study titled 'An analysis of the quality assurance policies in a Ghanaian University' and found that some staff view activities of IQAU with suspicion instead of seeing it as a transformative endeavour of the university demanding a collective responsibility. As a result of this perception, information on quality related matters is often viewed with some ambivalence. They argue that quality assurance is nascent and it may take time for quality culture to be built in the university.

Also, an international survey conducted by Martin and Parikh (2017) revealed that, the lack of technical support for quality assurance at decentralized levels within institutions is an obstacle to the institutionalization of quality assurance. In most responding institutions, the university leadership (head of the institution and the vice-rector) played the most important role, followed by a quality committee and a dedicated person in charge of quality assurance. Decentralized authority over quality assurance (deans and departmental committees) was, however, less frequent. This suggests that IQA is still widely perceived as a central-level responsibility, which needs to further permeate HEIs to become fully effective.

Higher educational institutions in Ghana have been observed to take the top-down management-oriented approach in dealing with quality assurance. According to Abma (2006) this top-down management-oriented approach has several flaws. First, the goals and intentions of policy makers in making judgment would lead to management bias. Second, the findings are hardly used in decision making and third, the stakeholders' experiences and expertise and dialogue with and between stakeholders are being side-lined although their interests are at stake.

As one of the administrators interviewed in this study observed "to be successful in developing a good quality culture in the university we need to encourage the bottom-up approach to quality assurance." What this means is that, if the public universities want to achieve their aim of rendering quality services to their stakeholders, they need to ensure that every unit in the university establish functional QA sub-unit or QA committee as recommended in the QA policy documents of the universities. This may bring additional cost in human capital or financial

commitment. While a high level of quality cannot be achieved with little funding, the costs related to neglecting quality must also be recognised. In the long run lack of appropriate funding for quality measures could lead to the institutional mission remaining unfulfilled. Therefore, investment in quality is seen as indispensable for higher education institutions and, in order to minimise cost, the key concern is: what can be done better, rather than what additional activities should be embarked upon

The current structure of QA assurance system in the public universities mandate the IQAU to ensure effective implementation of institutional QA policy and coordinates all QA related processes and activities in all sections in the university. This mandate seems not to be very clear to some members of the university community, thinking that it is the responsibility of some few individuals to assure quality in the institution. This calls for serious education for people to understand that assuring quality is the responsibility of all and not for a few. Some members of the university community see the staff of the IQAU as people who are in to police them. This is in line with Rauhvargers' (2004) view point that in some countries higher educational institutions have established performance-based management systems rather than improvement-oriented and learning outcomes-based quality culture. While quality of teaching as such is often mentioned, there is no notion of learning and learning outcomes in the general descriptions of the internal QA systems; suggesting there is a need to focus more on internal QA.

Staff and Students Progression

Students and staff are key players in the life of every university. Therefore, any good IQA system should needfully focus on the progression of students and staff. Research questions two and three examined the effectiveness of activities organised by the university to assure smooth progression of students and staff from one level to another. The findings revealed that activities and procedures to assure students progression is fairly effective while that of staff progression is very effective. All the required activities and processes that students and staff need to experience for smooth progression are stated in details in the various policies in the universities, but the implementation of that of students is not done as expected. This supports Anyakoha (1994) assertion that our policies are written by knowledgeable authorities who have foresight and believe strongly in what they write for the future but the problem comes when translating theory into practice by implementers.

There are many factors that help a new staff or student flourish when arriving on campus and remain prosperous once there. Orientation programmes aid in the successful transition for staff and students who are eager to start their new experience and continue successfully through their university journey. It is therefore important for universities to put quite a reasonable time and resource into the orientation they give to their staff and students. New staff and students are to be educated on their responsibilities, rights and privileges in the university. Students should be educated on the courses to offer for the award of degrees, and the requirements to progress from one level to another. All those responsible for the various academic support services should be given the opportunity to educate staff and students during the orientation period. There is no need to rush staff and students through orientation programmes with the excuse of insufficient time and resources. Staff and students who are taken through well-structured orientation programmes, taking into consideration inputs of all academic support services, are likely to produce better results.

The European University Association (2006) Quality Culture Project had identified staff development as an important building block of internal quality assurance and quality enhancement. It indicated that institutions should provide low performing staff with opportunities to improve their skills to an acceptable level and should have the means to remove them from their duties if they continue to be demonstrably ineffective. Romina (2013) has posited that vibrant staff development programme on a continuous basis will help academics and non-academics to clarify and modify their behaviour, attitude, value, skills and competencies. In this way, they grow and develop in their knowledge and thus become more effective and efficient in the performance of tasks.

Conclusion

Members of the university community do not take ownership of assuring internal quality in the universities. It is not enough to produce good and detailed policy documents, with little commitment to ensuring its implementation.

Quality assurance is implemented by few individuals of the IQAUs in the universities. Real results of achieving a quality assurance culture in the universities will materialize if all members of the university community take ownership of internal and external quality assurance systems by embracing the idea of setting up functional QA sub-units and QA committees in every section within the university to complement the existing centralized QA system.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made:

The university authorities should make it mandatory for every school, college, faculty, department and section within the university to establish a functional QA sub-unit or committee. The heads of the various departments and sections should be tasked with the responsibility of establishing functional QA sub-unit or committees.

It is also recommended that the IQAU in collaboration with the students' affairs division and other sections should develop and implement a well-structured orientation programme taking into consideration all the academic support services for students. This should be done at the university, school, college, faculty, departmental and unit levels. Enough time should be given for the orientation programme.

Lastly, the IQAU in collaboration with the human resource division and other sections should develop and implement a well-structured orientation programme taking into consideration roles, responsibilities and expectations for all staff recruited into the university.

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