

**Quality Assurance in Ghanaian polytechnics:
perspectives and strategies of rectors, vice rectors and
quality assurance officers**

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Abstract

This study investigated the perspectives of Ghanaian rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' on quality assurance, their origins and their quality assurance strategies. Underpinned by symbolic interactionism, a qualitative methodological approach via in-depth interviewing of twenty key informants and document analysis was used to establish how they defined their situations and addressed problematic situations in quality assurance.

The findings revealed that respondents' quality assurance perspectives had internal and external dimensions. Their internal quality assurance perspectives covered human resources, teaching and learning, and management whilst their external quality assurance perspective focused on institutional, national and global contexts. These embraced achieving institutional goals, delivering quality programmes, achieving national development, protecting national economic interest, equipping students with international competencies and enhancing mutual recognition of credentials globally. It emerged that, their perspectives on quality assurance originated from interactions with each other, from group life and reference groups. It was also discovered that their quality assurance strategies focused on staff and students but in different ways.

The study concludes by generating substantive and formal propositions on quality assurance in polytechnics and public funded higher education institutions. A recommendation for further research into quality assurance perspectives of vice chancellors, pro-vice chancellors and quality assurance directors of Ghanaian universities is made. A similarly designed study be used to explore how quality assurance rhetoric of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' matches the actual institutional experience.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of The University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The importance of quality assurance in higher education

Quality concerns are a central theme in higher education both at the state and institutional levels of policy-making (Rosa & Amaral, 2014). Quality assurance is frequently associated with procedures meant to improve higher education and make higher education institutions accountable to external stakeholders. It embraces the core higher education activities of teaching, research, scholarship and community service.

From its infancy a couple of decades ago, quality assurance now attracts attention from the government, higher education institutions and the general public (Westerheijden, Stensaker, & Rosa, 2007). In Ghana, print and electronic media regularly cover and raise issues related to ensuring quality in higher education. For example, the *Ghana News Agency*, 25th March, 2008 featured Professor Akilagpa Sawyer (former Secretary-General of Association of African Universities (AAU) and former vice chancellor of the University of Ghana) with a caption “quality in higher education must be assured” (Sawyer, 2008). Additionally, *Ghana News Agency*, March 27th, 2013 devoted a page to a report “tertiary institutions urged to provide quality education to meet global standards” (Yankson, 2013). Furthermore, the *National Daily Graphic* newspaper, 11th September 2014 carried a headline “ensure quality standards in tertiary education” (Opoku-Agyemang, 2014).

Seminars and workshops throughout Ghana continue to promote quality education. For example, Baraka Policy Institute, a policy think tank on education in Ghana recently organised a seminar on the theme “quality higher education: key to

national development” for the education sector in order to develop ideas and suggests strategies for the provision of quality education (Andani, 2015). Concern about quality assurance is much deeper at the political level. The government of Ghana’s interest in quality assurance is manifested in the promulgation of several acts such as the National Accreditation Board Act 2007, Act 744 (Government of Ghana, 2007a) which established a national quality assurance agency, the National Accreditation Board (NAB) with sole responsibility for safeguarding quality higher education provision in Ghana. In addition, the passing of the National Board for Professional and Technician Examination Act, Act 492 by Ghana’s parliament led to the birth of the National Board for Professional and Technician Examination (NABPTEX) with the mandate to oversee the activities of polytechnics (Government of Ghana, 1994a). The government of Ghana’s interest in quality assurance is further shown in the promulgation of the National Council for Tertiary Education Act, Act 459 which gave legal backing to the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) to superintend the proper administration of institutions designated as higher education institutions in Ghana (Government of Ghana, 1992). Similarly, the desire of Ghanaian universities to be comparable with the best in-country and internationally is increasing higher education institutions interest in quality issues. Higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their education provision. Like any other institutional policy, quality assurance in Ghanaian polytechnics is influenced by the perspectives of key individuals.

1.2 Why study rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers’ occupy positions of influence in their polytechnics. Rectors are the highest academic officials in polytechnics. They are responsible for the management of their institutions and set

the direction for the accomplishment of their polytechnic's goals. Vice rectors head the academic components of their institutions. They manage the academic activities of their polytechnics in teaching and research and are accountable to the rector. Quality assurance officers' provide leadership in relation to quality assurance processes and articulate national quality requirements for their organisations. These responsibilities allow them to bring to bear on quality assurance policy formulation in their institutions their own knowledge, skills, norms, values, beliefs, and behaviours. Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' normally determine the quality assurance practices appropriate for their polytechnics. They influence the academic staff and students of their polytechnics. However, little is known empirically about rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on quality assurance and how this influences quality assurance in their polytechnics. It is thus within this context that this study was carried out.

1.3 The nature of the study

This study examined the perspectives rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' held on quality assurance in their polytechnics. The research explored the origins of their quality assurance perspectives and the quality assurance strategies they enacted in their institutions. This study was shaped by the following three research questions:

1. What are rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' of Ghanaian polytechnics perspectives on quality assurance?
2. What are the origins of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on quality assurance?
3. What quality assurance strategies do rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' of Ghanaian polytechnics enact in their institutions?

The participants of this study were contacted through invitation letters addressed to their offices. In addition, assistance from former work colleagues in Bolgatanga polytechnic, community leaders and local politicians helped to gain access to some of the participants in other polytechnics. A more comprehensive explanation of the approach used in accessing the key informants for this study is provided in Chapter 5.

An appropriate way of investigating rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on quality assurance was through an interpretive paradigm. Unlike positivists frameworks which focus on objective study of human behaviour, interpretive paradigms are focused on the individual and the subjective world of human experience (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

Symbolic interactionism championed by the early Chicago School scholars such as Mead and Blumer underpinned this study. Key to this theory is the concept of socialisation which states that self arises out of social interaction. The "self" comprises a kind of back-and-forth dialectic between the individuals spontaneously-acting "I" and his/her talking of him/herself as an object perceived from the standpoint of other, the "Me" (Watson, 2010). Human experience is mediated by interpretation (Blumer, 1969). Meanings are formed through social interaction with significant others and as a consequence are social products. Interaction is the main link between an individual and social group. The individual and society are inseparable. Each exists because of the other. In this study, rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' and the interactions which they have experienced are not separated. Whilst social structures, in this case, quality assurance policies, the national quality assurance agencies and state government impose limitations on human actions, they do not determine them. Perspectives form integral part of

symbolic interactionism. The concept of perspectives originated with the work of Becker, Geer, Hughes and Strauss (1961) and was later developed by Woods (1983). Perspectives are defined as frameworks through which people make sense of the world (Woods, 1983). Through perspectives, rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' construct their own realities and define situations. Their perspectives are linked to actions through strategies.

This study was qualitative in nature because the main objective was to examine the social world of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' from their own points of view. In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 key informants. This was augmented with analyses of documents such as strategic plans, quality assurance draft policies and ethics policies. These formed the core data for the study. By adopting approved ethical procedures, I safeguarded the anonymity of the key informants and the confidentiality of their responses. Throughout the study key concepts of symbolic interactionism such as self, significant others, reference groups, socialisation and perspectives (explained in detail in chapter 4) informed the major themes for analysis of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on quality assurance, origins of their quality assurance perspectives and quality assurance strategies.

The study focuses on the following: the Ghanaian higher education landscape, rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on quality assurance, origins of their quality assurance perspectives and their quality assurance strategies. Of major concern is the effects of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' previous employment, membership of professional association and trade unions, internal and external institutional socialisation , and the impact of significant others on how they formed their perspectives on quality

assurance. In addition, the quality assurance strategies they instituted in their polytechnics to enable them impart their quality assurance perspectives to the academic staff and students are examined. The study concludes with substantive and formal propositions on quality assurance in polytechnics and public funded higher education institutions respectively. Management implications are also drawn.

1.4 Significance and contribution of the study

The researcher was motivated by the following factors to undertake this study. Firstly, quality assurance issues in Ghanaian polytechnics have been given little examination and are severely under-represented in both domestic and international scholarship. Asgedom (2007) notes that in Sub-Saharan Africa including Ghana quality assurance practices in higher education are not well researched and documented. Therefore this study would contribute to the literature by helping to analyse quality assurance policies and practices of Ghanaian polytechnics key personnel.

Secondly, the study addresses an important issue of concern in the Ghanaian polytechnic sector namely quality assurance and as the first study of its kind its findings would serve as a useful resource for policy makers involved in the planning, management and improvement of polytechnic education in Ghana and personnel in other similar contexts.

Thirdly, the use of symbolic interactionism as a framework for the study would enable the researcher to reveal how perspectives of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' influence quality assurance policy formulation and practices in Ghanaian polytechnics.

1.5 Limitation

This study was undertaken in Ghana. Twenty (20) participants including rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' from eight (8) Ghanaian polytechnics participated. Claims to the generalizability of the population of rectors, vice rectors and quality officers of Ghanaian polytechnics were not made. Conclusions drawn in this study on rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on quality assurance is limited to only the participants however substantive and formal propositions are offered.

1.6 Organisation of the thesis

This study is organised into nine chapters. This introduction (chapter one) presents the background to the study. The chapter also discusses why rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' were studied, the nature of the study, significance and contributions of the study and limitations.

Chapter 2 discusses relevant literature on quality assurance. The chapter starts with a discussion on various constructs of quality and quality assurance in higher education. Then it proceeds to discuss the types of quality assurance and the tension that comes with their implementation, purposes of quality assurance in higher education, quality assurance strategies in higher education, audiences of quality assurance and data collection methods in quality assurance. Global factors behind quality assurance in higher education, international quality assurance models in higher education, and international trends in quality assurance practices are also discussed. Chapter 3 presents an overview of the study context. Specifically, it highlights Ghana's peculiarities, educational landscape and quality assurance structure. Chapter 4 is devoted to the theoretical framework employed for the research. It discusses symbolic interactionism as an epistemological orientation for

the study, the reason for using this framework and the key concepts used to probe participants' quality assurance perspectives. Chapter 5 presents the procedures adopted in interviewing the 20 participants, the in-depth interviews undertaken, documents (strategic plans, quality assurance draft policies, and ethics policies) analysed, the rationale behind the technique employed, the data collection processes and the ensuing analysis. Chapters, 6, 7 and 8 analyse the data from the in-depth interviews and the above mentioned documents related to quality assurance in Ghanaian polytechnics, focusing on rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on quality assurance, the origins of their perspectives and the strategies they enacted in their polytechnics to impart their quality assurance ideas to academic staff and students. Conclusions and recommendations for future research projects are dealt with in chapter 9.

Chapter 2

Review of literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines studies on quality and quality assurance in higher education and is divided into four main sections. The first section reviews the origin of the concept of quality and addresses the problematic nature of conceptualising quality in higher education. Section two examines the construct and processes associated with quality assurance in higher education. It examines the principles required for successful implementation of quality assurance and highlights practices in quality assurance. The section ends with an analysis of quality culture and academics' perspectives on quality assurance. The factors behind the heightened interest in quality assurance in higher education are examined in section three. The fourth section examines a selection of quality assurance models in higher education, stressing their features, strengths and weaknesses.

2.2 Quality

2.2.1 Origin of quality movement

The quality movement can be traced back to medieval Europe, where craftsmen began organizing into unions called guilds in the late thirteenth century (Shah, Nair, & Wilson, 2011). The craft guilds regulated quality and developed apprenticeship programmes that ensured that there was proper training and regulation in the craft (Sallis, 2002) that enabled craftspersons to serve as both manufacturers and inspectors (Evans & Lindsay, 2013). This craftsmanship model was followed until the advent of the industrial revolution in the early 1800s, when mass-production threatened this approach to maintaining quality (Evans & Lindsay, 2013; Sallis,

2002; Shah et al., 2011). Manufacturers broke their manufacturing processes into narrow and repetitive tasks and individuals were no longer responsible for making whole products.

Concerns about quality heightened again in the United States of America after the Second World War. However, the application of quality concepts were initially accepted by Japanese in their production sectors (Beckford, 2002). The Japanese welcomed the ideas of statistical control and quality management of Joseph Juran and Edwards Deming and this contributed to their re-emergence as a major industrial nation (Shah et al., 2011). By the 1970s, US industrial sectors such as automobiles and electronics had been surpassed by Japan's high-quality products (Shah et al., 2011). The United States responded, emphasizing not only controlling quality but approaches that embraced an entire organization. This became known as total quality management (TQM) (Shah et al., 2011). Since then new quality systems have evolved and moved beyond manufacturing into service sectors such as health and education.

2.2.2 Definitions of quality

Many scholars have attempted a definition of quality but this has produced inconsistent results (Harvey, 2009a; Reeves & Bedner, 1994). A commonly quoted remark in discussions about quality is: "Quality...you know what it is, yet you don't know what it is" (Pirsig, 1974). This suggests that individuals have an intuitive understanding of what quality means but it is often hard for them to articulate (Harvey & Green, 1993). As a result, quality has been defined differently by various authors in the quality literature (Tam, 2001; Van Kemenade, Pupius, & Hardjono, 2008; Watty, 2006a). Authors such as Abbott (1955) defines quality as value;

Gilmore (1974) defines it as conformity to specification; Juran (1974) defines it as fitness for use whilst Crosby (1979) defines it as conformity to requirements.

Perceiving quality as a culture has also dominated the literature in recent times (Henkel, 2000; Stensaker, 2003). Harvey and Stensaker (2008) describe quality culture as an organisational climate in which groups of staff work together to realise their specific tasks. Similarly, Berings, Beerten, Hulpiau, and Verhesschen (2010) perceive quality culture as organizational culture, which contributes to the development of effective and efficient concern for quality. These suggest that a single definition of quality does not exist in the literature. For this reason, quality has been described as a “slippery concept” (Pfeffer & Coote, 1991) and a relative concept (Harvey & Green, 1993). However, Harvey and Newton (2004) argue that this difficulty arises because conceptions of quality are both personal and socially constructed. They further suggest that individuals construct a view of quality based on a few attributes only and that these selected attributes vary from one person to another and at different times (Harvey & Newton, 2004). Thus, there seems to be no consensus on a definition of quality. Individuals perceive quality and its outcomes differently.

2.2.3 Quality in higher education

Defining quality in higher education is more complicated than in manufacturing industry (Mishra, 2007). This is because the higher education sector is characterised by numerous stakeholders including government and government agencies, policy makers, teachers, support staff, students, parents, employers, academics and professional associations (Mishra, 2007; UNESCO, 2007). These stakeholders have different interests and this influences their definitions of quality. For example, governments may define quality as the training of more higher

education students at international standards at a lower cost (Mishra, 2007; UNESCO, 2007; Vroeijenstijn, 1995) whilst employers define quality as the knowledge, skills and behaviour acquired during study (Mishra, 2007; UNESCO, 2007; Vroeijenstijn, 1995). Furthermore, students' view of quality may be concerned with the contribution of education to their personal development and preparation for a position in society. Teachers may define quality as a proper academic training based on knowledge transfer and a learning environment and a relationship between teaching and research (Vroeijenstijn, 1995). All these indicate the existence of several descriptions of quality in higher education, testifying to the complexity and the multifaceted nature of the concept (Inter-University Council for East Africa, 2008a; Motala, 2000; UNESCO, 2007).

Harvey and Green (1993) identified five approaches to defining quality in higher education. These include quality as exceptional (excellence), quality as perfection or consistency (zero errors), quality as fitness for purpose (mission orientation and consumer orientation), quality as value for money, and quality as transformation. They argue that the notion of quality as exceptional is associated with excellence, distinctiveness or something special. That is something unattainable by the majority and this confers status on the owner or user (UNESCO, 2007). Excellence in higher education is viewed as the demonstration of exceptionally high standards in an institution. Emphasis is placed on high quality inputs and producing "excellent" outcomes (Nicholson, 2011). For example, an institution that sets high entry requirements for their academic programmes, owns state-of-the-art teaching and learning facilities, recruit academic staff with outstanding credentials and records high students achievement in academic tasks is tagged as a quality institution. The quality as exceptional approach in higher education may be used in evaluating academic programmes, research and determining flagship universities (UNESCO,

2007). However, this view may not be appropriate to mass higher education systems since it may lead to exclusivity and elitism, as excellence by definition is attained by a few only (Parri, 2006). Harvey and Green describe quality as perfection as consistent or faultless results. This concept originated from the quality control approach in the manufacturing industry, which perceives quality as “zero errors or defects” and “getting things right first time”. This quality concept focuses on processes and specifications that need to be perfectly achieved at each stage. This notion democratises the concept of quality and assumes that if it were possible to achieve consistency, then it would be possible to achieve quality. However, Watty (2003) argues that the construct of quality as perfection is inappropriate in higher education settings because it is not the purpose of higher education institutions to produce students who are the same, which is the implicit meaning of quality as perfection or consistency (zero errors). Similarly, the construct of quality as perfection has limited application to higher education because it is impossible to achieve zero defects in higher education where parts of the end product are intangible and based on subjective measurements (Sebastianelli & Tamimi, 2002).

Fitness for purpose judges quality in terms of the extent to which a product or service fits its purpose (Campbell & Rozsnyai, 2002; Harvey & Green, 1993; Vlăsceanu, Grünberg, & Pârlea, 2007). For example, if something does the job for which it is designed for, then it is a quality product or service. Harvey and Knight (1996, p. 16) claim that if a product does not fit its purpose, its perfection is irrelevant. Quality as fitness for purpose is a functional definition of quality and quite remote from the idea of quality as something special, distinctive, elitist, conferring status or difficult to attain (Harvey & Green, 1993). It is regarded as most appropriate to higher education. Its appeal stems from its inherent flexibility, which allows institutions to measure quality in terms of their ability to meet their respective

missions and objectives (Campbell & Rozsnyai, 2002). Quality as fitness for purpose allows variability in institutions rather than forcing them to be clones of one another (Woodhouse, 1999). Fitness for purpose seems to be the most cited definition of quality by scholars in higher education. Woodhouse (2006) describes fitness for purpose as the definition for all seasons. However, the applicability of this quality concept in the higher education context is problematic. Firstly, a student is a complex entity with dual nature as both a customer and a product hence the applicability of this concept is not straightforward. Campbell and Rozsnyai (2002), argue that it may seem to imply that “anything goes” in higher education so long as a purpose can be formulated for it. They caution that this weakness is more likely to be exacerbated in large and diverse higher education systems in which a wide range of purposes at institutional level may be identified by individual institutions, generally through their mission statements, and at more precise academic levels through the learning outcomes of particular programmes. Campbell and Rozsnyai (2002) claim that this diversity is even complicated in transnational and distance education (situations in which educational provision crosses borders) as there is frequently a divergence of national views between sending and receiving countries as to both fitness and purpose. Hence, Westerheijden (1999) suggests fitness for purpose be changed to fitness of purpose.

Quality as value for money measures quality in terms of return on investment (Harvey & Green, 1993). This notion focuses on efficiency and effectiveness. This quality perspective is also associated with accountability of public funds. The growing tendency for governments to require accountability from higher education reflects a value for money approach while students, parents and higher education funders consider value for money as regards their own investments as important component of quality (Campbell & Rozsnyai, 2002). The transformative view of

quality is rooted in the notion of qualitative change, a fundamental change of form (Harvey & Green, 1993). This transformation is not restricted to apparent or physical transformation but also includes cognitive transcendence (Harvey & Green, 1993). Quality as transformation is interpreted as the enhancement and empowerment of students or the development of new knowledge (Harvey, 1995b; Harvey & Green, 1993). It focuses on changing the life experiences of students. For example, an institution that transforms students' self-image, improves students' competence and employability is seen as successful in its efforts and therefore in generating quality (UNESCO, 2007). This view of quality is further echoed by (Harvey, 2002a) who argues that in this era of mass higher education, transformation ought to become the major attribute of quality rather than excellence, fitness for purpose or value for money.

Apparent from these discussions, is lack of consensus about definitions of quality. This might be as a result of the multiplicity of stakeholders involved in defining quality which opens up the possibility of multiple and conflicting interpretations. It may also mean that that the concept borrowed from business and industry is ill suited to the educational context. It is not surprising that Harvey and Green (1993) suggest that the only practical solution to this is to recognize and validate all of these diverse perspectives and reject the possibility of accepting a single definition of quality.

2.3 Quality assurance in higher education

2.3.1 Definitions of quality assurance

Quality assurance appears to have been imported from industry into higher education as part of the major changes that characterised the sector some decades ago

(El-Khawas, 2013). But like the quality concept, quality assurance in higher education is without an agreed definition. Various scholars have attempted to theorise the concept. Harvey and Green (1993) see quality assurance to be about ensuring that there are mechanisms, procedures and processes in place to guarantee that the desired quality, however defined and measured, is delivered. This implies that quality assurance is not about specifying the standards or specifications against which to measure or control quality. Quality assurance is also viewed as the means by which an institution guarantees, with confidence and certainty, that the standards and quality of its educational provision are being maintained and enhanced (Friend-Pereira, Lutz, & Heerens, 2002). Furthermore, Woodhouse (2006) defines quality assurance as those systems, procedures, processes and actions intended to lead to the achievement, maintenance, monitoring and achievement of quality with Vlăsceanu et al. (2007) defining quality assurance as an all-embracing term referring to an ongoing, continuous process of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining, and improving) the quality of a higher education system, institutions, or programs. From a stakeholder perspective, Harvey and Green (1993) see quality assurance as a process of establishing stakeholder confidence that provision (input, process and outcomes) fulfils expectations or measures up to minimum threshold requirements.

These definitions of quality assurance suggest that a common definition of quality assurance does not exist. This can be attributed to the diverse perspectives of stakeholders in higher education on what counts as quality, which subsequently impacts on their understanding of quality assurance. Stensaker (2010) argues that this diversity of definitions of quality assurance still exist in organisational practices related to quality where national quality assurance schemes (accreditations, evaluations, audits and assessments) and institutional quality assurance systems

(evaluation systems, information systems and management systems) are combined in various ways. As a result, Williams (2002) argues that present debates surrounding quality assurance consist too often of superficial soundbites, mediocre clichés and low-quality, ill-tempered non-thought that is usually more about personalities. Quality assurance can be identified as a generic term open to wide interpretation however recent developments in the higher sector have raised the stakes of quality assurance in contemporary higher education provision.

2.3.2 Types of quality assurance

Quality assurance falls under two main categories namely internal and external. Internal quality assurance refers to an institution's policies and mechanisms for ensuring that it is fulfilling its own purposes as well as meeting the standards that apply to higher education in general or to the profession or discipline in particular (Commission for Higher Education, 2008). This mechanism is concerned with continuous process of enhancing the quality of education provision (Lewis, 2009). Its procedures are institutional based and are normally designed for internal stakeholders. Internal quality assurance processes normally involve the following phases: defining institutional mission and strategic goals, setting up processes to ensure that quality is reached and monitoring progress in this regard, and finally responding when all is not well, and being able and willing to improve (Loukkola & Zhang, 2010). Internal quality assurance mechanisms adopt formative approaches and are associated with the development of quality culture. Internal quality assurance is non-negotiable for higher education institutions (Santiago, Tremblay, Basri, & Arnal, 2008). Materu (2007) argues that internal quality assurance mechanisms are no longer optional, but rather a requirement if higher education institutions are to guarantee high academic standards and enhance their global competitiveness.

Despite this, in a situation where internal quality assurance is a response to external pressures or legislation its prime focus may shift to accountability rather than improvement (Poole, 2010) and this can result in managerialism. Managerialism associated with routine paper work may reduce time spent on teaching and research because most academic staff may have to concentrate on putting in place structures that meet the standards of external reviewers.

External quality assurance (EQA) refers to the actions of external bodies, which maybe quality assurance agencies or other bodies external to the institution, which assesses its operation or that of its programme in order to determine whether it is meeting agreed upon standards (Martin & Stella, 2007, p. 34; Skolnik, 2010). These external bodies can be government, quasi-governmental, or professional associations. External quality assurance aims at strengthening external insight and control, with possibility of undertaking external corrective action, if necessary (Kis, 2005). For example, it may be mandated by the government as necessary for institutional funding or intended to prevent poor quality programs or institutions. These are executed through accreditation, audit, assessment, licensure, recognition, and authorisation (Harvey & Newton, 2004; INQAAHE, 2015). However, these vary in different circumstances.

EQA is underpinned by a philosophy of accountability. Providing information to external stakeholders of higher education about the policy infrastructure used to achieve targets of an institution and achieve consumer protection (INQAAHE, 2015). Santiago et al. (2008) argues that external quality assurance legitimises higher education in the eyes of the public. EQA approaches are summative in nature and its reports contain explicit statements of outcomes. These

are normally published to inform the public of the performance of higher education institutions (Middlehurst & Woodhouse, 1995).

2.3.3 Purposes of quality assurance in higher education

Quality assurance is intended to ensure accountability and/or to bring about improvement (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009; Kis, 2005; Rosa & Amaral, 2007). Accountability is often associated with external quality assurance while improvement is linked with internal quality processes (Nicholson, 2011). Accountability requires the entity held accountable to demonstrate, conformity to established standards or processes or outcomes (Ewell, 2009). Accountability often focuses on the priorities of external stakeholders, such as state, governmental agencies, professional bodies and regional accrediting bodies (Nicholson, 2011), who have vested interest in institutional performance (Alexander, 2000). Wellman (2001) argues that accountability is necessary for preserving the compact between higher education and society. For example, it requires higher education institutions to demonstrate that public funds are spent effectively and that the public purposes for financing higher education are fulfilled (Alderman & Brown, 2007; Ali & Shastri, 2010; Hendel & Lewis, 2005). Accountability requires quality measures, metrics or performance indicators, typically defined as inputs, outputs or outcomes (Nicholson, 2011). Quality assurance schemes underpinned by this notion often adopt a summative approach (Billing, 2004). The processes of accreditation, audit and assessment are used to gather data in order to provide accountability (Koslowski III, 2006; Nicholson, 2011). Reports from this approach which include explicit statements on outcomes achieved by institutions are often published (Billing, 2004).

The improvement purpose of quality assurance is concerned with a continuous enhancement of the quality of higher education (Lewis, 2009). Quality

assurance mechanisms based on this philosophy are intended to strengthen the internal processes of quality improvement (Inglis, 2005; Kis, 2005). Procedures such as admission criteria, teacher appraisal, programme review, examination moderation and rules and regulations employed by these mechanisms are expected to lead towards the specification of quality according to goals and criteria that are internal to the institutions (Thune, 1996). Quality assurance strategies which focus on quality improvement use a formative approach. Information is specifically for internal stakeholders and usually includes recommendations on how quality can be improved. Both accountability and improvement are vital in higher education. Woodhouse (1999) perceives them to be inseparable, as accountability can always be re-phrased to focus on improvement. However, Vroeijstijn (1995) claims there is an uneasy balance between accountability and improvement purposes, which raises the question of incompatibility of purposes.

2.3.4 Major external quality assurance strategies in higher education

External quality assurance involves a variety of practices. Three main mechanisms can be distinguished (Sanyal & Martin, 2007). These are accreditation, audit and assessment (Brennan & Shah, 2000; Santiago et al., 2008; Sanyal & Martin, 2007). Quality assurance agencies often use one or more of these mechanisms and apply them to different units of analysis namely institutions, programmes and course (Sanyal & Martin, 2007).

Accreditation is a process by which a quality assurance body evaluates a HEI as a whole or a specific academic programme against a pre-determined criteria or standards (Vlăsceanu et al., 2007). Its process usually include self-assessments, document analysis, scrutiny of performance indicators, peer visits, inspections, specially constituted panels, delegated responsibility to internal panels often via

proxy entrustment to external examiners or advisors, stakeholder surveys (such as student satisfaction surveys, alumni and employer surveys), direct intervention (such as direct observation of classroom teaching or grading of student work) (Harvey, 2004; Hayward, 2006). Accreditation procedures usually results in awarding a status decision, recognition, or a licence to operate an institution or a licence to deliver an academic programme within a certain period of time (Vlăsceanu et al., 2007). This is of utmost importance to higher education institutions because it provides legitimacy in the eyes of the public (Jones, 2002; Santiago et al., 2008; Sanyal & Martin, 2007) and facilitates their acceptance by society. Accreditation, compared with other methods, is perceived to be the best and most suitable evaluation method for higher education (Stensaker, 2011). Accreditation has now crept into almost every external quality assurance scheme worldwide (Schwarz & Westerheijden, 2004; Vroeijenstijn, 2003). However, the strategy is often criticized. Harvey (2004) argues that accreditation is more about minimum standards (be they academic, competence, service or organisational) than about the quality of the process. Accreditation has been identified as impeding innovation with regards to internal quality assurance processes in some higher education institutions.

Quality audit unlike accreditation, does not primarily verify the achievement of minimum standards with regard to a study programme or institution. Quality audit is a strategy used to determine whether an institution has the capacity to assure the quality of its programmes and the services that support them (Australian Universities Quality Agency, 2008; Kastelliz, Kohler, & Strassnig, 2014). The approach demands evidence of the existence of internal quality processes, which are generally provided through samples, such as audit targets, selected themes, fields of performance, or exemplary study programmes (Kastelliz et al., 2014). Like other external quality assurance process, quality audit is performed by individuals not involved in the

organisation being examined (Santiago et al., 2008). Its procedures include the following stages: preparatory phase, self-report, peer review, site visit, peer report, decision, publication of the report and follow-up. Quality audit has merit. It encourages continuous quality improvement (Hodgson & Whalley, 2006). Quality audit also recognises institutional diversity by auditing institutions and programs against their own mission and objectives (Chalmers, Lee, & Walker, 2008). The strategy may allow the compilation and publication of quality practices found by the audit (Chalmers et al., 2008; Quality Assurance Agency, 2007). Furthermore quality audit provides leverage for academics to follow through on initiatives that might have met internal resistance (Jennings & Cameron, 2013). However, the relevance of quality audit has been questioned by many stakeholders. Quality audit places particular emphasis on institutional processes, with an implicit assumption that if the auditee has implemented acceptable quality assurance arrangements, satisfactory outcomes will ensue (Chalmers et al., 2008). However, a concentration on processes does not guarantee the achievement of quality outcomes (Chalmers et al., 2008). Additionally, quality audit is perceived to be costly, time consuming and has been resisted by many (Hodgson & Whalley, 2006; Kis, 2005). A particularly poignant example is provided in a review of external evaluations conducted by the Australian Department of Education Science and Training (2004). The audit was described as superficial due to very little information regarding actual impacts on university teaching, learning and research functions (Carr, Hamilton, & Meade, 2005; Kis, 2005; Szanto, 2005).

Quality assessment on the other hand, involves reviewing, measuring and judging the quality of higher education processes, practices, programmes and services using appropriate techniques, mechanisms and activities (Hendel & Lewis, 2005; Sanyal & Martin, 2007). It is normally carried out by a team of external

experts, peers or inspectors (Martin & Stella, 2006) and mainly concerned with issues of teaching, research, curriculum and student experiences, or with organisational matters, or a combination of both (Brennan & Shah, 2000). Quality assessment usually entails collection of descriptive information (often statistical) and sometimes evaluative elements (Brennan & Shah, 2000). Its processes include self-assessment, assessment by peer review, site visits and published reports (Brennan & Shah, 2000; Sanyal & Martin, 2007). Quality assessment like accreditation is linked with institutional status. It can alter internal quality systems to improve quality. Awareness amongst academic staff in a HEI of quality assessment can induce policy and procedural change (Brennan & Shah, 2000). However, the usefulness of quality assessment is undermined by the following. Preparation for self-evaluation and the process of getting ready for an external assessment can be traumatic (Brennan & Shah, 2000). It is considered as an intrusion into the professional autonomy of academic staff (Skolnik, 2010). Furthermore, quality assessment is based on assumption that it automatically leads to quality improvement which can be false. In addition, quality assessment schemes often target publicly debated and easily visible information, to show higher education's responsiveness to society's demand (Westerheijden, 2010). Lastly, while reports of assessment visits and recommendations can help set an agenda for long term change in a department or institution, they can also be ignored (Brennan & Shah, 2000). Accreditation, quality audit and quality assessment overlap, but are distinct processes fundamental to quality assurance. Each is relevant as higher education undergoes transformation (Harvey, 2002b; Hendel & Lewis, 2005; Stensaker, 2003).

2.3.5 Methods for quality assurance in higher education

Commonly used quality assurance methods include reviews, evaluations and performance indicators or statistics (Kis, 2005). Review is the scrutinisation of the education provision of an institution to determine the appropriateness of quality assurance systems. Quality review has three basic methods namely self-review, peer-review and/or external review (Kis, 2005). Self review provides a standard against which a HEI can measure itself and a framework for building up a definition of quality (Kis, 2005). It enables a HEI to check its achievement of strategic mission and goals, and its action plan for development (Thune, 1998). Though self-reviews are carried out by many HEIs, their nature varies significantly (Brennan & Shah, 2000). Peer-review is carried out by other academics, usually in the same discipline (Kis, 2005). This method is dominant in research evaluation and is increasingly used in the evaluation of teaching and learning (Kis, 2005). External review is the appraisal of the education provision of a HEI by external quality review panel. External review panel members often include peers and non-academics who have an interest in higher education (Eaton, 2004).

Evaluation refers to measuring and judging the inputs, outputs and outcomes of higher education institutions using appropriate standards (Sanyal & Martin, 2007). Evaluation may be external or internal to a higher education institution. Self-evaluation is undertaken by a higher education institution to assess the quality of its academic programmes and work conditions (Koprivica, 2010). It involves the collection of information, analysis and debate (Chahine, Jammal, Moscardini, & Kaissi, 2008). Self-evaluation is used for continuous improvement however, self-evaluation is sometimes an external requirement of a national quality agency (Chahine et al., 2008). External evaluation is practiced by quality assurance agencies for accreditation and quality assessments purposes. It provides feedback on the

functioning of the institution. Bodies responsible for conducting external evaluation can bring depth and breadth to a HEI's self-evaluation. Nonetheless, evaluation itself does not create quality.

Performance indicators are measures which give information and statistics context permitting comparisons between fields over time and with commonly accepted standards (Chalmers, 2008). They provide information about the degree to which teaching and learning and research objectives are met (Chalmers, 2008). Performance indicators fall under input, process, output and outcome (Chalmers, 2008). They can be broadly categorised as quantitative and qualitative indicators (Chalmers, 2008). Performance indicators serve various purposes in higher education. HEI's use performance indicators to monitor their own performance for comparative purposes, to facilitate assessment of institutional operations, and to provide evidence for external quality assurance audits of institutional teaching and learning (Chalmers et al., 2008). Performance indicators used at the national level are designed to ensure accountability for public funds, improve the quality of higher education provision, stimulate competition within and between institutions, assign institutional status and facilitate international comparisons (Fisher, Rubenson, Rockwell, Grosjean, & Atkinson-Grosjean 2000; Marginson & van der Wende, 2007). At the international level, OECD/UNESCO use performance indicators to facilitate international comparisons of higher education systems (OECD, 2007). Performance indicators depict trends and raise questions about the state of higher education; however they do not necessarily provide explanations which reflect the complexity of higher education.

2.3.6 Principles for effective implementation of quality assurance in HEI's

Quality assurance does not operate in a vacuum. It depends on proper principles for its effective implementation in higher education (European University Association, 2006). HEI's may have their own set of principles for enacting quality assurance mechanisms because of their diverse nature. However, Frazer (1994) has proposed four quality assurance principles for HEI's to take into account. Frazer has worked on quality in higher education in 25 countries for: British Council, World Bank, Council of Europe, Dutch Validation Council, European Centre for Higher Education, European University Association, and OECD (Hellenic American Union, 2005) and is regarded as a prime mover for the establishment of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) (Hellenic American Union, 2005). His principles cover the following:

- Everyone in the enterprise has a responsibility for maintaining the quality of the product or service (i.e. substandard products rarely reaches the quality controllers because they have been rejected at source);
- Everyone in the enterprise has a responsibility for enhancing quality of the product or service.
- Everyone in the enterprise understands, uses and feels ownership of the systems that are in place for maintaining and enhancing quality;
- Management (and sometimes the customer or client) regularly checks the validity and reliability of the systems for checking quality.

Frazer (1994) argues that when HEI takes quality assurance seriously and endorses these principles, it emerges as a self-critical community of teachers, students, senior managers and support staff, each contributing to and striving for continued improvement (Frazer, 1994). Even though a lot of developments have taken place

since Frazer developed these principles, they are still relevant in higher education. They have been reframed and expanded by institutions such as IHENQ (Irish Higher Education Quality Network, 2005). The principles are also in line with recent advocacy on quality assurance as culture rather than event (Doherty, 2008). In this situation, quality is seen as part of institutional practice (Mishra, 2007). It becomes everyone's responsibility and contributes to the success of quality assurance (Santiago et al., 2008).

2.3.7 Exemplar quality assurance in higher education

Good quality assurance is clear and coherent and adds significant value to the practices of a higher education institution (INQAAHE, 2005). Though HEIs and quality assurance agencies are encouraged to identify and disseminate their own good quality assurance practices, organizations such as European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (NQAHE) (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009; INQAAHE, 2005) have come out with exemplar quality assurance practices that Ghanaian higher education institutions and the National Accreditation Board (Ghana's external quality assurance agency) can emulate. In this study I focus on ENQA's good practices for HEIs' and quality assurance agencies and are discussed below.

2.3.7.1 Exemplar quality assurance within higher education

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) has developed exemplar quality assurance. ENQA's first quality assurance practice relates to policy and procedures for quality assurance (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009). It suggests that HEIs have

policies and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. In addition, they should commit to explicitly developing a culture which recognises the importance of quality and quality assurance. The second practice focuses on approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009). HEIs should have formal mechanisms for approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.

ENQA's, third practice relates to students' assessment (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009). Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures. For example, students should be clearly informed about the assessment strategies, examinations and other assessment methods.

Quality assurance of teaching staff is also another area ENQA emphasises (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009). HEI's should employ qualified and experienced staff. Institutions should ensure that staff meet minimum competence levels. ENQA argues that institutions should ensure that resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.

ENQA's practice relates to information systems (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009). HEIs should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of programmes of study. Public information is also an aspect of ENQA's good practice (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009). ENQA suggests that HEIs should regularly publish up-to-date, impartial and objective information about the programmes and awards they offer.

2.3.7.2 Exemplar external quality assurance in higher education

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education proposes practices with regards to external quality assurance. External quality assurance embraces the use of internal quality assurance procedures (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009). External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of HEIs internal quality assurance. An institution's own internal policies and procedures must be carefully evaluated in the course of external procedures to determine the extent to which standards are met.

ENQA suggests the aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009). Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.

Quality assurance processes must be fit for purpose (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009). All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to achieve the aims and objectives set for them. Reports should be published and written in a form which is clear and readily accessible. Decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy to find. Furthermore, quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently. Lastly, external quality assurance of institutions and/or programmes should be undertaken

on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.

2.3.8 Quality culture in higher education

Quality culture is not a set of procedures much less one that can be imported from a different context or imposed on an organisation (Harvey, 2009c). It is one in which everyone in the organisation, not just the quality controllers, is responsible for quality (Crosby, 1986; European University Association, 2011). Quality culture reflects the way in which a group of people (organisation through to operational unit) address the issue of quality in their lived, every day, existence (Harvey, 2009b, 2009c). There is no right or wrong, good or bad quality culture, although a real quality culture is invisible; in as much as it is an integral part of everyday practice rather than a rule-bound add-on (Harvey, 2009c). Quality culture comprises two distinct sets of elements: shared values, beliefs, expectations and commitments towards quality and a structural/managerial element with defined processes that enhance quality and aim at coordinating efforts (European University Association, 2006).

Embedding quality in a department or institution is a complex task because there is no simple checklist of actions to create a quality culture (Harvey, 2009c). Quality culture does not arise because of a declaration from an institutional leader, but through a sustained engagement with the meaning of quality, the implications for practice, and the embedding of quality thinking in practice (European University Association, 2011; Yorke, 2000). Quality requires the commitment of all staff and the application of the leadership abilities of senior managers and change agents (Gordon, 2000). When quality culture exists in an institution, the concern for quality becomes natural for staff and forms part of the corporate DNA (Lomas, 2004).

However, quality culture is not a uniform concept in higher education. Even within a single higher education institution, the concepts of quality culture may differ between various interest groups such as university management, academic and administrative staff, students and student organisations (Gvaramadze, 2008). Quality culture may still vary within these groups at a sub-group level such as different academic fields and even different academic programmes. This might be due to the diverse nature of internal stakeholders of higher education with each one having different perspective of quality. Though a broad consensus has been reached about the importance of quality culture in higher education systems it is difficult to establish a generally accepted approach (Ehlers, 2009).

2.3.9 Perspectives of academics on quality assurance

The emerging role of the market, the diffusion of the rhetoric of new public management and the loss of trust in institutions and academic professionals has led to more intrusive forms of quality assurance (Amaral & Rosa, 2011). Though the perspectives of academics towards quality assurance still constitute a relatively underdeveloped subject in quality assurance in higher education literature, (Cardoso, Rosa, & Santos, 2013; Lomas, 2007; Westerheijden, Hulpiou, & Waeytens, 2007), it is possible to argue that academics' perspectives tend to translate into different degrees of acceptance, support and adaptation to the idea of quality assurance, policies and implementation procedures (Catwright, 2007; Watty, 2006b).

The perspectives of some academics with regards to quality assurance are not favourable. This can be interpreted as emanating from concerns academics have regarding quality assurance implementation (Cardoso et al., 2013). For example, academics associate quality assurance with cost (Newton, 2010). Additionally, academics perceive quality assurance processes to be bureaucratic and time

consuming (Stensaker, Langfeldt, Harvey, Huisman, & Westerheijden, 2011) and, the diversion of attention from the important aspects of academic life, namely teaching and research (Harvey, 2006). Quality assurance is perceived by other academics as generating reports that “do not engage with the heart of the academic endeavour” (Harvey, 2009a, p. 1). This notion held by academics might be informed by the fact that they are not always effectively integrated in the development of quality assurance procedures occurring within institutions (Loukkola & Zhang, 2010).

Other academics’ perspectives relates to the perceived impact of quality assurance. They view quality assurance as capable of producing unintended consequences upon personal and organisational behaviour and as stimulating inspection, regulation and standardisation more than addressing pertinent issues for academic staff (Stensaker et al., 2011). This view associates quality assurance with monitoring and control rather than with enhancement, transformation and even excellence (Papadimitriou, Ursin, Westerheijden, & Va’limaa, 2008). In addition, academics understand quality assurance to be more associated with the establishment of threshold quality in higher education than with enabling institutions and academics to go beyond such thresholds (Papadimitriou et al., 2008).

Some academics associate quality assurance with imposition and prescription, and clashing with the values characterising academic culture namely academic freedom (Laughton, 2003; Lomas, 2007). It is seen as trying to grasp the academic world through the language and ideology of managerialism and its business ethos (Bell & Taylor, 2005, p. 241), undermining academics’ privileged position through a new form of regulation (Laughton, 2003). Quality assurance is perceived as alien to the core values of academic culture such as self and collegial accountability and self-

improvement (Laughton, 2003, p. 317), imposing a new orthodoxy, strange to the academic and educational world, based on business values and centred on the accomplishment of aims and goals (Bell & Taylor, 2005). Quality assurance is viewed as altering the traditional relationship between academics, inducing a situation where they relate to each other more as managers and managed than as colleagues (Bell & Taylor, 2005). These perspectives are often held by academics not undertaking managerial roles.

However, quality assurance perspectives of academics in leadership positions seem to favour quality assurance. They perceive quality assurance as providing the opportunity for institutions to reflect on their missions and purposes (Cardoso et al., 2013). Quality assurance is also seen by them as enabling the development of teaching and learning quality (namely educational provision and curricula), hence benefiting students, as well as academic work and decision-making processes (Huusko & Ursin, 2010; Kleijnen, Dolmas, Willems, & van Hout, 2011). Institutional leaders and administrators see positive results deriving from quality assurance (Stensaker et al., 2011).

2.4 Global factors behind quality assurance in higher education

The concern for quality in higher education is not new. Medieval universities were self-governing communities of fellows mediating their own quality and these traditions continued with universities operating as autonomous institutions (Weir, 2009). However, there has been an upsurge in the attention given to quality in higher education in recent times. This has not occurred in a vacuum but is linked to factors such as: mass participation and diversification; marketisation and privatization; the changing role of the state and the decline of state funding; globalization and internationalization; and development of new technologies (Bigalke & Neubauer,

2009; Ginkel & Dias, 2007). These factors have raised the stakes of quality assurance in contemporary higher education (Oyewole, 2012). Detail explanations of these factors are provided in subsequent sections.

2.4.1 Mass participation and diversification

The global recognition of the competitive advantage a highly educated workforce offers countries in the emerging knowledge economy led to the democratisation of higher education and a shift from elitist to mass higher education in the latter part of the 20th century (Mohamedbai, 2008). This development activated global demand for higher education resulting in the growth of student numbers and higher education institutions. For example, there are now more than 140 million students in postsecondary education worldwide, and this number continues to expand rapidly (Altbach, 2013). To be able to meet the ever growing demand for higher education, various countries including Ghana have expanded their higher education sector to include non-university institutions such as polytechnics and colleges (Teichler, 2008). The mode of higher education provision has also changed. In addition to the traditional on-campus provision, programmes are now offered via distance and online (Mohamedbai, 2008; Sanyal & Martin, 2007; Uvalić-Trumbić, 2007). Variations in academic programmes cover part-time learning, module-based curricula and credit systems, competence-oriented, student-centered, non-degree studies and continuing education (Schuetze & Slowey, 2002). This has increased the enrolment of non-traditional learners such as mature, part-time, and off-shore students (Mohamedbai, 2008; Sanyal & Martin, 2007). Commenting on this state of affairs, Uvalić-Trumbić (2007) suggests that there are now “brick and mortar” and “click and mouse” higher education institutions. For some stakeholders the shift to mass education is central to higher education’s future structure, purpose, social and

economic role in society (Schuetze & Slowey, 2002). Yet for others, the expansion and diversification of higher education has resulted in growing concerns about their quality (Sanyal & Martin, 2007; Thompson-Whiteside, 2013) and has led to the development of the argument that more means worse (Lomas, 2001). As a result, most OECD countries have established mechanisms to ensure and improve the quality of mass higher education (Kis, 2005). Currently, most Sub-Saharan African countries including Ghana have established quality assurance agencies to regulate their higher education sector (Materu, 2007). Additionally, various institutions have created structures to ensure continuous improvement in their academic programmes and mitigate the negative effects large student numbers could have on quality education provision (Materu, 2007). These notwithstanding, challenges with regards to quality education provision still exist.

2.4.2 Marketisation and privatisation

The global shift towards mass higher education, spurred by the need for additional financial resources, drove most countries (both developed and developing) to undertake initiatives to privatize their higher education systems. Higher education, which hitherto was considered a public good, increasingly became transformed into a predominantly private good, a commodity that could be subject to trade rules (Ginkel & Dias, 2007). While particulars differ by country, overall one can observe the state in various ways withdrawing its financial support for higher education (Bigalke & Neubauer, 2009), encouraging public universities to seek alternative sources of funding, win at least part of their public money on performance criteria, and opening up the tertiary education marketplace to private providers (Parker, 2012). Higher education institutions were no longer treated as subsidised service providers but rather as economic organisations selling specified services to the state and to others

who were willing to purchase them (Roger & Carosso, 2013). Profit maximisation became a central focus for higher education provision (Romero & Rey, 2004). All these developments were part of the wider New Public Management (NPM) that occurred in many countries (Parker, 2012).

Market principles are perceived to offer positive contributions for the betterment of higher education. They are believed to promote competition, innovation and efficient use of resources (Dill, 2007; Susanti, 2011). For example, they force institutions to be flexible by adapting their curricula and their specialization according to labour market demands (Kwiek, 2008; Reisz, 2003), highlight the need to continuously improve the quality of instruction (Bok, 2003), and improve the chances of turning scientific discoveries into useful products and processes (Bok, 2003, p. 102). Marketisation and privatisation are said to be strategies that can assist countries including Ghana to facilitate higher education enrolments with minimal impact on the public purse (Rossi, 2010). However, Bok (2003) argues that the size and scope of marketisation and privatisation of education have expanded beyond their precedents and this has negatively affected academic quality. For example, some private providers serve both as “back door” feeders to public universities, and as cheaper, lower entry standard alternative degree and diploma providers (Parker, 2012; Romero & Rey, 2004). Outcomes of commercialisation may also include increased secrecy for company-sponsored research, biased or compromised research findings, and programs such as extension courses with marginal academic content (Bok, 2003).

2.4.3 Decline in state funding

Funds allocated to higher education by governments have declined significantly. This has been associated with increasing concern for efficiency in the

higher education sector (Mok, 2005), competing public needs (health, basic education, pension, infrastructure) (Johnstone, 2006; Ngolovoi, 2008), and the strain placed on state resources by massification (Altbach, 2013). Presently, budget reductions in the sector are common in both the developed and the developing worlds. For example, the budget for higher education sector in the United Kingdom (UK), fell from 36.3% in 2007/8 to 35% in 2008/9 (Universities UK, 2009, 2010). Eicher (1998) reported major declines in government funding per student across European countries including Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Belgium, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. Similarly, in Canada, federal and provincial government funding of universities declined from 69% of their total funding sources in 1992/3 to 56% in 2004/5 (Snowdon, 2005). New Zealand universities obtained 51% of their total funding from the government, but by 2007, this percentage had declined to 45% (Ministry of Education, 2000; Universities NZ, 2010). In Australia, government funded 57% of university expenditures in 1996, but this had shrunk to 42% in 2006 (Department of Education Employment and Work place Relations, 2008).

Africa's higher education sector has not been immune to these trends. Government funding for tertiary education has been declining over the years (Teferra, 2013). In Zambia, the government could only dispense 20 per cent of institutional budgets and the funding level remained almost the same for three years, from 2009 to 2011, without regard to major inflation and depreciation of the local currency (Teferra, 2013). Mpofu, Chimhenga, and Mafa (2013) claim the major problem facing universities in Zimbabwe, is under-funding. Similarly, Ghana's expenditure per student dropped sharply from US\$6800 in 1980 to US\$1200 in 2002 (Duwiejua & Newman, 2014). Ghana's education expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure fell from 40% in the early 2000's to 23.2% in 2012

(Ministry of Education, 2012a). Out of this 23.2%, 21.6% is allocated to the higher education sector (Ministry of Education, 2012a). Nonetheless, this falls short of the funds required by Ghanaian higher education institutions (Materu, 2007). This shortfall in funding in the sector is systemic even in South Africa where major higher education growth and transformation has taken place (Teferra, 2013). These figures clearly indicate that government-dominated financial support for higher education is not sustainable in the long term. Hence the need for higher education institutions to seek new revenue streams to put them on a sustainable fiscal path. Currently, alternative funding arrangements are discernible. Funding from student tuition and fees (typically the largest source), private loan programs, university income generating programs (such as industry collaboration or consulting), and philanthropic support (Altbach, 2013) represent a substantial part of contemporary higher education budgets (Santiago et al., 2008). Yet, these new approaches to higher education funding have raised concerns amongst stakeholders in higher education. Uvalić-Trumbić (2007) argues that this may reduce the state's regulatory influence and increase the autonomy of higher education institutions. However, Marginson (1997) describes this modified relationship between the government and the higher education institution as a neoliberal paradox of steering from a distance.

2.4.4 Globalisation and internationalisation

Globalisation has become a catchword in higher education in the 21st century. It has been described as the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values and ideas across borders (Altbach, 2013), and is beyond the control of governments and individual higher education institutions. The inevitability of the impact of globalisation on higher education institutions has been underlined by Scott (1998, p. 122) “not all universities are (particularly) international, but all are subject

to the same processes of globalization—partly as objects, victims even, of these processes, but partly as subjects, or key agents, of globalization”.

Globalisation has influenced higher education throughout the world in various ways (Fägerlind & Strömqvist, 2004). It has brought about convergence of higher education policies in some areas, namely access, curricula, research commercialisation, the use of information and communication technology and autonomy for faculties and institutions (Fägerlind & Strömqvist, 2004). Globalisation has enhanced the mobility of students and mobility of academics (Altbach, 2013; OECD, 2008). For example, more than 2 million students are currently studying outside their home country, and it is estimated that this number will increase to 8 million by 2025 (Altbach, 2013). Many others are enrolled in branch campuses and twinning programs. Globalisation has led to new forms of education provision labelled as borderless, transnational, trans-border, and cross-border education (UNESCO, 2004). Additionally, there are many thousands of visiting scholars and post-doctoral fellows studying internationally (Altbach, 2013). The globalization of the higher education curriculum has also enhanced mutual recognition of credentials (Sanyal & Martin, 2007). Institutions collaborate with others beyond their physical territorial boundaries to undertake scientific research projects. The “brain drain” of the past has change to “brain exchange,” with flows of both people and knowledge back and forth across borders and among societies (Altbach, 2013).

Globalisation is often confused with internationalisation but conceptually they are distinct. Internationalization of higher education is seen as a possible response to globalization (i.e., as a way to make HEIs more effective in response to the globalization of societies, cultures, economies, and labour markets (UNESCO, 2004). Internationalization also includes a broad range of elements such as

curriculum, teaching/learning, research, institutional agreements, student/faculty mobility, development cooperation and many more (UNESCO, 2004). Higher education internationalization strategies are mostly guided by national regulatory and funding frameworks and are underpinned by “national embeddedness” (Luijten-Lub, Huisman, & van der Wende, 2005; Vlk, 2006). Nonetheless, van der Wende (2007) as well claims that institutions may become “disembedded” from their national contexts because of the driving forces of globalization. Evidence for the disembedding process can be found in areas such as cross border expansions (virtual and/or physical), increasing international income, and growing relative weight of international missions of HEIs, combined with lack or weak legislation and quality assurance in these areas.

The current dynamics in higher education are to an increasing extent a result of globalisation. However, Altbach (2013) suggests that developing countries including Ghana are at a significant disadvantage in the new globalized academic system. Altbach argues that the advantages associated with globalisation still accrue to traditional academic centres in the West at the expense of the peripheries. For example, the open door policy associated with globalisation has made developing countries such as Ghana function as education markets for developed countries (Prasad, 2009). Though this has positive effects, such as increased access and opportunities, transfer of knowledge and adoption of quality standards of the HEIs in the advanced countries, it has also increased the importation of “degree mills” or poor quality higher education from the developed countries (Hallak & Poisson, 2007). This has ignited the debate on the ability of developing countries including Ghana to guarantee quality higher education in the context of globalization where cross-border provision limits the regulatory capacity of the receiving country (UNESCO, 2004).

2.4.5 Digital technologies

The advent of digital technologies has altered the landscape of higher education (Edwards, 2012; Selwyn, 2013). It has affected the mode of HE delivery, pedagogy and facilitated greater collaboration between HEI's worldwide. Digital technologies offer alternatives to traditional face-to-face models of education by facilitating the acquisition of knowledge and skills which were hitherto confined to specific physical locations (UNESCO, 2005). HEI's are able to offer online learning opportunities to a broader range of students anywhere in the world at any time (European Union, 2014; UNESCO, 2005). These online offerings range from full degree programmes, continuing professional development to short courses like massive online open courses (MOOCs) (Edwards, 2012; Selwyn, 2013; UNESCO, 2005), increasing higher education access and the diversity of the student population (Rovai & Downey, 2010). Online students enrolment have surpassed six million, with nearly one-third of all students in higher education taking at least one online course (UNESCO, 2005). Over five hundred (500) courses are offered online already by HEI's globally, with more expected in the near future (UNESCO, 2005). Additionally, the growth of the open courseware (OCW) movement such as massive online open courses (MOOCs) has also created a new reality in online higher education (Rhoads, Berdan, & Toven-Linsey, 2013). For example some universities have put their courses online by setting up open learning platforms, such as EdX (Yuan & Powell, 2013). In 2005 UNESCO projected that e-learning would grow fifteen-fold, and account for 30% of all educational provisions in the next 10 years (UNESCO, 2005). Some experts believe that the information technology boom would spell the end of "brick and mortar" institutions (UNESCO, 2005) but so far this has not eventuated.

The introduction of digital technologies in the higher education sector has had profound impact on pedagogy (Engelbrecht, 2005; Liaw, Huang, & Chen, 2007). Teachers can now support their pedagogical approaches with computers, iPads and smart boards. Through interactive media teachers are able to incorporate images, graphics, videos, animations and audio elements in their lessons (UNESCO, 2005). The availability of digital assessment tools has also enabled quick feedback on student progress.

Furthermore, digital technology has driven collaboration between higher education institutions. The internet has offered academic staff and students the opportunity to draw on a wide range of materials in a variety of formats (European Union, 2014). Because of digital technology, library resources such as e-books and text are no longer confined geographically, but have become nomadic (UNESCO, 2005). Academic staff and students in some HEIs' especially in the advanced countries can now have access to their own institutions library collections and other HEIs' via the internet twenty four hours a day. Additionally, digital technology has made it possible for HEI's to exchange expertise (UNESCO, 2005).

Selwyn (2013) suggests that digital technology is solving long-standing problems in higher education that have been in place for decades. He cautions that, the effects of digital technology on higher education provision are over-hyped. Especially those concerned with institutions being more learner-centred, flexible and easier to access (Selwyn, 2013). Teaching and learning is often still about instruction rather than interaction, and assessed work rather than active learning (Selwyn, 2013). Even the much hyped MOOCs seem to be simply increasing participation amongst people already involved in university-level education, rather than widening participation to those who were previously excluded (Selwyn, 2013). Digital

technology has also produced several challenges to higher education practitioners. Amongst these are de-professionalisation of academic staff through standardization of work (Noble, 1998) and facilitation of fraudulent practices in higher education (Hallak & Poisson, 2007). These and many other concerns associated with the impact digital technologies can have on the quality of higher might have triggered the need for a policy infrastructure such as quality assurance to mitigate perceived negative effects.

2.5 International quality assurance models in higher education

Concerns over quality improvement in higher education and demands for accountability have led to the importation of quality assurance models from the private sector (Sarrico, Rosa, Teixeira, & Cardoso, 2010). These include the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model, Total Quality Management (TQM), the ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management Framework and the Balanced Scorecard (Mishra, 2007; Rosa & Amaral, 2010; Rosa, Amaral, & Sarrico, 2012). Several voices have been raised about the non-applicability of these frameworks to higher education, especially because they derived from industry and have nothing to do with the ethos of higher education (Massy, 2003; Pratasavitskaya & Stensaker, 2010). Others claim these tools could be applied to higher education as long as they are instruments at the service of institutions and their governance and management boards, subject to the institutions academic mission, goals and strategies (Dill, 1995; Harvey, 1995a; Rosa et al., 2012). Each of these models enumerated above is explained below.

2.5.1 The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM)

The EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) Excellence Model was established by 14 European large companies (Hides, Davies, & Jackson, 2004). It was initially developed as a model to underpin the European Quality Award called European Model for Business Excellence (Rosa & Amaral, 2010). It is a non-prescriptive framework that recognises different ways to achieve organisational excellence (Saravia, Rosa, & Orey, 2003). EFQM excellence model is based on eight fundamental concepts (Rosa & Amaral, 2010). These eight concepts are operationalised using nine criteria belonging to one of two possible categories: Enablers and Results (Rosa & Amaral, 2010). Enablers (or implementation factors) are directly related to what is done and the way it is done, while results have to do with what a given organisation derives from the way the enablers are managed and what they achieve (Saravia et al., 2003). The EFQM Excellence Model is used by many organisations including HEI's in a number of different ways namely as a self-assessment tool, a way to benchmark with other organisations and a guide to identify areas for improvement (Rosa & Amaral, 2010). However, being a model associated with industry, its application in higher education has been resisted by academics and has not received broad based support in HEIs. This notwithstanding, the growing concern for quality, the need to be accountable and the increase presence of the market in higher education have made quality assessment, management, assurance and improvement an unquestionable reality covering teaching, research, services and institutional-level approaches (Rosa & Amaral, 2010). Due to this, some HEI's have no choice but to consider the application of the EFQM Excellence Model (Calvo-Mora, Leal, & Roldan, 2005; Rosa & Amaral, 2010; Saravia et al., 2003) to enable them to meet quality expectations.

2.5.2 Total Quality Management (TQM)

Total Quality Management originated from the Total Quality Control concept espoused by Feigenbaum (Feigenbaum, 1961). It is generally understood as a comprehensive philosophy grounded in implanting awareness of quality in all organizational processes (Harvey, 1995a; Kahsay, 2012; Sallis, 2002). Proponents of TQM argue that it is a deliberate, strategic and systematic organizational and management approach characterized by constant organizational effectiveness, innovation, improvement and change (Kahsay, 2012). However, as is the case with the definition of quality, divergent views on what constitutes Total Quality Management approach have emerged (Rosa & Amaral, 2010). Harvey (1995a) argues that a number of common issues can be found in most TQM approaches. These embrace a clear customer focus, continuous improvement, quality assurance of internal processes, process orientation, prevention instead of inspection to achieve quality, management and leadership commitment, involvement of all employees at all levels, teamwork and systematic problem solving, and focus on facts (Harvey, 1995a).

TQM has its roots established in industry, but there is a strong push for its adoption in educational institutions (Liao, Chang, & Wu, 2010; Mehta, Verma, & Seth, 2014; Telford & Masson, 2005). These authors consider that the continuous quality improvement, quality consistency, participation of academics, students, non-academic staff, satisfaction of the clients' needs and the existence of management procedures that reinforce quality are a number of TQM principles that nobody would consider irrelevant within higher education. However, TQM is not a management approach easily applied to HEIs. Birnbaum (2000) claims a barrier for TQM application in HEIs has to do with the need for a compromise between TQM and the traditions, values and purposes of higher education. Besides, in several institutions

the application of this management tool has not contributed to internal quality improvement (Harvey, 1995a; Rosa & Amaral, 2010). The greatest resistance to quality process improvement comes from academics who think it is just another business oriented fad (Massy, 2003). For Massy (2003), the language of some TQM advocates such as customer, scientific method and removal of all forms of waste are sure to raise the hackles of academics. Nevertheless, it is a possible pathway for higher education institutions to follow to improve quality (Rosa & Amaral, 2010).

2.5.3 The ISO 9001:2008 Standard

The ISO 9001:2008 is a quality management framework applied by many HEIs' (Rosa et al., 2012). It establishes minimum procedures required to set up a quality system in an organisation under these main themes: quality management system, management responsibility, resource management, product realisation and measurement, analysis and improvement (International Organization for Standardization, 2007; Rosa et al., 2012). Developing and implementing a quality management system using the ISO approach requires various phases. Amongst these are:

- determining the needs and expectations of customers and other interested parties;
- establishing a policy for quality and the organisation's quality goals;
- defining the processes and responsibilities needed to attain the quality goals;
- determining and making available the resources needed to attain quality goals;
- establishing the methods to measure each process, efficiency and efficacy;

- applying these measures to determine each process, efficiency and efficacy;
- identifying the means to prevent non-conformities and eliminate their causes;
- establishing and applying a process to the continuous improvement of the organisation's quality management system (International Organization for Standardization, 2007).

The application of the ISO management framework has led to some successes in industry (International Organization for Standardization, 2007). This has enticed some HEI's to consider this model in their quest to achieve quality education delivery. Many references exist in literature with regards to ISO's implementation in HEI's (Rosa et al., 2012), despite the fact that previous studies pointed out gaps specific to the field of higher education within ISO9001:2000/2008 (Becket & Brookes, 2008; El Abbadi, Bouayad, & Lamrini, 2011). However, Sohail, Daud, and Rajadurai (2006) argue that HEIs' who have applied the ISO management framework have obtained benefits such as a cost effective method for accountability, the development of an improvement-driven focus through re-focusing core processes to improve both productivity and service data for quality assurance purposes, improvements in inter-departmental working conditions, and student enrolment (Brookes & Becket, 2007). However, concerns have been raised about the application of this quality management framework in HEIs, especially because the ISO model entails too general a view of the production processes of higher education (Csizmadia, 2006), implying a high degree of process standardisation that is incompatible with HEIs' nature (Rosa, 2003). It is also claimed that, the application of the ISO 9001: 2008 model in higher education has been generically limited to the institution's services and not to their core functions, namely teaching and learning

(Rosa et al., 2012). Even, the ISO strategic plan 2011-2015 does not identify education as one of the sectors where ISO standards provide and achieve benefits (International Organization for Standardization, 2010-2011).

2.5.4 The Balanced Scorecard

The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) translates an organisation's mission and strategy into a comprehensive set of performance measures that provides a framework for a strategic measurement and management system (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). It aims at attaining a balance between several dimensions of performance (Rosa et al., 2012). These cover financial, internal business processes, customer and the needs of learning and growth (Rosa et al., 2012). Organisations that adopt this model are able to achieve the following: clarify and gain consensus about vision and strategic direction; communicate and link strategic objectives and measures throughout the organisation; align departmental and personal goals to the organisation's vision and strategy; plan, set targets and align strategic initiatives; conduct strategic and systematic periodic reviews; and obtain feedback to learn about and improve strategy (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). BSC's adoption and use in educational context is well documented (Asan & Tanyas, 2007; Karathanos & Karathanos, 2005). BSC use in higher education seems to be motivated by issues of performance, comparability, accountability and the fact that educational institutions like businesses need to be managed through strategic concepts in order to meet demands and keep up with change (Asan & Tanyas, 2007). Through the Balanced Scorecard, HEIs' are able to monitor their efforts to provide teaching, learning and research activities, improve customer services, streamline key processes, provide an environment in which their employees are motivated and developed, and enhance their information systems (Cribb & Hogan, 2003). This notwithstanding, the concept

of BSC has not been widely embraced in the higher education sector (Karathanos & Karathanos, 2005).

2.6 Conclusion

The chapter has presented background on aspects of quality and quality assurance in higher education. The literature revealed that there is no consensus on the definition of quality in higher education. The contentious nature of the definition was as a result of the different perspectives held by the various stakeholders in higher education. External factors including: massification and diversification, marketisation and privatisation, decline of state funding in higher education, globalisation and internationalisation have heightened concern for quality in higher education.

Studies suggest that HEIs' responded to these external factors through the establishment of internal quality assurance mechanisms to achieve continuous quality improvement in the delivery of their programmes. They relied on approaches such as reviews, evaluations and performance indicators to assist them to achieve the quality they desired. Additionally, the state established external quality assurance systems to guarantee quality and ensure accountability through methods including accreditation, quality audit and assessment. Concerns over quality improvement in HEIs' and demands for accountability have led to the adoption of business models such as EFQM, TQM and ISO though some scholars question their suitability in higher education.

The literature review showed that university academics either approved or disapproved of quality assurance ideas, policies and implementation procedures. However, no explanation was offered by any identifiable study as to how

perspectives of individuals specifically responsible for quality assurance enactment in polytechnics have been formed. This present study fills a gap in research by investigating rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' of Ghanaian polytechnics quality assurance perspectives, origins of their perspectives and the quality assurance strategies they enacted in their institutions. These are examined using symbolic interactionism.

Chapter 3

Ghanaian higher education context

3.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a brief overview of Ghana's geography, history, political structure, economic status and educational provision. This enables readers to see the context of this study. Then, attention is paid to quality assurance in the polytechnic education sector as this is the focus of this current study.

3.2 Ghana in brief

Ghana, the site of this study is a republican state located on the west coast of Africa, bordered to the west by republic of Côte d'Ivoire, to the east by republic of Togo, to the north by republic of Burkina Faso and to the south by the Gulf of Guinea. Ghana gained independence from Britain on 6th March 1957 and subsequently became a republic on 1st July 1960. The official language for government business and school instruction in Ghana is English. Besides English indigenous Ghanaian languages such as Fante, Akuapim Twi and Asante Twi are widely spoken and understood.

Ghana's population is twenty five million, nine hundred and five thousand (25, 905, 000) with females comprising 51.3% and males 48.7% (World Bank, 2015). Three percent out of this total population have some form of disability (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). The country's population growth rate is 2.1% and life expectancy is estimated at 61 years (World Bank, 2015). Ghana has a youthful population consisting of a large proportion under 15 years of age, and a small proportion of elderly (65 years and over) (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Urban dwellers constitute 50.9% of Ghana's total population however, 2% of the national

population live in makeshift dwellings such as tents, kiosks, containers and attachment to shops (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). The country's adult literacy rate is 74.1% (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Twenty-eight percent of Ghanaians live below the poverty line that is less than US\$ 1.25 a day (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012).

The Akans are the predominant ethnic group in Ghana (47.5%), followed by the Mole Dagbani (16.6%), the Ewe (13.9%), Ga-Dangme (7.4%) and Mande (1.1%) (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Christianity is the dominant religion in Ghana with about 71.2 per cent of the total population professing this faith followed by Muslim religion which accounts for about 17.6 per cent. Small proportions of Ghanaians either adhere to African traditional religion (5.2%) or are not affiliated to any religion (5.3%) (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012).

The total land area of Ghana is 238, 535 square kilometres and is made up of two broad ecological zones—a high forest zone covering much of the southern 1/3rd of the country, and a savannah zone over a drier northern 2/3^{rds} (African Development Bank, 2012). Ghana's climate is tropical and the country has only two main seasons that is a wet and a dry. Ghana is administered by a democratically elected executive president with an elected parliament and independent judiciary (United Nations Development Programme, 2012). Ghana is split into ten administrative regions namely: Northern, Central, Eastern, Western, Volta, Brong Ahafo, Ashanti, Greater Accra, Upper West and Upper East (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Larger cities in Ghana are situated in the south of the country which has relatively high population density and low poverty rates whilst the northern part of Ghana is relatively sparsely populated but with a very high incidence of poverty (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012).

Ghana's ten regions are currently divided into 216 districts in an attempt to ensure effective governance and quality public service provision. However, this appears to be far from being achieved because most districts created in Ghana after 1992 (that is when the country started practicing multi-party democracy) seem to have been done to fulfil political party election promises and win votes of particular constituents rather than to decentralise governance in the country.

Ghana is rich in natural resources such as oil, gas, gold, diamonds, manganese ore, limestone, silica sand and bauxite. The country is endowed with agricultural potential, including forests and significant tracts of savannah land with high agricultural value but these are not being fully exploited (Africa Infrastructure Country Diagnostic, 2010). Oil, gold and cocoa are Ghana's main export commodities. Its economy is the fastest growing and the second largest economy in West Africa after Nigeria (African Development Bank, 2012). Ghana's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is US\$ 48.18 billion and her Gross National Income (GNI) per capita stands at US\$ 1770 (World Bank, 2015). The structure of Ghana's economy is made up of the following: services sector 50.2%, industry 29.2% and agriculture sector 20.6% (Government of Ghana, 2014). Though the agricultural sector constitutes 20.6 % of Ghana's economy, it provides employment for more than 60% of the country's total workforce (Government of Ghana, 2014).

Ghana is an emerging economy and is currently classified by the World Bank as a lower middle level income country (World Bank, 2015). The country's vision is to attain fully-fledged middle income status by the year 2020 (Government of Ghana, 2013). Ghana wants to achieve this via industrialisation especially manufacturing, modernised agriculture and sustainable exploitation of Ghana's natural resources, particularly gold, oil and gas (Government of Ghana, 2013). Rapid infrastructural

and human development and application of science, technology and innovation are hoped to enhance employment and income earning opportunities for sustained poverty reduction (Government of Ghana, 2013).

Despite these aspirations, Ghana's current economy appears gloomy. Ghana faces key challenges in its development. The country suffers from huge infrastructure deficit (Africa Infrastructure Country Diagnostic, 2010). This covers electricity, water, roads, communication and transport. Ghana's annual infrastructure funding gap is about \$0.4 billion per year and would require a sustained spending of 2.3 billion dollars annually over 10 years to address its infrastructure deficit. In addition to this is fiscal indiscipline on the part of past and current Ghana governments. Ghana has large fiscal and balance of payments deficits. Its inflation rate is currently 16.8% (Ghana Statistical Service, 2015), high for a country classified as lower middle income. The country's currency (the Ghana cedi) is weak and continues to struggle against major foreign currencies such as the US dollar, the Pound Sterling and the Euro. The Ghana cedi depreciated 14.15 percent and 31.2 percent in 2013 and 2014 respectively against these major currencies (Ghana Statistical Service, 2015). Ghana's public debt stock as a percentage of GDP currently stands at 60.8 percent (Government of Ghana, 2014) highlighting the nation's indebtedness. Furthermore, Ghana's over reliance on revenues from export of primary commodities makes its economy vulnerable to external market shocks. Ghana's quest to sustain its economic growth and seek competitive advantage in the globalised knowledge economy requires her higher education institutions to graduate a highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce. Figure 1 depicts the map of Ghana and its ten administrative regions.



Figure 1. Map of Ghana

Source: adapted from (Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011)

3.3 Education structure

3.3.1 Overview

Education in Ghana is divided into three phases: basic education (kindergarten, primary school, junior high school), secondary education (senior high school, technical and vocational education) and tertiary education (universities, polytechnics and colleges) (Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011). Ghana operates a 6+3+3+4 school system. This means 6 years primary, 3 years junior high, 3 years secondary and 4 years university and is mainly classified under pre-tertiary and tertiary. This is explained in detail in the next sections. English language is the medium of instruction at all levels of education except the first few years of primary school where the main Ghanaian language of the school locality is used for teaching (Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011). Ghana's academic year usually runs from August to May inclusive. The responsibility for education lies with the Ghanaian Ministry of Education (MOE). The MOE has under it two major agencies namely: the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE). The GES is responsible for implementing policy in respect of primary and secondary (general and vocational) education, as formulated by the Ministry of Education (Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011) whilst the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) is in charge of the higher education sector. Figure 2 below shows Ghana's educational structure from primary to tertiary levels and the possible articulation paths.

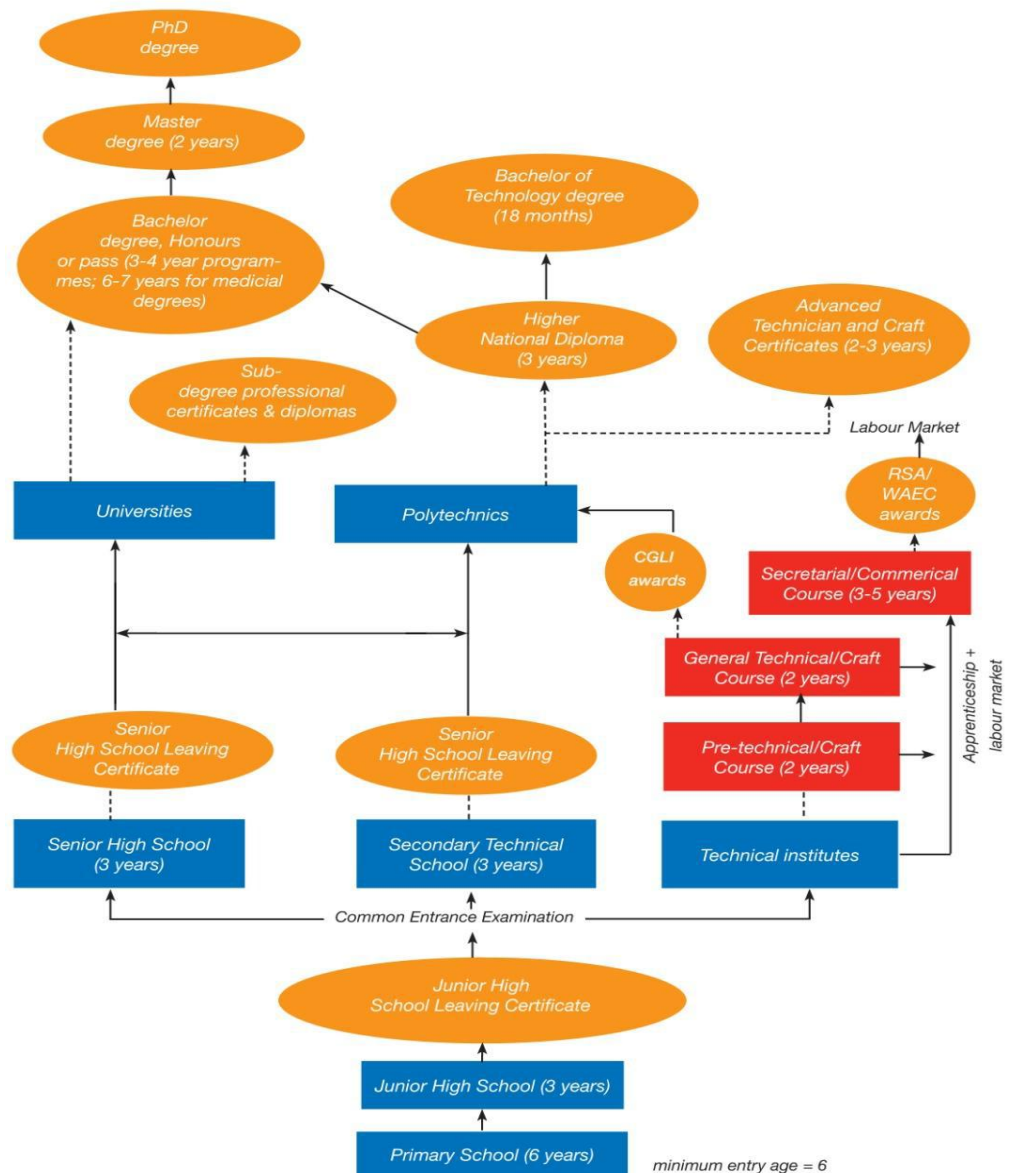


Figure 2. The current education structure of Ghana

Source: adapted from (Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011:14)

3.3.2 Pre-tertiary education

Pre-school (kindergarten) education caters for children from three to five years of age and is not compulsory. Basic education is free and compulsory and is made up of six years of primary school and three years of junior high school. The basis for this is the 1996 Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme. This is a policy executed by the government of Ghana to ensure that every Ghanaian child of school going age has access to basic education (Ministry of Education/Ghana Education Service, 2001). Basic school graduates sit for Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) at the end of the ninth grade. This is a national examination conducted by West African Examination Council (WAEC) a regional examination body for Anglophone countries in the West Africa sub region. Basic education is followed by three years of senior high school, which is not compulsory but is subsidized by government (Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011). Senior high school has four parallel education streams (i.e. general education, vocational education, technical education and agricultural education) with a core of compulsory subjects in the first two years i.e. mathematics, integrated science, social studies and English language (Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011). At the end of their secondary education, students sit for a national examination known as West African Senior Secondary School Certificate (WASSCE), administered on behalf of the Ministry of Education by the West African Examination Council (WEAC). Candidates must obtain a pass in at least six subjects (three compulsory and three electives) in order to pursue higher education.

3.3.3 Higher education

Higher education in Ghana dates back to the pre-independence era. In 1948 the British colonial government established the University College of Gold Coast and

affiliated it to the University of London to be in charge of its academic programmes (Girdwood, 1999). This relationship was severed when Ghana gained independence in 1957. The University College of Gold Coast attained sovereign university status, its name was changed to University of Ghana and given the powers to award its own degrees in 1961 (Girdwood, 1999). In December, 1960, the Government of Ghana appointed a University Commission to advise it on the future development of university education in Ghana. Following the report of the commission which came out early 1961, Government transformed the then Kumasi College of Technology which was established by a Government Ordinance on 6th October, 1951 into a full-fledged University and renamed it Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) by an Act of Parliament on 22nd August, 1961 (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, 2015). Similarly, a third university the University College of Cape Coast was established in 1962 and upgraded to a full university in October 1971 by an Act of Parliament, the University of Cape Coast Act 1971 (University of Cape Coast, 2015). The University of Cape Coast Act 1971 has since been replaced by the University of Cape Coast Law 1992 (PNDC LAW 278). The number of universities in Ghana remained three until the education reforms in 1987 (Eshun, 1998).

3.4 The higher education reforms of 1987

The period from 1966 to the mid-1980s was a turbulent one for Ghana, with a series of military coups interspersed with brief periods of civilian government, and an economic crisis in the mid-1970s brought on in part by the global increase in the price of oil and disappointing growth in the country's economy (Girdwood, 1999). The quality of education deteriorated, school enrolments stagnated and the proportion of the GDP allocated to education was reduced from a high of 6.4 percent

in the mid-1970s to about 1.3 percent in the mid-1980s (Dwomoh, 1994). The education reforms of 1987 were initiated by the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), a military government led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings as part of a Structural Adjustment Programme negotiated with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank and aimed at halting the decline in expansion and quality through a radical overhaul of both the structure and the content of education (Acheampong, 2008).

The University Rationalisation Committee (URC) was established by the government with the task of undertaking a comprehensive review of postsecondary education in the country as part of the 1987 Education Reform Programme (University Rationalisation Committee, 1988).

The specific objectives of the review included the following:

- re-defining the structure of the tertiary education system to comprise all post-secondary and pre-service training institutions under the general control of the Ministry of Education;
- making tertiary education more cost-effective;
- increasing the capacity of institutions for income generation and encouraging private sector participation in funding of tertiary institutions;
- increasing access for qualified people, improving gender balance and providing quality education;
- obtaining an appropriate balance between science/technology and social sciences/humanities enrolments in relation to national manpower needs;
- improving the management of the tertiary institutions (University Rationalisation Committee, 1988).

The URC's recommendation included the creation of a unified tertiary sector and reforms to management, academic programmes, governance and funding structures of post-secondary institutions (University Rationalisation Committee, 1988). In addition to the URC recommendations was the need to expand the tertiary sector. Such expansion was to be achieved through regrouping, rationalisation and upgrading of existing post-secondary institutions to tertiary status, and the establishment of new ones (University Rationalisation Committee, 1988). The policy framework recommended by the URC was subsequently reformulated in 1991 as a White Paper entitled "Reforms to the Tertiary Education System". The reforms to the tertiary sector were then carried from 1993 through a World Bank funded Tertiary Education Project (TEP) (Girdwood, 1999; Samoff & Carol, 2003).

3.5 The present Ghanaian higher education sector

Ghana currently operates a binary system of higher education. The higher education sector includes universities and non-universities. These are 9 public universities, 10 polytechnics, 11 public nurse training colleges, 38 public colleges of education, and over 50 private tertiary institutions (Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011). Ghanaian universities are a mix of public, private, national and international institutions whilst the non-university sector includes polytechnics, nurse training colleges, colleges of education and several national or international specialized colleges (Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011) all under the supervision of the National Council for Tertiary Education (Bailey, Cloete, & Pillay, 2011).

The Universities offer academic programmes at Bachelor, Master and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) levels with the non-university institutions offering sub-degree professional higher education (certificates and diplomas) (Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011). Enrolment in the Ghanaian higher education sector has increased steadily in

the last decades. Gross Enrolment Ratio rose from 2.9 in 1999 to 12.14 in the year 2011. Tertiary enrolment increased from below 9,997 in 1992 to more than 132,000 in 2010, representing an increase of 1,300% (Bailey et al., 2011). Enrolment in the tertiary sector continues to expand, surpassing the national target of 174,574 for 2012 with 185, 268 in public institutions alone and additional 32, 275 in private institutions in the same year (Ministry of Education, 2012b). Total enrolment in the ten polytechnics stands at 53, 078 (National Council for Tertiary Education, 2014a). Despite the expansion in the tertiary education sector, it has been estimated that only about 10% of the age cohort from junior secondary schools gain admission to tertiary education institutions (Effah, Newman, & Pillay, 2009). Further to this are gender disparities in the Ghanaian tertiary education sector. The proportion of female students is lower than that of males across all levels of tertiary institutions in Ghana, with the exception of Nurse Training Colleges where 75.3% of the students are females (Government of Ghana, 2013).

Ghana's technological and industrial development plan requires the nation to achieve a ratio of 60:40 sciences to humanities manpower base by the year 2020 (Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 2010b). Yet enrolments in Ghana's higher education sector are skewed towards humanities. For example, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Arts/Humanities ratio was 36:64 in 2001-2002, 35:65 in 2002-2003 and 38:62 in 2007-2008 academic years respectively in public universities. In the case of the polytechnics, the ratio was 32:68 in 2006-2007 for STEM and Arts/ Humanities respectively (Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 2010a). The ratio of STEM to Arts/Humanities in 2010-2011 was 40:60 and 33:67 for public universities and polytechnics respectively in favour of Arts/Humanities (National Council for Tertiary Education, 2012).

Higher education in Ghana is mainly funded by the government. Ghana's education expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure is 23.2% (Ministry of Education, 2012a). Out of this, 21.6% is allocated to the higher education sector (Ministry of Education, 2012a). Unfortunately this falls short of the funds required by higher education institutions, negatively impacting on their academic operations (Materu, 2007). To boost funding in the sector, the government established the Ghana Education Trust (GET) Fund to provide additional funds for the development of physical and academic infrastructure (Bailey et al., 2011). Despite these financial arrangements, public investment in the Ghanaian higher education sector has not been able to keep pace with enrolments in the sector (Materu, 2007). To enhance their financial sustainability, Ghanaian public higher education institutions obtain additional funding through what is known as "cost sharing". Officially, public tertiary education in Ghana is tuition free, however students contribute towards the use of academic facilities through payment of what is termed "academic facilities user fees" (Bailey et al., 2011). Additionally, Government allows public universities to allocate 10% and 5% of their enrolment quota to foreign and Ghanaian full-fee paying students respectively. For example, student fees contributed 31 percent of university budgets in 2005 (Adu & Orivel, 2006). Though cost-sharing schemes were met with student resistance prior to their introduction, they have brought in additional funding to supplement insufficient government subventions (Materu, 2007). This together with other funds derived from admission fees, consultancies and rent income allows public higher education institutions to generate substantial "own revenue" (Bailey et al., 2011). These financial arrangements exclude the private higher education sector. Private higher education institutions receive their support from the government in the form of tax exemptions. The financial position of most public higher education institutions appears to have improved as a result of these

interventions however, the Ghanaian higher education sector is still considered to be underfunded compared to other similar sectors (Materu, 2007).

3.6 Ghanaian polytechnics

Ghanaian polytechnics are state owned institutions that offer vocational and technical higher education. They were upgraded to tertiary status in 1993 to offer Higher National Diplomas (HND), which were considered to be equivalent to a bachelor degree by the Government's White Paper of 1991 (Government of Ghana, 1991). Prior to this upgrading, polytechnics' were post-secondary institutions that trained vocational, technical and business students for external examination bodies like City and Guilds and Royal Society of Arts (RSA) of the United Kingdom.

Ghanaian polytechnics are career-oriented and are required to supply the state with middle level manpower. Specifically, their mission is to among other things provide tertiary education in the fields of manufacturing, commerce, science, technology, applied social science, applied arts and any other field approved by the Minister of Education (Government of Ghana, 2007b; National Council for Tertiary Education, 2014b). Polytechnics derive their legal framework for operation from the Polytechnics Law of 2007 (Act 745), which replaced the Polytechnic Law of 1992 (PNDC Law 321) (Government of Ghana, 2007b). This new law expanded the mandates of polytechnics by allowing them to offer qualifications in a wide range of applied arts and science disciplines at sub-degree, degree and postgraduate degree levels (Government of Ghana, 2007b) though there is still an atmosphere of stakeholder dissatisfaction on the quality of polytechnic education existing since the polytechnics attained tertiary status (Ghana National Union of Polytechnic Students, 2012).

Polytechnics are spread across the country with one situated in the nation's capital city (Accra) and one in each of its nine administrative regional capital cities. Their establishment in the country occurred during different periods. The pioneer polytechnics located in Accra, Takoradi and Kumasi were established in the pre-independence era by the colonial government (Honyenuaga, 2013) but as post-secondary polytechnics (offering non-tertiary programmes). This number increased to six with the establishment of three additional polytechnics (Ho Polytechnic, Tamale Polytechnic and Cape Coast Polytechnic in 1986 (Bakah, 2011; Honyenuaga, 2013). The late 1990's and early 2000's also saw the number increased to ten with the establishment of four extra polytechnics (Koforidua Polytechnic, Sunyani Polytechnic, Bolgatanga Polytechnic and Wa Polytechnic) (Bakah, 2011). They are strategically positioned in the country to improve access to higher education and ensure equity of provision.

Entry into polytechnics requires passes in the senior high school leaving certificate from a secondary school, secondary technical school or completion of general technical or craft courses at a technical institute (Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011). Polytechnics mainly offer Higher National Diplomas. The Higher National Diploma is a 3-year postsecondary qualification in vocational and technical education that is centrally certified by the National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations (NABPTEX) (Ng'ethe, Subotzky, & Afeti, 2008). NABPTEX is a legally mandated examining body backed by an Act of Parliament (Act 492 of 1994) and is responsible for developing the HND curriculum, review of syllabuses, conduct of examinations and the award of diplomas (Government of Ghana, 1994a). Twenty-nine (29) HND programmes were offered within the polytechnic system as at the 2011/2012 academic year (National Council for Tertiary Education, 2014b). (Refer to appendix "G" for the list of HND programmes).

Currently, some polytechnics (Accra Polytechnic, Kumasi Polytechnic, Ho Polytechnic and Takoradi Polytechnic) offer Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech) degree programmes (Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011). These are two year HND top-up degree programme and the highest obtainable professional qualification in Ghanaian polytechnics. They have a strong practical component and are expected to offer HND graduates with a more logical avenue for academic and professional progression (National Council for Tertiary Education, 2014b). Hitherto HND graduates might have to study for additional three years or more before obtaining a bachelor degree at the university due to differences in orientation of university and polytechnic education (Ng'ethe et al., 2008). The government of Ghana is planning to convert Ghanaian polytechnics into technical universities by September 2016 with the objective of upgrading the training and qualifications offered by the polytechnics. It has tabled a Technical Universities Bill in parliament to provide the necessary legislative backing (Fredua-Kwarteng & Ahia, 2015). Figure 1 shows the political regions where the ten polytechnics are situated.

3.7 Quality assurance in Ghanaian polytechnics

Ghanaian polytechnics have been placed under three external quality assurance regulators namely, the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), the National Accreditation Board (NAB) and the National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations (NABPTEX) to monitor and control their academic activities to ensure quality polytechnic education. The National Council for Tertiary Education is responsible for ensuring that academic activities of polytechnics are financially sustainable and support national development (Government of Ghana, 1992; Njoku, 2012). The National Accreditation Board's role includes accreditation of institutions and academic programmes (Government of Ghana, 2007a; Njoku,

2012) whilst the National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations (NABPTEX) is responsible for curriculum enrichment, conduct of examinations and award of Higher National Diplomas (HND) to graduates of the polytechnics (Government of Ghana, 1994b; Njoku, 2012). NABPTEX's current mandate covers only HND programmes but not degree programmes such as Bachelor of Technology offered by the polytechnics. To ensure the quality of the degree programmes offered by polytechnics, NAB requires polytechnics to be affiliated to long established public Ghanaian universities in order to offer degree programmes. This affiliation relationship is expected to last for a minimum of 10 years (National Accreditation Board, 2010) and it is intended that the universities assist the polytechnics to build their internal capacity for quality assurance. These roles played by external quality assurance regulators have enhanced the image, deepened public trust and increased the attractiveness of polytechnics. At the institutional level, polytechnics have put in place procedures to complement the initiatives of their external regulators to assure the integrity of their standards. These initiatives cover internal quality assurance policy formulations and the establishment of quality assurance directorates. The quality assurance directorates are required to promote quality culture in the institutions and also ensure that academic staff and students adhere to the institutions accepted quality practices. Though these are the major goals linked to most internal quality systems of the polytechnics, functions of internal quality systems seems to vary between various Ghanaian polytechnics. This might be as a result of differences in institutional characteristics which impact on each polytechnic's internal quality systems. Quality assurance in the Ghanaian polytechnic sector is a recent phenomenon. It is still going through policy reforms and can best be described as a "work -in- progress".

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter outlined how Ghana inherited its education system from Britain. Ghana's education system is categorised into pre-tertiary and tertiary. The pre-tertiary comprises basic and secondary education. The basic is free and compulsory and ends at the ninth grade after which students take the Basic Education Certificate Examination. Results from this examination determine entry to senior higher school, secondary technical school or technical institute. Senior higher school and technical schools are both 3 years in duration. Graduates of these institutions with the requisite passes in the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate can pursue higher education. The higher education sector comprises universities and non-universities. The universities provide academic courses at bachelor, masters and doctoral degree levels. The non-universities on the other hand offer specific professional higher education at sub-degree levels. Polytechnics belong to the non-university higher education sector. They offer qualifications such as HND and B.Tech. In order to ensure quality polytechnic education provision, the government has mandated the National Council for Tertiary Education, the National Accreditation Board and the National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations to regulate the academic operations of polytechnics. Polytechnics have their own institutionalised quality systems and procedures to complement the national external quality mechanisms.

Chapter 4

Theoretical framework

4.1 Introduction

Symbolic interactionism is the theoretical framework employed in studying rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' of Ghanaian polytechnics quality assurance perspectives, origins of their quality assurance perspectives and quality assurance strategies. This framework is appropriate for this study because the central tenet on which the theory rests is people's actions result from their interpretations of the situations that confront them in their everyday life (Blumer, 1962, p. 181). Fundamental to interactionism is an emphasis on human capacities, capabilities, and creative agency (Katovich, 2011). Individuals form perspectives of their world based on past and current socialisation. This is actualised in the application of symbols whose meanings and significance are acquired by the individual. By acquiring a particular set of symbols and meanings humans are enabled with capacity for distinct individual and group interpretation of reality (Malesevic, 2004). Symbolic interactionism enabled me to understand how perspectives formed by individuals through past and current interactions have affected their views on quality assurance. Hence, the adoption of symbolic interactionism for this study. This view is endorsed by Athens (2010) when he acknowledged symbolic interactionism as a theory that places emphasis on human interaction such as the case of this research.

A polytechnic, as any other organisation is made up of individuals whose roles in the organization involve the self interacting with others. The perspective of these individuals influences the institutional policy formulation and practices concerned with quality assurance. The interactions these individuals engage in are influenced by their previous and present socialisation. These individuals with diverse

background in terms of professional training and career development might have undergone different socialisation in the past. These experiences may affect their judgement on quality assurance. Social interaction shapes perspectives and enables human beings to create and exchange meanings (Malesevic, 2004).

4.2 Symbolic interactionism

4.2.1 Historical overview

Symbolic interactionism grew out of the American Philosophical tradition of pragmatism in the late 19th century which was spear-headed by William James, John Dewey, Charles S. Peirce and other pragmatist including Mead at the University of Chicago (Watson, 2010). Mead elaborated the philosophical underpinnings of social psychology which was founded both upon contemporaneous behaviourist and pragmatist thought (Watson, 2010). Mead's position was contrary to the philosophy that had prevailed since Rene Descartes by including human consciousness as an essential outcome of a social process (Blumer, 2004; daSilva, 2008). In his philosophy of mind, Mead emphasized that the individual was au fond, a biological organism, part of nature, part of evolution, building a biological concept into his philosophy of mind (Watson, 2010).

After the demise of Mead, Blumer (1969) a past student of Mead indicated it was necessary for him to deal explicitly with many concepts which were implied in the works of Mead and his fellow scholars. Blumer then published selections of Mead's lecture notes as a foundation for the sociological orientation he called "symbolic interactionism" with his 1937 essay on "Social Psychology", in "Attitudes and the Social Act" (1955), "Society as Symbolic Interaction" (1962), "Sociological Implications of the Thought of George Herbert Mead" (1966), "The Methodological

Position of Symbolic Interactionism” (Blumer, 1969) and “George Herbert Mead” (1981) (Cook, 2011).

The central theme of symbolic interactionism is that human life is lived in the symbolic domain. Interactionists agree that humans rely on shared symbols to construct their realities (Deegan, 2008) and on the methodological requirement of understanding behaviour by “getting inside” the reality of the actor (Athens, 2010). Despite these stands, symbolic interactionism is not a uniform theoretical perspective. Differences exist between those who emphasize process and those who emphasize structure in studying human realities. The former, associated with Blumer and branded as the Chicago School, advocates the use of qualitative methods in studying the process of reality construction within natural social settings (Musolf, 2003). Chicago interactionists strive to understand human behaviour, but not to predict and control it, nor have mere statistical knowledge of it (Musolf, 2003, p. 87).

The latter, linked to Manford Kuhn and labelled the Iowa School advocates the use of quantitative methods in studying the products of social interaction (Katovich, Miller, & Stewart, 2003). Kuhn elaborated Mead’s social behaviourism in an effort to establish a theory of self that was both testable and usable (Katovich et al., 2003). Iowa interactionist stress the importance of viewing social behaviour as purposive, socially constructed, coordinated social acts informed by preceding events in the context of projected acts that may occur (Katovich et al., 2003, p. 124). Although the Iowa School incorporated interactionist emphasis on process, it maintained a stable standpoint and a scientific objective of developing a sociological social science as the analytical center of the project (Katovich et al., 2003). The theory through its history has gone through various stages with variety of scholars

interpreting specific concepts of the symbolic interactionism theory differently. Table 1 below depicts a historical overview of symbolic interactionism and the phases it has gone through. My intention in this chapter however, is not to discuss the relative strengths and weakness associated with each phase of the development of symbolic interactionism but to outline a framework for the current research.

Table 1

Historical overview of symbolic interaction: phases and time periods (Denzin, 1992, p. 9)

The canon 1890-1932	Empirical/ theoretical 1933-50	Transition/ new texts 1951-62	Criticism/ferment 1963-70	Ethnography 1971-80	Diversity /new theory 1981-90
Representative Texts					
James, 1890; Cooley, 1910; Dewey, 1922; Thomas & Znaniecki , 1918- 20; Simmel, 1908; Park & Burgess, 1921; Payne Fund, 1928; Zorbaugh, 1929; Shaw, 1930; Rice (ed.), 1931; Blumer, 1931	Mead, 1934, 1936 , 1938; Blumer, 1933, 1937, 1939; Peirce, 1934; Karp f, 1932; Kreuger & Reckless, 1930; Lindesmit h, 1947; Second World war; Strauss, 1949; Conwell & Sutherland , 1937; Lee, 1949; Donllard, 1935	Gerth & Mills 1953; Faris, 1952; Park, 1950; Huges, 1950; Goffman, 1959; Strauss, 1959; Shib utani, 1961 ; Hickman & Kuhn, 1956; Martindale , 1960; Rose (ed), 1962; Blumer, 1962; Stone, 1962; Strauss (ed) 1956; Pfeutze, 1954; Reck, 1964; Shils, 1961; Becker et al., 1961; Mills, 1959; Natanson, 1956; Ames, 1956	Becker, 1963; Aldine series; Blumer, 1966; Faris, 1970; Manis & Meltzer (eds) 1967; Glasser & Strauss, 1967; Becker, 1967; Garfinkel, 1967b; Goffman, 1963a,b; Vaughan & Reynolds, 1968; Blumer, 1969; Gouldner, 1970; Matza, 1969; Blumer & Hughes, 1969, 1970 (discussed in Lofland, 1980) Shubitani (ed) 1970; Stone & Farberman (eds) 1970; Vietnam War; Becker, 1970	Douglas (9ed) 1971; Hughes, 1971; Urban Life started, 1972; Manis & Meltzer (eds) 1972; Mullins, 1973; Goffman, 1974, 1979; Strauss, 1978; SSSI formed, 1974; Couch & Hintz (eds), 1975; Meltzer et al., 1975; J.T. Carey, 1975; Douglas, 1976; Symbolic Interaction started, 1977; Rock, 1979, (ed), 1990; Reynolds, 1990	Stone & Farbe man (eds.), 1981; Maines, 1982; Goffman , 1981; Blumer, 1984; Couch et al., 1986b Emotion s section started, 1987; Lyman & Vidich, 1988; Mall, 1987; Manning , 1988b; Perinban ayagam, 1985; Haberma ns, 1987; Becker & McCall, 1990

4.2.2 Core elements of symbolic interactionism

The core principles linked with symbolic interactionism emanate from the concept of self (I and Me), symbols, significant symbols, meaning, role taking, significant others, the generalised other and formation of perspectives (Blumer, 2004). Blumer's first principle states that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them (Blumer, 1969). Things refer to physical objects, individuals, organisations, policies, practices of others and issues individuals/groups have to deal with daily. The second principle is that, meaning arises out of the social interaction that one has with one's fellow (Blumer, 1969). This premise highlights the importance of social interaction in the process of constructing meaning. Meaning is not implicit at birth, instead it is acquired through socialisation and interpretations of the social encounters of an individual. Meaning is established in communication (Mead, 1932). The third principle states that, the meaning of a thing for a person grows out of the ways in which other persons act toward the person with regard to the thing (Blumer, 1969). An individual's interpretation of meaning guides and determines his/her action. Meaning develops through interaction (Hollander, 2011) and self arises out of interaction.

Self is that which is known (Weigert & Gecas, 2003). The self arises solely through social interaction in which actors take the role of others toward themselves, addressing themselves as social objects just as they do other objects (Musolf, 2003). The "self" comprises a kind of back-and-forth dialectic between the individuals spontaneously-acting "I" and his/her talking of him/herself as an object perceived from the standpoint of other, the "Me" (Watson, 2010). The "I" and "Me" identified as the two components of self make construction of meanings possible. The "I" comprises the side of freedom of initiative, while the "me" phase refers to "attitudes,

roles, meanings, pressure, and values of others which are organized into one's self through the agency of role-taking" (Geniusas, 2006, p. 247).

A self not only enables one to assume the attitudes of the other people but also enables an individual to assume the attitude of what Mead called our "generalized other" or community in deciding the course of action that he/she should take in a situation (Athens, 2010, p. 93). The generalized other does not refer to the attitudes of others becoming generalized into an abstract attitude, but instead refers to the generalization of the self's own previous attitudes into the attitude of the other (Gillespie, 2005). The notion of self reflects the dualities of subject-object, knower-known, agent-responder that constitute a living person (Weigert & Gecas, 2003, p. 267).

Human beings ability to use symbols forms the basis of symbolic interactionism. Human beings employ symbols, carve out and act toward objects rather than merely responding to stimuli, and act on the basis of interpreted and not only fixed meanings (Hewitt, 2003, p. 307). The value of symbols in interaction rests on the fact that it makes communication possible. Symbols are abstract meanings attached to objects, people and behaviours (Hollander, 2011). Symbols also refer to plans and patterns of activity involving complex interactions among people over extended periods of time (Hewitt, 2003, p. 309). Individuals behave towards symbols not on the basis of the concrete properties of the object, but on the meanings that these objects have for them (Hollander, 2011). Symbols represent something because there is consensus amongst its users on what it means. Symbolic meanings are unique to particular individuals or groups (Hollander, 2011) even though the meaning attached to symbols can change over time. Human social life depends on symbols. Humans learn the cultural meanings of symbols through socialisation, where the individual not only learns the meaning of objects but also creates the

meaning of objects as an active participant in his/her own socialisation (Musolf, 2003). Individuals attach symbolic meaning to objects, behaviours, and other people, and develop and transmit these meanings through interaction (Hollander, 2011). Having a mutual understanding of a symbol helps individuals understand each other. The distinction between gestural and symbolic communication is central to Mead's understanding of human beings and their world (Hewitt, 2003). Significant symbols differ from gestures in that they involve a level of self-consciousness on the part of the individual producing that symbol (Watson, 2010). Human beings are symbolic and act on signs. The symbol becomes genuinely significant when the recipient imputes the same meaning to this indication as does the producing self. Then a shared scheme of interpretation and the derivative possibility of concerted or joint action becomes likely (Watson, 2010). This implies that meaning is not inherent but formed through interpretative process by an individual during socialisation. Interaction with diverse others, exposes an individual to more chances for diversity in his/her interpretation of objects, interpretation which may affect him/herself (Musolf, 2003). Meaning is anchored in what people do, as well as in their reflections on what they have done, are doing, or will do (Hewitt, 2003). Meaning making is a creative activity that occurs through language which is itself a symbolic system (Hollander, 2011).

Language, for Mead comprised a vast repository of significant symbols. It is these symbols incarnate in language, which so fundamentally set apart human social organisation and communities from that of all other animals (Watson, 2010). Through significant symbols a given social actor can take the role of the other, can prefigure the results of his/her action from the other's standpoint and from that standpoint can treat him/herself as an object, the Me (Watson, 2010). "Me" is

symbolic, in the sense that it arises when self is both in the attitude of self (engaged in some action) and in the attitude of other (reacting to that action) (Gillespie, 2005).

Role taking is the anticipation of another's line of action which gives coherence and significance to one's particular act (Halas, 2010). The standpoint of others enables an individual to come out of him/herself and see him/herself. Interaction does not occur only between the "I" and "Me" but other individuals in the social world. The notion of "the other" comprises anyone who is part of an individual's orientational field including significant others and generalised other (Watson, 2010). Individuals are active in society. When individuals interact, they do so within a socio-historical environment that provides certain meanings and shape to the interaction, at the same time as the interaction itself creates societal alteration (Katovich & Maines, 2003). Human beings make up society and it is society which makes human beings. Each exists because of the other. Symbolic interactionism sees group life as a process in which people as they meet in their different situations, indicate lines of action to each other and interpret the indications made by others. This means that their respective lines of behaviour have to be built up in the light of the lines of actions of others with whom they are interacting (Blumer, 1969, p. 52). This process occurs through socialisation. This is discussed in detail later in the chapter.

4.2.3 Criticisms of symbolic interactionism

Symbolic interactionism has been criticized by various scholars since its emergence. Manning (2003) indicates that the standard critiques of symbolic interactionism have been on the following issues: its self-focus, its failure to explicate structure, its lack of a framework for organisational analysis and its descriptive and ethnographic base. Interactionists have been criticized for suggesting

that agency is all that there is, that social structure does not matter (Sandstrom & Fine, 2003). Symbolic interactionism challenges reified definitions of social structure. Seen as external and constraining structure, is often separated from the observable behaviour of interacting individuals (Franks, 2003).

Interactionists have often been described, and sometimes describe themselves, as fundamentally unscientific, doubtful of the possibility of any objective truth (Sandstrom & Fine, 2003). Denzin (1992) writes that symbolic interactionism has been haunted by a double-edged specter. While arguing for an interpretive, subjective study of human experience, interactionists also strive to build a science of human conduct, a social realist approach based on natural scientific criteria (Sandstrom & Fine, 2003). This tension is evident within interactionism's most important and influential writings and this raises a critical question for the perspective: How can one be objective, while still being subjective? (Sandstrom & Fine, 2003). Symbolic interactionism is astructural (Reynolds, 1993), focusing on micro level, everyday face-to-face interactions (Stewart, 2003). Symbolic interactionists also reject individualistic psychologies in which the social process or society is viewed as presupposing, and being a product of mind (Meltzer, 2003).

Symbolic interactionism is methodologically diverse. Debates over the proper methodology to use are lively, and some claim that symbolic interactionism is divided between humanists and positivists, or between interpretivists and realists (Sandstrom & Fine, 2003) because some interactionists accept a systematic collection of data, whether through in-depth interviewing, ethnography, introspection, historical analyses or surveys (Sandstrom & Fine, 2003).

Symbolic interactionism's failure to address emotional orientation to all situations has been cited as one of the theory's shortcomings (Collins, 2004). Lastly,

symbolic interactionism's identity has also been challenged and remade as its proponents have borrowed more extensively from other theoretical approaches to invigorate their analyses, and its concepts have been adopted by sociologists operating outside of the interactionist orbit (Sandstrom & Fine, 2003). These criticisms motivated Mullins and Mullins (1973, p. 98) to pronounce the obituary of symbolic interactionism earlier with the following statements:

It is clear that the original ideas that developed within symbolic interactionism.....have run their course intellectually and socially.....As a change-maker and general orientation for sociology and as the loyal opposition to structural functionalism, however, it has come to an end.

However, Plummer (1991) argues that it was a premature burial. Symbolic interactionism is still too alive for an epitaph (Fine, 1993). Symbolic interactionism continues to be a lively, vigorous, and creative perspective as demonstrated by its thriving journals, its growing organisational membership, its well-attended annual meetings and its ongoing intellectual contributions (Sandstrom & Fine, 2003). It also continues to emerge in new forms, blending in innovative ways with constructionist, dramaturgical, feminist, phenomenology, structuralist, postmodern, formal, discursive, and everyday life sociologies (Reynolds, 1993). This has shed light on the emerging landscape of symbolic interactionism and how it is being applied currently. This diversity has been beneficial in many respects, particularly in fostering innovation (Sandstrom & Fine, 2003), however it has also led to fragmentation, a process that threatens to vitiate interactionism's centre (Sandstrom & Fine, 2003).

4.3 Socialisation

4.3.1 Overview of socialisation

Socialisation is fundamental to symbolic interactionism and rests on the idea that the self is a social product (Berger & Berger, 1991). Socialization is a process of internalizing the expectations, standards, and norms of a given society (Austin & McDaniels, 2006). Paramount among these are the social skills, social understandings, and emotional maturity needed for interaction with other individuals to fit in with the functioning of social dyads and larger groups (Maccoby, 2008). Many agents are involved in the socialisation of a person.

Socialisation agents are individuals and institutions who help to facilitate the adjustment of newcomers through various actions such as providing information, feedback, and resources (Klein & Heuser, 2008). The child's family of origin is the first and in many cases the most enduring socializing agent, joined by peer groups, schools, religious institutions, and in adulthood, employers and intimate partners as sources of norms for social behaviour (Maccoby, 2008). Socialisation involves a variety of outcomes. While some outcomes are deliberately hoped for on the part of agents of socialisation, others may be unintended side effects of particular socialisation practices (Maccoby, 2008).

Socialisation is a reciprocal process in the sense that not only the socialised but the socialisers are affected by it (Berger & Berger, 1991). Children should not be seen in the socialisation process as simply taking on the standards of others but playing an active part in the construction of their own standards (Bugental & Grusec, 2006). Both children and adults are active agents in the socialisation process though their roles and goals are distinct (Maccoby, 2008). While a deep and lasting socialisation is often assumed to occur primarily in childhood, socialisation does of course go on throughout the lifespan as individuals enter new social settings where

new patterns of social behaviour may be needed (Maccoby, 2008). Socialisation makes it possible for individuals to prepare themselves for various roles in life (Kibera & Kimokoti, 2008). Socialisation begins at birth and ends with death, occurs in many ways and at all times. Socialisation does not happen in a vacuum but occurs when there is the existence of a socializee, socializer, and a definite environment (Kibera & Kimokoti, 2008). The socializee and the socializer interacts in this definite environment for the desired kind of socialisation to be achieved. Society is in a constant state of change and individuals need to constantly align their behaviour to societal expectations. The socialization processes to be explored in this chapter has been categorised into five namely; primary, secondary, anticipatory, institutional, and occupational socialization.

4.3.2 Primary socialisation

Though socialisation goes on throughout the entire life of an individual, the experience an individual acquires at each stage of life and environment differs. Primary socialisation consists of the processes a child goes through in the earliest stages of becoming a member of his/her culture or society (Scollon, Scollon, & Jones, 2011). For the child at this stage, the family is the world and what is mediated to him is the only reality that he/she knows (Woods, 1980). Through interaction with family members, the child learns the language and many other behaviour patterns of that particular society. The situation of childhood is given and one has no choice over the significant others through whom the world is mediated in the first years of life when primary socialisation occurs (Woods, 1980).

Mead (1934) conceptualised three sequential stages of primary socialisation. During the first stage, the newborn child simply emits unreflective gestures (Watson, 2010). However, as time passes, the child forms memory images as a result of

previous similar acts, begins to adjust to others and begins to copy them, though more or less unreflectively. This is called the preparatory or imitative stage (Watson, 2010).

The second stage, which is the play phase is characterised by the child acting out various roles. This involves adopting the perspectives of others, as is attested by the child's burgeoning ability to refer to itself through third-person statements (Watson, 2010). Learning to take the standpoint of others toward oneself begins in interpersonal relations within primary groups (eg., the family, neighbourhood play group, school peer groups) (Kinney, Rosier, & Harger, 2003). Moving from one role to another at this stage occurs in a relatively unorganised way therefore there is no unitary conception of self (Watson, 2010). Symbolic interaction, which is the basis of social organisation, depends on the role-taking abilities of humans.

The third stage is known as the game stage. The child learns to take account of not just one but a range of standpoints simultaneously (Watson, 2010). Thus the child learns to orientate to the attitude of the generalised other, the common perspective of everyone on that team (Watson, 2010). The child learns the standard symbolic meanings which the group attributes to various persons, situations, actions and sees him/her self as others in general see him/her (Watson, 2010). This implies that Mead's concept of generalised other emanated from the concept of playing games which involves team work. At this stage, the child is a fully-socialised member of society conceived as a communicative order, possessing the cultural apparatus for taking others into account and acting appropriately (Watson, 2010). Primary socialisation is vital because subsequent socialisations build on it to extend the self (Nash & Calonica, 1996).

4.3.3 Secondary socialisation

Secondary socialisation process inducts an already socialised individual into new sectors of the objective world of his/her society (Appelrouth & Edles, 2011). Secondary socialisation takes place beyond the family and close community (Browne, 2011). Secondary socialisation often takes place in secondary groups which provide more limited knowledge and skills that are used to fulfil specific roles (Furseth & Repstad, 2006). The adult's ability to imagine him/herself in different situations is the hallmark of secondary socialisation, for it involves the internalisation of specific forms of reciprocal thinking, forms that passes definite limits and partial application (Nash & Calonica, 1996).

Individuals undergoing secondary socialisation have already been socialised and thus may be either more receptive or more defensive towards the new ideas and actions to which they are being socialised (Waksler, 1991). During secondary socialisation, contradictions, conflicting viewpoints, and personal and societal requests have to be negotiated, and new decisions, new trajectories and reorganisation of perspectives, beliefs, and opinions have to be produced (Carugati, 2003). Having acquired the rudiments of language use and self during primary socialisation, children mature into discriminating adults, picking and choosing the groups toward which they compare their behaviour (Nash & Calonica, 1996). An individual may begin to act like a member of a reference group in anticipation of later becoming a member of that group (Brent & Lewis, 2014).

Reference group are those persons in the social world whom an individual uses for standards in making sense of his/her own actions (Nash & Calonica, 1996). Reference groups act as a compass to point to who we might want to become as we continue to navigate through our social world (Brent & Lewis, 2014). A strong identification with a particular reference group is a central factor in the organisation

of one's goals, values and behaviours (O'Brien, 2011). Reference groups influence individuals through normative and comparative processes (Ugwuegbu, 2011). The normative function sets standards for appropriate attitudes, beliefs, intentions and behaviours whilst the comparison function sets the standards or benchmarks against which an individual evaluates him/herself and others (Ugwuegbu, 2011). Both primary and secondary socialisations are geared toward transmitting societal norms and values. However, whereas primary socialisation is predefined and taken for granted, secondary socialisation is acquired in a more conscious way (Appelrouth & Edles, 2011).

4.3.4 Anticipatory socialisation

Anticipatory socialisation encompasses all of the learning that takes place prior to a newcomer's first encounter with a situation (Nelson & Quick, 2007). There are several aspects to anticipatory socialisation. For example, learning about work in general, learning about a particular occupation and learning about a particular organisation (Miller, 2011). Individuals develop their own meaning for work through social interaction. Information about careers and organisations come from different sources and are often highly idealised and inaccurate (Miller, 2011). A variation in the role requirements presumed during the anticipatory socialisation process and the reality faced by the newcomer in organisation can affect the individual's job performance.

Scholars writing on organisational socialisation often divide the process into three phases: anticipatory socialisation, encounter and metamorphosis (Kramer, 2010). Anticipatory socialisation also known as pre-arrival is the first stage in organisational socialisation and occurs prior to an individual joining an organisation (Kramer, 2010). Anticipatory socialisation is divided into vocational anticipatory

socialisation and occupational anticipatory socialisation (Jablin, 2001). Vocational anticipatory socialisation is the process by which individuals select occupations, typically the time before their first paid full-time job (Jablin, 2001). Organisational anticipatory socialisation refers to the processes by which individuals anticipate and begin to join specific organisations (Jablin, 2001). The events during this stage are the first glimpse of the organisation's culture by an outsider (Champoux, 2011).

For those considering faculty careers, the first stage of the academic career begins during graduate education (Austin, 2002). Graduate education functions as a period of anticipatory socialization during which future faculty members develop values and perspectives as well as specific skills that they need to become faculty members (Austin, Sorcinelli, & McDaniels, 2007). Prospective faculty observe how current faculty allocate their time, what work they do, what they value, and what tasks they enjoy (Austin et al., 2007). The anticipatory socialization experience provided through graduate education is complex, necessarily involving many experiences (Austin et al., 2007).

The encounter or entry phase begins when an individual assumes some organisational role (Kramer, 2010). In his study with new faculty, Menges (1999) and his colleagues found that as prospective faculty moved into their first appointments, their anxieties shifted from anxiety about getting a job to anxiety about surviving on the job. At this stage, newcomers may begin to experience some changes in their skills, attitudes and behaviours as they find out what life in the organisation and job is actually like and what is required to be successful (Ashford & Nurmohamed, 2012). Regardless of the position or title an individual occupies, one feature of this stage is being a newcomer rather than an established organisational member (Kramer, 2010).

The third stage represents the period when an individual is active, established or a full organisational member. This is referred to as metamorphosis, role management or change and acquisition (Kramer, 2010). Though an individual needs to go through all these stages to be a fully socialised member of an organisation, there are no stated experiences for an individual to go through and no fixed time period for the transition from the encounter phase to the metamorphosis stage. It is a psychological change that occurs when individuals no longer consider themselves as newcomers (Kramer, 2010). The relationship between the individual and the organisation is not static after metamorphosis. There is always some measure of flux and uncertainty in employees' understanding of organisational roles and culture (Miller, 2011). Successful anticipatory socialisation requires that individuals parallel the attitudes, norms, values and behaviours of the group members and the role to be filled (Braxton, Lambert, & Scott, 1995).

4.3.5 Institutional socialisation

Institutional socialisation is the process through which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours required to adapt to a new work role (Wanberg, 2012). When individuals enter organisations, they find themselves in a state of unfamiliarity and uncertainty in many respects (Saks & Gruman, 2012). Institutional socialisation provides them with the necessary information to navigate the institutional environment (Austin & McDaniels, 2006). The primary goal of institutional socialisation is to ensure the continuity of an organisation's central values (van Vianen & De Pater, 2012). Successful institutional socialisation has been understood as the alignment between newcomers' personal values and behaviours and those of the organisation (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006).

Institutions reinforce related values and behaviours (Strebel, 2004). This implies that roles of new entrants are already defined and must be adhered to. Britz (1997) claims that newcomers of organisations must adhere to established modes of behaviour or risk ostracism from the group. This may be the case in highly institutionalised organisations however, van Vianen and De Pater (2012) argue that even in occupations and organisations where a strong uniformity of behaviour is required such as in police, military and medical teams, employees can exert some influence in the performance of their role.

Institutional socialisation has been seen as a two-way mutual process (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007). While an organisation insiders are likely to have more influence on newcomers than vice versa, it is also true that the entry of newcomers can change the groups into which they are being integrated (Bauer et al., 2007). Newcomers can be a positive influence for constructive change and innovation within organisations (Ashforth, Sluss, & Harrison, 2007). Newcomers may not only learn the technical requirements of a job to become proficient and effective in its performance, they also learn the social behaviours and attitudes that are acceptable and required for becoming a functioning member of an organisation (Katz, 1980). This situation may compel a newcomer to adjust overtime leading to institutional socialisation.

Organisations use different socialisation tactics to initiate newcomers into their basic values and behavioural repertoires (van Vianen & De Pater, 2012). However, the extent to which newcomers experiences fit with their new organisation may not depend only on an organisation's socialisation efforts but also on newcomers' own characteristics and behaviours (van Vianen & De Pater, 2012). Personal organisational fit has been conceptualised as the congruence between a

person and an organisation's culture or more specifically, as the match between people's own values and those of the organisation (Kristof, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Newcomers high on self-monitoring may focus their adaptive efforts mainly on the self. They produce "a whole new coat of feathers" in order to match the colour of their environment (van Vianen & De Pater, 2012, p. 152). In contrast, newcomers who are curious and/or optimistic may particularly adapt by reframing or changing the organisational environment. These employees colour the environment in a way that matches their needs (van Vianen & De Pater, 2012).

Several studies have looked into the process undergone by new faculty when entering an academy (Barkhuizen, 2002; Knight, Tait, & Yorke, 2006; Trowler & Knight, 1999) focusing in particular on the notion of socialisation and how newcomers learn in their new role (Gourley, 2011). Within the school context, Johnston and Ryan (1980, p. 6) describe the newcomer teacher as alien in a strange world. The same is true for lecturers starting to lecturer in universities for the first time (Trowler, 1998). In addition to thorough knowledge of their disciplines and disciplinary-based research norms, new faculty should understand the history of higher education, the variety of institutional types and missions, and the diverse work-related expectations encountered by faculty based on institutional type (Austin et al., 2007).

New lecturers are confronted by official routines of the university and the department in which they work. For example, how and when the setting and marking of examination papers takes place, the procedures for the efficient administration of courses, the design of curricula and establishing learning outcomes for the various courses which they teach, whom to ask and whom not to ask for help, and how to cope with securing appropriate venues and equipment for their lectures (Barkhuizen, 2002). These lecturers are not yet part of the complex web of social

relationships, both formal and informal that already exist in the university and the department (Barkhuizen, 2002).

Researchers involved in the study of socialization of school principals call for attention to the way school systems approach the organizational socialization of new principals (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004; Crow, 2006). Novice principals may face challenges ranging from economic, health, cultural and resource problems (Bush & Oduro, 2006) to unrealistic expectations (Quong, 2006) and being called to improve the school's public image (Weindling & Dimmock, 2006). However, Crow (2006) argues that the organizational socialization of new principals is often left to chance. For example, Crow (2006) claims the organizational socialization of beginning principals in the USA follows a format in which the new principal is bombarded with all the responsibilities that a veteran principal has. Crow further indicated that principals, for the most part, were socialized individually, informally, and with little attention paid to what could be learned from their teaching experiences. Crow claims the lack of mediated entry creates burnout, stress, and ineffective performance as beginning principals develop quick fixes and unreflective practices – responses that are counterproductive to the type of leadership needed in a complex society. Crow's assertion may be similar amongst most higher education institutions over the world including Ghana.

Interpersonal and group interactions are responsible for socialisation (Ashford & Nurmohamed, 2012). The organizational culture of a university is one divided by disciplinary ways of thinking and behaving (Holley, 2009). As Clark (1997, p. 21) notes, “the academic profession is a multitude of academic tribes and territories”, in terms of discipline and institutional type, but also regarding gender, race, religion, and social status, among other aspects, all of which produce divergent academic subcultures. There are tensions between disciplinary cultures, those of the

department and institution, and those of research, teaching and service to the community (Trowler & Knight, 1999). The increase in interdisciplinary work also requires new faculty to appreciate ways in which their own fields connect with other disciplines to address complex questions that exist at disciplinary borders (Austin, 2002a).

New lecturers may feel pressured to fit in, both with their established colleagues' practices (Trowler & Bamber, 2005) and with their students' expectations (Barkhuizen, 2002). Through interactions with co-workers, newcomers learn about the values and norms of the group and those of the organisation as a whole (Jokisaari & Nurmi, 2009). The interactions newcomers have with others in the academy have the potential to both shape the experiences of the newcomers and change the academy (Austin & McDaniels, 2006) because organisational members facilitate meaning for newcomers undergoing role transitions, as they affirm or disaffirm the narratives newcomers' enact (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010).

Some elements of an organisational culture are articulated specifically in presentations or activities during a formal orientation session (Ballard & Blessing, 2006). Other values are also acquired informally through discussion and professional practice (Trowler & Knight, 1999). This engagement is often tacit, unrecognised by those involved, yet it has important consequences for both the new entrant and the organization. Regardless of whether or not a formal socialization program exists, employees eventually become socialized (Ballard & Blessing, 2006).

4.3.6 Occupational socialisation

Work is central to who and what we are (Shaffir & Pawluch, 2003). This includes not only the skills and knowledge needed to do a job but also the “standards, beliefs, and moral concerns” (Fine, 2003, p. 76) that comprises an occupational

culture. It is through socialization that individuals acquire an occupational culture, learn to adjust to the discrepancies between work role expectations and day-to-day realities (Hicks, 2008). Occupational socialization is the process by which a person acquires the values, attitudes and behaviours of an ongoing occupational social system (Klofas, Stojkovic, & Kalinich, 1990). Occupational socialisation may be considered across three related but separate stages in an individual's career. These stages are anticipatory socialisation, socialisation during training or education (formal socialisation), and post-training or education socialisation (Cant & Higgs, 1999). While these stages may overlap or occur simultaneously, each stage has its own unique characteristics.

Occupational socialisation of graduate professionals occur in two phases that is in formal training where professional knowledge, skills, and values are seen as being transmitted through formal curriculum (Atkinson, 1984). This happens through immersion in the actual work of knowledge production and transmission in the laboratory, the classroom, the library, the archive, the field site, the departmental seminars and professional seminars (Golde, 2010). By immersing graduate students in the process of knowledge production, supervisors also immerse them in the dominant values and attitudes of specific disciplinary fields (Parry, 2007). The second phase of occupational socialisation is experienced during performance of role in an organisation by a person (Kramer, 2010). Both specialized training and peer interaction in academic work constitute basic socialization processes for the academic profession (Grediaga, 2000).

Weidman, Twale, and Stein (2001) describe graduate student socialization as the processes through which individuals gain the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for successful entry into a professional career requiring an advanced level of specialized knowledge and skills. According to Weidman et al. (2001)

socialization for graduate students occurs in four developmental stages: anticipatory, formal, informal, and personal stages. The anticipatory stage occurs primarily as students enter the program, and need to learn new roles, procedures, and agenda to be followed. These students will tend to seek information and listen carefully to directions. This stage can be described as the student becoming aware of the behavioural, attitudinal, and cognitive expectations held for a role incumbent. The formal stage is characterized by the graduate student observing roles of incumbents and advanced students, while learning about role expectations and how they are carried out. Students in this stage are primarily concerned about task issues, and communication at this stage is informative through course material, regulative through embracing normative expectations, and integrative through faculty and student interactions. The informal stage is described as the stage in which the novice learns of the informal role expectations transmitted by interactions with others who are current role incumbents (Weidman et al., 2001). At this stage, the graduate student receives behavioural cues, observes acceptable behaviour, thereby responding and reacting accordingly. The final stage, the personal stage, is characterized as the time when the student's individual and social roles, personalities and social structures become fused and the role is internalized (Weidman et al., 2001). During this final stage, the graduate student accepts a value orientation and adjusts his or her behaviour to meet the expectations that exist. The conflict that exists between the former graduate student identity and the new professional identity is resolved and the graduate student will be able to separate from the department in search of his or her own identity (Weidman et al., 2001).

Literature on doctoral student's socialisation suggests that aspiring faculty members should develop a set of core competencies while in their doctoral programmes to assist them in making transition to successful careers as faculty

members in the 21st century postsecondary institutions (McDaniels, 2010). Faculty socialisation begins in the graduate school prior to any commitment to the employing institution. The socialization that occurs during graduate education contributes to how faculty members understand their work and assume their professional roles (Austin & McDaniels, 2006). As aspiring faculty gain knowledge and develop a professional identity, they are influenced by faculty members, peers, family and friends, and professional groups (Wulff, Austin, Nyquist, & Sprague, 2004).

Rectors experience various socialization stages as they begin and continue their careers (Weindling, 2000). Preparation programs generally address generic course content related to management and leadership (Cowie & Crawford, 2008; Daresh & Male, 2000). Crow (2006) asserts that the professional socialization, which occurs in university programs in the USA relates to the initial preparation to take on an occupational role and includes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to enact the role regardless of the setting. Authors such as Cowie and Crawford (2008) claim the lack of context in professional socialization often causes individuals to feel that they are not adequately prepared by formal preparation programmes.

Socialisation is inherent in all types of work but most scholars have tried to differentiate between occupation and profession. Maclean (1991) defines occupations as social roles which are generally performed by adult members of society and which directly or indirectly yield social and financial consequences that represent a major focus in the life of the adult. Professions are regarded as the knowledge-based category of service occupations which usually follow a period of tertiary education and vocational training and experience (Evetts, 2013). Professionalization is the process by which an occupation incorporates the structural aspects and criteria required of a profession (Ingersoll, 2003). Members have greater control over their work. Disciplines have their own particular qualities, cultures, codes of conduct,

values, and distinctive intellectual tasks (Austin, 2002) that ultimately influence the experiences of their members. When socialisation occurs in an occupation regarded as a profession, neophytes become involved in a moral and symbolic transformation and this allows them to alter their selves (Shaffir & Pawluch, 2003). This process involves not only mastery of certain skills but a related set of implicit, often taken-for-granted qualities that neophytes must display to be accepted into the fraternity of occupational members (Shaffir & Pawluch, 2003). The outcome of occupational socialisation is identification with and commitment to a professional role (Austin & McDaniels, 2006).

What motivates individuals to select occupations differ. Some individuals select professions which are in line with their self-concept. Others too may select occupations base on their ability and interest. Page (2005) suggests that the role societal dimensions like financial reward, prestige and status of professions play in career selection cannot be ignored.

Socialisation is a lifelong process and continues when an individual joins an occupation. Occupational socialisation focuses on how occupations and professions transform individuals to behave. Tensions sometimes exit between the occupation a person belongs to and the employment agency a person works for during occupational socialisation. This often results in a pull and push relationship between the employment organisation and an individual's occupation with regards to his/her commitment. For many, disciplinary allegiances trump institutional affiliation (Clark, 1987). An individual who joins an occupation may have already been socialised hence occupational socialisation deals with an already formed self.

4.3.7 Perspectives

Perspectives form integral part of symbolic interactionism thinking as they serve as the basis by which individuals interpret social actions. Woods (1983, p. 7) defines perspectives “as frameworks through which individuals make sense of the world”. Individuals do not see one objective reality with a universal mental template but rather, their view of reality is through a screen or an interpretational code which they employ to understand the world (Woods, 1983). Individuals undergo different forms of socialisation throughout their life time. This may result in persons giving different interpretations to a particular situation. Situations have to be interpreted by individuals (Woods, 1983) and perspective forms the basis of the meaning an individual attaches to a situation. A person develops and maintains a perspective when he/she faces a situation calling for action which is not given by his own prior beliefs or by situational imperatives (Becker et al., 1961). A perspective will arise when the individual has options in dealing with a situation. The choice of an option normally leads to the individual forgoing an alternative. When a particular kind of situation recurs frequently, the perspective will become an established part of a person’s way of dealing with the world (Becker et al., 1961).

Group perspectives are ways of thinking and acting evolved by a group which has to confront similar problematic situations (Becker et al., 1961). Social acts in the form of collective undertakings, calling for conscious cooperative behaviour, make up a large part of human group life (Blumer, 2004). As groups of individuals develop or acquire a sense of common purpose, the set of strategies adopted by them acquire a common element. This common element enables a common perspective to emerge (Lacey, 1977). When the same perspective is used over a long period of time to address a common element which is persistent in a situation that a group has to

deal with, the perspective may be accepted by the group members hence becomes the groups sub-culture (Lacey, 1977).

Perspectives form the basis of social actions in every aspect of social life. They contain definitions of the situation as seen by an individual and include actions as well as ideas (Becker et al., 1961). Becker et al. (1961) argue that perspectives have several components namely a definition of the situation – a collection of ideas outlining the sort of situation in which action must be taken; an outline of the types of activities one may rightly be involved in; and finally criteria of judgement. Perspectives are linked to action through strategies (Woods, 1983) and strategies are ways of achieving goals. Perspectives are applicable in every aspect of social life including education. Esland (1971, p. 85) suggests that perspectives in the educational field are of three categories namely pedagogical, subject and career perspectives. Esland (1971) regards the perspectives of a teacher as constituting the constitutive categories of thought through which a teacher understands his/her occupational world. The teacher is engaged in teaching a particular subject so he has a disciplinary perspective and, if he so chooses, he can attempt in his classes to “reflect” (out loud) in a way which is essentially similar to his more private cogitations (Starup, 1979, p. 19). The pedagogical perspective is a view of the teaching situation and certain assumptions and theories relating to how it can and should be handled (Starup, 1979).

The influence of the vice-chancellor has been described by Mountford (1966, p. 138) as “probably the greatest single factor in the well-being of the university”. The vice chancellor (rector) guides academic policy. He/she mediates between council and senate, between various academic groups and he/she is the official representative of the university in the outside world (Starup, 1979). These roles make the vice chancellor (rector) exercise leadership and because he/she is in authority,

he/she has the right to make judgements both about people and situations (Starup, 1979). Educational perspectives take into account how the situation is experienced, how this situation is interpreted, given the individual's background of experiences, beliefs and assumptions, and how this interpretation is manifested in actions (Goodman, 1992).

The stock of knowledge that allows us to negotiate our everyday lives consists of a vast number of recipes (Hargreaves, 1993). Recipe knowledge is a term coined by Alfred Schutz (Schutz, 1964; Schutz & Luckmann, 1973). Schutz (1964) argues that recipe knowledge arises out of an individual's past experiences within a group. Early childhood learning is in part the acquisition of such recipes (Hargreaves, 1993). The stock of knowledge acquired provides most members of the group with a reasonable chance of understanding and being understood (Schutz, 1964).

This concept was later publicised by Berger and Luckman (1966) to describe the mind-set of an average person performing a daily task. Berger and Luckman (1966) argue that individual's have a repertoire of knowledge that is automatically at hand for coping with the confrontations of daily life. For example, the routine steps that a person follows when utilising a public service or making a phone call (Berger & Luckman, 1966) or sentences that an interpreter translates without thinking about their meaning (Schutz & Luckmann, 1973).

Recipe knowledge is as an attempt to transfer practical abilities or know-how from a skilled or knowledgeable performer to a novice by offering step-by-step directions in terms that is familiar to the novice and by utilising behaviours already within the repertoire of the novice (Shaffer, 2010). This implies that the intention of the socializer is to permit the novice to approximate skilled performance without the need for apprenticeship, classroom instruction, or personalised feedback (Shaffer,

2010). Teachers understanding of their work is also sometimes described as recipe knowledge (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998). Some studies on administrators including rectors suggest that they also rely on recipe knowledge in order to expand their managerial and leadership repertoire (Huberman, 1983). Huberman (1983) asserts that both teachers and administrators may be caught up in the immediacy and diversity of daily classroom and building-level demands while being isolated from other classrooms and buildings, such that problem-solving becomes an essentially private process of trial and error, recourse to personal experience and, when appropriate, retrieval of fragments of pre-service training (Huberman, 1983, p. 484). Though recipe knowledge contains a fund of wisdom, it is in more senses than one, undisciplined. It is not an adequate basis for professional action (Woods, 1986).

4.3.8 Conclusion

Symbolic interactionism (SI) has its origins in the theories of social psychology. The central theme of this framework is that human life is lived in a symbolic domain. SI assumes that the self arises solely through social interaction. A self not only enables one to assume the attitudes of other people but also enables an individual to assume the attitude of the generalized other in deciding the course of action that he/she should take in a situation. Human beings do not react to stimulus, but rather are active constructors of their meanings and actions. This is realised in the application of symbols whose meanings and significance are acquired by the individual.

As humans go through life cycles, they undergo identifiable stages of socialisation namely primary, secondary, anticipatory, institutional and occupational. These socialisation experiences shape their perspectives. Perspectives form the basis of the meaning an individual attaches to a situation. Perspectives are linked to action

through strategies. Symbolic interactionism is an appropriate framework for this study because it facilitates a clearer understanding of individual's behaviour and perspectives. The qualitative methodology employed in the next chapter is congruent with the tenets of symbolic interactionism.

Chapter 5

Research methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to investigate rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' of Ghanaian polytechnics perspectives on quality assurance, the origins of these, and the strategies they enacted. Symbolic interactionism and qualitative methodology focus on experiences and interactions as sources of evidence. In line with symbolic interactionism which guided this study, a qualitative methodology using in-depth interviewing and document analysis was used to establish how they defined their situations and addressed problematic situations in quality assurance. Key interactionist concepts of self, others, roles, reference groups, socialisation and perspectives coupled with in-depth interviewing and document analyses were employed to examine their quality assurance perspectives and strategies.

5.2 Symbolic interactionism and qualitative methodology

An epistemological standpoint is vital because it impacts on methodological considerations in research. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011, pp. 4-5) suggest:

The researcher'sepistemological positions form the philosophical basis for a research project. This philosophical foundation impacts every aspect of the research process, including topic selection, question formulation, method selection, sampling and research design.

Some epistemologies use specific methodological approaches including instrumentation, data gathering, analysis, interpretation, and presentations of findings

to addressing trustworthiness in research. Symbolic interactionism coupled with a qualitative approach was used for this study because they both endorsed multiple realities, multiple ways of knowing, and individuals' active involvement in human group life. Lichtman (2011, p. 14) argues that "our interpretation will carry more weight if the data we gather, the manner we organise the data, and the vehicle we use to present our interpretation supports it".

Symbolic interactionism suggested the use of a qualitative design for the investigation of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' quality assurance perspectives and strategies. This theoretical perspective guided the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data from interviews and documents. Symbolic interactionism matches with qualitative methodology. Blumer (1969, pp. 47-48) noted:

Symbolic interactionism is a down-to-earth approach to the scientific study of human group life and human conduct. Its empirical world is the natural world of such group life and conduct. It lodges its problems in this natural world, conducts its study in it, and derives its interpretation from such naturalistic studies.....Its methodological stance, accordingly, is that of direct examination of the empirical social world.

Blumer's direct observation composed of two phases: exploration and inspection of human group life (Athens, 2010; Blumer, 1969). He explained "exploration" as a descriptive accounts of social experiences and patterns of activity in the sphere chosen for study whilst "inspection" refers to an as analysis of descriptive accounts obtained from exploratory processes. Qualitative methodology, involving gathering of data via in-depth interviews and documents analysis flow from symbolic interactionism traditions. Blumer (1969, p. 41) suggested investigating social experiences, the researcher use direct observation, interviews,

life-histories, letters and diaries, and public records. This guided my research approach in this study.

In qualitative study, human group life is experienced and constructed from a subjective perspective and symbolic interactionism advocates a subjective epistemology (Morrison, 2011). Symbolic interactionism and qualitative methodology recognised rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officer's as active agents in their socialisation processes and capable of assigning meaning to their experiences (Pollard, 2012). Their quality assurance perspectives were regarded as subjective and the social actions they undertook as individuals or in groups carried meaning and were understood through their own frame of reference. Investigating these perspectives demanded undertaking in-depth interviews and documents analyses which offered data for an examination of their socialisation experiences. The rationale behind the adoption of symbolic interactionism and qualitative methodology was to present thick description of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officer's quality assurance perspectives, origins of these perspectives and their quality assurance strategies. Qualitative methodology via symbolic interactionism enabled an examination of their quality assurance perspectives and strategies through their own narration of their experiences. Prus (2010, p. 502) provided support for this approach when he noted:

People, as agents, deliberate and act with intention.....people monitor, assess and readjust their activities-even as they are in the process of developing particular lines of action....What is needed is more focused attention on the ways people in specific settings define, experience and enact particular roles as well as how they deal with others in strategic, reflective, adjustive terms.

Those involved in this research were active agents in their socialisation, constructed their own meanings, took on the role of others and address problematic

situations. In interviews and in document, they shared their perspectives on quality and quality assurance, where these perspectives emanated from and the quality assurance strategies they implemented to achieve the quality polytechnic education they desired. Their responses served as data for this study. Analysis of the data was guided by symbolic interactionism.

5.3 Interviewing

In-depth interviews were suitable to elicit rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' experiences and knowledge on quality assurance. Support for interviews was also provided by Shanahan and Gerber (2004) who employed in-depth interview with key stakeholders to examine quality in Australian universities. Symbolic interactionism notes that individual's social experiences can be examined through in-depth interviews. To understand their social world required listening to their experiences and probing their experiences. Through in-depth interviews, they shared their quality assurance ideas and how these ideas were put into practice. There are no specific canons for conducting in-depth interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, some qualitative researchers such as Lincoln and Guba (1985), Gonzalez and Brown (2008) and Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, and Walker (2014) have developed interview tenets which I categorised into pre-interview protocols, interview protocols and post-interview protocols and used to guide this study.

Initial preparation for the actual interviews included sending letters to all rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' in ten Ghanaian polytechnics inviting them to participate in the study. Ten of them including rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' declined to participate. I tried through phone calls to get them to participate but this proved futile. Those who agreed to be interviewed requested to know what the interview would cover. I sent them a sample of the

interview schedule through email. One rector who agreed to be interviewed further requested a letter of introduction from the University of Adelaide as a condition of interview. This was done and access was granted immediately. Thus interviews were conducted with twenty key informants in eight polytechnics. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that both formal and informal gatekeepers prior to granting access would want to be informed about the nature of the proposed enquiry to enable them to assess costs and risks the study could pose to them and the groups they controlled.

As part of pre-interview arrangements, I provided all the participants with information sheets. These noted the nature and purpose of the study and the benefits they stood to gain from participating. They were informed that participation in the research was voluntary and that they were free to opt out at any time. Participants were informed that interviews would be audio-taped. A promise to ensure confidentiality and anonymity with the information they provided was made. These interactions helped to nurture rapport with the participants and assisted participants to give accurate accounts of their experiences. In this I was guided by the advice of King and Horrocks (2010).

Interviews were conducted at the offices of the participants. They preferred this venue and cited convenience as the reason. Before each interview, participants signed consent forms. I guided the interviews with key questions. These were open-ended and focused on my research questions. For example, I asked participants to explain how they understood quality assurance. This allowed the participants to share their experiences on quality assurance.

There seems to be no consensus in the literature on interview time limits. My interviews lasted between thirty to fifty minutes. This time frame was deemed sufficient to obtain relevant data. Interviews were audio taped to enhance accuracy.

Lincoln and Guba (1990) recognise the tape recorder as an unimpeachable data source which assures completeness and provides the opportunity to review material.

Being mindful that participants may have been uneasy, I stressed my connection with Bolgatanga polytechnic and also assured them that their names and that of their polytechnics would be replaced with pseudonyms in the research. This notwithstanding, I made the participants aware that due to the uniqueness of their roles in their polytechnics, their identities could be speculated on.

The closure of the interviews was as important as the start. I gave all participants the opportunity to recap some major aspects of their experiences. For example, I narrated to the participants the strategies they indicated were used to enhance quality teaching and learning in their polytechnics. Through cross checking, inconsistencies in their experiences were rectified. Loisel, Profetto-McGrath, Polit, and Beck (2010, p. 269) argue:

Member checks involve soliciting study participants' reactions to preliminary findings and interpretations. Member checking can be carried out both informally in an ongoing way as data are being collected and more formally after data have been collected and analysed.

5.4 Document analysis

Interviews provided the core data for this study. Additional data was provided by relevant polytechnic documents. Denzin (1970, p. 291) writes “document analysis is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation—the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon”

Cohen et al. (2011) refer to a document as a record of an event or process. In this study, documents that focused on quality assurance policies and practices such as the Ghanaian polytechnic act 745, polytechnic statutes, quality assurance policies, strategic plans, ethics policies, staff recruitment policies and external quality assurance reports were used.

Photocopies of relevant documents which provided information on each polytechnic's quality assurance practices were made. For example, the internal quality assurance draft policies and strategic plans. These documents were windows onto the social and organizational realities of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers and their polytechnics. They informed me about what went on and helped me uncover the culture and ethos of quality assurance (Bryman, 2012, p. 554). Data from documents served as important sources of evidence, however I was cautious and avoided over relying on the information contained in them. I used data from the interviews to corroborate and augment evidence from documents (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011, p. 79)

5.5 Access

In this study, access to the Ghanaian polytechnics was not taken for granted. I started by finding individuals who could provide me ready access and who could facilitate the collection of data. I was well aware of Feldman, Bell, and Berger (2003, p. 31).

Gatekeepers can grant or deny initial access and make access either more or less difficult..... Access via a gatekeeper often makes research easier, as this person, in a sense, vouches for the legitimacy of the researcher to all the other people to whom one gains access.

Having received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Adelaide (see Appendix B), I contacted all the rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' of the Ghanaian polytechnics via letter (see Appendix F). The letter included the nature of the research, the purpose of the research, the envisaged timescale for data collection and protocols in place to anonymise data. This strategy contextualised the study for respondents. Lincoln and Guba (1985) claim both the formal and informal gatekeepers prior to giving consent for access want to be informed about the nature of any proposed enquiry to enable them to assess costs and risks involved. I was mindful of Bogdan and Biklen (2003, p. 76) observation that official permission to conduct a study may be sabotaged by the subjects.

Gaining entry into one polytechnic was very slow. One rector emailed me and requested that I sent to him an introductory letter from the University of Adelaide in addition to a scanned copy of my University of Adelaide identity card. I adhered to these requests and gained permission, acceptance, and support in that polytechnic. My attempt to get two polytechnics to participate in the study proved futile. I persistently contacted the personnel in them via telephone to request access but this did not materialize. The case was different from the polytechnic I worked in previously. Access to this polytechnic and support for this study was offered immediately.

Securing access to the study sites was considered ongoing activity. I did not discontinue the process when I gained an entrée to the participants. I informed respondents of the potential findings of the study being useful for policy makers to improve polytechnic education in Ghana. This interaction deepened the trust between respondents and me.

5.6 Selection of key informants

In this study, I sought to obtain deeper insights into rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' quality assurance perspectives and strategies. This required me to purposively select participants. *Guba and Lincoln (1981, p. 276)* argue:

Sampling is almost never representative or random but purposive, intended to exploit competing views and fresh perspectives as fully as possible. Sampling stops when information becomes redundant rather than when subjects are representatively sampled.

Using a small sample in a qualitative study such as this is not unusual because my aim was not to generalise findings but to gain deeper insights into rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' quality assurance perspectives. I purposefully selected six rectors, six vice rectors and eight quality assurance officers' from eight Ghanaian polytechnics to participate in this study. These were a select group of people who were especially knowledgeable and experienced about quality assurance (Bryman, 2012).

Rectors are chief executives of the polytechnics and polytechnics are driven by their vision and mission. The vice rector is head of the academic section which delivers academic programmes, the prime objective of the institution. They are the head of the academic staff and are aware of quality implications relating to teaching and learning. The quality assurance officer heads the quality assurance office. He/she in consultation with the senior management personnel enact and oversee quality strategies. The rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' generated most of the data for this study. Having identified these individuals, I had to deal with the ethical issues associated with the study.

5.7 Ethical considerations

In this study, ethical issues arose prior to conducting the study, at the beginning of the study, during data collection, in data analysis and in reporting the data. This required me to safeguard the interest of the participants of this study. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 41) suggest:

“...qualitative researchers, because they deal with individual persons face-to-face on a daily basis, are attuned to making decisions regarding ethical concerns, because this is part of life in the field....qualitative researchers must remain alert to ethical dilemmas throughout the research process”.

Before commencing this study, ethics approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Adelaide was granted. I had to convince this committee that the research posed no physical, emotional and psychological threat to participants. The University of Adelaide Human Ethics Committee approved this research on the 7th August, 2013 with ethics certificate number HP-2013-049 (see Appendix B).

I contacted respondents in Ghanaian polytechnics and sought their consent through letters (see Appendix F), emails and phone calls. The letter sent contained information on the nature and purpose of the research, risks and benefits associated with the study, rights to participate and withdraw at any time, methods of data collection, confidentiality and anonymity issues and lastly data storage. This approach helped to establish some level of rapport between the respondents and me and helped me to gain access to them.

I did not take the permission given to me by respondents to enter the polytechnics to represent something completely different. I did not adopt any deceptive tactics to encourage participants to take part. Participation was voluntary. Before the commencement of interviews, participants signed the consent form and agreed for interviews to be tape recorded and transcribed. I pointed out that the

information provided during interviews would be added to data from document analysis to provide data for the study. Data obtained from the participants is stored in a secured place in accordance with the University of Adelaide regulations. I assured the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents and the polytechnics they worked in by assigning aliases to names and institutions.

5.8 Going native

Having worked in a Ghanaian polytechnic as the head of liaison office for over three years cast me as something of an inside researcher. I had multiple commonalities with my respondents such as shared organisational culture, educational experiences, work roles and responsibilities. This alerted me that my status as an inside researcher may have influenced the conduct of this study in various ways (Smyth & Holian, 2008, p. 33).

My relationship with the respondents offered me opportunities as well as challenges. As an insider, I understood the language the staff used with regards to quality assurance. I had easier access to a wide-range of data than outside researchers. For example, the internal quality assurance policies were often in draft form but I was allowed to photocopy them. It would not have been as easy to obtain a copy of the draft policy as an outsider. Some polytechnics also allowed me to read their current external quality assurance audit reports which contained confidential information. This would have been impossible if I was not an insider. Furthermore, my insider status made it easier to verify the evidence from the interviews from policy documents such as internal quality assurance policies, statutes and strategic plans. Lastly, the in-depth knowledge I have about the academic operations of Ghanaian polytechnics made it difficult for my study participants to provide me with incorrect information because they knew I would detect that (Potts, 2008). For

example, when I asked one participant a question on the strategies his polytechnic used to enhance the credibility of their examinations, he responded by saying “you are part of us so you should know” before he provided his answers. These advantages notwithstanding, the background I shared with respondents threw up considerable challenges. Respondents had particular assumptions about what answers they should provide. However, when I sought further clarification with follow up questions, I realised that they were often referring to other things instead. This may have meant I neglected important data. I also noticed that some respondents did not provide details in their answers during interviews due to our shared common knowledge. Coghlan (2007) cautions that insider-researchers may assume that participants will explain everything without much prompting because of familiarity in their relationship.

5.9 Addressing credibility in qualitative research

I adopted symbolic interactionist theory via qualitative methodology using interviews and documents analysis to illuminate rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers’ quality assurance perspectives, the roots of their quality assurance perspectives and their quality assurance strategies. Epistemologically, this study assumes multiple ways of knowing and multiple perspectives. This necessitated me adopting approaches different to the traditional validity and reliability techniques favoured by quantitative studies to enhance the rigour of this research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested the use of alternatives such as credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability to aid the trustworthiness of qualitative research. These criteria were followed in this study to improve trustworthiness and are explained below.

Credibility may be equivalent to internal validity in quantitative study. By using an interactionist theoretical perspective and methods such as interviews and

document analysis, this criterion was accounted for. I also examined previous research findings on quality assurance in higher education through a review of related studies. This exercise located this research in the existing body of knowledge (Shenton, 2004). In addition, interviews and documents resulted in credible data. I augmented the data from the responses of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' on the strategies they used to enhance teaching and learning in their polytechnics with data from documents. By drawing conclusions from multiple data sources I enhanced the credibility of the study. I ensured the credibility of this study by presenting the realities of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers accurately. For example, I crossed checked field notes and rectified any inconsistencies at the end of each data collection period.

With regards to transferability, though this study does not generalise all rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' of Ghanaian polytechnics, the theory and methods can be adopted for use in other settings. Being able to apply symbolic interactionism and the methods (interviews and document analysis) in other settings and context helps address issues of transferability. I provided accurate, detailed, and complete descriptions of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers and the context of this study to assist subsequent studies of the same phenomenon. However, Ary et al. (2014, p. 535) cautions:

Transferability of a set of findings to another context depends on the similarity or "goodness of fit" between the context of the study and other contexts. The transfer is made by the potential user of the findings, who must compare and decide on the similarity of the two contexts. This contrast with quantitative research, in which the original researcher makes generalisations.

Dependability in qualitative research required that results consider variations in settings. Dependability shows how these changes affected the approach of the

study (Trochim, 2006). In relation to dependability, it was vital to establish that the outcomes of this research emerged from rigorous practice. I adopted strategies such as audit trail, replication logic and triangulation to install confidence in the findings. The findings of this study are supported with evidence from the data. Information on the conduct of the study, including a description of the research design, details of data gathering and what happened in the field are provided. Explicit information on the context of Ghanaian polytechnics and data analyses and interpretation is given. In addition, a thorough and well-organised record of this research process is outlined. This includes the ethics certificate, invitation letters to respondents, letters of acceptance, participant information sheet, consent and complaint forms, interview schedule, audio files of interviews and transcripts. I applied replication logic, to ensure findings of the study are dependable. For example, I established from the data that, rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on quality cover perfection, value for money, fitness for purpose, excellence and transformation. This finding was consistent amongst all the participants. Ary et al. (2014, p. 537) argue:

Replication logic..... is suggested for determining the dependability of a study. According to this logic, the more often a conclusion is found to be true with different sets of people or in different settings and time periods, the more confident the researcher can be in the conclusion.

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the findings of this study can be substantiated by others. This study adopted various strategies to ensure that investigator biasness was minimal. Peer review was used as a strategy to lessen the impact of my biasness and establish the confirmability of the research findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). For example, my research supervisor repeatedly and minutely examined the data and the findings. Similarly, data and analyses procedures

are accessible for an audit trail (Ary et al., 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Sources for all claims made and for the interpretation of the findings of this study are provided. All raw data comprising audio recordings, institutional documents, transcripts and field notes are stored in a secured place for any needed audit. Lastly, information on my status as an insider-researcher and how this might have affected the conduct of this study is provided. This is an additional provision made to address confirmability.

5.10 Data analysis

Once data was obtained it was due for analysis. There are no single agreed-on tenets for qualitative data analysis (Srivastava and Hop, 2009). Due to this, scholars such as Huberman and Miles (1994), Madison (2005), Wolcott (2008), and Ary et al. (2014) have suggested procedures that qualitative researchers can use. In this study, I followed guidelines provided by (Ary et al., 2014) to transform the data I obtained into findings which are captured in this report. The procedure involved three stages namely: familiarizing and organizing, coding and reducing and interpreting and representing.

As part of familiarizing and organising the data, I listened to the audio tapes of the interviews repeatedly and read the transcripts in their entirety several times. I made notes at the margins of the transcripts and relevant portions of documents such as Ghanaian polytechnic act 745, polytechnic statutes, internal quality assurance policies, strategic plans, ethics policies, staff recruitment policies and external quality assurance reports. This immersed me in the data before I started to code them. I was aware of the availability of computer software (NVivo) for qualitative analysis however, I did the coding of the data for this study manually to allow me to

understand the world of my participant from their point of view. Ary et al. (2014, p. 527) argue:

Technology can never replace the human researcher in terms of thought process and interpretation. The researcher must decide what data to process, and how to process it, the computer cannot reflect or transform data into meaningful findings.

I looked for words, phrases, sentences, and subjects that appeared regularly in the twenty transcripts. For example, words such as excellence, standards, assuring, definition, employment, unions, qualification, training, workshops, profession, previous and association appeared in the transcripts. I cut these coded documents with scissors and stored the material like codes in marked folders. I then merged these codes according to key socialisation concepts. These included others, reference groups, perspectives, socialisation and strategies. Srivastava and Hopwood (2009, p. 77) alerted me that:

Themes, categories and patterns do not come out of the blue but driven by what the researcher wants to know and how he or she interprets what the data represents based on theoretical frameworks, subjective perspectives, ontological and epistemological stands, methodology and intuitive field of understandings, making the procedure of data analysis highly reflexive.

I reviewed the transcripts for any uncoded data and examined closely any data which did not fit into any category. For example, data on the dates each Ghanaian polytechnic formalised quality assurance in their institutions was deemed of less importance. I explored relationships amongst categories and merged them into major themes such as perspectives on quality assurance, origins of quality assurance and quality assurance strategies. I reflected on the statements of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' and abstracted understandings from them. For example, what defined quality assurance for them. I presented this and the other

abstractions from the data in narrative form to convey their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. I described the settings and the context. This places readers in the research setting so that they can follow the logical processes followed in this study.

5.11 Conclusion

Using symbolic interactionism to study rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' of Ghanaian polytechnics quality assurance perspectives, positioned this study in the qualitative inquiry domain. This necessitated that I interact with respondents in a natural setting to obtain a deeper understanding of their perspectives. I achieved this through in-depth interviewing of twenty key informants from eight Ghanaian polytechnics and by analysing data from documents such as polytechnic statutes, internal quality assurance draft policies, strategic plans, ethics policies and staff recruitment policies. I used strategies to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of respondents.

Being a native of the setting offered me opportunities to more readily access the polytechnics, easily identify relevant information and obtain accurate data. Despite this, my familiarity with respondents and the settings carried a number of challenges. Some withheld information because they thought I knew it already. Others engaged in conversations about issues that were not the focus of this study whilst others offered less detailed answers. To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, I focused on credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. I analysed the data manually and presented the findings in a form that conveyed the respondents' thoughts, feelings, and experiences through their own eyes. A description of the settings and the context studied is provided. This enables readers to follow the processes undertaken in conducting this study. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 present the analysis of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on

quality and quality assurance, origins of their perspectives and their quality assurance strategies.

Chapter 6

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on quality assurance

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the quality assurance perspectives of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers of Ghanaian polytechnics. As noted in Chapter three, Woods (1983) defines perspectives as frameworks through which individuals make sense of the world. They contain definitions of the situation as seen by the individual and include strategies as well as ideas (Becker et al., 1961). Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' of Ghanaian polytechnics perspectives on quality comprised perfection, standard, value for money, fitness for purpose, excellence and transformation. These quality perspectives formed the basis of their definitions of quality assurance. They defined quality assurance as improving the core business of an institution and satisfying the demands of external stakeholders.

The chapter is organised into two main sections. These are quality perspectives and quality assurance perspectives. In both these, perspectives that pertained to them with regards to quality and quality assurance are examined. Analysing data on their perspectives on quality in the first section provided insights into the ideas their definition of quality contained. The analysis of data on their perspectives on quality assurance is undertaken in the second section. This is vital in understanding the core themes that made up quality assurance.

6.2 Perspectives on quality

This section describes the rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on quality which formed the basis of the quality assurance strategies

they enacted in their polytechnics. Their perspectives contained five concepts. These were perfection, value for money, fitness for purpose, excellence and transformation. The perspectives of those in this study were similar to categorisation of perspectives of quality made by Harvey and Green (1993).

6.2.1 Quality as perfection

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspective on quality centred on perfection. Their perspective had two dimensions. These were zero defects and meeting certain specifications. They saw quality as flawless, perfect, faultless and with no defects.

Participant K1: I understand quality as product or service which has some elements of sharpness. It is ideal.

Participant H1: I see quality as an impeccable process which perfectly fulfils some set of specifications in a reliable and constant manner.

6.2.2 Quality as excellence

Those who participated in this study defined quality as excellence. Their notions of quality included higher standards and doing right things well. The ideas contained in their definition were exceptional, special, exclusive and fineness. They defined excellence as something which was of a very high standard. For example, they perceived quality products or services as those that have passed all established quality checks of a manufacturer or service provider. These points were well expressed by Participants T1 and A3.

Participant T1: For me, quality means any product or service which is outstanding in nature.

Participant A3: This is how I define quality. It is anything that exceeds high standards.

Equally, the idea contained in respondents' perspectives on excellence centred on effectiveness. They defined excellence as doing right things well. For example, recruiting students who met the defined entry requirements and providing teaching and learning environment that graduated students with the required skills for employment. This was how Participant S1 illustrated it.

To me, quality means putting in place superb structures from scratch to end to enable one to achieve extraordinary results. This is my understanding of quality.

6.2.3 Quality as fitness for purpose

Quality perspectives of those in this research centred on fitness for purpose. Their quality notion had two components. These were meeting expectations of customers and fulfilling organisational goals. They judged the quality of a product or service according to the extent to which it satisfied customers' requirements. For example, they viewed quality polytechnic education as one that provided students with vocational and technical skills required to be successful in chosen occupations. The ideas of these officers reflect those of Harvey and Green (1993). This is illustrated by Participant B3.

I determine the quality of a product or service based on the extent to which it meets the buyer's expectations. So if the education we provide here meet the expectations of our students, then its fit for purpose.

Similarly, the quality perspectives of staff involved in this study related to the extent to which an organisation met its own stated goals. For example, they

recognised a quality polytechnic as one that has fulfilled its mission statement. This is how Participant KF2 put it.

I determine quality according to the extent to which an institution realises its own organisational objectives. For example, the mission of this polytechnic is to train career-focused middle level manpower for the development of this country, so I judge the quality of this institution based on the extent to which this goal had been achieved.

6.2.4 Quality as value for money

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' quality perspectives had as a central concern value for money. The main components here were economy, efficiency and effectiveness. They defined quality as the most cost effective use of resources for a given product or service which simultaneously met minimum standards. This view was well emphasised by Participant H3.

I define quality product or service as the one produced with fewer materials than required to produce the product or provide the service whilst still maintaining the acceptable standards. So by relating this concept to education, if my polytechnic churns out more graduates with employability skills with less materials then we have been economical in our dealing and this makes our system quality.

6.2.5 Quality as transformation

Quality perspectives of staff involved in this study focused on transformation. Key aspects here were enhancement and empowerment. They defined quality as a change from one state to another with added value. For example, they described learning brought about as a result of the acquisition of new knowledge, ideas and skills by students as quality. They also perceived quality as the inclusion of students'

views in decisions related to teaching and learning such as development of courses and academic programmes. These views were noted by Participants KF3 and S3.

Participant KF3: I consider educational experiences offered by a polytechnic to its students which resulted in improvement in their thinking and skills and allowed them to gain entry into their chosen occupations and perform their roles successfully as quality polytechnic education.

Participant S3: I understand quality to be empowering students. This occurs when feedback obtained from students evaluation of teachers and courses had been included in decisions made in relation to teaching and learning by an institution.

6.3 Perspectives on quality assurance

This section examines rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on quality assurance. These perspectives on quality assurance had two dimensions covering internal quality assurance and external quality assurance.

6.3.1 Perspectives on internal quality assurance

This segment discusses internal quality assurance perspectives of respondents in this study. The idea that underpinned their internal quality assurance perspectives was improvement in human resources, teaching and learning and management.

6.3.1.1 Perspectives on human resources

Internal quality assurance perspectives of respondents in this research centred on human resources. Their definitions concentrated on recruitment, induction and orientation. The main idea contained in their perspective related to human resources was qualified staff. They defined internal quality assurance as recruitment of

academic staff with appropriate qualifications and experiences. This is illustrated by Participant B2.

I understand internal quality assurance as hiring academic staff who possess appropriate content and pedagogical knowledge to teach in an educational institution.

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on internal quality assurance focused on student admissions. The core concern in their perspectives was entry criteria. They described internal quality assurance as the recruitment of students who meet entry requirements that allowed them to successfully pursue their academic programmes. Participant B1 remarked as follows.

I describe internal quality assurance as admitting students with appropriate entry qualifications to polytechnics' academic programmes.

Quality assurance perspectives of those in this study concerned staff induction. The core ideas in their definition were learning and transition. They saw internal quality assurance as socialising new academic staff into the academic environment to allow them to perform their roles effectively and efficiently. This was explained by Participant S2 as follows.

This is how I define internal quality assurance. It is smooth transition of academic staff into their school's environment to enable them to become successful in the institution.

Similarly, their perspectives on internal quality assurance related to students' institutional orientation. The key ideas in their definition were integration and retention. They defined internal quality assurance as acclimatizing new students to their polytechnics' environment. Participant H2 explained this as follows.

I think internal quality assurance is assisting students to adjust to the school environment without any difficulty.

6.3.1.2 Perspectives related to teaching and learning

Respondents' perspectives on internal quality assurance also related to teaching and learning. Their perspectives had the following components: academic programmes, teaching, assessment, learning resources, physical facilities and school environment. Their definition that focused on academic programme covered course duration, core and elective courses, assessment tasks and expected learning outcomes. (A different aspect of this perspective is explored later in the chapter under external quality assurance). They described internal quality assurance as having academic programmes designed to meet labour market requirements. Participant B3 revealed this.

My opinion about internal quality assurance is designing and updating study programmes to match labour market requirements.

Equally, their internal quality assurance perspectives related to teaching was made up of the following ideas: effective communication, utilisation of a range of pedagogical methods and appropriate feedback. They defined internal quality assurance as providing appropriate learning experiences to students.

Participant S1: My thought about internal quality assurance is equipping students with knowledge and skills they need to enter the job market.

Internal quality assurance perspectives of respondents also centred on assessment. The main components of their definition of assessment were validity,

reliability, fairness and flexibility. They defined internal quality assurance as making proper judgements about the achievements of polytechnic students.

Participant KF3: To me, internal quality assurance is taking decisions on students' performance after their completion of studies in a polytechnic.

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on internal quality assurance encompassed learning resources. Core issues were texts, software, equipment, tools and multimedia resources. They defined internal quality assurance as having appropriate learning resources to support the learning activities of academic programmes offered by their polytechnics. This is illustrated by Participant H3 as follows.

I understand internal quality assurance to be having the needed teaching and learning materials for the training offered in the school.

The internal quality assurance perspectives of those in this study embraced provision of library facilities. Their perspectives had these components: quality collections and access to these. They defined internal quality assurance as having quality information resources that lead to advances in teaching, learning and research. Their definition also included having reliable access to information resources in a polytechnic's library. These opinions are well expressed by Participants A3 and T2.

Participant A3: I acknowledge internal quality assurance as having library book collections that are up-to-date and relevant for the polytechnics study programmes.

Participant T2: I understand internal quality assurance to be having more library opening hours to allow ready access to the library book collections.

Internal quality assurance perspectives of respondents in this research centred on the physical environment. These included “in-class” and “out-of-class” spaces. The concepts in their definition were safety, security, comfort, cleanliness, and quietness. They saw internal quality assurance as having physical resources that allowed for effective teaching and learning and social interaction. Participants C2 and K3 gave these illustrations.

Participant C2: To me, internal quality assurance is having flexible teaching and learning spaces that promotes teacher-student interactions, student-student interactions and accommodates different approaches to teaching and learning.

Participant K3: I understand internal quality assurance as having comfortable social spaces in the polytechnic for students to meet informally.

6.3.1.3 Perspectives related to general management

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers’ internal quality assurance perspectives embraced general management. The ideas that formed the basis of their internal quality assurance beliefs concentrated on communication, evaluation, staff development and promotion, data management, public information, student support services, institutional values, rules and regulations, conflict resolution, safety and security and certification. The ideas contained in their perspectives that focused on communication were completeness, conciseness, clarity, accuracy, proper medium and courtesy. They defined internal quality assurance as having well-defined communication. Participant H2 expressed this view below.

I understand internal quality assurance as having effective communication amongst academic staff and students in the polytechnic.

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on internal quality assurance covered evaluation. Their notion had two dimensions. These were evaluation of academic staff and academic programmes. The ideas contained in their perspectives that concerned staff evaluation were work roles, standards and performance. They defined internal quality assurance as forming judgements about teachers' role performances. Additionally, the components of their definition which centred on academic programme evaluation were validity, relevance and currentness. They saw internal quality assurance as making decisions on the relevance of polytechnic's academic programmes. This was noted by Participants B2 and K1 as follows.

Participant B2: I perceive internal quality assurance to be assessment of competencies of academic staff to see if they match approved standards.

Participant K1: To me, internal quality assurance is making pronouncements on the usefulness of an academic programme to society.

These respondents' perspectives on internal quality assurance related to staff development. The idea contained in their definition was continuous learning. They described internal quality assurance as having opportunities to learn throughout a career. This was illustrated by Participant T1.

This is how I understand internal quality assurance. It is providing academic staff with content and pedagogical knowledge in their fields of studies through in-service training and further studies.

Respondents in this study's internal quality assurance perspectives centred on staff promotions. Their definition contained these concepts: merits, achievement and reward. They defined internal quality assurance as acknowledging and rewarding individual merit and achievement. This point was well articulated by participant K1.

I understand internal quality assurance to be basing the advancement of an academic staff from a lower to a higher rank on quantity of teaching loads, quality and quantity of research publications and community service.

Data management formed part of the internal quality assurance perspectives of those in this study. Their perspectives contained these ideas: accessibility, location and reliability. They defined internal quality assurance as having accessible and reliable institutional data. Participant S2 elaborated this.

I see internal quality assurance as having effectively and efficiently managed records of academic activities of an educational institution such as a polytechnic.

Public information was a component of the internal quality assurance perspectives of staff involved in this research. The ideas contained in their perspectives included information on academic programmes, selection criteria, teaching and learning processes, assessment criteria, learning outcomes, certificates awarded and employment opportunities. They defined internal quality assurance as publishing information on institutional academic activities. Participant A3 gave this illustration.

I define internal quality assurance as providing accurate and readily accessible information to prospective students, current

students, alumni and other stakeholders on academic programmes.

Perspectives on internal quality assurance of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' centred on student support services. The core components in their definition were academic and personal guidance. They defined internal quality assurance as providing extra attention to students to enable them to be successful in their studies. Participant B3 explained this.

I understand internal quality assurance to be offering academic and non-academic advice to students to enable them to go through their training smoothly.

Internal quality assurance perspectives of respondents in this research focused on institutional values. Their definition of the situation had these components: truthfulness, honesty, integrity, professionalism and hard work. They saw internal quality assurance as promoting institutional values amongst academic staff and students. Participant K3 explained this as follows.

I understand internal quality assurance to be making beliefs of an educational institution known to its teachers and students.

The ideas of staff who participated in this study on internal quality assurance related to rules and regulations. Their definition contained components of academic and personal ethics. They defined internal quality assurance as providing academic staff and students with relevant professional and personal guidelines. Participant C3 recounted this as follows.

I perceive internal quality assurance as the promotion and maintenance of good behaviour

amongst academic staff and students of a polytechnic.

Conflict resolution formed part of the internal quality assurance perspectives of respondents in this study. The ideas present in their perspectives were reduction and elimination of undesirable behaviour. They defined internal quality assurance as having effective procedures for dealing with complaints and disputes amongst staff and students.

Participant C2: I identify internal quality assurance as having procedures to reduce misunderstanding amongst academic staff and students of polytechnics.

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' internal quality assurance perspectives focused on departmental safety and security. Their perspectives had the following core ideas: safety and security of staff and students and departmental properties. They defined internal quality as encompassing safe learning environment. Participant A3 confirmed this as follows.

I see internal quality assurance to be having a school environment with less crime and violence.

Their internal quality assurance perspectives also related to certification. The ideas which underpinned their definitions centred on integrity of certification. They described internal quality assurance as having technical security features in Higher National Diploma and Bachelor of Technology certificates to prevent forgery. This point was well stated by Participant T1.

I perceive internal quality assurance as having embossed seals in our certificates to make it impossible to use scanners or photocopier to reproduce the same.

6.3.2 Perspectives on external quality assurance

This segment describes rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' external quality assurance perspectives. They identified external quality assurance as being accountable to external stakeholders. Their definition of quality assurance embraced institutional, national and global contexts.

6.3.2.1 Institutional context

Perspectives on external quality of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' had institutional contexts. The ideas contained in their stock of knowledge in relation to external quality assurance centred on institutional mission, governance, academic programmes, practical training, professional bodies, distance education, affiliation, resources, quality culture, internal quality processes and research culture. Their external quality assurance perspectives focused on institutional mission and contained ideas on institutional mission and goals. They defined external quality assurance as operating academic activities in line with stated mission.

Participant T2: I understand external quality assurance to be focusing academic activities of polytechnics on their stated missions.

Their external quality assurance perspectives also covered institutional governance. They were made up of the following three components: structure (eg. Council, academic board), instruments (eg. Polytechnic Act 745 and Polytechnic statutes), and process (eg. Consultative processes). They defined external quality

assurance as having frameworks within and by which authority is exercised and controlled. Participant H3 recounted this input as follows.

To me, external quality assurance is having appropriate governance structures in polytechnics to allow efficiency and effectiveness in their academic operations.

External quality assurance perspectives of those in this study related to academic programmes. The components of their perspectives were content, instructional strategies, duration, learning resources, learning outcomes and assessment. They defined external quality assurance as providing learning experiences that fulfilled national standards. Participant K1 stated this.

I define external quality assurance as running academic programmes that are in line with national expectations in the polytechnics.

External quality assurance perspectives of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' focused on practical training. The core concept in their definition was work place experiences. They perceived external quality assurance to be providing students with workplace experiences during their polytechnic education. Participant K2 acknowledged this perspective.

I understand external quality assurance as inculcating real life experiences in vocational and technical education offered by polytechnics.

External quality assurance perspectives of respondents in this study related to professional bodies. The collections of ideas present in their definition of the situation were professional knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. External quality assurance meant offering educational experiences that met standards specified by

professional bodies such as Ghana Institute of Engineers and Institute of Chartered Accountants (Ghana). Participant H3 commented this way.

I understand external quality assurance as providing vocational and technical courses that match standards stipulated by professional bodies.

External quality assurance perspectives of respondents in this study centred on affiliation. The core of their perspective was mentorship. They defined external quality assurance as partnering with different universities to deliver degree programmes. Participant T2 narrated this.

I perceive external quality assurance as an academic collaboration between two educational institutions on the delivery of Bachelor of Technology degree programmes offered to students.

Distance education formed part of the external quality assurance perspectives of those involved in this study. The concepts in their definition of the situation were learning communities, curriculum, instruction, assessment, learning facilities and resources, faculty and students' support systems and finance. They defined external quality assurance as delivering standard instructions and learning experiences to students not physically present on campus. Participant KF2 stated:

I define external quality assurance as having the same standards of quality for academic programmes provided through distance and academic programmes offered on campus.

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' external quality assurance perspectives focused on resources. Their notions covered two dimensions. These were financial and physical. Financial viability was the core idea of their

perspectives that centred on financial resources. They defined external quality assurance as having the financial capacity and sustainability to operate as a vocational and technical higher education institution. Additionally, the collection of ideas contained in their perspectives related to physical resources covered architectural design, facility usage and maintenance. They saw external quality assurance as having infrastructure that facilitated effective teaching and learning. Participants C1 and C3 gave these illustrations.

Participant C1: I describe external quality assurance as a mechanism put in place to ensure that Ghanaian polytechnics' have financial capacity to run as higher educational institutions now and the foreseeable future.

Participant C3: I perceive external quality assurance as having physical resources such as classroom, workshops, laboratories and offices that support academic activities of an educational institution.

External quality assurance perspectives of respondents in this study focused on what they termed quality culture. The components of their definitions were shared values, beliefs, expectations and accepted practices. They saw external quality assurance to be a commitment towards quality. Participant H3 narrated this view:

I understand external quality assurance to be embedment of quality ideals amongst academic staff of an educational institution.

The external quality assurance perspectives of respondents related to internal quality processes. Teaching, learning, research and community service were the main ideas in their definition. They defined external quality assurance as having quality enhancements in polytechnics.

Participant K1: I perceive external quality assurance as having improvements in the academic operations of an educational institution.

Perspectives on external quality assurance held by rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' related to a research culture. Their perspectives had the following components: research agenda, guidelines and standards for research, incentives for research and publications, facilities and capital for research. They defined external quality assurance as stimulating a research culture amongst academic staff. This is how Participant B3 presented his views.

I think external quality assurance is promoting research interest amongst academic staff of polytechnics for them to engage in productive research activities.

These external quality assurance perspectives also related to efficiency. Ideas present in their definition were prudent use of resources related to teaching, learning and research. They defined external quality assurance as provision of polytechnic education which was cost effective. One Participant, S2 gave this illustration.

I see external quality assurance as the optimal usage of resources in polytechnic education provision to allow improvement in their existing education provision.

6.3.2.2 National context

Similarly, notions of external quality assurance held by respondents focused on national context. The ideas contained in their definition of external quality assurance focused on governance, national development, equity, knowledge economy, public management, consumer protection, research output, civic participation and culture transmission. Their external quality assurance perspectives

related to governance was underpinned by regulation. They perceived external quality assurance as stimulating as well as sanctioning the development of polytechnics.

Participant B2: This is how I see external quality assurance. It is controlling institutional behaviours in the Ghanaian polytechnic education sector.

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on external quality assurance focused on national development. The key components in their definition were "production of knowledge", "diffusion of knowledge" and "transmission of knowledge". They defined external quality assurance as influencing the activities of polytechnics so there were consistent with national goals. Participant A3 stated this.

To me, external quality assurance is making sure the academic operations of polytechnics are in line with national development goals and objectives.

Additionally, their perspectives on external quality assurance embraced equity. The key components of their definition were access and participation. They defined external quality assurance as giving equal opportunities to the citizenry to participate in polytechnic education. Their definition also covered having equal opportunity to complete a study programme in a polytechnic. This is how Participants H2 and K3 expressed their notions.

Participant H2: I define external quality assurance as having a level playing field for all students in a polytechnic to participate and complete their studies smoothly.

Participant K3: I see external quality assurance as giving each individual in a country especially women and rural dwellers an equal chance to pursue polytechnic education.

The perspectives respondents held about external quality assurance centred on a knowledge economy. The main components of their definition of the situation were innovative ideas and technical expertise. They defined external quality assurance as ensuring a well-educated work force that provided a competitive edge in the globalised economy. Participant C3 gave this illustration.

I view external quality assurance as building national intellectual capital that can guarantee the nation a place in the knowledge economy.

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' external quality assurance perspectives related to public management. The ideas found in their perspectives covered the need for productivity and prudent use of resources. They defined external quality assurance as enhancing outcomes and cost efficiency of educational services. Participant B2 expressed this view.

I understand external quality assurance as tuning the activities of polytechnics and their staff to enhance their output and performances.

Research output underpinned the external quality assurance perspectives held by them. The components of their ideas were new knowledge, technologies and capabilities. They defined external quality assurance as ensuring the relevance of polytechnics' research projects for national development. This is how Participant H1 confirmed this perspective.

This is how I understand external quality assurance. It is sustaining and promoting research outputs required for national developmental needs.

Perspectives on external quality assurance held by these Ghanaian polytechnics staff centred on consumer protection. The core themes in their definition were protection from risk and guarding against low-quality educational provision. They saw external quality assurance as assisting students to obtain credentials of value. Participant S3 illustrated his views as follows:

I understand external quality assurance to be helping students who patronise polytechnic education to get value for their money.

Equally, their external quality assurance perspectives focused on civic participation. The key aspects of their definition comprised actions and attitudes associated with democratic governance and social protection. They described external quality assurance as promoting polytechnic graduates participation in community life. Participant B1 put it as follows.

I define external quality assurance as inculcating in students' experiences that urges them to perform their civic duties.

External quality assurance perspectives of respondents focused on cultural transmission. The ideas in their definition included knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. They viewed external quality assurance as ensuring continuity of accepted behavioural patterns in society. Participant B3 commented.

I define external quality assurance to be transmission of a nation's culture from one generation to the other.

6.3.2.3 Global context

External quality assurance perspectives of respondents also focused on globalisation. The notions contained in their perspectives centred on economic interests, international competencies, credentials, institutional image, transnational educational provision, massification, privatisation, diversification, and technology. The key idea that underpinned their perspectives related to economic interest was the education of a highly skilled labour force with a competitive edge. They defined external quality assurance as protecting Ghana's economic interest in the global world through provision of quality polytechnic education. Participant H1 stated it this way.

I perceive external quality assurance to be providing quality education so as to secure Ghana's economic interest in the global market.

Additionally, their perspectives focused on international competencies. The main component in this was cross-cultural capabilities. They described external quality assurance as equipping students with knowledge, skills and values that meet the requirements of global labour markets. Participant T1 noted this.

My understanding of external quality assurance is providing students with broad knowledge base to enable them to perform in diverse cultural environments.

Perspectives on external quality assurance held by them extended to mutual recognition of credentials. The idea that underpinned this was equivalence of qualifications. They perceived external quality assurance as enhancing and facilitating the global acceptability of Higher National Diploma and Bachelor of

Technology qualifications awarded by Ghanaian polytechnics. Participant KF2 gave this illustration.

I see external quality assurance to be guaranteeing the quality of qualifications awarded by institutions so as to enhance their recognition worldwide.

Similarly, their external quality assurance perspectives focused on institutional reputation and image. Crucial here was the public impression of educational institutions. They recognised external quality assurance as safeguarding and promoting public confidence in the education delivered by Ghanaian polytechnics to make them competitive in the international higher education market. Participant H3 presented this view.

To me, external quality assurance is making the public accept Ghanaian polytechnics as providers of quality education so as to make them attractive in the global higher education market.

External quality assurance perspectives of respondents in this study related to transnational education. Of importance here were delivery of training and qualifications off-shore. They defined external quality assurance as aligning education experiences offered by cross boarder providers to national standards. Participant K3 explained this.

Participant K3: I see external quality assurance to be ensuring that the quality of learning experiences provided to Ghanaian students by overseas higher education institutions in the country match the country's acceptable quality standards.

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on external quality assurance focused on new technologies. The key components of their ideas

were educational design (course content and pedagogy), technological infrastructure, and technical support systems. They saw external quality assurance as providing quality online polytechnic educational experiences. Participant A3 expressed his views this way.

I understand external quality assurance to be delivering polytechnic education through online and virtual means within acceptable quality standards.

Similarly, their external quality assurance perspectives embraced massification. The core idea here centred on increases in higher education enrolments. They defined external quality assurance as maintaining acceptable quality standards whilst expanding access and participation in the polytechnic sector. Participant H3 gave this explanation.

For me, external quality assurance is not sacrificing quality standards in the quest for expanding access and participation in polytechnic education.

Privatisation formed part of the respondents' external quality assurance perspectives. Their definition centred on private investment in higher education. They defined external quality assurance as controlling private participation in the polytechnic education sector.

Participant B2: I see external quality assurance as regulating private interest in the higher education sector for it to be in line with national expectations.

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' external quality assurance perspectives also covered diversification. Crucial here were variety of students and range of educational offerings. They defined external quality assurance as providing

quality polytechnic education through other modes to non-regular students.

Participant KF2 gave this explanation.

For me, external quality assurance is making sure the level of quality of academic programmes delivered through distance and part-time is similar to the regular teaching and learning on site.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter explored the quality assurance perspectives of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' of Ghanaian polytechnics. They defined quality as including perfection, standard, value for money, fitness for purpose, excellence and transformation. These notions underpinned their definition of quality assurance. Their perspectives on quality assurance had two dimensions and these were perspectives on internal quality assurance and perspectives on external quality assurance. Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on internal quality assurance focused on human resources, teaching and learning and general management. Their definition of internal quality assurance centred on quality academic staff and students. Similarly, their perspectives on external quality assurance concerned teaching and learning. This focused on quality academic programmes, valid and reliable assessments, availability of quality learning resources, suitability of physical facilities and a conducive learning environment. Their definitions related to general management concerned achieving effective communication, continuous learning amongst academic staff, evaluation of academic staff, accurate information for education consumers, quality student support services, effective rules and regulations, effective conflict management, safe and secure teaching and prevention of certificate forgery.

The respondents' perspectives on external quality assurance had institutional, national and global context. Their perspectives related to institutional context centred on achieving institutional goals, effective governance, delivering quality programmes, improving access to higher education, promoting quality, research culture and ensuring proper data management. The external quality assurance perspective held by them which related to national context concerned regulating the higher education sector, achieving national development, widening participation, producing a well-educated labour force, achieving efficiency and effectiveness in education service delivery, protecting consumers of education, ensuring research outputs have economic impacts, improving civic participation in the nation and transmission of culture to the next generation. Their external quality assurance perspectives also had links with globalisation and concerned protecting national economic interest, equipping students with international competencies, enhancing mutual recognition of credentials globally, promoting public confidence in institutions, ensuring cross boarder providers adhered to national quality standards, expanding higher education participation as well as ensuring quality standards, providing quality learning experiences through other modes to non-regular students and monitoring private investments with regards to polytechnic education delivery. The next chapter looks at the origins of these officers' quality assurance perspectives.

Chapter 7

Origins of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on quality assurance

7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the origins of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on quality assurance. As indicated in chapter four, symbolic interactionists such as Mead (1934), Blumer (1969), and Hage and Powers (1992) argue that individuals form perspectives from interactions with each other, from group life and reference groups. Perspectives are the frameworks through which individuals make sense of the world (Woods, 1983). They form the basis of social actions in every aspect of social life. Perspectives contain definitions and include strategies as well as ideas (Becker et al., 1961). Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on quality assurance were the result of secondary socialisation specifically socialisation occurring in their occupations and also the organisations they worked in. As they interacted in their occupations and organisations, they engaged in the construction of new self, took on a new identity, took on new perspectives and learnt to take on new roles.

Analysing the data on their perspectives provided insights into the socialisation origins of these perspectives. These are grouped under occupational socialisation and institutional socialisation and form the two main sections in this chapter. The first section explores their occupational socialisation experiences and how these contributed to the formation of their perspectives on quality assurance. Finding out about this was essential in understanding how they defined situations and designed strategies to solve problematic situations. The second section examines the polytechnics' influence on the formation of their perspectives on quality assurance. This account provided insights into the secondary socialisation agents existing in the

polytechnics which the school used to influence their perspectives on quality assurance.

7.2 Occupational socialisation

In exploring the origins of their perspectives on quality assurance practices it was essential to provide insights into their occupational socialisation experiences. These included their interactions in their previous employment, professional associations and trade unions. Through the performance of their roles in their previous employment, professional training and trade union meetings they interacted with significant others. This assisted them to develop a new self, take on new identity, and form perspectives on quality assurance.

7.2.1 Previous employment

In terms of socialisation, their previous employment was a key influence on their perspectives. They formed their perspectives on quality assurance from past socialisation in their previous employment. Their perspectives assisted them to define situations, formed definition of quality assurance, and highlighted actions to be engaged in during quality assurance. Participant H3 had previously been in charge of admissions, registration and examinations in two private universities in Ghana before his current position. This experience gave him a collection of ideas on the actions to be undertaken when admitting, registering and conducting examinations for students in his polytechnic.

Participant H3: I was in charge of admissions, registration and examinations in Regent University and Data Link University before I took appointment as the quality assurance officer of this polytechnic. So I have experience on admissions, students registration and examinations conduction.

Participants B3 indicated he had previously taught in a College of Education in Ghana and also occupied the position of Head of Educational Studies. This previous experience enabled him to acquire ideas and actions to be engaged in during quality assurance processes.

Participant B3: I previously taught in one of the Colleges of Education. I was in charge of teaching practice and Head of Education Studies Department. So I got experience with regards to what must be done in order to achieve quality teaching and learning.

Two participants (C3 and T2) formed their perspectives on quality assurance during experiences in industry. Participant C3 worked as a site engineer for a construction firm. He was given definitions of the situation and standards which showed him actions to take in that situation. He defined quality as meaning conformity to requirements. These perspectives were not discarded but used in solving problematic situations related to quality assurance practices in the polytechnic. For example, participant C3 developed quality standards for students' assessment for his polytechnic and benchmarked the assessment practices of the polytechnic's teachers against those standards. Teacher's assessment practices which fell below the approved standards were seen to be improper.

Participant C3: I worked as a site engineer for K.C.E Ltd. I was given some standards to meet. If my construction work falls below those standards, they were declared inferior. This experience moulded me so I use the same perspective in making sure quality standards in the polytechnic are achieved.

Participant T2 formed his perspectives on quality assurance from prior experience in a telecommunication's company. His dealings in the company enabled

him to acquire ideas and actions to take to ensure the polytechnic's courses offered the students the appropriate socialisation for the job market.

Participant T2: I worked as a production foreman with Ghana Telecoms. I put interventions in place from the beginning of the production to the end to enable me achieve the quality desired. So in this polytechnic from admission I make sure the students are given the right raining before they graduate.

Participants K1 previously worked with the Ghana Statistical Service. This provided him with ideas on the process he could follow to generate quality data for national development. For example, the data participant K1 used for his analysis had to be cleaned for it to be error free before it could be used. Participant K1 constructed a new self and took on the perspectives of his clients. Participant K1 used these perspectives to define situations as he performed his role in the polytechnic.

Participant K1: I was the Government Statistician. My data for national development had to be errorfree in other words quality. This standard helped me to be meticulous in my work so that is how I define quality in this polytechnic.

7.2.2 Professional associations

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' engaged in professional associations. These professional associations served as reference groups. They set standards and expectations for practice which they used when they were faced with problematic situations.

Participant S1: I am a veterinary surgeon and an agriculturist. We have our rules and regulations. Because of this I cannot administer medication to humans, which is a quality issue. So in assuring quality in this polytechnic I apply the rules strictly.

Professional associations had deliberate socialisation techniques that influenced the perspectives of their members. Through the supply of periodicals, magazines and manuals, they transmitted new knowledge or new developments about their field to their members. This assisted them to construct a new self by taking on the perspective of others. For example, participant S2 learnt from the Chartered Institute of Builders that money, time and quality forms the golden triangle and with these three things quality cannot be compromised. These ideas assisted participant S2 to strive for quality as he performed his role as a teacher in his polytechnic.

Participant S2: I belong to the Chartered Institute of Builders and Royal Institute of Builders. They supply us with periodicals and magazines on quality construction activities. This influences my practices in this polytechnic.

For participant T1 and B3, the professional associations provided them with a way of thinking and acting which enabled them to deal with problematic situations.

Participant T1: I belong to Institute of Professional Management, UK. They advocate quality management practices. Because I have adopted these practices in the management of this polytechnic, this polytechnic has received international awards on quality teaching and learning.

Participant B3: I belong to the Professional Development Leaders. They organize training for us. I have improved upon my leadership skills and I apply this in ensuring quality in this school.

The perspectives on quality assurance participant H1 held were as a result of his profession as an agronomist. This provided him with definitions of quality. These definitions centred on quality produce, quality food and quality grains. These definitions were used by participant H1 to address the problematic situations he

encountered in his polytechnic on students' admissions, teaching and learning, and the appropriateness of the polytechnic's environment.

Participant H1: I identify myself as a crop protectionist. I protect crops because I want quality produce, quality food and quality grains. So it is the same perspective I use in admissions, teaching and learning and making sure the school environment is clean and safe.

For participant H3, his perspectives on quality assurance arose as a result of his membership of the Chartered Institute of Marketing, Ghana. He obtained criteria of judgment used to evaluate quality service delivery from the socialisation he underwent as a member of Chartered Institute of Marketing, Ghana. These same criteria were replicated in the quality assurance survey questionnaire he used to assess the performance of the polytechnic's staff with regards to quality service offered to students.

Participant H3: Evaluation is part of marketing strategies. This enables you to review your performance and improve it.

Similarly, participant T1's perspective on quality assurance emanated from his background as a mathematician. It gave him ideas on project evaluation. This resulted from his interaction with others in his professional association. These ideas were used by participant T1 to review the academic programmes offered by his polytechnic to see if they met the requirements of the generalised other.

Participant T1: I am a mathematician.... I have been able to design models for my polytechnic to use to evaluate our programmes to see if they meet societal expectations.

Furthermore, participant C2 asserted that his perspective on quality assurance had been influenced by the roles he played in Institute of Public Relations, Ghana. He derived his understanding of quality communication from this association. Through interaction with others in this group, participant C2 took on the perspective of Institute of Public Relations. Participant C2 therefore used these ideas to design channels of communication for his polytechnic. For example, information about quality teaching and learning was disseminated from the rector's office to the vice rector's office then it went to the deans offices before it went to the heads of departments for them to inform all teaching staff in their departments. This communication process helped the polytechnic to achieve its quality goals related to communication.

*Participant C2: Communication is vital in quality assurance.
The channel of communication I designed for
this polytechnic makes it possible for us to
disseminate information concerning quality
quickly.*

7.2.3 Trade unions

As staff of polytechnics in Ghana, they belonged to unions including the Conference of Rectors of Polytechnics (CORP), Polytechnic Teachers Association of Ghana (POTAG), Ghana Association of Polytechnic Administrators (GAPA) and Polytechnic Administrators' Association of Ghana (PAAG). These unions served as reference groups by performing normative functions for them. They had codes of ethics which indicated standard practices for members in the performance of their roles. For participant KF2, the Polytechnic Teachers' Association of Ghana (POTAG) provided him with a way of thinking and acting that enabled him to perform his role as teacher in the polytechnic.

Participant KF2: The Polytechnic Teachers Association of Ghana (POTAG) has a code of ethics. It serves as a guide to me when I am teaching. This compels me to deliver quality lessons to the students.

Participant T1 derived his ideas on quality assurance strategies from his interaction with others in CORPS. By interacting with others in CORPS he took on the group's perspectives on staff recruitment, staff appraisal, staff development and students' support services. These strategies were used to assist the polytechnic to achieve its quality goals.

Participant T1: At CORP meetings we discuss quality issues concerning staff appointments, staff appraisal, staff developments, and student affairs. Some of us pick one or two ideas from there and implement them.

7.3 Institutional socialisation

In ascertaining where the perspectives of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' on quality assurance had emanated from, it is prudent to highlight the institutional socialisation experiences which underpinned their perspectives. These are grouped under external institutional socialisation and internal institutional socialisation.

7.3.1 External institutional socialisation

This section explains the influence institutions external to the Ghanaian polytechnics had on their quality assurance perspectives. This section is organised in two main parts that is domestic institutions and international institutions.

7.3.1.1 Domestic institutions

This section presents information on the influence domestic institutions and legislation such as the Polytechnic Act 745, National Council for Tertiary Education, the National Accreditation Board, the National Board for Professional and Technician Examination and Ghanaian public Universities had on their quality assurance perspectives. Through programmes such as accreditation and mentorship, they had interaction with significant others. This assisted them to develop a new self, take on new identity, and new perspectives on quality assurance.

7.3.1.1.1 The Polytechnic Act 745

The Ghanaian Polytechnic Act 745 of 2007 influenced the quality assurance perspectives of those involved in this research. The polytechnic act served as an agent of socialisation. It provided T1, S2, C1 with ideas on the mandate of Ghanaian Polytechnics. For T1, the understanding of quality assurance he derived from the Polytechnic Act 745 centred on the specific education that could be provided by Ghanaian polytechnics. He learnt from the Polytechnic Act 745 that Ghanaian polytechnics only provided vocational education. This assisted T1 to design and offer academic programmes which provided students with the requirements of the job market.

Participant T1: The Polytechnic Act 745 requires Ghanaian polytechnics to train middle level manpower for industry and businesses so we are compelled to provide career focused education in the fields of manufacturing, commerce, science, technology, applied social science and applied arts.

The understanding S1 derived from the Polytechnic Act 745 related to establishing links with industry. He indicated that the Polytechnic Act provided him with ideas on hands-on-training. These ideas assisted S1 to place his students in industry for work experience and introduce them to work place competencies. This helped S1 to ensure that his polytechnic's academic programmes met the standards of the work place.

Participant S1: At the end of every second semester vacation our students go for industrial attachment to learn some practicals and also acquire work place competencies.

The perspective of quality assurance C1 held centred on research. He indicated that the Polytechnic Act 745 required polytechnics to provide opportunities for research and publications. Participant C1 established a fund for research and publications. This enabled staff in his polytechnic to engage in research and journal publication.

Participant C1: The Polytechnic Act 745 requires all Ghanaian polytechnics to provide opportunities for research and research publications.

7.3.1.1.2 The National Council for Tertiary Education

The National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) is a constitutional advisory body to Ghana's Ministry of Education on tertiary education (Njoku, 2012). In terms of institutional socialisation, this body influenced their quality assurance perspectives. It provided them with ideas on tertiary education. For Participant K1, the National Council for Tertiary Education provided him with ideas on the relevance of his polytechnic's academic programmes to Ghana's development.

Participant K1: The NCTE requires all tertiary institutions including polytechnics to make the content of their academic programmes relevant to Ghana's development.

Participant K1 adhered to this directive by ensuring that the socialisation his polytechnic courses offered students could be used in developing Ghana. For example, he sent the civil engineering students of his polytechnic to the construction site of Sinohydro Ghana Ltd at Bui to under study the Chinese technicians who were building a new hydroelectricity power dam for Ghana in 2011.

On the part of participant T2, the understanding of quality assurance he derived from the National Council for Tertiary Education related to budgets. He disclosed that the National Council for Tertiary Education provided him with ideas on the cost implications academic programmes of Ghanaian polytechnics had on the budget of the Ministry of Education.

Participant T2: The NCTE assesses the budgetary implications proposed academic programmes of tertiary institutions could have on the budget of Ghana's Ministry of Education.

Participant T2 used these ideas to assess the financial implications proposed academic programmes could have on the budget of the Ministry of Education before they were introduced in his polytechnic. This helped in ensuring that his polytechnic offered academic programmes which fell within its financial capabilities.

7.3.1.1.3 The National Accreditation Board

The National Accreditation Board of Ghana was also influential in the formation of their understanding of quality assurance. This is an external quality assurance body established by the government of Ghana to regulate the activities of

Ghanaian polytechnics (Njoku, 2012). The National Accreditation Board (NAB) acted as a reference group for the polytechnics and performed normative functions during institutional and programme accreditation. It set standards on students' admissions, staff appointments, academic programme content, lesson delivery methods, logistics and infrastructure and provided them with plans of action to follow when they encountered problematic situations.

For participant B2 the understanding of quality assurance he had related to students' admissions and emanated from the National Accreditation Board. He indicated that NAB offered him ideas on the entry requirements of each of the academic programmes offered by his polytechnic. Through interaction with significant others in the National Accreditation Board, participant B2 altered his self and took on the perspectives of the other. Participant B2 used these entry criteria to judge the suitability of students' who applied to pursue academic programmes in his polytechnic. This helped to ensure that the students who gained admission possessed the required socialisation to pursue the academic programmes his polytechnic offered.

Participant B2: The National Accreditation Board provides us with entry requirements for our Higher National Diploma programmes. Applicants with grade "F" in either English or Mathematics in their senior secondary school results do not qualify for HND and we follow this strictly during student admissions.

Similarly, the perspective of quality assurance participant C2 held centred on quality staff recruitment and this was as a result of his interaction with significant others in the National Accreditation Board. They provided participant C2 with the appropriate qualifications applicants needed before they were appointed to teach in the polytechnic. This assisted participant C2 to construct a new self and take on the

role of the other. Participant C2 used the appointment criteria of the National Accreditation Board to judge the suitability of applicants for advertised teaching positions before they were given appointments in the polytechnic.

Participant C2: The National Accreditation Board has standard qualifications for teachers of polytechnics. Applicants with relevant bachelor and master's degree qualifications can be appointed to teach in the polytechnic and I follow these guidelines strictly in recruiting teachers for this school.

Furthermore, participant KF3 recounted that her perspectives on quality assurance focused on the development of academic programmes. This was the result of her encounter with significant others in the National Accreditation Board. She had obtained ideas on programme contents for core and elective courses of academic programmes. These ideas assisted participant KF3 to select the topics that needed to be covered in the courses she taught in the polytechnic. This ensured that the socialisation her polytechnic's courses offered students met required standards.

Participant KF3: The National Accreditation Board has standard content for Higher National Diploma (HND) core and electives courses. This is what guides us in the selection of topics of the courses we teach.

For participant H2, the National Accreditation Board provided her with ideas on the standard duration for the completion of a Higher National Diploma. This occurred as a result of her dealings with significant others in the National Accreditation Board. This assisted participant H2 to adjust herself and take on the perspectives of others. Participant H2 adopted the National Accreditation Board's duration for all the academic programmes her polytechnic offered. This enabled

participant H2 to ensure that students who were awarded the polytechnic's certificate had undergone socialisation specified by the generalised other.

Participant H2: The standard duration required by National Accreditation Board for a student to complete Higher National Diploma programme is three year.

Additionally, participant B1 disclosed that his perspective on quality assurance centred on quality logistics for teaching and learning and this originated from the National Accreditation Board. He argued that the National Accreditation Board provided him with ideas on specific logistics required to teach an academic programme like agricultural engineering. By interacting with the significant others during the process of accreditation, participant B1 modified himself and took on the role of the other. This motivated participant B1 to make resources available to ensure that the Agricultural Engineering programme offered students the appropriate occupational socialisation. It also assisted him to seek accreditation for the Agricultural Engineering programme.

Participant B1: This polytechnic gets accreditation for its academic programmes, only if it meets the logistics requirements specified by the National Accreditation Board.

Equally, participant H1 noted that his understanding of quality assurance came from National Accreditation Board and centred on quality infrastructure for teaching and learning. He disclosed that the National Accreditation Board provided him with the standards for buildings used as classrooms, workshops and laboratories. Through interaction with others in National Accreditation Board during the institutional accreditation and re-accreditation process, participant H1 altered his self and took on the perspectives of the other. Participant H1 ensured that the contractors

who put up buildings in the polytechnic used these standards. This allowed participant H1 to secure institutional accreditation for his polytechnic.

Participant H1: The National Accreditation Board has standards for buildings for specific academic programmes and these standards are taken into consideration when we embark on any building construction activity.

7.3.1.1.4 National Board for Professional and Technician Examination

The National Board for Professional and Technician Examination was one of the sources of their quality assurance perspectives. This was established by the Government of Ghana, specifically to regulate the activities of the polytechnics (Government of Ghana, 1994b). It served as a reference group for them by performing normative functions such as providing standards for the content of the syllabi of the academic programmes, providing standards for the conduct of end of semester examinations and providing criteria for students' assessment.

Participant B2 disclosed that the perspective of quality assurance he had formed centred on syllabi for academic programmes. He indicated that the National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations provided the syllabi for the academic programmes of his polytechnic. The content of these syllabi were followed by participant B2 as he performed his teaching role. This assisted him to offer the students with the occupational socialisation required by the generalised other.

Participant B2: The polytechnics are not autonomous. We are under National Board for Professional and Technician Examination. They give us the syllabi for our academic programmes we teach.

For participant H2, the National Board for Professional and Technician Examination (NABPTEX) provided her with a way of thinking and acting which she used to address problematic situations such as syllabus reviews.

Participant H2: Through the National Board for Professional and Technician Examination we are able to review our syllabi to see if our programmes satisfy the requirements of the job market.

Participant C2 confirmed National Board for Professional and Technician Examination (NABPTEX) as a source of his perspectives on quality assessment practices. He had obtained ideas on criteria for judging students achievements.

Participant C2: The National Board for Professional and Technician Examination provides us with an assessment criteria and that is what we use to judge the performance of our students.

Similarly, participant C1 remarked that he derived his understanding of quality assurance from the National Board for Professional and Technician Examination. The board provided him with a way of thinking and acting which assisted him to deal with problematic situations such as examination moderation. Participant C1 indicated that end of semester examination questions and their marking schemes were submitted to NABPTEX for moderation before they were administered to the students. Through this process participant C1 set examination questions which met NABPTEX standards before they were administered to students.

Participant C1: We send our end of semester examination questions and marking schemes to NABPTEX two weeks in the beginning of the semester for moderation before it is given to students to write.

The understanding of quality assurance participant KF2 derived from the National Board for Professional and Technician Examination related to examination administration. This board provided him with a manual which contained their standards for examination administration. This assisted participant KF2 to take on perspectives of others. For example participant KF2 kept the end of semester examination questions under lock and key, selected suitable examination venues for the examinations, appointed qualified invigilators and determined appropriate durations for the examinations.

Participant KF2: We ensure the integrity of our examinations by following the directives in the National Board for Professional and Technician Examination manual for our examinations.

Participant H1 claimed the understanding of quality assurance he derived from the National Board for Professional and Technician Examination related to academic misconduct. The National Board for Professional and Technician Examination provided participant H1 with definitions of cheating in examinations. These definitions included helping someone in a test or copying from someone without his/her knowledge. These definitions were applied by participant H1 to address the problematic situations he encountered when he administered the end of semester examinations in his polytechnic.

Participant H1: We refer to the NABPTEX examination guide for sanctions to deal with students who help their friends in examinations or copy from someone without his/her knowledge.

7.3.1.1.5 Ghanaian universities

Old public universities in Ghana such as University of Ghana, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and University of Cape Coast

provided participants (B3, T3, C3, S3, KF3, H3) understandings on quality assurance. As pioneers of higher education provision, these universities were perceived as custodians of academic quality in Ghana. These universities acted as reference groups. They performed normative functions by providing rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' with criteria for organising quality assurance programmes, standards for content of courses, teachers' assessment and ideas on data management and report writing.

Participant B3 stated that the quality assurance perspective he held emanated from the University of Cape Coast. The University provided him with ideas on how to organise educational programmes on quality assurance for staff. Participant B3 learnt when to organise such programmes, what the nature of these programmes should be, the personnel involved, the duration of programmes, and the funds required to organise programmes. This was the outcome of the interaction participant B3 had with significant others at the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance of the University of Cape Coast. B3 constructed a new self and took on the role of the other. He used these ideas to organise educational programmes on quality assurance for teaching staff of his polytechnic every year. This helped to increase awareness of the teaching staff on quality issues and also ensured that teaching staff performed their roles in accordance with the polytechnic's standards.

Participant B3: I went to understudy the staff of the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance of the University of Cape Coast for eight weeks after I was appointed as the quality assurance officer of this polytechnic so this experience enables me to organise training on quality assurance for the teaching staff.

On the part of participant T3, the interaction he had with significant others at the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance of the University of

Cape Coast provided him with criteria of judgement for evaluating his polytechnic's academic courses.

Participant T3: At the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance of the University of Cape Coast I was trained on how to develop and validate survey instruments to assess the perception of students on the quality of academic courses.

Participant C3 derived his understanding of quality assurance from the University of Cape Coast. The university had provided him with criteria he used to assess the performance of his teachers. This was the result of the interaction he had with significant others during a four weeks internship at the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance of the University of Cape Coast. He used these same criteria to appraise the performance of teaching staff in his polytechnic.

Participant C3: I had internship at the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance of the University of Cape Coast so I adopted the questionnaire I used to appraise the performance of the teaching staff from them.

Participant S3 derived his understanding of quality assurance from the University of Ghana. This provided him with ideas on quality assurance including pre-assessment and post assessment moderation. This happened when participant S3 had encounters with significant others in the Quality Assurance Department of the University of Ghana whilst on internship. Participant S3 adopted these quality assurance strategies in his polytechnic to ensure effective teaching and learning. For instance, marked examination scripts of courses were randomly checked and moderated.

The University of Cape Coast was for participant KF3 the origin of her understanding of quality assurance. The university provided her with ideas on quality data management. This was as a result of encounters with significant others in the quality assurance directorate of the University of Cape Coast. Ideas gained were used by KF3 to deal with problematic situations she encountered in quality assurance activities such as supervising data collection, cleaning data and capturing data on courses and teachers' assessment. This enabled KF3 to generate quality data used to write the quality assurance report for her polytechnic.

Participant KF3: At the University of Cape Coast I was exposed to their systems and processes for the collection, recording, analysis and reporting of data for quality assurance.

For participant H3, his perspective on quality assurance originated from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The University provided him with ideas on the preparation of the annual quality assurance report. This occurred through the interaction he had with others in the Quality Assurance Department of the University when he went there to understudy its staff. Participant H3 used ideas gained there to prepare annual quality assurance reports for the management of his polytechnic.

Participant H3: The style of the annual quality assurance report I prepared for my polytechnic's management was adopted from the Kwame University of Science and Technology.

7.3.1.2 Overseas institutions

Perspectives on quality assurance of staff involved in this study were also derived from international institutions such as overseas universities and colleges, the Association of African Universities (AAU) and the International Organization for

Standardization (ISO). Due to affiliations with these institutions they engaged in interaction with significant others. This assisted them to develop perspectives on quality assurance.

7.3.1.2.1 Overseas universities and colleges

Perspectives on quality assurance of participants (A3, T1, K1) originated from overseas universities and colleges such as Liverpool John Moores University UK, Yangtze University China, Aircraft Maintenance Training Institute of Florida, United States, and Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT), Canada which their polytechnics were affiliated to. These overseas educational institutions exposed these people to overseas quality assurance policies. They served as reference groups by performing normative and comparative functions. They assisted to determine resources required to run academic programmes, entry requirements and content of programmes. Participant A3, claimed that Liverpool John Moores University provided him with standard syllabi for two bachelor degree programmes offered by his polytechnic. This assisted him to ensure that the socialisation these two degree programmes offered students in his polytechnic had international credibility.

Participant A3: Liverpool John Moores University, UK provided us with the syllabi for our Bachelor of Science top-up degree programmes in Construction Management and Civil Engineering and award certificates to students who completed these programmes.

Participant A3 disclosed that his polytechnic's affiliation to Liverpool John Moores University formed the basis of his perspectives on quality teaching staff. The university provided him with standards for teachers who could teach the academic programmes. Participant A3 adhered to these by ensuring that teachers recruited to teach the bachelor degree programmes in construction management and civil

engineering in his polytechnic had bachelor and masters qualifications in construction, civil engineering and building technology. This ensured that the courses offered the students who pursued such programmes were in line with global standards.

Participant A3: Per Liverpool John Moores University standards, only teachers who had relevant bachelor and master's degree qualifications could teach their academic programmes we offer.

For participant T1, overseas institutions set the benchmarks against which he evaluated himself and others. The Aircraft Maintenance Training Institute of Florida, United States, and Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) in Canada shared information on their quality practices with him. He used these practices as benchmarks against which he evaluated his quality practices and other staff of his polytechnic.

Participant T1: I want this polytechnic to be like Aircraft Maintenance Training Institute of Florida, United States, or Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) in Canada so I have adopted some of their quality practices in our quality assurance policies.

For participant K1, the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and the Bachelor of Science in Petro-Chemical Engineering programmes offered in his polytechnic were affiliated to Yangtze University in China. Yangtze University provided his polytechnic with the entry requirements and the structure of these academic programmes. For example students who applied for each of these two programmes must possess three (3) credit passes in SSSCE/WASSCE subjects including English language, mathematics, social studies or integrated science and

three (3) credit passes in elective subjects. Participant K1 used these criteria to select qualified applicants for these academic programmes.

Participant K1: We follow strictly the admission criteria of Yangtze University. Also students' who gain admission to pursue Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Bachelor of Science in Petro-Chemical Engineering programmes do two years study in this polytechnic and continue with extra four years in Yangtze University.

K1 further stated that Yangtze University provided him with ideas on the equipment his polytechnic needed in order to run these programmes. Through this collaboration, K1 adjusted his self and took on the perspective of the other and procured this equipment for his polytechnic. This helped to ensure that the students who pursued these programmes underwent the appropriate occupational socialisation.

Participant K1: Yangtze University provided us with a list of the equipment we needed to run these academic programmes and they assisted us to purchase them in China.

7.3.1.2.2 The Association of African Universities (AAU)

The Association of African Universities (AAU) serves as a strategic forum for consultation, exchange of information and co-operation among institutions of higher education in Africa (Oyewole, 2012). This association provided K1 with his understanding on quality assurance. Through attendance at conferences, through training and the supply of periodicals this association passed on information on quality institutional management to K1. This assisted K1 to construct a new self and take on the perspective of the other by using these ideas to improve the management of his polytechnic.

Participant K1: My polytechnic and the polytechnic of Namibia are the only two polytechnics in Africa who are members of AAU. I have gained lot of ideas on management from their conferences, training and periodicals. This has helped me to improve the management of this polytechnic.

7.3.1.2.3 The International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

The ISO 9001: 2008 is the International Organization for Standardizations (ISO) standard for quality management systems. This was the source T1 derived his understanding of quality assurance from. Participant T1 learnt quality management practices in ISO 9001:2008 and adopted them as part of his polytechnic's quality assurance policies. This assisted T1 to manage his polytechnic effectively and also secure ISO 9001: 2008 certificate for his polytechnic. The possession of the ISO 9001:2008 enhanced the image of the polytechnic. It portrayed that the school had the right facilities for teaching, learning and research and delivered high quality academic programmes.

Participant T1: I use the ISO principles as framework to guide this polytechnic towards improved performance and I tell you this has enhanced our polytechnics image as the best polytechnic in Ghana.

T1 further indicated that the award of ISO 9001:2008 certificate to his polytechnic enabled him to benchmark his polytechnic's academic programmes with other world class institutions.

7.3.2 Internal institutional socialisation

Perspectives on quality assurance of respondents of this study also emanated from the polytechnic council, the polytechnic statutes, academic board, internal quality assurance draft policies, strategic plans and ethics policy.

7.3.2.1 The polytechnic council

The polytechnic council is the governing body of the polytechnic. It has the overall responsibility for the strategic direction and management of polytechnic's activities. It makes policies and decisions on academic programmes, infrastructure and budgeting. The polytechnic council was where some participants (T2, K3, C2, A3, B1, H1, KF3) derived their understanding of quality assurance from. Participant T2's claimed that the understanding of quality assurance he derived from his polytechnic's council focused on the educational character of his polytechnic. His polytechnic council provided him with ideas on the mission of his polytechnic. These ideas related to his polytechnic's academic and operational assurances, as well as its commitment to its students.

Participant T2: The mission of my polytechnic is to produce highly competent human resource through career focus education, skills training and research in partnership with business and industry.

Through his dealings with the polytechnic council, T2 constructed a new self by taking on the perspective of businesses and industry. This enabled T2's polytechnic to graduate competent graduates for the job market.

Participant T2: We place our students in industry and businesses for them to learn practical things there and also apply the theory they have

learnt in the classroom. This has been part of the polytechnic's training.

Participant K3 indicated that his understanding of quality assurance emanated from his polytechnic's council and related to the type of academic programmes that was offered in polytechnics. His polytechnic's council ensured academic programmes were in line with the mission of his polytechnic. This helped K3 introduce academic programmes which were in line with the polytechnic's mission.

Participant K3: Decisions on proposed academic programmes in the polytechnic are subject to approval by the polytechnic council. This compels us to run academic programmes that are in line with our mission.

For C2, his polytechnic council provided him with ideas on a strategic plan. These ideas centered on what his polytechnic wanted to achieve in the future and how it planned to get there. Through discussions at his polytechnic's council, C2 modified his self and took on the perspective of the other. C2 ensured that the polytechnic had a unified direction towards the future.

Participant C2: With the support of the polytechnic council I have developed a strategic plan for this polytechnic. The strategic plan captures our vision and strategies to achieve that vision.

Participant A3, derived from his polytechnic's council perspectives on budgeting. The polytechnic council provided him with criteria for approving annual estimates of income and expenditure. By participating in his polytechnic's council meetings, A3 interacted with significant others. As a result, he adjusted his self and took on the perspective of the other. This assisted A3 to allocate the polytechnic's financial resources to ensure effective teaching and learning.

Participant A3: Our budget has to be approved by the polytechnic council before it can be used.

Participant B1's perspectives on quality assurance centred on better use of existing resources and this originated from his polytechnic council. The polytechnic council provided him with mechanisms for continuous internal re-examination and reallocation of resources. This was the result of B1's interaction with significant others in the polytechnic's council. This assisted B1 to reallocate resources from existing projects to new ones. For example, an unused carpentry workshop was approved by the polytechnic council to be turned into classroom.

Participant H1's perspectives on quality assurance focused on staff recruitment. The polytechnic council provided him with criteria for appointing senior office holders. For example, applicants for registrar had to be proven leaders with academic and managerial standing and with a master's degree from a reputable university. They had to show evidence of developing and implementing strategies which would grow and transform the polytechnic. He used these criteria to judge the suitability of applicants who applied.

Participant KF3's perspective on quality assurance centred on quality infrastructure and came from her polytechnic's council. Her polytechnic council provided her with ideas on the quality of buildings. This assisted KF3 to ensure that the polytechnic's new buildings were fit for purpose.

7.3.2.2 The polytechnic statutes

The polytechnic statute is the law that governs the operations of a polytechnic. This was where their perspectives on quality assurance emanated from. For T2, the polytechnic statute provided him with ideas on the functions of his polytechnic's council.

Participant T2: Our statute clearly states that the polytechnic council shall ensure the availability of financial, human and material resources for teaching, learning and research.

This allowed T2 to work with the polytechnic's council to ensure that his polytechnic had the necessary resources for effective teaching and learning. For example, through the effort of the polytechnic council, the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFUND) built a modern library block. The perspective of quality assurance K1 held related to the academic board. His polytechnic's statutes provided him an understanding of the powers of the academic board.

Participant K1: The academic board had to approve all our academic policies before they could be implemented in the polytechnic.

This compelled K1 to submit the internal quality assurance draft policy and admission policies of the polytechnic to the academic board for review and approval. Understandings of quality assurance B1 derived from his polytechnic's statutes concerned appointment and promotion of academic staff. His polytechnic's statutes provided him with the criteria he used to form the appointments and promotions committee. For example, the composition of this committee included the rector as the chairperson, and the following as members: registrar, finance officer, librarian and two heads of departments. This committee assisted B1 to assess applicants for senior positions and staff due for promotion.

Participant B1: The Appointments and Promotions Committee advises the Polytechnic Council on matters of engagement, promotion and discipline of senior members of staff, both academic and administrative.

For KF2, the understanding of quality assurance he obtained from his polytechnics statute focused on class attendance. His polytechnic statute provided him with the criteria he used to judge the quality of students' class attendance.

Participant KF2: Students' are required to attend all lectures and practical classes specified for their course of study. Students who absent themselves for a cumulative total of 25% in any one semester are deemed not to have satisfied the attendance requirements for that semester.

7.3.2.3 The academic Board

The academic board of Ghanaian polytechnics had responsibility for their academic affairs. The academic board was recognised as forming perspectives on quality assurance of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers. The academic board set the standards for students' admissions, teaching, learning, and research. Participant C1 disclosed that his perspectives on quality assurance focused on students' admissions and originated from the academic board of his polytechnic. The academic board instituted entry requirements for academic programmes. For example, the cut off point for students who sought admission into Higher National Diploma (HND) in Accountancy was aggregate fifteen from their Senior High School results. Participant C1 used this entry criteria instituted by the academic board to select students.

Participant C1: The academic board gives us cut off point for all academic programmes every year and we select students into our academic programmes based on these criteria.

Participant H3's quality assurance perspectives he obtained from the academic board centred on students' enrolment. The academic board designed enrolment

procedures. For example, students had to report at the academic registry on their first day in the polytechnic and produce the following: original admission letter, bankers draft of full fees paid and four passport size photographs before they could register.

Participant H3: We have procedure for students' registration. Students have to first report at the academic registry with all the required documents, before they could proceed to their various departments to register.

Participant KF2's perspective on quality assurance he derived from academic board related to programme accreditation. He obtained ideas on how to write self-evaluation reports from his encounter with others in the academic board. These ideas were used by KF2 to write self-evaluation reports for accreditation for academic programmes.

Participant KF2: Before we apply for accreditation for new programmes, we discuss it at academic board. Staffs bring inputs which are factored in our evaluation report for accreditation.

Participant T3's perspectives on quality assurance focused on quality teaching. The academic board provided him with guidelines for teaching in the polytechnic. For example, they indicated how a course must be taught, when and how students must be assessed. These guidelines assisted T3 to adjust his self and take on the role of others. For example, T3 used the discussion method to teach second year secretaryship and management students' quantitative methods. He assessed them by giving them three take home assignments, one class test and end of semester examination. The assignments were marked over 30%, class test 10% and the end of semester 60%.

Participant K1's perspectives on quality assurance concerned the preparation of a quality time table. This came from his encounter with others in the academic board. He obtained ideas on how to coordinate resources and used these ideas to design the time table.

Participant K1: At our academic board meetings, we discuss all the resources of the institution and how it could be harnessed for us to deliver quality education.

7.3.2.4 Internal quality assurance draft policy

The internal quality assurance draft policy of the polytechnics was identified behind their understanding of quality assurance. This policy outlined the structures, guidelines and procedures for ensuring quality in teaching and learning, research, community service and support services in polytechnics. For K3, the internal quality assurance draft policy provided him with a definition of quality assurance as a process whereby measures were established to ensure academic programmes met prescribed standards. This definition guided K3 as he put in place strategies to ensure that students got quality training in the polytechnic. He did this by inviting industry to make input into the design of the polytechnic's courses.

Participant C2 derived from his polytechnic's internal quality assurance draft policy the structure of quality assurance on teaching and learning. This helped to ensure that the polytechnic's courses offered were of right standard.

Participant C2: The internal quality assurance policy is a guide for us to ensure that our teaching and learning meet international standards.

Participant K1 disclosed that, the internal quality assurance draft policy provided him with the core values of his polytechnic namely integrity, good

stewardship, leadership by example and institutional patriotism. These values guided K1 in his role. For example, on leadership by example K1 noted:

Participant K1: The policy requires me to display maturity in my lifestyle particularly when I am teaching in order to serve as role model for my students.

Participants T2 and B1 derived from the internal quality assurance policy concepts of quality learning and assessment. Participant T2 indicated that he identified the types of task students had to perform. These covered assignments, examinations, presentations, practicals, industrial placements and project work.

Participant T2: Our internal quality assurance policy document clearly indicates assignments, examinations, presentations, practicals, industrial placements, and project works as the appropriate learning tasks for the academic programmes we offer.

For participant B1, the internal quality assurance policy provided criteria for judging students' performance in the form of standards and their descriptions. Participants KF2 and KF3 obtained their perspectives on quality assessment moderation from the internal quality assurance draft policy. This provided them with ideas on pre-assessment and post-assessment moderation. Participant KF2 noted these ideas assisted him to ensure that assessment tasks were fit for purpose. For example, he validated the appropriateness, fairness, clarity, accuracy and standard of assessment tasks and materials before they were used to assess students. Participant KF3's ideas related to post-assessment moderation. She used the criteria she obtained from the internal quality assurance draft policy to scrutinize the marks awarded by

staff. This assisted KF3 to identify whether a marker made consistent and accurate assessment decisions in accordance with the polytechnic's assessment criteria.

Participant KF3: At the end of every semester, after teachers have finish marking exams scripts, we randomly select a department and go through their scripts to see if the teachers followed the marking scheme.

7.3.2.5 Strategic plan

Respondents' of this study also derived their definitions of quality assurance from their polytechnics strategic plan. This contained the polytechnics goals, strategies and timescale to achieve them. The strategic plan provided them with the missions, vision statements and strategies to enable the polytechnics to achieve them. For S1, the strategic plan ensured programmes offered were career-focused and met middle level manpower requirements. This is how participant S1 illustrated it.

Participant S1: This polytechnic is committed to the provision of career-focused education and training at the tertiary level with hands on experience and entrepreneurship development to fill the middle level manpower needs of the country.

For K1, the strategic plan provided ideas on quality standards relating to teaching, learning, research and community service. This enabled K1 to put in place strategies which could ensure that his polytechnic achieved these quality goals. This is how K1 explained it.

Participant K1: The vision of the Polytechnic is to become a centre of academic and professional excellence for teaching, learning, and research and community service employing state of the art technology.

Participant B1 derived from his polytechnic's strategic plan ideas on quality governance. The plan provided him with ideas on decentralization of the polytechnic's administration. This helped B1 to improve the management of his polytechnic.

Participant B1: The new organizational structure clearly explains the position and responsibilities of every staff of this polytechnic and whom he/she is accountable to.

Participant T1 derived from his polytechnic's strategic plan ideas on students' admissions. He adopted the recommendation contained in the strategic plan and established electronic admissions. This improved the students' admission processes in line with the polytechnic's vision.

Participant T1: The software we installed at the students admissions office has helped us to process our students' admissions on time.

For participant H1, his polytechnic's strategic plan provided him with ideas to improve the quality of the library. This resulted after he read the strategic plan. Participant H1 established e-library facilities for the polytechnic in line with the polytechnic's vision.

Participant H1: Now our library is better. We have access to e-books and other electronic journals and this is improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Participant A3 used the policy document for strategies to recruit quality teaching staff. The strategic plan recommended the establishment of appointments board for the polytechnic.

Participant A3: The function of the appointments board is to recruit quality teaching and administrative staff so that the polytechnic can provide quality services to students.

Participant H2 acquired from the strategic plan ideas to improve the capacity of the teaching staff including further studies, conferences and workshops. Participant H2 organised workshops and seminars and sponsored staff for further studies in order to improve their skills. For example at the time of the study, one staff in his polytechnic had been sponsored to pursue a master's degree in Total Quality Management (TQM).

Participant H2: Workshops and seminars on pedagogy and assessment are organized for teachers in this polytechnic and one staff has also been sponsored to pursue masters in Total Quality Management.

The understanding of quality assurance participant K3 derived from his polytechnic's strategic plan related to quality budgeting. He used this idea to source funds for the polytechnic's academic activities. Participant K3 allocated resources to each goal of the polytechnic. For example, a polytechnic goal (provision of sponsorship to staff for further studies) was allocated time, an officer responsible for its achievement, funds required for its achievement, the source of funding (Ghana Education Trust Fund) and the expected output (10 teachers).

Participant H1's perspective on quality assurance centered on quality research and came from the strategic plan of his polytechnic. The plan provided him with ideas on promotion of a research culture. He established a fund for research, conferences and publications.

Participant H1: GHC 29000 has been allocated for promotion of research culture in our strategic plan. This is to ensure that teachers engage in quality research in the polytechnic.

7.3.2.6 Ethics policy

The ethics policy of Ghanaian polytechnics figures as a key influence on the rectors, vice rectors, and quality assurance officers' perspectives. They derived understandings of quality assurance from this policy. The code of ethics provided statements of ethical principles, values and behaviours expected. Participant B1 disclosed that he derived an understanding of teacher-student relationships. The policy provided him with the values he adhered to as he performed his role. He treated students with respect at all times; recognised that all forms of harassment were unacceptable; developed assessment procedures that were fair and effective and that contributed to student learning; administered them in a fair and efficient manner; and provided timely and constructive feedback. These requirements compelled participant B1 to handle his relationship with students in accordance with the standards in the code of ethics. This helped to ensure effective teaching and learning.

Participant B1: The polytechnic's codes of ethics explain clearly how teachers should relate to students and this guides us in our dealings with students in the classroom and outside the classroom.

Participant C1 used the ethics policy to solve conflicts of interest. This definition served as a guide to C1 as he performed his role in the polytechnic and helped him to avoid taking extra work that interfered with the fulfilment of his duties as an employee of the polytechnic.

Participant C1: The polytechnic's ethics policy advises staff to be mindful of conflict of interest as they perform their duties.

Participant H2 learnt how to deal with conflict resolution. She learnt to handle employment related conflict such as sexual harassment in the polytechnic from ethics policy. H2 used this policy to resolve and to create a safe teaching and learning environment in her polytechnic.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the origins of perspectives of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' on quality assurance. Their perspectives on quality assurance were the results of secondary socialisation that occurred in the occupations they practiced and the organisations they worked in. For them, as they interacted with significant others in their previous employments they learnt ideas and actions they used during quality assurance.

They derived understandings of quality assurance from professional associations and unions. These served as reference groups by setting standards and expectations for practice which they used. Perspectives of quality assurance held by them were also the results of external and internal institutional socialisation experiences. Domestic institutions and legislation such as the Polytechnic Act 745, National Council for Tertiary Education, National Accreditation Board, National

Board for Professional and Technician Examinations and Ghanaian public universities were influential in institutional socialisation. Through the interaction they had with others in other institutions they obtained ideas, standards and criteria for judgement.

Equally, their understanding of quality assurance originated from their polytechnics affiliation to overseas universities and colleges, the Association of African Universities and the International Organization for Standardizations (ISO 9001: 2008). These international institutions provided ideas on students' entry requirements for academic programmes, programme content and structure, assessment practices and management practices.

Institutional socialisation agents such as the polytechnic statutes shaped their perspectives on quality assurance. They provided a way of thinking and acting. This was the result of the interaction they had with significant others in the polytechnic council and academic board. These participants altered their selves and took on the role of the other. The next chapter discusses the quality strategies the rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' of Ghanaian polytechnics instituted.

Chapter 8

Quality assurance strategies of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers

8.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on how rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' of Ghanaian polytechnics put their perspectives on quality assurance into practice. As explained by Woods (1983), perspectives derive from cultures, and are linked to action through strategies. Strategies are ways of achieving goals (Woods, 1983). The analysis of data on their quality assurance strategies is organised into two sections. The first section examines the quality assurance strategies they used to impart their quality assurance perspectives to academic staff. Finding out about this was essential in understanding the strategies they used to turn their academic staff into the type of persons that mirrored their quality assurance ideas. The second section explores the quality assurance strategies they used to impart their quality assurance ideas to their students.

8.2 Quality assurance strategies related to academic staff

This section explains the strategies they used to recruit staff who fitted into their quality assurance ideas. These strategies included staff recruitment, staff induction, rules and regulations, formal appraisal methods, workshop and seminars, further studies, short training courses, disciplinary associations, departmental meeting and specific briefings.

8.2.1 Staff recruitment

Respondents had strategies in place to hire qualified academic staff. These were applicants with bachelor and master's degree qualifications relevant to their academic programmes. They hired staff to mirror their ideas on quality assurance.

Vacant academic positions in Ghanaian polytechnics were governed by a committee. For C1, this was an appointment and promotions board. This was chaired by the rector and composed of other academic staff members such as the vice rector, deans of schools, heads of departments and the quality assurance officer. Participant C1 instituted this board in his polytechnic to ensure transparency and fairness in staff recruitment.

Participant C1: Academic staff recruitment is not done by one person in this polytechnic. It is undertaken by an Appointment and Promotions Board. This helps us to ensure fairness in our recruitment exercises.

Participant S1's appointment and promotions board conducted face-to-face interviews with all short listed applicants. The board used this to explain the mission of their polytechnic. For example, they stressed to interviewees that their polytechnic had a vocational and technical pedagogical perspective. They also used the selection interview to select applicants who would enact their quality assurance ideas. This was done via questions and comments board members posed during the interviews.

Participant S1: The Appointments and Promotions Board conducts face to face interviews for all short listed applicants. They used the interviews to portray their polytechnic's mission and select applicants who can enact these missions.

8.2.2 Staff induction

Staff involved in this study, through the registry organised induction programmes to enhance the transition of academic staff into the polytechnic. They used these to explain the history, mission and culture of their polytechnics. They used this to impart their perspectives on quality assurance to staff.

Participant S1 narrated the history of his polytechnic to new staff during induction. He briefed the academic staff on the history of the polytechnic. This information assisted S1 to shape the perspectives of his academic staff.

Participant S1: I narrated the history of the polytechnic to the new staff at their induction. I informed them when and how this polytechnic started and the major changes that had occurred since its establishment.

Participant B1 outlined the mission of his polytechnic to academic staff. This was to provide career-focused skill-based education and training with hands-on experience and entrepreneurship development. Participant B1 stressed the broad goals of his polytechnic to academic staff and inculcated in them his perspectives on quality assurance.

Participant B1: I present the mission of this institution to the staff at their induction. Through this I make them aware of the broad goals of this polytechnic. This guides them in the performance of their roles in this school.

Participant B2 indicated to his staff that his polytechnic was a teaching institution. He disclosed his polytechnic's approved methods of teaching and assessment. He informed his academic staff of the strategies they could use to enact his quality assurance ideas in the polytechnic.

Participant B2: The culture of this polytechnic is disclosed to staff at their induction. They are made to understand that this is a teaching place. We also explain the accepted teaching and assessment methods that are used to enhance teaching and learning in this school at the induction programme.

Participant A3 emphasised the core values of his polytechnic at induction. Truth, excellence and service were stressed as core values. He told staff to take into consideration these values whilst performing their roles.

Participant A3: I informed the academic staff of the core values of this polytechnic at their induction. These were truth, excellence and service. This is to guide them in the performance of their duties.

8.2.3 Rules and regulations

Those involved in this study used rules and regulations to impart their perspectives on quality assurance to academic staff. Rules and regulations governed academic programme design, academic programme approval, teaching, campus life and resignation. They used these to control the actions of their academic staff.

Participant K1 had procedures academic staff had to follow in the design of academic programmes in the form of templates. Importantly, the proposed academic programme had to complement the goals and mission of the polytechnic.

Participant K1: The polytechnic has procedures one has to follow before he/she can introduce a new course. We have captured this in a form of template and all the portions need to be answered before it is forwarded to the appropriate authorities for action.

Participant C2 had procedures for academic programme review and approval. The proposal on new academic programmes submitted by academic staff had to be

scrutinized and approved by the department, faculty and academic board. Learning objectives of the proposed academic programme, assessment practices and expected graduates attributes are all examined. These processes allowed Participant C2's polytechnic to scrutinize the quality of academic programmes.

Participant C2: We have procedures for review and approval for our academic programmes. Proposals on new academic programmes are scrutinized and approved at the department, faculty and academic board if they fell within the overall mission of the polytechnic.

Participant KF2 had regulations that governed teaching. Teachers had to use teaching strategies such as demonstration and field trips to deliver the courses offered. This ensured staff offered students vocational skills in line with the polytechnic's mission.

Participant KF2: The accepted teaching methodologies in this polytechnic are demonstration and fieldtrips. This is what the teachers are required to use to teach our vocational and technical programmes.

KF2 further disclosed regulations for class attendance. Academic staff had to be regular and punctual and to sign a class attendance book kept by course representatives in the classroom showing when they started and ended classes. KF2 used this to improve teaching.

Participant KF2: I have rules and regulations on class attendance. It requires teachers to be in class every day and proof their attendance by signing a class attendance book kept in the classroom by the class representative. This is to make sure that the teachers attend classes as expected of them.

Participant H1 had rules on assessment. These required teachers to submit their end of semester examination questions for internal and external moderations. Participant H1 used this to enhance the validity of students' assessment.

Participant H1: Teachers are required to submit their end of semester examination questions to their departments for the questions to be reviewed internally by their departments and externally by National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations before they could be administered to students. These help us to ensure that our end-of-semester examinations questions are standard and valid.

Participant K3's rules governed students' results. Marks and grades awarded to students were to be moderated by the quality assurance department before publication. K3 used this to enhance the reliability of marks and grades awarded. It also helped to reinforce integrity of qualifications awarded.

Participant K3: End-of-semester marks and grades submitted by teachers have to be cross checked and approved by our quality assurance department before they can be published. This has brought transparency in the marking of students' examination papers.

Participant T1's rules focused on teacher-student relationships. Teachers were prohibited from having intimate relationship with students with dismissal for same. Participant T1 used this to encourage professional behaviour.

Participant T1: It is an offence for any teacher in this polytechnic to engage in intimate relationship with a student since this is regarded as conflict of interest.

Participant A3's had procedures for resignation. Academic staff had to give three months notification prior to their resignation. This gave Participant A3 time to search for, and appoint quality academic staff to replace the outgoing ones.

Participant A3: Academic staff are required to give three months prior notice of their resignation before their resignation letter can be accepted. This allows us to search for quality staff to replace them when they leave.

8.2.4 Formal appraisal methods

This study's respondents' conducted formal appraisals to socialise staff. They administered questionnaires through departmental heads and students to evaluate staff job knowledge and personal behaviours against established standards. They did this to identify teachers who fell short of their standards and provided them with additional training. Formal appraisal results were used in promotion decisions. These strategies enhanced teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Participant B3 evaluated academic staff every year. Questionnaires focused on the position roles and measured skills, knowledge and attitudes exhibited in the classroom. This assisted B3 to identify areas staff required support. B3 used this to improve teaching effectiveness.

Participant B3: I use formal appraisal to measure the level of my teachers' knowledge in their subject area, the strategies they use to deliver their lessons and how they communicate with their students effectively.

Participant K1 appraised annually personal behaviours of his academic staff. He evaluated commitment to work roles using questionnaires. This was used in promotion decisions.

Participant K1: Teachers are appraised by their students at the end of the semester. They filled a questionnaire on each teacher as a form of assessment. This has made most of the teachers to be serious about their work.

8.2.5 Workshops and seminars

Staff involved in this study organised workshops and seminars to socialise academic staff. They used these to improve teaching, develop research skills and reinforce their polytechnics norms and standards. Participant K3 organised workshops on pedagogy. He hired a professor from the Faculty of Education, University of Cape Coast to provide staff with pedagogical approaches to enhance teaching effectiveness.

Participant K3: We organise workshops on pedagogy every academic year and hire experts to teach our teachers. This is helpful because it has improved the way teachers deliver lessons in this polytechnic.

Participant C1 organised workshops on assessment for staff who did not possess teaching qualifications. He brought in experts on assessment from the University of Cape Coast to provide the staff with strategies for quality assessment practices.

Participant C1: I organize workshop on assessment for the teachers with non-teaching qualifications. I invite experts on assessment from the University of Cape Coast to run the

programme. This has helped to enhance the performance of these academic staff.

Participant B1 organised seminars on academic writing and publishing. He hired a professor from the University of Ghana to assist in the writing of academic papers. B1 used this to improve the research skills of his academic staff.

Participant B1: I organise seminars on academic writing and publishing for my teachers. I hire a professor from the University of Ghana to facilitate this programme. This has generated interest in academic writing in this school. Most of my teachers are now publishing in journals even though these are low quality journals, I think this shows their interest in academic writing is now growing.

Participant A3 organised seminars on project work supervision. He used this to highlight the responsibilities of staff during project work supervision especially their responsibility of allowing students to have access to them. A3 used this to improve project work supervision and the quality of students' dissertations.

Participant A3: We organise workshops for our academic staff to enlighten them on their role in project work supervision. We draw their attention to the need for them to have enough interaction with their students and give quality supervision. This has improved project work supervision in this polytechnic greatly.

Participant T1 organised workshops for academic staff to inculcate the norms of the polytechnic. These related to teaching and assessment and covered personal and professional behaviours. He used this to improve teaching and learning.

Participant T1: I use workshops to re-echo this polytechnic's teaching norms. I emphasized that this polytechnic forbids routine late attendance to

class and awarding of marks to students based on teachers own personal discretion.

8.2.6 Further Studies

Staff who participated in this research used higher degree study to socialise academic staff. They encouraged higher degree study. This increased the discipline knowledge of academic staff and improved teaching. Ideally, academic possessed a master's degree. However due to difficulty in recruiting staff with master's degrees in some fields such as civil engineering and building construction, polytechnics offered appointments to applicants with bachelor degrees in these fields. Participant B1 used further studies to enhance the knowledge of these academic staff. He helps them to enrol in Master's degree programmes in universities in Ghana and overseas. This allowed these staff to obtain additional knowledge.

Participant B1: The tertiary status of this polytechnic does not permit teachers with qualifications lower than master's degree to teach here. But because we sometimes find it difficult to get teachers with master's degrees in special fields such as Civil Engineering and Building Construction, we sometimes employ those with bachelor degree and sponsor them to obtain masters degrees to make them fit to teach here.

Participant T1's polytechnic offered Bachelor of Technology and Masters programmes in collaboration with Ghanaian and overseas universities. Because of this, the polytechnic required staff with higher qualifications than masters. Participant T1 used further studies to equip staff in the departments running these programmes with advanced knowledge. He approved five staff to pursue doctoral degrees in universities in Ghana and overseas. He used this to provide these staff with advanced knowledge.

Participant T1: We are currently running Bachelor of Technology and Masters programmes with other universities in Ghana and overseas. Because of this we had to boost the capacity of our lecturers. We sponsored some of them to go for doctoral studies.

Participant K1 used further studies to improve teaching. He allowed staff to enrol in post-graduate degree programmes in teaching at the University of Cape Coast and the University of Education in Ghana. K1 used this to improve teaching.

Participant K1: We sponsored some teachers to pursue post graduate degree programmes in teaching at the University of Cape Coast and the University of Education. This has improved teaching and delivery of lessons tremendously in this school.

8.2.7 Short training courses

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' used short training courses to enhance the efficiency of academic staff. These were run by universities and professional bodies and lasted between one and three weeks. They used this strategy to provide staff with additional knowledge and leadership skills. Participant K1 allowed two academic staff who were heads of departments to enrol in a short training course in leadership offered by Ghana Institute of Professional Administration.

Participant K1: We enrol most of our teachers in short courses for them to up- grade themselves. Recently we allowed two Heads of Departments to attend a short training course on leadership organised by the Ghana Institute of Professional Administration to improve their leadership skills.

Participant S2 used short training courses to provide staff with new knowledge in their discipline. He enrolled one staff member in the civil engineering department in a short training course on geographical information systems and remote sensing organised by the Ghana Institute of Surveyors (GIS). He used this strategy to expand the experiences of academic staff in his civil engineering department.

Participant S2: We used short training courses to provide our academic staff with additional knowledge in their field. Last time we enrolled one teacher in the Civil Engineering Department in a short training course organised by Ghana Institute of Surveyors on Geographical Information Systems and Remote Sensing. This makes our teachers always to be well informed in their study area.

8.2.8 Disciplinary associations

Disciplinary associations served as important sources of learning for staff. They organized workshops, and forums to provide members with additional knowledge, skills and ideas. Examples of some disciplinary associations include Home Science Teacher's Association and Mathematics Teacher's Association of Ghana. Disciplinary associations in Participant H2's polytechnic played a vital role in the socialisation of staff. The Home Science Teacher's Association organised workshops and provided members with content knowledge.

Participant H2: The facilitator of the workshop organized by the Home Science Teachers Association, explained to the members some recipes for intercontinental dishes contained in their schools catering syllabus and cooked them for them to see. This made the teachers to be familiar with these dishes.

The Mathematics Teachers Association in Participant KF2's polytechnic organised annual forums for members. These provided additional pedagogic knowledge on appropriate teaching methodologies.

Participant KF2: The Mathematics Teachers Association organised annual forum and educated their members on the strategies they could adopt to teach statistics effectively. This has improved the teaching of statistics in this polytechnic tremendously.

8.2.9 Meetings

Meetings were also used by respondents to socialise staff. Departmental meetings provided strategies to perform roles effectively and to improve teaching and learning. Participant B2 held departmental meetings on lesson plan preparation. He exchanged ideas with academic staff on best practice. He used this approach to enhance teaching. Participant S2 also held similar meetings.

Participant B2: Departmental meeting is the forum provided for discussion on lesson plan preparation in this polytechnic. The academic staff converge at this place and exchange ideas on better ways of preparing lesson notes. Those with deficiencies in lesson plan preparation are helped out.

Participant S2: Academic staff in this department share ideas on how to deliver lessons. We help each other out on the approved teaching methodologies for the courses offered in this department at our meetings. This is the way we improve on our teaching in this school.

Participant K3 organised meetings on post assessment moderation. Staff collectively scrutinized students' end of semester results. He used this strategy to validate results before publication.

Participant K3: The students end of semester results submitted by lecturers at the department are crossed checked at the departmental meetings before it is submitted to the academic registry for it to be published. This is done to make the published results valid and reliable.

Participant A3 organised departmental meetings to discuss teachers' formal appraisal results. Discussed were how each teacher in the department performed. He recommended specific training for staff who underperformed. This assisted in improving teaching.

Participant A3: We discuss how our students rate us in the teachers' evaluation report at our departmental meetings. Teachers who perform well in the report are praised there but those who perform poorly are recommended to go for specific training to enable them to improve.

Participant KF3 held departmental meeting to reinforce rules and regulations on class attendance. He used this to control the behaviour of staff and improve teaching.

Participant KF3: I always remind my staff at our departmental meetings that this polytechnic forbids absenteeism and lateness to class. I do this to keep them on their toes.

8.2.10 Specific briefings

Respondents used specific briefings to socialise staff. They used these to provide staff with specific information to enhance their performance. Participant T2 used specific briefings to provide his staff with additional technical knowledge. He invited technical experts from industry to brief staff in mechanical engineering

department on the operation of a new lathe machine. He used these briefings to improve the technical competencies of staff.

Participant T2: I use special briefings to provide my teachers with information on a specific issue. For example, a technician was invited from industry to brief the Mechanical Engineering teachers on how to operate a modern lathe machine my Polytechnic had acquired for their department. This allowed them to use it effectively and also teach the students the techniques of using that machine.

8.3 Quality assurance strategies related to students

This section examines some of the strategies rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' used to admit students who mirrored their quality assurance ideas, and impart these ideas to students. These included student recruitment, student orientation, rules and regulations, academic programmes, simulated workplace, academic counselling, disciplinary associations, meetings, job fairs and career expos, graduation ceremonies and alumni tracer studies.

8.3.1 Students' recruitment

Those who participated in this study had strategies to recruit qualified students. Qualified students were applicants who possessed credit in English language, Mathematics, Integrated Science/Social Studies and two (2) relevant electives in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) or West Africa Secondary School Examination (WASSCE). Participant B1 advertised his polytechnic's academic programmes and their entry requirements in major Ghanaian newspapers such as *The Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times*. This was used to attract students.

Participant B1: I advertise the polytechnics academic programmes and their entry requirements in the Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times every academic year. This helps the polytechnic to attract quality students from all over Ghana.

Student admission was overseen by a committee. As part of his quality assurance strategies, student admissions in Participant K1's polytechnic were facilitated by a Joint Admission Committee composed of the registrar, assistant registrar academic and all the heads of departments. The committee met and discussed the number of applications each department received. They scrutinized and ranked applicants and made decisions based on merit. This strategy allowed Participant K1 to offer admissions to students whose qualifications were in line with his quality assurance principles.

Participant K1: Student admissions in this polytechnic are done by the Joint Admissions Committee. They scrutinize the applications received by all the departments and take decisions on them based on the polytechnic's admission criteria.

8.3.2 Student orientation

Students on arrival on campus were subjected to socialisation by the respondents. Orientation programme educated their students on the mission of the polytechnics, their polytechnics norms, teaching, employability and campus life.

Participant H1 explained his polytechnic's mission to students at the orientation. He highlighted his polytechnic as one of the leading polytechnics in Ghana and stressed its mission of producing highly competent graduates through career focused education, skills training and research in partnership with business and industry.

Participant H1: The first thing I do at students' orientation is to explain this polytechnic's mission to them. They are made to understand what this polytechnic stands for and the reason for its existence. This gives them clue about the polytechnic's goals.

Participant B2's speech at student orientation concentrated on ethical behaviours and the important norms of his polytechnic. He informed students the use of illicit drugs, illicit sex on campus, and improper dress on campus were forbidden. Drugs apart from being illegal, would prevent them from gaining employment and that sexual activities on campus would impact on their studies negatively. Dressing was part of their professional training and dressing appropriately on campus carried to work places of the future.

Participant B2: I inform my students about the important norms of this polytechnic. These are related to drugs, sex on campus and dressing. I explain to them that the polytechnic is strict on these issues because of the negative effect they can have on their studies and career.

Participant C2 used student orientation to stress vocational and technical education and the theory/practice link. He stated that theory lessons were provided in the classrooms and practical lessons in laboratories, workshops, demonstration rooms and internship sites. He stressed the instructional activities undertaken with academic staff that provided the skills required to gain entry into their chosen professions.

Participant C2: I mentioned to the students that as a technical and vocational education provider, our training involves both theory and practicals. So we provide lessons to our students in the classroom, workshops, demonstration rooms and internship sites.

Participant KF2 focused on employability. He outlined the connection between the training offered by his polytechnic and the labour market. He mentioned employability attributes included as part of the curriculum. That included team work, communication skills, initiative and decision-making skills. He clarified the expectations of students to enhance their subsequent learning.

Participant KF2: I enlightened my students on employability at their orientation programme. I told them that apart from the technical knowledge our academic programmes will offer them, other generic attributes have also been included in their studies to make them more marketable.

Participant K1 used orientation to disclose their quality assurance practices. These included class tests, assignments, practicals, presentations, examinations and project work. K1 informed students of the mechanisms used to monitor student's learning.

Participant K1: I informed the new students at the orientation that they would do class tests, assignments, practicals, presentations, examinations, industrial placements and project work whilst undergoing training in this polytechnic.

Participant B3 emphasized the importance of time management and the development of daily, weekly and semestral time management plans.

Participant B3: Time management is important aspect of our quality assurance. So I highlight this during students' orientation. I teach them how they can manage their time to enable them to turn up for academic events promptly.

8.3.3 Rules and regulations

Rectors, vice vectors and quality assurance officers' used rules and regulations to socialise students. These rules and regulations governed class attendance, examinations, dress and respect for property. They covered aspects of personal and professional behaviour. Participant H1 focused on class attendance. Students were to be regular and punctual for lectures.

Participant H1: There are laws on class attendance in this polytechnic. It requires students to attend the entire lecture for the courses they have registered and be punctual too. Students can only absent themselves from lectures if they gain permission from the appropriate authorities to do so.

Participant KF2's rules governed examinations. These prohibited students from taking lecture notes, textbooks and electronic devices to examinations. This helped to ensure the integrity of examinations.

Participant KF2: Our rules forbid students to take materials such as notes, textbooks and devices such as phones and laptops to the examination room. This is strictly enforced to ensure the credibility of our examinations.

Quality assurance for participants B3 and T1 centred on ethical behaviours. Rules and regulations governed students' personal and professional behaviour.

Participant B3: We are very strict on the way students dress on campus. The reason is that when they complete their studies and are looking for jobs they need to be professionally dressed to submit their applications and attend interviews. So we start teaching them here for it to be part of them when they start working.

Participant T1's rules concerned drug use. Banned were possession, use, manufacture or distribution of substances such as marijuana, cocaine and heroin. Drug abuse had personal and professional dimensions harming employment prospects. Participant T1 strove to inculcate in students, certain moral values in line with his polytechnic's mission.

Participant T1: There are strict prohibitions on substance abuse in this polytechnic. Our laws forbid the possession, use, manufacture or distribution of illegal drugs such as marijuana, cocaine and heroin. Any student found to have indulged in this act is handed over to the police and sacked from the school.

Participant K1's rules governed school property and careful use of facilities. He required the students to take good care of his polytechnic's properties. Students were liable for any loss or damage to properties and facilities.

Participant K1: The polytechnic held students liable for the loss or damage of the polytechnic's property entrusted in their care. They are charged for the cost of repairs or replacement of the spoilt property.

8.3.4 Academic programmes

Respondents used academic programmes to socialise students into preferred career fields. Participant C1 incorporated in academic programmes relevant socialisation experiences required by relevant occupations and professions. He exposed his students to these experiences whilst they underwent training. He used this to provide students with the knowledge and skills required to practice in their chosen occupations.

Participant C1: The education we provide in this school is of high quality. In fact we have included in our curriculum the important ideas students require to gain entry into their occupations. Most students who undergo training in our institution are successful in their careers.

Similarly, B1 used internship programmes to socialise students. He placed them in industries, businesses and government institutions for sixteen weeks during their study. They acquired practical skills, knowledge, norms and values related to their career fields at the work place. Participant B1 used this to provide students with the requisite skills required for the job market. It reduced skills mismatch between the training Participant B1's polytechnic offered and labour market demands.

Participant B1: As part of our training, the Industrial Liaison Office of this polytechnic places our students in industry, business and governmental agencies for sixteen weeks for them to apply the theory they have learnt and also learn practical skills from the work place.

8.3.5 Simulated workplace

Those involved in this study used simulation experiences to train students. They simulated workplace environments in their institutions which allowed students to acquire workplace skills. This provided students with technical competencies required to gain entry into their occupations. Participant KF2 used simulation to enhance the delivery of technical courses offered by his polytechnic. This was due to lack of internship sites in his polytechnic's catchment area. He simulated workplace settings in his polytechnic and exposed his students to various workplace scenarios. This allowed KF2's students to obtain workplace culture and practical skills.

Participant KF2: Because we don't have enough industries sited in our catchment area it becomes difficult for our students to get internship sites to train there. This has compelled us to simulate workplace settings in our school and train the student there. This enables us to equip our students with practical skills and workplace culture.

8.3.6 Academic counselling

Staff who participated in this research used academic counselling to enact their quality assurance ideas. They had academic counsellors who provided students with academic advice. These brought about improvement in student retention and improved their academic performance. Participant K3's academic counsellors interacted with his students and stimulated their interest in the academic programmes they were pursuing. They demonstrated the relevance of academic programmes to students by linking them to real world situations. This generated students' interests in programmes they were pursuing and resulted in improvement in student retention.

Participant K3: Every student in this polytechnic is assigned to an academic counsellor. These academic counsellors interact with our students and

stimulate their interest in their academic programmes. This has helped to improve our students' retention rate.

Academic counsellors met the students once a semester, discussed with them their academic life and provided them with academic advice. They identified areas the students were performing well in and struggling in and suggested alternative study skills. They enlightened them on how they could use learning support services in the polytechnic. Participant S2 used this to improve the academic performance of his students.

Participant S2: We have assigned academic counsellors to our students. They meet them once in a semester and provide them with the strategies they can adopt to improve their performance in the school.

8.3.7 Disciplinary associations

Students' disciplinary associations provided members with additional knowledge in their field of study. The Association of Higher National Diploma Secretaryship and Management Students (AHSMAS) in Participant B1's polytechnic provided members with knowledge required to gain entry into occupations related to their field of study. They organised workshops and hired experts in telephony to train their members on telephone etiquette. Participant B1 used this channel to provide his students with knowledge, skills and values in telephone communication.

Participant B1: The Association of Higher National Diploma Secretaryship and Management Students organised workshop for their members during their week celebration. They brought an expert to train their members on telephone etiquette.

The Polytechnic Engineering Students Association of Ghana (PESAG) in Participant T1's polytechnic organised seminars and invited guest from industry to

speak on Building Information Modelling (BIM) and automation in construction.

This enabled students to obtain additional ideas in their field of study.

Participant T1: The Polytechnic Engineering Students Association of Ghana (PESAG) organized seminars and invited speakers from the construction industry to speak on the application of software in the engineering industry.

The Polytechnic Engineering Students Association of Ghana (PESAG) also organised study tours. Members visited the Bui hydro power construction site to observe techniques Chinese engineers used to divert the Black Volta River to pave way for the construction of a dam. This allowed students to gain practical knowledge in line with the mission of the polytechnic.

Participant T1: The Polytechnic Engineering Students Association of Ghana (PESAG) local branch in this polytechnic organized a study tour for their members. They travelled to the Bui hydro power dam site to observe the techniques the Chinese engineers used to divert the Black Volta River to able them construct the dam.

8.3.8 Meetings

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' used meetings to impart quality assurance to students. Participant C2 held class meeting with his students that focused on teaching and learning. He shared ideas with students on course outlines, handouts, textbooks, the time tables and expected assessment tasks. He used this to facilitate communication between himself and students and improve learning.

Participant C2: Before I start teaching any course assigned to me in this school, I first of all hold class meeting with the students to clear any ambiguity in their minds. I introduce myself to them, give them the course outline, explain

how the course will be taught and disclose the assessment task they will be performing. This helps to facilitate their learning.

Participant H3 organised class meetings for students to deal with classroom misconduct and the negative effects such behaviours had on teaching and learning. He used these meetings to reduce misbehaviour.

Participant H3: I explain classroom misconducts to students at their class meetings. I also enlighten them on how these can affect their studies negatively. Through this I have been able to curb such behaviours in class.

Participant B2 held class meeting to manage classroom conflict between himself and students that had resulted from disputes over sanctions he meted to students. He discussed this at a meeting with his students and asked them to come out with amicable solutions. This strategy was to reduce frictions amongst himself and students.

Participant B2: I use class meetings to solve conflicts between me and my students. This reduces frictions amongst us and promote favourable learning environment in the classroom.

8.3.9 Job fairs and career exposition

Respondents used job fairs and career exposition to socialise students. They used these to provide students with ideas on prospective employers and their requirements. Participant T1 organised job fairs for final year students. He undertook this activity through his polytechnic's career centre and hosted fifty prospective employers on campus. Prospective employers gave students clues about job

opportunities and requirements in their organisations. This provided students with ideas on job opportunities and the experiences required.

Participant T1: We normally organise job fairs and career expos for our final year students. We bring prospective employers to campus for them to interact with our students. Through this interaction our students learn about career opportunities in their field and their requirements before they go out of this school.

8.3.10 Graduation ceremony

Those in this study used graduation ceremonies to affirm their quality assurance. This confirmed that the socialisation of their graduates was completed and affirmed that the polytechnics' graduates were quality assured. The graduation ceremony also confirmed the graduates as newly qualified professionals.

Participant T1: My polytechnic organizes congregation for the graduates and award them their diplomas to signify that they are ready for the job market.

8.3.11 Alumni tracer studies

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' monitored students after graduation. They conducted tracer studies on graduates to establish links between the occupational socialisation they offered them and job market requirements. They used the results of these studies to enhance the quality of their academic programmes.

Participant H2 administered questionnaires to graduates to obtain feedback on their performance in the labour market. She enquired from her graduates their employment status, their occupation and the relationship between their occupation and the academic programmes they had pursued in her polytechnic. These were factored into her polytechnic's academic programme review. This reduced the

defects in academic programmes and made them more relevant to labour market demands.

Participant H2: We track our students after they have graduated. We conduct tracer studies on them to find out whether they are employed, the type of work they are doing and the usefulness of the training they had in this school to their current job. This helps us to review our academic programmes to make them relevant to the current demands of the labour market.

8.4 Conclusion

This chapter described the quality assurance strategies rectors vice rectors and quality assurance officers' of Ghanaian polytechnic used to enact and affirm their quality assurance perspectives. These strategies focused on academic staff and students. Strategies were used to hire well qualified academic staff who could enact their quality assurance. Induction was conducted to impart quality assurance ideas. They had rules and regulations that governed staff. These related to academic programme design, academic programme approval, teaching and resignation. These imparted quality assurance perspectives to staff and controlled their behaviour. Strategies were used to expand the knowledge base of academic staff and to refine skills. These included workshops, seminars, further studies, short training courses, disciplinary associations, meetings and briefings. These brought about quality teaching, learning and research in their polytechnics.

Similarly, those involved in this study used strategies to recruit students who met their quality assurance criteria and prepared them for the job market. They organised student orientations to present them with their quality assurance perspectives. They used academic programmes, simulated workplaces, academic

counselling, disciplinary associations, job fairs and career exposition to provide students with the knowledge, skills, norms and values required to gain entry into the occupations they were training them for. Graduation ceremonies were also conducted by them to confirm the successful completion of students' occupational socialisation. They conducted tracer studies on their graduates to confirm links between training offered and job market demands. They used the results of these studies to enhance the quality of their academic programmes. The next chapter presents the summary and conclusions of this study.

Chapter 9

Summary and conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This study investigated the perspectives of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' on quality assurance. The research focused on their definition of quality and quality assurance, origins of their quality assurance perspectives and the quality assurance strategies they enacted in their polytechnics. Vocational and technical tertiary education is primarily provided by polytechnics in Ghana. These institutions serve as Ghana's main source of supply of middle level manpower. They have tertiary status and their academic activities are externally regulated by the National Board for Professional and Technician Examination (the sole supervisory body of Ghanaian polytechnics) and the National Accreditation Board. This notwithstanding, Ghanaian polytechnic graduates are perceived to be of low quality. Polytechnic Act 745 seeks to free polytechnics from National Board for Professional and Technician Examination and permit them to offer bachelor degree programmes if they can meet programme accreditation standards specified by the National Accreditation Board (NAB). These developments have necessitated Ghanaian polytechnics demonstrate that they can ensure delivery of quality polytechnic education.

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' formulated quality assurance policies to supplement quality assurance initiatives undertaken by the National Accreditation Board. These personnel occupy unique positions in Ghanaian polytechnics. Rectors are chief executives of their polytechnics and their vision drives their institutions. Vice rectors are in charge of the academic activities of their polytechnics. Quality assurance officers head the quality assurance unit of their

institutions and their roles include quality assurance strategies. These roles allowed their perspectives to influence the quality assurance policy formulation and practices of their institutions.

9.2 Theoretical and methodological underpinnings

This study was underpinned by symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism allowed unpacking of the various socialisation experiences they encountered. Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' were products of interaction with significant others, generalised others and reference groups. They acquired patterns of behaviour, norms, standards, values, knowledge and skills of their occupations through interaction with socialisation agents which were made up of individuals and institutions. These social interactions shaped their perspectives. Their perspectives had several components namely a definition of the situation; an outline of the types of activities they were rightly involved in; and finally criteria of judgement (Becker et al., 1961). They formed the basis of social actions in these people's lives. Their perspectives were linked to actions through strategies.

Symbolic interactionism as a theoretical framework suggested qualitative methodology. Symbolic interactionism operates on the premise that the individual and the context in which that individual exists are inseparable. Therefore, to understand human behaviour, it was essential to employ a theoretical approach that provides access to the meanings which guide a person's actions. Qualitative methodology adopted for this study, allowed me to interact with those involved in this study in a natural state and to understand the social world from their point of view.

Qualitative methodology favoured the use of multiple methods for data collection. This allowed the use of document analysis and in-depth interviewing as methods to disclose the respondents' perspectives on quality assurance. The qualitative data obtained from documents and in-depth interviews were analysed following the three stages advocated by (Ary et al., 2014). These involved familiarizing and organizing, coding and reducing, and interpreting and representing. I developed propositions by grounding the data in symbolic interaction concepts. As a result two kinds of propositions (substantive and formal) emerged from the findings (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Substantive propositions helped to generate tentative new grounded formal propositions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 34). I adopted four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability advocated by (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to ensure trustworthiness of this research.

9.3 Substantive propositions - quality assurance

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' perspectives on quality and quality assurance varied. Their perspectives on quality included perfection, excellence, fitness for purpose, value for money, and transformation. These quality perspectives underpinned their definitions of quality assurance. Their quality assurance perspectives had internal and external institutional dimensions. Human resources, teaching and learning and general management formed the main components of their internal quality assurance perspectives.

The perspectives of respondents that focused on human resources concerned well qualified academic staff and students. This also included smooth transition of academic staff and students into the polytechnics' academic environment. Their internal quality assurance perspectives related to teaching and learning, covered quality academic programmes, valid and reliable assessment, availability of quality

learning resources, suitability of physical facilities and conducive learning environments.

Additionally, their internal quality assurance perspectives covered general management. This embraced effective communication, continuous learning amongst academic staff, evaluation of academic staff, accurate information for education consumers, quality student support services, effective rules and regulations, effective conflict management, safe and secure teaching and prevention of qualification forgery.

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' external quality assurance perspectives had institutional, national and global dimensions. Their external quality assurance perspectives that focused on institutional context embraced achieving institutional goals, effective governance, delivering quality programmes, improving access to higher education, promoting quality, a research culture and ensuring proper data management.

Respondents' external quality assurance perspectives had a national focus. These included regulating the higher education sector, achieving national development, widening participation, producing a well-educated labour force, achieving efficiency and effectiveness in education service delivery, protecting consumers of education, ensuring research outputs have economic impacts, improving civic participation in the nation and transmission of culture to the next generation.

External quality assurance perspectives of respondents of this study included global context. Their definition of the situation embraced protecting national economic interest, equipping students with international competencies, enhancing mutual recognition of credentials globally, promoting public confidence in

institutions, ensuring cross boarder providers adhere to national quality standards, expanding higher education participation as well as ensuring quality standards, providing quality learning experiences through other modes to non-regular students and monitoring private investments with regards to polytechnic education delivery.

Quality and quality assurance perspectives of staff involved in this research originated from interactions with each other, from group life and reference groups. Their perspectives were the results of secondary socialisation, specifically socialisation that occurred in their occupations and also the organisations they worked in. They carried their past experiences to their current office especially if there was alignment between their employment history and current work. Through interaction with significant others, they obtained knowledge required to perform their roles.

Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' quality assurance perspectives also originated from institutional socialisation effected by such things as polytechnic councils, polytechnic statutes, academic boards, internal quality assurance draft policies, strategic plans and ethics policies. These assisted them to form definitions of quality assurance and highlighted actions to be engaged in during quality assurance. Their encounters with these institutional socialisation agents assisted them to alter their selves and take on the perspectives of others.

Respondents of this study formed their perspectives on quality assurance through the use of reference groups. These included professional associations, trade unions, the National Council for Tertiary Education, the National Accreditation Board, the National Board for Professional and Technician Examination, long established Ghanaian public universities, overseas universities and colleges, the Association of African Universities and the International Organization for

Standardizations (ISO). They influenced them through normative and comparative processes by setting standards and expectations for practice which they used when they were faced with problematic situations.

Staff involved in this study used different strategies to enact their quality assurance perspectives in their polytechnics. Their strategies focused on academic staff and students but in different ways. They adopted strategies to employ academic staff who fitted into their quality assurance frameworks and also provided them with socialisation experiences that mirrored their quality assurance ideas. They accomplished this through staff recruitment, staff induction, rules and regulations, formal appraisal methods, workshop and seminars, further studies, short training courses, disciplinary associations, departmental meeting and specific briefings.

Similarly, they had strategies to admit, retain, and graduate students who mirrored their quality assurance perspectives. They achieved these goals through student recruitment, student orientation, rules and regulations, academic programmes, simulated workplaces, academic counselling, associations, meetings, job fairs and career expos, graduation ceremonies and alumni tracer studies. These strategies allowed them to provide students with the knowledge and skills they required to operate in their occupational fields. The foregoing leads to the formulation of these substantive propositions. Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' definitions of quality assurance:

- include the provision of highly qualified staff and students.
- cover an appropriate campus culture that provides programmes of a vocational nature
- include intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of staff and students

- comprise inputs from professional associations, trade unions, NCTE, NAB, NABPTEX, ISO, AAU and overseas universities.

9.4 Formal propositions-quality assurance in public funded institutions

Glaser and Strauss (1971) suggest two principal ways that formal propositions are generated from substantive propositions when no more data is involved. These included analysing comparatively several diverse substantive theories and advancing substantive theory to formal theory by a rewriting technique. In this study, the latter was adopted to generate formal propositions from the substantive ones detailed above.

Chief Executive Officers' (CEO's) of publicly funded institutions have diverse quality and quality assurance frameworks. Their quality frameworks comprise distinctiveness, consistency, efficiency and effectiveness, adding value and meeting specified objectives. These collections of ideas form the basis of their understanding of quality assurance. CEO's quality assurance frameworks focus on institutional improvement and accountability.

CEO's of publicly funded institutions quality assurance frameworks embrace knowledge acquisition, quality curriculum, availability of quality logistics for knowledge acquisition, and suitability of physical infrastructure.

CEO's definition of quality assurance cover quality information management, lifelong upskilling of their workforce, assessment of employees' role performances, quality information for stakeholders, effective guidelines for behaviour, effective dispute resolution, risk free environment and a highly developed ethical code.

CEO's quality assurance frameworks have an organisational, state and international focus. CEO's embrace meeting organisational needs, effective

management, providing quality services, and guaranteeing proper institutional records.

CEO's framework for accountability relate to state controls, national prosperity, improving social justice, producing knowledgeable workers, achieving value for money and safeguarding clients.

CEO's accountability notions have international contexts. Their definitions include defending *raison d'état* ("reason of state"), enhancing institutional image, ensuring trans-national and acceptance of quality practices.

CEO's of publicly funded institutions frameworks on institutional improvement and accountability emanate from their dealings with each other, from group behaviour and persons in their social world whom they used as standards for making sense of their actions. Their notions are the result of occupational training and previous workplace influences. These contribute to their performance in current positions.

CEO's of publicly funded institutions derive their stock of knowledge on institutional improvement and accountability from influences exerted by government legislation, and institutional policies related to quality assurance. Through institutional socialisation, they develop work roles and appropriate standards.

CEO's of publicly funded institutions frames of reference on institutional improvement and accountability derive from groups with which they wished to gain or maintain acceptance. These cover professional societies, quasi-governmental organisations, other similar organisations (domestic and international) and international quality assurance regulatory bodies. Through interaction with others in these groups, they obtain standards they adhered to.

CEO's of publicly funded institutions have procedures to impart their quality assurance perspectives. These include employment frameworks, formal evaluation strategies, in-service training and off the job training. The preceding leads to the following propositions. CEO's definitions of quality assurance:

- include credentialed and experienced employees.
- embrace an organisational culture focused on client needs
- include ongoing training and support of employees
- comprise appropriate rewards and sanctions for employees
- include inputs from professional associations and other outside organisations.

9.5 Management implications

Higher education with a professional focus is mainly delivered by polytechnics in Ghana. Their academic operations are subjected to dual supervision by the National Board for Professional and Technician Examination (the sole supervisory body of Ghanaian polytechnics) and the National Accreditation Board. Despite these regulatory arrangements, Ghanaian polytechnic graduates are perceived to be of low quality. Polytechnic Act 745 seeks to grant polytechnics autonomy from National Board for Professional and Technician Examination and allow them to offer degree programmes if they can satisfy institutional and programme accreditation requirements stipulated by the National Accreditation Board (NAB). These conditions necessitated Ghanaian polytechnics demonstrate that they can deliver quality polytechnic education. Rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' formulated quality assurance policies to supplement quality assurance initiatives undertaken by the National Accreditation Board.

This study reported that the mandate of Ghanaian polytechnics is to train middle level manpower. They are to equip students with vocational and technical knowledge and award them Higher National Diplomas. Under the full implementation of polytechnic act 745, this mandate will change. Polytechnics can offer degree programmes and rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' will need to further socialise academic staff in their institutions to enable them to embrace this change.

This study indicated experiences from the past jobs of those involved in this study played vital roles in the formation of their quality assurance perspectives. They assisted them to define situations, form definition of quality assurance, and highlighted actions to be engaged in during quality assurance. The management implications that arise here is that under the new polytechnic status, their past experiences may not be sufficient. They will need to undergo further training related to quality assurance to obtain additional knowledge to enable them to perform their work roles effectively.

The study demonstrated that the staff who participated in this study formed their perspectives on quality assurance through the use of reference groups. They set standards and expectations for practice which they used when they were faced with problematic situations. From a management point of view, the adoption of these standards by them enhances their polytechnics' image as providers of quality polytechnic education.

The current research found that significant others assisted the respondents to form new perspectives on quality assurance. They provided them with ideas on work roles. These covered what to do when admitting, registering and conducting examinations for students in their polytechnics. The implication of this under the new polytechnic status is they will need to alter their quality assurance strategies with

regards to students' admission, registration and examinations to meet what is required in degree awarding institutions. For example, they will need to adjust their admission criteria to conform to that of the institutions of their significant others and also institute mechanisms to bring their polytechnics to a level comparable to competitor institutions.

Evidence was presented in chapter 7 that rectors vice rectors and quality assurance officers' used strategies to recruit well qualified staff. These staff held bachelor and master degree qualifications relevant to the Higher National Diploma courses offered. The management implication is that by offering degree programmes under the polytechnic act 745, they will need to alter their quality assurance perspectives with regards to academic staff qualifications. They will have to hire lecturers who have credentials higher than masters, for example PhD, to meet the criteria required of higher education institutions who offer degree programmes. Similarly, they will need to adjust entry requirements for prospective students who apply for degree programmes in their institutions to be in line with the requirements of the National Accreditation Board.

The present research found that respondents organised induction and orientation for new academic staff and students upon their arrival on campus respectively. These events served as institutional socialisation agents and were used to impart their quality assurance perspectives. The implication following from this is that with the new status polytechnics enjoy under the polytechnic act 745, staff and students will need further induction and orientation for example at their departmental levels to assist them to fully embrace the new culture of the polytechnics.

The current research found that those involved in this study used in-service training schemes and further studies to impart their quality assurance perspectives to staff. These things served as institutional socialisation agents. From a management

point of view, these institutional socialisation activities will need to be upgraded to allow academic staff to gain advanced knowledge in their discipline so they can equip students with occupational socialisation experiences that are mandated in degree awarding institutions.

The present research demonstrated that rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' conducted formal appraisal to socialise staff. They administered questionnaires through departmental heads and students to evaluate staff occupational knowledge and personal behaviours against the standards they had established. From a management point of view, the full implementation of polytechnic act 745 will alter upwards the standards required in polytechnics. They will have to adjust formal appraisal techniques used to evaluate academic staff to conform to degree awarding institutions.

They also used academic programmes to socialise students. These programmes served as occupational socialisation agents and provided students with knowledge, values, norms and skills required in their occupational fields. The implications that comes with full implementation of polytechnic act 745, is that polytechnics themselves will be responsible for their academic programmes, therefore they will need mechanisms to ensure the relevance of their academic programmes. Additionally, polytechnics will need to provide additional occupational socialisation experiences (different from that of the Higher National Diploma) for students who pursue degree programmes.

It was reported in this study that National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations (NABPTEX) is solely responsible for the examinations held in Ghanaian polytechnics. They act as a reference group by offering the polytechnics syllabi for their courses and standards for their examinations. The full adoption of polytechnic act 745 will free the polytechnics from (NABPTEX). This

will require staff involved in this study to institute internal mechanisms to ensure the relevance of their courses and the validity and reliability of student assessments. Polytechnics who issue their own certificates will have to ensure the credibility of qualifications they offer.

This study demonstrated that those who participated in this research used rules and regulations to socialise staff and students. These covered personal and professional behaviour and acted as institutional socialisation agents. They assisted in altering staff and students' quality assurance perspectives. The management implication is that, with the coming into force of polytechnic act 745, rules and regulation will still be vital in shaping the quality assurance frameworks of staff and students to meet the new standards that come with the implementation of polytechnic act 745. These will need to be promulgated and accepted by staff and students.

This research indicated that rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' used job fairs and career expositions to provide students with socialisation experiences. These helped to equip students with ideas on prospective employers. The full implementation of polytechnic act 745 will permit polytechnics to offer degree programmes in addition to the Higher National Diploma. They will need to expand job fairs and career expositions by including other employers whose activities relate to the degree programmes they now offer.

This research presented evidence that they conducted tracer studies on their Higher National Diploma graduates to confirm links between the occupational socialisation they offered and job market demands. Under the full implementation of polytechnic act 745, polytechnics that offer degree programmes in addition to the Higher National Diploma will graduate two types of students. The management implication that arises from this is that, they will have to broaden the focus of their tracer studies to include graduates of their degree programmes to enable them to

establish the link between the training they offer them and labour market requirements.

9.6 Recommendations for future research

As reported previously, various scholars have used symbolic interactionism in their research. This study too used symbolic interactionism as a theoretical framework. Empirical findings in the research reported here were used to formulate substantive and formal propositions. As a result of these, the following could be the focus of future research projects.

Symbolic interactionism and case study research could investigate academic staff and students of Ghanaian polytechnics perspectives on quality assurance. A similar research design could be used to explore the quality assurance perspectives of vice chancellors, pro-vice chancellors and quality assurance directors of Ghanaian universities. This would broaden knowledge on quality assurance perspectives of senior officers working in the Ghanaian higher education sector. Research to establish similarities and differences in quality assurance perspectives of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' of Ghanaian polytechnics and vice chancellors, pro-vice chancellors and quality assurance directors of Ghanaian universities using either quantitative or qualitative research designs would be useful. This would allow comparisons to be made on the quality assurance perspectives of these groups. Lastly, research could be conducted to explore how quality assurance rhetoric of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers' matches a more lived experience. This could be done by extended field work research using observation and participant observation methods. However, gaining access for such research may be difficult if not impossible.

Appendices

Appendix A

Interview schedule



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Level 8, 10 Pulteney Street, University of Adelaide, Adelaide SA 5005; Tel: (+618) 8313 0694, Fax: (+618) 8313 3533

Interview questions for participants

1. What is your understanding of the term 'quality' as it applies to your institution?
2. What is your understanding of 'quality assurance' in your institution?
3. What is your understanding of the difference between 'quality' and 'quality assurance'?
4. Describe how quality assurance has been formalised in your institution?
5. Describe the institutional policy you have in place to assure quality of your academic programmes?
6. Describe the principles that underpin the quality assurance policy in your institution?
7. Describe the activities your institutional quality assurance system cover?
8. Describe the systems and processes in place to implement these policies?
9. Describe an evidence to prove the effectiveness of these processes?
10. In what ways have an internal evaluation process been put in place to provide feedback on the policy to inform planning and decision making?
11. Describe how the perspective of a rector/vice rector/quality assurance officer of the polytechnic influence quality assurance policy formulation and practice?
12. Describe the professional association you belong to?
13. Describe how your professional training has influence your perspective on quality assurance policy formulation and practice in this polytechnic?
14. Describe how the quality assurance regulations influence your quality assurance practices?
15. Describe how your previous employment has influence your perspective on quality assurance policy formulation and practice in this polytechnic?
16. Describe how the institutional culture affects the formulation and implementation of quality assurance in the polytechnic?
17. Describe the administrative support services you have in place to support quality culture?
18. Describe how quality assurance policy in the polytechnic is enacted?

19. Describe how the management (political authority) of the polytechnic influence the formulation and implementation of quality assurance in the polytechnic?
20. Describe how these policies emerge within the institution?
21. Describe the specific interest groups or persons, if any that influence the development of the quality assurance policy?
22. Explain the motive behind the implementation of quality assurance policy in your institution?
23. Describe how external quality assurance regulators influence quality assurance policy formulation and implementation in your school?
24. Describe how your polytechnics relationship with other higher education institutions impacts on your quality assurance policies and practices?
25. What in your views, are the challenges faced by your institution regarding the effective implementation of internal quality assurance system?
26. What would you suggest to strengthen the current quality assurance policies and practices in your polytechnic?

Appendix B

Ethics approval letter



RESEARCH BRANCH
OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS, COMPLIANCE AND
INTEGRITY

BEVERLEY DOBBS
EXECUTIVE OFFICER
LOW RISK HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW
GROUP (FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL
SCIENCES AND FACULTY OF THE PROFESSIONS)
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7 August 2013

Dr A Potts
School: Education

Dear Dr Potts

ETHICS APPROVAL No: HP-2013-049
PROJECT TITLE: Internal Quality Assurance Policies and Practices of Ghanaian Polytechnics

I write to advise that the Low Risk Human Research Ethics Review Group (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Faculty of the Professions) has approved the above project. The ethics expiry date for this project is **31 July 2016**.

Ethics approval is granted for three years subject to satisfactory annual progress and completion reporting. The form titled *Project Status Report* is to be used when reporting annual progress and project completion and can be downloaded at <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/ethics/human/guidelines/reporting>. On expiry, ethics approval may be extended for a further period.

Participants in the study are to be given a copy of the Information Sheet and the signed Consent Form to retain. It is also a condition of approval that you **immediately report** anything which might warrant review of ethical approval including:

- serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants,
- previously unforeseen events which might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project,
- proposed changes to the protocol; and
- the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.

Please refer to the following ethics approval document for any additional conditions that may apply to this project.

Yours sincerely

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR PAUL BABIE
Convenor
Low Risk Human Research Ethics Review Group (Faculty of
Humanities and Social Sciences and Faculty of the Professions)



RESEARCH BRANCH
OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS, COMPLIANCE AND
INTEGRITY

BEVERLEY DOBBS
EXECUTIVE OFFICER
LOW RISK HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW
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Applicant: Dr A Potts
School: Education
Project Title: Internal Quality Assurance Policies and
Practices of Ghanaian Polytechnics

Low Risk Human Research Ethics Review Group (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the
Faculty of the Professions)

ETHICS APPROVAL No: HP-2013-049 **RM No:** 0000016591

APPROVED for the period: 4 July 2013 to 31 July 2016

This study is to be conducted by Patrick Swanzy, PhD Candidate.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR PAUL BABIE
Convenor

Low Risk Human Research Ethics Review Group (Faculty of
Humanities and Social Sciences and Faculty of the Professions)

Appendix C

Information sheet for participants



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Level 8, 10 Pulteney Street, University of Adelaide, Adelaide SA 5005; Tel: (+618) 8313 0694, Fax: (+618) 8313 3553

Participant information sheet

Title

Internal quality assurance policies and practices of Ghanaian polytechnics

Purpose of the study

This study aims to examine the internal quality assurance policies and practices of Ghanaian polytechnics. The focus of the study is on how perspectives of key internal stakeholders of Ghanaian polytechnics influence internal quality assurance policy formulation and practice. The findings of this study will serve as a useful resource for policy makers involved in the planning, management and improvement of polytechnic education in Ghana. The findings will serve as key literature on internal quality assurance policies and practices in Ghanaian polytechnics in domestic and international scholarship.

What will be asked of the participant?

Participation in this research is voluntary and a participant has the right to withdraw from this research at any time. To be part of this study, a consent form needs to be signed.

Duration of interaction

In-depth Interview: Approximately 1 hour

Possible benefits from the study, to the participants and/or the community

The study serves as a platform for participants to share their views on how perspectives of key internal stakeholders of Ghanaian polytechnics influence internal quality assurance policy formulation and practice. This study will also reveal and raise awareness on how perspectives of key internal stakeholders of Ghanaian polytechnics influence internal quality assurance policy formulation and practice in domestic and international scholarship.

Assurance of confidentiality

Data acquired from the field will be treated in a way that protects the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. Codes will be assigned to participants to prevent their identification in the research report or any other subsequent publications from this study. Records of the project will be stored on the main researcher's computer. However, the data collected will be archived on compact disc and securely stored for five years as prescribed by the university of Adelaide regulations.

Measures that will be taken in the event of an adverse event

If, at any stage a participant experience discomfort, please inform the researcher. The activity will be stopped immediately. If this request is made by a participant, all data collected up to that time will be deleted and disposed permanently. After completion of an interview, a participant can contact the researcher by email and request for the removal of his/her data from the research. Upon receiving such request, data collected from the participant will be removed and disposed off. Participants are assured that no adverse effect will result from such requests. Please refer to the University of Adelaide's independent complaints sheet attached.

Contacts

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Patrick Swanzy	PhD Candidate School of Education, The University of Adelaide, Adelaide SA 5005 Ph: +61 466557098 Email: patrick.swanzy@adelaide.edu.au

Appendix D

Consent form



Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

CONSENT FORM

1. I have read the attached Information Sheet and agree to take part in the following research project:

Title:	Internal quality assurance policies and practices of Ghanaian polytechnics
Ethics Approval Number:	HP-2013-049

2. I have had the project, so far as it affects me, fully explained to my satisfaction by the research worker. My consent is given freely.

3. Although I understand the purpose of the research project it has also been explained that involvement may not be of any benefit to me.

4. I have been informed that, while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will not be divulged.

5. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.

6. I agree to the interview being audio. Yes No

7. I am aware that I should keep a copy of this Consent Form, when completed, and the attached Information Sheet.

Participant to complete:

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher/Witness to complete:

I have described the nature of the research to _____
(print name of participant)

and in my opinion she/he understood the explanation.

Signature: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

2013_consent_form_for_professionals_only

Appendix E

Complaints procedure and information for participants



**The University of Adelaide
Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)**

This document is for people who are participants in a research project.

CONTACTS FOR INFORMATION ON PROJECT AND INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The following study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Adelaide Human Research Ethics Committee:

Project Title:	Internal quality assurance policies and practices of Ghanaian polytechnics
Approval Number:	HP-2013-049

The Human Research Ethics Committee monitors all the research projects which it has approved. The committee considers it important that people participating in approved projects have an independent and confidential reporting mechanism which they can use if they have any worries or complaints about that research.

This research project will be conducted according to the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (see <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/e72syn.htm>)

1. If you have questions or problems associated with the practical aspects of your participation in the project, or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult the project co-ordinator:

Name:	Dr. Anthony Potts
	Patrick Swanzy
Phone:	Contact details were provided in the original documents

2. If you wish to discuss with an independent person matters related to:
 - making a complaint, or
 - raising concerns on the conduct of the project, or
 - the University policy on research involving human participants, or
 - your rights as a participant,

contact the Human Research Ethics Committee's Secretariat on phone (08) 8313 6028 or by email to hrec@adelaide.edu.au

secretariat/ethics/human/complaints

Appendix F

Letter to participants



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Level 8, 10 Pulteney Street, University of Adelaide, Adelaide SA 5005; Tel: (+618) 8313 0694, Fax: (+618) 8313 3553

Letter to participants

20th May 2013

Dear

I am currently undertaking a research project for my doctoral studies at The University of Adelaide, Australia. The research is entitled "Internal quality assurance policies and practices of Ghanaian polytechnics" In this study I intend to examine how perspectives of key internal stakeholders of Ghanaian polytechnics influence their internal quality assurance policy formulation and practices. Attached is an information sheet which provides more details about the study.

This study will be significant because its findings will support efforts of Ghanaian polytechnics to make their internal quality assurance practices consistent with international best practice.

This study cannot be completed successfully without the participation of rectors, vice rectors and quality assurance officers of Ghanaian polytechnics. I trust that as a rector/vice rector/quality assurance officer whose perspective influences internal quality assurance policy formulation and practice of your polytechnic, your contribution will be of immense value to this study. Therefore, I kindly invite you to participate in this study as an interviewee.

If you need further details on this study, feel free to contact me at Patrick.swanzy@adelaide.edu.au or my supervisor Dr. Anthony Potts at Anthony.potts@adelaide.edu.au. If you accept the invitation to participate in this study, I will be glad if you communicate to me the date, time and venue for the interview. I intend to be in Ghana in early October, 2013.

Thank you

Yours sincerely,

Patrick Swanzy

Appendix G

Programmes offered in Ghanaian polytechnics 2011/2012 academic year

No.	Higher National Diploma	Bachelor of Technology
1	Agricultural Engineering	Automobile Engineering
2	Civil Engineering	Agricultural Engineering
3	Electrical/Electronic Engineering	Civil Engineering
4	Building Technology	Building Technology
5	Mechanical Engineering	Estate Management
6	Oil & Gas Engineering	Chemical Engineering
7	Production Engineering	Hospitality & Tourism Management
8	Renewable Energy Systems Engineering	Procurement Management
9	Computer Science	Entrepreneurship & Finance
10	Computer Network Management	Accounting with Computing
11	Statistics	
12	Science Laboratory Technology	
13	Dispensing Technology	
14	General Agriculture	
15	Purchasing & Supply	
16	Procurement & Logistics Management	
17	Entrepreneurship & Finance	
18	Agro Enterprise Development	
19	Estate Management	
20	Secretaryship & Management Studies	
21	Hotel, Catering & Inst. Management	
22	Hospitality & Tourism Management	
23	Fashion Design	
24	Industrial Arts	
25	Interior Architecture & Furniture Prod.	
26	Marketing	
27	Accountancy	
28	Banking & Finance	
29	Accounting with Computing	

Source: National Council for Tertiary Education (2014b)

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