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Implementation Barriers to Internal Quality Assurance in Private Higher Education in Ghana

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Abstract

The National Accreditation Board (NAB) in Ghana is the agency responsible for monitoring the external accreditation requirements nationwide. Internal quality management of individual universities and university colleges in the country are expected to complement the external accreditation monitoring by NAB. The NAB has traditionally evaluated Universities/University Colleges in relation to a set of standards. With internal quality assurance, the responsibility rests with the institutions' to manage effectively their own quality. This means that, NAB expects mature institutions that can successfully identify their own strengths and areas for needed improvement, and then develop a strategy to bring necessary changes that are evidenced by outcomes. This study explored how the national quality assurance schemes are understood and implemented and barriers to implementation in four private University Colleges in Ghana. Academic, administrative staff and students from the private institutions completed a set of questionnaires that tapped their perceptions on issues causing implementation barriers to internal quality assurance. Quality management decisions emerged as a major barrier to the implementation of internal quality assurance, especially the failure to link identification of quality objectives to the institutional strategic plan. Student involvement was barrier that adversely affected the implementation of internal quality assurance. Another barrier was the lack of effective coordination resulting in dichotomy in Strategic planning and quality management in looking at different aspects of the present and future of higher education. Dominance of culture not open to change and improvement was an important barrier to the implementation of internal quality assurance in private higher education where there are strong traditions in place and departments and units are quite independent. Transparency, openness, responsiveness and creativity should form the bases of the ideal culture for quality improvement in private higher education institutions.

Key Words: Internal Quality Assurance, Accreditation, Implementation

Introduction

Quality Assurance has been defined as the planned and systematic activities implemented in a quality system so that quality requirements for a product or service will be fulfilled (ASQ Definition 2012). The AU document “Developing an African Higher Education Quality Rating System” quoted UNESCO, 2005 definition of Quality Assurance as the systematic review of educational programmes to ensure that acceptable standards of education, scholarship, and infrastructure are being maintained (COMEDAF II 2007). Given these varying definitions, the importance of clearly understanding what quality assurance means for private higher education in Africa cannot be overemphasized. It is of importance to identify which elements in the definition of quality assurance are essential, in terms of the expectation we have for private higher education to accomplish for us in Africa. So there is a challenge for providers of private higher education in Africa not only to assure quality, but also develop the conditions that make quality possible. One can therefore not help but agree with Lemaitre (2002, 36) that the challenge to identify what is quality in higher education is much more urgent and essential. Policies and mechanisms implemented in an institution or programme to ensure that it is fulfilling its own purposes and meeting the standards that apply to higher education in general or to the profession or discipline in particular can be generated from internal sources or can be applied from an external source. Internal quality assurance means that the actor in this activity is the Higher Education institution and external quality assurance means that the actor in this activity is a body or organisation outside the. The activities of the internal and external quality assurance are highly interrelated and one cannot have one without the other.

Martin and Stella defined internal and external quality assurance as follows: “Internal quality assurance refers to the policies and mechanisms implemented in an institution or programme to ensure that it is fulfilling its own purposes and meeting the standards that apply to higher education in general or to the profession or discipline in particular” and “ External quality assurance refers to the actions of an external body, which may be a quality assurance agency or body other than the institution that assesses its operation or that of its programmes, in order to determine whether it is meeting the agreed or predetermined standards” (Martin & Stella 2007, 34).

From above definitions we see that external quality assurance activities are carried out by entities outside the higher education providers. In Ghana the National Accreditation Board (NAB) has this responsibility with a national mandate covering all private and public universities. Accreditation began in 1993. According to (Billing 2003; Clarke 2005; Harvey & Newton 2004; Stephenson 2004; Strydom & van der Westhuizen 2001), the two main concerns with externally driven procedures, particularly when a specific set of quality standards or criteria have been defined for use across institutions, is that the approach does not take adequate account of varying institutional contexts, nor does it encourage any meaningful quality.

On its own an internally organized self assessment in the frame of IQA is not sufficient. It is easy for the unit responsible for quality assurance internally to take things for granted that are not. An external assessor’s view will help overcome some blindness and blind spots when we are looking to our quality. On the other hand, an external quality assessment can never been done without self assessment by the institution. Without that information, it is impossible to assess quality. The role internal and external

quality assurance unit play should be in balance. A critical examination will reveal that the external quality assessor (NAB in the case of Ghana) often serves two masters: on one hand, mandated to help educational institutions to enhance and improve the quality, and on the other, is meant to provide information to government, politicians and taxpayer. The basic question one may ask is whether it is possible to combine those two functions without corrupting the balanced relation with internal quality assurance?

It has been suggested that internal quality monitoring especially in private universities and university colleges in Ghana suffers because of following obstacles:

- The influence of Institutional Boards of management
- The concept of quality culture is still underdeveloped
- Capacity building in newly established quality systems is underdeveloped
- Lack of training and expertise in the KSA quality system
- Private universities have levels of experience and resource that pose challenge in the implementation process of quality assurance
- Student involvement in processes of quality system is low

The extent to which these concerns hold true depends, on the type of internal quality assurance taking place. The responsibility for delivering quality, and thus also to assure the quality, belongs to the higher education institutions. Only experts in that specific discipline can say what barriers they face in implementing internal quality assurance. So a study was carried out involving a number of private universities in Ghana to examine the

extent to which concerns about internal quality assurance in their institutions hold true.

Background

Higher Education in Ghana

Ghana continues to witness progressive shift in educational needs for the society. According to Armenia (2009), the 1992 constitution of Ghana makes general provisions for education and higher education in particular as follows:

(1) All persons shall have the right to equal educational opportunities and facilities and with a view to achieving the full realization of that right

- i) Basic education shall be free, compulsory and available to all
- ii) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular, by the progressive introduction of free education
- iii) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular, by progressive introduction of free education
- iv) Functional literacy shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible
- v) The development of a system of schools with adequate facilities at all levels shall be actively pursued

(2) Every person shall have the right, at his own expense, to establish and maintain a private school or schools at all levels and of such categories and in accordance with such conditions as may be provided by law UNESCO

(1998, 2009) reports on the World Conference on Higher Education attest to higher education's viability and capacity to change and induce change and progress in society, especially for the development of the African continent. The 2009 UNESCO report includes a contribution to public good through the eradication of poverty and sustainable national development. This point is further strengthened a World Bank (2009) document, which states that investment in human capital through quality-assurance and growth in higher education is crucial for accelerating economic growth and reducing all forms of national and individual poverty, illiteracy and social inequality.

Amenya (2009), however, argue that there is an imbalance between the numbers of students who apply to attend higher education institutions, and the limited spaces available for admissions into higher education programs. He asserts that higher education in Ghana is befuddled with numerous problems such as lack of strategic planning, lack of vision, financial malfeasance and lack of infrastructure and points out that demand for higher education in Ghana far out strips current provisions for higher education.

Private Higher Education in Ghana

Between 1999 and 2006, student numbers doubled to more than 118,000. But universities have still not been able to meet the growing demand and many more students knock on the doors of higher education than there are places. University of Ghana received application from 22,865 students in 2008 but just over a third, or 8,774 students, were finally enrolled. A study carried out in 2001 found that government support per student, in real terms, had decreased by almost 75% during the 1990s. Government provided 70% of costs and public universities raised the remaining 30% from fees and donations. A survey in 2002 suggested that

more than 70% of students were willing to pay higher fees for quality instruction (Adu 2009). For this matter, strengthening private participation in higher education in Ghana is a step in the right direction (Amanyah 2009). He debunked the notion that private participation in higher education dilutes standards as absurd and encouraged private as well as government participation in higher education as essential in stimulating healthy competition which leads to improved standards.

The numbers of private universities in Ghana has been on the rise since 1999. According to a feature article, 2009, there were just two private universities in Ghana in 1999 but since then 11 new private universities and 19 private polytechnics or colleges have opened their doors. According to a phone conversation with an official of the Ghana Accreditation Board on 3rd August, 2012, there are seven Public universities, three private universities with the Presidential Charter, 38 Private tertiary Institutions offering Degree and HND programmes, three private Colleges of Education and five private nurses training colleges in Ghana today in their updated list.

In 2006, private universities enrolled 9,500 students or about 8% of all tertiary students, while the polytechnics had 24,660 students or 20% of total enrolments (Feature Article 2009). The growth of private tertiary institutions in Ghana is similar to developments taking place in other West African countries such as Nigeria, Benin and Senegal, as well as in the East African countries of Tanzania and Uganda following the general trend of deregulation in Africa in the wake of a wave of democratization.

In Ghana the process began in 1993 when a structure for accrediting private universities was formed. The same year, polytechnics were upgraded to tertiary status. In the 2007 Ghana Education Reform, a goal was set to

increase private sector participation in education services and aligned policies such as tax exemptions on imported books were created (Adu 2009).

Most private institutions are Ghanaian-owned and run but there are few offshore campuses of foreign universities. Nowadays private universities such as the Wisconsin International University College are attracting international students and lecturers from the West and Central African block. Many private institutions teach religion, business administration and information and communication technology - sectors that are booming in West Africa. Ashesi University is one private university that focuses on software development but with mandatory classes in liberal arts and African studies.

The private institutions fund their operations mainly through student fees. The Conference of Heads of Private Universities has made calls to the government to grant tax relief to their institutions. Private universities, however, have come to stay in Ghana and other African countries, and for thousands of youths dreaming of a better life, this is a positive development. Private universities will continue to educate entrepreneurs and employees for the African market, and in competing with the public universities they will raise the bar and lower the public costs of tertiary education. Private universities are bridging the gap by increasing access to higher education for many more students. This is because their curricula are innovative, demand-driven, job-tailored and perhaps more context specific (Bermile 2012).

Accreditation Procedures in Institutions of Higher Learning

The National Accreditation Board (NAB), established by the National Accreditation Board Law 1993 (PNDCL 317) and replaced by Act 744 (2007), is responsible for the accreditation of both public and private tertiary institutions, with regard to programme contents and standards. Another body, the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), with representation from the universities provides for formal consultation on education policy and reports to government on the condition of higher education (Bermile 2012).

For an Institution to obtain accreditation, a letter of application must first be submitted to the National Accreditation Board (NAB). That institution must wait for a response from NAB before beginning operations and also the choice of name of the Institution shall be in consultation with NAB. NAB's authorization for an Institution is not transferable and may be suspended or revoked if abused. NAB authorization does not allow the applying institution to advertise for or admit students (Dadzie-Mensah 2012). Institutional Accreditation shall not be granted until proof of affiliation is established. On programme accreditation, NAB does it to enforce quality assurance and quality improvement to determine if the programme in question has met minimum standard for accreditation and meeting stated objectives. Regarding procedures for granting Presidential Charter the length of operation under mentorship should not be less than ten (10) years among other requirements that must be met (Dadzie-Mensah 2012).

NAB's role, according to Dadzie-Mensah rests on decisions in getting the Institutions to do the right things towards quality assurance. NAB

attaches great importance to institutional audit and the role of the internal quality assessment units. NAB is currently using a set of instruments referred to as affiliation Barometer which have been developed to assess the health of the relationship between the two parties (mentor and mentee universities) in an affiliation agreement. To apply the instruments, each of the two parties must complete the appropriate instrument and send to NAB within the first quarter in the calendar year following the year under review. By matching the corresponding instruments, NAB analyzes inputs together and advises appropriately where the relationship appears strained or unproductive.

Internal Quality Assurance Unit is mandatory for all Institutions under NAB'S mandate. Internal Quality Assurance Unit should be in place before accreditation shall be granted. The Internal Quality Assurance Unit if well established performs the role of the NAB in the respective institutions (Nti 2012). New programmes should have at least three (3) full time Lecturers – one of whom should be a Senior Lecturer. Departments are to be headed by a Senior Lecturer or a higher ranking member. Accreditation of programmes applies to all Universities both public and private. In the case of affiliation with mentoring Institutions – Institutions applying for accreditation are to finalize their affiliation arrangements with their affiliated Institutions before submitting their documentation to NAB for accreditation. The Legislative Instrument (L.I) 1984, Section 16(a) mandates all recognized tertiary educational institutions in Ghana to submit Annual Reports to NAB. Heads of institutions must verify the qualification of all prospective employees with the NAB to certify that their certificates are genuine and authentic (Nti 2012).

Concerns and Challenges in Ghana's Private Higher Education

The rapid expansion of private tertiary education means that private institutions are increasing access to higher education for many more students. But with rapid expansion there are also fears the quality of instruction will be compromised. To address this, the Association of African Universities has supported efforts to assure the quality of public and private institutions.

According to Bermile (2012), private universities have raised concerns that the accreditation bodies are rather too hard on them than on public ones. He cites the example of accreditation requirement that university colleges be mentored for 10 years before chartering and notes, that seems to apply more for the private university colleges only. Bermile also raised concern regarding the fact that colleges of education which have recently been granted tertiary status are permitted to take applicants with WASSCE grades D7 and E8 but others (supposedly private universities are prevented).

Bermile notes, it might appear as if there were some unhealthy competition between public and private tertiary institutions and shows concern that new private institutions are drawing staff from public universities and so may becoming threat to the public sector. Another area of concern regards national service. Private university products do national service. However, if private universities engaged the service personnel, private universities and not the National Service Secretariat, are required to pay them.

Private universities in Ghana cannot be discounted in the delivery of quality education in Ghana and elsewhere as they offer a great hope to thousands of youth who are yearning to better their lot. They will continue to

fill the vacuum created by the public ones and educate entrepreneurs and employees for the job market. It is therefore to be expected that the government and the public sector see them not as undue rivals and mere business entities but rather as partners and complements to the development drive and give them the needed support to grow the desired human resource needs of the country (Bermile 2012).

Internal Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Internal quality assurance unit or department is a unit created within an institution purposely to promote quality culture within that institution. It has the primary responsibility of facilitating the development and operationalization of structures and systems within the institution for assuring quality in academic work. It would usually prepare the institution for scrutiny by an external quality assurance agency (Dadzie-Mensah 2012).

The UNESCO commission on Education in the 21st Century titled “Learning the Treasures within” emphasized four pillars of education namely “learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be (UNESCO 1996). The ENQA (2005) has formulated some guidelines for internal quality assurance, based on experiences. Those guidelines are adopted by the AUN in the AUN-QA and bodies like the NAB in Ghana for the implementation of the internal quality assurance.

In these guidelines, Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognizes the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The

strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for and assessment of students other stakeholders. Others include:

- Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards: Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.
- Assessment of students: Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.
- Quality assurance of teaching staff: Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staffs involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.
- Learning resources and student support: Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.
- Information systems: Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyze and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.
- Public information: Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering

Methodology

An instrument was used to gather data from selected private university/university colleges in Ghana. The study employed a descriptive design of cross-sectional nature. The study attempted to explore from the

views of respondents important issues that constitute barriers in internal quality assurance of their institutions. The study is described as cross sectional because the relevant data was collected only at a point in time when each respondent was asked to complete the questionnaire. The survey was conducted in June and July of 2012.

Population of the study

Population for the study comprised of administrative staff, academic staff, and staff from existing internal quality assurance units and students from the private institutions made to complete questionnaires. One hundred and twenty questionnaires were administered to ten institutions (i.e. nine private university colleges and one private university namely: Wisconsin International University College, Knutsford University College, Radsford University College, Christian University College, Ghana Technology University College, Reagent University College of Science and Technology, Methodist University College, Pentecost University College and Maranatha University College, Valley View University). Ninety-three (93) completely or partially filled questionnaires were received from four of the private tertiary institutions.

Questionnaire Development

Questionnaire was the main data collection instrument. It comprised three sections, i.e. the respondents' demography, respondent's institutional affiliation and identified barriers to internal quality assurance. Barriers to internal quality assurance in private higher education were identified as autonomy, quality culture, training and experience, resource constraints and student participation. Each Barrier was measured by five indicators as

shown in Appendix 1. Respondents views on each barrier to internal quality assurance determining the extent to which they are in agreement, uncertain or in disagreement with statement of indicators were tapped on a Likert-type scale with five levels ranging from strongly agree (allotted 5 points), agree (4 points), uncertain (3 points), disagree (2 points) and strongly disagree (1 point).

Validation of Instruments

The instruments for the study by assessed for content and construct validity (Emory, 1985). Each item of the instrument was carefully analyzed and checked to ensure that it conveyed the necessary message. The instruments were divided to seven sections to ensure that the instruments provided adequate coverage of the topic under study.

Data Entry and Analysis

Data was entered to the SPSS. Data entry was cleaned up involving editing, coding and tabulation to detect anomalies in the responses and assign specific numerical values to responses. Data entered was analyzed and outputs printed for further scrutiny.

Results and Discussion

Although the study explored respondents' views on barriers to internal quality assurance results are presented in this paper on four of the identified barriers to IQA namely constraints impacting quality management decisions, quality culture, training, experience and coordination and students' involvement in internal quality assurance.

Autonomy in making internal quality management decisions

There cannot be effective internal quality assurance without external quality assurance. The two are different sides of same coin as noted by Vroeijenstijn (1989). It follows that autonomy and assurance of quality are two sides of one coin. In this study, influence of Institutional Boards of Management are perceived to be problematic and a major barrier to the smooth implementation of internal quality assurance (Table 1), There is a very strong perception that Institutional Boards of Management view internal quality assurance as involving financing (M = 4.64, Mode = 5 i.e. strongly agree) and therefore might not lend full and ready support. Financing in private higher education in Ghana is a major issue that is handled tactfully. This situation could cause a failure to link identification of quality objectives to the institutional strategic plan.

Quality assurance agencies such as the NAB and NCTE have to work in association with government authorities, tertiary institutions, students, employers and other stakeholders. The support and influence of government on the NAB comprise a complex of structural, financial and methodological procedures some or all of which may constrain private tertiary institutions in their efforts at internal quality (M = 3.85, Mode = 4 i.e. agree). The government also influences standard setting and quality assurance outcomes. Structural influence results from the recognition of functions of the NAB and defining its legal role (M = 4.10, Mode = 5 i.e. strongly agree).

Table 1: Quality management decisions as barrier to IQA implementation

Indicators	Mean	Std D	Mode	Range	S. Size
Influence of Institutional Boards of Management problematic (as they view IQA as involving financing)	4.64	0.78	5	5	93
Affiliated Institution's role in quality management decisions presents barriers	4.47	0.90	5	5	93
Government's role in quality management decisions presents barriers	3.85	0.99	4	5	93
Structural influence of NAB presents barriers	4.10	1.20	5	5	93
Financial Barriers (GETFUND, tax relief and incentives)	4.09	1.11	5	5	93

Financial barriers are in the form of lack of direct funding from the government unlike the public universities, high accreditation fees and lack of tax reliefs and incentives. Comments from some respondents revealed that attempts by the Conference of Heads of Private Universities on the government to support them through the (GETFUND) as well as grant tax relief to their institutions have not yielded desired results.

Interestingly, staff, guardians and even some students in the private tertiary institutions contribute to the SSNIT from which the fund is drawn. Another respondent revealed in a comment that, government of Ghana provides 70% of costs and public universities raise the remaining 30% from

fees and donations. Private universities and university colleges do not get this direct funding from the government.

Quality culture as barrier to IQA implementation

Table 2 confirms that the concept of quality culture is still under developed in private tertiary institutions. There is a marked perceived lack of professional quality assurance expertise (M = 4.31, Mode = 5 i.e. strongly agree). Perception that staff members are not aware of quality assurance concepts was high (M = 4.40, Mode = 5 i.e. strongly agree).

Table 2: Quality culture as barrier to the implementation of internal quality assurance

Indicators	Mean	Std D	Mode	Range	S. Size
There is marked lack of professional quality assurance expertise	4.31	1.03	5	5	93
Staff members not aware of quality assurance concepts	4.40	0.81	5	5	93
High risk that quality concepts are implemented in a way fails to comply with existing regulations	3.56	0.90	4	5	93
Quality assurance concepts implemented without deep understanding of their pedagogical function	4.10	1.12	5	5	93
Lack of communication between quality assurance units of the different private universities	4.03	1.26	5	5	93

There was a perceived strong risk that quality concepts are implemented in a way that fails to comply with existing regulations (M =

3.56, Mode = 4 i.e. agree). The perception that quality assurance concepts such as student-centered learning, learning outcomes and modularization are implemented without deep understanding of their pedagogical function was high (M = 4.10, Mode = 5 i.e. strongly agree). Lack of communication between quality assurance units of the different private universities was perceived to be a major problem in the implementation of internal quality assurance ((M = 4.03, Mode = 5 i.e. strongly agree).

The above observations show that, the internal quality assurance processes are not yet effectively integrated into the normal planning and administrative processes in the private tertiary institutions especially the recently established ones. In situations where quality processes have been added there is the need to incorporate in more processes in the quality system because they often focus mostly on academic matters more than on administrative ones.

Training, Experience and Coordination as Barriers to IQA Implementation

There is a marked perceived lack of training and experience about issues dealing with knowledge, skills and attitudes about internal quality assurance (Table 3; M = 4.14. Mode = 4, i.e. agree). Capacity building is perceived to be inadequate in private tertiary institutions (M = 4.07. Mode = 4, i.e. agree). However, internal quality assurance has not been associated with resistance from staff members (M = 2.62. Mode = 1, i.e. disagree to strongly disagree). Perception was strong for the fact that lack of coordination through inadequate task analysis (M =3.68.14. Mode = 4, i.e. agree). There was no perceived lack of coordination through inadequate

target group analysis (M =2.56; Mode = 1 i.e. disagree). At best respondents were uncertain about this indicator.

Table 3: Lack of effective training, coordination and experience as barriers to IQA implementation in private tertiary institutions

Indicators	Mean	Std D	Mode	Range	S. Size
Lack of training and experience about internal quality assurance	4.14	0.58	4	5	93
Capacity building in private universities not adequate	4.07	0.58	4	5	93
Quality assurance associated with resistance from staff members	2.62	1.47	1	5	93
Lack of coordination through inadequate task analysis	3.68	0.77	4	5	93
Lack of coordination through inadequate target group analysis	2.56	1.39	1	5	93

Findings here confirm already held views about capacity building in established quality system as totally different from that of newly established quality systems. It is interesting that quality assurance is not associated with resistance from staff members as have been observed in other places (Al-Yafi 2008). Inadequate task analysis was challenge to internal quality assurance implementation. Different training programmes with diverse methodologies should be tried with special quality assurance participants including senior academic members, newly appointed staff, non academic staff and employees from private tertiary institutions.

Student Participation as Barrier to IQA Implementation

Table 4 presents interesting findings about students' involvement as barrier to the implementation of internal quality assurance in private tertiary institutions. There is a perceived agreement that student involvement in IQA is inadequate (M = 4.28; Mode = 5; i.e. strongly agree). There is also a perceived agreement that students' evaluation of courses and learning outcomes is challenging. Regular graduate employment data is perceived to be lacking. Likewise standard feedbacks from employers are perceived to be lacking. However, respondents were uncertain in their perception about the statement that IQA processes are not relevant to employers and student employability.

Table 4: Student Involvement as Barrier to the Implementation of Internal Quality Assurance

Indicators	Mean	Std D	Mode	Range	S. Size
Student involvement in internal quality assurance is inadequate	4.28	1.05	5	5	93
Students' evaluation of courses and learning outcomes is problematic	3.62	1.02	4	5	93
Regular graduate employment data is lacking	4.05	1.26	5	5	93
Standard feedbacks from employers are lacking	4.00	1.20	5	5	93
IQA processes not relevant to employers and student employability	2.97	1.02	3	5	93

Students' involvement in the processes of quality system including students' evaluation of lecturers and learning outcomes need implemented in a more rigorous manner. Students' evaluation of courses and learning outcomes tend to be impulsive and lacks the desired level of judgment as students tend to be unrealistic in inflating outcome scores. Also regular

graduate employment data and standard feedbacks from employers are lacking. There is the need for institutions to incorporate effectively designed tracer studies into their quality strategies. Also the relevance of academic programmes to employers and student employability should also be considered.

Conclusions

In conclusion a passionate appeal is made to all tertiary private university colleges to establish internal quality assurance units to lead and coordinate quality assurance initiatives in their respective institutions. The internal quality assurance units should endeavor to establish internal quality assurance systems that focus on the development of quality culture and put more emphasis on internal quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that there is internal accountability that is enshrined in some definite principles.

Private tertiary institutions already with existing internal quality assurance units should continue to embark on self evaluations on newly developed standards and interventions. Outcomes of their self evaluations should guide them to recognize matters on which reliable evidence could be collected and identify areas where improvements would be needed. There is a need for more transparency to stakeholders. There is marked need also to support and enhance quality assurance units in private universities to initiate and expand cooperation in quality assurance in higher education between private universities to facilitate exchange of information on quality assurance and to develop systems for capacity building in quality assurance of private higher education institutions.

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