



Promoting Quality University Education in Ghana: The Challenges of Mentoring Private Universities

Isaac Owusu-Mensah^{1*}

¹Department of Political Science, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana.

Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed and interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Private universities have become key partners in the provision of higher education in Africa. A remarkable feature of tertiary education in Ghana at the end of the 20th Century was the exponential increase and intense participation of the private sector in the establishment and development of universities. Most private universities in the country (57 of them) operate under the supervision and mentorship of public universities to ensure that the quality of their graduates meets the minimum standard of training set by the National Accreditation Board. This study sought to examine the quality of mentoring provided by the public universities to ensure the development of appropriate human capital in the country. Adopting the Resources Dependency Theory with the development of a model to assess the quality of mentoring relationships, the study concludes that the quality of mentoring offered is poor based on the scale developed, which is comparable to regular academic grading systems in the country.

Keywords: Private; public; universities; mentoring; mentors; mentees.

*Corresponding author: E-mail: iomensah@ug.edu.gh;

1. INTRODUCTION

The independence of African countries required special attention to issues of education in all spheres to train the appropriate high-level human resources to meet the requirement of public and civil service to mitigate the vacuum created by the departure of colonial officials [1]. The private sector contributed to the development of educational systems at the primary and secondary levels. However, the provision of higher education continued to be the responsibility and monopoly of state until the late 1990s. The introduction of new educational reforms instigated the expansion of the frontiers of higher education as a result of the huge numbers of people who demanded higher education, which the public universities could not contain. A remarkable feature of tertiary education in Ghana at the end of the 20th Century was the exponential increase and intense participation of the private sector in the establishment and development of universities. The state did not shirk the responsibility of promoting quality higher education in the country; it defined the parameters and the framework to guide the trajectory of private higher education in the country. A key feature of the private higher education institutions' framework is a ten-year compulsory mentorship by a public university. The objective of the mentorship is to prevent unscrupulous business entities from setting up sub-standard institutions as well as protect the interest of prospective students. While private universities grow across the continent, little research has been conducted regarding the impact of these private institutions on quality of education.

This paper seeks to analyze the accreditation process of tertiary institutions with specific emphasis placed on the quality of education. The central question of the study is?

Are the public universities offering the appropriate mentoring to the private universities? This question will be answered through the following sub-questions.

1. How is quality education monitored and maintained in Ghanaian universities?
2. Is there a perceived difference in the quality of education delivered between private and public universities?
3. Are the teething challenges of mentoring properly addressed?

4. What must the Mentors do to promote higher quality education in Ghana?
5. Are the private universities providing social good or serving private business interest?
6. What is the capacity of the state to regulate these new frontiers of higher education delivery in the country by critically subjecting these institutions to the stringent quality assurance mechanism?

Such examination provides a foundation for the required research on quality education in Africa, Further; It highlights the status of tertiary education practices and realities on the ground and offers recommendations for improving our own standards. This research adds to the growing body of literature on higher education.

2. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

This study is based on the hypothesis that public universities that serve as mentors are supervising, directing and guiding private universities to be chartered while promoting quality higher education in Ghana.

3. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS OF THE STUDY

In determining the quality assurance mechanisms for Ghanaian private universities a concurrent Mixed Method methodology was used to identify perceptions and facts from registrars and administrators from selected public and private universities. The study adopted interviews and questionnaire administration as data collection techniques. Primary data was collected from university administrators in the public and private universities as well as at the National Accreditation Board (NAB). The university administrators of 6 public universities and 27 private universities provided information on mentoring relationship between the public and private universities. Key stakeholders at the NAB provided data on the mentoring and regulatory mechanisms for controlling the provision of university education in the country. A rigorous literature review process pertaining to quality higher education and the NAB's accreditation process was essential in order to gain a thorough understanding of the process and rationale for the accreditation procedure. Such documents and literature review provided the foundation for analyzing data collected, determining results and contextualizing the data within the raging debate on higher education.

4. PRIVATE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

The objective of this section is to discuss the emergence of global private higher education.

The privatization of higher education according to Mok [2] is a response to challenges of globalization. Using China as a case study; he asserts that it is a response to the growing demand of a knowledge-based economy which has led social transformation as a response to rapid global revolution. In spite of the need for higher education to confront global demand, Chang and Hsing [3] argued that a study of higher education indicates that the cost of tuition and attendant factors considerably affects the enrollment into private colleges and universities globally, with a higher impact in America. Carpentier [4] affirms a higher risk of cost-sharing strategy of providing higher education by private equity because of implications of equity and quality, consequently he proposed the acceleration of public funding to support higher education as a result of economic and social benefits. The growth of private universities is increasing globally to meet the needs of huge university entrants who are denied the opportunity to access higher education. However, Levy [5] argues that European response to the global development of Private Higher Education (PHE) is slow and limited, accounting for 12% of the entire higher education. The European community has over the years invested heavily in higher education because of its importance and its unique role in the developmental trajectory consequently the pushing factors of private higher education such as access are absent on the European Continent. Disaggregation of this 12% further shows that private higher education is predominately in the Eastern European countries emerging from communism [5].

In Africa, Munene [6] argued that a dramatic feature of African higher education has been the growth and development of private universities. Setswe [7] in a seminal paper on private higher education in Africa, provides a vivid account of the desperation of parents and the large numbers of university entrants in search of limited places available in public universities. He further argues that the emergence of private universities on the continent has widened access to higher education and improved student experience in spite of the inability of private universities to retain skilled human resources with the increasing cost of higher education [7].

Conversely, Mbanze and Coetzee [8] argue that the development of private universities in Swaziland goes beyond the establishment of an appropriate equilibrium of the demands of school leavers and supply of university opportunities to achieve the objective of retaining the graduates in the Swazi Kingdom.

In Ghana, the genesis of the private sector, led by the religious bodies, towards the development of human resources at the highest echelon of education can be attributed to three main factors:

- (a) Increased demands of tertiary education evolved from the implementation of new educational reforms. The new educational reforms introduced in 1987 shrank the duration of academic years of primary and secondary education, consequently strangulating the self-regulating system of selecting qualified students for university education through the Ordinary Level and Advanced Level system.
- (b) The continuation of private sector led educational delivery at the primary and secondary level and
- (c) Institutionalization of religious values and ideals, which Ghanaian public universities have neglected over the years.

Comparative analysis of the role of religious bodies in the development of private universities in Africa and Asia reveals a positive relationship between dominant religions and their contributions to the development of private universities. For example, [9] contends that the emergence of private universities in Japan was necessitated by renegotiated cultural values and traditions as well as institutionalization of these values led by Buddhist and Shinto believers. In the same manner, in Ghana religious private universities were led by Christians and Moslems as a reflection of dominant religious bodies in the country.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Young and Perrew [10] define mentoring as 'a more experienced person, providing support and guidance to a less experienced person referred to as a *protégé*... both of whom are working together in a mutually agreed-upon relationship. Kram [11] also defines mentoring as "a relationship between an older, more experienced mentor and younger, less experienced protégé for the purpose of helping and developing the

protégé's career" Kram [12] further maintains that mentoring is a process which is dynamic; the range of mentoring functions, experiences and the pattern of relationships may significantly vary with the development of the mentee. For Bozeman and Feeney [13] a key definition in mentoring is the transmission of a form of knowledge, social capital and psychological support related to the work of the mentor and mentee. Young and Perrewé's as well as Kram's definitions established that in mentoring, there is an older and younger partner, a younger partner seeking to acquire some fundamental knowledge and skills from the experienced older partner. In the context of the study, public universities are the older partners while the private universities are the younger partners seeking to absorb essentials of university training and management skills from the public universities.

The Resource Dependence Theory (RDT) espoused by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik [14] is hereby employed to explain the mentoring relationship between public and private universities. Organizations are the main unit of analysis within the theory. The theory argues that organizations depend on critical and important resources from other external organizations within their environment for their survival as well as their proper functioning, resources over which the organizations have limited control. The extent of the availability of the external resources correlates with the operations as well as the development of the organization [14]. The theory helps to explain the behavior of an organization within its environment. Commenting on the contributions of RDT in inter-firm relationships, Casciaro and Piskorski [15] assert that a mere reciprocal dependency relationship between two firms is insufficient to represent power structure in the dyadic. Consequently, RDT ought to establish the distinct effect of mutual dependence and power imbalances within the dyadic [15]. However, Nienhuser (2008) argues that RDT assumptions of the relationship between organizations and their environment, especially the increasing importance of interdependence of organizations cannot not be accepted in entirety. In spite of the imperfections, the theory will help to establish university management resources that the public universities are providing for private universities in the country.

The examination of public-private universities relationship can further be situated in the career theory perspective espoused by Scandura and

Schriesheim [16] who maintain that career progress in terms of performance, salary and promotions define and measure the extent as well as the quality of the mentoring between mentor and protégé. The development of the relationship positively affects the confidence level of the mentee. The same individual mentoring process is comparable with institutional mentoring: quality can be measured in terms of graduates from these institutions, the progress reports of the National Accreditation Board culminating in receipt of academic Charter and performance of private universities in World University Rankings as incentives to these private universities.

6. REGULATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN GHANA

Business entities are established with the fundamental objective of profit maximization. The profit orientation perspective lures businesses to undertake several efficient strategies to meet the requirements of competitive local and global market environments. The consumers are potentially at the peril of products and services sold and delivered by the private enterprises. Consequently the interest of the consumers ought to be protected by the state machinery, hence state regulatory frameworks. The frameworks have culminated in the promulgation of laws and the establishment of regulatory institutions to implement codes, regulations and standards of various sectors and industries of the country such as hospitality, transport, finance, security, education, health and pensions to protect the interest of the vulnerable citizenry because the consequence of noncompliance will be punishment.

Gunningham and Grabsoky [17] maintain that for state institutions to properly regulate the private sector, appropriate techniques and workable structures must be put in place to achieve regulatory purposes. However, Smith [18] argues that regulation must respond to the contemporary demands of the sector; it ought to be flexible, facilitative and effective, and provide an appropriate mechanism for accountability. For Nonet and Selznick [19], the legitimacy and importance of regulatory institutions is determined by effectiveness in achieving its objectives.

Stigler [20] examined the benefits of regulation to firms and society. He recognized that regulation can foster the achievement of social benefits,

stimulate competitions, control markets, and shore organizational efficiency [20]. In spite of the importance of regulations to citizens and country, Jogn and Wittenloostuijn [21] argue that regulations can also obstruct entrepreneurial activities, innovative power as well as dynamic adaptation of private firm performance through regulatory cost, regulatory inconsistency and regulation change.

William [22] outlined the significance of the introduction of regulatory mechanisms in higher education. According to him, to establish the appropriate equilibrium amidst the rising cost of meeting social demands of higher education, economic efficiency and the desire to use market competition as catalyst for innovation and adaptation in higher education it is imperative that regulatory mechanism are introduced. Dill [23] identifies three critical junctures for public policy intervention in higher education: first, the conduct of consumers and suppliers, especially in pricing of academic programmes, research, services and inter-institutional cooperation and collusion; second, the structure of the market, that is the extent of differentiation of competitors' academic programmes, presence and absence of barriers to entry and exit, and new competitors; third, the general legal framework within which the higher education operates. Volkwein and Malik [24] caution that unnecessary regulatory activity may be unproductive and wasteful, thereby curtailing managerial job satisfaction and eventually lowering organizational productivity and adaptation. Lemaitre and Kells [25] report that beyond the external regulatory mechanism, public and private universities are developing a culture of self-regulation through the institutionalization of peer visitors, student's evaluations, audits and advisory training efforts to contribute to quality of university education on their accord.

Dill (2001) proposes three main critical questions required in the development of a national higher education policy regulatory framework to guide emerging private higher education sector. This framework is to ensure that a national education regulatory institution works within appropriate mechanism of global standard.

- a. What are the critical dimensions of managerial control that need to be delegated to the university level?
- b. What new mechanism of accountability may be necessary in assuring public interest of the university?

- c. To what extent are the public policies designed to ensure that appropriate transitory corporate management systems are put in place in the university?

A globally appropriate legal framework in a jurisdiction regulates the establishment of private educational systems. This also permeates the international system; consequently, the acceptance into membership of international educational organizations is based on the legal status of the institution in the respective country. For example, the International Association of Universities and Association of African Universities membership criteria require applicants to be legally recognized by the government authority of higher education in their respective countries [26].

In Ghana, the provision of quality higher education has been a key ingredient in the development of education since independence. The 1961 Education Act outlines the guiding principles regulating tertiary education and explicitly states, 'No person shall establish a private institution without prior approval of the Minister of Education [27]' Subsequently, quality assurance is a highly important factor in ensuring that tertiary institutions are adequately equipped to ensure proper standards of education to train generations of potential leaders. In 1993, the Government of Ghana, through a Legislative Instrument and later the National Accreditation Board Act, 2007, Act 744, established the National Accreditation Board (NAB), with the mandate to regulate the accreditation of tertiary education in the country. The Act 744 2(1) stipulates that "the Board is responsible for the accreditation of both public and private institutions as regards to the contents and standard of the programmes" [28].

With the inception of NAB in 1994, the Board has provided higher education regulatory services for public and private institutions in the country. The greater regulatory efforts were channeled towards the accreditation of private universities. The accreditation process is rigorous and arduous. The standard accreditation procedure involves the following: an application is made for a name of institution, the legal status of the institution is established through the Registrar-General's Department, a team of experts are dispatched to applicant to assess the basic provisions and ability to meet NAB regulations required to run the proposed academic

programmes (NAB, 2012)¹. Accreditation is based on the recommendations from the team of experts to the NAB. The team of experts comprises educationists and subject based professionals whose recommendations are expected to be impartial and impeccable in the determination of the status of the applicant.

A prospective private university must be prepared to serve as mentee for a minimum period of ten years on terms and conditions determined by the NAB and the selected mentoring university. A mentoring university must be a chartered institution legally registered with the qualification to award certificates, diplomas and degrees in its home country. The mentor university must also have the appropriate faculties and departments; academic and administrative staff responding to the proposed programmes of the private university. The NAB reviews the operations and maintenance of affiliated institutions to ensure they meet the required levels of academic and professional standards set out for private universities. NAB has set out guidelines to facilitate an appropriate relationship between the mentoring and mentored institution.

The mentoring universities are each expected to appoint coordinator at a rank of a Senior Lecturer. The coordinator is expected to communicate all university management best practices to the mentee. These include: requirements of admissions of students, appointments and promotions of staff and examiners. The mentors are required to regularly send teams of assessors to ensure that the mentees are implementing the appropriate university management practices. The mentors are further expected to deliver annual reports on the mentees to NAB at the end of every academic year. The mentor must also be prepared to absorb the students of the mentee in the event of the closure of the Mentee University or revocation of status.

The Mentee Universities are expected to comply with the requirements of all spheres set out by the Mentoring University. They are required to seek permission and approval of proposed changes to be made in the academic requirements and curricula. The mentoring university ought to approve names and qualifications of external examiners before

appointments are made. Mentee universities are required to submit an annual report to NAB in accordance with questionnaires submitted by NAB [29]. These guidelines are to be strictly followed by the mentors and mentees to harmonize the university management processes in the interest of quality higher education as well as to protect prospective students of private universities.

7. DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

The study assessed the mentoring responsibilities of the six public universities- University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast, University of Education, Winneba, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Wales and Akrofi Christaller alongside 27 private universities², which are under their mentoring. The study evaluated the functions under five thematic areas that are considered as predictor variables in appropriate university management.

7.1 Quality of Admission

Selection of candidates into various higher education programmes in the country has been based on results of objective examinations conducted by an independent West Africa Examination Council (WAEC). The NAB, based on the WAEC results, has set the minimum requirement for entry into any tertiary education programme; that is, passes in English, Mathematics and either Science or Social Studies for humanities and science students respectively to ensure that students of higher education possess the rudiments of statistics, human behavior as well as the ability to communicate in English. Markert and Monke [30] have challenged using such measures and variables in predicting knowledge, personal development and skills of university entrants. Corroborating this position, Abedi [31], in a study of graduate students' academic performance in United States of America, argued that there is no correlation between undergraduates' GPA with GRE results and graduate students' performance. Contesting this perspective, Pope and Kline (1999) maintain that undergraduate GPA and GRE scores continue to be the important and objective mechanisms for graduate admission.

¹ Interview conducted with Mr. Duku, Programme Officer of NAB, on 15th October 2013 at the offices of NAB.

² See attached appendix for the full list of private universities interviewed.

Mr. Duku of NAB contends that the results from the WAEC have served and continue to serve as the only objective basis for selection into higher education programmes in Ghana because various second cycle institutions have different academic standards³. The Mentoring Universities are expected to set the admission requirements into various programmes of their Mentee Universities as well as ensure that these requirements are strictly followed. Mentors are also expected to participate in the admission board meetings of their mentees when they are admitting students. The study sought to examine the extent to which mentoring university determined the appropriate rigorous processes and standard for ensuring that mentees abide by the minimum national admission standards set-up by the NAB.

7.2 Quality of Academic Delivery

Quality Assurance experts have identified three main types of quality: quality as a measure of value for money, quality as fit for purpose and quality as transforming. In measuring quality of academic delivery, Harvey and Green [32] identified quality as fit for purpose and quality as transforming as key ingredients. For quality as it fits the purpose of the institution or the university, it ought to ensure that students effectively learn to ascertain the appropriate standard of the institutions and quality to transform students' perspectives of the world as well as their ability to apply the knowledge acquired in providing solutions to real world problems.

As a requirement for mentoring private universities, mentor universities are expected to have active accreditation (lecturers and facilities) in the specific programmes to ensure capacity and ability to monitor mentees. The mentors are required to assess the nature of academic delivery of mentees to ascertain the quality of training offered to students as well as the level of exposure required of the course. For example the number of laboratory practical lessons, field trips, hospital clinical visits, just to mention a few per semester per student per course which is relevant to determine the extent and content of training provided. The mentoring universities further have a duty to monitor the academic delivery of lecturers of mentees by unannounced auditing of lectures to measure the quality and

extent of interactions, lecturer-student ratio as well the content of lectures in comparison with the mentor university. The contents of library facilities –online and offline resources available and accessible to students are critical to ascertain the quality of academic delivery.

7.3 Quality of Examinations

The certificates awarded by the mentee universities are in the name of the mentoring university with an inscription indicating the Mentee University as the location of lectures attended by the candidate. Consequently, the Mentoring Universities are required to implement the same examination requirements with grading systems comparable to their standards. Stressing the importance of supervision of examinations conducted by a subsidiary body, Donovan et al. [33] reports of three functions: normative function of monitoring and assessing competence of supervisee, formative function of educating and guiding supervisee and restorative function of supporting and promoting professional well-being of the supervisee. The NAB requires that names, qualifications and expertise of external examiners be approved by the Mentoring Universities before appointments are made. Subsequently, mentors are expected to vet the interim assessment and main examinations with the appropriate marking schemes as well as the marked examination scripts. Also, the mentoring universities are required to participate in the examinations and academic boards meetings to determine awards of degrees as well as examinations related issues.

7.4 Quality of Staff

Coaldrake and Stedman [34] have recounted over the years the significance in improvement in teaching and greater accountability in higher education as a global concern for educationists. In response to this critical component of higher education Ballantyne et al. [35] have stressed the efforts made by universities and governments to institute appropriate policies and measures designed to improve the quality of teaching staff as well as the methodology of delivering academic knowledge. In Ghana, the NAB has also designed policies and practices to promote the quality of staff of higher education. The NAB has set the minimum academic and professional standards for recruiting academic and administration staff of the universities, for example the entry point for academic staff is the

³Proceedings of interviews with Mr. Duku, a Programme Officer of NAB on 15th October 2013 at the offices of NAB.

Doctorate Degree. These standards are to be implemented by the mentee universities under direct supervision of the mentoring universities. The mentoring universities are required to participate in appointments board meetings to recruit new staff as well as to confirm evaluated promotion applications. The study also sought to assess the extent to which the mentees meet the national requirements.

7.5 Efficient University Administration

The study evaluated the contributions of mentoring universities to efficient university management in mentee universities. The study sought to establish capacity of training opportunities provided, as well as supporting the mentee to set-up appropriate accounting, information and auditing management systems of the new universities. The University management systems such as types of committees, compositions, modus operandi- functions, limitations, reporting and control systems are very imperative to efficient management of any higher education establishment. The use and management of information communication infrastructure for admissions, management of students' academic records as well as for teaching is very important. These elements constituted the basis of assessment of the relationships.

$$Y = \frac{(Q_{adm} + Q_{ac del} + Q_{exm} + Q_{staff} + Q_{unv adm})}{8}$$

for $0 \leq Y \leq 2.9$; Y is Fail
for $3 \leq Y \leq 5.95$; Y is Bad
for $6 \leq Y \leq 8.95$; Y is Good
for $9 \leq Y \leq 10$; Y is Excellent

From the table of results;

$$Y = \frac{(Q_{adm} + Q_{ac del} + Q_{exm} + Q_{staff} + Q_{unv adm})}{8}$$

$$Y = \frac{(6.16 + 5.10 + 15.05 + 8.90 + 6.92)}{8} = 5.27 = \text{Bad}$$

The national average figure of 5.27 with interpretation of bad shows the quality of mentoring relationships that operate in the country and consequently the quality of higher education delivery. The mentoring relationships in some universities may qualify as dysfunctional mentoring because the public universities have abandoned their responsibility of nurturing the private universities. For example, as a result of

poor supervision from University of Education, Winneba, its mentee, Ideas University was closed down for poor university management practices. Furthermore, NAB in 2012 directed Methodist University College to withdraw 1400 students from the university because the said students did not possess the requisite minimum national entry requirements for admission into a tertiary institution. This development ensued because the Mentoring University (University of Ghana) failed to properly supervise the admission process of the Mentee University. Furthermore, students of Pentecost University College who had completed a four-year training leading to an award of Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies sued the University in 2014 because they could not receive their certificates on the basis that the programme had not received the requisite accreditation from NAB and the academic board of University of Ghana. This is another clear case of negligence of mentoring responsibility by University of Ghana.

7.6 Testing of Hypothesis

The hypothesis of the study is hereby rejected. The public universities assigned with the responsibility of supervising private universities have underperformed the task as expected by the NAB. The rejection of the hypothesis is in line with an appeal made by the Principal of Methodist University Collage, Prof. Samuel Adjepong that "Public Universities should see affiliations with private universities as an academic duty to contribute to higher education in Ghana but not an avenue for internally generated comes.⁴" The assertion by Prof. Adjepong attests to the affiliation fee structures and quality of mentoring received by the private universities.

Applying the Resource Dependence Theory (RDT), with the central thesis - an organization that relies on critical and important resources from other organizations determines its progress and growth of the organization. The mentee universities need critical university management resources that ought to be provided by the mentoring university that will enable the mentees to acquire chartered status as well as improve the quality of private university education in the country. The mentors have not provided these critical resources for their mentees.

⁴ Speech delivered by Prof. Samuel Adjepong, Principal of Methodist University Collage at the 12th Annual Graduation on 31st January 2015, at the Methodist University Campus.

Table 1. Mentors' average performance is as follows

| MENTORS | Quality of admission | Quality of academic delivery | Quality of exams | Quality of staff | Quality of university administration |
|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| UG | 6.83 | 4.83 | 14.83 | 12.83 | 8.67 |
| KNUST | 7.75 | 5 | 14.25 | 8.25 | 5.75 |
| CAPE COAST | 5.86 | 5.29 | 16.71 | 11.29 | 5.57 |
| WINNEBA | 8.5 | 5.5 | 16.5 | 8 | 9.5 |
| WALES | 0 | 5 | 20 | 10 | 11 |
| AKROFI | 8 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 1 |
| AVERAGE | 6.16 | 5.10 | 15.05 | 8.90 | 6.92 |

Performance model of mentors in the five thematic areas

Source: Field data collected

Based on the average mentors performance as shown in table 1. The table 1 further depicts a global average performance of all the mentoring universities as poor with the exception quality of examination. A key factor that accounts for inefficient mentoring is overtrading on the part of mentoring universities. The mentor universities have accepted more mentees than they could possibly manage and supervise competently. Consequently the average resources, defined as academic supervisors and time dedicated to each mentee has diminished over the years to the detriment of the mentees.

The findings complement the perspective of Keating et al. [36] that the effectiveness of mentoring is dependent, amongst other variables, on the intensity of contact between the mentors and mentees. Frequent and consistent interactions provide opportunity to know, highlight and assess the challenges of mentees which can be addressed with the requisite alacrity.

A second factor, which requires attention of mentoring universities, is the passion to commit enough resources to the mentorship programme. A Mentee University complained: "we have to foot the bills of supervisors sent here to monitor our programmes although we have paid our affiliation fees in full.⁵" Consequently, the supervisors (academic and administrative staff) sent to audit the performance of mentees are compromised to depend on mentees for their sustenance. The process queries the ability of the supervisors to act independently in the interest of improving the quality of the mentorship. The table 2 below indicates mentors

and their respective numbers of mentees. A university to mentor more than 20 private universities in addition to regular core responsibilities is a huge challenge.

Table 2. Public Universities and Mentee Universities

| Mentor | Number of Mentees |
|--|--------------------------|
| Kwame Nkrumah Univ. Science and Technology | 34 |
| University of Cape Coast | 25 |
| University of Ghana | 22 |

Source: Data collected from the field

Multiple mentorship by a single institution is another problem of higher education in Ghana. The NAB regulations and rules on private higher education permit accredited institutions to engage other programme specific mentors to boost the number of programmes offered, especially where the primary mentor is unwilling to allow the Mentee University to introduce more programmes or lacks the capacity to supervise the mentee. According to NAB, multiple mentoring creates problems of inefficiencies and vacuum of responsibility on the part of the mentors because each mentor expects the other will undertake the responsibility but no mentor ends up performing the task⁶. It is also improper for students to attend the same university but to earn different certificates from different universities because of multiple affiliations.

The table 3 below indicates mentees and their respective numbers of mentors. These Mentees have three mentors each consequently, the

⁵Extracts from interviews with Catholic University at Fiapre 20th on October 2013 at the offices of the Registrar.

⁶Proceedings of interviews with Mr. Duku, a Programme Officer of NAB on 15th October 2013 at the offices of NAB.

mentors fails to fully apply the roles of mentorship with expectation other universities may assume that responsibility.

Table 3. Private Universities and Mentors

| Mentees | Number of mentors |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Pentecost University College | 3 |
| Methodist University College | 3 |
| Central University College | 3 |
| Wisconsin University College | 3 |

Source: Data collected from field

8. CONCLUSION

The study has established that the NAB basis that is appropriate supervision and mentoring of granting authorization to the corporate and religious bodies to establish private universities has not been successful as expected. The Public Universities entrusted with the responsibility to supervise and mentor private universities are yet to meet their targets. A number of factors account for this failure including overtrading, multiple mentorship as well as lack of commitment to invest in the mentoring programmes.

It is important that NAB and Mentoring Universities work assiduously to improve the quality of mentoring by each partner fulfilling the contractual obligation in the mentorship agreement. This will improve the higher education delivery in the country to the benefit of students, industry as well as the public universities, because mentorship provides sturdier prospects to train quality graduates this will enable private university to serve as credible alternative to the public universities rather than substitute to public universities. NAB must have the capacity to withdraw the mentorship rights of any public university which fails to meet the basic requirements of mentorship.

Series of training and retraining programmes ought to be instituted by Mentoring Universities as a requirement of NAB. The University of Ghana has commenced such training workshops for its Mentee Universities to provide quality management skills that are required in university administration. This step is laudable and ought to be embraced by all mentors in higher education, although its efficacy is yet to be established in terms of quality of participants as well as application of the knowledge acquired from the training session.

Private Universities have become an integral part of higher education in Ghana. The state through NAB has a mandate to guarantee a proper regulatory mechanism and responsibilities that are implemented in line with best practices to improve the quality of higher education. This will guarantee proper development of human capital for industry and academia in the era of competitive in the global labour market.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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APPENDIX
List of universities interviewed

Data on the mentoring of private universities in Ghana

| Mentor University | Mentee University(s) | Thematic Areas | | | | | Total | Total average | Percentage (%) | Percentage average |
|---|---|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|
| | | Quality of admission | Quality of academic delivery | Examination | Quality of staff | University administration | | | | |
| University of Ghana (UG) | Pentecost University College | 5 | 0 | 10 | 14 | 6 | 35 | 7.00 | 38.89 | 7.78 |
| | Methodist University College | 5 | 0 | 15 | 20 | 4 | 44 | 8.80 | 48.89 | 9.78 |
| | KNUSTFORD | 10 | 9 | 20 | 14 | 7 | 60 | 12.00 | 66.67 | 13.33 |
| | Islamic University College | 5 | 5 | 15 | 0 | 5 | 30 | 6.00 | 33.33 | 6.67 |
| | Wisconsin* | 10 | 9 | 27 | 20 | 18 | 84 | 16.80 | 93.33 | 18.67 |
| | Catholic Institute of Business & Technology | 6 | 6 | 12 | 9 | 12 | 45 | 9.00 | 50.00 | 10.00 |
| AVERAGES | | 6.83 | 4.83 | 16.50 | 12.83 | 8.67 | 49.67 | | 55.19 | |
| Kwame Nkrumah Univ. of Science & Technology (KNUST) | Datalink University College | 10 | 5 | 20 | 2 | 1 | 38 | 7.60 | 42.22 | 8.44 |
| | Regent University College | 8 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 29 | 5.80 | 32.22 | 6.44 |
| | GTNC | 10 | 5 | 20 | 5 | 6 | 46 | 9.20 | 51.11 | 10.22 |
| | KNUSTFORD University College | 4 | 0 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 21 | 4.20 | 23.33 | 4.67 |
| | KAAF University College | 8 | 6 | 16 | 13 | 9 | 42 | 8.40 | 46.67 | 9.33 |
| | Garden City University College | 6 | 7 | 10 | 8 | 3 | 34 | 6.80 | 37.78 | 7.56 |
| | Spiritan University College | 10 | 10 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 80 | 16.00 | 88.89 | 17.78 |
| | Christ Apostolic University College | 6 | 0 | 12 | 9 | 1 | 28 | 5.60 | 31.11 | 6.22 |
| AVERAGES | | 7.75 | 5.00 | 14.25 | 8.25 | 5.75 | 39.75 | | 44.17 | |
| University of Cape Coast | Ghana Baptist University College | 8 | 7 | 20 | 17 | 9 | 61 | 12.20 | 67.78 | 13.56 |
| | Wisconsin | 8 | 9 | 27 | 20 | 14 | 78 | 15.60 | 86.67 | 17.33 |
| | West End University College | 2 | 6 | 12 | 8 | 6 | 34 | 6.80 | 37.78 | 7.56 |
| | Meridian University College | 0 | 0 | 20 | 10 | 3 | 33 | 6.60 | 36.67 | 7.33 |
| | Zenith University College | 8 | 8 | 16 | 16 | 5 | 53 | 10.60 | 58.89 | 11.78 |
| | Asheshi University College | 5 | 0 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 22 | 4.40 | 24.44 | 4.89 |
| | Entrepreneurial Training Institute | 10 | 7 | 15 | 8 | 2 | 42 | 8.40 | 46.67 | 9.33 |
| AVERAGES | | 5.86 | 5.29 | 18.14 | 11.29 | 5.57 | 46.14 | | 51.27 | |

| Mentor University | Mentee University(s) | Thematic Areas | | | | | Total | Total average | Percentage (%) | Percentage average |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|
| | | Quality of admission | Quality of academic delivery | Examination | Quality of staff | University administration | | | | |
| University of Education Winneba | Advance Business College | 10 | 0 | 20 | 5 | 16 | 51 | 10.20 | 56.67 | 11.33 |
| | Bluecrest University College | 4 | 2 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 19 | 3.80 | 21.11 | 4.22 |
| | Jayee University College | 10 | 10 | 18 | 10 | 8 | 56 | 11.20 | 62.22 | 12.44 |
| | UCOMS | 10 | 10 | 20 | 15 | 11 | 66 | 13.20 | 73.33 | 14.67 |
| AVERAGES | | 8.50 | 5.50 | 16.50 | 8.00 | 9.50 | 48.00 | | 53.33 | |
| University of Wales | Ghana Christian University College | 0 | 5 | 20 | 10 | 11 | 46 | 9.20 | 51.11 | 10.22 |
| | AVERAGES | 0.00 | 5.00 | 20.00 | 10.00 | 11.00 | 46.00 | | 51.11 | |
| AkrofiChristaller | Good News Theological College | 8 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 25 | 5.00 | 27.78 | 5.56 |
| | AVERAGES | 8.00 | 5.00 | 8.00 | 3.00 | 1.00 | 25.00 | | 27.78 | |
| INDICATORS* | | 10 | 10 | 20 | 20 | 20 | | | | |

*Represents total number of expected responses for each thematic area, Calculations, 18 questions *5 (years) =90, Therefore Total /90 *100% = Percentage

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