TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING PROGRAMMATIC QUALITY IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN TANZANIA

Fulgence John Matimbo

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Department of Curriculum Studies

Faculty of Education

Stellenbosch University

Promoter: Prof. Eli M. Bitzer

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DECLARATION

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i

ABSTRACT

The context of this study is the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) – German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) pilot project on enhancing quality assurance in higher education in East Africa. The purpose was to explore institutional internal quality assurance processes which resulted from participation in the project and critically analyse the use and application of the concept of 'quality' in private universities in Tanzania. In doing so, the study sought to understand how private universities in Tanzania interpret and apply the quality concept in programme evaluation. In order to answer this question, the study examined the literature on quality assurance in higher education and proposed a simple conceptual framework for a better understanding of self-evaluation of undergraduate programmes in private universities in Tanzania. The framework is based on a judgement that an improved understanding of how private universities in Tanzania interpret and apply the quality concept in programme self-evaluation depends on an understanding of the contexts in which these institutions operate. It is argued that programme self-evaluation is a complex multi-faceted process requiring a pluralistic research design. This was attempted in the study by employing a range of research methods from within an interpretative research paradigm and using a multiple case study design. The study analysed data from documents, interviews and used a Delphi exercise to reach levels of consensus. The study is therefore classified as exploratory and explanatory. It sought to explore the perceptions of quality held by key practitioners and how these perceptions influenced the process of programme self-evaluation. It also sought to explain how context influenced the process of programme self-evaluation.

Findings from the study revealed varied perceptions of 'quality' in Tanzanian private higher education. These perceptions have a bearing on implementation of programme quality assurance. The findings of the study also showed that the IUCEA did attempt to work communicatively with the higher education community and that it was, in part, due to its consultative effort that private universities restructured themselves by establishing quality assurance units. However, the study also revealed that the adoption of the regional approach to programme self-evaluation was done at the expense of internal institutional quality assurance systems leading to compliance culture. The findings of the study suggest that understanding and

operationalisation of the quality concept should not ignore the fact that private universities in Tanzania are facing common as well as distinctive challenges. On the one hand, this study has identified lack of financial resources and poor leadership as among the major of such challenges. On the other hand, the study suggests that bureaucratic power is an important dimension in understanding the dynamics of programme self-evaluation. From its findings and conclusions the study has narrowed the knowledge gap which existed before as little was known about how undergraduate programme quality in private universities were interpreted and applied in Tanzania. The study may contribute to make difference in improving such an understanding and importantly contribute to future programme self-evaluation efforts in Tanzania.

ABSTRAK

Hierdie studie handel oor die Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) – German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) loodsprojek met die oog op die verbetering van gehalte in hoër onderwys in Oos-Afrika. Die doel was om 'n aantal privaat hoëronderwysinstellings se interne gehalte versekeringsprosesse te ondersoek en om die gebruik en toepassing van die konsep "gehalte" in privaat universiteite in Tanzanië krities te ontleed Die navorser het ondersoek ingestel na hoe privaat universteite in Tanzanië die konsep 'gehalte' in die evaluering van voorgraadse programme toepas. Om hierdie vraag te beantwoord het die navorser die literatuur oor gehalteversekering in hoër onderwys ondersoek en 'n konseptuele raamwerk vir die begrip van die selfevaluering van voorgraadse programme aan privaat universiteite in Tanzanië voorgestel. Hierdie raamwerk is gebaseer op die aanname dat 'n beter begrip van hoe privaat universiteite in Tanzanië die konsep 'gehalte' in programevaluering   interpreteer en toepas, afhang van die konteks waarbinne hierdie instansies opereer. Daar is vasgestel dat die self-evaluering van programme 'n komplekse proses met vele fasette is en dat 'n veelvoudige navorsingsontwerp benodig word. Daarom het die navorser gebruik gemaak van 'n veelgeval navorsingsontwerp en verskillende metodes binne 'n interpretatiewe navorsingsparadigma benut ten einde kwalitatiewe data te genereer. Data verkry vanaf dokumente, onderhoude en die gebruik van 'n Delphi oefening is ontleed om konsensus oor bepaalde gehalte-aspekte bereik. Hierdie studie is dus ondersoekend en ook beskrywend deurdat dit persepsies van gehalte en hoe hierdie persepsies die proses van program self-evaluasie beïnvloed, ondersoek het. Daar is ook gepoog om te verduidelik hoe konteks die proses van program self-evaluering beïnvloed.

Die studie het bevind dat verskillende persepsies van gehalte aan hoëronderwysinstellings in Tanzanië bestaan. Hierdie persepsies beïnvloed die toepassing van gehalteversekering. Daar is ook bevind dat die IUCEA wel probeer het om met die hoëronderwysgemeenskap te kommunikeer en dat hierdie konsultasie daartoe gelei het dat privaat universiteite gehalte versekeringseenhede gevestig het. Die aanvaarding van 'n streeksbenadering tot die self-evaluering van programme was ten koste van interne gehalte versekeringsprogramme en het gelei tot die ontstaan van 'n kultuur van inskiklikheid. Daar is bevind dat indien daar gepraat word oor die verstaan van die gehalte konsep en die lewensvatbaarheid

daarvan, die feit dat privaat universiteite in Tanzanië algemene asook unieke uitdagings beleef, nie uit die oog verloor kan word nie. Die studie het bevind dat gebrek aan fondse en goeie leierskap belangrike uitdagings is. Aan die ander kant speel die burokrasie ook 'n rol in die dinamiek van die self-evaluering van universiteitsprogramme. Die bevindinge van die studie kan bydra tot kennis van die onderwerp, aangesien daar voorheen min aandag geskenk is aan hoe die gehalte van voorgraadse programme aan privaat universiteite in Tanzanië geïnterpreteer en toegepas is. Hierdie bevindinge kan bydra tot toekomstige pogings om self-evaluering in privaat universiteite in Tanzanië beter toe te pas.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Last, but equally important, I want to express my sincere appreciations to Mr Zaharan Hussein Mgina whose technical assistance made it possible for me to meet the submission deadline.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Joyce se-Mvande, my daughter Upendo and my son Baraka who constantly prayed for me to successfully accomplish this undertaking.

TABLE OF CONTENT

ACRONYMS

AAU	Association of African Universities
ACUQA	African Catholic Universities Quality Assurance
CAS	Central Admission System
CSAC	Chairperson of Self-assessment Committee
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
DIES	Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies
DVCA	Deputy Vice Chancellor-Academic
EAC	East African Community
EU	European Union
FD	Faculty Dean
HRK	German Rectors' Conference
HELSB	Higher Education Students' Loans Board
HoD	Head of Department
IUCEA	Inter-University Council for East Africa
MSAC	Member of Self-assessment Committee
NACTE	National Council for Technical Education
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
PSE	Programme Self-Evaluation
QAC	Quality Assurance Coordinator
TCU	Tanzania Commission for Universities
TQM	Total Quality Management
UDSM	University of Dar es Salaam
UK	United Kingdom
UQF	University Qualifications Framework
USA	United States of America
URT	United Republic of Tanzania

| VC | Vice Chancellor |
| ZIMCHE | Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education |

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and background to the study

Concern about quality and standards in higher education is a relatively new phenomenon. In the United Kingdom (UK), for example, until the mid-1980s, debate on quality and standards was internal to the higher education system (Green, 1994; Loder, 1990; Moodie, 1986; Stubbs, 1994). The UK is not unique, because in Africa concern about the same issue is also mounting (Babalola, Adedeji& Erwat, 2007; Green, 1994; Materu, 2007).

However, 'quality' is a philosophical concept of which definitions vary in relation to perspectives of the individual and society. In higher education, this complexity is intensified by the fact that there are many stakeholders in higher education (Harvey &Knight, 1996; Masembe & Nakabugo, 2004; Materu, 2007; Seymour, 1993; Tang &Wu, 2010). In addition, most higher education institutions have broad autonomy to decide on their own futures.

In 2007 the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) in collaboration with the German Academic Exchange Services (DAAD), the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), the Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES) and the University of Oldenburg developed a pilot project on enhancing quality assurance in higher education in East Africa.

The main objective of the project was to develop a regional quality assurance framework in East Africa, which involved making the main stakeholders aware of the need for a systematic effort to assess and improve higher education. This included capacity building at the level of regulatory agencies.

This objective was addressed through a number of activities. It involved participation of vice-chancellors and other relevant stakeholders in study visits to Europe, the development of a handbook on quality assurance in higher education, a number of training seminars addressed to external reviewers and academic staff from higher education institutions and pragmatic self-assessment of a number of programmes.

These activities were followed by external reviews in two cohorts. In Tanzania external reviews begun with seven universities in the first cohort, followed by a review of eight other universities in the second. Of the 15 higher education institutions from Tanzania that participated in the project, 10 were public and 5 private. However, one private university withdrew from the project while at its final stages in the second cohort. Each of these institutions undertook self-evaluation in one selected undergraduate study programme from the following list: general science, medicine, business studies, agriculture, education, and information and communication technology.

The self-evaluation of each programme was followed by an external peer review. The main purpose of the external assessment was to assist universities and their academic departments to improve the quality of their programmes by offering a critical view of state-of-the-art programmes and the quality of those programmes. This included mechanisms for continuous improvement in the sustainability and development of programmes.

In 2008 I had the opportunity to serve as secretary to two international peer review teams that visited 10 universities in East Africa, five of which are based in Tanzania. One of the prime questions that emerged from my involvement in the IUCEA-DAAD programme evaluation project was the use and application of the concept of quality in private universities in Tanzania. What seemed clear was the variance in the understanding and use of the term, which implied different ways of justifying and promoting quality at the programme level. Since the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project was initiated without having a common understanding of the concept of 'quality' in higher education in East Africa, questions such as the following emerged:

- How do the authors of self-assessment reports perceive 'programme quality' in higher education institutions?
- How does the programme quality as promoted by the IUCEA concur or differ from those perceptions?
- How are perceptions of quality enacted in programme design and delivery?

In March 2011 an external team comprising of three experts (from Mozambique, Germany and Latin America) was assigned to evaluate the IUCEA-DAAD project.

The team observed that the programme evaluation project was successful in making the notion of quality assurance valued and accepted (Lemaitre, Martos & Teichler, 2011). However, and this has constituted the main research problem addressed in this study, it was unclear as to whether programme evaluation in private higher education institutions had similar effects regarding the concept of 'quality'.

1.2 Purpose of the study and research questions

The IUCEA-DAAD project described in Section 1.1was undertaken with the expectation that upon its completion, national regulatory agencies would facilitate spreading in universities the good practices learnt. It is in this light that this study was carried out so as to explore institutional internal quality assurance processes that resulted from participation in the IUCEA-DAAD project and to critically analyse the use and application of the concept of quality in private universities in Tanzania. The underlying assumption is that different understandings and uses of the quality concept imply different ways of justifying and promoting it at the undergraduate programme level in private universities in Tanzania. This knowledge may contribute to a better understanding of the unique contexts of private universities when pursuing quality assurance initiatives in the country. The study was undertaken in recognition that private universities in Tanzania have distinctive missions, offer varying programmes and enrol different types of students.

Against this background the main research question for this study was formulated as follows:

How do private universities in Tanzania interpret and apply the quality concept in programme evaluation?

This question was informed by the following sub-questions:

(i) How do the authors of the self-assessment reports at five private Tanzanian universities perceive programme quality in higher education?

(ii) How do self-assessors' perceptions of programme quality compare to views of programme quality in the IUCEA-DAAD pilot project?

(iii)   How can the concept of programme quality be better understood in the Tanzanian private university context?

In Chapter 2 broad definitions of the key concepts are presented. The purpose is to provide the reader with an understanding of key concepts that are relevant to this study. The concepts are organised to provide focus, a rationale and a tool for the integration and interpretation of information. Three concepts are broadly defined in this chapter. These are 'quality', 'undergraduate programme' and 'university'. Apart from providing broad definitions, the concepts of quality and university have been approached from a historical perspective as well. As Stefan (2010) noted, this presents three advantages: (a) it allows the possibility to identify those forces that have always shaped the process of education, (b) one need not re-invent the wheel; knowledge of ideas launched in the past puts the outputs of present thinkers in perspective and may confer a different colour to their theories, and (c) discerning the course of history may suggest the course of the future.

Information provided in chapters1 and 2 is complemented by Chapter 3, which places the study in its larger setting. The information provided in this chapter is crucial, because a proper understanding of programmatic quality in private universities in Tanzania requires a clear understanding of the local, regional and international contexts in which these universities operate. The aim of Chapter 3 is therefore to give a general overview of the contexts in which private universities in Tanzania operate. Further, the chapter explores the international as well as the national contexts of private universities. The information presented in this section is important for understanding the commonalities and disparities brought by local contextual factors.

1.3 Literature review

Based on the purpose of the study I conducted literature review for four reasons. First, I wanted to read broadly and understand deeply the important works which were related to what I was investigating. The second reason is to provide a theory base by identifying how the current study relates to the major theories that underpin it. This was done in order to give the reader the big picture. In pursuing this I explored literature on perceptions of quality, private/public debate, reasons for

4

establishment of private universities, as well as on accountability and improvement debate. These provide explanations to understand the area under investigation namely the dynamics of undergraduate self-evaluation in private universities in Tanzania.   Research is a collective, cumulative enterprise with the ultimate goal of expansion of knowledge. It is in this light that I had the third reason, of locating my work in the context of what is already known about the topic. The aim here is to show the reader how my work fits within what has already been done before. By discussing the works which relate to what I have done, and focusing on the ones which closely relate to my work, I expect to make this study clear to the readers. In other words, I took literature review as a process of situating what I wanted to study within a larger framework of information and ideas in essence, explaining how the empirical work at hand informs unresolved questions in literature.   The last reason is to inform research design and methodology. Apart from the intellectual benefits described above, knowing the literature has methodological benefit. Because this study explores the complex interconnection between perceptions of 'quality' and its application in undergraduate self-evaluation, it was necessary to use a methodology that emphasises the experience of the key practitioners. This was done in order to establish how these actors define their situations and explain the motives which govern their actions. In this regard, a conceptual framework was developed based on the literature review and assisted me to respond to issues such as the kind of questions to be asked. This is because, from the conceptual framework I learnt about the key constructs that were to be studied.

1.4 Research design and methodology

The study's research question provided for an interpretive approach using a multiple case study design. In interpretive research the social context is important, because the meaning of a social action, event or statement depends on the context in which it appears (Gall, Borg &Gall, 1996; Henning, Van Rensburg &Smit, 2004; Maree, 2007; Yin, 2009).

The study comprised a multiple case study design involving five private universities in Tanzania and the IUCEA, which is based in Kampala, Uganda. However, as national regulatory agencies were given the responsibility of ensuring that the good practices learnt are spread countrywide, the inclusion of the state regulatory agency

5

in this study was inevitable. This is because the provision of university education in Tanzania is governed by laws that are country-specific. Therefore, the study compared the practices both horizontally (among the five institutions) and vertically; that is, between the institutions and the IUCEA-DAAD programme quality project, as indicated in Figure 1.1:
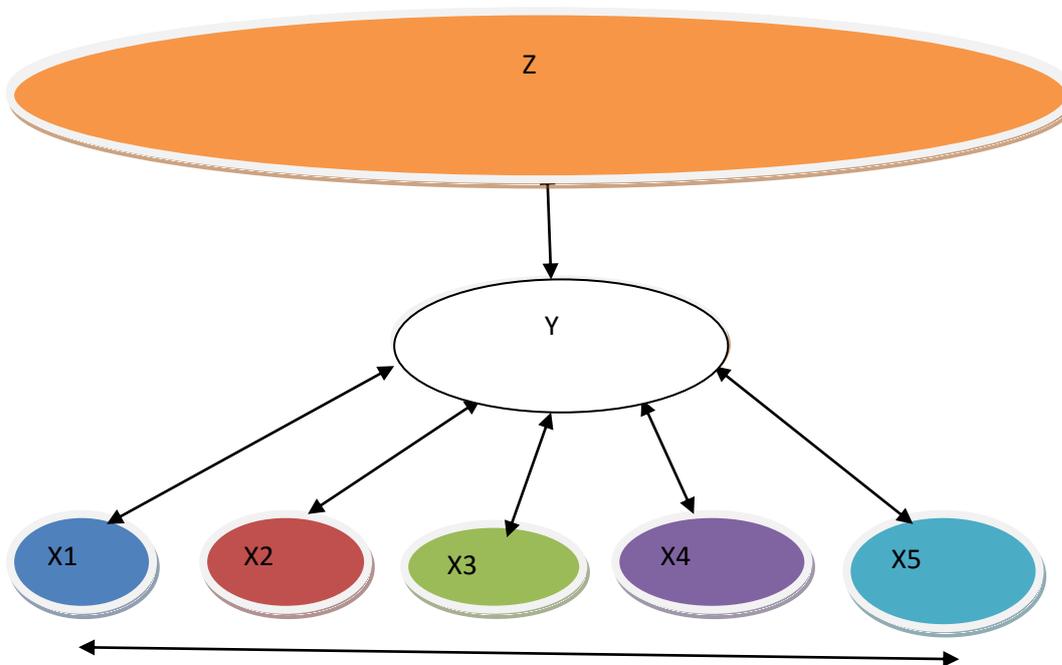
Figure 1.1: Visual representation of the six cases

In the above figure, 'z' represents the IUCEA, which is the quality assurance umbrella body in East Africa. The lower level (X1 to X5) represents the five private universities that participated in the IUCEA-DAAD project. The body between the upper and the lower ones is the state regulatory agency. This is the mediator between the umbrella body and institutions. Although it is not among the studied cases, its inclusion is inevitable because it provided the context in which the project was carried out.

In this study I explored institutional programme self-evaluation practices through analyses of documents, interviews with key actors who participated in the IUCEA-DAAD project and a Delphi exercise carried out in three rounds.

Data obtained through interviews and the Delphi exercise were analysed manually. The procedure involved organising the data; generating categories, themes and

patterns; coding the data; and searching for explanations, as recommended by various authors (Babbie, 2010; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Miles &Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 2001; Strauss, 1987). Data from documents were extracted using a content analysis approach to identify key issues regarding programme quality. Information gathered from documents provided background that helped me to analyse the raw data.

1.5 Locating the study

As highlighted in Section 1.2, this study comprised research on the process of undergraduate programme self-evaluation by seeking the opinions of key practitioners who participated in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project. It is therefore located in the field of higher education. As an academic field of study, higher education is concerned with the complexity of higher education. It looks at the development of higher education with regard to the way it has been shaped by political and social forces as well as institutional culture.

Research on higher education can be conducted from several perspectives. These include the philosophical, sociological, managerial and thematic. The focus of attention of this study is the dynamics of undergraduate programme self-evaluation. Therefore it takes a sociological perspective in studying the process of programme self-evaluation in private universities in Tanzania. Studies that take a sociological background are not unusual in higher education. In 1983, Burton Clark wrote a book on higher education systems that depicted the forms of influence on the shape and character of the higher education system. He typified social forces by distinguishing those that are primarily caused by the academic community, the state and the market.

I decided to focus on the dynamics due to the fact that higher education has many stakeholders, thereby constituting tensions caused by different demands. Further, as observed by project reviewers (see Section 1.1), there was no clear indication whether the IUCEA-DAAD project was successful in making the concept of quality clearly perceived. Therefore, to recapitulate, my decision to focus on the mentioned topic was motivated by my participation in the IUCEA-DAAD project.

1.6 Main findings

The findings of interviews with key practitioners of programme self-evaluation show that there were varied perceptions of the term 'quality' in Tanzanian private higher education, particularly as it pertains to programme quality. Data also indicated that the way quality is defined has much bearing on its implementation. The introduction of managerial approaches to quality had caused reliance on quality assurance units to coordinate self-evaluations based on external criteria. The study suggests that as private universities in Tanzania adopt a more regional approach to programme self-evaluation, their internal institutional quality assurance systems become increasingly influenced by external forces. Furthermore, the study suggests that at least a qualitative relationship exists between institutional commitment, university leadership and operationalisation of quality assurance at programme level. However, despite the fact that each of the studied cases had mission statements the study did not establish clearly how institutions pursue their mission through programme self-evaluation.

1.7 Chapter layout of the study

Having provided the context and purpose of the study, the following section explains how this dissertation is structured in order to logically address the research question set in Section 1.1.

In Chapter 2 the study presents theoretical perspectives, focusing on broad definitions of key concepts relevant to this study. The concepts are systematically organised so as to provide focus, a rationale and a tool for the integration and interpretation of information. Chapter 3 contextualises the study. It provides an overview of the public/private divide in higher education, the contexts in which private universities in the world operate, and the legislation regarding the provision of higher education in Tanzania. The literature review that provided a conceptual framework for this study is presented in Chapter 4, by drawing on literature on quality assurance of undergraduate programmes. It also outlines some of the theoretical issues and debates relating to programme self-evaluation. Chapter 5 details the methodology employed, with a critical overview of the suitability of the case study design in carrying out the current study. The findings of the study are presented in two chapters. Chapter 6 describes specific contexts of the studied cases and

presents and discusses findings from documents and interview data. Chapter 7 gives separate attention to the findings from the Delphi exercise. The conclusions are formulated in Chapter 8.

As highlighted in this section, the next chapter (Chapter 2) presents theoretical perspectives on definitions of key concepts relevant to this study.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present broad definitions of key concepts that are relevant to this study. The concepts are organised to provide focus, a rationale and a tool for the integration and interpretation of information. Three concepts are broadly defined in this chapter. These are 'quality', 'undergraduate programme' and 'university'. Apart from providing broad definitions, the concepts of quality and university have been approached from a historical perspective as well. As Stefan (2010) noted, this presents three advantages: (a) it allows the possibility to identify those forces that have always shaped the process of education, (b) one need not re-invent the wheel; knowledge of ideas launched in the past puts the outputs of present thinkers in perspective and may confer a different colour to their theories, and (c) discerning the course of history may suggest the course of the future. Finally, the chapter ends with a conclusion.

2.2 The concept of 'quality'

In Chapter 1 (see Section 1.1) it was indicated that the concept of quality is elusive and therefore hard to define (Materu, 2007; Mayhew, Ford & Hubbard, 1990). It takes on different meanings in different settings. As Materu (2007) posits, it becomes more difficult to come to a precise definition in the area of higher education due to the existence of multiple stakeholders. Therefore, quality in higher education is more complex than in manufactured products, for example. When evaluating a manufactured product, one weighs to assign variables such as performance, features, reliability, durability, serviceability and aesthetics (Winch & Gingell, 1999). These characteristics simply connote product usefulness and reliability.

Unlike in industry, Mayhew et al. (1990) rightly suggest that while quality as a concept shares certain abstract dimensions whenever it is discussed, it lends itself to so many different perspectives that meaningful dialogue is impossible unless participants agree on a common approach. Mhlanga (2013) suggests that conceptual clarification is essential to enable the reader to understand the focus of

the discourse, as different people hold different conceptions of the term. Barnett (1994) argues that university institutions have particular social and cultural identities. In addition, universities are not places, but academic communities constituting people. These people may also have varying perceptions of quality far different from those promulgated by the university management. As van Vught (1996:188) rightly suggests, in higher education there (at least) as many definitions of quality as there are categories of stakeholders.

One of the most systematic overviews of the definition question is the work by Harvey and Knight. Harvey and Knight (1996) agree that there are widely differing conceptualisations of quality in use in higher education. However, these can be grouped into five discrete but interrelated ways of thinking:

- Quality as the exceptional
- Quality as perfection or consistency
- Quality as fitness for purpose
- Quality as value for money
- Quality as transformation.

Quality as the exceptional

The exceptional notion of quality sees it as something special. There are three variations of this: first, the traditional notion of quality as distinctive; second, a view of quality as exceeding very high standards (or 'excellence'); and third, and a weaker notion of quality, as passing a set of required (minimum) standards.

In the traditional notion of quality the concept of quality is associated with the notion of distinctiveness, of something special or of a 'high class'. The traditional notion of quality implies 'exclusivity'. On the other hand, excellence is often used interchangeably with quality. In this sense excellence is seen in terms of 'high' standards. It is similar to the traditional view, but identifies the constituents of excellence, while at the same time ensuring that these are difficult to attain. It is elitist inasmuch as it sees quality as only possibly attainable in limited circumstances. In Chapter 6 (see Section 6.2.1) this notion appeared in institutional missions. The last meaning is concerned with checking standards. A 'quality' product in this sense is one that has passed a set of quality checks that are based on

attainable criteria designed to reject 'defective' items. The 'pass mark' for course work and examinations is an everyday example of standards checking in higher education. 'Quality' is therefore attributed to all those items that fulfil the *minimum* standards set by the manufacturer or monitoring body as a result of 'scientific quality control'. This threshold approach is applied, for example, by the state regulatory agency in Tanzania (see Section 6.2.3).

Quality as perfection or consistency

This definition focuses on process and sets specifications aimed to be met perfectly. It relates to the notion of *zero defects* and *getting things right first time*. Zero defects redefines quality as conformance to specification rather than exceeding high standards. This is also, in manufacturing circles, referred to as 'excellence', but does not mean the same as the notion of excellence as exceeding high standards. In this approach there is a distinction between quality and standards. Quality is that which conforms to a particular specification. The product or service is judged based on its consistency, or in some cases, its reliability. Excellence therefore becomes 'perfection' as measured by the absence of defects. A quality product or service is that which conforms exactly to specifications and a quality producer or provider is one whose output is consistently free of defects. Zero defects is not just about conforming to specification. It embodies a philosophy of prevention rather than inspection. The focus is on ensuring that at each stage faults do not occur, rather than relying on final inspection to identify defects.

Quality as fitness for purpose

Quality as fitness for purpose holds that quality only has meaning in relation to the purpose of the product or service. This notion is remote from the idea of quality as something special, distinctive, elitist, conferring status or difficult to attain. If something does the job for which it was designed, then it is a quality product or service. Fitness for purpose has emerged as the fashionable way to harness the drive for perfection. Although straightforward in conception, 'fitness for purpose' is deceptive, for it raises the issue of *whose purpose* and *how is fitness assessed*? Fitness for purpose offers two alternative priorities for specifying purpose. The first puts the obligation on the consumer; the second locates it on the provider. Quality as fitting-the-consumer-specification requires that the outcome of a process matches

the special requirements. This requires, first of all, that the customer's requirements are precisely identified and second that the outcomes conform to those requirements. The producer or service provider is, in theory, merely the instrument in fulfilling customer needs. Some advocates of fitness for purpose argue that the producer can, or indeed should, be more pro-active by anticipating consumer desires.

However, the idea that the customer determines the specification is an idealisation. In practice, customers rarely specify their individual requirements. On the contrary, the manufacturer of mass-produced artefacts or producer of standardised services assesses what the customer is prepared to buy. Not only do providers anticipate needs, but through massive marketing departments, they attempt to mould requirements to match the product. This raises fundamental question about the fitness-for-purpose definition of quality as 'meeting customer requirements'. Fitness for the purpose therefore leaves open the question of what should define quality in education and how it should be assessed.

Quality as value for money

This definition of quality 'at a price you can afford' implies a 'high-standard' specification at a reduced cost. This view links the quality of education to value for money through its demand for efficiency and effectiveness.

Since the mid-1980s there has been growing pressure on higher education institutions in the world to demonstrate their efficiency and effectiveness by, among other things, managing expansion without a comparable increase in resources and with no decline in quality. Value for money is therefore the market view of quality linked to accountability. The use of performance indicators, customer charters and league tables is an attempt to operationalise and legitimise this notion of quality by creating a pseudo market designed to affect change through competition.

Quality as transformation

The transformative view of quality is rooted in the notion of 'qualitative change', a fundamental change of *form.* Transformation is not restricted to apparent or physical transformation, but also includes cognitive transcendence. This transformative notion of quality raises doubts about the relevance of product-centred approaches such as

fitness for purpose. There are problems in translating product-based notions of quality to the service sector. This becomes acute when applied to education, because education is a participatory process. Students are not products, customers, consumers, service users or clients – they are participants. Education is not a service for a customer, but an ongoing process of transformation of the participant.

There are two elements of transformative quality in education, namely enhancing the participant and empowering the participant. Enhancing the participant a quality education is one that effects changes in the participant and, thereby, enhances them. Value-added notions of quality provide a measure of enhancement. Value-add is a measure of quality in terms of the extent to which the educational experience enhances the knowledge, abilities and skills of students. A high-quality institution would be one that greatly enhances its students.

On the other hand, empowering students involves giving power to participants to influence their own transformation. It involves students taking ownership of the learning process. Furthermore, the transformation process itself provides the opportunity for self-empowerment, through increased confidence, self-awareness, and so on. It is a counter-argument to those who view students as people who do not know what is good for them.

As van Vught (1996: 188) rightly observe, Harvey and Knight neither exclusively choose one or another of these categories of definitions, nor develop their own new definition of quality. In that sense, as van Vught continues to argue, these scholars like others, are unable to answer the question 'What is quality?' However, as van Vught (1996) notes, despite their failure to answer the question, an important contribution made by Harvey and Knight are that they draw attention to the 'transformative' aspect. Teaching in higher education is not just a service for a consumer, but is a process that does something to a consumer.

Pragmatic perception of quality

As Mhlanga (2013) rightly suggested, while these various perceptions of quality are treated separately in the literature, this is not the case in real practice. In the actual practice several conceptions manifest themselves in programme self-evaluation at the regional, national and institutional levels. Van Vught (1996) asserts that different

actors may emphasise different combinations of these – and other dimensions. Lacovidou, Gibbs and Zopiatis (2009, in Harvey and Williams (2010) for example, reported a case study of a private institution in Cyprus that is developing its understanding of quality through the eyes of two of its key stakeholders, staff and students. The results indicated a mismatch in student and teaching staff perceptions regarding the importance of factors in what constituted quality higher education provision. The key differences were that students considered the programmes and courses of study offered by a higher education institution and the teaching and learning that takes place in the institution as the most important dimensions of quality higher education provision. Teaching staff, considered the student support services, the teaching and learning facilities and student examination and assessment as the most important dimensions. As Mhlanga (2013) rightly suggests, finally, which actors dominate in a higher education system depends among others on their power, coalitions and policies, with all possible consequences for the prevailing quality definitions in the higher education system. In Tanzania, the state regulatory agency has encompassed fitness for purpose. The approach taken is that of mission-based fitness for purpose, because it avoids the issue of determining who higher education's customers are by returning the emphasis to the institution. In this case, quality is defined in terms of the institution fulfilling its own stated objectives or mission. As Harvey and Knight (1996) suggest, quality becomes fitness for, and performance in, the market defined by the institution. The approach to teaching quality assessment relies on making judgement about the quality of provision within the context of the individual institution's stated mission. This is a significant element of the dominant model of external quality monitoring in many countries.

2.3 Development of the concept of 'quality'

In tracing the incline to quality, Seymour (1993) and Sallis (1996) suggest that prior to the Industrial Revolution, quality was embedded in the hearts and hands of skilled artisans. However, as Seymour (1993) posits, with the advent of mass production, the embodiment of quality was sliced and diced as different people on the production line were assigned the task of making interchangeable parts. Inspectors were hired and placed at the end of each line. Their job was to analyse each and every product with the intention of detecting errors.

A group of five statisticians at Bell Telephone Laboratories was the first to recognise that variability in error rates could be understood with probability and statistics (Seymour, 1993; Sims & Sims, 1995). From this simple beginning came the idea of sampling plans and statistical process control, which dominated American industrial management until after World War II.

The next major shift began to take form in post-war Japan. With a devastated industry, the Japanese invited W. Edwards Demings and Joseph Juran to share their evolving views of how quality could be built into manufacturing processes. Some of their ideas defied common logic. For example, quality did not cost more, it cost less; inspectors did not decrease the number of defects, they increased them. Both Deming and Juran began to see quality as a management function that could be systematically improved. Based on their ideas, the philosophy of total quality management (TQM), as the movement was later labelled, helped to transform the Japanese industry into the economic powerhouse of today (Sims & Sims, 1995).

According to Sims and Sims (1995), total quality began as a simple quest for quality in products, as customers would always examine products to see whether they met their standards prior to purchasing them. Several notable figures were significant in developing the current version of TQM. These prominent figures are described by Sims and Sims (1995) and Lewis & Smith (1994) as follows:

Fredric Taylor

Sims and Sims (1995:2) suggest that Fredric Taylor was the first to propose theories of scientific management, postulating that all business behaviours are perfectible through the application of testable work methods. The inspection of end products therefore becomes the sole guarantor of quality. The rush to mass produce resulted in poorer-quality products. Quality was no longer built into the product, as was the case prior to the Industrial Revolution, when products were individually made.

G.S. Radford

According to Sims and Sims (1995), in 1922 G.S. Radford published the first important book on quality, *The control of quality in manufacturing*. This book established the inspection of end products as the primary means for enduring quality and eliminating waste. The book solidified the work of quality inspectors whose job

was to examine, weigh, measure and test every product prior to its exit from the factory. In education, this would mean testing each student to determine what he/she knows after completing his/her academic programme. Several major drawbacks prohibit this approach to quality determination at universities. First, it has high cost implications, as it would require immense financial resources that are often unavailable to institutions. Second, it requires thorough pre-and post-testing that cover the entire curriculum and college expertise that might have affected the student during his/her stay at the institution. Finally, it requires long-term commitment by the university to the assessment process, thereby making it unattractive to most institutions' quality process.

W.A. Shewhart

In 1933, W.A. Shewhart published a book, *Economic control of quality of manufactured product.* The book was instrumental in progressing Taylor's scientific management approach and its corresponding quality control inspection control proposed by Radford. Shewhart, along with five other employees of Bell telephone Laboratories (W. Edwards Deming, Harold Dodge, Harry Roming, G.D. Edward and Joseph Juran), converted statistical methods into a manufacturing discipline in order to standardise and improve the national Bell System. Realising that it was impossible to achieve 100% conformance to manufacturing specifications, the team developed a statistical system to control variability between like things so that conformance falls into acceptable limits. In order to maintain quality, rigid monitoring techniques based on random sampling developed by Dodge and Roming were imposed to determine conformity of day-to-day production. Random sampling eliminated the need to test every manufactured item (Sims & Sims, 1995). As suggested by Lewis & Smith (1994), a major contribution of Shewhart's was recognition of the need for operational definitions that can be communicated to operators, inspectors and scientists.

W. Edwards Deming

Sims & Sims (1995: 3) consider Deming as the father of TQM. Known for his perfection of the statistical control process and sampling developed for the Bell System and for aiding Japan to achieve its reputation for quality products, he contributed several important notions to current TQM practices. Deming proposed

Seven Deadly Diseases that infected US managers and administrators. These diseases, as well as inability to understand people, were identified as common obstacles to quality improvements that must be overcome in order for an organisation to be successful. The Seven Deadly Diseases were identified as:

- Lack of constancy to purpose
- Emphasis on short-term profits
- Evaluation by performance, merit, rating or annual review performance
- Mobility of management
- Running a company on visible figure alone
- Excessive medical costs for employee healthcare, which increases final costs of goods and services
- Excessive costs of warranty, fuelled by lawyers who work on the basis of contingency fees (Sims & Sims, 1995:4).

In addition, as Sims & Sims (1995) indicate, Deming proposed the continuous PDSA cycle, which stood for:

- Plan carefully what you want to do.
- Do what was planned earlier.
- Study the results by asking whether the plan worked as expected or whether there were some problems.
- Act based on the results. The last step means identifying what worked as planned and what did not, then using these findings to develop an improved plan and start a new PDSA cycle.

Joseph Juran

Juran's definition of quality is described as "fitness for use as perceived by the customer" (Lewis & Smith, 1994:54).   According to this definition, if a product is produced and the customer perceived as fit for use, then the quality mission has been accomplished. As Lewis & Smith (1994) indicate, Juran also believed that every person in the organisation must be involved in the effort to make products or services that are fit for use.   Juran's concept of quality included the managerial dimensions of planning, organising, controlling – which was known as "the Juran Triliology" (Lewis &Smith, 1994:55) and focused on the responsibility of management

to achieve quality and the need to set goal. According to Sims & Sims (1995), in 1950 Joseph Juran published the *Quality control handbook*, which emphasised the message of TQM. His message revolved around 10 stages for total quality. These stages, as Sims & Sims (1995:5) indicate, were as follows:

- Creating awareness of the need and opportunity for quality improvement
- Setting goals for continuous improvement
- Building an organisation to achieve goals by establishing quality council, identifying problems, selecting a project, appointing teams and choosing facilitators
- Training everyone
- Carrying out projects to solve problems
- Progress reporting
- Showing recognition
- Communicating results
- Keeping record of success and incorporating annual improvements into the company's regular systems and processes, thereby maintaining momentum.

Armand Feigenbaum

Armand Feigenbaum was the Vice President of Worldwide Quality for General Electric until 1960s when he set up his own consulting firm. According to Lewis and Smith (1994), Armand Feigenbaum was best known for coining the term '*total quality control'*. His teachings centred around the integration of people-machine-information structures in order to economically and effectively control quality and achieve full customer satisfaction.

His system theory of total quality control includes four fundamental principles:

- Total quality is a continuous work process, starting with customer requirement and ending with customer satisfaction.

- Documentation allows visualisation and communication of work assignment ;
- The quality system provides for greater flexibility because of greater use of alternatives provided.
- Systematic re-engineering of major quality activities leads to greater levels of continuous improvement (Lewis & Smith, 1994: 57).

Philip Crosby

Unlike the other quality gurus, who were scientists, engineers and statisticians, Philip Crosby is known for his motivational talks and style of presentation (Lewis & Smith, 1994: 57). Lewis & Smith (1994) purport that Philip Crosby's emergence began in 1961, when he first developed the concept of 'zero defects' while working as quality manager at Martin Marietta Corporation in Orlando, Florida. According to Lewis & Smith (1994:57), Philip Crosby believed that zero defects motivated line workers to turn out perfect products. As indicated by Sims & Sims (1995) and Lewis & Smith (1994), Philip Crosby popularised TQM by issuing his five absolutes of management:

- Quality is defined as conformance to requirements.
- The system of quality is prevention of problems.
- It is always cheaper to do it right the first time.
- The measurement of quality is the price of non-conformance, or the cost of quality.
- The only performance standard is zero defects.

These five absolutes of management can be summarised in his popular slogan "Quality is free", which simply means that the cost of quality, though real, evaporates over time, as the costs are enveloped by the very real measurable benefits of quality improvement. Another popular slogan that is a direct result of Crosby's management philosophy is 'zero defect', which means that errors should not be expected or accepted as inevitable. When defects occur, they should be corrected immediately and efforts should be made to prevent any future problems.

In short, as Sims & Sims (1995) put, TQM is a set of management principles and core values. The following four themes emerged from these founders:

- Customer focus: Customer satisfaction is the criterion for quality. Just as the value of a gift is defined by the receiver, quality is defined by the customer;
- Commitment to process improvement: TQM focuses on how each process can be improved. Continuous improvement assumes well-defined objectives, criteria and measurement (assessment). These require a deep personal and shared commitment to quality that transcends other personal short-term concerns.

- Total involvement: Involvement is facilitated by providing quality education and training initiatives that allow employees to learn and use skills that go beyond their current job task requirements in order to design work processes.

- System thinking: TQM asserts that 85% of total error is a 'common cause variation' or 'system error'; only 15% results from individual performance. TQM is fundamentally different from traditional management, which may be inordinately concerned with individual performance.

As Green (1994b:116) suggests, there are some advantages to TQM. The first advantage is its primary focus on customer's requirement. Second, it can be used to look at the quality of the whole organisation. Sims and Sims (1995) identified five elements that relate to improvement as practised in higher education:

- It is focused on an identified process or system that can be described (flow charted) and linked explicitly to other processes and institutional goals.

- It is designed to identify, understand and meet customer needs.

- It relies on data to define needs, describe problems and arrive at solutions.

- It involves those who make decisions about improvements and is sponsored by an appropriate manager or decision maker.

- It respects individuals and their contributions, whether they are customers, team members, administrators or colleagues.

The five elements outlined above all require commitment to change. As discussed in Chapter 4, issues of competition, cost, accountability and service orientation require higher education institutions to change their thinking frameworks and learn to 'cause' quality (Seymour, 1993).

However, as Green (1994b) rightly observes, evaluation of the literature suggest that there might be some difficulties in adopting TQM models in higher education. First, the models require acceptance of a definition of quality based on meeting customers' needs and do not provide room for competing definitions of quality. Second, there are problems of identifying the customer and the product in higher education. Central to the debate about quality in the higher education context is the issue whether concepts derived from the profit-centred private sector can be readily transferred to public service organisation. As Green (1994a) posits, the argument is

that commercial organisations are funded differently, have different objectives and face different external environment. However, despite these philosophical and practical difficulties in transplanting business techniques and practices to higher education, there is evidence that some transference has occurred (Green 1994a:7). Examples of such transference include a growing interest in marketing techniques, which is visible in the development of corporate styles and logos, the revamping of prospectuses, the production of corporate videos and the proliferation of higher education fairs where universities set their stalls up and market themselves to potential recruits.

One of the recent developments of the application of the business model of quality assurance to higher education is the application of ISO standards to gauge quality of higher education. The ISO standards evolved over time. According to IAF-ISO (2008), ISO 9001:2008, for example, which was published before the end of 2008, had replaced the 2000 version of the standard which was being implemented by both business and public sector organisations in 170 countries. Although certification is not a requirement of the standard, the QMS of about one million organisations had been audited and certified by independent certification bodies (also known in some countries as registration bodies) to ISO 9001:2000.

Later, ISO 9001:2008 was revised and new terminologies were introduced as a result of borrowing from the business world. According to Merrill (2014) the revision included terminologies such as 'leadership', 'planning', 'operations, and innovation'.

However, even in the business world the application of ISO 9001:2015 caused a debate. According to West, Cianfrani & Cianfrani (2015) one of the contested issues was inclusion of 'innovation' as one of the criteria.

Similar debates existed in higher education regarding the application of ISO standards. Munene (2013) argues that the International Organization of Standardization, ISO 9000 and its assemblage of family standards which have their roots in business and industry are inapplicable to higher education. This is because modern universities had their genesis in cathedral and monastic schools in medieval Europe where knowledge refinement and transmission were the prime objectives. Munene affirms that academic quality in such knowledge production and transmission centres cannot be measured using the same parameters found in

industrial production centres, as output products in both centres are inherently different. (Munene, 2013:170) purports that these contrasting roots cast aspersions on the wisdom of applying business standards to academic institutions. Making reference to Kenyan universities, Munene (2013:170) argues that by blindly adopting ISO 9000:2000 standards, Kenya university administrators were succumbing to the faulty logic, promoted by business and industry, that non-rational systems are less efficient or even inefficient.

Munene (2013:171) cites an example of audit for ISO 9000:2000 certification which he finds to be problematic. This is because in Kenya the audit is undertaken by SGS Kenya with the assistance of Kenya Bureau of Standards (KeBS). Munene purports that these organizations are well known for their work in inspection, verification, testing and certification of goods and services provided by businesses and social institutions. According to Munene, faculty at both Kenyatta and Nairobi universities faulted these agencies foray into Kenyan university certification business on a number of fronts, including lack of peer-equivalency as research or academic institutions. Munene continues to argue that being outside the knowledge production industry and wanting in professionals with that background, it is doubtful that the agencies would have manpower with the necessary skills, knowledge and competency to provide appropriate university certification.

In 2010 Harvey and Williams summarised articles by Harvey (1995), Barrett (1996), Winchip (1996), De Jager and Nieuwenhuis (2005), Houston (2007), and Houston, Robertson and Prebble (2008). These scholars explored the applicability of industrial models to higher education. Most focused on aspects of total quality management (TQM) presented above in this section. Harvey (1995) critiqued the TQM approach and argued that it failed to address fundamental issues of educational quality.

Barrett (1996), focusing on a book by Seymour, argued that total quality management was inapplicable to higher education. He critiqued the notion of the student as customer and warned against injudiciously transferring ideas about quality from business to the realm of education, which inter alia overlooked political overtones of the term 'Total Quality'. In 1996 Winchip explored the possible adaptability of Deming's management philosophy to higher education institutions. Winchip's (1996) empirical study suggested that, with limitations, five major Deming

themes are adaptable to higher education: purpose; cooperative systems; improvement; leadership; and methods processes.

De Jager and Nieuwenhuis (2005) focused on the linkages between TQM and the outcomes-based approach in South African higher education. These scholars claimed that quality assurance in some academic programmes is based on the TQM model because of the strong focus on the employers of graduates. In 2007 Houston argued that TQM is a poor fit with higher education and can only be made to fit by major reshaping either of TQM to a more appropriate methodology (and hence not TQM), or of higher education to an image of organisation that fits TQM. Houston revisited longstanding concerns about multiple aspects of TQM from a critical systems perspective. He pointed to the importance of purpose, language, values and boundary judgements and images of organisations in the determining the transferability of concepts and methods for quality between organisational types. Houston concluded that the language, concepts and tools of TQM, while superficially attractive, on closer examination do not match the substance of higher education.

As noted, these articles indicate the scholarly debate in relation to the application of industrial model to quality assurance in higher education.

2.4 The concept of an undergraduate programme

Ratcliff (1992) views the undergraduate programme as the formal academic experience of students pursuing the baccalaureate and subordinate degrees. As. There is much debate about what should be the purpose, content and structure of the undergraduate programme in countries throughout the world (Barnett, 2011; Collini, 2012; Ratcliff, 1992). The debate varies in tenor and direction between the developed and developing nations (Ratcliff, 1992).

Undergraduate programmes are formalised into courses or programmes of study, including workshops, seminars, colloquia, lecture series and laboratory, internship and field experiences. The faculty or academic staff members are generally used to control its purpose, process and content. However, there is a growing concern about the need for involvement of other stakeholders (Barnett & Coate, 2005; Michelsen, 2007).

The role of a course in a programme is largely determined during its initiation through a review by colleagues, first within the faculty member's department and its division and subsequently at the school, college or institutional level. The focus of the review is often on the overlap and duplication of the proposed course with others. The presumption is that if the new course does not substantially duplicate others, it must have merit as a contribution to and a representation of the expanding knowledge base in that subject or in general (Ratcliff, 1992).

The undergraduate programme at most universities consists of a wide array of course offerings. From this array, students choose a limited number of courses to comprise their undergraduate degree programme (Barnett & Coate, 2005; Ratcliff, 1992). Students' choice is constrained by institutionally defined requirements for general and liberal education, major and minor specialisations, and elective studies. According to Ratcliff (1992), a common intellectual experience is rare among students, unless the institution specifically prescribes a core of courses, which is usually not more than 20% of the coursework that all students must take. However, as Ratcliff emphasises, such a prescription is not the norm. Instead, the curriculum expands with the knowledge base, the needs of society and the interests of the students and the faculty. The practice of offering an increasing catalogue of courses developed and taught largely by an individual faculty reflects the implicit assumption that taking different courses produces different types of learning. As stressed by Ratcliff, this is considered the positive attribute of undergraduate programmes.

The undergraduate programme is dynamic. Changes occur continuously within and among courses that reflect shifts in the modes of inquiry within the field of study, in the subject's social and cultural value, in the role of a course or programme in the overall curriculum, or in the interests and inclinations of the students who enrol or the faculty who design the instruction. As Barnett (2000:35) observes, the problem with knowledge for the modern university is not that knowledge has come to an end. Rather, it is that there are now many 'knowledges' vying for a place within a university. Therefore, the university has lost its monopoly over the definition as to what is to count as knowledge. As a result, the university is swamped with rival claimants for worthwhile knowing. Several questions arise, such as (i) is knowing a matter of understanding large conceptual schemes?, (ii) is it a matter of determining

strategies that will carry one forward effectively in large-scale endeavours (through policy studies)?, (iii) Is knowing essentially epistemological or ontological in character?, or (iv) is it cognitive or has it much to do with one's state of being-in-the-world?

Historical and society conditions exert significant influence on the purpose, organisation and structure of the curriculum (Barnett 2011, Collini, 2012; Habermas, 1978; Kraak, 2000; Scott, 2008). Barnett and Coate (2005), for example, propose a general schema for the higher education curriculum consisting of three components, namely *knowing, acting* and *being (see Figure 2.1).*
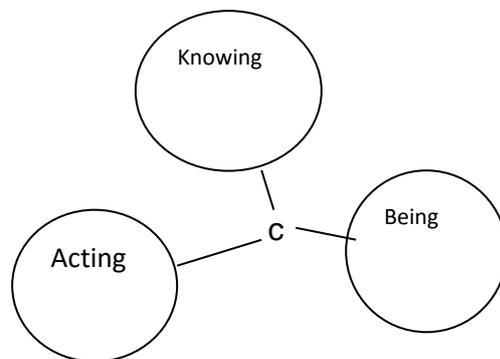
Figure 2.1: General schema for the higher education curriculum (Barnett & Coate, 2005:70)

Barnett and Coate (2005) identified nine *zones of influence* that may be seen to act upon the patterns of curricular change. These are (a) internal and external to the academic community, (b) epistemological, practical and ontological, (c) criteria of truth and performance, (d) managerial, academic and market orientations, (e) local, national and global focus, (f) past, present and future orientations, (g) context-specific and context-generic, (h) endorsing and critical orientations, and (i) reflexivity and the promotion of self.

According to Barnett and Coate (2005), these zones of influence cut across each other, so that curricula represent a mixture of any number of these elements. Further, these influences do not exert equal pressures. Some elements take on a new significance at different points in time. The two authors further argue that past

orientations can at certain times become the preoccupation of public debate, influencing curricular design so that it incorporates those elements that have historically been considered important.

An undergraduate programme can be academic or professional. In other words, as Oakeshott (2004, cited in Adam & Cross, 2011) notes, there is an important difference between learning that is concerned with the degree of the understanding necessary to practice a skill, and learning that is expressly focused on an enterprise of understanding and explaining. These distinctions are further discussed below.

2.4.1 Undergraduate academic programmes

Barnett and Coate (2005) suggest that there is a difference between the curricula for arts and humanities subjects on the one hand, and science and technology subjects on the other hand. In arts and humanities the knowledge domain usually forms a large and important element of any set of curricula. It is followed by the 'self' or 'being' domain, as indicated in Figure 2.2 below.
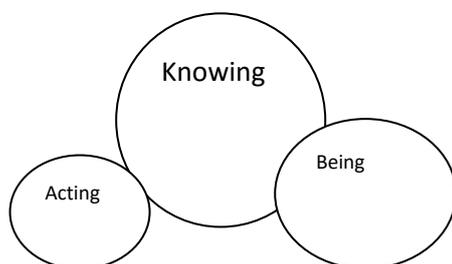
Figure 2.2: Curricula in arts and humanities subjects (Barnett & Coate 2005:73)

Although there is also dominance of the knowledge domain in science and technology subjects, there is a difference in the sizes and extent of integration of the action and self domains. In science and technology, the action domain is a larger component of the curriculum, with a smaller 'self' domain that does not integrate to a great extent with a knowledge domain. Figure 2.3 illustrates this difference:

27

Acting
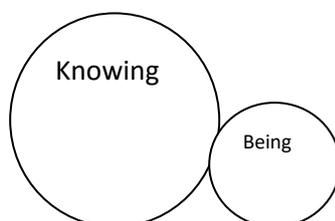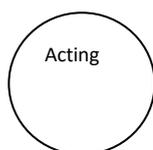
Figure 2.3: Curricula in science and technology subjects (Barnett & Coate, 2005:75)

2.4.2 Undergraduate professional programmes

Barnett and Coate (2005) suggest that the difference between academic and professional programmes is based on the knowledge domain. Unlike academic programmes, knowledge in professional programmes is given less prominence. This is because the professional subject areas tend to be externally oriented and their curricula often significantly reflect the professions that they represent, rather than changing concerns within the academic disciplines.

Barnett and Coate (2005) further argue that in the professional subject areas, the action domain is a substantial component of the curricula. The key factor in curricular patterns in the professional subjects is the integration of the self and action domains. Students are required to undertake activities that are designed to develop their sense of being a professional, with an underlying knowledge base and associated practical skills. This is illustrated by Figure 2.4.

Knowing

Acting

Being
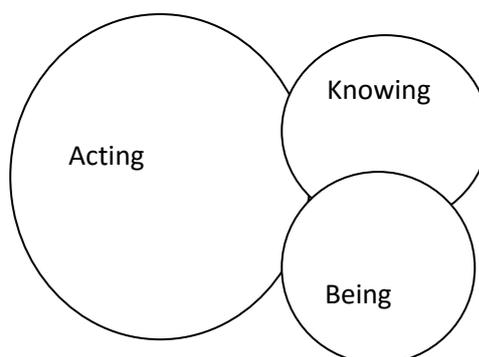
Figure 2.4: Curricula in professional subjects (Barnett & Coate, 2005: 77)

Shay, Oosthuizen, Paxton and Van der Merwe (2011) cite Muller's (2008) classification of occupational fields, knowledge and induction as the starting point for

conceptualising knowledge and curriculum distinctions. Muller argues that within each occupational group there is differentiation in the knowledge base, ranging from practical knowledge in the occupational pathway to theoretical knowledge in the academic pathway and various combinations in-between. Muller further argues that it is the combinations in pathways that offer the biggest challenge for comprehensiveness and require more fine-grained distinctions.

For these fine-grained distinctions, Shay et al. (2011) refer to Gamble (2009), who distinguished between theoretical and practical knowledge (what she calls 'general' and 'particular' knowledge). Gamble argues that these forms of knowledge can be further divided into principled and procedural. In other words, theoretical knowledge can be principled (pure theory) or proceduralised (applied theory). Gamble further argues that the same principled/procedural division can also be found in practical knowledge.

Drawing from Gamble's conceptual distinctions, Shay et al. (2011) agree that both conceptual and procedural knowledge can be principled. However, they make one important difference: in principled procedural knowledge the principles emerge from the procedures themselves. The principles emerge from the codification of practice. In proceduralised conceptual knowledge the principles emerge from the conceptual domain, that is, from the theory. Shay et al. (2011) conclude their observation by arguing that these are distinctive forms of knowledge and they do not necessarily lead from one to another, in other words, procedural knowledge does not lead to conceptual knowledge and conceptual knowledge does not lead to procedural knowledge.

2.5 The concept of 'university' and its historical development

Lategan (2009) has suggested that in answering the question of what a university is, a number of approaches are needed to unpack the conceptual meaning of the term 'university'. These approaches may include exploration of the history of universities, the tasks assigned to universities or policy directives. In relation to the current study I focus on the conceptual meaning as well as its historical development. However, as the historical development of the concept of 'university' can be approached from contrasting contexts, it is worthwhile to state categorically that in this chapter the

approach taken is an exploration of the concept of 'university' from the perspective of the development of the European university.

2.5.1 The concept of 'university'

As Lategan (2009) rightly asserts, the term 'university' has had an evolving meaning since Newman initiated its scholarly discussion during the 18th century. Newman (1927) defined a university as a place of teaching universal knowledge, its object being the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than its advancement. This conception based its emphasis on a continuing process of intellectual reflection of what had been intellectually and otherwise achieved (Barnett, 1990).

However, Newman's idea became obsolete through the course of time. Ker (1999) argues that the most common complaint about Newman's idea of a university is the neglect of the place of research in the university. Ker uses strong words when he asserts that "if there is one thing that any writer on education knows about Newman's *Idea of a university*, it is that the book is hostile to research" (Ker, 1999:14).

One of the critiques of Newman's idea came from Schurman (1898). This author argued that it was difficult to warrant Newman's perception on two grounds. First, universities did not aim at teaching universal knowledge, and second the word 'university' did not mean an institution that was a nursery of every kind of learning and scholarship. According to Schurman, the term 'university' etymologically simply implied a number of persons, a party, or, in its more formal sense, a corporation of any kind whatsoever. Schurman further argued that when universities were being founded in the 12th and 13th centuries, the term 'universitas' was not one primarily applied to them (in the sense in which we apply 'university' today). As he elaborated, when the term 'universitas' was used, it simply signified an aggregate of persons or the guild of scholars. This idea of the 'guild of scholars' is commonly supported by various scholars (Perkins, 1966; Rait, 1912; Sayer, 1999; Sloman, 1963).

The second conception considers a university as primarily a place for research (Perkins, 1966; Sloman, 1963). This definition is connected to the view that there is no single way to pursuing knowledge. Proponents of this view did not disqualify the

place of teaching in a university. They considered these roles as complementing each other. Sloman (1963), for example, argued that through research a university can discharge its responsibility to train future researchers, thereby guaranteeing a university's academic standards. Sloman (1963) argued that it has always been the special quality of a university not only that its teaching is informed and vitalised by the discovery of new knowledge, but also that it counts among its members the most original and fertile minds in all branches of learning.

The third perception of 'university' is that which sees a university as involving three inseparable functions, namely teaching, research and service. Niblett (1974) suggested that the perception of a university as a service institution was rooted in the two world wars, in which universities in different countries offered different services to support their societies. Nations came to learn that universities were not only reservoirs of knowledge, but also service institutions on a large scale (Niblett, 1974). As will be indicated in the next section, the three perceptions of 'university' have a historical background.

2.5.2 'The university' and its historical development

Scholars argue that it is difficult to specify the dates of the establishment of the first university (Perkins, 1966; Wieruszowski, 1966). This difficulty emanates from the fact that the earlier universities were not created. Fundamentally, the medieval universities were meeting places of students and masters drawn together by a common desire for learning. It was a spontaneous movement and not the result of planning (Wieruszowski, 1966). However, in the Western world the concept of a university is generally regarded to have its origin in the medieval Christian setting (Barnett, 2011; Cobban, 1990; Hamlyn, 1996; Jackson, 1999; Lategan, 2009; Schurman, 1898), and universities were established in Italy, France and England. The following sections present key episodes of the historical development of the concept of 'university'.

2.5.2.1 Universities from 1100 to 1500

The beginnings of the oldest universities reach back to the last decade of the 11th century (Wieruszowski, 1966). Scholars often associate the growth of the first

universities with the Renaissance of the 12th century. In this regard, it is often argued that the emergence and growth of universities between 1100 and 1500 has to be viewed in relation to the European urban revival and indirectly to the quickening in communications, which resulted from the expansion of international trade and from crusading movements, on the one hand, and the eventual outcome of the vast intellectual revival, which centred on the assimilation of the heritage of the Greek and Greco-Roman worlds and the subsequent efforts made to reconcile a vast body of pagan material with Christian learning on the other hand (Cobban, 1990; Rait, 1912). Rait (1912) contended that the 12th century produced in Europe a renewal of interest and a revival of learning, brought about partly by the influence of great thinkers such as Anselm and Abelard, and partly by the discovery of the lost work of Aristotle. There was an increase in student numbers, and these students were naturally attracted to schools where masters and teachers possessed, or had left behind, great names. For example, at Bologna there was a great teacher of civil law in the first quarter of the 12th century, and a great writer of canon law lived there in the middle of the same century. In the schools of Paris there were great masters of philosophy and theology.

The essence of the medieval university was the dominance of the academic guild organised for the mutual defence of its members and the supervision of the teaching regime (Cobban, 1992; Sayer, 1999; Schurman, 1898). Cobban (1992) argues that until the late 12th and 13th centuries universities were more in the nature of intellectual occasions than more elaborate administrative structures.

As it was difficult to specify the dates, Wieruszowski (1966) purported that the great century of university growth was the 13th century, which saw not only the rise of the three archetypical universities, Bologna, Paris and Oxford, but also that of many other *studia* of importance. The Parisian archetype gave rise to the concept of the magisterial university, whose affairs were directed by a guild of masters, and whose students were in the nature of academic apprentices. On the other hand, Bologna started as a magisterial university that developed into a student-controlled university, which institutionalised the notion of student power and served as prototype for a large family of universities, either partially of mainly governed by students. These

were the developments of the university from 1100 to 1500 (Cobban, 1992; Sayer, 1999; Wieruszowski, 1966).

The main challenges experienced during this period were related to quality assurance. The first challenge was formal recognition of earlier institutions, because these institutions emerged piecemeal and were not founded by definite acts. This challenge was addressed in the late 13th century when the Italian jurists devised the term *studium generale ex consuetudine* (studium generale by custom) and applied it retrospectively to confirm that centres such as Bologna, Paris, Padua, Montpellier, Orleans, Oxford and Cambridge had been legitimate universities in the period before they sought formal validation of their status (Cobban, 1990; Rait, 1912). Rait (1912) observed that the multiplicity of schools in Italy, Spain and France, copying from the Bologna and Paris models, brought about rivalry that was accentuated by the small and insignificant schools that claimed equality of status with the older and greater contemporaries. Therefore, in the latter half of the 13th century, there arose a necessity for a definition and a restriction of the term 'studium generale'. To prevent abuse, permission had to be granted to a limited number of recognised studia generale. As suggested by Cobban (1990), from the second half of the 13th century it was generally accepted that all new universities had to be specifically founded and all old-established 'customary' universities were expected to seek confirmation of their standing from a validating source. This decision resembles what had happened in Tanzania when the state regulatory agency was established in 2005 (see Section 6.2.3).

The second challenge was recognition of awards. This challenge was experienced due to the fact that the earlier universities were not based on well-established curricula and examination procedures (Rait, 1912). Hence, well-established institutions such as Bologna and Paris were reluctant to recognise teaching masters from less-established institutions.

The third challenge is related to staff retention. The problem arose because payment of teachers depended on student fees. This suggests that the problem of over-dependence on student fees, discussed in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.3.7) is not a new phenomenon. It is argued that it was not unusual for the character of a school to fluctuate according to the movement of key scholars. While some centres retained

their reputation in one academic area over a lengthy period, others had a more fragile existence and ceased to be significant following the departure of one or two outstanding teacher-masters (Cobban, 1990).

The fourth challenge was a power struggle in pursuit of autonomy (Cobban, 1990; Wieruszowski, 1966). In order to win an acceptable level of autonomy, as suggested by Cobban (1990), some of Europe's early universities such as Paris, Montpellier, Angers, Orleans, Oxford and Cambridge had to engage in bitter and protracted struggles to achieve exemptions from episcopal and archiepiscopal jurisdictions.

2.5.2.2 Universities from 1500 to 1900

According to Frijhoff (1992), the most important feature of the period 1500–1900 was the increasing diversification in higher education and therefore the definition of a university. Frijhoff asserts that the first element of this definition involved the self-consciousness of the institutions. Being in charge of education at the highest level, the university had to manifest the ambition to fulfil this mission properly. Sloman (1963) argued that, in order to fulfil their missions, universities had to be viewed as self-governing academic communities with people who hold different interests.

The second element was graduation (Frijhoff, 1992; Hamlyn, 1996). Frijhoff (1992) claims that during the 1500–1900 period, the essential task of the university might not always have been research, and not even teaching, but it was in any case the certification of knowledge through the power to award degrees. Hamlyn (1996) considers the conferment of degrees as both a main right and a main function of universities at that age. Frijhoff (1992) contends that by 1800 there were approximately 190 full universities in Europe, and approximately 30 in the Americas, where some of these 'universities' were merely examining bodies.

One of the challenges relevant to the current study, as stated by Niblett (1974), is the question of power. Although universities were essentially part of the stable society, there were sharp and violent thought quarrels between townsmen and students to question the fundamental right of the church to supply an underlying ideology about the nature of God and man. There was contestation on whether they all accepted God as first cause and the source of truth. Early universities taught that it was important to understand truth, but its pursuit was not by questioning everything;

rather by further exploring into the text of the Bible and adhering to the rules by logical deduction and by careful comparison of what the commentators had said.

2.5.2.3 Universities since 1900

It is suggested that the idea of the modern university was a creation of the end of 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries (Barnett, 2011; Shils, 1992). Shils (1992) observes that internally universities of the first two decades of the 12th century had not departed remarkably from the point they had reached a half century before in terms of their progress towards the idea of the university. Externally, as Shils (1992) argues, universities had rather clearly demarcated boundaries, separating them from the rest of the societies in which they lived. They provided advanced education to a sector of the population that was distinctive in its age and social origin. Those enrolled were mainly from families of the upper and middle classes.

A change in the meaning and function of the university was brought by the two world wars (Lyons, 1983; Shils, 1992). The two wars gave universities widely recognised national roles. As Shils (1992) asserts, during the wars, university teachers and students were drawn into practical affairs to a large scale. New demands on universities were established. Universities seemed to be the institutional instruments for enriching societies, curing their diseases, feeding them better and elevating them in the opinion of the world. Countries that had little industry became ambitious to increase their industrial production. Universities were held to be efficient instruments for training planners and technologists. Shils (1992) emphasises that this was regarded as the responsibility of universities in both developed and developing countries. Following this reputation, what this meant in practice was that the universities, having proved their value, would have to continue providing it by agreeing to an enlargement, certainly of their numbers, and probably also of their functions (Lyons, 1983).

The consequence of this reputation was that many people were attracted to study in universities. As Sloman (1963) noted, universities attracted students from all sections of the community, even those who came from home with no tradition of learning. By doing so, universities moved more into the centre of the public. In the field of politics this was interpreted as fulfilment of the ideal of social equality: raising people from the lower to the middle classes. It is worth noting that before the World

War II, universities did not concern themselves with the issue of social classes (Shils, 1992).

A notable contribution to the tracing of the historical development of the university during this time came from Karl Jaspers. Jaspers (1959) gave a succinct statement of the idea of the university in the aftermath of a world war that had threatened the values represented by the university. Jaspers's writing was informed by a sense that the university, through a fragmentation of knowledge and its emphasis on useful knowledge, had underwritten nationalism and the new technological age. Against that background, Jaspers saw the possibility of the university playing a role in the reconstruction of a more humane society, but based on a more unitary and purposeful conception of knowledge. Therefore, Jaspers argued that the modern university had four main functions, namely research, teaching, a professional education and transformation of a particular kind of culture. Even so, the essence of the university remained the same, namely that of a community of scholars and students seeking knowledge and truth.

On knowledge, Jaspers was arguably the first theorist of the university to confront the knowledge base of the university and to provide an appropriate theory of knowledge (an epistemology). Particularly he was conscious of the theoretical difficulties of securing reliable knowledge. Although it may be universally valid, knowledge is not absolutely objective, because what counts as knowledge is the product of a particular method chosen by the investigator, and which involves a 'framework of assumptions' that are relatively valid.

Of more relevance to this study is Jaspers's observation on the difficult of pursuing 'universally valid' knowledge due to the increasing tension between the university and the modern state. Jasper therefore considered that academic freedom was necessary, if the essential tasks of the university were to be safeguarded. An extended discussion of the challenges facing modern university follows in Chapter 4 (see Section4.2).

2.5.3 Institutional forms of a university

Jackson (1999) rightly observes that based on the situation by the end of the 20th century, one cannot talk about 'the idea of a university' with its implication that there is only one idea of a university. This is because the arrival of mass higher education systems around the world has brought about many different kinds of institutions bearing the name 'university'. As Trowler (2008) posits, it is very difficult to generalise about institutions of higher education or even about universities. Nowadays higher education takes place in many contexts, in further education, in private companies, and in institutions containing the word 'university' but with hugely different characteristics. Barnett (2011) states that given the complexity of modern society, there will be many ideas as to what a university is meant to be. In turn, it is unlikely that any single institution can be a pure institution of any one form of university; different ideas of the university are likely to reside in one institution. Collini (2012) states that the huge expansion in the numbers of university students in recent decades has also involved growth in the range of subjects and types of institutions. Therefore, for Collini (2012), it is too late to attempt to be insistently purist about the usage of the term 'university'. This is because, as suggested by Trowler (2008), the term is now applied to a great variety of forms of post-secondary educational institutions. These institutions serve several important social functions, from vocational training to technological transfer. They also further several admirable social goals, from inculcating civic values to enabling social mobility.

The following subsection explores various forms of the modern university. The exploration begins with the metaphysical university for two reasons. First, as indicated by McCaffery (2004), modern universities trace their first beginnings to those universities founded in the late middle ages. Second, as Barnett (2011) argues, even in the modern university there exist traces of the metaphysical university.

2.5.3.1 The metaphysical university

The idea of the metaphysical university has existed for more than 2 000 years (Barnett, 2011; Clark &Neave, 1992; Cobban, 1975; Jackson, 1999; Newman, 1927). Barnett (2011) suggests that the metaphysical university was a university that was informed by large ideas as to the relationships between – successively – man and God, man and the universe, man and the state, and man and spirit. The university

therefore came to be understood as an institution through which individuals could come to stand a new and surer relationship with their world (Barnett, 2011). Therefore, the major philosophical goal of the metaphysical university was the pursuit of divine truth and learning (Scott, 2006) in order to discipline both the mind and the heart (Niblett, 1974).

2.5.3.2 The research university

The major effort of the 20th century has been to develop more universities of a technological kind and to emphasise within existing universities the parts that were likely to be of use to society in a fairly immediate sense. This is the research university (Niblett, 1974). The research university (or scientific university) was the first form of university to emerge after the dissolution of the metaphysical university, and originated in Germany and the USA in the 19th century (Barnett, 2011; Perkins, 1966; Shils, 1992). Perkins (1966) asserts that the German universities, in the third decade of the 19th century, were the first to raise the banner of research as a central mission of the university. The combination of the Industrial Revolution in the cities and the nationalistic commitment among the intellectual classes brought new life to the German university. Within two decades this combination transformed both theory and practice of higher education.

In the USA, as Niblett (1974) posited, during the period 1945–1960 universities found themselves increasingly under pressure to sacrifice independence to meet the demands of a technological society. The definition of what were the national needs was voiced at this time, but mainly by big business rather than by the state or public opinion. Funds were therefore made available for the production of useful knowledge to be obtained by objective research, and these were channelled to university departments by the wealthy foundations.

At this juncture, research was given prominence because it was conceived that a university could not serve its own society adequately if its understanding of the scope of knowledge was confined and limited to the contemporary. It was considered imperative therefore for the university, through its departments and their interrelationships, to give attention to learning and teaching about things that matter without undue regard to a merely present-day estimate of the things that matter most (Niblett, 1974).

Barnett (2011) indicates that the scientific or research university is dominated by science and science-based fields; that is, science, technology, engineering and mathematics. This form of a university, as Barnett (2011) argues, is an institution that sought to challenge, rebut and overturn knowledge in order to yield fresh knowledge.

2.5.3.3 The entrepreneurial university

The third university form is the entrepreneurial university. Barnett (2011) indicates that this form took off in recent years and seems to offer a way of capturing the common features of university development. The entrepreneurial university is not evident in many systems of higher education. However, Barnett (2011) is of the opinion that universities all over the world are on the right path to entrepreneurialism, even if they are somewhat behind.

Barnett (2011) purported that entrepreneurialism in universities comes in many shapes and sizes. Barnet (2011) distinguishes two sets of entrepreneurialism, namely *hard* and *soft* entrepreneurialism, and entrepreneurialism under conditions of *strong state regulation* on the one hand, and *strong markets* on the other hand. By 'hard' and 'soft' entrepreneurialism he refers to those forms of entrepreneurialism where there is a definite intention to secure an economic return (preferably 'profit') as against those firms where the economic drive is much less evident or is absent altogether. This idea of hard entrepreneurialism relates to the type of private universities (see Chapter 3) categorised as 'for-profit'.

However, as Marginson and Considine (2000) indicate, entrepreneurialism involves capital risk. Capital, as clarified by Bourdieu (1998), does not necessarily have to be financial. The university may risk its reputation, its intellectual capital, its position, its ethos, its educational character, or its role as a cultural good. Barnett (2011) exemplifies this risk by citing an example that, under market conditions, the pedagogical relationship between teacher and taught may be irredeemably distorted. This is because the student becomes a customer seeking a return on his/her own financial investment. Further, staff sense more career advancement by pursuing avenues for research and consultancy that bear significant economic and status returns. The worst example is that in research, recognised methodologies may be short-circuited and outcomes may be softened to satisfy private sector corporations

funding the work in hand. The university is obliged to take these risks because of becoming a player amid knowledge capitalism, as suggested by Peters (2003).

2.5.3.4 The bureaucratic university

According to Shils (1992), the power and multiplicity of the forces working on universities, from within and from outside, intensified since the 1950s. Shils (1992) contends that there had been bureaucratisation and politicisation within universities by external bureaucratic and political influence over the interior life of universities.

Neave (1998) considers the bureaucratic university to have arisen from what he terms the arrival of the 'evaluative state', demanding universities to ensure accountability. This form of a university is characterised by bureaucratic procedures that dominate academic life (Barnett, 2011). As Barnett (2011) suggests, bureaucracy is evident in student admissions, the appointment of staff, the balance of academic activities, examinations, research applications, curricula structures, recording of one's activities, teaching hours, meetings with research students, research student vivas, internal quality audits and statements of expenditure. Both the academics and their activities are being regulated. The emergency of bureaucratic procedures in universities is linked to the introduction of managerialistic approaches to quality assurance, as discussed in Chapter 4.

Barnett (2011) suggests that bureaucratic procedures are not necessarily bad. They are useful for (a) enabling universities to respond rationally and prudently to the environment of accountability in which they find themselves, (b) the efficient and effective management of resources (for the most part, the academic staff), and (c) addressing the uncertain environment in which universities find themselves. Thus, bureaucracy is a natural response to risk because senior managers ought to have more information to handle the current turbulence in the world.

2.5.3.5 The corporate university

The entrepreneurial university discussed above is encouraged to identify and sell its knowledge products and identify new customers (Murphy, 2009). However, as it exists together with other providers of similar products, it is compelled to maximise its efforts, pool resources and advance itself in the world (Barnett, 2011). This led to the birth of the corporate university. In other words, as suggested by Barnett (2011),

the corporate university has arisen in a context that includes the emergence of globalisation, the worldwide knowledge economy and neo-liberal movements. Neoliberalism, as indicated in Chapter 3, is among the theories that explain the growth of private universities in the world.

The corporate university is found alongside the bureaucratic university discussed above. Barnett (2011) states that the bureaucratic university is necessary for the emergence of a corporate university. In the bureaucratic university, individuals are subject to common procedures and their working lives are thereby rendered transparent. However, Barnett (2011) stresses that the bureaucratic university has a life of its own. Therefore it is not to be understood purely as a means to achieving a corporate university.

Olsen (2005) suggests that in the idea of a corporate university, external policy makers have considerable influence over the organisation of and activities within the university. External political agendas affect funding resources, which in turn influence behaviours within the university, with activities being monitored with a range of performance indicators. Scholarly purposes are subordinated to purposes dictated by political support and funding opportunities. In addition, appropriate organisational structures are suggested by external review, and normatively adopted. Olsen's (2005) view is evidenced by the findings of this study presented in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.3.5).

The corporate university is fashioned by the establishment of marketing departments (Pilbeam, 2009). Barnett (2011) considers the corporate university inevitable, because amid knowledge capitalism, universities are obliged to identify and sell their knowledge products as well as compete on a global stage (the global rankings), depending largely on their research reputation and achievement.

Nelson and Watt (1999) anticipated the possibility of some universities resembling corporations, as there are now entire programmes in higher education devoted to product testing to the extent that it is difficult to think of them as academic units at all. These authors cite an example of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Cincinnati, whose research was primarily drug testing for pharmaceutical companies.

There are several meanings of the notion of the corporate university. Nelson and Watt (1999) identified 12 overlapping meanings, namely: (a) universities that perform contract services for corporations, (b) universities that form financial partnerships with corporations, (c) universities that design curricula and degree programmes to serve corporate hiring needs, (d) universities that condone corporate influence over curriculum and programme development by accepting corporate-funded programmes, fellowships and faculty lines, (e) universities that adopt profit-oriented corporate values, (f) universities that adopt corporate-style management and accounting techniques, (g) universities that effectively sell portions of their enterprise to corporations, (h) universities whose faculty members are co-opted by corporations that hire them as high-paid consultants and fund their research, (i) universities that engage corporations to market their products of faculty labour, (j) universities that instil corporate culture in their students and staff, (k) universities that sell faculty or staff time to corporations, and (l) universities whose top level of governance (board of trustees) is dominated by executive officers of corporations.

2.5.3.6 Mixed form

As cautioned earlier (see Section 2.5.3) Barnett (2011) does not suggest that any one of the above states of being entirely characterises any one university today. Within a single university, several forms are possible. For instance, one university may display characteristics of a research university, an entrepreneurial university, a bureaucratic university and a corporate university. Even traces of a metaphysical university may have a presence. The modern university therefore is an amalgam of different degrees of these states of being, as all forms have a place.

As noted by Barnett (2011), managerial presence is a surface feature of both the bureaucratic university and the corporate university. Each of those latter two forms of universities requires strong management. The establishment, maintenance and refinement of the bureaucratic procedures across a university require strong management and the development of a vivid and unified corporate identity. This explains the establishment of quality assurance units in the case universities, as discussed in Chapter 6 (Section 6.3.5).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has indicated the dynamic nature of the three core concepts that are of significance to this study, namely 'quality', 'undergraduate programme' and 'university'. It is apparent that the relationship between the university as an institution and the outside world has a bearing on the perception of the concept. The medieval university, for example, was preoccupied with teaching divine truth because of the influence of the church. In this regard, the medieval university had to discipline both the mind and the heart based on the established truth. However, changes in societies brought by important events such as the two world wars and the Industrial Revolution changed the relationship between the church and the university. As government and society at large assigned new roles to the university, the definition of the concept of 'university' changed. Universities were considered not only as reservoirs of knowledge, but also as service institutions. They were also seen as places for the development of skills necessary for professions and employment. However, most importantly, universities were perceived to pursue knowledge truthfully and objectively.

The importance that government and society at large had attached to the university attracted more students to enrol for studies. The practical implications of this massive expansion in student enrolment were that more resources had to be allocated, whether financial, material or human. As a consequence of investing, governments had to demand accountability from universities. However, as governments failed to bear the burden of funding universities, individuals and other constituents also had to incur costs and demand value for money. The university, being a community of scholars, still had to maintain its values, mainly related to academic freedom. These varying requirements by society, government, students and teachers naturally created particular tensions.

It also seems clear from literature that changes in society had a profound bearing on the perception of 'quality'. There were changes in its meaning and shifts from being implicit to be more explicit. Quality of university education was no longer considered to be seen through the eyes of professors only, but from many other angles taken by different stakeholders. As demonstrated in the description of professional programmes, for example, the acting domain gives prominence to the development

of skills necessary for the labour market. As a consequence, this accords substantial weight to professional bodies when it comes to judgement of quality.

In conclusion, it is therefore obvious that the concepts of 'quality' and 'university' have had an evolving meaning. In modern times, the world has experienced a shift of the university from the ivory tower to one that responds to needs of society. Similarly, in the provision of university education the world has witnessed a shift of meaning from 'excellence' to many other connotations of the concept of quality.

The next chapter provides a general overview of the contexts in which private universities operate.

CHAPTER 3

CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1 it was stated that this study is located within the field of higher education studies. It pursued an interpretivist path in investigating how private universities in Tanzania interpret and operationalise the concept of 'quality' in undergraduate programme evaluation. Chapter 2 explored the meaning of the key concepts related to this study, namely 'quality', 'undergraduate programme' and 'university'. This chapter further contributes by placing the study in its larger setting. The information provided in this chapter is crucial, because a proper understanding of programmatic quality in private universities in Tanzania requires a clear understanding of the local, regional and international contexts in which such universities operate. According to Geroimenko, Kliucharev and Morgan (2012), the levels of development of private universities in the world vary significantly in different countries, based on the level of economic development and cultural-historical traditions.

The aim of this chapter is therefore to give a general overview of the contexts in which private universities in Tanzania operate. It begins by looking at the concepts of 'public' and 'private' so as to guide the reader to a better understanding of the meaning of the concept of a 'private university'. This definition is accompanied by theories on the establishment of private universities in the world, and in Tanzania in particular. The chapter also includes a section on institutional structures to describe how private universities organise themselves in response to their contexts. This discussion relates in particular to the main research question, which reads: How do private universities in Tanzania interpret and apply the quality concept in programme evaluation?, and also to sub-question iii, reading: How can the concept of programme quality be better understood in the Tanzanian private university context? In order to understand the way private universities operationalise the quality concept, one needs to understand how these private universities structure themselves.

Further, the chapter explores the international as well as the national contexts of private universities and ends with a conclusion on the discussions.

3.2 'Public' and 'private' domains in higher education

Relevant literature on the public/private debate in higher education suggests that our common understanding of what constitutes 'public' and 'private' in higher education is drawn from neo-classical economics and/or statist political philosophy (Calhoun, 1998; Kaul, Conceicao, Goulven & Mendoza, 2003; Marginson, 2007). However, as Marginson (2007) observes, because the world is not static, higher education is continually changing; rendering understandings of 'public' and 'private' in education and other sectors not only unstable, but also ambiguous and unclear. Marginson (2007) argues that in the public/private debate, scholars often confuse three other distinctions, namely those between state/non-state ownership, between state and market, and between market activity and non-market activity. According to Marginson (2007), in public debates, and sometimes in scholarly literature as well, the following equations appear: (a) public = government = state-owned = non-market, and (b) private = business (or civil society, or family/home) = privately owned = market. Marginson (2007) suggests that the work of higher education can be public and/or private and can manifest either as individual or as collective benefits.

Another contribution to the 'public' and 'private' debate is from Kaul et al. (2003), who argue that pure public goods are rare because complete market failure is rare. Some level of production of most goods and services will prove profitable because there will be some element of rivalry or some mechanism of excludability that can be imposed. Many of the goods considered as 'public goods', such as universal primary education, for instance, are better classified as 'impure public goods' or cases of market failure. Little of the knowledge produced in universities qualifies as pure public goods.

Probably a safer approach to the distinction between 'public' and 'private' in higher education is provided by Calhoun (1998), who argues that whether higher education is 'public' or 'private' is policy-sensitive and varies in time and place. This view suggests that the whole education system cannot be treated as universally 'public' or 'private'. In some parts of the world, for instance in Latin America, universities are

also publishers of textbooks and academic journals that transmit research knowledge, and these are often open-access publications. However, in other countries such as in the USA and the UK, many of these services are commercially produced and then sold to students, lecturers and libraries, even though the academics that produced them are often paid little or nothing in return for the publication of their work.

On the other hand, as Marginson (2007) argues, in political philosophy public/private can take on wider meanings than economics suggest. For example, the term 'public' can cover such factors as how the goods are produced and by whom, who controls it, how and how widely it is distributed, and who benefits from it. Here 'public' can refer to goods that are collectively produced and/or consumed. In terms of a democratic philosophical argument, 'public' might refer to broadly accessible goods and/or goods produced in transparent fashion, or goods whose production is subject to common decision making within a community.

More simply, however, the term 'public' is often associated with government or state, using the ownership-based definition. Here 'private' variously refers to any non-state production, that is, production subject to legal alienation/private ownership: 'the market' as a whole, individual markets in particular sectors, the home and family, the inner self, and others. Again, as Marginson (2007) observes, it is apparent that usage is loose and eclectic, suggesting the need for more consistent definitions.

This brief introduction to the debate on the public/private divide is crucial to guide the reader into the next section, which discusses at length the concept of the 'private university'. Given the vague boundary of the concepts of 'public' and 'private' described above, the public/private boundary in higher education is blurred. Geiger (1986) argues that, without explicit and standard criteria to determine the degree of 'privateness' and 'publicness' of institutions, it is difficult to interpret evidence or make comparative statements. To substantiate the blurring nature of the boundaries, Geiger (1986) and James (1991) observe that in countries such as Brazil and Japan, for example, the private sector received at the time a relatively low 10% of their operating budgets from government. In other countries, such as Belgium and the Netherlands, private institutions were established to accommodate particular religious and cultural groups and were equally financially supported in terms of

constitutional principles. Further, in Sweden, all institutions in the relatively small private sector were obliged to adhere to state-defined social responsibilities, while by contrast, the Philippines higher education system was overwhelmingly private and its independence was fiercely guarded.

Mabizela, Subotzky and Thaver (2000) suggest the presence of obvious criteria for determining the private/public boundary. These authors consider the following two factors as crucial:

- The nature and extent of the state's financial contribution
- The state's control or regulation of the sector and its function.

3.2.1 Classification of private higher education institutions

International literature suggests that there are two broad approaches for classifying the various types of private higher education institutions: a typological approach and a non-typological approach. The typological approach adopts a two-level categorisation of private higher education institutions, while the non-typological approach adopts a one-level categorisation (Obasi, 2008).

Based on the typological approach, five ways of classifying private higher education institutions are identified. The first typological scheme is based on value-orientation. An example of this classification is given by Levy (1986). Levy (1986) presents a three-type classificatory scheme of values reflected in private institutions. These are (a) religious and other values, (b) elite alternatives, and (c) non-elite values. In an analysis of this classification, Obasi (2008) indicates that these values are not mutually exclusive. This is because a religious private higher education institution can also be of elite-value orientation. Obasi (2008) argues that existing private higher education institutions across the world reflect these three dominant values. Based on value-orientation typology a distinction is made between (a) religious and (b) secular private higher education institutions, or between (a) elite and (b) non-elite private higher education institutions. Obasi (2008) succinctly argues that although the classification is useful for analytical purposes, in reality there can be a reflection of mixed values in one institution.

The second typological scheme is based on profit/non-profit orientation. In this typological scheme, two types of private higher education institutions can be identified, namely (a) for-profit, and (b) not-for-profit higher education institutions. However, as Obasi (2008) posits, in reality this demarcation is blurred in some countries. Apart from pure types, mixed types are also common. This happens when proprietors claim that their institutions are not-for-profit while in reality it is not the case.

The third typological scheme is based on level of education provided. Here a distinction is made between two broad types: (a) university types, and (b) non-university types. The non-university types cater for both post-secondary-level colleges and vocational and technical institutions. The post-secondary-level colleges offer purely diploma-level programmes, while vocational and technical institutions offer diploma- and certificate-level programmes. Based on the typology of level of education provided, a distinction is made between (a) university type, (b) private colleges of education or other institutions of comparable level, or (c) vocational and technical types.

The fourth typology is based on source of origin. Two categories are distinguished, namely (a) private higher education institutions that originated within the country where they are located and operate, and (b) transnational private higher education institutions that provide cross-border education through branch institutions or other modalities. Obasi (2008) cites an example by Varghese (2004), who discussed these type of institutions, reflecting more about the collaborative nature of some private higher education institutions and especially those in developing countries. Varghese indicated that in developing countries cross-border commercial private higher education institutions are operationally active.

The fifth typology is based on state support. Distinction is made between (a) state-supported, and (b) non-state-supported private higher education institutions. In many countries there are private higher education institutions that are financially supported by the state and there are others that are not supported. As Obasi (2008) observes, the distinction between state-supported and non-state-supported serves a very useful analytical function. It addresses the question of sustainability of private higher education institutions in Africa and other regions of the world.

On the other hand, a non-typological classificatory scheme adopts a one-level categorisation of higher education. The method identifies four types of private higher education institutions. These are: (a) transnational, (b) agency, (c) technical and vocational training institutes (TVET), and (d) corporate classrooms. The transnational type is based on source of origin, while the agency type is based on the type of local company or franchise institution involved. The TVET classification is based on specific functions provided, while the corporate classroom classification is based on in-service orientation. As can be observed from the list, the non-typological approach reflects all the various types found in the typological classification.

According to Obasi (2008), another non-typological approach of categorising private higher education institutions is presented by Varghese (2004). Three types of private higher education institutions are identified. These are: (a) state-supported, (b) not-for-profit, and (c) for-profit private higher education institutions. These are part of the typology based on the profit/non-profit orientation.

From the above description it can be observed that both the typological and non-typological approaches indicate some levels of overlapping. However, the typological scheme is less ambiguous than the non-typological one. Therefore, to sum up, Obasi (2008) suggests the following classification for private universities: (a) religious/non-profit type, (b) religious/non-profit/non-elite type, (c) elite/secular/for-profit type, (d) transnational/for-profit/elite type, and (e) transnational/religious/not-for-profit/non-elite type. Table 3.1 depicts the status, identity and focus of some private higher education institutions in six African countries.

Table 3.1: The status, identity and focus of private higher education institutions

Country	Status	Identity	Focus
Ghana	Not-for-profit For-profit	Religious Secular	Christian Business
Nigeria	Not-for-profit For-profit	Religious Secular	Christian Business
Kenya	Not-for-profit For-profit	Religious Secular	Christian Business
Tanzania	Not-for-profit For-profit	Religious Secular	Christian/Islam Business
Uganda	Not-for-profit For-profit	Religious Secular	Christian/Islam Business
Zimbabwe	Not-for-profit For-profit	Religious Secular	Christian Business – Access

(Source: Thaver, 2004:74)

The table above indicates that those institutional types classified as not-for-profit have a religious identity, whereas the for-profit types have a secular identity. These types have a religious and business studies focus respectively. As Thaver (2004) observes, the religious focus arises out of traditional histories and linkages with their parent institutions in the host country. On the other hand, the business studies focus is linked to what has marketability inside a country.

3.2.2 Theories accounting for the growth of private universities

Harvey (1992) identified three theories accounting for the growth of private higher education institutions in the world. The first is the 'neo-liberal market' theory. This is a theory of political economic practices proposing that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. This perspective views one of the roles of the state as to guarantee the proper functioning of the markets. Furthermore, if the markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, healthcare, social security or environmental pollution), they must be created, by state action if necessary.

The second theory is the 'public failure' theory, which purports that private higher education institutions emerged due to governments' fiscal constraints to support the provision of higher education in state-sponsored higher education systems. The third theory is the 'demand absorption' theory. This theory suggests that the emergence of

private higher education is explained by an excess in the social demand for higher education, which the public university sector failed to meet.

3.3 Institutional contexts and structures of private universities

Institutions are shaped by the contexts in which they operate and private universities are no exception to this. The context can broadly be classified as either technical or institutional (Scott, 1995). Both may be represented to a greater or lesser extent in a single context, giving rise to a typology of four organisational context types. Pilbeam (2009) suggests that universities are typically found in contexts that are institutionally strong but technically weaker. As a result, organisational structures, and their antecedents in this context, may be different from those found in technically strong but institutionally weak contexts – such as manufacturing firms – or where both are strong, as in banks, or both are weak, such as restaurants.

Pilbeam (2009) indicates that the technical context is primarily concerned with issues of resources and dominated by the questions of efficiency and effectiveness, while the institutional context addresses the question of legitimacy and focuses on rules, roles and beliefs, or cultural and symbolic aspects of the organisation. Structures within organisations are created from the interplay between these two contextual settings. The two subsections below are about two perspectives. However, as universities are not categorised as organisations, the discussion on organisational design has been shortened in order to create space for the discussion on an institutional view, which is directly related to the current study. Further, it should be noted that the term 'university' in the following subsections is used inclusive of 'private universities'.

3.3.1 Organisational design

This view suggests that structures within an organisation reflect the tasks that the organisation needs to perform and the mechanism of coordination required to accomplish these activities. Certain tasks can only be performed in particular ways, and some of these ways will be more effective than others. Similarly, some mechanisms of coordination may be more appropriate for some tasks than others, so that for effective and efficient organisational performance there needs to be a consistency between the task to be performed and the mechanisms for its

coordination (Pilbeam, 2009). This view is evidenced by the establishment of quality assurance units described in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.3.5).

Mintzberg (1979) suggests that there are five principal ways in which organisations coordinate their work: by (a) mutual adjustment, which uses informal communication to coordinate activities; (b) direct supervision; (c) standardisation of work process; (d) standardisation of outputs; and (e) standardisation of workers' skills.

3.3.2 An institutional view

In describing the three 'pillars' of institutions, Scott (1995) defines institutions as consisting of regulative, normative and cognitive structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour. Institutions are transported by various carriers such as cultures, structures and routines, and they operate at multiple levels of jurisdiction. Scott (1995) argues that aspects of each of these three elements of institutions may be present in a single organisation. However, Scott (1995) cautions that each of these three elements has its origin and may result in different outcomes. When one dominates the other two, the structures and processes in an institution adopt a particular and distinctive, yet stable, pattern.

According to Scott (1995), the first pillar, the regulative system, gives particular prominence to the rules, laws and sanctions, both formal and informal, that guide, monitor and reward different behaviours. On the other hand, the second pillar, the normative system, defines appropriate goals and legitimate ways of achieving them. These are generated according to values and norms that inform aspects of social life. Values describe what is desirable and provides mechanisms of evaluating actual performance, while norms specify how these things should be done. The normative pillar provides the basis for developing and defining roles, each with expected patterns of behaviour. As Becher (1989) suggests, in general academics may be expected to conform to the values and norms established for the particular discipline in which they specialise.

The third pillar is the cognitive system (Scott, 1995). This critically depends on actors interpreting the contexts according to rules that constitute the nature of reality and frames through which meaning is made. Reality is socially constructed, so that meaning arises and is maintained through social interaction. The resulting symbolic

systems and cultural rules affect behaviour by orienting and guiding actions according to taken-for-granted conventions. In many cases behaviour is transmitted by an actor copying the behaviour of others. Pilbeam (2009) suggests that this is particularly prevalent in those cases of goal ambiguity and environmental uncertainty, or when technologies are poorly understood. In such contexts, actors attempt to behave conventionally in order to retain legitimacy.

Pilbeam (2009) indicates that the two perspectives (organisational design and an institutional view) outlined above emphasise organisational efficiency and organisational legitimacy respectively. According to Pilbeam (2009), the importance of either focus for organisational stability and success varies with different aspects of the environment in which the organisation is situated. Some environmental contexts, for example markets, demand that efficiency is prioritised. Others, for example regulated environmental contexts, require legitimacy through conformity. Universities across the world are found in a diversity of environmental contexts, where the demands for efficiency or legitimacy vary to a greater or lesser extent, and both may vary independently from each other. In some counties such as the USA and the UK, the state plays a prominent role in the organisation of the university landscape, but universities are highly institutionalised.

McNay (1995) categorised universities into four organisational types according to their position along two orthogonal dimensions. The first dimension describes the definition of policy for the whole organisation as being loose or tight. In other words, universities may operate more or less autonomously and more or less independently of the expectations of the state for organisations in the higher education sector. The second dimension describes the internal control over the activities of the university (or the implementation of any policy) as either loose or tight. At one end of the continuum, individuals or units (including departments) have freedom to pursue their own interests irrespective of the wishes of the central authorities within the universities, while at the other extreme, activities are highly prescribed and monitored. This creates a typology of universities with distinct labels (collegium, bureaucracy, corporate and enterprise) and with distinctive characteristics.

According to Becher (1989), as the collegium or self-governing community of scholars, the operating core of academics dominates the organisation, leading to a professional bureaucracy. Coordination of activities is through the standardisation of skills along disciplinary lines. Typically, the management style is consensual, drawing on the taken-for-granted assumptions that the main purpose of the university is to pursue knowledge, and that those suitably qualified should be free to pursue any lines of inquiry deemed appropriate. As Olsen (2005) suggests, there is a shared commitment to scholarship and learning, basic research and the search for truth, irrespective of immediate utility and applicability, political convenience or economic benefit. Cognitive structures therefore dominate the institutional forms in this type of university organisation. Consequently, regulative structures in the institutional environment give more authority to the technostructure in the configuration of organisational activities. This creates tensions within this type of organisational structure.

Regarding bureaucracy, Pilbeam (2009) contends that the university as a bureaucracy emphasises the importance of external regulatory bodies in determining the activities of the university. External monitoring of university performance, to ensure compliance with externally developed standards and achievement of the set targets, demands the creation of an internal mechanism that mirrors the external ones in order to achieve the desired outcomes. This phenomenon is elucidated in Chapter 6 of the current study. Characteristically, as Pilbeam (2009) observed, these mechanisms seek to control and monitor task performance (output) and standardise work processes. Such practices call for a technostructure that will monitor and evaluate the performance of the operating core, as in the machine bureaucracy. Olsen (2005) argues that giving power to technical and administrative staff in a university, for example through the creation of such technostuctures, is justified by their contribution to the performance of the university. Conversely, Olsen (2005) views these as regulatory structures that coerce universities to conform to rules in return for rewards. However, Pilbeam (2009) warns that a structure that conforms to rules, either imposed by external stakeholders or developed internally, and standardisation of work processes may not be able to respond to circumstances that require flexibility and novelty.

As indicated in Chapter 2 (see Section 2.5.3.5), the university as corporation suggests that external policy makers have considerable influence over the organisation and activities within the university. External political agendas affect funding resources, which in turn influence behaviours within the university, with activities being monitored with a range of performance indicators. Scholarly purposes are subordinated to purposes dictated by political support and funding opportunity (Olsen, 2005). Appropriate organisational structures are suggested by external review and normatively adopted. For example, the vice-chancellor is preoccupied with securing resources for the university. Hence leadership style becomes uncooperative (see Section 6.3.5), expecting that members of the university will deliver the required outputs efficiently and effectively.

On the other hand, as indicated by Barnett (2011), the enterprise or entrepreneurial university or the university as a service organisation is often embedded in competitive markets and focuses on packing research and teaching into products and services that can be purchased by consumers. Information and knowledge are sources of competitive advantage that can be combined in multiple ways to meet particular market needs. The ability to 'mix and match' effectively requires individuals and units to work together. As Pilbeam (2009) notes, in many cases this gives a prominent role to support staff who can mediate these interactions. Moreover, the formal hierarchy of a university breaks down, as teams combine and recombine to pursue specific opportunities. This structure resembles the adhocracy (Mintzberg, 1979) in which there is mutual adjustment to coordinate and control the activities of participating individuals. As the fiscal position of the university in many countries has deteriorated, so universities have increasingly adopted an entrepreneurial stance in order to generate additional income and create autonomy from government control (Clark, 1998). Pilbeam (2009) cites an example of UK universities that have developed specialist business development offices that facilitate knowledge transfer. Table 3.2 below summarises key elements of each of the four types of universities from both an organisational design and institutional perspective.

Table 3.2: Key elements of four university types from an organisational design and institutional theory perspective

University type	Key parts of the organisation	Coordination of activity	Configuration of the organisational form	Influence on organisational form	Prominent institutional pillar	Characteristics of environment
Collegiums	Operating core	Standardised skills	Professional bureaucracy	Proficiency	Cognitive	Stable, complex
Bureaucracy	Techno-structure	Work processes	Machine bureaucracy	Efficiency	Regulative	Stable, simple
Corporation	Strategic apex	Direct supervision and outputs	Divisional forms	Concentration	Normative	Pockets of stability in complex environment
Enterprise	Support staff	Mutual adjustment	Adhocracy	Innovation	Cognitive/ normative	Dynamic, complex

(Source: Pilbeam, 2009:351)

Table 3.2 indicates that in each case, institutional legitimacy is sought in different ways by reflecting the relative power of, and prominence given to, external stakeholders. Where these characteristics are important, regulative structures appear. Pilbeam (2009) emphasises that in circumstances where external stakeholders have less power, or are internal to the university, legitimacy is achieved through normative or mimetic mechanisms.

As indicated in Chapter 2 (see Section 2.5.3), none of the four types of university exists in a pure form. Rather, a university comprises a mix of some or all of these types (Barnett, 2011; Pilbeam, 2009). Obviously, this creates tension within the institution as it strives to organise to meet the, perhaps conflicting, demands of multiple stakeholders. These tensions might be heightened by changes in the environment that challenge the status quo, so that the structures that had developed in one circumstance are no longer appropriate and must change as a consequence of wider political or market forces. This discussion is further extended to Chapter 6, Section 6.3.11.

According to Morden (2004), organisations need to be appropriate to the fierce competitive conditions prevailing in the contemporary international markets. They have to do more with the same or fewer resources, and must be able to do it in collaboration with employees, suppliers and distributers as partners. This implies prioritisation of cooperative relationships and partnerships, whether internal or external; that is, *social architecture*. This refers to relationships and contacts with

other as (a) internal architecture, which is relationship between management and employees, and (b) external architecture, which is the contact and relationship between management, customers, suppliers and distributors and with other institutions engaged in related activities.

Pilbeam (2009) observes that effective organisations not only adopt configurations that are internally consistent and congruent with their environmental circumstances, but also need to balance a series of five competing influences that impact on any organisation. Each of these influences is attractive to a particular component of an organisation and will tend to favour a particular configuration. The five influences are direction, efficiency, proficiency, concentration and innovation. These appeal respectively to the strategic apex, the middle line, technostructure, the operating core and the support staff, and therefore seem congruent within the simple structure, the machine bureaucracy, the professional bureaucracy, the divisionalised form and the adhocracy.

3.4 International and national contexts of private universities

Private higher education is increasing rapidly in terms of size and significance (Altbach, 1999; Asmal, 2002; Gupta, 2008; Lau & Yuen, 2010; Levy, 2009). Mabizela et al (2000) argue that while private higher education is a new phenomenon in some countries, such as former communist countries in former Eastern Europe, it has been well established historically in countries such as Mexico, Japan and Brazil. In other countries, such as South Africa, it has existed for some time, but has experienced a rapid recent expansion (Bitzer, 2002).

Altbach (1999) argues that the major reasons for this expansion are increasing demand for higher education and the inability or unwillingness of governments to provide the necessary support. According to Levy (2009), East Asia contains the largest concentration of countries with proportionally the largest private sector. Gupta (2008) indicates that while many East Asian and South Asian countries had a long tradition of private higher education, in most European countries it is a recent phenomenon. Gupta (2008) further argues that in some of the Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea, Philippines and Taiwan, private higher education occupies a centre stage, while in most other countries, such as the USA, Europe and South

Africa, private higher education may be on the periphery. For comparative purposes the following subsection explores the state of private higher education in selected countries from the advanced liberal economies, the post-communist societies and developing countries. East African countries (Kenya and Uganda) are included because of their proximity to Tanzania, similarity in historical background and the ongoing initiatives of reviving the East African Community (EAC).

3.4.1 International contexts

The USA

The USA is a huge country with 50 states. This being the case, it is difficult to describe exhaustively the development of the private higher education sector. Dill (1997) suggested that the USA had a diverse system of mass education for many years. According to Radford (1997), the American system of higher education in its development has manifested a number of principles, including (a) free choices by students and teachers of what to study and what to teach, (b) independence of government control (except for military academies), (c) flexibility and willingness to meet the needs of society, (d) diversification, and (e) self-regulation. Diversity is substantiated by Fielden (2013), who indicates that in the USA there are 112 public company-owned university-level institutions compared to 1,127 not-for-profit institutions. The not-for profit category can be further split into those run by charities, religious organisations and professional bodies.

Historically, the USA is among the countries in which private higher education is not new (Michelsen, 2007; Stadtman, 1992). In the beginning, private higher education was often elite, exemplified by the establishment of Harvard University, then Harvard College, in 1636 (Stadtman, 1992). This trend changed later, and as Su (2012) indicates, many private universities were set up to cater for the educational needs of their local areas, where public universities were found to be lacking. The expansion of the US private higher education sector, as suggested by Levy (2006), occurred partly due to the evolution of existing institutions, as when religious ones became more secular or liberal arts colleges become job-oriented institutions. According to Levy (2006), the most striking growth of private education sector in the USA lay in for-profit. Levy (2006) cites an example of the University of Phoenix, the country's largest private university representing the presence of large new chains or networks.

However, Levy (2006) indicates that most for-profit colleges are enterprise colleges of modest size and are often family institutions.

Funding of private higher education as a whole shows a high degree of pluralism, receiving significant amounts from student tuition, indirect government support and private patronage (Geroimenko et al., 2012; Stadtman, 1992; Su, 2012).

Due to the size of the country it is difficult to generalise on the quality of private higher education in the USA. The quality of private universities in America varies tremendously from the highest in the world to relatively low. It should therefore be noted that unlike many other countries in the world, some American private universities are the most prestigious when compared to other universities both within the USA and outside. In 2013, for example, the three private universities that ranked highest in America were also among the best universities in the world. The website of the Academic Ranking of World Universities (2013) indicates that Harvard University ranked the highest in the world, while Princeton University and Yale University fell within the top 20.

On the other hand, Cohen and Brawer (2008, cited in Katsinas & Hardy, 2012) make a claim of poor quality of education among community colleges in America. The two authors contend that in America, for millions of graduates, the choice is not between a community college and another institution, but rather between a community college and nothing. Katsinas and Hardy (2012) argue emphatically that the situation is severe for rural community colleges where the referred colleges fail to meet public expectations.

Fielden (2013) identifies three challenges pertaining to the provision of private higher education in the USA. The first challenge is finance, because some of the large for-profit providers highly depend on the federal loan scheme for students. The second is a business bent on recruiting students at the expense of quality, and the third challenge is that this selling led to increased unemployment of graduates. Earlier, Ewell (2002, in Harvey and Williams, 2010) suggested that there was lack of transparency in the review system. A similar view was presented by Arden (1996), indicted that more transparency was needed on the part of regional accrediting agencies because they acted too much in camera; the makeup of the visiting teams

was too incestuous; and it was difficult for the public to discover very much about the judgements rendered.

The UK

According to Stone (1990), in the mid-1970s the UK had one private institution of higher education, namely the University of Buckingham. This state continued until the late 2000s, when BPP University College was established in 2009. However, as Fielden (2013) suggests, between those dates there has been widely unrecognised growth of private provision in many professional and technical disciplines.

Britain has traditionally preferred to depend upon individuals rather than the state for educational innovation. According to Pritchard (1992), the state has assumed a *laissez faire* spirit. This claim by Pritchard was later supported Fielden (2013), who reports that public policy on private higher education sector is 'still being formed'. As a result of the absence of any comprehensive regulation, there is no clear definition of what a private provider is. This is because a number of agencies have various roles regarding public policy on private higher education sector and there is no all-embracing registration of private providers.

Due to the absence of an established umbrella body to coordinate the provision of private higher education, Fielden (2013) suggests that it is difficult to identify the number of private providers in the sector. However, he identified criteria that may be used to classify them. These criteria include ownership, motive, level or mode of provision, nature of course provided and target audience.

A classification provided by Universities UK in 2010 produced the following categories (UUK, 2010):

- Private providers with powers to award degrees
- USA-based and other universities that had established campuses in the UK
- Foreign-owned universities located in the UK that have obtained accreditation of their programmes from a UK organisation so that they can enrol UK/EU students
- Private education and training colleges with programmes accredited by professional bodies or agencies

- Private education and training colleges with programmes accredited by publicly funded universities
- Other organisations with programmes accredited by publicly funded higher education institutions
- Pathway providers that work with university partners to ensure that international students are soundly prepared for university programmes.

However, the status of the last category of providers is questionable, because the highest level that any of them offer is equivalent to the first year at a university.

According to Fielden (2013), colleges that attract international students are subjected to more rigorous regulations than those that only attract UK students. For example, if an entrepreneur wishes to launch a private college in the UK for UK students, there is no formal national registration required and the success of the enterprise would depend on the credibility and reputation of the body that undertook to accredit or certify the programmes that are offered. As well as the universities, these accrediting agencies vary in size, ranging from the large, well-established ones to the lesser known.

Of interest is the location of private higher institutions. Fielden (2013) purports that institutions targeting international students are generally based in London and offer programmes in a limited number of disciplines such as management, accountancy, computing and hospitality and tourism. On the other hand, those targeting UK students are much more widely dispersed geographically and offer a wider range of courses.

Fielden (2013) identifies two challenges in relation to the provision of private higher education in the UK. The first challenge is physical facilities. Most private providers depend on rented facilities and quality varies widely. Many are less endowed than publicly funded institutions, although the trend in London is to rent impressive modern facilities to meet students' expectations. The second challenge is that private providers offer two-year accelerated undergraduate programmes, contrary to the traditional three years. However, the two-year option is favoured by politicians on economic grounds.

According to Fielden (2013), it is difficult to conclude about the quality of teaching and student experience in private institutions. However, it is apparent that a good proportion of the academic staff consists of employed part-time and already works in the publicly funded sector. Due to this fact it is hard therefore to suggest that all teaching staff is poor.

In 1996, Elton (in Harvey and Williams, 2010) criticised a forward-looking evaluation of the Welsh system of quality assessment, which emphasised local responsibility for quality improvement. He concluded that external agencies should change from stressing accountability for past performance (through direct assessment) to checking that self-evaluation for improvement is effective. In such a developmental system, based on mutual trust, power is shared between the external agency and the institution. Brown (1998, cited by Harvey and Williams, 2010) noted that the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education had given an enlarged and more prominent role to the QAA. He suggested that institutions would be more likely to go along with the National Committee proposals if the report leads to significant additional resources, together with some greater degree of societal support, for higher education.

Russia

Private universities in Russia are expected to serve the public interest by offering unique self-owned programmes and technologies, methodologies and methods of learning. They are also expected to integrate new economic methods into management and provide lecturers and staff with high salaries (Geroimenko et al., 2012). The state plays an important role in the development of private investment in higher education in a number of ways, including focusing on the forms of legislative support for a favourable investment climate.

The provision of private higher education in Russia is of interest, as members of the council of founders and the trustees of private universities usually tend to be influential personalities in financial or political corporations and enterprises. This creates links to loan-providing institutions (Geroimenko et al., 2012).

Suspitsin and Suspitsyna (2008) indicate that quality assurance of the sector was initially introduced by the 1992 Law on Education and further established through

other legislative acts. These authors claim that initially the regulations were less restrictive towards the private sector of higher education. However, since the mid-1990s, government tightened regulations and raised accreditation requirements. The Ministry of Education and Science set increasing targets for full-time faculty relative to the institutional duration of operation as a requirement for obtaining accreditation. In addition, to discourage low-cost, low-quality programmes offered by academically weak private institutions, the Ministry devised an index of economic viability that established a minimum level of annual per-student expenditures in various specialisations as a condition for obtaining accreditation (Suspitsin & Suspitsyna, 2008).

However, as suggested by Geroimenko et al. (2012), this situation changed in 2010 after government enacted the federal law on higher and postgraduate professional education. Following the enactment of this law, many private universities were granted licenses and state accreditation and were able to compete successfully with federal and municipal universities. Under the referred law, private (non-government) universities are regarded as educational institutions founded within the organisational and legal framework of the Russian Federation civil legislation for non-commercial organisations managed by individuals, and commercial and non-governmental organisations. The legislation envisaged that non-state universities can be completely or partially funded by the founding organisations. Under this law, private universities are not expected to be launched through gradual transformation of state universities, but through the establishment of completely new institutions.

Geroimenko et al. (2012) suggest that among private universities in Russia there are elite universities with solid, widely high records of achievement, and pure market bodies that arose in response to the service requirements of the population that the state universities were failing to meet.

Suspitsin and Suspitsyna (2008) identified four challenges in the Russian higher education private sector. First, the accreditation requirements of full-time faculty and faculty qualifications pose a challenge for small institutions. Due to their small sizes, many private institutions are unable to provide a full-time workload to the majority of their faculties because such an arrangement is not feasible to them from an organisational and economic point of view. The second challenge is the inability of

accrediting agencies to cope with the innovativeness of the private sector. This occurs because many private institutions are set up to offer novel curricula to meet the emerging market demands. However, these novelties are not reflected in the accreditation standards. The third challenge is the perceived 'commercial' image of private institutions. Through the accreditation standards, government got rid of institutions it perceived as profit-oriented. In some cases this judgement was reached based on the profiles of institutional leaders who had a business background. The fourth challenge as identified by Geroimenko et al. (2012) is the emergence of fake providers, whom the authors term 'universities-by-night'.

China

Like other parts of the world, private higher education (often referred to as *minban:* 'people-run' or 'community-run') in China was probably the fastest growing sector of post-secondary education (Wei, 2010). However, its beginning is controversial. While Levy (1999) contends that the sector started to develop in 1982, Lei (2012) has a different opinion. According to Lei, Levy's claim refers to contemporary China. Contrary to Levy, Lei (2012) argues that China has had a long history of privately run educational institutions at various levels dated to thousands of years ago. Lei (2012) contends that the history was discontinued in the early 1950s by the newly established government led by the Communist Party, which opted to follow a Soviet model to transform private enterprises into public ones. In 1982, however, government promulgated a new constitution that stipulated that social groups were encouraged to initiate and administer legal educational activities. This was the first official step towards the privatisation of higher education in modern China. Lei (2012) indicates that following this step, government in contemporary China accredited the first higher education institution in 1994. It was followed by a mushrooming of higher education institutions in the early 21st century.

Mok (cited in Lei, 2012) suggests that private higher education in China experienced three waves: (a) in the early 1980s, when some experienced professors, school administrators and educators initiated private higher education institutions with insufficient investment; (b) in 1990s, when the Chinese government started publicising policies and regulations on private higher education; and (c) from the late 1990s (ongoing), during which a new type of higher education institutions emerged.

These were called the 'independent colleges'. However, as Lei (2012) stresses, independent colleges were not private colleges in the traditional sense, because they were affiliated to public universities and used resources from host public universities. In other words, these colleges were publicly owned but privately run.

According to Su (2012) and Lei (2012), apart from independent colleges, there were two other types of private higher education institutions in China. These were (a) private colleges that provided assistance to students who were preparing for the self-study higher education examinations, which colleges were not authorised by government to offer diplomas or degrees, and (b) private colleges that were authorised by the Chinese government to grant diplomas and degrees.

Wei (2010) suggests that when compared to public higher education, the mechanism of private higher education was more market-oriented, versatile and geared to socio-economic requirements. The growth patterns varied according to regions. The first was a market resource-dependent growth pattern in economically developed regions such as Zhejiang province; the second was an education resource-dependent growth pattern that was identified in areas where public higher education was relatively well developed, such as in the Hubei province; and the third was a policy-driven pattern in which government actions replacing the market was seen in regions where the economy and public higher education were underdeveloped.

Though not explicitly stated, the contribution of private higher education in China can be seen from statistics. The number of higher education institutions rose from 1 022 in 1998 to 2 263 in 2008. The rise in the number of institutions had a subsequent effect on student enrolment, as the number also rose from 1. 08 million to 20 million in 2004. China's tertiary student population almost reached 30 million by the end of 2008, accounting for 24.2% of the 18–22 age cohorts. This made China's education system the world's largest in absolute numbers (Zha, 2011:751). According to Zha (2011), the participation rate was raised by 15% in 10 years, compared to the USA, which took 30 years, and Japan, which took 23 years.

Lei (2012) suggests that Chinese private higher education had already come to a plateau due to serious challenges and obstacles. Some of these challenges are common to all private education worldwide, such as suspicion and confusion over the mission of private higher education, confusion over the role of government in

supporting higher education, difficulties in obtaining sufficient funds and resources, ambiguity and inconsistency of government policy, the public perception of the low quality of private higher education, and the fierce competition within the private sector and from the public sector.

Gathering from Lei's (2012) opinion, one challenge that appears to be unique to China is a decreasing number of students. According to Lei (2012), the decrease in the student population in China is due to three reasons: first, government's one-child policy, which started in 1978; second, some high school graduates opting not to take the college entrance examination based on the fact that one is not guaranteed to secure employment upon completion of college (especially private colleges); and third, the increasing number of high school graduates who opt to study abroad.

The Philippines

According to James (1991), in the Philippines private colleges and universities started in the 17th and 18th centuries by Catholic orders and a bit later by Protestant missionaries. These were not-for-profit private higher education institutions. However, for-profit higher education institutions emerged rapidly later due to the existence of a policy that facilitates their growth. James (1991) indicates that between 1946 and 1985, for example, the number of private institutions grew at a rate of 70% and by the year 1991, 70% of all higher education costs were covered by private sources.

The dominant programmes in many private universities were engineering and business studies. These two programmes played the largest role. James (1991) indicates that over 90% of undergraduate enrolments (as per 1991) were in vocational programmes with specific occupational goals. In contrast, the traditional arts and sciences played a larger role in the more prestigious chartered public institutions, which could afford to offer fields even if they are undersubscribed and could pay for expensive laboratory equipment out of public funds rather than tuition fees.

Regarding the size of private higher education institutions in the Philippines, it appeared that the (religious) non-profits aimed at the prestige or high-quality market (associated with small classes, selective admissions, low enrolments and high tuition), while the for-profit aimed at the mass market (associated with large classes,

non-selective admissions, high enrolments, low tuition fees and presumably high profits). As James (1991) posits, the income classes served by these institutions corresponded to their quality choices. The incoming students for non-profit private universities came from wealthier families and had higher entrance examination scores, and their outgoing students secured better employment.

Malaysia

According to Tham (2013), by the year 2013 there were 20 public higher education institutions in Malaysia compared to 468 private higher education institutions. This tremendous growth in the size of the private sector was due to two reasons: first, government's shift of emphasis from being a sending to a receiving country; and second, but equally important, the country's renewed ambition of being a regional hub in higher education.

Wilkinson and Yussof (2005) indicate that although the Education Act of 1961 allowed the establishment of educational institutions, higher education in Malaysia had traditionally been subject to strict regulation, whereby it was only provided by the public sector. In the 1990s a few private higher education institutions were established, but they were allowed to conduct only certificate and diploma courses. However, through special linkage programmes, foreign universities were allowed to confer degrees.

The enactment of the Private Education Act in 1996 brought about a major policy shift by allowing private institutions to confer degrees and selected foreign universities to establish branch campuses in the country. Two types of private higher education institutions were established under the referred act: (a) private colleges, which had no university or university college status; and (b) private universities, with university or university college status. Only the latter category was allowed to confer degrees.

As suggested by Tham (2013), change in government policy was the trigger to the rapid expansion of private higher education. However, the successful implementation of government policy depended on resource allocation. While public higher education institutions had access to research funds, private ones relied on students' tuition fees.

Senegal

It is suggested that until the early 2000s, Francophone countries in Africa had been slow in the growth of private higher education (World Bank, 2002). However, Michelsen (2007) counter-argues by suggesting that such a claim is a reproduction of the assumptions in the English language literature and reflects a lack of sources written in other languages.

According to Michelsen (2007), the first private higher education institution in Senegal was established in 1992. This establishment was followed by six other private higher education institutions. Many of the private higher education institutions that existed by 2007 date back to the 1990s (Michelsen, 2007). However, their establishment was characterised by a legal vacuum, especially concerning the role of private higher education institutions within higher education. Government had not established a proper regulatory framework with an appropriate system of quality assurance and accreditation. As indicated by Ndiaye (2003), the situation was changed by the 1991 law, which encouraged individual or collective private initiatives. This law was followed by another in 1994, which defined the status of higher education institutions. Nonetheless, although no proper legislation existed to regulate private higher education in 1992, it should be noted that a law passed in 1991, of which the purpose was to regulate technical schools and vocational training, encouraged private universities. Another law passed in 1994 provided private education (in general) in Senegal legal status.

Michelsen (2007) argues that the emergence of private higher education institutions in Senegal in the early 1990s was caused by three factors: (a) the crisis of the public system, which acted as a negative factor in favour of the growth of private higher education; (b) policy favouring the growth of private higher education; and (c) the demand for the kinds of programmes offered by the private sector.

Statistics from the Ministry of Education indicated that as per the early 2000s, the size of private higher education institutions varied a great deal. While the smallest institution had only 34 students, the average had 268 students, and the largest had 1 029 (Michelsen, 2007:289).

The role played by private higher education institutions in Senegal also varied. Some had been assuming the role of short post-secondary, job-oriented and technical education. Until the mid-2000s, 90% of the students enrolled in private higher education were taking courses supposed to prepare them for the labour market. By that time, there was a high concentration of programme offerings in the fields of management, accounting, finance, international business and secretarial training. As indicated by Michelsen (2007), these are the fields that were by then only offered to a very small extent or inadequately by public institutions. Michelsen (2007) further states that the biggest and most prestigious private higher education institutions were specialising in business administration, at the bachelor and master's degree levels. Further, in the situation where the main public university was already overcrowded, private higher education institutions constituted an alternative for many students who otherwise would have been excluded from higher education. Ownership of private higher education in Senegal was locally based, and funding depended on student fees. There was no support from the state. As is the case with many other countries, private higher education institutions were overwhelmingly characterised by part-time academic staff.

Regarding the social background of the students, the richest part of the population was over-represented within private higher education. One of the reasons given for this situation is that the system of scholarship and aid in Senegal was reserved for students studying within the public system. However, some students from poor families managed to enrol in the private higher education, for which two reasons are given: (a) financial assistance from more affluent relatives, and (b) some students who enrolled in private higher education institutions enrolled in the public ones too. Hence they were receiving student aid from the state (Michelsen, 2007).

According to Michelsen (2007), the Senegalese government attitude towards private higher education has been generally positive. However, public authorities as well as public universities typically responded to the phenomenon reactively rather than proactively. This situation is contrary to one described in the next section, which indicates that South African public universities are ready for the co-existence of both sectors.

South Africa

Private higher education in South Africa existed before the 1990s (Mabizela et al., 2000; Subotzky, 2003). However, it was during the 1990s that it experienced rapid growth. Subotzky (2003) indicates that a rapid proliferation of both local and international providers and suppliers occurred mainly from the UK, the USA and Australia. These establishments often involved linkages of various types between local and foreign public and private institutions.

Mabizela et al. (2000) argue that the particular political economic, legislative and educational conditions that prevailed in the 1990s created a fertile ground for the rapid proliferation of this sector. In particular, Subotzky (2003) considers the growth to have resulted from a number of factors, including growing local demand and perceived better quality and flexibility of market-oriented programmes, especially those designed for non-traditional students. Mabizela et al. (2002) argue that the reconstruction of higher education, accompanied by fiscal constraint and changing labour market conditions, led to a perceived mistrust of public higher education. As a result of this perception of dropping quality and standards, many students were attracted by private institutions, especially those offering overseas programmes that were considered to be closer to the market place. Another reason for students to opt for private higher education was political disruptions, class stoppages and boycotts in public higher institutions (Mabizela et al., 2000). Therefore, students in private institutions were perceived to be more academically motivated and less concerned with politics.

Asmal (2002) contends that South African private higher education, at its infancy stage, was characterised by small-scale single-purpose providers specialising in programmes with high economic returns, such as information technology, business and commerce, beauty therapy and hospitality. The programme offerings were primarily at undergraduate diploma and certificate levels. However, this situation changed, where by 2012 there were 88 private higher education institutions registered with the Department of Education and 117 role players in the private higher education market. This meant that South Africa had the largest number of private higher education institutions in Africa at the time (Cosser, 2002).

The establishment of private higher education institutions in South Africa is the right of any body. The 1996 South African Constitution provides for higher education institutions on condition that such institutions do not discriminate on the grounds of race, that they register with the state and that they maintain standards that are not inferior to those at comparable public educational institutions (Badat, 2004; Cosser, 2002). However, due to the infancy of quality assurance in higher education, it is argued that the establishment of private higher education institutions in South Africa was accompanied by an absence of government regulation (Bitzer, 2002; Subotzky, 2003). Given this reality, providers took advantage of the comparatively unregulated local environment and began to offer programmes without having to comply with regulations for registration and accreditation. This, in turn, created a sense of mistrust by the people, as some of these institutions were established without order (Bitzer, 2002; Mabizela et al., 2000).

In South Africa, the regulation of the provision of higher education is the responsibility of a number of bodies. These are the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE), and the Department of Education (DoE). These have gained regulatory prowess. However, the acquisition of such prowess has not necessarily been accompanied by the development of an institutional culture of quality, which may well occur outside the regulatory process in the context of institutional accountability (Cosser, 2002).

Scholars such as Van Schalkwyk, Davis and Pellissier (2013) suggest that the regulation of private higher education institutions in particular entails service to two masters. This is because, in order to be legal entities, private higher education institutions must be accredited by an appropriate education and training quality assurance body and registered with the DoE. Two bodies have thus far been responsible for the accreditation of private higher education institutions: SAQA and CHE, through its permanent committee, the HEQC. The obvious challenge in the system is at the implementation level – the relationship between accreditation and registration. The problem is that if a provider has not been previously registered, and if registration must precede accreditation, how does the registrar know that the applicant is capable of fulfilling the requirements? In practice, the registration criteria

would seem to be applicable only once an institution has demonstrated in concrete terms its capability to comply with them (Cosser, 2002). It was apparent relatively early in the regulation process that providers were confused about the respective roles of SAQA and the DoE in the process. As Cosser (2002) suggests, this problem was caused by the fact that the notion of quality assurance in higher education in South Africa was itself in its infancy, and quality assurance policies had to be developed from scratch (Cosser, 2002).

The arrival of private providers of higher education in South Africa has been received with mixed feelings (Bitzer, 2002). While government saw the need to protect the citizens through regulation of its provision, others believed that the presence of private higher education institutions is an opportunity to improve higher education by increasing accessibility and creating benchmarks with higher standards of quality through market forces. Mabizela et al. (2000), for example, view establishment of private higher education institutions in South Africa as an opportunity to open access to otherwise marginalised students. Some proponents argue that private higher education should be left to the market forces whereby consumers would be given the responsibility to decide for the market (Bitzer, 2002).

Exploring stakeholder opinion on the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) proposals for institutional audit and programme accreditation, Luckett (2007, in Harvey and Williams, 2010) showed that opinions were shaped more strongly by the respondents' position in the social structure (apartheid-defined class and race position) than by their social role (academic, manager, quality assurance manager) in the policy-making process. In another study Quinn and Boughey (2009, in Harvey and Williams, 2010) concluded that the South African audit methodology per se is unlikely to bring about the change necessary because of its tendency to focus on the mechanistic implementation of recommendations.

Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, private higher education is provided by private universities and agents of foreign institutions. Private universities in Zimbabwe started in 1992 in response to the need to fill in gaps in access to higher education (AAU, 1995; Garwe, 2013). According to the Association of African Universities (AAU, 1995), the demand for higher education outstripped supply following the rapid growth of advanced-level

students who completed their studies. Therefore, this demand necessitated modification of the legislation and allowed the establishment of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), which was empowered to receive and consider applications for the establishment of private universities and colleges.

The regulation of private higher education players is provided for by the charters (legal documents) granted to them by government. The charter spells out the functions and governance of the university. The ZIMCHE Act (ZIMCHE, 2006) also provides for the regulation of private universities as far as quality assurance matters are concerned. The NCHE was established by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to receive and process applications to establish private universities.

According to Garwe (2013), quality is the biggest challenge for private universities in Zimbabwe. Private institutions face quality assurance challenges brought about largely by poor financial resources, which render it difficult for them to acquire adequate human and material resources to support quality teaching and learning. They are also unable to attract more qualified academic staff. The unprecedented demand for university education prompts private universities to increase enrolments without corresponding increases in appropriate facilities and infrastructure and adequate, competent staff. Such a scenario led to problems, for example the revocation of the charter issued to one private university in 2001 and the closure of programmes at another in 2004.

According to Garwe (2013), there is also a problem of the bogus private providers that impersonate as providers of 'quality higher education'. It is claimed that some of these institutions are manned by unqualified personnel and that most of the facilities are sub-standard. There is also a problem of recognition, as most agents are not registered. Another challenge is academic staff. Garwe (2013) contends that private institutions in Zimbabwe are characterised by a strong complement of part-time staff, with several of the part-time staff being full-time employees at public universities and in industry.

Regarding degree programmes in private universities in Zimbabwe, emphasis is on education, business management and agriculture, followed by the humanities, social sciences and theology.

On funding, Maunde (2003) indicates that as per 2003, students attending private universities received public financial assistance in aid or grants, just like their counterparts at state universities. Private universities charged money for tuition, and students had to pay more money to offset the difference, as there was no government subsidy. Maunde (2003) argues that if there could be improvement in the economy, student enrolment at private universities would increase, as the majority of private universities are church-owned and parents seemed to value church-related education.

Garwe (2013) suggests that private universities contribute to higher education in terms of increasing access to higher education. They also have a significant contribution to engendering higher education and hence empowering women in view of the ratio of male to female students.

3.4.2 Regional context

Kenya

Kenya is one of the few countries in Africa that has a well-developed private university system. The Commission for Higher Education was established in 1985 with the overall responsibility of licensing private universities and accreditation (Ngome, 2003). According to Wesonga, Ngome, Oume-Odero and Wawire (2007), private institutions of higher learning existed in Kenya even before the country achieved its political independence in 1962. The establishment of a Kenyan campus of the United States International University in 1970 signalled the arrival of the first foreign private university. This was followed by other private universities in the 1990s following government relaxation of its stance on private provision of higher education.

In the early 2000s Kenya had already experienced expansion of higher education. In Wesonga et al.'s (2007) view, the demand had been triggered by massive expansion of primary and secondary education. This corresponds with the demand absorption theory outlined in Section 3.2.2. Other factors included increased sophistication of the economy, which demanded a skilled work force; and reduction of the use of the country's foreign exchange to cater for students who were going abroad for similar education.

However, Wesonga et al. (2007) suggest that despite their increased visibility, until the mid-2000s private universities in Kenya were generally not viewed as priority alternatives to the overcrowded public ones. Most Kenyans still believed that public universities could provide a high quality of education and offer reasonable chances of employment. Similarly, Ngome (2003) suggests that private universities in Kenya were considered to be the perfect choice for people already on the job, as they as they were able to enrol in weekend and evening classes. In addition, private universities in Kenya were also a choice for young school leavers who preferred them to public universities because students were able to enrol in universities earlier and complete their studies in a much shorter time than if they were to attend the less flexible state universities. However, this was a favoured choice among applicants from rich families, because private higher education was perceived by the majority of Kenyans as expensive (Wesonga et al., 2007).

On the types of programmes, a study of four private universities by Thaver (2004) revealed that studied institutions offered programmes in liberal arts, social sciences and applied sciences. These programmes included business studies, information technology, medical sciences, automotive technology and agriculture.

Regarding funding, Thaver (2004; 79) indicates that the Kenyan government as per 2004 was not providing any form of direct subsidies to private institutions. Instead, it had taken an active role in helping private institutions to finance themselves. This claim is confirmed by Wasonga et al. (2007), who suggest that the legal distinction between public and private universities in Kenya lies in the source of funding. Private universities are categorised as those with funds other than public, while public universities are those that are maintained or assisted out of public funds. The main sources of finances of private universities therefore include tuition and other fees, auxiliary enterprises, donations, grants and gifts, student loans, bursaries and scholarships and bank loans. This classification of private universities matches the descriptions provided in Section 3.2.1 above.

Like other countries in the world, private higher education in Kenya raises a number of concerns. Ngome (2003) observes that in general, the standard of education offered in the majority of smaller private universities is relatively poor for five reasons: (a) many students who enrolled had lower academic qualifications; (b)

programmes in private universities were concentrating on narrow areas, often with a heavily religious overtone; (c) because of the profit nature, weak students were encouraged to continue their studies until they graduated; (d) there was little investment in research; and (e) inefficiency in the management of private universities due to the significant influence of religious bodies in some of these institutions. According to Ngome (2003), in some of these institutions the religious affiliation of potential employees might have been more critical than their professional competence. However, Ngome (2003) argues that there is an exception, as to a limited extent, some of the private universities in Kenya were offering better-quality education than the relatively bigger and public universities.

3.4.3 Private universities in Tanzania

Being a member of the EAC, the development of private higher education in Tanzania is more or less similar to that of Kenya. It should be noted that higher education in the East African regional cooperation is considered to play a unique role because of the history of university education in the three pioneer universities, namely the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, the University of Nairobi in Kenya, and Makerere University in Uganda (IUCEA/DAAD, 2010).

Mkude and Cooksey (2003) suggest that the historical development of higher education in Tanzania may be divided into four phases: (a) between 1961 and 1974, when the University College of Tanganyika (currently the University of Dar es Salaam) was established; (b) between 1974 and 1983, in which time a political decision was passed requiring candidates applying to join higher education to have a two-year work experience, thereby causing stagnation in the development of higher education in the country; (c) between 1984 and 1993, when the second university was established; and (d) from 1994 to the present, marked by the liberalisation of higher education. In 1994 individuals or groups were legally allowed to establish private higher education institutions and charge fees. According to Mkude and Cooksey (2003), by 1999 six such institutions were at different levels of registration.

3.4.3.1 Types of private universities in Tanzania

One approach on the growth of private universities in the world posits that the rise of private higher education is linked to the needs of specific groups in society (see

Section 3.2.2). This approach draws a relationship between the rise of private higher education and the demand for a different higher education (Thaver, 2004). Several of private universities in Tanzania have a religious focus. For example, the following faith-based institutions have founded university institutions in Tanzania: the Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, the Moravian Church, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the Baptist Church, the Korean Church and a Muslim foundation. So far, private universities in Tanzania have opened 16 university colleges and 13 teaching centres (see Annexure 1).

As indicated above, the religious orientation is also reflected in the names of these universities. The social function of these 'not-for-profit' institutions is to provide education to the citizens of Tanzania. Emphasis is placed on producing graduates who are substantively different from their secular counterparts.

There are also private universities that can be categorised as for-profit. These have arisen due to the influence of the market ideology on higher education (Altbach, 1999). In East Africa there is evidence pointing to the emergence of more secular-based private higher institutions that are managed with a for-profit motive by a new group of 'education entrepreneurs' who are deploying market principles in education (Useem, 1999b). This pattern of education entrepreneurship is evident in two universities: one based in Dar es Salaam and one recently (2011) established in the north-east of Tanzania. I am aware that at the time of writing this report, the processing of a number of applications from entrepreneurs was in progress. This indicates that in Tanzania private higher education is also perceived as a marketable commodity that can be traded. The application of a market ideology is related to the global economic (private) higher education phenomenon that emphasises education as a (private) good for economic growth (Altbach, 1998). Table 3.3 below identifies the status, identify and focus of private universities in Tanzania.

Table 3.3: Status, identity and focus of private universities in Tanzania

Status	Number	Identity	Focus
For-profit	4	Secular	Business/access
Not-for-profit	15	Religious	Christian/Islam/Access

(Source: TCU, 2014)

As evident from Table 3.3, those institutions that are classified as not-for-profit have a religious identity, whereas the for-profit types have a secular identity, each of which has religious and business foci respectively. The religious focus arises out of traditional histories linkages with their parent institutions in the host countries. On the other hand, the businesses focus is linked to what has marketability inside the country.

3.4.3.2 Funding of private universities in Tanzania

Mkude and Cooksey (2003) indicate that as by 2003, private universities in Tanzania were entirely self-financing. According to these authors, the main sources of funds were tuition fees, subsidiary activities, donations and endowment. However, one may argue that currently the situation is different. With the establishment of the Tanzania Education Authority in 2001 (URT, 2001) and the Higher Education Students' Loans Board (HESLB) in 2004 (URT, 2004), private universities in Tanzania receive direct and indirect financial support from government. Private universities also access bank loans, subject to legal registration.

Support from the HESLB can be said to be indirect, because it is received in the form of tuition fees given to students. The board assists, on a loan basis, needy students who secure admission to accredited higher learning institutions, but who have no economic power to pay for the costs of their education. The board is also entrusted with the task of collecting due loans from previous loan beneficiaries in order to have a revolving fund in place so as to make the board sustainable.

3.4.3.3 Programme quality assurance measures

Regarding programmes, private universities in Tanzania offer a range of programmes varying from certificates and diplomas to degrees. The focus of these programmes includes business studies, communication and language, engineering, information technology, social sciences/liberal arts and health sciences. The focus and levels of the programmes are varied and linked to a specific institutional type. The key components that tend to dominate the curriculum focus in these programmes are religious training, language, information technology and business management courses (TCU, 2012).

The quality assurance of programmes offered by private universities in Tanzania is the responsibility of three categories of agencies. These are (a) the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU), (b) the National Council for Technical Education (NACTE), and (c) relevant professional bodies.

The TCU was established on in 2005 under the Universities Act (Chapter 346 of the Laws of Tanzania) to succeed the former Higher Education Accreditation Council, which had been in operation since 1995. The TCU is a body corporate mandated to recognise, approve, register and accredit universities operating in Tanzania and local or foreign university-level programmes offered by registered higher education institutions. The TCU also coordinates the proper functioning of all university institutions in Tanzania so as to foster a harmonised higher education system in the country. In order to ensure that such a harmonious higher education system does not compromise institutional peculiarities and autonomy, each university has the legal right to operate under its own charter.

Similarly, the establishment of the NACTE was approved by parliament. The NACTE was established under the National Council for Technical Education Act, No. 9 of 1997. The act defines the NACTE as a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectorial body empowered to, among other functions, register and accredit technical education institutions as well as programmes offered (URT, 1997). This implies that, if a private university offers a programme that falls under the jurisdiction of NACTE, it is the responsibility of the private university in question to ensure that appropriate procedures to register the programme with the NACTE are followed.

Likewise, all professional bodies in Tanzania exist under the specific prevailing acts that established them. These acts have been approved by parliament. For example, the Pharmacy Council was established under Section 3 of the Pharmacy Act, No. 1 of 2011 after repealing of the Pharmacy Act, No. 7 of 2002 (URT, 2011). This council is a body corporate established under Section 3 of the Pharmacy Act Cap. 311, with well-defined powers and functions.

One of the functions of the Pharmacy Council is to ensure that training in pharmacy at any institution in Tanzania guarantees the necessary knowledge and skills needed for efficient pharmacy practice. Another function is to keep and maintain registers,

rolls and lists for the registration, enrolment and enlisting of pharmacists, pharmaceutical technicians, pharmaceutical assistants and intern pharmacists (URT, 2011). In other words, this means that the council only registers pharmacists whose training meets the criteria set by the council or other equivalent and relevant professional bodies in the field.

Given the Tanzanian context, it may be argued that this requirement does not merit a student whose qualifications have been obtained from an institution that has been legally registered by the TCU or NACTE, but which pharmacy programme has not been approved by the Pharmacy Council. As discussed in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.3.11), this creates power tension between the Pharmacy Council and the TCU and NACTE.

There are other professional bodies that act in a similar manner as the Pharmacy Council. These include the (a) Engineers Registration Board, (b) Nurses Council of Tanzania, (c) National Board of Quantity Surveyors and Architects, (d) National Board of Accountants, (e) National Board of Procurement, (f) Medical Council of Tanganyika, and (g) Tanzania Law Society.

3.5 Conclusion

Following neo-liberal policies, private higher education is rapidly growing in the world. International literature has suggested that the size and importance of the sector is undeniable. However, what is apparent from this chapter is that the significance of the private sector in a nation's higher education much depends on its perception and treatment. In many cases this has to do with the relationship between the government and the private and public sectors. This fact is important in understanding the sector's diversity. As observed, apart from the international context, in many countries the balance of private and public education depends on policy decisions. The importance of national policies on higher education is well elucidated by the case of the Malaysian government's ambition of being a regional hub in higher education producing robust results. Conversely, in countries where stringy regulations prevail, the sector will stagnate and the existing private institutions will be compelled to structure themselves as corporate, allowing external policy makers to influence institutional internal quality assurance arrangements. As

these institutions also have to address the question of limited resources, and with an increased demand for higher education, the private sector becomes one of the most dynamic segments of higher education.

In Chapter 4 a conceptual framework for understanding programmatic self-evaluation in private universities in Tanzania is presented.

CHAPTER 4

TOWARDS A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to establish a conceptual framework for analysing how the concept of quality in undergraduate programmes in private universities in Tanzania is interpreted. This is done by drawing in particular on relevant international literature on quality assurance in higher education. The chapter looks briefly at the reasons for the development of quality assurance in higher education, the development of a widely accepted model for quality assurance in higher education, as well as the tension between improvement and accountability in the quality assurance of higher education. A framework for the analysis of the concept of quality within undergraduate programmes is proposed, as adapted from the work of Luckett (2006). This is accompanied by a description of typologies or models of quality assurance that characterise undergraduate programmes in terms of rationality, purpose, locus of power and control, agents, methods, results and consequences and the likely definition of quality. The last part of the chapter contains a conclusion on the discussion.

4.2 The quality gap in higher education

Relevant literature on higher education indicates that quality assurance is not a new concept (Brennan & Shah, 2000; Harvey & Knight, 1996; Schwarz & Westerheijden, 2004; Vroeijenstijn, 1995). It has been part of the academic tradition. As Trow (1999) and Brennan and Shah (2000) suggest, universities and other institutions of higher education have always possessed mechanisms for assuring the quality of their work. However, Brennan and Shah (2000) argue that many of these mechanisms concerned the quality of people. These included the qualifications necessary for students to gain admission and subsequently to gain a degree and the qualifications necessary to be appointed to an academic post or to achieve promotion to professor. In Europe, until approximately the 1960s or 1970s, this way of ensuring the quality of higher education was fairly successful due to commitment to the culture of excellence (Schwarz & Westerheijden, 2004).

However, due to changes in the world, governments and society at large started doubting the existence of this commitment to the culture of excellence. Therefore, quality assurance as a separate instrument in university management and in government policy started in the 1970s and 1980s, when it was discovered as a new management tool in industry mimicking the success of the Japanese economy (Schwarz & Westerheijden, 2004). As discussed in Chapter 2, higher education in the USA was influenced first, followed by higher education in Western Europe.

Among academics the rise of quality assurance with evaluation and accreditation activities as a policy instrument was interpreted as indicating a decrease in the trust in society that higher education delivered the goods without giving special attention to it (Trow, 1996). This lack of trust, as Barnett (1992) suggests, was partially contributed by governments' renewed interest in the expansion of their higher education systems and diminishing unit costs as one means of funding the expansion. However, as Barnett further suggests, there is a possible conflict of interest between expansion and diminishing unit costs (see Figure 4.1 below). The pull in the directions of both expansion and the squeezing of resources causes doubts about the quality of the system's products. Therefore, one critical question that emerges is whether it is possible to have both greater numbers and lower unit costs while maintaining quality.
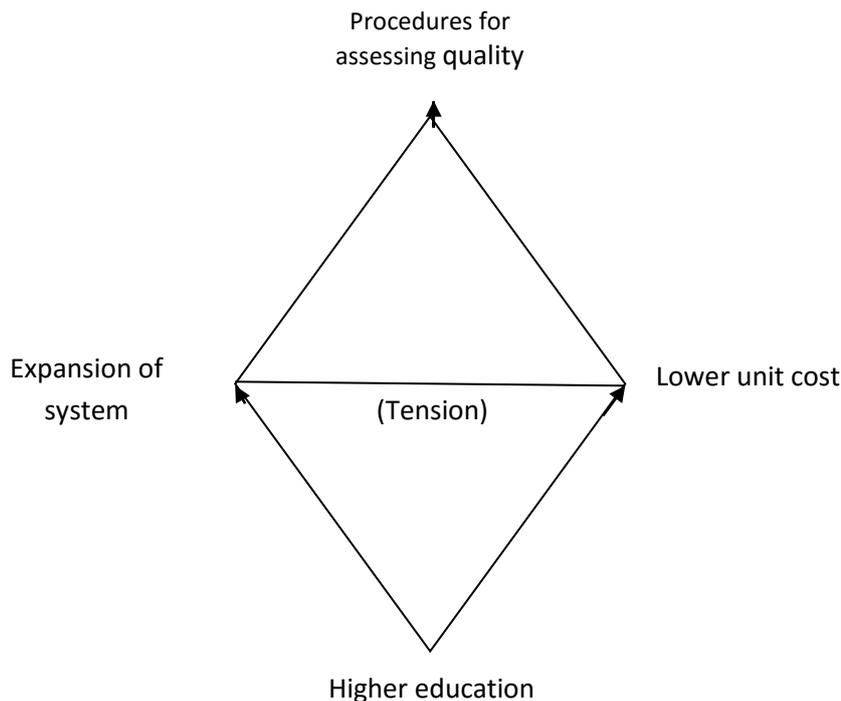
Figure 4.1: A suggested quality gap in higher education (Barnett, 1992:2)

The concern for quality in higher education comes from several angles (Brennan & Shah, 2000; Frazer, 1992; Schwarz & Westerheijden, 2004; Vroeijenstijn, 1995) and its manifestations and the reasons for introducing quality assurance measures vary from country to country – depending on the culture and history of the country and its state of economic development (Frazer,1994). Concerning Central and Eastern Europe, for example, Westerheijden and Sorensen (1999) highlighted the main purposes of introducing quality assurance policies as follows:

- Transformation of higher education curricula to eradicate Marxist-Leninist dogma
- Rapid expansion to accommodate tremendous excess demand for higher education (reflecting the needs of post-industrial societies in combination with the elite character of higher education systems)
- Much freer entry into higher education markets than previously
- The change of relationship between the state and higher education institutions: the state retreated from its former strict central control, which led to extremely decentralised higher education systems.

85

Materu (2007) identified the main factors that drove the push to quality assurance in higher education in Africa as: (a) rapid growth of tertiary enrolment, which did not match with an increase in funding; (b) demands for increased transparency and accountability due to cost-sharing schemes, which were introduced to supplement insufficient government subventions; (c) inadequacy of traditional academic controls to address new challenges; (d) rise of new methods of delivery (such as open and distance education) due to advances in information and communication technologies, which rendered tertiary education borderless; (e) increased competition and shorter cycles; (f) increasing regional collaboration, which enhanced students' and workers' mobility; (g) strategies for the retention of skilled human capital, as most emigrants initially were attracted abroad by the quality and status attached to tertiary institutions abroad; and (h) the rapid growth of private higher education institutions.

Some of these reasons are given by Frazer (1994) as general reasons. Frazer (1994) outlines them as (a) concerns from governments and taxpayers (including employers) about rising costs and priority to higher education within the long list of other socially desirable activities; (b) effectiveness, as in many countries the expansion of higher education did not bring the prosperity promised; (c) the view by the majority that higher education was a hidden reassure for personal development; and (d) the lowering of national barriers by political change, massive increase in travel and the electronic communications revolution.

Vroeijenstijn (1995) suggests that the move from the people approach to more explicit attention has been caused by the outside world. To support his view, Vroeijenstijn (1995) cites several factors, including (a) the shift from elite to mass higher education, which caused governments to intervene to ensure that increased enrolment is not done at the expense of quality; (b) change in the relationship between higher education and society, such as the labour market; (c) student exchange and international cooperation; (d) governments assigning themselves a strong steering role in the development of higher education through detailed regulations; and (e) maximisation of the use of few resources available (Vroeijenstijn, 1995:2–4).

As a result of lack of trust, as pointed out by Guthrie (1995) and Vidovich and Slee (2001), governments could no longer afford to leave higher education institutions to their own traditional practices of self-regulation. With the exception of the USA, an increase in the power and influence of the state over higher education became an international trend. Several models depicting the influence of state were developed. In 1993, Van Vught and Westerheijden developed a general model of quality assessment with the following elements: (a) existence of a national co-coordinating body, (b) institutional self-evaluation, (c) external evaluation, and (d) published reports. From this general model, there were variant models depending on who assesses what, how and how often (Brennan & Shah, 2000).

However, as stated by Maasen and Coete (2002), the role of higher education institutions reflects a constellation of interests voiced by different interest groups. These include government, professional bodies, employers, students and civil society. Vroeijenstijn (1995), for example, indicates that government has a number of motives behind quality assessment. These include (a) its constitutional obligation, as it is called to account to parliament; (b) finding out the extent to which its aims are being realised in achieving mass education or regarding the role of universities in technological development; and (c) demonstrating to society and parliament in particular that it is in control of higher education. On the other hand, the market-related point of view emphasises labour market demands, which include the commodification of education, profit maximisation and institutional efficiency (Maasen & Cloete, 2002).

4.3 The dynamics of quality assessment

Brennan and Shah (2000) observe that the way in which quality assessment is organised and managed is a question of power. They argue that the introduction of systems of quality assessment frequently involves changing the balance of power between institutional and system levels. The following sub-section further considers the relationship between quality assessment and the questions of power within higher education and programme evaluation in particular.

4.3.1 Improvement and accountability

Harvey, (2007) differentiates between 'improvement' purpose and 'accountability' purpose by indicating that the improvement purpose (sometimes also referred to as enhancement), is less about constraint and more about the encouragement of adjustment and change. Thus, the improvement function of quality assurance procedures is normally about encouraging institutions to reflect upon their practices, with a view to enabling a process of continuous improvement of the learning process and the range of outcomes.

On the other hand, accountability is about institutions taking responsibility for the service they provide and the public money they spend. Harvey (2007) asserts that accountability has been the dominant underlying rationale for introducing quality evaluation. According to Harvey, higher education in most countries has to demonstrate its worth and to account for its use of public resources in the face of competition for state funds. This notion of accountability is compatible with the value-for-money definition of quality.

The debate on improvement and accountability in higher education is a common topic (Barnett, 1999; de Vries, 1997; Frazer, 1994; Harvey & Knight, 1996). Frazer (1994) summarised the sources of debate on accountability, and this is depicted in Figure 4.2 below. However, it is worth noting that that contrary to what the figure indicates, in practice there is no linear relationship among stakeholders. Thus Frazer's model presented is only meant to summarise sources of debate on accountability.
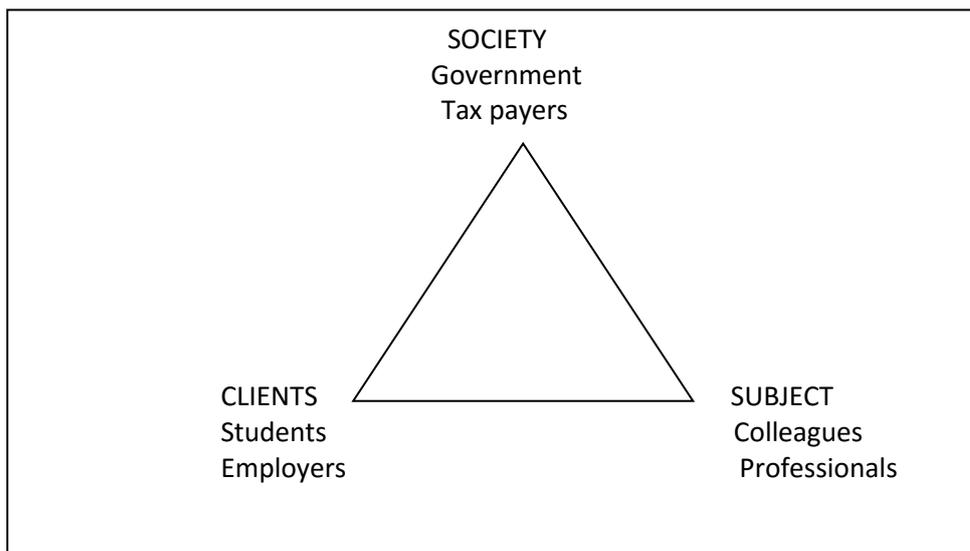
Figure 4.2: A triangle of accountability in higher education (Frazer, 1994:103)

Prominent issues discussed in debates on improvement and accountability include assessment procedures, comparison across institutions, assessors and assessment criteria (Barnett, 1992). As Luckett (2006) suggests, on the one hand, there are those experts who suggest that the two concepts are contradictory and even mutually exclusive and therefore cannot be the goals of the same quality assurance system. Barnett (1999) is an example of those who adopts this position. He argues that it is difficult for a single evaluation to do justice to both sets of ideas (improvement and accountability) at once, because they are mutually exclusive descriptions of possible evaluation purposes and methodologies. Other proponents of this point of view are Harvey and Knight (1996). However, unlike Barnett, these two authors adopt a weaker position by admitting that there might be the possibility for accountability measures to result in short-term improvement as a by-product. However, they negate the possibility of accountability measures to have a long-term impact.

On the other hand, there are those experts who argue that although in tension, it is possible to hold the two purposes together. Vroeijenstijn (1995) is an example of the proponents of the second position. Vroeijenstijn argues that emphasis on continuous improvement can deliver accountability as a by-product. Therefore, for him, external quality assessment has two purposes: improvement and accountability (Vroeijenstijn,

1995:33). In order to fulfil these two purposes, he considers managing the quality assurance process as being like navigating between two extremes. He cautions that when one aims only at improvement, the system will be shipwrecked against the 'Scylla' (improvement) because the outside stakeholders will ask for accountability and design their own external quality assurance system (Vroeijenstijn, 1995). On the other hand, if accountability is stressed too much, the system will disappear in the 'Charybdis' (accountability), because improvement will be hindered or even made impossible. However, Vroeijenstijn (1995) admits that reconciling the two purposes in one system is a challenging undertaking.

As an extension to the debate, Harvey (1999) views external quality assurance as carrying governments' political agendas. He therefore adds a third purpose to the two discussed above of compliance with government agendas. Harvey (1999) suggests that in the compliance model, quality assurance serves as a means of increasing state control over the academy and as a means of enforcing compliance with particular government demands. Harvey's position suggests that it may be possible (although very difficult) to design a model of quality assurance that includes both improvement and accountability dimensions, provided that accountability and compliance motivations do not dominate.

Luckett (2006) presents another reinforcing perspective on the improvement-accountability debate, according to Habermas (1996), who provided a political-philosophical framework for the problem of law making and law enforcement in modern democracies. Creatively, Luckett blended Habermas's works of the theory of communicative action (1984), the distinction between communicative action and strategic action (1987) and the discourse theory of law and democracy (1996) to produce an analogue that can be applied in the higher education quality assurance process. As interpreted by Luckett (2006), in his *Theory of communicative action* Habermas (1984) suggests that social coordination is effected through language (i.e. discourse). Habermas (1984) asserts that an 'ideal speech' situation is based on four assumptions: (a) that members of a discourse community share a common understanding of the meaning of words, phrases, and so forth; (b) that they consider themselves rationally accountable; (c) that they assume when they reach a mutually agreed resolution that this is based on a defensible argument that will not

subsequently be proven to be false or mistaken; and (d) that if any of these conditions are shown not to have been met, this is sufficient grounds for re-opening the discussion.

Later, Habermas (1987) made a distinction between communicative action, where social coordination and agreements are reached communicatively by meeting the conditions spelt out above, and strategic action. The latter occurs when one party tries to force its will on another through bargaining, threats or promises. Habermas suggests that capitalist markets operate via strategic action using a medium of money, while bureaucratic administrations do so via the medium of power. Both media are non-linguistic. Habermas also points out that reaching agreements communicatively (as opposed to strategic bargaining or coercive enforcement) requires background consensus on a large number of matters that are unproblematic for members of both parties. In other words, the 'lifeworld' background, which is built on shared identities, cultural and intellectual resources, and so on, is a significant factor in enabling communicative action.

However, as interpreted by Luckett (2006), Habermas (1996) suggests that in modern societies, the conditions for reaching background consensus are diminishing. This has led to a process of 'societal rationalisation', in which there is a need to reach explicit agreement on issues (such as the quality of undergraduate programme), whereas in the past, the more homogeneous nature of societies allowed these to remain implicit. Habermas's analysis of modern democracies points out a paradoxical duality in modern law, namely a tension between facts (facticity) and norms (validity). Facts are commands backed by threats or compulsory laws backed by sanctions, while norms are laws or standards that embody a claim to legitimacy and are based on an appeal to reason that all citizens (ideally) find acceptable (Habermas, 1996).

Habermas explains that law is constituted by this tension between facticity and validity and that all democratic legal systems need to hold both these elements in tension. He aims to produce a theory of law that situates the idealizing character of validity claims in concrete social contexts'. For him, the challenge is to maintain the tension between the context-transcending claims of reason and the always-limited contexts in which human reason must play its trade. In answer to the question, How

91

is a legitimate system of law (for the purpose of this study, 'system of programme evaluation') possible?, Habermas suggests that norms are only valid and legitimate if they are agreed to through rational discourse by those who must comply with the system and carry its costs. As Luckett (2006) suggests, this is linked to the idea of self-determination and ownership.

Max Weber (cited in Finch, 1999) distinguishes between 'naked power' and 'legitimate authority'. In Weber's terms, organisations that have genuine power possess the ability to pursue their aims despite the resistance of the others. Brannan and Shah (2000) argue that most national quality assurance agencies have such power. This power, as Brannan and Shah (2000) continue to argue, is derived from the state and is linked to the exercise of state power through legislation and state funding. Internally, the managements of higher education institutions also possess 'naked power', although there remain considerable variations between institutions and countries. However, Weber (cited in Finch, 1999) believes that a stable society could not be based on the exercise of a naked power. This is because decisions made on this way would tend to be resisted or subverted. What is necessary is the conversion of a naked power into legitimate authority. Arguably, in higher education, legitimacy is commonly thought to be achieved through adherence to values and standards that are part of the cultures of academic disciplines (Becher, 1989; Kogan, 1992).

In 2010 Harvey and Williams (2010a) summarised the contribution of scholars on the accountability-improvement debate as follows:

- Middlehurst and Woodhouse (1995) addressed the question of whether or not it is desirable, feasible or stable to combine the functions of quality improvement and accountability in national arrangements for quality assurance in higher education. They argued that, while it is possible to specialise a system towards improvement, it is not possible to have a separate system solely for accountability, as it will inevitably overlap into improvement. They concluded that improvement and accountability must be conceptually and practically distinct, with separate resourcing thus a clear understanding and respect for the separate purposes needs to be developed within both national agencies and institutions. According to these authors, a

failure to accommodate different purposes could damage the quality and the integrity of higher education by leading to serious imbalances of power.

- Thune (1996) argued that accountability and improvement are often conceived as mutually exclusive goals of evaluation, which are based on different methods related to the ownership of the evaluation system. However, the character of the process is different from, and independent of, control. He concluded that accountability and quality improvement may be combined in a balanced strategy and, in the Danish case, these two perspectives have been synthesised in a dual approach, with an emphasis on improvement.

- Using Deming's approach to quality in the industrial sector as a basis for analysis of quality assurance development in the USA, the UK and the Netherlands, Dill (1995) suggested that quality assurance policies are more effective in contributing to improvement when they foster the development of 'social capital', both within and between academic institutions.

- Danø and Stensaker (2007) maintained that the role and function of external quality assurance is of great importance for the development of an internal quality culture in higher education. External quality assurance can stimulate but also create obstacles for institutional improvement. To strike a balance between improvement and accountability is, therefore, a key issue.

Harvey and Williams (2010) concluded that many agencies have failed to develop an appropriate balance, often failing to accommodate improvement and prioritising accountability. An essential element of that is the apparent dissolution of trust: an issue that recurs. Despite scholarly contributions suggesting how a balance could be achieved, the overall tenor of the contributions was that external quality evaluations of whatever type were not particularly good at encouraging improvement, especially when they had a strong accountability brief.

4.4 The assessment of undergraduate programme quality

Based on the fact that quality involves issues of power and values, Luckett (2006) suggests a conceptual framework for analysing quality assurance systems in higher education. This framework captures the answers to the following questions: (a) Who

decides what counts as quality?, (b) Who decides what the criteria or measures of quality should be?, (c) Who owns the quality system?, (d) For whom is the evaluation done? In developing this framework, Luckett drew on the works of Harvey and Knight (1996), Barnett (1999) and Trow (1999). Luckett suggests that the proposed framework can be applied at national level, institutional level as well as at programme level.

While adopting Brennan and Shah's (2000) ideas of quality values, renamed 'rationalities', Luckett (2006) developed new categories for her study, which I have adopted and applied to the current study. However, Luckett reminds us of Barnett's (1999) cautions that the grid has only general analytic value and that it cannot replace in-depth case studies of particular quality assurance systems, which will not always fall neatly in one of the quadrants. The proposed framework as adopted from Luckett (2006) gives four quadrants that can be used to classify and explain different conceptualisations of quality and different approaches to and methods of the quality assurance of programmes in higher education. These quadrants are labelled as (a) collegial rationality, (b) managerial rationality, (c) facilitative rationality, and (d) bureaucratic rationality (see Figure 4.3).

Luckett (2006) explains that the use of the term 'rationality' indicates that these are ways of thinking about quality assurance that lead to different approaches being adopted. Luckett (2006) suggests that in many cases these ways of thinking can be traced back to particular discourses, orders of discourses and ideologies. For example, managerialism can be viewed as an ideology that is widely adhered to in both higher education and government. Collegiality may also be viewed as a set of ideas that have evolved around the nature of the academic profession. The facilitative rationality in Quadrant 3 of Figure 4.3 is not linked to any particular ideology, and exists outside of academic practice.

As adopted from Luckett's work, the two axes of the framework are labelled 'power and control' and 'purpose' respectively. The horizontal axis seeks to plot the power relations that are set up by the quality assurance system. This seeks to answer the questions: (a) Who is in control of the evaluation? (Who initiates it?), (c) Who owns it? and (d) Is the ownership held by people internal or external to the academic community? The two poles of this axis indicate whether control of the quality

assurance system lies inside or outside of the academic community. Where the control is within the academic community, the ownership of the evaluation remains in the hands of academics or academic managers. Where power and control are located externally, it means that the evaluation is controlled by people or bodies external to the institution, such as a government agency or professional council.

The vertical axis labelled 'purpose' seeks to plot the purpose of the quality assurance system to answer the questions: (a) who is to be enlightened by the evaluation system? and, crucially, (b) Who designs it and who determines the evaluation criteria? Barnett (cited in Luckett, 2006) suggests that this axis captures the answer to the question; To what extent is the self-understanding of those being evaluated enhanced as a result of the evaluation process? He states that the vertical axis is based on an embedded premise, namely that enlightenment is maximised when it is self-generated and minimised when other-generated.

In addition, Luckett drew from Habermas's work (1987) and named the positive pole of the vertical axis 'communicative action'. This refers to social action oriented towards mutual understanding in which participants are treated as genuine persons (as subjects rather than objects). According to Luckett (2006), the positive pole can also be labelled as 'transformative' based on Harvey and Knight's (1996) work. The negative pole on the 'purpose' axis is labelled 'strategic action' to convey the instrumental character of evaluation that is carried out for the purposes of 'enlightening' an authority or a third party (usually the state) for purposes that lie outside of the teaching and learning process. Again, Luckett drew from Habermas's (1996) discourse theory of law, where the use of the term 'strategic action' means the procedurally regulated bargaining that is necessary in democratic will formation in order to take into account the concerns of different interest groups. In Luckett's (2006) words, certain forms of quality assurance have evolved to take into account the concerns and interests of a wide range of stakeholders such as governments, management and professionals as well as students and academics. As argued in quality assurance literature, these different groups have competing interests in higher education and they are not necessarily committed to communicative action to achieve them. Therefore, Luckett (2006) suggests that quality assurance approaches at the strategic action end of the purpose axis are concerned with generating

findings that serve the interests and purposes of 'other' systems or interests that are not part of the educational process itself. These other stakeholders could be internal managers or decision makers, or they could be external professional bodies or state agencies. The framework places 'accountability' as the most likely purpose of evaluation at the strategic pole of the purpose axis and 'improvement' as the most likely purpose of evaluation at the communicative pole.

Luckett (2006) indicates that the conceptual weight of the four quadrants is uneven because quality assurance in Quadrant 3 tends to give external support and validation to evaluation that is based internally in Quadrant 1, while evaluation carried out in Quadrant 2 tends to be internally managed in order to meet quality assurance requirements that are based externally in Quadrant 4. Therefore, the 'deep-structure' or 'inherent contradiction' in quality assurance practice identified by Barnett, Harvey and Knight, and Vroeijenstijn really lies between quadrants 1 and 4. These tensions become more explicit when viewed as the perspectives of different stakeholders in defining the quality of undergraduate programmes.
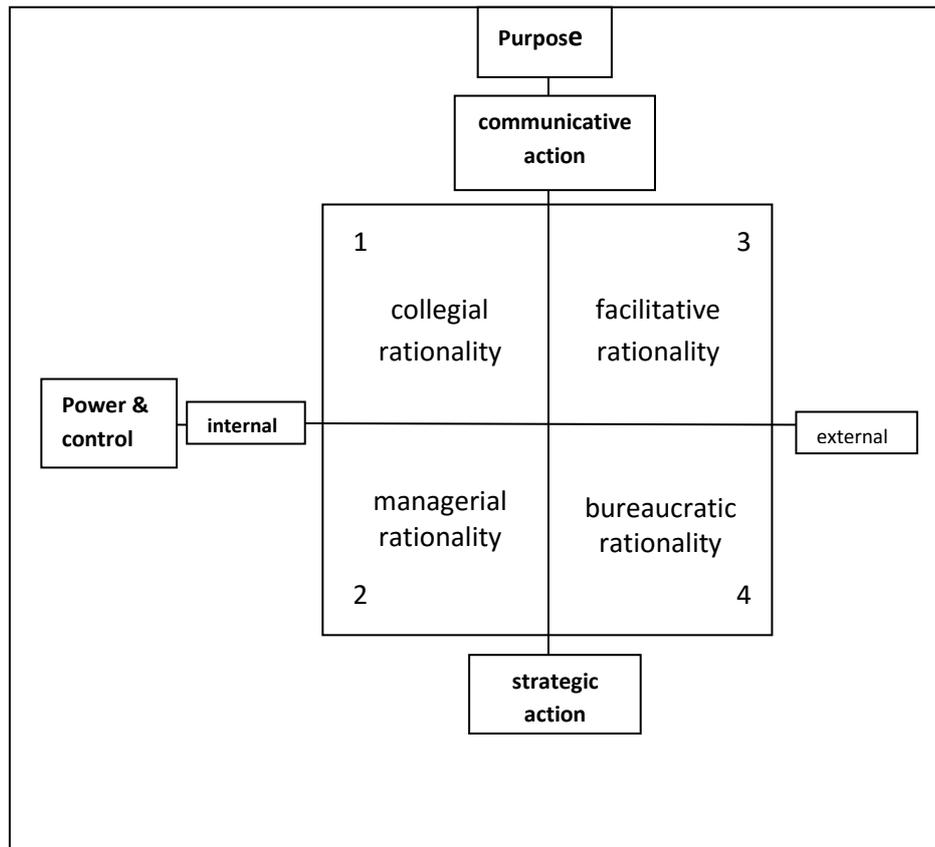
Figure 4.3: A conceptual framework for analysing quality assurance systems (Luckett, 2006:26)

4.4.1 Quadrant 1: Collegial rationality

Quality assurance in Quadrant 1 is based on collegial rationality. This means that it is conducted within the norms and values of communities of scholars. Traditionally, the key value in academia is the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake (the epistemic interest). Other traditional collegial values include academic integrity, reasonableness, tolerance, respect for other persons, discursive freedom, shared decision making by a collegial group and conservation of the realm of specialised knowledge. The purpose of this type of quality assurance is the enlightenment of academics, ideally, in order for them to understand better, learn more about their teaching practices and, as professionals, determine how to improve, so that students learn better. The academic teaching staff is therefore the primary audience for the findings of the evaluation. The method mostly used in this model of quality assurance would be self-evaluation, although it may be linked to external validation

and fed into internal audit. In some cases a middle manager, such as the head of a department (HoD) or head of a school, may initiate the evaluation and receive the results, with academic peers from other institutions validating the findings. Models of quality assurance found in Quadrant 1 are typically controlled and owned internally and locally. Therefore, it would be the academic teaching staff (probably with their HoD) who would initiate and design the evaluation of their programme (or department) and determine the criteria for making context-specific judgements about its quality. Given the elitist approach of this model, Luckett (2006) suggests that the definition of quality that sits most comfortably is 'quality as exceptional' or 'excellence'.

Although collegialism remains an important value and ideal in most higher education institutions, Kogan (2002:59) points out that it exists only in mixed or diluted forms, in tension with hierarchical, competitive and bureaucratic systems. A key criticism of this type of evaluation is that quality criteria, while understood tacitly within the academic community, may remain implicit and therefore opaque to outsiders. Therefore, the findings and results of the evaluation may not be sufficiently explicit and evident to outsiders. Finally, the model assumes that all academics are motivated by professional pride and that they care about students and the status and reputation of their department or university. However, this is not always the case. This means that while catering well for the improvement purpose of quality assurance, this model on its own is unlikely to meet accountability requirements.

As an extension to the notion of collegialism, Harvey and Knight (1996:71) distinguish between two types: 'cloisterism' and the 'new collegialism'. They define cloisterism as a type of collegialism that embodies a conservative reassertion of academic autonomy and freedom. It emphasises the absolute right of the collegial group to make decisions that relate to academic matters. This type of collegialism is more evident in research-dominated universities that hence tend to prioritise research over teaching. Academics who subscribe to cloisterism are typically not particularly interested in improving their teaching and view activities such as programme self-assessment as an extra burden that takes away their scarce research time. Harvey and Knight (1996) criticise cloisterism for being inward-looking and elitist.

In contrast, the new collegialism proposed by Harvey and Knight (1996) sees the collegial group as the forum for academic decision making, but is willing to broaden that group to allow discourse and negotiation with other stakeholders, including students. The proposed new collegialism emphasises accountable professional expertise rather than unbreakable academic integrity. Unlike cloisterism, this is outward-looking and responsive to changing circumstances. It is self-critical and concerned with continually improving its processes and practices rather than being content with traditional modes of functioning. They value teamwork and embrace a quality culture of continuous improvement. Academics who subscribe to this new collegialism tend to be found in middle-range undergraduate teaching institutions. Luckett (2006) suggests that this new collegialism is likely to be located closer to pedagogic and managerial rationalities and may make alliances with these interests.

4.4.2 Quadrant 2: Managerial rationality

Models and practices for quality assurance of teaching and learning in Quadrant 2 are based on managerial rationality. As Luckett (2006) posits, this idea includes faith in good management as the key factor in the productivity of successful organisations. The practice involves establishing mission statements, strategic planning, institutional framing of academic work, power shifts from senates to councils, and growing multi-centred management and administration. Kogan (2002) defines managerialism in education as the shift in power from senior academics and their departments to the central institution and the dominance of systems over academic values, resulting, in part, from an institution's need to meet new demands with fewer resources. According to Barnett (2003), this is a pragmatic political and economic reasoning that works in the best interests of the institution. Higher education managers exercise managerial authority when they impose decisions on the academic community that are based on non-academic criteria. Academic managers make decisions on the basis of institutional rather than academic criteria and present issues as technical problems, focusing on the means while ignoring their ends. Managerialism often embraces a culture of performance and calculation borrowed from the private sector. Senior managers emphasise a shared vision, generic approaches and similar treatments to functions such as quality assurance, staff development and teaching and learning. This usually involves the standardisation of procedures and their documentation, in which it is assumed that

all academic practices can be made explicit, measured against generalised performance indicators, evaluated and rewarded in a manner that encourages individualism and destroys collegiality.

The purpose of quality assurance in Quadrant 2 is to enlighten senior management, to inform them of how well the goals for the institution are being achieved, and to enable them to become more effective and efficient. Control over the evaluation is typically located at senior management level and usually devolved to middle-management levels. The focus of this type of evaluation is on the institution as a whole and senior managers are the primary audience. This model of quality assurance is owned by higher education senior managers, who typically initiate institution-wide quality management systems as part of their institutional management strategy, using quality assurance as a lever of control or change. In many cases senior managers are obliged to do this because of accountability requirements placed on them to report to government agencies. The model of evaluation is commonly that of pragmatic evaluation, which ensures that the evaluation is useful to decision makers. Evaluation methods are usually goal-based and summative in orientation. This means that the criteria for evaluation are usually management's goals and objectives, which are typically linked to institutional missions and goals and are common across the institution. In this model, quality is defined as fitness for purpose. The most common method to do this is to begin with self-evaluation, to have the findings validated by external peers and then to use the findings for summative purposes. The evaluation criteria are usually determined by management in consultation with quality assurance experts, although they are often ratified by academic decision-making bodies such as senates. These quality assurance systems are usually run by the institutional quality assurance experts, using the expertise of external peers for judgements. Luckett (2006) suggests that, depending on how this is done, these evaluations may be perceived by academics on the ground as more or less alienating and threatening. In some cases, Quadrant 1-type self-evaluation are ring-fenced and as far as possible kept formative and supportive at sub-unit levels, with only generalised and sanitised results being combined for institutional reporting and summative decision-making purposes. However, according to Trow (1999), if they feed off type 1 self-evaluations, Quadrant 2-type evaluations tend to undermine them. This is because their results are linked

directly to internal decision making and may be linked to promotions and allocation of resources. Definitions of quality that fit in this quadrant are quality as fitness for purpose in relation to institutional mission and perhaps quality as perfection or consistency. These definitions of quality are compatible with managerial rationality, because they focus on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the institution as a whole. Managerial rationality usually views students as clients or customers.

Kogan (2002) suggests that in the process power shifts from senior academics and their departments to central management, causing institutional and system values to dominate over academic values. Gordon (2002) indicates that the shift to managerial authority in higher education also undermines the traditional idea of leadership by emphasising hard managerial and entrepreneurial skills. These shifts include the monitoring of academic work through the establishment of institutional quality management systems, which are believed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of institutions as organisations, usually in response to pressure from governments and other external pressures, such as funding requirements, competition and expansion.

4.4.3 Quadrant 3: Facilitative rationality

In this quadrant the external authority includes its own agenda to that of the academic community. In other words, as Luckett (2006) suggests, the external authority is prepared simply to facilitate the quality assurance process that occur in Quadrant 1 by arranging for them to be externally authorised and validated and by aiming to provide expertise and useful feedback to the academics concerned. In the process, the external agent may also play a supportive role to institutional management by assisting to systemise and institutionalise quality assurance and by providing constructive feedback to them on institutional quality assurance systems. The external agency would recognise and adhere to the principle that evaluation and improvement have to be self-generated to be meaningful. According to Trow (1999), the external agency could also become a repository for educational innovation and expertise, which it could disseminate through this advisory role.

Therefore, quality assurance models in Quadrant 3 are owned and controlled externally but are improvement-oriented, because they aim to facilitate and support Quadrant 1-type self-evaluation and self-improvement (Luckett, 2006). Because they

are facilitative, the criteria used to measure quality would be owned internally – either negotiated with those to be evaluated or left to the insiders to determine – and this could happen at either institutional or programme level. A typical method of evaluation in this quadrant is the external audit, where the external agency validates the internal quality management system, but does not make judgements about quality *per se*. In other words, it ensures that the institution has its own means of judging and improving quality effectively, but does not presume to impose its own criteria for quality or to make quality judgement itself. In this model of quality assurance, the evaluators are typically expert peers who operate on behalf of the external agency but are also trusted and respected, and whose appointment is usually approved by the evaluated. The outcomes of the evaluation are neither punitive nor linked to resource allocation. The evaluation report is often confidential or the extent of its publication is negotiated with the evaluated institutional decision makers. Luckett (2000) suggests that an important characteristic of a truly facilitative external quality assurance agency is its concern to be focused and efficient. It avoids over-burdening hard-pressed academics with paper work and time-consuming bureaucratic quality assurance demands.

Quality assurance models in Quadrant 3 are most commonly driven by governments or professional bodies, but Harvey and Knight (1996) point out that market-driven models that evaluate customer satisfaction would also be applicable here. For example, client/customer satisfaction surveys such as graduate surveys, graduate destination surveys and employer on the employability of students would all be examples of market-driven quality assurance processes that indirectly measure the quality of teaching and learning. These may be initiated by external bodies, or run as collaborative efforts, but with a view to informing and improving the educational provision of the higher education institution concerned. However, control over the curriculum would always remain firmly in the hands of the academics involved.

The definition of quality most likely to be adopted in models of quality assurance that fall in Quadrant 3 is fitness for purpose, with the purpose of the institution or programme being defined by insiders and the external agency simply assuring that the self-defined purposes are being attained. Under certain conditions, it is possible for quality assurance in this quadrant to support quality as transformation, leading to genuine improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

4.4.4 Quadrant 4: Bureaucratic rationality

Under bureaucratic rationality the authority on which the quality assurance is based is institutional or bureaucratic, such as the evaluators being authorised by state power. Norms and values applied are those related to governance and control, such as administrative efficiency and system-building priorities. Quadrant 4 is interested in setting up rule-based systems that can produce evaluation findings that can be considered 'scientific', value-free, generalisable and comparative. This means that bureaucratic rationality tends to be context-insensitive and accept cross-context judgements as unproblematic. Bureaucratic rationality is not very interested in dialogue and deliberations. Its main concern is to 'get the job done' across the system. The purposes of evaluation are often accountability and compliance. They reflect the interests and values of the external quality assurance agency and the government to which it reports. Quality assurance in this quadrant is typically initiated by government. As argued by Harvey and Knight (1996), this type of external quality monitoring is typically driven by governments that use quality assurance as a vehicle for generating government-defined change and for 'steering' institutions to meet their short-term policy imperatives. The revival of the EAC deserves to be mentioned as an example. These interests feed into the external agency's definitions of standardised criteria by which quality is to be measured uniformly across the higher education system. This corresponds to what the IUCEA did in the referred pilot project. One of the objectives was to have comparability of undergraduate university programmes in the region. According to Barnett (2003), when this happens, the quality project becomes ideologically invested.

The quality assurance model based on bureaucratic rationality is typically controlled by a government-appointed agency that usually has independent legal status but is funded by government. Typically, the functions of such agencies are to assure minimum quality thresholds, enforce efficiency requirements and evaluate and monitor institutions and programmes in order to inform government decisions on funding and planning and provide information to students and the market. In compliance mode, quality assurance findings are sometimes used to ascertain the extent to which government policy goals have been achieved. Typical evaluation methods used are institutional audits of quality management systems, accreditation

of individual institutions and programmes, evaluation of research, national subject or discipline reviews and external examination of students.

Standardised criteria are used to measure performance and accountability across a system with a focus on inputs, outputs and outcomes. If the approach uses internal evaluation first, the threat of subsequent external judgement tends to force these into a defensive as opposed to an open and honest mode, thereby limiting their potential for improvement. The key difference between methods of quality assurance in quadrants 3 and 4 is that in the latter the criteria and standards for quality assurance are pre-determined and prescribed by the external agency in order to attain generalisable and comparable results. This undermines more interpretative self-evaluation methods that become based on the need to provide evidence for meeting these externally defined criteria.

According to Trow (1999), this means that the self-evaluation tends to be 'other-directed' and therefore persuasive and defensive rather than open and honest. In this model, self-evaluation reports are often compiled by full-time quality assurance experts under the supervision of institutional decision makers and as such can become remote from life in the classroom. Models of quality assurance of teaching and learning in this quadrant often view students as customers or clients and the expert peers appointed and trained by the external agency to undertake external evaluations are often defined very broadly to mean other higher education stakeholders such as employers or professionals (as well as the disciplinary peers recognised by academics). Peer review is based primarily on the use of standardised criteria as opposed to professional judgement, with an emphasis on 'neutral' and 'objective' judgement. Peer review therefore serves as a means of legitimating the external quality assurance system within the higher education community. As the model of quality assurance found in Quadrant 4 is not based on the inner motivations and values of academic staff, and represents a shift in the balance of power away from academia and towards the state, Trow (1999) warns that such extremely driven quality assurance processes are often resisted or subverted by academics on the ground. Alternatively, because of the high stakes involved, there is also a counter-tendency for this model to drive academics into a culture of compliance and conformity rather than admit their weaknesses and make genuine improvements.

As rightly portrayed by Brennan and Shah (2000), evaluations that are based on Quadrant 4 tend to threaten the autonomy of institutions and the basic units within them, and in particular the authority tenured on the academic staff. It also has a symbolic force, being seen as a challenge to academic autonomy whether at the individual, institutional or system level. Figure 4.4 visually depicts their stance.
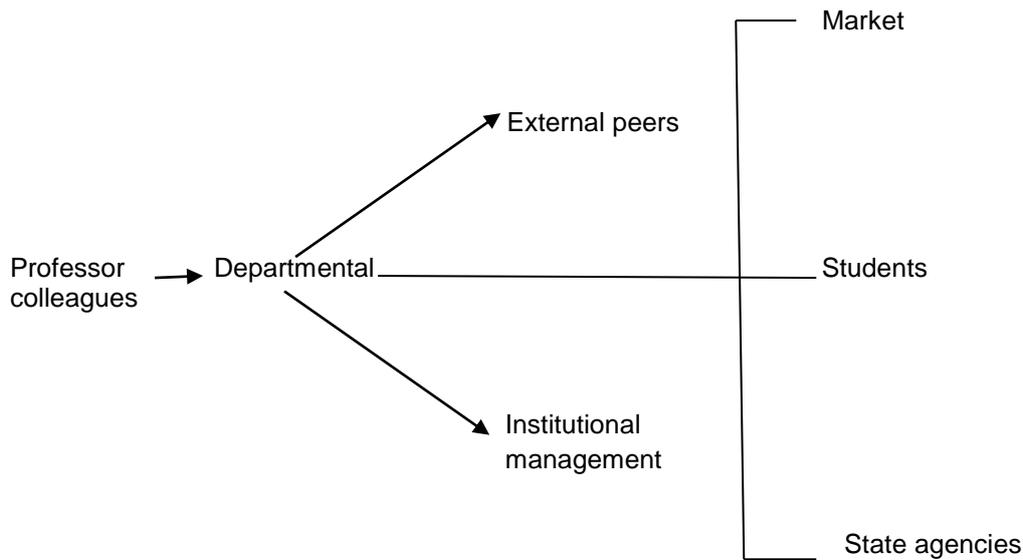
Figure 4.4: Indications of the loss of professorial power (Brennan & Shah, 2000:17)

Definitions of quality that are compatible with this quadrant are quality as fitness of purpose and quality as value for money. Luckett (2006) suggests that the definition of quality as fitness of purpose does not normally stand on its own. It is usually accompanied by value for money or fitness for purpose definitions as well. This is because it does not make sense to assure that an institution's mission accords with government policy without also checking whether the goals of that mission are being achieved. The definition of quality as fitness of purpose is clearly linked to the use of quality assurance by governments to steer institutions towards meeting state-defined purposes and policy agendas for higher education. Meanwhile, the definition of quality as value for money aims to determine whether public funding has been used efficiently and effectively, usually measured via performance and output indicators.

4.5 Conclusion

After scrutinising Luckett's framework and describing approaches to self-evaluation, I realised that viewing programme evaluation, particularly within the context of private universities in Tanzania, may not fall neatly into any one of the four quadrants as Luckett suggested. A close examination of the concepts related to the vertical axis of Figure 4.5 below does not reveal traces of quadrant one or three; which stands for an improvement oriented evaluation. It rather suggests that programme self-evaluation, as contextualised within private universities in Tanzania, may be positioned towards the negative pole of the purpose of evaluation - which emphasises accountability. Since the negative pole on the 'purpose' axis is labelled 'strategic action', it conveys the instrumental character of evaluation that is carried out for the purpose of 'enlightening' institutional managers and external bodies. The use of the label 'strategic action' here corresponds to Habermas' (1996) idea of power to mean the procedurally regulated bargaining that is necessary in democratic will-formation to take into account the concerns of different interest groups. In other words, strategic action justifies forms of quality assurance that take into account the concerns and interests of a wide range of stakeholders such as government, institutional management, professions, as academics and students.

Similarly, the horizontal axis suggests that power and control of evaluation may be more externally located. This means that there may be power shift away from academics as evaluation is increasingly controlled by state regulatory agencies or professional bodies. Evaluation may be initiated by university managers but this is done in compliance to external bodies which determine the evaluation criteria, the definition of quality and the methods of evaluation. In practice, self-evaluation is usually followed by external audit to validate the findings of self-evaluation. Although the audit is conducted by academic peers, these peers are often accountable to the regulatory agencies which assign them the task. In other words, programme peer review may be undertaken to legitimise the external quality assurance system within the higher education community rather than to improve the quality of programmes themselves.

Based on my theoretical and contextual explorations of the phenomenon of programme self-evaluation in Chapter 2 and 3, Figure 4.5 depicts my theoretical understanding of the self-evaluation of undergraduate programmes, especially within the context of in private universities in Tanzania at this point. Such understanding was informed by Luckett's quality evaluation framework and my own background experience as quality assurance officer in Tanzania.
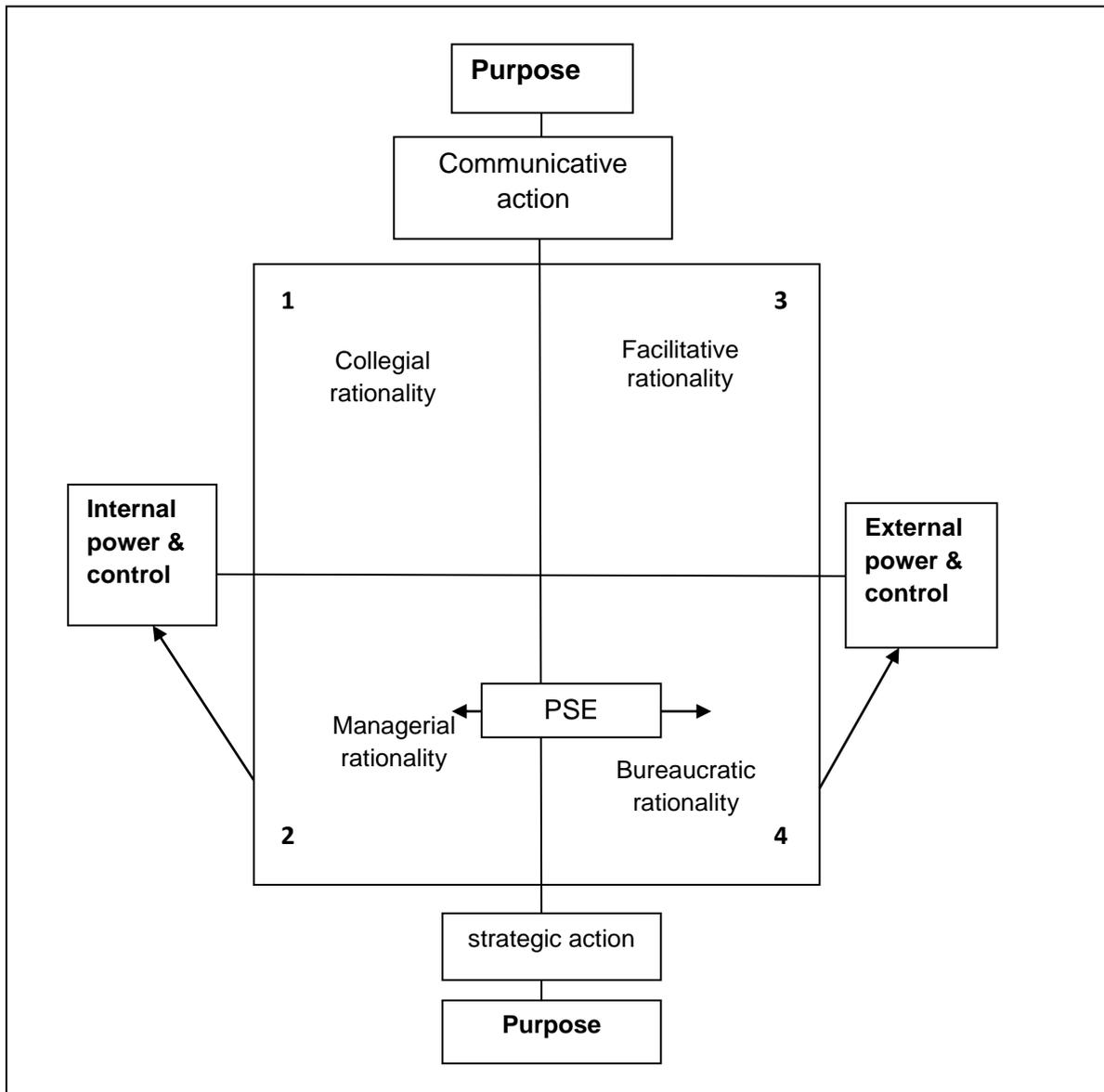
Figure 4.5: A conceptual framework for understanding programme self-evaluation

Figure 4.5 suggests that programme self-evaluation in private universities (in Tanzania) can be seen as conducted under the control of an external agency through institutional managers. In this regard, evaluative communication seems strategic rather than communicative. Even when evaluation is initiated by university managers this may be done in compliance to external bodies which have the power to determine most, if not all, of the characteristics of such evaluations.

For Habermas (1984 and 1987) communicative action entails the establishment or maintenance of a social relationship between two or more individuals. As such actions are meaningful, they will involve some sort of appeal to ordinary language. However, communicative acts do not just communicate information between people. Communicative action can be a way of doing something in the world such as threatening, ordering or promising. Habermas thus identifies three functions that communicative action could perform. It can be used to convey information, to establish social relationship with others and finally to express one's own opinions and feelings.

At its most basic, when one communicates communicatively he/she presupposes that others will understand what that person is doing. First, they will share the same language as he/she does. Second, they understand the external world in much the same way as he/she does. Third, they will share the same social norms and conventions and fourth they will understand his/her self-expression.

Clarifying on the two terms, Edgar (2006) suggests that communicative action is distinguished from strategic action in that the latter does not presuppose the need to establish any shared understandings. In strategic action one simply seeks to manipulate another, without the second person necessarily understanding what is going on, or consenting to it.

Strategic action is a type of social action where one or more participants treats the others as if they were objects, rather than as fellow human beings with whom agreement and mutual understanding should be achieved. In strategic action a person acting strategically does not attempt to have a shared understanding of the world with the other person. He/she coerce the others, so that he/she acts according

to his/her intentions whether or not the other person understands them or agrees with them (Edgar, 2006:144).

According to Habermas (1987) a person acting strategically may also treat the opponent strategically by planning his/her moves according to his/her instrumental predictions of the opponent's responses. He/she will act in such a way that the opponent is forced to make moves against his/her will, while the actor is doing his/her best to conceal his/her intention. This suggests that in much every day interaction, people relate to others not through their meanings of their actions, but rather through their predictability. A consensus is established between people, not after discussion of their world views and motives, but through treating each other as beings who will react predictably react to certain stimuli.

Figure 4.5 suggests that based on Luckett's (2006) conceptual frame work programme self-evaluation in Tanzania takes a 'bureau-managerial' approach. It can be explained by focusing on what takes place in Quadrant 2 and Quadrant 4. In Quadrant 2, which is Managerial Rationality, models and practices for quality assurance of teaching and learning are based on faith in good management as the key factor in the productivity of successful organizations. Power shifts from senior academics and their departments to the central institution. Academic managers make decisions on the basis of institutional rather than academic criteria and present issues as technical problems, focusing on the means whilst ignoring their ends.   . The purpose of quality assurance is to inform senior management about how well the goals for the institution are being achieved. Control of the evaluation is typically located at senior managers who initiates the evaluation. The focus is on the institution as a whole and managers use quality assurance as a lever of control or change. The evaluation criteria are usually determined by management in consultation with quality assurance experts and these criteria are typically linked to institutional missions and goals and are common across the institution. Quality is defined as 'fitness for purpose' in relation to institutional mission, and perhaps 'quality as perfection or consistency'. These definitions of quality are compatible with managerial rationality because they focus on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the institution as a whole. The most common method to do this is to begin with self-evaluation, to have the findings validated by external peers and then to use the findings for summative purposes. These quality assurance systems are

usually run by the institutional quality assurance experts, using the expertise of external peers for judgments. Depending on how this is done, these evaluations may be perceived by academics on the ground as more or less alienating and threatening. Managerial rationality usually views students as clients or customers.

In Quadrant 4, which is Bureaucratic rationality, the evaluators are authorized by state power. Norms and values applied are those related to governance and control such as administrative efficiency and system building priorities. Quadrant 4 is context insensitive as it is interested in setting up rule-based systems that can produce evaluation findings that can be considered 'scientific', value-free, generalisable and comparative. Bureaucratic rationality is not interested in dialogue and deliberations. Its main concern is to 'get the job done' across the system. The purposes of evaluation are often accountability and often compliance. They reflect interests and values of external quality assurance agency and the government to which it reports. Quality assurance in this quadrant is typically initiated by government that uses quality assurance as a vehicle for generating government-defined change and for 'steering' institutions to meet their short term policy imperatives. These interests feed into the external agency's definitions of standardized criteria by which quality is to be measured uniformly across the higher education system. The quality assurance model based on bureaucratic rationality is typically controlled by a government-appointed agency that usually has independent legal status but is funded by the government. Typically the functions of such agencies are to assure minimum quality thresholds, to enforce efficiency requirements, to evaluate and monitor institutions and programmes in order to inform government decisions on funding and planning and provide information to students and the market.

In compliance mode, quality assurance findings are sometimes used to ascertain the extent to which government policy goals have been achieved. Typical evaluation methods used are institutional audit of quality management systems, the accreditation of individual institutions and programmes, the evaluation of research, national subject or discipline reviews and external examination of students. This means that the self-evaluation tends to be 'other-directed' and therefore persuasive and defensive rather than open and honest. Models of quality assurance of teaching

and learning in this quadrant often view students as customers or clients and the expert peers appointed and trained by the external agency to undertake external evaluations are often defined very broadly to mean other higher education stakeholders such as employers or professionals, (as well as the disciplinary peers recognized by academics).   Peer review is based primarily on the use of standardized criteria as opposed by professional judgment, with an emphasis on 'neutral' and 'objective' judgment.   Peer review thus serves as a means of legitimating the external quality assurance system within the higher education community.   Since the model of quality assurance found in Quadrant 4 is not based on the inner motivations and values of academic staff, and represents a shift in the balance of power away from academia and towards the state. Definitions of quality that are compatible with this quadrant are 'quality as fitness of purpose' and 'quality as value for money. The definition of 'quality as fitness of purpose' is clearly linked to the use of quality assurance by governments to steer institutions towards meeting state-defined purposes and policy agendas for higher education.   Meanwhile, the definition of 'quality as value for money' aims to determine whether public funding has been used efficiently and effectively, usually measured via performance and output indicators.

In the next chapter the methodology pursued in the empirical part of the study is outlined.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into six main sections. The first section introduces the chapter by reminding the reader of the research question and purpose of the study. The second section deals with the issue of research design and paradigmatic assumptions that guided the study and justifying the suitability of a case study design in investigating the problem under study. The third section describes the methods employed in data collection, analysis and interpretation. It provides a detailed description of the three methods of data analysis employed in the study, namely document analysis, personal interviews and the use of a Delphi exercise to determine a level of expert consensus. The fourth section focuses on ethical considerations and also how data quality issues such as validity and reliability were addressed. The fifth section discusses the challenges encountered in executing the study to indicate that undertaking research that involves multiple institutions is not an easy or smooth process. The last section concludes the chapter.

As indicated in Chapter 1, the main research aim for this study was to explore how private universities in Tanzania interpret and apply the quality concept in the evaluation of their programmes. This aim was informed by the answering of three sub-questions:

- How do the authors of the self-assessment reports at five private Tanzanian universities perceive programme quality in higher education?

- How do self-assessors' perceptions of programme quality compare to views of programme quality in the IUCEA-DAAD pilot project?

- How can the concept of programme quality be better understood and applied in the Tanzanian private university context?

5.2 Research design and paradigmatic assumptions

The purpose and primary research question of a study determine its design. This study pursued a multiple case study design, which involved five private universities in Tanzania, the state regulatory agency and the IUCEA, which is based in Kampala, Uganda. The empirical part of the study compared the practices both vertically (among the five institutions) and horizontally, that is, between the institutions and the IUCEA-DAAD programme quality project.

Yin (2009) argues in favour of this design due to its ability to generate more powerful analytic conclusions rather than those coming from a single-case study. Merriam (1991) identified, among others, one advantage of the case study as its ability to offer a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon. Flyvbjerg (2011:314) lists the strengths of the case study method as depth, high conceptual validity, understanding of context and process, understanding of what causes a phenomenon, linking causes and outcomes, and fostering new hypotheses and research questions.

Despite the merits described above, Marshall and Rossman (1999) and Yin (2009) argue that using case studies for research purposes involves two main challenges. The first challenge relates to the task of designing a good case study so as to collect, present and analyse data fairly. The second challenge relates to bringing the case study to closure by writing a compelling report. Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggest an additional limitation of case studies, namely that they can oversimplify or exaggerate a situation, leading the reader to erroneous conclusions about the actual state of affairs. In addition, qualitative case studies are limited by the sensitivity and integrity of the investigator. The researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. In this study attempts were made to address these challenges, as later detailed in the methods section (see Section 5.3).

The study is located within an interpretive knowledge paradigm. In this paradigm, there are no absolutes. All phenomena can be studied and interpreted in different ways, mainly because people and situations differ. In addition, realities are not abstract objects, but depend on the inter-subjectivity of people (Burgess, Sieminski &

Arthur, 2006). The key element of interpretivism, as described by Neuman (2011), is that it is defined in terms of human beings creating and maintaining their social world. The reason for the emphasis on the social context is that if stripped from an event, social action or conversation, meaning will be distorted. As shown in Chapter 4, from an interpretivistic point of view, the role of communication and language is fundamental to social life (Burgess et al., 2006). The role of communication and language justifies the unit of analysis of the study, which is the dynamic of undergraduate programme self-evaluation quality as defined by the authors of self-assessment reports.

Shaw (1978, cited in Merriam, 1991:28) indicate that in interpretative case studies researchers are primarily concerned with two things: first, they are interested in the way certain things happen and the natural history of the activity or event under study; and second, researchers are interested in meaning, that is, the way people make sense of their lives, what they experience, the way they interpret these experiences and the way they structure their social world. It assumes that meaning is embedded in people's experiences and mediated through the investigator's own perceptions. In this study I employed document analysis, personal interviews and the Delphi method for data collection. These methods are all sensitive to the contexts from which the data are generated.

5.3 Methodology

Case study research is flexible, as it does not claim any particular methods for data collection or data analysis (Merriam, 1991; Yin, 2009). In the current study, the literature perspectives discussed in Chapter 2 were meant to give a broader understanding of the concepts 'private universities' and 'quality' in higher education. The concepts were discussed alongside other themes, such as perception of quality, evaluation criteria as well as methods of evaluation. These themes shed light on the complexity of the definition and application of the concept of programmatic quality. From Chapter 2 it was also learnt that defining and operationalising quality involves power; hence the focus of this study.

Given the purpose of this study and the unit of analysis identified above (see sections 5.1 and 5.2), it was imperative to use a methodology that emphasises the

experiences of the participants themselves, referring to their actions, thoughts, feelings and perceptions. Therefore, the methods that seemed most appropriate for the research are those associated with triangulation. The study employed a triangulation of methods in data collection involving interviews, document analysis and a Delphi exercise. This methodology permitted me as a researcher to meet the basic requirements of empirical inquiry, including confronting the social context, discovering relations between categories of data, formulation propositions about these relations and organising these propositions into an analytical scheme that others can understand. The main data-collection methods were documentary materials and interviews. The Delphi exercise was used as a secondary method to provide supplementary data. As highlighted in Chapter 1, the findings from the main data-collection methods are presented simultaneously in Chapter 6, and those of the secondary method are reported in Chapter 7.

5.3.1 Development of instruments for data collection

The development of an interview schedule started with a literature review, which assisted me in developing questions based on themes. I then read the key documents that describe the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project as well university education in Tanzania. The questions developed for the interview schedule were meant to explore how private universities define and apply or operationalise the concept of programmatic quality. To develop the Delphi instrumentation, I combined information obtained from the literature review with that from the interviews. The Delphi questionnaire had two sections: perception of quality and programme self-evaluation. The first section had two questions, one closed- and one open-ended. The second section had seven questions, one closed- and six open-ended. The purpose of administering the Delphi questionnaire was to establish whether some measure of consensus could be determined among the Delphi participants on the issues raised in the questionnaire.

5.3.2 Data collection

Data were collected from March 2014 to May 2015. This involved a number of activities, including tracing and reading documents, pilot studies (for the interviews and the Delphi exercise) and the actual data collection. Admittedly, and as proven by the duration of the exercise, the exercise involved a number of high and low points.

The challenges started with the process of securing funds for the project and extended into constantly negotiating bureaucratic procedures.

Accessing documents

Apart from the challenges related to funding and bureaucracy, another challenge was securing documents and accurately identifying the participants of the IUCEA-DAAD project. This challenge was caused by poor documentation systems in the chosen case institutions. There were no records of names of the members of self-evaluation committees who wrote the self-evaluation reports. The quality assurance coordinators (QACs) had to think retrospectively to at least recall the names of the chairpersons of the referred committees. At two institutions the QACs who had participated in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project had vacated their jobs. This necessitated me to spend time to trace them to get the names of members who constituted the self-evaluation committees. I could not obtain this information from their successors. In addition, the final self-evaluation reports as well as peer review reports were not available. Only one institution had those documents readily available. This situation was rather surprising, because a similar problem was reported by a majority of participants in 2008 and 2009. It was expected that as one of the outcomes of institutions participating in the project this situation would have changed. However, as suggested by the interview data (see Section 6.4.2), this was not the case.

Another challenge in relation to document analysis was the time lapse. Early in 2014 I started going through the policy document that was guiding the provision of higher education in Tanzania at that time. Early in 2015 a new policy document on higher education was made public and hence I had to start afresh analysing the current policy document.

Access to data via documentary analysis, interviews and the Delphi exercise was formally granted by the management of the five case universities as well as the state regulatory agency with which I work. Access to the interviewees was assisted by the fact that I was known as an employee of the regulatory agency. The majority of the participants were known from the various activities related to not only the IUCEA-DAAD project, but also accreditation activities in my capacity as a programme accreditation officer. Access to the policy document and the laws guiding the

provision of private university education in Tanzania was unproblematic, as these are available in the public domain (see sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.3).

Access to interview data at the first four universities was granted based on an introduction letter (see Annexure 2) written by the study supervisor. The supervisor had to take this step to rescue the situation following a delay in securing ethical clearance at Stellenbosch University. The delay was caused by delayed responses by some case institutions to grant institutional permission for the inquiry. In two institutions, for example, I conducted interviews based oral permission granted by the Deputy Vice-Chancellors: Academic (DVCAs). I later had to follow up to obtain written responses. In one of those two cases, I had to write a reminder letter requesting the management to issue a written response. The most problematic case was the fifth institution, where the Director for Research had requested me to submit to her permission from the ethics committee of Stellenbosch University, which would not be granted unless institutional permission was obtained. It suffices to say that both research clearance (see Annexure 3) and a permission letter were finally obtained from the referred institution. It was a challenging process that called for patience and diplomacy.

In this study I analysed two main documents that guide the provision of private university education in Tanzania, namely the Education and Training Policy (2014) and the Universities Act of 2005, I also explored the websites of a number of institutions to obtain relevant information. Access to these documents did not pose any challenge, as they were publicly available. I had also intended to analyse a further two key documents that were produced in the course of undertaking the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project, but these were not made available to me due to lack of a proper documentation system (see Section 6.4.2). These documents are self-evaluation reports and peer review reports.

Interview data

To access the interview data in the first four institutions I used the introduction letter that was written by the study supervisor. For the fifth I had to submit ethical clearance from Stellenbosch University. Based on these, permission was granted by the institutions' management.

When asking for interviewees' consent to participate, I cautioned them that the sessions would take time and stated the approximated duration (see Annexure 4). Before commencing the interviews, I first established a rapport, as advised by Arksey and Knight (1999), Kvale (1996), and Marshall and Rossman (1999). This attempt was made to ensure that the interviewees felt relaxed. Interview schedules were sent to the participants through emails to allow them to familiarise themselves with the questions before the actual interviews were conducted. I also assured the interviewees that their names and institutions would not be disclosed in the reporting of the research. On the day of the actual event I sought their permission to use a mobile phone to record the conversations. This request applied to all interviewees, except the DVCAs, with whom I conducted brief interviews as a follow up to questions that the other interviewees found challenging.

Important to be mentioned – at least for the Tanzanian context – is that these interviews were conducted in Kiswahili, the language that all participants had confirmed to be competent in. The advantages and disadvantages of using this language are discussed in Chapter 8 (see Section 8.6). The actual interview schedule can be found in Annexure 5 and 6. I designed two separate interview schedules: one for chairpersons of self-assessment committees (CSACs) and members of self-assessment committees (MSACs), and another for QACs. No interview schedules were prepared for the DVCAs because for them the questions were extracted from the two mentioned schedules. Before commencing the interview sessions, the participants were asked to mark questions that they felt they would not be able to answer and could hence recommend the appropriate person to be consulted. This justified the use of snowball sampling (see Section 5.3.3).

I was always flexible in using the interview schedules to allow the participants to make alterations as deemed appropriate. To keep the interviews flowing, the researcher added probe questions and used gestures. Given the nature of the interviews (in-depth), it was necessary for me to stimulate the conversations to enable him to enter the interviewees' point of view, following Patton (1987).

While pursuing responses to my questions, during interview sessions I considered Kvale's (1996) suggestion by making the questions not only relevant, but also ensuring that they promote positive interaction. Therefore, efforts were made at all

times to ask good conceptual thematic research questions and good dynamic research questions. As argued by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), the notion of power is significant in the interview situation because the interview is not simply a data-collection situation, but also a social and frequently a political situation.

In the current study I conducted in-depth interviews with the authors of self-assessment reports and individual interviews with various senior officials. These officials included quality assurance directors, vice-chancellors, the executive secretary of the TCU, the chairperson of the IUCEA and the regional director of DAAD.

Two challenges were encountered in the exercise of collecting interview data. The first concerned securing the names of participants who took part in the IUCEA-DAAD project. This challenge was brought about by poor documentation systems in the case institutions and the lack of records of names of members of self-evaluation committees. The QACs had to provide the names of the chairpersons of the referred committees. At two institutions the QACs who had participated in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project had vacated their jobs and had to be traced to obtain the names of members who constituted the self-evaluation committees. As suggested in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.3.5), QACs were implicitly the 'owners' of institutional internal quality assurance systems. When coupled with the absence of poor documentation systems, as identified in all studied cases (see Section 6.4.2), it was not surprising to experience the challenge of missing names of committee members.

Accessing Delphi data

The third method employed for data collection in this study was the Delphi exercise. Invitation to participate in the first, second and third round of the Delphi exercise was done through letters. In the first round I requested participants to fill in the consent form (see Annexure 7) and clarified to each participant that one was at liberty to withdraw from participating. In the third round, (see Annexure 7) I thanked the participants for participating in the interview and depending on them for the Delphi exercise. The letter also re-invited the participants to take part in the third round. Motivation to participate was given by stating the objective of the Delphi exercise and a promise was made to provide feedback to each participant. Anonymity of the participants was also assured.

Participants in the Delphi exercise were selected from five institutions that participated in the IUCEA-DAAD pilot project as well as the regulatory agency. The Delphi exercise comprised three rounds. Detailed procedures for the selection of participants at each round are discussed in Chapter 7 (see Section 7.2).

On the size of the group, relevant literature suggests a lack of consensus on what constitutes an ideal number of participants in a Delphi exercise (Delbecq, Van de Ven & Gustafson, 1975; Hammond & Wellington, 2013; Hsu & Sandford, 2010). Hsu and Sandford (2010) and Stefan (2010) state that researchers have not reached a consensus on what constitutes an ideal number of participants in a Delphi study. Delbecq, Van de Ven and Gustafson (1975)) suggest that 10 to 15 participants should be adequate if their backgrounds are similar. Brockhoff (cited in Linstone & Turoff, 1975) suggests that under ideal circumstances, groups as small as four can perform well, while Rowe and Wright (cited in Stefan, 2010) consider five to twenty experts with disparate domains of knowledge as enough.

Fifteen participants were invited in total to participate in the first round. Twelve of these provided feedback and maintained their participation up to the third round. Participants were drawn from the five institutions as well as the state regulatory agency.

With regard to the Delphi exercise, two challenges were encountered. First, it was time-consuming. The challenges started with the process of seeking the contact particulars of the Delphi participants. I had to rely on QACs to provide the contact details of some participants. When data collection began, I had to make friendly calls to remind the participants to provide feedback. As the final round was carried out while I was in South Africa, I had to appoint a research assistant to help with the task of making phone calls.

The second challenge was the task of identifying 'experts' to participate in the Delphi exercise. This challenge was brought by lack of clear criteria. As the participants came from different backgrounds, it was difficult to establish their levels of understanding of the managerial terminologies employed in higher education quality assurance. This challenge caused the problem of having participants who had no equivalent level of familiarity with the managerial terminologies. A further discussion on this challenge is presented in Chapter 7.

5.3.3 Sampling

Cohen et al. (2000) argue that the quality of a piece of research not only stands or falls with the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation, but also with the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted. Given the purpose of the study stated in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.2), the study therefore involved an analysis of documents that guide the provision of private university education in Tanzania, and the interpretation of findings from the interviews and the Delphi exercise. The population to which the research applies is all private universities in Tanzania that participated in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project.

The method of selecting individual actors or texts as data sources employed in the study could be described as purposive (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Specifically, the method employed in the selection of participants to the interviews and Delphi exercise in the current study may be described as snowball sampling (Neuman, 2011). This is an approach for locating information-rich key informants. It involves asking well-situated people to recommend cases to study. Cohen et al. (2000) and Neuman (2011) indicate that the method uses the analogy of a snowball, which begins small but becomes larger as the ball rolls on wet snow and picks up additional snow. Likewise, in snowball sampling the investigator identifies a small number of individuals who have the characteristics in which the researcher is interested. These people are then used as informants to identify, or put the researcher in touch with, others who qualify for inclusion and these, in turn identify yet others. As the process continues, the researcher might discover an increasing number of well-situated people and an increasing number of recommended cases, all or some of whom can be included in the sample. Also, the names of a few individuals might come up repeatedly in talking to different well-situated people.

When planning this study, I thought that it could be feasible to start with the identification of the authors of self-assessment reports as the first group of interest. However, this proved to be difficult at least from a practical point of view due to the problem of poor documentation systems identified in Chapter 6. Hence I changed strategy and started with QACs, who remained the primary contact persons until the end of the study. They were used as informants to put me in touch with the HoDs, members of self-evaluation committees and DVCAs, where the occasion demanded.

Regarding the size of the sample, the study was guided by an inquiry approach, as recommended by Patton (2002). As overtly stated in Chapter 1, the study focused on private universities that participated in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project. Interviews began with four QACs after obtaining their institutions' permission, after which other participants such as HoDs and DVCAs were invited. Finally, staff from the state regulatory agency were invited to participate in the Delphi exercise.

5.3.4 Data analysis

Data analysis in a study such as this one is an interactive process. Merriam (1991) and Wolcott (1994) suggest that in interpretative research, description, analysis and interpretation of data is a simultaneous activity. There are no clear demarcations of where description ends and analysis begins, or where analysis becomes interpretation. Patton (2002) argues that it is possible to make hard-and-fast distinctions between data collection and analysis in surveys, standardised tests and experimental designs, but not in studies that seek qualitative data.

Goetz and LeCompte (1984) recommend that one begins analysis by reviewing the research proposal. These authors provide two reasons for this recommendation: first, the proposal contains the original research questions that shaped the inquiry. These questions must be addressed in the final report. Second, the proposal reminds the researcher of the audience for whom the study originally was intended. This is helpful when it comes to deciding on the level of analysis and format of the final report.

While both suggestions seemed plausible to me, for practical purposes I began with the revision of the study's research proposal. As suggested by Trafford and Leshem (2008), one's proposal tends to focus on the viva from the start. By revising the research proposal, I was reminded of both the purpose of the study and the research questions. I also kept in mind that the report was meant to be read by scholars in the field as the primary audience. This triggered issues such as academic writing style and a novel contribution to knowledge.

Analysis of documents was done by taking into account that the documents were not written to cater for the present study. Therefore, based on being a Tanzanian citizen and my experience in working with the state regulatory agency, I critically analysed

the texts I encountered within the context of the research project undertaken. This was done in compliance with phases suggested by Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004:138). These authors suggest conducting content analysis in three phases:

- Reading or studying data sets to form overview and to apprehend the context;
- Coding segments of meaning, categorising related codes into groups, and seeking relationships between categories to form thematic patterns; and

- Writing the final themes of the set of data and presenting patterns of related themes.

Having revised the research proposal, the next stage entailed gathering and organising the texts topically. I read through the documents several times and wrote down notes, comments, observations and queries in the margins. As Goetz and LeCompte (1984) point out, at this stage I was virtually holding a conversation with the data. At this juncture I noticed the importance of logs and journals written during the data-collection phase. I utilised a personal research journal to recapitulate a detailed account of the way I spent my time on site. The notes recorded in a field notebook detailed all the interviews conducted, hence chronicled my thinking, feelings, experiences and perceptions.

At this beginning stage of analysis I followed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) suggestion by identifying units of information that served as basis for defining categories. These units came from interview transcripts and documents and emerged in various forms, such as phrases, sentences and, in some cases, though rarely, paragraphs. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the units have to meet two criteria: first, they have to reveal information relevant to the study and stimulate the reader to think beyond the particular bit of information; and second, they have to be the smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself. In developing categories I was guided by the following criteria: first, the frequency with which something arose; second, uniqueness; and third, emphasis by the audience, as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

I analysed the interviews and Delphi data manually. The process entailed coding, during which I encountered the challenge of making decisions on the major themes or concepts to be reported. Saldaña (2013) states that most qualitative studies in

education will generate 8 to 100 codes, which can be organised into 15 to 20 categories. As a rule of the thumb, Merriam (1991) suggests that the number of categories should be manageable. Merriam (1991) further suggests that the fewer the categories, the greater the level of abstraction. She therefore recommends avoidance of a large number of categories, because it is more likely to reflect an analysis based on concrete description when fewer categories are involved (Merriam, 1991).

In presenting the interview data, I followed Putney's (2010) advice by reporting the findings as individual portraits and then summarising the findings in each section (see Chapter 6) before drawing a final conclusion. This indicates how the individual portraits contributed to my collective understanding of the issues under inquiry.

Based on Putney's (2010) recommendation, I started the presentation by first making a detailed description of the identities of each institution, followed by a presentation and discussion of the data based on the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 4. Neuman (2011) states that in an approach such as this one, analysis starts with abstract concepts or a theoretical proposition that outlines the logical connection among concepts. Thereafter, researchers move to evaluate the concepts and propositions against concrete evidence. Therefore, the movement is from ideas and theory towards observable empirical evidence.

5.4 Qualitative validity and reliability

Internal validity

Bryman (2012) suggests that the question of how well the case study fares in the context of the research design criteria depends to a great extent on how far the researcher judges that these data quality criteria are appropriate for evaluation of case study research. Some writers on case study research, such as Yin (2009), consider validity and reliability as appropriate criteria and suggest ways in which case study research can be developed to enhance its ability to meet those criteria. Other writers, such as Stake (1995), barely mention them without due consideration.

Validity is one of the most discussed issues in qualitative research because it involves the existence of objective reality and truth of assertions about it (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Lyn, 2015). Lincoln & Guba (2000:178) for example, consider validity

as a construct which cannot be dismissed simply because it points to question that in one way or another has to be answered. According to Lyn (2015:158), the important question is how the researcher and the readers would know if the argument or explanation one proposes is valid. As Lincoln and Guba (2000:178) expand the question, one may need to know whether the findings are sufficiently authentic, (isomorphic to some reality, trustworthy, related to the ways others construct their social worlds), that a person may trust himself/herself in acting on their implications.

Lincoln and Guba (2000:179) posit that there have been two arguments on validity: The first argument is borrowed from positivism, arguing for a kind of rigour in the application of methods. The second argues for both a community consent and a form of rigour – defensible reasoning, plausible alongside some other reality that is known to the author and reader – in ascribing salience to one interpretation over another and for framing and bounding an interpretative study itself.

According to Lincoln and Guba (2000:179) the key question to be answered in the second argument when conducting qualitative research is 'Are we interpretatively rigorous?' Alternatively, how do we know when we have specific social inquiries that are faithful enough to some human construction that we may feel safe in acting upon them, or more importantly, members of the community in which the research is conducted may act upon them? Lincoln and Guba (2000:180) affirm that to that question there is no final answer. There are however several discussions of what we might use to make both professional and lay judgments regarding any piece of work.

Creswell (2009) suggests that in qualitative research validity does not carry the same connotations as it does in quantitative research. Qualitative research means that the researcher checks for accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures.

Creswell and Miller (2000, cited by Creswell, 2009) consider validity as one of the strengths of qualitative research, and is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of the account.

Janesick (2000) indicates in the attempts to respond to the question asking how well qualitative case study can be conducted qualitative researchers have correctly offered alternative ways to think about descriptive validity and the unique qualities of

case study work. Terms abound in the qualitative literature that speak to the idea of validity have been suggested. These are such as trustworthiness, authenticity, ethical relationship, reflexivity and credibility (Creswell and Miller, 2000, in Creswell, 2009; Lincoln and Guba, 2000; Newman, 2011).   According to Neuman (2011), validity is viewed as truthfulness. Therefore, the emphasis is on the importance of authenticity rather than realising a single version of truth. By 'authenticity' Neuman (2011) means offering a fair, honest and balanced account of social life from the viewpoint of the people who live it every day.

In an earlier work Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed the use of the term credibility to be parallel to internal validity or truth value. Credibility as Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest, can be explained as confidence in the truth of the findings. The focus is on establishing the match between the constructed realities of participants, on the one hand, and those realities as presented by the evaluator and attributed to various stakeholders, on the other. Lincoln and Guba (2000) recommend a procedural perspective as to identify and discuss one or more strategies available to check the accuracy of the findings. The researcher is expected to actively incorporate credibility strategies. In the current study I employed the following credibility strategies:

- I triangulated different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build coherent justification for themes. The process adds to the qualitative validity of the study because themes are established based on converging several sources of data or perspectives.

- I used member checking to determine the accuracy of qualitative findings through taking specific descriptions to participants and determine whether these participants feel they are accurate;

- I used rich, thick description to convey the findings. This description, as Creswell (2009:191) suggests, may transport the reader to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences. By providing detailed description of the setting and providing many perspectives about themes, I attempted to make the results more realistic and richer, hence adding to the validity of the findings.

- I clarified researcher's bias that I brought to the study. According to Creswell (2009:191), this reflection is important for creating an open and honest narrative that will   resonate well with readers. Reflection has been mentioned as a core characteristic of qualitative research. Good qualitative research contains comments by the researchers about how their interpretation of the finding is shaped by their background (Creswell, 2009:192).

- I used of voice. Unlike in former eras when the only appropriate voice was the 'voice from nowhere', today voice can mean not only having a researcher's voice in the text but also that of the research participants who speak for themselves in the text. In the current study this is substantiated by the presentation of data and interpretation in Chapter 6 where both researcher and participants' voices are presented (Lincoln and Guba, 2000:183).

Reliability

The goal of reliability is to minimise errors and bias in a study. To achieve this, Yin (2009) argues that an investigator should make as many steps as operational as possible and conduct research as if someone was always looking over the researcher's shoulder. Yin (2009) compares the task of conducting a case study with accountants and bookkeepers who perform their work with awareness that it ought to be audited. As identified by Bryman (2012), Yin (2009) counts among the proponents who would like to see that case study research adheres to the criteria of validity and reliability.

According to Lyn (2015:160), we refer to our ability to 'rely' on people or services following their regularity in doing what we expect them to do. However, as Lyn cautions, it is worth noting that regularity is implied to different degrees. Regularity and standard procedures fit poorly with life and qualitative research. Qualitative researchers protest against having the standards of randomised control trials applied to naturalistic field research. Lyn asserts that there are very few situations in a qualitative project that can be replicated in a controlled way. The advice to qualitative researcher is to aim for a result that the audience can rely on. However, Lyn admits that this is not easy. It absolutely is a goal of a good qualitative research that the audience should be able to depend on it to put confidence in the research results, that it should be seen to be trustworthy.

Lincoln and Guba (1985)   suggested the use of the term dependability parallel to reliability which is likewise concerned with the stability of the data over time.

Gibbs (2007, in Creswell, 2009) suggests several reliability procedures including (i) checking transcripts to make sure that they do not contain obvious mistakes made during transcription, (ii) making sure that there is not a drift in the definition of codes, a shift in meaning of the codes during the process of coding. Gibbs accentuates that this can be accomplished by constantly comparing data with the codes and by writing memos about the codes and their definition.   Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggests that dependability can be established by dependability audit, dense description of research methods, stepwise replication, triangulation, peer examination and the code-recode procedure.

In this study, my attempt to enhance reliability of the interview data and reduce interviewee reactivity was made by assuring the participants that the collected data were meant for academic purposes only, and therefore neither their names nor their institutions would be disclosed in the report. It is my conviction that this aim was successfully achieved in many of the interviews. However, I suspect that some of the interviews must have been affected by researcher expectancy, that is, because most of the interviewees knew that I was an employee of the state regulatory agency, and it affected how they responded to the questions, in particular to those questions that sought information on institutional management. This probably suggests that the findings on leadership (see Section 6.3.10), staff retention (see Section 6.4.5) and satisfaction of internal stakeholders (see Section 6.4.3) were exaggerated.

In a further attempted to check the accuracy and reliability of the interview data, in all cases I asked the interviewees whether they would like to see a copy of the interview transcript for comment. Five QACs and five MSACs requested this opportunity. On receiving their corrections, which were all minor, I returned the corrected versions to the interviewees.

For the Delphi exercise, which was conducted in three rounds, information regarding the structure of the questionnaire as well as the procedure of the Delphi process was given. To avoid ambiguity, clarification was provided on the use of the titles 'quality assurance coordinator' and 'head of department', as the latter could be used to refer

to the faculty dean (FD) or the head of a school, as these were used differently by institutions depending on the contexts. For example, due to the sizes of the institutions, some did not have HoDs, but rather FDs or heads of schools. Depending on the round (e.g. first or second), specific instructions were provided in the Delphi questionnaire to guide the participants on how to complete the statements. Detailed procedures for all three rounds are provided in Chapter 7 (see Section 7.2).

5.5 Ethical procedures

Among the controversial issues in qualitative research ethical procedure are confidentiality and anonymity. According to Hennik, Hutter and Bailey (2011), although the terms anonymity and confidentiality are often used interchangeably in much research literature, the ethical issues of each are quite distinct.

Confidentiality

Refers to not disclosing information that is discussed by the researcher and the participant. In qualitative research it is difficult to assure complete confidentiality because in researchers report the study findings and in qualitative research quotations from participants are often included in these reports. What can be assured is anonymity, in as much as all identifiable information is removed from the interview transcript or quotations used from it, so that no individual participants can be identified from these documents.

Anonymity

According to Hennik, Hutter and Bailey (2011), the information gathered must be anonymous so that no participant can be identified from the research data. Anonymising data involves not only removing any identifiers from the interview transcripts so that may provide a clue as to the identity of participants, but also involves not writing the names of participants on the tape or not using participants' names as file names. It is a common practice to replace participants' names with identification numbers or pseudonyms and to keep the list of participants' names that match the identification numbers in a secured location.

Linked to the issue of anonymity, is rich description which characterises qualitative case study. While on the one hand rich, thick description allows the reader to make

decisions regarding transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998), on the other it jeopardises anonymity. This is because as the writer describes in detail the participants or setting under study so as to enable readers to transfer information to other settings and to determine whether the findings can be transferred because of shared characteristics, there is risk of disclosing participants' identity.

Ensuring anonymity refers to not only to the data files themselves, but also to how the researcher publically discusses the information gathered from participants. In discussing the findings I refrained from revealing the identity of any participant, even inadvertently. While this may seem obvious, I faced the challenge of reporting issues reported by quality assurance coordinators, knowing that in each institution there was only one person in that capacity, thus, mentioning the title became tantamount to revealing their identity.

As highlighted in Chapter 1, prior to commencement of the research, formal procedures were adhered to in pursuit of permission from all institutions that were involved in this study. In particular, I followed the following procedures:

- Seeking permission from the management of the participating institutions (permission letters are withheld for ethical reasons)
- Seeking ethical clearance from Stellenbosch University, which was granted (see Annexure 3)
- Contacting the participants and informing them of general purpose of the study
- Not exerting pressure on the participants to sign the consent form
- Finding out about cultural and religious values, given the fact that most of the studied institutions were faith-based
- Discussing the purpose of the study and how the data would be used
- Avoiding leading questions as far as possible and avoiding disclosing sensitive information
- Reporting multiple perspectives through the triangulation of data
- Assigning pseudonyms to institutions (see Section 6.2.1).

Regarding confidentiality, in particular, in the current study, participants were informed that the research information would be collected, analysed and reported anonymously so that participants cannot be identified in any of the research data.

Although compete confidentiality cannot be assured, I restricted who listens to the recording of the interviews. Nobody apart from the researcher had the opportunity to listen to the recording. I also maintained confidentiality of the interview situation as all were conducted in closed rooms.

As per Section 5.3.2, due to the challenges encountered in securing ethical clearance from Stellenbosch University (due to the institutions' delayed responses) I started conducting the interviews based on an introduction letter from the study supervisor.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has indicated a number of aspects of methodological importance. First, a literature review is a vital component of the research process. Familiarity with previous theory and research in the area was helpful to me in conceptualising the problem, conducting the study and interpreting the findings.

Second, methods used for data collection have strengths and limitations. In order to be rewarded by the data obtained, I had to attend to the limitations and maximise the inherent strengths in all phases of the data-collection processes.

Third, an attempt to counter the researcher's own bias was made by triangulating both data sources (i.e. gathering expert opinions and interpretations from the literature review rather depending on than my own) and research methods; for example, the use of document analyses to support the interview data.

Fourth, in enhancing the reliability of the data, efforts were made to ensure that data were accurate and consistent, for example by recording the interviews and having the transcripts checked by some of the interviewees. With respect to representativeness, the data gathered for this study had to be gathered from institutional key actors who were involved in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project.

Fifth, with respect to objectivity of the methods used in this study, two issues ought to be mentioned, First, I had to translate the Education and Training Policy from Kiswahili into English. This applied similarly to all interviews and may have resulted in minor deviations from the meaning of the original texts. Second, there was a risk of 'participant reactivity' to interfere with the responses provided by interviewees, following my identity as an employee of the regulatory agency. I tried to control this effect by reminding the participants that the study was done for academic purposes only.

In the next chapter findings from the analysis of documents are presented and analysed simultaneously with the data from the personal interviews at the case institutions.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS FROMTHE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to document in detail the research conducted to address the research question guiding the project (see Section 1.2) which reads: How do private universities in Tanzania interpret and apply the quality concept in programme evaluation? As Wellington, Bathmaker, Hunt, McCulloch and Sikes (2005) posit, it is important to provide appropriate evidence to support an extended discussion of what the researcher has found out about the topic. Wolcott (1994) suggests that description, analysis and interpretation of data are mutually exclusive. There are no clear demarcations of where description ends and analysis begins, or where analysis becomes interpretation. In this light, Wolcott (1994) identified three approaches to reporting descriptive data. The first approach is treating the available data as facts. Here, the researcher lets the data 'speak for themselves'. The second approach builds on the first one, but here there is an expansion or extension beyond a purely descriptive account with analysis. As Wolcott (1994) suggests, this analysis proceeds in some careful, systematic way to identify key factors and relationship among them. The last approach calls for interpretation. This may follow from the first or spring directly from the first. Hofstee (2006) affirms that there is no set formula for structuring the body of the dissertation. His advice is that the researcher should structure the dissertation simply and intuitively as possible, having in mind the intention not to lose the reader.

In line with Hofstee's (2006) view of not losing the reader, the chapter adopts the approach of reporting the available descriptive data coupling with analysis. Much of the content in this chapter is therefore both descriptive and analytical. In addition to reporting the findings, my commentary as a researcher has been added to establish the relationship between the available data and context. As Wellington et al. (2005) accentuate, simultaneous presentation and discussion of original data form the heart of the dissertation. Arguments on the implications of these findings are presented separately in the last chapter.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section focuses on findings from documents. This starts with an overview of the contexts of the institutions under study. It is worth mentioning that Institution F has been given a rather extensive description in comparison to the others, because this is a regulatory agency. It is the umbrella body that in a way determines what is practised by the other five institutions. Little information is given under Institution E due to the nature of the content found on their website. The website provides a lengthy description on the location of the institution and programmes offered, which the researcher found to be of little relevance to the study. The second section comprises an analysis of the findings from the personal interviews. The discussed themes are perceptions of quality, power, timing of quality assurance, involvement of stakeholders, funding, coordination of quality assurance, purpose of programme evaluation, benchmarking, leadership, ownership of evaluation processes as well other issues that emerged(see Section 5.3.1). The final section is the conclusion of the chapter, which discusses the main findings from the two sources and the relationships among them.

The argument pursued in this chapter is that although all universities that were selected as cases in this study operated under the same regulatory conditions, they had established significantly different approaches to programmatic quality. As indicated below, this can been contributed to institutional as well as national contexts, which include a number of factors such as history, mission, vision, values, leadership, funding and regulation. These different contexts have influenced the application of the quality concept at the case universities in terms of their quality assurance practices.

6.2 Results from documents

Analysing case study evidence is challenging, because the techniques still have not been well defined to guide the task of data analysis; particularly that of combining evidence in order to draw empirically based conclusions. As indicated in Section 5.2, to overcome this challenge, Yin (2009) suggests that every case study analysis follows a general analytic strategy, defining priorities for what to analyse and why. Based on this analytic strategy, I decided to start with the analysis of documents in order to enable the reader to better understand the cases in question. The

usefulness of documents, particularly in case study research, stems from the fact that they can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated. Therefore, documents analysed in this section are intended to provide both the institutional and the national contexts, which were employed in the analysis of the interviews and survey data. The information given below has been gathered from the websites of the case institutions, but for ethical reasons, the sources are not disclosed. For a similar reason, these institutions are anonymously presented as institutions A, B, C, D, E and F. It is worth mentioning that although Institution F was not the focus of the studied cases, it could not be excluded from the report as quality assurance agency and its bridging role in the implementation of the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project.

As indicated above, the chapter begins with brief introductory notes on the case institutions, highlighting their establishment, ownership, visions as well as missions. Analyses of the current education policy as well as the law governing the provision of university education in Tanzania are presented in order to provide a wider national context.

6.2.1 Identity

The websites of each case institution indicated their vision and mission statements. As indicated below, the mission statements inform the reader of the general type of institution and the overall intentions of the institution. As Kells (1995) indicates, these statements describe the tone of the institution. The statements are useful to potential members of the community and, as argued in Section 6.3.10, they are also meant to guide the leaders and the workforce.

Institution A

Institution A is a secular and private institution of higher education owned and managed by the Catholic Church. It was established in 1998. The institution is a successor of a social training institute founded in1960. The founders of the social training institute were the then Catholic White Fathers (currently the Missionaries of Africa). As it may be recalled, the early sixties were years characterised by the emergence of independent African nations, including Tanzania, from colonial rule. The White Fathers had established the mentioned social institute in order to develop

skills in communication, community, development, accounting, management and administration. The aim was to educate the personnel, who would take positions of leadership in the countries of East and Central Africa that were gaining their independence.

Since 1992 there was a move within the Tanzanian government to liberalise the provision of social services, including higher education. The changes in government policy coincided with a desire among church leaders to establish a Catholic university in Tanzania. The referred social institute was therefore transformed into Institution A. It is in the wake of such a move that the Tanzania Episcopal Conference founded Institution A, which is affirmed to embrace the ideals of the Gospel message as it comes to the world through the 'World of God' and through the Catholic tradition. In matter of faith and morals, Institution A acknowledges the authority of canon law and the Apostolic Constitution for Catholic Universities. Having been established in accordance with the laws of the country, Institution A operates under the direction of the state regulatory agency (Institution F) in accordance with the provisions of the Universities Act, No.7 of 2005.

The name of the institution follows its dedication to St. Augustine of Hippo (345–430 AD). Its motto is 'Building the city of God'. It is proclaimed that when the Catholic bishops of Tanzania decided to extend the church's service to the provision of higher education, they envisioned training that would impart academic and professional skills, as well as inculcate values of civic and social learning. These values include acquisition of national identity, cultural norms, political growth and responsible citizenship. Therefore, the church claims to pursue the vision of holistic development of a person and respect for human dignity.

Regarding its mission, Institution A strives to:

- being a centre of excellence by providing a high quality of education, research and public service;
- promoting the pursuit and defence of truth with transparency and honesty, and service with competence and dedication;
- developing a sense of caring for personal and community property; and

- a holistic development of the person by providing sound knowledge, higher analytical ability and commitment to generous service and respect to humankind.

The institution affirms its position of being conscious of man's orientation towards God and neighbours and fostering an ethical and service-oriented approach in its academic and professional training. Therefore, one may argue that the prominence given to God suggests a top-down decision-making process, which is one of the explanations for the approach pursued in the institutional strategic plan discussed in Section 6.3.6.

Institution B

Institution B was founded by the Muslim Development Foundation in 2004. The objectives of establishment were to advance education through a variety of patterns, levels and modes of study and by a diversity of means through encouraging and developing learning and creativity. The aim was to benefit the community and specifically the Muslim community in the United Republic of Tanzania and beyond. Another objective was to preserve, advance and disseminate knowledge and culture through teaching, scholarship and research, and to make available the results of such research. Other aims were the promotion of wisdom and understanding by example and the development of the character of its students and staff by virtue of its corporate life guided by Islamic moral values.

The mission of Institution B is to contribute to the national effort to produce highly educated and well-trained human resources inculcated with the appropriate aptitudes and attitudes for the material, moral and spiritual development of society by upholding the highest standards of teaching, learning, research, outreach and consultancy in the provision of holistic and well-integrated education and training.

The institution envisions being a higher education centre of excellence with cutting-edge programmes, responsive to the needs of the individual and the nation in a globalised world under the guidance of Islamic moral values. Its motto is "Read in the name of the Allah".

A close look at the above descriptions suggests that Institution B was established to serve and preserve the needs, interests and values of the Muslim community in Tanzania. This confirms Useem's (1999a) claim that in East Africa Muslims are developing their own higher education option. However, the vision of this institution becoming 'a higher education centre of excellence' seems to be ambitious when compared with the resources at its disposal. An important point to note in relation to Institution B is that at the time of writing this report, there were only two universities in the United Republic of Tanzania with a Muslim orientation. One was in mainland Tanzania and the second one on Zanzibar Island. If Useem's (199a) claim that Muslim parents for many years have perceived Christian schools to be innately hostile to their own religion, then this partly explains why Institution B is strict in its mission to serve the Muslim community.

Institution C

The history of Institution C dates back to 1994, when it was founded as a Lutheran college and seminary. In 1997 it was transformed into a university college and became an affiliate of a Lutheran Church university. The institution started the academic year 2013–2014 as an autonomous fully fledged university, after having legally upgraded its status. Despite its new status, Institution C continues to operate as a private university under the ownership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania.

The vision of Institution C at the moment of its establishment was to be a leading university and entrepreneurial institution of higher learning that engages itself fully with the community. Such engagement takes place through teaching, research and outreach. Its mission is to develop professional dynamic and entrepreneurial leaders who would engage and realise their full potential and that of their community, their country and the world at large.

As its core values, Institution C, as proclaimed, endeavours to upgrade institutional work ethics that promote integrity in the work environment. The values that guide the institution's mandate are professionalism, excellence in service, confidentiality, integrity, transparency, customer focus, efficiency, accountability, teamwork and diligence.

However, when closely examined, two of the values stated above, namely confidentiality and transparency, can be said to be conflicting. In practice, this brings confusion, because a clear guiding principle will be needed to demarcate the two values. Probably this value conflict explains the logic of the complaint posed by the institutional QAC in Section 6.3.10.

Institution D

Institution '' is also a fully accredited and chartered private university, recognised by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania. It was established in 1997 as part of a non-governmental organisation. Unlike institutions A, B, C and E, ownership of this institution is vested in a private company. The company was established for the provision of health and education services. Linking the literature consulted in Chapter 3, it can be noted that the ownership of Institution D supports the description of types of universities in Tanzania described in Chapter 3.

Similar to Institution B, the vision of Institution D appears to be too ambitious, as it envisions becoming a model private university in Tanzania, and in Africa by providing the highest-quality education and conducting cutting-edge research. Its mission appears to be reasonable; that of educating liberally and broadly, qualifying men and women to advance as frontiers of knowledge through research and providing consultancy and advisory services to the public.

Its motto is 'For a brighter future', while core values are alleged to be: (a) professionalism: striving to adhere to professional ethics and standards and impart this to students; the aim is to drive a change in this area; (b) excellence: commitment to quality by continuing to recruit the most promising students, faculty and staff, and providing them with the resources to excel; (c) adaptability: by leading Tanzania and the region in embracing scientific and technological advancements, and seeking to adapt them to the local situation; and (d) collaboration: the institution acknowledges its newness as a provider of higher education but trusts to be dynamic. It hence seeks to learn from available best practices and to grow together with peers.

A notable paradox with Institution D is that through its vision, the institution claims to become a model university and one of the strategies to achieve this is through learning from available best practices. However, the reader is reminded to note that this is the

very university that withdrew from participating in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project of which one of its implied objectives was to provide an avenue for universities in the East African region to gauge their programmes in comparison to others. Again, this justifies the earlier claim that I made in the analysis of the mission statement of Institution B above.

Institution E

This institution was established in 2007 and is owned by the Anglican Church of Tanzania. The aim of the Anglican Church at the time of inception of the institution was to provide higher education in the different aspects of education in Tanzania that would respond to the country's needs. Specifically, the referred needs are eradicating extreme poverty, hunger and disease and thereby providing improved life expectancy to its people. Therefore, it can be argued that unlike the other four institutions, Institution D states categorically that its priority is to serve the country in which it is located.

The priority to serve the country is evidenced in the mission, which is to take on the responsibility of providing and maintaining high-quality education and training in the theological, social, scientific and technological disciplines. The Anglican Church of Tanzania made a bold statement that its aim was to increase access to university education in Tanzania by giving more young people the opportunity of higher education.

The vision of Institution E upon its establishment was to become a centre of excellence for developing humankind holistically to learn to serve. Its objective was to advance knowledge transfer from one generation to another in the fields of arts, sciences, technology and learning. The institution also aimed at providing higher education and facilities to conduct research and to ensure the process of monitoring of the intellectual, aesthetic, social and manual growth of the students in attitude.

Institution F

Institution F is a body corporate mandated to recognise, approve, register and accredit universities operating in Tanzania as well as local or foreign university-level programmes offered by registered higher education institutions. It was established in

2005 under the Universities Act (Chapter 346 of the Laws of Tanzania) to succeed the former Higher Education Accreditation Council, which had been in operation since 1995. It also coordinates the proper functioning of all university institutions in Tanzania so as to foster a harmonised higher education system in the country. As stated, in order to ensure that such a harmonious higher education system does not compromise institutional peculiarities and autonomy, each university has the legal right to operate under its own charter.

Institution F has three main roles, which are regulatory, supportive and advisory. The regulatory role is performed through conducting periodic evaluations of universities and their systems and programmes. This is done so as to oversee quality assurance systems at the universities, in the process leading to new institutions being registered to operate in Tanzania, existing institutions being accredited and validation of university qualifications attained from local and foreign institutions for use in Tanzania.

The supportive role is fulfilled by ensuring the orderly performance of the universities and the maintenance of the set quality standards. The role is also being fulfilled by providing support to universities in terms of coordinating the admission of students; offering training and other sensitisation interventions in key areas such as quality assurance, university leadership and management, fundraising and resource mobilisation, gender aspects in university management and gender mainstreaming.

The advisory role is manifested through advising government and the general public on matters related to the higher education system in Tanzania. This includes programme and policy formulation on higher education and international issues pertaining to higher education.

This institution envisions being a world-class higher education regulatory agency supporting systematic growth and excellence of university education in Tanzania. Its mission is to promote accessible, equitable and harmonised quality university education systems that produce nationally and globally competitive outputs.

The following are the strategic objectives of Institution F:

- Improved quality assurance management systems.
- Improved equitable access and coordination of student admission
- Improved student enrolment in science-related programmes
- Enhanced internal and external linkages and university support systems
- Improved information and communication technology resources and higher education management information systems
- Established permanent TCU office premises
- Enhanced diversification of sources of funding
- Improved staff development activities, welfare and working environments
- Enhanced mitigation against the HIV/Aids pandemic.

From the information above it is apparent that the establishment of four faith-based universities in the current study is linked to the needs of specific groups in Tanzania. By implication, this was in response to the demand for a different higher education, as suggested by Thaver (2004) (see Chapter 3). An example worth to be cited is the introduction of courses such as Islamic Banking and the Bachelor of Law with the Shariah degree programme by Institution B, as discussed in Section 6.3.11.On the other hand, Institution D falls in the for-profit category that has arisen due to the influence of the market ideology on higher education (Altbach, 1999), as also indicated in Chapter 3.

Although these faith-based universities embrace modern learning, this is done within a religious framework. For some, such as institutions A and B, education and spirituality are inseparable. These universities admit students of different religious backgrounds, but the promotion and protection of the culture of the faith in question are the mainstays. Therefore, as Radford (1997) indicates, such universities accept two sources of knowledge: divine revelation and the human intellect and its tools. However, as Radford (1997) observes, divine revelation is always given priority in cases of conflict.

The inclusion of mission statements in the institutional profiles suggests the adoption of the practical definition of quality (see Section 2.2), where the approach taken is that of mission-based fitness for purpose. As suggested by Harvey and Knight (1996), this

approach avoids the issue of determining who higher education's customers are and institutions are left to fulfil their own stated missions. In this regard, it is the responsibility of private universities in Tanzania to demonstrate how they fulfil their mission through programme self-evaluation.

While inclusion of mission and vision statements describe the tone of the institution and delimit their nature market, as suggested by Kells (1995), most institutions seem to be too ambitious. High ambitions are suggested by phrases such as *centre of excellence* (institutions B and E), a *model private university* (Institution D) and a *world-class higher education regulatory agency* (Institution F). This is contrary to the resources at the disposal of most of these institutions. Institution D is an outstanding example that deserves to be mentioned.

Gathering from the theoretical perspectives of the current study, institutions A, B, C, D and E suit the mixed institutional form suggested by Barnett (2011), as discussed in Chapter 2(see Section2.5.3.6). As argued by Barnett (2011), in the contemporary world there is no university that is a characteristic of only one state of being. Within the case universities there are traces of the entrepreneurial university, the bureaucratic university and the corporate university.

While all other universities share the purpose of serving the Tanzanian community at large, one (Institution B) demonstrates a unique feature following its bold statement that the aim of its establishment is to serve the interests and values of a specific faith-based community.

Emphasis on morality and change of attitude by institutions A, B, C and E is explainable by the abolition of the Arusha Declaration, which stipulated ethical leadership. The majority of Tanzanians are of the opinion that the country is facing a challenge of immorality. Recently there have been rampant scandals involving political leaders as well as professionals. A report by the Commissioner for Government Accounts in 2014, for example, revealed serious malpractices in government expenditures. Further, gathering from my experience, for more than 10years the debates in the National Assembly have been dominated by such scandals committed by both professionals and political leaders.

6.2.2 Education and Training Policy

The most recent education policy, Education and Training Policy (URT, 214), which relates to the provision of higher education in private universities came into effect in February 2015. It came into being following the revision of, among other policies, the former Education and Training Policy (1995) and the National Higher Education Policy (1999). It is stated that one of the forces that accelerated the need to revise the former education policy is regional and international cooperation. As detailed in Section 6.2.4, related to higher education are issues such as harmonisation of programmes, comparison of education standards and assessment and conferment of awards. It is further stated that the aim of the new policy is to enable Tanzanians to overcome the challenges of the labour market and life in general. Section 2.1 of this education policy states that the focus of education and training will be to build a good foundation in ethics, skills, professionalism and self-reliance (URT, 2014:19). The document stresses that education for self-reliance will continue to guide the provision of education and training in Tanzania, taking into cognisance the social, political, economic imperatives as well as changes in science and technology.

The vision of the current education policy is to have a Tanzanian citizen who is educated, knowledgeable, skilled and professional, and who has positive perspectives that will enable him/her to contribute to the development of the country. The mission is to improve the quality of education by putting in place systems and mechanisms that will enable a mass of educated Tanzanians who are eager to learn further and contribute to national development goals. Specific objectives of the current policy can be summarised as: (a) the provision of quality education and training at national, regional and international levels; and (b) having an education and training system that takes into account cross-cutting issues.

On higher education, the policy recognises the fact that the functioning of regulatory bodies has been facing several challenges. One of the challenges identified is lack of coordination between these regulatory bodies and the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training as well as the Prime Minister's Office for Regional Administration and Local Government. The policy states explicitly that the governing laws of these regulatory bodies must be reviewed in order to address the identified weaknesses. Based on this identified weakness, the policy states that government will ensure

collaboration among all quality assurance bodies at all levels of education.

On programmes, the policy acknowledges the existence of curricula that are irrelevant, hence producing unemployable graduates. In addition, the policy notes lack of harmonisation among similar programmes offered by different higher education institutions. The policy identifies two areas to exemplify this, namely (a) curriculum content, and (b) duration of teaching. This claim is in line with one discussed in Section 6.2.4. In this light, the policy emphasises the need for government in collaboration with all stakeholders to review the current curricula in order to address the current and future developmental needs not only nationally, but also at the regional and international levels.

On language, the policy admits that despite long-time efforts of teaching Kiswahili, English and other foreign languages as subjects at various levels of education, there has been a persistent problem of lack of mastery of proper communication skills among learners. The policy argues that admittedly, this weakness is the result of poor infrastructure, poor teaching methods, as well as lack of exposure. In Tanzania, Kiswahili is the national language, while the official languages are both Kiswahili and English. There has been an extended debate on the use of these languages as media of instruction, as detailed in Section 6.4.1.

Currently, Kiswahili and English are used as the media of teaching and learning. Kiswahili is the medium of instruction at pre-primary and primary school levels. However, some schools use English. From secondary school to higher education the medium of instruction is English, with the exception of teachers colleges and vocational training colleges, which use Kiswahili. The policy acknowledges the rapid growth of both languages, and identifies globalisation as one of the factors that has accelerated the spread of the use of English in the world. Similar is the development of Kiswahili, which is currently spreading rapidly in Africa and other continents. Tanzania has signed the East African Protocol on the development of the Kiswahili language and was appointed as the headquarters of the Institute of Kiswahili Development. In this light, the policy argues that there is a need to make Kiswahili and English the media of instruction at various levels of education.

The rapid growth of languages, globalisation and the signing of the East African Protocol has put Tanzanian policy makers in a state of dilemma. Section 3.2.19 of the policy declares that Kiswahili "shall be used as the medium of instruction at all levels of education and training" (URT, 2014:38), and government shall put in place the mechanism to enable its sustainable and effective use among learners. Meanwhile, Section 3.2.20 states that government "shall continue with its current plan to strengthen the use of English for teaching and learning at all levels of education and training" (URT, 2014: 38). In my opinion as a researcher, these are contradictory and ambiguous statements, with lack of commitment to any language. As Trappes-Lomax (1990) suggests, this is not the first time for suggestions to be made on changing the language policy. Policy reaffirmation and plans to implement it had been made at more or less regular intervals in 1969, 1970, 1974, 1979, and 1982.

A close scrutiny of the vision and mission of the current policy suggests that the policy allows for an emphasis on 'attitudes' of learning, which is a very important aspect that is currently missing among Tanzanians. A good education is that which produces citizens with a right attitude. As noted by Nyerere (1968), the Tanzanian education system has to encourage, foster and prepare our young people to play a dynamic and constructive part in the development of society. Nyerere (1968) states that Tanzanian education must inculcate a sense of commitment to the total community and the desire to learn. He also promulgates the philosophy of education for self-reliance, which emphasises the need for curriculum reform in order to integrate theory with the acquisition of practical life skills. Further, education for self-reliance urges linkage of education plans and practices with national socio-economic development and the world of work. This refers to employers' expectations of graduates, as identified in Chapter 2.

The development of the current education policy in Tanzania has considered the content of several documents. The most important ones are (a) the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty, (b) the key benchmarks of the Long -term Perspective Plan (2011/12 – 2025/26), and (c) the Tanzania Vision 2025. Among other objectives, for example, the Tanzania Vision 2025 envisions the country to be a nation with high-quality education at all levels. The aim is to produce the quantity and quality of educated people sufficiently equipped with a positive mind-set and a culture that

cherishes human development through hard work, professionalism, entrepreneurship, creativity, innovativeness and competitiveness at regional and global levels. The policy acknowledges that these attributes are driven by education and knowledge and are critical in enabling the nation to effectively utilise knowledge in mobilising domestic resources for assuring the provision of people's basic needs and attaining competitiveness in the regional and global economy. The current education policy recognises the role of education as a strategic agent change in realisation of Vision 2025 for mindset transformation. It does appear that the question of transformation of mindset corresponds with that of Harvey and Knight (1996) discussed in Section 2.2. These authors posit that transformation is not restricted to apparent or physical transformation, but also includes cognitive transcendence. This view emphasises that education is considered to be an ongoing process of transformation of the participants. Mezirow (1997) argues that thinking as an autonomous and responsible agent is essential for full citizenship in democracy and for moral decision making. Mezirow's (1997) transformative learning may be considered as an appropriate approach to address the proliferation of corruption scandals and other unethical practices in Tanzania (see Section 6.2.1).

As stated above, the current education policy is the result of revising, among other policies, the former Education and Training Policy (1995) and the National Higher Education Policy (1999). This means that the current policy treats educational matters in general terms. There is no education policy that caters specifically for the provision of higher education. This is unfortunate, given the fact that higher education in Tanzania is currently undergoing transformation from elite to mass, as per Trow's (1973) suggestions. Based on Trow's model, one cannot deny the fact that it is imperative for a developing country such as Tanzania to formulate a higher education policy that could guide putting in place clear governance mechanisms for a smooth transformation from elite to mass higher education.

Hussey and Smith (2010) rightly argue that the current decade has witnessed changes in higher education systems. There are wide ranges of levels and kinds of ability, and varieties of motivations, attitudes and aspirations. Therefore, countries design vigorous policies to address such concerns. Butcher and Hoosen (2013) point out that Africa faces additional challenges of the brain drain, underfunding, under qualified academic

staff and poor salaries.

Transformative education is crucial because higher education in Africa has been linked with development. As Cloete, Bailey, Pillay, Bunting and Maasen (2001) posit, there are two notions related to the idea of higher education as a developmental tool. The first one is a service role, in which the university is expected to play an important role through expertise exchange and capacity building. Here the focus of the university's development efforts is on reducing poverty and disease, improving agricultural production and supporting small business development. Another role is the university as an engine of development. This is related to improving healthcare and agricultural production in relation to innovation in the private sector, especially in areas such as information and communication technology, biotechnology and engineering.

Drawing on the information above, it is convincing to argue that treating higher education equal to primary education or secondary education in the national agenda is close to what Green (2011) terms 'hitting the target but missing a point'.

Currently, one of the challenges facing the education system in Tanzania is its management. Education is managed by different institutions, which at times create confusion and incoherence. While commending the current policy for addressing this issue, one can still note that the policy is result-oriented; it talks of producing the quantity and quality of educated people, while providing light statements on monitoring and evaluation. By doing so, the policy contradicts itself when it claims to bring a transformation agenda, which, in light of the argument by Harvey and Knight (1996), emphasises the process of education rather than outputs. In the document, for example, there is no mention of professional bodies. As indicated in Section 6.3.11 below, professional bodies are the major cause of power tension in programme evaluation. It is worth reminding that, as mentioned in Section 3.4.3.3, private universities in Tanzania offer a range of professional programmes whose regulation calls for the attention a number of professional bodies. These professional bodies are not under the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. Hence, there is a need to consider the quality of undergraduate professional programme as a cross-cutting issue. The implication of this issue is further discussed in Section 8.5.1. The effect of the current education policy being silent on the powers of professional bodies is

reflected in the revised Universities Act of 2005, discussed under Section 6.2.3 below.

It is construed that learning takes place when learners are taught in the language in which they are competent and proficient. Reading between the lines, one can argue that the policy suggests the state of ambivalence that government has decided to posit itself. On the one hand, it attempts to suggest a move from using English to Kiswahili. On the other hand, it argues in favour of continuing its current plan to strengthen the use of English for teaching and learning "at all levels". It is not clear why a policy that claims to advocate transformative education can remain undecided on a serious issue such as this. It is high time government declared a firm and clear stance to resolve the language issue in higher education.

6.2.3 Laws governing private universities

The provision of university education in Tanzania is governed by the Universities Act of 2005. This applies to both public and private universities. The act established Institution F (as applied in the current study) as a successor of the Higher Education Accreditation Council, which existed for only 10years. Section 5 of the act stipulates the functions of Institution F (URT, 2005:11). These include, among other functions, the following:

- To audit, on a regular basis, the quality assurance mechanisms of universities
- To provide guidance and monitor criteria for student admission to universities in the United Republic of Tanzania
- To consider and make recommendations to the Minister regarding the upgrading or downgrading of the status of a university
- To monitor and regulate the general management and performance of universities
- To oversee the provision by universities of essential resources for the needs of their current academic programmes and related functions
- To promote quality assurance in higher education
- To consider applications from persons, companies or organisations seeking to establish universities of programmes in the United Republic of Tanzania and make recommendations to the Minister
- To set standards for and accredit and register all universities

- To solicit for and distribute funds among universities.

The regulatory body has the power to grant accreditation, hence no institution resident in the United Republic of Tanzania can commence or carry on university education operations, activities or functions unless the institution is given statutory authority and is accredited and its programmes or courses are approved in accordance with its enabling statutory provisions, and is approved by the regulatory body in accordance with the provisions of the act.

Institution F has the power to require a university to conduct self-study and academic audits, covering the institution in general and the programmes and awards of the institution in particular, and prepare and submit the report in the manner as may be prescribed. This mandate is well elucidated in Section 6.2.3, when in the discussion of interview findings through the Accreditation Committee, Institution F is responsible for the promotion of linkage programmes of universities and short-term and long-term national development objectives, strategies and plans in higher education. Worth mentioning are the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty, the key benchmarks of the Long term Perspective Plan (2011/12 – 2025/26), as well as the Tanzania Vision 2025, discussed under Section 6.2 above.

Considering the different modalities and practices of establishing universities and the provision of higher education, Institution F has, through its mandate, developed a number of guidelines in 2012:

- Credit accumulation and transfer
- University qualification framework
- Practical training framework
- Minimum guidelines and norms for governance units
- Minimum guidelines for the harmonisation of awards conferred in Tanzania
- Minimum standards for postgraduate training
- Employment, staff performance reviews and career development.

In 2014 the above guidelines were reviewed to incorporate matters that relate to the formation of the EAC. These include recognition of awards and employment of nationals from the EAC partner states.

Tanzania has stringent regulations that emphasise the presence of quality assurance systems in universities. As indicated above, there are detailed laws and regulations regarding the establishment of universities, minimum academic qualifications for teaching staff, student admission, programme length and levels of qualifications. This is in line with Thaver's (2004) observation of Kenya, which is a member of the EAC. The only difference is that while in Kenya those regulations were meant to cater for private universities, in Tanzania it is not the case. Institution F has the mandate to regulate both public and private universities.

Though bureaucratic, Institution F seems to accommodate characteristics of facilitative rationality, described in Chapter 4(Luckett, 2006). For example, pursuant to the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project, in 2008 Institution F compiled a report based on the findings of peer reviewers. Among the notable findings were issues of qualifications of academic staff and leadership and management skills. The outcome of this report resulted in the launching of two projects. The first one was the Tanzania-Germany Postgraduate Training Programme. This is a training programme that was jointly funded by the Tanzanian government through the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and DAAD. In particular, the project (which was still in progress at the time of writing this report) aimed to impact on capacity building in Tanzanian universities through staff development. Scholarships were awarded to candidates who qualified to undertake PhD or master's degrees in Germany. A notable challenge of this project is that it did not accommodate private universities.

The second project was a leadership programme on human resource development for university management. The programme was funded through a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. It lasted from 2009 to 2011. The aim of the programme was to build human resource capacity in leadership and management of higher education institutions in Tanzania. It focused on the various layers of the existing leadership and management set-up. Apart from addressing the current situation, the project had a long-term perspective of creating a pool of future-generation university leaders and managers who have been exposed to skills for leadership and management of universities. The implementation of the project included organising a series of workshops on the following topics:

- Leadership in academic institutions

- Strategic planning

- Resource mobilisation

- Quality assurance trends in higher education and the need for efficient quality assurance tools

- Curriculum design and accountability to stakeholders

- Gender perspectives in enhancing the participation of women in university leadership

- Gender mainstreaming in higher education institutions and information and communication technology for institutional development.

It can be argued that through the above two projects, Institution F as an external quality assurance agency had assumed a supportive role to institutions. As Trow (1999) succinctly suggests, here the external agency through its advisory role has become a depository for educational expertise. However, as was the case for the Tanzania-Germany Postgraduate Training Programme, the second project on leadership and human resource development also did not accommodate private universities.

Like many other regulatory agencies in the world, Institution F faces two challenges that are commonly discussed in the literature on higher education. These challenges are low human resource capacity and funds (Kells, 1995). In this regard, although Institution F is required by law to audit on regular basis the quality assurance mechanisms of all universities (private universities included), this has never been the case. My experience as an insider suggests the presence of an overwhelming backlog. Conversely, this has been a relief for those private universities that seem to live on the culture of compliance. An alarming example to be cited here has occurred in 2014, when a medical private university based in Dar es Salaam dumped in a valley remains of human bodies that were being used by students for experiments. This malpractice caused havoc among nearby residents. The media reported this unprofessional incident and Institution F acted immediately by disallowing the university to admit students in the next academic year until such time it would address

all the weaknesses identified by the probe committee that was sent on site.

Through conversations with colleagues I also learnt that to curb the challenge of funds, Institution F had launched a quality assurance fund to cater for the monitoring and evaluation of quality assurance matters in universities. The money is obtained through a part of students' prescribed fees. The procedure is that universities collect the fees and deposit the money into Institution F's account. If this is the case, the current trend of timing of programme self-assessment in private universities (described in Section 6.3 below) is likely to change, because there will be regular visits to monitor such institutions.

Another weakness emanates from the parent document that established Institution F. This pertains to its failure to provide a substantive stance on how to handle the quality of professional programmes in collaboration with professional bodies. Many critics have voiced their concerns on agency duplication, as it causes an extra burden to universities. To address the question of power relations, Kells (1995) suggests that the evaluated institutions be assertive. Universities should request the use of a common self-study report or common sections, instead of totally separate ones for each agency. Kells (1995) also suggests joint or concurrent team visits.

In summary, the provision of higher education in Tanzania is governed by strict regulations. These regulations cater for both public and private universities. Therefore, an understanding of the quality assurance arrangements in the case universities must not ignore the broader national regulatory framework. The national regulatory framework forms part of the larger context in which private universities in Tanzania operate.

Based on the gaps identified via the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project, the regulatory agency played a facilitative role by introducing two projects to address the challenge of qualified academic staff and managerial skills. However, as noted above, these two projects excluded private universities. This is one of the weaknesses identified by the current study. As noted in Section 3.3, the distinction between the notions of 'private' and 'public' is often blurred. Further, students who graduate in public and private universities are all expected to serve the same country without any discrimination. Hence, the argument made here is that though facilitative, by excluding

private universities in the two projects described in above, the regulatory agency has in a way contributed to persistence of the challenge of leadership skills, identified in Section 6.3.10.

6.2.4 The IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project

Materu (2007) observes that the emergence of regional economic blocks and the possibilities opened up by the inclusion of higher education in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) have prompted new regional and international initiatives to enhance students' and workers' mobility, while respecting individual countries' authority to regulate the quality of their own education systems. The Bologna process launched in 1999 within the European Union is an outstanding example.

From the above observation it may be argued that the implementation of the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project did not happen accidentally. It was a planned activity that was linked to the revival of the EAC. It is worth reminding that Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda have had a history of cooperation that dates back to the early 20[th]century. The relationship started with the customs between Kenya and Uganda in 1917, after which Tanganyika (currently Tanzania) joined in 1927. The EAC was formed in 1967. In 1970 the three countries formed the Inter-University Committees (IUC) to maintain collaboration between the University of Dar es Salaam, the University of Nairobi and Makerere University. The IUC received financial support from the EAC. However, in 1977 the EAC collapsed. This collapse affected the function of the IUC, as there were no more sources of funds.

In 1980, after consultations that involved permanent secretaries responsible for higher education in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, the vice-chancellors in the three countries signed a memorandum of understanding committing them to maintain cooperation between their universities within the established IUC framework. The signing of the memorandum of understanding led to the transformation of the IUC into the current IUCEA.

The collapsed EAC was revived by the signing of the treaty for the establishment of the current EAC in 1999. The treaty entered into force in July 2000 following its ratification by the mentioned three partner states. Later, in 2007, Burundi and Rwanda joined the EAC. In this context, the IUCEA was revitalised and became integrated into

the EAC framework.

The IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project, from the perspective of the EAC, was therefore a timely response to the need of the East African partner states to guarantee free movement of people and labour. The partner states undertook, among other tasks, to harmonise their curricula, which led to the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project.

In the course of attending the various seminars, as described in Section 1.1 of Chapter1, three issues stood out. First, the project was initiated in response to the massification of higher education as a result of the multiplication of the number of higher education institutions. In Tanzania this is evidenced by the rapid increase of the number of private universities. The purpose therefore was to have an institutionalised system of quality assurance that would ensure comparability and competitiveness of higher education institutions programmes. There was a notably diversity of academic and professional programmes even where such programmes had a similar name. Some of the explicit differences were noted in admission criteria, programme structures as well as assessment methods. This could be one of the explanations why the regulatory agency in Tanzania developed a number of guidelines, as discussed in Section 6.2.3 above.

The second issue is the involvement of key stakeholders in the project. It was explained that the IUCEA had taken the necessary precautions by involving leaders of higher education institutions, academics, managers, representatives of national regulatory agencies as well as government representatives. By doing so, the IUCEA was convinced that it had sufficiently dialogued with these stakeholders on the relevant issues pertaining to the implementation of the project. These issues included evaluation criteria, prospects and modalities of carrying out the project. A detailed analysis of the 'dialogue' with these key stakeholders as proclaimed by the IUCEA is given in the next section, with data obtained from interviews with CSACs, MSACs as well as QACs.

The third issue is related to the criteria for the appointment of quality assurance officers from universities and regulatory agencies. Two important criteria were employed, namely age and position occupied in their respective institutions. It was

explained that participants had to be young in order to last through the pilot phase, which was from 2007 to 2011. On the other hand, they had to be senior enough to command respect from other colleagues in their institutions. These criteria brought confusion in some universities. I recall that while we were introducing ourselves in Germany, one participant, who seemed to be the oldest of all participants, introduced himself humorously as 'a retired professor, but not tired'. These words arose resentment among the organisers and funders of the project because it manifested a somewhat lack of seriousness on the part not only of the participant but also the institution that he represented. It was inappropriate for that participant to regard himself as 'young' at such a retiree age. The effect of these selection criteria are further discussed in Section 6.3.1.

One of the notable changes suggested by the IUCEA was the idea of competence-based instruction (see Section 6.4.7).At the end of the project, the participating institutions were expected to shift from the traditional modes of delivery to competence-based instruction. However, Mayhew et al. (1990) criticised this approach for being too demanding. Mayhew et al. (1990) observed that the amount of emotional and intellectual interdependence among faculty that is fostered by competence-based education is more demanding than that of other interdisciplinary programmes such as BBA and Education programmes, which were involved in the project. A further discussion of this approach is presented in Section 6.4.7.

In conclusion, the approach employed by the IUCEA in implementing the project corresponds with the idea of legitimate power suggested by Max Weber (1924, cited in Finch, 1997) and communicative action by Habermas (1987), discussed in Chapter 4. In analysing the nature of power in societies, Weber distinguishes between naked power and legitimate authority. Naked power is seen as ability to realise one's will or goals regardless of willingness of the other part. However, as exercising coercion is likely to guarantee an unstable situation in society, Weber suggests conversion of naked power into legitimate authority. In legitimate authority, individuals treat certain rules and expectations as binding. This is what Habermas (1987) referred to as 'societal rationalisation'. In societal rationalisation a society finds that there is a need to reach explicit agreement on issues (such as the quality of undergraduate programmes), whereas in the past, the more homogeneous nature of societies allowed

these to remain implicit. It is through such rationalisation that norms embody a claim to legitimacy and be acceptable by citizens. Habermas (1987) suggests that norms are only valid and legitimate if they are agreed to through rational discourse by those who must comply with the system and carry its costs.

In higher education, one way of achieving legitimacy is through the involvement of stakeholders. This is what the IUCEA did prior to applying the quality criteria in the self-assessment exercise. Section 6.4.3 discusses the question of satisfaction of those stakeholders on the level of their involvement in setting the referred criteria.My stance on stakeholders' involvement in setting said criteria is that IUCEA was successful in involving all key stakeholders. As mentioned above, it involved leaders of higher education institutions, academics, managers, representatives of national regulatory agencies as well as government representatives. However, the level of participation suggests that those who implemented the self-assessment, particularly QACs and MSACs, were uncritical to the criteria. Partly this is explainable by the novelty of the approach to quality as contrasted by the traditional one. Unlike the traditional approach, the current one emphasised the presence of a managerial culture that focused on making criteria and the approach to quality more explicit.

6.3 Results from personal interviews

The views presented in the first section of this chapter are from CSACs, MSACs, QACs, HoDs, DVCAs as well as staff of the regulatory agency. The coding of data was done manually, as recommended by Saldaña (2013) and analysis was based on an amalgamation of knowledge gathered from the research design; theoretical perspectives, particularly the international, national and institutional contexts; the conceptual framework; and personal experience, where applicable.

6.3.1 Quality

In Section 2.2 of Chapter 2the theoretical perspectives suggest that quality is a multidimensional construct that is perceived differently by different interest groups. The following section presents a report on and discussion of data gathered from CSACs, MSACs, as well as QACs. Based on one of the selection criteria identified in Section 6.2.4 above, in most cases these are junior academic staff holding master's degrees in various fields. This point is considered worth mentioning, because it had

157

a bearing on their perception of quality. This will be discussed later at the end of this subsection.

As indicated in Section 5.3, the collection of data on the perceptions of quality was meant to be done through the Delphi technique. However, due to the nature of the study I decided to include this question in the interview guide in order to capture preliminary views that will enable me prepare another instrument for the Delphi exercise. Data gathered from the Delphi are reported in the next chapter.

While the IUCEA had its own definition of quality and criteria, interviews with the key participants in the case universities confirmed that there was no shared definition of the concept of quality. Preliminary results suggested that one of the perceptions that emerged was that quality is something 'complex'. The interview with a current HoD at Institution A revealed a change of perception of quality over time. She admitted that prior to participation in the IUCEA-DAAD quality project, her perception was that 'quality' referred to 'output':

> After my participation in the project I can say that quality ... I mean quality of a programme… takes a student-centred approach. Taking into consideration components such as learning outcomes and clearly stated programme specifications...well, it involves many things. It is something complex.

If the claim that one's attitude influences one's actions, then it may be argued that the above perception of 'quality' by an HoD suggests the difficulty with the operationalisation of quality. If quality is perceived to be complex, it sets a difficult scenario at the implementation stage.

A similar perception of quality was expressed by the QAC at Institution A. Her response also confirmed acknowledgment of the contribution of the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project in changing her perception of quality: She commented that before embarking on the IUCEA-DAAD project in 2007, defining quality in a 'precise' way was difficult. In her views, people used to talk about quality without being able to give its 'precise definition'. She stated, "the meaning was just implied". Her response suggests that participation in the IUCEA-DAAD quality project had helped her in securing a precise definition of quality:

> We just knew that this is the way we do things in our house but we could not measure exactly what we were doing. However, currently this is not the case. We are changing from the former perception of 'implied' to one which is of overtly stated criteria. I mean, if one is talking about quality of a programme we understand that we have to address the issues of inputs, processes and outputs...Before the IUCEA-DAAD project we used to have programme manuals which were unclear.

The QAC further commented that the motive behind the evolvement of this approach to defining quality was the training in which she participated, coupled with the self-assessment of the BBA programme. Another reason, according to her, was the issuance of the IUCEA's handbook for quality assurance in higher education. She also described the contribution made by the regulatory agency, especially in the development of the University Qualifications Framework (UQF), as another contributing factor. According to her, these factors, when combined, contributed much to the refinement of her definition of quality.

However, looking from another perspective one can argue that the claim by the QAC on the existence of a precise definition of quality suggests her lack of awareness of the presence of different values in an academic community, as suggested by Harvey and Knight (1996).

Contrary to the above participants, an MSAC from Institution A presented a different perception of quality from that of her colleague. For him, quality denoted satisfying or meeting students' expectations:

> Since the student is our centre of attention, then for me when we talk about quality of a programme it means meeting student's expectations.

At Institution B emerged a view of quality as something 'vague'. This view came from an MSAC at that university. Like the above participant, this one also admitted that before the introduction of the IUCEA-DAAD quality project he had a different perception. For him, quality used to mean 'something of high standards':

> Once a person talked about quality, the first thing which came into my mind was the brand name Mercedes Benz. I remember to have read in one newspaper their advert saying 'the best or nothing'. So it stuck in my mind that quality has to do with something that is notably exceptional. But now I know that quality is a

matter of degree. …There can be established minimum thresholds to be met. However, this doesn't guarantee that all universities will come out with the same quality of a product.

Another MSAC at Institution B had a different perception of quality. For him quality referred to progress made by students:

I take quality to mean improvement on the part of students... and since the aim of this institution is to benefit the Muslim community, I'll be happy if those students admitted in the programme progressively shift from one stage to another, both morally and cognitively...most importantly, they should perform reasonably well in their exams.

The above response from an MSAC seems to suggest compliance with the definition of quality as 'value-added', as discussed in Section 2.2. In this definition, quality consists of the amount of progress made by students regardless of their starting point. An important thing to note about the emphasis made by the participant of Muslim students' progress is correspondence to the mission statement, as discussed in Section 6.2.1 above.

I also had the opportunity to interview the QAC at Institution B. He was appointed to take the position of QAC one year prior to our interview. He replaced the former QAC, who left in search of greener pastures. The researcher was aware that he did not participate in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project. However, in our informal conversation he informed me that he participated in sensitisation seminars and workshops that were organised by the former QAC. His perception of quality was related to addressing the issues of inputs, processes and outputs; although at the beginning his definition was striking. He started by defining quality as follows:

"Quality means doing the right thing in the right way and at the right time".

I found this definition a bit bookish, because I knew that it came from the IUCEA handbook. The IUCEA had expected that at the end of the pilot evaluation of the selected disciplines, quality assurance units would be in a position to guide the faculties to answer, among others, the question "Are we doing the right thing, in the right way and at the right time?" In pursuing this response, I asked the QAC to

160

provide clarifications in relation to programmatic quality. Particularly, I wanted him to make clear on the 'right thing' that he was referring to. He elaborated as follows:

> Well, let me start by saying that this is a quality assurance office. So when we talk about quality we are referring to many aspects. We are referring to curriculum content. We are making reference to products, and quality of inputs. Generally, here I mean admitted students, curriculum, academic staff, learning environment and many others.

As it may be noted, this clarification by the QAC does not address the question of the 'right time' which was mentioned in his previous response.

The view that quality is 'a matter of degree' was also expressed by the CSAC at Institution C. There was no significant difference in the definition:

> I used to perceive quality as something good looking or that which draws the attention of people. In the context of higher education talking about quality education I thought quality meant talking about big universities like Oxford and the like. I just didn't have any idea of having explicit criteria. After this project...Now I know that quality is just a matter of a continuum. The aim is to address issues of inputs, processes and outputs. These are always challenging and it is difficult to claim that you have reached the maximum level.

The above perception of quality expressed by the CSAC to relate quality with universities with high reputation had been challenged by some scholars. Radford (1997), for example, argues that although Oxford and Cambridge have traditionally been regarded as 'excellent', it does not come automatically that all their graduates are of equal merit.

Like Institution B, the QAC of Institution C was also a replacement of the former. I conducted an interview with him at his home (hundreds of kilometres from the institution) because he was on study leave pursuing a PhD. He had informed me that he took the position a year prior to our interview. His definition of quality referred to things such as quality of academic staff, enrolled students, curriculum and ways of delivery. Unlike the others, he insisted on the inclusion of support staff:

> Here I mean... it is not enough for the teaching staff alone to adhere to quality requirements. The support staff must be taken on board as well because these are the ones who support the institution in accomplishing its core functions.

Institution D is the one that withdrew from the project. Information gathered here is based on an interview the researcher conducted with the CSAC, who is also the institutional QAC. As discussed in Section 6.3.5, she was not formally appointed as QAC. Rather, she was simply nominated to represent the institution in matters related to quality assurance, given the fact that quality assurance has now become the 'world religion' in higher education. From her perception, quality means addressing the standard criteria set for inputs, processes and outputs. As she elaborated:

> Here I mean things like quality of students, teachers, teaching methods, available facilities, examination procedures, curriculum content and in the end, graduates' performance.

At Institution E I interviewed two participants, a QAC and an FD. It is worth mentioning that unlike the interviewees in the other four case universities, these are PhD holders. The views expressed by the QAC suggested that for him quality was synonymous to 'improvement'. He elaborated that given the meagre resources available, it was difficult to define quality as something that can be achieved. Rather, he perceived quality as a rolling goal sauntering towards improvement from one stage of achievement to another:

> For me, however, I take quality as not a fixed goal but the desire to improve. What this institution as a whole has to aspire to is improvement. It doesn't matter where we are at the moment. We must improve. This is the bottom line of quality assurance initiatives.

Unlike the previous participants, the QAC at Institution E acknowledged the fact that within an academic institution there are different values held by academic staff. He also expressed his concern about the challenge of staff retention, which had a severe impact on establishing a common definition of quality and culture.

The last definition of quality came from an FD. At the time of conducting this interview at Institution E he had shifted to another university a month ago. I found it

prudent to interview him due to the issue of staff retention and lack of cooperation that were raised by the QAC, as indicated in the discussion later (sections 6.3.11 and 6.4.5). He willingly participated in the interview. His perception of quality was similar to that of the QAC at Institution D. However, unlike the QAC at Institution D, he added the question of availability of resources as a necessity in the language of quality.

> For me, quality means meeting and possibly exceeding the set criteria to address issues of inputs, processes and outputs...depending on availability of resources.

From the participants involved in the personal interviews it can be deduced that they hold a variety of perceptions related to quality. Some definitions are vague, for example 'quality is complex' or quality is 'a matter of continuum'. Some have an industrial outlook, which is inapplicable in higher education. This was exemplified by quality as 'doing the right thing, in the right way and at the right time'. On the other hand, there are perceptions that were related to addressing issues of inputs, processes and outputs. All these definitions came from key people who were assigned key roles in the operationalisation of quality. From a practical point of view these variations have a bearing on the implementation of quality assurance and programme self-evaluation in particular. Table 6.1 below summarises the participants' perceptions of the concept of quality.

Table 6.1 Participants' perceptions of quality

Institution	Perception of quality	Source
Institution A	Precise criteria to address input, processes and output	QAC
	Something complex	HoD
	Meeting students' expectations	Committee member
Institution B	Doing the right thing in the right way and at the right time/ addressing issues of input, process and output	QAC
	A matter of a continuum; addressing input, processes and output	Committee chairperson
	A matter of degree of departing from established minimum standards	Committee member1
	Improvement on the part of students	Committee member2
Institution C	Qualifications of students, academic staff and support staff; curriculum content; and delivery methods	QAC
Institution D	Addressing established criteria for inputs, processes and outputs	Committee chairperson *cum* QAC
Institution E	Improvement, regardless of where you are	QAC
	Meeting and/or exceeding established criteria for inputs, processes and outputs	FD

A notable observation is that there is a link between perceptions of quality and institutional structure. For example, at all institutions the QACs seemed to provide a similar definition of 'quality'. This is understood because the definition is closely related to the established new institutional structures which incorporate quality assurance units, and the responsibilities assigned to these units.

However at institution B quality as 'value added' was given in relation to institutional orientation. As reported in section 6.2.1 Muslims in Tanzania were perceived to be marginalised with regard to participation rate in higher education.

Responses such as 'improvement regardless of where you are' takes into cognizance the various obstacles discussed in section 6.4. The point advanced by

this participant is that whatever circumstances that private universities in Tanzania were exposed to, each institution had to live to the culture of quality.

One aspect that is worth mentioning is the interviewees' assertion of the evolvement of the perception of quality due to their participation in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project. This implies that for them, without participation in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project there could have been no updated definition of quality. These participants seem to embrace the definition of quality from the IUCEA-DAAD project uncritically. Another reason that could explain this situation is the age of the institutions. As indicated in Section 6.2, the oldest university was established in 1997. This means that all private universities in Tanzania were founded under the strict regulations of the regulatory agency that was established in 1995. This, in a way, explains the culture of compliance, described in Section 6.3.2 below.

6.3.2 Operationalisation of programme quality assurance

The operationalisation of quality calls for addressing issues of inputs, processes and outputs. On the one hand, the evaluation of inputs includes, among other tasks, the assessment of factors relating to the qualifications of students and staff, teaching, administration and technical staff as well as physical facilities. Another important aspect is the intention and planning of courses. On the other hand, the evaluation of processes involves constantly monitoring how the course is proceeding, the difficulties, successes of the students, and logistical and pedagogical problems. Outputs include examination results – comparison with national data; employers' views of graduates; graduate destinations; graduates' views and reports from external examiners, from inspectors to professional bodies (Frazer, 1992).

Before reporting on how the case institutions operationalised quality in the areas of processes and output, the section starts with a description of the process of students' admission to universities in Tanzania. Since the 2010/2011 academic year, the government of Tanzania gave directives for higher education institutions to admit students through the Central Admission System (CAS). However, this directive was optional (though considered mandatory due to the advantages advocated). Currently, institutions that do not participate in the CAS proceed with admissions through their institutions and upload the selected applicants into the system for the regulatory body to approve.

While all other universities in this study complied with government's directives, Institution B declined. There are a number of ways in which such a decline can be interpreted. One way is to refer to the objectives stated in Section 6.2 above. The institution states categorically that its objective is to benefit the Muslim community in the United Republic of Tanzania and beyond. Hence, seemingly, participation in CAS would imply that Muslim applicants would not have been given priority by the CAS. Therefore, to avoid this risk, applicants to Institution B send their applications directly to the institution. This seems to be a kind of affirmative action by the university in favour of the Muslim community in Tanzania, whose participation rate in higher education is perceived to be low. In other words, it supports Habermas's (1987) view discussed in Section 6.2.1 that what is improvement from one point of view may be damage from another point of view.

There are marked differences of practices among the studied universities in terms of other aspects of operationalisation. For example, at Institution A I noted that at least an evaluation similar to that of the IUCEA had been conducted at programme level. In this case it was relevant to ask questions about how the evaluation was conducted, criteria, ownership and willingness to participate. However, in other institutions I had to change the questions slightly to accommodate the situation. An extreme example is that of Institution D, which, apart from withdrawing from the IUCEA-DAAD project, had never conducted any programme evaluation since its establishment in 1996. As this question was about the translation of theory into practice, the researcher asked several questions pertinent to the topic. The aim was to collect sufficient information that would inform the researcher of the way things were being done.

A significant observation in all studied universities was the way curricula are designed. It was reported that at institutions B, C and D the usual procedure is to involve external peers to develop them. This is explainable in the sense that many of these universities employ junior academic staff who had no expertise and experience in teaching and curricula development. This information reminded me of an incident that occurred in 2009 when I was in a team of peer reviewers. It happened that when one member of a certain department was asked questions about the weaknesses of their programme manual, he disclosed that he was not in a position to respond to the

questions because he was not involved in its development. Instead, he disclosed that the manual was developed by a peer reviewer who was seated in front with us. The tension was resolved by the chairperson of the peer review committee insisting that he was expected to own the manual even though he was not involved in its development.

However, the tendency to involve external peers in curriculum design was reported to be changing gradually, as some retired professors from public universities were joining the teaching pool of private universities. As a result, departments with qualified academic staff were initiating internal arrangements for curricula design. For example, at Institution E I was informed that once the department expressed the intention to establish a new programme, the Quality Assurance Office directed them to prepare a draft curriculum and later the office would convene a meeting with them for discussions. In a way, this was a positive development that suggested ownership in the process of curriculum development. As depicted by the QAC:

> …it is initiated by individual departments. Once an intention has been declared, the idea is submitted to the Quality Assurance Office. We then ask them to prepare a list of stakeholders. Then a workshop is organised with relevant stakeholders...This is what we practised recently in developing a Development Studies programme.

There was a different scenario at Institution A. The QAC reported that at Institution A programme manuals are prepared by academic staff at the respective departments. Final drafts are submitted to academic planning committees, channelled to senate, then to the regulatory agency for validation and approval. According to this participant, unlike at institutions B, C and D above, the problem at Institution A is related to reviewing. She contended that once a programme is approved, everybody seems to be satisfied with the achievement. Thereafter, nobody took the responsibility to update the programme. As the QAC reported:

> It happened once that the Quality Assurance Office had sent an internal memo to HoDs asking them to submit programme manuals that were approved by the regulatory agency. The memo posed a big challenge to HoDs because the approved programme manuals were not available. Many HoDs thought that a

university prospectus was sufficient evidence of the presence of programmes being offered by the university.

In response, the Quality Assurance Office reported the matter to the DVCA who directed the office to ensure that the problem was rectified in due course. As the QAC affirmed:

> Now we want everything to be stated clearly. The content, learning outcomes or objectives as others would prefer to call, specifications, rationale and other important details... We insist that there should be programme matrix indicating what is to be taught in each semester. And in recent development we now have received a UQF that has been prepared by the regulatory agency. This has been of great help to us.

Approaches to the institutionalisation of the quality culture appeared to be uniform in all universities, with the exception of Institution D, which did not participate fully in the IUCEA-DAAD project. Quality assurance offices employed similar approaches of conducting seminars and workshops. These workshops and seminars involved DVCAs, FDs, HoDs, and other academic staff. In some cases, external facilitators from public universities that seemed to be performing better in quality assurance were involved. Examples of these universities are the Open University of Tanzania, Mzumbe University and the University of Dar es Salaam. These are all public universities. The University of Dar es Salaam, for example, established a university-wide quality assurance bureau assigned with the task of constantly monitoring and evaluating quality assurance processes within the institution (UDSM, 2007). A QAC at Institution C clarified:

> It was decided that facilitators from universities that seemed to perform better should be invited. We also invited one facilitator from TCU. This helped participants from our institution learn from our counterparts through sharing of experiences.

The resemblance of approaches stems from participation in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project. The IUCEA had directed all QACs who participated in the project to develop action plans and implement them. These action plans were presented and discussed in various workshops organised by national regulatory agencies. This was exemplified by a QAC at Institution E:

> We had a workshop in Dar es Salaam that was organised by TCU. All quality assurance coordinators presented their action plans. These were discussed and refined. Thereafter, each Coordinator had to present the same to the university management and discuss implementation strategies.

In this regard, one may safely argue that the organisation of such institutional seminars and workshops was a matter of compliance rather than internal initiatives.

With the exception of Institution C, there were also similarities of approaches to spreading the culture of quality at departmental level. Institution C was reported to lag behind in holding regular academic meetings. However, in the rest the described approach was for members of the department (or faculty in cases with no departments) to meet regularly. This was done at the beginning and the end of each semester. As an HoD at Institution A elucidated:

> One of the requirements in my job description is orienting new staff. So, I do it whenever we recruit new members of staff. Likewise, at the beginning of each semester we have departmental meetings to remind staff of our core values. There are also seminars for tutors at institutional level guiding them on the same.

Another approach was the formation of quality assurance committees. However, universities differed at the implementation level. For example, while the formation of quality assurance committees had been fully implemented at institutions B and C, this was not the case at Institution A, which claimed to be at the initial stages of implementation.

The data from institution E provided a different picture. Although the institution participated in the IUCEA-DAAD project, it had never implemented programme evaluation in any of its programmes. The QAC blamed FDs for their inactiveness, which came in the form of passive resistance. According to this QAC, there is a high degree of hypocrisy because FDs support decisions that are made at meetings, but refrain from implementing them. One of these decisions is the formation of quality assurance committees. The absence of quality assurance committees does not imply an absence of quality assurance mechanisms. The admission of students, for example, is done based on minimum entry qualifications accepted by the regulatory agencies, including professional bodies. However, the participant raised his concern

169

on the administration of bridging courses. He admitted that universities have been abusing them. There are unethical admission officers who manipulate applicants' entry qualifications. To him, this suggests the practice of corruption, as detailed in Section 6.4.4.

Although Institution E has well-established admission criteria, in practice there is a reported challenge from in-service entrants who join the university based on qualifications earned after completion of diploma programmes. The QAC thought that it was high time that those programmes were reviewed because entrants who pursue that route do not match with their counterparts from high schools:

> In my opinion, direct entrants tend to cope better with university programmes
> than in-service ones. The latter category lack sufficient body of knowledge to
> help them cope with university studies.

There were also concerns about curriculum reviews. Although Institution E has never subjected its programmes to self-evaluation, there is a plan to review all programmes offered. This is in response to the guidelines availed by the regulatory agency. The QAC admitted that there are disparities in terms of contact hours. The number of courses in a programme varied from one faculty to another. This confirms the reason for the IUCEA to demand harmonisation of undergraduate programmes, discussed in Section 6.2.4 above. As stated by this QAC:

> I have learnt that in one faculty students take twelve courses in a programme,
> while in others there are only six courses. Definitely, this ought to be rectified.

The major contextual factors influencing lack of progress in operationalisation of quality at Institution E are funding, lack of support from the university leadership and lack of cooperation between FDs and the QAC. While the first factor seems to be well supported with evidence, there are varied explanations for the second factor. These will be further elaborated in Section 6.3.10.

Only one institution subjected all of its programmes to the process of self-assessment similar to that of the IUCEA. This is Institution A. An HoD described the typical method that is employed in programme evaluation as follows:

> The process starts by the FD appointing an evaluation committee, which is given
> terms of reference and time frame. Then members of the committee identify their

chairperson and secretary. Having finessed, the committee discusses terms of references to be addressed. From there each member is given his/her responsibility. This could be development of instruments for data collection, collection of data, analysis or interpretation. After completing the exercise, the team prepares a draft report, which is discussed in order to establish whether there is consensus. The draft report is then edited at least twice before submitting the final one to the Faculty Dean whom in turn submits it to the DVCA.

While it is a normal practice for the results of self-assessment to be validated by external peers, interviews with the HoD and the QAC revealed that this was not done at Institution A. However, in the interview with the DVCA the possibility of external peers to be invited was suggested. The DVC explained to me that since they were in preparation for re-accreditation by the regulatory body, he would be interested to compare the conclusions reached by a team of experts sent by the regulatory body with those of external peers. Further enquiries with the DVCA suggested an element of scepticism regarding the way the regulator agency conducted its business:

> You see, this year there are a number of complaints from private universities on the performance of the Central Admission System. Unlike previous years, this year there has been no transparency. This raises a number of questions.

What seemed exemplary was the way Institution A decided to transfer knowledge and experiences obtained from the IUCEA-DAAD project to other universities. I asked the QAC a question based on the information I received some years back, that immediately after being involved in the IUCEA-DAAD project, the university joined another initiative of a similar type that was under the umbrella of the Catholic Church. The QAC explained that immediately after their participation in the IUCEA-DAAD project they wrote a proposal targeting to include other universities in East Africa that were under the Catholic Church:

> We decided to write a proposal with the aim of spilling over to other universities the good lessons we learnt from the project. We managed to do it through ACUHIAM, which is an association of Catholic universities …. Under ACQUIAM we started a project named 'ACUQA'. As you are likely to guess, this is a quality assurance project targeting universities which are members of ACUHIAM.

However, the referred 'ACUQA' project focused on institutional self-assessment rather than programme self-assessment. One may wonder about the motive behind the initiatives of Institution A to be ahead of all other private universities in spreading the lessons learnt from the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project. As an insider to that project, I recalled that the former vice-chancellor of Institution A was a member of the IUCEA Quality Assurance Standing Committee. Probably this explains why he wanted the institution to be an example to be emulated by other universities in the region.

Another method of dealing with quality assurance at the programme level is peer teaching. This was reported to be practised at Institution B. However, the QAC admitted that unlike course evaluation, peer teaching is carried out on an *ad hoc* basis. There is no clear timeframe that indicates how regularly it should be carried out. In practice, this entails one lecturer being observed by other colleagues in a lecture theatre. This observation is followed by a feedback meeting. The whole idea is to share experience for the purpose of improvement. As the QAC clarified:

> The aim of peer teaching is not to criticise, but to improve practice. Those found to be weak are later assisted by more experienced colleagues. And this practice has been helpful to many.

The available data suggested marked differences of practices among the studied universities on other aspects of operationalisation. Only one institution had conducted an evaluation similar to that of the IUCEA at programme level. This institution became exemplary by chance because the performance was propelled by the fact that the person behind such achievement was a member of the IUCEA Quality Assurance Standing Committee.

Approaches to the institutionalisation of the quality culture appeared to be uniform in all universities with the exception of Institution D, which did not participate fully in the IUCEA-DAAD project. This resemblance of approaches stems from fact that the IUCEA had directed all QACs who participated in the project to develop action plans and implement them. In this regard, the implementation of action plans was a done as a matter of compliance.

Another significant observation in all studied universities was the way curricula are designed. The usual procedure is outsourcing. This is explainable by the qualifications of academic staff lined up to teach the courses and as the majority are junior staff with no experience in curriculum design. A QAC at Institution B described the process:

> As a Quality Assurance Coordinator, my responsibility is identify reviewers, handle logistical arrangements and to ensure that there is alignment with the University Qualification Framework as provided by TCU. It the responsibility of those at the department to make sure that issues of content and methods of teaching are properly addressed.

6.3.3 Purpose of programme quality assurance

As indicated (see Section 6.2.2), the institutions approach quality assurance in varying ways. Institution A subjects all programmes to self-assessment. Institutions B, C, D and E have never conducted any programme self-assessment similar to that of the IUCEA. However, Institution C conducts institutional self-assessment that in a way involves programme evaluation. On the other hand, Institution D conducts none of the two. However, it is still valid to claim that these institutions have their mechanisms of assuring quality and that these mechanisms are in place for various purposes.

The data gathered from most institutions suggest that the purpose of these mechanisms is compliance with the requirements of regulatory agencies. Institution A, for example, conducts programme self-assessment in preparation for the re-accreditation process. As a matter of procedure, the regulatory is mandated to require the university in question to produce an institutional self-study report. Institution A therefore decided to begin with self-assessment at programme level so as to get a detailed picture of what was going on at the lower levels. This view was shared by both the HoD and the QAC. Another purpose of conducting self-assessment at Institution A, according to the QAC, is alignment with the institutional strategic plan. However, the QAC criticised the process that was employed in the development of the strategic plan. Her concerns are further discussed in Section 6.3.11.

There was a similar experience at Institution C, which conducts self-assessment at institutional level. As indicated in Section 6.2.1 above, the institution started a new life as an autonomous fully fledged university in the academic year 2013–2014. Therefore, the institutional self-assessment that was conducted in 2013 was in compliance with the requirement of the regulatory agency. As indicated in Section 6.2.3, the Universities Act of 2005 mandates the regulatory agency to require a self-study report from a university prior to conducting any technical evaluation.

On the other hand, Institution B had a different experience. As mentioned, this institution has never conducted programme self-assessment in its real sense, but employs other mechanisms, including course assessment by students and peer teaching. The different approaches pursued have different purposes. The purpose of peer teaching, according to the QAC, is improvement of teaching methods. Involving students in course assessment has the implied purpose of evaluating the performance of part-time teachers. The contracts of those who underperform are terminated. As the QAC confirmed:

> We use these assessment forms to collect information on the performance of part-time teachers. Contracts of poor performers are always terminated.

A further probe indicated that there no full-time teachers were subjected to disciplinary action based on information gathered through course assessment. The participant admitted that there are full-time teachers who are not performing well. These are summoned and given advice to rectify the anomalies. In a way, it sounds like the institution is practising protectionism.

The discussion on operationalisation has made it apparent that under the current quality assurance arrangements at national (and regional) level, the institutions in the current study have to approach quality from different angles. This confirms that quality assurance arrangements in the case universities must be understood within a broader regional context as well as the national and institutional contexts. The regional context serves to understand quality enhancement for the purpose of comparability and competitiveness. The national context provides the atmosphere in which the case universities operate. Lastly, institutional contexts inform of resources at disposal as well as challenges. Having discussed the question of

operationalisation, it is worthwhile to turn to ownership, which is the focus of the next section.

6.3.4 Ownership of programme quality assurance

Debates on quality and quality assurance in higher education involve the question of ownership. Data gathered in the current study suggest that although universities are expected to own the processes of assuring quality, this is not the case for the studied private universities. At Institution A an HoD and the QAC expressed their candid opinions that they conduct programme evaluation after receiving directives from the university management. The QAC, however, clarified that even the university management are not the initiators of the process. As explained in Section 6.3.3above, it is done in compliance with the requirements for re-accreditation. The QAC at Institution A affirmed that the idea comes from the university management, because the university was supposed to be re-accredited two years prior to her interview for this study. Therefore, as a matter of procedure, self-evaluation is a pre-requisite to external evaluation. She said that the ACUQA project had taught them a lesson, because focusing on the institutional level and ignoring the evaluation of programmes was a wrong approach. She insisted that the programme is the vital component that sells the name of the institution.

However, based on the way things were being organised, there were sentiments from an MSAC that the second self-assessment was initiated by the QAC. The MSAC lamented:

> I'm convinced that it was initiated by... [mentions the name of the QAC]. Yes, it is that lady in collaboration with her colleagues. I know that the regulatory body had wanted us to produce an institutional self-assessment report. Not a programme self-assessment report. So why conduct self-assessment at programme level?

One way of interpreting these contrasting views expressed by an MSAC and the QAC was the sentiments that the QAC was in a way undiplomatic in her approach. The sentiments were learnt in an interview with the DVCA. The DVCA informed me that at times he had to advise the QAC to be diplomatic when dealing with senior staff. Luckily, this was confirmed by the QAC herself, when she said that it was necessary for her to press hard due to the nature of the academic staff:

> People say that I'm too strict. Even DVCA once advised me to be not too harsh…It might be true due to my background. I belong to the field of business management. Therefore I want to see things done. But these colleagues don't understand me.

Through probing the QACI learnt that impliedly, the shift of focus from institutional self-evaluation to programme self-assessment was initiated by the Quality Assurance Office. The reason was that, after being informed by the university management of the intention to invite the regulatory agency to conduct technical evaluation for the purpose of re-accreditation, the Quality Assurance Office convened a meeting with FDs to discuss the readiness of each faculty. From that meeting it was evident that none of the faculties was confident of their status. Hence the QAC reported the matter to the university management and convinced them to postpone the re-accreditation process. Alternatively, they proposed conducting self-assessment at programme level. In this regard, the claim by the MSAC was justifiable. However, as discussed in the next section, this had much to do with coordination of quality assurance rather than initiation.

Voluntary participation in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project was understood to be a starting point for the establishment of sustainable quality assurance systems in universities in Tanzania. It was in the wake of this voluntary participation that the case private universities were expected to spread the good practices of programme self-assessment and own the process. However, the data gathered suggest the opposite. Only one institution had conducted programme self-assessment similar to that under the IUCEA-DAAD project. However, academic staff did not own the exercise because the idea was initiated by the university management in preparation for institutional re-accreditation.

While the evaluation of quality by external agencies is positive in terms of enabling private universities to do things that otherwise they could have not done, in the case universities it encouraged a culture of dependency and compliance.

6.3.5 Coordination of programme quality assurance

The coordination of quality assurance and programme self-assessment is generally a matter of institutional internal arrangements. This study identified the coordination of quality assurance activities as one of the areas of concern. It was found that in

four universities coordination is solely the responsibility of the recently established quality assurance offices. Experience varies, from those with established units and quality assurance policies to those that have no policies at all. At Institution A, the university had established a quality assurance office manned by two staff members. These staff members were officially appointed and have a clearly stated job description. The university has a draft quality assurance policy. Two outstanding accomplishments of this office at Institution A are the coordination of institutional-wide programme self-assessment and hosting of the ACUQA project mentioned in Section 6.3.4 above. As the QAC proudly stated:

> I am very proud of this achievement. Hosting ACUQA project has accentuated the status of this unit and the university at large.

At Institution B there is a QAC who had been officially appointed. However, the university has no quality assurance policy. Despite its operation without a policy, the office plays a pivotal role of coordinating two major activities, namely peer teaching and curricula reviews. In curricula reviews, for example, the practice is for the QAC to initiate the process by communicating the need to carry out the review. A proposal is sent to the DVCA, who in turn communicates the same to the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration for funding. As the QAC elaborated:

> Being a coordinator, my responsibility is to ensure alignment. The alignment that I'm talking about is a framework proposed by the regulatory agency. All universities in Tanzania must adhere to [it]. This includes credit definition and calculation. The aim is to ensure harmonisation of academic programmes in Tanzania... But it is the responsibility of the faculty dean to provide terms of reference which mainly are about relevance and currency of the content, updating the references used in teaching, and alignment of learning outcomes with the content. These are the major aspects that we usually take into account.

Institution C has developed an institutional quality assurance policy, but this achievement is based on personal initiatives of the QAC. As the QAC described:

> I personally developed the policy by compiling and customising quality assurance policies of four institutions; three from Tanzania and one from Uganda.

According to the QAC of Institution C, the role of the Quality Assurance Office was underrated by the university management. The QAC thought that the office deserves a higher status than it had. He elaborated his stance by arguing that the course of time has necessitated change in many other aspects, including the labour market and methods of teaching. He insisted that universities are expected to sell their brand names through programmes offered. Hence, in his opinion, the quality assurance office is required to act as a mediator, assisting the university to collect and disseminate relevant information to stakeholders and ensuring the university remains relevant in the changing world.

The data indicate a different scenario at Institution D regarding the coordination of quality assurance. Its withdrawal from the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project occurred after the nominated person had participated in various workshops and developed an action plan for implementation as per IUCEA expectations. However, contrary to what happened at the other universities, participation ended only with the production of an action plan that had never been implemented until the time at which this interview was conducted. There is neither a unit, nor a quality assurance policy. Therefore, she holds a blank title because she was not officially appointed. As she remarked:

> I am not officially appointed. There is neither a letter of appointment nor an office identified for that purpose. Even my colleagues do not know that I have that title. They only person they know who is in charge of academic matters is the DVCA.

Interestingly, the QAC stated that she represents the institution at seminars and workshops organised by the regulatory agency. In a way, this suggests a compliance culture. It is worth reminding that the IUCEA through national regulatory agencies expected all institutions that voluntarily participated in the project to establish quality assurance units. Therefore, one could interpret the decision by the management to nominate one particular person to represent the institution away was to play the game 'safely and cheaply'.

As at Institution A, at Institution E there was a quality assurance office staffed by two people. These staff members were officially appointed and had clear terms of reference. However, unlike at Institution A, there is no significant achievement made

by the unit. Partly this is contributed to lack of support from the previous university leadership, as well as uncooperative FDs, as detailed in sections 6.3.10 and 6.3.11.

The major weakness identified in all four institutions was lack of coordination of feedback from the various stakeholders. From the interviews conducted, I established that there are various methods of collecting feedback from stakeholders. For example, students write fieldwork reports and give various recommendations on the notable weaknesses of the programme. The same applied to students' course assessment. However, this information is collected haphazardly without any clear coordination mechanism. As the QAC of Institution C stated:

> I must admit that coordination of feedback from stakeholders is one of the weaknesses at this institution. We have not established a clear mechanism of collecting feedback from various stakeholders for the purpose of reviewing our curricula. At the moment each faculty has its own way of doing things. But to the best of my knowledge, this is done in an uncoordinated way.

Clearly, the introduction of the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance initiatives has impacted quite significantly on private universities' internal quality assurance arrangements. This was evidenced by the establishment of quality assurance offices in 80% of the studied universities. This suggests the emergence of a new quality assurance culture, despite the variations in the level of implementation.

However, there are two major weakness identified in all four institutions. First, there is no coordinated processing and use of feedback from the various stakeholders. As indicated above, information is collected haphazardly. This practice cannot be used for improvement purposes. The second weakness is it appeared that the birth of the new quality era has been taken to mean everything related to quality should be left to be performed by the institutional quality assurance office.

6.3.6 Involvement in programme quality assurance

Another issue raised was the involvement of internal and external stakeholders. Internally, it was reported that there is a low level of student involvement in matters that relate to quality assurance. For example, at Institution A, which carries out programme self-assessment, students are not involved in the self-assessment committees. According to the HoD, this is considered to be unnecessary, as students

have very little to contribute. An MSAC thought that involving students is 'inconvenient', as students' schedules would not easily coincide with those of academic staff:

> You see, it is easier for the chairperson to convene a meeting with colleagues.
> But involving students is difficult. The issue here is time.

The major component in which students were reported to be involved is course assessment. However, the experience varied from one institution to another. At Institution B course assessment is carried out at the end of each semester. This is similar to the situation at Institution D. At Institution A the HoD was not sure whether the exercise is regularly carried out. The QAC at Institution C was sincere enough to disclose that the exercise is hardly carried out. Gathering from his experience, he said that students are involved in the 'evaluation of teachers', but not courses. As he explained, this happens only when there is a particular problem that has been reported targeting a specific staff member. In this regard, it can be argued that the 'assessment' is carried out reactively to respond to a given phenomenon.

As at Institution C, the involvement of students in course assessment at Institution E is not regularised. It was reported by the QAC that the questionnaire used in the previous years' assessment exercise had previously not been formally approved. This situation was reported to have been rectified:

> Currently we have a questionnaire that has been approved by the relevant authorities. It will be used starting from this semester. However, as I cautioned before, organising such an evaluation is one thing, and obtaining valuable results is another thing. Some students, especially those who want a shortcut to success, are not objective at all.

Further to course assessment, at Institution C students are representatively involved in sensitisation seminars and workshops. As the QAC reported:

> I started with all deans, heads of departments and the university management. I wanted these people to help me spread the message to others. I also involved the president and vice-president of the students' body.

The involvement of students in course assessment here raises a concern from four institutions (institutions A, C, D and E). It was claimed that students' opinions are

highly subjective. All interviewees anonymously raised this concern. It was reported that in case such a thing happened when assessing a particular teacher, the management resort to weighing students' opinions based on what they know about the teacher. As the QAC at Institution D elaborated:

> Students tend to assign low grades to teachers who don't favour them, and vice versa. We have this conviction because we are few here hence we know each other well. This helps us to establish the validity of students' claims.

A similar observation was made by the QAC at Institution E when he commented on course assessments that were carried out in the past:

> It was evident that teachers who did not compromise quality received low grades. But those who compromised, like ... [mentions the name of the former DVCA] definitely received high ranks.

There was a resemblance among the institutions on the involvement of the university management. All participants affirmed that QACs submit their action plans to the management. The aim is to share with them and chart together the way forward. At institutions A and C, for example, the university management was involved at the beginning of the process of carrying out self-assessment at programme and institutional levels respectively. The aim of involving the top management was strategic, in the sense that there was a need for drawing the attention of the community to the importance of the self-assessment exercise.

However, at Institution A the university management was reported to have ignored other stakeholders in the development of its strategic plan. The QAC considered such action to be undemocratic. In her view, the development of the university's strategic plan had to be preceded by self-assessment to identify weaknesses that could be addressed using the available resources. As she questioned:

> How does the management expect people to implement a plan which they did not participate in making?

The data in this section suggest a low level of student involvement in matters related to quality assurance. In all institutions there is no significant realisation of the changing role of students' involvement in quality assurance and programme self-

assessment in particular. The reasons for this low level varied. Some thought that it was inconvenient to involve students. Others considered students' opinions as too subjective. In cases where students are involved, there was a particular reason. An example is of judging teachers' performance. Therefore, the general picture portrayed was that of academic staff mistrusting students, although the same students who were regarded as not trustworthy were used to collect data that lead to the termination of the contracts of part-time teachers. This lack of trust suggests an urgent need to redefine quality and subscribe to transformative learning, as discussed (see Section 6.2.2).

The resemblance in the involvement of the university management suggests a culture of compliance based on the fact that all QACs are directed to submit their action plans to the management. The aim of involving the top management is strategic, in the sense that there is a need of drawing the attention of the community to the birth of a new unit that would be handling quality assurance matters. It should be borne in mind that QACs are expected to head those new offices; hence it is prudent for them to seek support from the top management.

Harvey and Williams (2010b) summarised scholarly articles by Hill (1995), Ratcliff (1996), Stensaker (1999), Geall (2000), Leckey and Neill (2001), and Bean (2005) on students' experience of higher education. Hill (1995) proposed that students should be involved as equal partners in the definition and assessment of quality and Ratcliff (1996) went further and proposed a more proactive role for student-centred evaluations in state and national quality assurance processes. Increasingly, he claimed, student feedback on their experiences has become an important internal quality assurance mechanism and is growing in prominence in external evaluations.

Several articles express a view that student feedback is valuable as one source of information that, as Bean (2005) argued, needs to be triangulated in order to inform management for improvement. In her study of student feedback surveys in Hong Kong, Geall (2000) argued that such surveys provide information from the student perspective to help management plan improvements. Stensaker (1999) explored the use of student surveys as a means of gathering information from key stakeholders but argued that only limited use is made of the information compared with data from other sources. Leckey and Neill (2001) continued in this vein, arguing in the case of

Ulster that student feedback was a vital source of information for the quality assurance process.

6.3.7 Funding of programme quality assurance

Quality assurance processes, and carrying out programmatic self-assessment in particular, require funds. As mentioned in Chapter 3, one of the challenges facing private universities in Tanzania is lack of funds. Private universities in Tanzania depend mainly on student fees. This was established in interviews with DVCAs of institutions A and D. The DVCA of Institution D, for example, identified lack of funds as the major reason for his institution withdrawing from the IUCEA-DAAD project. He insisted that the institution is facing a big challenge of identifying sources of funds, as at the moment it is operating mainly on student fees and a limited number of research projects:

> We appreciate IUCEA's good intention in this initiative. However, we had to withdraw due to financial constraints. Self-assessment cannot be carried out without funds.

The DVCA elaborated further that given the size of the institution, at the time of conducting the interview with him there were only two professors who were engaged in research projects that contributed to institutional finances.

There are different experiences at all institutions. At Institution A, despite the meagre resources, the university management has allocated a small budget for the coordination of quality assurance activities. Further, through a joint effort between the quality assurance office and the former vice-chancellor, it was possible to obtain funds for the ACUQA project, which they are hosting. At institutions B and C there is a budget that caters for participating in quality assurance seminars and workshops, inside and outside the institution. However, while Institution B has allocated a small budget for other activities related to quality assurance, this is not the case at Institution C, because other major activities are not properly supported.

The challenge of financial constraint was also reported at Institution E. The Quality Assurance Office planned to conduct self-assessment for all undergraduate programmes and subject them to external peer reviews in the 2015/16 financial year.

However, it was later learnt that these two activities could not be implemented simultaneously due to financial constraints. As the QAC stated:

> We opted to postpone the idea of inviting peer reviewers. Our analysis of the expenses suggested that it would be practical to separate the two. Hence we concluded that we are going to conduct self-assessment in one financial year, followed by peer review in another. We are also planning to conduct tracer studies... but the challenge is how to fund these activities.

The same participant described a decrease in student enrolment in humanities and social sciences programmes following changes made by the HESLB:

> We are currently facing the challenge of [a] massive drop in admission of students especially in humanities and social sciences. This is due to change of the criteria set by the Higher Education Students' Loans Board. As you know, [the] majority of students come from relatively poor families.

There are a number of limitations associated with heavy reliance on student fees. As indicated in Chapter 3, these student fees come from mainly poor students. In addition, the HESLB provides loans to a selected number of programmes as stipulated in their operational tools. The list of funded programmes is not static, because it is constantly being reviewed depending on national priorities. In this regard, a drop in the admission of students in those programmes mentioned by the QAC above was caused by the decision of HESLB not to support students who were enrolled in those programmes.

Attempts by private universities to free themselves from the problem of dependence on student fees are evident in the efforts made by private universities in Tanzania to establish teaching centres and colleges. In these centres, several non-degree courses are offered. Available data indicate that as per November 2014 (TCU, 2014) there were 18private universities operating in Tanzania, with established 12affiliated colleges and18teaching centres. The multiplicity of affiliate colleges and centres explains the efforts made by private universities in Tanzania to overcome the challenge of financial constraints. Most of these teaching centres offer non-degree programmes, which in a way help to generate funds to universities in question.

Mkude and Cooksey (2003) state that by 2003, private universities in Tanzania were entirely self-financing. According to these authors, the main sources of funds were tuition fees, subsidiary activities, donations and endowments. However, one may argue that currently the situation is different. With the establishment of the Tanzania Education Authority in 2001 (URT, 2001) and the HESLB in 2004 (URT, 2004) private universities in Tanzania receive direct and indirect financial support from government. Support from the HESLB can be said to be indirect, because it is received in the form of tuition fees provided to students. The board assists, on a loan basis, needy students who secure admission to accredited higher learning institutions, but who have no economic power to pay for their education. Based on their accreditation status, private universities also access bank loans.

Private universities in Tanzania face financial constraints due to overdependence on student fees. This lack of funds was a stumbling block to the accomplishment of quality assurance activities, including the implementation of action plans and conducting self-assessment at programme level.

Efforts by government to overcome the challenge of financial constraints facing private universities include the establishment of the Tanzania Education Authority and the HESLB. On the other hand, private universities have been struggling for survival by establishing teaching centres. These mainly offer non-degree programmes.

Since the end of the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project in 2011, the case universities that participated in the project have registered varying degrees of achievement in terms of the institutionalisation of quality assurance systems. This variation is partly explained by financial constraints.

The effects of dependence on student fees, which come mainly from students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, have been manifested by a massive drop in student enrolment in programmes that the HESLB had decided not to support.

6.3.8 Benchmarking of programme quality assurance

Benchmarking in higher education is not a recent phenomenon. As suggested by Shils (1992), within each national society, universities are in contact with one

another. They share a common tradition of learning in each of the disciplines and in their conception of their calling as universities. Through benchmarking, universities engage in a learning process structured so as to enable those engaging in the process to compare their services, activities or products in order to identify their comparative strengths and weaknesses, as a basis for self-improvement (Jackson &Lund, 2000). As such, benchmarking offers a way of identifying better and smarter ways of doing things and understanding why they are better or smarter. These insights can then be used to implement changes that will improve practice. As Spendolini (1992) observed, benchmarking helps people to think outside the box. Benchmarking activities that are focused on the education process might be directed towards the quality of inputs to the education process, the quality of the process itself and the quality of the output from the process.

The data collected from the case institutions do not suggest much going on with regard to benchmarking. Only two institutions reported that they benchmark with their counterparts, namely institutions A and B. However, the impression I received was that at institutions A and B benchmarking is a kind of once-off event. The reason is that it is not treated as a continuous process in which the case institutions have to continually seek to improve their practices. The QACs of the two institutions admitted that benchmarking is not regularly done. When compared, the two institutions seem to share the practice of process benchmarking. The study identified a unique feature of benchmarking, whereby institutions with similar faith orientations compared their operational processes with a goal of identifying and observing best practices. While Institution A benchmarks with other Catholic universities in East Africa, Institution B does the same by sharing experiences with a Muslim university in Uganda. However, as indicated in Section 6.3.6 above, even these institutions that seem to benchmark with external counterparts lack clear mechanisms of coordinating feedback that could inform the next round of benchmarking.

Contrary to institutions A and B, as discussed above, the other three institutions do not even manifest mechanisms of internal benchmarking. At Institution C the QAC's disclosure of the fact that academic committees rarely meet brings in scepticism whether there is internal benchmarking of programmes. At Institution D, for example, the QAC suggested the presence of informal benchmarking that takes place through

participation in workshops and seminars organised by professional bodies. This type of arrangement confirms a lack of coordination described in Section 6.3.6 above.

On the other hand, the failure of Institution D to participate in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project suggests a significant contradiction between what is ideal and practice. This is the institution that envisions becoming a model private university in Tanzania and Africa. As portrayed on its website, one of its core values is collaboration. The university acknowledges its newness as a provider of higher education and trusts itself to be dynamic. In that regard, it vows to seek to learn from the available best practices and grow together with peers. If it is living up to its promises, one would expect this institution would have been at the forefront in terms of participation in the IUCEA-DAAD project. This is because the IUCEA-DAAD project was an exemplary opportunity for universities in East Africa not only to collaborate, but also learn from one another.

In higher education, benchmarking is a learning process structured so as to enable institutions to compare their services, activities or products in order to identify their comparative strengths and weaknesses. Benchmarking is a basis for self-improvement, as it helps those engaged in the process to think outside the box. As Smith, Armstrong and Brown (1999) suggest, in today's highly competitive world benchmarking goes beyond simply looking at products' attributes. Benchmarking is seen as a tool that allows organisations to measure and compare themselves with the best performers and work towards improving standards of practice and performance. Gathering from the data obtained from the current study it is doubtful that the studied private universities are focusing on the improvement of standards of performance. I am inclined to take this stance because more than five years have elapsed since the launching of the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project, yet none of the institutions has established quality criteria of their own. All case universities rely on criteria set by the regulatory agencies.

Regarding the two institutions that seem to benchmark, they mainly focus their benchmarking on similar faith-based institutions. Although this can be regarded as 'thinking outside the box', these institutions ought to aim higher by attempting to learn beyond their current counterparts.

6.3.9Timing of quality self-assessment of programmes

In Chapter 3 it was established that as institutions, universities are shaped by the context in which they operate. Unlike banks, which are categorised as both technically and institutionally strong, universities are institutionally strong but technically weak (Pilbeam, 2009). As the technical context (which is weak) is concerned with issues of resources, it influences the timing of self-assessment. This is because institutional managers are always concerned with efficiency and effectiveness.

The timing of self-assessment can be said to have been done strategically. While the IUCEA had its own agenda in introducing the referred quality assurance project, as indicated in Section 6.2.4, institutions followed a similar line of thinking.

As reported in the previous sections, only one institution conducts self-assessment at programme level. This assessment is not conducted for improvement, but for the sake of compliance, as the university was due for re-accreditation at the time of the study. For a similar reason, Institution C conducts institutional self-assessment. The only institution that wishes to conduct programme self-assessment for improvement purposes is Institution E. However, this is wishful thinking, as the institution faces financial constraints.

Based on these findings, it can be argued that programme and institutional self-assessment at institutions A and C respectively are conducted to time the technical evaluation committees, which were by then expected to be sent by the regulatory agency.

The above findings concur with Kells's (1992) observation that institutions that are largely regulated by government or other prescriptive agencies are more reactive rather than active and determining. As Kells (1992) contends, such institutions are less in control of their institutional life. As they are less involved in the act of regulating their own behaviour, they are less responsive as institutions and less involved with strengthening themselves from within. This explains why the two self-assessments were conducted prior to visits by the regulatory agencies.

Like other higher education institutions in the world, private universities in Tanzania are expected to be found in institutionally strong but technically weak contexts. The institutional context addresses the question of legitimacy and focuses on rules, roles and beliefs, or cultural and symbolic aspects of the organisation. On other hand, the technical context is concerned with issues of resources. Conducting programme self-assessment evaluation requires resources. These resources can be temporal, fiscal or material. In addition, it requires the presence of clearly established rules and a strong belief in the culture of quality.

However, based on concerns voiced by QACs at institutions C and E, it was difficult to establish the validity of Pilbeam's(2009) classification of higher education institutions as institutionally strong but technically weak. From the data it appeared that some private universities among the current cases are both institutionally and technically weak.

6.3.10 Leadership involved in programme quality assurance

Leadership is viewed as a dynamic that attempts to keep contradictory forces in balance (Knight &Trowler, 2001). The importance of leadership in improving quality is confirmed by Foster (2010), who asserts that organisations with weak leadership will not gain a market advantage in terms of quality. However, the idea of leadership is difficult to capture and open to numerous definitions. If this is the case, then Middlehurst (1993) is right to suggest that the existence or absence of leadership is largely dependent on subjective judgement by observers, with different interests and perspectives.

In the studied cases, the role of the university leadership in programmatic quality is a mixed one. While some leaders have proven to be outstandingly supportive with their contributions more thoughtful and well organised, others do not serve their institutions properly. They do not support the efforts of QACs to implement their action plans as anticipated.

While the QAC of Institution A appreciated the contribution of the former and current vice-chancellors in supporting quality assurance initiatives (see Section 6.3.7 above), this was not the case at institutions C and E. QACs from these institutions have their own share of worries based on the way in which university leadership behaves.

189

Shockingly, it was learnt that at Institution C, the implementation of quality assurance initiatives faces a stumbling block from the vice-chancellor. The participant claimed that the vice-chancellor, who had been in that position for years, seems to take things for granted. Hence, he fails to spearhead the transformation agenda. The QAC expected the vice-chancellor to be the interpreter of the institutional mission and mediator between the various forces. To the contrary, the university management are divided. As a result, when decisions are made, implementation lack support. The situation was reported to be compounded by lack of clear procedures to cater for the proper conduction of academic affairs due to double standards. The QAC substantiated his claim by arguing that there are unclear examination procedures. Examination questions are not moderated. The security of examinations is not guaranteed. There are no examination templates. Every lecturer had his/her own format. Worse still, some lecturers were reported to mark students' examination scripts without marking schemes. There was also an extreme example of some lecturers who teach without issuing course outlines to students. This claim resembled one made by the QAC at Institution A given in Section 6.3.2 above, when she reported the absence of programme manuals.

When asked to clarify the double standards, the QAC at Institution C disclosed:

> To be specific, I mean employment without considering the actual demands. The university has a big number of administrative and support staff, almost equal to the number of academic staff. One wonders what the core function of this university is. Administrative and support staff have been given more prominence...The Bishop has the mandate to interfere with university practices.

At Institution D the QAC was of the opinion that the institutional management are operating under the premise that quality is being assured. This claim was verified in an interview with the DVCA, who was satisfied with the position of the institution nationally. The DVCA further argued that he had a strong conviction that they are operating under collegial relationships, trusting that everybody understood his/her professional responsibilities and hence are acting ethically.

The QAC at Institution E had mixed observations on the issue of support from the university management. He expressed his dissatisfaction with the lack of support from the former vice-chancellor and DVCA. While the former vice-chancellor was

reported to lack interest in the ongoing initiatives, the DVCA participates in malpractices that are detrimental to quality assurance initiatives. To elucidate this claim, the QAC reported that he was once shocked to hear the DVCA admitting that he occasionally exposed examination questions and marking schemes to students. The DVCA used to let students 'practise' a week before the commencement of examinations.

Further complaints by the QAC at Institution E were levelled at FDs who allegedly fail to implement various decisions related to the enhancement of the culture of quality assurance. This QAC cited an example that 18months had lapsed (prior to our interview) since it was agreed that all FDs had to submit action plans to the Directorate of Quality Assurance. At the time of this interview, none of the FDs had complied:

> Faculty deans are leaders who are expected to show the way. But there is passive resistance. They are hypocrites... in meetings they tend to deceive us that they are in favour of QA but in reality they are not. Currently we are planning to summon all deans to hold them accountable. Action plans were given to them by dispatch and through emails yet no action taken. We are now planning to give them [an] ultimatum.

However, the QAC assured the researcher that since the changing of the top management (due to the passing away of the former vice-chancellor and replacement of the former DVCA), he received maximum support. He affirmed his stance to continue with the struggle:

> Despite their resistance, I will continue to preach the gospel of QA because this is the fashion of the day. We cannot stay behind and watch while others are making progress. I recently participated in a workshop and I was so impressed by the level of advancement reached by our colleagues in Uganda.

The use of the words 'preach' and 'gospel' above by the participant is also subject to discussion. The resistance purportedly reported by the QAC can be explained by the approach that he employs. If the approach used is to 'preach', there is no question why the FDs resisted. As we are aware, there is fine line that distinguishes educating or teaching from indoctrination. As Neusner (1984) argues, university teachers do not propose to tell someone what is generally agreed upon as the truth. Similarly,

those who are taught at the university are not expected to take for granted the correctness of what they are told. They will definitely want to know the importance of what they are told, and analyse the amount of efforts required to produce the intended results. This claim by Neusner (1984) suggests that the QAC is expected to educate his colleagues on the importance of quality assurance rather than 'preach' the 'gospel'. By using the analogy of 'preaching', the message he communicates is that quality assurance is a kind of established knowledge that has to be forced or imposed upon those who are expected to receive 'salvation'. This brings in the importance of understanding the different academic values discussed in Chapter 4.For Brennan (1997), the nature of academic work itself allows plenty of scope for resistance and subversion. There are large differences of perceptions depending on where people are located within the system. It is not surprising, therefore, to find variations in opinions among academics, managers and administrators within the same institution. Probably it would be appropriate for the QAC to recognise that being adults, academic staff operate in their frames of reference that define their life world (Mezirow, 2003). Hence, when dealing with them it is suggested to start first by unearthing the frames of reference that shaped their lines of thinking and acting.

From the above data it can be construed that there is close relationship between commitment of university management and the way quality is being operationalised. While universities with highly committed leaders have made notable progress since the end of the IUCEA-DAAD project in 2011, those with less-committed leaders seem to lag behind. It is quite apparent in some cases that the mismatch between the expectations of QACs and those of the university management is an obstacle to the operationalisation of quality.

As Bensimon and Neumann (1994) rightly suggest, the vice-chancellor must be a team builder. He/she should not be viewed as a hero or heroine. Bensimon and Neumann (1994) further suggest that leadership is something that requires skills in the creation of meaning that is authentic to oneself and one's community.

If the above argument by Bensimon and Neumann (1994) is correct, the researcher's view here is that the regulatory agency obviously had to include private universities in the leadership programme on human resource development for university management, as described in Section 6.2.3.

Further, there is a qualitative relationship between the institutional type and operationalisation of quality. Reports on incidences of intrusion by institutional founders on quality assurance matters (such as recruitment procedure) stand out as peculiar examples.

6.3.11 Power tensions in programme quality assurance

One of the themes in the controversy about quality assessment in higher education is power. Particularly, it is about the relative autonomy of higher education from the state and about the relative autonomy of individual academic staff within the institutions in which they work (Brennan, 1997). As suggested by Clark (1983), there are three main sources of power, namely the state, the academic profession and the markets. In practice, these three sources of power exert all sorts of controls, including political, economic and cultural. In short, as Barnett (2000) suggests, power is a decisive factor in terms of control of the evaluation, methods of evaluation, as well as ownership.

In the current study, political control was manifested by the IUCEA's approach to convert what Max Weber (1924, cited in Finch, 1997) termed as 'naked power' into 'legitimate authority'. As noted in Section 6.2.4, Habermas termed this legitimatisation 'societal rationalisation'. In the IUCEA-DAAD project legitimate authority was achieved through involving various stakeholders prior to launching the quality assurance project in the East African region. This involvement caused participating institutions to accept the criteria and method employed in the self-assessment exercise as well as peer review. As mentioned, the project lasted from 2007 to 2011.

The end of the referred project was meant to be the beginning for universities in each country within the region to engage in the new culture of quality assurance, contrary to the traditional one. This implied vesting responsibility with regulatory agencies in each country to ensure that universities in their respective countries comply with what had been agreed to by the five partner states. This explains the reason for the regulatory agency in Tanzania developing a number of guidelines that reflected the focus of the IUCEA to harmonise undergraduate programmes. It is worth recording that this regulatory agency is statutory. It has been established by an

act of parliament. This suggests that private universities in Tanzania are obliged to comply based on the mandate of the regulatory agency. Therefore, contrary to Brennan's (1997) views that an assessment method that focuses on the subject (or programme) level tends to reinforce the importance of subject values and academic work, thereby enhancing the power of the subject group, the current study suggested otherwise. A programme evaluation conducted by Institution A can be said to have been 'hijacked' by the regulatory agency. This claim is justifiable by the fact that although the exercise was carried out by academics within the departments and faculties, the criteria did not originate from within. In addition, other important resources had to be sought from the central management of the institution because they were centralised.

One way to explain this situation is that because the emergence of private universities in Tanzania was preceded by the establishment of the regulatory agency, it follows that the case universities had been, in a way, 'conditioned' to think inside the box of the regulatory framework. This confirms the claim made in Section 4.3 that too much compliance is a hindrance to innovation (Barnett, 2000). The important question to be answered is the extent to which the self-understanding of those being evaluated has been enhanced as a result of the evaluation process (Barnett, 2000).

One of the notable power tensions was due to introduction of managerialism in quality assurance. Those at the lower level of administration thought that the university administration was pushing its own agenda to departments. At Institution A, for example, an HoD had a strong conviction that the assessment was controlled by the university management. According to this HoD, there was tension in its implementation because academic staff thought that an extra burden was being imposed upon them. The staff thought that they were subjected to forces, including writing reports and preparing various documents. As a result, in some cases the exercise was done for compliance sake. As the QAC indicated:

> There are some cases where heads of departments took the responsibility of writing these reports on their own after noticing lack of cooperation among members of self-assessment committees... It was easy to detect. If you read a

report that has been written by one person and that which has been written by a team you will notice the differences.

The above description fits what de Vries (1997) terms as doing programme evaluation for compliance sake. De Vries (1997) contends that some academics view the processes of external initiated self-assessment within quality management as an unnecessary extra burden on the increasing academic load and an encroachment on scarce research and consultancy time for minimal benefit. These sentiments result in academic departments carrying out self-assessment that results in 'write-ups' rather than full-scale self-assessments. De Vries (1997) contends that in such occasions, typically the task of doing a write-up would be undertaken by an academic member of the department with extensive knowledge of its activities over time. In de Vries's (1997) view, the purpose of this form of self-assessment is to discharge the department's obligation as quickly and as painless as possible.

In addition, the QAC observed that the university management was pushing its own agenda undemocratically. She cited an example of the way the university's strategic plan was developed without involving other staff and without diagnosis of local concerns, including areas of weakness that call for immediate redress.

Similar sentiments were expressed at Institution C. The QAC complained about the university management imposing its own agenda on staff recruitment:

> Yes. It happens...For example in staff recruitment. Criteria are set, but at the end you may find that we employ people who do not meet the criteria. The recruitment process is questionable in the sense that the set criteria are not adhered to.

This lamentation confirms Knight and Trowler's (2001) contention described in Chapter 4(see Section 4.3.1) that power involves agenda setting and, importantly, exclusion from the agenda. Individuals or groups may undermine a set of values or practices (in this case, recruitment criteria) in order to delimit the parameters of what is conceived as sensible, normal and desirable.

At Institution D the QAC confirmed Brennan's (1997) claim that local controls and constraints can appear to be far more powerful than anything that exists at the national system level. Lack of seriousness on the part of the university management

in updating itself on quality assurance issues seemed to be one of the major concerns that the QAC had in mind:

> I developed an action plan based on what I had learnt in the workshop. But when I submitted it to the university management it ended in shelves. I could not push it ... they have the final say.

A common phenomenon in all four institutions was tension caused by external forces, especially accreditation bodies. The response from the QAC at Institution A on the balancing of requirements of different stakeholders suggests that external pressure has a potential role in influencing the operationalisation of quality. The experience was described as follows:

> The dominant stakeholders that we prioritise their requirements are professional bodies and TCU. Regarding employers… [tries to recall] there are very few incidences that we have involved them. We had a tracer study which was focused on the BBA programme. At least employers were asked to give their opinions on how our graduates feature...So, to answer your question, I can say emphatically that TCU and professional bodies dominate. Then internal stakeholders follow. However, as I said, students' opinions are not given much weight because of biases.

Institution C faced a similar challenge of balancing the tension caused by professional associations. Being of Muslim orientation, the institution offers a unique programme of Bachelor of Law and Shariah. Apart for Muslim universities, the Shariah component is not available at any other university that offers an LLB programme in Tanzania. The faculty had designed the programme to be offered in four years instead of three. This is one year extra if compared to the practice in other universities.

It is a requirement for all university graduates in Tanzania to undergo special training offered by the Law School of Tanzania. The Law School of Tanzania was established by the Law School of Tanzania Act 2007 that came into force in May 2007. It is meant to improve the practical skills of aspiring lawyers in the country. Before the establishment of the school, aspiring lawyers were trained in practical skills through the internship program run by the Attorney General's Chambers. Later on, some universities adopted the externship system to impart practical skills to

aspiring lawyers. These systems have now been replaced by the Practical Legal Training Programme to be run by the school. The Law School falls under the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs and Justice.

Given the uniqueness of the law programme offered at Institution B, graduates from the referred programme face a challenge of coping with the requirement of the Law School of Tanzania. As a guideline to prepare university graduates to join the Law School, the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs and Justice prepared and issued a curriculum to be followed by all universities that offer the LLB programme. This is a three-year programme. Given its commitment to Muslim values, Institution B was forced to re-adjust in order to cope with the new curriculum issued by the Ministry. However, this was confirmed to be difficult. In an attempt to solve the problem, the FD at Institution B wrote a letter to the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs and Justice. The response was a disappointment, because the Ministry simply advised the FD to extend the duration of the contested Bachelor of Law and Shariah. In practice, this meant teaching it for five years. At the time this interview was conducted, the issue was still unresolved. As the QAC observed:

> This stands as a good example of power pressure... we are not ready to cover the content of the prescribed curriculum at the expense of Shariah...I must say that we do not agree with this suggestion because if we do, applicants will shy away from this programme. This is a unique programme primarily targeting Muslim students. I suspect very few applicants will be ready to spend five years while their colleagues elsewhere are graduating two years earlier. ... It will also not be cost effective for us.

At Institution Can MSAC asserted that at the Faculty of Business and Economics more emphasis is placed during curriculum review on addressing the requirements of professional bodies such as boards of accountants and boards of procurement:

> Because these are the ones who know what is in the market. They are also responsible [for] registering our graduates after being satisfied with our quality… May be I should put it like this; it all depends mainly on the programme in question. For example, in Accounts, the professional body is given prominence. Those which have no professional bodies like BA, BA(Ed) and others, priority is given to TCU requirements.

I interviewed one staff member from the regulatory agency and requested her candid opinions about the tension caused in the accreditation of professional programmes. On this matter, the interviewee went straight to the point by recalling how professional programmes had been posing a big challenge to universities and regulatory bodies. As she conceived:

> While TCU sets criteria for programme accreditation, professional bodies are responsible for registering graduates. Professional bodies are aware of the risk of having half-baked professionals. It will tarnish the image of their professions, that's why they will never register graduates who do not qualify to practice. I can still remember cases of two pharmacy programmes and one nursing programme. We had to convene meetings with university management and the relevant professional bodies in order to resolve the matters.

In her view the issue of multiple accreditations presents an additional burden to universities, as it has cost implications, both in terms of time and finances. In a further elaboration of this picture, she offered her sincere but radical suggestion:

> To avoid conflicts, if you ask me to give my personal opinion, I'd suggest that we let professional programmes be accredited by the relevant professional bodies. TCU should focus on academic programmes.

A similar response to those given by participants at institutions A and C was received from Institution E on balancing power tension. The QAC recalled tension between his institution, the regulatory body and the Pharmacy Council. While the regulatory had had approved the deliverance of the Bachelor of Pharmacy programme, the Pharmacy Council was not satisfied with the logistical arrangements as well as qualifications of academic staff lined up to teach the programme. The university had to abide by the requirements of the professional body. As the QAC put it:

> We had to succumb to the Pharmacy Council. As you are aware, these are the ones who certify our graduates to practice. Therefore any attempt to try to wrestle with them will end up jeopardizing the chances of our graduates to be recognized hence ending up being jobless. We cannot ignore the fact that our programmes carry a flag that bears the name of our institution.

He concluded:

> Although we have many stakeholders, we mainly give priority to professional bodies and the regulatory agency. Others are important but not as prominent as the two that I have mentioned.

Recently, at the National Assembly in June 2015, members of parliament contested the issue of health science programmes offered by one private university. The debate on a pharmacy programme in particular was so intense that it nearly culminated into withholding the budget of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. The tension was caused by three regulatory agencies. The first one is responsible for institutional accreditation and the second for programme accreditation, while the last is a professional body.

Commenting on the issue of power, an MSAC at Institution E thought that although programme harmonisation is a good idea, it is imposed from above. As he substantiated, the key practitioners are not involved in obtaining the assessment criteria. He added that although the institutional QAC is involved at some stage, his involvement is not full. The MSAC explained that their institution participates in the second cohort of evaluation, implying that only those who are in the first cohort have the opportunity to incorporate their inputs:

> I'm certain that our Quality Assurance Director did not participate in developing the quality criteria. However, I don't mean that the criteria are unsuitable.

The MSAC further commented that while other universities in the world are considering the issue of diversifying curricula to accommodate the ever-changing economic and social demands, the IUCEA efforts to harmonise programmes by prescribing the evaluation criteria (see Annexure 9) can be seen as contradictory to diversity.

The above claim by this MSAC seemed to support Schwarz and Westerheijden's (2004) views that there is a danger of pressure for uniformity to lead to greater homogeneity instead of diversity of approaches and competences currently needed in the 'massified' higher education systems and knowledge economy. Schwarz and Westerheijden (2004) assert that in the knowledge society the roles of higher education are multiplying, hence universities ought to respond in different ways to different demands.

However, another line of thinking as maintained by the IUCEA is that harmonisation does not necessarily mean homogenisation. The IUCEA thinks that it is possible for institutions to comply with the basic requirements as prescribed by accreditation agencies, while maintaining the unique features that sell their programmes.

In summary: Much of the debate on quality assessment at both system and institutional levels is a debate about power. This power is reflected by three sources, namely the state, the academic profession and the markets. The primary questions in the debate on power focus are on ownership, control and methods of evaluation. While all three parties to the debate are in favour of quality, each feels that it has a better definition than the others, and knows best how to achieve it. As suggested by the available data, this causes tension in the systems and institutions, as each tends to mistrust the motives and agendas of the others.

The data gathered concur with the view that power does not only involve a capacity, but also a right to act. However, while in this view both the capacity and the right are seen to rest on the consent of those over whom the power is exercised, this was not the case with the current study. There seems to exist tension between the regulatory agency and professional bodies at the system level, as well as high tension within institutions, as reported by individuals.

Much of the tension as system level was manifested in the evaluation of professional programmes. As in many other countries in the world, in Tanzania professional bodies are involved in accreditation of studies that lead to a professional title, such as pharmacy, law, engineering and medicine. The aim, as Brennan and Williams (2004) suggest, is to ensure that a programme of study provides some, or all, of the competences needed for professional practice. As Brennan and Williams (2004) further assert, this serves as a deterrent that compels university institutions to voluntarily open up their programmes for professional accreditation. The reason is that failure to comply might deny their graduates the opportunity to be licensed as professionals. Materu (2007) argues that the strength of professional associations in Africa is based on the fact that their legal mandate includes the licensing of graduates to participate after graduation. As indicated in Chapter 3, professional bodies in Tanzania are established by government through statutes to exercise control over particular professions. This explains why universities that offer

professional programmes, as detailed in Chapter 2(see Section 2.4.2), accord substantial weight to the requirements of professional bodies.

To sum up, it is agreeable that programmes that prepare students to practise in particular occupations must satisfy professional requirements. This calls for the presence of professional bodies manned by experienced members of the professions to judge quality. However, as Brennan and Williams (2004) purport, precautions must be taken, bearing in mind the fact that professional bodies only have a responsibility to judge new developments primarily in terms of effects on the profession rather than other benefits that graduates who join the programmes must gain. As such, there is a growing consensus that apart from acquiring specific subject knowledge, university graduates must acquire generic skills. These include, among other skills, communication, problem-solving, interpersonal, time-management and study skills, which are necessary for continuing professional development. These skills cannot be effectively assessed by professional bodies alone. Hence, there is still a need to cooperate with external regulatory agencies responsible for monitoring the quality of programmes on the basis of academic standards.

6.4 Other emerging issues

In the course of carrying out the current study, a number of supplementary issues, not addressed by the conceptual frame work that underpins the study(see Chapter 4), emerged. These issues included (a) medium of instruction, (b) poor documentation system, (c) satisfaction of internal stakeholders,(d) academic malpractice, (e) staff retention, (f) institutional culture and (g) competence-based instruction.

6.4.1 Medium of instruction

From the data it seems that language plays a major role in teaching and learning in higher education. One of the issues that emerged in the course of the interviews was the medium of instruction. This was posed at institutions B, C and D.QACs and MSACs claimed to represent the concern of many lecturers on this matter. Lack of proficiency in English among students in Tanzanian universities has been a challenging problem that has never been addressed properly. According to the

information gathered from the QAC at Institution B, the problem was dominant among students:

> Many Tanzanian students are not competent in English. This is both oral and written. At this university we have introduced oral exams in order to make students strive to improve their oral communication in English. ...Unlike in Kenya and Uganda, Tanzanian students fail to compete aggressively in the labour market because of poor communication skills.

Literature indicates that the problem of medium of instruction at university level in Tanzania is not new. The University of Dar es Salaam, for example, experienced it since the 1970s. In 1978 the university established a communication skills unit in response to the recurrent complaints from a number of lecturers and external examiners. As Rugemalira (1990) noted, despite efforts by the communication skills unit, the problem persisted. Following these results, the communication skills unit had suggested that the only solution to this problem was for government to consider the problem holistically from primary to higher education.

To support this claim, it would be worthy to include two examples from my experience on this matter. First, in 1990 when I was pursuing a BA (Ed) programme at the University of Dar es Salaam, it was a pre-requisite for students who opted to study English Language courses to pass a language skills test that was set by the communication skills unit. This test was a hindrance to many students who aspired to studying English Language. The second example recalled is in the same year when one lecturer decided to collect examples of grammatical mistakes that were found in students' essays that were sent to him for marking. These examples were from an African Literature class. The lecturer printed them and distributed them to each student in that particular course. He took time to read them aloud in a lecture theatre. The examples were quite shocking. While some of the mistakes caused laughter among the whole class, others were quite embarrassing.

Gathering from my experience, English occupies a more prestigious status in countries such as Malawi, Zambia, Uganda and Kenya than in Tanzania. Further, the medium of instruction in Tanzanian primary (especially government-owned) schools is Kiswahili. From secondary school to university the medium is English. Hence, one

202

notes the disconnection in the transfer of knowledge that happens among those who start to use English for the first time in secondary school.

The second example above suggests that Rugemalira (1990) was correct to conclude that at university level students passed their examinations only by chance. It was the tolerance of lecturers that made them pass. While some lecturers complained about students' inability to express themselves effectively in English, there were still many others who said that they looked for content and ignored the poor form of expression.

Rubagumya (1990) and Brock-Utne (2000) suggest that the problem of learners' inability to communicate effectively in English persists because people (especially policy makers) fail to differentiate between learning a language and using it as medium of instruction. This concern has been raised in Section 6.2.2 above.

6.4.2 Poor documentation system

One of the changes anticipated to be observed in private universities that participated in the IUCEA-DAAD project was transparency of practices through proper documentation. This was considered to be among the key changes that would guarantee sustainability of quality assurance. It was expected that institutions would develop proper means of documenting their procedures and make those documents available to most members of the university community. However, in the studied institutions, participants regularly complained about the non-availability of operational documents such as quality assurance policies, schemes of service, staff development policies and others. At Institution C the situation is severe, because it was reported that in some cases course outlines are not given to students and some lecturers mark students' examination scripts without preparing marking schemes. With the exception of institutions A and E, self-assessment reports and peer review reports that were written in the course of participating in the project were not accessed by the researcher. The reason given by both institutions was absence of the former QACs. This suggests that the documents were kept by an individual rather than an office. At Institution A the QAC reported failure of HoDs to submit to her office programme manuals that were approved by the regulatory agency. As she remarked:

It was so embarrassing. None of them knew where the manuals were placed.

Failure to address the problem of poor documentation system contradicts Duke's (1992) suggestion that universities ought to be institutions that learn. Universities should take in and use new information, adapt their identities, purposes and priorities to new environments and circumstances (Duke, 1992: xi). It is worth recalling that these universities were responsible for the establishment of internal quality assessment procedures to formalise and standardise practices that, although in existence, had been informal and implicit. One of the best practices that was expected was improved documentation of courses and requirements made of students, new monitoring and review arrangements, more systematic data collection and analysis as well as development of action plans to chart the effectiveness of the changes made. To facilitate this exercise of proper documentation, universities in question are expected to establish quality committees that would work simultaneously with quality assurance directorates/offices. Further, managers at all levels across these universities are expected to assume new responsibilities for quality and evaluation, which are in a way more demanding than the traditional ones.

6.4.3 Satisfaction of internal stakeholders

In what seemed to be an attempt to satisfy external stakeholders, there isa tendency to do so at the expense of internal stakeholders. At institutions A and C the interviews revealed the problem of low salaries. At Institution A in particular, the issue is lack of incentives because academic staff are paid what was termed as a 'consolidated salary'. This meant that the staff are not receiving any other payment in addition to the referred salary regardless of whatever extra duty they perform. This is a de-motivation factor, especially in terms of quality assurance activities, which are regarded to be time-consuming. At Institution C it was claimed that the administrative staff are highly paid in comparison to academic staff. A worse example given was for recruitment criteria where a person's experience is not taken into consideration when it comes to payment. As the QAC disclosed:

> It is not surprising to find a person with ten years of teaching experience being paid the same salary as someone with two years of teaching experience.

Due to this problem of low salary, there is low staff retention. When this complaint was raised, the researcher recalled that there was a lady from Institution C who was pursuing a master's programme at Stellenbosch University in 2013. In the conversation she assured me that upon graduation she would not return to her employer. She complained about the low salary that was not proportional to her teaching workload. Similarly, in the interview the QAC disclosed that upon completion of his studies he would prefer not to continue working at Institution C. The issue of staff retention is detailed in Section 6.4.5.

6.4.4 Academic malpractice

Traditionally, a university is considered to be a community of scholars sharing collegial values. These values include, among other values, academic integrity, reasonableness, tolerance, respect for persons, discursive freedom, shared decision making by collegial groups, and conservation of the realm of specialised knowledge (Barnett, 2003). However, data collected at institutions B, C and E suggest an element of violation of these norms.

At Institution B it was found that information that is collected from students through course assessment is used with bias to punish part-time teachers. There was no indication that full-time teachers are also punished. Therefore, this suggests an element of protectionism that is practised in favour of full-time teachers.

The problem of academic malpractice was also reported at Institution C. An MSAC shared a similar concern with the QAC on issues such as absence of regular departmental and faculty meetings to decide on academic matters, security of examinations and moderation of examinations. As he put it:

> There is no examination template. Every teacher has his/her format. As a result, composing an examination is like divine revelation rather than something intellectual.

Unlike at Institution B, the academic malpractice reported at Institution Cis mainly found among full-time teachers. Gathering from experience, the QAC affirmed that part-time teachers usually do their work properly. When probed to clarify, he remarked:

205

> One of the reasons that explain their commitment to academic excellence is the fact that unlike here, their institutions have well laid down procedures that guide academic matters.

Academic malpractice reported at Institution E is more severe than those described above. Two types of academic malpractice were reported. The first is bribery. This was reported to take place in either monetary or sexual form. It was reported that some lazy students approach some corrupt and irresponsible teachers to buy their way to obtain higher examination results. Coincidently, I was at the campus the day when a meeting was held to discuss a report by a probe committee on one teacher who was allegedly taking a bribe from a student for a similar purpose stated above. It was one day before this interview was conducted. On the day of the interview the QAC gave me shocking information that some students were planning to boycott classes to confirm their solidarity with the probed teacher. If this information was true, it indicates the magnitude of this problem. Elaborating on bribery, the QAC substantiated:

> ...some corrupt teachers hold pre-exam meetings with their 'customers'. Students sign examination registers and wait for the day. When the exam is over, they are given blank examination booklets where they can attempt the questions in a stress-free atmosphere because they had been issued with a marking scheme already.

The magnitude of the problem was suggested by two incidents. The first incident was the rejection of examination results of two faculties at one senate meeting. The second incident was of the former DVCA who was reported to participate in accepting bribery. It was claimed by the QAC that the former DVCA used to organise 'pre-exam sessions' with his students, and supplied them with examination questions:

> He claimed to be doing so as his attempt to help students familiarise [themselves] with the questions so as to avoid [a] stressful exam environment. This was overtly admitted by the former DVCA himself when the matter was brought to the attention of the former VC.

In what seemed to be total dissatisfaction, the QAC proposed the use of a centralised examination system that would cater for the whole country. He gave the

206

example of India, where examinations are not set by course tutors but by a pool of experts in a given field.

The second type of academic malpractice reported at Institution E is uncritical external examiners. It was reported that there are external examiners who avoid making negative comments that would sound unpleasant to the institutional or faculty management. When probed to give the reason, the QAC said that the aim of such external examiners is to pave the way for them to be invited again to perform a similar duty. The QAC was surprised by the fact that the probed teacher and the rejected faculty reports all had favourable/glossy reports that did not identify the suspected weaknesses.

The above information corresponds with Marginson and Considine's (2000) claim (see Section 2.5.3.3) that the presence of entrepreneurialism in universities involves risks. As clarified by Bourdieu (1998), the university may risk its reputation, its intellectual capital, its position, its ethos, its educational character or its role as a cultural good.

6.4.5 Staff retention

The issue of staff retention is of relevance to any higher education institution, but perhaps more so for private universities in Tanzania, because experienced academic staff ought to provide the foundation for the establishment of sound internal quality assurance systems. While the formation of quality assurance committees is an integral part of the establishment of quality assurance systems in these private universities, experience suggests lack of qualified staff to tackle the task. The fluidity of academic staff was explained as one of the reasons. In the studied institutions, for example, two QACs and one FD changed employment. Two of these were PhD holders who had received training under the IUCEA-DAAD quality project.

Several reasons were given to explain this problem of staff retention. At Institution D, for example (whose former QAC had vacated), the new QAC thought that low salaries and lack of support from the university management are among the factors that lead to low staff retention:

> We are not paid enough to live comfortably on our salaries. As a result, some
> leave the job. Those who stay are forced to engage themselves in other activities

such as part-time teaching and pet trades... Another reason is lack of support from the management.

The QAC disclosed that in one meeting staff were complaining about low salaries. In response, the VC told them that the door was open for anyone who felt unsatisfied with what he/she was earning to seek greener pastures somewhere else.

At Institution E there was similar evidence. This is the institution whose FD had sought employment at another university in Zanzibar. Due to staff mobility, the QAC considered that there was inefficiency in realising the results. He expressed his discontent as follows:

> It's a pity that I conduct seminars and workshops involving academic staff and students repeatedly, only to find that some of those whom I expected to form the base leave the job. This means I have to start afresh.

6.4.6 Institutional culture

A common view among the participants was that when implementing quality assurance initiatives there was a need to consider institutional cultures. As noted, most private universities in Tanzania are faith-based. The Muslim tradition is different from the Christian tradition. The value orientation of a particular institution contributes much in terms of the way things are done. An HoD at Institution A criticised the IUCEA criteria for lack of sensitivity to institutional contexts. She cited an example of the criteria on quality and quantity of support staff. In her view, that criterion was not applicable at her institution, where even the number of academic staff was minimised for the sake of cost reduction:

> Universities' managers are always concerned about cost. Their focus therefore is on the number of academic staff because this is an academic institution.

At Institution C the QAC indicated that he is uncomfortable with the way the institution is run. He thought that the VC had overstayed in that position simply because he is 'a man of the church'. According to this participant, the effect of overstaying is manifested in the way the VC takes things for granted. Further, the

Bishop (who was the chairperson of the Council) seems to impose his power over academic activities. As the QAC explained:

> This university started as a theological college. There are those who would like to see it operating in the same culture of silence and passiveness. They seem to forget that this is now a university. In universities we expect to have critical thinkers. This is not what we were expecting when we agreed that we want to inculcate a quality culture. We emphasised transparency.

The last statement above supports Seymour's (1993) argument that there is a sharp difference between describing a culture of quality and causing it. In order to inculcate a culture of quality, Seymour (1993) underlines the importance of dealing with assumptions and beliefs that sit at the core of the culture of an institution. These assumptions and beliefs, as Seymour (1993) argues, are learned responses that stem from espoused values. As the values are transformed into underlying assumptions about how things are done, they become increasingly taken for granted. As a result, the assumption becomes powerful and unchallengeable. Therefore, what was been experienced at Institution C could only be transformed by a new and revolutionary leader.

6.4.7 Competence-based instruction

One of the 'innovations 'that were introduced by the IUCEA-DAAD project was adoption of a competence-based approach to teaching. In general, a competence-based approach to teaching assumes that the purposes of a course can be stated in quite specific terms that describe human behaviours. Further, there is an assumption that the development of those behaviours can be facilitated by quite specific learning activities, and that the demonstration of those behaviours can be measured with some precision. However, as the ideal is usually different from the practical world, the study identified the challenges that were encountered by practitioners of quality assurance.

The QAC at Institution A described a split among academic staff on the application of a competence-based approach to teaching. She observed that senior lecturers tend to discredit it. Disappointedly, she remarked:

> Some professors will tell you that this is just an ideology being introduced by some people for reasons best known to them.

A similar view was expressed by a former FD at Institution E. He said that some teachers considered the whole idea of competence-based teaching as too demanding:

> There is this feeling that [a] competence-based approach to teaching should be adopted only when there is maximum cooperation, not only among staff, but also between the university management and the coordinator of QA. This type of cooperation cannot be easily achieved. The management must invest a lot of resources in this; particularly time.

An MSAC at Institution C also voiced his concern over the issue of learning outcomes (see Annexure 9), which demands competence-based instruction. He was sceptical of its applicability:

> The idea is not bad. But I don't take it to be practical in every programme. ...There are courses in which due to their nature it becomes difficult to state and measure the outcome with precision. ...it was unfortunate that in writing the self-assessment report there was no room for us to critique the criteria.

In his critique on the competence-based approach to teaching, Duke (1992) indicates that there has been considerable debate about the meaning of competence and its place in higher education. Two major concerns in the academic world about the notion of competence are: First, fear of vocationalism, where important dimensions of higher education which relate to the development of the person, to the acquisition and cultural and social values may be lost, and second is fear of reductionism.

Mayhew et al. (1990) suggest that the competence-based approach has obvious applicability to some sharply defined programmes. In their view, the approach demands a high degree of coordination. The sought coordination is among faculty, between faculty and assessors, and between administrators of the programme and practitioners in it. As Mayhew et al. (1990) assert, the amount of emotional and intellectual interdependence among faculty that is fostered by competence-based education exceeds that of other interdisciplinary programmes. This is because ideally, the total faculty of an institution, college or division ought to get together and

agree on a large array of specific behaviours that the institution values and wishes to produce. Once such an agreement has been reached, it is assumed that each faculty member will then reorganise his/her share of the programme in such a way as to contribute to the development of some of those behaviours. Hence, it suffices to argue that a competence-based approach to teaching requires a high level of cooperation and coordination, which was not evident in the current studied institutions.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with an analysis of documents and interviews relevant to the research question. The key documents were the Education and Training Policy (2014) and the Universities Act (2005). Interviews were conducted with CSACs, MSACs, HoDs, FDs, QACs and DVCAs, where deemed necessary. The perceptions of the interviewees regarding the concept of quality was summarised and tabulated. A number of contextual factors that seem to influence the operationalisation of programmatic quality in the studied universities were discussed. These factors are the national regulatory framework as well as institutionally related factors. A critical analysis of these internal and external contextual areas revealed how they can facilitate or constrain the practicalities of programmatic quality assurance in private universities. The chapter illustrated the differences that existed among the five case institutions– despite the fact that they share a common regional location and were subjected to the same quality assurance pilot project. From the above data, the following points emerged in particular:

- The data suggested an absence of a common understanding of quality. This was noted at both intra-institutional and inter-institutional levels. Some key practitioners held perceptions of quality that are far removed from the academic concerns that govern programme quality.

- Although all the institutions had mission and vision statements, the data generated did not indicate how these institutions pursue their missions through programme self-evaluation.

- Institutional orientations seem to have a significant influence on the operationalisation of programme quality. Therefore, programme

benchmarking was indicated as a comparison of programmes to institutions with similar faith orientations rather than benchmarking based on academic considerations.

- The IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance initiatives seem to have significantly influenced private universities' internal quality assurance arrangements, particularly in terms of the establishment of quality assurance units. These units were charged with the responsibility of coordinating quality assurance processes, including programme evaluation.

- Despite the establishment of quality assurance units, there are no proper mechanisms to coordinate quality assurance activities such as feedback from various stakeholders and regular reviews of programmes.

- Activities reflecting the operationalisation of quality such as programme evaluation, curriculum review and student involvement are carried out and done for compliance sake. Students' involvement in matters related to programme quality was also found as insignificant and some institutions do not involve students at all. Those that involved them do so for the sake of compliance rather than for improvement purposes.

- The issue of power became evident from the findings. There appears to be tension caused by external quality assurance bodies, namely the state regulatory agency and professional bodies. Each of these has statutory powers.

- Tension caused by internal forces appears to have a significantly damaging effect on quality assurance arrangements– probably more so than those caused by external forces.

- The adoption of a competence-based approach to undergraduate programmes, as recommended by the IUCEA, poses a challenge in some cases, as it demands an amount of cooperation and coordination that is currently lacking in such institutions.

- It appears as if a lack of proper coordination of matters related to higher education quality assurance may be partially ascribed to an absence of strong policy to address the imperatives of the transformation of the Tanzanian higher education system from an elitist to a mass system.

This chapter dealt with the empirical findings from documents and interviews. In the next chapter the findings from the Delphi survey are presented and discussed.

CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS FROM THE DELPHI EXERCISE

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the data obtained through the Delphi exercise. The instruments for data collection as well as analytic procedures were adapted from Nel (2004) and Stefan (2010).The Delphi questionnaire was compiled by using information that had been obtained from the literature review as well as from the findings of the interviews discussed in Chapter 6. The Delphi exercise was carried out in three rounds. While a comprehensive discussion is given on the third round by comparing the results with those in Chapter 6, the first two rounds are discussed briefly. This is done due to lack of significant findings from the first two rounds.

The purpose of administering the Delphi questionnaire was to establish whether there was some measure of consensus among the participants on a number of issues. These issues include perceptions of quality, ownership of programme evaluation, evaluation criteria, programme benchmarking, power tension, timing of evaluation, as well as challenges facing private universities in programme evaluation. The ultimate aim is to respond to the third sub-question stated in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.2). This question sought to establish the manner in which the concept of programmatic quality can be better understood and applied in the context of Tanzanian private universities. Tables are used to indicate the consensus status in the third round of the Delphi exercise. Statements with no consensus, but on which stability was reached, are also indicated. Further, explanations are given on possible reasons that necessitated the results.

7.2 Participants and process

In Chapter 5 (see Section 5.3.2), it was mentioned that there is no clear indication in the literature on what constitutes an ideal number of participants in a Delphi exercise (Delbecq et al., 1975; Hammond & Wellington, 2013; Hsu & Sandford, 2010). Delbecq et al. (1975), for example, suggested that 10 to 15 participants are adequate, provided that their backgrounds are similar. On the other hand, Hsu and

Sandford (2010) suggest between 15 and 20 participants. In their explanations, Delbecq et al. (1975) argue that if a wide variety of people or groups or wide divergences of opinions on the topic is deemed necessary, more participants need to be involved. The suggested guiding principle is that if the number of participants is too small, they may be unable to reliably provide a representative pooling of judgements concerning the target issue. Conversely, if the number of participants is too large, the shortcomings inherent in the Delphi exercise of time consumption and low response rates may take effect. Another suggestion by Hammond & Wellington (2013) is that the number of participants to be included in the Delphi exercise depends on, among other issues, the number of topics, the fields and the expected response or participation rate.

In this Delphi exercise, the participants were selected from five institutions that participated in the IUCEA-DAAD pilot project as well as the regulatory agency. At the time of the research, these participants occupied positions where they played a role in programmatic quality assurance. The purpose of including participants from the state regulatory agency was to obtain a wide range of opinions on the topics. As the managerial approach to quality assurance in Tanzanian universities seems to be a relatively recent phenomenon, the involvement of those who participated in the IUCEA-DAAD project was deemed indispensable. However, as the sampling technique (see Section 5.3.3) provided room for the involvement of other participants, the researcher requested QACs in the five case institutions to suggest names of additional participants.

Fifteen experts were finally invited to participate in the Delphi exercise. The selection criteria were academic qualifications not lower than a master's degree (in any field), experience in programmatic quality assurance and involvement in education at a higher education institution and/or regulatory agency for at least five years. The selected experts came from different fields of study, including health, business management, education and linguistics.

After incorporating the study supervisor's inputs, the Delphi questionnaire was pre-tested by consulting a staff member at the regulatory agency and a QAC at Institution E. Amendments to the Delphi instrument were made based on given suggestions. There were two suggestions. The first suggestion was on the clarity of

instructions in Section B. This point was raised by both pilot respondents. The second suggestion was on benchmarking, where it was recommended by one pilot respondent that a fourth option be added to read "The evaluated programme should be compared with those offered by other universities elsewhere". While the first suggestion was taken into consideration, the second was found to be unnecessary, as there was sufficient room for the participants to provide open responses in Question 9.

7.2.1 Description and analysis of findings from the first round

Traditionally, the Delphi process begins with an open-ended questionnaire, which serves as the cornerstone for soliciting information from invited participants (Hammond & Wellington, 2013; Hsu & Sandford, 2010). However, since its first use there have been numerous adaptations and modifications of both the instruments and the Delphi process (Anderson, Bale, Murphy & Associates, 1975). In the traditional approach, after receiving responses from participants, investigators convert the collected qualitative data into a structured instrument, which becomes the second-round questionnaire. However, based on Hsu and Sandford's (2010) suggestion, I employed an alternative approach based on an extensive review of the literature. Prior to initiation of the Delphi process, I conducted interviews with the participants based on the literature and used the information as a platform for questionnaire development. After administering the questionnaire in the first round, I gathered suggestions that enabled me to make further modifications to proceed in subsequent iterations.

Invitation to participate in the Delphi exercise was done through a consent form and a letter (see Annexure 7). The letter stated overtly that it was through interview participants' contributions that statements in Section B of the Delphi tool were compiled. Further to this appreciation, the letter re-invited the participants to take part in the Delphi exercise. Motivation to participate was given by stating the objective of the Delphi exercise and a promise was made that feedback on each round would be provided to each participant while maintaining the anonymity of participants. Information regarding the structure of the questionnaire was given as well as the procedure of the Delphi process. To avoid ambiguity, it was specifically stated that the title 'Quality Assurance Coordinator' was used to refer to a quality

assurance director and a quality assurance officer, depending on institutional contexts. Similarly, the letter clarified that the title 'Head of Department' could be used to refer to the dean of a faculty or the head of a school.

Specific instructions were provided in the Delphi questionnaire to guide the participants on how to complete the statements. The questionnaire consisted of two sections, namely (a) perceptions of quality and (b) programme self-evaluation. The first section comprised of two questions: one closed- and one open-ended. The second section consisted of eight closed-ended questions and one open-ended question. The closed-ended questions required the participants to evaluate the given statements in respect of their importance based on the given point scales. Definitions of these points were provided. The open-ended questions were meant to provide an opportunity to write additional comments as deemed appropriate.

In the first round, 12 experts provided feedback on the Delphi questionnaire. However, there was no consensus reached on any of the 24 statements. For this Delphi exercise, consensus was defined to be reached when 80% of the participants voted in the same bracket. This definition of consensus was stated in Chapter 5.

The participants' failure to reach consensus in the first round of this Delphi exercise has two possible explanations. The first explanation is that in this round statements in the first question were developed based on a literature review. There was no statement that was formulated based on the conducted interviews. In a way, this can be argued to be a stumbling block, as the participants sensed lack of ownership of the statements. The second explanation, relating to Section B, concerns the participants' institutional background in relation to the level of development of internal quality assurance systems. Some institutions are at a lower lever compared to others. Arguably, the level of development of quality assurance systems has an influence on the mindset of their key players, as they create frames of reference through which people understand their experience (Mezirow, 2003).

The above-mentioned differences in levels of development of internal institutional quality assurance systems have been noted by the regulatory agency. As a recent development, the regulatory agency categorised universities in Tanzania into three groups. This categorisation has a bearing on monitoring, because the lower the

grade, the closer the monitoring. Hence, while those in the first category are to be visited by the regulatory agency once a year, third-category bearers are to be visited four times. In this categorisation, institutions A, D and E were allotted in Category two, while institutions B and C fell under Category three. The third category suggests the minimum level of development of an internal institutional quality assurance system.

Although no clear consensus was reached in the first round, the participants provided further views on the following:

- The perception of quality as 'value added'
- Benchmarking to be done by comparing the evaluated programme with those offered by other universities elsewhere
- The best time to conduct programme evaluation, namely when academic staff deem such an evaluation appropriate, if the necessary resources are available and, at the end of the cycle of a programme.

These suggestions were included in the Delphi tool prior to commencement of the second round. A brief description and analysis of the findings of the second round are given in the next section.

7.2.2 Description and analysis of findings from the second round

Based on the fact that there was no clear consensus in the first round, the second round of the Delphi process was carried out to enable the participants to reconsider their previous opinions in light of the opinions of the other participants. As feedback on the first round had been given earlier, the second round was an opportunity for the experts to change their minds as deemed appropriate. However, the experts were at liberty to maintain their previous stances. Answers provided in the first round by each expert were included and highlighted in order to enable each expert to easily remember what he/she had opted in the first round.

The 12 experts who participated in the first round were re-invited to participate in this round. All 12participants provided feedback on the Delphi questionnaire. The results were analysed manually by indicating for each statement in the questionnaire the frequency of responses for each point scale.

Unlike in the first round, in Section A consensus was reached on two statements. This consensus is explainable, because the statements did not require much consideration. The participants were asked to make a judgement on the relevance of the perception of quality as 'something exceptional' and quality as 'perfection'.

In Section B consensus was reached on five statements. Statements on which consensus was reached and those on which stability was reached are analysed in the following section.

7.3 The third round of the Delphi exercise

In Chapter 5 it was suggested that the number of Delphi iterations can vary depending largely on the degree of consensus sought by the investigator (Hammond & Wellington, 2013; Hsu & Sandford, 2010). In the current study, the third round was taken to be the final round. Two explanations can be provided here: First, this study did not aim at a high level of agreement among the participants; and second, the factors of time and availability of participants were not in favour of the researcher. Based on these two reasons, a detailed description of the third round (which was the final one) is provided and the results are presented.

7.3.1 Description and process

Invitation to participate in the third round of the Delphi exercise was done through another letter (see Annexure 8). In the letter I thanked the participants for participating in the first two rounds of the Delphi exercise. Further to this appreciation, the letter re-invited the participants to take part in the third round. Motivation to participate was given by restating the objective of the Delphi exercise and a promise was made that, as in the previous two rounds, feedback would be provided to each participant and the anonymity of participants would be maintained.

It was stated in the letter that the purpose of the third round was to determine the participants' opinions regarding all the statements on which consensus was not reached during the second round. Further, the participants were informed that the third round of the Delphi process was the final one. During this third round, the participants were allowed to change or maintain their responses as deemed necessary. The answers they provided in the second round were included and

highlighted in order to enable the participants to easily remember what indicated in the second round.

Information regarding the structure of the questionnaire was given, as well as the procedure of the Delphi process. Again, to avoid ambiguity, clarifications were given on the use of the titles 'Quality Assurance Coordinator' and 'Head of Department' (see Section 7.2.1).

7.3.2 Findings

As in the second round, responses from the third round were analysed manually. This analysis focused on determining the frequency of responses for each point of the scale for a particular statement. At this juncture, consensus was reached on 16 statements. When coupled with seven statements on which consensus was reached in the second round, the total rose to 23. At the end of the third round, stability was reached on the remaining five statements.

The following sections provide, in tabular form, the results from the Delphi exercise. The tables indicate the percentage of participants who selected a specific point on the scale. Statements are also shown on which consensus was reached as well as statements with stability.

7.3.2.1 Perception of quality

Section A of the questionnaire dealt with perceptions of 'quality'. Statements that were given in this section required the participants to rate them based on suitability. The following scale was used in the first question: 1= most appropriate, 2=appropriate, 3=less appropriate, 4=neutral, 5=inappropriate and 6=most inappropriate. The findings are presented in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1: Indications of consensus and stability on perceptions of quality

Statement	Consensus	Scale point
When conducting programme evaluation in private universities in Tanzania, 'quality' should be perceived as to do with		
(a) something exceptional	**83%**	5
(b) perfection	92%	6
(c) value added	83%	3
(d) fitness for purpose	83%	1
(e) value for money	92%	2
(f) transformation of the participants in quality assurance processes	Stability	

Table 7.1 above indicates that the participants rated the perception of quality as fitness for purpose as most appropriate, and considered quality as perfection to be most inappropriate. However, they did not reach consensus on the perception of quality as transformation of the participants in quality assurance processes.

Gathering from Chapter 4, the definition of quality as fitness for purpose relates to institutional mission. Trow (1999) suggests that this definition, as well as one of quality as perfection, is compatible with managerial rationality, because they focus on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the institution as a whole. This suggests that the participants had clearly voted for a managerial definition of quality.

When compared, the information provided above does not suggest much difference in terms of the existing confusion on the definition of quality among key practitioners. It is worth recalling that the interviews with the participants at institutions (see Section 6.3.1) had suggested the presence of varying perceptions of quality. These included quality as something complex or quality is a matter of continuum. Surprisingly, some interviewees maintained an industrial outlook, which is inapplicable in higher education. This was exemplified by defining quality as doing the right thing in the right way and at the right time. In a way, maintenance of the industrial outlook to quality suggests compatibility with the institutional type.

That being the case, it can be argued that even consensus reached in the second and third round can be interpreted as results of learning that took place through participation in the Delphi exercise. This means that those who were uncertain about their views were influenced by others' comments and changed their positions.

There are several angles of interpreting failure to reach consensus on the definition of quality as transformation of the participants in quality assurance processes and embracing quality as fitness for purpose. First, quality as fitness for purpose is the definition that was supported by the IUCEA under the pretext of facilitating internally initiated quality assurance efforts. When coupled by institutional structural changes that led to the establishment of quality assurance units, it explains the reasons for embracing the perception of quality as 'fitness for purpose'. Second, given the relatively novelty of the current approach to quality assurance, some practitioners

embraced the definition of 'quality as fitness' for purpose uncritically as the current fashion of doing things, hence perpetuating a culture of compliance.

Further, but related to the second reason, failure to reach consensus on the definition of quality as transformation of the participants in quality assurance processes suggests the nature of the institutions in which key actors operate. As indicated earlier (see Section 6.2.1), most of the case institutions are faith-based. The fact that they work under the religious frameworks supporting the view of quality as transformation would require them to take a radical posture (Mezirow, 2003) and challenge the taken-for-granted frames of references, including religious doctrines. In other words, the frames of reference held by these key actors are primarily the result of cultural assimilations and idiosyncratic influences of the primary caregivers (Mezirow, 1997).

Finally, gathering from the challenges discussed in Chapter 6, it is understandable why the participants rated last but one in terms of appropriateness the definition of quality as something exceptional. For a university to consider quality as something exceptional, the existence of a highly developed and sustainable internal institutional quality assurance system is required. As this was confirmed to be contrary, the interview participants' perception of quality as a continuum was justified.

7.3.2.2 Initiation of programme self-evaluation

Three statements were presented on this topic and the participants were asked to rate them depending on their appropriateness. The following scale was used in this question: 1= essential, 2=useful and 3=unnecessary. These statements are indicated in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Indications of consensus on initiation of programme evaluation

Statement	Consensus	Scale point
When conducting programme evaluation in private universities in Tanzania:		
(a) Programme self-evaluation should be initiated by the head of department/school/faculty in collaboration with academic staff	83%	1
(b) Programme self-evaluation should be initiated by the quality assurance coordinator	83%	2
(c) Programme self-evaluation should be initiated by university management	100%	3

As shown by Table 7.2, the participants indicated that when conducting programme evaluation in private universities in Tanzania it seems essential that self-evaluation be initiated by the head of department in collaboration with academic staff. Surprisingly, the participants unanimously rated the university management as unnecessary in initiating programme self-evaluation. The decision to exclude the university management from programme self-evaluation contradicts the managerial perception of quality they supported above (see Section 7.3.2.1).

Explanations for this contradiction can be traced to Chapter 6 (seeSection6.3.4). In that chapter it was indicated that although voluntary participation in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project was understood to be a starting point for the establishment of sustainable quality assurance systems in universities in Tanzania, only one university in the current study had conducted programme self-evaluation. Even in the referred university, academic staff did not own the exercise because the idea was initiated by the university management in preparation for institutional re-accreditation. Therefore, it can be argued that the participants in the Delphi exercise in the current study were suggesting what they considered to be the ideal. This is because most of them lacked practical experience of what is meant by internally initiated self-evaluation.

Contrary to the findings based on the actual practice in the case universities, the Delphi exercise once again seems to have been a learning process that changed the participants' thinking that it was the responsibility of the quality assurance office to initiate self-evaluations. It can be assumed that awareness had been established that ownership of the whole the process should be vested in the teaching academic staff.

7.3.2.3 Evaluation criteria

Statements on this topic were given in expectation that the 'owners' of programme self-evaluation and evaluators would give their candid opinions on the ownership of evaluation criteria. The results are indicated in Table 7.3. The scale used was as follows: 1=essential, 2=useful and 3=unnecessary.

Table 7.3: Indications of consensus on ownership of evaluation criteria

Statement	Consensus	Scale point
Criteria for evaluation:		
(a) should be owned by the academic staff	83%	2
(b) should originate from the accrediting body	92%	3
(c) should be a combination of (a) and (b) above	92%	1

As it can be observed, while the previous section demonstrated increased awareness of the importance of academic staff to initiate programme self-evaluation, owning the process remained a challenge. The participants were probably well aware of the strict regulations that govern the provision of private university education in Tanzania. This explains why 92% of the participants thought that to create a balance of power it is essential for evaluation criteria to originate from both academic staff and the accrediting body.

It can again be argued that the Delphi process contributed to the change of perspective (ideally), as the participants negated giving prominence to the accrediting body. However, as the issue of evaluation criteria is closely related to the issue of power, it is further discussed in Section 7.3.2.5.

7.3.2.4 Benchmarking

In Chapter 6 it was suggested that benchmarking is a learning process that allows those engaged in the process to think beyond their boundaries (Smith et al., 1999). In this regard, the Delphi participants were asked to rate what they considered to be the best practice in benchmarking. The results are indicated in Table 7.4. The Delphi participants rated the statements based on the following scale: 1=most appropriate, 2=appropriate, 3=less appropriate, 4=inappropriate and 5=inapplicable.

Table 7.4: Indications of consensus and stability on benchmarking

Statement	Consensus	Scale point
When benchmarking:		
(a) the evaluated programme should be compared with others within the university	92%	5
(b) the evaluated programme should be compared with those offered by other universities in the country	83%	1
(c) the evaluated programme should be compared with those offered by similar (faith-based) institutions elsewhere	92%	4
(d) the evaluated programme should be compared with those offered by other private universities elsewhere	Stability	
(e) the evaluated programme should be compared with those offered by other universities elsewhere	Stability	

As can be seen from Table 7.4, programme benchmarking seemed to pose a challenge among the Delphi participants, as this was the only section in which consensus was not reached on two statements. While 92% considered the idea of benchmarking by comparing a programme with others within the university as inappropriate, 83% considered comparing a programme with those offered by other universities in the country as most appropriate. One of the statements on which stability was not reached was added by the participants. However, in the open-ended question, those who added the statements argued that in today's world it is risky for private universities and faith-based universities in particular to restrict benchmarking to local of faith-based institutions.

Explanations for these findings can be based on what was reported in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.3.8), where it was found that only two institutions are benchmarking. However, for those institutions, benchmarking focuses on comparison with similar faith-based institutions. In this regard, the questions of institutional type and orientation seemed to have been given prominence. To recapitulate my earlier stance: Although this can be regarded as thinking outside the box, these institutions ought to aim higher by attempting to learn beyond their current counterparts.

While recognising the significance of statements on which consensus was reached, it may be argued that statements on which consensus was not reached are also meaningful, as they reflect the divergence of opinions within the panel on the issue being discussed (Hammond & Wellington, 2013). In this regard, failure to reach consensus on statements on comparing programmes offered by private universities in Tanzania with those offered by other universities in the world seems to represent a dream that may be difficult to realise. Once again, the issue of institutional type played a vital role in this regard. Due to constraints discussed in Chapter 6, key practitioners in private universities could not compare performance of their institutions with their counterparts in public universities.

7.3.2.5 Compliance

In the conceptual framework of this study (Chapter 4) it was argued that power involves both a capacity and a right to act. Given the power tension caused by internal as well as external actors, the Delphi participants were asked to rate what

they considered to be the most likely phenomenon to take place when conducting programme self-evaluation. The following scale was used: 1=essential, 2=useful and 3=unnecessary.

Table 7.5: Indications of consensus on the most likely phenomenon in programme self-evaluation

Statement	Consensus	Scale point
The most likely phenomenon in programme evaluation is compliance with:		
(a) the relevant professional body	83%	1
(b) university management	92%	3
(c) the state regulatory agency	83%	2

According to Table 7.5, the Delphi participants regard compliance with the relevant professional body as essential in programme evaluation. In contrast, they consider compliance with university management as unnecessary. However, although the participants rated compliance with the state regulatory agency as useful, the interpretation of the Delphi findings would be better understood when considered in relation to those gathered through the interviews.

In Chapter 6 (see Section 6.3.11) it was learnt that the issue of compliance depends much on the nature of the programme being evaluated. While the evaluation of programmes that lead to professional degree would be inclined to comply with the requirements of the relevant professional agency, the case was different for academic programmes. This stance was repeatedly and emphatically presented by the interviewees in all case institutions. In the Delphi exercise it is not surprising to find compliance with the professional agency ranking higher than with the state regulatory agency. It is explainable because out of the five case institutions, four had their professional programmes subjected to the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project. One can therefore expect the Delphi participants from these four institutions to argue their cases in favour of professional agencies. Related to this study is the fact that Delphi participants recognised the role of power in controlling provision of higher education in private universities in Tanzania. As Harvey (2007) rightly suggested, in particular, control making it difficult for poor or rogue providers to continue operating and making access to the sector dependent on the fulfilment of criteria of adequacy. In many countries, especially those with a significant private

sector, governments seek to control unrestrained growth in higher education in an increasingly unrestricted market (Rosa & Amaral 2005, in Harvey 2007).

Alternatively, an ideal approach to obtaining the participants' views on distinctive powers of the state regulatory agency and professional bodies would be to ask two different sets of statements: one set for self-evaluation of academic programmes and another for professional programmes. By doing so, it would have been easier for the researcher to obtain a clear indication of consensus.

As programmes are believed to carry the names of universities, it not is surprising to see universities that offer professional programmes accord substantial weight to the requirements of professional bodies. It should be borne in mind that professional bodies in Tanzania are established by government through statutes. These bodies have the power to exercise control over particular professions, including conferment of the right to practise. Professional bodies restrict market-led expansion via quality monitoring and accreditation. The control aspect of quality evaluation specifically addresses the comparability of standards: that is the standard or level of student professional achievement, nationally and internationally (Harvey, 2007).

7.3.2.6 Timing of self-assessment

A question aiming at collecting the Delphi participants' opinions on the best time to conduct programme self-evaluation was asked. On this topic, two statements were added in response to opinions given by the Delphi participants in the second round (see Section 7.2.1). These were included as they appear in (d) and (e) in Table 7.6 below. Those who suggested inclusion of the two statements explained in the open-ended question that (a) conducting programmes self-evaluation is not just a matter of decision or willingness, but also of availability of resources and (b) it would be useful to evaluate a programme at the end of its cycle because it will be possible to include students who experienced teaching and learning in that particular programme. These explanations seemed plausible to the researcher, thereby meriting inclusion in the questionnaire. The Delphi participants rated the statements based on the following scale: 1=most appropriate, 2=appropriate, 3=less appropriate, 4=inappropriate and 5=inapplicable.

Table 7.6: Indications of consensus and stability on timing of programme self-evaluation

Statement	Consensus	Scale point
The best time to conduct programme self-evaluation is		
(a)any time as academic staff in the department deem appropriate	83%	3
(b)any time, but before an external visit by the accrediting body	Stability	
(c)any time when other key stakeholders deem appropriate	92%	5
(d)any time as academic staff in the department deem appropriate and if necessary resources are available	83%	2
(e)at the end of a programme cycle	92%	1

As indicated in Table 7.6 above, the participants did not reach consensus on statement (b), which contends that the best time to conduct programme self-evaluation is any time before an external visit by the accrediting body. Arguably, here the participants were reclaiming their independence from university managers.

When compared with findings discussed in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.3.9), the above data suggest a sharp contrast between the ideal and the actual. In Chapter 6 it was found that programme and institutional self-evaluations were conducted for compliance purposes, before an external visit by the accrediting body. This timing was what university managers found to be reasonable and practical, because university managers focus on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the institution as a whole rather than that of a programme. However, the data generated from the Delphi exercise suggest otherwise. Those who are actual practitioners would like to see programmes being evaluated at the end of each cycle.

As a further argument, the idea of conducting programme self-evaluation at the end of the cycle, as suggested by the Delphi participants, contradicts with the findings discussed in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.3.6), where the interview participants were emphatically against the inclusion of students in programme self-evaluation. In other words, and surprisingly, students pursuing the programme are negated, but alumni (who have just vacated the programme) are invited to participate in evaluating a programme that they had just completed.

However, given the challenge of lack of clear mechanisms to coordinate feedback from stakeholders, it may as well be argued that while the idea of conducting programme self-evaluation at the end of the cycle was rated as most appropriate, in

practice it would be difficult to obtain feedback from alumni, who are not under the control of the institution any more. This contradiction suggests the lack of a critical approach to the operationalisation of quality in the case institutions.

7.3.2.7 Challenges related to self-assessment

Three major challenges that were reported in Chapter 6 by the interview participants as a hindrance to programme self-evaluation were identified and listed in the Delphi questionnaire, as indicated in Table 7.7. These statements were rated based on the following scale: 1=very applicable, 2= applicable and 3= inapplicable.

Table 7.7: Indications of consensus and stability on the major challenge to be addressed in programme self-evaluation

Statement	Consensus	Scale point
The major challenge to be addressed with regard to programme self-evaluation is:		
(a) lack of funds	92%	1
(b) poor leadership	83%	2
(c) unwillingness of academic staff to participate	Stability	

As shown in Table 7.7, the responses from the Delphi exercise on the major challenge to be addressed with regard to programme evaluation suggested that lack of funds was rated as very applicable and poor leadership as applicable. However, there was no consensus on the statement made about unwillingness of academic staff to participate in the process of self-evaluation.

The findings on challenges that relate to self-assessment concur with the data generated through the interviews. As shown in Chapter 6, the question of funds was raised by most interviewees. Although consensus was not reached in the first two rounds, it can be explained by an argument that in the first two rounds the participants were more concerned about their institutional than national interests. As learnt in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.3.10), a number of concerns were raised by the interviewees. These included poor leadership, low salaries, unwillingness of middle managers to participate, unwillingness of academic staff as well as medium of instruction. This explains why in the first two rounds the Delphi participants failed to reach consensus, as they were mainly thinking inside their boxes. Through the

Delphi process, however, those who had focused their attention on individual institutional contexts had to surrender their positions in the third round.

While reaching a consensus in the third round of the Delphi exercise on lack of funds is easily explainable by the fact that most private universities in Tanzania depend on student fees, it is difficult to explain why the Delphi participants did not agree on Statement (c) above. A possible explanation could be that it is easier to judge others than oneself. As the statement targeted academic staff, it was difficult for the Delphi participants to hold themselves responsible and accountable.

7.4 Conclusion

The data generated from the Delphi exercise and reported in this chapter suggest similarity and disparity in the various opinions when compared to those provided as findings from the personal interviews, as reported in Chapter 6. This can be explained by a number of reasons, which include heterogeneity of experts, novelty of managerial approaches to quality assurance, level of development of internal institutional quality assurance systems, as well as different challenges facing institutions as per their own contexts.

As indicated in Chapter 6, the issue of power clearly manifested itself in the Delphi data as well. While the practitioners of quality assurance would like to initiate self-evaluation, they were still hesitant to suggest that evaluation criteria should originate from academic staff. Arguably, the participants in the Delphi exercise considered the risk of making such a heavy statement, which seems to suggest impracticability. In other words, the practitioners are conscious of the difference between the actual and the ideal.

Although the Delphi process was time-consuming, its advantages were evident in the current study, as the multiple iterations allowed the participants time to reflect and an opportunity to modify their responses in subsequent iterations. Considering the findings as reported in tables 7.1 to 7.7 above, the following trends emerged:

First, key actors in programme self-evaluation would like to initiate programme evaluation in favour of the managerial approach, which focuses on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the institution rather than that of a programme. This is

not surprising, because relevant literature suggests dominance of managerial ethos in higher education institutions, which regard quality as efficiency and effectiveness in meeting institutional goals (De Vries, 1997; Green, 1994; Schwarz & Westerheijden, 2004, Harvey, 2007).

Second, but related to the above section, key actors in programme self-evaluation did not prioritise the perception of quality as something exceptional and benchmarking with programmes offered by other universities in the world. While this is explicable, given the challenges facing private universities in Tanzania, ignoring the concept of quality as something exceptional supports what is commonly agreed upon in relevant literature, namely that in higher education such an elitist approach to quality is difficult to attain (Green, 1994; Harvey & Knight, 1996; Radford, 1997).

Third, the Delphi participants who preferred to be initiators of programme self-evaluation were hesitant to own the evaluation criteria. This is not surprising given the issue of power discussed in Chapter 6. Tanzania has strict regulatory framework that governs the provision of private university education. Similarly, previous studies have indicated that the emergence of national quality agencies has been a key factor in the changing context of higher education in many countries (see, for example, Brennan & Shah, 2000; Harvey, 2007).

Fourth, there is power tension caused by external forces. This is a phenomenon commonly discussed in the literature, especially with regard to issues of ownership and method of evaluation (Brennan, 1997; Brennan & Shah, 2000; Mhlanga, 2013). However, in Tanzania a lack of proper coordination of provision of higher education intensifies the magnitude of the problem. At the time this study was conducted, the tension caused by the state regulation agency and professional bodies remained unresolved.

Most points of consensus were reached in the third round of the Delphi exercise (see Table 7.8), which suggests different levels of expertise among the participants, as argued by Hsu and Sandford (2010). This is not surprising, because, as the literature suggests, the managerial language of quality exists outside of the specialist discourses of academic staff. The language has its 'experts' who are able to differentiate between and among the various terminologies that are used.

Table 7.8: Summative results of the Delphi exercise

Topic	Statement	Consensus	Rating scale
Perception of quality	(a)	5	1–6
	(b)	6	1–6
	(c)	3	1–6
	(d)	1	1–6
	(e)	2	1–6
	(f)	stability	1–6
Programme self-evaluation	(a)	1	1–3
	(b)	2	1–3
	(c)	3	1–3
Evaluation criteria	(a)	2	1–3
	(b)	3	1 –3
	(c)	1	1–3
Benchmarking	(a)	5	1–5
	(b)	1	1–5
	(c)	4	1–5
	(d)	Stability	1–5
	(f)	Stability	1–5
Compliance	(a)	1	1–3
	(b)	3	1–3
	(c)	2	1–3
Timing of self-assessment	(a)	3	1–5
	(b)	Stability	1–5
	(c)	5	1–5
	(d)	2	1–5
	(e)	1	1–5
Challenges related to self-assessment	(a)	1	1–3
	(b)	2	1–3
	(c)	Stability	1–3

Key:

■ Consensus reached in the second-round Delphi

▨ Consensus reached in the third-round Delphi
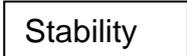
Stability   No consensus

As indicated in Table 7.8 above, the findings from the Delphi exercise in this study suggest that consensus was reached on 23 statements and stability on five. The fact that most consensus were reached in the third round of the Delphi partly supports the claim on different levels of expertise among participants. The selection criteria (see Section 7.2) did not guarantee that the participants would have similar levels of exposure to terminologies employed in the managerial language of quality assurance.

232

In the following chapter (Chapter 8), conclusions on the study are drawn and implications are pointed out.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Introduction

This study has set out to establish how writers of self-assessment reports at five private universities in Tanzania perceive and apply or the concept of programmatic quality. The main question that informed the study sought to understand the manner in which private universities in Tanzania interpret and apply the quality concept in programme evaluation. In pursuing this question, the study explored the perceptions of quality that informed programme quality assurance practices in five case institutions. Underlying the study was the need to unearth contextual factors that impacted on the operationalisation of the conception of quality, based on an assumption that different understandings and uses of the quality concept imply different ways of justifying and promoting it at the programme level. The goal of this study was therefore not to make judgements based on the perceptions of the meaning and operationalisation of quality, but rather to explore the different contexts that may contribute to such positions. This was done in order reach an improved understanding of the phenomenon of programme quality when further pursuing quality assurance initiatives in Tanzania.

It is worth noting that the chapter distinguishes between factual and conceptual conclusion (Trafford and Leshem 2008:140-141). Under factual conclusions the chapter states exactly what can be concluded from the evidence that has been collected. According to Trafford and Leshem, these are the facts from the investigation. The facts are presented descriptively without analysis or interpretation. The presented facts indicate the findings of the study.

Conceptual conclusions are those presented after factual conclusions. This section helps the researcher to raise the level of thinking and conceptualise the factual conclusions. Here the conclusions are expressed through abstract ideas and theories. Further, the conclusions are aligned with the components of the conceptual framework to reinforce the conceptual foundation of the research design,

methodology and intellectual context. Thus, this section of the chapter is written to close the conceptual circle of the doctoral research. According to Trafford and Leshem (2008:140-141), failure to provide conceptual conclusion leaves unanswered the question of the link between the factual conclusions and the wider significance of the study.

The motive behind undertaking this study has its origin in 2008. In that year I had the opportunity to serve as secretary to two international peer review committees that visited 10 universities in East Africa under the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project. The project was on enhancing quality assurance in higher education in East Africa. My appointment to participate in the assignment was based on my experience with the state regulatory agency as an accreditation officer (programmes and awards) for 11 years. Further, I was the country coordinator of the referred project. These two positions therefore served as the justification for my interest as a researcher and practitioner in the outcome of this study.

8.2 Methodology

Relevant literature suggests that programme self-evaluation should be initiated and owned by academic staff. In this way programme evaluation benefits the institution through improvement purposes and is not implemented for the sake of compliance. In a quest to pursue this suggestion and to answer the main research question, theories underpinning programme self-evaluation were examined based on Luckett's (2006) programme self-evaluation framework. Drawing on Luckett's (2006) work, other relevant literature and own understandings and experience of programme quality, a conceptual framework was developed for an improved conceptual understanding of programme self-evaluation within the context of universities. This framework was used as an analytical tool to interpret the empirical findings and explore ways that could lead to a better understanding of the phenomenon within the context of private universities in Tanzania.

In order to inform the main research question that sought to understand how private universities in Tanzania interpret and apply the quality concept in programme evaluation, three sub-questions were formulated as follows:

(i)   How do the authors of the self-assessment reports at five private Tanzanian universities perceive programme quality in higher education?

(ii)   How do self-assessors' perceptions of programme quality compare to views of programme quality in the IUCEA-DAAD pilot project?

(iii) How can the concept of programme quality be better understood in the Tanzanian private university context?

To respond to the first sub-question, interviews with key actors in programme self-evaluation (members and chairpersons of self-assessment committees, QACs, FDs and DVCA) were conducted in Tanzania and their perceptions were sought. Similarly, interviews were conducted with the same participants to seek answers to the second sub-question. However, in responding to the third sub-question a combination of methods was employed. These methods were documentary analysis, interviews and a Delphi exercise. In addition to the key actors mentioned above, the Delphi exercise involved staff from the state regulatory agency so as to widen the scope of views.

The major findings of the study can be summarised as follows:

- From the theoretical exploration it was found that quality is an elusive and multidimensional concept, defined differently by different stakeholders. There is no single definition of quality that is correct to the exclusion of others.

- The interviews conducted with key actors suggested that the varied definitions of quality may impact on its operationalisation. While the key practitioners at the departmental level grappled with the quality definition, the state regulatory agency, through institutional managers, seems to have taken control of the institutional internal quality assurance processes of undergraduate programmes.

- From the Delphi exercise it was construed that the operationalisation of quality entails taking cognisance of internal as well as external quality regulation forces. The findings also suggest that the laws that govern the provision of university education in Tanzania as well as institutional contexts influence the internal programme quality assurance arrangements of private higher education institutions.

Based on the factual findings from the study, which include findings from the literature overview, the interview data and the Delphi exercise, at least eight conclusions may be drawn.

8.3 Factual conclusions

First, it clearly emerged from the study that there were varied perceptions of the term 'quality' in Tanzanian private higher education, particularly as it pertains to programme quality. This variation in meaning was well illustrated in the interviews conducted with key actors (see Section 6.3.1) as well as the relevant literature consulted. What seems to be the case is that the concept of quality is either vaguely defined or closely associated with the world of business. Definitions of quality related to academic concerns appear to be missing or of peripheral concern to key stakeholders.

Second, it appears that the way quality is defined has much bearing on its implementation (see Section 6.3.2). The interviews with key actors portrayed how the introduction of managerial approaches to quality had caused reliance on quality assurance units to coordinate self-evaluations based on external criteria. Lack of ownership of evaluation criteria by academic staff has serious implications for programme self-evaluation processes, because programme self-evaluation seems to remain external to academic staff.

Third, as private universities in Tanzania adopt a more regional approach to programme self-evaluation, their internal institutional quality assurance systems become increasingly influenced by external forces (see Section 6.3.4) through the adoption of evaluation criteria and methods, the standardisation of structures (such as the establishment of quality assurance units) and the adoption of competence-based instruction(see Section 6.4.7). While it is important for private universities in Tanzania to join the efforts of the IUCEA to harmonise university programmes (see Section 6.2.4), it is equally important to take into cognisance contextual factors. In a situation such as in Tanzania, where private universities are exposed to strict regulations, the recognition of the institutional context in the process of programmatic self-evaluation is important.

Fourth, a facilitative role (see Chapter 4) is important in affecting institutional ability to develop internal institutional quality assurance mechanisms that are necessary for programme self-evaluation. When academic staff have requisite expertise in their areas of specialisation, they are most likely to perform their duties more freely. Therefore, rather than merely dictating the process, the state regulatory agency may devise ways of better equipping and supporting academic staff in private universities for programme self-evaluation. It may be worth mentioning that the state regulatory agency has coordinated a project named the Tanzania-Germany Postgraduate Training Programme (see Section 6.2.3), which aims at capacity building in Tanzanian universities through staff development. Up to now, unfortunately, the project has targeted only public universities.

Fifth, it has been shown in the study that at least a qualitative relationship exists between institutional commitments, university leadership and operationalisation of quality assurance at programme level (see Section 6.3.10). When institutional leaders have a high level of commitment, coupled with the requisite leadership skills, they are most likely to perform better in leading their institutions towards the desired changes. Therefore, rather than merely issuing guiding documents (see Section 6.2.3), the state regulatory agency may consider devising ways of improving leadership skills and raising levels of commitment among institutional leaders in private universities in Tanzania to guide the institutionalisation of improvement-oriented programme self-evaluation.

Sixth, the study has also shown that improvement-oriented programme self-evaluation is stimulated by dialogical rather than strategic communication. The contexts in which these dialogues take place have a bearing on the operationalisation of programme self-evaluation. Therefore, for private universities to take part in such dialogue, they may have to demand an increased position of autonomy and freedom from the constraining conditions under which they operate. As the findings indicate (see sections 6.3.7 and 6.3.11) financial incapabilities and power seem to constrain private universities in Tanzania to fully understand the meaning of programme self-evaluation. Adopting external quality criteria uncritically seems to perpetuate a compliance culture, which may not necessarily lead to undergraduate programme improvement.

Seventh, the issue of medium of instruction (see Section 6.4.1) remains significant in an understanding of the context in which private universities in Tanzania are to operationalise programmatic quality assurance. Lack of competence in the English language may be a contributing factor to undemocratic participation in the dialogue between students and teachers. Although the East African countries had decided to promote the Kiswahili language (see Section 6.2.2), the Tanzanian government was hesitant to make strong decisions concerning which language is to be used as the language of teaching in higher education. As in other parts of the world and other African countries in particular, the Tanzanian government finds itself positioned in the midst of power tensions between regional development and global trends in higher education where English currently is the world's most-used language in higher education, science and technology. The problem of medium of instruction in higher education institutions in Tanzania clearly impacts on students' learning as well as their participation in programme self-evaluation.

Eighth, what did not emerge sufficiently clear from the study is the role of institutional mission statements in programme self-evaluation. With the exception of one institution (see Section 6.2.1), it was not evident how institutions pursued their missions through programme evaluation. Arguably, in most cases institutional mission statements were publicised for the sake of compliance only, as this is one of the requirements stipulated by the state regulatory agency upon establishment of any university. Failure of the study to capture exactly how institutions pursue their mission through programme self-evaluation evidently calls for further investigation.

In order to foster an understanding of the concept of programmatic quality and its operationalisation in private universities in Tanzania, the factual conclusions identified above were interpreted as conceptual conclusions. These are discussed next.

8.4 Conceptual conclusions

In Chapter 4 (see Figure 4.5) I developed a conceptual framework describing his understanding of how programme self-evaluation was conducted in private universities in Tanzania based on Luckett's (2006) conceptual framework. In Figure 4.5 it was suggested that programme self-evaluation in private universities in

Tanzania is conducted under the control of the external agency through institutional managers and that communication is strategic rather dialogical. The empirical work has further informed my understanding as follows:

First, *understanding and operationalisation of the quality concept* should not ignore the fact that private universities in Tanzania are facing distinctive challenges despite their being subjected to similar national and regional contexts. Any attempt to develop effective and relevant self-evaluation mechanisms therefore cannot ignore the institutional historical legacies. While in some instances these legacies are seen as an asset, in others they hinder the ability of an institution to transform its internal self-evaluation arrangements in a way that enhances self-improvement. This is typical of faith-based institutions. For example, while Institution A uses other Catholic universities in the country and in the region for benchmarking, Institution C has to struggle with the negative impact of church management interfering with university affairs. In the majority of these universities the legacy of religious orientation may be seen as one of the constraining factors that may lead to a compliance culture. A recent study by Mhlanga (2013), which was based on national contexts, had revealed similar findings.

Second, *power* is an important dimension in understanding the dynamics of programme self-evaluation. Regardless of whether an institution conducts self-evaluation or not, there is power tension within the institutions between academic staff and management, which in some cases extends to institutions' founders. Outside the institution there is tension between the universities and external quality assurance agencies. The magnitude of this tension intensifies when the programmes lead to professional awards. Therefore, the balance of power between the university and quality assurance bodies as well as between academic staff, middle managers (particularly QACs) and university management as well as university trustees is a critical factor that may influence the effectiveness of the operationalisation of quality in private universities in Tanzania. Similar results on the role of power in the spheres of quality assurance in higher education were reflected in studies by several authors, including Clark (1983), Barnett (1992), Brennan and Shah (2000), Schade (2004) and Mhlanga (2013).

Third, the study has shown that the newly established quality assurance units in private universities in Tanzania as result of participation in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project have caused increased *managerialistic environment and bureaucratic arrangements*. In the studied universities, these units were seen as a replacement of traditional collegial arrangements that were expected to be found in universities. The situation seemed to be intensified by the state regulatory agency through extensive regulations, emanating from the revival of the EAC. The establishment of quality assurance units is an attempt to respond to the changing social, political and policy environment in the East African region. With the initiatives to revive the EAC, the move to harmonise undergraduate programmes was started by the IUCEA. In this regard, quality assurance units were established to coordinate, among other issues, the involvement of relevant stakeholders and inclusive practices and approaches in the running of private universities. This study highlighted that the involvement of stakeholders in the operationalisation of quality relies mostly on power relations. Priority is given to quality assurance agencies. University management act as mere mediators of the seemingly imposed criteria and processes. While academic staff are regarded as implementers, students' opinions are not considered equally important in the process. In the literature on higher education evidence of increased managerialistic environment and bureaucratic arrangements has been portrayed by different scholars, including Barnett (1992), Green and Hayward (1997), Hussey and Smith (2010) and Stensaker and Harvey (2011).

Fourth, it emerged from the study that the revival of the EAC, which triggered the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project, impacted the local contexts. Therefore, the first requirement is that *quality criteria and procedures* in private universities in Tanzania, which used to respond to the national context, had to be extended to reflect *sensitivity to regional imperatives*. This is the result of the integration of regional markets, which compelled universities in the region to align and their quality assurance systems with regional norms. One of these norms is the establishment of quality assurance units discussed above. The second requirement is the accommodation of a competence-based approach to teaching, which rose concern in one university under the current study. This finding on the impact of regional political movements on national and institutional systems of quality assurance in

higher education is not a new phenomenon (Mhlanga, 2013; Schwarz & Westerheijden, 2004).

Fifth, the study has shown that at least a qualitative relationship exists between the institutional financial position and the effective functioning of an institutional quality assurance system, which forms the basis of programme self-evaluation. The operationalisation of the quality concept and programme self-evaluation in particular is influenced by *allocated resources*. In the current study the absence of resources, in particular funds, was seen as the main hindrance for conducting proper self-evaluations. This issue was reported at institutions B, C, D and E. A severe case was reported at Institution D, which had to withdraw from participating in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance pilot project at the very initial stage. Even at Institution A, where programme self-evaluation is carried out, there were some complaints regarding low salaries. The issue of funding has been a common debate in higher education (Green & Hayward, 1997; Thaver, 2004).

Sixth, *leadership* has its role in understanding the nature and dynamics of the operationalisation of quality and programme self-evaluation in particular. University leaders are expected to play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between external and internal forces. The data gathered in the current study suggest a close relationship between the level of development of internal quality assurance systems and subsequent carrying out of programme self-evaluation on one hand, and the quality of leadership in place on the other hand. Sibley (1998) and Trowler (2001) have indicated that given the fact that universities are found to experience power tension due to continuously being asked to be accountable, those who have been assigned the role to lead have to steer changes.

The following two sections point out the practical and theoretical implications derived from the conceptual conclusions.

8.5 Implications for the study

Based on the theoretical exploration as well as the findings of this study, it is evident that the operationalisation of the concept of quality is influenced not only by the perceptions of the key actors, but also by the contexts in which those actors function.

From these findings and the conclusions reached in this study, five practical implications and six theoretical implications are pointed out.

8.5.1 Practical implications

First, as the study has revealed that quality is a philosophical concept that reflects different perspectives of individuals and society, those in power may consider reviewing their implementation strategies. This could start at the national level through the state regulatory agency holding workshops to discuss the varying perceptions of quality and their implication for practice. The regulatory agency may wish to inform institutional leaders and other key actors that opting for one definition such as fitness for purpose has been done for practical purposes only. The adoption of such a definition does not conclude that other views have to be forcefully suppressed. Institutions would prefer to be at liberty to interpret this notion based on their values and priorities. A similar dialogue may continue at the institutional level by involving all internal stakeholders.

Second, the study has shown that there is replacement of the traditional collegial arrangements to pursuing quality by managerialistic arrangements, which caused an overreliance on the newly established quality assurance units – even for matters that were meant to be handled by departments. This suggests that quality assurance practitioners subscribe to managerial rather than collegial rationality. As it is construed that academics tend to perform their work better when a reasonable degree of autonomy is assured, private universities may opt to dialogically communicate with the state regulatory agency so as to be included in capacity-building initiatives such as the Tanzania-Germany Postgraduate Training Programme (see Section 6.2.3). By doing so, quality assurance practitioners at departments may increase their levels of autonomy.

Third, the findings from the study have shown that one of the outcomes of the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project is the adoption of a competence-based approach to teaching. However, as relevant literature has suggested, the implementation of this approach to teaching requires strong internal coherence among the various key actors.

Fourth, as this study has shown that there is a gap in the coordination of the provision of university education in Tanzania, especially with regard to the quality assurance of undergraduate professional programmes, the ministry that is responsible for higher education may consider quality assurance of professional programmes as a cross-cutting issue. By doing so, professional bodies that are not under the Ministry of Education may be included in the dialogue to resolve the issue of multiple accreditations (power struggle), which takes places place at the expense of higher education providers, including private universities.

Fifth, as leaders are expected to bridge the gap between external forces and internal forces that affect the carrying out of improvement-oriented programme self-evaluations, institutional managers may opt to update their management and leadership skills. Institutional managers who focus on systems only and not on the people who have to implement self-evaluation systems risk the possibility of accepting the status quo rather than challenging it. On the other hand, while one may argue for individual managers to update their managerial and leadership skills, the regulatory agency may also intervene by including private universities in developmental projects that would better equip their leadership.

8.5.2 Theoretical implications

From the conceptual conclusions drawn above, I have developed new insights in the phenomenon of programme self-evaluation that extends my previous understanding described in Chapter 4, Figure 4.5 as follows:

- The understanding and operationalisation of programme quality in private universities in Tanzania are influenced by institutional variety and by national, regional and international contexts.
- Power is an important dimension of understanding the dynamics of programme self-evaluation. The balance of power between the institution external bodies on the one hand, as well as between institutional management, students, academics and institutional trustees on the other is pivotal in influencing programme self-evaluation.
- Managerialistic environments and bureaucratic arrangements influence programme self-evaluation. As institutional managers are often concerned with efficiency and effectiveness, the timing of programme self-evaluation

often takes the form of a compliance culture. Programme self-evaluations tend to be conducted prior to visits by regulatory agencies.

- Criteria and procedures for programme self-evaluation in private universities in Tanzania are influenced by local concerns and regional imperatives. This seems to be happening as a direct result of efforts by the IUCEA requiring universities in the region to align their curricula and their quality assurance systems in conformity with newly established norms.

- Resource allocation is a constraint to the proper operationalisation of programme self-evaluation. Failure by institutional managers to accord the appropriate resources has always ended in either failure to properly conduct programme self-evaluation or conducting ones with limited fruition.

- Depending on the level of commitment and possessed skills, leadership can be a facilitative or a hindrance factor to programme self-evaluation. Programme self-evaluation may be conducted more successfully when accorded the right support by the institutional management.

Figure 8.1 portrays my new understanding of programme self-evaluation in private universities in Tanzania. This new conception takes into account the six points enumerated above.
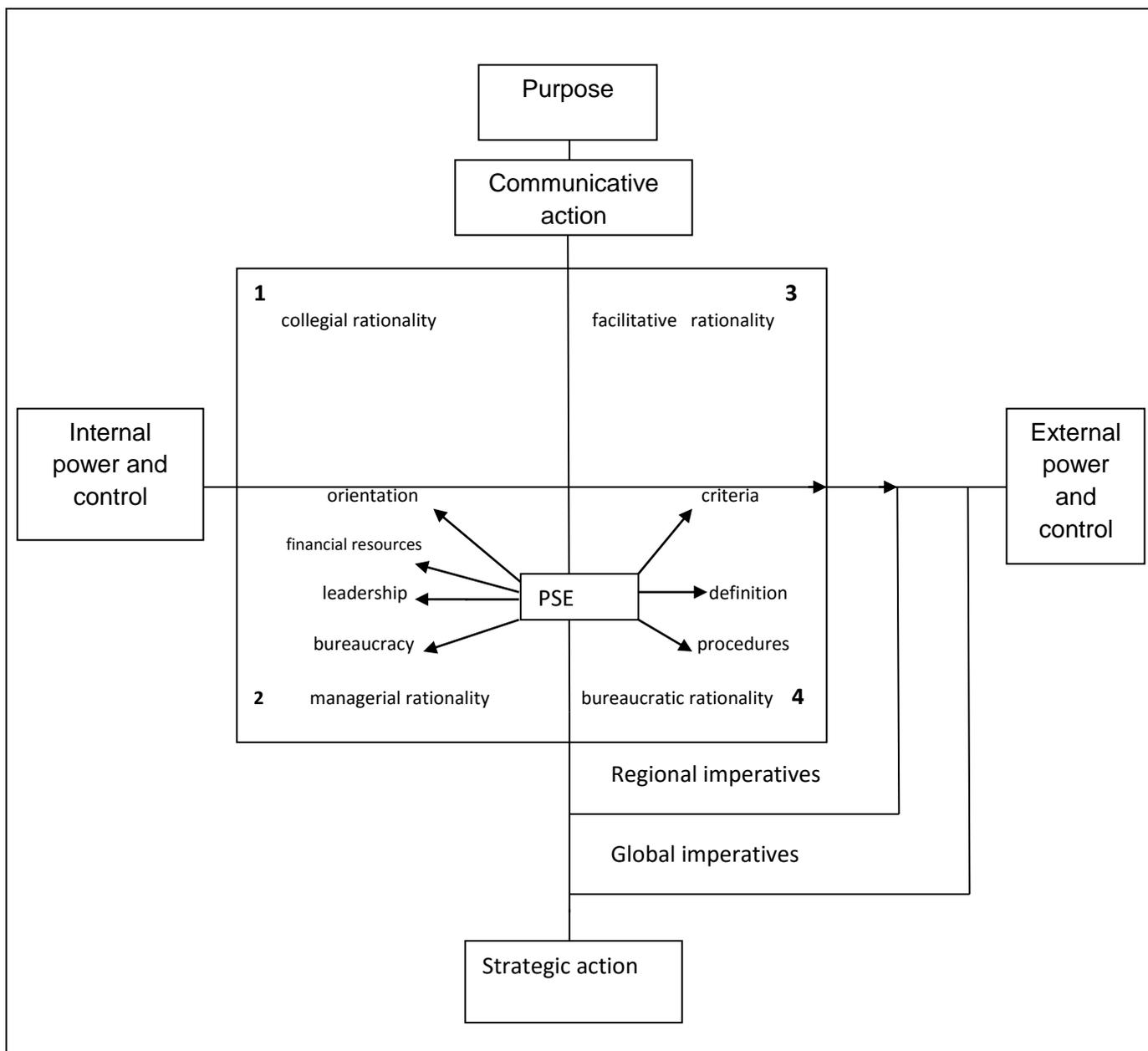
Figure 8.1: A conceptual framework for programme self-evaluation

Unlike Figure 4.5, Figure 8.1 takes into consideration factors which influence programme self-evaluation as depicted by the key practitioners. At the institutional level the identified factors are institutional orientation, leadership, financial resources and presence of managerialistic and bureaucratic arrangements. The figure shows that changes in the world have forced individual countries to unite and create larger communities such as the East African Community (EAC). In turn, these larger communities create norms which influence the individual countries. Within the East

246

African region norms in higher education were introduced by the Inter-University Council for East Africa through the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project. As individual countries were required to comply, each state regulatory agency had to devise implementation strategies. In Tanzania this was realised through issuance of guidelines which were provided to institutions. The guidelines specified among others, evaluation criteria, definition of quality and evaluation methods. The outcome of such guidelines is the creation of a compliance culture in programme self-evaluation (PSE) which was evidenced in the study.

As the figure indicates, programme self-evaluation is initiated by a government-appointed agency and implemented by academics through institutional managers. This agency has independent legal status. Through its legal mandates the agency issues minimum quality thresholds. Thus, the evaluation criteria are determined by the agency without consultation with institutions. Although institutions are expected to link these criteria to institutional missions and goals, there is no evidence to indicate how private universities in Tanzania use programme self-evaluation to pursue their missions. Context insensitive as it is interested in setting up rule-based systems that can produce evaluation findings that can be considered 'scientific', value-free, generalisable and comparative. Thus the definition of quality as 'fitness for purpose' leaves one critical question 'Whose purpose?'

The purpose of evaluation is often compliance; that is, to get the job done across the system. According to Harvey (2007) compliance refers to ensuring that institutions adopt procedures, practices and policies that are considered by governments to be desirable for the proper conduct of the sector and to ensure its quality. Government expectations include various forms of compliance that go beyond financial accountability and include the achievement of policy objectives. As suggested by PA Consulting (2000, in Harvey, 2007) governments place increasing emphasis on securing specified outputs and outcomes from publicly funded activities in response to community expectations about improving service quality and policy effectiveness. Harvey (2007) argues further that there are other stakeholders who seek compliance through quality monitoring, notably professional or regulatory bodies who may use quality monitoring to check that their preferences or policies are being acknowledged or implemented. At its simplest level, quality monitoring has encouraged, or even

forced, compliance in the production of information, be it statistical data, prospectuses, or course documents.

In addition, there is pressure to ensure comparability of provision and procedures, within and between institutions, including international comparisons. The later corresponds to the IUCEA quality criteria discussed in Chapter 6.

In compliance model, quality assurance findings are sometimes used to ascertain the extent to which government policy goals have been achieved. Typical evaluation methods used are institutional audit of quality management systems, the accreditation of individual institutions and programmes, the evaluation of research, national subject or discipline reviews and external examination of students. This means that the self-evaluation tends to be 'other-directed' and therefore persuasive and defensive rather than open and honest.

Since the model of quality assurance found in Quadrant 4 is not based on the inner motivations and values of academic staff, and represents a shift in the balance of power away from academia and towards the state. Tensions caused by internal forces appears to have a significantly damaging effect on quality assurance arrangements – probably more so than those caused by external forces. This refined conceptual framework suggests the following:

First, since 'quality' is a philosophical concept which reflects different perspectives of individuals and society, those in power may consider reviewing their implementation strategies. This could start at the national level by the state regulatory agency holding workshops to discuss the varying perceptions of quality and their implication to practice. The regulatory agency may wish to inform institutional leaders and other key actors that opting for one definition such as 'fitness for purpose' has been done for practical purposes only. Adoption of such a definition does not conclude that other views have to be forcefully suppressed. Institutions would prefer to be at liberty to interpret this notion based on their values and priorities. A similar dialogue may continue at the institutional level by involving all internal stakeholders.

Second, the replacement of the traditional collegial arrangements to pursuing quality by managerialistic arrangements caused over reliance on the newly established quality assurance units even for matters which were meant to be handled by

departments. This suggests that quality assurance practitioners subscribe to managerial rationality rather than collegial. As it is construed that academics tend to perform their work better when a reasonable degree of autonomy is assured, private universities may opt to dialogically communicate with the state regulatory agency so as to be included in capacity building initiatives to empower institutional quality assurance practitioners.

Third, as there is a gap in coordinating provision of university education in Tanzania especially with regard to quality assurance of undergraduate professional programmes, the ministry which is responsible for higher education may consider quality assurance of professional programme as a cross cutting issue which requires the attention of professional bodies as well. By so doing professional bodies which are not under the Ministry of Education may be included in the dialogue to resolve the issue of multiple accreditations (power struggle) which takes places place at the expense of higher education providers including private universities.

Fourth, the study has shown that at least a qualitative relationship exists between the institutional financial position and the effective functioning of institutional quality assurance system; which was considered as a hindrance to programme self-evaluation. As relevant literature suggests that most private universities in Africa depend on students fees, and efforts by these institutions to raise their financial positions have not brought significant results, funding agencies such as Tanzania Education Authority and Higher Education Students' Loans Board may consider revising their funding strategies so as to contribute to the development of private higher education in Tanzania. It is worth reminding that the private-public divide of the higher education sector in Tanzania is mainly based on ownership. In practice both private and public universities are meant to contribute to the national economic and social development by producing philosopher-practitioners.

Fifth, since leaders are expected to bridge the gap between external forces and internal forces that affect carrying out of improvement oriented programme self-evaluations, the regulatory agency may opt to conduct seminars and workshop involving institutional managers.

As can be noted programme self-evaluation is conducted on the negative pole of the vertical axis labelled 'strategic action' to suggest that the state regulatory agency acts strategically and does not attempt to establish a shared understanding of the norms with private universities. Strategic action also implies that the state regulatory agency may plan its moves strategically to its instrumental predictions of institutions. The agency may force institutions to make decisions against their will, for example, by conducting programme or institutional self-evaluation for compliance sake regardless of institutional constraints indicated in Quadrant 2 (see Figure 8.1).

8.5.3 Directions for further research

The main purpose of this study was to explore institutional internal quality assurance processes that resulted from participation in the IUCEA-DAAD project and to critically analyse the use and application of the concept of quality in private universities in Tanzania. However, as outlined in the following section, further work is desirable for this area of research to progress to fruition. It is suggested that further research be conducted aiming at exploring the following possible topics:

- What programme benchmarking entails and what the procedures for programme benchmarking involve
- To establish how private universities in Tanzania may better pursue their institutional missions through programme self-evaluation
- Further investigation into programme self-evaluation in Tanzania by including more institutions in a sample to determine the validity of the findings of this limited study.

Further, as research on higher education can be conducted from several perspectives, including philosophical, managerial and thematic, programme quality issues raised in the current study may be pursued from such perspectives.

8.6 Strengths and limitations of the study

One particular strength of the current study may be said to emanate from the language used in the interviews. All the interviews were conducted in Kiswahili, the language with which all interviewees confirmed to be at ease. This enabled me to obtain in-depth information. Candidly, the interviewees were free to the extent that in

some cases I found the 'stories' narrated off-record to be of much relevance to be included in the study.

Another apparent strength was the anonymity of the participants who participated in the Delphi exercise. Apart from allowing fair disclosure, the Delphi exercise was also considered a learning opportunity. Learning was evident in the second and third rounds, when some participants opted to change their former positions after being influenced by others. To me, this changing of stance was not just a matter of compliance, but a step consciously taken after critical thinking.

However, while acknowledging the above merits, it is also important to highlight two areas that may be considered as limitations to the current study. First, the selection of appropriate participants to take part in the exercise was difficult. It was difficult to claim that there were highly trained participants in the area of quality assurance in private higher education in Tanzania. In the selection of 'experts' I relied on their practical involvement in the issue under investigation rather than academic proficiency. However, in the course of carrying out the Delphi exercise I noticed that my assumption regarding knowledge equivalence among the Delphi participants was not completely justifiable. I noticed it when I received emails from three participants asking me to clarify some statements in the questionnaire. Surprisingly, the statements for which clarification was sought were considered by others as the 'taken-for-granted' statements.

Second, the use of Kiswahili can also be viewed as a limitation in a sense that the original scripts had to be translated into English. The reader should therefore be advised that while efforts were made to capture the true meaning of the original texts, departures from the original texts are probably inevitable.

8.7 Conclusion

This study contributes to the discourse on the quality assurance of undergraduate programmes. It has successfully addressed the knowledge gap established in Chapter 1. In that chapter it was stated that although the IUCEA-DAAD programme evaluation project had succeeded in making the notion of quality assurance valued and accepted, it was not clear whether it had similar effects regarding the concept of quality. This study has established that although institutions through the state

regulatory agency have adopted the definition of quality as fitness for purpose, practitioners of programme self-evaluation still have vague definitions or have definitions that are closely related to the world of business. Definitions related to academic concerns appeared missing or of secondary concern to the key practitioners.

The main research question that this study addressed was related to how private universities in Tanzania interpret and apply the quality concept in programme evaluation. From the findings and conclusions it is evident that it has succeeded in narrowing the knowledge gap that existed before, namely that it was not known how undergraduate programme quality in private universities is interpreted and applied in Tanzania. Hopefully, this study will make a lasting difference in improving such an understanding and, importantly, contributing to future programme self-evaluation efforts.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE 1. RECOGNISED UNIVERSITIES, UNIVERSITY COLLEGES AND TEACHING CENTRES IN TANZANIA

Harmonised status of fully fledged universities operating in Tanzania as of November, 2014

SN	Name of the Institution	Approved Acronym	Category of University	Ownership	Head Office	Current Status	Whether it Graduates Students in its Own Name	Registration Number
1.	University of Dar es Salaam	UDSM	Fully Fledged University	Public	Dar es Salaam	Accredited and Chartered	Yes	CR1/001
2.	Sokoine University of Agriculture	SUA	Fully Fledged University	Public	Morogoro	Accredited and Chartered	Yes	CR1/002
3.	Open University of Tanzania	OUT	Fully Fledged University	Public	Dar es Salaam	Accredited and Chartered	Yes	CR1/003
4.	Ardhi University	ARU	Fully Fledged University	Public	Dar es Salaam	Accredited and Chartered	Yes	CR1/004
5.	Hubert Kairuki Memorial University	HKMU	Fully Fledged University	Private	Dar es Salaam	Accredited and chartered	Yes	CR1/005
6.	International Medical and Technological University	IMTU	Fully Fledged University	Private	Dar es Salaam	CFR and chartered	Yes	CR1/006
7.	Tumaini University Makumira	TUMA	Fully Fledged University	Private	Arusha	Accredited	Yes	CR1/007
8.	St. Augustine University of Tanzania	SAUT	Fully Fledged University	Private	Mwanza	Accredited	Yes	CR1/008

9.	Zanzibar University	ZU	Fully Fledged University	Private	Kusini Unguja	CFR		Yes	CR1/009
10.	State University of Zanzibar	SUZA	Fully Fledged University	Public	Mjini Magharibi	CFR		Yes	CR1/010
11.	Mzumbe University	MU	Fully Fledged University	Public	Morogoro	Accredited and Chartered		Yes	CR1/011
12.	Mount Meru University	MMU	Fully Fledged University	Private	Arusha	CFR		Yes	CR1/012
13.	University of Arusha	UOA	Fully Fledged University	Private	Arusha	CFR		Yes	CR1/013
14.	Teofilo Kisanji University	TEKU	Fully Fledged University	Private	Mbeya	CFR and Chartered		Yes	CR1/014
15.	Muhimbili University of Health & Allied Sciences	MUHAS	Fully Fledged University	Public	Dar es Salaam	Accredited and Chartered		Yes	CR1/015
16.	Nelson Mandela African Institute of Science and Technology	NMAIST	Fully Fledged University	Public	Arusha	CFR		Yes	CR1/016
17.	Muslim University of Morogoro	MUM	Fully Fledged University	Private	Morogoro	CFR and Chartered		Yes	CR1/017
18.	St. John's University of Tanzania	SJUT	Fully Fledged University	Private	Dodoma	CFR and Chartered		Yes	CR1/018
19.	University of Dodoma	UDOM	Fully Fledged University	Public	Dodoma	CFR and chartered		Yes	CR1/019
20.	University of Bagamoyo	UoB	Fully Fledged University	Private	Dar es Salaam	CFR		Yes	CR1/020

21.	Eckernforde Tanga University	ETU	Fully Fledged University	Private	Tanga	Provisional Registration	Yes	CR1/021
22.	Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences	CUHAS	Fully Fledged University	Private	Mwanza	Accredited and chartered	Yes	CR1/022
23.	St. Joseph University in Tanzania	SJUIT	Fully Fledged University	Private	Dar es Salaam	CFR	Yes	CR1/023
24.	United African University of Tanzania	UAUT	Fully Fledged University	Private	Dar es Salaam	CFR	Yes	CR1/024
25.	Katavi University of Agriculture	KUA	Fully Fledged University	Public	Katavi	Provisional Licence	Yes	CR1/025
26.	Mbeya University of Science and Technology	MUST	Fully Fledged University	Public	Mbeya	CFR	Yes	CR1/026
27.	Sebastian Kolowa Memorial University	SEKOMU	Fully Fledged University	Private	Tanga	CFR and chartered	yes	CR1/027
28.	Tanzania International University	TIU	Fully fledged University	Private	Dar es Salaam	Provisional Licence	Yes	CR1/028
29.	Butiama University of Agriculture and Allied Sciences	BUAAS	Fully fledged University	public	Mara	Provisional Licence	Yes	CR1/029
30.	University of Iringa	UI	Fully fledged University	Private	Iringa		Yes	CR1/030
31.	Efforts University of Management, Science, Technology and Innovation	EUMSTI	Fully fledged University	Private	Bagamoyo	Provisional Licence	No	CR1/031
32.	Tanzania University of Technology	TUT	Fully fledged University	Private		Provisional Licence	No	CR1/032

33.	Tanzanite University	TU	Fully fledged University	Private	Chamanzi	Provisional Licence	No	CR1/033
34.	Abdul Rahman Al-Sumit Memorial University	SUMAIT	Fully fledged University	Private	Mjini Magharibi	CFR	Yes	CR1/034
35.	Mwenge Catholic University	MWECAU	Fully fledged University	Private	Moshi	CFR	Yes	CR1/035
36.	Ruaha Catholic University	RUCU	Fully Fledged University	Private	Iringa	CFR	Yes	CR1/036

Harmonised status of university colleges operating in Tanzania as of November 2014

SN	Name of the Institution	Approved Acronym	Category of University	Ownership	Head Office	Current Status	Whether it Graduates Students in its Own Name	Registration Number
1.	Kilimanjaro Christian Medical College	KCMCo	University College	Private	Kilimanjaro	CFR and chartered	No	CR2/001
2.	Tumaini University Dar es Salaam College	TURDACO	University College	Private	Dar es Salaam	CFR	No	CR2/002
3.	Mkwawa University College of Education	MUCE	University College	Public	Iringa	CFR and chartered	No	CR2/003
4.	Dar es Salaam University College of Education	DUCE	University College	Public	Dar es Salaam	CFR and chartered	No	CR2/004
5.	Stefano Moshi Memorial University College	SMMUCO	University College	Private	Kilimanjaro	CFR and chartered	No	CR2/005
6.	Kampala International University (Dar es Salaam Constituent College)	KIU - DAR	University Constituent College	Private	Dar es Salaam	Provisional Registration pending approval of foreign charter	No	CR2/006
7.	Archbishop Mihayo University College of Tabora	AMUCTA	University College	Private	Tabora	CFR	No	CR2/007
8.	St. Francis University College of Health and Allied Sciences	SFUCHAS	University College	Private	Morogoro	CFR	No	CR2/008

SN	Name of the Institution	Approved Acronym	Category of University	Ownership	Head Office	Current Status	Whether it Graduates Students in its Own Name	Registration Number
9.	Jordan University College	JUCO	University College	Private	Morogoro	CFR	No	CR2/009
10.	Stella Maris Mtwara University College	STeMMUCO	University College	Private	Mtwara	CFR	No	CR2/010
11.	Josiah Kibira University College	JOKUCO	University College	Private	Kagera	CFR	No	CR2/011
12.	St. Joseph University College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology	SJUCAST	University College	Private	Ruvuma	CFR	No	CR2/012
13.	St. Joseph University College of Information Technology	SJUCIT	University College	Private	Ruvuma	CFR	No	CR2/013
14.	St. Joseph University College of Management and Commerce	SJUCMC	University College	Private	Njombe	Provisional Licence	No	CR2/014

HARMONISED STATUS OF CENTRES AND INSTITUTES OPERATING IN TANZANIA AS OF NOVEMBER 2014

SN	Name of the Institution	Approved Acronym	Category of University	Ownership	Head Office	Current Status	Whether it Graduates Students in its Own Name	Registration Number
1.	University of Dar es Salaam - Marine Institute Zanzibar	IMS	University Centre	Public	Mjini Magharibi	CFR	No	CR3/001
2.	Aga Khan University - Tanzania Institute of Higher Education	AKU-TIHE	University College	Private	Dar es Salaam	CFR pending approval of foreign charter	No	CR3/002
3.	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (Arusha Centre)	JKUAT	University Centre	Private	Arusha	Provisional Registration pending approval of foreign charter	No	CR3/003
4.	St Augustine University of Tanzania- Songea Centre	Pending	University Centre	Private	Ruvuma	CFR	No	CR3/004
5.	St Augustine University of Tanzania - Dar es Salaam Centre	Pending	University Centre	Private	Dar es Salaam	CFR	No	CR3/005
6.	St Augustine University of Tanzania - Bukoba Centre	Pending	University Centre	Private	Bukoba	CFR	No	CR3/006

SN	Name of the Institution	Approved Acronym	Category of University	Ownership	Head Office	Current Status	Whether it Graduates Students in its Own Name	Registration Number
7.	St Augustine University of Tanzania - Arusha Centre	Pending	University Centre	Private	Arusha	CFR	No	CR3/007
8.	St Augustine University of Tanzania –Mbeya Centre	Pending	University Centre	Private	Mbeya	CFR	No	CR3/008
9.	University of Arusha- Buhare Centre	Pending	University Centre	Private	Mara	Provisional Registration	No	CR3/009
10.	St John University of Tanzania- St Marks Teaching Centre	Pending	University Centre	Private	Dar es Salaam	CFR	No	CR3/010
11.	St John University of Tanzania- Msalato centre	Pending	University Centre	Private	Dodoma	CFR	No	CR3/011
12.	Mzumbe University Dar es Salaam Centre	Pending	University Centre	Public	Dar es Salaam	CFR	No	CR3/012
13.	Mzumbe University Mbeya Centre	Pending	University Centre	Public	Mbeya	CFR	No	CR3/013
14.	Mzumbe University Mwanza Centre	Pending	University Centre	Public	Mwanza	CFR	No	CR3/014
15.	Mzumbe University Tanga Centre	Pending	University Centre	Public	Tanga	CFR	No	CR3/015
16.	Kenyatta University- Arusha Centre	Pending	University Centre	Public(Foreign)	Arusha	CFR	No	CR3/016

SN	Name of the Institution	Approved Acronym	Category of University	Ownership	Head Office	Current Status	Whether it Graduates Students in its Own Name	Registration Number
17.	Tumaini University Makumira - Mbeya Centre	Pending	University Centre	Private	Mbeya	Provisional Registration	No	CR3/017
18.	St Joseph University in Tanzania Arusha Campus	Pending	University Centre	Private	Arusha	CFR	No	CR3/018
19.	Stephano Moshi Memorial - Mwika Centre	Pending	University Centre	Private	Kilimanjaro	CFR	No	CR3/019
20.	Stephano Moshi Memorial– Moshi Town Centre	Pending	University Centre	Private	Moshi	CFR	No	CR3/020
21.	Mount Meru University – Arusha Town Centre	Pending	University Centre	Private	Arusha	CFR	No	CR3/021
22.	Teofil Kisanji University- Tabora Centre	Pending	University Centre	Private	Tabora	CFR	No	CR3/022
23.	Mount Meru University – Mwanza Centre	Pending	University Centre	Private	Mwanza	CFR	No	CR3/023
24.	St John University- Kigoma Centre	Pending	University Centre	Private	Kigoma	CFR	No	CR3/024

ANNEXURE 2: Supervisor's introduction letter

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot·your knowledge partner

Centre for Higher and Adult Education

Department of Curriculum Studies,

Faculty of Education, Private Bag X1

7602 Stellenbosch, South Africa

Tel +27 21 808 2277/2297
Fax: +27 21 808 2270
E-mail: emb2@sun.ac.za

9 December 2013

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR MR FULGENCE MATIMBO

You may recall that in 2007 the Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) in collaboration with the German Academic Exchange Services (DAAD), the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES) and the University of Oldenburg developed a Pilot Project on Enhancing Quality Assurance in Higher Education in East Africa.

The main objective of the project was to develop a regional quality assurance framework in East Africa, which involved making the main stakeholders aware of the need for a systematic effort to assess and improve higher education. This objective was addressed through a number of activities including self-assessment of a number of programmes and peer review of the same. It was observed that the project was successful in making the concept of quality assurance valued and accepted. However, it was not clear whether it had similar effect regarding the concept of quality.

It is in the above light that Mr Fulgence J. Matimbo, who is a PhD student currently pursuing his studies at the Faculty of Education, Stellenbosch University, South Africa has decided to conduct a study titled '**Towards understanding the concept of programmatic quality in private universities in Tanzania'.** The unit of analysis is 'the dynamics of undergraduate programme evaluation'. The purpose of the study is to explore the quality assurance process that was involved in the Inter University Council

for East Africa pilot project and critically analyse the use and application of the concept of 'programmatic quality' in private universities in Tanzania. The underlying assumption of the study is that different understandings and uses of the quality concept imply different ways of justifying and promoting it at the programme level in private universities in Tanzania.

The study applies an interpretative approach which attempts to understand what meaning private universities in Tanzania assign to the concept of programmatic quality, given their contexts, and the way they make it operational.

It is expected that knowledge generated from the study may contribute to an improved understanding of the contexts of private universities when pursuing programmatic quality assurance initiatives in Tanzania. Further, it may serve as a premise for establishing a framework for evaluating programmatic quality in private universities in Tanzania.

This letter therefore serves to request you to accord Mr Matimbo due cooperation in the course of conducting the study which is scheduled from December 2013 to September 2014. The methods which will be utilized in the study are document analyses and interviews with relevant role players who were involved in the IUCEA pilot project mentioned above. The programme specialists at the relevant departments will also be requested to participate in a Delphi-type survey later in the investigation.

Hereby I would therefore like to request you to confirm your willingness to allow Mr. Matimbo to conduct the referred study at your institution.

Yours sincerely,

Prof E. M. Bitzer

Study supervisor

ANNEXURE 3: Research clearance from Stellenbosch University

Centre for Higher and Adult Education

Department of Curriculum Studies,

Faculty of Education, Private Bag X1

7602 Stellenbosch, South Africa

Tel +27 21 808 2277/2297
Fax: +27 21 808 2270
E-mail: emb2@sun.ac.za

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to state that Mr F J Matimbo has obtained ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee (Human and Social Sciences) at Stellenbosch University to further his studies in the project: '*Towards understanding programmatic quality in private universities in Tanzania*' (DESC/Matimbo/Mar2015/4).

The Ethics Approval Letter accompanies this statement.

Prof E. M. Bitzer

Promoter

Approval Notice
New Application

23-Mar-2015
Matimbo, Fulgence FJ

Proposal #: DESC/Matimbo/Mar2015/4

Title: Towards understanding programmatic quality in private universities in Tanzania

Dear Mr Fulgence Matimbo,

Your **New Application** received on **05-Mar-2015**, was reviewed

Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: **19-Mar-2015** -**18-Mar-2016**

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number** (**DESC/Matimbo/Mar2015/4**) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 218089183.

Included Documents:

Informed consent form

Research Proposal

DESC Checklist form

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator

Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities).

ANNEXURE 4: Letter of request and consent form to interviewees

Dear Participant,

Request to participate in a PhD study entitled: Towards understanding the concept of programmatic quality in private universities in Tanzania.

I am currently occupying the position of **Senior Accreditation Officer** in the Directorate of Accreditation and Quality Assurance of the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU).

At the moment I am writing a thesis to obtain a PhD in the field of Higher Education in the Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. My registration number is 17141311. The title of my research is **Towards Understanding the Concept of Programmatic Quality in Private Universities in Tanzania.** My supervisor is:

> Prof. Eli Bitzer
> Director of Adult and Continuous Education
> Faculty of Education
> Stellenbosch University
> South Africa

The purpose is to explore institutional internal quality assurance process that resulted from participation in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project and critically analyse the use and application of the concept of 'quality' in private universities in Tanzania. The underlying assumption is that different understandings and uses of the quality concept imply different ways of justifying and promoting quality at the programme level in private universities in Tanzania.

The methods that will be utilized in the study are, in the first place, a comprehensive literature study (that has already been completed). In the second place, interviews with key participants who were involved in the IUCEA Quality Assurance Project in 2007 – 2010 will follow. Interviews in this study aim at obtaining multiple realities definitions of Quality as well as its application in all involved universities. The aim is to understand the given social situation from the participants' perspectives. The research methods and processes are flexible, changing strategies; and a design emerges as data is collected. The researcher's role is ensuring that the prepared interviewees become immersed in the social context, while the importance of the context is the goal of detailed context-bound generalisations.

The benefit and value of this research is that by understanding the way private universities define and operationalise programme quality in their given contexts. Such knowledge may contribute to a better understanding of the unique contexts of private universities when pursuing quality assurance initiatives in the country.

Having briefly explained the process to you, I would like to respectfully request your expert co-operation in completing this project. I am aware of the fact that time is a very precious commodity to all of us, therefore I will try to take as little of your time as possible. The completion of the interview will take approximately 50 minutes. Should you have any inquiries, my particulars are as follows:

Cell phone number:	+255 754 635315 and +255 715 63 53 15
Email:	matimbotz@gmail.com
Postal address:	P. O. Box 12967 Dar es Salaam.

Herby I would like to request your willingness to take part in the interviews, which are scheduled to take place between 15th March and 30th September 2014. Should you be willing to participate fill in the accompanying consent form (optional) and return it to me. Thank you very much for your kind attention and your time devoted to reading this communication.

Yours sincerely,

Fulgence Matimbo

FORM OF CONSENT

Date: ... /... /2014

Hereby I, the undersigned, consent to participate in the interviews which are scheduled to take place from ... /... /2014 to ... /... /2014.

My full particulars are as follows:

Title:…………………………………

Surname:………

Full names:………

Postal address:……

                    ………

                    ………

Email address:……..

Telephone number:……………………………………………………………………………………………..

Cellular Number: ……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Signature: …………………………………………… …………………………………………..

Please return this form on or before …………………..

My particulars are: Cell phone: +255 715 63 53 15

                    Email: matimbotz@gmail.com

Thank you in advance for your kind co-operation

Yours faithfully,

Fulgence Matimbo

Annexure 5: Interview schedule for chairpersons and members of self-assessment committees

TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING PROGRAMMATIC QUALITY IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN TANZANIA

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(Heads of Department, Chairpersons and Members of Self -Assessment Committees)

Purpose of the interview:

The purpose is to explore institutional internal quality assurance process that resulted from participation in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project and critically analyse the use and application of the concept of 'quality' in private universities in Tanzania. The underlying assumption is that different understandings and uses of the quality concept imply different ways of justifying and promoting quality at the programme level in private universities in Tanzania. This knowledge may contribute to a better understanding of the unique contexts of private universities when pursuing quality assurance initiatives in the country.

Important:

For this interview, Head of Departments, Chairpersons and members of Self-Assessment Committees will be viewed as synonymous.

QUESTIONS

1. What sort of meaning does the word 'quality' have for you?
2. Can you describe what you are doing to assure quality of your programme?
3. What purpose do you have in mind when conducting programme self-evaluation?
4. Which criteria do you use when conducting programme self-evaluation?
5. What are probable the main tasks that the Head of Department will handle during programme evaluation?
6. How do you handle the requirements of the various stakeholders such as the government, employers, internal stakeholders such as students and support staff?
7. What is the typical method that is employed in programme evaluation? Can you explain the process?
8. How do you compare the evaluation that is initiated by the department and that of the IUCEA in terms of ownership, as well as willingness of key participants?
9. In your opinion, what challenges/forces are there currently in the implementation of quality assurance at programme level?
10. What, in your opinion, is needed in order to successfully implement programme quality assurance?

11. Is there any other issue that you would like to comment regarding this study?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

ANNEXURE 6: Interview schedule for quality assurance coordinators

TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING PROGRAMMATIC QUALITY IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN TANZANIA

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(Quality Assurance Coordinators)

Purpose of the interview:

The purpose is to explore institutional internal quality assurance process that resulted from participation in the IUCEA-DAAD quality assurance project and critically analyse the use and application of the concept of 'quality' in private universities in Tanzania. The underlying assumption is that different understandings and uses of the quality concept imply different ways of justifying and promoting quality at the programme level in private universities in Tanzania. This knowledge may contribute to a better understanding of the unique contexts of private universities when pursuing quality assurance initiatives in the country.

Important:

For this interview, Quality Assurance Coordinators and Quality Assurance Directors will be viewed as synonymous.

QUESTIONS

1. What sort of meaning does the word 'quality' have for you?
2. How do you describe your role in programme quality assurance?
3. What purpose do you have in mind when conducting programme evaluation?
4. Which criteria do you use when conducting programme self-evaluation?
5. What are probable the main tasks that the quality assurance coordinator will handle during programme evaluation?
6. How do you handle the requirements of the various stakeholders such as quality assurance bodies, employers, students, teachers and support staff?
7. Can you describe the process involved in programme evaluation?
8. How does the evaluation initiated by the department resemble or differ from one initiated by the IUCEA?
9. In your opinion, what challenges/forces are there currently in the implementation of quality assurance at programme level?
10. What, in your opinion, is needed in order to successfully implement programme quality assurance?
11. Is there any other issue that you would like to comment regarding this study?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

ANNEXURE 7: Letter of invitation, consent form and Delphi questionnaire to the participants: Round 1

Dear participant,

Once again I would like to thank you for your willingness to participate in this study titled '**Towards understanding programmatic quality in private universities in Tanzania**'. I am pleased to inform you that information you provided in the interviews enabled me to compile questions which you will find in section B of this questionnaire.

You are therefore proudly invited to participate in the second round of data collection exercise, and this time is through the Delphi process. The purpose of this Delphi tool is to obtain your sincere opinions on the various aspects that are of importance to programme self-assessment in private universities in Tanzania. The questionnaire contains 23 statements. There are two open ended questions (question 2 and 9) that provide you with the opportunity to offer additional suggestions and comments. The questionnaire is divided in two sections. In each section precise instructions as well as specific themes are given to guide you.

The opinion of each participant is needed with regard to the relevance and importance of each definition (section A) and criterion (section B). All information you provide will be treated as **confidential**. This means, apart from the researcher and supervisor, no participant will be able to know the identity of any other participant.

You are therefore invited to answer all questions freely and provide any comment as honestly as you like. Please indicate your choice for the statements by placing an **X** over the number of your choice. That is, (a) to (e) in Section A, and (a) to (c) in Section B. Once compiled, results from this questionnaire will be sent back to you.

If convenient, I would like to receive feedback on this round not later than .../.../2015.

Once again, thank you for your willingness to be of assistance in this research.

Regards,

Fulgence Matimbo

Student number: 17141311
Cell phone: +255 754 635315 and +255 715 635315

DELHI EXERCISE FORM OF CONSENT

Date: ... /... /2015

Hereby I, the undersigned, consent to participate in the Delphi exercise scheduled to take place from May, 2015 to August, 2015.

I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw from this exercise.

My full particulars are as follows:

Title:…………………………………

Surname:………

Full names:………

Postal address…

.………..

.………..

Email address:………...

Telephone number:……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Cellular Number: ……

Signature: ………………………………………..

NB: Please return this form on or before …………………..

My particulars are: Cell phone: +255 715 63 53 15   Email: matimbotz@gmail.com

Thank you for your kind co-operation

Yours faithfully,

Fulgence Matimbo

Towards understanding programmatic quality in private universities in Tanzania

First round Delphi protocol

SECTION A
PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY
This section deals with the different perceptions of the concept of 'quality' in higher education
Please indicate how important each of the following elements of a definition of quality is in the context of private universities in Tanzania. Use the following scale:
1= most appropriate
2=appropriate
3=less appropriate
4=inappropriate
5=inapplicable
Please mark the appropriate answer with an X. Only mark one option

1. **When conducting programme evaluation in private universities in Tanzania, 'quality' should be perceived as to do with:**

						comments
(a)'something exceptional'	1	2	3	4	5	
(b)'perfection'	1	2	3	4	5	
(c)'fitness for purpose'	1	2	3	4	5	
(d)'value for money'	1	2	3	4	5	
(e)'transformation of the participants in quality assurance processes'	1	2	3	4	5	

2. **Any further views on the concept of 'quality'?**

SECTION B
PROGRAMME SELF-EVALUATION
This section deals with the process of programme self-evaluation in higher education
Please indicate how important each of the following statements is in the context of private universities in Tanzania. Use the following scale:
1= essential
2=useful
3=unnecessary
Please mark the appropriate answer with an X. Only mark one option.

3. **When conducting programme evaluation in private universities in Tanzania:**

				comments
(a) programme self-evaluation should be initiated by the Head of Department/School/Faculty in collaboration with academic staff	1	2	3	
(b) programme self-evaluation should be initiated by the Quality Assurance Coordinator	1	2	3	
(c) programme self-evaluation should be initiated by the university management	1	2	3	
4. Criteria for programme self-evaluation				
(a) should be owned by the academic staff	1	2	3	
(b) should originate from the accrediting body	1	2	3	
(c) should be a combination of (a) and (b) above	1	2	3	
5. When benchmarking				
(a) the evaluated programme should be compared with others within the university	1	2	3	
(b) the evaluated programme should be	1	2	3	

	compared with those offered by other universities in the country				
(c)	the evaluated programme should be compared with those offered by similar (faith based) institutions elsewhere	1	2	3	
6.	**The most likely phenomenon in programme self-evaluation is compliance with:**				
(a)	the relevant professional body	1	2	3	
(b)	university management	1	2	3	
(c)	the state regulatory agency	1	2	3	
7.	**The best time to conduct programme self-evaluation is:**				
(a)	any time as academic staff in the department deem appropriate	1	2	3	
(b)	any time, but before an external visit by the accrediting body	1	2	3	
(c)	any time when other key stakeholders deem appropriate	1	2	3	
8.	**The major challenge to be addressed with regard to programme self-evaluation is:**				
(d)	lack of funds	1	2	3	
(e)	poor leadership	1	2	3	
(f)	willingness of academic staff to participate	1	2	3	
9.	**Any further views on programme self-evaluation?**				

ANNEXURE 8: Letter of invitation and Delphi questionnaire to the participants: Round 3

Dear participant,

Once again I would like to thank you for your willingness to participate in this Delphi process and feedback you gave regarding the second round of the process. I have attached feedback on the second round. I trust it will be of interest to you.

Please find attached as well questionnaire for the third round of the Delphi process.   Questions on which consensus has been reached in the second round have been shaded. For the purpose of this Delphi process, consensus is defined to have been reached when 80% of the participants vote on a specific item within the same value of the point scale given in each question. **Please do not answer shaded questions**.

The **purpose** of the third round is to determine your opinion regarding all the statements on which consensus was not reached during the second round. This questionnaire contains the numbered statements and provides opportunities for reconsideration and additional comments and suggestions. **All statements are numbered exactly the same as in the second round**.

Please note that the third round of the Delphi process enables you to **reconsider your opinions** on specific statements, **in light of the opinions of the other participants**. During this third round, you are allowed to change your mind if you feel like doing it. You can therefore indicate a different level of importance to any of the statements, should you think it appropriate. **If you still wish to maintain your previous answer please put a third Xin the same place** as you did previously. The answers you provided in the second round have been included (yellow shaded) in order to enable you easily remember what you actually indicated in the second round.

The procedure is the same. Please indicate your choice for the statements in round three by once again placing an **X** over the number of your choice. You still have an opportunity for any comment that you feel necessary. **Please answer ALL questions in the questionnaire**.

If convenient, I would like to receive feedback on this round not later than ...../...../2015

Once again, thank you for your willingness to be of assistance in this research.

Regards,

Fulgence Matimbo

Student number: 17141311
Cell phone: +255 754 635315 and +255 715 635315

Towards understanding programmatic quality in private universities in Tanzania

Third round Delphi protocol

SECTION A	
PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY	
This section deals with the different perceptions of the concept of 'quality' in higher education	
Please indicate how important each of the following elements of a definition of quality is in the context of private universities in Tanzania. Use the following scale:	
1= most appropriate	
2=appropriate	
3=less appropriate	
4=neutral	
5= inappropriate	
6= most inappropriate	
Please mark the appropriate answer with an X. Only mark one option	

1.	When conducting programme evaluation in private universities in Tanzania, 'quality' should be perceived as to do with:							
(a)	'something exceptional'	1	2	3	4	5	6	
(b)	'perfection'	1	2	3	4	5	6	
(c)	'value added'	1	2	3	4	5	6	
(d)	'value for money'	1	2	3	4	5	6	
(e)	'fitness for purpose'	1	2	3	4	5	6	
(f)	'transformation of the participants in quality assurance processes'	1	2	3	4	5	6	

SECTION B	
PROGRAMME SELF-EVALUATION	
This section deals with the process of programme evaluation in higher education	
Please indicate in question 2 and 3 how important each of the following statements is in the context of private universities in Tanzania. Use the scale as indicated.	
1= essential	
2=useful	
3=unnecessary	
Please mark the appropriate answer with an X. Only mark one option.	

2.	When conducting programme evaluation in private universities in Tanzania:				
(a)	Programme self-evaluation should be initiated by the Head of Department/School/Faculty in collaboration with academic staff	1	2	3	
(b)	Programme self-evaluation should be initiated by the Quality Assurance Coordinator	1	2	3	
(c)	Programme self-evaluation should be initiated by university management	1	2	3	
3.	**Criteria for programme self-evaluation:**				
(a)	should be owned by the academic staff	1	2	3	
(b)	should originate from the accrediting body	1	2	3	
(c)	should be a combination of (a) and (b) above	1	2	3	

297

Please indicate in question 4 how important each of the following statements is in the context of private universities in Tanzania. Use the scale as indicated.
1= most appropriate
2=appropriate
3=less appropriate
4=inappropriate
5=inapplicable
Please mark the appropriate answer with an X. Only mark one option.

4. When benchmarking:	1	2	3	4	5	
(a) the evaluated programme should be compared with others within the university						
(b) the evaluated programme should be compared with those offered by other universities in the country						
(c) the evaluated programme should be compared with those offered by similar (faith based) institutions elsewhere						
(d) the evaluated programme should be compared with those offered by other private universities else where						
(e) the evaluated programme should be compared with those offered by those offered by other universities elsewhere						

Please indicate in question 5 how important each of the following statements is in the context of private universities in Tanzania. Use the scale as indicated.
1= essential
2=useful
3=unnecessary
Please mark the appropriate answer with an X. Only mark one option.

5. The most likely phenomenon in programme self-evaluation is compliance with:				
(a) the relevant professional body	1	2	3	
(b) university management				
(c) the state regulatory agency				

Please indicate in question 5 how important each of the following statements is in the context of private universities in Tanzania. Use the scale as indicated.
1= most appropriate
2=appropriate
3=less appropriate
4=inappropriate
5= inapplicable
Please mark the appropriate answer with an X. Only mark one option.

6. The best time to conduct programme self-evaluation is	1	2	3	4	5	
(a)any time as academic staff in the department deem appropriate						
(b)any time, but before an external visit by the accrediting body						
(c)any time when other key stakeholders deem appropriate						
(d)any time as academic staff in the department deem appropriate and if necessary resources are available						
(e)at the end of a programme cycle						

Please indicate in question 7 how important each of the following statements is in the context of private universities in Tanzania. Use the scale as indicated.

1= very applicable

2=applicable

3=inapplicable

Please mark the appropriate answer with an X. Only mark one option.

7. The major challenge to be addressed with regard to programme self-evaluation is:			
(a) lack of funds	1	2	3
(b) poor leadership			
(c) unwillingness of academic staff to participate			

ANNEXURE 9: IUCEA checklist for programme quality

IUCEA CHECKLIST FOPROGRAMME QUALITY

The quality of the different aspects of the program are assessed on a scale of 1-7. The marks have the following meaning:

1 = absolutely inadequate; immediate improvements must be made
2 = inadequate, improvement necessary
3 = inadequate, but minor improvements will make it adequate
4 = adequate as expected
5 = better than adequate
6 = example of good practice
7 = excellent

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Requirements stakeholders. The faculty/department has a clear idea							
• About the relevant needs and requirements of the government							
• About the relevant needs and requirements of the labor market							
• About the relevant needs and requirements of the students/parents							
• About the relevant needs and requirements of the academic world							
• About the relevant needs and requirements of the society							
Overall opinion							
2. Expected learning outcomes (objectives)							
• The program has clearly formulated learning outcomes							
• The program promotes learning to learn and lifelong learning							
• The expected learning outcomes cover generic skills and knowledge as well as specific skills							
• The expected learning outcomes clearly reflect the requirements of the stakeholders							
Overall opinion							
3. Program specification							
• The university uses program specifications/program description							
• The program specification shows the expected learning outcomes							
• The program specification is informative for the stakeholders							
Overall opinion							
4. Program content							
• The program content shows a good balance between general and specific skills and knowledge							

• The program reflects the vision and mission of the university							
• The expected learning outcomes have been adequately translated into the program							
• The contribution made by each course to achieving the learning outcomes is clear							
Overall opinion							
5. The organization of the program							
• The curriculum is coherent and all subjects and courses have been integrated							
• The curriculum shows breadth and depth							
• The curriculum clearly shows the basic courses, intermediate courses, specialist courses and the final project (thesis, etc.) activities							
• The curriculum is up-to-date							
Overall opinion							
6. Didactic concept/teaching/learning strategy							
• The staff have a clear teaching/ learning strategy							
• The teaching learning strategy enables students to acquire and manipulate knowledge academically							
• The teaching/ learning strategy is student oriented and stimulates quality learning							
• The curriculum stimulates active learning and facilitates learning to learn							
Overall opinion							
7. Student assessment							
• The assessments reflect the expected learning outcomes and the content of the program							
• Student assessment uses a variety of methods							
• The criteria for assessment are explicit and well-known							
• The standards applied in the assessment are explicit and consistent							
• The assessment schemes, the assessment methods and the assessment itself are always subject to quality assurance and scrutiny							
Overall opinion							
8. Quality of the academic staff							
• The staff is qualified and competent for the task							
• The staff are sufficient to deliver the curriculum adequately							
• Recruitment and promotion are based on academic merits							
• Duties allocated are appropriate to qualifications, experience, and skills							

• Time management and incentive systems are designed to support the quality of teaching and learning							
• Accountability of the staff members is well regulated							
• There are provisions for review, consultation, and redeployment							
• Termination, retirement and social benefits are planned and well implemented.							
• There is an efficient appraisal system							
Overall opinion							
9. Quality of the support staff							
• There are adequate support staff for the libraries							
• There are adequate support staff for the laboratories							
• There are adequate support staff for computer facilities							
• There are adequate support staff for the student services							
Overall opinion							
10. The student							
• The selection of entering students (if there is selection) is adequate							
• There is an adequate intake policy							
• There is an adequate credit points system							
• The actual study load is in line with the calculated load							
Overall opinion							
11. Student advice and support							
• There is an adequate student progress system							
• Students get adequate feedback on their performance							
• Coaching for first-year students is adequate							
• The physical and material environment for the student is satisfactory							
• The social and psychological environment for the student is satisfactory							
Overall opinion							
12. Facilities and infrastructure							
• The lecture facilities (lecture halls, small course rooms) are adequate							
• The library is adequate and up-to-date							
• The laboratories are adequate and up-to-date							

• The computer facilities are adequate and up-to-date							
• Environmental Health and Safety Standards should meet the local requirements in all respects							
Overall opinion							

13. Student evaluation

• Courses and curriculum are subject to structured student evaluation							
• Student feedback is used for improvement							
• The department provides the students with feedback what is dine with the outcomes							
Overall opinion							

14. Curriculum design &evaluation

• The curriculum was developed as a joint enterprise by all the staff members							
• Students are involved in the curriculum design							
• The labor market is involved in the curriculum design							
• The curriculum is regularly evaluated							
• Revision of the curriculum takes place at reasonable time periods							
• Quality assurance of the curriculum is adequate							
Overall opinion							

15. Staff development activities

• There is a clear vision on the needs for staff development							
• The staff development activities are adequate to the needs							
Overall opinion							

16. Benchmarking

• The faculty/department uses the instrument of benchmarking to get a better view on its performance							
• The faculty/department uses the instrument of benchmarking for curriculum design							
Overall opinion							

17 Achievements/the graduates

• The level of the graduates is satisfactory							
• The pass rate is satisfactory							
• The dropout rate is acceptable							
• The average time for graduation is in line with the planned time							
• The graduates can find easily a job. The unemployment rate is at acceptable level							

Overall opinion							
18 Feedback stakeholders							
• There is adequate structural feedback from the labour market (employers)							
• There is adequate structural feedback from the alumni							
Overall opinion							
Overall Opinion							