UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN GHANA: THE MEDIATION ROLE OF GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS

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STUDENT DECLARATION

I, Harriet Takyi, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and that it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature .....

Date 04/11/2019

SUPERVISION DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the preparation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of theses as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

PROF. FREDERICK SARFO (Principal Supervisor)

Signature .....

Date 12/11/2019

PAUL EFFAH (Co- Supervisor)

Signature .....

Date 26/11/2019

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family, especially my late mother, Madam Elizabeth Ama Donkor.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

MoE	Ministry of Education
GTEC	Ghana Tertiary Education Commission
NCTE	National Council for Tertiary Education
NAB	National Accreditation Board
COTVET	Council for Technician, Vocational and Training
NABPTEX	National Board for Professional and Technical Examinations
GM	Gorvenment Mechanism
IE	Institutional Environment
UG	University of Ghana
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
UCC	University of Cape Coast
URC	University Rationlization Committee
PNDC	Provisional National Defense Council
TTCs	Teacher Training Colleges
UNESCO-UIS	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics
GES	Ghana Education Service
IPS	Institute for Professional Studies
GIJ	Ghana Institute of Journalism
GIL	Ghana Institute of Languages
NAFTI	National Film and Television Institute
CD-ROM	Compact Disk-Read Only Memory
CUC	Central University College
EQA	External Quality Assurance
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency

ABSTRACT

The study was designed to explore and explain the influence of institutional environments on the academic performance of private universities in Ghana and the mediating role of governance mechanisms. The target population was the private universities in Ghana. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. Using a purposive sampling technique, a sample size of 120 (100 for the quantitative and 20 for the qualitative phase) were selected from private universities in Ghana. Data were obtained through self-administered questionnaires from field survey and focus group discussions. The quantitative data was analysed using regression analytical tool while content analysis was employed to analyse the qualitative data. Results from the study indicate that regulative, normative, mimetic, and cognitive institutional forces largely influence private university education management. The findings further show that in the context of private universities' operations, the institutional environment generally has a positive effect on academic performance. Again, the findings indicate that quality assurance practices, but not faculty governance, has a significant positive effect on academic performance. In addition, governance mechanisms partially mediate the relationship between institutional environment and academic performance. Results from the qualitative phase of the study largely corroborate the quantitative results. A significant theoretical contribution from this study is its ability to show that the institutional environments-academic performance relationship is partially mediated by governance mechanisms. Managerially, the findings inform policy decisions by offering guidance to the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC), and other relevant agencies to take into cognisance the prevailing institutional forces within their environments when developing and implementing policies of higher education in Ghana (and in similar context).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The demand for university education keeps increasing exponentially due to increases in student enrolment at the basic and senior high school levels in recent years and the recognition of the fact that education is key to economic development (Effah, 2011). Indeed, successive governments in Ghana have recognised the important role of higher education in achieving national development (Brenya, 2001). In the face of this, the increase in access to higher education has become a priority of the government of Ghana on its development agenda (Effah, 2011). In pursuant to this, the government has adopted a policy on more private participation in the provision of tertiary education (Effah, 2011; Brenya, 2001).

The government's commitment in this regard is seen in the number of private universities that have emerged across the country, both faith, and non-faith-based in recent times, and has brought significant relief to the government in its ultimate responsibility to provide quality education to its citizenry (Effah, 2011). The private universities have contributed to the development of human capital through the professional and academic programmes they offer to meet the industrial and socio-economic needs of Ghana and beyond. Thus the private universities, undoubtedly, are important contributors of human capital development for the job market (Effah, 2006).

Notwithstanding the key role of private universities in Ghana in expanding access to higher education (Effah, 2011), there have been concerns in the recent past about the quality of training students receive from some of these higher institutions of learning. For instance, the NCTE (now Ghana Tertiary Education Commission) report on Higher

Education (2013) suggests that most private universities in Ghana rarely meet the GTEC's academic staffing requirements, raising issues as to the effectiveness of governance mechanisms on staffing and quality assurance of most private universities.

Meanwhile, the institutional theory indicates that organisations, such as educational institutions, are the creations of societies, and they function on the dictates of the institutional environment of such societies (Dewey, 2013; Hargreaves, 2003; Scott, 1995). Given that institutional environmental factors of the society within which the educational systems operate influence university activities, including their governance mechanisms, and ultimately overall academic performances, an empirical assessment into how such institutional environment in Ghana facilitates or constrains the governance mechanisms and academic performance of private universities would be scholarly worthwhile.

Academic performance is an important deliverable of university education (Effah, 2006; Callender & Mason, 2017). Fundamentally, the level of academic performance does not only represent a measure of quality education but also has implications for socio-economic development (Spinath, Eckert & Steinmayr, 2014; Steinmayr, Meißner, Weidinger, & Wirthwein., 2014). Largely, it determines (or at least gives an indication about) students' vocation and career after education, and their (intellectual) readiness to further their education to higher levels (Ward, Stoker & Murray-Ward, 1996; Mason, 2017).

Conceived as the output of education, academic performance broadly refers to the extent to which students, teachers, or institutions of learning have achieved their educational goals (Ward et al., 1996). In its narrow sense, it represents the achievements of

individuals' accomplished specific goals of learning in instructional environments such as college and university (Ward et al., 1996). Specifically, the academic performance of students has to do with students' grades, and their acquisition of knowledge and skills in a specific discipline (e.g. engineering, business, science, history) (Steinmayr et al., 2014). According to Ward et al. (1996) and Steinmayr et al. (2014), academic performance or output covers a wide range of dimensions such as grades of achievement, declarative knowledge as well as educational degrees and certificates acquired in an educational system. Thus, academic performance involves different domains of learning outcomes.

Drawing on Ward et al.'s (1996) conceptualisation, this study defines academic performance as the level of students' acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies in a specific domain of learning, and the relevance for the job market and further studies or research. As an ultimate outcome of teaching and learning (Mason, 2017), academic performance is influenced by a variety of factors such as instructional engagement, students' motivation, cognitive ability, study skills, quality of instruction, environmental factors, and socioeconomic status of students (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005; Lewin & Mawoyo, 2014; Mason, Moseki & Schulze, 2010).

In view of this, Mason (2017) argues that students' academic performance is driven by a multiplicity of factors, such as, intellectual ability and socio-cultural environment. The institutional theory argues that intuitional environment influences societal behaviour and organisations (DiMaggio &Powell, 1983; Scott, 1995). Accordingly, this study takes the view that, considering the fact that educational institutions operate within a social context, the institutional environment, defined as a set of fundamental political, social and legal ground rules that influence societal behaviour (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), may

be an important influential driver of the academic performance of educational institutions (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 1995). As prior studies indicate, the institutional environment influences the management and administration of higher academic institutions (Coburn, 2004; Hu & Kuh, 2002; Osaikhiuwu, 2014).

Typically, institutions include laws, regulations, customs, social and professional norms, and ethics of society (Scott, 1995). From an institutional theory perspective, institutional environment (hereinafter, IE) consists of regulative, normative, mimetic, and cultural-cognitive forces that shape and influence social behaviour and orientation (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 1995). Regulative pressure stems from state laws, policies, rules, and regulations that govern actions and behaviours while mimetic pressure concerns with learning from successful organisations in times of uncertainty. On the other hand, cultural-cognitive elements are the basic mental processes by which people make sense of information (the taken-for-granted) while normative is about the accepted norms (sense of obligation) within a particular environmental setting (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

In the context of higher education in Ghana, regulative pressure, for example, manifests through the functions of state established agencies, such as, the National Accreditation Board (NAB), Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC), Council for Technician, Vocational and Training (COTVET), National Board for Professional and Technical Examinations (NABPTEX) and the Ministry of Education (MoE). These agencies mandatorily have the joint responsibility for developing and implementing regulations on (higher) education to which educational institutions must conform to ensure that educational objectives are met and standards maintained.

According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), forces within IE put pressure on organizations (including university institutions) to behave in certain ways thereby influencing decisions and practices (such as their governance mechanisms) and performance outcomes (Bratianu & Pinzaru, 2015). Consequently, the current study takes the view that regulative, normative, mimetic, and cultural-cognitive forces of IE may influence the academic performance of university institutions, and argues that IE may act as an antecedent academic performance. Focusing on IE as a key predictor variable is important in view of the fact that educational institutions are the creations of society from which IE evolves. As such, educational activities are subject to the dictates of forces that emanate from IE.

Although IE and its impact on academic performance outcomes have received substantial scholarly attention in the educational literature, yet, the findings have been mixed and largely conflicting (Abdullah & Primus, 2020; Alfred, Ma'rof & Buang, 2018; Chikalipah, 2017; Abbasi & Mir, 2012; Decramer, Smolders, Vanderstraeten, & Christiaens, 2012; Melius, 2011). This raises the fundamental questions of how IE drives academic performance.

Meanwhile, education literature suggests that governance mechanisms of educational institutions play a crucial role in achieving superior academic performance outcomes (Albach, 2005; Kezar, & Eckel, 2004). Governance mechanism (GM) generally involves internal policies and procedures, controls, and practices organizations put in place to ensure the effective running of organisational activities to achieve set goals (Santiago, Tremblay, Basri, & Arnal, 2008). Thus, it is (an administrative) system through which the activities and functions of organizations (such as universities) are performed in order to meet set objectives (Shattock, 2006).

In the context of university education, GMs generally involve policies, measures, and practices put in place to ensure effective management and administration of institutions of higher learning (Santiago, et al., 2008; Shattock, 2006). According to Albach (2005), governance structures for higher education are highly differentiated throughout the world. Generally, higher education is governed by different structures of management, from the council level, faculty board to department levels (Coaldrake, Stedman, & Little, 2003; Albach, 2005; Butts, 1955). Among the key domains of governance of universities are finance and administration, and academic affairs. While the finance and administration perspective of higher education governance is concerned with the financial management of the institution, academic affairs focus, among others, on faculty governance (staffing) and quality assurance system (Shattock, 2006; Albach, 2005; Coaldrake et al., 2003; Kezar, & Eckel, 2004; Lapworth, 2004).

Building on Albach's (2005), and Kezar and Eckel's (2004) definition, and focusing on the academic affairs perspective, this study defines GM as a two-dimensional construct comprising faculty governance and quality assurance system (Bratianu & Pinzaru, 2015). The faculty governance dimension focuses, among others, on policies and procedures regarding staff recruitment, retention, development, and progression of academic staff. In particular, faculty governance emphasises on availability and development of required faculty staff for the university to ensure effective teaching and learning (Bratianu & Pinzaru, 2015).

On the other hand, the quality assurance dimension is concerned with ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of programme development, students' admission, examinations, research, monitoring and supervision, and curriculum design to maintain standards of performance (Shattock, 2006; Trakman, 2008; Kezar & Eckel, 2004). In the

education context, an effective GM should reflect in the quality of teaching and non-teaching staff as well as the effectiveness of monitoring, supervision, and staff development. Prior studies have indicated that GM is an important factor that drives academic performance and excellence (Shattock, 2006; Albach, 2005; Kezar, & Eckel, 2004). Accordingly, this study posits that since GM represents an academic institutional-level strategy and practices, the impact of IE (a macro-level factor) on academic performance may be channelled through GM put in place in higher institutions of learning. Against this background, this study seeks to investigate the extent to which IE influences the academic performance of private universities in Ghana via GM.

The choice of private universities as the empirical context is premised on the fact that their contributions to the development of human capital through the provision of systematic education cannot be overemphasized. Specifically, private universities complement the public ones in producing employable graduates for the industries in Ghana (Effah, 2006). According to National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) report (2013), the number of accredited private universities in Ghana has increased from one in 1979 to 51 in 2013. The numbers have risen to 86 as of April 2018 (www.nab.gov.gh/), thus underscoring their importance and relevance to national development.

Furthermore, the focus of academic performance as an outcome variable in this study is premised on two key reasons. First, the level of academic performance determines the extent to which the ultimate expectation of investment in education has been met. As the ultimate outcome of (formal) education, it provides an important basis to assess the effectiveness or otherwise of academic and research works of educational institutions.

Second, the academic performance of (higher) education has far-reaching implications on socio-economic development in the sense that it determines the readiness of graduates to function productively in society, and also represents an important selection criterion of graduates for industry and commerce.

1.2 The Problem Statement

Considering that IE influences organisational behaviour and performance (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 1995), it is worth empirically examining such influences on higher education. In particular, IE is recognized as a potential determinant of academic performance outcomes as it affects universities' administrative decisions and actions, such as, staffing and quality assurance system, which may, in turn, have an impact on academic performance at large, given that educational activities take place in the socio-cultural context from which institutional forces evolve (Gumport, & Sporn, 1999). This recognition is supported by evidence in educational literature (Coburn, 2004; Abbasi & Mir, 2012).

Given the critical role of IE in driving academic performance outcomes (Coburn, 2004; Abbasi & Mir, 2012), several empirical works on the impact of IE on academic performance outcome have been reported in the education literature (Alfred et al., 2018; Abbasi & Mir, 2012; Coburn, 2004; Hu & Kuh, 2002). Yet, the findings have been mixed and largely inconclusive. For example, while some scholars have reported a significant positive relationship between the IE and performance outcomes (e.g. See Abdullah & Primus, 2020; Abbasi & Mir, 2012; Vanderstraeten & Christiaens, 2012; Chikalipah, 2017), others find the contrary (e.g. Melius, 2011; Alfred, Ma'rof & Buang, 2018),

suggesting that the mechanism through which IE impacts academic performance outcomes is still not clearly understood in the education literature.

Furthermore, the role of GM, conceived in this study as faculty governance and quality assurance system, in meeting the objectives of education cannot be overlooked. Specifically, faculty governance and quality assurance are key mechanisms through which programmes and activities are executed to meet the objectives of the university (Bratianu & Pinzaru, 2015; Shattock. 2006; Albach, 2005; Kezar & Eckel, 2004). On faculty governance, for instance, most of the private universities barely meet the requirements in terms of employing an adequate number of permanent teaching staff to meet GTEC standards (NCTE, 2013). This indicates that the capacity to engage full-time faculty staff is a major challenge facing most private universities in Ghana. As such, they seem to rely on part-time teaching staff even in the face of an increasing rise in student enrolment (NCTE, 2013). This seeming phenomenon of (over) reliance on part-time teaching staff might be a potential source of threat to university performance and standards, given that university education demands a great deal of attention and time from faculty members. As posited by (Kruss, 2004), achieving high academic performance standards require the availability of adequate, committed, and motivated faculty staff.

In addition, quality assurance practices, including the provision of continuous training and development of faculty members, monitoring and supervision, staff assessment, and moderation of examinations are crucial in attaining high academic performance (Seyfried & Pohlenz, 2018; Saeed, 2018; Zwain Lim, & Othman, 2017; Effah, 2006; Manuh, Gariba, & Budu, 2007). According to Mwinyipembe and Orodho (2014), quality assurance promotes and maintains rigorous academic standards through internal and

external scrutiny of academic activities. Thus, GMs (faculty governance and quality assurance system) are crucial for achieving superior academic performance (Effah, 2006; Mwinyipembe & Orodho, 2014).

Although previous studies on GMs have shed important insights (Muktiyanto, Hermawan, & Hadiwidjaja, 2020; Alhosani, Singh, & Al Nahyan, 2017; Bratianu & Pinzaru, 2015; Shattock, 2006), the theoretical specification of GMs as mediating variables linking a macro-level factor, ie. IE, to academic performance, appears under-explored in the education literature. Thus, despite the recognition of IE and GMs as key factors that influence academic decisions and activities, relatively little is known about the extent to which various aspects of IE drive academic performance, via GMs.

An important implication of these gaps in the education literature is that there is limited understanding regarding how IE influences academic performance in the context of higher education in Ghana. Therefore, this study proceeds on the premise that GMs, measured by faculty governance and quality assurance, may play mediating role in the relationship between IE and academic performance. Against this backdrop, the current study draws on institutional and resource-based view theories to shed empirical insights by examining how IE influences academic performance among private universities in Ghana.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

Education is the creation of society from which IE evolves (Dewey, 2013; Hargreaves, 2003; Scott, 1995). Given that institutional environmental factors of the society (in which educational systems operate) largely influence university activities (such as GM) and by extension performances, it becomes imperative to seek empirical insights into the extent

to which such institutional forces in Ghana facilitate or inhibit university academic performance. Thus, the challenge of how universities in Ghana, particularly the private ones, respond to environmental demands and translate such into superior academic performance is one of the key issues that require an empirical assessment to shed insight. Such insights, which seek to inform theory, and managerially shape policy direction, regulatory framework, and governance regarding university education in Ghana provide an important rationale for this study. Thus, the key purpose for undertaking this study is to provide a theoretically grounded and an empirically verified understanding regarding the IE conditions within which the private universities in developing economies, such as Ghana, operate, and the extent to which these conditions facilitate GMs and academic performance to guide educationists, regulators and policymakers.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study aims at examining how IEs (regulatory, normative, cognitive-culture, and mimetic) influence the academic performance of private universities in Ghana through GMs (faculty governance and quality assurance practices). Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. assess the prevalence of institutional forces in the private universities in Ghana;
2. examine the effect of institutional environment on academic performance, faculty governance, and quality assurance;
3. assess the relationship between faculty governance and academic performance
4. assess the relationship between quality assurance and academic performance
5. examine the mediating role of faculty governance between institutional environment and academic performance.
6. examine the mediating role of quality assurance between institutional environment and academic performance.

1.5 Research Questions

In addressing the objectives, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What institutional forces prevail in private universities in Ghana?
2. To what extent does the institutional environment affect academic performance, faculty governance, and quality assurance?
3. What is the relationship between faculty governance and academic performance?
4. What is the relationship between quality assurance and academic performance?
5. Does faculty governance play a mediation role between institutional environment and academic performance?

6. Does quality assurance play a mediation role between institutional environment and academic performance?

1.6 Research Hypotheses

To answer research questions 2 to 4, the following hypotheses were formulated.

H0: Institutional environment does not positively affect the academic performance of private universities in Ghana.

H1: Institutional environment positively affects the academic performance of private universities in Ghana.

H0: Institutional environment does not positively affect faculty governance of private universities in Ghana.

H2: Institutional environment positively affects faculty governance of private universities in Ghana.

H0: Institutional environment does not positively affect quality assurance of private universities in Ghana.

H3: Institutional environment positively affects quality assurance of private universities in Ghana.

H0: Governance mechanisms do not positively associate with academic performance of private universities in Ghana.

H4: Governance mechanisms positively associate with academic performance of private universities in Ghana.

H0: Faculty governance does not mediate the link between institutional environment and academic performance of private universities in Ghana.

H5: Faculty governance mediates the link between institutional environment and academic performance of private universities in Ghana.

H0: Quality assurance practices do not mediate the link between institutional environment and academic performance of private universities in Ghana.

H6: Quality assurance practices mediate the link between institutional environment and academic performance of private universities in Ghana.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in the theoretical and managerial contributions the findings made. Theoretically, the study seeks to synthesize insights from institutional and resource-based view theories to enhance an understanding of the academic performance benefit of IE by explaining the implications of IE on GM and academic performance. In addition, it explains how GM in turn affects academic performance from the perspectives of developing economies such as Ghana with its unique environmental idiosyncrasies, and yet has received limited research on the issues under investigation. This is an important and relevant contribution to knowledge considering that: 1) educational activities are embedded in the socio-cultural context of society and, as such, academic activities may be influenced by the institutional environmental factors of the society, and 2) education plays a crucial role in socio-economic development.

Again, the study extends the applicability and relevance of these theories across boundaries of knowledge discipline (such as from business to education sectors), and

bring to the fore the potential influence of institutional pressures on academic activities. Thus, the study's findings shed theoretical insights by testing IE as an antecedent to GM and academic performance, with GM playing a mediating role between IE and academic performance. This is an insightful and rigorous approach to knowledge development.

Managerially, the findings also provide empirical insights to reinforce the importance of meeting staffing requirements and standards to improve teaching and learning quality. It also provides insight on the need for instituting a rigorous quality assurance system in the management of university education to enhance performance and quality of university education. At the national level, the outcome will inform policy decisions and serve as a basis for reviewing and strengthening institutional structures and blueprints of the regulatory framework for higher education with the view to improving standards of education (Manu et al., 2007).

Finally, although the study was operationally set out in the context of private universities in Ghana, the conceptual model of IE–academic performance linkages, via GMs, could also apply in the context of public universities since they all operate within a similar socio-cultural context. Thus, based on the above, Students, Administrators, Deans, and Vice-chancellors in the developing economies would be better informed on the implications of the IE on the administration of their universities to formulate relevant strategies that will address the adverse impact of IE.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Notwithstanding the theoretical and managerial insights the study sheds, there are limitations that need further attention in future research. First, the study was restricted to

private universities in Ghana. As such, the generalisability of the findings may be subject to some degree of error.

Another limitation of the study concerns the use of cross-sectional data, which may not provide an adequate understanding of the 'causal' links among variables under investigation. Also, reliance on primary sources of data alone to measure the constructs is again a cause for concern. Although multiple informants approach and time-spaced collection of data on variables were employed to overcome the potential of method bias, future studies may consider employing both primary and secondary data, to not only enhance the reliability of the data but also make the findings more generalizable.

1.9 Delimitation

The study is limited to investigating the institutional environment as an antecedent to GM and academic performance of universities using the lenses of institutional and resource-based view theories. In particular, the study assesses the extent to which IE influences GM and academic performance of universities, and whether or not GM, measured by faculty governance and quality assurance, plays a mediation role between IE and academic performance. The rationale for studying institutional environments and their relationship lies in the fact that educational activities are embedded in the socio-cultural context and as such, policies and decisions are made within the institutional framework of the social system. In terms of context, the study focused on accredited private universities in Ghana.

1.10 Organization of the Study

The work has been presented in six chapters. Chapter One consists of the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of study, research objectives, and research

questions. The Chapter also presents the research hypothesis, the significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, and organization of the study. Chapter Two involves the review of relevant literature, theoretical background, and hypothetical formulation while Chapter Three presents the details of the methodology adopted for the study. The Chapter captures research design, research approach and strategy, population, sampling, and sample size, method of data collection, operationalization of constructs, pre-testing, data analysis, validity, and reliability. Chapter Four presents analysis, results, and findings while Chapter Five presents discussions of the results. Finally, Chapter Six presents a summary of the findings, draws conclusions, makes recommendations suggestions for further studies.

1.11 Operational Definition of Terms

Academic Performance

Academic performance is conceived as the level of students' acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies in a specific domain of learning, and the relevance for the job market and further studies or research**.**

Governance Mechanism (GM)

GM is a two-dimensional construct comprising faculty governance and quality assurance system.

Faculty governance: Faculty governance refers to policies and procedures regarding recruitment, retention, development, and progression of academic staff.

Quality assurance: Quality assurance is concerned with ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of programme development, students' admission, examinations, research, monitoring and supervision and curriculum design.

Institutional Environment (IE)

IE operationalised in terms of regulative, normative, mimetic, and cultural-cognitive forces that shape and influence social behaviour and orientation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses relevant literature on the topic of the study. The chapter is presented in three broad sections. The first section presents the concepts and overview of higher education. Specifically, the section discusses the concept of education, education and national development, overview, and history of higher education in Ghana and issues on access to higher education. Also, the roles and benefits of private universities in Ghana were brought into perspective.

The second section of the chapter focuses on the empirical reviews on the nature of the institutional environment, institutional environments and academic performance, and governance on higher education. The section also presents reviews on the relationships among institutional environment and quality assurance, faculty staffing, and academic performance.

In the third and final section, theoretical reviews are presented. In particular, institutional environment and resource-based view theories are discussed in relation to study objectives. The section concludes with the presentation of a hypothetical formulation and the conceptual framework.

2.1 The Concept of Education

Education has been defined as the process of facilitating learning, knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits of a group of people transferred to other people through storytelling, discussion, teaching, training, or research (Dewey, 1944). Dewey explains

that education is usually undertaken under the guidance and supervision of individuals referred to as educators although learners may educate themselves, a situation referred to as self-education or autodidactic learning. Thus, any learning experiences that have a formative effect on the way an individual thinks feels, or acts may be considered educational.

Clark (1986) defines education as the process by which behaviour is changed and ideally improved through experience. Others have variously defined education as the process of modifying individuals and their behaviuor, physical, mental, social and emotional-specified desirable directions (Dewey, 1944), or the development of the whole man-physically, intellectually and spiritually (Clark, 1986).

In synthesising the above definitions, it could be deduced that education involves the total development of individuals physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally to modify their behaviour in a desirable way. The general purpose is to help individuals to acquire certain attitudes; skills and knowledge that will enable them to live functionally with others, to understand their environment and solve problems, earn their living and contribute towards the development of society.

2.2 Education and National Development

National development refers to the progress a nation makes using human resources through education, science, and technology, and material resources in a manner that improves the standard of living. In other words, it is the progress a nation makes in terms of the extent to which it has overcome its complex social, economic, and political problems in a manner that improves the quality of life of its citizens (Effah, 2011).

According to Clark (1986), there is a relationship between national development and education. Education is considered to be the key to national development in the sense that it produces the labour force for economic activities in the areas of commerce, industry, civil service among others, and to contribute to national development.

Again, education raises the level of science and technology in a country by producing more scientists and technologists who help solve science and technology-related problems. Annoh further adds that education contributes to national growth through research in the discovery of new ideas and skills for solving social and economic problems. In this regard, education through knowledge creation develops new approaches to solving socio-economic problems to improve the standard of living.

Annor continues to opine that education also contributes to national growth through attitudinal change. In this sense, it seeks to minimize tribal related conflicts by bringing together people of varied and ethnic background. It awakens the political consciousness of individuals through training in citizenship, patriotism, and values in a democracy. Annoh concludes that education does not only instill into individuals' knowledge about scientific and technological approaches to problem-solving, but it also helps people to adapt to changes by transmitting new attitudes, skills, and the knowledge acquired.

2.3 Overview and History of Higher Education in Ghana

Higher education in Ghana traces its roots to the early 1940s at the time Mr. Justice Asquith was appointed by the British government to develop the principles that will guide the establishment of universities in the Colonies in 1943. Historically, the higher education system in Ghana was designed to educate elite corps who were to take up roles in the civil service played by expatriates (Ministry of Education, 2008; Effah, 2006).

The first higher education institution established in Ghana was the University College of Gold Coast in 1948. This was later renamed the University of Ghana (UG) after independence in 1957. There were three public universities in Ghana namely, the University of Ghana (UG), Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology [KNUST], and the University of Cape Coast (UCC) by the late 1980s. In addition, other professional institutions were offering various post-secondary programmes in the country. UG started with few100s students during its inaugural ceremony in 1948 and rose to 9,000 in 1976 (Atuahene & Owuau-Ansah, 2013).

The enrolment remained at this level until the government issued a white paper in 1991 on the reforms to the Tertiary Education System, a precursor of the report of the University Rationalization Committee (URC). The URC reviewed post-secondary education in the country and came out with detailed proposals designed to overhaul the education system (Ministry of Education, 2008). The recommendations of the URC provided the basis for innovation in higher education. The committee recommended, among other things, strategies to expand access to higher education particularly, for the poor and female students; the creation of a new university in the northern part of Ghana, and the upgrading of the existing polytechnics into tertiary education status under the Polytechnic Law (PNDC; Provisional National Defense Council; (PNDC) Law 321 in 1992). Another important recommendation by the URC report was the unification of all post-secondary educational institutions into a single, unified, and coordinated system with greater public accountability (Republic of Ghana, 2002). While the URC acknowledged that the government cannot exclusively finance higher education, the report recommended that universities embark on innovative financial diversification approaches such as the introduction of cost-sharing and cost-recovery programmes, while

tuition remained constitutionally free. These major developments led to improved access and participation between the 1990s and 2000s.

According to World Bank (2011), prior to 1993, enrolment of the three public universities was 14,500, r o s e t o 86,570 by 2002, and increased to 121,390 in 2005. The number of tertiary institutions in Ghana has increased, particularly private institutions over the past two decades (Effah, 2006; Mwiria, 2007). By 2012, there were more than 126 public and private universities accredited by the National Accreditation Board (NAB) in Ghana. These included 6 public universities, 49 private universities— two of which are chartered and have been given presidential authority to award degrees, 38 Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) that have been upgraded to diploma awarding status, and 18 Nursing Training Colleges.

The Polytechnic and Technical University sectors have also played key roles in the education system in Ghana. Polytechnics in Ghana were set up as technical institutes to respond to the industrial and technological policy of the 1960s by training manpower for national development.They were second cycle institutions under the supervision of the GES. They were upgraded to tertiary education institutions and thus integrated into the tertiary education sector with the ushering of the 1991 reforms in tertiary education. The earliest polytechnics (then technical institutes) were established in Accra, Kumasi, and Takoradi. Eight of the polytechnics have been converted to Technical Universities by Act of Parliament (Act 922, 2016). These include Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi, Koforidua, Sunyani, Cape Coast, Tamale, and Ho Technical Universities.

There are also professional institutes in addition to the universities and polytechnics. The Institute of Professional Studies (IPS) which was established as a private institute to provide training in professional courses for persons desirous of taking the relevant

examinations for professional institutes was taken over by the government in 1978. Under the IPS Decree 1978, provision was made for its management and operations under the public system (Effah, 2001). The Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ), the Ghana Institute of Languages (GIL), and the National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI) are also popular professional institutes in addition to the University of Professional Studies established by Act 860, 2012.

Inference from the preceding section indicates that Ghana's higher education sector is a diversified and an institutionally differentiated binary system. It has a university sector made up of traditional and technical public universities, university colleges, and a plethora of burgeoning private universities (religious-owned and offshore institutions); and the non-university sector comprising regional polytechnics (at Wa and Bolgatanga), professional institutes, seminaries, public and private teacher training and nursing training schools (Boateng, 2012; Effah, 2011).

In addition to these, several private universities have not received accreditation, but are running several post-secondary education programmes in the country. With public universities, the enrolment growth rate has not reflected the proportionate expansion in academic facilities to ensure equity and inclusion of all social groups. For example, during the period between 1990 and 2004, the average annual growth rate reached 18% for all tertiary institutions combined, and 16% for universities alone (World Bank, 2011).

Effah (2011) reported that during the 2006-2007 academic year, the total enrolment in the tertiary sector was just more than135,000. At the polytechnic level, enrolment increased from about 1,900 in 1990-1991 to about 45,000 in 2008-2009 These

developments are due to various policies adopted by the government to enhance higher education in Ghana. The policy of differentiation being implemented to allow accreditation of some polytechnics to run selected bachelor degree programmes to reduce the increasing pressure on universities in order to expand access and participation is one example. In spite of this growth, universities and polytechnics are not fully equipped with the required infrastructure to admit the number of qualified students seeking participation. Every year, many qualified students are denied access to tertiary education due to limited institutional facilities (Effah, 2011). This situation underscores the importance and the needed roles of the private universities to support the public ones to improve access.

2.4 Access to Higher Education

As has been indicated in Section 2,3, public tertiary institutions in Ghana were initially developed as residential institutions because of their national character and the model adopted from the metropolitan institutions in Britain (Republic of Ghana, cited in Atuahene & Owusu- Ansah, 2013). Admission to any of the public universities in Ghana is influenced by the availability of academic and residential facilities. With the growing demand for participation and the unequalled pace of expansion in residential facilities, access to higher education is determined by the available capacities of universities and polytechnics. Although enrolment increased from as low as 14,500 to 179,998 prior to 1993, and from 2009-2010, it increased to 201,153 during 2010-2011 academic years, there remains a greater percentage of students who are excluded from participating in tertiary education. Between 2009-2010 and 2011-2012 academic years, the enrolment in universities increased by 57%, while polytechnics registered an impressive enrolment rate of 21.4% (Atuahene & Owusu- Ansah, 2013).

According to Atuahene and Owusu-Ansah (2013), public universities are currently filled beyond their limit, and many academically qualified students are denied admission. The lack of adequate academic and residential facilities has made the universities embark on highly selective admission procedures. For example, in 2001, the total number of applications (see Figures 1 and 2) received by the UG was 6,268, of which 2,659 (i.e., 42%) were qualified and 2,550 were admitted to study in various programs (representing an acceptance rate of 96%, see Figure 2). However, this trend began to change as the number of applications increased in successive years. In 2011, for example, the total number of qualified applicants was 12,702 (i.e., 85% of total applications). Out of this, only 52% of the qualified applicants were admitted to study in various programs. The status of 48% of students who were denied admission remains unknown although there is the possibility that some of the qualified students may have been accepted into other tertiary institutions in the country as students usually apply to multiple institutions. As Atuahene and Owusu- Ansah (2013) indicated, although the expansion of access to higher education led to the training of the required manpower capacity needs of most African countries in the earlier days of independence, "the current growth exceeds the capacity of African economies to meet the high demand for university education". However, the fact that many students are faced with the challenge of accessing universities and programmes of their choice due to limited academic facilities means that Ghana is potentially underutilising a greater percentage of its human resource capacity.

In discussing access and participation issues, it is important to note that globally, higher education accessibility is becoming a major national concern for all countries. While enrolment has increased at the basic levels, similar trends have not been witnessed at the

post-secondary levels. Over the past three decades, the number of students attending post-secondary institution has increased from five to six million resulting in tertiary enrolment annual average growth rate of 8.6%, with Sub-Saharan African recording the highest growth rate (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics [UNESCO-UIS], Atuahene & Owusu- Ansah, 2013). These challenges regarding access issues underscore the importance and the critical role of private participation in the provision of higher education.

2.5 The Role of Private Universities in Ghana

Private universities are universities not operated by governments, although many receive tax breaks, public students' loans, and grants. Depending on their location, private universities may be subject to government regulation. The expansion of higher education has become an integral part of the development strategies adopted by many national governments. At the same time, state support for the expansion of higher education in many developing nations has dwindled in the face of population explosion and declining economic resources. Over the years, various governments in Ghana have recognized the important role higher education can play in the achievement of national development agenda but have not been able to meet the needs of the large number of people who seek it (Atuahene & Owusu- Ansah, 2013).

Since 1952 when the Accelerated Development Plan for Education for Ghana was introduced, the country has shown a steady growth in public schools' enrolment at all levels. This is largely due to educational reforms of the 1980s that focus on free compulsory basic education and enrolment at the senior high school level. This increase in enrolment in turn increased the demand for university education. In the face of demand

for higher education in Ghana, the private universities have sought to offer programmes ranging from professional and industrial demands to individual socio-economic needs. Private universities have emerged very quickly and from all directions by individuals, groups, and organisations. As such, Ghana in the last decade has seen a surge in the number of private higher educational institutions which has created opportunities for those who could not get access to public universities. The growth of private tertiary institutions in Ghana is not unique. Similar developments have taken place in other West African countries such as Nigeria, Benin, and Senegal, as well as in the East African countries of Tanzania and Uganda (Brenya, 2001).

There are several reasons for this rapid growth in private higher education: first, Ghana's education sector has been deregulated following a general trend of deregulation in Africa in the wake of a wave of democratisation. The process started in Ghana in 1993 when a structure for accrediting private universities was formed. The same year, polytechnics were upgraded to tertiary status. In the 2007 Ghana Education Reform, a goal was set to increase private sector participation in education services and aligned policies such as tax exemptions on imported books were created (Brenya, 2001).

Second, the massive growth in private institutions is a result of the increased demand for higher education. Enrolment has multiplied over the past two decades in response to social and political pressures for access to higher education. Between 1999 and 2006 for instance, student numbers doubled to more than 118,000. But universities had still not been able to meet the growing demand and many more students knock on the doors of higher education than there are places. At the public University of Ghana, 22,865 students applied for admission in 2008 but just over a third or 8,774 students were finally enrolled (Brenya, 2001; Atuahene & Owusu- Ansah, 2013). Some candidates who do not get

places in institutions seek admission to private universities. Finally, the decreased capability of public universities has encouraged growth in private higher education. Funding for public higher education has declined substantially since the optimistic post-independence years when Ghana's first universities were founded - the University of Ghana in 1948 and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in 1952. Consequently, tuition fees for tertiary education were introduced in 1988-89 (Manuh, Sulley, & Budu., 2007; Brenya, 2001).

However, there are consequences for the expansion of private tertiary education. In spite of the fact that private institutions are increasing access to higher education for many more students, there are suggestions that rapid expansion of these institutions may ignore and compromise the quality of instruction especially in the face of weak and ineffective regulation, monitoring, and supervision (Manuh et al., 2007). Another concern raised by Manuh et al. is that the new private institutions draw staff from public universities and thereby cause havoc in the public sector. Also, when it comes to research and graduate studies, private universities play a limited role. Graduate training is marginal even in public universities, with only 7% of the total enrolment. Again, training and development of academic staff is an issue in the private universities as most of these institutions mostly rely on the temporary engagement of some lecturers from private universities (Rooney, 2007; Sawyer, 2007; Manuh et al., 2007).

In a related development, a concerned group wrote an open letter to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education on some of the challenges and observations made on the practices of some private universities. They were of the view that many private universities in Ghana use names and qualifications which do not exist to process their

accreditation to operate their schools. This has resulted in unqualified persons lecturing in some of the private universities in the country, adding that some have only first degrees and part qualifications of some professional institutions

(see http://www.modernghana.com/news/230782/1/private-universities acreditation.html)

Another issue raised by the group was that some of these institutions failed to invest in educational infrastructure such as good lecture theatres (halls), libraries, books, journals, furniture among others with some having lectures in cubicles. The worst of it all is that most of them do not have good software to record, store, and protect students' academic records. In some cases, a result may be published on the notice board after a month when students request their transcripts, different results are printed out with many unrealistic explanations. The group further stated that some of the private universities are just adding on new programmes with the approval of the National Accreditation Board when they do not have the facilities, both faculty, and infrastructure to run those courses. In fact, they were of the view that NAB is not helping matters. Issues on influence from church members, politicians and so-called “big men” were part of the observations the group made. This raises questions about the implementation effectiveness of the policies and regulations on higher education and perhaps warrants scholarly investigations.

The assertion continues that some of the institutions do not have the capacity to graduate students upon completion and that raises issues about administrative structure and management effectiveness. According to the group, Central University College, for instance, advertised an 18-month MBA programme but close to three years, they have not been able to graduate students. Where is NAB? This supports the assertion that many

of the private universities are unable to meet the standards to graduate students. Some of the private institutions operating with the backing of religious bodies, especially churches, are trying hard to impose their religious beliefs on both staff and students, creating an unfriendly and tense learning environment. Research publication output leaves much to be desired in some of these institutions, with some of their academic staff promoted without a single publication. From the fore, it appears that even though most of these university colleges are affiliated to public universities for mentorship and guidance, the public universities either may not have been doing well in terms of supervision or that the private universities disregard the guidance given by the public universities. All these obviously point to the seemingly weak regulatory mechanism, supervision, and monitoring in the higher education sub-sector. This is why the call on NAB to be up and doing maybe in the right direction (http://www.modernghana.com/news/230782/1/private-universities-acreditation.html)

2.5.1 Benefits of Private Higher Education

Private provision of higher education nonetheless contributes towards a balanced development of education. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) strategy document, investing in Private Education in Developing Countries (1999), identifies a number of benefits (Collins and Wiseman, 2012; Mundy & Menashy, 2012). Manuh et al. (2007) outline specific benefits of private universities in Ghana to include, but not limited to, the following:

Expanding educational opportunities to more Ghanaians as existing public tertiary institutions are unable to meet the high demand for tertiary education that has arisen out of the rapid growth in population and the expansion in pre-tertiary education following the introduction of the educational reforms in 1987; freeing more public resources to be

targeted at the disadvantaged, the needy and the poor; demonstrable capacity to innovate and share good practices in education delivery, and increasing employment opportunities.

2.6 The Nature and Prevalence of Institutional Environment

The institutional environment has been defined as the established laws or regulations, customs, social and professional norms, and ethics of a society (Scott, 1995; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The institutional theory argues that institutions are critical components of the environment which consist of 'regulative, normative, mimetic and cultural-cognitive structures and activities that provide stability and meaning for social behaviour' (Scott, 1995; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Coercive or regulative pressure has to do with rules, laws, or legal mandates and principles that influence organizational governance. Coercive isomorphism is in contrast to mimetic isomorphism to where uncertainty encourages imitation, and similar to normative isomorphism where professional standards or networks influence change. Large corporations can have a similar impact on their subsidiaries. Change is as a consequence of formal and informal pressures imposed on institutions externally. In the case of universities, this includes the pressure to inform our teaching with research, and increasingly the need to produce graduates able to contribute to economic growth (Oliver, 1991; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 1995).

Further, coercive or regulative isomorphism is due to both formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations upon which they are dependent and by expectations from the society (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). For instance, a powerful organisation can exercise its coercive powers to serve its interest by demanding that

partners adopt its favourable operational practices (Liu, Ke, Wei, Gu, & Chen, 2010). In this regard, most private universities in Ghana who are under the mentorship of some public ones are compelled to adopt the practices imposed by their mentors in order to gain legitimacy, regardless of whether or not the practice will lead to academic quality and standard performance.

Private universities are under pressure from stakeholders, such as their mentor institutions and the government to operate in ways that meet certain regulatory requirements. Such coercive pressure from stakeholders is a typical instance of coercive isomorphism, where such pressures cause them to conform in order to be perceived as more legitimate (Zhu & Sarkis, 2007). Miemczyk (2008) is of the view that this does not always lead to efficiencies and superior organisational performances. Again, the government's directive to ban fee collection by heads of schools at the basic level and admission of students with grade D7 in English or Mathematics into polytechnics is a clear manifestation of coercive isomorphism. Another instance could be cited in terms of admission requirement where, for example, institutions under Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology are obliged to admit senior high school students with credit in Integrated Science only whereas the University of Ghana may admit students who may have a weak grade in Science but credit in Social Studies.

In terms of programmes offered, private universities are forced to adopt programmes run by their mentor institutions before they can be granted affiliation. This is regardless of the fact that those programmes may not reflect their (private universities) long-term goals and mission of producing graduates with certain competencies to address a particular

societal problem. These instances of coercive pressures of institutional theory may lead to improvement or decline in academic performance and quality.

The cognitive structures are the basic mental processes people use to make sense of information. Other names for cognitive structures include mental structures, mental tools, and patterns of thought, while the mimetic isomorphism refers to the tendency of an organization to imitate another organization's structure because of the belief that the structure of the latter organization is beneficial (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 1995). This behavior happens primarily when an organization's goals or means of achieving these goals is unclear (Scott, 1995). In this case, mimicking another organization perceived as legitimate becomes a "safe" way to proceed. An example is a struggling regional university hiring a star faculty member to be perceived as more similar to organizations that are revered (e.g., an Ivy League institution).

The mimetic isomorphism is in contrast to coercive isomorphism, where organizations are forced to change by external forces, or normative isomorphism, where professional standards or networks influence change (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 1995). Mimetic isomorphism occurs due to uncertainty that encourages imitation (Zsidisin et al., 2005). According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), the more uncertain the relationship between means and ends, the greater the extent to which an organization will model itself after organizations perceived as successful. Selznick (1996) suggests mimesis is more deeply rooted in anxiety than in rational efforts to avoid reinventing the wheel. Mimetic isomorphism occurs within industry groups to maintain legitimacy by imitating successful strategies and to minimize the risk. Liu et al., (2010) delineate that benchmarking is a typical approach related to mimetic pressures. Sousa and Voss (2008) however opine

that best practices that emanate from benchmarking do not work in all organizations due to contextual mismatches and that imitation may not necessarily lead to optimal results.

Another form of pressure from the institutional theory's perspective is the normative isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Normative is about doing what is acceptable within a particular environmental setting whilst mimetic pressure concerns with learning from successful firms in times of uncertainty (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Normative isomorphic change is driven by pressures brought about by professions. One mode is the legitimization inherent in the licensing and crediting of educational achievement. The other is the inter-organizational networks that span organizations. Norms developed during education are entered into organizations. People from the same educational backgrounds will approach problems in much the same way. Socialization on the job reinforces these conformities. Normative isomorphism is in contrast to mimetic isomorphism, where uncertainty encourages imitation, and similar to coercive isomorphism, where organizations are forced to change by external forces. The normative institution shapes the organisational activities such that they are viewed as consistent with influential groups, societal and professional norms. (Manolova et al., 2008; Scott, 2005). The normative forces come from professionalization, defined as a move by members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work to establish greater legitimacy for their occupation (Gopal & Gao, 2009). If many employees have similar educational backgrounds and industry experiences, they tend to define problems and filter information similarly (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), creating homogeneity over time (John et al., 2001). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) recognize two aspects of the cognitive base produced by university specialists and the growth of professional networks across which new models diffuse. Normative pressure finds its

expression in the way private universities' administration is run to meet generally accepted standards. This may involve how examinations are conducted, quality assurance practices, and staff recruitment practices. For instance, it is a normal practice for private universities under the mentorship of the University of Cape Coast to offer undergraduate students' project work as a taught course while for those under KNUST, most students' projects are research-based. These situations arising from normative isomorphism may, in one way or the other, affect academic performance and quality.

Best and Schweingruber (2003) suggest that Sociology textbooks display isomorphism, covering the same topics in a roughly similar order. They argue that most instructors can choose what to cover and how the majority adopt a "standard text," thick book with colour printing, glossaries, and illustrations, "boxes" with interesting topics, and with accompanying materials such as an instructor's guide and a CD-ROM. Several reasons are suggested as causes: authors and publishers duplicate elements in an attempt t o copy successful features; the review process encourages conformity to a standard; most instructors take standard introductory courses as students, and complimentary materials help in the teaching and learning.

Isomorphism in textbooks is not a negative thing per se; if the standard textbooks contain the core learnings for new starters, then certainly authors should not attempt to "stand out" just for the sake of it. However, if the introductory textbook is only about conforming to a norm due to mimetic (competition between authors and publishers), coercive (reviewers of textbook drafts and users in general), and normative pressures, the outcome may not serve the intended purpose and could be a contributable factor to declining quality and performance (Kauppi & Erkkilä, 2011).

Another instance is that a private academic institution might engage part-time lecturers from public universities not for the lack of qualified personnel or financial challenges, but merely out of habit or because of the notion that "that is how the sector operates". Again, students under competitive pressure to receive high grades may select courses with a reputation of enabling better grades (often those with less mathematical content) and of those seen as attractive and dynamic topics, even though that might not harness their potentials to the fullest. Another possible example of academics' own tendency towards isomorphism is textbook content. Schweingruber (2003), for example, suggests that Sociology textbooks display isomorphism, covering the same topics in a roughly similar order.

From the foregoing, it could be argued for organizations (such as private universities) to perform and survive, they must conform to the rules and belief systems prevailing in the environment within which they operate. This explains why organizations operating in different countries with varying institutional environments face different forms of pressure and consequently, influences the strategies they pursue (Scott, 1995; Oliver, 1997). According to Scott (1995), the influences institutionalized activities exert are on three levels- individual level, organizational and inter-organizational levels. On the individual level, education institutional heads consciously and unconsciously follow the traditionally held norms, habits, and customs. On the organizational level, the traditions of institutionalized activities within the operating environment are followed and maintained through the adoption of shared political, social, cultural, and belief systems.

On the inter-organizational level, pressure from the government, industry alliances, and expectations from society define and determine what is socially acceptable and expected

organizational behaviour (Oliver, 1997). This puts pressure on organizations like academic institutions to act and look the same (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Whereas some of these institutionalized practices and structures may contribute to academic standards and performance, others may lead to decisions that threaten the same. For instance, a private academic institution might mostly rely on part-time lecturers from public universities, merely out of habit or because of the notion that "this is how the system operates" (Oliver, 1997). In this respect, most academic institutions adopt certain practices not on the merit of their potentials contribution to performance and standards, but for the simple reason that "everybody else is doing it too". Thus, academic performances and standards of higher institutions of learning may be subjected to institutional constraints from the environment within which they operate (Oliver, 1997).

2.6.1 Governance in Higher Education

Governance in higher education is how institutions of higher learning are formally organized and managed (Vidovich, & Currie, 2011). Simply, university governance is how universities are operated. OECD (2008) defines governance in higher education to encompass the structures, relationships and processes through which, at both, national and institutional levels, policies for tertiary education are developed, implemented, and reviewed. Governance comprises a complex web including the legislative framework, the characteristics of the institutions and how they relate to the whole system, how money is allocated to institutions and how they are accountable for the way it is spent, as well as less formal structures and relationships which steer and influence behaviour (Coaldrake et al., 2003). Governing structures for higher education are highly differentiated throughout the world, but the different models nonetheless share a common heritage (Albach, 2005; Coaldrake et al., 2003).

In the context of higher education, the university governance domains involve finance and administration, and academic affairs. The finance and administration perspective of higher education governance mainly concern financial management of the institution whilst governance on academic affairs focuses, among others, on faculty staffing and quality assurance system to ensure the smooth running of academic programmes (Coaldrake et al., 2003). Thus, the academic governance mechanism may be conceived into two key dimensions: faculty governance and quality assurance system. The faculty governance dimension focuses, among others, on the recruitment, retention development, and progression of academic staff required. On the other hand, the quality assurance dimension is concerned with the relevance and effectiveness of programme development, students' admission, examinations, research, monitoring and supervision, and curriculum design to ensure and maintain standards and performance (Trakman, 2008; Kezar & Eckel, 2004).

Governance and management of higher institutions become even more diverse with the differences in defining the relationships between higher and tertiary education (university education), post-secondary education, technical and vocational, and community college models of education (Albach, 2005; Coaldrake et al., 2003). The concept of governance in higher education may also refer to the internal structure, organization, and management of autonomous institutions. The internal governance organization typically consists of a governing board, the university president with a team of administrative officers and staff, faculty senates, academic deans, department chairs, and usually some form of organization for student representation (Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Lapworth, 2004). Management structures themselves have become increasingly complex due to the increasing complexity of inter-organisational and governmental relationships. Kezar and

Eckel (2004) and Lapworth (2004) explain that educational administration presents complex challenges at all levels of private and public education regardless of whether it is college, university, or technical/ vocational education.

As universities have become increasingly interdependent with external forces, institutions are accountable to external organizational relationships such as local and central governments. The nature of the relationships determines whether governance is corporate and business-oriented or defined more by a collegial shared form of governance (Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Lapworth, 2004). Kezar and Eckel (2004) suggest that governance is a multi-level concept including several different bodies and processes with different decision-making functions. With the complexity of internal structures, the external relationships between institutions and local, state, and national governments are equally differentiated given the different forms of government in the international system. External governing relationships depend much on institutions, government policy, and other formal or informal organizational obligations.

Generally, institutions are recognized as autonomous actors with varying degrees of interdependencies and commitments to external stakeholders such as local and national governments. According to Münch (2014), an effective university governance system may comprise several interest groups including students, central administration, heads of university, board, stakeholders, agents, and government.

Students

Although students are considered central to the development of quality procedures at higher education institutions, they mostly appear marginalized in terms of roles as political actors in the discussion of the university governance system (Bergan, 2003). Compared to other stakeholder groups, their decision-making political influence within governing bodies is rather low – between 1/5 and 1/10 of members of governing boards are students (Bergan, 2003, p. 4), but their advisory capacities and informal structures that reach up into ministries give their voice a stronger impact (Bergan, 2003,). Unlike other stakeholders, they possess strong, short-term mobilization capacities.

Central Administration

The central administration has always been a powerful force in university governance. Particularly in higher education systems with a minimal entrepreneurial structure, this has an information advantage over academic authorities as it is continuously and fully involved in administrative issues. Academics normally postpone their research while assuming governing positions in universities and are less well equipped to deal with administrative matters. In countries with strong state regulation, the administration is also seen as a state instrument for financial accountability. In Germany, for example, the head of the administration is appointed by the Ministry of Education. In many universities, the position of the vice-chancellor, president, or chief executive officer has been established. This position is responsible for the day-to-day management of the university and hence, formally responsible for different administrative tasks. As these include the implementation of goals set out by the legislative authority or governing board, leadership, and decision-making based on the strategic framework are necessary attributes of the administrative head (Lauwreys, 2008).

Government Agencies

Quality assurance agencies are rather new actors in higher education governance. Based on government directives and ethical codes (*e.g.* NAB, GTEC, NASPTEX, etc.), they review programmes and/or institutions and judge whether these are appropriate and effective. Their influence varies from audits of programme accreditation to system accreditation.

Even though institutions have gained autonomy, the government‘s role is still as crucial as ever in higher education. Various intermediary bodies (such as NAB, GTEC, NABPTEX in Ghana) between government and institutions are common at the level of national higher education governance (OECD, 2008).

Kezar and Eckel (2004) and McMaster and Wagner (2007) further point out that external pressures have changed the substance of higher education governance during the last decades with more emphasis put on issues such as funding and sustainability. Such pressure which may be environment-specific is forcing universities, particularly the private ones, to move into the diversification of programmes and courses.

A new trend is also evident in terms of funding where tertiary education governance is seemingly focusing on funding arrangements and revenue targets. This trend has contributed to the introduction of fee-paying for the evening, weekend, parallel, and distance programmes, as well as an increase in student intake to generate revenue for funding tertiary education programs. To the extent that more student intake should be encouraged to address the issue of access, such an approach comes with its potential to undermine quality as resources, both human and facility, get overstrained. Indeed, this trend has partially accounted for the high student/lecturer ratio prevailing in most tertiary

institutions in Ghana where enforcement of regulations through monitoring and supervision appears relaxed (Brenya, 2001; OECD, 2008).

According to the NCTE report for 2012/2013, lecturer/student ratios which are supposed to be 1:12 for Science; 1:8 for Medicine, and 1; 12 for Humanities (Manu et al., 2007) were mostly not met. Again, the full-time academic staff in the accredited private universities in Ghana as of 2012/2013 stood at 1,865. Out of this, 207 were Professors/Associate Professors representing 11.10%, 203 Senior Lecturers representing 10.88%, and 1,455 Lecturers representing 78.02%. These fall short of GTEC's standards of academic staff mix of 10% Professors, 15% Associate Professors, 35% Senior Lecturers, and 40% Lecturers (NCTE, 2013).

These reinforce the notion that the regulatory framework on tertiary education in Ghana and its implementation is to some extent relaxed, if not weak, and may have influenced institutional governance where most private universities, in particular, appear to have taken things for granted. This is evidenced by the fact that some private universities in Ghana admit students without the minimum requirements. For instance, at the Methodist University, which is purely a private entity, 83 students were withdrawn in 2014 after NAB detected that the students did not meet the standard admission requirement (www.ghanaweb.com). In a related development, 695 unqualified students admitted by the Central University College (CUC) to pursue various degree programmes in the 2011/2012 academic year were expelled following an order from GTEC (GhanaWeb, 2012). Although the unqualified students were later withdrawn, the situation nevertheless raises questions as to the effectiveness and potency of the regulations and policies on education in Ghana.

The social norms, beliefs, and value systems in Ghana which are characterized by the " leave it to God" syndrome (*gyae manonka)* as portrayed in the local parlance, appear to be feeding into institutional governance, decision making, and general attitude towards abiding by rules and regulations at various levels. This is in line with the assertions made by Oliver (1997) and Scot (1995) that for organizations to survive, they must conform to the rules and belief systems prevailing in their operating environment, where their manifestation takes the form of mimicry, for example. Thus, the implementation effectiveness of the regulatory framework, to a large extent, is influenced by the nature of the prevailing institutional pressures. Such weak institutional structures may potentially have a negative effect on the implementation of educational policies and regulations and ultimately contribute to the decline in academic standards.

This relationship between institutional environment and governance of higher institution is explained by DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) assertion that institutional pressures cause homogeneity of organizational structure in an environment and therefore organisation, including educational institutions, in a similar environment usually operate on the dictates of institutional forces, i.e., coercive or regulative, mimetic, culture- cognitive and normative pressures.

2.6.2 Quality Assurance

Although quality is one of the most important aspects of all higher education worldwide, its definition according to Utuka (2012), continues to remain "elusive". Quality is a concept long associated with the manufacturing sector. The word quality literally implies a subjective judgment. According to Utuka (2012), quality is a familiar word, however, it has a variety of uses and meanings. Watty (2006) is of the view that attempts to define quality in higher education have resulted in a "variety of labels being attached to the

concept, yet similar explanations of the concept are evident. Watty continues to assert that quality in higher education is about efficiency, high standards, excellence, value for money, fitness for purpose, and/or customer-focused.

According to Beckford (2002), although the theories of quality emanated from American thinkers, it was the Japanese who first applied the concepts of quality in their production sector. They adopted into the ideas from the gurus and other contributors in the field such as Edward Deming, Joseph Juran, Philip Crosby, Oakland, and others to their production sector and that has been a contributing factor to their technological advancement.

Quality has been defined as "Fitness for purpose, where the word purpose is to be interpreted broadly to include mission, goals, objectives, specifications, etc. Fitness for purpose means that an organization has procedures in place that are appropriate for the specified purposes and that there is evidence to show that these procedures are in fact achieving the specified purposes" (Reid, 2005; Burdett & Crossman 2012). Vroeijenstijn, as cited in Watty (2006), describes quality as in the eye of the beholder and any definition of quality must take into account the views of various stakeholders. For example, governments may consider quality as represented by attrition rates, throughput, and pass/fail percentages; the professionals may view quality as the skills and attributes developed during the period of study; students may consider the concept concerning their individual development and preparation for a position in society; and academics may define quality as knowledge transfer, good academic training, and a good learning environment. Harvey and Green (1993) defined quality by identifying five categories about the way the term was used. According to them, the first category sees quality as

exceptional. This notion relates to the traditional concept of quality, which focuses on meeting high standards, and implies exclusivity (Harvey & Green, 1993).

The second category also considers quality as consistency or perfection. This notion is embodied in the idea that something is done correctly or to a consistent standard every time. With this notion, a quality product or service is one, which conforms exactly to a predefined specification. The focus here is to ensure that things are done correctly each time (Crosby, 1979). This position has been challenged however since higher education does not aim to produce defect-free graduates and the notion where the emphasis is placed on the process rather than inputs and outputs does not fit higher education (Watty, 2003).

The third classification sees quality as value for money, which focuses on ensuring that stakeholders receive high value for their investment whilst the fourth notion of quality perceives it as transformational, which focuses on ensuring that students are genuinely empowered because of their learning (Utuka, 2012). The final perspective to quality portrays it as fitness for purpose, where quality is defined in terms of the achievement of a desired educational or quality assurance goal. In other words, "quality is judged in terms of the extent to which the product conforms to standards or requirements. Harvey and Green's (1993) perspectives of quality are outlined in Table 2.1.

Table.2.1: Harvey and Green's Classification of Quality

Classification	**Brief explanation**
Quality as exceptional	A focus on meeting high standards, such as excellence.
Quality as perfection or consistency	

	As embodied in the idea that something is done correctly or to a consistent standard every time.
Quality as fitness for purpose	Where quality is defined in terms of the achievement of a desired educational or quality
Quality as value for money	A focus on ensuring that stakeholders receive high value for their investment.
Quality as transformation	A focus on ensuring that students are genuinely empowered as a result of their learning.

Source: Utuka (2012)

It can be discerned from the above definitions that the term "quality" may be used from different perspectives; however, it can be applied to higher education depending on what the focus is. The maintenance, improvement, and the assurance of quality by higher institutions have become issues of major concern and attention to governments, higher institutions, and other stakeholders alike (Avdjieva & Wilson, 2002; Birnbaum, 2001; Mehralizadeh, 2005; Utuka 2012).

Commenting on Green and Harvey's assertion, Utuka (2012) delineate that the notions of "meeting minimum standards" and "continuous improvements are frequently goals for assuring educational quality, where the former focuses on competency judgments related to workplace assessment or the meeting of professional standards, and the latter drawing insights from the Total Quality Management Philosophy.

According to Moitus and Seppälä (2009), quality assurance means the procedures, processes, and systems used by the higher education institution to manage and improve the quality of its education and other activities. It involves those activities associated with guaranteeing the quality of a product or service. Thus, quality assurance implies a system

by which a higher institution confirms that it has adequate conditions or provisions in place to enable students to achieve the set standards (Utuka, 2012; Birnbaum, 2001).

In the work of Morrison and Mensah (2016), it is suggested that quality assurance should never be a one-off activity; rather, it requires a continuous process of checking. They believe that quality assurance may relate to a programme, an institution, or a whole higher institution system. Woodhouse, (1999) describes quality assurance as all of those attitudes, objects, actions, and procedures which, through their existence and use, and together with the quality control activities, ensure that appropriate academic standards are being maintained and enhanced in and by the programme, institution or system, and make this known to the educational community and the public at large.

Utuka (2012) identifies various approaches to quality assurance as accreditation, assessment, academic audit, and external examination. Common to each practice is the development or setting up of criteria and the application of those criteria or set standards to a programme or institution by the accrediting body. The purpose may be assessment or enhancement with the aim of further improvement of the programme or the educational system at large. According to Brink (2003), quality assurance in higher education focuses on two separate but related approaches, namely internal and external evaluation.

2.6.3 Internal Quality Assurance

Internal quality assurance focuses on the provisions and processes designed by an institution to ensure the quality of the education it provides. Such systems may be a response to external pressures or legislation, but the processes are essentially designed and operated by the institution itself. Internal quality assurance aims at institutional

development and assessment of internal accountability. It incorporates every institutional activity that focuses on quality assurance and development in all the fields of activity of the institution. El- Khawas (1998) and Utaka (2012) reported that internal quality assurance concentrates mainly on academic issues and collects evidence and information about mission fulfilment, the efficiency of activity, and ways of ensuring quality within the institution. Concerning the internal quality assurance, Hall (2006) describes quality assurance as a general term that "covers all aspects of an institution's provisions and activities that focus on assuring educational (or research) quality. Common's (2003) study found that self-assessment makes a major contribution to improving the quality of college provision for students and promotes a range of management practices, especially evaluation. Thus, higher institutions can improve quality internally through institutional policies.

2.6.4 External Quality Assurance (EQA)

EQA assurance refers to the systems that are designed and operated by an external agency, often mandated by legislation, to monitor the quality of the education provided by tertiary providers. The major aim of these external requirements is to achieve accountability. EQA in higher education has witnessed major developments internationally in the last two decades (Billing, 2004; Woodhouse, 2004). Western and developed countries have practiced external monitoring for a longer time and thus tend to have considerable experience with EQA systems. Concerning developing nations, recent studies have reported varying degrees of success and experience in their attempt to implement external quality assurance practices that they have adopted from the advanced nations (Bordia, 2001; Gnanam, 2002; Lenn, 2004; Lim, 2001).

External quality assurance agencies vary in status, the scope of operations, and the focus of attention. Although accountability is one of the main characteristics associated with quality assurance, the nature of external agencies that take responsibility for assuring the quality in higher education differs from country to country. Despite these differences, there are some common features. According to Green (1994), whatever the focus of attention, the methodology appears to incorporate the same three ingredients involving a judicious mix of subjective and objective data through self-assessment, statistical or performance indicators, and peer evaluation, normally in the shape of an institutional visit.

2.6.5 Quality Assurance Practices

One of the main concerns of any educational system is the issue of quality. Indeed, factors that affect standards and quality of academic performance include, but not limited to, students' performance on standardized tests; quality of teachers; students' exposure to current knowledge and information; teacher-student ratio; the library and its holdings; and the general state of the learning environment (Antwi, 1992; Effah, 2003).

There is a concern that the expansion of both public and private tertiary institutions may lead to the lowering of the quality of what is offered to students. This is why the National Accreditation Board has been empowered through a law to grant both institutional and programme accreditation. It is for this reason that affiliation is necessary to ensure effective supervision and compliance (Effah, 2003). The process of accreditation involves a preliminary assessment of the readiness and genuineness to operate a tertiary institution that may lead to the issue of an interim letter of authority to allow an institution or proprietor to begin the establishment processes. This is followed by formal

accreditation, which may be granted in full for five years, partially or even denied. The final stage is the grant of a charter by the President (Antwi, 1992; Effah, 2003).

Institutions, whether private or public, are required to seek accreditation for new programmes before they are offered. They are also enjoined to submit an annual report of their activities to the Board. An accredited institution is until granted a charter, required to be affiliated to an established and recognized institution, which shall award its degrees for the accredited institution under its supervision. The system of external assessment applied to staff recruitment and promotion and the use of external examination in graduate work ensures that staff and students continue to meet internationally recognised standards while the provision of adequate library seeks to support this effort. Effah (2003) notes that highly qualified academic staff with the opportunity for continued education is key to ensuring quality and standards. Pereira (2007) opines that quality should be seen from the point of view of the programmes of the university system, the quality of staff, the facility available in the institution, and the research and publication outputs. These are the conditions that facilitate knowledge creations and production.

Research and teaching are the key components of higher education whilst library facilities are one of the fundamental support facilities of a university (Pereira, 2007). Indeed, by UNESCO Standard, the ratio of textbooks per student is 45 volumes while the seating capacity of the library should be big enough to accommodate more students. In Kenya for instance, the Commission for Higher Education stipulates that a university library seating capacity should be equal to one-third of the total student population (Mwiria, 2007) as these affect the quality of students' learning experience.

Again, the Commission for Higher Education in Kenya stipulates the minimum learning facilities to include classrooms/lecture rooms, staff offices, and seminar rooms, administration offices, library, and auditorium/lecture theatre, staff common room, students' common room with indoor recreational facilities, outdoor recreational facilities in the form of games or sports facilities and a dispensary. For residential universities, kitchen/dining facilities and hostels including adequate laundry facilities are all required. Co-curricular activities are equally important in facilitating quality all-around education (Mwiria, 2003).

According to Mwiria (2007), critics have questioned the standards of academic performance of some of the private universities as some of them do not have the facilities such as libraries and laboratories Again, the nature and the structure of the programme seem to compromise standards and quality. For instance, the extent to which students access and utilize library materials contribute to performance and standard.

The question is, to what extent do evening and weekend students access the library, since most of them are workers? The key issue here is that these categories of students do not have enough time for reading as most of them spend a major proportion of their time on work-related activities. In Ghana, most of the students in private universities are employees. They attend lectures in the evenings and on weekends and hardly get enough time to make extensive reading required for higher learning. Yet, they use the same period for various diploma and degree programmes just as full-time students. This may be a source of threat to academic standards and quality.

Though there has been very little emphasis on time management in these institutions, it is very clear from observation that there is an inefficient use of time within the semester

system. Due to the constraint in the semester system, coupled with the late and slow take-off of learning activities, most lecturers resort to inappropriate methods of content coverage such as focusing on areas in which they intend to examine at the end of the semester and thereby contributing to declining in quality and academic standards (Mwiria, 2007).

Mwiria (2007) also note that poor remuneration for lecturers is yet another contributory factor to the declining standard of academic performance. To them, the low salary of faculty members negatively affects the level of commitment with which they exhibit their work. This situation is reinforced by the fact that teaching resources are scarce in some of the private universities.

The ratio of students to academic staff is one of the key factors in determining standards and quality. It is a common observation that most private institutions rely heavily on part-time staff moonlighting from public universities. The situation appears to be worsening with the launching of fee-paying programmes, commonly known as a parallel programme, where these same lecturers that the private universities' mostly rely upon tend to be over-loaded in their respective institutions.

Perhaps key among the factor affecting quality and standard of academic performance is supervision and monitoring of the activities of higher education, internally and externally. The education system in Ghana is governed by an established regulatory framework jointly administered by NAB, GTEC, MoE, and other related agencies. The implementation effectiveness of this regulatory framework, largely, influences the quality and performance standards of higher institutions. For instance, weak

implementation of these educational policies and regulations, particularly in the private higher institutions would negatively affect quality and standards of performance and ultimately lead to the falling of academic standards (Manuh et al., 2007).

In Ghana, in spite of the existence of a regulatory framework of education to regulate higher educational institutions, there is the perception that governance activities of some private universities are subtly influenced by their commercial interest. Their quest for profit appears to be an overriding factor in their institutional governance and inadvertently leads to compromise of quality and standards.

Owing to the perception of the falling standards of education in recent years (Manuh et al. 2007), particularly concerning the private universities, concerns have been raised as to the operational effectiveness of the existing educational regulatory and governance mechanisms. Such a situation seems to have given rise to the compromise of staffing standards in most private universities.

2.6.6 Academic Standards

Academic standards are the benchmarks of quality and excellence in education such as the rigour of curricula and the difficulty of examinations (Morrison & Mensah, 2016). At colleges and universities, faculty members are under increasing pressure from administrators to award students good marks and grades without regard for those students' actual abilities, both to keep those students in school to pay tuition fee and to boost the schools' graduation rates. Students often use course evaluations to criticize any instructor who they feel has been making the course too difficult, even if an objective evaluation

would show that the course has been too easy (Alderman, 2010; Morrison & Mensah, 2016).

Educational standards define the knowledge and skills students should possess at critical points in their educational careers. Standards serve as a basis of educational reform across nations as educators and policymakers respond to the call for a clear definition of desired outcomes of schooling and a way to measure student success in terms of these outcomes (Kilpatrick, Swafford, & Findell, 2001). National, state, and local educators play an important role in improving student learning through the development and implementation of standards.

Academic standards seek to ensure that graduates of institutions of higher learning have the knowledge, skills, and competencies essential to leading productive, fulfilling, and successful lives as they continue their education, enter the workforce and assume their civic responsibilities. Schools need to establish high expectations that will challenge all students to reach their maximum potentials (Kilpatrick, Swafford, & Findell, 2001). Standards are built around the belief that the success of students depends on both a solid foundation of knowledge and skills and the ability of students to apply their knowledge and skills to the kinds of problems and decisions they are likely to encounter after they graduate.

The academic standards incorporate and strongly promote the understanding that active and hands-on learning will benefit students of all ages. By integrating and applying basic knowledge and skills in practical and challenging ways across all disciplines, students experience learning that is more engaging and motivating. Such learning stays in the mind

long after the tests are over and acts as a springboard to success beyond the classroom (Morrison & Mensah, 2016).

In the United Kingdom, degree-awarding bodies themselves are responsible for standards in higher education, but these are checked during the inspection by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual). According to QAA, academic standards are 'the standards set and maintained by institutions for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards (Palfreyman & Tapper, 2014). In the United State of America, academic policies and regulations are at the state level by bodies such as the Standards and Assessment Division of Education.

In Ghana, the Ministry of Education is responsible for the administration and the coordination of public action regarding Education. Its multiple agencies handle the concrete implementation of policies and regulations and ensure that standards are met. These agencies include among others, NAB, NABPTEX, and GTEC. NAB is mandated to accredit both public and private (tertiary) institutions concerning the contents and standards of their programmes. It also, in consultation with the appropriate institution or body, determines the programmes' requirements for the proper operation of that institution and the maintenance of acceptable levels of academic or professional standards; determines the equivalences of certificates and other qualifications awarded by institutions in Ghana or elsewhere. Publish as it considers appropriate the list of accredited public and private institutions at the beginning of the calendar year. Advise the President on the grant of a Charter to a private tertiary institution.

Perform any other functions determined by the Minister (National Accreditation Board Act, 2007 (Act 744)).

2.7 Faculty Staffing

One of the factors that determine the quality of university education is the human resource. Faculty Staffing is concerned with the availability of qualified teaching personnel in a given academic institute (Manuh et al., 2007). The issue of faculty staffing has been of concern even in public universities (Annoh, 2001). According to NAB and GTEC, university institutions must meet certain standards in terms of the calibre of faculty members to ensure quality and standards. Annoh (2001) holds the view that the quality of graduates very much depends on the quality of the staff. Therefore, for quality and standard to be met, the quality of faculty members should reflect such standards.

According to the NCTE (2013), academic staffing standards and norms for the universities require an academic staff/student ratio of 1:12 for Science, 1:8 for Medicine, 1:8 for Humanities, and 1:15 for Education (Manuh et al, 2007). Mauuh et al. (2007) report that except for Medicine, all other disciplines did not meet the GTEC minimum standard of staffing. In terms of student/lecturer ratio, GTEC standards require 15 students to every staff (15:1). However, the current situation on various university campuses appears contrary to the GTEC norms (NCTE, 2013). Amponsah and Onuoha (2013) find that apart from private universities' inability to recruit adequate academic staff, the ability to retain the few ones is a major problem.

The problem has been attributed to several factors including financial constraints, which is considered a major issue facing private universities. Perhaps this explains why these institutions rely on academic facility staff from the public universities. Indeed, Tettey

(2006) indicates that dissatisfaction with academic staff over salaries paid them has made it difficult for private universities to retain academic staff.

According to Manuh et al. (2007) and Amponsah and Onuoha (2013) staffing decisions are influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include financial needs, promotion, future growth plans, the technology used, support from top management, and image of the organisation. Also, labour laws of the government, pressure from regulatory bodies, educational standards, and competition among others affect the staffing policy of the organisation. Effah, cited by Tettey (2006) reinforced this assertion by the fact that some of the academic staff leave for other sectors believed to be more attractive, making it difficult for private universities to retain full-time faculty staff. In-terms of staffing composition, GTEC standard requires that 10% of the academic staff should be Professors, 15% Associate Professors, 35% Senior Lecturers, and 40% Lecturers.

According to GTEC, most of the private universities are unable to meet this standard. This situation may negatively affect academic performance and standards. Academic staff training and development is the key to quality education. According to Amponsah and Onuoha (2013), staff training and development is one of the key challenges facing private universities. This is supported by the fact that most of the private universities engage part-time lecturers and it may be unlikely that these private universities would commit resources to train professionals they do not have the permanent right to their services. Amponsah and Onuoha (2013) posit that the inadequacy of training and development programmes for faculty, particularly academic faculty is a threat to academic performance and standards.

Brenya (2001) opines that over-reliance on part-time lecturers could contribute to a decline in academic performance standards. He goes on to explain that most of these part-time lecturers are already overloaded with responsibilities in their various universities and so do not have enough time for the students they handle on a part-time basis at the private universities. Private universities' over-reliance on part-time academic faculty staff from public universities raises issues on the effectiveness of supervision, monitoring, and regulations on university education.

2.8 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.8.1 Relationship between Institutional Environment and Academic Performance Outcome

This section discusses the prior empirical evidence that establishes or refutes the assertion that the institutional environment affects academic performance outcomes of university institutions. The concept of the institutional environment has received substantial attention in management literature. As discussed earlier, the institutional environment depicts to regulatory, normative, mimetic, and cultural-cognitive forces of a particular country or environment (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The institutional environment is recognized as a potential determinant of academic performance outcomes. This recognition is supported by evidence from educational literature (Coburn, 2004; Abbasi & Mir, 2012).

Given the critical role of the institutional environment in driving academic performance outcomes (Coburn, 2004; Abbasi & Mir, 2012) several empirical works on the institutional environment – academic performance outcome relationship have been reported in the education literature. For example, Chikalipah (2017) reported a significant

positive relationship between the institutional environments and performance outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa. Decramer, Smolders, Vanderstraeten, and Christiaens (2012) also studied institutional pressures, and adoption of the school performance management system and found a significant positive association.

In a related study, Abdullah and Primus (2020) investigated the extent to which institutional support affects educational outcomes and found significant positive relationships. Similar findings are reported (e.g. See Hu & Kuh, 2002; Coburn, 2004; Abbasi & Mir, 2012; Osaikhiuwu, 2014). Other empirical studies however find a negative association between the institutional environment and academic performance outcomes (e.g. Melius, 2011; Alfred, Ma'rof & Buang, 2018). Table 2.2 presents empirical studies on the relationship between institutional environment and academic performance outcomes.

Table 2.2: Evidence of Relationship between Institutional Environment and Academic Performance Outcome

Author(s)	**Context**	**Independent Variable**	**Dependent Variable**	**Findings**
Chikalipah (2017), *African Development Review*	Microfinance institutions in sub-Saharan Africa	institutional environment	Organisation performance	The results demonstrate evidence that a strong institutional environment has a positive effect on organisation performance in sub-Saharan Africa.
Decramer, Smolders, Vanderstraeten and Christiaens (2012). British Journal of Management	Higher Education	Institutional pressures	Adopted performance management system.	The results show that institutional pressures (coercive pressures) are a significant predictor of whether the academic unit adopted performance management system.
Abdullah and Primus (2020). Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 1-16.	Malaysia	Impact of institutional support	Educational outcomes	Institutional support has a significant impact on engagement
Melius (2011). *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*	Higher Education	Institutional Environment	Academic Achievement	institutional Environment (support) did not predict academic achievement

Table 2.2: Evidence of Relationship between Institutional Environment and Academic Performance Outcome (Continues)

Hu and Kuh (2002). *Research in Higher Education*	Higher Education	Institutional environment	Student engagement	N/A	Individual student perceptions of certain aspects of the institutional environment affected engagement
Coburn (2004). *Sociology of Education*,	Educational institution	Institutional Environment	Classroom practices	N/A	Institutional environment Positively influence Classroom practices
Abbasi and Mir (2012). *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*	Higher Education	Institutional environment	Students' performance	N/A	Institutional environment has significant effect on students' performance
Alfred, Ma'rof, and Buang (2018). *Journal VARIDIKA,*	Higher Education	Institutional environment	*Academic performance*	N/A	*Relationships between institutional environment and academic performance fail to exist*
Osaikhiuwu (2014). *Public Administration Research*.	Higher Education	Institutional environment	*Academic performance*	N/A	Institutional environment factors considered (such as unfavourable learning conditions did not have any significant impact on students' performance

Summary and Comments

Table 2.2 demonstrates empirical evidence of the relationship between institutional environment and academic performance outcomes. In general, substantial pieces of evidence from the literature show that different aspects of the institutional environment (such as institutional support) have a positive relationship with academic performance outcomes. Nonetheless, evidence of a negative association exists in the education literature (Melius, 2011; Alfred, Ma'rof, & Buang, 2018). This suggests that notwithstanding the substantial evidence of the positive association between the institutional environment and academic performance outcomes, the institutional environment's influence on academic performance outcomes still appears inconclusive. This warrants further investigation to explore the mechanisms through which the academic performance benefits of the institutional environment manifests to enhance an understanding of how institutional forces may drive the academic performance of higher institutions of learning.

2.8.2 Evidence of Relationship between Quality Assurance and Academic Performance Outcome

This section discusses the empirical evidence that has been reported over the years to ascertain the nature of the theoretical association of quality assurance with academic performance outcomes. The impact of quality assurance in higher education has received much attention in recent years, both in practice and in academic literature. Within the broad education literature, quality assurance is recognised as a potential driver or determinant of academic performance outcomes. For example, M'inoti (2010) reports that quality assurance has a significant effect on academic performance outcomes. In another study, a positive relationship was indicated between quality assurance and quality of

education (Odhiambo, 2008). Similarly, Ahmed, Gamage, Suwanabroma, Ueyama, Hada, and Sekikawa (2008) report that quality assurance influences students' academic decisions.

More recent studies on quality assurance practices in higher institutions of learning provide empirical validation on the argument that quality assurance constitutes a key determinant of teaching and learning and academic performance outcomes (Seyfried & Pohlenz, 2018; Saeed, 2018; Zwain Lim, & Othman, 2017). Table 2.3 captures empirical evidence on quality assurance-academic performance relationship.

Table 2.3: Evidence of Relationship between Quality Assurance and Academic Performance Outcome

Author(s)	**Context**	**Independent Variable**	**Dependent Variable**	**Findings**
Saeed, S. T. (2018). *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*	Higher Education	Quality Assurance	Academic Performance	The results demonstrate that the application of the quality assurance process results in the improvement in the running process of teaching, learning, and researching.
Seyfried, and Pohlenz (2018) *European Journal of Higher Education*	Higher Education	Quality Assurance	Perceptions of effectiveness	The results show that stronger tendencies towards the promotion of the goals of QM are associated with higher perceived effectiveness of QM in teaching and learning.
Zwain, Lim, and Othman (2017). *The TQM Journal*	Higher Education	Total quality management	Academic Performance	Total quality management has a positive and significant impact on Academic Performance.
Ahmed et al. (2008). *Quality assurance in Education*	Higher Education	Quality Assurance	Students' decisions	Quality Assurance affects student decisions.
Odhiambo (2008). *International Journal of Educational Management*	Higher Education	Quality Assurance	Quality of education and Teacher Accountability	Quality of education is determined by the inputs such as quality assurance,
M'inoti (2010). *University of Nairobi*	Secondary Schools	Quality assurance	Academic performance	The study established that quality assurance affects school academic performance to a moderate extent

2.8.3 Evidence of Relationship between Faculty Staffing and Academic Performance Outcome

The concept of faculty staffing is central to the university administration. There has been a considerable amount of scholarly works on faculty staffing and its implications on teaching and learning outcomes (Endo & Harpel, 1982; Campbell & Campbell, 1997; Ronco & Cahill, 2004). As discussed earlier, faculty staffing is concerned with the administrative decisions and activities aimed at meeting the human resource needs of academic institutions (Ronco & Cahill, 2004). The faculty staff is recognised as a potential driver of teaching and learning and academic performance outcomes. This recognition is supported by the shreds of evidence in the educational literature (Endo &Harpel, 1982; Campbell & Campbell, 1997; Ronco & Cahill, 2004). Given the critical role of academic faculty staffing in driving teaching and learning as well as academic performance outcomes (Endo & Harpel, 1982; Campbell &Campbell, 997; Ronco & Cahill, 2004), some empirical works have been reported in the educational literature. For example, Campbell and Campbell (1997) reported a significant positive relationship between faculty/student mentorship and academic performance. Endo and Harpel (1982) also studied faculty staffing and found a significant positive association between student-faculty interaction and students' intellectual, and personal outcomes.

In a related study, Heng (2014) investigated the extent to which faculty behaviours drive students' academic achievements and found significant positive relationships. Similar findings are reported (see Muktiyanto et al., 2020; Alhosani et al., 2017; Torregosa, Ynalvez & Morin, 2016; Perkmann, King, & Pavelin, 2011; Clifton, Perry, Roberts, & Peter, 2008). Ronco and Cahill (2004) however reported a negative association between type of faculty staffing variables (the type of faculty/instructor) and students' academic

achievement. Table 2.4 presents empirical evidence on the faculty staffing-academic performance relationship.

Table 2.4: Evidence of Relationship between Faculty Staffing and Academic Performance Outcome

Author(s)	**Context**	**Independent Variable**	**Dependent Variable**	**Findings**
Clifton, Perry, Roberts, and Peter (2008). *Research in Higher Education*	Higher education	Faculty environments	Academic achievement	Students' faculty environments positively affects academic achievement.
Perkmann, King, and Pavelin (2011). *Research Policy*,	Higher education	Faculty staff quality	Industry involvement of students	We find that in technology-oriented disciplines, departmental faculty quality is positively related to industry involvement.
Endo and Harpel (1982). *Research in Higher Education,*	Higher education	Student-faculty interaction	Intellectual and personal outcomes	The results provided support for the importance of student-faculty interaction on the intellectual and personal outcomes of college
Torregosa, Ynalvez, and Morin (2016). *Journal of Advanced Nursing*	Higher education	Faculty staff care	Academic performance	Perception of faculty having a positive outlook/compassion had an enhancing effect on performance.
Ronco and Cahill (2004). *Association for Institutional Research*	Higher education	Faculty/ Instructor type	Academic achievement	Faculty/Instructor type has negative effect of academic achievement

Table 2.4: Evidence of Relationship between Faculty Staffing and Academic Performance Outcome (continues)

Author(s)	**Context**	**Independent Variable**	**Dependent Variable**	**Findings**
Muktiyanto, Hermawan, and Hadiwidjaja (2020). *International Journal of Trade and Global Markets*	Higher education	Management control systems (MCS) in schools	Academic performance	The effect of MCS is more pronounced with good university governance being a mediator between MCS and academic performance.
Campbell and Campbell (1997). *Research in higher education*	Higher education	Faculty/student mentorship	Academic performance	Faculty/student mentorship positively affects school academic performance
Heng (2014). *Educational Research for Policy and Practice*	University education	Faculty behaviours	Academic achievement	Results indicated that faculty behavior was a unique factor that had a strong and positive influence on students' academic achievement.
Alhosani, Singh, and Al Nahyan (2017). *International Journal of Educational Management*	University education	School leadership	Academic achievement	School leadership positively affects the academic achievement

Summary and Comments

The review of the literature indicates that quality assurance and faculty staffing have made several contributions to the performance outcomes of institutions. In the context of higher education, quality assurance practices and academic staffing (collectively labelled as governance mechanisms in this study) represent crucial elements in enhancing teaching and learning and accordingly academic performance (Seyfried & Pohlenz, 2018; Saeed, 2018; Zwain, Lim, & Othman, 2017; M'inoti, 2010; Heng, 2014). From the summary of the literature on the link between quality assurance and academic performance presented in Tables 2.3, it is evident that the association of quality assurance practices with teaching and management of higher institutions of learning has received scholarly attention. In particular, the shreds of evidence from prior empirical research suggest that the positive effect of quality assurance practices on academic performance outcomes has been established to a large extent in the education literature (Odhiambo, 2008, Saeed, 2018; Zwain, Lim, & Othman, 2017; M'inoti, 2010) where a majority of studies have focused on examining the direct effect between these constructs in the literature. A similar observation can be made on the relationship between faculty staffing and academic performance outcomes in Table 2.4 (see Muktiyanto et al., 2020; Alhosani, Singh, & Al Nahyan, 2017; Torregosa, et al., 2016; Perkmann et al., 2011; Clifton et al., 2008; Endo & Harpel, 1982; Campbell & Campbell, 997).

In sum, although research on the impact of IE on academic performance has received substantial attention in education literature, the findings have been mixed and largely confliction (Hu & Kuh, 2002; Coburn, 2004; Abbasi & Mir, 2012; Osaikhiuwu, 2014; Melius, 2011; Alfred et al., 2018), suggesting that the academic performance benefits of IE are still not clear in extant literature. In addition, while most of the studies report

positive relationships between quality assurance and academic performance outcomes, and that of faculty staffing and academic performance outcomes respectively, an understanding of the extent to which both quality assurance and faculty staffing (herein conceived as GMs) may translate the effect of the IE on academic performance appears limited in education literature. This raises the question of how IE impacts academic performance in educational literature. This gap in educational literature implies that there is a lack of knowledge or limited understanding regarding the mechanism through which IE, a macro-level variable may drive academic performance outcomes. In an attempt to fill this gap in the extant literature, the current study seeks to investigate the academic performance consequences of the IE, via quality assurance practices and faculty staffing (conceived as GMs).

2.9 Theoretical Framework

This section presents the theoretical underpinning of the study.

2.9.1 Institutional Environment Theory

The institutional theory explains the central question of why all organizations in a field tend to look and act the same (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The core concept of institutional theory is that organizational structures and processes tend to acquire meaning and achieve stability in their own right, rather than their effectiveness and efficiency in achieving desired ends, such as the mission and goals of the organization (Lincoln, 1995). In the initial stages of the organizational life cycle, there is considerable variety in organizational forms. Over time, however, there is startling homogeneity in organizational structures and practices.

Institutions, conceived as "regulative, normative, and cognitive structures and activities that provide stability and meaning for social behavior" (Scott, 1995, p. 33), exert isomorphic pressure on organizations: coercive, normative, and mimetic (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The theory argues that new organizational forms typically do not emerge based on the availability of an unused resource. Instead, new organizational forms emerge once they are viewed by society as legitimate (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994). Legitimacy refers to the extent to which an organization's actions are socially accepted and approved by various internal and external stakeholders (Kostova, Roth, & Dacin, 2008) and are consistent with widely held norms, rules, and beliefs (Sonpar, Pazzaglia, & Kornijenko, 2010). When organizations submit to institutional pressures and conform to social norms for certain organizational structures and processes, they are rewarded by earning increased legitimacy, resources, and survival capabilities for their operations (Oliver, 1997; Yang & Konrad, 2011).

The theory argues that institutionalized activities occur due to influences on three levels: individual, organizational, and inter-organizational (Oliver, 1997). On the individual level, managers follow norms, habits, customs, and traditions, both consciously and unconsciously (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). On the organizational level, shared political, social, cultural, and belief systems support traditions of institutionalized activities. On the interorganizational level, pressures from government, industry alliances, and expectations from society define what is socially acceptable, and expected organizational behaviours. These pressures compel organizations to look and act the same (DiMaggio

& Powell, 1983). For example, an action has become institutionalized" when the reason for its existence is that "everybody else is doing it too." Institutional theorists argue that

many organizational actions are so taken for granted that managers no longer question why a specific action was started or why a specific action should continue (Oliver, 1997). In the context of higher educational institution, heads and administrators can get caught in this same trap of only doing what "everyone else is doing." They may keep doing the same old thing due to norms, habits, customs, and traditions, both consciously and unconsciously. This phenomenon appears to be a reflection of private university management practices in Ghana where most of the private universities, for example, rely on part-time lecturers to a large extent.

The current study draws on the institutional theory to develop and test the notion that institutional pressures; regulatory, normative, mimetic, and cultural-cognitive may influence the GMs (faculty staffing policies and decisions as well as quality assurance practices) of higher institutions of learning, and academic performance.

2.9.2 Resource-Based View Theory

The resource-based theory examines the performance differences of organizations based on their resources (Peteraf & Barney, 2003). The theory makes two main assumptions:

(1) organizations within an environment or industry may differ in their resources, and (2) these resources may not be perfectly mobile across organizations, so organizational differences in resources can be very long-lasting (Barney, 1991).

The central idea of the resource-based theory is that organizations compete against others on the strength of their resources and capabilities (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). A resource is defined as anything that could be thought of as a strength for an organization (Wernerfelt, 1984), and may include any tangible or intangible assets that are semi-permanently tied to the organization (Caves, 1980). Examples of resources include

employee knowledge, skills, and abilities, machinery and technology, capital, and efficient procedures and processes (Wernerfelt, 1984).

An organization's competitive position relative to other organizations is based on its collection of unique resources (Peteraf, 1993). Resources are valuable when they help an organization create or implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness. The theory focuses on the resources and capabilities controlled by an organization that underlies performance differences across organizations. Superior resources enable an organization to produce better products and satisfy customers more sufficiently than it would with inferior resources (Barney, 1991; Peteraf, 1993).

In the educational context, resources may include but are not limited to, library facilities, teaching and learning facilities, laboratories, qualified and competent staff, governance structures, processes, and procedures especially established and implemented, etc. From the lens of the resource-based view, the availability of tangible resources is as important as the capabilities required for their deployment (Barney, 1991). For instance, the availability of qualified academic staff may not necessarily guarantee academic excellence unless they are well harnessed and deployed. In the context of the academic domain of governance structures of higher institutions of learning, staffing, and quality assurance system constitute crucial resources and capabilities respectively. Drawing from the theory, effective deployment of these resources is expected to lead to superior academic performance outcomes (Barney, 1991: Effah, 2003; Manuh et al, 2007). This line of reasoning is captured in the conceptual framework of the study in Figure 2.1.

2.9.3 Hypothesis Formulation

2.9.3.1 Linking Institutional Environment, Faculty Governance, Quality Assurance and Academic Performance

The institutional environment as defined earlier is a set of fundamental political, social and legal ground rules that influence societal behaviour (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). It consists of stable rules, social standards, and cognitive structures in society that guide, favour or restricts social behaviour and business activities (Scott, 1995). Institutions exert different types of pressure to which organisations respond, causing them to establish fields of action that define their operations and the conditions under which they (organisations) get legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 1995). The institutional theory argues that organisations adopt structures, processes, programmes, policies, and/or procedures because of the pressure coexisting institutions exert on them (Kostova & Roth, 2002). On the inter-organizational level, pressure from the government, industry alliances, and expectations from society define and determine what is considered socially acceptable (Oliver, 1997). These institutional structures influence organisations like academic institutions in terms of behaviour, governance, decision, and strategies (DiMaggio & Powell, 1993) pursued to achieve set objectives (Peng, Wang, & Jiang, 2008).

Whereas some of these institutionalized practices and structures may contribute to the achievement of academic standards and performances, others may lead to decisions that threaten it. For instance, a university institution might rely mostly on part-time lecturers from public universities merely out of habit or because of the notion that "that is how the system operates" (Oliver, 1997). In this respect, most academic institutions adopt certain practices not only on the merit of their (the practices) potential contributions to

performance and standards but because "everybody else may be doing it too". Thus, academic performances and standards of higher institutions of learning may be determined by institutional constraints from the environment within which they operate (Oliver, 1997).

Oliver (1991) posit that organisations respond to institutional pressures by accepting and complying with the imposed rules to gain legitimacy. Thus, the influence of environmental pressures on organisation's approaches to business is a perceptual phenomenon by nature, and therefore, it is only natural that organizational executives will react to their perceptions of the context within which they operate (Boyd & Fulk, 1996; Daft, Miller, & Shamsie, 1999). The present study's model considers organisational executives' perceptions about the institutional conditions to which their organisations are subjected and the implications of their reaction in terms of the decisions and policies they pursue on performance outcomes. The present study proposes that institutional dimensions (ie. regulative, normative, mimetic, and cognitive) especially influence the management orientation of (private) universities in terms of the type and structure of programmes they mount, academic staffing, and performance standards. In any society, knowledge sets (cognitive dimension) that are institutionalised, become part of a shared social understanding (Busenitz et al., 2000). For example, a society with a perception of high academic performance expectations is likely to influence the attitudes and approaches of the public towards what they do. Similarly, a society with strict applications and adherence to rules, laws, and regulations creates a perception of orderliness, discipline, and law-abiding among its people, and the opposite is true (Oliver, 1991; Scott, 1995).

The argument of the institutional environment suggests that effective policies of education, for instance, can encourage educational institutions to ensure high academic

performance and standards by strict enforcement through supervision, monitoring, training and development, and application of sanctions (regulative dimension) (Vesper, 1996). Such practice with time becomes internalized (cognitive) where high academic performance and standards become part of the value systems and way of life of the society (culture and normative) for new institutions to emulate (mimetic). Therefore, a society with strict application of educational policies and regulations adopts appropriate attitudes, motivation, and capabilities to develop an orientation towards high academic performance and standards.

The existence of regulatory bodies, such as, GTEC, NAB, NABPTEX, and MoE in Ghana significantly influence the degree of efforts higher educational institutions make towards academic excellence. Therefore, it is argued that an environment whose quest for high academic performance and standards is institutionalized (through enforcement of policies, rules, and regulations), and internalized (culture-cognitive, normative and mimetic) influences educational institutions' orientation towards achieving and maintaining high academic performance and standards. Such orientations inspire appropriate mechanisms manifested through, among others, academic staffing and quality assurance system. Accordingly, the study hypothesised that:

H0: The institutional environment does not positively affect the academic performance of private universities in Ghana

H1: The institutional environment positively affects the academic performance of private universities in Ghana

H1a: The regulatory system positively affects the academic performance of private universities in Ghana

H1b: The normative system positively affects the academic performance of private universities in Ghana

H1c: The cognitive culture positively affects the academic performance of private universities in Ghana

H1d: The mimetic positively affects the academic performance of private universities in Ghana

H0: Institutional environment does not positively affect Faculty Governance of private universities in Ghana.

H2: Institutional environment positively affects Faculty Governance of private universities in Ghana.

H2a: The regulatory system positively affects faculty governance of private universities in Ghana.

H2b: The normative system positively affects faculty governance of private universities in Ghana.

H2c: The cognitive system positively affects s faculty governance of private universities in Ghana.

H2d: The mimetic positively affects quality faculty governance universities in Ghana.

H0: Institutional environment does not positively affect quality assurance of private universities in Ghana

H3: Institutional environment positively affects quality assurance of private universities in Ghana

H3a: *The regulatory system positively affects quality assurance practices of private universities in Ghana.*

H3b: *The normative system positively affects quality assurance practices of private universities in Ghana.*

H3c: *The cognitive system positively affects quality assurance practices of private universities in Ghana.*

H3d: *The mimetic positively affects quality assurance practices of private universities in Ghana.*

An institutional environment reflects the values, beliefs, and aspirations of a society (Oliver, 1991; Scott, 1995). These aspirations may include the acquisition of knowledge through quality education. Societal aspirations on academic excellence manifest themselves in the output and performance standards of the universities. In the context of higher education, the standards of performance are dependent on (but not limited to) tangible facilities such as science laboratories and library facilities, teaching and learning materials and aids, and intangible capabilities such as governance mechanisms (e.g. staffing, and quality assurance system) (Effah, 2003, Brenya, 2001). Considering these, it is argued that holding constant all other factors, effective GMs, manifesting through appropriate academic staffing (that meets GTEC's requirements) and quality assurance system i.e. staff training and development, effective admission system, moderation of examinations, lecturers' assessment, monitoring and supervision among other, would lead to improved academic performance and standards. Hence, it is hypothesised that:

H0: Governance mechanisms, i.e. faculty governance and quality assurance do not affect academic performance of private universities in Ghana.

H4: Governance mechanisms, i.e. faculty governance and quality assurance affect academic performance of private universities in Ghana.

2.9.3.2 Mediation Roles of Staffing and Quality Assurance practices in IE-Academic Performance Link

The earlier argument and explanations sought to posit that IE has a direct effect on the academic performance given that the universities operate in conformance with these environmental pressures to gain acceptance and legitimacy (Oliver, 1991; Scott, 1995). However, it is further argued that in the context of university education, the effect of IE (regulatory, normative, cognitive-culture, and mimetic) on academic performance could also be channelled through GMs of academic staffing and quality assurance system.

The resource-based view theory argues that organisations perform better and become competitive through the deployment of unique resources. According to the theory, resource is defined as anything that could be considered as a strength for an organization (Wernerfelt, 1984). Resources include any tangible or intangible assets that are tied to the organization (Caves, 1980). Examples of resources include employee knowledge, skills, and abilities; machinery and technology, and efficient procedures and processes (Wernerfelt, 1984). An organization's resources are capabilities that help it to better accomplish its vision, mission, strategies, and goals (Porter, 1981). From the lens of resource-based view theory, academic staffing, and quality assurance practice as dimensions of GMs could be regarded as parts of intangible capabilities and competencies in universities.

Therefore, effective deployment of these capabilities, in the context of university setups, could lead to improved academic performance. Drawing insight from the RBV and

institutional theories, it is argued that the effect of IE (regulatory system, norms, cognitive-culture and mimetic), in the form of conformance to rules and regulations, adoption of best practices, among others, could be actualized through effective academic staffing and quality assurance practices to enhance academic performance (Effah, 2006; Brenya, 2001). In light of this line of reasoning, it is expected that:

H0: Faculty Governance does not mediate the link between institutional environment and academic performance of private universities in Ghana.

H5: Faculty governance mediates the link between institutional environment and academic performance of private universities in Ghana.

H0: Quality assurance practices do not mediate the link between institutional environment and academic performance of private universities in Ghana

H6: Quality assurance practices mediate the link between institutional environment and academic performance of private universities in Ghana.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. The model seeks to explain the direct and indirect effect of IE on academic performance of universities. More specifically, the model proposes GMs (academic staffing and quality assurance system) as a mediation mechanism between IE and academic performance.

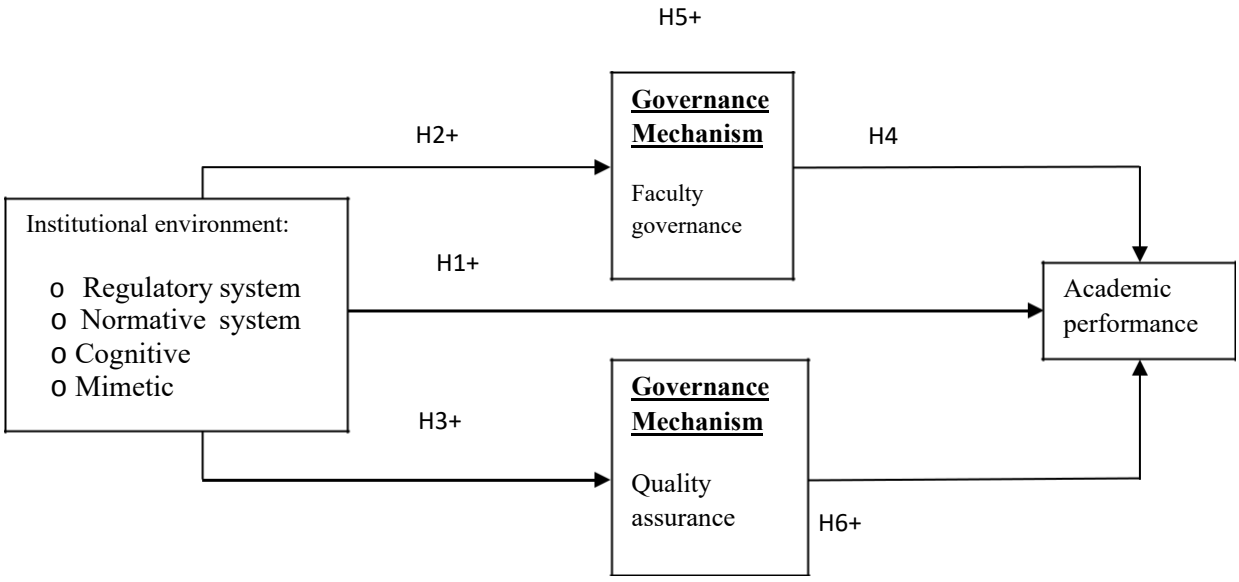

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

2.9.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the literature related to the study variables has been reviewed. Among the relevant issues dealt with is the overview of higher education in Ghana, the concepts of key constructs, i.e. institutional environment, faculty staffing, quality assurance, and academic performance and standards. Also, a review of empirical studies on the association of institutional environment forces with governance mechanisms (faculty staffing and quality assurance) and academic performance were explored. Further, the association of faculty staffing and quality assurance with academic performance was also brought into perspective. The chapter further presented institutional and resource-based view theories as the theoretical framework underpinning the study. Finally, hypotheses formulation and the conceptual framework of the study were presented.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes and discusses the methodology used for the study. The study specifically presents the philosophical stance adopted for the study, the research approach, the research design, and the research strategy. Also discussed are the study's population, the sampling technique and sample size, data collection tools, and operationalisation of constructs. Other issues discussed are the pretesting of instrument and pilot study, qualitative data collection, data analysis, validity and reliability tests, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Philosophy

The philosophical background for determining what constitutes an acceptable knowledge in a field of study is provided by epistemology (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009) which explains what it means to know. According to Singh (2006 p. 124), philosophy is…"concerned with an inquiry that begins from a given experience or body of knowledge and seeks the intelligible conditions for its possibility". Saunders et al. explain that in a research context, philosophy helps in developing and understanding knowledge, which underscores our position on how data concerning a particular phenomenon should be collected, analysed, interpreted, and reported. Methodological decisions are informed by the philosophical views and assumptions held about social reality, knowledge, and nature (Kusi, 2012).

Various research paradigms exist with each having its philosophical foundation. These include, but are not limited to, the positivism and interpretivism (Esterberg, 2002; Henn,

Weinstain, & Foard., 2005; Scott &Usher, 1999; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). According to Henn et al. (2005), positivism and interpretivism represent the key perspectives of research approaches or paradigms that provide different sets of assumptions about how issues of concern to the researcher should be studied.

The positivist paradigm assumes that the behaviour of humans is essentially governed by rules (Cohen et al., 2007; Kusi, 2012; Punch 2000). To discover the existing truth, therefore, the positivist researcher uses scientific methods that systematically focus on building and testing theories for confirmation or disconfirmation.

Ontologically, positivism assumes that reality is independent of the individual observing it. That is, the researcher (subject) and object (the phenomenon) are separate and independent (Kusi, 2012). From the epistemological perspective, positivists develop knowledge of a reality that exists beyond the human mind and contend that the human experience of reality (world) represents objective and independent reality which forms the basis or foundation of human knowledge (Weber, 1949). On research object, while the interpretivism holds that the phenomenon they research is socially constructed, positivists are of the belief that the object they research exists independent of the researcher. Methodologically, positivists assume that they can provide a scientific explanation of social reality or phenomenon via utilisation of quantitative approaches of data collection and analysis through experiments, observation, and survey (Weber, 1949). Thus, the empirical research process involves formulating a hypothesis, i.e. tentative supposition derived from previous theories (Cart & Kemmis, 1986; Assalahi; 2015; Kusi, 2012).

Interpretivism is conceived as a research approach that emphasises on the meaningful nature of people's character and participation in social life.

It is based on the principles that knowledge of reality is a social construction by human actors (Weber, 1949). As the key influencer of interpretivism philosophical tradition, Weber argues that we can deepen our understanding of the social world from the perspectives of the individuals being studied rather than explaining behaviour through causes and effects. The dominant assumption of interpretivism is that the meanings and motives behind people's actions, such as, behaviours and interactions with others in society constitute social reality (Chowdhury, 2014). Cohen et al, (2007) posit that interpretivism is about understanding the subjective world of human experience and that human behaviours cannot be explained by merely applying methods of natural science.

Rather, as part of humans' consciousness and given their interaction with the world they live in, behaviours can properly be understood by researchers through individuals who perform them in the context in the actions that occur (Assalahi, 2015). Thus, the interpretivists believe that social reality is created jointly through meaningful interactions between the researcher and the researched in the socio-cultural context of the latter (Kusi, 2012; Grbich, 2007).

Ontologically, interpretivism holds the belief that reality and the individual who observes it cannot be separated. Epistemologically, interpretivism, on the other hand, believes that knowledge built reflects their experience, culture, and history and that individuals constitute an integral part of knowledge construction. To them, knowledge is created through the social construction of the world (Weber, 2004).

Thus, interpretivism recognises knowledge as socially constructed reality.

On the research object, interpretivism holds that the phenomenon they research is socially constructed, that is, they are the product of their life-world. Methodologically,

the ontological and epistemological foundation of interpretivism (quest for deeper insights in social reality) makes it appropriate to use a qualitative approach.

Since this study seeks to explore, describe, and explain IE and its implications on the GMs and academic performance of private universities, the study draws from both positivism and interpretivism philosophical traditions of research. The exploratory aspect of the study is underpinned by the interpretivism tradition, which aims at finding deeper insights into the phenomenon being studied. This requires a qualitative approach (Cohen et al., 2007). The explanatory aspect on the other hand is positioned in the positivism paradigm, which requires a quantitative method of research (Cohen et al., 2007).

3.2 Research Design

The design of research describes the plan adopted by the researcher to address the objectives of the study and answer the research questions (Robson, 2002). As defined by Kothari, (2004,) research design is 'the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data" p.32. The choice of research design is usually informed by the purpose and nature of the study.

According to Bryman (2004), research is generally undertaken for three purposes: (1) to explore a phenomenon such as a group or a setting in order to become familiar with it and to gain insight and understanding about it, in order to formulate a more precise research problem for further study; (2) to describe a particular community, group, or situation as completely, precisely, and accurately as possible, and (3) to examine and formally test relationships between variables often referred to as explanatory studies or

design. Since the nature and purpose of a particular study influences the choice of design and subsequently the strategy to adopt, various options have so far been offered and adopted by researchers such as survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography, among others (Robson, 2002, Saunders et al., 2009).

Since the current study mainly seeks to explain the relationship between the variables being studied, a cross-sectional design with survey strategy was adopted. While survey research is well suited for studies that require data for testing hypotheses and explains theoretical associations between variables, cross-sectional design allows for the collection of data at a single point in time to gather quantitative or qualitative data about two or more variables to examine a pattern of association (Bryman, 2004). In addition, using a survey allowed the researcher to collect data in a standardised form through the use of a questionnaire. Furthermore, a focus group discussion approach was also used with the aim of seeking deeper insight into the institutional environment and how it affects the academic performance of private universities in Ghana. As Cornwall and Jewkes (1995) posit, the focus group discussion approach serves as a bridging strategy for scientific research and local knowledge.

3.3 Research Approach

Having selected a survey design, it is important to adopt an appropriate strategy to execute the research design. Generally, two key research approaches that have widely been discussed in the literature include deductive and inductive.

Cohen et al. (2007) describe the inductive approach as an approach to thinking that begins with observations and measurements. Patterns and regularities are then detected and a hypothesis that can be tested is developed. Where the tests confirm the hypothesis,

theories are formulated. Therefore, where an inductive approach is adopted, data that are relevant to the subject under study are collected first. Patterns are observed after the data collection is sizeable enough. Depending on the patterns identified in the data, hypotheses are formulated and the researcher formulates a theory to provide an explanation and or a justification for the patterns identified (Cohen et al., 2007).

Deductive reasoning on the other hand begins with hypothesis formulation; substantial data is then collected to test and confirm or reject the stated hypothesis (Cohen et al., 2007). According to Gills and Johnson (2010), when a researcher adopts a deductive approach, he or she first formulates a hypothesis using a theory, then collects a variety of data to test the hypothesis to confirm or reject the hypothesis to resolve the issue at stake. In some situations, some studies could complement inductive reasoning with deductive. This is referred to as inductive-deductive reasoning or abductive reasoning (Perry, 1998). Saunders et al. (2009) indicate that a survey strategy is often linked to a deductive approach. In line with this assertion, and given that the primary aim of this study is to examine the relationship between the variables being studied, a deductive approach was employed in the study.

3.4 Population

The population of a study is the full set of cases or group members about which research is undertaken. (Saunders et al, 2009). Bryman (2004) defines the population of a study as all the individuals, objects, and events that meet the sample criteria for inclusion in a study. Broadly, this study focuses on private universities that have been operating in Ghana for a minimum of five years. Thus, private universities that have operated for a minimum of five years constituted the target population for the current study. The total number of accredited private universities, including those with chartered status, in Ghana

as of April 2018 is eighty-six (86) (www.nab.gov.gh). 61 out of the 86 accredited private universities had operated for five years or more. Accordingly, 61 accredited private universities in Ghana constituted the study's accessible population of the study. The unit of analysis of this study is at the institutional level.

3.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of cases in order to draw conclusions about the whole set (Véras, Medeiros, & Guimaráes, 2019). The debate on the appropriate sample size for various studies has been a contentious issue over the years (Westland, 2010; Kline 2013). In fact Singh (2006) argues that there is no single rule in arriving at a suitable sample size for any study. In resolving this issue, however, some authors (e.g. Pallant, 2007) recommend that the larger the sample size, the better. Ding *et al.* (1995) indicate that most researchers consider a minimum sample of 100 to 150 subjects as acceptable, while others (Hair et al., 2014) have considered a sample of 200 observations as the minimum acceptable.

Given that the population for the current study is so narrow (61 accredited private universities), it was deemed necessary to sample all. Accordingly, all the 61 private universities in the population, with a minimum of five years in operation, were used for the study. Furthermore, in each of the universities, respondents were selected using a purposive sampling approach. A purposive sampling technique, (also referred to as judgmental or expert sampling), is a type of non-probability sample which allows researchers to choose and approach eligible participants. (Lavrakas, 2008; Saunders et al, 2009). Usually, researchers use purposive sampling when they want to access a particular key people who are known to have the capacity or knowledge to provide the required

responses to address the research question (Saunders et al, 2009). This is often used by selecting, in a non-random manner, a sample of elements that represents a cross-section of the population (Lavrakas, 2008). The objective of this study requires individuals with in-depth knowledge about the institutional environment and its implications on governance mechanisms and performance of higher institutions of learning. This made the purposive sampling technique the most appropriate selection technique.

Specifically, from each of the universities, two informants were purposively selected: one from the administration and the other from among the academic staff. While the Registrar was selected to represent administrative staff, the longest-serving Dean in each of the institutions was also selected to represent the academic staff. In collecting the data, the Registrar was asked to respond to issues regarding the institutional environment and academic performance as these fall under his purview while the Dean was asked to respond to issues regarding governance mechanisms (Faculty staffing and quality assurance) as the implementation of quality assurance and academic staffing issues happen under the jurisdiction of the Dean. This was done using separate set of questionanires (see Appendix).

Also, the two officers were selected because it is assumed that they have sufficient knowledge about their institutions and the issues under study. In addition, using two informants from one institution helped to address the issue of common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Thus, a hundred and twenty-two (122) respondents were involved in the study to represent 61 accredited Private Universities in Ghana.

In addition, given that the study adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods (Sequential Mixed Approach), five people, comprising two administrators and lecturers each, and a student leader, were further selected purposively to form focus groups from four selected institutions for the qualitative phase of the study. The four institutions were randomly selected from four regions in Ghana—Greater Accra, Eastern, Ashanti, and Brong-Ahafo Regions. The rationale for choosing these regions is that most of the private universities are located in these regions. Thus, 20 people were involved in the qualitative stage of the study, making for a total of 142 people involved in the study.

3.6 Measurement of Constructs

This section presents the operationalization of the constructs used in the study.

3.6.1 Institutional Environment (IE)

IE was conceived in terms of regulatory, normative, mimetic, and cultural-cognitive forces that shape and influence social behaviour. Measures for each of the dimensions of IE were adapted from Manolova et al. (2008). The regulatory and normative constructs consisted of nine and four items respectively while cognitive and mimetic also consisted of five and four items respectively. These constructs were measured using a 7- point scale: 1= “strongly disagree”; 2= “disagree”; 3= “slightly disagree”; 4= “neither agree nor disagree”; 5= “slightly disagree”; 6= “disagree” and 7= “strongly agree”). Table 3.1-3.4 show items used to capture IE.

Table 3.1: Scale Item for Regulatory System

Name of Construct	Measurement Items	Item Sources
Regulatory System	Indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. 1 = "strongly disagree"; 7 = "strongly agree" 1. The legal system in Ghana encourages the smooth running of university activities. 2. Local and national government support and protect our university. 3. As an administrative officer, I have confidence in the higher education regulatory system. 4. It is easy to obtain accreditation to operate as a private university. 5. It is easy to obtain an affiliate status from public universities. 6. It is not very difficult to operate as a university without strict compliance with rules, policies, and regulations of university education. 7. My university must meet all requirements under the education regulatory system before allowed to operate. 8. There is strict enforcement of rules and regulations by the regulatory and policy implementation bodies 9. MoE, GTEC visit our school regularly.	Items adapted from Manolova et al. (2008)

Source: Adapted from Manolova et al. (2008)

Table 3.2: Scale Item for Normative System

Name of Construct	Measurement Items	Item Sources
Normative System	Indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. 1 = "strongly disagree"; 7 = "strongly agree" 1. My/our university belongs to a highly regulated educational sector 2. My/our university has difficulty complying with the educational standard of practice. 3. My/our university belongs to a sector that encourages high standards of performance. 4. Overall, my/our university follows the standard practices of higher education set by the regulatory authorities.	Items adapted from Manolova et al. (2008)

Source: Adapted from Manolova et al. (2008)

Table 3.3: Scale Item for Cognitive System

Name of Construct	**Measurement Items**	**Item Sources**
Cognitive System	Indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. 1 = "strongly disagree"; 7 = "strongly agree" 1. Private universities operate as business entities. 2. Private universities are masters of their own rules. 3. University degree is awarded and not actually earned. 4. Most people are not motivated to seek redress when they feel short-changed by private universities. 5. Individuals' social status is key to obtaining a university degree.	Items adapted from Manolova et al. (2008)

Source: Adapted from Manolova et al. (2008)

Table 3.4: Scale Item for Mimetic System

Name of Construct	Measurement Items	Item Sources
Mimetic System	Indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. 1 = "strongly disagree"; 7 = "strongly agree" 1. Private universities use mentor institutions as benchmarks. 2. Students are likely to switch to other universities when they perceive an institution's performances to be non- competitive. 3. Students choose private universities based on image and reputation 4. My university follows the practices of other universities for competitiveness.	Items adapted from Manolova et al. (2008)

Source: Adapted from Manolova et al. (2008)

Governance Mechanism (GM)

GM was conceived as a two-dimensional construct comprising faculty governance and a quality assurance system (Bratianu & Pinzaru, 2015). The faculty governance refers to policies and procedures regarding recruitment, retention, development, and progression of academic staff. Quality assurance, on the other hand, is concerned with ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of programme development, students' admission, examinations, research, monitoring and supervision, and curriculum design. Governance mechanisms, conceived as faculty governance and quality assurance (Bratianu & Pinzaru,

2015) was the mediating variable. Measures for governance mechanisms were developed following an extensive literature review. Seven items were developed for faculty governance while nine items were developed for quality assurance. These constructs were measured using a 7- point scale: 1=; "strongly disagree" and 7= "strongly agree"). Tables 3.5 and 3.6 show items used to capture GMs.

Table 3.5: Scale Item for Faculty Governance

Name of Construct	**Measurement Items**	**Item Sources**
Faculty Governance	Indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. 1 = "strongly disagree"; 7 = "strongly agree" 1. My institution uses lecturers with ranks of senior lecturer and above. 2. My institution uses part- time lecturers 3. My institution uses/relies on employed full-time lecturers. 4. My institution employs Ph.D. holders. 5. My institution organises training for the full-time academic staff after the appointment. 6. My institution organises training for the part-time academic staff after the appointment 7. I am aware that on average, my institution has not more than 25 students to 1 lecturer.	Items adapted from Bratianu and Pinzaru (2015).

Source: Adapted from Bratianu and Pinzaru (2015)

Table 3.6: Scale Item for Quality Assurance

Name of Construct	**Measurement Items**	**Item Sources**
Quality Assurance	Indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. 1 = "strongly disagree"; 7 = "strongly agree" 1. My institution engages in the monitoring of students' performance. 2. My institution engages in the monitoring of the examination process. 3. My institution engages in the supervision of the examination process. 4. My institution engages in the moderation of examination questions. 5. My institution engages in an examination scripts audit. 6. My institution engages in the assessment of academic staff performances 7. My institution engages in organising training programmes for academic staff 8. My university has compromised on student quality in its drive to increase or preserve student numbers. 9. Pressure to give students better marks has increased at my university. 10. My workload is huge. 11. My institution engages in using external examiners in the supervision of the examination process.	Items adapted from Bratianu and Pinzaru (2015).

Source: Adapted from Bratianu and Pinzaru (2015).

Academic Performance

Academic performance is conceived as the level of students' acquisition of knowledge, skills, and understanding in a specific intellectual domain of learning, the extent of their relevance for the job market, further studies or research. Measures for academic performance, which represents the endogenous (outcome) variable, were also developed based on Ward et al. (1996) and Huang, Cheng, and Tseng (2014). Seven items were developed for the academic performance construct. The construct was measured using a 7- point scale: 1=; "strongly disagree" and 7= "strongly agree"). Table 3.7 captures the items used to measure academic performance.

Table 3.7: Scale Item for Academic Performance

Name of Construct	**Measurement Items**	**Item Sources**
Academic Performance	Indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. 1 = "strongly disagree"; 7 = "strongly agree" *It is perceived that Graduates from my/our institution…* 1. are able to present problem-solving research outputs 2. are accepted on the job market 3. are competitive in their progression to higher academic laurels 4. Get placement in academic institutions. 5. fit well in the industry 6. are equipped with the problem- solving, critical thinking, and ICT skills 7. are able to perform well on the job	Items adapted from Huang et al. (2014) and Ward et al. (1996)

Source: Adapted from Huang et al. (2014) and Ward et al. (1996).

3.7 Pilot Testing

Pilot testing involves administering a survey to find out whether it will work in the real-world (Saunders et al, 2009). It is also undertaken to identify flaws in the instrument for the necessary correction such that every respondent understands the questions in the same way and to determine if respondents feel comfortable with the items (Saunders et al, 2009; Kline 2013).

Mooney and Duval (1993) recommend a sample size ranging from 30 to 50 as ideal for pilot test. Hertzog (2008) also recommends a sample size of 25 to 40 for instrument development. Following these recommendations, and to allow for statistical assessment and validation of the initial measures, a pilot test was conducted using 30 individuals working in academic institutions. This was undertaken to improve the quality of the measures, and to assess the validity of the items. The outcome of the pilot study helped the researcher to eliminate weaknesses and flaws in the survey instrument. In particular, some of the items had to be reworded as they appeared vague and confusing. Although with sample size of 30, the analysis from the pilot study suggested satisfactory internal consistency among the items as the minimum alpha value was above the recommended minimum threshold of 0.7 (Pallant, 2007).

3.7.1 Qualitative Data Collection

As suggested by Saunders et al (2009), combining two or more data collections methods enhances the credibility of the study. In view of this, and for the purpose of triangulation, and establishing consistency with the results from the quantitative data, qualitative data was also collected. In doing so, a five-member focus group made up of two administrators and lecturers each, and a student leader was formed on four campuses of the selected

institutions (one in each region of the study context) for discussions. The selection of members was done purposively such that people with considerable knowledge to give relevant information on the subject matter were selected.

The discussions focused on three key thematic areas. These included the perceived nature of IE characterizing private universities operations, governance mechanisms (faculty governance and quality assurance), and academic performance. The guidelines for the focus group discussions were based on the study objectives. Letters were sent to group members a week before to inform them of the area of discussion for the necessary preparations. Also, before the discussions, the group developed a road map and ground rules for the discussion sessions. Questions were evenly distributed to members to capture the views of all members of the group during the discussion. Having sought the consent of the group, the discussions were recorded and transcribed. The transcript was later sent back to members for validation. This was done to ensure that the information captured was the true reflection of the discussion. Based on the feedback received, the necessary corrections were made to validate the data for further analysis.

3.8 Data Analysis

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques in view of the fact that a mixed-method approach was adopted in the study. The quantitative data were analysed with descriptive and inferential statistical tools with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Lisrel 8.5 software. Lisrel was used to analyse CFA using covariance-based input while the SPSS was used for descriptive and inferential analyses (Hair et al., 2014). Specifically, the researcher used frequencies and percentages to describe the profile of respondents considered in the study. Further,

descriptive statistics were employed to evaluate objective one and research question one while Ordinary Least Squares was used to evaluate objectives two through to four. Specifically, using SPSS, regression analyses were run in estimating the hypothesized path.

In the qualitative phase, a content analysis approach, where deductions and inferences were made, was adopted in analysing data obtained from the focus group discussions. The results from the analyses were presented and discussed. However, prior to evaluating the study's hypotheses, steps were taken to address potential issues regarding validity and reliability. These are discussed in the section that follows.

3.9 Validity Test

Generally, validity refers to the degree to which the data gathering instrument measures what it is intended to while reliability seeks to assess the extent of consistency in the data gathered (Saunders et al., 2009; Pallant, 2007). In assessing the validity and reliability of the data, the following steps, in addition to the procedural measures used (see section 3.7.4) were taken. First, a reliability test was conducted using Cronbach Alpha (CA) (see Table 4.3 for alpha coefficient). The underlying rationale is to test the internal consistency of the scales employed to measure the constructs (Pallant, 2007). Second, exploratory factor analysis (using Principal Component Analysis) was performed to assess whether the items truly measure their respective underlying construct (Hair et al., 2014). Finally, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine discriminant validity (see the next sections).

3.9.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA): Unidimensionality

Unidimensionality refers to the extent to which a single construct underlies or represents a set of measures and this could be assessed through the use of EFA (O'Leary-Kelly & Vokurka, 1998). Authors such as Hair et al. (2014), Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) indicate that EFA could help in reducing a large set of measures to manageable factors and help in exploring the underlying structure of a given set of measures. For parsimonious reasons and necessity of relevance of ratio of measures to sample size, and given that the items were used in a different context (Ghana), the researcher conducted EFA on a parcel-basis (Field, 2009; Pallant, 2007; O'Leary-Kelly & Vokurka, 1998). This required subjecting each set of theoretical-related measures to analysis.

In consistence with related literature (see Danese & Romano, 2011), the researcher relied on Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and Varimax as the EFA estimation and rotation methods respectively. Given the relatively small sample size used in the study, only measures with loadings of at least .40 which did not have equally high cross-loadings on other components were considered as indicating relevant associations with their constructs (Hair et al. 2014; Field, 2009).

According to Hair et al. (2014) and Pallant (2007), a determination of components (factors) to 'extract' form EFA can be based on Kaiser's criterion where factors that have an eigenvalue of 1 or more are considered to be selected. In following this recommendation, only factors with Eigenvalues of 1.00 and above were selected (Hair et al. 2014; Pallant, 2007). Further, to assess the factorability of the data, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used (Pallant, 2007). The Kaiser- Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy value should

be 0.6 or more, and the Barlett's Test of Sphericity value should be significant (Pallant, 2007). (See Tables 4.1 and 4.2 in Chapter 4).

3.9.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity

Whereas convergent validity describes the extent to which multiple methods of capturing a construct produce the same results, discriminant validity relates to the degree of uniqueness of measures in measuring different constructs (O'Leary-Kelly & Vokurka, 1998). As indicated by O'Leary-Kelly and Vokurka (1998), the failure to achieve convergent validity and discriminant validity could lead to obtaining results that do not clearly or correctly reveal the relationships among the constructs of the study. In accordance with the literature (Hair et al., 2014; Vieira, 2011), CFA was used in assessing these aspects of validity in the study. Unlike EFA, in CFA, the linkages between the measures and their theoretical constructs are predetermined, specified, and accordingly estimated by the researcher (O'Leary-Kelly & Vokurka, 1998).

Similar statistical procedures used in and justifications offered for the EFA were drawn in the CFA. In Hair et al.'s (2014) view, CFA could be used as a direct method of cross-validating the results obtained from the EFA and thus it was deemed appropriate in this study. Using the maximum likelihood method as the estimation method and covariance-based input, the researcher followed procedural treatments offered by Vieira (2011) and Diamantopoulos and Siguaw (2000) and used LISREL 8.50 as the statistical software (See Tables 17 and 18 in Chapter 4).

3.9.3 Method Bias Assessment

Relating concerns of Common Method Bias (CMB) often associated with questionnaire administration, the study adopted some recommended measures and treatments (see Podsakoff et al., 2003) in minimising, as well as assessing the extent of CMB present in the data used in the study. As a preventive measure, the researcher relied on multiple respondents (administrators and Deans). Also, varied and wide-ranged scales were adopted. Lastly, the measures were positioned/ordered in such a way that does not easily suggest the associations among constructs that the researcher is interested in.

Notwithstanding these, the study relied on CFA procedures to examine the likely presence of CMB in the data. The Method-Only model was estimated by allowing all the retained measures after the EFA load onto a single latent variable. The Goodness-of-fit Indices obtained from the CMB analysis are presented in Section 4.4.1 in the next chapter.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics refer to the norms and rules governing the conduct of a particular study (Saunders et al 2009). Ethical issues arise when participants are not given absolute details on a piece of research (Bryman, 2004). It is important that in conducting research, researchers must follow rules and standards to address any ethical issues. In complying with ethical standards, consent of all the institutions involved in the study was sought before distributing the questionnaires to the participants. In doing so, a letter of introduction from the University of Education (see Appendix IV) was sent to all participating institutions. This exercise was made to seek the formal consent of the respondents (Robson, 2002). In addition, anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents, and information respectively were also taken into consideration. Specifically, respondents were assured of confidentiality, and all responses were treated

anonymously. In doing so, all names and identities attributed to the individual respondents were not disclosed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0. INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents in detail the results of data analysis and results. Specifically, it presents the preliminary analysis in terms of the response rate of the respondents, the demographic background of the respondents, measurement of the model analysis, and reliability test. The reliability test employed includes Cronbach alpha, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and then confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to evaluate "unidimensionality" and "validity' of the measures respectively. The chapter also presents a statistical evaluation of the study objectives. Under this section, structural estimation, model estimation, and hypothesis testing (both direct and indirect relationships of the constructs) were captured and presented in table forms.

4.1 Sample and Response Rate

As Ding et. al. (1995) suggest and stated in the preceding chapter (chapter three), a minimum sample size of 100 to 150 is appropriate to determine differences among data. Accordingly, a sample size of 122 was used to represent 61 private universities. Out of the 122 questionnaires sent, 100 were returned completed, representing a response rate of 82% as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Sample and Response Rate

Respondents (University College)	Sample Size	Questionnaires Returned	Response Rate
Administrators (Registrars)	61	50	82%
Academic Staff (Deans)	61	50	82%
Total	**122**	**100**	**82%**

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

4.2 Demographic Data of Respondents

This section of the study presents the demographic characteristic of the respondents as shown in Table 4.2.1 - 4.2.4. The demographic characteristics considered included the gender of respondents, age of respondents, educational level, current position in the university, and years of existence of the universities.

Following existing tradition, the nature of the study required that people who had a better understanding of issues being understudied provide responses for the study. Accordingly, such respondents from the institutions contacted were preferably Registrars and Deans as shown in Table 4.2.1.

Table 4.2.1: Respondent Level of Education

Variable name	Category	Frequency	Percent
Current position in	Registrar	50	50
	Dean	50	50
	Total	**100**	**100.0**

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

In terms of age, most of the informants were males (68%) and 32% females with the majority of them (85%) falling within the age brackets of 46- 55 as indicated in Table 4.2.2

Table 4.2.2: Respondent Age

Variable name	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	26-35	0	0
	36-45	11	11
	46-55	85	85
	56-60	4	4
	Total	**100**	**100.0**

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

Per the results shown in Table 4.2.3, the 100 Registrars and Deans (50 each) were involved in the study with the average years of existence of the universities being 20 years.

Table 4.2.3: Respondent Level of Education

Variable name	Category	Frequency	Percent
Current position in	Registrar	50	50
	Dean	50	50
	Total	**100**	**100.0**

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

In terms of qualification, the majority of the respondents (73%) have had their second degree while 27% were PhD holders (see table 4.2.4) These results indicate that the respondents are likely to understand the operations of their universities and the issues under consideration well. Also, the distribution of the education level (i.e. most of them

having 2nd Degree) also instilled confidence that most of them were likely to understand the items on the data collection instrument given to them.

Table 4.2.4: Respondent Level of Education

Variable name	Category	Frequency	Percent
Educational level	1st Degree	0	0
	2nd degree	73	73
	PhD	27	27
	Total	**100**	**100.0**

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

4.3 Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

As shown in Table 4.5, all the measures for the four dimensions of the institutional environment were subjected to EFA after initial individual EFA had been conducted on each set of measures capturing each dimension. The EFA results shown in Table 4.3 produced four components, which together explained 69.403% of the variance. Components 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively accounted for 34.853%, 17.503%, 9.767%, and 7.280% of the variance. All loadings were above .40 and ranged from .584 to .860. Also, the KMO value was above the minimum threshold of .60 and Bartlett's test of sphericity reached statistical significance level ($p < .01$) signifying the factorability of the data (see Table 4.3) (Pallant, 2007). These results show the unidimensionality of the measures underlying the four components of the institutional environment considered in this study (O'Leary-Kelly & Vokurka, 1998).

Table 4.3: EFA Results: Institutional Environment

	Loadings			
Measures[1]:	1 (Regulatory)	2 (Cognitive)	3 (Normative)	4 (Mimetic)
RS1	.824			
RS2	.826			
RS3	.810			
RS4	.845			
RS5	.818			
NS1			.760	
NS2			.682	
NS3			.830	
NS4			.773	
COG1		.704		
COG2		.860		
COG3		.792		
COG4		.855		
COG5		.584		
MS1				.851
MS2				.815
MS3				.758
MS4				.641
Eigenvalue	6.274	3.151	1.758	1.310
Variance explained	34.853%	17.503%	9.767%	7.280%

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = .814

Bartlett's test of Sphericity: Chi-square (degree of freedom) [χ^2(DF)] = 1045.014 (153); p = .000

Notes: [1]all measures were subjected to EFA. RS=regulatory system; NS= normative system; COG= culturalpcognitive; MS= mimetic system

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

Similarly, each set of measures for the other constructs (i.e. faculty governance, quality assurance, and academic performance) were subjected to EFA. The results obtained are shown in Table 4.4. For each case, only one component emerged and the associated loadings were above .40. The measures for faculty governance, quality assurance, and academic performance accounted for 72.754%, 60.454%, and 67.863% of their respective total variance. Their respective KMOs were above .60 and Bartlett's tests of sphericity reached statistical significance ($p < .01$). These results also suggest unidimensionality of the respective measures for faculty governance, quality assurance, and academic performance (O'Leary-Kelly & Vokurka, 1998).

Table 4.4: EFA Results: Faculty Governance, Quality Assurance, and Academic Performance

Measures[1]:	Loadings		
	Faculty Governance	Quality assurance	Academic performance
STA1	.824		
STA2	.874		
STA3	.830		
STA4	.879		
STA5	.900		
STA6	.806		
QAS1		.818	
QAS2		.888	
QAS3		.813	
QAS4		.765	
QAS5		.809	
QAS6		.799	
QAS7		.485	
PEF1			.850
PEF2			.854
PEF3			.751
PEF4			.851
PEF5			.811
PEF6			.813
PEF7			.832
Eigenvalue	4.365	4.232	4.750
Variance explained	72.754%	60.454%	67.863%
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.908	.880	.874
Chi-square (degree of freedom) [χ^2(DF)]	420.788 (15)	369.684 (21)	484.313(21)
P	.000	.000	.000

Notes: [1]EFA was conducted on measures each construct (separately). STA = staffing; QAS= quality assurance system; PERF= academic performance.

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

4.3.1 Results of CFA: Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity

Following a recommendation by Hair et al. (2014), CFA was conducted and good model fits were obtained in case (see Table 20). None of the CFA models reached statistical significance level (i.e. $p < .05$), which indicates that the specified measurement model was not significantly different from the data (Hair et al., 2014; Diamantopoulos and Siguaw, 2000) and thus suggest good CFA models were obtained in the study. Also, referring from Table 4.6, all the recommended goodness-of-fit indices (GOFIs) were within their recommended thresholds (i.e. normed chi-square < 2.00; root mean square error of approximation < .07; non-normed fit index > .90; comparative fit index > .90; standardized root mean square residual < .07 (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Hair et al., 2014; Vieira, 2011).

The measures and their loadings that passed the CFA tests are shown in Table 4.5. All loadings were above .50 and were statistically significant ($p < .01$). This in relation to the GOFIs suggested that convergent validity was achieved in each case. Discriminant validity was evaluated by computing the average variance extracted (AVE) values and comparing them to the shared variances between the constructs (Hair et al., 2014). Firstly, the AVEs obtained were above the minimum cut-off of .50. Secondly, they were larger than the shared variances (See Table 4.7). These indicate the distinctiveness of the variances of each set of measures used in the study and thus signify that discriminant validity was attained in the study (Hair et el., 2014).

Table 4.5: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Construct/measures		Loadings (t-values)
Regulatory system: CA = .894; CR = .915		
RS1	The legal system in Ghana encourages smooth running of university activities	.763 (fixed)
RS2	local and national government support and protect our university	.768 (7.76)
RS3	I have confidence in the higher education regulatory system	.813 (8.28)
RS4	It is easy to obtain accreditation to operate as a private university	.837 (8.54)
RS5	It is easy to obtain affiliate status from the public universities	.795 (8.07)
Normative system: CA = .833; CR = .836		
NS1	Our university belongs to a highly regulated educational sector	.824 (fixed)
NS2	Our university has difficulty complying with the educational standard of practices*	.627 (6.29)
NS3	Our university belongs to a sector that encourages high standards of performance	.838 (8.62)
NS4	Overall, my/our university follows the standard practices of higher education set by the regulatory authorities.	.692 (7.06)
Cognitive system: CA = .850; CR = .859		
COG1	It is perceived that private universities operate as business entities	.642 (fixed)
COG2	It is perceived that private universities are master of their own rules	.841 (6.71)
COG3	It is perceived that a university degree is awarded and not actually earned	.736 (6.11)
COG4	It is perceived that most people are not motivated to seek redress when they feel short-changed by private universities.	.874 (6.84)
Mimetic system: CA = .857; CR = .861		

MS1	Private universities use mentor institutions as benchmarks.	.830 (fixed)
MS2	Students are likely to switch to other universities when they perceive an institution's performances to be non- competitive.	.861 (9.08)
MS3	Students choose private universities based on image and reputation	.768 (8.19)
Faculty governance: CA = .841; CR = .931		
STA1	My university uses lecturers with ranks of senior lecturer and above	.771 (fixed)
STA3	My university relies on employed full-time lecturers	.805 (8.48)
STA4	My university employs PhD holders	.843 (8.96)
STA5	My university organises training for the fulltime academic staff after appointment	.901 (9.66)
STA6	My university organises training for the part-time academic staff after appointment	.748 (7.77)
Quality assurance: **CA = .868; CR = .869**		
QAS1	My institution engages in monitoring of students' performance	.783 (fixed)
QAS2	My institution engages in monitoring of examination process	.827 (8.25)
QAS4	My institution engages in moderation of examination questions	.792 (7.92)
QAS6	My institution engages in assessment of academic staff performances	.756 (7.54)
Academic performance: CA = .867; CR = .877		
PEF2	Graduates from my institution are accepted on the job market	.860 (fixed)
PEF3	Graduates from my institution are competitive in their progression to higher academic laurels	.575 (6.13)
PEF4	Graduates from my institution get placement in academic institutions.	.926 (11.67)

PEF7	Graduates from my institution are able to perform well on the job	.815 (9.99)

Notes: *reversed coded; CA = Cronbach alpha; CR = Composite reliability

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

Table 4.6: CFA Goodness-of-fit Indices

Model	χ^2	DF	χ^2/DF	p-value	RMSEA	NNFI	CFI	SRMR
-Set 1	116.86	98	1.192	.094	.044	.952	.961	.057
-Set 2	6.69	5	1.338	.245	.058	.988	.994	.022
-Set 3	1.21	2	0.605	.546	.000	1.000	1.000	.013
-Set 4	2.48	2	1.240	.290	.049	.993	.998	.022

Notes: Set 1 = Institutional Environment; Set 2 = Faculty Governance; Set 3 = Quality Assurance; Set 4 = Academic Performance; χ^2 (DF) = Chi-square (degree of freedom); χ^2/DF = Normed Chi-square; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; NNFI = Non-Normed Fit Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual.

Table 4.7: Inter-Construct Variances Correlations; Shared Variances; Average Variance Extracted

Constructs:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Regulatory system	**(.633)**	.125	.006	.075	.042	.025	.043
2. Mimetic system	.354	**(.563)**	.104	.240	.128	.166	.187
3. Cognitive system	.078	.323	**(.606)**	.194	.081	.063	.068
4. Normative system	.273	.490	.440	**(.673)**	.172	.163	.299
5. Faculty governance	.206	.358	.284	.415	**(.665)**	.235	.141
6. Quality assurance	.158	.408	.250	.404	.485	**(.624)**	.216
7. Academic performance	.207	.432	.260	.547	.376	.465	**(.648)**

Notes: Correlations are in the lower diagonal; Shared Variances are in the upper diagonal; Average Variance Extracted are in the principal diagonal.

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

4.4 Reliability Test

Two statistical techniques as recommended in the literature (see Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; O'Leary-Kelly& Vokurka, 1998) were relied on to examine the reliability of the study's measures. First, Cronbach alpha (CA) was used to assess the scale reliability among each set of measures that passed the CFA tests. Second, the composite reliability (CR) index (which was computed from the CFA loadings and errors) was used. In both cases, the CA and CR values for each set of measures were above the minimum thresholds of .70 and .60 respectively (see Table 4.5). This demonstrates that the measures used in the study had good internal consistency and stability (O'Leary-Kelly & Vokurka, 1998; Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Field, 2009).

4.4.1 Method Bias Assessment

As stated in the preceding chapter see Section 3.), the study used CFA procedures to examine the likely presence of CMB in the data. The Method-only model was estimated by allowing all the retained measures after the EFA load onto a single latent variable. The Goodness-of-fit Indices obtained: χ^2 (DF) = 3423.27 (860); χ^2/DF = 3.981; p = .000; RMSEA = .174; NNFI = .321; CFI = .355; SRMR = .144; clearly indicated that a single factor model poorly fit the data. There was a statistically significant difference between the data and the single factor model (i.e. $p < .01$) which indicates that CMB does not sufficiently describe the study's data. Given this, a conclusion was reached that CMB may not pose many threats to the results and conclusions of the study.

4.4.2 Evaluating Assumptions Underlying the Use of OLS Regression Analysis

As recommended by Hair et al. (2014) and Bagozzi and Yi (2012), it is important to evaluate the assumptions underlying the statistical tools used in evaluating the study hypotheses. Accordingly, in this section, the methods followed in estimating the study's hypotheses and the underlying assumptions are presented. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis was the main statistical method used to evaluate objective 2-5. However, prior to this, a correlational analysis was conducted to explore the linkages among the variables and help examine the key assumptions underlying the use of OLS. Authors such as Field (2009) and Hair et al. (2014) indicate that the goodness of estimations provided by OLS regression analysis is depended on the extent to which the data used do not violate certain assumptions. Missing values, outliers, independence of error terms, normality, linearity, and multicollinearity are the key assumptions evaluated in the study.

First, the extent of missing values in the dataset was assessed using the missing value analysis tool in SPSS. Missing values on both rows (i.e. cases) and columns (i.e. variables) were each less than 5% in the data used in the regression analysis. This suggests that missing values were not predominant in the study's data (Hair et al., 2014). Notwithstanding this, given the sample size used for the study, the expected mean model as suggested by Hair et al. (2014) was employed to estimate and replace missing values. Next, outliers were assessed visually using boxplots and also using Cook's distance (CD) and Mahalanobis distance (MD). Both the CD and MD values (i.e. .014 and 7.920) obtained were within recommended cuts (i.e. CD < .10; and MD < 25) and did confirm the results obtained from the boxplots that outliers were not much of a concern in the study (Field, 2009).

Durbin-Watson (DW) values were relied on in examining the independence of the error terms of the proposed model (Field, 2009). The DW obtained in all the regression models estimated did not deviate much from 2.0, which suggests that the residual terms were not substantially correlating (Field, 2009).

Normality was assessed by first of all examining the distribution of data of each variable (using histogram, and Skewness and Kurtosis values) and secondly, by the distribution of the error terms (using Probability Plot [P-P]) (Pallant, 2007). The histogram revealed a near- normality distributed scores for each variable. The skewness and kurtosis values as shown in Table 4.8 fall within the recommended thresholds of ±3 and ± 10 respectively (Kline, 2010) which further indicates that the distribution of the scores of the variables was satisfactorily normal.

Also, the P-P revealed results that suggest that the error terms were satisfactorily normally distributed as they fairly lied along the diagonal from bottom-left to top-right (Pallant, 2007). Also, the scatterplot of the relationship between the standardised residuals and the predicted values did not in any case show systematic or clear patterns (e.g. curvilinear), as the points were rectangularly spread with most of them concentrated along the zero axes. Together, these results indicate that the assumption of normality was not violated in the study.

Correlation analysis and collinearity diagnostics were used to assess multicollinearity. As indicated by authors such as Hair et al. (2014) and Pallant (2007), high correlations (i.e. above .70) between independent variables suggest the presence of multicollinearity. Per the regression models specified and estimated in the study, the correlation results as shown in Table 4.9, none of the correlations were above .70. The highest correlation between the independent variables was .490; which is far below the maximum cut-off value of .70. Furthermore, the variance inflation factor values generated via the collinearity diagnostics (see Table 4.8) were all far below the upper-bound of 10.00 (Pallant, 2007). These results clearly show that the multicollinearity assumption was not violated in the study. Lastly, the assumption of linearity was examined using correlational analysis (see Section 4.6.1). Among the hypothesised paths, the results obtained as shown in Table 4.9 reveal significant associations between the predictors and the criteria which indicates the existence of relevant linear relationships between the predictors and the criterion.

Table 4.9: Correlational Analysis Results

Variables:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Academic performance	1								
2. Faculty governance	.376**	1							
3. Quality assurance	.465**	.485**	1						
4. Regulation system	.207*	.206*	.158	1					
5. Normative system	.432**	.358**	.408**	.354**	1				
6. Cognitive system	.260**	.284**	.250*	.078	.323**	1			
7. Mimetic system	.547**	.415**	.404**	.273**	.490**	.440**	1		
8. Inst. size (log)	.109	-.029	-.020	.154	-.033	.073	.120	1	
9. Inst. experience (log)	-.102	-.254*	-.149	.085	-.037	-.102	-.066	.487**	1

Notes: *p < .05 (2-tailed); **p < .01 (2-tailed)

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

4.4.3 Correlational Analysis

In this section, the specific direction of relationships as well as the strength of association and statistical significance between the predictor variables and the criterion variables are presented. Firstly, the results as shown in Table 4.9 reveal statistically significant positive associations between each institutional environment dimension and academic performance. These suggest that higher levels of institutional forces within the private university environment in Ghana are perceived to be associated with higher levels of academic performance. Among the four dimensions of the institutional environment, the study reveals that the mimetic system has the highest association with academic performance ($r = .547$; $p < .01$). This is followed by normative system ($r = .432$; $p < .01$).

Also, statistically significant positive associations were found to exist between each of the institutional environment forces and (1) faculty governance and (2) quality assurance. Mimetic system and normative system were also found to be more correlated with both staffing governance ($r = .415$; $r = .404$; $p < .01$; respectively) and quality assurance ($r= .358$; $r = .408$; $p < .01$; respectively). Lastly, the results reveal that both staffing governance ($r = .376$; $p < .01$) and quality assurance ($r = .465$; $p < .01$) are significantly related with academic performance positively within the study's context. These indicate that higher levels of faculty governance and quality assurance are more likely to be associated with higher levels of academic performance.

With the exception of the link between an institutional experience (age) and faculty governance, none of the control variables (i.e. institutional age and size) were found to be significantly related to academic performance, faculty governance, and quality assurance. Among the control paths, the result in Table 4.9 indicates a statistically significant negative association between institutional experience and faculty governance; given $r = -.254$, $p < .05$. This implies that faculty governance is likely to be poor for institutions that have existed relatively longer in the study's context.

4.5. Evaluation of Study Objectives/ Questions

This section evaluates the study objective one in line with the research question one.

4.5.1 Prevalence of Institutional Forces in the Private Universities in Ghana

This objective seeks to answer research question 1 (what institutional forces, i.e. regulatory, normative, mimetic, and cultural-cognitive, prevail in the private universities in Ghana?). In assessing the institutional forces prevailing in the private universities in Ghana, descriptive statistical analysis was employed. Table 4.8 presents the descriptive

results of the composite variables used in the analysis. The results in Table 4.8 on the prevalence of institutional forces within the private university environment in Ghana suggest that the normative system is most predominant with the mean of 5.15 (SD = .1.096). This is followed by cognitive system (mean = 4.75; SD = .799), and then mimetic system (mean = 4.72; SD = 1.271) and lastly, regulatory system with the mean of 4.72 (SD = 1.271). Clearly, the average scores obtained on each of them is above the mid-point value on the scale used in the study. The results sufficiently substantiate the prevalence of regulative, normative culture, and mimetic systems as the institutionalised forces that characterise the private university environment in Ghana.

Table 4.8: Descriptive Analysis of Study's Constructs

Variables:	Min	Max	Mode	Median	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	VIF[1]
Academic performance	2.00	7.00	4.00 [a]	4.63	4.45	.990	-.767	1.475	n/a
Faculty governance	2.00	7.00	6.00	5.20	4.98	1.138	-1.021	.581	1.530
Quality assurance	3.00	7.00	6.00	5.50	5.10	.963	-.534	-.033	1.468
Regulation system	1.00	7.00	5.00	5.00	4.67	1.077	-.940	.629	1.214
Normative system	2.00	7.00	5.00 [a]	5.25	5.15	1.096	-.689	.938	1.597
Cognitive system	3.00	6.00	5.00	5.00	4.75	.799	-.512	-.154	1.303
Mimetic system	2.00	7.00	5.00	5.33	4.72	1.271	-.832	-.603	1.680
Inst. size (log)	3.09	4.63	3.09 [a]	4.17	3.92	.463	-.907	-.790	1.411
Inst. experience (log)	1.79	3.74	1.79[a]	2.08	2.86	.581	-.134	-.839	1.454

Notes: [a]Multi-modal (smallest shown); n/a = not applicable; [1]estimated with academic performance as the criterion

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

4.6. Model Specification and Results

Two main analyses were conducted to evaluate the study's hypotheses. First, direct effect analysis was conducted to examine the effect of each dimension of the institutional environment on academic performance, staffing governance, and quality assurance. Second, an indirect effect analysis was conducted and examine the mediating role of staffing governance and quality assurance in the link between each institutional environment factor and academic performance. Broadly, all the regression analyses that were conducted could be summarised as follows:

$AP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IE + \beta_2 IS + \beta_3 RS + \beta_4 NS + \beta_5 CS + \beta_6 MS + \beta_7 FG + \beta_8 QA + \varepsilon$ ----1

$SG = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IE + \beta_2 IS + \beta_3 RS + \beta_4 NS + \beta_5 CS + \beta_6 MS + \varepsilon$ ----------2

$QA = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IE + \beta_2 IS + \beta_3 RS + \beta_4 NS + \beta_5 CS + \beta_6 MS + \varepsilon$ ----------3

Where

AP = academic performance; IE = institutional experience; IS = institutional size; RS = regulatory system; NS = normative system; CS = cognitive system; MS = mimetic system; FG = faculty governance; QA = quality assurance; ε = error term

β_{0s} are the constants and $\beta_{1\text{-}6s}$ and β_7 and β_8 are the regression coefficients to be estimated.

4.6.1 Evaluating the Study Hypotheses (Based on Research Questions 2-4)

Following the preliminary analysis, and having satisfied the reliability and underlying assumption requirements, the researcher then evaluated the hypotheses of the study to address the research question 2-4. This section presents the results of the hypothesis evaluation.

4.6.2 Evaluating Hypothesis 1: Institutional Environment Positively Affects the Academic Performance of Private Universities in Ghana (Research Question 2)

Hypothesis 1 seeks to address research question 2: *To what extent does the institutional environment affect academic performance.* Given the sample size of the study and its likelihood of affecting the power of the analysis (Hair et al., 2014), the effect of each of the predictors (regulation, normative, cultural-cognitive, and mimetic) on the outcome variables was first and foremost estimated, while controlling for institutional size and experience. To examine the relative strength of each predictor, subsequent models were estimated by progressively including all the predictors. This became necessary to help evaluate the robustness of the estimates generated when each predictor of interest was considered separately (see Table 4.10).

Further, six models were estimated with Model 5 and Model 6 serving as robust models (see Table 4.11). As shown in Table 4.11, each of the six models was statistically significant. Respectively, model 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 explained 8.1%, 23.0%, 9.5%, 31.2%, 35.2%, and 40.1% of the variance.

Concerning hypothesis one (H1), results in model 1 to 4 (which analysed the individual dimension) suggest that each of the four dimensions of the institutional environment (i.e. regulatory system, normative system, a cognitive system, and mimetic system) were found to positively and significantly affect academic performance. However, in Model 5 (which analysed all the dimensions together), only the normative system and mimetic systems were found to significantly impact academic performance positively. Both regulatory and cognitive systems were found to have an insignificant effect on academic performance. In Model 6 (which controlled for the direct effects of faculty governance and quality assurance), only the mimetic system was found to significantly affect academic performance positively. The regression coefficients of all the other three

dimensions (i.e. -.001 for regulatory, .161 for normative, and -.036 for cognitive) were not significantly different from zero. These results generally indicate that among the institutional forces within the private university environment in Ghana, the mimetic system, followed by the normative system, better predict academic performance in relative terms (see Table 4.11 for the results), suggesting that Hypothesis one (1) is partially supported. Thus, the null hypothesis that institutional environment does not positively affects the academic performance of private universities in Ghana is rejected.

Table 4.10: OLS Regression Results: Institutional Environment – Academic Performance Link

Variables	**Dependents** Academic Performance	(Standardized coefficients)
Independents	Model 1	Model 2
Controls		
Bus. exp.	.179 (1.585)	.132 (1.335)
Firm size	-.205(-1.834)†	-.132 (-1.357)
Hypothesized paths		
Regulation		.004 (.039)
Normative		.233(2.286)*
Cultural-Cognitive		-.002 (-.232)
Mimetic		.417(4.003)***
Fit Indices		
R^2	.043	.353
ΔR^2	.043	.309
Adjusted R^2	.24	.310
F statistics Δ	2.196	11.072
D/f	97	93

Notes: Dependent variable: Academic performance; Beta values are shown before the parenthesis; t-values are in the parenthesis; †p < .10; *p < .05; *** p <; hypothesised path evaluated at 1-tailed test (i.e. t ≥ 1.645).
Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

Table 4.11: OLS Regression Results: Institutional Environment – Academic Performance Link

Predictors	Standardised estimates					
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5[a]	Model 6[a]
Control paths:						
-Inst. Size	.179 (1.585)	.217 (2.111) *	.171 (1.521)	.103 (1.041)	.132 (1.335)	.125 (1.294)
-Inst. Experience	-.205(-1.834)†	-.191(-1.861) †	-.161(-1.431)	-.117 (-1.191)	-.132 (-1.357)	-.089 (-.909)
-Ft. govern.						.052 (.522)
-Q. assurance						.232 (2.362) *
Hypothesised paths:						
-Regulatory[1]	.197(1.991)*				.004 (.039)	-.001 (-.001)
-Normative[1]		.432(4.821)***			.233(2.286)*	.161 (1.567)
-Cognitive[1]			.231(2.344)*		-.002 (-.232)	-.036 (-.389)
-Mimetic[2]				.527(6.119)***	.417(4.003)***	.348(3.313)***
R^2	.081	.230	.095	.312	.352	.401
Adjusted R^2	.053	.206	.067	.290	.310	.348
F-statistics	2.830*	9.548***	3.364*	14.493***	8.418***	7.615***

Notes: Dependent variable: Academic performance; Beta values are shown before the parenthesis; t-values are in the parenthesis; †$p < .10$; *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$; [a]Robust model; hypothesised path evaluated at 1-tailed test (i.e. $t \geq 1.645$); [1]partially supported link; [2]fully supported link.

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

4.6.3 Evaluating hypothesis 2: Institutional Environment Positively Affects Faculty Governance of Private Universities in Ghana. (Research Question 2)

Hypothesis 2 answers research question 2: *To what extent does the institutional environment affect faculty governance?*

For hypothesis two (H2), as indicated in Tables 4.12 and 4.13, each dimension of the institutional environment, when considered individually (while controlling for institutional size and experience), was found to significantly affect faculty governance and also quality assurance. However, when considered together, only the mimetic system was found to significantly predict faculty governance. In relative terms, the mimetic system was found to predict the variations in both faculty governance better, lending partial support for hypothesis two (2) and rejecting the null hypothesis that institutional environment does not positively affects faculty governance of private universities in Ghana.

Table 4.12: OLS Regression Results: Institutional Environment – Faculty Governance Link

Variables	**Dependents** Faculty Governance	(Standardized coefficients)
Independents	Model 1	Model 2
Controls		
Bus. exp.	.092 (.834)	.052 (.497)
Firm size	-.318 (-2.902) **	-.256 (-2.470) *
Hypothesized paths		
Regulation		.885 (.878)
Normative		.172 (1.588)
Cultural-Cognitive		.084 (.830)
Mimetic		.247 (2.232) *
Fit Indices		
R^2	.076	.269
ΔR^2	.076	.196
Adjusted R^2	.057	.222
F statistics Δ	4.010	6.118
D/f	97	93

Notes: Dependent variable: faculty governance; Beta values are shown before the parenthesis; t-values are in the parenthesis; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; hypothesised path evaluated at 1-tailed test (i.e. $t \geq 1.645$).
Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

Table 4.13: OLS Regression Results: Institutional Environment – Faculty Governance Link

Predictors	Standardised estimates				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5[a]
Control paths:					
-Inst. Size	.092 (.834)	.131 (1.255)	.084 (.766)	.046 (.439)	.052 (.497)
-Inst. Experience	.318(2.902)**	.305(2.916)**	.269(2.452)*	.251(2.410)*	.256(2.470)*
Hypothesised paths:					
-Regulatory[1]	.219 (2.267)*				.885 (.878)
-Normative[1]		.351(3.840)***			.172 (1.588)
-Cognitive[1]			.251(2.604)**		.084 (.830)
-Mimetic[2]				.393(4.292)***	.247(2.232)*
R^2	.123	.199	.137	.225	.269
Adjusted R^2	.096	.174	.110	.201	.222
F-statistics	4.501**	7.967***	5.093**	9.294***	5.698***

Notes: Dependent variable: faculty governance; Beta values are shown before the parenthesis; t-values are in the parenthesis; †p < .10; *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001; [a]Robust model; hypothesised path evaluated at 1-tailed test (i.e. t ≥ 1.645); [1]partially supported link; [2]fully supported link.
Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

4.6.4 Evaluating hypothesis 3: Institutional Environment Positively Affects Quality Assurance of Private Universities in Ghana (Research question 2)

Hypothesis 3 aims at addressing research question 2: *To what extent does the institutional environment affect quality assurance?*

Regarding hypothesis three (H3), and as shown in Tables 4.14 and 4.15, the mimetic system and normative system were found to significantly predict quality assurance. Again

mimetic system was found to best predict the variations in quality assurance in relative terms (see Table 4.12 for the results). Thus, partially supporting hypothesis three (3) and rejecting the null hypothesis that institutional environment does not positively affects quality assurance of private universities in Ghana.

Table 4.14: OLS Regression Results: Institutional Environment – Quality Assurance Link

Variables	**Dependents** Quality Assurance	(Standardized coefficients)
Independents	Model 1	Model 2
Controls		
Bus. exp.	.045 (.394)	.020 (.187)
Firm size	-.185 (-1.631)	-.129 (-1.220)
Hypothesized paths		
Regulation		.000 (.002)
Normative		.272 (2.462) **
Cultural-Cognitive		.041 (.402)
Mimetic		.241 (2.131) **
Fit Indices		
R^2	.026	.238
ΔR^2	.026	.212
Adjusted R^2	.006	.188
F statistics Δ	1.294	6.452
D/f	97	93

Notes: Dependent variable: Quality Assurance; Beta values are shown before the parenthesis; t-values are in the parenthesis; **p < .01; hypothesised path evaluated at 1-tailed test (i.e. t ≥ 1.645).

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

Table 4.15: OLS Regression Results: Institutional Environment – Quality Assurance Link

Predictors	Standardised estimates				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5[a]
Control paths:					
-Inst. Size	.045 (.394)	.078 (.738)	.032 (.284)	.010 (-.090)	.020 (.187)
-Inst. Experience	-.185(1.631)	-.172 (-1.635)	-.141(-1.243)	-.118(1.106)	-.129 (-1.220)
Hypothesised paths:					
-Regulatory[1]	.166 (1.656)†				.000 (.002)
-Normative [2]		.404(4.394)***			.272(2.462)*
-Cognitive [1]			.233 (2.343)*		.041 (.402)
-Mimetic [2]				.397(4.215)***	.241 (2.131) *
R^2	.053	.189	.079	.178	.238
Adjusted R^2	.023	.164	.050	.152	.188
F-statistics	1.793	7.461***	2.733*	6.935***	4.830***

Notes: Dependent variable: Quality Assuramce; Beta values are shown before the parenthesis; t-values are in the parenthesis; †p < .10; *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001; [a]Robust model; hypothesised path evaluated at 1-tailed test (i.e. t ≥ 1.645); [1]partially supported link; [2]fully supported link

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

4.6.5 Evaluating Hypothesis 4: Governance Mechanism (Faculty Governance and Quality Assurance) Positively Associates with the Academic Performance of Private Universities in Ghana (Research Questions 3 and 4).

Hypothesis 4 seeks to answer research questions 3 and 4:

3. What is the relationship between faculty governance and academic performance?

4. What is the relationship between quality assurance and academic performance?

As indicated in Tables 4.16 and 4.17, although both faculty governance and quality assurance have positive effect on academic performance, faculty governance showed a weak relationship with academic performance and was statistically insignificant. However, results on the relationship between quality assurance and academic performance provided statistically significant support (given $\beta = .238$; $p < .10$). Thus, partially supporting hypothesis 4 and rejecting the null hypothesis that governance mechanisms does not positively associate with academic performance of private universities in Ghana.

Table 4.16: OLS Regress Analysis: Faculty Governance and Quality Assurance – Academic Performance Link

Variables	**Dependents** Academic Performance	(Standardized coefficients)
Independents	Model 1	Model 2
Controls		
Bus. exp.	.208 (1.830)*	.160 (1.577)
Firm size	-.203 (-1.784)*	-.078 (-.746)
Hypothesized paths		
Faculty Gov.		.181 (1.755)
Qty. Assurance		.369 (3.668)***
Fit Indices		
R^2	0.043	0.265
ΔR^2	0.043	0.222
Adjusted R^2	0.024	0.234
F statistics Δ	2.196	14.347
D/f	97	95

Notes: Dependent variable: Academic Performance; Beta values are shown before the parenthesis; t-values are in the parenthesis; *** $p < .001$; hypothesised path evaluated at 1-tailed test (i.e. $t \geq 1.645$).

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

Table 4.17: OLS Regress Analysis: Mediation Analysis Results

	Unstandardised estimates			
	Performance	F. governance	Q. assurance	Performance
Control paths:				
-Inst. Size	.279 (.207)	.175 (.254)	.050 (.218)	.259 (.202)
-Inst. Experience	-.221 (163)	-.514 (.201) *	-.222 (.172)	-.146 (.164)
- faculty governance				.043 (.086)
-Quality assurance				.238 (.100) *
-Norm	.208 (.086) *	.219 (.106) *	.245 (.091) **	.141 (.088)
-Mimetic	.320 (.076) ***	.256 (.093) **	.193 (.080) *	.262 (.077) **
R^2	.352	.258	.236	.400
Adjusted R^2	.324	.227	.204	.361
F-statistics	12.875***	8.270***	7.346***	10.333***

Notes: Dependent variable: Academic performance; Beta values are shown before the parenthesis; standard errors are in the parenthesis; †p < .10; *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001; hypothesised path evaluated at t ≥ 1.645

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

4.7 Mediation (Indirect Effects) Analysis (Research Questions 5 and 6)

This section of the chapter assesses if the effect of the institutional environment on academic performance is channelled via faculty governance and quality assurance. According to Preacher and Hayes (2008), "mediation exists when a predictor affects a dependent variable indirectly through at least one intervening variable, or mediator"

(p.879). For robustness purposes, the study employed three key different strategies often used in conducting mediation analysis. These include bootstrapping, Baron and Kenny's 'causal' technique, and Sobel test. First, bootstrapping technique was used to explore the possibility of any significant indirect effect. Next, paths where mediation effects were likely, Baron and Kenny's method was used to estimate the actual direct, indirect effects, and total effects. Lastly, Sobel test was used to re-assess the significance of any indirect effect found.

Bootstrapping, as advocated by Preacher and Hayes (2008), requires the use of repeated data sampling from the original dataset and estimating the indirect effect in each resampled data to get an approximation of the sampling distribution of the indirect effect which is used to estimate a confidence interval for the indirect effect. In situations where the confidence interval includes zero, it is concluded that the indirect effect is not statistically significant (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). Following this analogy in SPSS, results obtained indicated that although the effects of the regulatory system and cognitive system (see Tables 4.11- 4.15) on academic performance, faculty governance, and quality assurance are statistically significant, the confidence interval of their indirect effects included zeros. As such, these dimensions of the institutional environment were dropped from further analysis. Only that of the mimetic system and the normative system passed this test and thus considered in the subsequent analysis.

Subjecting mimetic system and normative system to further test using Baron and Kenny's (1986) 'causal' technique required following the following steps (see Preacher and Hayes, 2008, for details):

Regressing the outcome variable (Y, i.e. academic performance) on the dependent variable (X, i.e. mimetic system and normative system). This is to show that X has effect on Y. In this case, if no effect is found, there is no need to proceed with the subsequent step.

Regressing the mediator (M, i.e. staffing governance, quality assurance) on X. If no significant effect is found, stop!

Regressing Y on M, while controlling for X (i.e. included in the regression model). This is to show that M has unique effect on Y even after controlling for X and that such effect is not as a result of X being affecting both M and Y.

Following the above steps, if the signs (i.e. direction of effects) of the proposed model is consistent with the results obtained, mediation is found when the effect of X on Y as found in Step 1 (almost) becomes zero in Step 3. In such case, a full mediation is found. However, if the effect of X on Y found in Step 3 is still significant, partial mediation is found (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). In following the above procedures, the results obtained are summarized in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18: OLS Regress Analysis: Mediation Analysis Results

	Unstandardised estimates			
	Performance	Ft. governance	Q. assurance	Performance
Control paths:				
-Inst. Size	.279 (.207)	.175 (.254)	.050 (.218)	.259 (.202)
-Inst. Experience	-.221 (163)	-.514 (.201) *	-.222 (.172)	-.146 (.164)
- faculty governance				.043 (.086)
-Quality assurance				.238 (.100) *
-Norm	.208 (.086) *	.219 (.106) *	.245 (.091) **	.141 (.088)
-Mimetic	.320 (.076) ***	.256 (.093) **	.193 (.080) *	.262 (.077) **
R^2	.352	.258	.236	.400
Adjusted R^2	.324	.227	.204	.361
F-statistics	12.875***	8.270***	7.346***	10.333***

Notes: Dependent variable: Academic performance; Beta values are shown before the parenthesis; standard errors are in the parenthesis; †p < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001; hypothesised path evaluated at t ≥ 1.645

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

4.7.1 Evaluating hypothesis 5: faculty governance positively mediates the link between institutional environment and academic performance of private universities in Ghana (Research question 5)

Hypothesis 5 of the study seeks to address research question 5: *Does faculty governance play a mediation role between institutional environment and academic performance?* The results reported in Tables 4.18 and 4.19 suggest the potential of the mimetic system and normative system partially having an indirect effect on academic performance through quality assurance, given that among all the paths estimated, it is only these paths that satisfy Baron and Kenny's (1986) causal technique described under section 4.8. To be sure of this, the study tested for the significance of the indirect effects (i.e. product of the 'X->M (a)' and 'M->Y, after controlling for X (b)' using Sobel test. The use of Sobel test requires computing the ratio of 'ab' (i.e. unstandardised coefficients) to its estimated standard error (SE) (Preacher and Hayes (2008). The results from the Sobel test (see Table 4.19) generally suggest that governance mechanism (quality assurance but not faculty governance) plays a partial mediation role between IE and academic performance relationship. Thus, rejecting hypothesis 5. The summary of the results of this test as well as the various types of effects (i.e. direct, indirect, and total) of all paths tested are shown in Table 4.19.

4.7.2 Evaluating Hypothesis 6: Quality Assurance Practices Positively Mediates the Link between Institutional Environment and Academic Performance of Private Universities in Ghana (Research Question 6)

Hypothesis 6 of the study seeks to address research question 6: *Does quality assurance play a mediation role between institutional environment and academic performance?* From Tables 4.18 and 4.19, the results suggest that although mimetic (MS) and normative systems (NS) partially have indirect effects on academic performance (AP) through quality assurance, the results do not provide statistically significant support for the indirect effect of mimetic and normative systems on academic performance through faculty governance given that these paths as estimated failed to satisfy Baron and Kenny's (1986) causal technique described under section 32. Thus, hypothesis 6 is supported. Table 4.20 presents a summary of conclusions on the hypotheses.

Table 4.19: Mediation Analysis: Direct and Indirect Effect Assessment

Path	Unstandardized β			Sobel test statistics[1]	Form of mediation
	Direct effect (c)	Indirect effect (a*b)	Total effect		
NS → FG → AP	.208	.219*.043 = .009	.217	.486	No mediation
NS → QA → AP	.208	.245*.238 = .058	.266	1.783*	Partial mediation
MS → FG → AP	.320	.256*.043 = .011	.331	.491	No mediation
MS → QA → AP	.320	.193*.238 = .046	.366	1.694*	Partial mediation

Notes:

NS, MS, FG, QA, and AP are normative system, mimetic system, faculty governance, quality assurance, and academic performance respectively;

[1]computed as $a*b/\sqrt{(b^2*s_a^2 + a^2*s_b^2)}$ (Preacher and Leonardelli, 2015)

$p < .05$ (one-tailed); hypothesised path evaluated at 1-tailed test (i.e. $t \geq 1.645$) The outcome variable is AP

Mediators are FG and QA

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

Table 4.20: Summary of Conclusions on the Hypotheses

Hypothesis:	**Conclusion**
H1: Institutional environment positively shapes the academic performance of private universities in Ghana	Partly supported
H2: Institutional environment positively shapes faculty governance of private universities in Ghana	Partly supported
H3: Institutional environment positively shapes quality assurance of private universities in Ghana	Largely supported
H4: Governance mechanism (faculty governance and quality assurance) positively associates with academic performance of private universities in Ghana	Partly supported
H5: faculty governance mediates the link between institutional environment and academic performance of private universities in Ghana	Not supported
H6: Quality assurance mediates the link between institutional environment and academic performance of private universities in Ghana	Partly supported (*only the path from normative system and mimetic system)*

Source: Authors' field survey (2019)

4.8 Qualitative Analysis (Focus Group Discussions)

In line with the research questions and objectives, focus group discussions were held in three thematic areas to complement the survey outcome. These were:

1. The nature of the institutional environment in private universities in Ghana
2. How institutional environment affects and governance mechanism and academic performance
3. How Governance mechanism affects academic performance

Table 4. presents the responses from the focus group discussions.Through deductions and inferences, the results of the focus group discussions are presented in the following sections.

Table 4. 21: Data from Focus Group Discussions

Question	**Group 1**	**Group 2**	**Group 3**	**Group 4**
To what extent do you believe in the prevalence of the following institutional forces in your social system? *i. Regulatory forces* *ii. Normative forces* *iii. Culture*	Largely, culture, laws, and social norms inform our actions in society, even academic decisions are driven by these factors.	To a very large extent. Ghanaian society is influenced by our state laws, beliefs, norms and values	Ghanaian society is governed by formal laws and informal beliefs and societal norms values etc. Our education policies are made in response to these forces. We have follow what others are doing.	State laws and sanctions, norms and cultural values are what shape decisions and societal behaviors including academic institutions.

Source: Author's field work (2019)

Table 4.21: Data from Focus Group Discussions continues

Question	**Response from Group 1**	**Response from Group 2**	**Response from Group 3**	**Response from Group 4**
To what extent does your institution employ the following categories of staff? *i. lecturers with ranks of senior lecturer and above* *ii. part- time lecturers* *iii. PhD holders*	It not easy employing a PhD lecturers on full time because they mostly don't stay. The few we gave are all part tome lecturers. We have so few Senior lecturers on our full time list though.	We have both full time and part time lecturers. We do not have full time PhD lecturers. Although GTEC's requirement is ideal and a fantastic policy, the reality on the ground makes it extremely challenging to meet this requirement. How can the institution fund full-time lecturers for a class size of less than 20? You can hardly break even''.	We do employ more part time lecturers than full time staff because of the low enrolment of students. Some of our part time lecturers are hold PhD and Senior lecturers as well. For training, we don't do that regularly. It is pretty expensive to run a private university in Ghana solely on full-time lecturers when you do not have much student's population. How can the students afford it? The PhD holders are mostly part time lecturers. Some are Senior lecturers.	The University has both full time and part time lecturers. Some are Senior lecturers with few PhD holders. Bu the majority are lecturers.

Source: Author's field work (2019)

Table 4.21: Data from Focus Group Discussions continues

Question	**Response from Group 1**	**Response from Group 2**	**Response from Group 3**	**Response from Group 4**
To what extent does your institution undertake the following? *i. Organises training for the fulltime academic staff after appointment* *ii. Organises training for the part-time academic staff after appointment*	We run training for our faculty members but not often; averagely once every two years. For part time staff, it rarely happens.	Sometimes we do for our permanent staff but not for the part time staff. it is difficult to invest in staff who are not your permanent employee.	We do all that because training is critical. But most of the part time staff are not often involved because they usually do not get time.	We have policy on training for all categories of lecturers but it rarely happens because of resources.

Source: Author's field work (2019)

Table 4.21: Data from Focus Group Discussions continues

Question	**Response from Group 1**	**Response from Group 2**	**Response from Group 3**	**Response from Group 4**
To what extent do the following institutional forces influence decisions and policies on faculty staffing, training, monitoring, supervision and academic performance? *i. Regulatory forces* *ii. Normative forces* *iii. Culture*	Regulatory is supposed to guide our faculty staffing decisions. However, you need to scan the academic environment and know what is going on. Then you follow the trend of practice.	Monitoring and supervision are critical to maintain academic standards. Laws on educational dictate what type of staff to recruit for your faculty. But when law implementation is not effective, you relax. In that case you do what works for you. We are in the same industry and cannot do anything different when the game plan of your competitors seems to work well".	All the institutional environment forces shape this decision. The GTEC are critical about this. It has also become a norm and all institution copy the practice Monitoring and supervision are critical to maintain academic standards. Rules and educational norms affect these practice to a large extent.	Training and monitoring are needed but they do not appear effective. It's like the regulation is relaxed. Some of the lecturers do not have full control on the courses given them to handle and so we sometimes find it difficult to understand some concepts well. It seems like some of the part-time lecturers may have been overburdened by the workload from their permanent institutions already while others come to the lecture hall exhausted. Some of us have to watch video tutorials to help understand the concepts but it comes at a cost to us because you need to buy internet credit.

Source: Author's field work (2019)

4.8.1 To Assess the Prevalence of Institutional forces in the Private Universities in Ghana (Research Question 1)

To further provide more insight to complement the survey outcome addressing research question 1 of the study, the researcher sought to enquire from the focus groups their perception about the IE. From the discussions, it emerged that the activities of the universities were influenced by state regulations and policies, values, and culture of the larger society. From their views, private universities seemed to follow what their competitors do. Generally, the responses from the various group appeared unanimous in terms of the nature of IE characterising private universities in Ghana. Indeed, one administrator said:

"***We are in the same industry and cannot do anything different when the game plan of your competitors seems to work well".***

Another administrator was on record that:

"You need to scan the academic environment and know what is going on. Then you follow the trend of practice".

These private universities learn from the practices of their peers, internalize the practice, and eventually become part of the cultural norms of university administration within the larger society.

4.8.2 How Institutional Environment Affects Governance Mechanism and Academic Performance

Again, regarding research question two, the outcome from the focus group discussions sought to shed more light on how IE influences governance and academic performance. The discussions revealed that the nature of IE prevailing in the social system informed faculty governance and by extension academic performance. For example, with respect

to academic staffing, the existing regulations of GTEC require certain requirements to be met. In reality, most private universities are unable to meet such staffing requirements due to the financial implications involved. As such, some universities use PhD holders as a decoy for the purpose of obtaining programme accreditation when in actual fact such personalities may not be part of the teaching and learning process. This was possible because it appeared the regulators do not strictly enforce the regulations regarding the governance of private universities. This phenomenon has led to a situation where most of the private universities seem to focus much on the use of part-time lecturers, most of whom work at public universities. A student observed that:

"Some of the part-time lecturers may have been overburdened by the workload from their permanent institutions already while others come to the lecture hall exhausted".

Relatedly, an administrator observed, **"*it is pretty expensive to run a private university in Ghana solely on full-time lecturers when you do not have much student's population. How can the students afford it?"***

Thus, it was clear from this observation that financial resources appear to be a major factor that accounts for the reliance on part-time lecturers in most private universities. Again, it emerged from the discussions that most of the institutions do not implement quality assurance practices. This was because 1) there is less pressure from the regulatory bodies for its implementation and 2), the most institution found it as a source of resource drain. A lecturer made a statement that: **"*well I do not remember any training programme my university has organised for faculty members".*** These phenomena, to some extent, negatively affect the academic performance of the institutions.

4.8.3 How Governance Mechanism Affects Academic Performance

Finally, in respect of research question three, the focus group discussions explored further to find out whether new insights would emerge in terms of how governance on academic staffing and quality assurance affects academic performance. The results from the discussions generally corroborated the findings from the survey. Specifically, with respect to how governance on academic staffing affects academic performance, it was indicated that most of the private universities were unable to meet the GTEC staffing requirements. This is consistent with the NCTE (2013) report in which there were a number of universities, including the private ones were unable to meet the staffing requirements. A student observed that: ***"some of the lecturers do not have full control on the courses given them to handle and so we sometimes find it difficult to understand some concepts well. Some of us have to watch video tutorials to help understand the concepts but it comes at a cost to us because you need to buy internet credit"***.

The group unanimously agreed that the situation was affecting effective teaching and learning.

Regarding the quality assurance practices, the administrators underscored the importance of training, monitoring, and supervision in maintaining standards and quality. ***"Monitoring and supervision are critical to maintaining academic standards",*** an administrator intimated.

They further revealed that given that part-time lecturers are not fully part of the institutions, monitoring and supervision were a bit challenging.

On training and development, they agreed that staff training and development was crucial to inspiring academic performance. However, most of the private universities were (reasonably) reluctant to invest in the part -time staff given that they do not have permanent commitment to the institution. An administrator made an observation that***, "it is difficult to invest in staff who are not your permanent employee".***

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS

5.0 Introduction

The preceding chapter (Chapter 4) presented detailed results of data analysis. This chapter discusses the research findings in relation to the relevant literature. The chapter is organised in two sections. The first section discusses the direct relations between IE and academic performance and GM as well as the association of GM with academic performance. In the second section, the mediation role of GM between IE and academic performance is also discussed.

5.1.1 The Prevalence of Institutional Forces in the Private Universities in Ghana

Research objective one seeks to answer the question, "what IE forces prevail on private universities' campuses in Ghana? Results on the prevalence of institutional forces within the private university environment in Ghana (Table 4.6 in the preceding chapter) suggest that the normative system is the most predominant factor of the institutional environment. This is followed by cognitive, and then mimetic systems with the regulatory system being the least prevailing force. Thus, the normative and cognitive systems are stronger institutional forces than mimetic and regulatory within the study setting. The average scores obtained on each of them (see Table 4.6) is above the mid-point value on the scale used in the study.

This finding suggests that institutional forces (regulatory, normative, cognitive, and mimetic) largely prevail on the campuses of private universities in Ghana. In effect, the study finds that regulatory, normative, cognitive, and mimetic forces of IE in Ghana influence the operations of private universities. This indicates that, although there is the

existence of rules to regulate educational activities of higher institutions of learning in Ghana, they are perceived to be less effective. This confirms NCTE's (2013) findings that indicated that most private universities in Ghana rarely meet the faculty staffing requirements even though there is explicit regulations to that effect.

Again, the outcome of the study suggests that private universities study each other and follow the practices of their peers, making them homogenous in terms of their operations. This might have explained why most of the private universities run and adopt similar academic programmes and staffing approach. The finding corroborates with previous evidence in extant literature (Oliver, 1991; Scott, 1995) that the forces within the social environment affect the activities of organisations.

The finding is consistent with the outcome of the focus group discussions held when one of the administrators said that private universities in Ghana are essentially similar since they mostly do what others do. Thus, the private universities in Ghana learn from the practices of their peers, internalise the practice, and eventually become part of the cultural norms of university administration within the larger society. This confirms the assertion that organisations in the same environment operate similarly to respond to institutional pressures in other to gain societal legitimacy (Oliver, 1991; Scott, 1995).

5.1.2 To assess the Effect of Institutional Environment on Academic Performance

In addressing research question two, the study sought to examine the extent to which IE affects academic performance by testing hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 states that the institutional environment positively shapes the academic performance of private universities in Ghana. The analyses were conducted by examining how each dimension

of IE affects academic performance while controlling for other dimensions. This analytical procedure followed did not only provide an in-depth understanding of the relationships between the dimensions of IE and academic performance but also, made it possible to evaluate the robustness of the study's results.

Generally, the results of the study suggest that the prevailing IE in private universities in Ghana has a positive impact on academic performance, to the extent that higher levels of each dimension of IE are associated with higher levels of academic performance. There was sufficient statistical support that, the prevailing IE to some extent influences higher academic performance outcomes of the institutions under study. Thus, hypothesis 1 is partially supported. In the ensuing sub-sections, the discussions on each specific dimension of IE are presented.

Institution of Regulatory system and academic performance

The results show that the regulatory component of IE moderately drives the academic performance of private universities in Ghana. The implication of the results is that monitoring, and regulatory mechanisms from the Ministry of Education, GTEC, and other relevant stakeholders of higher education in Ghana may be effective to some extent in terms of enhancing the academic performance of private universities.

Notwithstanding, in the presence of all the other dimensions of IE, the weight of the effect of the regulatory system on academic performance declines and becomes statistically insignificant. Thus, suggesting that it is less important to indirectly predict academic performance within the study context, compared to the effects of the other dimensions of IE. Conceptually, the lack of a significant direct effect of the regulatory system on

academic performance could be explained by possible deficiencies in the regulatory practices (e.g. monitoring and supervision). Resource constraints faced by the regulatory bodies for a higher institution may also restrict the effectiveness of the regulatory systems of IE, and subsequently, its effect on academic performance.

Institution of Normative System and academic performance

Again, the results indicate the normative dimension as a key driver of academic performance (see Table 4.10 in Chapter 4). This outcome suggests that the established norms of the university management system (such as the use of external moderators, internal peer review by second examiners, supervisors, and internal peer reviewers) seem to improve academic performance to a large extent.

In MODel 5 (Table 4.11 in Chapter 4), normative still appears to be a moderate driver of academic performance in the presence of three (3) other dimensions of IE. However, when the intervening variables (staffing governance and quality assurance) were considered together, the effect size (the degree of influence) of the normative system on academic performance becomes statistically insignificant as shown in Model 6 of Table 4.11. Thus, the findings suggest that normative is less relevant indirectly predicting academic performance within the study's context, compared to the effects of the other dimensions of IE.

In practical terms, the lack of a significant direct effect of the normative system on academic performance could be explained by some possible lapses in the norms (e.g. monitoring and supervision) that characterise university management practice in Ghana. Lack of strict/robust implementation of the regulatory system and ineptitude may also restrict the effectiveness of the normative systems of IE and its effect on academic

performance. For example, the practice of the universities engaging lecturers on a part-time basis, under a less robust regulatory system may be a limiting factor to performance standards to some extent.

Statistically, it could be argued that the positive effect of normative system on academic performance found in the less restricted model may be transmitted via quality assurance (included in the subsequent sections).

Institution of cultural- cognitive and academic performance

Cultural-cognitive, as a dimension of IE was also examined in terms of its unique effect on academic performance. The results show a moderate effect of cognitive (culture) on academic performance (see Model 3 in Table 4.11). However, in the presence of all the dimensions of IE and the intervening variables as shown in models 5 and 6 respectively (see Chapter 4), the strength of the effect of the cognitive dimension on academic performance becomes negative and statistically insignificant. As with the regulatory system, the outcome suggests that notwithstanding the moderate impact of cultural-cognitive dimension on academic performance, it is less relevant to indirectly predict academic performance within the study context, compared to the effects of the other dimensions of IE.

Practically, the insignificant direct effect of the cognitive dimension of IE on academic performance could be explained by possible deficiencies in the attitudes of the stakeholders of higher education (i.e. government, administrators, parents, teachers, and students) towards teaching and learning, disciplinary issues, and adherence to rules and regulations. Thus, the societal orientations, values system, and beliefs on education may be at play to hinder academic performance to some extent.

Further, the seemingly societal beliefs and values for paper qualification more than the actual acquisition of knowledge may be a motivating factor for most private universities to run some of their programmes on a part-time basis to capture workers, usually from Mondays through to Fridays between the hours of 5:0 pm – 9:0pm. Despite the limited contact hours for these categories of students, the duration for such programmes in most cases remains the same as with the regular students who have the benefit of time and access to the library for extensive reading. Such culture prevailing in the space of academia, particularly the private universities, may also explain the insignificant effect of the cognitive dimension of IE on performance among private universities.

Mimetic Effect on Academic Performance

Mimetic is the fourth component of IE under the study. Results from the analysis suggest that the mimetic dimension has a strong effect on academic performance. This outcome implies that as private universities adopt best practices from renowned institutions and implement them (benchmarking), academic performances improve. Again, the effectiveness of the mimetic dimension of IE may be explained by the fact that most of the private universities under the study are affiliated with public universities. To a large extent, private universities copy their mentoring institutions in terms of their approaches to school management and administration such as academic programmes, admission, and examination processes.

The findings corroborate previous research findings that the performance of institutions is dependent on the prevailing institutional environment which either facilitates or constrain institutional activities (DiMaggio & Powel 1983; Oliver, 1997).

5.1.3 To Assess the Effect of Institutional Environmental on Faculty Governance

As part of research question two (2), the study sought to examine how each dimension of IE uniquely influences staffing decisions (H2). The study's findings suggest that academic IE influences staffing decision in general which partially support Hypothesis 2. The effects of each of the four dimensions of IE on staffing decisions are discussed below.

Institution of Regulatory system and faculty governance

The results indicate that the regulatory component of IE moderately influences faculty governance of private universities in Ghana. The implications of the results suggest that to some extent, decisions on academic staffing are influenced by regulations and requirements established by the regulatory bodies i.e. MoE, GTEC, and other relevant stakeholders of higher education in Ghana. It may also be due to the fact that this constitutes part of the requirements for private universities to receive accreditation. However, when all the dimensions of IE were considered together in the model, the degree of the effectiveness of the regulatory system declined. This may be attributed to the fact that most of the private universities, after meeting the initial staffing requirements, may relax the staffing obligations to reduce the financial burdens.

This may also be explained by the seemingly relaxed monitoring and supervision atmosphere particularly in respect of private universities. Resource constraints faced by the regulatory bodies for a higher institution may also account for this.

Institution of Normative System and Faculty Governance

The institution of norms was evaluated to ascertain the extent to which it inspires faculty governance. Results from the analysis indicate that the normative dimension influences

faculty governance to a greater extent although the degree of its influence appeared less relevant in the presence of (without holding constant) the other three institutional environmental factors. This outcome suggests that the established norms associated with academic staffing practices within the university system, such as the engagement of retired lecturers and temporary staff largely seem to influence faculty governance.

Institution of Cultural- Cognitive and Faculty Governance

On the cultural-cognitive dimension of IE, the results indicate a strong association between cognitive and faculty governance, even though further observation indicates that this association appeared suppressed when all other dimensions of IE were considered together (see in Model 5, Table 4.12 of Chapter 4). This implies that staffing decisions among private universities are influenced by the generally accepted processes of staffing (the taken for granted practice) within academia. For example, it is a common practice to find more part-time staff than permanent ones in some departments within private universities. Although some of the practices may violate staffing regulations (per the GTEC's requirements), yet it appears normal within academia. The seemingly relaxed regulatory environment within academia, coupled with what appears to be an "inertial phenomenon", largely driven by societal orientations, beliefs, and values system (*the common normal mentality of most Ghanaians irrespective of the consequences*) may account for the negative effect of the cognitive dimension of IE on staffing decision.

This finding is in line with the focus group discussions outcome where it was revealed that some private universities use Ph.D. holders as a decoy for the purpose of obtaining programme accreditation when in actual fact such personalities are never involved in the daily teaching and learning process.

Mimetic Effect on Faculty Governance

Similar to the other dimensions, results show that the mimetic component has a strong positive influence on faculty governance. In particular, when all components of IE were considered together, mimetic was seen as the only significantly relevant factor that informs staffing to some extent. This may be attributed to the fact that private universities benchmark their affiliates and competitors that have proven successful with their staffing model.

5.1.4 Effect of Institutional Environmental on Quality Assurance

The final part of research question two (2) sought to examine how IE affects the quality assurance practices of private universities (H3). Again, findings of the study suggest that quality assurance practice is influenced by IE in general, thus partially supporting hypothesis 3 as discussed below.

Institution of Regulatory system and Quality Assurance

Findings from the analysis indicate that the regulatory dimension of IE has a moderate effect on the quality assurance of private universities in Ghana. The implication of the results suggests that although regulations and requirements on academic standards, whether through persuasion or imposition, influence quality assurance practices within private universities to some extent, the degree of influence is not enough. This may be explained by the fact that most private universities after meeting some of the strict requirements on standards, such as external moderation of examination questions and library resources become less motivated to commit more resources to quality assurance practices.

This reinforces the observations made during the focus group discussions. From the focus group discussions held, it came out that most of the institutions do not implement quality assurance practices. This was due to the fact that 1) there is less pressure from the regulatory bodies for its implementation and 2), the most institution found it as a source of resource drain.

Institution of Normative System and Quality Assurance

With respect to the normative system and its effect on quality assurance, results from the analysis indicate that the normative dimension drives quality assurance practices to a greater extent. Although the strength of association declined when all the dimensions were put together in the model (see Table 4.14, Chapter 4), its effect still appeared strong. The implication of the outcome is that the established norms of quality assurance practices within the university systems, such as external moderators from mentoring institutions, and internal peer reviewers on the examination process, the use of external examiners and supervisors may largely and effectively influence the practice.

Institution of Cognitive and Quality Assurance

The unique effect of the cognitive dimension of IE on quality assurance was also evaluated. From the results, there was a moderate association between the cognitive dimension of IE and quality assurance even though this association appeared suppressed when all the dimensions of IE were examined together as shown in Model (5 See Table 4.14, Chapter 4).

These results suggest that the generally held-on to beliefs and values of the Ghanaian society on issues of quality drive quality assurance and control on campuses of private universities to some extent. This may be attributed to the fact that the pursuit of quality

standards may not have become solidly ingrained within the fabric of the larger society. Such orientations somehow appear to limit the passion to go beyond the threshold of the minimum requirements, particularly in a less strictly regulated environment. Therefore, more needs to be done to inspire quality within private universities.

Mimetic Effect on Quality Assurance

On the influence of mimetic on quality assurance, results again show that the mimetic component of IE has a strong positive association with quality assurance practices. This may be attributed to the effectiveness of the culture of benchmarking. The quest for most private universities to confidently follow the practices of mentoring institutions and competitors may explain such a strong relationship. These outcomes reinforce literature that environmental conditions influence the operations of the organisations within that environment and the success or otherwise of their operations is largely determined by these environmental conditions (DiMaggio & Powell, 1939; Scott, 1995; Oliver, 1991).

5.1.5 The Relationship between Faculty Governance and Academic Performance

To address the research questions 3 and 4, the study sought to examine the relationship between governance mechanisms (faculty governance and quality assurance) and performance (H4). The findings suggest that staffing governance, even though was seen to have a positive association with academic performance, its effect is not significant. This may be attributed to the fact that the current system of academic staffing among private universities may not be effective. This is consistent with the NCTE Report (2013), which seems to suggest that most of the private universities failed to meet the staffing requirements of GTEC. A plausible explanation could be that most of the private universities seem to focus much on the use of part-time lecturers, most of whom may

have been already overburdened by the workload from their permanent institutions and others come to the lecture hall exhausted.

Again, given that part-time lecturers do not see themselves as fully part of the institutions, the commitment of most of these categories of staff may be compromised. Also, staff training and development is crucial to inspiring academic performance. However, most of the private universities are (reasonably) reluctant to invest in the part-time staff given that they do not have a permanent commitment to the institution. This together with the relaxed system of monitoring and regulations, particularly in terms of meeting staffing requirements (i.e. Ph.D. holders and professors for university education), may also explain the weak effect of staffing practices on academic performance given that most private universities barely meet the requirement (NCTE, 2013).

Again, the study sought to examine the effect of quality assurance practices on performance. Results from the analysis suggest that academic performance is driven by quality assurance practices to some extent. Thus, Hypothesis 4 was partially supported. In practical terms, universities that strictly monitor, train, and supervise their staff and control their examination process (quality control and assurance practices) are likely to improve performance although these have cost implications. This corroborates existing literature on the key role of quality assurance practice in enhancing institutional performance (standard (Utuka, 2012; Avdjieva & Wilson, 2002).

5.2 The Mediation Role of Governance Mechanism between IE and Academic Performance

In addressing research questions 5 and 6, the study sought to evaluate if IE indirectly affects academic performance through governance mechanism. In other words, the

analyses examined the mediation roles of faculty governance and quality assurance practices between IE and academic performance. This was done by evaluating Hypotheses 5 and 6. The findings suggest partial support for this hypothesis as discussed below.

5.2.1 The Mediating Role of Faculty Governance between Institutional Environment and Academic Performance

Objective 5 sought to evaluate whether faculty governance, as a dimension of governance mechanism mediates the relationship between IE and academic performance H5.

The findings indicate that the indirect effect of IE on academic performance through faculty governance was not statistically significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was not supported. The implication of the findings suggests that although faculty governance is necessary for achieving academic performance, it does not play any mediation role between IE and performance. The outcome of the results may be attributed to the fact that the current staffing practices among most of the private universities fall short of GTEC staffing requirements (NCTE, 2013), making it less effective to actualize best practices and norms adopted by the private universities to enhance academic outputs. The findings are largely in line with the outcome of the focus group discussions held on the selected campuses. On the issue of staffing, it emerged from the focus group discussions that financial constraint appeared the major factor causing the inability of most institutions to meet GTEC staffing requirements. One administrator stated that, *"although* GTEC*'s requirement is ideal and a fantastic policy, the reality on the ground makes it extremely challenging to meet this requirement. How can the institution fund full-time lecturers for a class size of less than 20? You can hardly break even''.*

Again, the positive direct effect of IE on academic performance underscores the importance of creating an environment that inspires best practices, effective learning habits, and academic excellence. These are key in meeting performance standards. There could be the best staff available, but if the necessary environment that inspires effective learning habits and academic excellence are not present, performance may still suffer. Thus, in the absence of a conducive learning environment, good staffing practices per se may not necessarily guarantee academic excellence.

The distance learning model of higher institutions of learning, where learners have limited contact hours but are still able to meet performance standards, provides demonstrable support to the assertion that for good academic staffing practices to translate into superior performance, it should be inspired by the right teaching and learning environment.

The performance of private schools at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) level in Ghana reinforces this insight. Although public schools at the basic level are relatively better resourced than the private schools in terms of human resources, given that most teachers at the public schools have had professional training, the private schools perform better in the BECE (Bonsu, 2006; Alhassan, 2016). The poor performance of most public schools has been attributed to factors including lack of an appropriate learning environment, thus, underscoring the importance of a good learning environment.

5.2.2 The Mediating Role of Quality Assurance between Institutional Environment and Academic Performance

The final objective sought to answer the research question 6 by testing the proposition of whether quality assurance plays a mediation role between IE and academic performance.

This was captured in Hypothesis 6. The findings indicate that the effect of IE (normative and mimetic dimensions) and academic performance could be channelled through quality assurance and was statistically significant. Thus, hypothesis 6 was supported. This finding confirms existing literature that quality assurance practices are key to ensuring improved academic performance and standard (Utuka, 2012; Woodhouse, 1999; Avdjieva & Wilson, 2002; Birnbaum, 2001).

Impliedly, to the extent that it is necessary for the universities to operate within an environment that inspires adoption of best practices and norms from high performing universities, it is equally important to have certain mechanisms to facilitate the actualization of such practices to manifest into desirable outcomes. To this end, the quality assurance system serves as the mechanism that facilitates the effective implementation of best practices of the university system adopted from model institutions. In practical terms, this manifests itself in the form of training and development of staff, moderation of examinations, staff-assessment, and reviews of programmes and process which translate into performance. Thus, the quality assurance system serves as a control system to address deficiencies in programmes and activities of the university, thereby improving the performance of the institution.

Again, this finding corroborates the outcome of focus group discussions held on the selected campuses as most of the administrators underscored the importance of monitoring and supervision in maintaining standards and quality. *"Monitoring and supervision are critical to maintain academic standards", an administrator intimated.*

In summary, the results of the different models with and without direct paths from the predictors (normative and memetic components of IE) to the outcome variable (academic performance) provide satisfactory support for partial mediation effects. In particular,

there was evidence of a partial mediating role of the quality assurance dimension of GMs. In the chapter that follows, a summary of the findings emerged from the analysis and discussions, the conclusion drawn from them, and subsequent recommendations are presented.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings from the analysis conducted, the conclusion arrived at from the findings, and recommendations for policy consideration regarding higher education in Ghana. The chapter is organised into four parts. First, a recap of the study's aim and the approach employed in executing the research is presented. This is followed by a summary of findings in line with the research objectives and questions in the first two parts. In the third part, the conclusion drawn from the findings and the implications is discussed. Finally, recommendations and suggestions for further studies are presented in the last part.

6.2 Overview of the Study

The study aimed at investigating the influence of institutional environment and governance mechanisms on the academic performance of private universities in Ghana. Specifically, the study examined the prevalence of forces of IE in private universities in Ghana. It also examined the relationship between IE, GM, and academic performance. Finally, the mediation role of GM between IE and academic performance was assessed. In executing the study, both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. The study relied on primary data using surveys and focus group discussions. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools together with content analysis, where deductions and inferences were used, to analyse the data. The section that follows presents the summary of findings based on research objectives and questions of the study.

6.2. Summary of the Findings

In line with research question one the study, sought to assess the prevalence of institutional forces prevailing in the private universities. This study finds that institutional forces (regulatory, normative, cognitive, and mimetic) mostly prevail on the campuses of private universities in Ghana. These influence their operation to a large extent. Thus, it can be concluded that the operations of private universities are largely influenced by the regulatory systems of the Ministry of Education and other relevant bodies established to govern higher education in Ghana. Also, the outcome of the study suggests that private universities follow the practices of their counterparts making them homogenous in terms of their operations. This may explain why most of the private universities run the same programmes and adopt a similar academic staffing approach.

Regarding the extent to which the institutional environment drives the academic performance of private universities. The findings indicate that although the cultural aspect of IE appears to have an adverse effect on academic activities, the regulatory, normative, and mimetic systems in Ghana positively drive academic performances of the private universities to some extent. Thus, generally, the IE prevailing on the private universities in Ghana has a positive influence on academic performance to a large extent.

On how each dimension of IE uniquely influences staffing decisions. The outcome of the study revealed that IE influences academic staffing decisions in general. Specifically, the findings indicate that the regulatory component of IE moderately influences faculty governance of private universities in Ghana. This implies that, to some extent, decisions on academic staffing are influenced by regulations and requirements established by the regulatory bodies i.e. MoE, GTEC, and other relevant stakeholders of higher education

in Ghana. In fact, faculty staffing constitutes part of the requirements for private universities to receive accreditation. Similar to the regulatory dimension, the findings show that normative, cognitive, and mimetic components of IE also have a strong positive influence on academic staff recruitment decisions. Thus, societal orientations, beliefs, and values system to a large extent may drive the academic staffing decision of the private universities in Ghana.

Again, the findings of the study suggest that quality assurance practices are influenced by IE in general. In particular, the normative system of IE appears to drive quality assurance practices to a greater extent**.** Similarly, the findings suggest a strong positive association of mimetic system with quality practices. Thus, the existing norms and culture where private universities benchmark their mentoring institutions and competitors largely may influence quality assurance practices on campuses of private universities in Ghana.

On the relationship between faculty governance and performance, the findings revealed that faculty governance, even though was seen to positively affect academic performance, its association is not significant. This implies that the current system of faculty governance within private universities may be less effective. A plausible explanation could be that most of the private universities seem to focus much on the use of part-time lecturers, most of whom may have been already overburdened by the workload from their permanent institutions while others come to the lecture hall exhausted.

Regarding the extent to which quality assurance practices affect academic performance, the findings indicate that academic performance is driven by quality assurance practices to some extent. Thus, universities that invest in quality assurance practices such as

monitoring, training, and supervision of staff, and control their examination process (quality control) are likely to improve academic performance.

The study also examined the mediation roles of faculty governance and quality assurance practices between IE and academic performance. The findings suggest partial support for this hypothesis. Specifically, the findings indicate that the indirect effect of IE on academic performance through faculty governance was not statistically significant. This implies that, although faculty governance is necessary to achieving academic performance, theoretically, it does not play any mediation role between IE and academic performance. The outcome of the results may be attributed to the fact that the existing internal faculty staffing policies of most of the private universities may fall short of the established faculty requirements of MoE and GTEC. As such, faculty governance of most private universities may be less effective to actualize best practices and norms adopted to reflect academic excellence.

Again, the positive direct effect of IE on academic performance underscores the importance of creating an environment that inspires best practices, effective learning habits, and academic excellence. These are key in meeting performance standards. There could be the best staff available, but if the necessary environment that inspires effective learning habits and academic excellence are not present, performance may still suffer. Thus, in the absence of a conducive learning environment, good staffing practices per se may not necessarily guarantee academic excellence.

In fact, the distance learning model of higher learning institutions, where learners have limited contact hours but are still able to meet performance standards provides

demonstrable support to the assertion that good academic staffing policies require the right IE to translate into superior performance.

The performance of private schools at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) level in Ghana reinforces this insight. Although public schools at the basic level are relatively better resourced than the private schools in terms of human resources, given that most teachers at the public schools have had professional training, the private schools mostly perform better in the BECE. The poor performance of most public schools has been attributed to factors including lack of appropriate learning environment, thus, underscoring the importance of appropriate IE.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that the effect of IE (normative and mimetic dimensions of IE) on academic performance could be channelled through quality assurance. Impliedly, to the extent that it is necessary for the universities to operate within an environment that inspires adoption of best practices and norms from high performing universities, it is equally important to have certain mechanisms to facilitate the actualization of such practices to manifest into desirable outcomes. To this end, a quality assurance system may serve as an important mechanism that facilitates effective implementation of best practices of the university system adopted from model institutions. In practical terms, this manifests itself in the form of training and development of staff, moderation of examinations, staff-assessment, and reviews of programmes and process which translate into performance. Thus, the quality assurance system serves as a control system to address deficiencies in programmes and activities of the university, thereby improving the performance of the institution.

6.3 Conclusions

Based on the findings discussed in the preceding sections, the following conclusions are made. First, institutional forces (regulatory, normative, cognitive, and mimetic) mostly prevail on the campuses of private universities in Ghana which largely influence the management practices of the universities. In particular, the operations of the private universities in Ghana are influenced by regulatory systems of MoE and other relevant bodies as well as the established norms of higher educations in Ghana. Also, private universities learn from their competitors and thus make them similar to their operations and modus operandi.

Second, the regulatory, normative, cognitive, and mimetic dimensions of IE, generally, have a positive influence on the academic performance of private universities in the Ghanaian context. Specifically, the study provides sufficient evidence that higher academic performance outcomes of private universities studied are grounded within the 'supportiveness' of the prevailing IE. Thus, the monitoring, and regulatory mechanism from MoE, GTEC, and other relevant stakeholders of higher education in Ghana, for example, may be effective to some extent in terms of enhancing the academic performance of private universities, although the system could be improved. Also, notwithstanding the fact that the societal orientations and values in Ghana (culture) subtly hinder the operations and academic activities of the university system in general, the practice where the private universities mimic from the best practice of their peers, as well as the norms of the university system, developed over the years largely drive academic performance.

Third, it was also evident from the study that in moderate terms, IE generally informs the policies regarding the academic staffing of private universities in Ghana. Thus, although certain staffing requirements may not be adequately met by most of the private universities studied, the regulations and requirements of higher education established by the regulatory bodies such as MoE and GTEC nonetheless serve as the guide and reference point regarding decisions and policies on faculty staffing. In addition, it emerged that IE is an important driver of quality assurance practices in private universities studied. Thus, to a large extent, IE has an influence on GM. Finally, it emerged from the study that GM - faculty governance and quality assurance, partially mediates the relationship between IE and academic performance. Specifically, the quality assurance dimension of GM serves as a conduit through which the influence of IE is channelled to academic output. It is concluded that although the faculty governance dimension of governance is necessary to achieving academic performance, it does not play any mediation role between IE and academic performance. This implies that attainment of superior academic output demands more than just hiring academically qualified staff since their availability per se does not necessarily translate into academic excellence.

In effect, the study concludes that the quality assurance system (training and development of staff, moderation of examinations, staff-assessment, and review of programmes and process) serves as the mechanism that facilitates effective implementation of best practices of the university system adopted from model institutions. Thus, quality assurance practices act as surveillance and control systems within the university operations to address deficiencies in programmes and activities of the university, thereby improving the performance of the institution.

6.4. Implications of the Study

The study has theoretical, methodological, and managerial implications.

Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, the study seeks to broaden the IE- academic performance domain by: First, synthesising insights from the institutional environment and resource-based view theories to explain how IE affects academic performance via governance mechanism, and when governance mechanism, in turn, affects academic performance from the perspectives of the developing economy. This is insightful, particularly in Africa, with its unique environmental idiosyncrasies and yet has received inconsiderable research on the issues under investigation.

Second, extending the applicability and relevance of these theories across boundaries of knowledge discipline (such as from business to education fields), and recognizing the potentials of institutional pressures in improving the quality of university education. Thus, the study's findings shed theoretical insights by testing IE as an antecedent to governance mechanism and academic performance, with the quality assurance dimension of governance mechanism partially playing a mediation role between IE and academic performance.

Again, the study extends the applicability and relevance of these theories across boundaries of knowledge discipline (such as from business to education sectors), and recognize their relevance and implications on managing university education. Thus, the study's findings shed theoretical insights by testing IE as an antecedent to governance mechanism and academic performance.

Methodological Implications

The methodological contributions of the study lie in the development of the measurement items of the constructs, i.e. institutional environment, governance mechanism, and academic performance and their actual operationalisation. These items, having been developed in sociology and business management literature were adopted, reviewed, and validated by specialists and researchers to suit the context of education disciplines. Future studies may adapt these items to measure similar factors under different circumstances either within or beyond the field of education. This is important for knowledge development through cross-fertilization of knowledge. In addition, the study contributes to the methodological aspect by empirically confirming the institutional environment as a second-order construct.

Managerial/Practice Implications

Managerially, the findings also provide empirically grounded insights to reinforce the importance of meeting faculty requirements and standards and the need for instituting rigorous quality assurance systems in the management of university education to enhance performance and quality of university education.

Finally, although the study was operationally set out in the context of private universities in Ghana, the conceptual model of IE-governance mechanism-academic performance linkages could also apply in the context of public universities given that they all operate within the similar institutional environment. Thus, based on the above, government, vice-chancellors (Rectors, where applicable) administrators, and deans in the study context could be informed to develop appropriate policies that will improve the standards and quality of university education.

6.5 Recommendations

Based on the insights the study sheds, the following recommendations are made: First, given that IE (regulation, normative, culture, and mimetic) influence societal behaviors, actions, and orientations as corroborated empirically in the current study. As such, educational authorities, such as MoE in collaboration with relevant bodies such as Vice Chancellors and administrators, in developing policies and decisions on higher education, should take into cognisance the prevailing forces of the IE and their implications on their implementation.

Second, as per the findings on objective four, and in consistence with existing literature (Utaka, 2012; Woodhouse, 1999; Avdjieva & Wilson, 2002) the study highlights the need to intensify monitoring and supervision on staffing, issues of quality assurance practices, programmes and activities of higher education on campuses, particularly the private universities to maintain standards, quality, and performance. To this end, government, through MoE, should provide human and material resources to GTEC, NABPTEX, and other relevant bodies to equip them to build their capacity, knowledge, and skills to effectively monitor activities of private universities in Ghana.

Third, as emerged from the focus group discussions, the regulatory and supervisory bodies of higher education usually do not effectively engage students in their monitoring and supervision exercise although students constitute key stakeholders of education. In view of this, it is recommended that regulatory authorities should engage students more effectively during monitoring and supervision to get balanced information that reflects the reality on the ground to provide the needed guidance regarding faculty governance and quality assurance.

Fourth, institutions engaging part-time lecturers should demand written consent from their employers to address any ethical and professional breaches and issues.

Fifth, mentoring and affiliate institutions should intensify their monitoring and supervision to improve the academic activities of mentee institutions. This may be done through annual workshops and seminars to deal with issues associated with affiliation and mentoring. In addition, Moe in collaboration with GTEC should limit the number of private universities a particular chartered university should have under its mentorship to be efficient in their mentoring obligations.

6.5.1 Suggestions for Further Studies

Although this study reveals some meaningful conclusions,to enrich resaerch on institutional environment and academic performance, the following suggestions are made. First, since the study was limited to private universities in Ghana, it is recommended that the scope of future research should be widened to include public universities to explore whether new insights will emerge.

Second, given that the use of cross-sectional data may not provide an adequate understanding of the associations among the variables investigated, it is suggested that future study should consider longitudinal research to improve the generalisability of the findings. Finally, to overcome the potential of method bias, future studies may consider using both primary and secondary data to enhance the reliability of the findings.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ADMINISTRATORS

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY - 2017

Questionnaire for Administrators

Dear Respondent,

Thank you for your participation in this study. Given the importance of higher education in economic growth, I believe it is imperative to understand how the Institutional Environment of Ghana and governance practices in private universities influence academic performance and standards.

The questionnaire seeks your opinion on the above subject matter and I would be grateful if you could take a couple of minutes to respond to the questions asked.

There is no right or wrong answer, what matters is that your candid opinion is provided-based on your experiences. Though some questions appear similar, please answer them as this is deliberately done for statistical analysis purposes.

Our questions are largely not sensitive. However, should you find anything sensitive, please be assured that your responses would be treated strictly confidential. Neither you nor your responses would, at any time, be identified in the results. The success of this project rests fully on your completed questionnaires.

Please follow the instructions under each subsection of the questionnaire to provide your responses. **Where not applicable please N/A.**

Thank you once again for taking the time to participate in this study. I am very grateful.

SECTION A: RESPONDENT'S BACKGROUND INFORMATION

(Please, Kindly Tick [√])

1. Gender [ ] Male [ ] Female
2. Educational level [ ] 1st Degree [ ] 2nd Degree [ ] PhD
   [ ] Others, specify…….
3. Indicate your current position in this institution [ ] Dean [ ] HOD
4. Please how long have you held this position in this institution?
   [ ] 1-3 yrs [ ] 4-6yrs. [ ] 7-9 yrs. [ ] 10- 12 yrs. [ ] Over 12 yrs.
5. No. of years served [ ] 1-3 yrs [ ] 4-6yrs. [ ] 7-9 yrs. [ ] 10- 12 yrs. [ ] Over 12 yrs.

SECTION B: UNIVERSITY BACKGROUND INFORMATION (For Registrars/Administrators)

1. Please indicate your institution type
   [ ] Full University [ ] University College [ ] Tutorial Centre
   [ ] Others…..
2. On the average, **how many years** has this institution been in existence?
   ……..…….…….
3. How many **academic staff** does this institution currently have?
   ……..……...
4. How many **academic staff** are permanent?.....
   No. of Professors [ ] No. of PhDs [ ] No. of Masters holders [ ] Professionals [ ]
   Others please specify……..

5. How many **non-academic staff** does this institution currently have?

   …….....

6. How many **non-academic staff** are permanent? .....

7. Which of the following do your university belong? [ ] Research [ ] Teaching

   [ ] Both Research andTeaching [ ]Others/ Professionals

SECTION C: Institutional Environment of Ghana and Governance on Academic Faculty of Private Universities

Please, use the scale below to provide your responses to all items under each subsection concerning your university's performance over the years.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somehow disagree	Indifferent/ not sure	Somehow agree	Agree	Strongly agree

SECTION C1: INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT: - **REGULATORY SYSTEM**

In Ghana,	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1. the legal system in Ghana encourages smooth running of university activities	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2. local and national government support and protect our university	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3. as an administrative officer, I have confidence in the higher education regulatory system	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4. it is easy to obtain accreditation to operate as private university	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5. it is easy to obtain affiliate status from the public universities	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
6. it is not very difficult to operate as a university without strict compliance of rules, policies and regulations of university education	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7. my university must meet all requirements under the education regulatory system before allowed to operate.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
8. there is strict enforcement of rules and regulations by the regulatory and policy implementation bodies	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
9. MoE, GTEC visit our school regularly	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

SECTION C2: INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT:- **NORMATIVE SYSTEM**

In Ghana,	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1. my/our university belongs to a highly regulated educational sector	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2. my/our university has difficulty complying with the educational standard of practices	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3. my/our university belongs to a sector that encourages high standards of performance	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4. overall, my/our university follows the standard practices of higher education set by the regulatory authorities.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

SECTION C3: INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT- **COGNITIVE**

In Ghana it is perceived that..	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1. private universities operate as business entities	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2. private universities are master of their own rules	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3. university degree is awarded and not actually earned	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4. most people are not motivated to seek redress when they feel short –changed by private universities.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5. individuals' social status is key to obtaining a university degree	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

SECTION C4: INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT- **MIMETIC SYSTEM**

In the education sector,	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1. private universities use mentor institutions as benchmarks.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2. students are likely to switch to other universities when they perceive an institution's performances to be non- competitive.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3. Students choose private universities based on image and reputation	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4. my university follows the practices of other universities for competitiveness.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

SECTION C5: Students' Academic Performance

Please, use the scale below to provide your responses to all items under each subsection.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somehow disagree	Indifferent/ not sure	Somehow agree	Agree	Strongly agree

SECTION C6: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

It is perceived that Graduates from my/our institution…	*Strongly disagree* 1	2	3	*Neither agree nor disagree* 4	5	6	*Strongly agree* 7
1. are able to present problem-solving research outputs	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2. are accepted on the job market	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3. are competitive in their progression to higher academic laurels							
4. get placement in academic institutions.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5. fit well in the industry	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
6. are equipped with problem- solving, critical thinking and ICT skills	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7. are able to perform well on the job	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ACADEMIC STAFF (DEANS)

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY - 2017

Questionnaire for Deans

Dear Respondent,

Thank you for your participation in this study. Given the importance of higher education in economic growth, I believe it is imperative to understand how the Institutional Environment of Ghana and governance practices in private universities influence academic performance and standards.

The questionnaire seeks your opinion on the above subject matter and I would be grateful if you could take a couple of minutes to respond to the questions asked.

There is no right or wrong answer, what matters is that your candid opinion is provided-based on your experiences. Though some questions appear similar, please answer them as this is deliberately done for statistical analysis purposes.

Our questions are largely not sensitive. However, should you find anything sensitive, please be assured that your responses would be treated strictly confidential. Neither you nor your responses would, at any time, be identified in the results. The success of this project rests fully on your completed questionnaires.

Please follow the instructions under each subsection of the questionnaire to provide your responses. **Where not applicable please N/A.**

Thank you once again for taking the time to participate in this study. I am very grateful.

SECTION A: RESPONDENT'S BACKGROUND INFORMATION (please, kindly tick [ ])

1. Gender [ ] Male [ ] Female
2. Educational level [ ] 1st Degree [ ] 2nd Degree [ ] PhD
   Others, specify……
3. Indicate your current position in this institution [ ] Registrar [ ] Dean
4. Please how long have you held this position in this institution?
   [ ] 1-3 yrs [ ] 4-6yrs.[ ] 7-9 yrs. [ ] 10- 12 yrs. [ ] Over 12 yrs.
5. No. of years served [ ] 1-3 yrs [ ] 4-6yrs. [ ] 7-9 yrs.
   [ ] 10- 12 yrs. [ ] Over 12 yrs.

SECTION B: GOVERNANCE ON ACADEMIC STAFFING

Please, use the scale below to provide your responses to all items under each subsection concerning your university's operations over the years.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somehow disagree	Indifferent/ not sure	Somehow agree	Agree	Strongly agree

Not very frequent		*Neither frequent nor infrequent*				*Very frequent*

SECTION B1: GOVERNANCE ON ACADEMIC STAFFING

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. My institution uses lecturers with ranks of senior lecturer and above	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2. My institution uses part- time lecturers	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3. My institution uses relies on employed full-time lecturers	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4. My institution employs PhD holders	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5. My institution organises training for the fulltime academic staff after appointment	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
6. My institution organises training for the part-time academic staff after appointment	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7. I am aware that on average, my institution has not more than 25 students to 1 lecturer	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

SECTION C: QUALITY ASSURANCE

*Using a scale of **1 to 7, where 1=Not very frequent, 4=neither frequent nor infrequent, 7=very frequent**, provide responses on the following items concerning your university's operations over the years.*

	Strongly disagree			*Neither agree nor disagree*			*Strongly agree*
My institution engages in	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
My institution engages in monitoring of staff performance	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
1. My institution engages in monitoring of students' performance	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2. My institution engages in monitoring of examination process	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3. My institution engages in supervision of examination process	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4. My institution engages in moderation of examination questions	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5. My institution engages in examination scripts audit	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
6. My institution engages in assessment of academic staff performances	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7. My institution engages in organising training programmes for academic staff	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
8. my university has compromised on student quality in its drive to increase or preserve student numbers	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
9. pressure to give students better marks has increased at my university	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
10. my workload is huge	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
11. My institution engages in using external examiners in the supervision of examination process	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

APPENDIX III

GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

THEMATIC AREAS

Prevalence of Institutional Environment

1. To what extent do you believe in the prevalence of the following institutional forces in your social system?

i. Regulatory forces

ii. Normative forces

iii. Culture

Governance Mechanism

2. To what extent does your institution employ **the following categories of staff?** i. lecturers with ranks of senior lecturer and above

ii. part- time lecturers

iii. PhD holders

3. To what extent does your institution undertake the following?

i. Organises training for the fulltime academic staff after appointment

ii. Organises training for the part-time academic staff after appointment

iii. What is the students - staff ratio in your **institution?**

Institutional Environment, Governance Mechanism and Academic Performance

4. To what extent do the following institutional forces influence decisions and policies on faculty staffing, training, monitoring, supervision and academic performance?

i. Regulatory forces

ii. Normative forces

iii. Culture

APPENDIX IV: INTRODUCTION LETTER FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, KUMASI

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

P. O. Box 1277
Kumasi

18th May, 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: Harriet Takyi
INDEX NO: 9131770001

This is to confirm that Harriet Takyi is an Ph.D student pursuing a programme in Educational Leadership at the Department.

Harriet is currently engaged in a research on ***Influence of Institutional Environment and Governance Mechanisms on Academic Staffing and Performance of Private Universities in Ghana*** as part of the requirements for the award of the Doctor of philosophy Degree.

We should appreciate any courtesies that you could extend to her as she gathers data for writing the thesis.

Thank you.

Rev. Fr. Dr. Francis K. Sam
Head of Department