



QUALITY ASSURANCE NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY REPORT

THE GAMBIA

APRIL 2019

Acronyms/Abbreviations

CSR	Country Status Report
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GABECE	Gambia Basic Education Certificate Exams
GBoS	Gambia Bureau of Statistics
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSQF	Gambia Skills Qualifications Framework
HDI	Human Development Report
IHS	Integrated Household Survey
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
MoBSE	Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
MoHERST	Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology
NAQAA	National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTA	National Training Authority
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WASSCE	West African Senior School Certificate Examination
WCR	West Coast Region
WDI	World Development Indicators

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The research study was funded by **UNESCO** through support from the **Shenzhen Municipality** of the People's Republic of China within the framework of the **UNESCO SCHENZHEN** Project of Quality Assurance in higher education in Africa. The project aims to assist African higher education systems to further develop their quality assurance mechanisms by putting in place the necessary quality assessment tools to facilitate the recognition of foreign higher education credits, study programmes and qualifications, and thus contribute to the enhancement of transnational mobility of students.

The study aimed at identifying quality assurance practices and related gaps within the post-secondary education system. It also establish priorities for future actions towards continual quality improvement within the system.

Findings

- The total number of respondent education and training providers is thirty-six (36), resulting to a response rate of ninety (90) percent as forty (40) institutions were considered for the study.
- In relation to the level of qualifications offered at the tertiary and higher education institutions, the revealed the following:
 - ✚ The proportion of institutions offering PhD programmes is only six percent (2 higher education institutions) of the total respondents. These postgraduate programmes are offered in limited areas such as Business Administration, History, and International Relation.
 - ✚ Only eight percent of the institutions (3 higher education institutions) offer master's degree programmes in the country. Out of the six (6) higher education, five (14% of all respondent) offer programmes at the Bachelors level, and the other specializing only in postgraduate programmes.
 - ✚ At the tertiary level (non-degree awarding institutions), 42 percent of the institutions offer diploma (National and Higher National) programmes; 61 percent offer

programmes at the level of advanced certificate and 81 percent of the respondents offer qualifications at certificate level.

- In terms of programmes offered by field of study, fourteen (39%) offer programmes in Science, Technology and Engineering, whilst eighteen (61%) do not offer programmes in the mentioned area. Eighteen (50%) of the respondents offer programmes in Management and Business Administration related; nine (25%) offer programmes in Arts, Languages and Humanities whereas twenty-seven (75) do not. In the field of Tourism, Hospitality and Culture, seven (19%) offer programmes in the area and twenty-nine (81%) of respondents do not. In Agriculture, which is a key sector of the economy, two (6%) responded to offering programmes in the area whereas thirty-four (94%) stated otherwise.
- In relation to admissions criteria to the tertiary and higher education institutions, **(69)** percent of total respondent institutions stated that admissions are obtained through performance on national exams such as WASSCE/GCE O' Level and in some cases, the GABECE as is the case with skills centres. Fourteen (14) percent revealed that they placed value on their institution's test or assessment as an admission criteria, and seventeen (17) percent indicated other means such targeting early school leavers without any formal qualification attainment.
- Out of the thirty-six (36) respondent institutions, 69 percent responded to having a functional library while 31 percent indicates otherwise. This findings revealed that the availability of functional libraries within the tertiary and higher education institutions requires improvement.
- In assessing the quality of the staff, respondents were asked to provide the actual number of full-time staff by highest level of educational attainment. Out of the total 466 persons reported in the higher education institutions, the findings indicated that: 11% are males with a PhD and 1% are females with a PhD, 43% are males with an MSc degree and 13% are female holding the same level of qualification; 23% and 10% respectively represent males and females with a highest attainment of a bachelor's degree.
- Similarly, within the tertiary education level, the findings out of a total 174 persons reported revealed the following with respect to the number of degree holders among respondent

institutions. 1% of the males are PhD holders with no female PhD holder, 30% of the total are males with an MSc degree and 11% are female holding the same level of qualification; 44% and 15% respectively are males and females with a highest educational attainment of a bachelor's degree.

- With reference to availability of IQA Policy, 4 (67%) of higher education institutions do not have an internal quality assurance policy, while 2 (33%) stated they have the policy. At the tertiary level, 23 (77%) indicated not having a policy on IQA and 7 (23%) state they have a policy on IQA.
- Regarding established quality assurance units, 27 (90%) of tertiary institution indicate not having any unit/department responsible for internal quality assurance issues, whereas 3 (10%) stated they do. At the higher education level, 2 (33%) indicated the availability the mentioned unit or department whilst 4 (67%) responded on the contrary.
- In gauging the linkage of industry with education and training providers, the survey findings revealed the following:
 - ❖ 69% of all (36) respondents stated having no collaboration with industry in terms of research, 19% indicated the collaboration as insufficient as implementation is not forthcoming, 6% rated the collaboration as fairly good and 6% mentioned the research collaboration is excellent specifically in the Tourism Field.
 - ❖ 53% indicated having no data on output and employment rate of graduates. This implies that no tracer study or graduate employment studies are conducted by the many tertiary and higher education institutions. However, only 6% rated having reliable data on graduates in relation to external efficiency of programmes.
 - ❖ 33% stated having good partnership with potential employers to facilitate graduate employability, and 53% mentioned having none or insufficient partnership with potential employers in the same domain. Those that mentioned having good

partnerships, are mainly public institutions in the areas of health and education. However, in most private institutions, these arrangement are not in place.

- ❖ **55%** (19% excellent, 11% fairly good and 25% good) mentioned having some sort of arrangement with industry regarding industrial placements and practical trainings for students. Internship is a requirement for most tertiary education programmes, however it can be deduced that despite the arrangements, implementation has not been successful as many students are unable to obtain the industrial experience, largely due to lack of placement opportunities.
- ❖ **56%** of respondents mentioned that there exist no collaboration such that employers' participate in curriculum design in view of addressing responsiveness of programmes to labour market needs. 6% rated the collaboration as excellent, 11% as fairly good, 14% as good, and 11% as insufficient.

These results indicate that the collaboration between employers and education and training is very low, and by implication adversely affect relevance of programmes.

- In terms of factors responsible for the ineffective implementation of IQA mechanisms at institutional level, the study revealed that:
 - ❖ 81% of total respondents mentioned lack or inadequacy of IQA specialists or personnel.
 - ❖ 72% of all respondents indicated lack of IQA tools.
 - ❖ 64% of respondents stated lack of a coherent IQA Strategy.
 - ❖ 53% reported lack of technical know-how to implement IQA Strategy.
 - ❖ 75% indicated lack of funding to carry out IQA activities.
 - ❖ 56% said lack of commitment from their management in supporting IQA activities.

Recommendations

In the light of the data analysis and findings, the following recommendations will be key for enhancing the provision of quality and relevant education to the national aspirations.

1. There should be much greater attention placed on the improvement in quality of governance and leadership at the tertiary and higher education institutions. Governing Boards of institutions should set measurable targets for heads of institutions to implement. In addition, heads of institutions should be trained on academic leadership to be au-fait with processes and procedures for administration of post-secondary institutions.
2. Board of Directors or Governing Council of institutions must be part of the quality assurance process from design to oversight administration. This will ensure commitment from Management to improving the quality of educational service delivery.
3. Structures for the establishment and effective functioning of the internal quality assurance mechanisms should be a priority of tertiary and higher education institutions. Persons responsible for QA activities should be capacitate and necessary tools must be developed and implemented. In addition, the QA units/departments must be empowered adequately by top management in performing their duties with high standards of accountability.
4. The Authority should come up with ranking criteria to rank institutions according to approved performance indicators.
5. Capacity building of quality assurance personnel of tertiary and higher education institutions on IQA practices should be conducted periodically by the Authority to enhance capacity on implementing IQA processes and procedures
6. Training of External QA Personnel is highly recommended to avail the higher education sector with the necessary pool of specialist for effective monitoring and evaluation of the system in accordance with national minimum standards.

7. A Credit Transfer Framework for the tertiary and higher education system should be developed in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework. This would contribute significantly in the harmonization of programmes and qualifications between the tertiary and higher education system and by implication, encourage vertical mobility of both students and staff.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.0. Introduction

This research study was funded by UNESCO through support from the Shenzhen Municipality of the People's Republic of China within the framework of the **UNESCO SCHENZHEN** Project of Quality Assurance in higher education in Africa. The overall objective of the project is to assist African higher education systems to further develop their quality assurance mechanisms by putting in place the necessary quality assessment tools to facilitate the recognition of foreign higher education credits, study programmes and qualifications, and thus contribute to the enhancement of transnational mobility of students. In the Gambia, the project support falls under component two i.e. strengthening support for newly established quality assurance agencies and is implemented by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (**MoHERST**) in collaboration with the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (**NAQAA**).

The rationale for this study is to take a stock of the existing quality assurance practices and gaps in the tertiary and higher education system in The Gambia. The standards of quality of tertiary and higher education in The Gambia need to be improved significantly to achieve the goals of competitiveness with international standards and to create the foundations of a knowledge-based economy as envisioned by government. NAQAA is making concerted efforts to improve the quality of tertiary and higher education to meet international standards in the provision of high-quality teaching, learning, research and service.

The rest of the document is structured following Chapter 1: Chapter two summarises perspectives on quality assurance both within and outside the country; Chapter three discusses the methodology including the research methods, organization, and interpretation of data. Chapter four reveals the analysis and main findings from the survey data and Chapter five gives the conclusion and recommendations for future actions.

1.1. Country background Information

The Gambia is one of the smallest countries in West Africa with a total land area of a little more than 10,600 square kilometres. It is bounded by the Republic of Senegal on all sides except on the West by the Atlantic Ocean.

The total population of the country is estimated at 1.9 million inhabitants with an annual growth rate of 3.1 percent. Of these 943,426 (50.8 per cent) are females whilst males constituted 913,755 (49.2 per cent). Among the male population, 16.2 per cent are children under the age of five compared to 15.3 per cent of females in the same age-group; over 3 per cent of the population are aged 65 years or older and the population aged **15-24** years, has increased from 19.0 per cent in 2003 to 21.4 per cent in 2013¹. These statistics has significant implications in post-secondary educational planning and policy decision-making as enrolment is expected to increase thus putting more pressure on existing resources tertiary and higher education resources.

The population of the country is heavily concentrated in the Kanifing, Brikama, Kerewan and Basse administrative areas with a density of approximately 176 persons inhabiting every square kilometre with the majority living in the urban centres (**Census Report, 2013**).

According to the Human Development Indices and indicators (**2018**) statistical update, the country recorded a life expectancy at birth of 61.4 years, expected years of schooling of 9.2 years and a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.460, suggesting there is huge need for the country to align its national development plans to strengthening human capital formation as the country strives to upgrade its status from a low income to a middle income country.

1.2. Post-Secondary Education System of The Gambia

In the Gambia, post-secondary education is generally recognized as education beyond 12 years of schooling. Post-secondary non tertiary institutions are generally skills/apprenticeship centres whose target are mainly early school leavers.

The education sector in The Gambia is governed by two ministries; the ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE), and the ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST). MoHERST has the vision to play a central role in terms of policy formulation in the drive to transform The Gambia into a skills-based economy and a knowledge

¹ 2013 Population and Housing Census Report

society through the establishment of a tertiary and higher education system of reputable (world class) standing; a system that will turn tertiary and higher education institutions into centres of excellence for the production of well-educated and skilled citizens with competencies to lead fulfilled lives and compete nationally and globally².

TVET has been recognized by the government as a necessary and sufficient condition for development. Technical Education in The Gambia began as far back as 1948 (**TVET Policy, 2001**). At that time a Vocational Training Centre was established under the supervision of the Directorate of Education. The Centre provided training in basic carpentry skills to artisans and early school leavers. In 1977, the Directorate of National Vocational Training Programme (**DNVTP**), under the supervision of the Office of the President, was set up on the recommendation of the World Bank, as a precondition for funding.

In 1979, the National Vocational Training Board (**NVTB**) was set up and charged with responsibility for policy direction and development of technical and vocational education and assisted by the directorate as the executive arm.

In 1992, the National Council for Technical Educational and Vocational Training (**NCTEVT**) was set up under the Education Act of 1992. The council like its predecessor board **is** responsible for policy development and direction under the supervision of the Directorate of Technical and Vocational Training (DTEVT) of the Department of State for Education³. In 2002, as part of the recommendations in the TVET Policy (2001), the NTA Act was enacted, establishing the National Training Authority and mandated to regulate Tertiary (TVET) institutions.

As part of the government's reform agenda in Tertiary and Higher Education, NAQAA was established by an ACT of Parliament in 2015. NAQAA is mandated to establish, regulate and accredit tertiary (including TVET) and higher education institutions in The Gambia.

² See the tertiary and higher education policy: P (2014 – 2023).

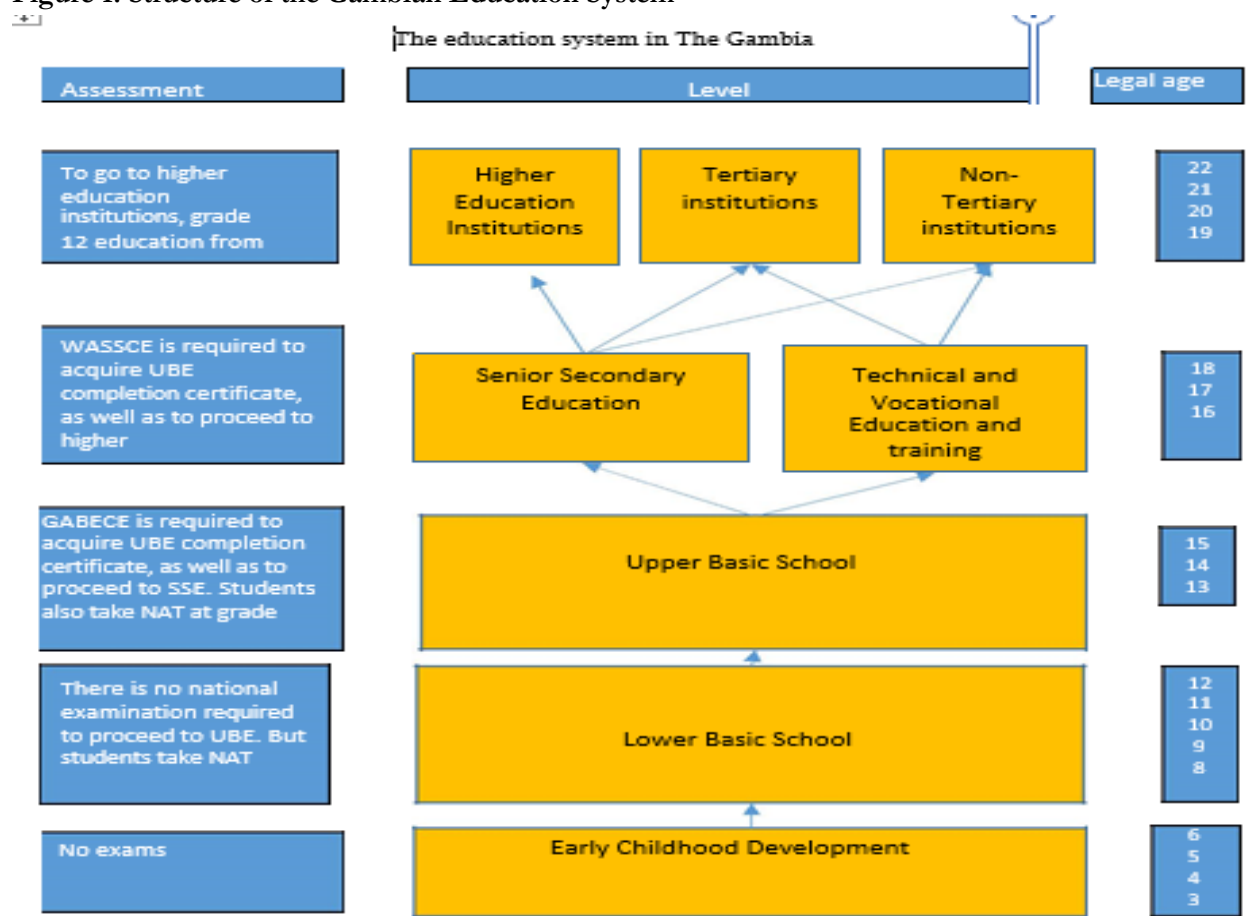
³ For more information on the evolution of the TVET sector, see the Gambia TVET Policy, 2001.

NAQAA is committed to a quality driven tertiary and higher education system that contributes to social and economic development, relevant and innovative scholarship in The Gambia. The functions of the Authority as expressed in the NAQAA Act 2015 include inter alia to:

- Develop criteria and standards for the establishment, registration and accreditation of tertiary and higher education institutions;
- Monitor the quality assurance practices in tertiary and higher education institutions for continuous quality improvement.
- Provide policies and guidelines for the development of qualifications, credit accumulation and transfer, harmonization and streamlining of professional, tertiary and higher education programmes to reflect the human development needs of the country; and
- Provide technical advice to the Minister of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology on accreditation and quality assurance related issues.

There are four levels of education namely: Basic Education (nine years of uninterrupted learning – made up of lower and upper basic education); Senior Secondary Education; Tertiary Education; and, Higher Education. As part of the education-sector wide policy 2016 – 2030, a new structure of education is proposed as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: Structure of the Gambian Education System



Source: Public Expenditure Review of Education in the Gambia (World Bank Group, 2017)

Currently, there are seven (7) higher education institutions and sixty-one (61) registered non-degree tertiary institutions operating in the country. Of the HEIs, one is public and the rest private. For the registered and accredited tertiary institutions, three (6) are public institutions.

Table 1: Classification of Post-secondary education and Training Institutions

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Higher Education Institutions	7	9	9
Registered and Accredited Tertiary Institutions	64	91	100.0
Total	71	100.0	

Source: NAQAA Database, December 2018

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective is to establish the baseline information which will assist tertiary and higher education institutions in institutionalizing effective internal quality assurance mechanism.

1.3.1. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the survey is to:

1. Take stock of the current tertiary and higher education sector in The Gambia
2. Provide evidence-based self-assessment information on quality assurance practices of tertiary and higher education institutions;
3. Provide evidence in the functionality of effective IQA tools in the tertiary and higher institutions; and
4. Identify gaps for continuous quality improvement in educational service delivery.

1.4. Limitations of the Study

Keeping in view the given timelines, financial resources and logistics available to conduct this survey, the following limitations were observed:

- Restricted mobility to visit education and training providers in all regions of the country.
- Non-availability of resources to conduct focus group discussions and consultative meetings/workshops on quality assurance at the various regions.

1.5. Definition of study key concepts

Accreditation: means the process of according formal recognition to an education and/or training institution by the Authority for meeting satisfactory standards in performance, integrity and quality in relation to the programmes offered by the institution;

Tertiary Education: means a post-secondary institution offering professional, vocational and/or technical education training programmes from Certificate to Higher National Diploma levels.

Higher Education: includes a university, college, or institute offering degree and non-degree programme of an academic or professional nature.

TVET: means programmes geared towards skills acquisition in vocational and technical training
Registered and Accredited Institution.

Programme: means any arrangement of a course of study that is structured or designed to achieve a learning outcome leading to an award of a tertiary qualification or a higher education qualification

CHAPTER TWO: PERSPECTIVES ON QUALITY ASSURANCE

2. Introduction

Quality Assurance is the planned and systematic review process of an institution or programme to determine whether or not acceptable standards of education, scholarship and infrastructure are being met, maintained and enhanced (**Hayward, 2006**). It is a system designed to add value to tertiary and higher education by encouraging conformance to high quality standards. An efficient and effective high quality education system which is internationally recognized and a well-established national quality culture are vital for economic growth in developing countries like The Gambia. A sustainable quality assurance system enhances employment opportunities, improves the education and training of future employees, harnesses future leaders, facilitates an enabling learning environment, and enriches the academic and intellectual landscape. Thus, it fuels the engine of economic and social development at the national and international levels.

A quality educational system is essential to the successful development and functioning of an open and democratic civil society. Higher education is expected to provide the social norms of communication and interaction such as philosophical thinking and reasoning to promote the sovereignty of its individuals, and to eliminate all kinds of social-class ethnic conflicts and gender or religious biases (Clarke, 2002).

The development of Quality Assurance is a continuous process and therefore, continuity of strategies, actions and efforts is a prerequisite for quality in higher education. Quality Assurance including its processes, procedures and outcomes of assessment is a challenge and its management is even a greater challenge to practitioners seeking workable guidelines, evidences of good practices and tools that will facilitate the process (Basari, et.al, 2016).

Transformation and rapid socio-economic changes have engulfed higher education systems and institutions. In the period from 2000 to 2013, enrolments in higher education doubled from 100 million to **199 million (UNESCO, 2015)**. This development has been spurred by an accelerated privatization and marketization of higher education, including public institutions. The pressure on higher education systems to provide access can be expected to increase massively in the years to come due to the catching-up of developing countries, in particular Asia and Africa (Bloom et al., 2005). Higher Education institutions are under tremendous pressure to reform and adapt considering the

massification of higher education by national development objectives, thus rendering quality and graduate employability (relevance) at the centre stage of higher education policy in countries (Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumberg, 2009).

Quality assurance in general refers to the systematic processes aimed at monitoring and enhancing quality of education (Mien Segers and Philip Dochy, 1996). Quality assurance provides confidence and trust that education and training providers, programmes and graduates meet minimum acceptable standards of education and scholarship (Melia, 1994). An established quality assurance framework enhances mutual recognition of qualifications such as degrees and diplomas, and thus, removing barriers to academic integration and the mobility of students across the globe.

Quality Assurance systems is therefore key to ensuring mutual trust of diplomas and degrees in countries, and thereby, making it very important for the successful implementation of the Addis Convention (2014). This needs assessment survey aimed at identifying quality assurance practices and related gaps within the post-secondary education system, and to establish priorities for future actions towards continual quality improvement within the system.

Prior to the establishment of NAQAA, responsibility for quality assurance in higher education (Universities) was the responsibility of the institutions. During the first period of quality assurance, from 2003 to 2015 at the post-secondary level, the defunct National Training Authority was responsible for the Quality Assurance of institutions offering only Technical and Vocational Education and Training (**TVET**) developed a policy documents such as the Gambia Skills Qualifications Framework – a partial national qualifications framework –to strengthen the quality of TVET programmes offered. A system for registering and accrediting TVET institutions was also established.

During the same period, registered private tertiary institutions are quality audited. The audited institutional reports are produced by the lead body (i.e. Quality Assurance Committee) comprised of key stakeholders. These institutional reports identifies institutions' strengths and weaknesses, thereby making recommendations for improvement.

Despite these efforts, several quality assurance mechanisms such as online programmes regulations, framework for monitoring teaching and learning as well as research were not established. Thus, the need for conducting such a survey to enhance quality education at all levels of the education system as enshrined in Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which is binding on all countries. Specifically, quality and relevant TVET and higher education is key to providing graduates that are responsive to the job market.

NAQAA with the expanded mandate of regulating both the tertiary and higher education institutions, all public and private higher education institutions (Universities) are audited and recommendations made for improvement in accordance with national set standards. These institutional audits are necessary conditions to strengthening the quality assurance systems and processes at individual institutions and the accountability of the system as a whole. However, despite these measures, graduates throughput in relation to the labour market continues to pose a challenge as revealed by report findings such as Employers Skills Need Assessment Survey (**NAQAA, 2018**) and Public Expenditure Review of the Education System of The Gambia (**World Bank, 2017**).

Therefore, the outcome of this research project will assist in improving student success, i.e., enhanced student learning with a view to increasing the number of graduates with attributes that are personally, professionally and socially valuable for the labour market, through supporting the effective functioning of internal quality assurance mechanisms.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

This chapter looks at the study design, respondents and research methods that are used during the needs assessment survey process. The research methods include the data collection processes and the statistical approach to data analysis. The survey aims to obtain representative responses from public and private tertiary and higher education institutions operating in the country.

3.1. Framework of Study Design

The sampling frame was provided by the Authority (NAQAA) through the database of post-secondary institutions in the Gambia. The sampling frame gives information about the location, address and type of education and training provider.

All higher education institutions (degree awarding institutions i.e. Universities) and all the main public tertiary education institutions (non-degree awarding institutions) are considered as part of the sample for the survey. This resulted to a total of 7 higher education and 33 tertiary institutions being considered part of the sample of the study to collect primary data through administering of a questionnaire.

Out of the 33 tertiary institutions, 30 are private tertiary institutions. The selection of these 30 are based on a systematic stratified random sampling technique from the registered and accredited institutional database of the Authority.

Table 2: Framework of Design

Aspect	Methodology and Data Sources	Data Collection Instrument/Tools	Respondent
Take stock of the tertiary and higher education sector in the Gambia	For this purpose, data were mainly extracted from the related reports/documentation/policy documents etc.	Desk Review	
Evidence-based self-assessment information on quality by tertiary and higher education institutions;	Survey instruments were developed to elicit perception of the HEIs students, faculty and staff, about (a) the available resources, and (b) vis-à-vis quality at Institutions	Survey Questionnaire Desk review	Universities; Tertiary Education Institutions

Provide evidence in the functionality of effective IQA tools in the tertiary and higher institutions; and	Questions within the survey instrument were developed to elicit perception of the THEIs on functionality of IQA systems and implementation of students, faculty and staff, about (a) the available resources, and (b) vis-à-vis quality at Institutions	Desk Review Survey Questionnaire	Universities; Tertiary Institutions
Identify gaps for continuous quality improvement in educational service delivery.	Questions within the Survey instrument were formulated to elicit gaps on challenges to quality assurance	Desk Review; Survey Questionnaire	Universities; Tertiary Institutions

3.2. Data Collection Instrument Development

A technical research committee was set-up to develop the instrument. The data collection tool was designed to obtain detailed information on the following:

- Characteristics of Education and Training Provider
- Institutional thematic focus in terms of programmes offering
- Physical teaching and Learning Resources
- Human Resources
- Internal Quality Assurance Tools and Practices
- Challenges to implementing effective Internal Quality Assurance System

3.3. Inception Workshop

An inception workshop was organized with a variety of stakeholders including the target population detailing the proposal on the research methods, the study framework and analysis for validation of the data collection instruments and methodology.

3.4. Data Collectors Recruitment and Data Collection

Ten (10) qualified personnel with at least a post-secondary diploma were recruited for the field work. Two supervisors facilitated the two-day data collectors training workshop on the data collection instruments and processes for the conduct of the survey. The GBoS were involved because of their experience in the conduct of surveys.

Pre-test of the research tools were conducted to enable the data collectors familiarize with the survey tools before actual field data collection, and for them to have an overview of the likely challenges they may face during fieldwork. This feedback helped devise penetrative strategies to enhance timely filling of the survey instrument with the necessary and sufficient information.

Data Collectors were divided into two groups, each headed by one supervisor. Each data collector and supervisor was supplied with mobile credits for their mobile phones in order to facilitate and ease communication amongst data collectors, supervisors, and co-coordinator of the survey. The data collection period span from **20th to 26th of March, 2019.**

3.5. Organization and Analysis of Data

Three clerks were tasked for the data entry. The data entered were sanitised to address inconsistencies and missing values before data analysis.

The information garnered is analysed using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. The main form of data analysis is descriptive statistics in the forms of bar charts, pie charts and tables. The data was analysed using mainly categorical data analysis techniques.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the information obtained from the respondent tertiary and higher education institutions during the field data collection. The study utilized mainly descriptive statistical methods in analysing the data.

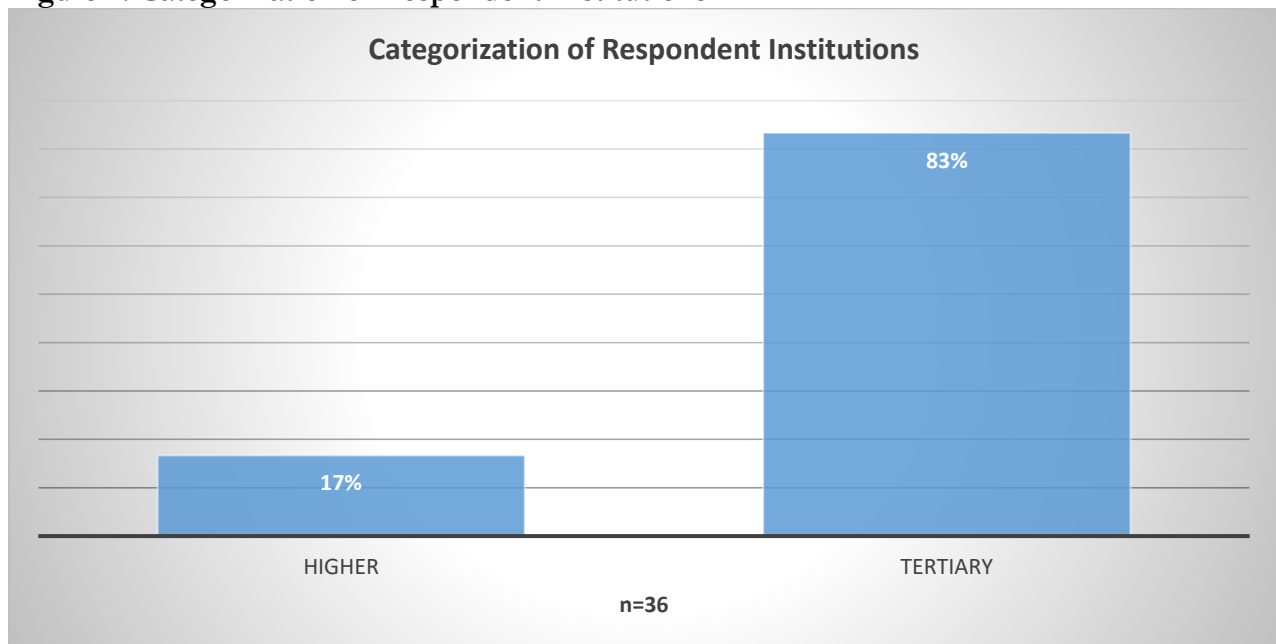
4.1. Findings

The total number of respondent education and training providers is thirty-six (36). This culminated to a response rate of ninety (90) percent as forty (40) institutions were identified for the study.

4.1.1. Characteristics of Institutions

Out of the total respondents, seventeen percent were higher education institutions whilst eighty-three percent are tertiary education institutions as shown in **figure 2**.

Figure 2: Categorization of Respondent Institutions



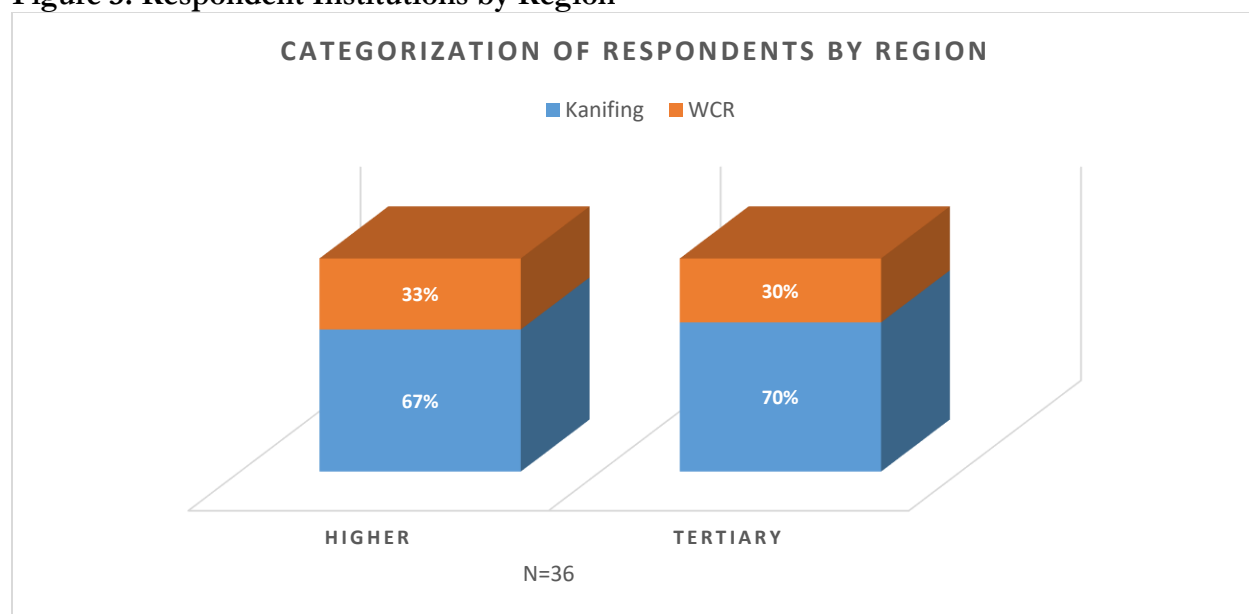
Source: Field Data, 2019

In figure 3, the distribution of respondent institutions by region is shown as follows:

- Out of the total 30 tertiary institutions, 70% are in Kanifing region, of which and 30% are in WCR.
- Of the six (6) higher education institutions, 67% are within the Kanifing Region and 33 percent are in the WCR.

The skewness of the number of institutions sampled in Kanifing, is due to the fact that most of the post-secondary institutions are found within the locality.

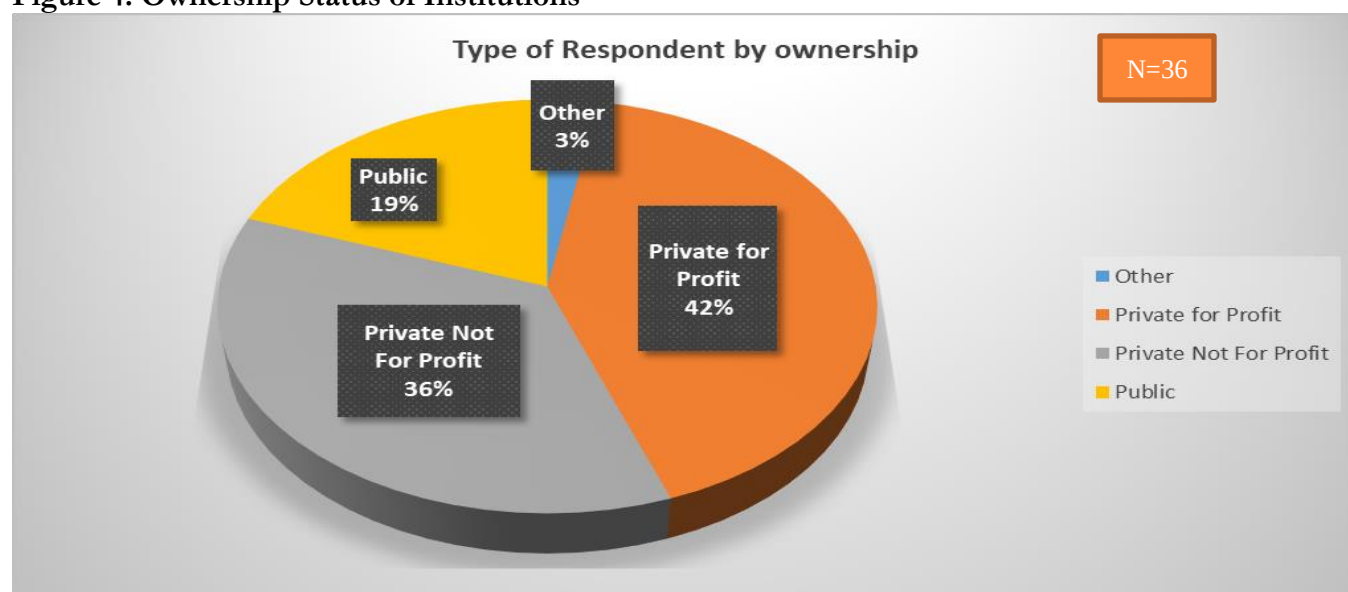
Figure 3: Respondent Institutions by Region



Source: Field Data, 2019

Further to type of institutional ownership, as shown in figure 4, out of the total thirty-six (36) respondents, forty-two (42) percent are private for profit, nineteen (19) percent are public, thirty-six (36) percent are private not for profit institutions and three (3) percent are categorized as others – indicating could not be placed into the above-mentioned categories.

Figure 4: Ownership Status of Institutions

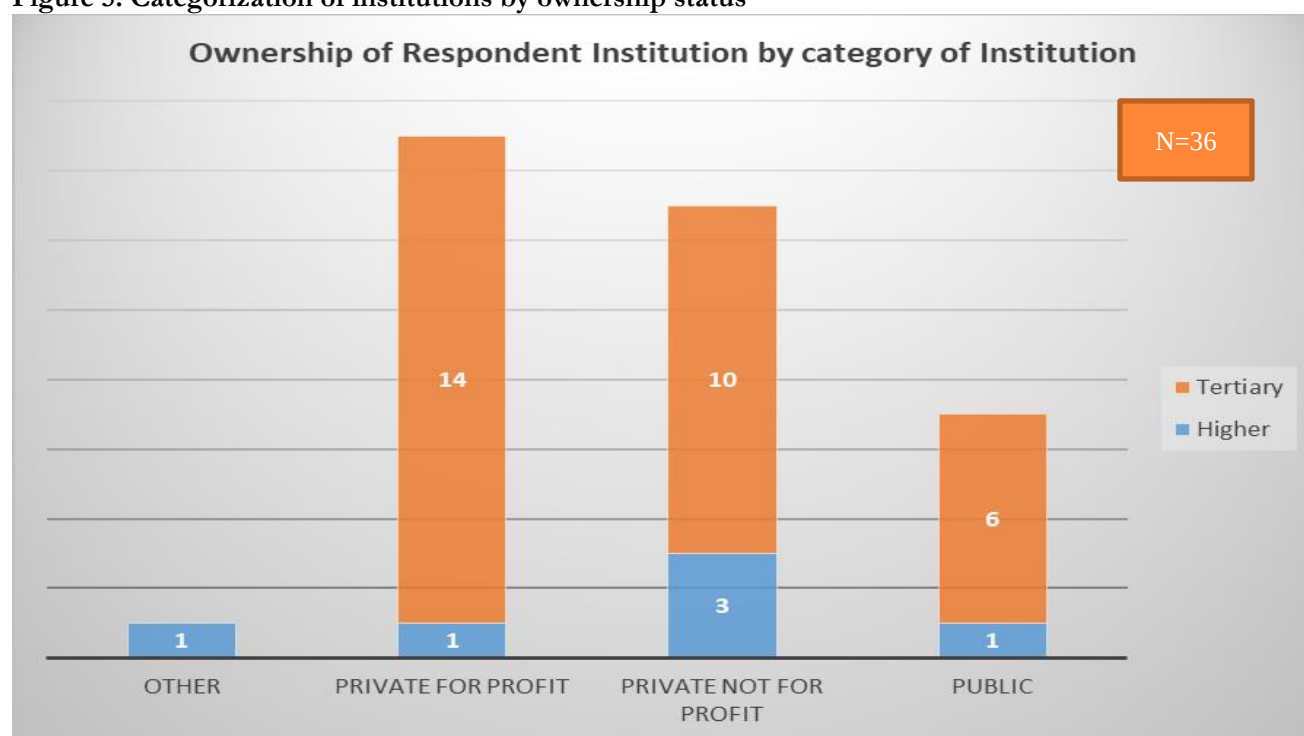


Source: Field Data, 2019

In terms of ownership status, out of the 7 public institutions considered, one (1) is a higher education institution whilst six (6) are tertiary institutions. Similarly, of the thirteen (13) private not for profit institutions, three (3) are higher education whilst 10 are tertiary in nature. Furthermore, of the fifteen (15) private for profit institutions, one (1) is a higher education entity whereas fourteen (14) are tertiary institutions.

Therefore, it can be observed that most tertiary (non-degree) awarding institutions operate on the basis of the profit motive and in most of them, robust financial systems are not established. This has resulted to low amount of investments to improving the facilities for teaching and learning in the institutions (NAQAA Audit Reports, 2018).

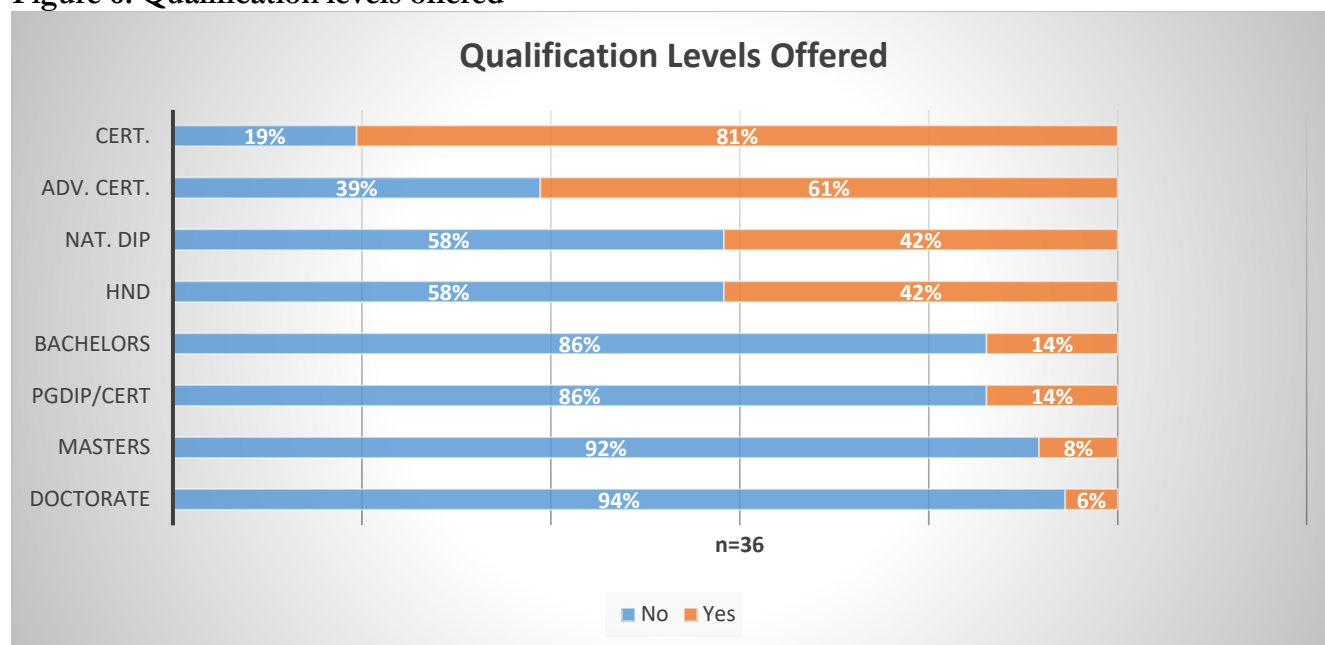
Figure 5: Categorization of institutions by ownership status



Source: Field Data, 2019

4.1.2. Institutional thematic focus in terms of programmes offering

Figure 6: Qualification levels offered



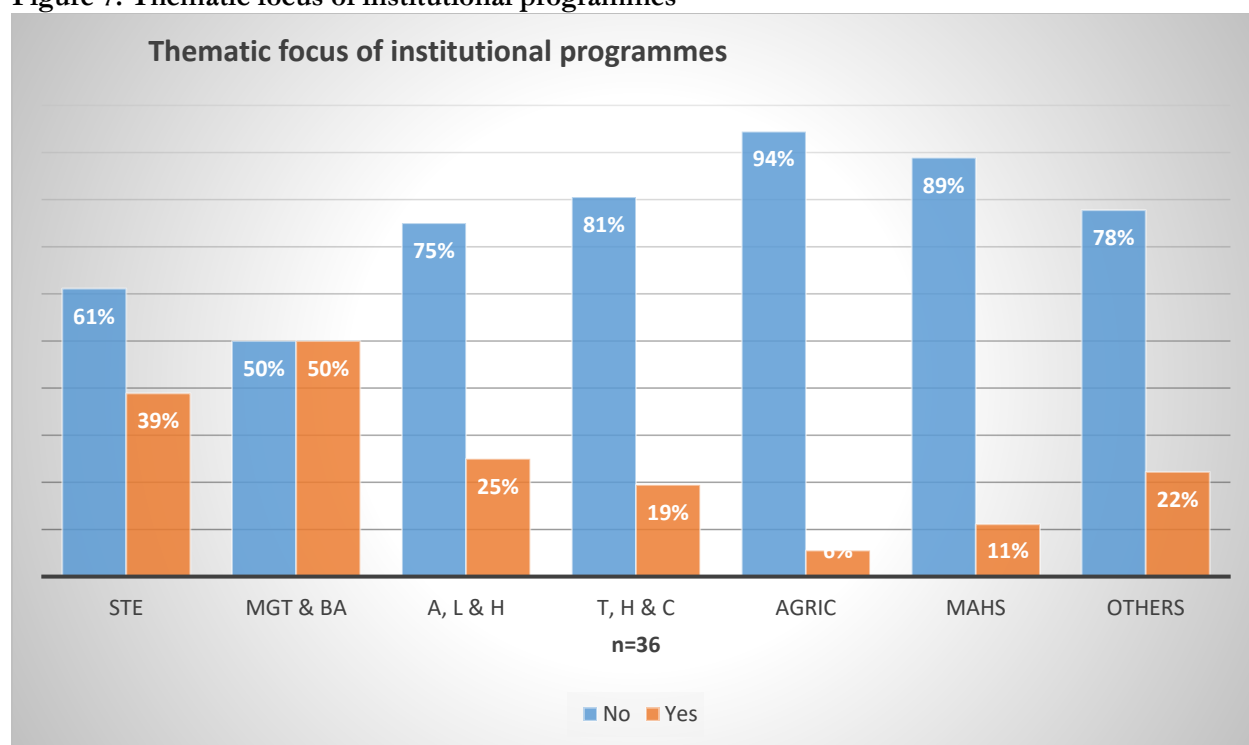
Sources: Field Data, 2019.

In relation to the level of qualifications offered in the tertiary and higher educations, the findings are as follows:

- ❖ The proportion of institutions offering PhD programmes is only six percent (2 higher education institutions). These postgraduate programmes are offered in limited areas such as Business Administration, History, and International Relation.
- ❖ Similarly, only eight percent of the institutions (3 higher education institutions) offer master's degree programmes in the country. Out of the six (6) universities, five (14% of all institutions in the sample) offer programmes at the Bachelors level, and the other specializing only in postgraduate programmes.
- ❖ At the tertiary level, 42 percent of the institutions offer diploma (National and Higher National) programmes; 61 percent offer programmes at the equivalent of advanced certificate and 81 percent of the respondents offer qualifications at the certificate level.

Comparably, all the respondent higher education institutions do not offer structured programmes at the certificate level except one, whereas all tertiary institution respondents offer programmes at the certificate level. It can also be deduced that training at postgraduate level in the country remains a challenge, the reason many people sought postgraduate training overseas.

Figure 7: Thematic focus of institutional programmes

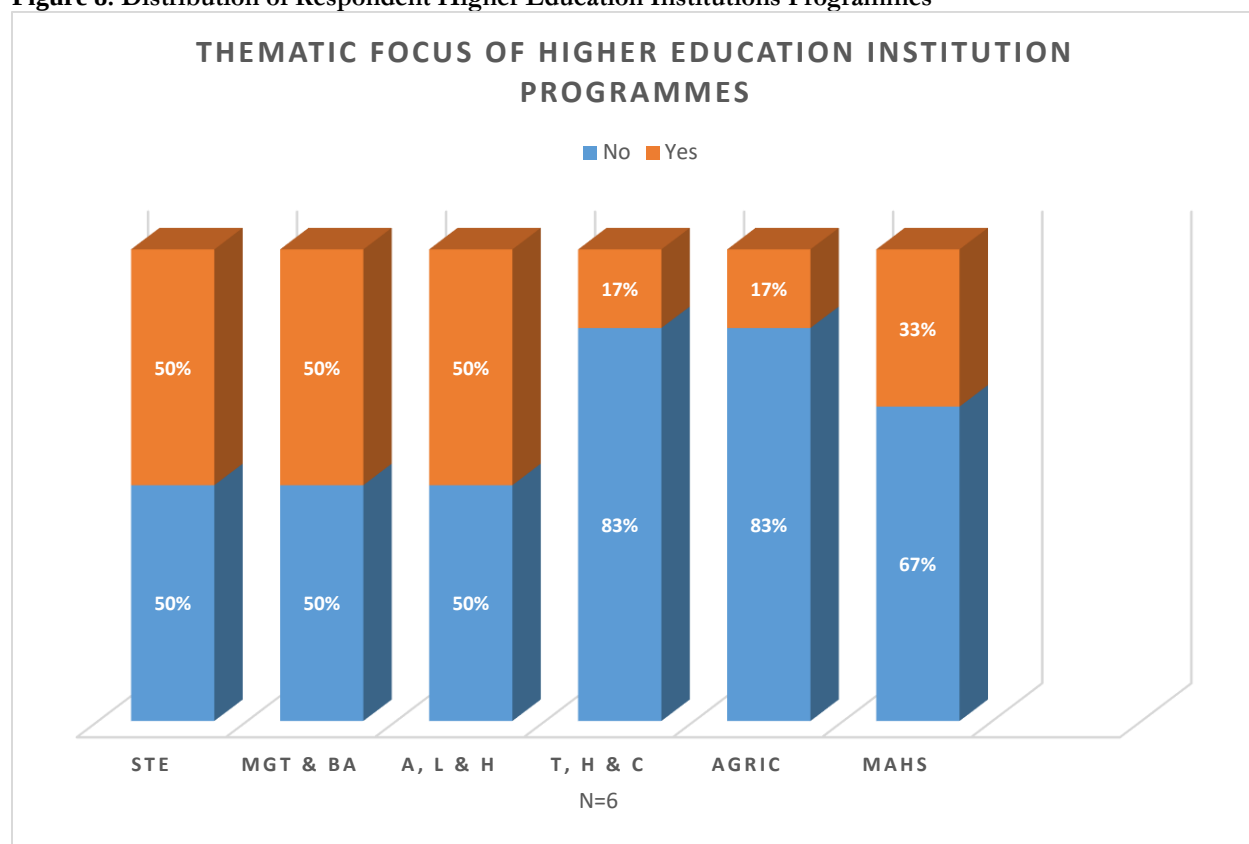


Source: Field Data, 2019.

Considering the focus of programmes at institutional level, fourteen (39%) of respondents offer programmes in Science, Technology and Engineering (**STE**) whilst twenty-two (61%) of the respondents do not offer programmes in **STE**. Eighteen (50%) of respondent institutions are offering programmes in Management and Business Administration (**MGT & BA**) field. Furthermore, nine (25%) of total respondents are offering programmes in Arts, Languages and Humanities (**A, L & H**) whereas twenty-seven (75%) do not. In terms of programmes in Tourism, Hospitality and Culture (**T, H & C**), seven (19%) of the institutions are running programmes in the said area and twenty-nine (81%) do not. In Agriculture, which is a key sector of the economy, two (6%) institutions responded to offering programmes in the area and thirty-four (94%) do not.

In addition, only four (11%) of the respondents are offering Medicine and Allied Health Sciences (MAHS) related programmes and thirty-two (89%) do not. Out of these four, two are Universities offering Programmes at bachelors and master's levels, and the other two are tertiary institutions offering certificate and diploma programmes specifically in the area of Nursing. The survey also reveal that eight (22%) respondents offer programmes in other areas different from the above-mentioned such as tailoring, auto-mechanic, electrical installation grouped as depicted in figure 7.

Figure 8: Distribution of Respondent Higher Education Institutions Programmes



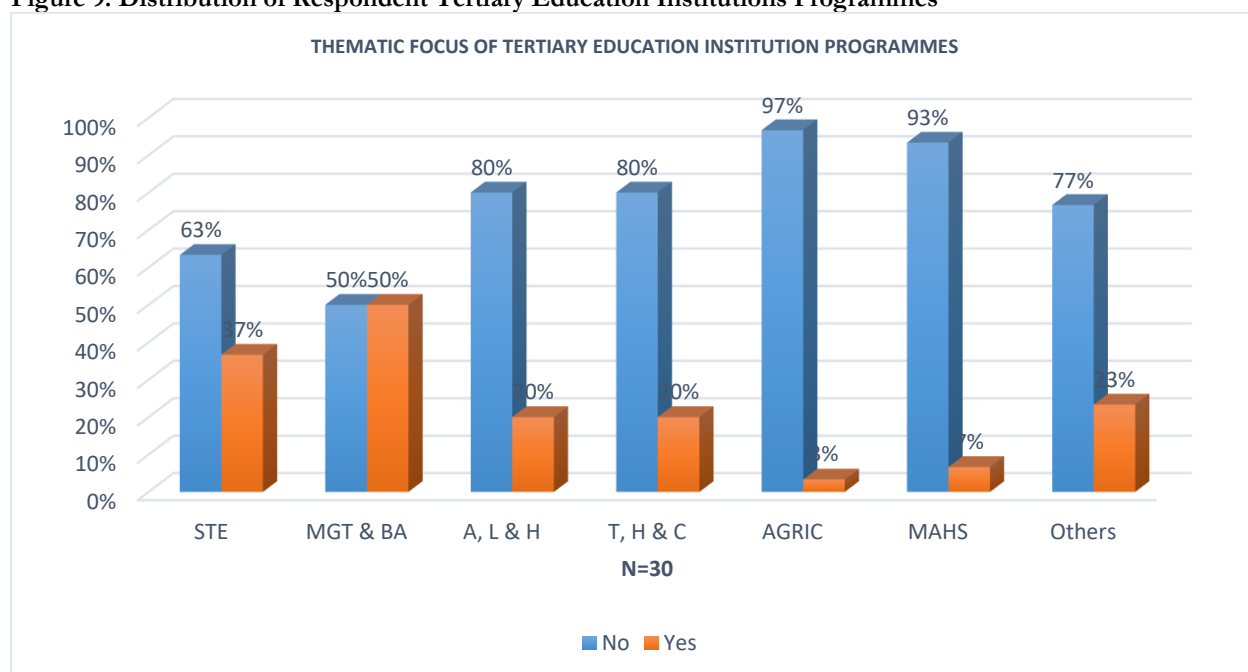
Source: Field Data, 2019

In disaggregating the distribution of programme fields by category of respondents, the findings of the survey with respect to higher education institutions reveal the following:

- ❖ Three (50%) of the respondent Higher Education institutions (HEIs) offer programmes in Science, Technology and Engineering (**STE**) and three (50%) do not. It was also found that three (50%) offer programmes in Management and Business Administration (**MGT & BA**) and Arts, Languages and Humanities (**A, L & H**) related respectively.

- ❖ One (17%) respondent HEI offers programmes in the areas of Agriculture and Tourism, Hospitality and Culture (**T, H & C**) respectively, with five (83%) not offering any programmes in the said fields.
- ❖ Two (33%) of the responded HEIs offer programmes in the areas of Medical and Allied Health Sciences (**MAHS**) notably in Medicine, Nursing, and Public Health.
- ❖ One (17%) responded offering programmes different from the above-mentioned fields.

Figure 9: Distribution of Respondent Tertiary Education Institutions Programmes



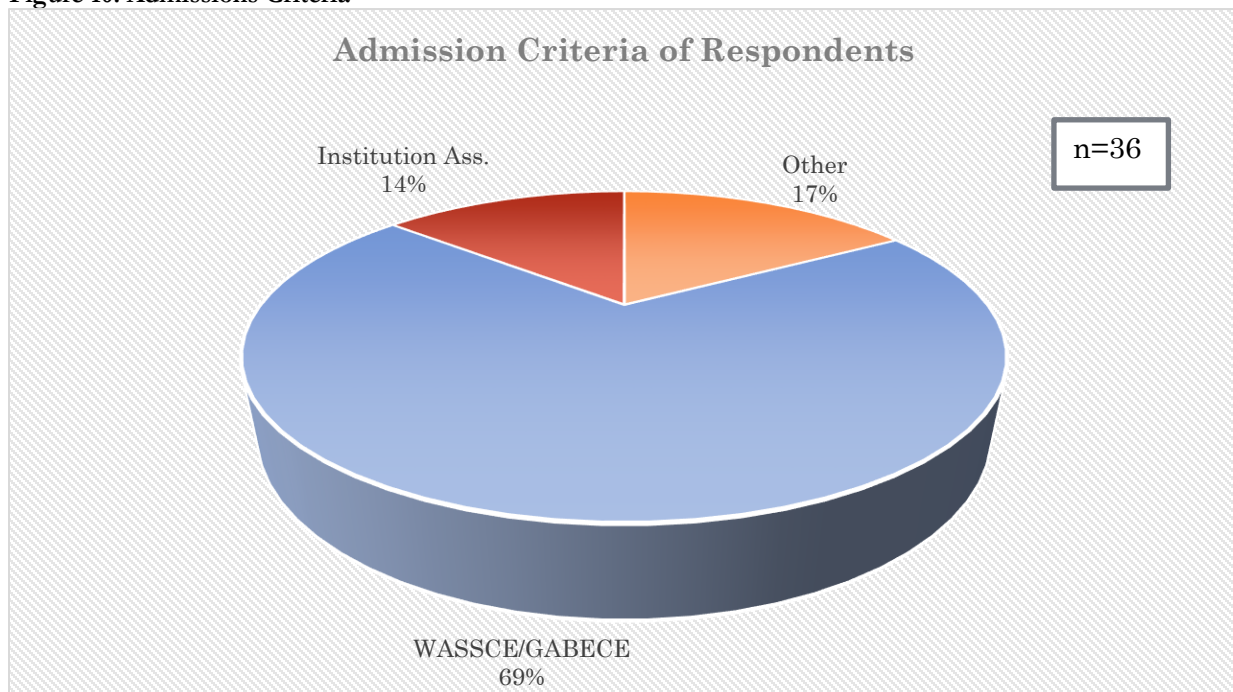
Source: Field Data, 2019

With respect to the tertiary education institutions, the distribution of programmes is as follows:

- ❖ Eleven (37%) of the respondent institutions offer programmes in Science, Technology and Engineering (**STE**) and nineteen (63%) do not. Furthermore, fifteen (50%) of the respondent institutions offer programmes in the areas of Management and Business Administration (**MGT & BA**).
- ❖ In the Arts, Languages and Humanities (**A, L & H**) related field, twenty-four (80%) of respondent institutions do not offer programmes in the area whereas six (20%) of the respondent indicate running programmes in the above-mentioned area. Similarly, the same finding applies to the Tourism, Hospitality and Culture (**T, H & C**) area.

- ❖ One (3%) respondent of the tertiary institutions offer a programme in Agriculture from certificate to diploma levels whereas twenty-nine (97%) respondents state not offering programmes in the field.
- ❖ In Medical and Allied Health Sciences (**MAHS**) notably in Nursing related and Public Health, two (7%) offer programmes in the field and twenty-eight (93%) do not.
- ❖ Others in the number of seven (23%) offered programmes that are divergence to the above-mentioned particularly in basic skill areas such as tailoring.

Figure 10: Admissions Criteria

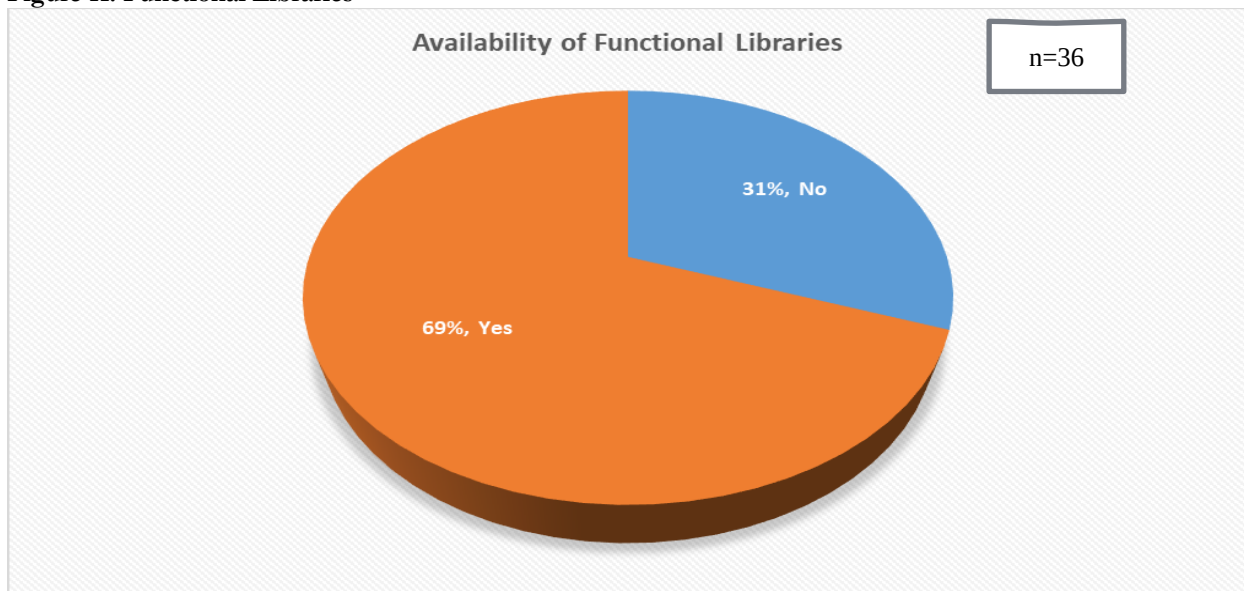


Source: Field Data, 2019

At present, admission to many tertiary and all higher education institutions (69% of all respondent institutions) is through performance on national exams or its equivalent such as **WASSCE/GCE O'** and in some cases, the **GABECE** as is the case with skills centres as shown in **figure 10**. Fourteen percent of respondents stated that they placed value on their institution's test or assessment as admission criteria, and seventeen percent indicated other means such as targeting early school leavers without any formal qualification attainment.

4.1.3. Physical teaching and Learning Resources

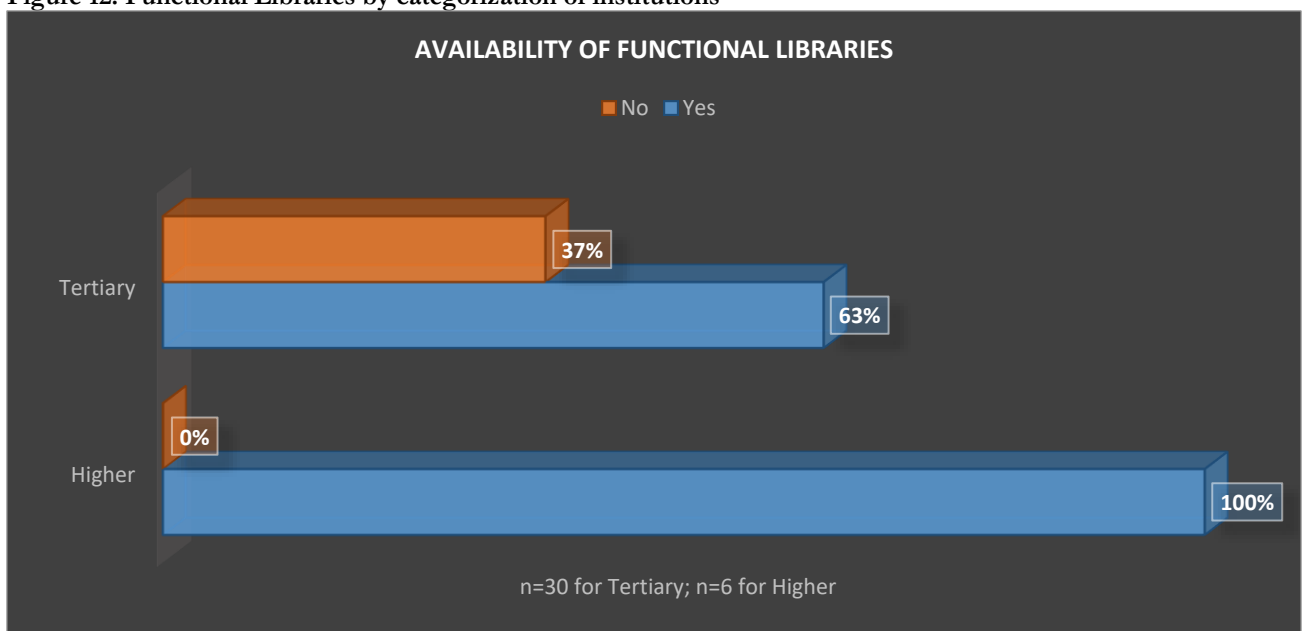
Figure 11: Functional Libraries



Source: Field Data, 2019

The survey revealed the availability of functional libraries within the tertiary and higher education institutions as shown in **figure 11**. Out of the thirty-six (36) respondent institutions, 69 percent responded to having a functional library while 31 percent indicated otherwise.

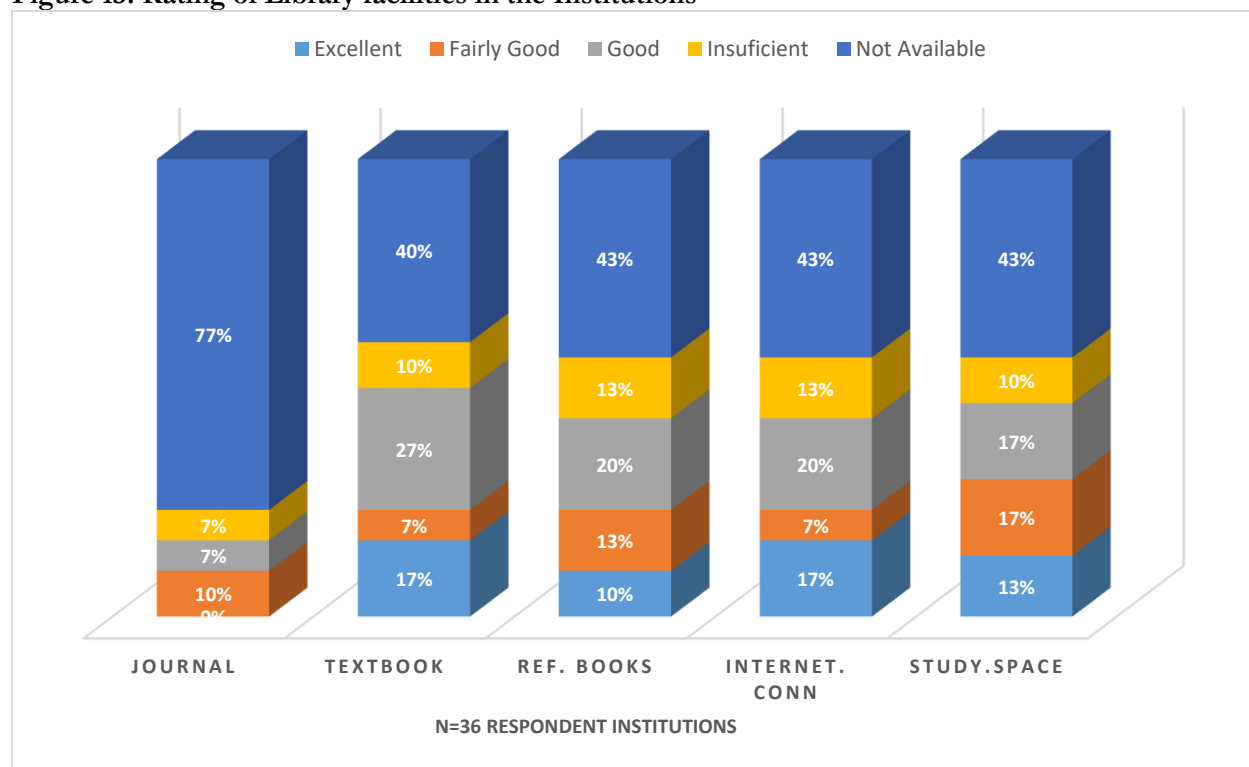
Figure 12: Functional Libraries by categorization of institutions



Source: Field Data, 2019

In consideration of the above statistics on availability of library and information services, the findings revealed, a significant number of responded tertiary education institutions (37%) are without functional libraries as shown in figure 12. Furthermore, all the responded higher education institutions (100% of universities) stated having a functional library, indicating that they are more likely to value the strategic role of libraries in the provision of educational services than tertiary institutions.

Figure 13: Rating of Library facilities in the Institutions



Source: Field Data, 2019

In rating facilities in the libraries, seventy-seven (77) percent of all respondent institutions do not have libraries that offer access to credible journal papers/articles, whereas seven (7) percent responded to having journal subscription with at least one publisher as shown in figure 13. Seven (7) percent rated their subscription as being good and these are mainly the online universities.

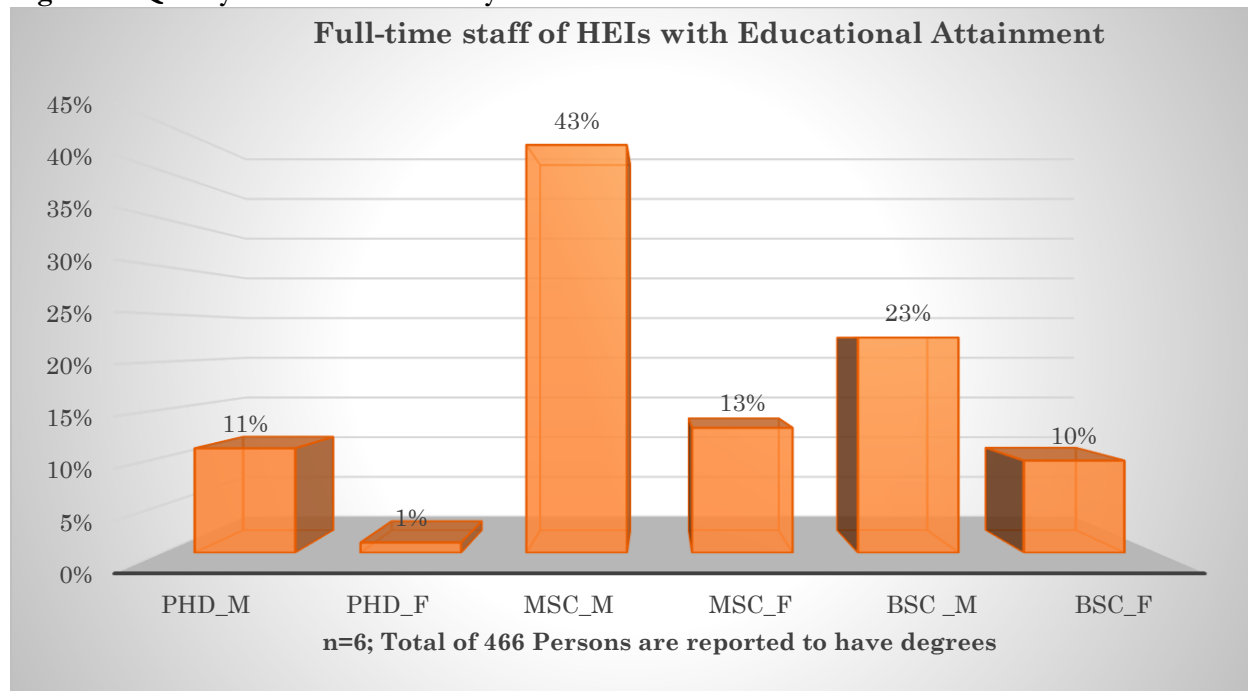
Regarding textbook availability, forty-three (43) percent indicate their libraries do not include adequate textbooks, Reference books, Internet Connectivity and Study Space as shown in **figure 13**. It is important to note that, in general, the quality of library services in the institutions according to the mentioned parameters requires improvement.

4.1.4. Human Resources

In assessing the quality of the staff, respondents were asked to provide the actual number of full-time equivalent staff by highest level of educational attainment. As shown in figure 14, out of the total 466 persons reported in the higher education institutions, the findings indicated that:

- 11% of the males are PhD holders and 1% are females with a PhD.
- 43% are males with an MSc degree and 13% are female holding the same level of qualification.
- 23% and 10% represented males and females with highest attainment of a bachelor's degree respectively..

Figure 14: Quality of Full-Time Staff by HEIs

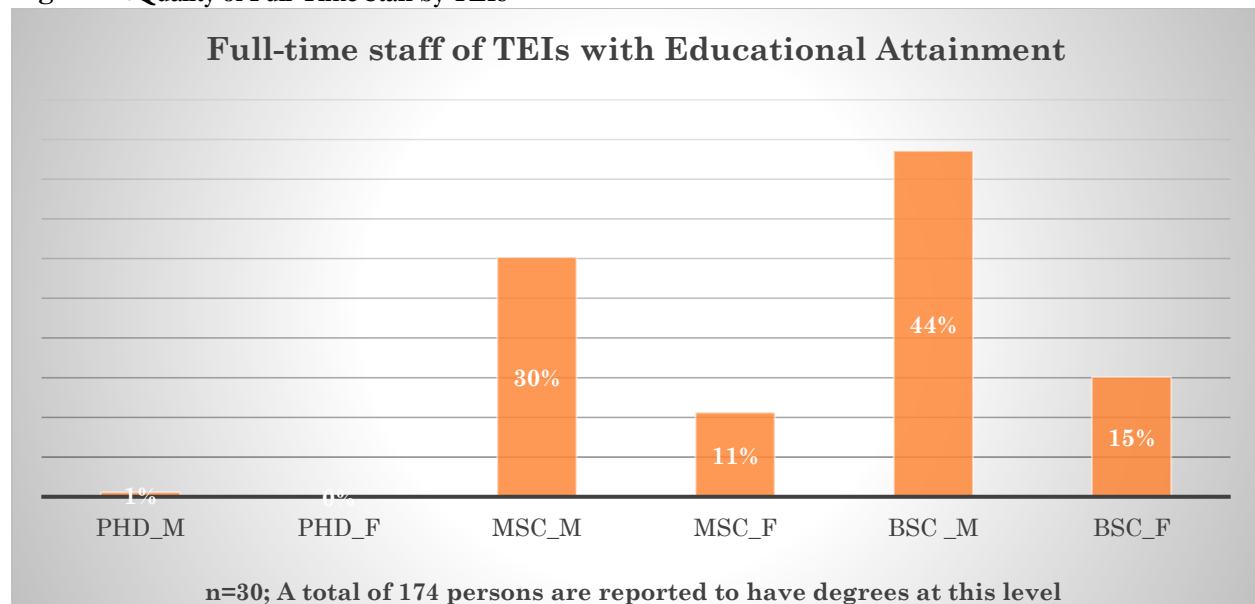


Source: Field Data, 2019

Similarly, within the tertiary education level, the findings revealed the following with respect to the number of degree holders among respondent institutions. As shown in figure 15, the percentages are calculated out of a total of 179 persons reported.

- 1% of the males are PhD holders with no female PhD holder
- 30% males are holder of an MSc degree and 11% are female holding the same level of qualification
- 44% and 15% represented males and females with highest attainment of a bachelor's degree respectively.

Figure 15: Quality of Full-Time Staff by TEIs



Source: Survey Field Data, 2019

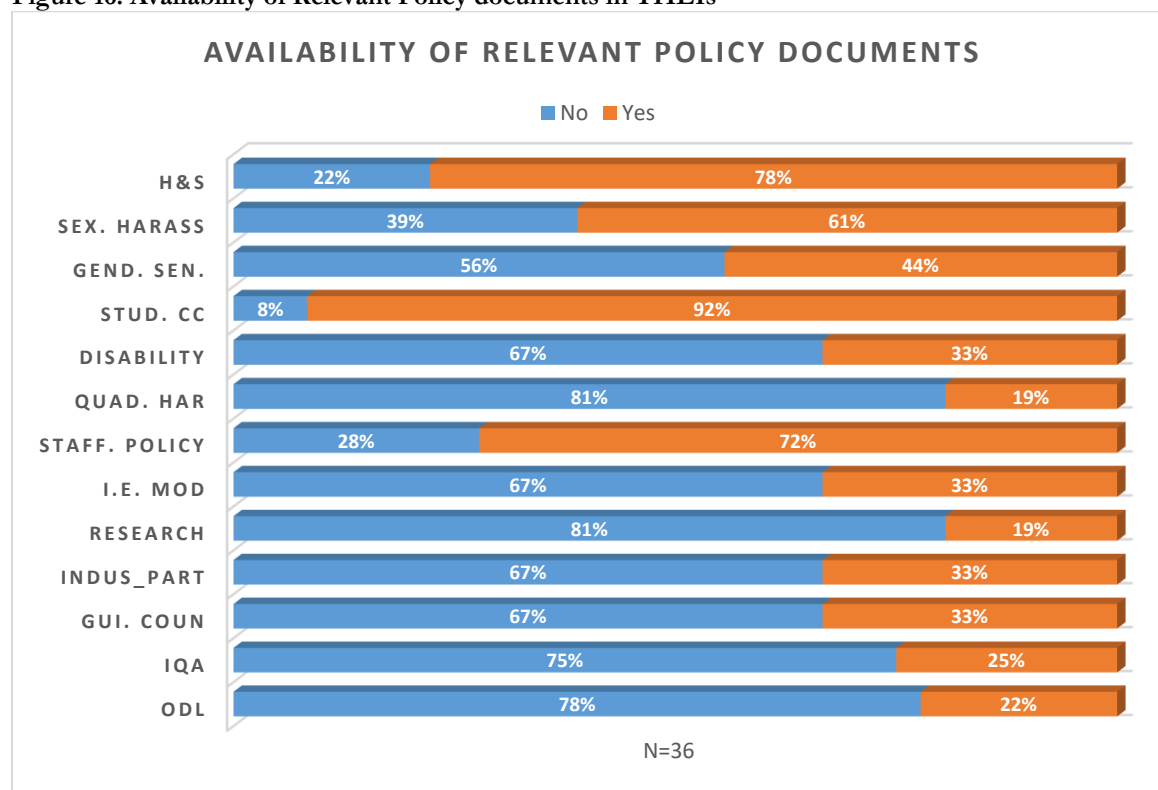
4.1.5. Internal Quality Assurance Tool and Practices

In assessing the availability of relevant policy document in the respondent institutions, the survey reveal the following as shown in the figure 16:

- ❖ **Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Policy:** Overall, 28 (78%) report that no policy on ODL exist, and 8 (22%) indicate that they do have a policy on ODL. ODL modes mainly offered in these institutions are online programmes.
- ❖ **Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Policy:** 27 (75%) of all respondent institutions do not have a policy on IQA whereas 9 (25%) indicate to having some sort of policy on IQA but not comprehensive.
- ❖ **Career Guidance and Counselling (GUI-CON) Policy:** 12 (33%) indicated to have a policy on Career Guidance and Counselling whilst 24 (67%) stated having no policy related document on it.
- ❖ **Partnership with Industry (Indus_Part):** Similarly, 12 (33%) indicated have a policy on Career Guidance and Counselling whilst 24 (67%) stated of having a policy related document on it.
- ❖ **Research:** 29 (81%) stated to having any policy on Research, whereas a 7 (19%) responded to having a policy on research.
- ❖ **Internal and External Moderation (I.E. Mod) Policy:** For those who value Internal and External Moderation of programmes or courses, 12 (33%) indicate to have a policy on it and 24 (67%) do not.

- ❖ **Staff Recruitment Policy (Staff Policy):** Overall, 26 (72%) indicate having a staff recruitment policy and 10 (28%) mentioned not having a comprehensive document on it any.
- ❖ **Qualifications Harmonization with Other Institutions (Quad_Har) Policy:** In terms of harmonization of qualifications with other institutions to ease mobility of both students and staff, 29 (81%) indicate having no strategy or policy, whereas a 7 (19%) responded to having a policy statement on harmonization.
- ❖ **Students and Staff with Disability (Disability) Policy:** 24 (67%) do not have any policy catering for the physically challenged for both staff and students, where 12 (33%) indicate they do specifically a statement on their staff service rules.t
- ❖ **Student Code of Conduct (Stud_Cc) Policy:** 33 (92%) indicate to having a comprehensive policy on student code of conduct whilst 3 (8%) mentioned they do not.
- ❖ **Gender Sensitivity (Gend_Sen) Policy:** 20 (56%) indicate to having some sort of policy on Gender sensitivity whilst 16 (44%) indicate none.
- ❖ **Sexual Harassment (Sex_Harass) Policy:** 22 (61%) indicate having policy on sexual harassment and 14 (39%) stated none.
- ❖ **Health and Safety (H&S) Policy:** Overall, 28 (78%) report that a policy on health and safety exist, and 8 (22%) indicate that they do not have a policy on it.

Figure 16: Availability of Relevant Policy documents in THEIs

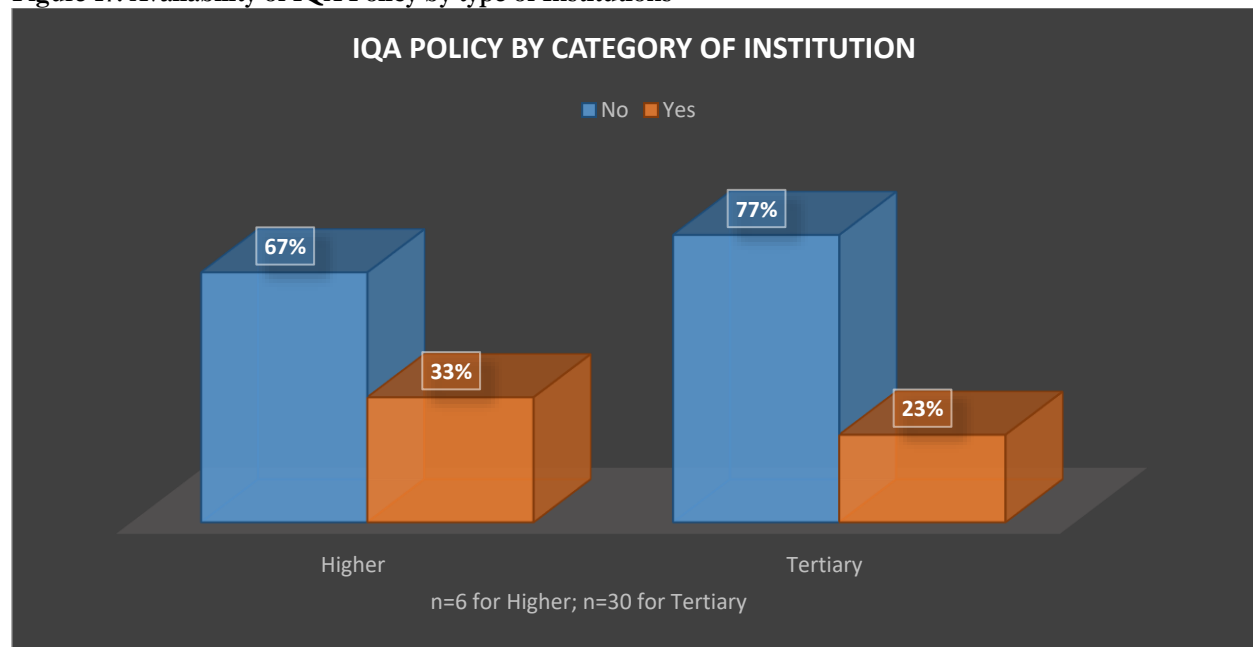


Source: Field Data, 2019

As presented in figure 17, survey respondents show that 4 (67%) of universities do not have an internal quality assurance policy, while 2 (33%) stated they have the policy. This result is not surprising, as the all the universities except one have been into operations before NAQAA was established. As a result, relevance to internal quality assurance mechanisms were not a priority. At the tertiary level, 23 (77%) indicate not having any IQA policy and 7 (23%) said they have a policy on IQA.

In general, all the tertiary and higher education institutions who indicate having the policy stated they are facing challenges in the development of IQA tools and implementation of the same.

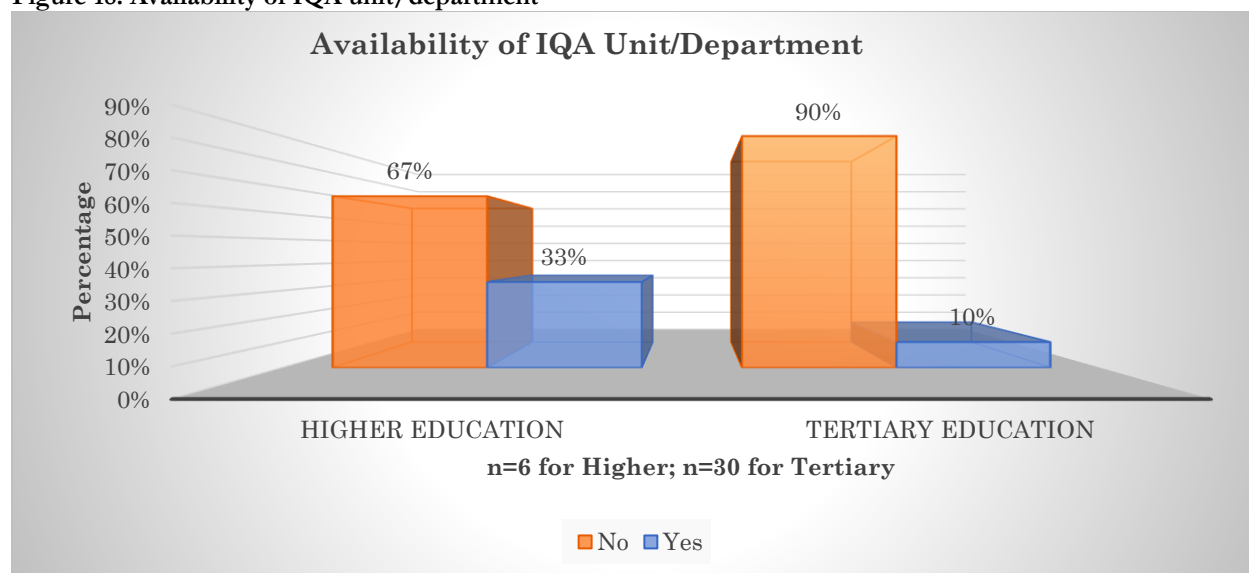
Figure 17: Availability of IQA Policy by type of Institutions



Source: Field Data, 2019

In relation to the establishment of quality assurance unit, respondents confirmed 27 (90%) of tertiary institution respondents have no unit/department responsible for internal quality assurance issues, whereas 3 (10%) said they do. At the higher education level, 2 (33%) mentioned the availability of a unit/department within the institution responsible for quality assurance matters whilst 4 (67%) responded in the contrary as presented in figure 18.

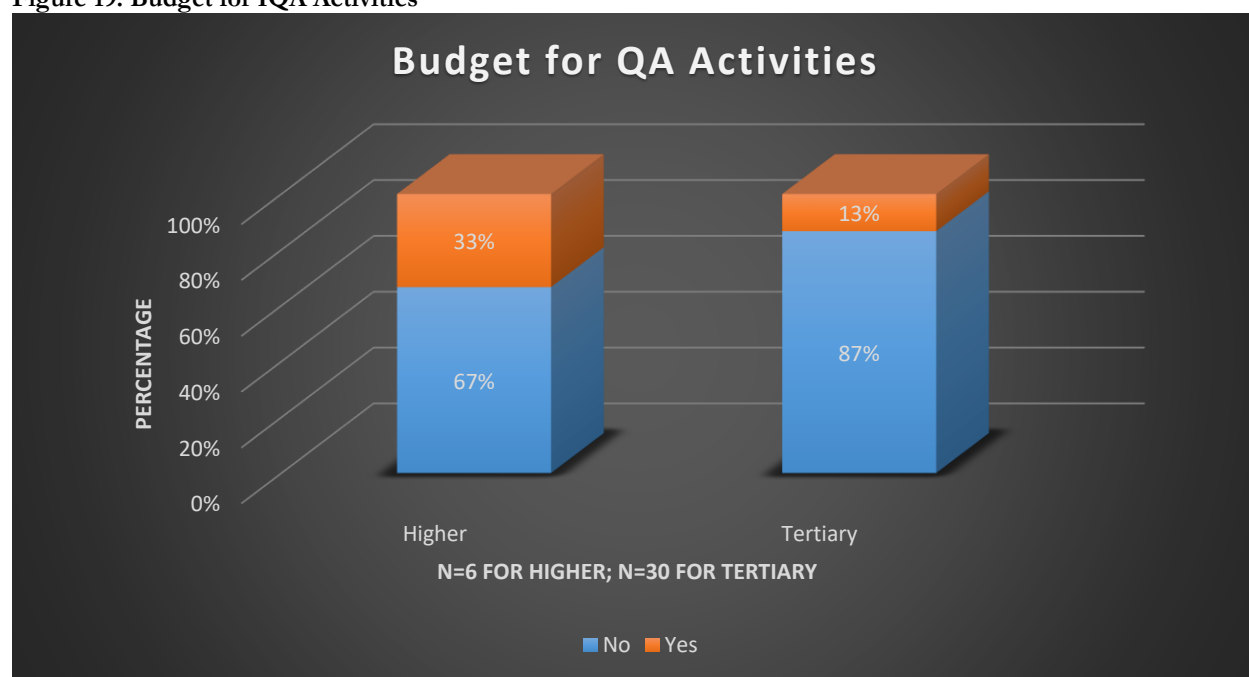
Figure 18: Availability of IQA unit/department



Source: Field Data, 2019

On availability of budget for quality assurance activities, 4(67%) of higher education institutions indicate they have no specific budget for quality assurance activities and 2(33%) state to having some kind of funds for quality assurance activities. At the tertiary level as presented in figure 19, 26(87%) mentioned of not having any budget for quality assurance programmes and 4(13%) said they do have funds to implement some quality assurance programmes.

Figure 19: Budget for IQA Activities

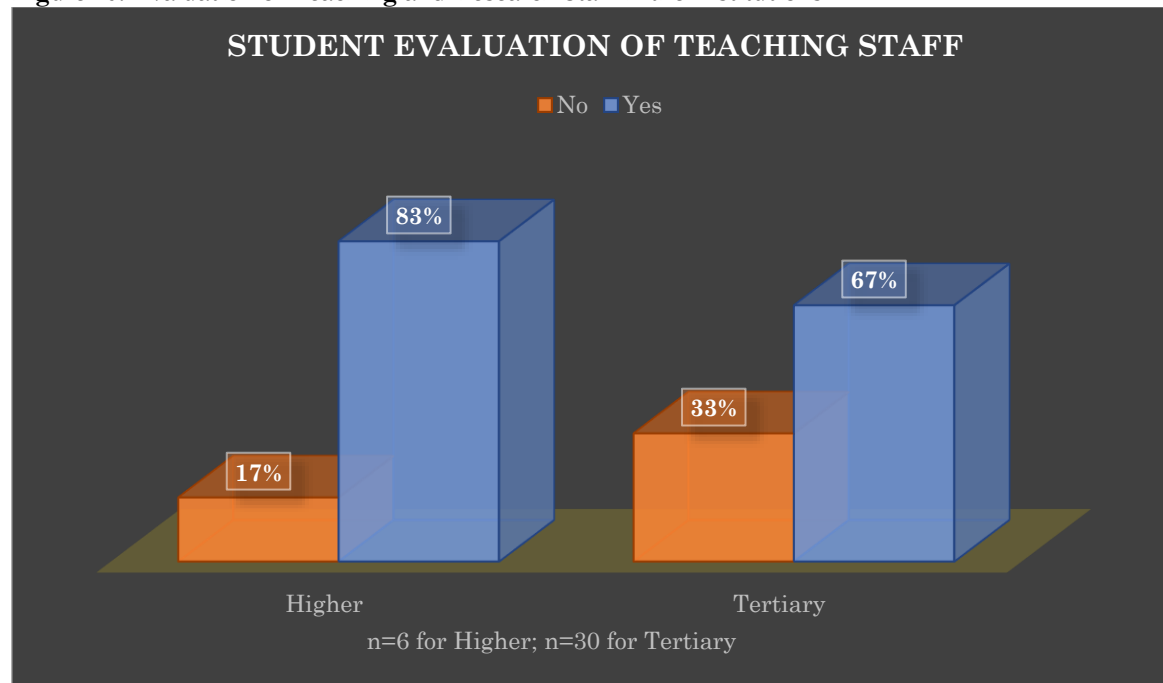


Source: Field Data, 2019

It can infer from the above results, that the level of quality assurance awareness initiatives among staff and stakeholders of tertiary and higher education institutions is very low. This contributed to lack of quality assurance personnel or specialist in the system especially at the tertiary education level.

Findings on the evaluation of teaching and research staff by students revealed that 5(83%) of respondent higher education institutions and 20 (67%) of respondent tertiary institutions stated to evaluation of teaching and research staff periodically (semester/term basis) through the administration of anonymous forms, as depicted in figure 20. These institutions stated that the main aim of the evaluation is for improvement in teaching and learning. However, the completed forms are not usually analyse and report of feedback not available as evident by the NAQAA quality reports.

Figure 20: Evaluation of Teaching and Research Staff in the Institutions



Source: Field Data, 2019

In gauging the linkage of industry with education and training providers, the findings as shown in figure 21, are as follows:

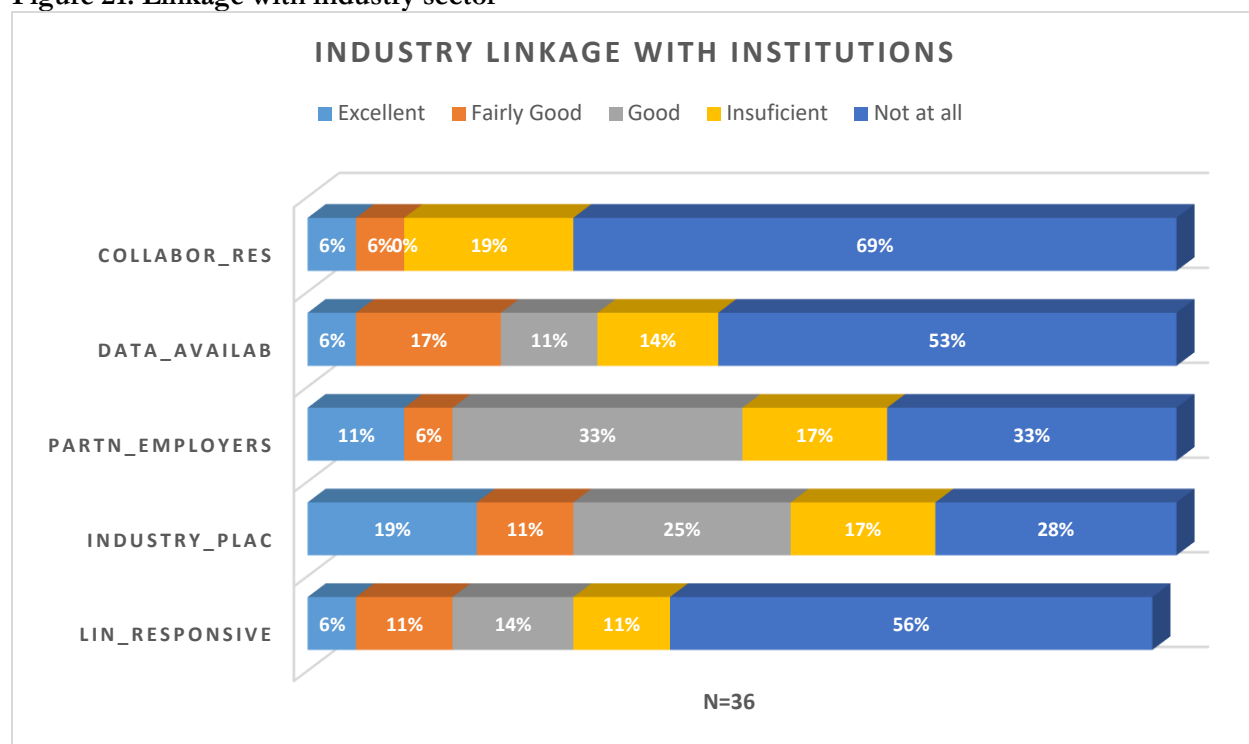
- ❖ 69% of all respondents mentioned to having no collaboration with industry in terms of research, 19% indicated the collaboration as insufficient as implementation is not forthcoming,

6% rated the collaboration as fairly good and 6% mentioned the research collaboration is excellent (specifically in the Tourism Field).

- ❖ **53%** indicate to having no data on output and employment rate of graduates. This implies that no tracer or graduate employment studies are conducted by tertiary and higher education institutions. Only 6% rated to having good data on graduates in relation to external efficiency of programmes.
- ❖ **33%** stated having good partnership with potential employers to facilitate graduate employability, and 53% mentioned having no or insufficient partnership with potential employers in facilitating graduate employability. Those that mentioned having good partnerships, are mainly public institutions in the areas of health and education. However, in most private institutions, these arrangements are not in place.
- ❖ **55%** (19% excellent, 11% fairly good and 25% good) mentioned having some sort of arrangement with the industry regarding industrial placements and practical trainings for students. Internship is a requirement for most tertiary education programmes, however it can be deduced that despite the arrangements, implementation has not been successful as a lot of students are unable to obtain the industrial experience, largely due to lack of places in the institutions.

These results are in agreement with the findings of the employers skills need survey conducted by NAQAA in 2018. Therefore, it can be ascertain from both employers and education and training providers that, industry-training provider linkages is very low in the country, which had an adverse effect on relevance of programmes.

Figure 21: Linkage with industry sector



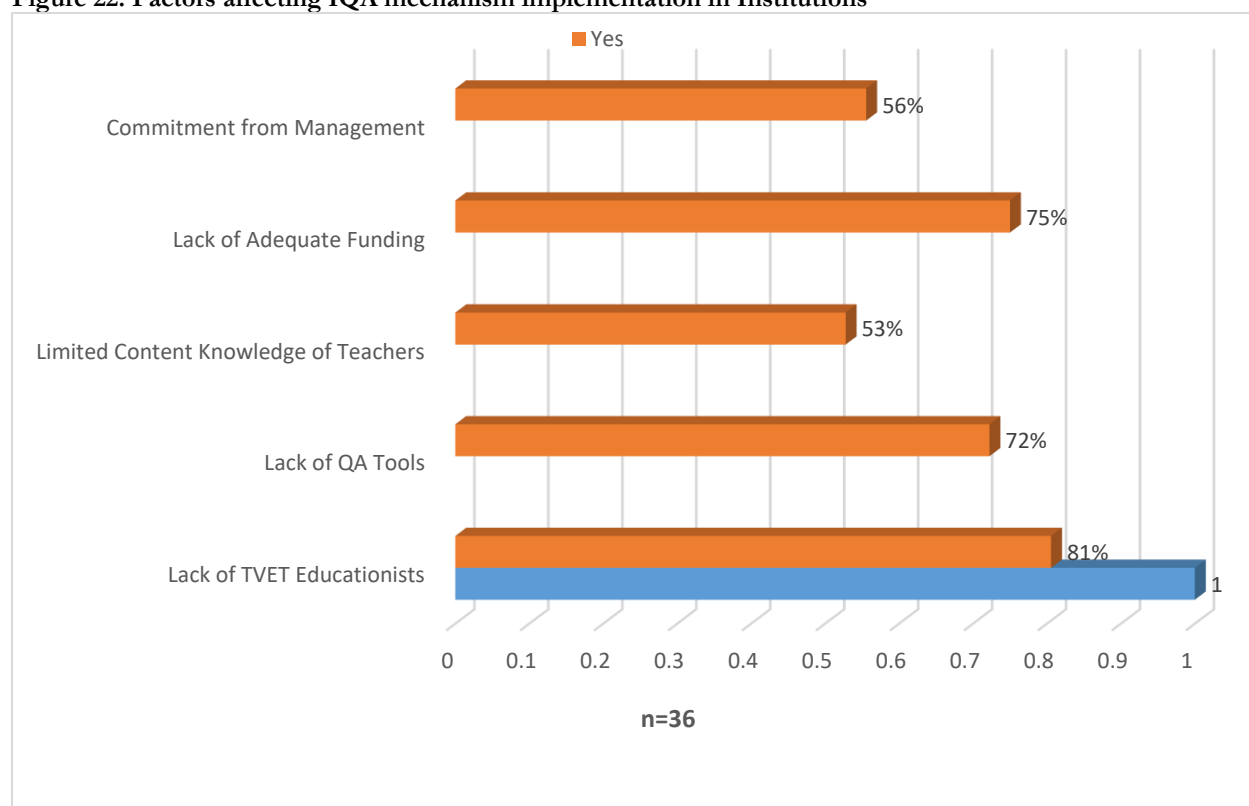
Source: Field Data, 2019

In terms of factors responsible for the ineffective implementation of IQA mechanisms at institutional level, the study revealed that:

- ❖ 81% of total respondents mentioned lack or inadequacy of IQA specialists or personnel.
- ❖ 72% of all respondents indicated lack of IQA tools.
- ❖ 64% of respondents stated lack of a coherent IQA Strategy.
- ❖ 53% reported lack of technical know-how to implement IQA Strategy.
- ❖ 75% indicated lack of funding to carry out IQA activities.
- ❖ 56% said lack of commitment from their management in supporting IQA activities.

4.1.6. Challenges in implementing effective Internal Quality Assurance Systems

Figure 22: Factors affecting IQA mechanism implementation in Institutions



Source: Field Data, 2019

From the results in figure 22, it can be deduced that the main factor in undertaking significant quality assurance initiatives is the lack of capacity and expertise in internal quality assurance mechanisms within the institutions.

4.1.7. Findings from the Review of Quality Audit Reports

In summary, the desk review of the quality audit reports by NAQAA and stakeholders highlights the following challenges facing the tertiary and higher education institutions:

1. Leadership deficit at the tertiary and higher education institutions.
2. Inadequate research culture emanating from low proportion of PhD holders among academic staff particularly in higher education institutions.

3. Inadequate library facilities thus limiting academic development and lack of experience library and information science specialist to take charge of libraries.
4. Experienced staff leaving for greener pastures especially in public institutions. Low recruitment and retention levels of staff due to unattractive terms and conditions of employment.
5. Heavy dependence on part-time lecturers in some faculties especially in private tertiary and higher education institutions. Also, growth of private sector and availability of limited resource persons in different disciplines has made the market highly competitive to retain and maintain the qualified faculty and staff.
6. Absence of a systemic approach to quality assurance constraining the development of management and administrative structures with regard to capacity building.
7. At the tertiary level, the non-availability of the relevant workshops to conduct effective practical trainings hampers the productions of graduates that are ready for the labour market.
8. Limited number of qualified and competent instructors especially in the technical areas at the tertiary level.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

This study investigated quality assurance needs and practices in the tertiary and higher education in the Gambia. Some of the findings were in line with the results of the Employers Skills Need Assessment Survey conducted (2018).

The findings of the survey show that the quality of the workforce in the tertiary and higher education institutions particularly in respect of the administrative staff is generally not at good standing and this affects governance and leadership in the institutions. At the higher education level, most teaching staff meet the minimum requirement for teaching with a master's degree. At the tertiary level, especially at the skills centres, many staff possess the same level of qualification as the level they are teaching at.

Also, the inadequacy of facilities such as library, workshops, and laboratories continue to grapple the system. These have resulted to ineffective practical trainings in the institutions, limiting academic prowess, and by extension, the employability of graduates.

The results of the survey also indicate the gap between education and training providers' linkage with industry is wide, suggesting that many programmes offered by the tertiary and higher education institutions are designed without adequate consideration of the labour market needs.

5.2. Recommendations

In the light of the data analysis and findings, the following recommendations will be key for enhancing the provision of quality and relevant education to the national aspirations.

1. There should be much greater attention placed on the improvement in quality of governance and leadership at the tertiary and higher education institutions. Governing Boards of institutions should set measurable targets for heads of institutions to implement. In addition, heads of institutions should be trained on academic leadership to be au-fait with processes and procedures for administration of post-secondary institutions.

2. Board of Directors or Governing Council of institutions must be part of the quality assurance process from design to oversight administration. This will ensure commitment from Management to improving the quality of educational service delivery.
3. Structures for the establishment and effective functioning of the internal quality assurance mechanisms should be a priority of tertiary and higher education institutions. Persons responsible for QA activities should be capacitate and necessary tools must be developed and implemented. In addition, the QA units/departments must be empowered adequately by top management in performing their duties with high standards of accountability.
4. The Authority should come up with ranking criteria to rank institutions according to approved performance indicators.
5. Capacity building of quality assurance personnel of tertiary and higher education institutions on IQA practices should be conducted periodically by NAQAA to enhance capacity on implementing IQA processes and procedures
6. Training of External QA Personnel is highly recommended to avail the higher education sector with the necessary pool of specialist for effective monitoring and evaluation of the system in accordance with national minimum standards.
7. A Credit Transfer Framework for the tertiary and higher education system should be developed and aligned to the National Qualifications Framework. This would contribute significantly in the harmonization of programmes and qualifications between the tertiary and higher education system and by implication, encourage vertical mobility of both students and staff.

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