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# Approaches to Ghana's Higher Education Challenges Drawn from the U.S. Community College Model

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# Walden University

College of Education

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Francis Goode

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2017

Abstract

Approaches to Ghana's Higher Education Challenges

Drawn from the U.S. Community College Model

by

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MA, Trinity International University, 1999

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1999

BA, Oakwood University, 1984

Dip. Mus. Ed., University of Cape Coast, 1979

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Education

Walden University

December 2017

## Abstract

Higher education institutions in Ghana are challenged in providing access to affordable education to accommodate all qualified students for postsecondary education. Most Ghanaian students seek skills and knowledge to prepare them for a global workforce. The study's purpose was to investigate the adaptation of the U.S. community college's 2-year model for training students in Ghana's higher education system to participate in high skilled employment in business and industry, using a conceptual framework drawn from Becker's theory of human capital. The research questions focused on what support students need to participate successfully in Ghana's higher education system, and what concerns stakeholders have regarding higher education in Ghana that might be addressed by the U.S. community college model. This qualitative study included individual and focus group interviews with 11 participants, including college students, faculty, staff, the registrar, and community business partners. Data were analyzed to find emerging codes and themes. Results showed that participants perceived a variety of challenges that limited their access to and participation in higher education including: financial issues, lack of preparation in critical thinking, inadequate academic facilities, and inequitable distribution of education subsidies. Participants expressed the need for campus-based career development programs, partnerships with community business organizations, and employable skills and work experience. Findings may contribute to positive social change by encouraging entrepreneurship education that might help create wealth to break the cycle of poverty. Higher education administrators may be encouraged to provide practical education to address the problem of youth unemployment.

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my dad the Hon. Frank K. Goode who taught me the lessons of faith and perseverance. Thanks for believing in me when so many people gave up on me.

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I am eternally grateful to my Heavenly Father for guiding me to the end of my doctoral journey. Without His wisdom and sustaining power, I could not survive this level of academic rigors and human accomplishment.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Access to higher education in Ghana is still limited despite a growing number of qualified young adult students. The problem of access to higher education is the result of limited academic facilities, limited family economic resources, and national examinations that set the bar too high and too early for students to succeed. Lack of economic opportunity and inequality in Ghana's higher education system has contributed to an environment of youth unemployment (Osei-Owusu & Awunyo-Vitor, 2012).

In addition, the current system of higher education in Ghana results in inequitable participation based on deprived economic opportunities for a growing number of qualified students from impoverished school districts, including qualified students in the rural areas in Ghana (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah (2013). Moreover, the current educational structure in Ghana requires students desiring higher education to pass the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) at the end of junior high school (JHS) and the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) at the end of senior high school (SHS; Embassy of Ghana, 2013).

These examinations are a challenge for many junior high school and senior high school students who do not have the economic resources for tuition and textbooks (Embassy of Ghana, 2013). In addition, the quality and location of a senior high school determines a student's performance on the WASSCE required for participation in Ghana's higher education system (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013).

Furthermore, students from impoverished socioeconomic backgrounds, including those from rural areas who cannot afford to pay admission and other incidental fees, are

excluded from participation in postsecondary education (Atuahene, 2013). Without economic resources and sufficient academic preparation early in a student's academic career, it is impossible for most students from low income families to successfully apply for admission to an accredited college or public university in Ghana to pursue postsecondary education.

The most recently available figures suggested that, although student enrollment for the previous 5 years had increased by as much as 60%, the completion rate of 34% implies that the student dropout rate was relatively high (Ministry of Education Science and Sports [MOESS], 2007). The reasons for this dropout rate included limited academic resources such as fewer facilities and a high tuition rate (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013). Although high tuition rates in Ghana's higher education system have resulted in increases in college revenue and student enrollment, disparities exist between students who could afford to pay for tuition for their postsecondary education and those who could not (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013).

Yusif, Youssof, and Osman (2013) argued that the major predictors in the selection of students for higher education in Ghana was biased and was based on two categories of a student's "academic ability, and the quality of SHS attended" (p. 7). This suggested that the selection process was based on students' socio-economic status as reflected in the quality of their high school ranking and academic ability, implying that access and financing of higher education in Ghana may not be fair or impartial for all students (Yusif et al., 2013).

In addition to the issues of inequity in access and financing higher education, the persisting problem of gender bias explains the wide gap between male and female higher education enrollment. Recently available figures showed that, of the total higher education enrollment of 119,550 students, female student enrollment constituted 34.9% (Yusif et al., 2013). This enrollment gap could be a crucial consideration for academic officials and policy makers in Ghana to formulate financial policies that impact female student applicants in postsecondary education.

An additional problem that limits access is the type of postsecondary education currently offered in Ghana. This included high tuition cost for many students from the large cohorts of postsecondary graduates competing for high skilled employment opportunities required for participation in the local market (Tagoe, 2014).

Moreover, the Ghanaian labor market has become increasingly competitive for recent graduates from higher education institutions without adequate practical education and entrepreneurial skills (Ayarkwa, Adinyira, & Osei-Asibey, 2011). The Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare drafted a national employment policy in 2009 and noted that Ghana's higher education system was continuing to graduate an unskilled labor workforce for a job market with limited employment opportunities.

This study may contribute to addressing the problem of producing an unskilled workforce by exploring components of the U.S. community college model that could be used to train students in Ghana's higher education system to participate in their local labor market. The components of the U.S. community college model I considered in this study included increased access to 2-year programs as alternative pathways to expand

adult education and employment opportunities for students in Ghana's higher education system (Tagoe, 2014), as well as accredited courses and training programs such as contract education, work study, and internship programs designed to provide specific training for employment in contract to individual companies in business, government agencies, and industry.

Moreover, U.S. community college education frequently offers certification programs in healthcare, including programs for licensed practical nurses, dental and medical assistants, laboratory and pharmacy technicians, and emergency management technicians. Additional certification programs included those for teacher's aide, construction project management, paralegal in criminal justice, and homeland security, as well as programs in highly technical and skilled agricultural, tourism, and hospitality fields which also require less than 4-years to complete.

Providing access and alternative training programs in a 2-year format for students in Ghana's higher education system could enable them to receive academic and vocational training in skills that prepare them to compete successfully for high skilled employment in the 21st century global economy (Bista & Saleh, 2014), as well as improve the standard of living by addressing the issues of youth unemployment, inadequate academic facilities, and high tuition cost (Daniel, 2012).

In addition, students enrolled in Ghana's higher education system would be required to develop skills and competencies to participate in their local labor market (Arthur-Mensah & Alagaraja, 2013). The adaptation of the U.S. community college model could help to address the problems of limited student access, limited facilities, and

high tuition cost in Ghana's higher education system, which in turn could help train an educated workforce to create a vibrant local labor market to address the problems of youth unemployment and income disparity in Ghana.

### **Background of the Study**

There are three kinds of higher education systems in Ghana. These include (a) universities and university colleges, (b) polytechnics, and (c) other specialized professional academic institutions of higher learning. The polytechnic institutions were designed to train students to participate in the industrial growth and development in their country (Bakah & Voogt, 2011). However, they have been poorly funded, and they face a shortage of qualified staff to train graduates to participate in wealth and job creation to develop their local market economy (Ababio, et al., 2012).

Moreover, Ghana's private higher education institutions have experienced rapid growth since the turn of the 21st century. The rapid expansion in Ghana's private higher education reflects the huge demand for higher education within the country (Yusif, Yussof, & Osman, 2013). In addition, four of the six leading public higher education institutions have instituted a continuing education program to provide training for qualified student applicants who could otherwise not gain access to university education because of limited academic facilities, inadequate programs, and inadequate financial resources to acquire the knowledge and skills for professional development (Osei-Owusu & Awunto-Vitor, 2012). The four continuing education institutions included University of Ghana in the Greater Accra Region, University of Cape Coast in Central Region, University College of Education in Central Region, and University of Science and



Technology in Ashanti Region. The six publicly accredited higher education institutions in Ghana are strategically located in five regional school districts in the country (see Table 1).

Table 1

*List of 4-Year Public Universities with School Districts and Regional Locations*

Name of University	Est. Date	School District	Regional Location
University of Ghana	1948	Legon	Greater Accra
University of Science and Technology	1952	Kumasi	Ashanti
University of Cape Coast	1961	Cape Coast	Central
University of Education	1992	Winneba	Central
University of Developmental Studies	1992	Tamale	Northern
University of Mines and Technology	2001	Tarkwa	Western

*Note.* Adapted from “Embassy of Ghana Archival Records,” by Embassy of Ghana, Washington DC, 2013.

In addition to the six accredited public universities, thirteen private institutions of higher education (see Table 2) are accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Ghana’s estimated population of 27 million people (U.N. World Population Review, 2015). Unfortunately, most of the accredited public and private postsecondary institutions in Ghana are heavily concentrated in cities and towns, leaving many rural 15- to-25-year-old students and potential citizens of Ghana who have completed secondary schools with little or no access to affordable higher education.

Table 2

*List of 4-Year Private University Colleges in School Districts and Regional Locations*

Name of University College	School District	Regional Location
Ashesi University College	Accra	Greater Accra
Central University College	Accra	Greater Accra
Catholic University College	Sunyani	Brong Ahafo
Evangelical Presbyterian University College	Ho	Volta
Ghana Telecom University College	Accra	Greater Accra
Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College	Accra	Greater Accra
Islamic University College	East Legon	Greater Accra
Methodist University College	Dansoman	Greater Accra
Pentecost University College	Suwutuom	Greater Accra
Presbyterian University College	Kwahu	Eastern
Regent University College	Accra	Greater Accra
Univ. College of Agriculture and Environmental Studies	Bunso	Western
Valley View University College	Accra	Greater Accra

*Note.* Adapted from “Embassy of Ghana Archival Records,” by Embassy of Ghana, Washington DC, 2013.

These potential students deserve a system of adult education that delivers on quality and provides equitable access for all. Unless significant changes are made, the goal of training a productive workforce with practical knowledge and skills to address the

problems of joblessness and youth unemployment will be difficult to achieve (Owusu-Ansah & Poku, 2012).

In addition to the public and private postsecondary institutions in Ghana, there are 10 polytechnic institutions funded by the central government (see Table 3). Although these polytechnic institutions were upgraded from secondary to higher education status in 1993 by an Act of Parliament (Act 745), they were also elevated without adequate financial resources for expanding the institutional structures (Ababio et al., 2012).

Table 3

*List of 3-and 4-year polytechnic institutions with specialized area of education and training.*

Name of Polytechnic Institute	Regional Location	Specialized Area of Education & Training
*Accra Polytechnic	Greater Accra	Offers HNDs in Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Building Technology, Civil Engineering, Furniture Production and Design, Statistics, Science Laboratory Technology
Cape Coast Polytechnic	Central	Offers BDs in Building Technology, and HNDs in Accounting, Marketing, Catering, Electrical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Building Construction, Secretarial Studies and Management, Statistics, Tourism, Fashion Design & Technology
*Bolgatanga Polytechnic	Upper East	Offers HNDs in Statistics, Hotel Catering and Institutional Management, Ecological Agriculture, Industrial Art, Accounting, Marketing, Secretarial and Management Studies, Procurement and Logistics Management, Agricultural Engineering, Civil Engineering
*Ho Polytechnic	Volta	Offers NHDs in Fashion Design & Textile, Building Technology, Secretarial Studies, Accounting, Hotel Catering & Institutional Management, Statistics, Fashion Design, Electrical Engineering, Agriculture Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Marketing. Offers BDs in Automobile Engineering, Hospitality and Tourism Management

*Kumasi Polytechnic	Ashanti	Offers HNDs in Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Building Construction, Accounting, Secretarial Studies, Dispensing Technology, Fashion and Textile Studies, Furniture Design & Wood, Civil Engineering, Marketing, Metallurgy & Foundry, Statistics, Estate Management, Purchasing & Supply
Koforidua Polytechnic	Eastern	Offers BDs in Renewable Energy Systems Engineering, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering. Offers HNDs in Accounting, Marketing, Purchasing & Supply, Hospitality Management, Mechanical and Automobile Engineering, Bilingual Studies, Secretarial and Management Studies, Computer Technology, Computer Science & IT Management, Statistics
*Sunyani Polytechnic	Brong-Ahafo	Offers HNDs in Accounting, Hotel Catering, General Agriculture, Secretarial & Management Studies, Electrical and Building Engineering. Offers BD in Building Technology
*Takoradi Polytechnic	Western	Offers HNDs in Statistics, Building Construction, Accounting, Secretarial Studies, Purchasing & Supply, Marketing, Furniture Design & Construction, Commercial Art (Textile & Graphics), Material Science & Technology, Fashion Design, Catering, Civil Engineering, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning, Automobile and Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering
*Tamale Polytechnic	Northern	Offers HNDs in Statistics, Secretarial & Management Studies, Agricultural Engineering, Accounting, Marketing, Building Technology, Hotel Management & Catering, Mechanical Engineering (plant/automobile production)
Wa Polytechnic	Upper West	Offers BDs in Mechanical Engineering and ICT. Offers HNDs in Accounting, Agriculture, Secretarial and Management Studies, Civil Engineering, Estate Management, Building Technology

*Note.* Adapted from “Embassy of Ghana Archival Records,” by Embassy of Ghana, Washington DC, 2013. *The 3-year polytechnic institutions are identified with asterisks. \* Higher National Diploma is abbreviated HND and bachelor’s degree is abbreviated BD*

In Ghana, there are no 2-year community college education programs like the U.S. community college model of adult education. The adaptation of the U.S. community college education model with training programs could help provide young adult students in Ghana with practical education and skills required by the private sector

to address the problems of youth unemployment and income disparity in their country and community. It could help train a skilled labor force to develop their local market economy. Given the transitional status and inadequate funding of the polytechnic system, I focused this study on the exploration of integrating the U.S. community college elements into the more established higher education institutional structures in Ghana.

### **Ghana's Higher Education Enrollment**

Student enrollment in higher education in Ghana at the beginning of the 21st century was heavily skewed toward disciplines in the humanities. The current official government policy is to achieve a ratio of 60-40, sciences to humanities disciplines, to train employable graduates by 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2008).

In addition, the National Apprenticeship Program approved by the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training could help with the enrollment of student applicants to increase the number and variety of on-the-job training opportunities and to reduce the rate of youth unemployment and income inequalities in the country (Ministry of Education 2008). However, there are no empirical studies to support the effectiveness of the apprenticeship program.

### **Adapting the U.S. Community College Model**

Adapting components of the U.S. community college 2-year education model could help train students in Ghana's higher education system to develop the skills and knowledge required to compete for sustainable employment to improve the economy and the quality of social life (Boateng, 2012). It could be useful in creating increased national and international awareness in employment and wealth creation to stimulate the Ghanaian

labor market (Kojootoo, Gyamfi, & Agyeman, 2012). Moreover, adapting the U.S. community college 2-year education model in Ghana could serve to develop international partnerships and international development projects (Bermingham & Ryan, 2013) to meet the global challenge of industrial growth and economic development (Bakah, Voogt, & Pieters, 2011).

U.S. community college education does not require students to participate in 3 or 4 years of academic training and preparation to qualify them to enter the job market. Unlike the traditional 4-year institutions of higher learning that often require as much as 6 years to train undergraduate students for public service or jobs in industry, community college education takes 2 years or less if students earning an associate degree attend full-time.

In addition, the traditional 4-year institutions tend to place greater emphasis on education in the disciplines rather than vocational or occupational education and practical training required to improve the local labor market and to encourage self-employment to improve the standard of living (Owusu-Ansah & Poku, 2012). Moreover, very limited research has been conducted in the areas of access to Ghana's higher education system in order to address the challenges of equity, quality, and access. In this study, I sought to address this gap and argued for the provision of increased access to alternative pathways for expanding adult education and employment opportunities for students in Ghana's higher education system (Tagoe, 2014).

### **Problem Statement**

Student admittance into Ghana's public institutions of higher education has remained limited and highly competitive for a growing number of qualified young adult students. The problem of limited student admittance has been due to the limited number of academic facilities and inadequate resources, which have resulted in institutions charging high tuition rates that college students from middle and low-income families could hardly afford. These problems have persisted for many years, yet higher education institutions in Ghana continue to face the challenge of providing access to affordable education to accommodate all qualified students for postsecondary education (Osei-Owusu & Awunyo-Vitor, 2012).

The adaptation of the U.S. community college model could provide college students in Ghana with alternative pathways to receive affordable education and training to address the problems of limited access, inadequate resources, and high tuition rates (Hillman & Orians, 2013). Furthermore, the adaptation of the U.S. community college model could provide increased access and low tuition costs to students, offering practical education, training, and certification for skills regardless of race and gender to contribute to a globally competitive workforce (Hollifield-Hoyle & Hammons, 2015).

Although the U.S. community college model has not been utilized in Ghana, it could help to bridge the skill deficiencies or gaps between study programs and industry requirements in Ghana (Boahin & Hofman, 2012). It could also help to address the issues of access and unequal distribution of higher education participation based on

students' socioeconomic status, high tuition costs, and lack of youth employment opportunities (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013).

### **Purpose Statement**

This qualitative study's purpose was to explore how components of the U.S. community college 2-year model might serve as a supplemental delivery system to address problems of limited student access, limited facilities, inadequate programs, and high tuition costs as well as increase employability and other post-graduation opportunities for students in Ghana's higher education system. The phenomenon of interest was the perceptions of participants at a 3-year college of continuing education in Ghana regarding the fit of components of the U.S. community college 2-year model. As the participants found it difficult to understand the U.S. community college model and apply it to their experience, the purpose evolved to better represent participants' understanding of the problems facing Ghana's higher education institutions and the needs of students.

### **Research Questions**

As I began the study, the original research questions pertained more to adapting the U.S. community college 2-year model as reflected in the two questions: How could the adaptation of the U.S. community college 2-year model serve to address the problems of limited student access, limited facilities, and high tuition cost in Ghana's 3-year higher education system? And what key curricular components of the U.S. community college model could be adapted to address the employment needs of potential students in Ghana's higher education system?



However, findings based on participants' responses suggest that they did not comprehend the interview and focus group questions that pertained to the U.S. community college model and could not provide a realistic assessment due to their unfamiliarity of the U.S. community college model. I provided a chart comparing the U.S. community college 2-year model with Ghana's 3-year and 4-year education models, to prompt discussions and facilitate understanding. However, ultimately it was not possible to represent the participants' experiences and perceptions through the frame of my original research questions. To more authentically report the findings, I adapted the questions to better reflect what the participants were actually responding to given their knowledge and contextual perspective.

The research questions I ultimately used to guide the analysis of the findings in chapter 4 were as follows:

RQ 1: What support do students need to participate successfully in Ghana's higher education system?

RQ 2: What concerns do stakeholders have regarding higher education in Ghana that might be addressed by the U.S. community college model?

These adapted questions allowed me to uncover the kind of support students needed and how those needs might be met by the U.S. community college model, which I have addressed in this dissertation.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework I chose for this qualitative research study was drawn from Becker's (1976) theory of human capital. The development of human capital

requires investments in practical education and training systems to enhance the knowledge and skills of an educated workforce (Arthur-Mensah & Alagaraja, 2013). According to this theory, no country or community can improve the quality of life for its citizens without investments in human capital (Tagoe, 2014). I have chosen the human capital theory to reflect society's responsibility toward its citizens in improving the standard of living through quality education and training.

The premise of Becker's (1976) human capital theory is that increases in individual and community investments in education and training, result in a greater number of skilled workers and increased productivity with economic prosperity to benefit the people and the community. The human capital theory also suggests that unless substantial investments in workforce education and training are made, no community can achieve sustainable economic growth.

Following Becker's (1976) perspective of human capital theory, Martin, McNally and Kay (2013) examined the relationship between human capital and entrepreneurship education and training, and noted that individuals and communities invest in entrepreneurship education and training systems to produce an efficient workforce with greater levels of knowledge and skills to build a vibrant market economy. In addition, Stuart, Rios-Aguillar, and Deil-Amen (2014) posited that community college students persist toward degree completion when there is incentive for employment opportunities to improve their standard of living.

Drawing on Becker's (1976) human capital theory, D'Amico, Rios-Aguilar, Sala and Gonzalez Canche (2012) employed the term *career capital*, the combination of

knowledge and competencies as investments in community college education to increase student engagement and persistence to qualify them as skilled workers in the 21st century global workforce. Dadgar and Trimble (2015) argued that investing in community college education was essential for understanding both taxpayers and students' investment returns in higher education.

Becker's (1976) proposition regarding the human capital theory was applicable to this study, in that community investment in practical education and training could enable potential students in Ghana's higher education system to develop the skills relevant for gainful employment to contribute to the human resource and economic development in their own country. In addition, community investments in practical education and training a skilled workforce could better meet the demands of the local labor market in Ghana and could yield economic benefits, including the creation of wealth and good paying jobs to improve the standard of living. It could also challenge academic officials and policy makers in Ghana to provide practical education and training programs consumers of higher education deserve in order to have access to gainful employment opportunities to build a vibrant local economy (Ntim, 2014).

### **Nature of the Study**

I proposed a basic qualitative research tradition of inquiry for this study. In particular, the intention of my chosen method of inquiry was to study a phenomenon and people in their natural settings and how people affected by the phenomenon responded in order to interpret and ascribe meanings to occurrences (Merriam, 2009). The basic qualitative design was also employed for this study because it allowed broad questions to

be posed to participants to share useful information on the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2012).

I selected 11 participants for the study from students and staff of a 3-year college of continuing education in Ghana. I then divided participants into two focus group cohorts. The first focus group included two 2nd-year and two 3rd-year students. The second focus group consisted of two faculty members and two staff members. Separating participants into two focus groups encouraged openness and allowed participants to be truthful in their responses and answers. In addition, I conducted face-to-face interviews with the registrar and two community business leaders. I also returned a week later and shared my field notes and impressions of the interview and focus group findings with participants to help confirm my initial interpretations and solicit additional clarification and thoughts.

My criteria for the selection of participants were the participants' knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in at least one institution in Ghana's higher education system. I collected data for this study from interviews and focus group discussions. The research methods described in Chapter 3 provide a detailed analysis of the study's participants, including the participant selection criteria, the data analysis, and procedures.

### **Definitions**

The following terms were used throughout this qualitative research study:

*American community college (ACC)*: An institution of higher education with regional accreditation that provides alternative pathways to the traditional 4-year public

and private university systems at a lower cost for young adult displaced students, lifelong learners and developmental learners (Raby & Valeau, 2014).

*Globalization:* A phenomenon that seeks to disseminate knowledge through the enhancement of cultural, ethnic, class and gender differences among diverse groups of people in the world (Birmingham & Ryan, 2013).

*Global economy:* A system of economic interdependence, including the production of goods and services available to a global workforce and global community. It includes economic policies from wealthy and industrialized nations that regulate food prices and the distribution of wealth and investments (Clapp, 2014).

*Global partnerships:* Extending adult global educational opportunities for young adult students and adult workers, through educational partnerships between institutions where the participating partners derive mutual benefit from their involvement to meet local workforce demands (Floyd, Falconetti, & Fisher, 2012).

*International cooperation:* The distribution of knowledge and information responsibly among individuals and nations in an international setting, including the management of economic resources to mitigate intrastate conflict and to provide humanitarian relief in the world (Sisk, 2013).

### **Assumptions**

I conducted this study on the assumption that participants would be willing to answer questions truthfully to provide useful data or rich information based on their knowledge and experiences of Ghana's higher education system. I also assumed I would be able to explain components of the U.S. community college system so that participants

could consider their relevance for adaptation to develop their local market. I learned in the course of the data collection that I had overestimated their ability to understand the U.S. community college model and compare it to their own experience. However, I was correct in my expectations that they could offer rich information based on their knowledge and experience in Ghana's higher education system.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

Ghana is a republic covering a wide area of 92,009 square miles and divided into 10 political subdivisions. The scope of this study was restricted to one of the 3-year institutions of higher education in Ghana that serves several communities. The scope of this study was limited to the problems of limited student access, limited facilities, and high tuition cost.

The U.S. community college 2-year model served as an optional delivery system to address these problems of limited student access, limited facilities, and high tuition cost in Ghana's higher education system. Consideration of the potential of the model did not pertain to other educational problems such as student dropout rate and did not include displaced workers seeking job retraining. The study was delimited in its consideration of some key components of the U.S. community college model, without consideration of the sources of funding that would be required to institute an additional model in the country.

### **Limitations**

Only 11 participants were involved in the interview and focus group discussion. The sample size was small so claims of the study are limited. Moreover, what I heard from each participant on the implications of the U.S. community college model's

adaptation was limited. In this study, I focused on one university college in Ghana providing a 3-year program, so findings may not apply to other 4-year universities and 3-year polytechnic institutions. I have also acknowledged the limitations in applying the findings of this study to other developing countries in the Sub-Saharan African continent that are seeking to train their students and adult workers to develop knowledge and skills in jobs and wealth creation to grow the economies of their countries.

### **Significance of the Study**

This qualitative study addressed the dilemma facing a number of qualified students in Ghana's higher education systems. The problem of limited academic facilities and high tuition cost has contributed to an environment of unemployment for students from low income families with limited economic resources. Therefore, the results of this study could be used to influence university officials and policy makers to increase their efforts in providing affordable college education with adequate training facilities in a systematic cost-effective way to train students to develop the skills to compete for employment opportunities in today's global economy to improve their quality of life. The results of this study could have positive social implications with the adaptation of the U.S. community college model for training students in Ghana's higher education system to succeed in a globally competitive environment as responsible young adults.

### **Summary**

Chapter 1 included the background to the study, problem statement, purpose statement, research question, conceptual framework, and significance of the study. The

chapter concluded with a rationale for the adaptation of components of the U.S. community college model for training young adult students in Ghana's higher education system to develop the skills for jobs and wealth creation and to develop the economy within their own country. In Chapter 2, I address the internationalization of the U.S. community college education and review the literature related to the methodology I used for the adaptation of the U.S. community college model as an optional delivery system for adult education in Ghana's higher education system.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this literature review, I examine the internationalization of U.S. community college education as a vital component of global education, and as part of a broader strategy to provide academic and occupational training for young adult in Ghana's higher education system to improve their standard of living. The adaptation of the U.S. community college model could enable young adults enrolled in Ghana's higher education system to acquire practical knowledge and skills relevant for gainful employment and to participate in Ghana's economic development (Bista & Saleh, 2014).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how components of the U.S. community college 2-year model might serve as a supplemental delivery system to address the problems of student access, limited facilities, inadequate programs, and high tuition costs as well as increase post-graduation employment opportunities for students in Ghana's higher education system. The adaptation of the U.S. community college model could provide college students in Ghana with alternative pathways to receive practical education and training to address the problems of limited access, inadequate resources, and high tuition rate (Hillman & Orians, 2013). Similar problems have been shown in the United States to result in local youth unemployment and low wages for middle and low-income families (Hillman & Orians, 2013). The adaptation of the U.S. community college education could also serve as an optional delivery system to the current 3-year continuing education program and the traditional 4-year campus type of education in Ghana's higher education system to train a skilled workforce for their country's local labor market (Birmingham & Ryan, 2013).

In this review, I explore the significance of adapting the U.S. community college model for training students in Ghana's higher education system to succeed in a globally competitive environment. The review of literature includes a discussion of the global leadership challenge facing the U.S. community college in making adult education and training available and easily accessible for young adult students in Ghana's higher education system to compete for high skilled employment opportunities and to build a vibrant local economy.

In addition, I discuss issues in the literature related to the internationalization of U.S. community college education for training students in Ghana's higher education system to develop the practical education and knowledge with skills for wealth and job creation and to improve their local market economy. According to Boateng (2012), there is an urgent need for students enrolled in Ghana's higher education system to develop the practical knowledge and training to become critical thinkers, problem solvers, and lifelong learners in order to successfully compete in today's global economy and to maintain a high standard of living.

### **The Literature Search Strategy**

I obtained the literature for this review from multiple sources using libraries and search engines. The resources included scholarly peer-reviewed articles from Walden University's online library, Google Scholar, and EBSCO, as well as ERIC, ProQuest Central, Academic Search Complete, and Education Research Complete.

In addition, I completed an exhaustive search for the internationalization of U.S. community college education using Google Scholar. Other publications such as

documents related to the internationalization of the U.S. community college education and Ghana's higher education were retrieved in electronic print from Amazon.com using Google Scholar. In all, I reviewed more than 75 peer-reviewed journal articles in an effort to compile an exhaustive and comprehensive literature review.

Additional readings on the internationalization of U.S. community college education are included from books on international education along with books on qualitative research methods and design to supplement and complete the comprehensive review of scholarly journal articles and books. The key search terms used in this review include *international education, global citizenship, global economy, Ghana's higher education, global leadership, global workforce, global partnership, international literacy, internationalization, and international community*. These search terms provided the basis to advance the literature review on the role of the adaptation of the U.S. community college model for training students in Ghana's higher education system to succeed in a globally competitive environment.

I begin this literature review with the conceptual framework, and then incorporate an overview of the history and structure of Ghana's higher education system. Chapter 2 also includes a discussion of the global mission and vision of the U.S. community college and the global challenge facing an aging workforce in the 21st century global economy.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study draws on Becker's (1976) theory of human capital, according to which the development of human capital requires investments in education and training systems in order to educate a skilled workforce to

participate in the economy of a nation (Arthur-Mensah & Alagaraja, 2013). Moreover, the development of human capital is essential for a nation's educated workforce to remain competitive in the 21st century global market economy (Othman, 2012).

Becker's (1976) human capital theory underscores the unique challenge facing the U.S. community college as it seeks to make its global mission relevant for students in an international higher education setting to succeed in a globalized world (Bista & Saleh, 2014). In an age of globalization, the adaptation of U.S. community college education could provide practical education, training, and skills to prepare students in Ghana for socially responsible careers (Coryell, Spencer & Sehin, 2013).

In this review, Becker's (1976) human capital theory is compared with other theories and perspectives to underscore the significance of investing in community college education and training to produce skilled workers in Ghana to meet the growing demands for their local labor market. Becker's (1976) theory of human capital posits that individual and community investments in practical education and training result in a greater number of skilled workers and increased productivity with economic prosperity to benefit the people and the community. Schultz (1961) argued similarly that people acquire useful skills and knowledge as a form of human capital to ensure economic prosperity to benefit the community and its citizens.

While Becker (1976) and Schultz (1961) viewed the human capital concept as investments to produce a highly trained and skilled workforce to benefit individuals and society, Beach (2009) argued that the human capital concept benefits individuals and community by raising social consciousness of constituents within the community to seek

social justice to improve the quality of life. Gray and Herr (1998) viewed the human capital concept as a link between workforce education and training, including a skilled workforce of a nation's economy. They argued that the effectiveness of a nation's workforce depends largely on the level of professional and intellectual skills individuals in the nation possess. Baxter and Birks (2004) posited that employers invest in an educated workforce in order to ensure a higher yield in their investment returns through labor productivity. By educating a skilled workforce in Ghana, the country could increase its economic productivity to benefit its citizens and community.

Following Becker's (1976) perspective of human capital model, Martin, McNally and Kay (2013) examined the relationship between human capital and entrepreneurship education and training, and noted that individuals and communities invest in entrepreneurship education and training to produce an efficient workforce with greater levels of knowledge and skills to build a vibrant market economy. In addition, Stuart, Rios-Aguillar, and Deil-Amen (2014) posited that community college students persist toward degree completion when there is incentive for employment opportunities to improve their standard of living. Becker's (1976) human capital theory was an appropriate theoretical framework for this study because it highlighted the significance of educating and training a skilled workforce to participate in the economic growth and development of a nation's labor market.

In this study I presented the adaptation of U.S. community college education as an investment designed to produce a skilled workforce to improve the local labor market in Ghana. According to Arthur-Mensah and Alagaraja (2013), it is essential to view

Ghana's higher education system as a crucial form of workforce education and training systems for the development of human capital.

### **Historical Overview and Structure of Ghana's Higher Education System**

The development of Ghana's higher education system began with the recommendations of two commissions on Higher Education (Asquith and Elliot Commissions) appointed by the British government in 1943 to inquire into formal university education modeled after the British system of higher education (Yusif, Yussof & Osman, 2013). The commissions' recommendations led to the establishment of the University College of the Gold Coast in 1948, the first university in Ghana with degrees awarded by the University of London (Effah & Senadza, 2008).

By 1961, through an Act of Parliament, the public university system in Ghana received full autonomy and power to award its own academic credentials with a mandate for international recognition (Teferra & Knight, 2008). Since 2006 the National Accreditation Board has also accredited several private higher education institutions to run various degree and diploma programs. The rapid expansion of private higher education institutions in Ghana reflects the huge demand for higher education and training in the country (Yusif, Yussof, & Osman, 2013). Presently, Ghana's system of higher education is skewed toward liberal arts education and does not adequately provide the practical education and skills in workforce training and development needed to achieve economic growth and development in the competitive 21st century global economy (Arthur-Mensah & Alagaraja, 2013).

According to Boateng (2012), emphasis on programs in science and technology aimed at training young adult students in Ghana's higher education system could be useful for building a vibrant local labor market. In addition, the problem of youth unemployment in Ghana has become a growing concern, with about 50% of young adult graduates from Ghana's higher education system not finding employment for over two years after they complete their national service (Owusu-Ansah & Poku, 2012). The adaptation of U.S. community college education could provide critical pathways for Ghanaian students to earn associate and bachelor degrees to qualify them to participate in Ghana's economic development (Styrahorn & Johnson, 2014).

Ghana's higher education system was structured to include university systems, university colleges, polytechnics, and several professional and specialized institutions of higher learning for training a qualified workforce to respond to Ghana's labor market (Arthur-Mensah & Alagaraja, 2013). The Ghanaian government, through the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, has been the sole agency responsible for providing administrative oversight for higher education in Ghana (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013). Other governing agencies such as the National Accreditation Board, the National Council for Tertiary Education, and the National Board for Professional and Technical Education also provide regulatory oversight for Ghana's higher education system (Teferra & Knight, 2008).

In addition, recent enrollment in private higher education has surged partly in response to the widening gap between demand and supply in Ghana's higher education system (Yusif, Yussof, & Osman, 2013). Currently, the numbers of private institutions of

higher education in Ghana outnumber the public institutions, even though the public institutions account for about 80% of student enrollment in the nation's higher education system (Yusif et al., 2013). Although enrollment in Ghana's higher education system has increased, both the public and private institutions have failed to absorb the growing number of young adult students who qualify for higher education and training mostly due to inadequate academic facilities, limited classroom space, and high tuition costs (Osei-Owusu & Awunyo-Vitor, 2012).

### **Globalization of the U.S. Community College Model**

According to Education for Global Learning, a consortium of universities and colleges that promotes global education and learning in United States and overseas, the global mission of the U.S. community college includes the creation, promotion, and support of a wide range of educational and learning initiatives and experiences for students, faculty, staff, and administration at the local and state level and around the world (Bista & Saleh, 2014). This global mission of the U.S. community college has evolved to include students in the international community, including young adult students in Ghana's higher education system to acquire affordable education with occupational training and skills relevant for gainful employment in the 21st century global market economy (Bista & Saleh, 2014).

Traditionally, the mission of the U.S. community college, according to the American Association of Community Colleges, has been to educate the local student for jobs or employment in local industry or to prepare students for admission into a state college or university to complete for a 4-year academic degree (Bradshaw, 2013).



However, due to the impact of globalization, the mission of the U.S. community college has broadened to include high proportions of minority and immigrant students (Abu-Ghazaleh & Hoffman, 2016). This includes students from low income families seeking lower college costs, and young adult workers seeking new skills and training to compete for high skilled employment opportunities in the 21st century global market economy, and to articulate an understanding of global issues (Jones & de Witt, 2012).

As an institutional structure devoted to universal education, U.S. community colleges strive to educate the U.S. citizenry to contribute to a global economy and society. Part of the global mission of the U.S. community college is the training of local and international students to live and work in a competitive global economy (Patel, Li & Piscioneri, 2013). In addition, the U.S. community college global mission includes the implementation of new policies and processes aimed at meeting the needs of young adult student workers and enhancing global workforce performance (Boahin & Hofman, 2012). Moreover, the U.S. community college global mission could serve to drive planning, budgeting, and decision making in order to create intercultural learning opportunities to promote intercultural competencies for students in the international community including young adult students in Ghana's higher education system (Coryell et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the global orientation of U.S. community college missions could serve to identify key competencies in the development of skills to meet the needs of today's global labor market (Boahim & Hofman, 2012). Their initiatives include the training of young adult students to acquire international literacy and competency to ensure employability for participation in a global workforce (Feast, Collyer-Brahan &

Bretag, 2011). This approach in turn could inform training design and opportunities for young adult students in the international community to recognize global interdependence and to communicate and interact with counterparts in other countries to discover their cultural similarities and ethnic differences in a complex globalized world (Besnoy, Madden, Steele, & Eisenhardt, 2015).

Knott, Mak, and Neill (2013) argued that the global mission of the U.S. community college includes the training of young adult students with relevant skills to address issues about global citizenship, cultural awareness, and youth employment opportunities. Therefore, adapting the U.S. community college model could serve to provide practical education and training for an efficient workforce with skills in creativity, adaptability, and human relationships that are essential for developing a vibrant labor market in Ghana (Boahin & Hofman, 2012).

### **Global Vision of the U.S. Community College**

The vision of the U.S. community college goes beyond the commitment to provide higher educational opportunities and training for students and young adult workers in their local communities. The vision includes new initiatives that are consistent with the global mission of the U.S. community college to remain relevant in the 21st century competitive global workforce (Bissonette & Woodin, 2013). Moreover, the ability of the U.S. community college system to articulate the importance of a globalized perspective positions it to be considered adaptable to other international settings (Higgitt, 2012).

Part of the U.S. community college's global vision is an international effort to infuse globally oriented content into all levels of community college education and to enable student participation in today's complex global environment characterized by cultural diversity, global interconnectedness, and conflict (Bista & Saleh, 2014). In order to remain relevant in the global workforce, students in Ghana's higher education system could receive quality education and training and practical skills to function as socially responsible adults (Coryell et al., 2013).

In addition, students in Ghana's higher education system could acquire practical education and skills to enhance work performance in a competitive global workforce (Boahin & Hofman, 2012). Making practical education and training affordable and accessible to college students in Ghana could enable them develop the skills required to build a competent workforce and to improve the local economy in their country. By providing affordable quality education and training and skills, college students in Ghana could be viewed as valuable assets for their nation's economy (Tagoe, 2014).

### **Global Commitment of the U.S. Community College**

Since its inception in 1901, the U.S. community college has maintained a commitment to provide access to students and young adult workers which has led to an efficient global workforce for the 21st century economy. Although the mission differs considerably from one community college to another, and in different regional locations, the commitment to provide academic and occupational education and training with entrepreneurial skills has remained the same. In addition, the mission of the U.S. community college may resonate with other institutions and populations, including a

skilled workforce in Ghana to help build new global partnerships, and create new and highly innovative and adaptive systems (Treat & Hagedorn, 2013).

Perrino (2012) argued a three-fold global commitment of the U.S. community college to include the following:

- Provide a source of higher education to individuals who previously did not have access to quality and affordable education due to economic hardships.
- Address social and economic issues facing a nation.
- Provide a source of higher education to previously marginalized individuals such as ethnic minorities and women.

This global commitment is consistent with the global mission statement provided by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) which is broadly stated as building a nation of learners to advance the educational objectives of the community colleges in United States and abroad (AACC, 2013).

### **Components of the U.S. Community College Approach Relevant to Ghana**

Components of the U.S. community college education includes a wide range of activities including multicultural, intercultural and international aspects of young adult students to engage in informed and culturally sensitive coexistence in the 21st century global community (Coryell et al., 2013). It includes a process of social interactions and communication with the ability to establish meaningful relationships with international partners (Gallagher, 2013).

Moreover, investing in U.S. community college education underscores the significance of training a productive workforce to build a vibrant labor market to improve

the standard of living. Therefore, the adaptation of the U.S. community college model as a supplemental delivery system could be viewed as investing in occupational education and training with skills to encourage student participation in Ghana's higher education system, and to function as global partners in the 21st century global workforce (Treat & Hagedorn, 2013).

Thorn (2012) argued that investing in U.S. community college education requires the development of new approaches to critical thinking and problem solving to improve working conditions for college students to engage in global affairs (Dirlik, 2012). These new approaches to critical thinking and problem solving could benefit students from low income families in Ghana's higher education system to compete for high skilled employment opportunities and to improve the standard of living (Treat & Hagedorn, 2013).

In 2006, the United State Department of State at its annual University Presidents Summit on International Education recommended that a new generation of global leadership initiatives must be taken to advance international education and exploration to guide young adult students toward responsible global leadership, support growth in critical thinking, increase practical knowledge and skills, promote cultural dialogue and learning and to help students understand the global economy, including its social and cultural implications (Bista & Saleh, 2014). Since the recommendation of the U.S. Department of State global leadership initiative in 2006 the U.S. community college has become an important institution for the development of international educational initiatives in global communities (Birmingham & Ryan, 2013). The adaptation of U.S.

community college model in Ghana could help provide diverse methods and curricular for students to maintain a balance between workforce readiness, and responsible citizenship in a competitive global community (King & Thorpe, 2012).

### **The Impact of Globalization on Higher Education**

One of the most notable effects of globalization on higher education is increased demand for learning opportunities in the acceleration of knowledge and cultural integration in the 21st century global community (Lau & Yuen, 2014). Globalization's impact has resulted in the rapid distribution of technologies for higher education in the labor workforce to meet the growing demands of today's competitive and resilient global market economy (Alalshaikh, 2015).

Moreover, globalization's impact has become a catalyst for young adult students to receive practical education and training with skills to compete for high skilled employment opportunities to improve the quality of life (Treat & Hagedorn, 2013). In addition, knowledge has become a powerful tool for the advancement of technology and innovation in the 21st century competitive workforce environment. It is viewed as a profitable product and a productive resource for developing local labor market economies (Li, 2016).

For developing countries like Ghana, the demand for knowledge has become a crucial instrument for socio-economic development, and one of the strategies for internationalization (Alemu, 2014). Therefore, adapting the U.S. community college model in Ghana could help to educate college students to receive practical education and training to build a vibrant economy to improve the standard of living.

Moreover, the effectiveness of reducing joblessness in today's economy is dependent less on the allocation of wealth and more on the distribution of knowledge. The demand for knowledge has become the predictor for success in today's global labor market (Gokee, 2015). It has become a way of influencing students' career intentions and aspiration toward entrepreneurship education (Owusu-Ansah & Poku, 2012). In addition, responsible participation in today's global workforce requires the acquisition of knowledge and the development of 21st century labor skills to compete for sustainable employment (Besnoy, Maddin, Steele, & Eisenhardt, 2015).

The U.S. community college model's adaptation for college students in Ghana could provide entrepreneurship education with relevant skills for an efficient and productive workforce for the nation. In the long run, the U.S. community college model's adaptation for students in Ghana's higher education system could help to address the problems of limited student admittance and high tuition cost which has contributed to an environment of youth unemployment and income inequity in their nation (Owusu-Ansah & Poku, 2012).

### **The Scope of Globalization in Higher Education**

The scope of globalization in higher education suggests a rapid change that is the result of social dynamism and environmental factors, leading nations around the world to consider how to educate more qualified workers for a 21st century competitive global market economy (Gokee, 2015). This change has slowly evolved from trade and commerce during the industrial revolution to the use of technology and high-speed internet access in the 21st century to connect local communities with global partners to

accelerate knowledge and to encourage cross-cultural communication among divergent groups of people (Raby, Culton, & Valeau, 2014).

In addition, today's global workforce environment presents numerous opportunities for young adult students to come together and discover their cultural similarities and appreciate their ethnic differences (Besnoy et al., 2015). In order to successfully compete for high skilled employment in a globally competitive economy, Ghana's higher education system must be tailored to meet not only the demands of the economic sector in terms of knowledge and a skilled workforce (Othman, 2012), but also provide opportunities for college students to learn from U.S. community college global counterparts to develop an understanding of different cultures and traditions and deepen an appreciation for responsible global citizenship (Besnoy et al., 2015).

Educating students to develop an understanding of different cultures and traditions is significant because the likelihood of finding employment in many developing countries including Ghana increases as the level of education increases, making it difficult for uneducated workers to find high skilled employment to sustain a decent living for themselves and their families (Shumaker, 2013). Moreover, the demand for practical education to successfully compete for high skilled employment opportunities may require substantial changes in budget allocations, subsidies, or fees paid by students (Lau & Yuen, 2014).

These changes could impact the way students in Ghana's higher education system relate to different cultures, the environment, or work habits, and the way global partnerships are forged. It could reflect the values and commitment of international



education programs in preparing them to live and work in today's global society (Acquaye & Crewe, 2012). Therefore, the adaptation of U.S. community college model for students in Ghana's higher education system could include not only programs for international partnerships but joint programs including international cooperation for research and development, and the internationalization of the curriculum (Urbanovic & Wilkins, 2013).

Furthermore, the demand for education is slowly connecting and transforming the world with the emergence of technological and economic interconnectivity leading to create intellectual capital and talents (Treat & Hagedorn, 2013). The adaptation of U.S. community college model could produce partnerships with business and industry to increase the level of work force education and training (Lau & Yuen, 2014).

In addition, a working knowledge in international trade, commerce, and communication could lead to an environment in which talent and technology could be achieved if a system of education such as the U.S. community college model is made available and accessible for students in Ghana's higher education system (Treat & Hagedorn, 2013, p. 9). Through globalization's forces such as international economies and international partnerships, it is now possible for more people to collaborate and compete for high skilled employment from diverse places around the world while cooperating and collaborating among divergent communities through the universality of shared experiences across geographical borders (Othman, 2012).

Moreover, globalization's impact has created a heightened need for the U.S. community college to make practical education and training accessible and affordable to

student workers who possess creative, innovative and competitive skills (Othman, 2012). With today's high-speed internet access and availability of communication and technology, knowledge workers can be invaluable assets to employers if investments in practical education and training results in labor productivity and higher economic growth (Yeboah, Kumi, & Gyamfi, 2012).

In times of drastic change, such as the case with globalization, it is often young adult workers with academic qualifications and critical thinking skills who successfully compete for high skilled employment to sustain a high quality of living. The adaptation of U.S. community college model of adult education could provide practical education and training for students in Ghana's higher education system to successfully compete for high skilled employment to improve the quality of life.

Moreover, the adaptation of U.S. community college education could enable college students in Ghana to receive practical education and training to recognize globalization and environmental sustainability as key emerging issues to survive and thrive in a globally connected world (Erickson, 2012). Equipped with high-level analytical and critical thinking skills to process information, students in Ghana's higher education system could rely on their professional education and training to enhance their social and occupational skills to build a vibrant market economy in their nation (Boahin & Hofman, 2012).

However, analytical and critical thinking skills alone are not enough to inherit the future. The adaptation of U. S. community college model could serve to train college students in Ghana to embrace cultural differences and uniqueness. In today's

globalization, embracing cultural differences and uniqueness will include the unleashing of creative abilities and potentials required to work and survive in an increasingly diverse local and global work environment (Mitchell & Vandegrift, 2013).

Furthermore, in today's declining economy, college graduates from traditional 4-year institutions in the United States continue to remain unemployed while a majority of them are now turning to the community colleges for retraining in employment opportunities and creation of wealth. Even older workers in the United States including those who have reached retirement age could hardly afford to retire. In fact, many retirees are seeking employment and retraining program opportunities from community colleges in order to develop the practical knowledge and skills to survive in the 21st century competitive global economy (Bista & Saleh, 2014).

Moreover, with more retirees now working longer hours, it is increasingly difficult for college student and young adult workers to find sustainable employment in an already saturated global workforce to support themselves and their families. In seeking to participate in a competitive global market economy, college students in Ghana are more likely to remain unemployed than adult workers even in regions with strong economic growth and development (Grigoryeva, 2012). The adaptation of U.S. community college model in Ghana could be useful in creating systems that are innovative and flexible for college students to participate in the local market economy of their country as educated and productive workers (Treat & Hagedorn, 2013).

## **The Global Challenge for an Aging Workforce**

The issue of an aging population has become a prioritized concern for many industrialized nations. The aging population has become a global challenge for many employers since an aging workforce nearing retirement must be replaced by a new generation of a younger workforce. Currently in most industrialized nations, the trend has reversed. Instead, there are a growing number of retirees who are postponing retirement for part-time and full-time positions.

Recently available figures have shown that as many as 50% of graduates from Ghana's higher education system may not find employment for over two years after they complete their national service. The problem of youth unemployment is the result of limited capabilities and skills developed in graduates by Ghana's higher education system (Owusu-Ansah & Poku, 2012). Therefore, the adaptation of U.S. community college model in Ghana could help educate a skilled workforce in business, industry and technology to meet the needs of the local market economy and to address the problem of youth unemployment in their nation.

Moreover, providing professional education and training for college students in Ghana will require emphasizing entrepreneurship and self-employment to foster economic progress while reducing youth unemployment in the country (Owusu-Ansah & Poku, 2012). This will require the capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of ingenuity, creativity, and human relationship to meet local workforce demands (Floyd, Falconetti, & Felsher, 2012). In addition, providing professional education and training with skills will require the painstaking work of training young adult students not just to

be globally competitive and competent, but to understand their roles as responsible global citizens in a competitive global workforce environment (AACCC, 2013).

Furthermore, training a productive workforce will require the removal of barriers that exist in some U.S. community colleges in order to provide quality affordable education for college students and young adult workers to obtain key competencies and proficiencies to navigate the complexities of today's global market economy (Raby, Culton, & Valeau, 2014). The removal of barriers could enable students in Ghana's higher education system to access quality and affordable education to address the issues of limited student access, limited facilities, inadequate programs, youth unemployment and low wages among minority groups including individuals from low socioeconomic status (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013).

### **Barriers in Internationalization**

The two major barriers to the internationalization of U.S. community college education are perceived as institutional and individual. These barriers undermine community college officials, faculty, and students' understanding and appreciation of internationalization (Mitchell & Vandegrift, 2014).

#### **Institutional Barriers**

The institutional barriers enable some U.S. community college officials to continue to insist that issues on internationalization are no longer relevant to the contemporary community college, and should be addressed by 4-year traditional institutions with strong foundation in global literacy (Bradshaw, 2013). When U.S. community college officials develop a narrow view on internationalization, they fail to

consider the broader perspective to connect global and local issues and to recognize the relevance of international education to train young adult students to communicate effectively with community college global counterparts in other parts of the world (Raby, Culton, & Valeau, 2014).

Moreover, since the U.S. community college serves a greater proportion of students from lower income families including minority students than the traditional 4-year institutions, the open access policy could be the means to make internationalization accessible to minority students from low income families who may not otherwise participate in internationalization to improve the quality of their social lives (Raby et al., 2014).

### **Individual Attitudes**

Another barrier to the internationalization of U.S. community college education is individual attitudes. This is due to the fact that some U.S. community college officials have not developed the expertise required for participation in internationalization.

While some U.S. community college officials may view internationalization as extraneous to their personal and professional goals, there are others who perceive internationalization as irrelevant (Raby et al., 2014). Therefore, it is important to change individual attitudes and perceptions toward internationalization through specific interventions such as diversity workshop and training programs to encourage an understanding and appreciation for internationalization (Mitchell & Vandegrift, 2014).

### **Failure to Prioritize Global Learning**

Part of the U.S. community college education is the inclusion of its curriculum on learning in a global classroom environment. Internationalization has been a part of the U.S. community college environment for more than 50 years, yet internationalization of community college education is most often seen in the form of campus event or peripheral activities rather than as a central component of the curricula within the classroom environment (Raby et al., 2014).

According to Treat and Hagedorn (2013) the U.S. community college can no longer be isolated from global issues. It must “pivot as a key global partner for the democratization and development of a global workforce” (p. 6). In order to encourage interest in internationalization, U.S. community college officials and governing boards could support ongoing study abroad programs, including workshops for faculty and students to engage them in an understanding of their knowledge and support for internationalization (Brennan & Dellow, 2013).

In addition, U.S. community college officials could embrace the notion that the U.S. community in the 21st century is positioned to provide leadership in today’s global economic, social and educational advancements to meet the global challenge of training young adult students to work and thrive in a 21st century competitive global economy (Raby et al., 2014). The degree to which young adult students are able to succeed in achieving their academic goals and objectives has profound implications on how they cope with the complex demands and rigors of today’s higher education (Hommes, Rienties, deGrave, Bos, Schuwirth & Scherpbier, 2012).

Furthermore, to ensure successful internationalization of U.S. community college education, it is essential to include the right people in the process (Bissonette & Woodin, 2013). The process includes the involvement of governing board of trustees, community college policy makers, and community stakeholders as ardent supporters of internationalization (Urbanovic & Wilkins, 2013).

Moreover, the process for the internationalization of U.S. community college education includes allies to develop a strategic plan that is broadly acceptable and implementable (Bissonette & Wooden, 2013). This can be accomplished through sustained attention in making internationalization part of the DNA of institutional life. The adaptation of U.S. community college model could serve as a flexible, innovative, and optional system of adult education in the delivery of academic programs with skills for building capacities in wealth and job creation to resolve the problems of youth unemployment and income inequality to build a vibrant market economy in Ghana (Treat & Hagedorn, 2013).

### **Framework for Internationalization**

The strategic framework for internationalization includes a broader vision expressed by the AACC which is broadly stated as building a nation of learners to advance the educational objectives of the community colleges in America and abroad (AACC, 2013). The framework for internationalization includes academic programs or curriculum, as well as instructional systems designed to create international learning environments to promote global learning experiences and opportunities for young adult students in Ghana's higher education system (Creese, et al., 2016).



### **Utilization of Human Assets for Internationalization**

Utilization of human assets for promoting internationalization is readily available through the U.S. community colleges' student body which brings diverse and cultural traditional heritage to campus life. Currently, several U.S. community colleges are financing international activities on campuses and many more are becoming engaged in international endeavors (Brennan & Dellow, 2013).

While community college students and faculty are encouraged to participate in internationalization, community members and community organizations including community business leaders as stakeholders could also be challenged to participate in internationalization. According to Brennan and Dellow (2013) lack of consistent leadership and involvement of boards of trustee and community stakeholders, including the lack of commitment from faculty and staff, as well as lack of funding international programs could contribute to the notion that internationalization is irrelevant and must be relegated to 4-year traditional institutions of higher learning. Therefore, the adaptation of U.S. community college model of adult education could result in the fusion of international and intercultural perspectives as strategies to ensure that young adult students in Ghana's higher education system and their U.S. counterparts learn from each other on global issues, including culture, customs, and languages in the formation of global partnerships for training an efficient and productive workforce (Brennan & Dellow, 2013).

## **Faculty Engagement in Internationalization**

In advancing community college international education initiatives, U.S. community college faculty engagement in internationalization is essential. Friesen (2013) argued that internationalization of community college education includes U.S. community college faculty playing the role as agents in the process of internationalization. The internationalization of U.S. community college faculty could also be viewed as indispensable cultural brokers to underscore the significance of faculty internationalization (Choi, Khamalah, Kim, & Burg (2014).

According to Selmer, Jonassen, and Laning (2013) U.S. community college faculty engagement in internationalization could result in networking to enable them see themselves as capable of dealing with the demands of the job. In addition, U.S. community college faculty could be made aware of the global factors that influence their professional practice through internationalization. Lack of awareness and commitment to internationalization could send the wrong message to U.S. community college faculty that the work of internationalization is beyond the global mission of the U.S. community college (Brennan & Dellow, 2013).

Providing professional workshops and training for U.S. community college faculty and staff could be essential investment for internationalization. It could be a positive alternative to rely on external support teams for internationalization (McDonald & McGill, 2013). In addition, a key focus to internationalization's initiative for U.S. community college faculty could include the internationalization of the curriculum, and

increase emphasis on global partnerships to address problems and to work effectively in a globalized and integrated world (Bradshaw, 2013).

### **Funding Internationalization**

Lack of institutional funding is one of the reasons cited as explanations given for inaction in internationalization. In addition, budget cuts, political unrest and awareness of unsafe traveling around the globe due to ISIS terror threats is a systematic concern, as well as the recent Ebola epidemic in some West African states including Liberia, Sierra Leon and Gambia.

Furthermore, while there may be limited resources to fund internationalization initiatives, the prioritization of internationalization as part of U.S. community college's global mission to provide training for students and adult workers, could generate enough support and benefits to promote and implement international educational initiatives. Therefore, adopting a policy in support of internationalization of U.S. community college education could help prepare young adult students in Ghana for life in the growth and development of a competitive globalized economy (Raby & Valeau, 2014). In addition, investments in occupational education and training could have profound implication on the internationalization of U.S. community college education on young adult student participation in high skilled employment to improve their local market economy and the standard of living.

### **Benefits of Internationalization**

There are several benefits for the internationalization of U.S. community college education that could be integrated into the curriculum to encourage cultural exchange and

sharing of information to prepare students in the international community, including college graduates in Ghana to succeed as responsible young adults in a competitive global world. Some of the benefits include study abroad programs, increased attention to the internationalization of community college curriculum, and recognition of diversity as part of global workforce environment and learning to achieve internationalization (Sawir, 2013). Additional benefits for internationalization include a strong foundation for global literacy, emphasis on international partnerships and intercultural cooperation among diverse groups of people, including the dissemination of knowledge and information to create international and intercultural competency for young adult students (Bradshaw, 2013).

### **International Adaptation of the U.S. Community College Model**

Models of U.S. community college 2-year education model exist as alternative pathways to public and private 4-year traditional universities in many countries around the world. Jephcote and Raby (2012) used the term community college counterparts to denote the adaptation of U.S. community college characteristics around the world. In most developing countries such as Ghana, the adaptation of U.S. community college 2-year model of adult education provides lower-cost pathways for lower and middle-class income families. They also provide alternative pathways to a higher level of practical education and training systems with specialization in applied and workforce fields of study, including technology, management, business, nursing education, engineering, and teacher education (Floyd, Falconetti & Felsher, 2012).

Raby and Valeau (2014) argued that the U.S. community college 2-year education model exists globally to provide alternative options for young adult learners, and life-long learners, including remedial and developmental learners, and non-traditional learners to train them for sustainable employment. In Vietnam, lower cost was the noted reason for most young adult students seeking community college education (Epperson, 2012).

China adapted the U.S. community college 2-year model to refine the features of its existing structure of vocational technical education to develop their local labor market (Rui, 2014). Japan reformed its traditional 3-year professional education system to adapt the U.S. community college 2-year model in order to train a local labor force to rebuild their economy (Raby & Valeau, 2014).

In addition, South Korea adapted the U.S. community college 2-year model as an alternative system of adult education to train their students to transition from secondary/vocational schools to postsecondary institutions (Raby & Valeau, 2014). Taiwan also adapted the U.S. community college 2-year model to train their students to develop the practical skills in specialized fields for their local labor market (Raby & Valeau, 2014). In the African continent, Kenya adapted the U.S. community college 2-year model to train a skilled labor workforce for their country (Mwangi, 2013), including community health workforce to increase the number of skilled personnel for community healthcare delivery (Kaseje, 2015).

While many developed countries such as Denmark, Sweden, and Germany provide tuition free college education, most developing countries in Africa have

increased their tuition for postsecondary education. However, in some developed countries such as Canada, increase in tuition fees has been necessitated and justified by ongoing budget cuts (Anderson, 2015). The adaptation of U.S. community college 2-year model of adult education in developing countries such as Ghana is critical to absorb the growing number of qualified students for postsecondary education due to high tuition cost and limited student admittance that has contributed to an environment of youth unemployment and poverty in their nation (Osei-Owusu & Awunyo-Vitor, 2012).

In addition, the adaptation of U.S. community college model could provide internship, work study and contract education programs to lower the cost of training college students in developing countries such as Ghana to develop quality education and training systems with skills to address the problem of youth unemployment and income inequality (Osei-Owusu & Awunyo-Vitor, 2012). Moreover, the U.S. community college model could appeal to many higher education consumers in many developing countries in Africa including Ghana because the U.S. community college 2-year model takes less time to complete (Mwangi, 2013).

### **Adapting the U.S. Community College Model to Ghana**

In this study, I conceptualized stakeholders as individuals or community college counterparts who are directly involved in the adaptation of the U.S. community college model for higher education and training in Ghana (Jephocote & Raby, 2012). These are individuals who were directly impacted by this study. They consisted of 2nd-year and 3rd-year students who are currently enrolled at a 3-year college of continuing education, including the faculty and staff. Additional stakeholders included the registrar, or policy

makers who were charged with the responsibility of providing oversight, including the management of higher education at this college of continuing education in Ghana. The remaining stakeholders included two local business leaders who could benefit directly from the adaptation of U.S. community college education with companies and business agencies and industry in the country/community.

In an era of unparalleled economic challenges, the adaptation of U.S. community college 2-year education in Ghana could provide college students with an affordable education and professional training required to build an efficient global workforce to develop the economies in their own country and communities. Despite the economic challenges facing the international community, the U.S. community college could provide young adult students in Ghana with opportunities to increase the global literacy for business, industry and technology in today's global economy. The adaptation of U.S. community college 2-year education could make postsecondary education affordable and accessible to students in Ghana's higher education system. Curriculum focused on entrepreneurship and small business could further develop their knowledge and practical skills enabling them to not only compete for sustainable employment, but also facilitate the creation of jobs and wealth to grow their local market economy.

Jephcote and Raby (2012) used the term community college global counterparts to denote the adaptation of U.S. community college characteristics by a variety of academic institutions around the world. This would suggest that the U.S. community college model is making a global impact in education and youth employment opportunities in a 21st century global community. With the adaptation of U.S.

community college model, students in Ghana's higher education system could have access to affordable college education and training to resolve the problems of limited student access, inadequate academic resources, and high tuition rates. Moreover, several businesses and industries in Ghana could benefit from the U.S. community college model's adaptation of training an educated workforce to increase their productivity.

### **Summary**

The literature presented in this chapter emphasized three categories or themes in internationalization. They included the U.S. community college model's adaptation in Ghana, investing in U.S. community college education in Ghana, and the benefits of the U.S. community college model's adaptation for students in Ghana. These themes provided the basis to draw conclusions on the adaptation of the U.S. community college 2-year model of adult education as a supplemental delivery system to the current system of higher education in Ghana. The analysis of Becker's (1976) human capital theory grounded the framework of the study. It provided a rationale for the adaptation of the U.S. community college model of adult education for students in Ghana's higher education system to develop the practical knowledge and skills relevant for active participation in their local labor market.

The uniqueness of the U.S. community college 2-year model of adult education regarding access and affordability could benefit college students in Ghana; many of whom are consistently excluded from participation in higher education due to social status, poverty, hardships, age, or gender (Jephcote & Raby, 2012). The adaptation of U.S. community college education could provide college students in Ghana with



alternative pathways to receive practical education and training with entrepreneurial skills to address the problems of limited student access, inadequate academic resources, and high tuition rates (Hillman & Orians, 2013), which have resulted in local youth unemployment and low wages for middle and lower income families (Hillman, Orians, 2013).

The adaptation of the U.S. community college model could enable students in Ghana's higher education system to become an educated workforce for the development of human capital in building a vibrant local labor market (Ntim, 2014). The U.S. community colleges' commitment to academic excellence and professional development could enable students in Ghana's higher education system to receive affordable education and practical training with relevant skills to successfully compete for high skilled employment to enable them earn higher wages in the labor market to improve the standard of living (Yeboah, Kumi, & Gyamfi, 2012).

In addition, the need for highly skilled and professional workforce could position the U.S. community college to become an innovative academic institution for providing occupational and professional education to build a vibrant global economy in the 21st century (Bechman & Doucette, 2012). Moreover, the need for highly skilled employees could position the U.S. community college as an innovator in training a global workforce with entrepreneurial skills that requires an integration of academic and technical concepts to solve real-life problems (Bragg, 2011). Without the U.S. community college 2-year model of adult education many low-income families and minorities groups who view the U.S. community college as an opportunity to realize their dreams may not have access to

acquire affordable education and training with occupational skills required to participate in today's competitive global market economy (Jephcote & Raby, 2012).

Therefore, to emphasize their commitment to internationalization, AACC and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) in 2006 issued a joint statement on the role of the U.S. community colleges in international education. The joint statement offered suggestions on how to establish leadership role for directing the U.S. community college education in today's globalized multicultural world. It appealed to U.S. community college leadership and policy makers to adopt a policy for supporting international education. The joint statement further urged U.S. community college governing boards to take proactive roles in working with community business organizations to promote international education. The ideas expressed in the literature review are a foundation for Chapter 3's research methods in the discussion of qualitative study with the use of a qualitative data collection instruments for interviewing participants on the adaptation of the U.S. community college 2-year model as a supplemental delivery system of higher education for young adult students in Ghana's higher education system.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the adaptation of the U.S. community college 2-year model as a supplemental delivery system for expanding adult education and employment opportunities for young adult students in Ghana's higher education system. This chapter includes detailed descriptions of the research design, and a rationale for the qualitative method of inquiry employed for this study. I have also included the population of the study, sample size, sampling strategies, and the criteria for selecting the sample for the study. The chapter concludes with the data collection and the management of procedures employed, including issues of quality and trustworthiness and the procedures for protecting participants.

#### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research question(s):

RQ 1: What support do students need to participate successfully in Ghana's higher education system?

RQ 2: What concerns do stakeholders have regarding higher education in Ghana that might be addressed by the U.S. community college model?

These research questions are in alignment with the literature review and basic qualitative design as my methodology. The phrasing of these questions reflect the data I analyzed and my recognition that it was difficult for participants to answer some aspects of the original research questions pertaining to the U.S. community college model, as they were unfamiliar with it and my handout explaining the differences was insufficient.

### **Qualitative Research Framework**

I employed a basic qualitative method of inquiry for this research study. A qualitative method of inquiry is employed by researchers to study a phenomenon that occurs in a particular setting and how people affected by the phenomenon react and respond (or not) to the phenomenon in their future behavior (Yin, 2013). In this study, I explored the perceptions of people in a community in Ghana, including their attitudes and knowledge, to understand how components of the U.S. community college 2-year model might serve as a supplemental delivery system to address problems of limited student access, inadequate facilities, high tuition costs, and poor post-graduation employment.

The qualitative approach in this study allowed me to understand a phenomenon that occurred in a natural setting and how people affected by the phenomena responded the way they did (Merriam, 2009). This approach also allowed participants to share their perceptions and experiences on the central phenomenon under study without being influenced by my perspectives (Creswell, 2012). I used interview protocols and focus group discussions in the collection of data for the study.

#### **Other Qualitative Approaches Considered for the Study**

Qualitative research inquiry and methods considered but rejected for the study include the narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, and case study approaches. The narrative research tradition was rejected because of its focus on participants and their stories. The narrative approach could best be employed to capture detailed stories or life experiences of individual or a small group of individuals, but I sought this understanding at a national scale and in a natural setting (Creswell, 2012). A phenomenological study

did not fit for the same reason as the narrative research tradition, because of its focus on individual stories and experiences.

The grounded theory approach was not a suitable fit either since it is used to generate a theory through the data collection process. The purpose of this research was not to develop a theory since the study employed the human capital theory to guide the data collection process, the analysis of data, and the interpretation of the findings.

I also rejected the case study approach. Given that the U.S. community college model does not exist in Ghana, gathering participants' learned behavior and beliefs or documents about an unrelated lived experience would have been impossible. In this qualitative study, I sought to understand stakeholders' perceptions regarding the adaptation of the U.S. community college 2-year model as a supplemental delivery system for expanding adult education and post-graduation employment for young adult students in Ghana's higher education system.

For this study, the ethnographic tradition could have been applied to provide an understanding of participants' cultural and learning experiences, including their beliefs, behavior, attitudes, and understanding toward the adaptation of the U.S. community college model of adult education as a supplemental delivery system in their natural setting to address the problems of limited student admittance and high tuition cost.

### **The Role of the Researcher**

One of the characteristics of qualitative research is the role of a researcher as the primary instrument in the data collection and data analysis process (Creswell, 2012). My role in this study involved the administration of interview and focus group instruments

for gathering and analyzing data from participants (Kerlin, Carlsen, Kelly, & Goehring, 2013).

A qualitative researcher is also cautioned to be aware of developing relationships with participants that could influence the outcome of a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Maxwell (2013) referred to research relationships with participants as “gatekeepers” who can either facilitate or interfere with the outcome of a study. I did not have any personal or professional relationships, such as supervisory or instructor relationships, with any of the participants I interviewed.

In addition, I did not have any personal or professional relationships involving power over participants at this college of continuing education in Ghana in the focus group discussions that might influence their responses to this study. However, I occasionally referenced my experience gained as a former student at a university college in Ghana in the focus group discussions. Thus, relationships were not a factor that duly influenced the outcome of this study.

Additionally, a researcher must be knowledgeable in the procedures and techniques involved in research work (Yin, 2013). In order to conduct a qualitative study, I limited my role as a researcher to more of an outsider and less as an insider in the collection of data for this study. As an outsider, my role was limited to asking questions, using probes for clarification and elaboration, taking notes, and analyzing the data collected from participants. I also acknowledged that my experience gained as a former student at a university college in Ghana could be perceived as superior knowledge and interpreted as research bias and a potential threat to validity. It may also have been an

advantage in guiding the development of questions; increasing trust and willingness of participants to open up and be truthful in their answers, and informing my interpretation of responses.

Maxwell (2013) emphasized two significant quality indicators to the validity of a qualitative research study. They included a researcher's bias and reactivity. These quality indicators could profoundly influence the outcome of a study leading to invalid conclusions. The researcher's bias includes a subjective activity, and it involves personal beliefs, values and assumptions introduced in a study to influence the outcome.

Reactivity refers to a researcher's domineering influence on the setting or participants in a study due to prior engagement with the study's setting, the participants, or the phenomenon. In order to minimize these potential threats, I approached this study with an open mind. I was mindful not to allow my experience or insider information as a former student at a university college in Ghana to influence the collection and interpretation of data for the study.

As mentioned earlier, my role as a researcher was that of an outsider employing open ended questions, probes, note taking, analysis and interpretation for the study. Occasionally, I engaged participants in the discussion of the issues under investigation, providing prompts, clarifying issues, and adjusting research questions and procedures when necessary to provide a focus for the study. To ensure accuracy and validity, I employed member checking which involved sharing the transcribed responses from my notes with participants and asking them to verify the accuracy of the report (Creswell, 2012).

## **Methodology**

This section includes the data and data collection methods, as well as the research population and size, the setting, sample strategies and criteria, analysis and source of data, and an explanation of the issues of trustworthiness, personal biases, and ethical considerations.

### **The Setting**

The setting where I collected data was the campus of a university college of continuing education within a 3-year university. It was one of several public institutions of higher learning in a district with a population of almost 2 million people. The administrative governance of the community where the institution was situated was under the supervision of a district administrator elected by the people to provide oversight for community development projects including banking, commerce, healthcare, and education. According to the population division of the U.N. Department for Economic and Social Affairs, it was estimated that one-third of the residents in this region live in impoverished surroundings (DESA, 2014).

I travelled to the campus to conduct the interview and focus group discussions in person. My community partner for this study, a staff member at the college, introduced me to the institution's director of research and development. I accompanied the director to a youth forum, where I was introduced as a guest conducting research, and distributed invitation letters to recruit participants for the focus group discussions.



### **Research Population and Criteria for Selection**

I interviewed three people and engaged eight more in two focus group interviews. I selected an anticipated sample with at least one-year prior knowledge and experience in Ghana's higher education system to participate in the study. I conducted face-to-face interviews with the college registrar and two community business leaders. The first focus group consisted of two second-year and two third-year students, and the second focus group was composed of two faculty members and two staff. The two focus group discussions were conducted at two separate venues: the first in a classroom, and the second in a small conference room.

Separating participants into two focus groups encouraged openness and allowed participants to be truthful in their responses and answers. The sample for this study provided sufficient information-rich data to reach data saturation.

I used purposeful sampling for the selection of participants to find people who informed understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2007). The selection of participants for the focus group discussions involved some degree of snow balling. The major criteria for the purposeful selection of participants as key stakeholders for this study included knowledge, experiences, and direct involvement or engagement in Ghana's higher education system.

I interviewed the registrar based on her knowledge, experiences, and direct involvement or engagement in Ghana's higher education system. I selected the two community business leaders for interviews based on their knowledge and lived experience.

In order to recruit participants for the focus group discussions, I attended a youth forum, a regularly scheduled meeting held by the college of continuing education and attended by students, faculty, and staff, and was introduced as a guest conducting research. I made an announcement inviting all attendees to consider participating in the focus group discussions. I distributed a letter of invitation with my email address and participants interested in the study were invited to email me in 2 days. I selected participants who responded to the letters of invitation the next day for the focus group discussions. I then invited potential participants via email to participate in the study based on their knowledge, experiences, and direct involvement in Ghana's higher education system. I requested that my community partner select additional participants if the recruitment resulted in fewer participants than originally targeted. To protect their privacy, I used pseudonyms for all participants.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection for this study included interviews and focus group discussions, collected over an anticipated period of 2-3 weeks. The director of research granted me permission to collect data at the college of continuing education in Ghana. I was responsible for recording data, with participants' permission, on an audio recording device. I also took notes during the interview. The face-to-face interview of participants enabled me to observe the nonverbal reactions of participants in this study. I dated the transcribed responses and shared them verbally with participants. I did not provide participants with a written transcript of their responses.

I used corroborating contributions from participants in focus group discussions for continuous comparison of data to ensure consistency and credibility (Creswell, 2012). I also used focus group discussions and interviews until I reached saturation. The logic of data triangulation was based on the notion that a single method of inquiry was more prone to errors. Multiple data sources provided cross-data validity checks to increase credibility and accuracy (Yin, 2013). The process of conducting each interview and focus group required the use of probing questions after using a small number of open-ended questions (see Appendix B & D) to allow participants to share their perceptions on the central phenomenon of the study (Creswell, 2012).

I conducted face-to-face interviews with participants for the two small focus group discussions in a designated conference room and a classroom requested at the college in Ghana. The two focus group discussions lasted for about 1 hour to discuss the adaptation of the U.S. community college 2-year model as a supplemental delivery system of education for students in Ghana's higher education system. I was personally responsible for the audio-recording of the interviews and focus group discussions with permission from participants.

I also interviewed the registrar at the college and two community business leaders. Interviews of the registrar and community business leaders lasted for about 1 hour and was conducted face-to-face at their office and a home office. I recorded the interviews on an audio-recording device with permission from participants. I also returned to the college the following week and met with five participants in the focus group and the three individuals I had interviewed face-to-face as a group a second time

for 30 minutes to share my interpretation of their responses so that they could review and confirm that their responses were accurately interpreted.

To facilitate informed responses to my interview and focus group questions, I provided participants with a chart that compared the U.S. community college system to Ghana's higher education system and referred to it, as needed, throughout the interviews and focus groups. (See Appendix G for the comparison chart of the U.S. community college 2-year model with Ghana's 3-year continuing education model and Ghana's 4-year university education model). The constraints of time and participants' experiences made it difficult to answer the interview questions intended to address the research questions. However, I faithfully report in Chapter 4, on the analysis of the data that I collected.

### **Instrumentation**

The questions for the interviews and focus groups were derived by myself and reviewed by my committee. They were to be supported by a comparative chart on the U.S. community college 2-year model and Ghana's 3-year and 4-year models of adult education. I tested the questions once I arrived in Ghana with a colleague from a different university to increase the clarity of the questions. I however found out, once I entered the setting, that the interview questions were challenging for participants to answer, particularly anything that required them to compare the U.S. community college model to their experience.

The interview protocol (Appendix A) guided the introduction of the interview and the interview questions (Appendix B) were framed to invite research participants to

reflect on the four central problems that the study was focused around in an open way, followed by probes if they did not raise those concerns themselves. The focus group protocol (Appendix C) helped me orient participants and the focus group questions (Appendix D) were designed similarly to the interview questions to evoke their concerns, and then probe based on the study's problem focus, with an emphasis on training programs and youth employment.

### **Data Management**

Information provided by participants for this study was kept confidential. Participants were notified they could withdraw from the study anytime without penalty. Data collection for this study, including transcripts of participants' responses or conversations, personal notes, and recordings at interview and focus group discussions, was stored electronically with a password protected code on a computer system in my home office to protect privacy and confidentiality of participants. Transcripts, personal notes, and recordings collected for this study will be destroyed at the end of 5 years, consistent with Walden University privacy protection policy of storing sensitive information of research participants.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

The qualitative data strategies for this study included analysis of open coding of data and then sorting the codes into categories and themes. The challenge was to identify frequently used words from the text in order to sort them to assign a code to describe the meaning of the text (Creswell, 2012). Codes represented participants' actual words or

phrases. The coding process was continuously revised and adjusted as new themes emerged from the clusters of coded responses of participants.

I also employed the qualitative data analysis outlined by Creswell (2007) for this study's data analysis. Creswell summarized the qualitative data analysis into four sequences to include (a) preparation and organization of data (b) reducing data into themes and subthemes through coding (c) condensing the codes into themes and phrases (d) representation of the data in the form of discussions (Creswell, 2007).

Employing Creswell's (2007) four procedures for qualitative data analysis, I began the first phase of the data analysis while I was doing data collection of the study. While conducting face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions with participants, I wrote down critical recurring responses from participants. I triangulated my notes with participants' responses in the open coding of data and then sorted the codes into themes.

I also initiated the second and third phase of the data analysis process by reducing the data into themes through the coding I had started. I reviewed and analyzed the themes into overarching results that clarified each of the two research questions for this study. The fourth and final phase of the data analysis included the process and discussions of the thematic findings organized under the two central research questions. After following these practices designed to enhance credibility of the findings, it was clear that all the participants couldn't adequately grasp the concept of the U.S. community college 2-year model's adaptation as a supplemental delivery system for students in Ghana's higher education system. Therefore, in Chapter 4, I report on the findings that emerged from this careful data analysis process to represent their

perceptions credibly.

### **Issues of Quality and Trustworthiness**

Issues of quality and trustworthiness are important considerations in a qualitative research. They are critical consideration to determine the credibility of a study's findings as acceptable or plausible. They may also result from a researcher's subjective and reflective biases, poor sampling, inappropriate data collection methods, and ineffective use of research instruments. Therefore, to ensure quality and trustworthiness for this study, I applied the instruments consistently throughout the data collection process so that the findings and conclusions align with the research methods.

I also employed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four principles to address the issues of quality and trustworthiness in this study. The four principles included: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

#### **Credibility**

Credibility refers to a study's finding as plausible or whether the objectives represent a logical outcome. In order to increase quality and trustworthiness, I employed multiple data collection strategies and data collection sources for consistency and ensured that the study's findings and conclusions aligned with the methodology.

#### **Transferability**

Transferability refers to the generalizability of research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability may also plausible if the research findings provide rich detailed description. I employed multiple data collection strategies and data collection sources for consistency and to ensure that the study's findings and conclusions aligned

with the methodology. I used collaborating contributions from interviews and focus group discussions for continuous comparison of data. I also employed constant analysis of interview transcripts and constant comparative methods to look for emerging codes and then sort them into categories and themes.

### **Dependability**

Dependability refers to the consistency of methods and procedures employed in a research study. It includes the management of researcher's bias as well as the application of a uniformed research tool or instrument for the collection of data from participants. I sought to minimize personal bias by ensuring that the interview and focus group instruments are applied uniformly and consistently with each interview. I reminded participants of the voluntary nature of this study that they were at liberty to withdraw or discontinue their participation from the study anytime, or refrain from answering any questions.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability relates to a researcher's objectivity. It includes the objective view of a researcher as to whether the findings in a study are based on established procedure of collecting data rather than the influence of a researcher's bias or assumption (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used member checking to ensure validity of information. I asked all the participants to meet with me a second time to verify their responses to ensure that they were represented accurately and to address any concerns on my part that evolved from my ongoing analysis.



**Protecting Research Participants**

This research study was conducted with sensitivity to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants. Any information provided by participants is being kept in a safe deposit box with a personal password protected code and will be destroyed after 5 years according to Walden University policy on research participants' protection and confidential rights.

**Institutional Review Board**

In order to protect the rights of participants in this study, I sought approval from Walden University Institutional Review Board. (Walden University IRB approval number 02-03-17-0243776). The process required that I summarize the research procedure in this study and supply evidence that the research procedure will offer certain protection to research participants (Creswell, 2012). Approval from Walden University IRB helped to evaluate and address the ethical issues involved in the study.

**Informed Consent**

An informed consent form guaranteeing the rights of participants' involvement in the study was signed by participants before the research is conducted. The consent form outlined the rights of participants to withdraw any time from the proposed study. I remained committed to protecting the privacy of participants, being aware of the potential harm participants often experience when privacy or confidential protocol is violated (Creswell, 2012). The statement of informed consent stated that participants have the right to discontinue their participation in the research study any time during the interview.

The process also included participants' voluntary participation in the study, and their right to know the purpose of the study.

### **Confidentiality**

I secured all personal information collected for this study, including the interview transcripts and notes, any audio recordings, and consent forms to be protected and stored in a fireproof safe deposit box locked in my home office or study for a period of 5 years. Providing a safe and secure place to store these documents was critical to ensure that information generated from participants was protected according to ethical standards. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of participants.

### **Minimizing Personal Biases**

As a researcher I am aware of potential biases that could impact the outcome of this study. Therefore, I took all the necessary precautionary measures to manage personal biases associated with human experiences when collecting data from participants. Personal biases if not properly managed can potentially weaken the results of this study. To ensure quality and credibility, I approached the study with an open mind. I also clarified my personal values, assumptions, and biases at the outset before the collection of data for this study.

In addition, I rehearsed all the interview questions thoroughly and did a trial run with a colleague in Ghana prior to the actual participation of research to avoid asking leading questions to interject personal influence or bias during the research investigation. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) argued that a "qualitative researcher must be explicit and self-aware as possible about the inevitable bias that exists in qualitative data

collection in order to manage personal assumptions, values and biases” in a research study (p. 321).

### **Ethical Procedures**

I observed ethical practices of informing participants of the purpose of this study. As the sole investigator of this study, I took the necessary precautionary measures and refrained from any deceptive behavior in collecting data, in order to demonstrate a high level of respect for participants, and to maintain confidentiality and collaboration with participants (Creswell, 2012). I also communicated to participants about the possibility of potential stress and discomfort associated with participation in the study. I followed the ethical principles and standards throughout the course of this research investigation.

### **Summary**

In Chapter 3, I explained the methodology for examining components of the U.S. community college model’s adaptation for students in Ghana’s higher education. The methodology included interview of participants, and a small focus group discussion at a 3-year university college of continuing education in Ghana.

Without improved access to affordable quality education and professional training such as the U.S. community college model, many low-income students from growing middle class families in Ghana will not be equipped with the academic training and skills required for a 21st century workforce employment to sustain a high quality of living. The research and useful information provided by participants served to inform Chapter 4 in my reporting of the findings and analysis for this study.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore how components of the U.S. community college 2-year model of adult education might serve as a supplemental delivery system to address the problems of limited student access, limited academic facilities, high tuition costs, and limited postgraduation employability for students in Ghana's higher education system. The central phenomenon of interest for the study was the perception of participants at a 3-year college of continuing education in Ghana regarding the fit of components of the U.S. community college 2-year model of adult education.

My analysis of the data was guided by the following research questions:

RQ 1: What support do students need to participate successfully in Ghana's higher education system?

RQ 2: What concerns do stakeholders have regarding higher education in Ghana that might be addressed by the U.S. community college model?

### **Research Setting and Participants Demographics**

The study's participants included three individuals in face-to-face interviews and eight participants in focus group discussions. Individual participants whom I interviewed face-to-face included the registrar at the college and two business leaders in the neighboring community in Accra, Ghana. I conducted the interview of college registrar in her office, whereas interviews for the two community business leaders took place in an office and a home office in Accra, Ghana.

The first focus group was comprised of two second-year and two third-year students at this 3-year college of continuing education in Ghana. The second focus group consisted of two faculty and two staff members at the college. I conducted the two focus group discussions at two separate venues: the first in a classroom, and the second in a small conference room.

In order to ensure confidentiality, I substituted the 11 participants' actual names with pseudonyms (See Table 4 for a list of their pseudonyms, role at the college, and gender).

Table 4

*Table of Participants and Codes*

Source	Participants	Gender	Pseudonyms
Interview	Registrar	Female	Dr. Smithe
Interviews	Community	Male & Female	Ebow & Efua
	-Business Leaders		
Focus Group	2nd-year students	Female	Adjua & Mansa
	3rd-year students	Male	Fifi & Kwame
Focus Group	Faculty	Male & Female	Kofi & Ama
	Staff	Male & Female	Kwesi & Araba

### **Data Collection**

The research study was conducted as outlined in Chapter 3, with participants' full cooperation in the interviews and focus group discussions. I also met with interview and focus group participants a second time to review and confirm that their responses were accurately interpreted. The interview and focus group responses elicited feedback, and I was able to adapt my interpretation of what they said based on their input to better reflect

their central concerns. Participants in the interview and focus group discussions showed no signs of duress or withdrawal during the data collection. All data collected from participants were audio recorded by me, are being kept in a safe deposit box with personal password protected code, and will be destroyed after 5 years in accordance with Walden University IRB policy on research participants' privacy protection and confidentiality rights.

Individual interviews were conducted according to the following process and order. I recruited interview participants based on the recommendation by my community partner and in consultation with the director of research and development at this 3-year college of continuing education in Ghana. I invited the college registrar to sign the consent form and interviewed her face-to-face in her office the same day for 65 minutes. Next, I interviewed the first community business leader, inviting him to sign the consent form and then participate in a 60 minute, face-to-face interview in his office the same day. The second community business leader was recommended to me by the first community business leader. I interviewed the second community business leader in her home office the evening of the same day for 60 minutes, after she had signed the consent forms.

The first community business leader was an educational consultant and a former student at this 3-year college of continuing education. The second community business leader operated a culinary arts institute in the same neighboring community. I conducted the face-to-face interviews based on the prepared interview questions and recorded the interviews, with permission, using an audio recorder. In each interview and focus group,

I shared a chart that compared the U.S. community college 2-year and 4-year models with Ghana's 3-year and 4-year education models (see Appendix E).

To recruit participants for the focus group discussions, I attended a youth forum, a regularly scheduled general meeting held by the college and attended by students, faculty, and staff, and was introduced as a guest conducting research by the director of research and development at this 3-year college of continuing education. I made an announcement inviting all attendees to consider participating in the study. I distributed letters of invitation with my email address and invited everyone interested in the study to email me within 2 days.

About 37 volunteers, which included students, faculty, and staff, responded to my e-mail. I selected eight participants based on the order in which I received the emails. All eight volunteers I selected for participation met the criteria of having at least one year prior experience and direct involvement or engagement in Ghana's higher education system. I sent an email to thank those who volunteered for the focus groups but were not selected for participation.

I divided participants into two cohorts. The first cohorts consisted of two second-year female and two third-year male students. The second cohort consisted of one male and one female faculty, and one male and one female staff. I shared with participants the prepared consent forms and a chart comparing the U.S. community college 2-year model (see Appendix E) with Ghana's 3-year and 4-year education models, and collected focus group data using an audio recorder. I conducted the two focus groups in one day with each session lasting about one hour. Despite my probing for answers to address their

ideas regarding application of the U.S. community college model, participants did not seem to go beyond their construction of Ghana's higher education system and their concerns within their own system, so I eventually stopped pressing any further for answers to these questions and listened carefully to their concerns as suggested by Merriam's (2009) description of a basic qualitative study.

### **Member Checking and Validation**

I returned to the college the following week and met with five participants in the focus group and the three individuals I had interviewed face-to-face to interview them a second time for 30 minutes to share my interpretation of their responses so that they could review and confirm that their responses were accurately interpreted. The other participants were unavailable. I conducted the reviews verbally in two small focus groups with similar participants, as my short stay in Ghana did not allow me time to transcribe the recordings and share the transcripts. I instead provided a summary drawn from the extensive notes I took during the interviews and my reflections of what I thought participants said during the interview and focus group discussions.

Two second-year and two third-year students, two staff members, and the registrar were in attendance for the reviews. I also met the community business leader on the evening of the same day for the reviews, and all interviewees said the interpretation of the summary of the review was accurately interpreted. Participants did not raise any objection or add anything to the review summary I provided. Two faculty members could not attend the review session because of prior teaching engagements. One of the two community business leaders could not participate due to a prior business



engagement. I did not follow up with all the participants to share my interpretive impressions due to my short stay in Ghana.

### **Data Analysis**

The strategy I employed for this study included analysis of open coding of data and then sorting the codes into categories and themes. To analyze data, I employed Creswell's (2007) four procedures for qualitative data analysis. I began the first phase of data analysis during data collection, while I conducted face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions with participants. I also wrote down recurring words from participants' responses. I used these recurring words from participants' responses during the coding process.

I initiated the second and third phase of the data analysis process by reducing the data into themes through the coding I had started. I reviewed and analyzed the codes, categorizing them into overarching themes that correspond to each of the two research questions. I triangulated my notes with participants' responses in the open coding of data and then sorted the codes into themes. The logic of data triangulation was based on the notion that a single method of inquiry is more prone to errors. Multiple data sources provide cross-data validity checks to increase credibility and accuracy (Yin, 2013). For this study, those multiple sources were the interviews, focus groups, my researcher notes, and member checking and validation.

The fourth and final phase of the data analysis included identifying the themes and then associating the thematic findings to the research questions. I continuously compared contributions from participants in interviews and focus group discussions to

ensure credibility (Creswell, 2012). Analysis confirmed that participant responses supported each other and there were no discrepant outliers, confirming that saturation was reached.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

Issues of quality and trustworthiness are important considerations in a qualitative research study to determine an objective outcome and to establish the credibility of a study's findings as acceptable or plausible. Therefore, to ensure quality and trustworthiness for this study, I selected participants based on the criteria set for the study, and I applied the interview and focus group discussion tools consistently throughout the data collection process so that the findings and conclusions aligned with the research methods. I implemented the interview process and instrumentation plan as designed with no significant deviation.

To further increase quality and trustworthiness for this study, I applied Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four principles of qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

### **Credibility**

Participants were unable to credibly respond to some of the interview and focus group questions as the questions required understanding of the U.S. community college model that was beyond their experience. Even after I shared the chart of the two models describing the structure of the U.S. community college without direct experience with this alternate higher education context, participants were unable to relate to the ideas embedded in the questions I posed (see Appendix E). No one whom I or my community

partner was aware of at the university could have fully responded to the interview and focus group questions, suggesting that a different study design might be necessary for future exploration of the same research questions. Therefore, I focused the findings on credibly reporting what they did say in response, reflecting the authenticity of their perceptions as well as I could.

### **Transferability**

In order to represent this study's findings as potentially transferable to different contexts, I provided a detailed description of the data collection methods and employed multiple data collection strategies and data collection sources for consistency. I used collaborating contributions from interviews and focus group discussions as well as my notes for continuous comparison of data.

### **Dependability**

Dependability refers to the consistency of methods and procedures employed for this study. To minimize potential threats to quality and trustworthiness, I applied the research tools uniformly for the collection of data from participants. To minimize personal bias I was mindful not to allow my experience as a former student to influence the collection and interpretation of data for this study. In addition, I reminded participants of the voluntary nature of their participation in the study and that they had the right to refrain from responding to any question they did not wish to answer, or even terminate their involvement in the study if they felt uncomfortable at any time.

### **Confirmability**

To ensure that the findings of this study were based on established procedure of

collecting data rather than the influence of a researcher's bias or assumption, I used member checking and validation to ensure validity of information. I met interview and focus group participants the second time for 30 minutes to review my notes and initial impressions of their responses to confirm that I was understanding and representing their responses accurately. Participants responded positively, confirmed my interpretation, and did not add anything to the summary of notes that I shared.

### **Results**

The findings of this study are presented according to the themes generated from the analysis of the interviews and focus group discussions I conducted with participants at a 3-year college of continuing education in Ghana. The two original research questions guided the interview and focus group questions to which all the participants attempted to respond with full cooperation, regarding the potential for the U.S. community college model's adaptation to address problems of limited student access, limited academic facilities, high tuition costs, and increase post-graduation employment opportunities for students in Ghana's higher education system. I tried to support participants' ability to respond to and address these issues with the chart I provided which compared the U.S. community college 2-year model with Ghana's 3-year and 4-year models, but they found it difficult in the light of their lack of experience with the U.S. community college model (see Appendix E).

#### **Findings Related to Research Question 1**

The following are the findings related to Research Question 1, which is as follows: What support do students need to participate successfully in Ghana's higher

education system?

Some of the codes included: *critical thinking, logical reasoning, rote learning, family income, limited housing, and education subsidies*. I condensed the codes into three themes to include:

- Lack of preparation in critical thinking
- Inadequate academic facilities
- Inequitable distribution of education subsidies

The themes are organized to reflect the dominance of the responses from participants. I will summarize the findings below in relationship to each of the three themes.

**Lack of preparation in critical thinking.** All the research participants stated that critical thinking skills must be added to the curriculum to train students in Ghana's higher education system to take initiatives and personal responsibilities for themselves. Some of the words they used in referring to critical thinking were logical reasoning, rote learning, and lack of creativity. All the participants stated that the current system of higher education in Ghana does not train students to be independent and logical thinkers. All the interviews and focus group members perceived Ghana's higher education system as lacking in logical reasoning and creativity because it is focused on theoretical learning, and narrowly tailored on rote learning for students to pass entrance examinations to participate in higher education.

For instance, the college registrar stated the following: "Our students lack critical thinking skills, including personal responsibility to compete successfully for entrance examinations to increase the pass rate in the selection process for higher education

participation.” Describing the current system of higher education in Ghana, one of the faculty members, Ama, stated the following:

The kind of education we are lacking is what makes students critical thinkers. We are not helping our students or training them to be critical thinkers. We are training them to take information, and that is it. But for me, this is not the time for content. I view education more as a process than content. Training our students to be critical thinkers and be able to ask questions is important. Once we teach them to be critical thinkers, they will be able to analyze and process information, and always take care of themselves.

Commenting on the system of higher education in Ghana, one of the student participants, Kwame, stated:

Our system of higher education is currently modeled after the colonial system, where people are trained to be clerics. Unfortunately, we have evolved to a time when clerical work is irrelevant. To be honest, the system is not helping us, because it is designed to make us masters of rote learning. The curriculum is lacking in critical thinking skills, and students learn theory without the hands-on practical experience. We graduate with no work experience to find employment to support ourselves and families.

In addition to lack of critical thinking skills, most of the study’s participants noted that students in Ghana’s higher education system face the problem of limited access in higher education participation. For example, a staff member, Araba, stated the following:

Many of our high school and college dropout do not have access to reenter the

system to participate in higher education. We've got to find a way to increase access, and training them with critical thinking skills will prepare them to participate in higher education opportunities.

One of the community business leaders, Ebow, noted that there are several educational consultants and private institutions of higher learning that provide remedial education and training for high school and college dropout to prepare them for reentry to participate in Ghana's higher education system. The adaptation of the U.S. community college model was perceived by all the study's participants as an optional delivery system of adult education to provide access for high school and college dropout to reenter the system of higher education in Ghana through remedial education and training.

**Inadequate academic facilities.** Most of the research participants perceived that the facilities in Ghana's higher education system were inadequate. One of the staff members, Kwesi, stated that "many underprivileged qualified students are turned away every year because of limited housing or residential accommodations."

Most of the research participants recalled that some students they knew were turned away because of limited family income and limited residential accommodations. One of the staff members, Araba, stated: "Most of our students from unprivileged families are denied residential accommodations because of limited family income. Many of them walk several distances from neighboring communities to attend classes."

All the student interviewees stated that the academic facilities were inadequate and argued for the construction of new facilities to accommodate the residential needs of students. One of the student participants, Fifi, stated the following: "I would like to stay

on campus with most of my friends. But I don't have money to pay to stay on campus. So, I commute every day, and rely on public transportation to attend classes. Sometimes, I miss lectures because I arrive late for classes.”

Describing the facilities at this 3-year college of continuing education, the college registrar stated the following:

Our facilities still remain inadequate, but for the years I have been working here, I can see gradual improvements in terms of facilities being put up. We have few classrooms for our students . . . so new facilities are being put up to increase the number of classrooms to facilitate better classroom interaction.

More specifically, the college registrar stated that although there was physical evidence of gradual or steady improvements in the number of academic facilities currently under construction on the campus of this 3-year college of continuing education in Ghana, which she reported are financed by the World Bank, the existing and planned facilities still remain inadequate.

One of the community business leaders, Ebow, described the residential facilities as “highly overstretched with six or more students assigned to a small room.” One of the student focus group members, Adjua, added: “The rooms in our residence halls are small. Most of us plan our extra-curricular activities outside the residence halls due to limited space.” Another focus group student participant, Kwame, stated: “Since I was elected Students' Representative Council President 2 years ago, we have been discussing this issue of student housing with administration, but so far, I have not seen any progress, in terms of new residential halls built on this campus for students.”



All the participants mentioned the construction of new residence halls and lecture halls is urgent. Without the ability to reside on campus, many students have long commuting distances which cuts into their time to spend on their studies.

**Inequitable distribution of education subsidies.** Most of the research participants perceived the problem of high tuition cost, and incidental fees charged to students in Ghana's higher education system as a major barrier for underprivileged student participation in postsecondary education. One of the faculty members, Ama, noted that because the cost of higher education in Ghana was high, "some parents supported their children by selling personal properties to finance their education." One of the community business leaders, Ebow, noted that the cost of Ghana's higher education system was extremely high and recommended funding from UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) to subsidize the cost of higher education in Ghana.

Information and perspectives regarding funding support and its availability seemed to be viewed differently from different perspectives. The college registrar noted that student loans and grants are available for financially needy students, and yet, according to student participants, not every student from a low income family receives funding to subsidize their education. All the focus group student participants felt that the current system of distributing education subsidies was class-based and excluded many underprivileged students from middle and low income families from participation in Ghana's higher education system.

Reacting to the current system of financing education in Ghana's higher education

system, one of the students, Fifi, stated:

The current system of financing higher education does not favor students from low income families. Because of corruption, many underprivileged students like me continue to defer due to limited family income to pay my tuition. This semester for instance, I was lucky to have the Students' Representative Council President come to my rescue, and co-sign a loan for me to continue my education. Without his help, I would have to defer again and put my education on hold.

Two of the student focus group members, Fifi and Kwame, noted: "education subsidies are currently awarded to affluent and privileged students because of corruption among officials in Ghana's higher education system." Most of the interviews and focus group participants argued that education subsidies must be awarded to qualified students from middle and low income families to encourage underprivileged student participation in Ghana's higher education system.

### **Findings Related to Research Question 2**

Findings related to research question 2 have been organized according to themes coded from transcripts of the interviews and focus group discussions. Research question 2 is stated as follows: What concerns do stakeholders have regarding higher education in Ghana that might be addressed by the U.S. community college model?

Some of the codes included: *career skills, employable skills, work experience, community business, decent wage, youth unemployment and labor market*. I condensed the codes into three themes to include:

- Campus-based career development programs

- Partnerships between academia and community business organizations
- Provision of employable skills and work experience

The themes are organized to reflect the overarching concern of limited post-graduation employment opportunities for students in Ghana's higher education system. I will summarize the findings below in relationship to each of the three themes.

**Campus-based career development programs.** All the interviews and focus group participants perceived that the current curriculum in Ghana's higher education system must be redesigned to include career development programs tailored to meet business and industry standards to train students for gainful employment opportunities. One of the staff members, Kwesi, noted the following:

The current curriculum has been in place for many years, and it is not designed to prepare our students for employment when they graduate from this institution.

The world is changing, and it is time to change the curriculum to include professional programs tailored to meet business and industry standards to train our students to develop our local market economy.

One of the faculty members, Ama, argued for the improvement of student workshop and training programs such as the expansion of the Master Class (M-class), a regularly scheduled youth forum designed to educate students on agriculture, food, and jobs training investments. Another staff member, Araba, noted that "redesigning the current curriculum to include career development and training programs could help train our students to develop career skills to become employable in a competitive labor market economy."

All the students in the focus group discussions stressed the need to include career development and training programs for writing resumes, job interview preparation, and communication, IT, data processing, and entrepreneurial skills to meet the requirements of today's business and industry. One of the focus group student participants, Adjua, stated the following: "We need workshops on campus to learn how to prepare good resumes and interview for good paying jobs. Without a good resume these days, it is very difficult to interview successfully for good paying jobs to take care of ourselves and family."

All the student participants felt that these career development and training programs are lacking in the current system to equip them to develop the technical and professional skills required by business and industry to participate in their local market economy to improve the quality of their lives. The college registrar agreed, stressing that "students in Ghana's higher education system must be trained to develop career skills to become employable in a competitive labor market economy." However, she noted that these career development and employability programs are not currently available to students in Ghana's higher education system.

Another staff member, Kwesi, reflecting on the lack of career development programs for students in Ghana's higher education system stated the following: "We have not built a culture for our students in our higher education institutions to develop career skills due to lack of technical training programs in our current system."

In discussing the urgency to redesign the current curriculum to train students in Ghana's higher education system to develop career skills for gainful employment, one of

the community business leaders, Efua, argued:

Our main focus should be to train students in Ghana's higher education system with skills that will make them employable for the job market. But sadly, most of the universities in this country offer courses that have little relations to the needs of a developing economy like Ghana, whereby students graduate with no career skills to enter the job market and make a decent wage to support themselves and their families.

All the research participants perceived that students in Ghana's higher education system should be trained to develop career skills to meet the demands of local business and industry. Given what they understood by the U.S. model, all the participants were able to see the potential in adapting the U.S. community college model as a supplemental delivery system of adult education to train students in Ghana's higher education system to develop career and entrepreneurial skills to meet the requirements of community business and industry.

**Partnerships between academia and community business organizations.**

Most of the research participants perceived that a good working relationship between academia and community business organizations was crucial to establish support for youth employment opportunities in Ghana's higher education system. The two faculty and staff members who had the most to say about this agreed that forging partnerships between academia and community business organizations could encourage programs such as job fairs, career workshops, and youth entrepreneurship forums to enable business leaders in the community to engage students in Ghana's higher education system

in ongoing discussions on how to start and succeed in business.

One of the faculty members, Ama, commenting on partnerships with community business organizations stated the following:

We need to reach out to our community business partners to tap their resources and expertise to benefit our students and academic community. If we do not build meaningful relationships with our community business leaders, we risk losing the opportunity for meaningful dialogue, and how can we expect them to provide jobs for our students? Mutual partnerships with community business leaders will provide the opportunity for them to train our students in job creation to develop our growing economy.

The college registrar stated that building partnerships between academia and community business organizations was essential for community business leaders to mentor students in Ghana's higher education system. She stressed the need for cooperation with community business organizations by stating:

It is necessary that we forge partnerships with community business organizations so that we can engage them to share their expertise with our students, and train them on how to create business to benefit our local market economy, and to improve the quality of life for our students and their families.

Commenting on establishing partnerships programs with academia, one of the community business leaders, Ebow, noted:

Community business and industry should be given a role to play. They should be allowed to participate in the development of the curriculum so that community

business leaders can share their vision on jobs training and wealth creation to prepare our students to contribute to our growing economy.

All the research participants felt that building partnerships between academia and community business organizations was essential for students to learn from community business leaders how to start business and create wealth to benefit society and to improve the quality of life for students and their families. All the interviews and focus group members perceived that building partnerships between academia and community business organizations could enable community business leaders to mentor students in wealth and job creation to sustain a higher quality of living.

**Provision of employable skills and work experience.** All the participants in the interviews and focus group discussions stated that many students in Ghana's higher education system do not qualify for employment after graduation due to lack of employable skills and work experience required to meet business and industry standards. Their perceptions of the importance of increased post-graduation employment opportunities was premised on the notion that the current system of higher education in Ghana does not provide practical education with entrepreneurial skills to train students to compete successfully for gainful employment in a competitive local market economy.

The college registrar stated the following: "It is most unfortunate that Ghanaian parents do not approve of their children to work while pursuing their education, for fear that they might fail their examinations." Two of the focus group student participants, Adua and Mansa, noted that community business organizations require 2-3 years of prior work experience to qualify student graduates to participate in the local market economy,

a requirement many student graduates lack in Ghana's higher education system.

Reacting to the problem of work experience and employable skills in Ghana's higher education system, one of the student participants, Kwame, stated:

We spend so much money on school fees and leave here with no work experience and any skills to get jobs. Many of us line up on the streets with degrees after graduation and find ourselves selling items nobody wants to buy. Jobs are hard to find these days and without any work experience, nobody will hire us to work and make a decent wage to support ourselves and our families.

Most of the focus group participants stated that majority of students who graduate from Ghana's higher education system continue to remain unemployed even after they complete their 2-year national service. The 2-year national service typically is done after students graduate from college. It is a mandatory program for all students who graduate from Ghana's public institutions of higher education.

Describing the problem of youth unemployment in Ghana's higher education system, all the student interviewees in the focus group discussions stated that the problem has deteriorated to a point where past graduates have now organized an association, called Association of Unemployed Graduates, to assist student graduates in search for employment opportunities. Most of the focus group members perceived that there was limited number of full-time employment opportunities in the business sector to absorb all qualified graduates. Two of the focus group student participants, Adua and Mansa, stated: "even if we find employment after graduation, the jobs offered are mostly part-time which does not pay enough to support ourselves and our families."



All the interviewees and focus group members noted that if provisions are made for students to acquire employable skills and work experience before graduation, student graduates would be prepared to search for employment opportunities to improve the quality of their lives. In addition, the college registrar stated: “If the U.S. community college contract education model were to be adapted, it could serve as a beneficial model to train our students to develop early work experience and employable skills to participate in our local market economy.”

All the interviewees and focus group participants referred to the comparison chart of the U.S. community college 2-year model with Ghana’s 3-year and 4-year education models which I gave to them during the interviews and focus group discussions. The comparison chart listed contract education, work study, and internship programs (see Appendix E).

Most of the interviewees and focus group participants thought that community business and industries in Ghana would be beneficiaries with the adaptation of the U.S. community college contract education, work-study and internship model, as it could save time and cost in retraining employees. One of the staff members, Kwesi, noted the following:

The U.S. community college’s contract education, work study, and internship model appeals to me as an effective program to train our students to acquire early work experience and career skills, which in turn, would be beneficial for our local business and industries, in terms of spending less time and money in hiring and retraining their employees to develop our local market economy.

## Summary

Most of the interviewees and focus group participants perceived that increased post-graduation employment opportunities were essential to enable student graduates acquire early work experience. One of the concerns participants raised during the interviews and focus group discussions was in regards to funding an adapted U.S. community college model in Ghana. Participants argued that it will require substantial financial investments from the central government as subsidies to provide lower cost education for students in Ghana's higher education system, an investment participants said the central government was unable to make toward higher education.

In addressing this issue, participants concluded that if the central government is unable to make the investments, community business organizations could provide funding to subsidize community college education in Ghana. All the study's participants noted that the current curriculum must be redesigned to include career and employable skills to train students in Ghana's higher education system to access gainful employment to improve the quality of life.

Three thematic findings were identified related to research question 1: What support do students need to participate successfully in Ghana's higher education system? The themes included (a) lack of preparation in critical thinking, (b) inadequate academic facilities, and (c) inequitable distribution of education subsidies. The themes reflect the challenges currently facing Ghana's higher education system to train their students to acquire the skills for employment and wealth creation to build a vibrant local market economy. This requires a system of education that provides lower cost-pathways to

ensure low and middle income family participation in higher education opportunities.

In addition, three thematic findings were identified for research question 2 which is stated as: What concerns do stakeholders have regarding higher education in Ghana that might be addressed by the U.S. community college model? The thematic findings included (a) campus-based career development programs, (b) partnerships between academia and community business organizations, and (c) provision of employable skills and work experience. Each theme reflects the need to redesign the current curriculum to meet business and industry standards to enable students in Ghana's higher education system to receive practical education and training to access gainful employment to improve the quality of their lives.

I have presented the results of the study in the form of themes generated from interviews and focus group responses gathered during data collection. The themes reflect perceptions of interviews and focus group members regarding the significance of training students in Ghana's higher education system to develop employable skills to meet business and industry standards, and to enable student graduate participation in their local labor market. These findings inform Chapter 5's interpretation of the findings, recommendations, and conclusions.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This basic qualitative study was conducted to explore and understand the perspectives of stakeholders on the adaptation of the U.S. community college 2-year model as a supplemental delivery system for students in Ghana's higher education system. The key findings pertain to participants' call for supports in three areas: more preparation in critical thinking, better academic facilities, and fairer distribution of education subsidies.

In addition, participants' concerns regarding higher education in Ghana that might be addressed by the U.S. community college model focused on three themes: the need for campus-based career development programs, the need for partnerships between academia and community business organizations, and the need for provision of employable skills and work experience. Findings based on participants' responses suggest that stakeholders did not fully understand the possible adaptation of the U.S. community college 2-year model and were generally not able to provide their perceptions regarding the basic aspects of the model as detailed in the chart I provided (see Appendix E).

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

I organized my interpretation of the findings for this study according to the two research questions: what support do students need to participate successfully in Ghana's higher education system, and what concerns do stakeholders have regarding higher education in Ghana that might be addressed by the U.S. community college model? In interpreting the findings I considered the conceptual framework, as well as the relevant literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The findings aligned with the conceptual framework of

the human capital, in which Becker (1976) claimed that investments in education and training systems produce an educated skilled workforce.

In the theory of human capital, Becker (1976) suggested that individuals and communities invest in practical education and training systems in order to produce an educated workforce with skills to ensure increased productivity and economic growth to benefit the people and their communities. Becker further suggested that unless substantial amount of investments in workforce education and training is made, no community can achieve long-term sustainable economic growth to benefit its citizens.

### **Interpretation of Themes Related to Research Question 1**

For Research Question 1, I wanted to know what support students needed to participate successfully in Ghana's higher education system. I derived the following three themes from responses generated by research participants: (a) lack of preparation in critical thinking, (b) inadequate academic facilities, and (c) inequitable distribution of education subsidies. These themes were perceived by all the interviewees as critical investments in education and training needed to encourage underprivileged student participation in Ghana's higher education system. In the following sections, I will interpret each theme in light of the conceptual framework and the empirical literature.

**Lack of preparation in critical thinking.** All the participants perceived that better efforts to promote critical thinking and logical reasoning skills in the current curriculum would constitute a significant investment in education and training that would better prepare students in Ghana's higher education system to become independent thinkers, and to take personal responsibility to succeed in the local labor market. When

students in Ghana's higher education system are trained simply by rote, the findings suggest that students fail to develop the mental discipline to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and conceptualize information and apply it effectively to solve problems in the workplace. Likewise, Wienclaw (2017) argued that one of the essential skills for success in a 21st century workplace is critical thinking.

Martin, McNally, and Kay (2013) found that training students to develop critical thinking and logical reasoning skills could produce an efficient workforce with greater levels of knowledge and skills to build a vibrant market economy. When students are trained with high-level analytical reasoning and critical thinking skills to process information, they rely on their professional education and training to enhance their social and occupational skills (Boahim & Hofman, 2012). Providing training in critical thinking and logical reasoning skills for students in Ghana's higher education system may prepare them to enter the job market as educated skilled workers to increase productivity to benefit them and their communities.

Moreover, providing students in Ghana's higher education system with analytical reasoning and critical thinking skills may prepare them to set achievable goals to ensure academic progress, and ultimately, improve their chances to succeed in achieving their professional goals and objectives. Stuart, Rios-Aguillar and Deli-Amen (2014), found that community college students are more likely to persist toward degree completion, experience cognitive gains, and graduate when they associate their studies with the possibility of economic and employment opportunities that will improve their standard of living.

D'Amico, Rios-Aguilar, Sala and Gonzalez-Conche (2012) employed the term *career capital*, the combination of knowledge and competencies as critical investments in education and training systems to increase student engagement and persistence toward degree completion to qualify them as educated skilled workers. Training students in Ghana's higher education system to develop critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills may produce an educated workforce with skills to benefit employers, if the investments result in labor productivity and high economic growth (Yeboah, Kumi, & Gyamfi, 2012).

**Inadequate academic facilities.** The construction of new academic facilities including lecture halls and residence halls was discussed by most of the interviewees and focus group members. They identified the need for urgent education investments in instructional and residential accommodation to better train students in Ghana's higher education system to be skilled workers for the local labor market. Becker's (1976) theory of human capital suggests that significant investments in education are required to train an educated workforce to participate in their local economy. Investment in residence halls can encourage peer collaboration, increase opportunities for campus engagement, and increase access to university libraries and resources, positively increasing time available for studying.

Abel and Deitz (2011) found that investments in human capital facilitated an increase in both supply and demand by producing an educated skilled workforce, and engaging in research and development to improve the local economy and standard of living. In addition, investments in human capital contributed to the economic success of

a region by “deepening the skills, knowledge, and human capital of its residents” (p.1).

Furthermore, investments in human capital produced educated and skilled workers to function as economic engines in their communities. As educated and skilled workers, they help to stimulate economic growth and stability, and they tend to be more productive and earn higher wages to sustain a higher quality of living (Abel & Deitz, 2011). All the study’s participants discussed the constructing of new academic facilities including lecture halls and residence halls as critical investments in human capital to train students in Ghana’s higher education system to develop the skills required to build a vibrant local economy and improve the quality of their lives.

**Inequitable distribution of education subsidies.** Becker’s (1976) theory of human capital suggests that significant financial investments in practical education and training are required to enhance the knowledge and skills of an educated workforce. According to Arthur-Mensah and Alagaraja (2013), Ghana’s higher education system must be viewed as a crucial workforce education and training system for the development of human capital.

The equitable distribution of education subsidies benefits students and the academic community in terms of sustainability and social responsibility. Inequitable distribution of education subsidies may itself be detrimental to sustainable economic growth and social development. It could reduce economic development by slowing down poverty eradication, and inhibition of entrepreneurship (Slaus & Jacobs, 2011).

Becker’s (1976) human capital theory suggests that substantial financial investment is required to support workforce education and training to achieve long term



sustainable economic growth to benefit individuals and their communities. Equitable distribution of education subsidies to students in Ghana's higher education system was perceived by all the interviewees and focus group participants as a critical financial investment in education and training that reflect society's responsibility toward its citizens to improve the standard of living.

However, most of the students in the focus group discussions felt that the current system of distributing education subsidies was class-based and excluded underprivileged students from middle-and low-income families from participation in Ghana's higher education system. Therefore, all the study's participants argued for a more equitable distribution of education subsidies to limit the number of student deferments, and to provide underprivileged students the opportunity to complete their education on time to save cost.

### **Interpretation of Themes Related to Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 related to the concerns stakeholders have regarding higher education in Ghana that might be addressed by the U.S. community college model. The following three themes reflect responses of participants: (a) campus-based career development programs, (b) partnerships between academia and community business organizations, and (c) provision of employable skills and work experience. These themes were perceived by participants as essential to train students in Ghana's higher education system to participate in their local economy as educated and skilled workers so they can have a higher quality of life for themselves and their families. My review of the literature suggests that these needs could be met by adaptation of the U.S. community college

model.

**Campus-based career development programs.** Becker's (1976) human capital theory proposes that employees should be allowed to make rational decisions and choices regarding investments in human capital. This proposition suggests that stakeholders in Ghana's higher education system should be allowed to make rational choices regarding the investment of time, effort, and money in education, training, and experience.

Moreover, Becker's (1976) human capital theory suggests that potential employees should be allowed to weigh their options, including the advantages and disadvantages regarding the cost and potential rewards of such investments. One such investment is education. When students in Ghana's higher education system invest in education and training systems, their investments should prepare them to enter the job market as educated skilled workers with greater levels of knowledge and expertise to access gainful employment to improve the quality of their lives. Based on Becker's human capital theory, educated skilled workers have more options because they have increased their human capital investment.

Redesigning the curriculum in Ghana's higher education system to include career development programs as investment in human capital could provide students with more options to receive practical education and training to enter the job market as educated skilled workers to compete for good salaries, compensations, and promotions in the workplace. The extent of human capital acquisition in the workplace includes tacit knowledge, exchange of ideas with colleagues in the workplace, continued education, and staff training to enhance social responsibility and productivity in the workplace (Leopold,

Zahidi, Guzzo, Leonardi, & Milligan, 2015).

Moreover, redesigning the curriculum in Ghana's higher education system to include career development programs could lead to greater demand for educated skilled workers to compete for high skilled employment opportunities to sustain a high quality of living (Pelinescu, 2015). Today's employers are more likely to hire employees with greater levels of education and training as investments in human capital to increase labor market productivity and enhance labor market outcomes (Weiss, Klein, & Grauenhorst, 2014).

#### **Partnerships between academia and community business organizations.**

Schultz (1961) argued that higher educational institutions should play a vital role in developing human capital. Investment in human capital includes building partnerships between academia and community business organizations to "improve the quality of academic work, enhance the reputation of higher education institutions, and to enrich the on-campus university experience" (Ashton & Wagman, 2015, p. 713).

Higher education institutions in developing countries such as Ghana must recognize that tremendous gains are made when they collaborate with community business organizations to train a competent workforce to build a vibrant local market economy. Mutually beneficial partnerships between academia and community business organizations could "improve profitability, increase productivity, and enhance educational experience and human capital" (Ashton & Wagman, 2015, p. 714).

Building partnerships between academia and community business organization could improve performance significantly in the short term by enhancing the quality of

human capital. It could enable community business organizations to mentor Ghanaian students in wealth and job creation to improve the quality of living in the academic labor market.

In addition, building partnerships between academia and the business sector may encourage exchange and sharing of information to train students in Ghana's higher education system to succeed in a competitive global market economy as educated skilled workers. All the study's participants perceived that building partnerships between academia and community business organizations could provide training for students to develop entrepreneurial and career skills to meet the demands of local business and industry standards.

**Provision of employable skills and work experience.** The training of students to develop work experience and employable skills is lacking in Ghana's higher education system. Most of the interview and focus group participants stated that Ghana's higher education institutions have failed to build a culture for students to develop work experience and career skills due to lack of technical and professional training programs in the current system. Furthermore, all the student participants noted that their parents do not allow them to work while pursuing their education and training for fear that they might fail their examinations and then dropped from completing their education.

However, Weiss, Klein, and Grauenhorst (2014) posited that early work experience pays off for student graduates upon entering the labor market. It enhances productivity and produces positive effects on the labor market outcomes. Early work experience introduces student applicants early into the cultural environment at the

workplace and enables them to network or establish social relationships with employers in the labor market.

Moreover, early work experience provides resources that are relevant for job search in the academic labor market (Weiss, Klein, & Grauenhorst, 2014). The human capital concept suggests that a student applicant's work experience could be directly linked to the career skills and knowledge acquired during academic training and preparation.

From a broad perspective of the human capital concept, any work experience and career skills acquired by students while pursuing their education and training conveys skills or knowledge and should be rewarded in the labor market. Robert and Saar (2012), argued that any work experience and employable skills acquired during a student's academic training are important for subsequent labor market returns. All the study's participants perceived the adaptation of the U.S. community college 2-year model of adult education as a form of investment in human capital to reduce the cost of higher education in Ghana, and to train students to develop the skills required by business and industry to build a vibrant local market economy.

There is no 2-year community college education system in Ghana. The adaptation of the U.S community college education in Ghana could introduce a new system of adult education that provides low cost education and training to encourage underprivileged student participation in higher education opportunities. The adaptation of the U.S. community college education in Ghana could help to train a skilled labor force with practical education tailored to meet industry and business standards to ensure

gainful employment to break the cycle of poverty, and to address the problem of income disparity.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Most of the research participants were critical of public officials for the inequities in the current system of higher education in Ghana. They felt that corruption among public officials has contributed to the inequities in the distribution of education subsidies in Ghana's higher education system. I tried to get participants to address these issues with the comparison chart of the U.S. community college 2-year model and Ghana's 3-year and 4-year education models which I gave to them during the interviews and focus group discussions, but found they had difficulty explaining their experiences in the light of this model (see Appendix E).

Research on the adaptation of the U.S. community college education as a supplemental delivery system of adult education for students in Ghana's higher education system should be ongoing since several gaps exist in the literature for further research investigation. One step to close the gap in the literature that I would recommend for future research would be asking Ghanaian higher education administrators trained in the United States to address the applicability of the U.S. community college 2-year model for students in Ghana's higher education system.

I would recommend for future research a focus on student access and funding of the 10 polytechnic institutions or technical universities which were upgraded from secondary to tertiary by an Act of Parliament (Act 775) in 1993. The adaptation of the U.S. community college 2-year model of adult education was discussed by all the study's

participants as crucial investment in human capital to provide practical education with skills for students in Ghana's higher education system to participate in their local market economy as educated skilled workers to increase productivity and to sustain a high quality of living.

Therefore, I propose the following three questions for future research:

- What resources might be needed to adequately fund the technical universities in Ghana?
- What skills or training programs may be recommended to train students in the technical universities to build a vibrant local market economy?
- How may industry and business organizations collaborate with the technical universities to address the problems of joblessness and youth unemployment in Ghana?

In addition, it is my fervent hope that future researchers of Ghana's higher education system approach their studies with flexibility to understand participants' concerns in seeking social justice to address the inequities in their system of higher education and not overly focus on practical implementation concerns.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Issues of quality and trustworthiness are critical considerations to determine the credibility of a study's findings as acceptable or plausible. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that threats of trustworthiness may result from poor sampling, inappropriate data collection, and a researcher's bias. These issues could alter the outcome of a research investigation.

During the course of this research study, I did not observe any of these threats to trustworthiness that may have altered the outcome of the study's findings. This study focused on one university district in Ghana providing a 3-year program of study which may not apply to other 4-year universities and 3-year polytechnics or technical universities. The sample was small and the participants weren't able to understand the U.S. community college model sufficiently to provide a realistic assessment of its applicability.

Participants' inability to provide a realistic assessment to help me answer the interview and focus group questions due to their unfamiliarity of the U.S. community college model suggests that a different study design might be necessary for future exploration to address the same research questions. Finally, every precaution should be taken when applying the findings of this study to other academic institutions in the Sub-Saharan African continent to train their students to acquire the practical knowledge and skills in jobs and wealth creation to develop their local market economies.

### **Implications for Positive Social Change**

Ghana's higher education system is facing serious challenges regarding the training of students in practical and entrepreneurship education with skills to access gainful employment to sustain a high quality of living in a 21st century competitive global market economy. Some of the challenges include training students in campus-based career development programs to acquire the skills and work experience required by community business organizations and industry. Other challenges include equitable distribution of education subsidies to encourage underprivileged students' participation in



higher education opportunities to qualify them as educated skilled workers for a competitive labor market in Ghana.

While the central government provides a small percentage of reduced tuition cost in return for national service upon graduation, evidence of inequities still exists in the current system. According to student interviewees, education subsidies are awarded to affluent and privileged students because of corruption among public officials in Ghana's higher education system. As a result, if their perceptions are true, many underprivileged students from middle and low income families are denied access, or continue to defer, delaying the time for the completion of their academic training.

Findings for this study have implications for positive social change for raising social consciousness to enable students in Ghana's higher education system to seek social justice to challenge the inequities in the current system (Beach, 2009). Findings could be a crucial consideration for academic officials to provide lower tuition cost to assist underprivileged students' participation in higher education opportunities in Ghana. The study's findings could help students acquire entrepreneurship education and training to create wealth and new employment opportunities to address the problems of youth unemployment and poverty in Ghana.

With today's high speed internet and availability of communication, adapting the U.S. community college model in Ghana to train students as knowledge workers could contribute to labor productivity for community business organizations and higher economic growth to improve Ghana's (GDP) gross domestic product. Adapting the U.S. community college education to train students in Ghana's higher education system could

help improve the quality of life for many students from middle and low income families.

### **Recommendations for Action**

Higher education practitioners in Ghana are responsible for designing academic programs and courses to ensure economic growth in order to prepare their students to compete successfully for gainful employment to sustain a high quality of living. In addition, the curriculum in Ghana's higher education system must be redesigned to include career development programs such as writing resumes, job interviews, communication, IT, data processing, and entrepreneurial skills to meet business and industry standards.

These are critical investments in human capital needed to train students to develop early work experience and technical skills required by business and industry to ensure participation in their local market economy to increase productivity and to improve the quality of life. Therefore, I propose the following recommendations for policy makers, community business organizations, and college administrators in Ghana's higher education institutions. These recommendations are derived from the findings of this study and based on responses from participants in the interviews and focus group discussions.

#### **Policy Makers**

- Adapt a policy similar in structure to the U.S. community college 2-year model of adult education to increase access, and lower tuition cost for students in Ghana's higher education system.
- Design a career program similar to the U.S. community college's internship

program tailored to meet industry and business standards to train an educated workforce with skills to build a vibrant local market economy.

### **Community Business Organizations**

- Forge partnerships with academia to support youth employment opportunities for students in Ghana's higher education system.
- Organize workshops and career development programs to mentor students in entrepreneurship education, employment, and wealth creation.
- Hire students to participate in internship and work study programs to develop the skills and early work experience to increase post-graduation employment opportunities for students.

### **College Administrators**

- Collaborate with community business organizations and adapt the U.S. community college's internship and work study model to train students to access gainful employment.
- Conduct regularly scheduled youth forums to educate students in employment, information technology, and agriculture investments.
- Construct new academic facilities to accommodate the residential needs of students.
- Redesign curriculum to include critical thinking and logical reasoning skills to educate students to become independent thinkers, and to succeed as responsible young adults in a competitive global market economy.
- Adapt a policy to ensure equitable distribution of education subsidies to

encourage low and middle income students' participation in higher education opportunities.

### **Scholarly Practitioner Plans**

Following the completion of this dissertation, I plan to initiate a yearly residency program at this 3-year college of education in Ghana to mentor graduate students who are struggling to complete their education. I am currently communicating with the director of research and development at this 3-year college of education to design a mentorship program for students at this college of education. According to the director of research and development, many graduate students at this college are unable to graduate because of their inability to successfully complete their thesis and dissertation. I am hopeful that this yearly residency program would attract graduate students from other public and private colleges and universities in Ghana.

In addition, I plan to implement the 2-year community college adult education model in Ghana since the 2-year community college program has not been utilized in Ghana. I intend to start small as a private community college with resources from Ghanaian business partners, and expand later to involve public education practitioners and officials in Ghana's public higher education institutions.

### **Conclusion**

Ghana's higher education system lacks creativity in how to teach critical thinking and logical reasoning skills to train students to take initiatives and personal responsibilities to ensure academic progress, and to succeed ultimately in achieving their professional goals and objectives. The current curriculum could be redesigned to include

campus-based career development programs tailored to meet industry and business standards. Without these career development programs, many students graduate from Ghana's public higher education institutions without the skills and work experience to access gainful employment. Participants' responses to the interviews and focus group discussions show that students in Ghana's higher education system are taught by rote learning, and this style of learning in higher education is not serving the needs of students in preparing them as educated skilled workers to participate in their local market economy to improve the quality of life.

In today's competitive workplace environment, any work experience requires critical thinking skills and knowledge acquired through practical education and training to improve job productivity (Weiss, Klein, & Grauenhorst, 2014). Students in Ghana's higher education system must receive practical education and training to develop the skills and work experience required by industry and business to increase labor productivity and to improve the quality of their lives.

The adaptation of the U.S. community college 2-year model could help train students in Ghana's higher education system to receive practical education and training required by industry and business to build a vibrant market economy in their country to sustain a high quality of living for students and their families. It could help train students in Ghana's higher education system in entrepreneurship education to create wealth and jobs to address the problems of youth unemployment and poverty in Ghana.

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### **Appendix A: Interview Protocol**

Title of Research Study: “Approaches to Ghana’s Higher Education Challenges Drawn from the U.S. Community College Model.”

Data collection sheet for each participant without their names:

Major Themes for Interviews

Students, faculty and staff participation in Ghana’s higher education system

Community business leadership involvement in Ghana’s higher education

Skills training and employment opportunities

#### Introductory Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to share your experiences with me in this study. You have been invited as a participant because I feel that you have useful information to contribute to my study. In order to facilitate our note-taking, I would like your permission to audio tape our conversations today. Information recorded will only be available to myself and my dissertation committee and contents will be kept confidential. The tape will be destroyed after transcription and text will be treated with confidentiality.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time if you feel uncomfortable. You may choose not to answer any question you are uncomfortable with and there is no risk or harm associated with participating in this study.

This interview may last for about 1 hour. I may ask you to meet with me a second time for 30 minutes to verify your responses if necessary to ensure that they are represented accurately. The process could include interrupting you at some point for

clarification and elaboration during our conversation. The purpose of this interview is not to test your knowledge or competency but to understand your perspectives on the adaptation of the U.S. community college education model for students in Ghana's higher education system. For the record please state your name, organization affiliation, title and education.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Do you have any questions?

Shall we begin?

**Appendix B: Interview Questions**

- Prompt: Can you describe the current system of higher education in Ghana? What in your experience is lacking (if any) in the current system of higher education? (Probe for adequate access, adequate facilities, affordable tuition, and training programs)
- Probe: Are there any efforts made to address these problems you identified in the current system of higher education in Ghana? Can you share them with me?
- Prompt: How would you describe the impact of the cost of higher education in Ghana?
- Probe: Are there specific programs you would recommend to address this problem? Can you describe what you have in mind?
- Prompt: Could you tell me what you think about the facilities in Ghana's higher education system?
- Probe: Do you find them to be adequate for the needs of the system?
- Prompt: What training programs would you recommend to prepare students for gainful employment?
- Prompt: Could you share your thoughts about student access to higher education in Ghana?
- Prompt: Are there any plans you know to improve student access to quality education in Ghana?

- Prompt: Considering the comparison chart (Appendix G), what are your impressions of how the elements of the U.S. community college model would work in Ghana?
- Probe: Let us refer to the comparison chart (see Appendix G) and discuss specific elements.
- Prompt: What differences do you see between the U.S. community college education and Ghana's 3 and 4-year higher education system?
- Probe: Which differences might be most promising to pursue?
- Prompt: Assuming there is potential for the adaptation of the U.S. community college education model in Ghana, would you recommend this as a higher education pathway for students in your community to pursue?
- Probe: Can you tell me why you would recommend it to students in your community?
- Prompt: Can you reflect on what might be some of the benefits of adapting the U.S. community college model to be offered in your community?
- Probe: Who within your community might benefit the most from the adaptation of the U.S. community college model?
- Prompt: In what ways might the implementation of an adapted U.S. community college education serve to improve the market economy and living conditions in your community?

### **Appendix C: Protocol for Focus Group Discussion**

Thank you for agreeing to share your experiences and reflections with me in this study. You are invited to take part in this study because I feel that you have useful information to contribute to this study. As indicated in the consent form that you will sign, the discussion may last for about 1 hour and will be audio-recorded and transcribed with your permission. Meet with me for about 30 minutes to review your comments to confirm that they were correctly interpreted. I wish to also remind you that you are at liberty to withdraw from the study at any point if you so desire.

Let us begin with self-introduction (Name, organization affiliation and education) I will take 5 minutes to explain the U.S. community college 2-year model and provide a comparison chart showing the U.S. community college 2-year model with Ghana's 3-year distance education and 4-year university models of higher education (See Appendix G).

#### **Review sample questions for participants**

1. Ask for participants' perception of the current system of higher education in Ghana
2. Ask for participants' perception of the U.S. community college model's adaptation as an alternative delivery system of adult education for young adult students in Ghana.
3. Ask for participants' perception of youth unemployment in their community.
4. Ask for participants' perception of the potential benefits of the U.S. community college model's adaptation for students in Ghana's higher education system.



**Appendix D: Questions-Focus Group Discussions**

- Prompt: Can you describe the key components of the current system of higher education in Ghana?
- Probe: What have you observed as lacking in the current system of higher education in Ghana? (Probe for adequate facilities, affordable tuition, training and alternative certification opportunities if they do not mention it)
- Prompt: In your opinion what aspects of Ghana's higher education system (if any) need improvement to address the problem of youth unemployment in our country?
- Probe: Do you find them to be adequate to address the needs of the system?
- Prompt: What roles do you believe local and community business leaders could play in the academic preparation and training of students in your community?
- Probe: Can you describe any examples you have witnessed or ideas you may have for how this might work?
- Prompt: In your opinion what factors have contributed to the problem of youth unemployment in your community?
- Probe: Which of these are most important and why? Can you provide additional detail?

- Prompt: Are there programs you would recommend for your local and community business leaders to establish support for youth employment opportunities in your community?
- Probe: Can you describe how these programs might work? (Probe for internship and work-study programs if they do not mention them)
- Prompt: What specific skills or training programs you would recommend to address the problem of youth unemployment in your community?
- Probe: Please describe these in greater detail? (Probe for contract education with definition if they do not mention it)
- Prompt: Considering the comparison chart (Appendix G), what are your impressions of how the elements of the U.S. community college model might work in Ghana?
- Probe Let us refer to the comparison chart (See Appendix G) and discuss specific elements.
- Prompt: What differences do you see between the U.S. community college education and Ghana's 3-year and 4-year higher education system?
- Probe: Which difference might be most promising to pursue?
- Prompt: Can you reflect on what might be some of the benefits of adapting the U.S. community college education model for students in Ghana?
- Probe: Who within your community might benefit the most from the adaptation of the U.S. community college model?

Prompt: In what ways might the implementation of an adapted U.S. community college education serve to improve the market economy in your community?

**Appendix E:**

**Comparison Chart of the U.S. Community College 2-year Model as an Optional Delivery System with Ghana's 3-year Continuing Education and 4-year University Education Models**

(Used in Interviews and Focus Group Discussions)

<b>U.S. Community College 2-Year Model</b>	<b>Ghana's 3-Year Continuing Education Model</b>	<b>Ghana's 4-Year University Education Model</b>
2-years/option for additional 2 years (total 4 years)	3-years/option for additional 2-years (total 5 years)	4-year education (often 6 years to complete)
Associate of Arts/Science Degree	College Diploma (Higher National Diploma)	Bachelor's degree
Cost effective (Less tuition cost due to fewer years of study)	Costly (requires more years of study)	Very costly (requires more years of study)
Focus on technical education/training and skills for jobs and income generation.	Focus on disciplinary education	Focus on disciplinary education
Partnership with business and industry facilitate employment	Can take 2 years after national service to find employment	Can take 2 years after national service to find employment
Opportunities include: Contract education Work study programs Internships programs	None	None