Exploring the Usefulness of Open Systems Theory in Adult Education Organisations: The SCDE in Perspective

Dr. Isaac Kofi Biney
Lecturer, School of Continuing and Distance Education (SCDE), College of Education,
University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana
Coordinator, University of Ghana Learning Centres – Accra Centre & Tema Office, Ghana

Abstract:
This paper examines the usefulness of open systems theory in Adult Education (AE) organisations. Attention is placed on SCDE. AE organisations, by virtue of the provision of education to the critical mass of people, make them useful to the development of countries. Their usefulness, however, is felt when they render their services effectively to the people. This paper which is a library research has noted that inadequate funding, lack of effective communication and lack of partnership with the wider society has led to failings of some AE organisations. Devising better means of securing adequate funds for programming and management is the way to go. The SCDE should regularly engage in effective communication and partner with the various publics in implementing her programmes. This will ensure the maximization of success in her programmes. Needs assessment should also be made central in SCDE programmes. It concludes that the SCDE should exhibit a high degree of creativity in resource mobilisation toward programming. This is one surest way of ensuring that the SCDE implement overarching educational programmes that seeks to build quality human capital for Ghana's development.

Keywords: Open systems, adult education, communication, partnership, human capital

1. Introduction

Bertalanffy (cited in Tamas, 2000) defined a system as "a set of elements standing in interaction" (p. 1), in other words, a system is a group of things which have something in common. This includes any grouping with any sort of relationship. An example is a collection of people. An open system, on the other hand, is a system that has a boundary which is open to some extent, which makes it possible for energy in various forms, such as information, to pass into and out of its system. One of the factors that determine the 'openness' of the system boundary between organisations and the outer world is the ease of communication. The continuous interaction and consultation of the organisations with the wider society would probably demonstrate the degree of usefulness or otherwise of the products or services offered to the society.

When adult education (AE) organisations exhibit cooperativeness, and also work in partnership with the society, the same 'openness' would apply. It appears, however, that many of the organisations engaged in AE programmes have challenges in this direction. The questions to be answered then are: Are AE organisations exhibiting 'openness' to the Ghanaian society? If the answer is 'No', then the next probable question to ask is: Is their inability to exhibit 'openness' due to lack of funding, staff in competencies or what? These, and other underlying challenges confronting AE organisations, can successfully be addressed if they learn to understand properly their mission, purpose and goal.

Oduro-Mensah (2009) observes that AE organisations as social entities, primarily established to render crucial services to the society, necessarily need to have missions, purposes and goals to remain focused and effective in their work. In that direction, he asserts that adult educator has among his/her responsibilities the need, and desire of helping adults to learn. For this reason, adult educator's mission is to help individuals learn what is required for gratification of their needs at whatever level they are struggling. If adult learners are hungry, adult educators are to help them learn what will get them food; if they are well-fed, safe, loved and esteemed, they help them explore undeveloped capacities and become their full selves. He adds that the purpose of adult education in Ghana, like elsewhere, is to prepare individuals to be responsible citizens socially, economically and politically. He further adds that the AE becomes functional, in its true sense, only when it addresses the concerns of the poor, underprivileged, deprived and other minority groups of the society because the goal of AE is *development*. Deducing from the mission, purpose and goal of AE organisations, it can be ascertained that they are open systems organisations. Thus, the effective and efficient manner in which they execute their services, will sufficiently inform the extent to which they will attract many clienteles, or participants, into their educational programmes.

Perhaps it is on that basis that Katz and Kahn (1978) assert that open systems theory emphasises two aspects of social behaviour patterns. First, it has to do with the systems character, thus, movement in one part leads in predictable fashion to movement in other parts. Second, open system is open to environmental inputs, so that they are continually in a state of flux. Here are few examples of organisations that engage in AE programmes in Ghana: School of Continuing and Distance Education (SCDE), Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), Management Development and Productivity Institute (MDPI), Non-Formal Education Division (NFED) of Ministry of Education, Electoral Commission (EC), National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), The Universities, Non–Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Education for Profit Institutions.

Cartwright (cited in March, 1965) defines organisation as an arrangement of interdependent parts, each having a special function with respect to the whole. Organisation is also defined as "a group of people working together to achieve a common purpose" (Hess and Siciliano, 1996: 6). Perhaps a cumbersome and unwieldy, but equally important definition of organisation, was provided by Hall and Tolbert (2005). They assert that an organisation is:

- "a collectivity with a relatively identifiable boundary, a normative order (rules), ranks of authority (hierarchy), communications systems, and membership coordinating systems (procedures); this collectively exists on a relatively continuous basis, in environments, and engages in activities that are usually related to a set of goals; the activities have outcomes for organisational members, for the organisation itself, and for society" (p. 4-5).

Even casual observation of the behaviour of members of an organisation, such as an industrial firm, a hospital, or a university, reveals its organised character (Cartwright, cited in March, 1965). The members assemble on schedule, each person engages in a limited number of activities, the range of interpersonal transactions is restricted and stable over time, and the style of social interactions is patterned. Behaviour has a reasonably high degree of predictability and people know rather well what to expect of one another. Moreover, the activities of different individuals tend to combine in such a way to result in organisational accomplishments (Cartwright, cited in March, 1965).

The industrial firm turns out products and makes profits. The hospital provides medical care and the university creates alumni. In organisation, there is a display of dependability, regularity and coordination due essentially to the heterogeneity of the organisation's human elements that may vary greatly in ability, training, knowledge, cultural background and needs (Cartwright, cited in March, 1965). All these features can be found in organisations that offer AE programs. It involves managing to ensure performance and good results. As noted by Nafukho, et al. (2011), sound leadership and management, is a prerequisite to the successful operation of adult education organisations. As organisations, they are composed of a set of independent parts and have needs for survival, and as systems behave, actions are taken (Silverman, 1970).

It is against this background, that this paper highlights the influence of open systems theory on adult education programmes implementation. The paper postulates that the operations of AE organisations, including the SCDE, are very important in developing countries following crucial roles they play in the development of human capital in the countries. The SCDE programmes implementations were also critically examined and strategies to address challenges were outlined.

2. Open Systems and the Implementation of AE Programmes

As observed by Katz and Kahn (cited in Tabbs, 2001), the open system theory emphasises the close relationships between a structure and its supporting environment. It begins with the concept of entropy. The assumption is that without continued inputs any system soon runs down. Thus, the tendency towards entropy in social systems needs to be constantly countered through exchange of energy. The fact is that, in all social structures, the most important maintenance source is human effort and motivation. It means therefore that sufficient energy or influence in the form of continuous staff training, education and material incentives are to be provided, to engender meaningful implementation of AE organisations programmes.

Much progress in this direction, however, will be made when the throughput concept, which is the processing of production inputs into outputs, is sufficiently activated. In every AE organisation, a cycle of input – throughout – output patterns is observed. For example, students enter universities and go through teaching and training in various courses. They finally come out as graduates and postgraduate's qualifications and degrees. They are equipped with knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and understanding. What is important to be taken into consideration by all open system organisations is what happens in the environment. Are the services of the new graduates going to be bought? If the answer is 'no' then the next probable question to ask is: why? These and many other questions have to be posed and answered as far as the functioning of AE organisations are concerned.

To be successful in this regard, the environment for AE organisations to function must be conducive, peaceful and stable. Such an environment will sufficiently pave way for smooth operations of AE organisations. The opposite, that is, turbulent and disruptive environment, is too bad for the operations of open systems or AE organisations. This is because they are interrelated and interdependent, and a disturbance in one sub-system has rippling effects, on the other. A case in point is the teeming unemployed university graduates found on our streets in Ghana presently, and the global economy in general. The captains of business, and today's job market watchers, claim that they are unemployable because they lack certain basic work-related skills. This may seem real, but if that is the case, then it is a major challenge to be noted by AE organisations, including the universities which train these graduates. This challenge calls on the universities in developing countries in particular, to engage constantly, and also deepen interaction and consultation with the wider society. This approach is one of the surest ways to identify the needs in the market place to inform reviews of academic programmes to meet the identified needs and expectations of the society.

The concept of entropy and the second law of thermo-dynamics also states that every system moves into disequilibrium. In the case of AE organisations, because they can import energy from the environment as the Universities in Ghana and everywhere do, they do not

run down. It means that the operation of entropy is counteracted by the operation of energy (students). In this case, AE organisations have negative rather than positive entropy. Thus, the 'negative entropy' ensures maintenance or increases the order or harmony within the universities. Is this truly the case in the Universities of Ghana? It does not always work out like that. There are a number of programmes mounted in the Distance Education (DE) programme coordinated by SCDE, University of Ghana, which does not attract large number of applicants to engender their successful implementation. Some of such programmes are eventually abandoned to help cut down cost. In fact, some of the University of Ghana Learning Centres (UGLCs) are not attracting good number of students to enrol into their programmes. The factors accounting for this abysmal performance of the UGLCs are multifaceted and multidimensional. Perhaps, some observers may suggest the lack of effective outreach programmes, communication, consultation and interaction of SCDE with the various publics to market the programmes as some of the reasons. These factors, though, seem critical to the effective operations of SCDE in the DE programme, the problems may appear to be more than that.

It is also true that the constancy of environment cannot be assumed in the open systems organisations, but must continually be the subject of investigation. The nature of the environment, thus its stability, turbulence, the degree of organisation is contingent upon the social field of forces in which it occurs, and must be understood in terms of the organisation's interaction with that environment. It is not surprising, therefore, to learn that many AE organisations, including organisations that offer DE programmes that are not in tune with the environment, are finding it difficult to survive. The fact is that organisations, and especially, the AE or open systems organisations, are mostly prevented from attaining full efficiency by a recalcitrant environment and personnel. Both, however, have to be taken care of. There is a stiff competition waged now, by dual-mode universities operating in Ghana, for attracting students to feed their DE programmes. Such a competition calls for staff or personnel who are selfless in the provision of quality services to the students, and are also innovative in their approach, in running the DE programmes. But even as they strive to offer quality services to the students, they should equally be mindful that, AE programmes are integrated and coordinated.

Integration as used here is about an achievement of unification to share norms and values. Coordination, too, is analogous to Bertalanffy (1968). It is about control management. It is control and supervision after delegating roles to the lower parts. Progress can only be made when the activities and the operations of lower parts are properly harmonised, supervised and controlled. There should be linkages among the various branches and units in AE organisations. The overall activities, and in this case, the SCDE centres in the regions, are to be coordinated by the heads of the departments. It is therefore not surprising to learn that, following the adoption of the collegiate system of administration by University of Ghana, the former Institute of Continuing and Distance Education has become a School of Continuing and Distance Education (SCDE), under the College of Education. The SCDE has three departments with University of Ghana Learning Centres and that of Department of Distance Education with their heads having supervisory roles on the University of Ghana Distance Education (UGDE) programmes and continuing professional development programmes. Until recently, that was not the case, as far as the supervision of the learning centres was concerned. This approach rather informs the Centre Coordinators sufficiently in identifying who exactly to respond to, depending on the type of programme, one is running.

The principle of equifinality also operates in the open systems organisations. As rightly stated by Bertalanffy (1968), equifinality is all about the need of flexibility to operate in every organisation. This is because, each branch or division of an organisation, reach the goal or the set objectives of the organisation by different paths. This point can be likened to some AE organisations that prefer employing people with experiences and others that like recruiting fresh graduates and offering them various training to build their capacities to execute important services. Both decisions are taken with due regards to cost and benefit analysis open to them. If at the end of the day, both achieve their set objectives, so be it, but if one fails to meet the set objectives and targets, then that policy of recruitment has to be re-examined for good results next time. Every AE organisation wants to break even as part of their services, and thus provide relevant education, training and capacity building to engender the production of quality human capital for national development. It means, therefore, that every effort has to be made to train and retrain the faculty, tutors and all the supporting staff of SCDE, to ensure that they deliver their services efficiently.

Hess and Siciliano (1996) had rightly observed that management role of coordination of human, material, technological, and financial resources needed for an organisation to achieve its goals are very critical in today's global [education] environment. This is because, it takes management to gather the resources – the people, the financing, the technology required to make work and workers more productive in not only the AE programmes in Ghana, but globally as well. Management designs the tasks and organises the work to be done. It ensures the skill and coordination necessary for the kind of cooperative effort, that is, the essence of organisations. Organisations that offer AE programmes go through all these processes, but the question is: Are management able to mobilise sufficient resources to implement AE programmes? The answer may be 'no' in many situations. Following global financial meltdown, many economies are cash-stripped. There is grinding unemployment confronting many people, especially those who would have wished to continue their education. Hence, many AE organisations, especially the universities in Ghana, are faced with financial difficulties since they are not attracting or getting the number of students they would have wished. This is making it difficult, if not impossible, to deliver important AE programmes to the teeming and critical mass of the adult population.

When one takes a closer look at how Walton (cited in Attah, 1999: 12) defined administration, one comes to understand why some AE organisations in Ghana, in particular, are failing in their attempt to attract clienteles. Walton defines administration as "an activity that concerns itself with survival and maintenance of an organisation and with the direction of activities of people working within the organisation in their reciprocal relations to the end that the organisational purpose may be attained". When one defines administration as a 'process', then one is thinking of what administrators do: - thus planning, organising, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting. That exactly is what administrators in AE organisations should be seen to be doing to engender effective programming.

This is imperative because, the aim of AE organisations is to effect change in people's habits and attitudes. It also seeks to improve methods and techniques of work and communication as well as to help solve urgent social and economic problems.

However, adequate budgetary support, effective monitoring and coordination have been lacking in some state funded AE organisations, including the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE). Hence the NCCE is gradually, but surely, failing in its core responsibility of educating Ghanaians on citizenship and the constitution. This is evidenced by the ever increasing number of spoilt ballot papers experienced during every election conducted in Ghana. The inadequate budgetary support to AE organisations should not be surprising to anybody who is conversant with the programming of AE organisations. This is because Lowe (1982) had earlier asserted that:

- "In most countries, however, the purse-strings were kept tightly drawn and adult education got the crumbs from school education's well laden table. It was noted that those who were nationally responsible, politicians and administrators alike were simply not alive to the objectives of adult education, and that expenditures for adult education were considered to be optional expenditures" (p. 173).

The challenge of inadequate budgetary support may exist in the non-profit making AE organisations, but are not as pronounced as that of publicly-funded AE organisations of which SCDE is one of them. The reasons are that many of the non-profit making AE organisations receive funding, technological and logistical supports from parents' organisations in abroad. Hence, they are able to attract the best calibre of staff, and also maintain good management practices. They, thus, open themselves up for scrutiny. In that sense, they are in tune with the trend of affairs in the environment. They also accept negative feedbacks and adopt all the necessary changes to remain competitive and achieve good results in the global market place of ideas. The public AE organisations are strategically positioned, based on the availability of infrastructure facilities, to deliver appropriate AE programmes, yet lack of regular financial support among others, are making many of them fail in their operations. The paper further takes a look at SCDE implementation of AE programmes in Ghana.

3. SCDE Implementation of AE Programmes

The UNESCO, cited in Bown and Olu-Tomori (1975: 15), defines adult education (AE) as a "process by which men and women (alone, in groups, or in institutional settings), seek to improve themselves by increasing their skills, their knowledge, or their sensitiveness: any process by which individuals, groups, or institutions try to help men and women improve in those ways".

Similarly, Darkenwald and Merriam (cited in Nafukho et al., 2005: 5) have aptly noted that:

- "Adult education is conceived not with preparing people for life, but rather with helping people to live more successfully. Thus, if there is to be an overarching function of the adult education enterprise, it is to assist adults to increase competence, or negotiate transitions in their social roles (worker, parent, retired person), to help them gain greater fulfilment in their personal lives, and to assist them in solving personal and community problems".

If one takes the SCDE of College of Education, University of Ghana, for example, it has numerous functions, activities and extension services it renders to the general public. These functions, services and activities have been allocated to the specialised units of the School. The Department of Distance Education, in additional to teaching, research and extension services, coordinates the University of Ghana Distance Education Programme. Currently, there are over 10,000 students enrolled on the DE programme being run in 8 of the University of Ghana Learning Centres, with over 300 tutors.

The Vice-Chancellor of University of Ghana, Prof. Ernest Aryeetey, has put in place a 'Vision 20-20', envisaging that by the year 2020, the University of Ghana Distance Education (UGDE) programme should enrol at least 20,000 students. It was on that basis that the Government of Ghana partnership with the Chinese Government has led to the establishment of the SCDE state-of-the-art computer laboratory, video-conferencing rooms, smart classrooms, discussion rooms and presentation practicing rooms built in 8 of the 12 Regional Learning Centres. Thus, the SCDE has gone electronic learning (e-Learning) at SCDE Legon campus, and 8 of the 12 Regional Learning Centres. These are being done to make the University of Ghana Distance Education (UGDE) programme correspond not only to the happenings and developments in DE at the global level, but also, meet the standards at which DE is being implemented in the developed economies. This approach will ultimately make Ghana join the knowledge societies in the shortest possible time. The fact that in learning societies all citizens are learners makes it imperative that the SCDE adopt realistic approaches to get as many Ghanaians as possible become educated.

The Department of Adult Education and Human Resource Studies, aside running BA, MA/MPhil and PhD degree programs in Adult Education, also run MA/MPhil degree programs in Care and Management of HIV and AIDS, and MA degree programme in Distance Education and Electronic Learning (DEEL) Online through DE mode. The SCDE, University of Ghana, also organises Diploma in Adult Education and Youth in Development Work programmes on 'Sandwich' and DE modes.

The Department additionally organises Annual New Year School and Conferences, a flagship programme, of SCDE. It also runs short certificate modular courses in HIV and AIDS management and counseling. This programme uses education to address stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS. It is organised for not only workers in the public and private sector workers, but the general public, as well. The Department further oversees, and also supervises teaching and learning programmes, researches in Adult Education and Human Resource Studies, and all other presentations at SCDE. The department, finally, oversees issues surrounding students' results and all 'Sandwich' programmes, and any other activity that has to do with the Annual New Year and Conferences, organised by the SCDE.

The University of Ghana Learning Centres is also another department of SCDE. It runs continuing professional development programs, and also coordinate University of Ghana Distance Education (UGDE) program to students in the 8 of the 10 regions in Ghana. The unit also builds the capacity of public and private sector workers through its important programme dubbed: Continuing Professional Development Programme. In all these, the faculty of SCDE has a core responsibility of ensuring that its assigned role of teaching, research and extension services are excellently carried out or performed by the senior members. This, in a way, will make the university ultimately meet, and also attain, a world-class university status.

As an AE organisation that endeavours to improve on the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of prospective adult learners in the country, the SCDE offers extensive programs, including lifelong and civic education, distance education, extension services, seminars, workshops, and training programmes to both public and private sector workers. The SCDE also run remedial classes for Senior High School leavers, professional education for clienteles and literacy programmes to the public at it Adult Literacy Research Centre at Legon campus, and some of the regional learning centres.

In this direction, the SCDE can only secure sufficient funds to run its numerous programmes, if it enrolls more students into her programmes. This is because DE thrives on numbers. But here again, there is a limited number of students that SCDE can admit in the face of ageing faculty. More lecturers are to be trained locally and abroad. The capacity of the tutors is to be continually built. These and many other challenges are currently facing the running of AE programmes, including the DE programme, coordinated by SCDE.

On the essence of open systems theory, the students that go through the SCDE programmes are eventually transformed through the teaching and training they receive. They finally come out as diplomates, graduates and postgraduates. The final products turned out into the labour markets must be appreciated by the society in terms of how they serve and satisfy the needs of the society. When that role is fulfilled, their usefulness will be greatly felt by the society or else, the society will stop patronising their services. When that happens, it will directly have a negative effect on the SCDE, and for that matter, the University of Ghana as a whole. The SCDE will have no other option then to review some of its programs or re-adjust itself properly, to meet the prevailing intense competition and conditions in the market place, so as to remain competitive.

It appears, there is an intense competition confronting the commercial banks and many other corporate organisations in the telecommunication sub-sector. That of the competition among the financial institutions seems more intense then organisations that offer AE programmes in Ghana. No wonder, multinational organisations go further to provide social services to the society as a balancing act for the massive gains and profits they continue to make from Ghana. Examples of some of the services are the provision of recreational centres, stocking of school's libraries with books and computer laboratories, clinics and health centres built for communities. Donations are also made to hospitals. These corporate social responsibilities are undertaken by organisations to show their concern to the society. It further demonstrates that the organisations operating in the communities are responsible to the needs of the catchment communities and the society at large. After all, the organisations benefit a lot from the Ghanaian society.

That notwithstanding, the competition raging among AE organisations involved in the delivery of DE seems very much intense, currently. At least, six of the publicly-funded universities have learning centres not only in the regional capitals, but some have established centres in the municipals and the districts, to provide education to learners at their doorsteps. It means, therefore, that universities that are proactive in making and taking decision, and also innovative in coming up with ideas, are getting the students enrolled into their DE programmes. To Asiedu-Addo (2015), the University of Education, Winneba, overall net worth revenue base increased from GH¢19.3 million in 2007 to GH¢126.1million in 2014, representing a 553 percent increase. Not only that, but also, the University of Education, Winneba, has increased the number of DE centres from 12 in 2007 to 28 centres presently, and there has been a significant and consistent growth in DE student numbers.

The SCDE, therefore, has a lot to do to catches up with the progress her compatriots are making. To succeed in this direction, a number of measures, including availability of financial resources to undertake this important exercise, are to be made available. The reality, however, is that SCDE is not self-sufficient financially. It must compete with other Schools, Institutes, Departments and Centres in the University for funds to execute its numerous functions. That is to say, the SCDE employs energy from outside to carry out its numerous programmes.

Similarly, some Non-Governmental Organisations such as Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG), The World Vision International and Action Aid Ghana find themselves in similar situation. However, these organisations continue to chalk successes in the implementation of their educational programs. This is because of the excellent organisation, administration and the management they have put in place to manage the massive funds they attract and receive from their sponsors outside. The funds they receive are judiciously used to meet the needs of their clienteles. The employees are given appropriate motivations, no wonder; these organisations are operating smoothly and surviving in the hostile and competitive global market place. The paper, therefore, turns its attention into considering the appropriate strategies that will engender smooth implementation of AE programmes by SCDE in Ghana.

4. Strategies to Improve AE Programmes Implementation at SCDE

AE organisations, including SCDE, can only survive in this era of hostile and competitive environment of the provision of education in Ghana, when they remain focused and become abreast with modern developments in the provision of AE locally, and globally, as well. This is one sure way to succeed in AE programmes. This, therefore, calls on SCDE to adjust itself properly, and also takes advantage of all the changes taking place in the technological fields, information and communication fields, to power and also provide AE programmes. This is significant because as observed by Schermerhorn (2005), as the pace and complexities of technological change accelerate, the demand for knowledge workers with the skills to best utilise technology is increasing. Hence the staff of SCDE

must necessarily learn to master the computer literacy skills, and also, continuously update themselves so as to impact positively on clienteles of her AE programmes. After all acquisition of relevant skills in computing is the foundation of career success today.

Specialization is something that must be developed in AE organisations to facilitate efficiency and effectiveness. It is not for nothing that SCDE has offices in all the 12 learning centres in the 10 regions of Ghana. They carry out a number of functions in Ghana; both formal and non-formal education programmes, in the regions. The facilities in the centres are used to upgrade skills, knowledge, and attitudes of those who initially thought they cannot make it educationally. Formal education is offered to remedial students, professional courses, including accounting, banking, computer studies, and non-formal education programs including bee-keeping, public lectures, symposium and sometimes, consultancies, are offered to district assemblies, on a wide range of developmental issues. Each of the centres is to identify the educational needs of the people in the region to enable the centre package the programmes properly to address their educational needs.

However, much of the courses run by SCDE can only attract many prospective participants only if the appropriate needs assessment and researches are conducted by the centres on the specific programmes or educational needs of the participants in specific regions. Perhaps, it is also on that basis that the SCDE is currently running specific bouquet of programmes that appear attractive to participants in specific centres and regions in Ghana in order to cut down cost, and have value for money. This approach will help optimise the use of facilities at the learning centres. That is one of the ways to secure as many students as possible to enroll into the SCDE programmes.

For SCDE to make maximum impacts in her programmes implementation, and also have lasting effect on the participants and the public, the programs should be properly organised, managed and administered. This is because properly organised and administered programmes have always triumphed over turbulent, stormy and unstable environment, as far as the implementation of AE is concerned. Under the current difficult global financial meltdown, coupled with inadequate budgetary support from governments and the University of Ghana, it becomes imperative for SCDE to enter into partnership with sister organisations. When that is done, SCDE will make massive progress, for instance, in the provision of teaching and learning technology in sufficient quantities to learners, as part of the implementation of AE programmes.

SCDE needs to engage in elaborate consultation with its various publics whenever it decides to organise AE programmes. Both print and electronic media are to be used extensively in this direction. For instance, in organising Annual New Year School and Conferences, planning has to be adequately carried out ahead of time, such that areas of discussion will be identified on time. Next importantly, a theme and sub-themes of the program has to be formulated on time. People, and for that matter experts, who can speak on the various topics are to be consulted and contacted on time. The cost of services to be provided should be properly budgeted. Data on all relevant activities are collected on time and funding towards the School is sought on time. Specialist seminars are held and finally, participants' seminars to be held with fees for participation, clearly made known to the public on time.

All the aforementioned activities demand thorough planning, monitoring and coordination; otherwise, the set objectives would not be achieved. Effective communication, information dissemination and public education and sensitization have to be taken seriously. Negative feedbacks have to be taken in good faith. Plain hard work, rededication and readjustment in the SCDE programs become necessary so as to feed-forward. It is on the basis of this that Miller (cited in Silverman, 1979) emphasised the importance of negative feedback as good thing. This is because when a system's negative feedback discontinues, its steady state vanishes, and at the same time, its boundaries disappear and the system terminates.

It should also be added that regular interactions and monitoring as well as co-evaluation should be placed at the centre of all the operations of organisations that offer AE programme. It means therefore that when SCDE adopt this approach, it would aid her to maximise success in her programmes. This approach appears to be admired by all the players involved in AE programmes because co-evaluation in the works of SCDE actually demonstrate trust and cooperation among the parties involved in AE. Indeed, regular interactions engender mutual respect and tolerance, among the players in AE. That, ultimately, goes a long way to foster growth, development and improvement in the provision of AE programmes in Ghana.

Additionally, needs assessment of any AE programme meant for public consumption must be first carried out by organisations with expertise in AE. In designing the programme, the goals and objectives should be clearly stated. Again, the necessary planning on the AE programme should be properly thought through and expertly carried out. Plans should be implemented, regularly monitored and evaluated to ascertain whether the stated objectives have been achieved, or otherwise.

As observed by Allport (cited in Katz and Kahn, 1978: 6) that structure is "a cycle of events which return in circular fashion to reinstate the cycle"; he sought to remained AE organisations that they should continually work assiduously to remain competitive in their operations. They must devise better strategies of mobilising and securing more funds to implement programmes. Thus, emphasise should be placed on the importance of input – throughput – output concept. In the case of SCDE of College of Education, University of Ghana, effort should be made to expand the existing faculty and review some of the programmes and courses on offer, so as to attract more students to enroll in her AE programmes. In that process, as many people as possible would be made to become competitive in the global market place. This, also, calls for creativity and innovation on the part of management and Centre Coordinators, and indeed, the entire faculty in the College of Education, University of Ghana. It must be stated unequivocally, that, creativity and innovation should be the hallmark of SCDE in its AE programmes.

The interconnectedness and comprehensive nature of SCDE is such that collective decision making involving all the stakeholders, and their interest in the AE programmes, is important to keep it functioning successfully in the global market place. Hierarchical ordering and decision making rights, which hitherto, seem to be the exclusive preserve of the management team, should give way to decentralised and democratic decision-making. When that is done, the Centre Coordinators of SCDE would become empowered, and

imaginative enough, to come up with innovative ideas to entice as many adult learners as possible to enroll in AE programmes. This is another best way of ensuring that SCDE works assiduously to overcome survival threats posed to her by other Universities running AE programmes in Ghana. When the aforementioned are done, the SCDE will grow from strength to strength to provide an overarching AE programmes to build the quality human capital to ensure overall development of Ghana.

5. Conclusion

This paper has highlighted on the utility of open systems theory. It took into consideration organisations engaged in AE programmes, with emphasise placed on SCDE of College of Education, University of Ghana. It also looked at open systems and the implementation of AE programming and implementation. The paper further suggested implementing strategies for AE programmes in Ghana. To be successful in the global market place, AE organisations should constantly upgrade and build the capacities of their staff. They should also motivate their staff through improved salaries and incentive packages to enable them deliver excellent services to their clienteles and the public at large. Decentralized and democratic decision-making coupled with the regular assessment of needs, effective communication, regular consultations, sharing of information, monitoring and evaluation of programmes should be placed at the centre of all the operations of AE organisations, including SCDE. This approach, no doubt, would create congenial environment to enable SCDE and any other AE organisations maintain, and also achieve, successes in their programming. What all these mean, is that, not only should SCDE demonstrates imagination, creativity and innovation in its programming and implementation of her educational programmes, but should also lobby the government, to create the enabling environment to enable her mobilise sufficient funds to implement overarching AE programmes. This is one surest way Ghana can eventually join the knowledge societies, and also strive hard to train, and build appropriate human capital for her development.

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