

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA



**PRESIDENTIAL CHARTER CHALLENGES IN PEREZ UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE**

BELINDA BENTUM

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**PRESIDENTIAL CHARTER CHALLENGES IN PEREZ UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE**

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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Belinda Bentum, declare that this thesis, except quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my original work and has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature:

Date:

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised following the guidelines for the supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor: Prof. Kwame Odei-Tettey

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

To my loving parents, Mr. James Padmore Bentum and Mrs. Georgina Bentum.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents	Page
DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	ix
GLOSSARY	x
ABSTRACT	
Error! Bookmark not defined.	
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	7
1.3 Purpose of the Study	10
1.3 Objectives of the Study	10
1.5 Research Questions	11
1.6 Significance of the Study	11
1.7 Delimitation	12
1.8 Operational Definition of Terms	12
1.9 Organization of the Study	13
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	14
2.0 Introduction	14
2.1 Conceptual Framework	15
2.2 Theoretical Framework	21
2.3 Effectiveness of the Regulatory Requirement of Bentiful-UC for Presidential Charter	32

2.4	Challenges Encountered by Bentiful-UC in Acquiring Presidential Charter	43
2.5	Preparedness of Bentiful-UC in obtaining Presidential Charter	52
2.6	Strategies to overcome Challenges to Presidential Charter by Bentiful-UC	55
2.7	Summary of Literature Review	59
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY		62
3.0	Introduction	62
3.1	Research Paradigm	62
3.2	Research Approach	65
3.3	Research Design	66
3.4	Site and Sample Characteristics	68
3.5	Population of Study	70
3.6	Sample Size	71
3.7	Sampling Technique	72
3.8	Source of Data	73
3.9	Data Collection Method	74
3.10	Data Collection Instruments	75
3.11	Pilot Testing	76
3.12	Data Collection Procedure	77
3.13	Data Analysis Procedure	78
3.14	Trustworthiness of Interview	80
3.15	Ethical Considerations	82
3.16	Conclusion	83
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION		84
4.0	Introduction	84
4.1	Demographic Data	85
4.2	Effectiveness of the Regulatory Requirement of Bentiful-UC for Presidential Charter	87

4.3	Challenges encountered by Bentiful University Colleges in Acquiring Presidential Charter	97
4.4	Preparedness of Bentiful University College in obtaining Presidential Charter	110
4.5	Strategies to Overcome Challenges to Presidential Charter by Bentiful University College	120
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		142
5.0	Introduction	142
5.1	Summary of Key Findings	143
5.3	Conclusion	146
5.4	Recommendations	148
5.5	Suggestions for Further Research	149
REFERENCES		150
APPENDIX A: Semi-Structured Interview Guide		165
APPENDIX B: Introductory Letter		169

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
4.1: Demographic Data	85

GLOSSARY

GTEC	Ghana Tertiary Education Commission
LDO	Learning-Driven Organizations
NAB	National Accreditation Board
NTCE	National Council for Tertiary Education
Bentiful-UC	Bentiful University College
PHEI	Private Higher Education Institution
SSA	Sub-Saharan African
TTS	Trinity Theological Seminary
UCC	University of Cape Coast
URC	University Rationalization Committee

ABSTRACT

This study examines the challenges impeding Bentiful University College (Bentiful-UC) in pursuing a presidential charter and explores strategies for overcoming these obstacles. The study followed an interpretive paradigm as its philosophical foundation. It employed a qualitative research approach, using a case study design to conduct an in-depth analysis of the institutional barriers encountered by Bentiful-UC. The study population comprised 11 individuals, of whom 7 participants were purposively selected using expert purposive sampling. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and documentary evidence, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the research issues. A grounded theory framework for data analysis was employed, incorporating open coding, axial coding, and thematic and theoretical concept development to interpret the data systematically. The findings reveal that administrative, financial, and regulatory challenges significantly hinder Bentiful-UC's progression toward charter status. Key issues include low student enrolment, limited revenue diversification, and challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified academic staff, constraining the institution's financial and operational capacity. To address these challenges, the study recommends strategic income diversification, the establishment of public-private partnerships, and enhancing governance structures to ensure financial sustainability and regulatory compliance. A structured yet adaptable regulatory system will enable institutions like Bentiful-UC to improve operational efficiency, meet evolving educational demands, and achieve long-term sustainability in the Ghanaian higher education landscape.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Public universities are established by an act of parliament with Presidential assent to award their degrees, diplomas and certificates, while Private University Colleges face tremendous challenges in preparing for a presidential charter. The University Colleges have to go through periods of mentorship and supervision by public institutions or chartered Private Universities, and the process has to be regulated by the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC). The National Council for Tertiary Education and the National Accreditation Board under the new Education Regulatory Bodies Act, 2020 (Act 1023) were merged to form the GTEC in August 2020.

GTEC regulates public and private higher education institutions (PHEIs) and their programmes. High population growth and increasing enrolment in basic and secondary education have heightened the demand for tertiary education in Ghana. The situation has outweighed the capacity of existing public tertiary institutions to absorb the increasing number of prospective students who seek tertiary education (Ntim, 2015). The growing number of private tertiary institutions in Ghana has complemented the public tertiary institutions to ameliorate the situation for prospective students. During the pre-independence era, PHEIs in Anglophone sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries were regulated by Universities in Britain. After independence, the pattern of regulation by metropolitan institutions generally continued.

However, the economic downturn in most SSA countries during the 1980s impacted governments' ability to provide public access and choice to postsecondary education.

As a result, Anglophone sub-Saharan African countries could not support public higher education. To address the shortfall of decreasing numbers of students gaining access to public higher education institutions, reforms in the education sector were undertaken by sub-Saharan African countries. Subsequently, private higher education grew substantially, usually quite apart from the government plan. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund engineered some of the reforms that SSA countries had to undergo. The increase in sponsors has alleviated the burden on nation-states as sole higher education providers. Included among these providers were religious PHEIs, demand-absorbing institutions that are non-state institutions and are neither elite nor religiously or culturally affiliated, and commercial and elite institutions. The passage describes the historical regulation of higher education institutions in former British colonies by universities in Britain. Even after gaining independence, this pattern continued, with oversight from metropolitan institutions (Tsevi, 2016).

University education in Ghana began when the colonial government established the Asquith Commission (1943-1945) to promote learning and research in the British Colonies. The University College of the Gold Coast was established in 1948 as an affiliate of the University of London. It then became a fully-fledged University on October 1, 1961. Today, Ghana has 16 public Universities, 106 Private University Colleges offering HND/degree programmes, and 13 chartered Private University Colleges (<https://gtec.edu.gh/accredited-institutions>). To provide access to the growing secondary school population, the Ghana University Rationalisation Committee (URC)-a body established by the Ghana government for higher education policy purposes-recommended that public and private higher education institutions be allowed to operate and be regulated. A further recommendation by the URC was the establishment of the Ghana National Accreditation Board in 1993 to accredit public

and PHEIs. A primary objective of the accreditation board is to ensure quality education. The emergence of Private University Colleges was to complement the efforts of public universities, particularly by admitting qualified students who could not access public universities due to inadequate infrastructure.

The rapid changes in the higher education context worldwide, such as the proliferation of private higher education institutions, diversity in programme provision, massification of education, and matching programmes to labour markets, have raised concerns for quality measures in the provision of higher education. As a result, countries worldwide have adopted formal quality assurance systems to regulate and improve the quality of their higher education system (Brennan & Shah, 2000). One of such strategies to ensure quality tertiary education was affiliation. The idea of affiliation is to ensure that the newly-established tertiary institution or prospective tertiary institution is mentored by an established public university, which is nationally recognised or a chartered private tertiary institution. It mentors the institution until the Private University College (mentored institution) becomes matured and able to operate independently and subsequently receives a presidential charter to run its programmes (National Accreditation Board [NAB], 2011).

Presidential charters are pivotal documents that outline an institution's vision, mission, and strategic goals, providing a roadmap for its future development and success. In higher education, particularly in private university colleges, preparing a presidential charter is a complex and multifaceted process involving various stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, and external partners. This process ensures the institution aligns its objectives with the broader educational landscape and societal needs. According to Ghassan (2022), the strategic vision in educational

institutions inspires employees. It aligns their aspirations with institutional goals, thereby supporting the development of comprehensive strategic plans essential for continuous improvement and competitive advantage. Zhou (2021) emphasised that private colleges should develop precise and reasonable strategic positioning and development plans, which align with the importance of presidential charters in outlining vision and goals, ensuring alignment with educational and societal needs.

Bentiful University College, a prominent private institution, has embarked on the challenging task of preparing its presidential charter. This endeavour is not merely an administrative exercise but a strategic initiative aimed at defining the college's identity, setting its long-term goals, and establishing a framework for governance and accountability. The charter serves as a guiding document that influences policy-making, resource allocation, and the overall direction of the institution. The charter confers autonomy over the University College to operate and award its degrees.

However, preparing a presidential charter in a private university like Bentiful University College is fraught with numerous challenges. These challenges range from ensuring stakeholder engagement and consensus to navigating the complexities of regulatory compliance and resource constraints. The process requires a delicate balance between the aspirations of the institution and the practical realities of its operational environment. Stakeholder participation and compliance in governance are essential; challenges like regulatory complexities and resource constraints must be managed effectively to align institutional aspirations with operational realities in higher education governance (Rusdi, Sartika, Putra, & Sari, 2023).

Utuka (2008) illuminates that the requirement by GTEC for institutional and programme accreditation was too stringent, bureaucratic, expensive, time-consuming,

and involved too much paperwork. In addition to meeting the requirements of GTEC, Utuka contends that a private tertiary institution has to budget for affiliation fees and meet the other requirements of the mentoring institution. Similarly, Effah (2006) has argued that private tertiary institutions have drawn attention to several problems relating to affiliation that frustrate the efforts of new institutions seeking accreditation. These include the requirement that mentoring institutions show evidence of certification, high cost of affiliation, delay in processing applications for affiliation, and lack of clarity about the obligations of the mentoring institutions.

Whilst there has been some commentary on the affiliation policy and accreditation of private tertiary institutions, little attention has been paid to the challenges private tertiary institutions face in attaining a presidential charter. This is critically important since chartered private tertiary institutions have greater autonomy and improved reputation in Ghana. Thus, the chartered private institution can decide its curriculum, faculty, and other operations without interference from the mentored institutions. This raises the question of the regulatory frameworks and requirements needed by private tertiary institutions for a presidential charter. Although there are laid down regulatory guidelines by GTEC in Acts 1023 concerning the attainment of presidential charter, it raises questions whether the procedure for presidential charter is clearly stated, and whether the challenges of private tertiary institutions are considered (e.g., cost, quality of training, administrative structure of the mentor institutions, training received, self-performance evaluation, institutional visit, etc.) during the process.

There are several challenges in assuring the quality of higher education in developing countries, especially in Ghana. For the institutions seeking accreditation, the challenges include conflicting requirements from GTEC and mentoring (supervising)

institutions, dealing with duplication of activities between local mentoring (supervising) institutions and GTEC, lack of regular and formal communication about an institution's request for charter, unequal treatment of Private University Colleges in comparison with the public universities, and the lack of clear-cut policy on how private providers can become chartered institutions and award their degrees (Tsevi, 2016). Policy makers identified some of these challenges, and that led to the creation of GTEC, under the Education Regulatory Bodies Act, 2020 (Act 1023), it is no longer mandatory for new tertiary education institutions to go into affiliation arrangements with existing chartered institutions to be accredited. As part of the new transitional arrangements for granting a charter, all existing University Colleges have been given until the end of 2024 to demonstrate their capability and readiness for a charter by meeting the prescribed conditions.

The Act states that, if an affiliated institution is unable to meet the requirements for a charter within the specified four-year period, but demonstrates sufficient cause for preparing for a charter, an additional two years may be given by GTEC to the institution to enable that institution to meet the requirements (Kojo Adams, October 6, 2022)/GNA. The advent of private tertiary institutions' participation in educational delivery in Ghana has been phenomenal. Private tertiary institutions are crucial in higher education, contributing significantly to nations' intellectual and economic growth. A presidential charter is often considered a hallmark of institutional excellence and stability. This research investigates the challenges confronting private tertiary institutions in pursuing a presidential charter, specifically focusing on Bentiful University College. Bentiful-UC was selected as the focus of this study because the researcher is affiliated with the institution and possesses comprehensive knowledge of its internal processes and operations. This unique position enables the researcher to

access detailed and reliable information, ensuring a thorough and insightful investigation into the institution's preparations for achieving a presidential charter.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

A presidential charter grants Private University Colleges a prestigious standing in academia, providing them with the independence to make critical decisions without the need for constant consultation or approval from mentoring institutions. Bentiful University College operates under the mentorship of the University of Cape Coast (UCC) for the School of Business and Communications, and Trinity Theological Seminary (TTS) for the School of Theology. This arrangement mandates that the University College can only administer examination questions that have undergone successful moderation and approval by the respective mentor institutions. Additionally, the mentor institutions are responsible for issuing academic certificates, and the University College pays affiliation fees to these mentor institutions (Memorandum of Understanding between Bentiful-UC and UCC / TTS, 2024).

If Bentiful University College obtains a presidential charter, it would gain full autonomy and liberation from these demanding processes. This would open up new avenues for the University College to expand its academic offerings, implement innovative policies, and make decisions more efficiently, ultimately contributing to its growth and development as a distinguished institution. Studies on private tertiary institutions in Ghana have mainly been based on the practices of quality assurance of private tertiary institutions, challenges, affiliation and institutional and programme accreditation (Yakubu, 2015; Boateng, 2014; Arthur & Kuranchie, 2022; Tsevi, 2015; Amponsah and Onuoha, 2013). For instance, a study by Amponsah and Onuoha in 2013 on the topic “The Performance and Challenges of Private Universities in Ghana

and Nigeria” revealed that the private universities were outstanding for their ability to provide uninterrupted academic calendar through the years; for production of the best quality graduates, as well as graduating highly ethical and well-disciplined students. The study further showed that the major problem facing private universities in the two countries is mainly financial, high cost of training and development of faculty and staff, lack of well-resourced libraries, inability to retain top-quality faculty and staff, and inadequate teaching and learning equipment and infrastructure.

Another study, by Richard Nalarb Yakubu on “Analysis of Institutional Requirements for Affiliation of Private Tertiary Institutions in Ghana” in 2015, also revealed that there were rigorous requirements by the University for Development Studies for affiliation of private tertiary institutions. Linda Tsevi’s study on “Quality and Accreditation of Private Higher Education in Ghana” on the other hand, stated that “for the institution seeking accreditation, challenges include conflicting requirements from the GTEC and mentoring institutions, dealing with duplication of activities between local mentoring institutions and GTEC, lack of regular and formal communication about an institution’s request for charter, unequal treatment of private university colleges in comparison with the public universities, and the lack of clear-cut policy on how private providers can become chartered institutions and award their degrees.

These studies however, have not addressed why private university colleges, including Bentiful University College (Bentiful-UC), cannot overcome their challenges to attain presidential charter. The clear problem for this research is that in spite of the efforts of Bentiful-UC to overcome its presidential charter challenges, the university has up until now not been able to achieve this status to become a fully-fledged university

after a period of operation. Hence, it is expedient to identify the challenges these institutions encounter and provide insights into the preparation for presidential charter. First, the findings of the study would help private university colleges to know the challenges regarding presidential charter. This would help these institutions to put structures in place before pursuing a presidential charter.

The study's results would inform existing private university colleges of the challenges that university colleges face as they attain presidential charter and various strategies to overcome these challenges in Ghana. The study would also help policy makers such as government and its agencies (i.e., Ministry of Education, GTEC and others) to implement policies that ease the burden university colleges encounter when pursuing presidential charter. This study would finally serve as a literature for further studies. This study explores the challenges confronting Bentiful University College in preparing its presidential charter. By examining the case of Bentiful University College, the study seeks to provide insights into the common obstacles encountered in such processes and to offer recommendations for overcoming these challenges. The findings of this study will not only be beneficial to Bentiful University College but also to other private university colleges grappling with similar issues. Through a comprehensive analysis of the case study, this research will shed light on the intricacies of presidential charter preparation and contribute to the broader understanding of strategic planning and governance in higher education institutions.

In the light of the problem above, the research thesis is that Bentiful University College (Bentiful-UC) will effortlessly attain presidential charter if there are concise and limited requirements for charter attainment, financial support and sustainability, a transparent governing structure and adequate faculty staff. Without a clear

understanding of the challenges, private university colleges may continue to; face operational inefficiencies and strategic misalignments, hindering their ability to achieve their long-term goals; face difficulties in meeting regulatory requirements and accreditation standards, which could jeopardize the operational licenses and reputations; miss out on opportunities for innovation and adaptation, failing to keep pace with evolving educational trends and technological advancements; face inadequate planning which can result in the misallocation of resources, leading to financial strain and inefficiencies that could have been avoided with a well-defined charter (Hermawan, Arifin, Yulianto, Maulamin & Wahyudin 2023).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study sought to explore challenges preventing Bentiful University College from being chartered, and find out ways of overcoming these challenges to obtain a presidential charter.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To find out the effectiveness of the regulatory requirements that Bentiful-UC is required to meet for presidential charter status.
2. To investigate the challenges that Bentiful-UC encounter in the process of acquiring presidential charter.
3. To investigate the state of preparedness of Bentiful-UC in meeting the requirements for obtaining a presidential charter.
4. To suggest ways Bentiful-UC can overcome its challenges to attain presidential charter.

1.5 Research Questions

The overarching research question to this study is that, Bentiful University College is unable to attain presidential charter due to their inability to overcome their challenges, so, why has it been unable to overcome these challenges to obtain presidential charter, and in what ways can it overcome these challenges to attain presidential charter? However, the under-listed elements of the research question have been crafted to guide the research.

1. What has been the effectiveness of the regulatory requirements that Bentiful-UC is required to meet for the presidential charter status?
2. What are the challenges that are faced by Bentiful-UC in acquiring presidential charter?
3. How prepared is Bentiful-UC in meeting the requirements for obtaining a presidential charter?
4. What are the ways Bentiful-UC can overcome its challenges to attain presidential charter?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study will lie in its capacity to contribute to the effective strategies for the attainment of presidential charter of private tertiary institutions. It is hoped that the results of the study when disseminated through publication, will inform prospective private tertiary institutions the impending challenges as they prepare to obtain presidential charter and suggest strategies to overcome these challenges in Ghana. It is also hoped that this study will help private tertiary institutions facing similar problems to develop similar strategies to provide solutions. It will also serve as an additional source of reference for other researchers and students whose studies relate to the topic of discussion.

1.7 Delimitation

The study focused on the challenges of attaining presidential charter by private university colleges under the regulatory requirements for presidential charter in Ghana's higher education system. It focused on respondents who are directly involved in working on presidential charter issues. The study concentrated on Bentiful University College and GTEC.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Public Universities: Higher education institutions established and funded by the government through parliamentary acts, authorized to award degrees, diplomas, and certificates, and primarily governed by public regulations and policies.

Presidential Charter: A formal authorization granted by the President of Ghana, that enables a university college to operate as an independent university, award its own degrees, diplomas, and certificates, and exercise autonomy in governance and academic matters.

Private University Colleges: Tertiary institutions privately-owned and managed, that are operating initially under affiliation with established universities, and seeking eventual accreditation and presidential charter to function independently.

Mentorship: A structured relationship where an established university supervises and supports a private university college in governance, academics, and operations to ensure compliance with regulatory standards and readiness for autonomy.

Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC): The national regulatory body responsible for overseeing and coordinating tertiary education in Ghana, ensuring quality assurance, accreditation, and the development of higher education institutions.

Affiliation: Formal agreements between private university colleges and established public universities or chartered universities, wherein the latter provides mentorship and supervision, for former's programmes or institutional development.

Quality Assurance Systems: Mechanisms and processes implemented by GTEC to ensure that tertiary institutions maintain and enhance the quality of education they provide.

Regulatory Frameworks: The policies, rules, and guidelines established by GTEC and other legal bodies to govern the establishment, operation, and accreditation of tertiary institutions in Ghana.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The study is organised into five chapters. Chapter One focuses on the introduction and background of the study. Chapter Two deals with the literature review which supports the study. It has sections to cover important aspects of review such as theoretical framework and conceptual framework. The methodology which describes how the study is conducted is discussed in Chapter Three. This chapter covers the research design, sample size and sampling technique, Instrumentation, data collection and analysis procedure, etc. The data analysis is presented, discussed and interpreted in the fourth chapter. Finally, Chapter Five consists of a summary of the key findings of the study, conclusions, limitations and recommendations for policy and practice.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Literature review is a crucial component of every study. Consequently, researchers meticulously select relevant works, analyse the work to identify similarities and differences, and synthesize information when necessary. In this light, McCombes (2023), views literature review as a survey of scholarly sources on a specific topic. It provides an overview of current knowledge, allowing you to identify relevant theories, methods, and gaps in the existing research that you can later apply to your thesis topic. According to Nudurupati, Bititci, Kumar and Chan (2011), literature review has the function to bring out the theories backing the study, and to help in contextualizing the findings of the research with reference to existing knowledge. The literature review of this research is crafted in alignment with the research's thesis statement, which articulates that, Bentiful University College (Bentiful-UC) will effortlessly attain Presidential Charter if there are concise requirements for Charter attainment. This thesis statement embellishes the focal theory that, private university colleges are unable to attain presidential charter due to its inability to overcome its challenges, so in what ways can they overcome these challenges to attain presidential charter. This chapter therefore explains all relevant concepts backing the subject, challenges of presidential charter.

Based on the purpose of the study, literature is reviewed on the under-listed concepts, derived respectively from the four research questions:

- a) effectiveness of regulatory requirements of Bentiful-UC for presidential charter
- b) challenges encountered by Bentiful-UC in acquiring the presidential charter

- c) preparedness of Bentiful-UC in obtaining the presidential charter
- d) strategies to overcome challenges to the presidential charter by Bentiful-UC

2.1 Conceptual Framework

GTEC regulates both public and private higher education institutions in Ghana. An act of parliament establishes public universities and can award its degrees, while private university colleges must undergo a rigorous process to attain a presidential charter, allowing them to become fully autonomous universities. To qualify for a presidential charter, private university colleges must affiliate with a public or chartered private university for at least ten years. However, the stringent regulatory requirements pose significant challenges for these institutions, including difficulties in obtaining initial accreditation, high affiliation fees, and conflicting requirements from GTEC and mentor institutions. To overcome these obstacles and achieve a presidential charter, private university colleges must develop strategies to address these weaknesses, comply with standards, and navigate regulatory challenges. Self-assessment is crucial in identifying gaps and devising relevant strategy for progress. Successfully meeting these challenges will enable private university colleges to operate independently and award their own degrees.

The first concept, derived from research question one, is the effectiveness of the regulatory framework of private university colleges for presidential charter. The regulatory framework for private university colleges pursuing a presidential charter in Ghana involves meeting specific criteria set by GTEC. The Government merged the National Council for Tertiary Education and the National Accreditation Board to form the GTEC under the Education Regulatory Bodies Act, 2020 (Act 1023). This body is the regulatory body for all private and public tertiary institutions. The regulatory framework emphasises quality assurance in tertiary education, governance structure,

teaching quality, research standards, financial sustainability, and resource availability as key evaluation criteria. The regulatory framework for private university colleges pursuing a presidential charter in Ghana is designed to ensure quality and compliance with set standards. The regulatory framework ensures that private university colleges in Ghana meet stringent criteria before being granted a presidential charter, signifying their ability to award degrees and diplomas independently.

GTEC closely monitors private university colleges that receive a presidential charter to ensure they maintain the required standards. Failure to meet these standards may lead to revocation of the charter. The requirements for obtaining a presidential charter typically involve meeting stringent academic, administrative, and infrastructural standards set by the GTEC. The process of presidential charter involves a thorough evaluation of the institution's academic programmes, faculty qualifications, governance structure, physical facilities, and financial sustainability. The institution can apply for a presidential charter through GTEC upon meeting these requirements. The application is then reviewed, and if approved, it is forwarded to the president for consideration. Once the charter is granted, the institution can independently confer degrees and diplomas.

In accord with this, the second concept derived from the second research question is the challenges private university colleges encounter in acquiring a presidential charter. Private university colleges in Ghana encounter several challenges in developing a presidential charter, which is essential for them to award degrees and diplomas independently. Some private university colleges often face financial challenges in meeting the requirements for a charter. The need for funds to enhance infrastructure, academic Programmes, and overall quality can be a significant hurdle. A decline in

admissions to private university colleges affects revenue strength, making it difficult for them to generate sufficient funds to cover operational costs, break even or make a profit to meet the charter requirements. The financial burden of paying institutional affiliation fees can strain the resources of private university colleges, impacting their ability to progress towards obtaining a presidential charter. Private university colleges must demonstrate capacity in governance, finances, academic matters, and infrastructural development over 10 years before applying for a charter. This process requires significant investment in various areas. Ensuring compliance with quality standards and regulatory frameworks set by the GTEC also poses a challenge for private university colleges striving to meet the criteria for a presidential charter. Private university colleges are under strict monitoring by GTEC to ensure they maintain required standards. Failure to meet these standards may lead to the revocation of presidential charters, adding pressure on institutions to meet expectations continuously. Private university colleges face challenges in maintaining a high-quality faculty.

Data shows that a significant percentage of academic staff do not hold terminal degrees (PhDs), which falls short of the standards set by GTEC. Again, public perception that graduates from private university colleges are inferior in quality compared to those from public universities poses a challenge. Overcoming this perception and proving the quality of education provided is crucial for private institutions. Unfair regulations, undue competition from public universities, and challenges with accreditation bodies are obstacles that private university colleges must overcome to attain a presidential charter. The regulatory environment can be demanding and may not always favour private institutions. Despite these challenges, private university colleges are encouraged to work diligently towards meeting the

criteria set by GTEC to obtain a presidential charter, which signifies their ability to award degrees and diplomas in Ghana independently.

Having identified the challenges of the presidential charter, the next concept, derived from the third research question, is the preparedness of private university colleges in obtaining the presidential charter. The readiness of private university colleges towards attaining presidential charter is the ability of private university colleges to demonstrate sufficient cause for presidential charter. This preparedness includes financial stability. Private university colleges should be financially stable to cater all operational costs. Private university colleges should increase student enrolment numbers to be eligible for the presidential charter. There is also a need for improvements in quality assurance processes, which also contribute to the challenges private university colleges face in receiving a charter. Policies, statutes, regulations, and structures should be implemented to ensure that the institution operates according to GTEC standards. Private university colleges are expected to have a certain number of academic staff with a minimum qualification of terminal degrees to attain the presidential charter. Academic staff are expected to publish regularly to enhance their relevance in the educational system.

Furthermore, developed and adequate infrastructure is also an essential part of the presidential charter. An institution seeking a Charter should have sufficient infrastructure and facilities such as lecture halls, a library, internet facilities, hostels, offices, etc. Administrative personnel at private university colleges seeking a charter must possess the appropriate qualifications, and every administrative role should be filled without any vacancies.

The Commission and Council for Independent Universities organise workshops and training sessions to guide universities through the charter system, focusing on quality assurance, regulatory frameworks, and other relevant topics. To prepare for the charter application, private university colleges must assess their strengths and weaknesses, address any gaps, and ensure they have the funds available to meet the charter requirements. Uphold high-quality assurance standards in academic matters, governance, and infrastructure development to demonstrate readiness for a charter. Universities must be proactive in preparing to meet the standards required for obtaining a presidential charter. The importance of a presidential charter for private university colleges in Ghana is multifaceted. It signifies a significant milestone in the institution's academic journey, elevating its status to an independent degree-awarding university. This distinction enhances the institution's credibility, autonomy, and academic freedom. It also expands the opportunities for collaboration, research, and international partnerships. Again, it contributes to the diversification and enrichment of the higher education landscape in Ghana, offering students a wider range of educational choices and fostering academic excellence. The recent granting of presidential charters to private university colleges in Ghana underscores the government's commitment to promoting higher education and strengthening the capacity of private institutions to contribute meaningfully to the country's academic and intellectual development.

Finally, the last concept derived from the fourth research question is strategies to overcome challenges to the presidential charter by private university colleges. To overcome challenges and successfully obtain a presidential charter, private university colleges in Ghana can employ strategies to help them overcome challenges. Preparing a self-assessment document indicating strengths and weaknesses, and identifying gaps

that need to be addressed, is a way of overcoming challenges which may not be evident to the university college. Private university colleges should devise multiple streams of income to help raise adequate funds for the presidential charter. Engagement in mentorship programmes with public universities to learn from their experiences can help private university colleges to improve institutional capacity. Understanding and adhering to the regulatory frameworks set by GTEC ensures that private university colleges comply with charter requirements. Private university colleges should introduce innovative programmes that enhance the knowledge and skills of students, contributing positively to socio-economic development. The charter committee of Private university colleges should attend workshops and training sessions organised by GTEC to gain insights into the charter system and quality assurance processes.

Private university colleges should form collaborations and partnerships with other institutions to share resources, expertise, and best practices, which can help strengthen the university's capacity to meet charter requirements. Academic staff should also focus on research and publications to enhance the university's reputation and demonstrate its ability to contribute to knowledge and innovation. Private university colleges should develop strategies to adapt to changes in the funding relationship with the state and other stakeholders, as public funding for higher education institutions in Ghana has been dwindling over the years. By implementing these strategies, private university colleges can improve their preparedness and increase their chances of successfully obtaining a presidential charter in Ghana.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study's theoretical foundation focuses on the thesis of this research, which posits that a private university college will effortlessly attain a presidential charter if there are concise requirements for charter attainment. This thesis incorporates elements of both institutional and stakeholder theories to examine issues concerning the regulatory framework and prerequisites for obtaining a presidential charter. It explores the significance of financial support and sustainability, the necessity of a transparent governance structure, and the importance of having adequate faculty staff as facilitators in the charter attainment process.

2.2.1 The Institutional Theory's Influence in the Context of Private University

Colleges

A study by Dacin, Goodstein, and Scott in 2013 on institutional theory acknowledged that although institutions seek to drive change powerfully and shape the nature of change across levels and contexts, they also change in character and potency over time. This highlights that institutions are not static entities. They evolve and change over time in terms of their character and influence. This evolution can occur due to various factors such as shifts in societal values, technological advancements, changes in leadership, or external pressures (Dibben & Wood, 2024). Therefore, while institutions play a crucial role in driving and shaping change, they must recognise that they are also subject to change in their identity and operation. This understanding is vital for effectively navigating and adapting to societies' dynamic nature and institutional frameworks. In this context, the private university colleges seek to drive change by obtaining a presidential charter, which would signify their official recognition and potentially grant them more autonomy and authority in their operations. By achieving this charter, the institution aims to shape the nature of

tertiary education within its sphere of influence. However, it is essential to acknowledge that the institution itself will change character and potency throughout this process. For instance, obtaining the charter requires the institution to meet clear and minimal criteria, indicating a shift in its governance structure and operational standards.

Additionally, securing sufficient financial backing and ensuring sustainability will necessitate institutional restructuring and strategic planning. Furthermore, transparent governance practices and adequate faculty staff are essential aspects that may evolve as the institution progresses towards charter acquisition. The institution may need to adapt its governance mechanisms to comply with regulatory requirements and demonstrate accountability. Similarly, building and maintaining a qualified faculty complement may involve recruitment efforts, professional development initiatives, and adjustments to academic programs. Institutions can impose constraints, overlaying conditions that affect the potential for mobilisation, access, and influence. They restrict specific actions while enabling others (Amenta & Ramsey, 2010). The institutional theory posits that organisations conform to institutional pressures to gain legitimacy and acceptance in their environment.

2.2.2 The Role of Regulatory Bodies (Institutions) in Shaping Legitimacy for Private University Colleges

Legitimacy is a vital resource organisation's need to survive and thrive. It is often achieved by conforming to societal norms and expectations, and these institutions serve as the primary source of these societal norms and expectations. They establish the rules, regulations, and cultural norms organisations must adhere to, to be perceived as legitimate by their stakeholders. This can involve constraints imposed by

formal institutions such as laws and regulations and informal institutions such as social norms and cultural values. At the same time, these institutions provide frameworks and opportunities for organisations to demonstrate their legitimacy and gain acceptance by aligning their actions with institutional expectations. Organisations can enhance their credibility and reputation, increasing access to resources, opportunities for mobilisation, and influence within their environment. Therefore, the interplay between institutional constraints and opportunities shapes the strategies and behaviours of organisations as they navigate their quest for legitimacy and survival in their respective environments. In the case of private university colleges seeking presidential charters, GTEC, as the regulatory body overseeing presidential charters, plays a pivotal role in establishing the regulatory framework.

GTEC functions by imposing constraints and setting conditions that affect the potential for mobilisation, access, and influence of private university colleges. The clarity and conciseness of the regulatory requirements can significantly impact the ease with which private university colleges obtain charters. Simplified and focused requirements can streamline the process, reducing resistance and increasing the likelihood of successful charter acquisition. Conversely, complex and extensive requirements may present challenges, subjecting private university colleges to coercive pressures from regulatory agencies, thereby hindering their efforts to attain charters. The external expectations enhance the institution's legitimacy in the eyes of stakeholders such as government bodies, accrediting agencies, and potential students. By meeting these requirements, the university is not only conforming to societal norms and expectations but also demonstrating its legitimacy, which, according to the institutional theory, increases its chances of survival and success.

2.2.3 Isomorphism Forces and their Impact on Higher Education Institutions

According to Ansah and Swanzy (2019), institutional theory posits that organisations, including higher education institutions, operate within an environment shaped by rules, requirements, understandings, and widely accepted assumptions about appropriate organisational forms and behaviours. These institutional pressures, such as those related to accreditation, affiliation and presidential charter, compel higher education institutions to adapt their behaviour to resemble that of other institutions in their environment to maintain legitimacy and ensure their survival. This gives rise to isomorphism from coercive, mimetic, and normative forces (Di Maggio & Powell, 1983).

2.2.4 Coercive Isomorphism in Ghana's Higher Education Sector: The Influence of Regulatory Bodies

Coercive forces originate from political and legal influences and the pursuit of legitimacy. These pressures are evident when powerful organizations, such as GTEC, compel less powerful entities, like Private University Colleges, to conform to specific actions and behaviours to gain accreditation and legitimacy. In Ghana's higher education sector, coercive pressure is prevalent due to the dominance of government, professional, and regulatory agencies. The regulatory framework for setting up and operating private universities in Ghana brings the concept of coercive isomorphism to bear on that venture. The regulatory framework not only prescribes that all such institutions and their programmes must be assessed and accredited before commencing operations, but also prescribes sanctions for failing to do so. An institution's legitimacy, as a legal entity, thus hinges on its compliance with the tenets of coercive isomorphism. This comes with incentives such as the attraction of good students and staff and funding from various sources for Private University Colleges.

2.2.5 Mimetic Isomorphism in Ghana's Higher Education Sector: Emulation of Public Universities by Private University Colleges

In mimetic isomorphism, organisations tend to model themselves after similar organisations in their field of operation that they perceive to be more legitimate or successful. Mimetic forces arise from standard responses to uncertainty. These forces encourage organisations, such as a mentored private university, to emulate best practices from Ghana public universities recognised for providing quality education. By doing so, these mentored institutions model themselves after public universities to enhance their legitimacy and chances of attaining a presidential charter.

2.2.6 Normative Forces and Professionalism in Ghanaian Higher Education: Impact on Private University Lecturers and Institutions

Normative forces, on the other hand, relate to professionalism. Professionalism involves members of a particular occupation collectively setting standards and expectations for practice. These norms and values are communicated through deliberate methods such as workshops, public lectures, seminars, short courses, periodicals, magazines, and manuals. University lecturers in Ghana, for instance, are expected to display similar traits and characteristics to gain legitimacy. This impacts the higher education institutions they work for, as their credentials and experiences influence the perceived legitimacy of the university college.

It appears possible that an institution may experience all three forms of isomorphism in an overlapping manner in its quest for legitimacy in its operations. For instance, in addition to direct coercive isomorphism inherent in the regulatory framework, the accreditation procedure implicitly sees the public universities as the norm by requiring the private institutions to affiliate with them (normative isomorphism). This

requirement compels them to comply with conditions set by the mentor institutions before graduates from the private universities can be awarded qualifications (coercive isomorphism). The mentorship procedures and the private universities' quest for speedy accreditation are also likely to compel those institutions to readily adopt recommendations from assessment panels (made up of professors appointed mainly from the public universities). These recommendations, no doubt, would be based on the experiences acquired by the mentors and evaluators from their regular places of work, which are the public universities. Therefore, adopting and implementing the evaluators' recommendations would necessarily result in the Private Universities mimicking public university practices (mimetic isomorphism) (Dattey, Westerheijden & Hoffman 2014). This theoretical framework has been used to interpret the regime of the legitimacy of private university colleges' presidential charter in the Ghanaian higher education sector.

2.2.7 Application of Stakeholder Theory in Private University Colleges

The term “stakeholder” as we use it today originated in a 1963 internal memorandum at the Stanford Research Institute, now known as SRI International, Inc. This term was introduced to challenge the traditional belief that only stockholders were the primary group to which management should be accountable. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, scholars and practitioners began developing management theories to address high uncertainty levels and rapid business environment changes (Parmar, Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Purnell & de Colle, 2010). Stakeholder theory emphasises the importance of considering the interests of all parties affected by a company's actions, not just shareholders. It recognises that businesses have responsibilities to a broader range of stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers,

communities, and society. This shift in perspective has led to a more holistic approach to corporate governance and decision-making.

The evolution of stakeholder theory has significantly impacted how organisations operate and make strategic decisions. Companies increasingly recognise the value of engaging with stakeholders to build trust, manage risks, and create long-term sustainable value. Stakeholder engagement has become a key aspect of corporate social responsibility efforts and is essential for maintaining a positive reputation and competitive advantage in today's interconnected world. The concept of stakeholders has evolved to encompass a broader range of individuals and groups impacted by an organisation's activities. Recognising and addressing the needs and concerns of stakeholders is now considered essential for effective management and sustainable business practices. This theory posits that private university colleges must align their objectives with the expectations and needs of their diverse stakeholders.

The stakeholder theory suggests that an institution's success is not solely dependent on shareholders, but also on other entities with a stake in the institution. In the context of private university colleges, these stakeholders include the regulatory body (GTEC), students, and staff (faculty and administration). GTEC, as a stakeholder, sets the requirements for charter attainment, and the university college must meet these requirements, which should be concise and limited to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy and delays. The stakeholder theory suggests that the university should engage with GTEC to understand and influence these requirements, ensuring they are reasonable and achievable.

According to the stakeholder theory, a business entails a network of relationships involving various groups with vested interests in the business activities (Parmar et al.,

2010). These groups encompass customers, suppliers, employees, financiers (including stockholders, bondholders, and banks), communities, and managers, collaborating to generate and exchange value collectively. Moreover, the theory asserts that every stakeholder holds inherent value, and the organisation is responsible for them. It challenges the conventional business perspective, prioritising profit maximisation solely for shareholders. The executives must oversee and influence these relationships to maximise stakeholder value and regulate distribution (Parmar et al., 2010). In the context of private university colleges, this theory suggests that the institution's objectives should not be profit-driven. Instead, the university college should endeavour to gain acceptance by adhering to and surpassing standards set by GTEC, thereby continually improving quality and relevance as time progresses, which aligns with stakeholders' interests, such as owners, students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

2.2.8 Application of the Institutional Theory and Stakeholder Theory in the Context of Private University Colleges

Research on changing organisational structures in higher education publishing underscores how resource competition and market acquisitions during the mid-1970s intensified market pressures. This led to a decline in the traditional editorial logic based on professional norms and the establishment of a market-oriented approach throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Another study on this issue examines a parallel shift in institutional logics within the United States finance industry, driven by environmental changes (Dacin, Goodstein & Scott, 2013). The study emphasises how resource competition and market acquisitions heightened market pressures in the mid-1970s, leading to institutionalising a market logic in higher education publishing. Similarly, sufficient financial backing is crucial in the context of the private university college seeking a presidential charter. Just as market pressures drove changes in the

publishing industry, financial considerations significantly influence the college's ability to achieve its goals.

The availability of financial resources can determine the institution's capacity to meet the requirements for obtaining a presidential charter, such as investing in infrastructure, faculty development, and administrative systems and its financial obligations to affiliating institutions and accrediting bodies (GTEC). Private university colleges operate within a broader institutional environment that will change, such as shifts in regulatory frameworks, economic conditions, or educational policies. These environmental changes can influence the college's institutional dynamics and decision-making processes, impacting its ability to secure financial backing and navigate the charter acquisition process. Institutions that demonstrate sound financial management practices are more likely to gain credibility and support from external stakeholders. This includes having sustainable revenue streams, prudent budgeting practices, transparent financial reporting mechanisms and securing adequate financial support through various sources such as tuition, grants, donations, and endowments.

By meeting these criteria, stakeholders can be assured of the college's stability and commitment to excellence. Adequate financial resources ensure the institution can invest in infrastructure, faculty development, research activities, and student services, all of which contribute to its long-term viability. Key stakeholders in this area would include donors, investors, faculty members, students, and administrative staff. Donors and investors would want assurance that their contributions are being used effectively towards sustainable growth. Faculty members would be concerned about adequate

resources to support their teaching and research activities. These resources include learning management systems, e-library facilities etc.

On the other hand, students would benefit from improved facilities and resources such as ultra-modern computer laboratories, libraries, e-libraries, hostels, lecture halls, infirmaries, auditoriums, etc. Stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, donors, and community members, have a vested interest in the financial health and long-term sustainability of the University College. Adequate financial support ensures the institution can deliver quality education, maintain infrastructure, support research and community engagement initiatives and pay requisite fees such as accreditation and affiliation fees. Stakeholders are more likely to support the institution's charter attainment efforts if they believe their investments will contribute to its long-term viability and success.

The sociological-institutionalist theory suggests that organisational structures serve as the foundational frameworks through which various mechanisms of institutional influence operate (Amenta & Ramsey, 2010). Organisations' formal arrangements and configurations include their hierarchical setups, decision-making processes, operational procedures and governing structures, which dictate how activities are organised, coordinated, and carried out. The norms, values, and beliefs ingrained within the organisational cultures guide behaviour and decision-making, shaping how individuals perceive and respond to different situations. These mechanisms influence organisational members to conform to accepted standards and practices.

Also, the shared understandings, interpretations, and mental models within an organisation shape how members perceive their environment, interpret information, and make sense of their experiences. This influences organisational behaviour by

framing how problems are defined and solutions are pursued. Furthermore, organisations often rely on external resources, such as funding, legitimacy, and support, to sustain their operations and achieve their goals. This dependence mechanism shapes organisational behaviour by influencing how organisations interact with external stakeholders and adapt to environmental pressures, as it fosters trust among stakeholders and helps organisations gain legitimacy. Concerning private university colleges aspiring for a presidential charter, a transparent governing structure enhances the institution's legitimacy in the eyes of stakeholders, including regulatory agencies, potential students, faculty, and the wider community.

It demonstrates accountability and adherence to established norms and standards, essential for gaining acceptance and approval for the charter. These structures facilitate compliance with regulatory requirements and institutional expectations, including a clear delineation of roles among board members, administrators, faculty, and staff, decision-making processes, and accountability mechanisms, which help ensure that the institution operates within legal and ethical boundaries, which is often a prerequisite for obtaining a presidential charter. As per the sociological-institutionalist perspective, organisational structure serves as a conduit for various mechanisms of institutional influence. A transparent governing structure, therefore, enables private university colleges to effectively navigate their influences by aligning their operations and decision-making processes with prevailing norms and expectations. Transparency fosters trust and confidence among stakeholders, which is essential for the success of private university colleges in its charter aspirations. When stakeholders (faculty members, administrative staff, students, etc.) have visibility into how the institution is governed and managed, they are more likely to support its endeavours, including pursuing a presidential charter.

The presence of qualified faculty members is crucial for the academic reputation and institutional legitimacy of private university colleges. Mimetic pressures drive the institution to emulate peer institutions that boast renowned faculty. Additionally, normative pressures dictate adherence to standards of academic excellence, which necessitate the presence of an adequate and qualified faculty. Thus, by ensuring sufficient competent faculty members, Private University Colleges enhance their conformity to institutional norms and increase their chances of attaining the presidential charter. Faculty members themselves are primary stakeholders in ensuring there is an adequate number of qualified staff. Students benefit directly from having access to knowledgeable educators who can provide high-quality instruction. GTEC also has an interest in ensuring that faculty-student ratios meet specific standards. GTEC requires tertiary institutions pursuing a presidential charter to have at least 30% faculty staff with minimum qualifications as senior lecturers and above. An adequate faculty staff is essential for maintaining academic standards and delivering quality education. It also impacts research output, student satisfaction levels, and institutional reputation.

2.3 Effectiveness of the Regulatory Requirement of Bentiful-UC for the Presidential Charter

The discussion in this section is about the effects of regulatory framework of private universities for charter which emanates from research question one which states that, “what has been the effectiveness of the regulatory frameworks and requirements that Bentiful-UC is required to meet for the presidential charter status?” In essence, university colleges play a crucial role in shaping a country's human capital through tertiary education (Zhakhanova, 2020). To maintain high standards and ensure quality outcomes, effective regulation by a competent authority is essential. This regulatory

framework sets forth guidelines and benchmarks that must be met for quality assurance purposes (Handke, 2023). However, if these standards do not effectively uphold quality or become excessively burdensome and rigid, the University College may face challenges in balancing efforts between ensuring quality and operational efficiency (Livingstone, 1999).

One key aspect of quality assurance in private university colleges is the accreditation of the institution and its academic programmes. Additionally, requiring a minimum affiliation period of 10 years with established private institutions helps solidify the credibility and commitment to maintaining educational excellence over time (Ansah & Swanzy, 2019).

Private university colleges seeking a presidential charter must navigate a complex regulatory framework that varies from country to country. In many jurisdictions, obtaining a presidential charter involves meeting stringent criteria set by government bodies or accreditation agencies. These criteria typically cover areas such as academic quality, governance structure, financial stability, infrastructure requirements, faculty qualifications, student support services, and research capabilities (Educational Regulatory Bodies Act 1023, 2020).

2.3.1 Establishment of Regulatory Bodies

Amesimeku (2020) noted in his study that, as part of efforts to regulate the tertiary education sector in Ghana, the government established the National Accreditation Board (NAB) in 1993 through a Legislative Instrument, which was later formalised by the National Accreditation Board Act, 2007 (Act 744). Owusu-Mensah (2015) emphasised the importance of establishing regulatory bodies to protect the interests of consumers and ensure compliance in various sectors and industries, including

education. Regulatory bodies, such as GTEC in Ghana, play a crucial role in regulating and accrediting tertiary education institutions to ensure proper education standards. According to Tsevi (2016), Ghana established quality assurance guidelines for higher education about two decades ago through the National Accreditation Board (NAB), formed in 1993 to regulate public and private institutions and their programmes. Tsevi (2016) added that the burgeoning demand for tertiary education, spurred by rapid population growth and a surge in post-secondary enrolment, prompted the establishment of private university colleges to accommodate students beyond the capacity of public universities. While public universities had established internal mechanisms for quality control, the proliferation of private institutions raised concerns about uniform standards. Recognising the importance of maintaining educational quality across all sectors, the government took proactive measures by instituting a regulatory body overseeing private university colleges (Alam, 2020). This regulatory framework aimed to ensure rigorous academic standards and safeguard the credibility and integrity of tertiary education in Ghana. Private university colleges function within a regulatory framework to provide quality education, institutional accountability, and adherence to national standards (Ansah & Swanzy, 2019). This framework covers several critical areas, including quality assurance, accreditation, affiliation, and presidential charters.

2.3.2 Accreditation of Private University Colleges

The regulatory process begins with authorising a private entity to establish or expand a campus. It continues through the approval of curricula, certifications, and operational benefits. It also involves ongoing monitoring and data collection on financial and academic performance (Amesimeku, 2020). The accreditation procedure, amongst other things, requires private universities to be mentored by

autonomous universities that run similar programmes before being considered for institutional and programme accreditations. According to Owusu-Mensah (2015), since the inception of the National Accreditation Board (NAB) in 1994, the Board has provided regulatory services for both public and private higher education institutions in Ghana. The Board's primary focus has been on accrediting private universities. This rigorous and demanding accreditation process involves several steps: submitting an application for the institution's name, establishing the legal status through the Registrar General's Department, and dispatching a team of experts to assess whether the institution meets NAB's requirements for the proposed academic programmes. Accreditation is granted based on the recommendations of these experts, who are educationists and subject-matter professionals expected to provide impartial and thorough evaluations.

Additionally, a prospective private university must be prepared to operate as a mentee under the guidance of a mentoring university for a minimum of ten years, following terms and conditions set by the NAB and the mentoring institution. In agreement with this, Tsevi (2016) highlights that in Ghana, establishing private university colleges typically begins with them being affiliated with Chartered higher education institutions, which supervise them for a period. To start a new private university college, an application must be submitted to GTEC, detailing the proposed name, academic resources, and a timetable for achieving institutional objectives within three years. Upon inspection and verification of premises, GTEC issues a letter of interim authority. GTEC sets institutional standards, including admission requirements, faculty qualifications, and annual reporting obligations. Institutions must align their educational programmes with national policies and have stable financial resources and internal quality assurance committees.

These requirements are assessed through a self-study document and panel visits, with recommendations benchmarked against accreditation standards before making a final determination (Tsevi, 2016). According to Obadara and Abayomi (2013), in the study of Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Nigerian Universities, private universities are among the universities in Nigeria that undergo accreditation processes for improvement and quality assurance. Accreditation of private universities is essential for various reasons, such as verifying that the institution meets established standards, assisting in determining the acceptability of transfer credits, and creating goals for self-improvement and raising standards among educational institutions.

2.3.3 Affiliation

To improve the quality of education in university colleges, GTEC delegates its quality assurance responsibilities to chartered universities (primarily public ones) through a strategy known as affiliation (Ansah & Swanzy, 2019). Affiliating a private tertiary institution with a chartered institution is a multi-step process. It commences with the private institution applying to GTEC, expressing its intention to affiliate with a Chartered institution. GTEC's approval is imperative to ensure that the proposed mentoring institution possesses the minimum qualifications and resources to oversee the programme(s) seeking affiliation. GTEC's approval paves the way for initiating the affiliation process with the intended mentoring institution. Following this process, the private tertiary institution can apply to the Chartered institution it wishes to be mentored by (NAB, August 2010).

The practice of affiliating private tertiary institutions with public and chartered institutions has proven beneficial amid the increasing participation of the private sector in tertiary education service delivery. This affiliation has shifted the focus of

private institutions from profit motives to delivering quality education at the tertiary level. Without such affiliations, many private tertiary institutions might compromise their profit motives for the quality of graduates (Yakubu, 2015). The affiliation of private tertiary institutions with public and chartered institutions enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of GTEC as a quality assurance agency. It allows GTEC to delegate some responsibilities to mentoring institutions. Experienced faculty members from the mentoring institution often act as mentors, overseeing the activities of the private tertiary institution as part of the affiliation relationship. Consequently, GTEC can maintain a streamlined staff for its operations (Yakubu, 2015). Given the number of private tertiary institutions in Ghana, GTEC's role would have been challenging without these affiliations. Amesimeku (2020), on the other hand, argues that affiliation arrangement is essential because GTEC lacks the expertise and human resources to mentor newly established institutions until they can become chartered.

GTEC has established a benchmark to assess the eligibility of chartered institutions for mentoring private tertiary institutions. According to GTEC's mentoring guidelines, a tertiary institution qualifies for mentoring based on several conditions: i) it must be chartered, ii) it should have graduated the inaugural batch of students in the intended mentoring programme, iii) it must possess sufficient and qualified academic Senior Members to supervise the targeted programme(s), iv) it must hold active accreditation for the programme it intends to supervise in the mentored institution, v) it should demonstrate the ability to mentor multiple institutions in the same programme, vi) it needs to submit a report on the programme affiliation to GTEC and exhibit a track record of research output in the relevant Programme area (NAB, August 2010).

Affiliating private tertiary institutions with chartered institutions also recognises students' achievements from private institutions. Graduates are awarded certificates, diplomas, and degrees from the mentoring institutions, which often enjoy international reputations. These highly regarded qualifications enhance graduates' competitiveness in the global job market. Another significance of affiliating private tertiary institutions with chartered institutions is the prevention of the proliferation of substandard tertiary institutions. Through the affiliation process, mentoring institutions can assess the capacity of private tertiary institutions in terms of physical infrastructure, financial stability, and organisational structure (Yakubu, 2015).

2.3.4 The Process of Obtaining a Presidential Charter

The concept of a presidential charter for private university colleges in Ghana refers to the legal authority granted by the President of the Republic of Ghana on the advice of the commission given through the minister to a private tertiary institution, allowing it to operate as an independent and fully-fledged university. This charter empowers the university to award its degrees and diplomas, distinguishing it from institutions that operate under affiliation with chartered universities (Educational Regulatory Bodies Act 1023, 2020) GTEC, as the regulatory authority for both public and private tertiary institutions, is also responsible for overseeing the charter of private university Colleges in Ghana. As per the regulations of GTEC, an institution that has been under mentorship for a minimum of ten years can apply for a presidential charter under the rules. Professor Ahmed Jinapor Abdulai at his opening speech at the ninth Association of West African Universities (AWAU) Conference 2024 and the 11th Annual General Meeting held at the University of Cape Coast said that, GTEC has admonished that all private universities that are not chartered or initiated processes to receive charter would be closed down by August 31, 2024. He added that the decision aligned with

the Education Regulatory Bodies Act, 2020 (Act 1023), aimed at ensuring standards and quality in Ghana's tertiary education (Acquah, 2024).

2.3.5 Impact of the Regulatory Framework on Academic Standards and Student Outcomes

The regulatory framework in education plays a crucial role in shaping academic standards and student outcomes. Regulations are implemented to ensure quality, equity, and accountability in educational institutions. These regulations impact various aspects of the education system, including curriculum design, assessment practices, teacher qualifications, and overall institutional governance. Understanding the impact of the regulatory framework on academic standards and student outcomes is essential for ensuring that students receive a high-quality education that prepares them for success in future endeavours.

According to Sadler (2017), higher education academic achievement standards and quality assurance are essential. The study advocates for a shift towards comparability and grade integrity to ensure all students reach minimum achievement levels and fulfil their potential. The study also highlights the need for visible external standards, clarity in quality assurance practices, and a different formulation of academic achievement standards to ensure consistency and comparability across courses, programmes, and institutions. The conclusion drawn from the survey is that grading policies and practices in higher education are influenced by various factors such as academic and management structures, international rankings, competitive student recruitment, and accreditation agencies. These factors have led to the embedding of certain philosophies and practices in colleges and universities worldwide, hence the importance of external academic quality assurance policies in promoting universal

academic values and protecting the public interest in the context of academic globalisation.

On the other hand, a study on the “Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Practices and Issues” by Dill, McGaw, Baker and Peterson (2007) discusses how national qualifications frameworks and subject benchmarks play a role in external quality assurance by encouraging a focus on student learning outcomes rather than course content in national debates about academic standards. These frameworks provide potential reference points for external quality assurance practices and help redirect public and academic discussion of academic quality towards socially beneficial learning outcomes.

The study highlights the importance of maintaining and improving academic standards through quality assurance practices in higher education. It emphasises the significance of internal and external quality assurance measures, with a growing focus on the latter due to global changes in higher education policies. The study acknowledges the positive impact of new practices such as national qualifications frameworks, quality assessments, and accreditation in ensuring academic quality amidst challenges like globalisation, increased enrolment in higher education, and evolving student and labour market demands. However, it also notes the challenges associated with these practices, such as high costs and the risk of prioritising compliance over actual enhancement of academic standards (Dill et al., 2007).

2.3.7 Challenges Faced by Private University Colleges in Complying with Regulatory Requirements

Private universities are essential in expanding access to higher education and fostering academic innovation. However, these institutions often face significant challenges in complying with regulatory requirements. These challenges can impact operations, educational standards, and overall ability to deliver quality education. Anis and Islam's 2019 study revealed that private higher education institutions face challenges in complying with regulatory requirements such as accreditation, finance, and governance. The need to balance generating profit and meeting quality standards prescribed by regulatory agencies poses significant challenges for Malaysian private higher education institutions. A key challenge private higher education institutions face is balancing financial obligations to shareholders and regulatory compliance. This Study concluded that Malaysian private higher learning institutions face various challenges in providing quality education. These challenges include academics, accreditation, competition, facilities, finance, programmes, research, and students. These challenges must be addressed to improve the quality of education in Malaysia. Policy makers are encouraged to use the evidence collected to design and implement relevant policies to assist these institutions. Addressing these challenges is crucial for improving the quality of education in Malaysian private higher learning institutions (Anis & Islam, 2019).

Another study on the "Challenges Malaysian Private Higher Learning Institutions Face in Providing Quality Education: A Thematic Analysis," identified various challenges private higher education institutions face in complying with regulatory requirements. These challenges include academics, accreditation, competition, facilities, finance, programmes and curriculum, students, and research. Additionally,

the study emphasised the need for private higher institutions to balance generating profit and meeting specific quality standards prescribed by regulatory agencies, which can be a significant challenge. According to the study, critical success factors encompassed financial management, industry collaborations, curriculum review, facility maintenance, research support, and accreditation adherence. The study emphasised the importance of addressing these challenges and implementing the identified critical success factors to enhance the quality of education in private higher educational institutions in Malaysia. Additionally, the study highlighted the varying perspectives of different stakeholder groups on the importance of these challenges and critical success factors, underscoring the need for a systematic and collaborative decision-making process in addressing issues within private higher educational institutions (Anis, Islam, & Abdullah, 2018).

2.3.8 Loopholes and Shortcomings in the Current Regulatory Framework

The regulatory framework designed to govern private universities is essential for ensuring academic quality, accountability, and equitable access to education. However, despite its importance, this framework has loopholes and shortcomings that can undermine its effectiveness.

According to (Amponsah & Onuoha, 2013), the loopholes and shortcomings in the current regulatory framework of private universities include issues related to conformity with formal curriculum, standard reporting and accountability, teacher qualifications and remuneration, formal licensing and accreditation, funding sources leading to inequity, and cost-effectiveness concerns. The regulatory framework can be overly prescriptive, limiting the ability of universities to innovate in curriculum design, teaching methods, and research approaches. This rigidity can stifle creativity

and responsiveness to emerging trends and technologies in education. Tsevi (2014), on the other hand, states that GTEC faces challenges in monitoring accredited private institutions to ensure they do not admit students lacking minimum qualifying requirements, as well as monitoring unaccredited private institutions that start advertising as if they had accreditation.

2.4 Challenges Encountered by Bentiful-UC in Acquiring a Presidential Charter

This section addresses the challenges private universities face in acquiring charter, which emerges from research question two, which posits that, “What are the challenges Bentiful-UC faces in acquiring presidential charter?” Tsevi (2015) revealed a lack of clear-cut requirements for private institutions to apply for a Charter and be autonomous. The lack of clarity in acquiring a charter presents a significant obstacle for Private Universities striving to attain this status. This ambiguity makes it challenging for institutions to navigate the requirements and expectations set forth by regulatory bodies, leading to uncertainty and potential setbacks in the charter application process. Without clear guidance on the specific criteria, timelines, and procedures involved, private universities may struggle to prepare and meet charter attainment standards adequately. Consequently, greater clarity and transparency in the charter process are essential to facilitate smoother transitions to autonomy and ensure that Private Universities can effectively navigate the path towards obtaining a charter.

The challenges faced by private university colleges in obtaining a presidential charter are not limited to a specific phase but span across the various stages of their establishment and operation. From the initial accreditation process through affiliations with other institutions to finally becoming eligible to apply for a Presidential Charter, universities encounter hurdles that test their capabilities and commitment to meeting

regulatory standards. According to Tsevi (2014), private university colleges in Ghana encounter challenges in acquiring a Presidential Charter due to the requirement of being affiliated with a mentoring institution for at least 10 years and fulfilling all requirements. This relates to the challenge of a presidential charter to affiliation. Universities seeking this charter must comply with these requirements, which often involve faculty qualifications, infrastructure adequacy, financial stability, academic programmes offered, and governance structure.

In 2013, a study by Amponsah and Onuoha on the “Performance and Challenges of Private Universities in Ghana and Nigeria” revealed the following challenges faced by Private Universities in the order of seriousness as (1) High cost of faculty and staff development and training; (2) Lack of adequate finances needed for growth; (3) Lack of well-resourced libraries; (4) Inability to retain top quality faculty and staff; (5) Lack of adequate teaching and learning equipment (projectors, computers, textbooks, etc.), (6) Inadequate infrastructure (lecture halls, residence halls, offices, etc.); (7) Problems with accrediting bodies; (8) Lack of adequate human resource (understaffing); (9) Low students intake; and (10) Low remuneration and welfare packages for employees. According to Tsevi (2016), Private University Colleges face challenges in acquiring a presidential charter due to issues such as duplication of activities between local mentoring institutions and GTEC, lack of a clear policy on becoming chartered institutions, unequal treatment compared to public universities, and challenges in the accreditation process.

2.4.1 Financial Challenges

Financial challenges for private university colleges refer to the difficulties they encounter in maintaining economic stability and sustainability (Mungathia, 2018),

which are often linked to a decline in enrolment. Enrolment challenges significantly affect the financial health of private university colleges in Ghana. Furthermore, reliance solely on tuition fees can result in limited or insufficient funds when enrolment declines, jeopardising the operational viability of these institutions (Akinwalere, 2023). A decline in student enrolment decreases the revenue of private universities, resulting in financial difficulties (Amponsah & Onuoha, 2013). This suggests the need for a diverse source of income.

Financing higher education is a significant challenge in many developing and underdeveloped countries. In an increasingly globalised world, nations strive to raise the standards of local and national higher education systems to compete effectively in the international market. To achieve this goal, it is crucial to evaluate the financial resources available to ensure the quality of higher education. In Ghana, for instance, GTEC is vital in assessing and auditing private institutions' financial sources and budgets. This thorough examination enables GTEC to establish appropriate frameworks for these institutions. Moreover, GTEC evaluates the competences and faculty resources accessible at these institutions to maintain academic excellence (Utuka, 2008).

2.4.2 Low Student Intake

According to Utuka (2008), the demand for higher education in Ghana exceeds the capacity of state-funded universities, leading to fierce competition for admission. With limited vacancies, only a fraction of qualified applicants secure spots, resulting in a significant gap between demand and supply. Consequently, many students end up in private institutions, where academic standards may be lower than those of public universities.

The study of Kwakwa, Arthur and Obeng, (2012) on the “Demand for Private Higher Education in Ghana: The Case of the Presbyterian University College Ghana, Akwapem campus” revealed certain factors influencing the demand for private higher education. The study aimed to analyse the demand for private higher education in Ghana, using the Akuapem Campus of the Presbyterian University College, Ghana, as a Case Study. A sample of 140 students was surveyed using a questionnaire to gather the necessary information. The findings indicated that students' decisions to enrol in higher education are influenced by factors such as the potential for higher income, job acquisition, job promotion, job security, and improving social status. Additionally, the study examined the respondents' social characteristics, revealing that most students have parents with higher educational qualifications and professional occupations. The chi-square test confirmed significant differences in social backgrounds and university enrolment. Furthermore, students from top-tier schools were more likely to access university education than students from second-tier schools, as they have a better chance of passing entrance exams. The study also found that the programmes being offered are key factors influencing students' choice of a Private University over a public one. Many students declined offers from public universities because they were not interested in the programmes available.

Dezhbakhsh and Karikari (2010) conducted a study on the enrolment at highly selective private colleges: Who is left behind? The study focused on analysing the enrolment decisions of students, particularly low-income students, at highly selective private colleges compared to public colleges. The study highlights the significant impact of family income, financial aid, and college pricing on enrolment decisions. The findings suggest that despite financial aid offerings, low-income students may

find private colleges less affordable due to hidden costs, leading to lower enrolment rates than public colleges.

2.4.3 Inadequate Infrastructure Facilities

Inadequate infrastructure facilities lead to a lack of essential academic resources such as libraries, laboratories, and research facilities. These resources are vital for meeting the standards for obtaining a presidential charter. It compromises the quality of education offered by Private Universities. Sulemana (2011) conducted a study on “The Provision of Educational Infrastructure and Academic Performance in Tertiary Institutions in Ghana: University of Developmental Studies (UDS)”;

he used the WA Campus as a Case Study.” The study revealed a significant correlation between the availability of educational infrastructure facilities and academic performance. Moreover, it suggests that factors like the educational background of students’ parents have minimal impact on students' academic achievements. Lack of modern classrooms, technology, and equipment can hinder effective teaching and learning processes, essential for meeting the criteria set by regulatory bodies for charter approval. Students at the Wa campus experience stressful learning conditions, adversely affecting academic results. Therefore, it is reasonable to state that providing sufficient educational infrastructure, such as well-equipped libraries with relevant books, adequately furnished lecture halls, transportation facilities, and residential halls, can alleviate student stress and improve academic outcomes.

2.4.4 Inadequate Faculty Staff and Poor Retention

Private institutions often function with a restricted number of faculty and staff members, leading to a notable issue of insufficient qualified teaching and administrative personnel. These establishments commonly lack an adequate regular

workforce, prompting them to heavily rely on part-time lecturers, many of whom are sourced from public universities (Utuka, 2008). This reliance on part-time staff is prevalent across private universities, as highlighted in a study conducted by Varghese (2004). Part-time lecturing has become common in many educational institutions, particularly private universities. This phenomenon arises due to various reasons such as budget constraints, decreasing student enrolment, and the need to generate additional revenue. However, this practice can harm the academic performance of lecturers already overwhelmed with their workload. One of the most significant consequences of part-time lecturing is the reduced time and energy that academics can dedicate to their primary roles.

In parallel with this assertion, Arthur and Arthur (2016) emphasise the significant shortage of instructors and personnel in Ghana's private and public universities. Private universities heavily depend on part-time faculty from public institutions, which affects the quality of education in both sectors. Part-time faculty cannot dedicate sufficient time and attention to private universities, and their involvement exacerbates understaffing issues in public universities, leading to poor teaching, research, and mentoring. The emergence of new institutions stretches resources and staff, raising quality concerns. While this approach allows private institutions to offer affordable education options to students, it may limit their ability to contribute meaningfully to academic research and innovation.

2.4.5 Low Remuneration and Welfare Packages

Low salaries can demotivate staff members, affecting productivity and commitment to the institution. It can also result in high turnover rates as employees may seek better-paying opportunities elsewhere. The inability to retain experienced faculty members

can impact the quality of education provided by the university, making it challenging to meet the stringent requirements set by regulatory bodies for obtaining a Presidential Charter.

A study on “Employee Retention in Institutions of Higher Learning: A Study of Some Selected University Colleges in Ghana” in 2022 by Boakye, Arpoh-Baah, Odoom, Afram, Addai and Agyemang revealed that firstly, the expectations of senior members play a crucial role in the decision to work at institutions. These expectations encompass various factors such as seeking a competitive salary package, improved working conditions that enhance productivity and well-being, access to more training opportunities to enhance skills and knowledge, prospects for career growth and development within the organization, a positive and supportive work environment that fosters job satisfaction and motivation, as well as the desire for recognition and appreciation for contributions. Secondly, several key factors can influence the retention of senior members within institutions. One significant factor is offering better remuneration packages that reflect the value of experience and expertise. Additionally, providing care and concern from employers by addressing needs and concerns can contribute significantly to retaining senior talent. Moreover, offering continuous training and development opportunities allows senior employees to stay updated with industry trends and further develop skills. A well-structured promotion system that recognises meritocracy and provides clear pathways for advancement is also crucial in retaining senior staff.

Furthermore, creating a conducive working environment that promotes collaboration, communication, and mutual respect can enhance retention rates among senior members. Lastly, increasing employee engagement through various initiatives can

foster loyalty and commitment among senior employees towards the institution. According to (Boakye et al., 2022), Several studies align with the findings of this study. These include the notion that effective communication and information sharing impact employee retention, as discussed by Gopinath and Becker (2000) and supported by Taylor and Cosenza (2002). Two-way communication is emphasised by Taylor and Cosenza (2002) to foster employee comfort in the workplace. Similarly, research by Odoom, Opoku and Ayipah (2016) and Amegatsey, Odoom, Arpoh-Baah and Okyere (2018) highlights the significance of promotion for employee retention in Ghanaian tertiary educational institutions. Remuneration's influence on retention, as noted by (Amutuhaire, 2010) is corroborated by the findings in this study. Scholars like Odoom et al. (2016) acknowledge the importance of employee involvement in decision-making. Furthermore, the significance of training and development opportunities for employee retention is underscored by various researchers (Amegatsey et al., 2018; Odoom et al., 2016), suggesting viewing employee training and development as an investment rather than a cost, akin to capital improvements, to strengthen organisational bonds with employees.

Akafo, Boateng and Yamoah's study in (2015) on "An Assessment of Compensation Determinants and Its Impact on Employee Commitment in Private Tertiary Institutions in Ghana" aimed to identify compensation determinants in private tertiary institutions in Ghana, finding internal and external factors influencing academic staff compensation. Educational qualification emerged as the most significant factor, followed by skills, job position, length of service, religious denomination, and available funds. This aligns with previous research emphasising the importance of academic qualifications and skills. Despite warnings against tenure-based rewards, length of service was a significant determinant, possibly reflecting institutional

traditions. External factors like collective agreements and economic conditions played minor roles but were considered for competitiveness. Statistical tests confirmed the relationship between job title and compensation factors. The study hypothesised that an entitlement-oriented compensation approach increases organisational commitment, which was supported by findings suggesting that tenure-based rewards enhance loyalty and decrease turnover. Financial rewards were also found to positively impact organisational commitment, particularly through direct monetary incentives, aligning with theories emphasising the motivational power of money in job choice and performance (Akafo et al., 2015).

2.4.6 Impact of the Challenges

According to Aithal and Kumar (2016), challenges faced by private universities, such as attracting students for admission, faculty recruitment, library and laboratory facilities, sports facilities, research productivity, and graduation outcomes, impact the ranking, status, brand image, and overall performance of private universities. This study was on the opportunities and challenges of private universities in India. The study identified aspects such as national development, student admission, course design, teaching methods, research, industry collaborations, ICT usage, student support, evaluation processes, and global expansion to have advantages like academic freedom, customised programmes, and international reach. Still, they also encounter challenges like resource constraints, establishing a brand image, and attracting students for admission. The study emphasised the importance of quality, infrastructure, teaching methods, placements, collaborations, technology use, and global expansion for private universities to thrive in the competitive educational landscape. Challenges faced by private universities, such as a lack of adequate

financing, quality and ethics of graduates, and accreditation problems, hinder private institutions from fully achieving their objectives (Amponsah & Onuoha, 2013).

2.5 Preparedness of Bentiful-UC in Obtaining the Presidential Charter

This section discusses the preparedness of private universities to obtain a charter. This originates from research question three: "How prepared are private universities to meet the requirements for obtaining a presidential charter?" Obtaining a presidential charter for a private university college is a significant milestone that signifies the institution's recognition and approval by the government. This charter grants the university the same rights and privileges as public universities enjoy, including the power to award degrees and conduct research. However, obtaining a presidential charter is not easy, requiring extensive preparation from the university college.

2.5.1 Legal Criteria for Obtaining a Charter by Universities

An essential requirement for obtaining a presidential charter is compliance with government regulations and accreditation standards. Private Universities must adhere to all laws and regulations related to higher education, including academic freedom, non-discrimination, student privacy, and campus safety. Furthermore, they must meet or exceed accreditation standards set by GTEC. To prepare for this rigorous application process, private universities often engage in self-evaluation exercises to identify areas of improvement and develop action plans to address deficiencies. They may also seek guidance from consultants or experts in higher education law and policy. Additionally, they may collaborate with peer institutions or professional organisations to learn best practices and share resources. According to Dill, Massy and Cook (2023), many colleges and universities in the private sector are unlikely to be covered by state regulation regarding academic quality assurance. This has made it

mandatory for private universities to comply with the regulatory framework for the Charter.

2.5.2 Financial Resources and Stability of Private Universities

The financial sustainability of private universities is crucial for their ability to operate effectively and achieve their educational goals. Private universities should diversify revenue sources and adopt internal and external resource mobilisation strategies to ensure financial stability (Kobugabe & Rwakihembo, 2022). Financial stability is another critical factor that private universities must demonstrate to secure a presidential charter. The institution must show sufficient funds to sustain its operations and long-term growth. This may involve having a diverse revenue stream, including tuition fees, grants, contracts, and donations from various sources. Additionally, the college should have sound financial management practices to ensure sustainable growth and fiscal responsibility. Private universities must focus on factors like adaptation, customer service, and increasing revenue streams to ensure financial sustainability. Increasing revenue streams positively impact financial sustainability, and universities should explore various sources of income beyond tuition fees, such as investing in natural resources surrounding the institution (Ndlovu, 2020).

2.5.3 Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance Mechanisms of Private Universities

Private universities must demonstrate academic excellence and financial stability to be considered for a presidential charter. The institution must have a well-established curriculum that meets or exceeds the standards set by accrediting bodies. It should also have qualified faculty members with advanced degrees and relevant field experience. Moreover, the college should have adequate facilities, resources, and

infrastructure to support its academic programmes effectively. Alam (2020) discussed the quality of higher education in private universities in Bangladesh, focusing on business marketing approaches, quality assurance strategies, and the success of private universities. The study highlights challenges such as the lack of qualified full-time teachers, dominance of part-time teachers from public universities, and the rapid growth of Private Universities driven by political motives.

The quality assurance mechanism for private higher education in Bangladesh is deemed insufficient, with a need for improvement in governance, management, regulatory control, and recruitment of qualified faculty to ensure quality education. Arthur and Sunday in 2021 on the study “Quality Assurance Practices in Private Universities: A Literature Review,” state that private universities face challenges in maintaining academic excellence and quality assurance due to factors such as reliance on part-time lecturers, concerns about the quality assurance process by faculty members, and the need to meet local and international standards simultaneously. Quality assurance systems are crucial for identifying weaknesses in institutional operations and improving service delivery to students and stakeholders. The multidimensional nature of quality in higher education makes it a challenging and debatable concept, with different stakeholders having varying interpretations. The proliferation of private universities with different quality frameworks and technology integration poses challenges to ensuring quality standards in higher education.

2.5.4 Infrastructure, Facilities and Resources Available at Private Universities and their Effect on Eligibility for Charter

Private universities seeking charter status must comply with standards set by accrediting bodies and government agencies. These standards typically encompass the

quality and adequacy of infrastructure, facilities, and resources. Achieving and maintaining accreditation from recognised bodies is often a prerequisite for charter status. Accreditation involves rigorous evaluations of a university's academic programmes, faculty, facilities, and financial health. Continuous quality improvement mechanisms are essential, such as regular reviews and assessments of academic and administrative operations. These processes ensure that the university meets evolving educational standards and stakeholder expectations. According to Seniwoliba (2014), inadequate infrastructure, such as classrooms, lighting systems, library facilities, science laboratories, internet facilities, and audio-visual technology, can hinder effective teaching and learning; hence, the availability of infrastructure and resources in tertiary institutions will aid educational quality, demonstrating preparedness for charter.

2.6 Strategies to Overcome Challenges to the Presidential Charter by Bentiful-Uc

This section focuses on strategies by private universities to overcome challenges to the presidential charter, which emanate from the fourth research question, which posits, "What are the ways private universities can overcome their challenges to attain Presidential Charter?" To address the challenges encountered by private university colleges aspiring to attain presidential charter status, it is imperative to develop strategies to surmount these obstacles and meet the requirements for presidential charter eligibility.

2.6.1 Streamlining Regulatory Framework and Bureaucratic Processes

Streamlining regulatory and bureaucratic processes can be a highly effective strategy for private universities to overcome challenges to obtaining charter status. This approach involves simplifying and making more efficient the various administrative

and regulatory requirements that universities must fulfil to gain and maintain the charter. An online portal where universities can submit applications, track progress, and receive updates should be implemented to speed up the process and ensure transparency. Utilising e-governance tools to manage documentation, approvals, and compliance checks will make it easier to manage and retrieve digital records, reducing the time and effort spent on paperwork. Streamlining universities' regulatory and bureaucratic processes is essential for improving higher education. It eliminates regulations that are not focused on institutional financial security and student outcomes and frees up resources that could be redirected to help students progress (Carey & Pritchett, 2016). This study further highlights the need for a more robust accreditation system and a revised regulatory system to promote innovation and allow institutions to experiment while gaining access to federal funding.

2.6.2 Enhancing Academic and Quality Assurance Standards

Maintaining standards in academic quality assurance practices and continuous improvement is essential to meet national needs (Seniwoliba, 2014). The study emphasised the importance of maintaining a balance between student numbers, infrastructure, staff capacity, and teaching equipment to address quality issues in higher education institutions in Ghana. It also highlights the role of quality assurance agencies in ensuring and enhancing educational quality through processes like accreditation and audit (Seniwoliba, 2014). In the view of Obadara and Abayomi (2013), private universities in Nigeria undergo accreditation processes for improvement and quality assurance. The process ensures that institutions meet established standards, create goals for self-improvement, and raise standards among educational institutions. The study emphasised that accreditation ensures that acceptable standards of education, scholarship, and infrastructure are maintained,

producing graduates relevant to the Nigerian economy. Enhancing academic and quality assurance standards is a crucial strategy for private universities to overcome challenges in delivering quality education.

Developing and implementing clear quality assurance policies and procedures can help ensure consistency and transparency in the institution's operations. Additionally, establishing external quality assurance frameworks at the national level can help ensure academic standards are met and maintained. These efforts can contribute to raising awareness, fostering a quality-oriented culture, and enhancing the overall quality of education provided by Private Universities (Arthur & Sunday, 2021).

2.6.3 Improving Financial Stability and Infrastructure

According to Nalwoga (2021), universities must focus on generating accurate cost information, pursuing efficiency strategies, diversifying income sources, and embracing digital service delivery to improve financial sustainability. It is emphasised that universities with sound financial structures will be better equipped to survive and fulfil their missions, especially during challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic. Urgent intervention from owners, managers, and government support is needed to address the financial difficulties faced by private universities.

Private universities often face challenges related to financial stability and infrastructure development. These challenges can hinder its ability to provide quality education, attract students, and compete with other institutions. To overcome these obstacles, private universities can implement strategies to improve their financial stability and infrastructure. Kobugabe and Rwakihembo (2022) emphasised that the economic sustainability of Private Universities is crucial for their ability to operate effectively and achieve their educational goals. It suggests that private universities

should diversify revenue sources and adopt internal and external resource mobilisation strategies to ensure financial stability. Private universities can improve their financial stability by increasing revenue streams through investing in immovable property that can generate income in the future. Additionally, enhancing the attractiveness of infrastructure and degree programmes can help increase student enrolment and revenue for the university (Ndlovu, 2020).

2.6.4 Strengthening Governance and Administrative Capacities

Governance refers to the system of rules, practices, and institutions through which a university is directed and controlled. Strong governance ensures clarity of mission, effective decision-making, and transparency. In the context of chartering, it helps Private Universities demonstrate their capability to manage the institution effectively to regulatory bodies. Key elements of governance for private universities include a well-defined mission statement and an effective board of directors. Additionally, having competent administrators in key positions managing academics, student services, finance, and marketing demonstrates the university's ability to effectively manage operations and comply with regulatory requirements.

A comprehensive overview of the study of university governance and management practices globally highlights the diversity of governance structures, appointment processes for university leaders, and trends towards increased autonomy and accountability. It emphasises the importance of balancing autonomy and responsibility for effective university leadership. The study also discusses the challenges and promises of higher education in different countries and regions, and the evolution of governance arrangements and legislative reforms in higher education. Overall, the study underscores the significance of good governance arrangements in protecting

institutions from political interference and ensuring innovation and effectiveness in university management (Saint, 2009). Amponsah and Onuoha's study in 2013 suggest that better and more efficient management of private universities helps them perform better than public universities, indicating that strengthening governance and administrative capacities are crucial strategies for private universities to attain charter status.

A study by Yirdaw in 2016 on "Quality of Education in Private Higher Institutions in Ethiopia: The Role of Governance" focused on the declining quality of education in private higher education institutions in Ethiopia, using qualitative methods to identify challenges related to infrastructure, resources, student behaviour, instructor qualifications, and government policies. This study emphasised the importance of effective leadership and management in addressing challenges related to infrastructure, resources, student behaviour, instructor qualifications, and government policies to improve the quality of education in private higher education institutions in Ethiopia. The study highlighted the significant role of management and leadership activities in determining the quality of education. It stressed the need to focus on leadership and governance to enhance the quality of education in private tertiary institutions.

2.7 Summary of Literature Review

The literature review highlights the crucial role of the regulatory framework in ensuring quality and compliance with set standards. GTEC is vital in overseeing the process, emphasising quality assurance in tertiary education, governance structure, teaching quality, research standards, financial sustainability, and resource availability as key evaluation criteria. Despite the challenges, Private University Colleges must

devise strategies to overcome these obstacles, meet all set standards, and make substantial progress towards the Presidential Charter. Private university colleges' ability to strategise well to overcome the challenges of the Charter will prepare them for the Presidential Charter, which is essential for them to award degrees and diplomas independently.

Research by Hankei (2023) highlights that Ghana's regulatory framework for tertiary education plays a crucial role in ensuring quality through the enforcement of standard requirements. While these standards are necessary, Livingstone (1999) warns that overly rigid regulations can limit the flexibility institutions need to innovate and adapt. This tension between quality assurance and institutional autonomy creates a real challenge, especially for private universities trying to grow and develop. What seems to be missing in the current system is a degree of flexibility—regulations that take into account the diversity of institutions, rather than assuming a one-size-fits-all approach. This study explores that gap to propose a more flexible and context-sensitive model of regulation.

Current literature tends to treat all private universities as if they operate under similar conditions. But in practice, private institutions in Ghana vary significantly in terms of size, resources, and academic offerings. Some may offer just a handful of programmes, while others run dozens. Applying the same regulatory expectations across this wide spectrum places a disproportionate burden on smaller institutions and risks discouraging innovation and growth.

To address challenges in regulatory oversight, GTEC introduced the affiliation system, which links private tertiary institutions that are mentored by public or chartered private universities. According to Yakubu (2015), this was meant to be a form of delegated oversight. However, Amesimekwu (2020) takes a different view,

suggesting the system was introduced due to GTEC's lack of staff and expertise. Both perspectives are valid, but they reveal that there's no clear or unified understanding of what the affiliation system is really for.

In practice, many private universities find that the affiliation system comes with significant financial and administrative costs. Affiliation fees are high, and institutions must comply not only with GTEC's standards but also with those of the mentor university.

Additionally, programme reviewers, academic auditors, and inspectors appointed by GTEC to private universities for academic audit, programme accreditation, institutional accreditation, etc, often rely on norms from public university settings, which may not be suitable for private institutions. Since GTEC has not clearly outlined the expectations for these external assessors, the process becomes highly subjective and inconsistent. As a result, key decisions such as programme or institutional accreditation depend more on individual reports and interpretations than on standardized, transparent criteria. This points to a major gap in the form of unclear regulatory guidelines, which this study seeks to address.

For an institution seeking accreditation, challenges include conflicting requirements from the GTEC and mentoring institutions, dealing with duplication of activities between mentoring institutions and GTEC, unequal treatment of private university colleges in comparison with the public universities, and the lack of clear-cut policy on how private providers can become chartered institutions and award their degrees
Tsevi (2016)

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter details the methodology employed to achieve the study's objectives. Methodology is a cornerstone of any research study, providing a structured framework for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data. It ensures the research process is systematic, reliable, and replicable, enabling the researcher to address the research objectives effectively. A well-defined methodology helps establish the validity and credibility of the findings by outlining the techniques, tools, and procedures used to gather evidence. It also clarifies the rationale behind the chosen approaches, allowing others to evaluate the study's rigour and appropriateness. The methodology includes the research paradigm, research approach, research design, site and sample characteristics, study population, sampling techniques, sample size, source of data, data collection methods, data collection instrument, pilot testing, data collection procedure and data analysis procedure. Additionally, it addresses ethical considerations and the study's trustworthiness.

3.1 Research Paradigm

This study adopted the interpretive paradigm as its philosophical approach or research paradigm. This paradigm holds that the social world can be better understood by exploring it from the perspective of the people living there (Muldoon, 2023). The interpretive paradigm is based on the assumption that social reality is not singular or objective. Still, it is shaped by human experiences and social contexts (ontology) and is best studied within its socio-historic context (Potrac, Jones, Hall, Ives, Morgan & Nelson 2024). Interpretivism views reality as socially constructed and subjective, emphasising the importance of context in understanding phenomena. Also, the

paradigm emphasises understanding the meaning-making processes, choices, and intentional actions of individuals and groups. It is grounded in specific ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions prioritising subjective experiences and social contexts (Potrac et al., 2024). Knowledge is context-dependent and constructed through interactions between individuals and their environments (Lyu, 2024).

Interpretive researchers argue that reality emerges from individuals' subjective experiences of the external world. Interpretivists embrace an inter-subjective epistemology and hold an ontological view that reality is socially constructed. The paradigm argues that meaning differs from one person to another. To understand people's behaviour, it is essential to understand it from the individual's account or perspective. This study seeks to understand the challenges faced by private university colleges in attaining presidential charter from the viewpoint of members of the Presidential Charter Committee of the university college. This ensured that my research explored the perspectives of the committee members and their suggested strategies to overcome the challenges faced by Bentiful-UC.

The study, therefore, gained insights into the participants' meanings, interpretations, and experiences in their contexts regarding presidential charter challenges at Bentiful-UC. Adopting a social constructivist worldview is well-suited to examining the challenges faced by Bentiful-UC in its quest to attain a presidential charter. Social constructivism, as a theoretical perspective, emphasises the influence of social and cultural contexts on shaping individuals' perceptions, behaviours, and experiences. In the context of Bentiful-UC's aspirations for a presidential charter, this perspective offers valuable insights into how institutional, social, and cultural dynamics contribute

to the challenges encountered. The researcher conducted a face-to-face interview with the research participants to obtain their perspectives, and in the end, the research report was informed by these perspectives.

Social constructivism underscores the importance of social and cultural norms in shaping organisational behaviour and decision-making. At Bentiful-UC, pursuing a presidential charter is influenced by regulatory requirements, institutional policies, and societal expectations regarding higher education standards. A social constructivist lens helps to unpack how institutional stakeholders, such as senior members and faculty, interpret these norms and respond to the pressures they create.

The interpretive paradigm aligns closely with the principles of social constructivism and provides a complementary lens for exploring Bentiful-UC's challenges in attaining a presidential charter. Interpretive research focuses on understanding individuals' subjective meanings and experiences within a specific social context. This paradigm emphasises the importance of exploring how stakeholders at Bentiful-UC make sense of the chartering process, including their perceptions of challenges, expectations, and institutional identity. Also, the interpretive paradigm facilitates an in-depth understanding of the social, cultural, and institutional factors influencing Bentiful-UC's journey toward a presidential charter. By examining the lived experiences of key stakeholders, researchers can uncover the underlying motivations, beliefs, and attitudes shaping their actions and decisions. This enables a nuanced analysis of the interplay between external pressures, such as regulatory requirements, and internal dynamics, such as resource management and leadership practices.

The interpretive paradigm recognises that reality is constructed through individuals' subjective experiences and shared meanings. For Bentiful-UC, this perspective allows researchers to explore how stakeholders perceive the challenges of attaining a presidential charter and how these perceptions influence their behaviours and strategies. It also highlights the importance of understanding the collective narratives that emerge within the institution and how they shape organisational culture and identity.

3.2 Research Approach

This research is a qualitative study. It focused on the participants' perspectives on the challenges faced by Bentiful-UC in attaining the presidential charter. Qualitative research is a methodological approach widely utilised across academic disciplines, particularly within the social sciences (Mosbah, 2024). This research approach emphasises exploring human behaviour, experiences, and perceptions through in-depth analysis, often using interviews, focus groups, and thematic analysis. Qualitative researchers aim to gather an in-depth understanding and information about human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour.

Qualitative research examines and understands phenomena within their natural contexts, aiming to interpret them through the meanings individuals assign to their experiences (Chasokela, 2024). This approach prioritises the processes and underlying meanings that cannot be quantified or measured numerically, such as intensity, frequency, or amount (Noor, 2008). It is especially relevant in the social sciences, where it supports gaining insights, uncovering discoveries, and providing interpretations, rather than merely testing hypotheses. According to (Creswell, 2015), qualitative research is used to explore and understand social or human problems of

any individual or group. This approach allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and to generate meaningful insights. The qualitative research method studies real-world situations as they unfold naturally, non-manipulatively, unobtrusively, and without control, and is open to what emerges. It immerses in the details and specifics of the data to discover essential categories, dimensions, and interrelationships and explores genuinely open questions rather than testing theoretically derived (deductive) hypotheses. The qualitative research helps researchers focus on the accounts provided by interviewees.

A qualitative approach is particularly well-suited for studying Bentiful-UC's challenges in attaining a presidential charter because it allows for an in-depth exploration of complex, context-specific issues. This method enables researchers to understand stakeholders' lived experiences, perceptions, and strategies within these institutions, such as administrators, faculty, and policymakers. By capturing their narratives and perspectives, qualitative research sheds light on the socio-political, economic, and regulatory factors influencing the chartering process, offering a nuanced understanding that quantitative methods may overlook. This interpretive depth is essential for proposing meaningful and actionable solutions tailored to the unique contexts of Bentiful-UC.

3.3 Research Design

This study used a case study design that seeks to understand the case in depth and its natural setting or authentic context, following Punch (2005). This design is particularly well-suited for this study, as it facilitates gathering intricate details that might be challenging to obtain through alternative research methodologies. Additionally, using a case study design will enable a nuanced exploration of the case's

circumstances, enhancing the depth of analysis and providing valuable insights. The case study design also allows the researcher to explore the case's complexity and uniqueness and examine it from multiple perspectives.

The design is deemed appropriate because it provided time for data collection, offered the researcher an opportunity for in-depth interactions with the study's participants and made room for gathering data from multiple sources in the field. According to (Creswell, 2016), a case study research design allows the researcher to analyse data at the micro level. Shaw (2024) also noted that the case study design is a hands-on means of seeking explanations of societal problems from a few subjects of a scientific study. Despite these and many other advantages of the case study research design, it has some challenges.

First, a study conducted using a case study research design is usually restricted in generalizability to its findings (Gustafsson, 2024). Second, it tends to allow the researcher to construe data in a biased manner. Additionally, a case study research design is likely to compromise the reliability of the results of research studies (Omar, Barber & Ambler, 2007). As a result, suspicion of such findings is usually attributed to the saying that “small samples do not represent the viewpoint of the larger society”. Aside from these and the other challenges of the case study research design, which have not been enumerated herein, the design is continually used by researchers because it is found to be appropriate for conducting exploratory studies to discover solutions to undesirable social phenomena (Gustafsson, 2024). Also, proponents of case study design argue that it provides rich and detailed data that can lead to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Annamalah, 2024).

Case study research allows for a detailed examination of a specific context, such as an institution, organisation, educational setting, event, or individual case that the challenges under investigation have directly impacted. It provides rich, contextualised data on the case's unique challenges, opportunities, and dynamics. This approach helps uncover insights that might not be evident in broader, more generalised research designs. The challenges of attaining a presidential charter will likely be complex and multifaceted, involving interconnected social, economic, and regulatory factors. Case study research can capture this complexity by examining the real-world context of these challenges at Bentiful-UC and exploring the interplay of various factors and their impacts. This approach enables a holistic and nuanced understanding of the issues Bentiful-UC faces in pursuing a presidential charter.

Overall, the case study research design is a valuable tool for investigating complex and context-specific issues, and it has been widely employed across different research fields. In the present study, using a case study design is appropriate for understanding the challenges Bentiful-UC faces in attaining a presidential charter, as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the experiences and perspectives of individuals within their natural setting.

3.4 Site and Sample Characteristics

The study was conducted at Bentiful University College (Bentiful-UC) in Pomadze, Central Region, Ghana. The private university operates within the regulatory frameworks of the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC). The university is affiliated with the University of Cape Coast and Trinity Theological Seminary.

Bentiful-UC consists of the School of Business and Communication and the School of Theology. Both schools operate in Pomadze as the main campus and Dworwulu as the

city learning centre. The university college features an eight-classroom lecture block, an auditorium, a library, a computer laboratory, an administration block with various offices, staff bungalows, and hostel facilities for both male and female students. Internet access and an e-library are also available.

The staff at Bentiful University College are divided into senior members, including faculty, senior, and junior staff. Most senior members, particularly faculty staff, are directly engaged in accreditation matters. This research will focus on the senior members involved in the accreditation and presidential charter processes of Bentiful University College. This includes the Rector, Registrar, Deans, Head of quality assurance, Librarian, Head of academic affairs, and Accountant. These individuals hold academic credentials ranging from initial to terminal degrees and assume roles such as senior lecturers, doctors, associate professors, professors, and emeritus professors. Their collective experience varies, and they exhibit diverse levels of technological proficiency. The University is currently undergoing a period of significant transformation as it strives for academic and institutional excellence. This journey involves navigating the intricate and multifaceted process of attaining an independent charter status.

Bentiful-UC is a suitable case study for examining private universities' challenges in attaining charter status because it embodies the complexities and dynamics characteristic of many private higher education institutions. As an institution striving for a presidential charter, Bentiful-UC navigates various interconnected challenges, including meeting stringent regulatory requirements, demonstrating academic excellence, securing financial stability, and addressing infrastructural demands. Its experiences reflect the broader struggles of private universities, such as balancing

innovation with compliance and sustaining institutional growth while upholding quality standards. Additionally, Bentiful-UC's unique context, including its mission, vision, stakeholder composition, and socio-economic environment, offers valuable insights into how private universities can adapt and strategise to overcome barriers. Studying Bentiful-UC provides a rich, contextualised understanding of the pathways and obstacles in achieving charter status, making it an ideal case for exploring this significant study.

3.5 Population of the Study

The population for the study is 11 people, which consists of the charter committee members and management of Bentiful University College, that is, 11 charter committee members. The researcher's affiliation with the University College and familiarity with the local context contributed to selecting the population for the study. An insider researcher is someone who studies a group, organisation, or community that they belong to. They may have more access to information, data, and people than an outsider researcher. It is mainly used for qualitative methods. In the social and behavioural sciences, it is assumed that insider researchers have greater access to information because they possess a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the setting in which they are conducting the research (Labaree, 2002).

In qualitative research, the target population comprises the specific group of individuals, events, or phenomena the researcher seeks to study in depth. As Creswell (2015) explains, the target population in qualitative studies is typically more focused and smaller than in quantitative research, emphasising exploring experiences, perceptions, and behaviours (Subedi, 2023). This population is carefully identified based on the research objectives and questions, ensuring relevance to the study's

context. It may include individuals with shared characteristics or experiences, organisations facing similar challenges, or particular events relevant to the research focus. Suarez-Balcazar (2020) highlight that involving the target population in a study ensures meaningful engagement and allows participants to contribute directly to the findings, enhancing credibility and relevance. This approach helps researchers understand the subject through the lens of those directly involved or affected.

3.6 Sample size

The study gathered data from a total of 7 participants: the Rector of the University College, the Vice Rector, the Registrar, the Head of quality assurance, the Finance Officer, the Accountant and the Dean of the school of Business and Communication since they are directly involved in the accreditation issues and presidential charter processes of Bentiful-UC to reach data saturation. The selected sample size works directly within the purview of the case and, therefore, is in the best position to provide the needed information. Data saturation is the point in a research process where enough data has been collected to draw necessary conclusions, and any further data collection will not produce value-added insights (Ahmed, 2024). The concept of saturation is the benchmark for determining sample size in qualitative research. Saturation occurs when no new information or themes emerge during data collection, signalling that the sample sufficiently addresses the research questions or objectives (Ahmed, 2024). In qualitative research, purposive sampling is commonly employed, wherein participants are deliberately selected based on specific criteria such as their experiences, perspectives, or characteristics relevant to the study (Subedi, 2023). Unlike quantitative research, where sample size is determined by statistical power or generalizability, qualitative research focuses on the depth and richness of the data and achieving saturation.

Ahmed (2024) argues that saturation is crucial for determining sample size. They suggest that data collection can conclude once saturation is reached, as further data is unlikely to yield new insights. This approach aligns with the goal of qualitative research: to deeply explore research questions with a sufficient sample size rather than a large one. Yagar (2023) reinforces this perspective by describing sample size determination as iterative until data collection and analysis achieve saturation, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Creswell (2021) advises that sample size should balance manageability with the ability to produce accurate results. Deciding on the appropriate sample size requires thoughtful evaluation of the data's relevance and contribution to the research objectives, alongside methodological and purposeful sampling strategies. Researchers must rely on experience and judgment to determine when saturation has been achieved. Kawbia (2006) adds that a good sample should be representative of the population being studied. Various approaches to determining sample size in qualitative research highlight the importance of saturation. They emphasise the goal of obtaining a sufficient, rather than extensive, sample size to enable in-depth exploration. Ultimately, the specific context and nature of the research topic should guide decision-making regarding sample size.

3.7 Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants for the study. Purposive sampling is defined as choosing a specific group of individuals for analysis. This method is appropriate when the researcher has a clear idea of the characteristics or attributes they are interested in studying and wants to select a sample representative of those characteristics. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method that

involves selecting participants based on specific criteria, such as their expertise or experience related to the research topic (Ajithakumari, 2024). This methodology consists of the researcher intentionally choosing particular samples from the overall sample size, guided by their judgment. This selection is driven by the belief that the selected samples are information-rich and will readily yield the required data. This method is particularly advantageous when seeking in-depth insights, as it allows for a targeted approach in capturing data that aligns closely with the research goals (Campbell, Greenwood, Prior Shearer, Walkem, Young, Bywaters & Walker 2020).

Moreover, this approach is both time and cost-efficient, enabling the research to be conducted effectively. Purposive sampling frequently yields precise and meaningful data, which is crucial for addressing the research question comprehensively. The researcher's choice to employ purposive sampling to select participants aligns well with the study's objectives and research questions. The chosen participants are expected to offer valuable insights into Bentiful-UC's challenges as it strives to attain charter status. There are seven techniques of purposive sampling: maximum variation sampling, homogeneous sampling, typical case sampling, extreme case sampling, critical case sampling, total population sampling, and expert sampling. An expert sampling technique was used for this study. Expert sampling is used when the researcher needs to glean knowledge from individuals with particular expertise. This expertise may be necessary during the starting phase of the qualitative research because it will help highlight new areas of interest.

3.8 Source of Data

This study employed both primary and secondary data sources. According to Kara (2023), primary data refers to information collected directly by the researcher for a

specific research or project. In this case, the researcher gathered first-hand data from the field, focusing on the challenges Bentiful-UC faces in its pursuit of presidential Charter. Secondary data was also utilised to supplement the primary data. Secondary data consists of information collected initially for a different purpose but later repurposed to address a new research question (Kara, 2023). This study obtained secondary data through an extensive review of diverse sources, including published and unpublished materials such as books, press releases, presidential speeches, journal articles, magazines, newspapers, online resources, and prior research works. These sources provided rich and relevant information to support the study's objectives.

3.9 Data Collection Method

This study employed in-depth interviews and documentary analysis to collect data on Bentiful-UC's challenges in pursuing a charter. An interview guide was carefully crafted, drawing from the study's objectives, research questions, existing literature, and relevant constructs. These methods were selected for their effectiveness in providing a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the challenges. Before the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted with eight participants. This process helped identify potential issues with the semi-structured interview guide and allowed for necessary refinements. The primary instrument for data collection was the researcher, who conducted the interviews using a flexible, open-ended approach. Strategic pauses and intentional silence were employed to encourage participants to share their thoughts freely and in depth. To ensure data preservation and facilitate thorough analysis, the interviews were recorded with participants' explicit consent using mobile devices. Additionally, the researcher maintained detailed field notes to document non-verbal cues and contextual observations, enhancing the richness of the data.

As a qualitative research method, in-depth interviews enable researchers to explore participants' experiences, beliefs, and perspectives in detail. These interviews are characterised by their open-ended and adaptable structure, allowing for deep exploration of the topic (Thomas & Earthy, 2023). As Rubin and Rubin (2012) describe, in-depth interviews involve detailed conversations that provide insight into participants' emotions, beliefs, and lived experiences, making them ideal for studying Bentiful-UC's challenges in pursuing a charter. The study also relied on documentary evidence to complement the interview data. This included reviewing institutional records, policies, reports, and other relevant documents. These sources provided additional context and a broader understanding of the institutional and external factors influencing Bentiful-UC's pursuit of a charter.

3.10 Data Collection Instruments

The instruments used for data collection were a self-developed semi-structured interview guide and documentary checklist. The semi-structured interview guide is a structured document or set of instructions designed to help guide the interview through a consistent and organised process. It included a series of questions, prompts, and guidelines to ensure that the interview is focused, relevant, and that critical information is gathered from the interviewee. Documentary evidence is a process that involves evaluating electronic and physical documents to interpret them, gain an understanding of their meaning and develop upon the information they provide. Document analysis is crucial as it allows researchers to make sense of the resources and select the appropriate pieces for the studies. The documentary checklist lists documents the interviewer should focus on to gather important information. The validation of instruments for this study will be face validity, thus giving the instruments to colleagues to try.

The semi-structured interview guide contained five (5) sections with twenty-six (26) open-ended questions, which were developed based on the objectives of the study and the research questions. The first section collected demographic information such as gender, designation/position and years of experience in service at the University College. The second section focused on the effectiveness of the regulatory frameworks and requirements that Bentiful-UC must meet for presidential charter status. The third section gathered participants' views on the challenges that Bentiful-UC encounter in acquiring presidential charter, the fourth section collected data on the state of preparedness of Bentiful-UC in meeting the requirements for obtaining a presidential charter. The last part looks at strategies that Bentiful-UC can use to overcome its challenges to attain a presidential charter. Data collection instruments are the tools or techniques utilised in research to obtain information from participants (Salmia, 2023). These instruments enable researchers to capture individuals' thoughts, beliefs, experiences, perceptions, or attitudes within a given sample. Simply put, they are the mechanisms designed to gather study data.

3.11 Pilot Testing

Pilot testing is "a preliminary administering of instruments carried out before the full research to test out data collection instruments and other procedures" (Njeri & Kyalo, 2023). Hilton (2017) emphasises the importance of pre-testing instruments to identify and eliminate ambiguities or errors, ensuring the validity and reliability of the data collection tools. In this study, pilot testing was conducted using administrators from Akim State University College (ASUC) to evaluate the effectiveness of the research instrument. Before the main data collection, a pilot study was carried out with eight participants—eight administrators, from ASUC. These participants were interviewed to identify issues with the semi-structured interview guide, allowing for necessary

revisions and corrections. My supervisor reviewed the instrument and made further adjustments to ensure its validity. The pilot study provided valuable insights into the approximate duration of interviews with key informants and other participants. It also led to the rearrangement of specific questions for logical flow and the elimination of redundant ones. As a result, planning for the fieldwork became more organised and less challenging.

3.12 Data Collection Procedure

An introductory letter from the head of the Department of Educational Administration and Management, UEW, was given to the management of Bentiful University College for permission to be granted before scheduling an interview appointment with the interviewees. Respondents were informed about the interview session, and a date was scheduled to interview each participant. Each participant was sent a reminder a day before the interview. Each interview session was face-to-face and lasted for forty-five minutes. Data was captured through audio recording and taking notes. Respondents were encouraged to stay focused and avoid any disruptions, including answering phone calls. Supporting data was collected from documents. Documents contain qualitative data, which researchers organise non-numerical information into categories. Organising the data allows researchers to combine document analysis with other types of research. Researchers use documentary data because the information it contains can serve many purposes. The rationale for this supporting data is to ensure the consistency of information from participants. A formal letter was sent to the institution requesting access to supporting documents. After a week, a follow-up call was made, and in-person access was given for the papers. The institution did not give out copies of the documents, hence detailed notes were taken while reviewing the document.

3.13 Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis is a critical step in ensuring that the collected data is systematically processed and interpreted to address the research objectives. For ethical reasons, the study employs a pseudonym to protect the institution's identity and the individuals involved. Using a pseudonym ensures confidentiality and minimises potential risks associated with disclosure, such as reputational harm or unintended consequences for participants. This approach aligns with ethical research principles, particularly those related to privacy and informed consent (Cheng, Wang & Nasirov 2024). By anonymising the institution's name, the study maintains integrity while allowing for an open and honest exploration of the challenges faced by the institution. The grounded theory framework was utilised for data analysis in this study. Grounded theory framework for data analysis is a systematic methodology in the social sciences that involves constructing theories through a structured data collection and analysis process. The researcher transcribed the audio recordings using a software. The data was then cleaned and organised, with responses categorised under each question. Colour coding was applied, followed by the development of memos.

Writing memos throughout the coding process allowed the researcher to document key ideas, reflections, and insights related to the data and the emerging theoretical framework. The coding process followed four stages: open/initial coding, axial coding, thematic coding, and theoretical development. At each stage, significant themes identified in the data were refined and advanced to the next level of coding. This process was facilitated using the Qualitative Research Excel control panel developed by Christopher P. Hahn. Grounded theory methodology emphasises an iterative and flexible framework for data analysis, necessitating continuous movement between data collection, coding, and analysis. This approach aids in constructing a

well-founded theoretical framework sensitive to participant perspectives (Esmeraldo, 2024).

According to Mihas (2023), qualitative data analysis involves systematically organising, interpreting, and explaining data. Grounded theory framework for data analysis, as outlined by Esmeraldo (2024), is a methodology that enables the systematic development of theory based on empirical social research. In this study, the grounded theory framework for data analysis was employed to develop theoretical concepts of the data collected, as the research primarily focused on exploring participants' experiences, perceptions, and insights. The analysis was conducted in the following steps:

1. Open/initial Coding

The first step involved organising the raw data collected from interviews and documentary sources. Audio recordings of interviews were transcribed verbatim to create accurate textual data for analysis. Field notes, including observations and non-verbal cues, were reviewed and incorporated into the transcripts where relevant. Documentary evidence was catalogued and summarised to provide additional context. The data was now coded into memos, bringing out the key ideas and essence of the data.

2. Axial Coding

The researcher thoroughly read and re-read the transcripts and documentary data to gain an in-depth understanding of the data. At this level, meanings were assigned to the memos as developed in the open coding.

3. Thematic Coding

Using thematic analysis, the researcher assigned codes to data segments that corresponded to specific ideas, concepts, or recurring themes. Open coding was initially applied to generate a wide range of codes, which were later refined through axial coding to establish relationships between themes. The codes were grouped into broader categories that aligned with the research questions. These categories represented the core issues and challenges identified in the data. This opened up the data for interpretations

4. Development of Theoretical Concepts

Assumptions were established based on the data. The researcher critically analysed the data to uncover deeper assumptions, theories and statement of belief. Comparisons were made between findings from interviews and documentary evidence to triangulate the data and enhance the credibility of the results.

5. Presentation of Results

Finally, the analysed data were organised into a coherent narrative, with codes and sub-themes clearly outlined. Direct quotes from participants were included to illustrate key points, support claims and provide authenticity to the findings. The results were presented in a manner that aligned with the study's research questions and objectives. This approach to data analysis ensured that the findings were robust, credible, and relevant to the research objectives.

3.14 Trustworthiness of Interview

Ensuring the trustworthiness of the interviews is essential in the study, as it directly impacts the validity and reliability of the findings.

3.14.1 Credibility

Credibility was established by encompassing participants with varied experiences and perspectives within the target population. This approach helped to attain a more thorough comprehension of concerns. Additionally, before the actual interviews, pilot testing was conducted to enhance the clarity, relevance, and efficacy of the interview questions in capturing the pertinent concerns.

3.14.2 Transferability

Transferability was achieved by providing a comprehensive account of the research report of the study context, participants, and research methods. This transparency entitles readers to evaluate the relevance of the findings in different settings or contexts.

3.14.3 Dependability

To ensure dependability, the researcher maintained uniformity in data collection procedures, ensuring interviewers adhered to a standardised approach to maintain consistency across participants. The researcher meticulously maintained detailed records of the data collection process, encompassing audio recordings and transcripts, to establish an audit trail that can be referenced for verification.

3.14.4 Confirmability

Confirmability was ensured by employing diverse methods, such as interviews and documentary evidence, to validate findings. This approach aids in verifying data and minimising potential biases. Further, consultation with experts in the field was sought to obtain external perspectives on the research process and findings, mitigating potential researcher bias. Following interviews and documentary evidence, the findings were shared with participants for their feedback through a member-checking

process. This step allowed participants to confirm the accuracy of the data and interpretations.

3.15 Ethical Considerations

The study diligently addressed ethical considerations, including but not limited to matters of accessibility, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, plagiarism and other pertinent concerns.

3.15.1 Access

An introductory letter from the Head of Department of Educational Administration and Management, UEW, was obtained to enable approval from the University of Education, Winneba, for permission to be granted before scheduling an interview appointment with the interviewees. After permission had been granted, dates, time and venue were fixed for data collection.

3.15.2 Informed Consent

The researcher explicitly outlined the purpose, intended use of the data, and its significance to the participants. Subsequently, each participant was allowed to decide whether to participate in the study voluntarily. This indicates that participation was not coerced.

3.15.3 Confidentiality

Participants were assured that their data would remain confidential. The audio recordings of the interviews were not shared with the public. Additionally, the interviews were conducted in a private and comfortable setting where the participants' voices could not be overheard.

3.15.4 Anonymity

Participants were advised to avoid sharing identifiable information while expressing their views. As a result, no personal details of the participants were included in the study's reports or findings, making it challenging for third parties to trace specific responses to individual participants. Additionally, codes were assigned to the interview data and securely stored to prevent access by unauthorised individuals.

3.15.5 Plagiarism

The study made every effort to acknowledge all in-text references in the reference section. It ensured that no text was cited without properly crediting its source.

3.16 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has outlined the research methodology employed to address the objectives of this study. It detailed the research paradigm, research approach, research design, site and sample characteristics, population of the study, sampling techniques, sample size, source of data, data collection methods, data collection instrument, pilot testing, data collection procedure, data analysis procedure, trustworthiness of the data, and ethical considerations. The rationale for selecting these approaches was also discussed to ensure the research process's reliability, validity, and moral integrity. By adhering to this well-structured methodology, the study is equipped to generate credible and insightful findings, providing a solid foundation for addressing the research questions in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of data derived from the research conducted to address the objectives outlined in Chapter One. The data collected from interviews and documentary evidence were analysed using the grounded theory framework for data analysis, providing insights into the effect of GTEC's regulation, the challenges faced by Bentiful-UC and the strategies to overcome its challenges under the presidential charter. The data are systematically organised to align with the research questions, ensuring clarity and coherence in the presentation. Through this chapter, the foundation is laid for interpreting the data in the context of existing literature and theoretical frameworks. The research focused on the thesis statement, which states that Bentiful University College (Bentiful-UC) will effortlessly attain a presidential charter if there are concise and limited requirements for charter attainment, financial support and sustainability, a transparent governing structure and adequate faculty and staff. Data was collected to validate or prove otherwise the above thesis statement.

To ensure systematic data management, each participant and document in the study was assigned a unique identification code. Participants were labelled as Part#1, Part#2, Part#3, Part#4, Part#5, Part#6, and Part#7, maintaining anonymity while allowing for apparent reference during data analysis. Similarly, institutional documents were coded as RECHARTAPP, ACAAUDLT, REACAAUD, INVTRALT, FECHARAPP, CHARINV/RE, and STRTPL to facilitate organised document analysis without compromising institutional confidentiality. These identifiers enabled efficient data organisation and cross-referencing while upholding ethical research standards.

4.1 Demographic Data

This section focuses on the bio-statistics of the participants. The data was collected from members directly involved in the presidential charter of Bentiful University College. The bio-data is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Demographic Data

Item	Category	Frequency
Gender	Male	5
	Female	2
Designation	Rector	1
	Academic Dean	1
	Registrar	1
	Ag. Head of Academic Affairs	1
	Ag. Head of Quality Assurance	1
	Accountant	1
	Finance Officer	1
Years in service in position	1-5years	7

Source: Author (2025)

The bio-data of the participants' gender, designation, and years in service are highly relevant to the research because they provide critical insights. These details contribute to understanding the perspectives and experiences of the individuals directly involved in the presidential charter processes of Bentiful-UC. Including both male and female participants ensures that the research captures diverse viewpoints. Gender diversity enriches the analysis by offering a balanced perspective on the administrative, academic, and financial challenges Bentiful-UC faces. Such diversity helps identify inclusive solutions and is considerate of various leadership styles and decision-making approaches.

The participants' designations reflect key roles integral to Bentiful-UC's administration. The Rector and Academic Dean oversee academic governance and strategic direction, and the Registrar and Acting Heads of Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance handle administrative, procedural, and quality assurance mechanisms crucial for achieving regulatory benchmarks. Similarly, the Accountant and Finance Officer manage the institution's finances. This range of designations ensures the research captures a holistic view of the administrative, academic, and financial dynamics at Bentiful-UC.

The participants' years in service, ranging from 1 to 5 years, add further relevance to the research. The relatively recent tenure of the participants allows them to provide first-hand insights into the current regulatory framework and its impact on Bentiful-UC. The experiences of the participants highlight contemporary challenges and strategies employed by the institution to navigate the evolving demands of GTEC. Overall, the combination of gender diversity, varied designations, and recent experience enhances the research's depth and reliability. It ensures that the findings reflect real-time challenges and opportunities while aligning with Bentiful-UC's broader goal of achieving charter status. These bio-data details provide a nuanced understanding of how interconnected financial, administrative, and regulatory issues affect the institution and inform strategic recommendations for sustainable growth and compliance. The integration of the bio-data elements contextualises what the study seeks to explore. The subsequent subsections present the data collected in the field and the analysis and discussions.

4.2 Effectiveness of the Regulatory Requirement of Bentiful-UC for the Presidential Charter

The data presented under this concept seeks to answer research question one: “What has been the effectiveness of the regulatory frameworks and requirements that Bentiful-UC is required to meet for the presidential charter status?” This research explores the effectiveness of regulatory frameworks and requirements for Bentiful-UC in achieving the presidential charter status. This involves assessing whether the established rules and procedures align with intended outcomes, particularly in quality, accountability, and compliance.

Institutional theory highlights the role of formal rules, norms, and regulatory oversight in shaping organisational behaviour. GTEC's role in overseeing Bentiful-UC reflects this perspective, as its regulatory frameworks enforce compliance with established educational standards, ensuring uniformity and legitimacy in Ghana's higher education system. The capacity-building efforts, such as workshops and training, further embed these institutional norms into Bentiful-UC's practices, reinforcing conformity with the broader regulatory framework. However, institutional theory also acknowledges that strict regulatory structures can lead to institutional isomorphism, where organisations prioritise compliance over innovation and adaptability.

In this case, GTEC's rigid frameworks constrain Bentiful-UC's ability to respond dynamically to changing educational needs, underscoring a common tension between maintaining legitimacy and fostering innovation in institutionalised systems. Stakeholder theory provides an alternative perspective, focusing on the balance of interests among different actors in the higher education system. GTEC's capacity-

building efforts for Bentiful-UC, such as workshops and recommendations, reflect an effort to support key stakeholders in achieving compliance while maintaining educational quality. From this lens, GTEC acts as a mediator to safeguard the interests of diverse groups, including students, faculty, and society, by ensuring that Bentiful-UC adheres to set standards. However, the rigid regulatory frameworks constraining Bentiful-UC's adaptability indicate a misalignment of stakeholder priorities. While GTEC prioritises standardisation and compliance, Bentiful-UC may prioritise innovation and responsiveness to dynamic educational demands. This tension illustrates the challenges of balancing the varied needs of stakeholders within a highly regulated system.

4.2.1 Quality Assurance and Regulatory Compliance at Bentiful-UC

The data from the interviews, validated by the documentary evidence, indicate that GTEC's oversight responsibility fosters the development of high-quality and standardised educational practices in Bentiful-UC through effective compliance with standards. This is shown in GTEC's role as a regulatory body. The idea is that GTEC plays a vital role in overseeing private university colleges in Ghana, ensuring they adhere to established educational standards. Through their regulatory oversight and quality assurance mechanisms, GTEC works to enforce rigorous standards, monitor compliance, and maintain uniform academic standards across private university colleges. These functions help to safeguard both student interests and overall educational quality. They also help to set specific benchmarks for obtaining a charter, which authorises private university colleges to confer degrees.

The interview and documentary evidence data indicate again that GTEC's regulatory framework has been effectively enforced on Bentiful-UC to guide key academic and

operational standards. For example, GTEC specifies requirements for recruiting and developing academic staff, ensuring faculty are qualified and equipped to provide high-quality education. Additionally, GTEC outlines resource standards and ensures that Bentiiful-UC has the necessary facilities and infrastructure to support effective learning environments. By standardising these aspects, the regulatory framework helps to maintain educational quality and promote mentoring practices that align with national standards, aiming to ensure quality higher education in Ghana. These mean that GTEC regulates the activities of private university colleges in ways such as setting educational standards and quality issues, ensuring compliance to obtain a charter, and safeguarding stakeholders' interests. Thus, the regulatory framework ensures quality, standardises education and stipulates mentorship for private university colleges. These ideas are corroborated by interview participant #1, who claims that “the regulatory frameworks contribute to ensuring proper and uniform academic standards within the institution towards presidential charter by visiting the institution periodically to conduct audits to ensure that the standards are met.” The interviewee continues that:

The role of GTEC in regulating private university colleges is to approve the running of programmes, ensuring that programmes that are offered meet the development needs of Ghana. They also provide facilities, personnel, and resources that are available to run those programmes. They regulate quality and standard issues, ensuring that the university operates in line with policies relating to tertiary education. They also see you have the appropriate administrative staff (Interview data, Participant #1).

This idea is also supported by Participant #2, who confirms that:

The regulatory frameworks contribute to ensuring proper and uniform academic standards within the institution and towards the presidential charter by outlining what the institution needs for quality education. This includes providing students access to educational resources like e-books and proper classrooms, and ensuring their welfare. Additionally, the framework dictates the kind of lecturers to hire, their qualifications, and the importance of publishing academic work (Interview data, Participant #2).

The above evidence is corroborated by document evidence RECHARTAPP, which states that:

The regulatory framework has affected the establishment and operation of the institution in ways such as insisting on the institution to engage more faculty with minimum qualification of terminal degrees and minimum rank of senior lecturers to meet GTEC's norm of 30% and proceed to the next stage of the charter process (documentary data, RECHARTAPP)

These findings concur with Arthur and Kuranchie (2022), who claimed that private universities in Ghana adhere to regulators' guidelines, including GTEC's standards, to ensure quality assurance in academic and administrative functions, thereby safeguarding student interests and maintaining educational quality despite facing particular challenges. The study emphasised the importance of adequately resourcing Quality Assurance Units within private universities. It is suggested that for the GTEC's regulatory framework to be practical, institutions must prioritise allocating human and material resources to their quality assurance efforts. However, the study did not state how GTEC ensures compliance with the effectiveness of the regulatory framework. A survey of quality assurance in curriculum development at the University of Mines and Technology (UMaT) in Ghana by Nyadzi, Addo and Okrah (2024) highlighted that GTEC oversees curriculum development in Ghana's higher education, ensuring institutions meet quality standards. It emphasised the need for qualified faculty and adequate resources to maintain educational quality and support effective learning environments, aligning with national standards. This corroborates the findings of this study on GTEC's specification on academic staff requirements and resources for quality education.

The findings emphasised that GTEC ensures private university colleges adhere to standards by defining criteria for academic staff qualifications, infrastructure, and operational processes. Participant feedback corroborates GTEC's role in upholding

compliance, auditing, and guiding institutions toward achieving benchmarks necessary for obtaining a charter. For example, GTEC's insistence on recruiting terminal-level staff and providing adequate educational resources aligns with its mission to standardise educational quality. This regulatory impact resonates with literature, such as that of Owusu-Mensah (2015), who highlighted the mentorship role of public universities in monitoring private institutions to meet quality standards, an approach similar to GTEC's oversight (Owusu-Mensah, 2015). Additionally, (Nyadzi et. al, 2024) reinforced GTEC's emphasis on curriculum development and faculty requirements, underlining its commitment to aligning institutional quality with national educational needs. While GTEC's framework effectively promotes quality and compliance, challenges persist, such as limited resources for Quality Assurance Units. Adequate resourcing of Quality Assurance mechanisms remains essential for sustaining regulatory effectiveness (Arthur & Kuranchie, 2022).

4.2.2 Regulatory Support and Capacity Building in Bentiful-UC

The interview data, confirmed by the documentary evidence, indicate that GTEC supports Bentiful-UC through training, workshops, and recommendations, enhancing its capacity to implement and sustain regulatory standards effectively. This signifies that GTEC supports Bentiful-UC and other private university colleges by providing training and workshops to ensure they correctly implement quality assurance standards. The responses and recommendations by GTEC from academic audits, institutions, and programmes re-accreditation, etc., also support these private university colleges in complying with the set standards. This signifies that GTEC supports the private university colleges by conducting quality assurance monitoring, technical support, capacity building and training. These ideas are supported by interview participant #1, who claims that:

The support given by GTEC to ensure this institution complies with the regulatory framework includes periodic academic audits of the institution. Another support is that GTEC has been organising beneficial workshops. The workshops focus on presidential charter, accreditation, etc. (interview data, participant #1).

This is also corroborated by another interviewee who claims that:

GTEC has supported this institution in ensuring compliance by conducting audits, and every audit conducted by GTEC gives the institution a report. The report indicates areas where the institution is faring very well and areas that need improvement. This guides this institution in implementing measures to address those issues (interview data, participant #5).

This is confirmed by Participant #6, who asserts that:

The support GTEC offers to the institution to ensure compliance is technical advice and expertise. For instance, if a programme requires renewal, they provide feedback to improve it, making it more beneficial for students. They also guided us in making facilities, like classrooms and laboratories, more accessible and compatible with standards (interview data, participant #6).

The above information is proved by the documentary data REACAAUD, which professes that “GTEC has supported the institution to ensure compliance with the regulatory standards by providing reports and recommendations on academic audits, programme re-accreditation, etc.” Also, documentary evidence INVTRALT holds that “GTEC has supported the institution to ensure compliance with the regulatory standards by providing training on charter, accreditation management information system, quality assurance, financial sustainability, etc., at a fee for tertiary institutions.”

A study on “Self-Regulatory Authorities, Professional Education and Inclusive Governance in India: Need for Reforms” revealed that Self-Regulatory Authorities (SRAs) play a crucial role in ensuring quality training and standards in professional educational system, thereby enhancing the capacity of private universities to implement and sustain regulatory standards effectively. The paper discussed the

importance of Self-Regulatory Authorities in strengthening the capacity of private universities in India, confirming that the regulatory bodies organise training sessions and workshops aimed at faculty and administrative staff of private universities. The SRAs continued providing recommendations and guidelines to help private universities align their operations with established regulatory standards. The support from regulatory bodies enhances the overall capacity of private universities (Sangita, 2010). On the other hand, Sonne, Gentilin, Sampson, Bell, Mauney, Young, Bright & Flume (2018) emphasized that providing regulatory support, particularly through hands-on training for trainees and junior faculty, enhances the capacity of private universities to navigate regulatory processes effectively, ultimately improving the success rates and ensuring compliance with regulatory standards.

Pavlakis and Kelley (2022) discussed the tension between accreditation and regulation, noting that voluntary certification impacts institutional viability and compliance with standards. Regulatory bodies' responses can support institutions in meeting these standards, fostering improvement and accountability. The above findings is also confirmed by a study on “Regulation, Accreditation, and the Compliance Function,” which stipulated that regulatory bodies, through academic audits and re-accreditation processes, provide essential guidance and support to private university colleges, helping them meet compliance standards amidst increasing scrutiny and evolving accreditation requirements in the health care sector (Boyd & Goodman, 2022). Furthermore, accreditation serves as a non-governmental process, providing essential feedback from regulatory bodies through academic audits and re-accreditation. This supports private university colleges in meeting and sustaining quality standards, enhancing their accountability and competitive positioning in higher education (Kohler, 2003). This indicates that if all mechanisms

for good governance are implemented, private institutions of higher education can meet quality requirements, suggesting that responses and recommendations from regulatory bodies can indeed support compliance with established standards (Etoundi, 2024). These studies confirm that regulatory support mechanisms, as observed in GTEC's engagement with Bentiful-UC, are essential for enhancing institutional quality and sustainability, underscoring the importance of capacity-building initiatives and technical guidance in fostering institutional compliance. This approach supports institutional development and ensures national and international education standards adherence.

4.2.3 Regulatory Rigidity and Constraint at Bentiful-UC

The data from the interviews substantiate that the rigid regulatory frameworks of GTEC inadvertently constrain the adaptability, innovation, and efficiency of Bentiful-UC to respond to dynamic educational needs. The data stipulate that there are limitations within GTEC's regulatory framework. The stringent requirements related to personnel qualifications, facility standards, and admission policies are not flexible, not forgetting its predominant financial obligations, making it difficult for Bentiful-UC to adapt to evolving educational demands. Furthermore, the bureaucratic nature of regulatory communication and pressure to meet charter deadlines adds to the operational strain. These regulatory demands also limit innovation within Bentiful-UC, as efforts to meet certification standards and comply with specific student-to-staff ratios place added constraints on their academic and administrative operations.

This is to say that the institution faces a predominant challenge of financial difficulty in conforming to the regulatory framework, which manifests as resource constraint, cash flow issues, staff-cost challenges, infrastructure development cost and limited

revenue sources. Aside from the financial difficulty in conforming to the regulatory framework, the regulatory framework has limitations that encompass inflexible requirements in personnel standards, facility standards, and admission policies. Additionally, bureaucratic communications, charter timeline pressure, and resource issues such as the financial burdens on private university colleges, the lack of financial support, and operational constraints affecting private university colleges' dynamics, certification requirements, and staff-student ratios. The rigid nature of GTEC's frameworks, which limits adaptability and innovation, directly connects to the thesis's argument for simplified, concise and achievable requirements to enhance Bentiful-UC's capacity.

The view above is supported by interview participant #1, who claims that:

The main limitation of the current higher education regulatory framework with regard to this institution is that, when it comes to personnel requirements, GTEC needs to assess some flexibility because, probably in universities like this, the institution does not have the money to attract the type of personnel GTEC requires. And the expectation of certain facilities to be put up too. The regulatory framework does not take into consideration the fact that the institution is a private university it is not a public university where the government is providing all the facilities, providing opportunities for training and all of that. GTEC will have to look at expanding personnel to pay attention to certain issues they want the university to expeditiously work on. And then also the communication. Communication lines should be open in such a way that when, say, you send an email, you should have a fast response. The bureaucratic processes should be truncated so we can quickly hear from them because it will go to this office, to that office, before you finally get the feedback (interview data, participant #1).

This idea is further supported by another interviewee who claims that:

The limitation of the current Higher Education regulatory framework from my perspective, is the six-year mandatory period for charter which puts pressure on this institution as well as other private university colleges, with the six years, irrespective of the state of a private university in its existence and in the organization of its programmes, everybody is forced to meet the criteria. Especially the first four years, during which you must meet a specific criterion before being considered for the two-year grace period. Secondly, requiring a

chartered university to issue its certificates could be challenging. Allowing chartered private universities to continue issuing certificates in collaboration with their mentoring institutions might be beneficial (interview data, participant #6).

This data is in harmony with a study which suggested that rigid regulatory frameworks can hinder the adaptability and innovation of Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in Egypt, affecting their ability to respond effectively to dynamic educational needs and transition towards becoming Learning-Driven Organisations (LDOs). It concluded on the issue that a rigid regulatory framework can significantly limit the flexibility of PHEIs to adapt their curricula and teaching methods and this inflexibility can hinder the institutions' ability to respond to the dynamic demands of the educational landscape, which is essential for transitioning to a learning-driven model (Garad, Al Ajmi & Khawaja 2024).

On the other hands a study on “Evaluation of the regulatory framework as an instrument of university governance in the private institutions of higher education” indicated that the rigid regulatory frameworks can limit the ability of private university colleges to adapt to changing educational demands which is why many private institutions in Cameroon operate outside the regulations, suggesting that the existing frameworks may not be flexible enough to accommodate innovative educational practices or respond to the evolving needs of students and the job market. Although the study concluded that the regulatory frameworks play a crucial role in ensuring quality in private institutions of higher education and that the framework must be designed to be flexible and adaptable to meet the dynamic needs of the educational landscape, the study suggests that effective governance mechanisms can enhance adaptability and innovation, allowing institutions to meet dynamic educational needs better. (Etoundi, 2024).

The data highlights the significant role of GTEC's regulatory framework in Bentiful-UC's pursuit of a presidential charter. While GTEC's audits, accreditation processes, and capacity-building initiatives promote compliance and quality assurance, rigid faculty qualifications, infrastructure, and financial requirements pose significant challenges. Bureaucratic delays and strict timelines further constrain Bentiful-UC's adaptability and growth. To address these issues, the study recommends streamlining accreditation processes, enhancing regulatory support, and fostering public-private partnerships. A more flexible regulatory framework is essential to balance compliance with innovation, ensuring private universities meet evolving educational demands while maintaining high standards.

4.3 Challenges Encountered by Bentiful University Colleges in Acquiring a Presidential Charter

The evidence presented under this concept seeks to provide answers to research question two, which states that: "What are the challenges that Bentiful-UC faces in acquiring a presidential charter?" The question intends to uncover the obstacles Bentiful-UC faces in meeting these requirements. This includes examining administrative, financial, faculty and student enrolment issues that hinder progress and broader systemic factors like resource limitations, stakeholder engagement, or policy misalignment. Institutional theory explains how external norms, rules, and regulatory frameworks shape and constrain organisational behaviour. Bentiful-UC's challenges in achieving charter status can be attributed to the rigid regulatory and financial requirements imposed by GTEC, which, while structured and transparent, create significant administrative strain.

These frameworks demand compliance without adequately addressing the resource limitations of smaller institutions like Bentiful-UC. The financial challenges, including low student enrolment and limited income sources, exacerbate the strain, restricting the institution's ability to invest in critical infrastructure and staff development. These constraints reflect the influence of external institutional forces prioritising uniformity and legitimacy over organisational adaptability and growth. As a result, Bentiful-UC struggles to navigate the transition from policy to practice, leading to stagnation in strategic goals and institutional performance outcomes that institutional theory predicts when organisations are overly constrained by their external environment.

Stakeholder theory provides a complementary perspective by focusing on the failure to balance the needs and priorities of internal and external stakeholders. GTEC, as an external regulatory body, emphasises standardisation and compliance, which inadvertently overlooks the resource and capacity constraints faced by institutions like Bentiful-UC. Internally, Bentiful-UC's inability to recruit, retain, and support qualified staff impacts its ability to meet the expectations of key stakeholders, such as students, faculty, and staff. This misalignment of stakeholder needs results in administrative inefficiencies, declining academic quality, and a weakened institutional reputation. Additionally, low student enrolment is a key driver of financial challenges, illustrating how neglecting the priorities of external stakeholders, such as prospective students and their families, exacerbates the institution's struggles. Stakeholder theory helps highlight these interconnected dynamics, emphasising the need to realign stakeholder priorities to address resource challenges and improve institutional performance.

4.3.1 Institutional Challenges towards Presidential Charter and Strategic

Progress at Bentiful-UC

The interview's input authenticates that, the interconnected administrative, financial, and regulatory challenges of Bentiful-UC significantly impact its capacity to achieve charter status. The data indicates Bentiful-UC faces numerous interconnected challenges, particularly in personnel management, financial constraints, and regulatory compliance. These difficulties impact daily administration and hinder the institution's ability to achieve long-term objectives, including attaining charter status. This status is crucial as it legitimises the institution's degree-conferring authority, enhances its reputation, and affirms its educational quality. However, various institutional challenges complicate progress towards these goals, affecting the institution's internal functioning and external perception.

Consequently, the institution faces significant personnel challenges manifesting through difficulties in staff recruitment, staff retention issues, meeting high qualification standards for academic staff, inadequate staff remuneration and insufficient staff accommodation facilities. Moreover, the institution faces resource constraints through ongoing financial difficulties from low student enrolment, which affect institutional sustainability and struggles with non-flexible regulatory requirements. These propositions are confirmed by participant #2, who asserts that “the challenges encountered by the institution in the push for acquiring presidential charter are, enrolment of students, recruiting qualified staff, especially professors and finally low remuneration for staff.”

This is corroborated by participant #4, who upholds that:

This institution encounters several challenges in the push for a presidential charter—for instance, staff numbers and staff remuneration. Having at least

three schools also brings administrative and teaching staff requirements. Moreover, the regulatory framework is stringent and not customised to meet the specifications of individual institutions; they are applied generally to every institution (interview data, participant #4)

The results above are affirmed by participant #5, who professes that:

In the push for a presidential charter, one major challenge faced by this institution is finance. The institution has minimal resources, so we are struggling to meet some of GTEC's minimum requirements. For example, to be issued a presidential charter, they look at something referred to as financial sustainability, where the focus is on income generation. Whether the sources and the amount being generated will sustain the institution over several years. And in our case, we are not generating enough based on the number of students, making the institution depend so much on the owners (interview data, participant #5).

Similar to the above findings, private universities in India face interconnected administrative, financial, and regulatory challenges that limit their institutional autonomy. These challenges affect their governance, management norms, and overall capacity to achieve the independence envisioned in the New Education Policy 2020 (Kilian, 2022). According to (Reilly, Turcan & Bugaian 2016), private higher education institutions face interconnected administrative, financial, and regulatory challenges that hinder their ability to achieve autonomy, and these challenges complicate their responsiveness to societal needs and limit their capacity for innovation and creativity. This study continued that the need to comply with various regulations can create a rigid administrative structure that hampers decision-making processes and causes financial constraints. Research on "Educational transformation through good university governance: HR empowerment strategies in private universities" revealed that inadequate quality and non-optimal management in private universities, stemming from administrative, financial, and regulatory challenges, hinder their ability to achieve autonomy status, necessitating educational transformation through good governance and human resource empowerment (Ashari, 2024).

4.3.2 Regulatory Rigidity and Institutional Strain at Bentiful-UC

The data from the interview validates that the rigid regulatory frameworks, while structured and transparent, create significant administrative strain on institutions like Bentiful-UC that have inadequate resources, limiting their capacity for progress and innovation. Non-flexible regulatory requirements also pose a considerable challenge to Bentiful-UC's progress. While the charter process is documented and well-structured, the strict standards set for faculty qualifications, facilities, and admission policies leave little room for adaptation based on individual institutional capabilities. The specific qualifications required for senior academic roles, for instance, create barriers Bentiful-UC finds challenging to overcome given its financial and staffing constraints. Moreover, the administrative workload required to maintain compliance with these standards is burdensome, leading to inefficiencies, disorganisation, and a diminished focus on enhancing educational quality. This indicates that the non-flexible regulatory requirements considerably challenge Bentiful-UC's progress. While the charter process is well documented and structured, the strict standards for faculty qualifications, facilities, and admission policies leave little room for adaptation based on individual institutional capabilities. Participant #1 affirms this in the claim that:

The regulatory framework that has posed a challenge to the institution as it seeks charter is the requirement that you should have at least three programmes for each school. For example, for the School of Theology, you cannot rely on Biblical Studies alone. GTEC will require you to have two other programmes. Then, the same applies to the School of Business, and that regulatory framework becomes a challenge for the institution because what it means is that you have to bring in more lecturers and students. The student number, too, will be a challenge. Another one has to do, again, with the fact that the institution should have senior lecturers to occupy the senior positions, such as the position of deans. You must also have people lecturing who have terminal degrees. These regulations put a lot of stress on the institution, and over time, the institution can get used to them, but they put a lot of stress on the institution. But the institution is doing its best. Recently, the institution

hired some people to join the faculty, and I think that will be a great help in getting the presidential charter (interview data, participant #1).

This is corroborated by participant #5, who claims that:

The regulatory requirement that posed a challenge for this institution while seeking presidential charter status is the minimum academic staff requirements, such as employing professors, PhD holders, and senior lecturers, which is another significant challenge. These positions come with high remuneration expectations that the institution cannot meet due to financial limitations (interview data, participant #5).

Similar to the above ideas, a work on “A Study on Examining Autonomy Provision in Higher Education” declare that while autonomy allows institutions to innovate, strict standards from regulatory bodies limit flexibility in faculty qualifications, facilities, and admissions, hindering institutions' ability to adapt based on their unique capabilities and needs (Akankshya, 2023). According to Le (2022), although the autonomy policy has facilitated internationalisation in Vietnam's higher education, it is enacted within the constraints of Vietnam's political features, which may limit flexibility in adapting standards for faculty qualifications, facilities, and admission policies. Vlasyuk and Daragan (2023) assessed the implementation of academic autonomy in higher education institutions as moderate, indicating that while autonomy exists, strict standards for faculty qualifications and admission policies may limit adaptability based on individual institutional capabilities.

4.3.3 Policy Clarity and Practical Challenges at Bentiful-UC

The facts from the interviews confirm that the well-defined charter policy and the transition from policy to practice have barriers that Bentiful-UC must navigate to achieve charter status. This means that universally, there's a shared sentiment that the structure of the charter process is well-defined, owing much to meticulously crafted policy documentation and a comprehensive set of step-by-step guidelines. These resources serve as a roadmap, helping to guide individuals through each stage of the

charter, leaving little ambiguity about what's expected. However, the institution faces considerable challenges in meeting the ambitious standards that the charter demands. Obstacles often mark the process from policy to practice, as the requirements for execution are rigorous. Many individuals acknowledge that the gap between written policy and application can be daunting, even as they appreciate the clear framework in which they operate. These are affirmed by participant #1, who says that, "the process and requirement for charter is obvious. It's just that meeting the requirements is a challenge."

In line with the above, a related study indicated that private universities face barriers in transitioning from autonomy policy to practice, including limited state control, management norms, and financial constraints, which complicate their journey towards achieving charter status and full institutional autonomy (Kilian, 2022). Another study also suggested that transitioning from well-defined autonomy policies to practical implementation in charter schools presents several barriers that private universities must navigate to achieve charter status. Thus, charter schools face barriers to autonomy, including state laws, relationships with authorizers, and partnerships with organisations. These factors complicate the transition from policy to practice, impacting private universities seeking charter status and autonomy (Finnigan, 2007). These studies highlighted a common gap between policy design and implementation. While the structure and clarity of frameworks like GTEC's charter policy are essential, success requires addressing systemic challenges such as financial constraints, capacity-building needs, and institutional governance support.

4.3.4 Financial Constraints and Institutional Sustainability at Bentiful-UC

The information from the interviews establishes that the rigid regulatory financial requirements, low student enrolment, and limited sources of income have been the cause of the economic challenges of Bentiful-UC, which has restricted the institution's capacity to allocate resources effectively across other critical areas, such as infrastructure development and staff development. This implies that Bentiful-UC's financial challenges are pervasive, stemming from low student enrolment, which directly affects revenue generation. This limited income hampers Bentiful-UC's operational sustainability, creating a cycle where financial constraints exacerbate recruitment and retention difficulties, deterring potential students. Additionally, regulatory compliance demands a significant financial expenditure, particularly when applying for charter status, as application fees and other spending pose a substantial burden. This lack of flexibility within regulatory financial requirements restricts the institution's capacity to allocate resources effectively across critical areas, such as infrastructure development and staff development.

Accordingly, the ultimate challenge faced by the University College is financial constraints in ways such as staff compensation issues, student recruitment challenges, management issues, the high cost of charter application fees and understaffing, such as a lack of key personnel like a substantive registrar, as administrative challenges during the process for charter status. The financial difficulties at Bentiful-UC are attributed to low student enrolment, limited income sources, and stringent financial requirements, which directly tie to the thesis point about the need for financial support and sustainability. This information is affirmed by participant #4, who holds that "the other challenges of the institution are financial issues, particularly the need for significant investments as a safety net, which is challenging because the institution

needs funds for other infrastructures.” This is supported by participant #2, who claims that:

The financial challenge the institution faces in meeting the criteria for charter is the payment of application fees for a presidential charter and hiring the requisite faculty. If the institution implements new business ideas, such as starting a farm or other revenue-generating activities, the institution would not have to rely solely on student fees (interview data, participant #2).

Concurrently, the financial challenges of private universities in Uganda stem from rigid regulatory requirements, limited income sources, and reliance on minimal income-generating activities. This restricts their capacity to allocate resources effectively, compromising the quality of higher education provision (Rwakijuma & Lunyolo, 2017). Anis et al. (2018) identify "finance" as the most crucial challenge for Malaysian private higher education institutions, highlighting that rigid regulatory financial requirements and low student enrolment restrict resource allocation across critical areas, necessitating high competency in financial management as a crucial success factor. The study also suggested that the financial challenges faced by private universities in Malaysia are significant and multifaceted, manifesting as rigid regulatory financial requirements, low student enrolment, and limited sources of income. Another study similarly indicates that limited funding significantly pressures private universities in Ghana, restricting their ability to achieve their missions. These financial challenges stem from rigid regulatory requirements, low student enrolment, and limited income sources, affecting resource allocation across critical areas (Oduro & Duncan, 2022)

4.3.5 Personnel Challenges and Institutional Performance Bentiful-UC

The interview evidence proves that the challenge in recruiting, retaining, and supporting qualified staff at Bentiful-UC affects administrative efficiency, academic quality, and overall institutional performance and compliance. This conveys that

Bentiful-UC struggles to recruit and retain qualified academic staff, mainly due to the high qualification standards set by GTEC. Additionally, competitive remuneration for academic and administrative staff remains challenging due to limited financial resources, making it difficult to offer attractive compensation packages. This challenge is compounded by inadequate staff accommodation, further impacting the institution's ability to attract and retain talent. As a result, staffing gaps are prevalent, with key positions such as a substantive registrar left vacant. The absence of such roles disrupts administrative functions and complicates compliance with regulatory standards, particularly in the charter application process.

Staff morale is also negatively impacted, with part-time lecturers often withholding results and a general decline in interactions and vibrancy on campus. Thus, the institution faces burdensome administrative tasks, leading to inefficiency and disorganisation as a significant administrative challenge during the process for charter status. Problems in recruiting, retaining, and supporting qualified staff directly affect academic quality and compliance, which is supported by the thesis statement for the necessity of adequate faculty and staff to achieve charter status. These ideas are supported by Participant #2, who asserts that:

The administrative obstacles of the institution encounter during the process for presidential charter status is that there is a problem with how records are maintained which makes it difficult to find files and information because they are not adequately organized and this is as a result of lack of continuity in both staff and leadership, leading to inefficiencies (interview data, Participant #2).

This is further affirmed by Participant #3, who professes that:

The administrative challenge of the institution is that no head of administration is a registrar, and the registrar oversees affairs regarding administrative staff, faculty, and the department, among others. Hence, this poses a significant challenge because until we have a registrar, other administrative work may not be given the needed attention. The low number of administrative staff has resulted in the staff working in two or three

departments, giving them the advantage of dodging between them (interview data, participant #3).

Also, Participant #5 holds that, “the administrative obstacles encountered by this institution during the process for presidential charter status are that the administrative staff are not adequate and they mostly have multiple responsibilities, making it difficult sometimes to get tasks completed on time.” Based on the above findings, a study by Akpey-Mensah (2023) highlighted several critical factors affecting the recruitment and retention of academic staff in emerging universities in Ghana, which can be related to the situation at Bentiful-UC. The study established private university colleges face the challenge of attracting qualified academic staff due to the high qualification requirements, poor conditions of service, limited resources and strained relationships which contribute to academic staff attrition in emerging universities, emphasizing the need for fostering good social relationships based on Ubuntu to retain qualified faculty and enhance educational quality in Ghana. However, the interview results did not prove that having good social relations will help retain qualified faculty at Bentiful-UC.

On the other hand a study on ‘Implementation of Management Strategies and Academic Staff Retention in Private Universities in Southwest, Nigeria outlined the challenges of recruiting and retaining academic staff in private universities, particularly in Southwest Nigeria as competitive incentives offered by larger or more established institutions which private university colleges cannot match, lack of modern management strategies which leads to dissatisfaction among staff and limited professional development opportunities which impacts the overall quality of education and institutional effectiveness. Further, the study suggests that by addressing these challenges, the institutions can improve their ability to attract and

retain qualified academic personnel, ultimately contributing to their overall success and quality of education (Oyalabu et al., 2023). Bucăța and Tileagă, (2023) also highlighted that recruiting and retaining qualified staff at Private University Colleges is challenging due to demographic changes, global mobility, and the need for diverse skills. This impacts administrative efficiency, academic quality, and overall institutional performance, necessitating effective human capital management strategies.

4.3.6 Effect of Institutional Challenges and Stagnation at Bentiful-UC

The interview scoop attests that the interconnected financial, regulatory, and administrative challenges of Bentiful-UC affect the institution's progress, leading to stagnation in achieving strategic goals, negatively influencing institutional reputation and student enrolment. This denotes that ultimately, these combined challenges have a significant impact on Bentiful-UC's journey towards charter status and its day-to-day functionality. The ongoing financial constraints and inability to fulfil regulatory standards lead to understaffing, low morale, and a lack of administrative efficiency. This results in a poor institutional image, limited recognition, and a diminished ability to attract prospective students. Without addressing these issues, the institution's capacity for growth and progression toward its long-term objectives remains limited. The challenges result in lecturers having low morale and commitment, Part-time lecturers withholding results, reduced student vibrancy, low staff interactions, and the overall atmosphere on campus. Also, these challenges prevent the institution from progressing towards charter, create a poor image and recognition of the institution and affect day-to-day administration. These propositions are certified by participant #1, who postulates that:

The effect of the challenges faced by the institution is that the morale of the lecturers is low due to a low number of students. It affects the delivery spirit, all of that. That's one. It also affects our motivation level and commitment level. Then, of course, it also goes down to the main issue: low enrolment (interview data, participant #1).

Participant #2 supports this idea and upholds that “the effect of the challenges faced by the institution is that it causes the institution not to grow. The institution is stuck in the same place, unable to progress”. Participant #6 also asserts that “the effect of these challenges faced by the institution is that the overall atmosphere on campus is very low due to decreased student intake. This affects the vibrancy of the campus, staff interactions, and the general environment required for a thriving tertiary institution”.

The challenges described in the write-up align closely with the literature on the impact of financial, regulatory, and administrative difficulties on higher education institutions. Research consistently highlights that constrained financial resources often lead to understaffing, poor infrastructure, and limited program offerings, which, in turn, diminish institutional reputation and student enrolment. For instance, a study by Kerlin and Dunlap (1993) underscored that financial instability can erode faculty morale, resulting in decreased productivity and commitment and hampering student experiences due to reduced support services. Similarly, Gopal, Sahu and Zulaikha (2024) agreed that the challenges faced by private higher educational institutions in Malaysia have significant effects on their overall functioning and sustainability, and these challenges create a cycle of difficulties that impact their ability to thrive in a competitive academic landscape. Private universities face complex internal and external challenges, including poor strategic performance management, which can hinder their progress, negatively impact institutional reputation, and ultimately affect student enrolment and the achievement of strategic goals. These challenges can

significantly impact their strategic goals, performance management, and effectiveness (Xuerong, 2023).

The data reveal that Bentiful-UC faces significant challenges in acquiring a presidential charter, primarily due to administrative, financial, faculty, and student enrolment constraints. Rigid regulatory frameworks, limited financial resources, and difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified staff create substantial barriers to compliance with GTEC requirements. The high cost of accreditation, bureaucratic delays, and inflexible faculty and infrastructure requirements further strain institutional capacity. Financial constraints, exacerbated by low student enrolment and limited income sources, restrict investments in critical areas such as staff development and infrastructure, creating a cycle of stagnation that hinders progress. The study also highlights that the misalignment of stakeholder priorities, where GTEC prioritises compliance and standardisation, while Bentiful-UC struggles with resource limitations, exacerbates these challenges. Additionally, while ensuring educational quality, bureaucratic inefficiencies and stringent policies place significant administrative burdens on the institution, slowing progress.

4.4 Preparedness of Beneficial University Colleges in Obtaining the Presidential Charter

The data presented under this concept seeks to answer research question three: “How prepared is Bentiful-UC in meeting the requirements for obtaining a presidential charter?” It aims to evaluate how well Bentiful-UC is positioned to meet the regulatory, administrative, and institutional requirements necessary for obtaining a presidential charter. This involves examining the readiness of the university college's governance structures, academic standards, financial stability, and stakeholder

engagement. The question also seeks to identify areas where Bentiful-UC may lack alignment with the required benchmarks. These gaps could include resource limitations, compliance with regulatory standards, etc. Institutional theory explains how organisations conform to external norms and standards to achieve legitimacy and recognition.

Bentiful-UC's procedural adherence, incremental progress in meeting regulatory benchmarks, and responsiveness to audits reflect its alignment with the institutional environment shaped by GTEC. These activities demonstrate the institution's commitment to complying with formal rules and expectations to achieve autonomy and full recognition, as institutional theory predicts. Furthermore, Bentiful-UC's focus on excelling in governance, personnel management, and infrastructure development reflects its efforts to institutionalise best practices, reinforcing its legitimacy within the higher education sector. The emphasis on regulatory compliance and structured growth initiatives underscores how external pressures drive the organisation to prioritise activities aligning with broader institutional norms, ultimately ensuring operational stability and sustainable development.

Stakeholder theory helps highlight how Bentiful-UC balances the interests of various stakeholders through its efforts to achieve recognition and growth. By excelling in governance and personnel management, Bentiful-UC addresses the needs of internal stakeholders, such as staff and administrators, ensuring operational efficiency and organisational stability. Its financial allocations toward infrastructure and growth initiatives demonstrate responsiveness to external stakeholders, including students and regulatory bodies, by improving educational quality and meeting compliance standards.

4.4.1 Progress and Commitment for Charter at Bentiful-UC

The facts from the interviews and documentary evidence prove that the procedural adherence, incremental achievement of regulatory benchmarks and commitment to meeting stringent requirements underscore the institution's dedication to achieving autonomy and full recognition. This indicates that Bentiful-UC has made notable progress in its journey toward obtaining a presidential charter, a milestone that would grant it full recognition and autonomy in awarding degrees. With its current level of readiness rated between 60% and 8 out of 10, the institution demonstrates significant strides, including the payment of required application fees and the successful completion of three stages in the charter application process. This level of fiscal responsibility and procedural adherence reflects the institution's commitment to meeting the stringent requirements of GTEC and its dedication to achieving full charter status. However, the institution needs to improve student enrolment and introduce new programmes. This information is supported by participant #2, who claims that:

I would assess the institution's current level of readiness to meet the requirements for obtaining a presidential charter at around 60%. While enrolment has not significantly increased, the institution has brought in some professors. Administrative work and committee meetings are also improving, and there's been some progress in infrastructure. The institution is also working on introducing new programmes, which is why I give them a 60% rating (interview data, participant #2).

This is supported by participant #3, who asserts that "Currently, the institution is well prepared for the presidential charter because we now have the required number of academic staff who are qualified by GTEC standards and have also paid for the charter application fees." Participant #5 also confirms that:

The institution's current level of readiness to meet the requirements for obtaining a presidential charter is approximately 60%. Progress has been made, particularly in response to GTEC reports. For example, recent recruitment efforts have led to the hiring of new staff, which has improved

the institution's readiness. Additionally, efforts are being made to attract more students, including initiatives on social media (interview data, Participant #5).

The view above is supported by documentary evidence, CHARINV/RE, which confirms that “the institution’s current level of readiness to meet the requirement for charter is that it has paid the presidential charter application fees of Ghc 77,630.00”.

The progress of Bentiful-UC towards achieving a presidential charter, as described in the write-up, aligns with current literature on accreditation and quality assurance in higher education. Research emphasised that meeting accreditation benchmarks often involves procedural adherence, infrastructural improvements, and strategic faculty development. For instance, Pham (2018) observed that accreditation processes encourage universities to align with national quality standards, often leading to enhanced reputation and operational improvements, albeit with significant resource requirements (Pham, 2018). Additionally, Duarte & Vardasca (2023) highlighted that early compliance with accreditation criteria, such as hiring qualified staff and adopting robust administrative systems, marks a critical step for institutions aiming for recognition and autonomy.

The detailed assessment from Bentiful-UC, showcasing accomplishments like fee payments and faculty recruitment, mirrors findings by Makhoul (2019), which associate accreditation readiness with systematic faculty engagement and infrastructural enhancement. However, challenges such as low student enrolment and the slow introduction of new programmes are consistent with the barriers identified in various studies on institutional readiness. The literature on “Autonomy at Higher Education Level” emphasises that autonomy in higher education institutions involves accountability and the ability to make independent decisions. Adhering to regulatory

benchmarks and meeting stringent requirements reflects an institution's commitment to achieving academic autonomy and enhancing educational quality (Ganie, 2019).

4.4.2 Quality Assurance and Systematic Compliance at Bentiful-UC

The evidence from the interviews attests that the regular performance evaluations and responsiveness to audits by Bentiful-UC help monitor its compliance with the regulatory standards. This suggests that a key component of this progress is the active role of the Beneficial-UC's Quality Assurance Unit, which oversees adherence to charter standards and monitors compliance through regular management meetings to evaluate departmental performance to ensure alignment with charter requirements. Additionally, the institution's responsiveness to GTEC audits highlights its commitment to regulatory compliance, as management promptly addresses any gaps identified in these audits. These proactive measures underscore Bentiful-UC's systematic approach to meeting governance and operational standards. These facts are corroborated by participant #3, who maintains that "the institution monitors compliance with regulatory standards for charter through the Quality Assurance Unit. It is monitored from the Quality Assurance Unit of the institution". Participant #4 also affirms that "the institution monitors compliance with regulatory standards for charter through GTEC audits. When audits are conducted, the institution receives a report that highlights any lapses, which is work on addressing the issues.

The role of Bentiful-UC's Quality Assurance Unit in monitoring compliance and addressing gaps identified through GTEC audits aligns with insights from literature that emphasise that quality assurance systems often operate within complex regulatory environments and rely on internal mechanisms, such as performance evaluations and audits, to ensure compliance with standards (Beerkens, 2015). Also, Sadler (2017)

highlights that the success of quality assurance processes hinges on their alignment with institutional goals and the proactive management of compliance measures.

Like the above study, external quality audits significantly impact private tertiary education institutions, particularly in enhancing their quality assurance processes and overall institutional effectiveness. It catalyses change and significantly impacts private tertiary education by driving improvements, fostering a quality culture, and promoting evidence-based practices, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes and institutional effectiveness (Shah & Stanford, 2013). According to Boateng (2014), quality assurance practices ensure compliance through regulatory frameworks, audits, feedback mechanisms, curriculum enhancements, stakeholder engagement, and a focus on continuous improvement, which work together to uphold educational standards and promote accountability within institutions. The evidence from Bentiful-UC supports this perspective, demonstrating how regular performance reviews and responsiveness to audit feedback create a feedback loop essential for sustaining compliance. The literature also suggests that embedding quality assurance into institutional culture, as Bentiful-UC appears to have done, enhances the institution's ability to meet external regulatory requirements while fostering continuous improvement. This approach exemplifies how structured internal mechanisms, such as a dedicated Quality Assurance Unit, are vital in advancing institutional standards and achieving regulatory goals.

4.4.3 Excelling Areas and Areas for Improvement for Charter at Bentiful-UC

The interviews show that Bentiful-UC excels in governance, personnel management, and infrastructure development, which has led to sustainable institutional growth and operational stability. Addressing critical gaps in leadership and enhancing faculty

retention are essential for improving organisational efficiency, regulatory compliance, and the overall student experience at Bentiful-UC. Bentiful-UC has made commendable advances in several critical areas, including governance, personnel recruitment, and infrastructure development, by successfully meeting personnel requirements and prioritising infrastructure improvements. The institution lays a strong foundation for sustainable growth and operational stability. However, to further strengthen its position, it recognises the need to introduce new academic programmes and boost student enrolment, increasing programme offerings to attract a more diverse student body, directly contributing to financial sustainability and enhancing the institution's appeal.

Furthermore, retaining qualified faculty and staff through improved remuneration remains a strategic focus, as competitive compensation is crucial for staff stability and morale, which, in turn, positively impacts the student experience. The data proves that while governance practices constitute a strength for Bentiful-UC, the absence of a substantive registrar remains a critical gap in administrative leadership. Filling this role would enhance organisational efficiency and bolster compliance with regulatory expectations, especially during the charter application process. This implies that the institution excels in meeting personnel requirements and infrastructure development; however, academic programmes must be expanded to attract more students, increase student enrolment, and focus on faculty and staff retention through improved remuneration. These results are supported by participant #2, who professes that:

The charter requirements the institution has excelled in are infrastructure development and some progress in administrative work. However, the institution lacks charter requirement areas such as recruiting students, introducing new programmes, and bringing in the required number of professors (interview data, participant #2).

Participant #2 substantiates these ideas by asserting that:

The charter requirements the institution has excelled in are infrastructure development and some progress in administrative work. However, the institution lacks charter requirement areas such as recruiting students, introducing new programmes, and bringing in the required number of professors (interview data, participant #2).

This is further validated by participant #3, who upholds that:

The institution excels in the infrastructure requirements for charters. The University College has excellent infrastructure and a library. However, it has to concentrate more attention on its faculty and staff. There is a need to be able to pay realistic wages so that the faculty engaged for the Presidential Charter can be maintained.

The interplay between good governance, effective personnel management, and robust infrastructure development is vital for the success of private universities. These elements work together to create an environment that promotes quality education, enhances human resource capabilities, and ultimately contributes to developing competent graduates ready to face global challenges (Ashari, 2024). The study on “enhancing higher education sustainability through quality management models” reveals that, good governance practices help in establishing clear policies and frameworks that guide the operations of private universities, leading to better decision-making, resource allocation, proper training, development, and support for staff which enhance their performance and positively affects student satisfaction. Moreover, loyalty Investments in physical facilities, technology, and resources are necessary to support educational activities and improve overall institutional effectiveness (Lubis, Zulfan, Sinulingga, Ismayadi, & Siregar, 2024). Hayter and Cahoy (2018) emphasised that effective governance and strategic resource management are crucial for achieving institutional sustainability and operational stability (Hayter & Cahoy, 2018). Similarly, Rubio, Llopis, Zeng, and Garcia-Hurtado (2023) argued that robust governance structures are necessary for institutions to

address evolving societal and economic demands while ensuring accountability and transparency (Rubio et al., 2023).

However, the challenges faced by Bentiful-UC, such as limited faculty retention and low enrolment, echo findings from Aithal and Aithal (2023), who noted that competitive compensation and the introduction of diverse academic programs are critical for enhancing institutional appeal and ensuring faculty stability (Aithal & Aithal, 2023). Addressing these gaps can strengthen Bentiful-UC's foundation for achieving charter status, as improved staff morale and diverse programme offerings directly impact student experience and institutional growth.

4.4.4 Targeted Financial Planning and Strategic Allocation of Resources at

Bentiful-UC

The data from the interviews and documentary evidence confirm that Bentiful-UC's financial allocations toward growth initiatives support the institution's development. This is to say that Bentiful-UC has made financial allocations toward student recruitment, infrastructure, and marketing to support its growth strategy. Yet, it faces challenges securing dedicated financial resources specifically for charter-related requirements. This funding shortfall could limit its capacity to meet additional standards by GTEC and highlights the need for a more targeted financial plan to cover charter prerequisites. Thus, financial resources have been allocated towards student recruitment, infrastructure development, and marketing; however, the institution lacks dedicated financial resources for meeting charter requirements. This information is supported by interview participant #2, who holds that: "To meet the requirement for presidential charter, the institution has financially invested in recruitment efforts, paying people to help recruit students. Additionally, the institution has made

infrastructural improvements and worked on marketing the institution. Participant #3 supports this idea, maintaining that “Financially, the institution has not allocated any resources yet towards meeting the requirements for presidential charter.”

These findings resonate with a study that suggested that private higher education institutions should reform their financial systems and revenue models to enhance competitiveness and support growth initiatives, indicating that financial allocations are crucial for institutional development and effective management within the Higher Education Plan (Lubis et al., 2024). Financial allocations toward growth initiatives, such as building facilities and expanding graduate programmes, are crucial for private universities' development. The study highlights that prioritising short-term facility improvements can increase enrolment and subsequent endowment growth (Drake & Sparks, 2012). On the other hand, Xu et al. (2016) argued that private universities primarily rely on tuition for funding, facing significant financial constraints. The lack of stable financing hampers their growth initiatives, making it challenging to achieve development goals and maintain educational quality, ultimately affecting their competitiveness in the education market.

Heaton, Teece and Agronin (2023) highlighted the importance of strategic financial planning in supporting institutional growth while emphasising that resource allocation tailored to specific goals, such as regulatory compliance, is critical for sustained success. Similarly, Wang (2019) observed that performance-based and targeted funding approaches are essential to enhance outcomes, particularly in contexts requiring compliance with external standards. Bentiful-UC's recruitment, infrastructure, and marketing investment mirror effective growth strategies but underscore a gap in prioritising financial resources for charter prerequisites. This

shortfall may impede its ability to meet the additional regulatory demands. As Al-Filali, Abdulaal and Melaibari (2023) suggested, a more balanced and goal-oriented financial strategy could optimize resource allocation to support immediate operational goals and address long-term regulatory objectives.

The data indicate that Bentiful-UC has made significant progress in preparing for a presidential charter, demonstrating commitment through procedural adherence, faculty recruitment, infrastructure development, and financial investments. The institution has completed key regulatory steps, including paying application fees and compliance with academic staffing requirements. However, challenges remain, particularly in student enrolment, programme expansion, and financial resource allocation. While governance structures and quality assurance mechanisms are well established, gaps in financial sustainability and faculty retention persist. The rigid regulatory framework continues to impose administrative burdens, making it difficult for Bentiful-UC to fully align with GTEC's expectations. Despite these challenges, the institution's incremental achievements and responsiveness to audits reflect its strong commitment to meeting charter requirements. Bentiful-UC must prioritise targeted financial planning, expand academic offerings, and implement strategic enrolment initiatives to enhance its readiness.

4.5 Strategies to Overcome Challenges to the Presidential Charter by Bentiful University Colleges

The data presented under this concept seeks to answer research question four: "How can Bentiful-UC overcome its challenges to attain a presidential charter?" This research question seeks to thoroughly understand the difficulties Bentiful-UC faces in meeting the stringent requirements for obtaining a presidential charter and actionable

solutions and pathways that Bentiful-UC can adopt to address these shortcomings, enhance its readiness, and successfully attain the presidential charter.

Stakeholder theory emphasises balancing the needs and expectations of multiple stakeholders to achieve institutional success. Bentiful-UC's strategies, such as diversifying revenue sources, engaging alums, forming local and international partnerships, and prioritising community engagement, reflect an effort to address the interests of key internal and external stakeholders. These actions aim to ensure financial resilience, improve student experiences, and foster innovation, benefiting stakeholders such as students, faculty, alumni, regulators, and the broader community. Furthermore, the collaborative approach to mobilising stakeholders, including alumni and external partners, highlights how Bentiful-UC's success depends on actively engaging and addressing the priorities of its diverse stakeholder groups. Stakeholder theory also fits the proposed flexible and tailored regulatory frameworks by GTEC, as these would better align standards with the specific capacities of institutions like Bentiful-UC. This adaptability reflects a stakeholder-focused approach by regulators, aiming to support private universities in meeting compliance while reducing financial and operational burdens. Stakeholder theory explains how strategic alignment among all involved parties can promote institutional growth, compliance, and quality education by addressing these shared goals.

Institutional theory applies to Bentiful-UC's efforts to meet regulatory benchmarks and comply with quality assurance systems. These activities reflect institutional theory's focus on how organisations align with external norms, standards, and expectations to achieve legitimacy. Bentiful-UC's actions, such as diversifying teaching models to meet learner needs and implementing strategic resource allocation

plans, underscore its commitment to conforming to regulatory requirements and achieving charter status. GTEC's proposed decentralisation and technological innovations in regulatory frameworks can also be interpreted as institutional reforms to ease compliance and promote long-term quality within the higher education system.

4.5.1 Financial Diversification for Financial Sustainability at Bentiful-UC

The report from the interviews substantiates that reducing dependency on a single revenue source, such as student tuition, through strategic diversification of income streams by leveraging alternative funding mechanisms, will enhance Bentiful-UC's financial resilience to allocate resources effectively and address critical needs such as infrastructure, faculty retention, and student services. This conveys that for Bentiful-UC to overcome its challenges and progress toward long-term financial sustainability and academic excellence, Bentiful-UC must adopt a multifaceted strategic approach. One essential strategy is diversifying its income sources, enhancing financial resilience and ensuring resources are available to address various institutional needs. By seeking alternative revenue streams such as international grants, local partnerships, and collaboration with faith-based and professional organisations, the institution can reduce its reliance on student tuition, allowing it to fund necessary improvements in infrastructure, faculty remuneration, and student services. For this reason, the institution should diversify its income sources for additional revenue as a strategy to overcome its challenges. These propositions are authenticated by interview participant #1, who holds that:

The strategy needed to overcome the institution's challenges is to diversify its sources of income. As a university, our niche is entrepreneurship, and I think the institution needs to get into some business-oriented ventures to bring in additional money. Whether to go into husbandry or something, we must do something to bring in money. Another strategy would be to get relationships with international bodies or institutions supporting tertiary education through grants, donations, or even contributing resources like books, buildings or

facilities. Another one is the alumni. The institution needs to organise the alumni base and see how they can support the institution (interview data, participant #1).

This is corroborated by participant #2, who declares that:

The strategies that can be used to overcome the institution's challenges are allowing management to make decisions without interference from the church. The church is a religious body, not an academic one, so they should leave it for the experts to work on and pay them. Also, the experts know the nuances of the university, so if they give the owners advice, they should implement it. Additionally, the institution should venture into new businesses like farming (interview data, participant #2).

This study corroborates the above findings, emphasising that diversifying income portfolios enhances resilience, particularly by balancing different sources like earned income and grants. This strategic approach allows non-profits, including private universities, to allocate resources effectively and address critical needs during crises (Young & Searing, 2022). Additionally, research by Garland (2019) indicated that income diversification enhances financial sustainability for universities, reducing reliance on single revenue sources like tuition. Strategic diversification allows for better resource allocation, effectively addressing critical needs such as infrastructure, faculty retention, and student services. Research indicates that diversifying revenue streams enhances organisational stability by reducing reliance on a single income source, such as tuition fees. Hung and Hager (2019) found that non-profit institutions with diverse funding portfolios exhibit better financial health and are more resilient to economic challenges. Similarly, Al-Filali et al. (2023) advocate for leveraging alternative revenue streams, such as partnerships, grants, and entrepreneurial ventures, to ensure sustainable financial growth. Bentiful-UC's proposal to explore entrepreneurial ventures, alum engagement, and collaborations is similar to strategies observed in successful case studies. These approaches align with Zamore (2018), who

reported that organisations integrating diversified revenue strategies achieve greater financial sustainability while maintaining flexibility to address operational priorities.

4.5.2 Strength through Governance and Personnel Retention at Bentiful-UC

The specifics from the interview ratify that effective governance and decision-making processes, coupled with strategic personnel management and staff retention practices by Bentiful-UC, directly contribute to the success, regulatory compliance, and reputational enhancement of Bentiful-UC, ultimately fostering an improved student experience and supporting its charter attainment status. This insinuates that strengthening governance and decision-making processes is another crucial strategy for overcoming operational challenges. Improved governance will enable more efficient resource allocation and foster better alignment with regulatory requirements, ensuring that Bentiful-UC is consistently prepared to meet GTEC standards.

Moreover, by prioritising personnel management and retaining qualified staff through competitive remuneration, the institution can bolster faculty stability and increase academic quality, ultimately enhancing the student experience. Addressing this area is vital, as staff retention directly impacts the institution's reputation, student satisfaction, and the likelihood of attaining full charter status. Therefore, the institution should strengthen its governance and decision-making and improve staff remuneration to enhance retention and overcome challenges. Participant #2 buttresses these recommendations by contending that:

The strategies that can be used to overcome the institution's challenges are allowing management to make decisions without interference from the church. The church is a religious body, not an academic one, so they should leave it for the experts to work on and pay them. Also, the experts know the nuances of the university, so if they give the owners advice, they should implement it. Additionally, the institution should venture into new businesses like farming (interview data, participant #2).

Participant #3 also lays claim that:

The strategies to overcome this institution's challenges involve financial investment in student recruitment and adequate remuneration to staff. Suppose we invest in recruiting students, and can recruit enough students and have the requisite staff. In that case, the University College should be able to overcome its current challenges (interview data, participant #3).

This is further authenticated by participant #4, who attests that “The institution needs a financial strategy to overcome its challenges. We must improve remuneration for administrative and teaching staff.”

In line with these findings a study on “University governance models around the world and lessons for Vietnamese universities” suggests that effective university governance, including strategic management and human resource practices, enhances operational efficiency and academic passion, ultimately contributing to a university's competitive advantage and its ability to fulfill its mission, including improving student experiences. The study further underscored the significance of effective governance in universities, the benefits of autonomy, and the potential for learning from international practices to enhance the governance framework in Vietnam (Bùi, 2024).

On the other hand, a study which focused on capital and resource management challenges faced by private higher institutions in the UK due to high enrolment and low retention rates underscored the necessity for private higher institutions in the UK to rethink their resource management strategies to navigate the complexities of enrolment and retention effectively (Oluwatobi, Olumide & Waite 2024). Butt, Lodhi and Shahzad (2020) emphasized that governance structures directly influence institutional stability and operational success by fostering streamlined decision-making processes and aligning with strategic goals. Improving governance can also address operational inefficiencies and promote regulatory compliance. Trust-based

governance fosters a quality-focused institutional culture, which aligns well with regulatory expectations and enhances institutional reputation (Dzimińska, Fijalkowska, & Sulkowski, 2018). These findings corroborate the emphasis on autonomy in governance as suggested by interview participants.

4.5.3 Institutional Growth through Programme Expansion and Stakeholder

Engagement at Bentiful-UC

The interview acknowledges that Bentiful-UC will achieve sustainable growth and administrative stability by expanding academic offerings, intensifying recruitment efforts, and leveraging alumni engagement to foster a supportive and vibrant community. These strategies collectively enhance enrolment, diversify revenue streams, and strengthen institutional reputation through mentorship, donations, and industry connections. In line with these financial and operational improvements, expanding academic programme offerings and intensifying recruitment efforts will help increase enrolment, thereby providing a steady source of revenue and attracting a diverse student body. Through targeted advertising, enhancing the student experience, and fostering alumni engagement, the institution can create a vibrant campus community that will attract prospective students and build strong networks with former students. Alumni engagement, in particular, can be a valuable resource for mentorship, donations, and industry connections, all of which benefit the institution's reputation and operational stability. This is to say that the institution should expand its programme offerings, student recruitment, intensify adverts, and enhance students' experience and alumni's engagement.

These proposals are vouched for by participant #5, who affirms that:

The institution should review its current programmes and consider offering unique and dual qualifications, such as major and minor combinations. This

approach can attract more students. For instance, a student could major in theology and minor in human resource management, making the institution more appealing. This institution also needs to expand its sources of revenue. There is so much dependence on the owners and the fees generated. The school should have donors or projects through which it earns some income. Internally, we need to enhance the student experience. To make the campus environment more engaging, the institution should invest in sports facilities and introduce practical elements into the curriculum, such as setting up a campus radio station for communication students. This would not only improve student satisfaction but also provide hands-on experience. The institution also needs to improve in its dealings with stakeholders. The institution has a wealth of alums who can be engaged to support the school financially and help promote it. Initiatives could include organising alum events, encouraging alumni to contribute to the school, or using alumni testimonials for marketing purposes (interview data, participant #5).

Alum engagement has been highlighted as critical for enhancing financial stability, institutional reputation, and mentorship opportunities. Strong alumni networks contribute to loyalty and ongoing institutional support, including non-monetary contributions such as mentorship and industry connections (Snijders, Wijnia, Rikers & Loyens 2019). Additionally, targeted recruitment strategies and program diversification are linked to increased enrolment and revenue streams. Dyer and Dyer (2017) emphasise that strategic program offerings, aligned with societal needs, attract a diverse student population, fostering institutional resilience and sustainability. Moreover, universities leveraging their community and alumni partnerships have been shown to enhance their societal impact and operational success. Purcell, Henriksen and Spengler (2019) found that such engagement fosters vibrant campus communities and promotes transformative growth through collective efforts.

Although the above findings suggests that Bentiful-UC will achieve sustainable growth and administrative stability by expanding academic offerings and intensifying recruitment efforts among other factors, Liu, Liu and Yang (2022) emphasizes that strengthening brand construction is crucial for the sustainable development of private colleges, particularly through student feedback, which can guide effective branding

strategies, ultimately contributing to enrolment and administrative stability in a competitive educational landscape. Another study suggests that expanded academic offerings and recruitment efforts can be achieved through institutional commitment and local partnerships in securing private funding, and engaging alumni and community foundations can enhance resources and foster a vibrant college environment (Drummer & Marshburn, 2014).

4.5.4 Institutional Readiness through Stakeholder Mobilisation and Quality

Assurance at Bentiful-UC

The reports from the interview substantiate that Bentiful-UC will achieve regulatory benchmarks and readiness by mobilising stakeholders alongside enhancing internal compliance and quality assurance systems. Effective stakeholder engagement drives collective support, while robust quality monitoring fosters a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring alignment with standards and advancing institutional goals such as charter approval. This conveys that effectively mobilising stakeholders is key to fulfilling charter requirements and institutional readiness. By rallying stakeholders from faculty and staff to alumni and local partners, Bentiful-UC can harness collective support and focus on meeting the benchmarks outlined by GTEC. This full mobilisation effort should be complemented by strengthening internal compliance and quality assurance systems to ensure ongoing alignment with regulatory standards. Enhancing the Quality Assurance Unit's monitoring systems will not only assist in compliance but also help establish a culture of continuous improvement, further preparing Bentiful-UC for charter approval. Consequently, full mobilisation of stakeholders is needed to focus on obtaining the Charter. This idea is substantiated by Participant #6, who postulates that:

The key strategy that can be used to overcome the challenges faced by this institution is the total mobilisation of the school, including management, staff, and even the council, to focus on obtaining the Charter. For example, the challenge of student recruitment is significant, but we address it through internet marketing, social media advertising, radio programmes, and school visits. The council and proprietors have supported these efforts and hope to see positive results. Regarding quality assurance, the requisite staff are appointed to handle the academic work. The institution has tried to improve the library by installing an e-library system and a design for open distance education (interview data, participant #6).

Beerkens and Udam (2017) emphasised that engaging diverse stakeholders—faculty, students, alums, and external partners—can create a more robust quality assurance ecosystem by incorporating diverse perspectives into institutional governance and decision-making. This approach improves compliance and builds a shared commitment to institutional goals. Kettunen (2015) further highlights the importance of stakeholder collaboration in formulating quality assurance systems that align with institutional strategies, which ensure that processes are meaningful, actionable, and integrated into the broader goals of the institution. Moreover, strengthening internal quality monitoring fosters a culture of continuous improvement, which is critical for achieving long-term compliance and readiness for accreditation or charter attainment (Riad & Belyaeva, 2019).

University actors in Malawi respond to external quality assurance with formal instrumentality and professional pragmatism, suggesting that mobilising stakeholders and enhancing internal compliance are crucial for achieving regulatory benchmarks and readiness in private institutions (Chikazinga, 2024). Another study indicated that private universities, like Institution A and B, achieve regulatory benchmarks through stakeholder engagement, internal compliance, and quality assurance systems, focusing on accountability, continuous improvement, and competitiveness to enhance their sustainability in higher education (Tang & Hussin, 2013). These measures cultivate a

proactive and collaborative culture, strengthening Bentiful-UC's position for achieving regulatory benchmarks and charter status.

4.5.5 Theory of Institutional Advancement through Adaptive Teaching Models and Strategic Planning

A theoretical development from the interview data indicates that Bentiful-UC will enhance its regulatory compliance and achieve core objectives by diversifying teaching models to meet diverse learner needs and implementing strategic plans to prioritise resource allocation and goal-oriented activities. This is to say that the strategic recommendation is to diversify teaching models to promote compliance with GTEC's framework and respond to the diverse learning needs of students. By adopting flexible teaching approaches, such as online courses or blended learning options, the institution can increase accessibility, attract non-traditional students, and enrich the academic environment. Similarly, implementing its strategic plan effectively will ensure the institution remains focused on its core objectives, using resources wisely and prioritising activities that directly contribute to its goals. Thus, the institution should diversify its teaching models to enhance compliance with the regulatory framework. Moreover, the institution should diversify its income and improve its financial sustainability management to enhance adherence to the regulatory framework. The above facts are certified by Participant #4, who guarantees that:

The initiatives needed to enhance compliance with the regulatory framework for charter are for the institution to focus on the teaching models it offers, including both online and in-person, for different student categories, that is, regular and weekend students, so that it can target various groups effectively. The institution needs quality and committed staff (interview data, participant #4).

This information is further supported by Participant #5, who defends that:

The strategic initiative needed to enhance compliance with the regulatory framework for charter is to meet the financial sustainability standards. As discussed earlier, the institution should focus on improving financial management and diversifying income sources to meet GTEC requirements (interview data, participant #5).

Similarly, incorporating flexible teaching models, such as blended and online learning, aligns with findings by (Zahid, Ur, Ali, Habib & Shad 2021). The study advocates for diverse teaching strategies to address varied learner needs and broaden access to education. These approaches attract non-traditional students, fostering inclusivity and resilience. The interplay of robust teaching frameworks and financial planning supports operational stability and long-term compliance with regulatory frameworks like GTEC. Additionally, integrating teaching diversity and financial planning can significantly improve institutional performance and readiness for accreditation or charter achievement.

An “Assessment of Private Education Based on Mathematical Modelling Techniques” study emphasises the importance of strategic decisions in private universities to increase student enrolment and improve education quality. Implementing diverse teaching models and effective resource allocation can enhance regulatory compliance and help achieve core educational objectives (Hussein & Khidir, 2008). Effective compliance programmes, including strategic policy development and resource allocation, can enhance university regulatory compliance. Collaborative internal processes and institutional policies are crucial for achieving compliance objectives and managing diverse educational needs effectively (Koebel, 2017).

4.5.6 Adaptive Regulatory Frameworks for Institutional Development at Bentiful-UC

The interview results attest that flexible and tailored regulatory frameworks enable private university colleges like Bentiful-UC to achieve compliance and maintain quality by aligning standards with its size, scope, and capacity. While these internal improvements are essential, several recommendations could enhance the regulatory framework to support Bentiful-UC and other private university colleges. For instance, making the charter timeframe more flexible would allow institutions to progress at a sustainable pace without compromising quality, and tailoring regulatory standards to the size and scope of each institution could help smaller institutions meet compliance standards without facing disproportionate financial or operational strain. A more tailored approach could adjust academic staff requirements, ensuring they are achievable for private institutions while upholding educational quality. Thus, the regulatory framework can be improved by making the charter timeframe more flexible, streamlining the required academic programmes for charter status, offering institutions the option to remain affiliated with mentor institutions even after charter status, tailoring the regulatory requirement to the size and status of the institution, and adjusting academic staff requirements. This is corroborated by Participant #2, who maintains that:

The regulatory requirement can be streamlined to facilitate the drive for a presidential charter at this institution by limiting the required number of professors. If they allow more Ph.D. holders instead of just professors, the school can afford to pay them. The current requirement for eight professors is financially burdensome. Also, the number of programmes required before achieving charter status should be reduced (interview data, participant #2).

These results are also authenticated by Participant #4, who upholds that:

The regulatory processes can be streamlined to facilitate the drive for presidential charter at this institution by making the time frame more flexible. The time frame for the process makes it challenging to meet. Institutions

should be able to remain affiliated with their mentor institution rather than necessarily acquire a Presidential Charter (interview data, participant #4).

Participant #7 further establishes that:

GTEC should streamline its regulatory requirements concerning the qualification and number of academic staff. This standard should be reconsidered since it might not be suitable for all universities, especially depending on the student size and status of the institution (interview data, participant #7).

Compliance is crucial for maintaining operational integrity and securing funding. Private universities, like their public counterparts, face numerous regulations that can be complex and burdensome. Flexible regulatory frameworks allow private universities to adapt compliance requirements to their specific needs. This means that rules can be adjusted based on the university's size, mission, and resources instead of a one-size-fits-all approach. Such tailored approaches help institutions manage their compliance obligations more effectively. By aligning regulatory standards with the university's capacity, institutions can ensure they are not overwhelmed by compliance demands. Flexible frameworks can encourage universities to develop innovative compliance solutions that fit their unique contexts. When institutions share best practices and policies, they can learn from each other and improve their compliance strategies. By allowing for flexibility, regulatory frameworks can reduce the administrative burden on private universities. This means institutions can allocate more resources to their core educational functions rather than being bogged down by compliance issues. This efficiency can ultimately enhance the quality of education provided to students (Koebel, 2017).

Zhang and Su (2016) argued that rigid regulatory requirements often challenge smaller institutions, particularly when such standards are not aligned with institutional capacity and size. They indicated the importance of fostering a quality culture over

strict compliance, enabling institutions to meet quality goals sustainably. Tailored frameworks, such as adjusting academic staff requirements and programme offerings based on institutional size, emphasise the need for context-sensitive standards to improve quality assurance outcomes (Aamodt, Frolich & Stensaker, 2018). Similarly, streamlined regulatory approaches and flexible timelines can reduce operational strain on private institutions, enabling them to maintain quality without excessive resource expenditure (Alzafari & Ursin, 2019).

4.5.7 Collaborative and Technological Enhancement in Tertiary Educational

Regulation

The proof from the interview suggests that decentralised support, public-private partnerships, cost reduction strategies and technological innovations in regulatory frameworks by GTEC promote institutional compliance, alleviate financial burdens, and enhance communication and long-term educational quality in private university colleges. This denotes that further innovations to the framework could involve establishing regional GTEC offices to support institutions outside Accra, making it easier for them to access resources and guidance. Another recommendation is to facilitate public-private partnerships, where the government could support private university colleges by covering lecturer salaries. This partnership model would alleviate financial pressure and promote a collaborative educational environment between public and private institutions. Developing a management information system to submit required documents electronically would streamline compliance and improve communication between institutions and GTEC. Lastly, reducing the financial costs of obtaining a charter and making compliance workshops more affordable would enable institutions to meet regulatory demands effectively. Though these innovation strategies may require short-term investment, they promise long-term

returns by creating a more supportive and adaptable framework for private institutions.

Consequently, GTEC should facilitate partnerships between public universities and private university colleges (public-private partnership) with the government being responsible for lecturer salaries, GTEC should ensure leadership stability and limit non-academic interference in management, establish regional offices to assist institutions located far from Accra and the regulatory requirements should be adjusted to match the specific size and needs of institutions as innovations to enhance the regulatory framework. Also, a management information system should be developed, allowing institutions to submit required documents electronically to GTEC. The evidence from above is validated by Participant#1, who asserts that:

The innovation that can enhance the regulatory process for charter is for GTEC to use its crowd to get some connections that the university colleges can fall back on. This will help private university colleges to draw resources to meet some of these requirements. For example, GTEC can influence the government to allow some public university lecturers to work within private university colleges and be paid by the government. For instance, if the institution has lecturers from UCC or Legon taking lectures in this institution, and the government is responsible for their salary, that would be of great help (interview data, participant #1).

This data is also confirmed by participant #2, who justifies that:

An innovation to enhance the regulatory processes for charter is that GTEC should require that all private university college rectors serve in the position for at least 10 years before a charter is granted. Frequent changes in leadership every two years do not allow the university college to grow. GTEC should add this to their framework. Also, private university colleges owned by a religious body or any other body other than an educational body should have a policy limiting their interference (interview data, participant #2).

Further confirmation from interview Participant #3 indicates that “innovations that can enhance charter is for GTEC to have offices at the regional levels so that institutions from afar will not have to travel far to submit documents” and Participant

#5 claims that “the innovation envisioned is a management information system where documents can be submitted electronically to GTEC.”

Public-private partnerships are a means to alleviate financial burdens and enhance educational quality in Nigeria. It is an innovative funding strategy, including cost-sharing, to improve institutional compliance and support sustainable educational development in private universities (Jones-Esan, 2022). The regulatory framework for private university colleges in Australia has evolved with the transition from state to commonwealth control, incorporating stringent accreditation processes and revised national protocols to enhance quality assurance while allowing for increased competition and marketisation (Stanford, 2016). Similarly, Liu, Yang and Zheng (2020) emphasise the effectiveness of public-private partnerships in enhancing operational efficiencies and bridging resource gaps in e-governance, noting that such partnerships improve accessibility and sustainability in complex systems. Additionally, technological innovations, such as management information systems for electronic submissions, align with Dupont, Morel and Guidat (2015) who argue that integrating digital platforms streamlines administrative processes and fosters better collaboration between regulatory bodies and institutions.

4.5.8 Strategic Growth and Sustainability for Bentiful-UC

The interview data, coupled with the documentary evidence, establish that strategic optimisation of resources, combined with programme expansion, partnerships, and promotional activities, will enable Bentiful-UC to achieve regulatory milestones and establish a foundation for enduring academic and administrative success. By embracing these strategies, the institution can optimise resource allocation, prioritise core activities, and enhance its capacity through programme expansion, partnerships,

and promotional activities. Together, these steps will position Bentiful-UC to achieve charter status and build a solid foundation for enduring academic and administrative success. Accordingly, the steps the institution can take to optimise the allocation of resources are to maximise personnel management, expand programme offerings, increase student enrolment and prioritise its activities. Moreover, future initiatives that can be considered to enhance this institution include implementing its strategic plan, increasing promotional activities, and developing partnerships. These ideas are supported by participant #1, who professes that:

Future initiatives that can further enhance this institution include more programmes, especially demanding ones, such as nursing, future assistantship, engineering, some short-term courses, and professional courses. Granting study opportunities to faculty members and taking short-term courses relating to their responsibilities. For example, if you have someone in charge of managing the record system, and there is a workshop in that area, the institution can sponsor that person. In terms of technology, the institution will soon implement an open distance education system that allows students to be at home and receive lectures as if they were in the classroom. This is another strategy to improve the institution. In finance and enrolment, I have already mentioned one-on-one contact on the ground to enhance enrolment. Also, half of the financial challenge is all about enrolment. Once you have the student numbers, you have your finances, and like I said, the institution needs to think of something else to do to bring in money for the school (interview data, participant #1).

This information is also corroborated by Participant #3, who declares that:

The strategy that can help optimise the allocation of resources to address the institution's challenges to charter is to have more academic programmes and professional programmes at the certificate and diploma levels that will culminate in a degree, and there is also a plan to have master's programmes such as MSc, MBA, etc. Thirdly, the institution is moving to online teaching and learning so that it will be able to have a lot of students worldwide because of the nomenclature of the founder (interview data, participant #3).

Further authentication from participant #2 states that "the future initiatives the institution can consider to enhance itself further are to implement its five-year strategic plan effectively". This is also confirmed from the documentary evidence STRTPL, which justifies that "the institution has a five-year strategic plan with future initiatives to overcome the challenges faced by the institution". Aligning resource

allocation with strategic objectives is fundamental for universities seeking to expand their influence while maintaining financial stability (Hayter & Cahoy, 2018). Similarly, the importance of strategic planning and stakeholder engagement in achieving institutional goals, particularly through targeted programme development and partnerships, is suggested by (Falqueto, Hoffman, Gomes & Mori 2020). Weiss, Barth and Wehrden (2021) have emphasised that programme diversification tailored to societal needs enhances institutional adaptability and appeal, especially when paired with promotional efforts and stakeholder collaboration. Additionally, leveraging technology and implementing open distance education systems aligns with global trends in increasing accessibility and enrolment, as noted by Shishakly, Almaiah, Luftin, & Alrawad (2024).

4.5.9 Institutional Growth through Partnerships and Funding Opportunities at Bentiful-UC

The report from the interview data substantiates that Bentiful-UC will enhance its reach, resources, and impact by forming strategic local and international partnerships and pursuing diverse funding opportunities, enabling shared expertise, community engagement, and support for innovation and growth. This implies that Bentiful-UC can pursue valuable partnerships and funding opportunities to enhance its reach and resources. Forming educational, academic, and professional collaborations will allow for shared expertise and expanded resources, benefiting faculty and students. Local partnerships, including partnerships with faith-based organisations, can strengthen community ties and offer unique support systems. Additionally, seeking international grants can provide the institution with vital funding to support research, facility improvements, and scholarship opportunities, enabling a broader impact and a stronger foundation for growth and, local and faith-based partnership, and sought

international grants. The above view is affirmed by participant #1, who establishes that:

The institutions can collaborate with institutions that have faculty members who are willing to take sabbatical leave, whose qualifications can also help boost the faculty level of this institution, so that we can get the charter and retain it. Yes, so we can make a partnership with the institution. There are professional groups that I believe can also help enhance and facilitate the institution to attain its charter (interview data, participant #1).

These facts are further guaranteed by participant #2, who postulates that,

The institution can form partnerships and collaborations with universities outside the country to gain additional support for the presidential charter. These partnerships could bring in certificate courses and professors to assist in achieving charter status (interview data, participant #2).

Further establishment of this data is made by participant #5, who holds that:

For partnerships or collaborations to gain additional support for a presidential charter, the institution could establish an endowment fund, seek grants from international bodies, and encourage lecturers to conduct research to secure grants (interview data, participant #5).

This claim is further substantiated by participant #6, who asserts that:

Partnerships and collaborations that the institution can form for additional support for charter, per the vision to have local, national and international influence. The institution can seek partnerships for support at all these levels. Locally, it can engage community leaders, chiefs, assembly members, among others, to promote student enrolment. Scholarships could be offered to these students. Nationally, alumni working in large organisations can be invited to collaborate. Internationally, partnerships could be formed with other educational institutions and churches to provide financial support and opportunities for faculty development. We need to establish collaborations and partnerships at every level. When I say every level, I mean that according to our vision, we aim to have an impact locally, nationally, and internationally. Therefore, we should seek out local, national, and international partners. For instance, at the regional level, we work within communities with leaders, chiefs, and assembly members. We can engage with these individuals to attract (interview data, Participant #6).

In confirmation of the above findings, private higher education institutions in India enhance their reach and impact through international partnerships, academic collaborations, and diverse funding opportunities. These strategies promote shared

expertise, community engagement, and innovation, ultimately contributing to the internationalisation of higher education and improving employability (Chanda & Betai, 2022). Also, private universities can enhance their impact through cooperation with industry and education, optimising resources and maximising income. Strategic partnerships and diverse funding opportunities are crucial for fostering innovation, community engagement, and shared expertise in regional cooperation contexts (Kuang, Yi, & You, 2018). University partnerships enhance reach, resources, and impact by sharing expertise, engaging communities, and pursuing diverse funding opportunities. These collaborations foster innovation, improve academic offerings, and create an environment conducive to growth in teaching, learning, and research (Hilliard, 2011).

International higher education partnerships foster resource sharing, knowledge exchange, and capacity building, which are vital for institutional growth (Mwangi, 2017). Also, Public-private partnerships (PPPs) in higher education can improve access to funding and support institutional development by connecting educational institutions with industry and community stakeholders (Mgaiwa & Poncian, 2016). Further, the importance of local community engagement and partnerships with faith-based and non-governmental organisations to strengthen ties and enhance institutional credibility is emphasised by (Eden, Chisom & Adeniyi, 2024). These approaches align with the reported strategies of Bentiful-UC to leverage local and international collaborations for faculty development, programme enhancement, and increased funding opportunities.

The data reveal that Bentiful-UC can overcome its challenges and attain a presidential charter through strategic financial diversification, governance improvements,

academic expansion, stakeholder engagement, and regulatory adaptation. To achieve financial sustainability, the institution must reduce reliance on student tuition by exploring alternative revenue sources such as grants, partnerships, and alumni contributions. Strengthening governance and personnel retention through competitive remuneration and improved decision-making will enhance institutional stability and compliance with GTEC standards. Additionally, expanding academic programmes, intensifying recruitment efforts, and fostering alumni engagement will help increase enrolment and institutional reputation. Effective stakeholder mobilisation and quality assurance mechanisms align institutional efforts with regulatory benchmarks.

Moreover, adopting flexible teaching models and strategic resource planning will enhance compliance and operational efficiency. The data also highlights the need for a more adaptive regulatory framework, advocating for greater flexibility in charter timelines, streamlined compliance requirements, and regional support structures. Leveraging technological advancements, decentralising regulatory support, and facilitating public-private partnerships can further ease the compliance burden and promote institutional growth. By optimising strategic resource allocation, forming national and international collaborations, and enhancing promotional efforts, Bentiful-UC can strengthen its foundation for long-term sustainability and secure its presidential charter status.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the culmination of the research effort, synthesizing the key findings derived from the study, offering conclusions based on the evidence gathered, and providing actionable recommendations to address the purpose of the research which seeks to explore the challenges that prevent Bentiful-UC to charter and find out ways of overcoming these challenges to presidential charter. The findings are discussed about the thesis statement “Bentiful-UC will effortlessly attain presidential charter if there are concise and limited requirements for presidential charter attainment, financial support and sustainability, a transparent governing structure and adequate faculty staff” and the following research questions:

1. What has been the effectiveness of the regulatory requirements that Bentiful-UC must meet for the presidential charter status?
2. What are the challenges that Bentiful-UC faces in acquiring a presidential charter?
3. How prepared is Bentiful-UC to meet the requirements for obtaining a presidential charter?
4. How can Bentiful-UC overcome its challenges to attain a presidential charter?

This highlights significant patterns, trends, or insights observed during the analysis. The conclusions draw on these findings to establish meaningful interpretations and implications for theory, practice, or policy. Lastly, the recommendations are formulated to address gaps identified in the research and propose pathways for future studies and interventions.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The findings provide an analysis of the effectiveness of regulatory requirements, the challenges Bentiful-UC faces in acquiring a presidential charter, its level of preparedness, and the strategies it can adopt to overcome these challenges. The findings are drawn from interview data, documentary evidence, and relevant literature. This chapter synthesises these insights, providing a concise overview of the study's key findings and their implications for policy, practice, and future research.

5.1.1 Effectiveness of Regulatory Requirements of Bentiful University College for Presidential Charter

This section presents the following key findings related to research question one, which examines the effectiveness of the regulatory requirements that Bentiful-UC must meet to obtain a presidential charter:

1. The research found GTEC's oversight fosters high-quality, standardised educational practices at Bentiful-UC, which ensures compliance with regulatory standards and safeguards student interests. However, its regulatory rigidity constrains innovation and institutional flexibility.
2. The study revealed GTEC's initiatives, such as workshops and training, enhance Bentiful-UC's ability to implement and sustain regulatory standards, supporting academic excellence and institutional growth.
3. The study also discovered that the rigid regulatory frameworks impose administrative strains, limiting Bentiful-UC's flexibility to innovate and adapt to evolving educational needs.

5.1.2 Challenges Encountered by Bentiful University College in Acquiring Presidential Charter

The key findings related to research question two, which explores the challenges faced by Bentiful University College in obtaining a presidential charter, are outlined:

1. The research revealed that Bentiful-UC faces financial, administrative, and regulatory challenges, which hinder its progress toward achieving charter status and contribute to institutional stagnation.
2. The study found that limited income sources, low enrolment, and strict financial requirements restrict resource allocation, impacting critical infrastructure, staff recruitment, and development.
3. The data discovered that the difficulties in hiring and retaining qualified staff negatively affect academic quality, compliance, and institutional performance, delaying progress toward charter status.

5.1.3 Preparedness of Bentiful University College in Obtaining the Presidential Charter

The key findings related to research question three, which explores the preparedness of Bentiful University Colleges in obtaining a presidential charter, are as follows:

1. The data revealed that strong governance, personnel management, and infrastructure development have provided a foundation for sustainable growth, operational stability, and regulatory compliance.

5.1.4 Strategies to Overcome Challenges to the Presidential Charter by Bentiful University College

The key findings related to research question four, which examines the strategies to overcome challenges for obtaining presidential charter by Bentiful University College, are below:

1. The data found that diversifying revenue streams beyond student tuition enhances financial resilience, allowing effective resource allocation for infrastructure, faculty retention, and student services.
2. The research revealed that mobilising stakeholders and strengthening compliance systems ensure alignment with regulatory benchmarks, fostering institutional readiness for autonomy.
3. The study discovered that decentralised support, tailored regulatory frameworks, and technological innovations help alleviate financial and administrative burdens while enhancing quality and compliance.
4. The research found that expanding academic offerings, recruitment strategies, and innovative teaching approaches tailored to diverse learner needs improve compliance and align institutional goals with educational quality standards, and alum engagement drives sustainable growth, strengthens institutional reputation, and fosters a supportive community.
5. The findings discovered that the local and international partnerships and diversified funding opportunities extend Bentiful-UC's reach, promote innovation, and enhance institutional resources.

5.3 Conclusion

From the summary of key findings in sub-section 5.1, the study successfully explored the challenges preventing Bentiful-UC from attaining a presidential charter and identified strategies to overcome these barriers. It comprehensively addressed the research questions, providing valuable insights into the institution's challenges, preparedness, and potential pathways to success. While the study aimed to explore challenges preventing Bentiful-UC from attaining a presidential charter and identify solutions, several unanticipated issues emerged that provide additional insights. One notable finding was the dual impact of GTEC's regulatory frameworks. At the same time, these frameworks ensure standardisation and quality, but their rigidity limits Bentiful-UC's adaptability and innovation. The study also uncovered the need for more flexible, size-appropriate regulatory frameworks and the potential of technological innovations to ease compliance burdens. These issues point to the importance of tailoring regulations to the capacities of smaller institutions like Bentiful-UC, while leveraging innovation to enhance institutional efficiency.

The findings indicate that while Bentiful-UC has made significant progress and is committed to meeting regulatory requirements, the evidence does not unequivocally support the thesis that "Bentiful-UC will effortlessly attain presidential charter" under certain conditions. Instead, the findings reveal a complex interplay of strengths, challenges, and opportunities that collectively influence Bentiful-UC's ability to achieve charter status. These findings partially support the thesis, which states that "Bentiful-UC will effortlessly attain presidential charter if there are concise and limited requirements for presidential charter attainment, financial support and sustainability, a transparent governing structure and adequate faculty staff", but do not substantiate the claim that Bentiful-UC will "effortlessly" attain presidential charter

status. While the outlined conditions—concise requirements, financial sustainability, transparent governance, and adequate faculty—are necessary for charter attainment, the challenges identified in the findings indicate that achieving these conditions will require considerable effort, strategic planning, and systemic reforms. The thesis is optimistic but oversimplifies the multifaceted nature of the process. In light of this, a new thesis statement is that Bentiful-UC can achieve presidential charter status through strategic resource optimisation, financial sustainability, enhanced governance structures, and adaptive regulatory frameworks that align with the institution's capacity, provided it addresses its interconnected financial, administrative, and compliance challenges.

The findings contribute to understanding the interplay between regulatory frameworks, institutional capacity, and strategic governance in pursuing educational accreditation, particularly within private university colleges like Bentiful-UC. The study illuminates the dual role of GTEC in fostering quality assurance while also inadvertently constraining institutional adaptability and innovation. The findings emphasise the critical importance of financial sustainability, resource diversification, and effective governance in overcoming barriers to progress. Additionally, the interconnected nature of financial, administrative, and human resource challenges is highlighted, demonstrating how these factors collectively impact institutional growth, compliance, and reputation. The research underscores the need for tailored regulatory frameworks and strategic partnerships to address the unique challenges faced by smaller institutions. This knowledge enriches the discourse on higher education governance, particularly in the context of developing countries, by providing actionable insights into how regulatory and institutional synergies can be optimised to promote educational quality and institutional autonomy.

The study fills a significant gap in the literature by addressing the challenges and opportunities faced by private university colleges in Ghana, specifically in navigating the stringent regulatory frameworks required to achieve presidential charter status. While existing research often focuses on the broader dynamics of higher education governance and quality assurance, this study analyses the interconnections between financial sustainability, administrative capacity, and compliance with regulatory standards in a resource-constrained institution. Furthermore, the study offers insights into the specific strategies that private institutions can employ to overcome systemic barriers, including resource diversification, public-private partnerships, and decentralised regulatory support. By focusing on the unique challenges of Bentiful-UC, the study contributes to the literature by offering a localised and institution-specific perspective that underscores the importance of aligning regulatory frameworks with institutional capacities, a topic that has been underexplored in the context of developing countries.

5.4 Recommendations

1. Advocate for GTEC to adopt adaptable regulatory requirements that align with the size, scope, and capacity of private university colleges like Bentiful-UC to enable compliance without stifling innovation.
2. Reduce dependency on student tuition by exploring alternative funding sources such as partnerships, grants, endowments, and entrepreneurial initiatives to enhance financial resilience.
3. Strengthen governance structures to improve decision-making processes and prioritise strategic allocation of resources toward critical areas like infrastructure, faculty development, and student services.

4. Implement competitive recruitment, retention, and staff development strategies to attract and support qualified personnel, improving academic quality and institutional performance.
5. Intensify efforts to promote Bentiful-UC's academic offerings and reputation to increase student enrolment and institutional visibility.

These recommendations address Bentiful-UC's challenges while leveraging its strengths to achieve sustainable growth and successfully attain presidential charter status.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Despite the findings for this research work, the study makes suggestions about gaps that need further research to bring closure to the body of knowledge.

1. Conduct comparative research on other private university colleges in Ghana or similar developing countries to identify common challenges, successful strategies, and lessons learned.
2. Study how rigid regulatory policies limit or promote innovation in private universities and propose adaptable policy models.
3. Examine how broader economic conditions, government funding policies, and societal perceptions of private higher education influence the growth and sustainability of private universities like Bentiful-UC.
4. Conduct long-term research tracking private universities' journeys toward attaining charter status, identifying critical milestones, and persistent challenges after charter.

Further research in these areas will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities for private university colleges in Ghana and beyond.

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APPENDIX A

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL LIFE LONG LEARNING DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

I am an MPhil student in the Department of Educational Administration and Management at the University of Education, Winneba. I am conducting an interview to gather information on the challenges faced by Private University Colleges in preparing for a Presidential Charter. This interview will focus on key management personnel at Bentiful University College and their experiences with these challenges.

As a researcher, I assure you that this study adheres to strict ethical standards. All information provided will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, and your identities will remain anonymous. Your honest contributions to this study are essential for advancing knowledge and informing practice. Therefore, your objective participation in this interview would be greatly appreciated.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Tick appropriately by choosing the demographic factors related to you.

Gender: 1. Male [] 2. Female []

Designation:

Years of service in institution:

What has been the effectiveness of the regulatory frameworks and requirements that Bentiful-UC is required to meet for the presidential charter status?

1. What is the role of GTEC in regulating Private University Colleges?
2. How do these regulatory frameworks contribute to ensuring proper and uniform academic standards within your institution towards presidential charter?
3. How has the regulatory framework affected the establishment and operation of your institution?

4. What support does the regulatory body give to your institution to ensure compliance?
5. What are some common obstacles or difficulties your institution faces when trying to conform to regulatory requirements?
6. What do you perceive as the main limitations of the current Higher Education regulatory framework in your institution?
- 7.

Challenges Encountered by Private University Colleges in acquiring Presidential Charter.

What are the challenges that are faced by Bentiful-UC in acquiring presidential charter?

1. What challenges are encountered by your institution in the push for acquiring presidential charter?
2. What regulatory requirements poses challenges for your institution seeking presidential charter status?
3. Is the requirement and process for Charter clear?
4. What other challenges does your institution have?
5. What financial challenges does your institution face in meeting the criteria for presidential charter status?
6. What administrative challenges does your institution encounter during the process for presidential charter status?
7. What is the effect of the challenges faced at your institution?

Preparedness of Private University Colleges in obtaining Presidential Charter.

How prepared is Bentiful-UC in meeting the requirements for obtaining a presidential charter?

1. How would you assess your institution's current level of readiness in meeting the requirements for obtaining a presidential charter?
2. How does your institution monitor compliance with regulatory standards for charter?
3. What charter requirements does your institution excel in, and which charter requirements need more attention?
4. What resources has your institution allocated towards meeting the requirements for presidential charter?

5. How prepared is your institution in compiling the necessary documentation and evidence required for the presidential charter application?

Strategies to overcome challenges to Presidential Charter by Private University Colleges.

What are the ways Benin-UC can overcome its challenges to attain presidential charter?

1. What strategies can be used to overcome the challenges faced by your institution?
2. What strategic initiatives are needed to enhance compliance to the regulatory framework for charter?
3. How can the regulatory processes be streamlined to facilitate the drive for presidential charter at your institution?
4. What innovations do you envision for the enhancement of the regulatory processes for charter?
5. What is the cost effectiveness of the innovation strategies suggested?
6. What steps can your institution take to optimize the allocation of financial, human, and technological resources to address its challenges to charter?
7. What future initiatives or strategies are you considering to further enhance Private University Colleges?
8. What partnerships or collaborations can your institution form to gain additional support for presidential charter?