

Ghanaian Private Higher Education Providers: Are they becoming Endangered Species
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Abstract

Ghana's quest to improve higher education provision and respond to high demand for higher education resulted in reforms in the sector in 1993. Through this, the Higher Education sector was liberalized and allowed individual entrepreneurs and non-governmental organizations to invest in the sector by setting up higher education institutions (HEIs). Ghana government's data put private higher education institutions' (PHEIs) number over 90. They are a mix of national, international institutions and are secular and faith based. PHEIs play a vital role in Ghana's higher education system. They complement the efforts of public HEIs to absorb the increasing number of high school leavers seeking higher education every year. Nonetheless, current statistics show that PHEIs share of gross tertiary enrolment is on the decline. Given the main source of funding of PHEIs in Ghana comes from student fees, are they becoming endangered species in the higher education space in Ghana? This study examines how sustainable the operations of PHEIs are, within the context of declining enrolment via Resource Dependency Perspective. Through desktop review of articles that focus on Ghana's PHEIs and interviews of purposely selected 15 key informants (including Presidents, Vice Presidents, Registrars, and Accountants) of PHEIs and an academic auditor connected to Ghana's National Accreditation, this paper investigates the viability of the academic operations of PHEIs in Ghana. It provides indicative realities of operational viability and long-term sustainability of PHEIs in Ghana based on the dynamics of students' enrolments, funding, affiliation policy, staffing and innovativeness. We conclude that PHEIs in Ghana could become endangered species in the near future with implication of exacerbating the pressure on the public purse to meet the ever-increasing demand for higher education, and the increasing unemployment rate in the country. Going forward, we recommend that the Ministry of Education should initiate a national dialogue on the viability and sustainability of PHEIs in Ghana.

Keywords: private higher education institution, sustainability, Ghana

Introduction

Higher education plays an important role in society by increasing opportunities and assisting individuals and communities to achieve their potential (Kilpatrick et al., 2017). The global recognition of these claims seems to have pushed various countries both developed and developing to ensure that higher education is more accessible to their citizenry. In the latter part of the 20th Century, most countries democratized their higher education, resulting in a shift from elitist to mass higher education provision (Mohamedbai, 2008). This has since activated demand for higher education worldwide, leading to a surge in students looking for places in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Altbach (2013) states that in 2013, 140 million students pursued higher education worldwide and the number continues to increase quickly. The strain placed on the state purse by Higher Education mystification (Altbach, 2013) and competing public needs (pension, infrastructure, health, security and basic education)

(Johnstone, 2006; Ngolovoi, 2008) spurred the need for additional financial resources to sustain and expand the higher education sector. An attractive option to most countries was the privatization of their higher education systems. Privatization is a vague concept and is often implemented differently in different contexts (Wang, 2014). While particulars differ by country, overall one can observe the state in various ways withdrawing its financial support for higher education (Bigalke & Neubauer, 2009) and opening up the higher education marketplace to private providers. Broadly speaking, privatization covers all attempts to increase the participation of the private sector and to strengthen the market in the national socioeconomic setting, through practices such as diminishing public intervention, encouraging public-private partnership, and creating market opportunities (Belfield & Levin, 2002). It is believed that, the approach makes universities more responsive to the needs of students and more efficient but privatization has also been accused of distorting and subverting the public mission of universities, turning universities into profit-oriented businesses that charge high fees and offer a narrow range of programs, often of sub-standard quality (Teixeira, Kim, Landoni, & Gilani, 2017). This notwithstanding, private higher education is expanding rapidly in many parts of the globe. Altbach and Levy (2005) even describe it as a “global revolution”. The phenomenon is evident in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and even in some parts of Europe, where increasing numbers of students willing to access higher education are creating stress upon traditional public universities (Teixeira et al., 2017). It is on record that about one third of global higher education enrolment is provided by private institutions, representing the fastest growing sector in the field (Levy, 2011). Van Schalkwyk (2011) suggests that the private sector is so large in certain countries that it could potentially meet the need for HE on its own. Africa was late in experiencing expansion of PHE, but currently PHEIs are a permanent feature of Africa’s educational milieu (Tamrat, 2017). The growth of the sector has been triggered by escalating demand that could not be met by the public sector and Structural Adjustment Programs that promoted privatization in the 1980s and beyond (Tamrat, 2017). From 1990 to 2007, the number of PHEIs exploded from two dozen to an estimated 468 (World Bank, 2009). Nonetheless, African private higher education institutions only accommodate 20 per cent of total higher education enrolment, below the global average of 31 per cent (Levy, 2013).

The percentage of Ghanaian higher education students enrolled in private higher education institutions increased from 13 to 20 per cent between 2007 and 2012, before dropping down to 16 per cent by 2017 (Kamran, 2019). This decline is inconsistent with the rising enrolment of the sector. The decline should be a cause for concern given that total higher education enrolment was less than 17% of potential students in 2015 (Kamran, 2019). Surprisingly, no study has attempted to answer the question of “Are PHEIs in Ghana becoming endangered species?” This question is what this study sought to answer. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine how PHEIs in Ghana are becoming endangered species so that a basis for a constructive national dialogue on the future of private higher education in the country could provide.

Context

The decision to privatize Higher Education in Ghana is not an isolated case. It is deeply rooted in the context of globalization in which neoliberalism has transformed public sectors in many countries (Wang, 2014). An economic crisis in the early 80's brought on in part by the global increase in the price of oil and disappointing growth in Ghana's economy had led to a reduction in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) allocated to education from 6.4% to 1.3% in the 1980's (Girdwood, 1999). As a result, the quality of education deteriorated and school enrolments stagnated (Dwomoh, 1994). The Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC), a military government led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings initiated education reforms in 1987 as part of a Structural Adjustment Program negotiated with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank and aimed at halting the decline in expansion and quality through a radical overhaul of both the structure and the content of education (Acheampong, 2008). A University Rationalization Committee (URC) was established to undertake a comprehensive review of postsecondary education in the country (University Rationalisation Committee, 1988). Prior to this, Ghana had only three public universities (University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and University of Cape Coast). Through this, the Higher Education sector was liberalized in 1993 and allowed individual entrepreneurs and non-governmental organizations to invest in the sector by setting up higher education institutions (HEIs) (Swanzy & Potts, 2017) to increase higher education provision and respond to high demand for higher education. Ghana government's data put private higher education institutions (PHEIs) number over 80. They are a mix of national, international institutions and are secular and faith based. PHEIs play a vital role in Ghana's higher education system. They complement the efforts of public HEIs to absorb the increasing number of high school leavers seeking higher education every year.

At present, there are 81 accredited private higher institutions in Ghana, but only five of them – Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Technology, Ashesi University, Central University, the Trinity Theological Seminary and Valley View University – have been officially chartered as independent degree-granting institutions (National Accreditation Board, 2019). According to Kamran (2019) many, but not all private HEIs are smaller providers of lesser quality that absorb excess demand by students locked out of the competitive and more highly regarded public sector.

Theory

The Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) is the explanatory tool used to guide the analysis of PHEIs in Ghana. RDT was spearheaded by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald R. Salancik, who became popular through their book "The External Control of Organizations. A Resource Dependence Perspective" (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). RDT has the tendency to explain behaviour of organizations such as PHEIs (Hillman, Withers, & Collins, 2009). Organization (PHEI) is defined as settings in which groups and individuals such as students, academics, administrators and staff of regulatory agencies with varying interests and preferences come together and engage in exchanges (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). RDT postulates that the environment provides "critical" resources (students, academic staff, Affiliation legitimacy,

funds) needed by organizations (PHEIs) and that key to their survival is their ability to acquire and maintain the resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). In other words, because organizations import resources from their environments, they depend on their environment. The environment includes every event in the world which has effect on the activities or outcomes of PHEIs. This does not suggest that every event confronting a PHEI necessarily affects it. Environments can change, new organizations enter and exit and this impacts the availability of resources. An organization's dependence on its environment in itself is not problematic, the challenge however is that the environment is not dependable. To acquire resources, PHEIs must inevitably interact with their social environments. Organizations such as Ghanaian PHEIs are linked to their environments by federations, associations (Private Universities Association of Ghana), customer-supplier relationships (PHEIs, student and staff) and a social-legal apparatus (National Accreditation Board/National Council for Tertiary Education of Ghana regulations) defining and controlling the nature and limits of these relationships (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Organizations such as PHEIs engage in exchanges and transactions with other groups or organizations (Public Universities, National Accreditation Board, National Council for Tertiary Education and Professional Bodies). The exchange may involve monetary (affiliation and accreditation fees) or physical resources (land and buildings for classrooms and offices), information or social legitimacy (affiliated/accredited status). An organization's (PHEI) vulnerability to extra organizational influence is partly determined by the relative magnitude of the exchange and/or the criticality of the resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). The relative magnitude of an exchange as a determinant of the importance of the resource is measurable by assessing the proportion of total inputs or the proportion of total outputs accounted for by the exchange. For example, an organization such as a PHEI that creates only one product or service (undergraduate academic programs) is more dependent on its customers (students) than an organization that has a variety of outputs (graduated students/ research outputs and breakthroughs/ funded research projects) that are being disposed of in a variety of markets. Similarly, organization's (PHEIs) which require one primary input (undergraduate students) for their operations will be more dependent on the sources of supply for that input than organizations (Public Universities) that use multiple inputs (undergraduate and post graduate students and public funds). The criticality of a resource measures the ability of an organization such as PHEI to continue functioning in the absence of the resource (students) or in the absence of the market for the output (employment/further studies for graduates of PHEIs). Interdependency characterizes organizations transacting in the same environment, with the connection being through the flow of transactions (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Interdependency exist whenever one actor (PHEI) does not entirely control all of the conditions necessary for the achievement of an action (provision of higher education in Ghana) or for obtaining the outcome desired from the action (quality graduates). Interdependence, is therefore, a consequence of the open-systems nature of Ghanaian PHEIs-the fact that PHEIs would have to transact with elements of the environment in order to obtain the resources (students, academic staff, and funds) necessary for survival. Interdependence can create problems of uncertainty or unpredictability for PHEIs. PHEIs facing uncertainty in Ghana attempt to cope with this situation by restructuring their exchange relationships such as seeking a chartered status. Actions such as academic activities engaged in by organizations (PHEIs) are not possible without constraints.

Constraints on PHEI's actions are the result of prior decision making or the resolution of various conflicts among competing interest groups such as students, Public Universities, NAB, NCTE and professional bodies. The fact that constraints (Student entry requirements/academic staff qualifications criteria/PHEIs Affiliation requirement of NAB/NCTE/Professional bodies/Ghana's Higher Education funding formulae, Universities fees structure) exist indicates that sufficient social support has been mustered to bring it into existence (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Since constraints derive from the actions of others, management of organizations (PHEIs) try to influence these others as a means of determining their own environment. This managerial action normally involves the recognition of the social context and constraints within which the organization must operate and the choice of organizational adjustments to these social realities (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). This theoretical framework is used as an analytical lens to empirically explore the sustainability of Ghanaian private higher education institutions.

Methods

This exploratory study sought to gain insights into whether the operations of Ghanaian Private Higher Institutions are sustainable. Data for the study emerged from documents and expert interviews. A review of articles that focus on Ghana's PHEIs published in major newspaper portals (My joy online, Peacefmonline, Ghanaweb, Adomfmonline, Modern Ghana, Citifmonline.com and Ghana News Agency) in Ghana was undertaken between January to May 2018. These newspaper portals were used because they are known to report education news. Guided by Cronin, Ryan, and Coughlan (2008) criterion of currency, newspaper articles that were published in the last ten years, that is from 2008 to 2018, were sought. Search terms included: private higher education, private university college, enrolment in private universities, funding of private higher education, quality of private higher education, challenges of private higher education. Scholarly articles on Private Higher Institutions were excluded because these were deemed not to capture raw views of private higher education practitioners. A total of 31 newspaper articles were retrieved through this exercise and were appraised. Extracts from the articles were synthesized, categorized and thematically analyzed using NVivo 11 to draw meaning and discover relevant insights into private higher education provision in Ghana (Bowen, 2009). In addition to the data obtained from the literature, in-depth interview was conducted with 15 purposely selected experts (including Presidents, Vice Presidents, Registrars, and Accountants) of PHEIs and an academic auditor connected to Ghana's National Accreditation through face-face and partly via Skype for 30 minutes. These officers were deemed to have rich insights and knowledge about PHEIs (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Ethical considerations were upheld. With the interviewees consent, the interview was audio recorded and transcribed. This data was also coded, categorized and thematically analyzed through the assistance of the software mentioned above. The multiple data sources provided a confluence of evidence that enhanced the trustworthiness of the study. The major themes that emerged from the data form the main discussion of this paper.

Emerging Issues and Discussion

In this section, we present and discuss the emerging issues by addressing the purpose of the study which sought to examine how sustainable are PHEIs in Ghana so that a basis for a constructive national dialogue on the future of private higher education in the country could be provided.

The emerging issues revealed several dynamics which seem to be threatening the viability and for that matter sustainability of PHEIs in Ghana. We present the relevant quotations here and pick them up for discussion in subsequent subsections.

There has been a considerable reduction in student numbers and with the over reliance on fees as the main source of funds, it has put the institutions in a very serious situation (Q1).

Our main source of funding is student fees but student enrolment has declined to the extent that we have difficulty in meeting fixed operational cost (Q2).

We depend on bank credit now but it is not sustainable if we do not increase student enrolment in the coming years (Q3).

It appears the state universities have compounded the enrolment problem we are facing since they charge competitive fees and in many cases they are the mentoring institutions for the PHEIs. Why would a student attend a private university and pay more for a degree when he can assess the same education in a state university for the same degree at a much cheaper cost (Q4).

PHEIs, like the state financial institutions, need financial support from government to make them viable. I remember the teaching and learning innovative fund (TALIF) from which our institute benefited helped us to broaden our horizon on what we could offer to both faculty and students (Q5).

If the government can inject a whopping GHC10 billion plus of tax payer's money to inject life into an ailing financial sector, then something similar ought to be done for the private higher education sector else we cannot have a healthy higher education system given the role of PHEIs (Q6).

For the declining enrolment we are witnessing, funding will remain a problem of PHEIs for a long time to come (Q7).

It seems we are concentrated in the two largest cities in the country (Accra and Kumasi) which has made competition very intense, particularly for the generic program like the Humanities. Every private university offers study programs in the Humanities (Q8).

The current affiliation policy where public institutions have access to all our information and use it to compete with us is unfair (Q9).

In most cases, the affiliate institutions do not discharge their responsibilities towards the PHEIs as stated in the agreement (Q10).

Mentor/affiliate institutions most often expect the PHEIs to operate and put structures in place to reflect what is in place at the mentor institution. The mentor institution is required to provide guidance and direction and help ensure quality assurance irrespective of the institutional structures in place at the PHEIs. This is however not the case most of the time (Q11).

Staffing is a problem especially in situations where only few lecturers are available with the requisite qualifications. There has been a recycling which does not augur well for the sustainability of the PHEIs (Q12).

Salary competition from the public universities has made it difficult for us to maintain qualified staff. We are unable to match up the conditions of service at the public universities to keep terminal degree holders, particularly young PhD holders and professors. Now we, have only two professors who have retired from the public universities and are very advanced in age (Q13).

One key area that is greatly affected is staffing. This includes both teaching and non-teaching staff. It's either the institution has no funds to recruit qualified teaching staff or employ non-teaching staff to ensure the smooth running of the College (Q14).

Regulation to recruit PhD holders only for academic positions will put pressure on our wage bill and it will affect tuition fee and therefore make cost of private education higher than it is currently (Q15).

I do not consider PHEIs to be innovative in their academic programming since they all seem to be interested in offering the same programs. Most of these programs are replicated and there is no underlying difference to make them stand out (Q16).

In some cases, these affiliate institutions dictate to PHEIs, how things must be done which in the long run creates the impression that the PHEIs are a miniature of the affiliate institution. This prevents innovativeness and the ability to couch an image for the PHEIs (Q17)).

I believe PHEIs should diversify their funding requirements and introduce innovative programs that will not be a repetition of programs only because it attracts students. Institutions should create a niche for themselves and ensure that programs are linked to the needs of industry to make them competitive in the sector (Q18).

PHEIs struggle to operate and to threat extinction looms over their heads. Students' enrollment has greatly declined across most of the PHEIs especially with respect to foreign students from especially Nigeria. This reduction in enrollment has affected the operations and sustainability of these institutions (Q19).

A lot of innovativeness can be introduced into the Science based programs but because of the cost involved on running these programs, most institutions do not run them (Q20).

As a major stakeholder in the training of the required work force needs of the country, it is a cause for concern for the nation. The public higher education alone, cannot fill this skills requirement gap of the nation as well as meeting the enrolment needs of the sector (Q21).

One other key factor is that there are a number of employment opportunities offered the PHEIs. With the non-viability and subsequent collapse of these PHEIs, these employment opportunities will be lost further adding up to the bad unemployment situation, which is a concern for the nation (Q22).

So far, we have been managed by retired professors from public universities who hardly understand the private sector model higher education where the leader has to be entrepreneurial and business minded (Q23).

We have coded the above quotations as student enrolment dynamics; funding sustainability dynamics; affiliation policy dynamics; staff conditions of service dynamics; and innovation dynamics. We believe that the discussion of these dynamics put together, largely, answer the overarching research question of the study, “how are PHEIs becoming endangered species in the Ghanaian higher education landscape”?

Students’ Enrolment Dynamics

The above responses reveal interesting dynamics concerning declining students’ enrolment in PHEIs of this study. It is clear from the responses that declining students’ enrolment is a reality in the PHEIs in the study (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q8, and Q20). In these relevant quotations about the respondents’ expressions concerning declining students’ enrolment, threat of operational viability comes up. This is because the dynamic of the declining enrolment is not just about a concern for funding viability but also the primary input for operations. Even if alternative funding arrangements are made (Q6 and Q7) as indicated by some of the respondents, the PHEIs still need students as their primary inputs in order to exist so students’ enrolment is not just a source of funding. This is consistent with RDT which postulates that institutions survival depend on their ability to acquire and maintain the primary resources needed for operations (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). The dynamics of declining students’ enrolment were also nuanced with prestige and cost because there is a claim that “*Why would a student attend a private university and pay more for a degree when he can assess the same education in a state university for the same degree at a much cheaper cost*” (Q4). This implies that a state university is better and cheaper than a PHEI. In Ghana, this seems to be a widespread view (Tsevi, 2014). This is why the declining students’ enrolment in PHEIs needs to be looked at from a broader perspective because if the PHEIs are not patronized, pressure will mount on the state purse to provide growing demand for higher education. However, it is also clear that the declining students’ enrolment has been linked to several other dynamics including sustainable funding which is discussed in the previous section.

Funding sustainability dynamics

Participants responses are clear that the PHEIs involved in the study appear to be in financial distress which poses an existential threat to the PHEIs (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q5, Q6, Q7, and Q13). However, the funding situation has been strongly linked to the declining students' enrolment as can be observed from the relevant quotations cited in this paragraph. This suggests that increasing students' enrolment is a panacea to the funding distress being experienced by the PHEIs in this study. From RDT standpoint, funding dynamics linked to declining students' enrolment may not be an existential threat if the PHEIs are not dependent on only one primary product/service (academic programs) and one customer (students) for their operations. It is a reality that the students' enrolment is a resource environment that affects them as PHEIs but that environment is in a dynamic exchange with the PHEIs such that the vulnerability of the PHEIs is determined by the relative magnitude of the criticality of the resource (students' enrolment). If the PHEIs have more than one primary product/service (academic programs) and one customer (students), that can reduce their funding vulnerability associated with declining students' enrolment. This is probably the reason why some of the respondents (Q5 and Q6) are calling for government bail-out in times of declining students' enrolment. The question that will still remain is "will government bail-out be sustainable in ensuring the financial viability of PHEIs"?

Affiliation Policy Dynamics

The responses show that affiliation policy dynamics, largely, affect the operational viability of the PHEIs (Q9, Q10, Q11 and Q17). Firstly, the PHEIs pay affiliation fees that the PHEIs perceive to exorbitant (Ansah and Swanzy, 2019). Secondly, the respondents perceive that because of the national affiliation policy public universities who mentor the PHEIs have access to strategic information of the PHEIs and thereby compete unfavorably with them. Thirdly, the study participants perceive the existing mentorship arrangement as constraining innovativeness of PHEIs and eventual survival because mentor universities hardly allow the PHEIs to carve their niches and create identity for future sustainability. The participants seem to argue that because of the affiliation policy, the PHEIs are compelled to operate just like their mentor universities limiting innovativeness.

The affiliation policy dynamics have implications on the resources of the PHEIs which their operational viability and long-term sustainability depend on. The affiliation policy mechanism takes away resources from the PHEIs but instead of the affiliation arrangements helping the PHEIs to become more resourceful and viable, it appears to rather threaten their operational viability because the policy arrangements seem to put the PHEIs in a weaker position in transactional exchange for the resources they depend on for viability and sustainability.

Staffing Conditions of Service Dynamics

The responses (Q12, Q13, Q14 and Q15) portray staffing as one the biggest challenges threatening the survival of PHEIs in Ghana. The PHEIs seem not to have what it takes to maintain and retain qualified full-time academic staff as a result of uncompetitive conditions of service. The PHEIs are unable to match up the conditions of service provided to qualified

staff by the public universities because of funding gap. The PHEIs depend largely on part-time academic staff that is full-time staff of the public universities. Besides, because of the uncompetitive salaries few staff are usually recycled among the PHEIs which has implications for staff commitment and productivity. Additionally, the study participants perceive the implementation of an impending regulation to recruit PhD holders only for academic positions in higher education constraint the academic operations of PHEIs and serve as a recipe for making PHEIs endangered species.

Innovation Dynamics

The responses reveal that the study participants perceive PHEIs as not being innovative enough in their operations and academic programming. For instance, PHEIs are perceived to be largely concentrated in the two most populous cities in the country (Q8) and thereby creating unwarranted competition over limited number of students whilst a lot more potential students are denied access to higher education due to geographical remoteness. A rethink of the geographical locations through innovative programming in terms of satellite campuses or mode of academic program delivery could help in addressing the declining students' enrolment because they could create opportunities for those who are constrained by geographical remoteness to enroll on their programs.

The responses also indicate that PHEIs seem to be replicating same academic programs among themselves with no differentiations and diversification to broadening their potential student clientele base (Q16 and Q18). In line with RDT view, the less dependent an institution is on only one or two resource (Business and Humanities students) the less vulnerable the institution is with respect to operational viability. In Ghana, Business and Humanities academic programs had been the most patronized programs in PHEIs in the past but the trend has changed in recent times but the PHEIs have not moved with the changing trend, which appears to have adversely affected their operational viability. This is contrary to the widespread view that the private sector is more responsive to market trend as compared to the public sector (Teixeira et al., 2017). This is probably so because of the Ghanaian context where almost all PHEIs are under the mentorship of public universities who most often than not, will not permit PHEIs to offer programs they (the public universities) are not offering (Ansah and Swanzy, 2019). It should also be noted that public universities are only implementing a national policy on programme affiliation (Ansah and Swanzy, 2019).

It emerged from the responses that the PHEIs are mostly headed by retired Professors from the public universities who are perceived to be less 'business-minded' and entrepreneurial to drive innovation and pursue demand-driven programs (Q23). However, the situation appears to be complicated by regulating challenge than the entrepreneurial posture of the institutional head because every academic program requires affiliation which gives much power to the mentor institutions. This regulatory arrangement has often been justified with the claim that privatization has been accused of distorting and subverting the public mission of universities, turning universities into profit-oriented businesses that charge high fees and offer a narrow range of programs, often of sub-standard quality (Teixeira et al., 2017)

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has provided indicative realities of operational viability and long-term sustainability of PHEIs in Ghana due to the dynamics of students' enrolments, funding, affiliation policy, staffing and innovativeness. Based on our analysis and discussion of these issues, we conclude PHEIs in Ghana could become endangered species with implication of exacerbating the pressure on the public purse to meet the ever-increasing demand for higher education, and the increasing unemployment rate in the country. Going forward, we recommend that the Ministry of Education should initiate a national dialogue on the viability and sustainability of PHEIs in Ghana.

Limitation of the Study

The study is unable to state categorically that all PHEIs in Ghana are endangered species because it is an illustrative case study. Nonetheless, it has revealed insightful realities of the private higher education landscape in Ghana regarding institutional viability and sustainability, which could be a basis for a national dialogue.

Suggestions for Further Research

We suggest a further research to hypothesize the issues that have emerged in this study and test for how widespread they are in the PHEIs in Ghana.

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