Causes of coercive management behaviour, dimensions and occupations

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to identify the specific causes of individual dimensions of coercive management behaviour (CMB) and identify the relationship between individual causes of CMB and the deployment of individual dimension of CMB as well as propose the matching of anti-CMB solutions to occupational types.

Design/methodology/approach – This study used a sample of 371 respondents randomly selected from 10 of 100 accredited universities in Ghana. The data were gathered using an instrument that was measured on five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree = 1" to "strongly agree = 5". Then the least squares regression analysis was also used in testing the hypothesis.

Findings – This study identified the potent effect of causality in determining the CMB in organisations. Again, a regression of the individual causes on individual dimensions of CMB clearly shows that there is a strong relationship between specific causes and individual dimensions of CMB. The results show clearly that each CMB cause has a different effect and unequal level of significance in relation to specific dimensions.

Research limitations/implications – Though this research attempted to find the relationship between causes of CMB and the CMB dimensions deployed in universities, the identified causes are only the causes elucidated through a new scale developed Doe (2018). Other possible causes of CMB were not factored into this research's objectives. It is possible therefore that further research can link some other causes not mentioned in this work to dimensions of CMB which are intimidation, threat to personal standing, threat to professional standing, social isolation and work-related harassment. It is therefore suggested that more research will be necessary to ascertain which dimensions produce which effects and in what proportion in victims of CMB. Second, as a result of the fact that this is a novel area, formulating a hypothesis for the mediation of occupational types in the relationship between causes and dimensions is difficult. Hence, although the findings present a theory of a moderation of occupational characteristics on the relationship between causes of CMB and specific dimensions of CMB in the university, this theory was not tested. However, in spite of this, the researchers propose this perspective as the paper's contribution to the body of the literature as a novel research interest worth looking into. It is thus relevant and significant to ignite research interest in this direction. Finally, data used in the study was conjoint thereby leaving no room for a comparative analysis of public versus private universities. This limitation should therefore provide a base for further research.

Practical implications – The research findings have practical policy implications. This includes providing the basis for designing policies that suit the needs of employees in any organisation. This therefore prevents a one-size-fits-all approach which may not be effective in all cases. Second, corporate governance is enhanced through the identification and resolving of context-specific factors that provide the seedbed for institutionalised bullying. Theoretically, the research findings also have implications. The findings enhance

the cause and effect discussion of the phenomenon in the sense that being able to identify what causes more harm to the well-being of employees in a given organisation provides the vital link to crafting the right context-specific antidote to the phenomenon. Again, the relationship between causes of CMB and dimensions of CMB has been established. Having established this relationship, it is recommended that research focus should be directed at investigating differences in organisational cultures of various occupations and how they contribute towards providing the ideal environment for the causative factors in the CMB phenomenon to thrive. The establishment of the relationship between occupation types and causes and/or dimensions of CMB will unearth the critical nexus that needs to be found between type of occupations and the reverse relationship they have with causes through the lens of the dimensions deployed in the organisation. This will further enhance the understanding of the CMB phenomenon.

Originality/value – This study contributes significantly to research by bringing to attention of researchers and practitioners the linkage between causes and dimensions of CMB and thus enables organisations to tailor solutions to this phenomenon to the most pertinent causes of the dimensions experienced by victims.

Keywords University, Causes, Dimensions, Coercive management behaviour, Occupational types, Significant relationships

Paper type Research paper

Introduction
Research work on coercive management behaviour (CMB) (Doe, 2018), also referred to in scholarly research as bullying or abusive supervision (Tepper *et al.*, 2017; Thomas, 2005; Zapf and Einarsen, 2003), has been foregoing since the 1990s till now, and researchers have made great strides in identifying the causes of the phenomenon in various workplaces.

In general, most researchers in CMB have concentrated on the relations between the generic CMB phenomenon and the effects it has on an individual or the organisation. In that respect, many findings theoretically establish that the effect of CMB on the individual includes exhaustion, stress and negative emotions such as loss of self-esteem and frustration (Bentein *et al.*, 2017; Einarsen and Nielsen, 2015), whereas the effect on the organisation is seen mainly in lowered performance levels of the individual affected, decreased productivity and high turnovers (Berthelsen *et al.*, 2011; MacIntosh, 2012). Although researchers have studied this phenomenon largely in secular, profit-oriented organisations (Tepper *et al.*, 2017; Bentein *et al.*, 2017), universities have been historically regarded as collegial bodies where decision-making is collectively done by academic peers and power is shared (Burnes *et al.*, 2013). These characteristics suggest that a university is different from secular, business-like and profit-oriented organisations.

However, researchers have contested the 'uniqueness' of universities and advanced cogent arguments in support of their positions. Lockwood (1985, pp. 31-32) proposed that universities differ from regular organisations only in terms of the "complexity of purpose", "limited measurability of outputs" "both autonomy and dependency from wider society", "diffuse structure of authority" and "internal fragmentation" which they coalesce in a thorough way. Otherwise, universities bear similarity with secular organisations in their quest for world-class standards which requires quality leadership, excellent managerial structure and organisational climates that produce effective management (de Waal and Chachage, 2011). This is why recent researchers (Raineri *et al.*, 2011; Hanson and Léautier, 2011; Fogg, 2008) have turned their attention towards universities and have found evidence of the prevalence of this phenomenon. Doe (2018) amply confirmed this in a study which found that 48.9 per cent of the research sample taken from ten Ghanaian universities experienced CMB with its attendant ill-effects every year.

Research has proposed various causes of the occurrence of the phenomenon including organisational elements (OE) such as micro-politics, toxic cultures and other outcomes of the

interaction between leadership and organisational politics, shaped by OE such as personalities, structures, norms and cultures, hierarchical control, gender and ethnic tensions, power contests and tacit competitiveness in universities (Bachkirova and Cox, 2007; Doe, 2016). From the university perspective, researchers have attributed the occurrence of the phenomenon to poor university administration, governance problems, organisational structures, new managerialism, culture and ineffective management approaches in universities (Rowlands, 2013; Thomas, 2005). Doe (2018) identified five main causes as the antecedents of CMB in Ghanaian universities. These included administrative, governance, organisational, social and cultural causes. Although these causes as well as the effects of the phenomenon have been identified, these findings are limited in not being able to identify and validate the individual relationships between causes of the phenomenon and the manifested dimensions of the phenomenon, thus leaving a wide gap in the literature.

This research aims at achieving the following objectives: identifying the specific causes of individual dimensions of CMB; identifying the relationship between individual causes of CMB and the deployment of individual dimension of CMB; and proposing the matching of anti-CMB solutions to occupational types.

These objectives have many corollaries for practice and research. Researchers and organisations such as Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI), (2014) as well as the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2006, 2016) and World Health Organization, (2010) have over the years trumpeted the need to weed out CMB in organisations because of its harmful effects on both the individual and the organisation. Although a lot has been said and discussed in their research and international discourses, the researchers believe that a projection of the connexion between causes and dimensions and further on between dimensions and occupational types will provide a new angle to the search for solutions. The ILO, in particular, can fashion occupation-specific recommendations based on the findings of this research. Furthermore, our findings will open a new chapter in research in this area and help to develop policy frameworks that will edge organisations closer to eliminating CMB from workplaces.

Theoretical perspectives
Theory of reasoned action, theory of planned behaviour and coercive management behaviour
The theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) provide the theoretical bases for the study. Both TRA and TPB are axled on the controls of consciously intended behaviours. The TRA holds that a person's presentation of coercive behaviour is determined by his or her behavioural intention to be coercive, and behavioural intention is jointly determined by the person's attitude and subjective norm concerning the behaviour in question. Behavioural intention is a determinant of the power of one's intention to perform a specific behaviour. Attitude is defined as an individual's positive or negative feelings about performing the target behaviour. Subjective norm refers to "the person's perception that most people who are important to him think he should or should not perform the behaviour in question". Following this theory, a person in authority is presented with several choices and behavioural styles with which to enact his or her leadership role. Options often available to leaders and managers include leadership empowerment behaviour (Houghton and Yoho, 2005), tyrannical behaviour (Einarsen et al., 2007), supportive–disloyal leadership (Shilling, 2009), insincerity (Shilling, 2009), despotic and exploitative behaviour (Einarsen et al., 2007), avoidance behaviour (Skogstad et al., 2007), abusive behaviour (Tepper, 2000) and a gamut of positive leadership typologies such as shepherd leadership, supportive leadership,

transformational leadership, etc. In this regard, a leader's choice of any of the above behaviours and styles is pre-determined based on their own intentions to perform the said behaviours, in accordance with the planned behaviour theory. Both the TRA and TPB are closely linked with the situational strength (Mischel, 1973) and trait theories (Tett and Burnett, 2003). Situational strength theory, in particular, posits that an individual's reasoned and planned behaviour is given an impetus by external situational factors which provide justification and exert demands on him or her to perform a behaviour good or bad (Meyer *et al.*, 2010). The situation may also assuage or prevent performance of a behaviour which is inconsistent with the situation, thus moderating trait–result interaction. Trait theory on the other hand, "is the process by which individuals express their traits when presented with trait-relevant situational cues" (Tett and Burnett, 2003, p. 502). In behavioural literature, the situational strength and trait theories have been posited to explain behaviour as "a function of the person and the situation" (Judge and Zapata, 2015, p. 1149). In connection to CMB, in particular, the trait activation theory posits that the big five personality traits (emotional stability, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness) interact with situational strengths (impact of decisions on others, consequences of errors, responsibility towards others, unstructured versus structured work, freedom to make decisions and variety) to determine performance or otherwise of a coercive managerial behaviour. Emotional stability or neuroticism tends to be associated with irritability and anger which when matched with low situational strength can manifest in CMB. Similarly, extraversion has both an upside sociability and a downside dominance. The downside of extraversion then manifests in a needless tendency to want to dominate others in a social situation. Conscientious on the other hand has both caring and tolerance behaviour as two positive attributes that can inhibit CMB. Though situation and trait activation theories have had their own share of controversies regarding the validity of using self-ratings or observer ratings only because of rater or distortion errors (Oh Wang, and Mount, 2011) or difficulties in having external observers to rate (Chang *et al.*, 2012), they are still widely recognised as significant theories in the personality and leadership performance literature (Meyer *et al.*, 2010; Colbert *et al.*, 2012).

Following from the similarities between the TRA and TPB on one hand and situation strength and the trait activation theory on the other, this article thus explains the coercive management theory using a triangulation of the above theories and in so doing synthesises both sets of theories in the organisational behaviour literature, thus contributing to knowledge in the field.

Second, Salmivalli and Peets (2008) contend that CMB is the outcome of an individual's desire to achieve high positions of power and influence in a group. This resonates with the social dominance theory which purports that in every society, some people seek to dominate others. The dominance theory also syncs with the extraversion attribute in the trait activation theory where an individual with high levels of extraversion can also equally seek to dominate others in a social interaction. It is imperative therefore that such people will seek to exploit all opportunities provided by organisational culture, work organisation, social values and governance structures among others to live out their desires. CMB is thus also strongly embedded in the social dominance theory. Both the TRA and the social dominance theory are critical in enhancing the understanding of CMB because of the influence of governance, administrative systems, culture and social values on CMB tendencies. These theories are therefore very paramount and indispensable for the advancement of the study of the CMB phenomenon. Although culture, social values, administrative and organisational structures provide the tools, governance provides the authorisation to use the tools for CMB. Governance, in particular, plays a pivotal role in the sense that it invigorates intention. If a

person decides on a course of action or the deployment of a certain behavioural pattern, governance facilitates the enactment of the behaviour. Although a behaviour may be planned or reasoned out as a result of the influence of culture, social values, administrative systems, etc., the enactment of the behaviour is not possible unless and until the enactor of the behaviour is legitimised by the prevailing rules of engagement (D'Cruz and Noronha, 2016). Again, a personal desire to dominate and control others is accentuated by enablers such as administrative, cultural, social factors, organisational structures and governance. Thus, these enablers provide both smokescreen and alibi for CMB. Theoretically, therefore, the researchers promulgate that Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) TRA and its subsequent development into TPB as well as Salmivalli and Peets's (2008) social dominance theory are powered only in an environment where there are enablers such as a culture of silence, male dominance over females, superiority and deference accorded to age, tenure and position, lack or ineffective punitive sanctions against perpetrators of CMB. Other enablers include the upholding of racial and tribal superiority, excessive emphasis on adherence to communal cohesiveness which inhibits or discourages whistleblowing, petty politics, etc.

Coercive management behaviour in universities

CMB, as a product of organisational dynamics and human frailty, has been found to be prevalent in many organisations resulting from negative/destructive/abusive leadership and linked to employee outcomes (Kaye and Jordan-Evans, 2007). Research study of the work environment of universities, particularly of CMB practices and their attendant effect on both organisational and individual outcomes, has been done in several countries. The earliest study of CMB in universities was carried out by Björkqvist et al. (1994) on 338 university staff in a Finnish university in which 47 per cent of the respondents were found to have experienced CMB. Several other studies followed in various countries with varying results such as: Lewis (1999) (415 university staff in 32 institutions in Wales).

Other studies have corroborated these findings. For instance, Fogg (2008) found instances of supervisor undermining by peer managers in academic offices and a survey by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (USA) (Fogg, 2008) identified and recounted CMB in a number of university and higher institutions of learning across the USA and the UK. Rayner et al. (2002) also found evidence pointing to the fact that females encountered and experienced CMB at the hands of their male and superior counterparts in the university. CMB has also been found to be prevalent in one degree or another in higher institutions of learning (Raineri et al., 2011). Other themes studied in this area include the cultured-nature of CMB in institutions of learning: "the experience of black faculty in formal and informal mentoring relationships" (West-Olatunji, 2005); "obstacles to recruitment, retention as well as academic accomplishment of African-American teaching staff" (Constantine et al., 2008); "Professional Socialisation" (Thompson, 2008); "racial micro-aggressions" such as "covert discrimination, marginalization of research, lack of personal time, institutional climate, review/promotion process serving as barriers to performance, tenure and promotion of black faculty" (Frazier, 2011, p. 2). In this particular study, the research respondents were also asked to indicate their experience of CMB and the frequency they experienced it. A total of 40.9 per cent of the respondents had experienced CMB of which 48.9 per cent experienced it repeatedly from "once weekly" to a whole semester. On the basis of literature reviewed which emphasises that frequency is one of the criteria for making a determination of the prevalence of CMB (Fox and Stallworth, 2009; Gregory et al., 2013), this research found that 40.9 per cent of respondents have experienced CMB and 48.9 per cent of these have experienced it repeatedly (Heames and Harvey, 2006). There is sufficient reason therefore to assert that CMB does exist in Ghanaian universities.

Causes of coercive management behaviour

Following Fishbein and Ajzen's TPA and TRA, as well as the social dominance theory, theorists have tried to elucidate the factors that have led to the deployment of CMB in organisations. Consequently, approaches to identifying the causes of CMB in organisations have been varied. Some researchers have focused on the individual sources of the problem. However, research outputs have clearly indicated that unlike previous schools of thought, CMB was not incidental or accidental, that is, not because of offshoots of imbalances in personality or negative social learning but rather a planned or reasoned action in tandem with the TRA (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). This has led to researchers re-focusing their attention on the organisational antecedents of the phenomenon (Salin, 2012). In this regard, areas that have come up in research have included leadership forms, role-conflicts, organisational structure, social climate as well as governance and cultural issues (Matengu et al., 2014; Mulili, 2014; Nurunnabi, 2016; Pennock et al., 2015; Rowlands, 2013) and socio-cultural dynamics of the organisation. Other causes identified by some studies include culture (Byrne et al., 2014), paucity in management leadership and informal power (Chadwick and Travaglia, 2017), social learning and an endangered identity and inability to self-regulate (Robertson et al., 2018; Tepper et al., 2017) and the neo-liberalist ideology (Docherty, 2015; Grey, 2013).

Social and cultural causes of coercive management behaviour

Socially, researchers have traced the causes of CMB to the socio-cultural context of the organisation and externalities (Bachkirova and Cox, 2007; Burnes et al., 2013; Heames and Harvey, 2006; Padilla et al., 2007). Hawley (2007) and Manesini et al. (2013), for instance, cite, peer pressure, family backgrounds and societal values as some of the boosters of CMB. Social and cultural values however differ from one context to the other, and there is a symbiotic relationship between societal culture, organisational practices and managerial behaviour. However, because CMB is a derivative of managerial behaviour, it is not certain, given the possibility that cultures differ from one country to the other, that university managers in one context say USA will behave the same way as those in Ghana. In furtherance of this argument, Power et al. (2013) further argue that the acceptability of CMB depends on the cultural context in which it occurs. This is because the cultural structure of a country may predispose its citizens to incidence of CMB. For instance, countries high on the Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) humane orientation scale (House, 2004) are more likely to reject CMB than countries that are high on performance orientation scale. Giorgi et al.'s (2015) findings suggests that people have less expectation of positive behaviours from others in Latino countries than in other parts of Europe. As a result, most workers are unfamiliar with the concept of CMB. Consequently, it is imperative that these assumptions be tested within the Ghanaian context to ascertain any similarities or differences in the mediation of social values and culture in the deployment of CMB dimensions.

Administrative causes

Administration-wise, researchers in organisational behaviour have linked administrative systems as well as leadership styles to the managerial behaviour and performance (House et al., 2002). Some administrative processes reduce the cost of CMB to the perpetrator by its prolonged complainant management system, whereas others create wider power distances that facilitate abuse of power (Salin, 2003). D'Cruz and Noronha (2017) also found that organisational interventions could worsen rather than minimise the occurrence of CMB when instead of providing checks and balances on managerial power, it rather increases the

perpetrator's power, thus making targets more vulnerable to CMB. Consequently, administrative policies can provide a smokescreen or alibi for a manager to deploy CMB to achieve organisational aims.

In terms of organisation, Salin (2003) found in a Finnish work context, that work organisation, job designs, role conflict or ambiguity, reward systems, etc. pre-disposed members of an organisation to CMB tendencies. Furthermore, the structure of the organisation, particularly hierarchical ones, generate impressions of seniority and power differentials, thus creating a dual effect of inducing "seniors" to use their positional power when deemed necessary to have their way as well as inhibiting confrontation of a coercive behaviour (Patterson et al., 2005). Reporting systems, office structures and job classification also impact heavily on the possibility of CMB occurring in an organisation. Job classification is used to group workers in one unit. However this can also group both targets and perpetrators in same groups. Following the routine activities theory (Cohen and Felon, 1979), some individuals would become easy targets of negative actions and behaviour of others because of frequent contact with the perpetrators of those behaviours or actions and because they engage in certain activities daily. Where a person has tendency to enact a bullying behaviour, opportunity is created for such a person when he is a cluster lead and has autonomy in determining promotion, job assignment, etc.

Governance factors
Governance is essential in preventing and or solving problems associated with CMB in organisations. According to D'Cruz and Noronha (2016), ensuring ethical and responsible use of power in organisations through corporate governance is essential for determining the prevalence of CMB. Following their assertion, it is implicit that the lack of effective governance structures can provide a conducive environment for a manager to deploy CMB. This is because governance establishes the framework processes, structure and systems with which people and work are organised and managed and so in a sense also provides the seedbed for institutionalised bullying (D'Cruz and Noronha, 2016). Managerial philosophy is thus determined by policies, controls and structure. In an earlier study, Alves and Filho (2013) did not find any substantial variance between the physiognomies of management and that of corporate governance, thus suggesting that management mirrors corporate governance (Giorgi et al., 2015). Hence, the drafting and implementation of anti-CMB policies is therefore essential in raising the awareness of the prohibition and consequences of CMB to minimise or eliminate the acceptability and tolerance of CMB in organisations.

Hypothesis development
Relationship between antecedents and dimensions of coercive management behaviour
Zapf and Einarsen (2003) have iterated that although numerous causative factors may collectively produce the CMB phenomenon in an organisation, there is the likelihood that one cause may have a dominant role in the deployment of one dimension of CMB or another. In the bullying literature, however, although research findings in many varying occupations have been very instrumental in moving the discussion forward, the efforts have centred mainly on identifying the antecedents and effects of CMB (Apaydin, 2012; Berthelsen et al., 2011) in an organisation to the neglect of this very important gap. So till date, no work has matched the individual contribution of identified CMB causes (Doe, 2018) to the deployment of specific CMB dimensions in organisations. Hence, the relationship between antecedents and individual dimensions of CMB has not been established in the literature.

The review of causes of CMB in the literature shows that social, cultural, organisational, administrative and governance factors within context provide a complex fusion that together engenders the deployment of the five dimensions of CMB. From a collective perspective, however, it is impossible to determine how one cause, say cultural causes, could either on its own or conjoint with other causes be responsible for the deployment of social isolation (SI) in an organisation. Without investigating, it is difficult for instance to explain how a person managing people of a collectivist culture can socially isolate an individual. It is essential therefore to investigate the individual contribution of the various causes to each dimension of the CMB phenomenon. The significance of identifying the dominant role each antecedent plays in the deployment of individual dimensions of CMB is in being able to craft specific solutions to each situation. For instance, if administrative factors are found to be responsible for threats to professional standing (TPS), it will provide the relevant pointers as to what approaches to take in tackling the issue of TPS. More importantly, as a pioneer work on higher institutions in Ghana, the findings of this research provide critical foundation for intense academic research into this phenomenon within the African region and in Ghana in particular.

Based on the above, therefore, the researchers hypothesise that:

H1A-E. Administrative, social, governance, organisational and cultural elements (AE, SE, GE, OE and CE) have a significant effect on work-related harassment (WRH).

H2A-E. AE, SE, GE, OE and CE have significant effect on threat to personal standing (TP$_{ER}$S).

H3A-E. AE, SE, GE, OE and CE have a significant effect on TPS.

H4A-E. AE, SE, GE, OE and CE have a significant effect on SI.

H5A-E. AE, SE, GE, OE and CE have a significant effect on intimidation (INT).

Finding specific solutions to each situation as hypothesised above based on the outcome of investigation into the relationship between each cause and each form of CMB is only a partial solution. It is also critical to move further to investigate which type of organisation provides a fertile breeding ground for specific dimensions of CMB. Einarsen and Nielsen (2015) report that although firm conclusions could not be reached in their work about risk groups, there was evidence that manufacturing and service firms showed more prevalence of CMB than others. Other works that have touched on occupational differences have limited their investigations to the differences in specific effect rates (e.g. mental illness) among differing occupations (Notelaers *et al.*, 2011; Stansfeld *et al.*, 2011; Nolfe *et al.*, 2014), with inconclusive results.

Dimensions of coercive management behaviour and organisation types
Although it is significant to examine the effect that each cause of CMB has on each dimension, considering how the type of occupation or organisation can mediate in the relationship between the causes of CMB and its dimensions is also relevant for the complete understanding of the phenomenon.

CMB takes many forms in organisations and range from behaviours that are targeted at the individual directly as well as those that have indirect effect on a targeted victim. Over the years, researchers Apaydin (2012), Einarsen *et al.* (2009) and Frazier (2011) have identified many forms including: *Unduly reducing opportunities to for the victim to express themselves*, *telling lies about the person shouting at the victim*, *criticising the victim publicly*,

*making insulting comments about victims' private life, refusing to speak with victim, belittling
their opinion. Others are burdening the target with excessive work, verbally attacking the
person, refusing to promote or delaying their promotion, denying awards, etc.*(Einarsen and
Hoel, 2001; Einarsen *et al.*, 2009; Frazier, 2011). These dimensions have been put into five
broad groups, namely, INT, WRH (Devonish, 2017), TP$_{ER}$S, TPS (Einarsen *et al.*, 2003) and
SI (Bentein *et al.*, 2017; Colligan and Higgins, 2006; Einarsen and Nielsen, 2015).

Although these forms of CMB occur in many organisations (Colligan and Higgins, 2006),
not all of them occur in every organisation and, furthermore, not all the dimensions are the
same in terms of magnitude of effect and frequency of occurrence as well as pertinence to
workgroup's characteristics. For instance, although SI may be a significant CMB dimension
for a manager to deploy among workers in a call centre, the same tool might not be effective
or significant to workers in an IT firm. This is because every work group presents a unique
set of characteristics indicative of the varying needs and socio-cultural milieu of each work
group. As a result of the heterogeneity of work groups, it is misleading to hold a uniform
view of employee and organisational behaviour. One of such variances found in
organisations in the study of the phenomenon is team atmosphere (Giorgi *et al.*, 2013) which
was found to be strongly associated with CMB. However, within the same study, neither
having a white colour nor blue colour job was associated with CMB. Their work called for
further research into the role of occupation types in the deployment of CMB dimensions
because of the potential of some organisations to harbour a "climate for bullying" (Giorgi,
2009, p. 43). Sperry (2009) earlier classified jobs or occupations into four typologies:

(1) Type I – a type of organisation where the culture, system and management
    promote an atmosphere of esteem and mutual care. Such organisations are unlikely
    to breed CMB.

(2) Type II – where there is potential for CMB to be enacted because members are
    lethargic bystanders and do not intervene in or criticise a manager's coercive
    behaviour.

(3) Type III – where the organisation's leadership either in indifference or connivance
    allows members to gang-bully an individual.

(4) Type IV – where some members and leaders of the organisation collaborate to
    bully an individual.

All the above types of organisations provide varying climates which together create conditions
for CMB to ferment and thrive. Understanding these permissive conditions will further enhance
our understanding of why and how CMB occurs and provide a clue to solutions.

Again, Bailey and Madden (2015) and Lips-Wiersma *et al.* (2016) have identified
variables such as meaningfulness, satisfaction and motivation that tend to vary for white,
blue and pink colour occupations, thus confirming the heterogeneity of occupations.

In Lips-Wiersma *et al.* (2016), it was revealed that meaningful work (MFW) was
interpreted differently by different work groups. For instance, four shades of meaning were
adduced to MFW: These included:

(1) shared sense of values with co-workers;

(2) gaining a sense of achievement by expressing creativity and talents as an
    individual;

(3) having a sense of making a contribution to the well-being of others; and

(4) being able to be "true to oneself", being self-aware and having a good personal
    knowledge.

In a related study, Johnson *et al.* (2005) found that 26 different occupations measured differently on three variables, i.e. physical health, psychological well-being and job satisfaction, following a survey on the effects of work-related stress. This further re-iterates the heterogeneity of professions. This further means that although CMB may occur in every organisation, its recognition and indeed its effect on individuals will vary from one organisation to another. This is because although the characteristics of one work or occupational group will be "task-related", that of another will be "social or knowledge-based" (Alcover and Topa, 2018, p. 2). Consequently, what may be considered as CMB in one organisation may not be recognised as such at all in another organisation because of the differing characteristics of occupations.

The researchers appropriate the merits in Lips-Wiersma *et al.*'s (2016) findings on MFW to explain the differences in effect of causes of CMB on the dimensions of the phenomenon. For instance, using the MFW values above, it can be proposed that for each occupational type, each of the variables of meaning of MFW above can have a corresponding CMB dimension which has a strong positive relation with it. For instance, the SI dimension can impact heavily on a person's MFW, where an individual sees MFW in terms of "Shared sense of values with co-workers", whereas a person who sees MFW as "gaining a sense of achievement by expressing creativity" will be heavily negatively impacted on by the deployment of WRH. Similarly, "having a sense of contributing to the well-being of others" can correlate to TPS dimension, whereas "being able to be "true to oneself" will correlate with the $TP_{ER}S$.

The researchers also suggest that in the same regard, CMB may not have the same probability to be enacted in every organisation and/or in the same form through Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) TRA and TPB as well as Salmivalli and Peets's (2008) social dominance theory. This is because enablers such as a culture of silence, male dominance over females, superiority and deference accorded to age, tenure and position, lack or ineffective punitive sanctions against perpetrators of CMB, excessive emphasis on adherence to communal cohesiveness which inhibits or discourages whistleblowing, petty politics, etc. which power CMB may differ according to the environment.

In the context of the university, prior research revealed different dimensions of CMB occurred. For instance, studies by Tanoğlu (2006), Tüzel (2009) and Yaman (2007) all found that INT was the predominant form of CMB deployed in the universities they studied. Frazier (2011) found that the pre-dominant forms of CMB that occurred in a study of a sample of black faculty in a predominantly Caucasian university environment included "covert discrimination", "Marginalization of research", "using review/promotion process tenure and promotion", etc. These forms of CMB relate to TPS and WRH. Another study by Apaydin (2012) also found that $TP_{ER}S$, TPS, INT and WRH were the principal forms of CMB experienced by professors in a given university. In the study by Doe (2018), although all five dimensions of CMB were experienced by the sample surveyed, the predominant dimensions were TPS and WRH, with victims ranking items within these dimensions in the ten most recurrent forms of CMB experienced. In essence, therefore, although one identified cause may strongly influence the deployment of one type of CMB dimension in a given workplace, it may have relatively less influence or none at all in causing similar dimension of CMB in another workplace.

Consequently, seeking to reduce or eliminate CMB in a workplace with the same strategy may not be effective or successful if the heterogeneity of professions is not considered in crafting solutions to CMB at the workplace, and the most context-specific potent causes of CMB are not identified in the workplace (Bailey and Madden, 2015).

Moreover, although work specification and design have been considered in crafting motivational packages over the past 40 years (Alcover and Topa, 2018), the need to identify the most pertinent context-specific causative factors so as to be able to craft solutions, has eluded many researchers leaving a wide gap in the field.

Methodology

Data collection and sampling

Following the GLOBE (House, 2004; House *et al.*, 2002) and Hofstede's theories on national culture, it was significant for the generalisability of prior findings on CMB in its various descriptions, to bring to bear findings on the prevalence and nature of this phenomenon from the Ghanaian and African context. European, Asian and American cultures which have served as variables in the measurement of the construct hitherto are different from African cultures in many ways (Hofstede, 1991, 2001), and therefore there was the need to test the cultural assumptions in the study of this phenomenon by investigating the phenomenon in the Ghanaian and African context to provide comparable evidence and to make cross-cultural comparisons possible. Again, although bullying has been studied within context, it has always been limited to the occurrence of the phenomenon among primary school students, and no study has ever been conducted on universities in Ghana. The study was therefore conducted within the university environment with ten universities (five public and five private) of 100 accredited universities in Ghana randomly selected for the study. This sampling method was selected because of the fact that CMB generally occurs in every organisation and in universities as well (Notelaers *et al.*, 2006; WBI, 2014). The systematic sampling approach was then used to get the participants to answer the questionnaire because of the availability of sampling frame at the registrar of each university. The researchers determined sample size for this study based on the proposed data analysis technique used, the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation model (SEM). According to Tabachnik and Fidell (2007), the CFA requires a minimum sample size of 100 and above. Again, Malhotra and Birks (2006) argued that for a multivariate analysis, a sample size that is four to five times bigger than the number of variables is sufficient. Hair *et al.* (2010) suggested that 100 participants is the minimum size for CFA. In this study, the researched deemed 371 to be an appropriate sample size (Malhotra and Birks, 2006; Saunders *et al.*, 2011). The sample was distributed according to the ratio 2:1 based on the population of the public universities *vis-à-vis* that of the private universities which were relatively smaller (about half those of the public universities summed up). Hence, to have fairness in the distribution, the ratio was adopted. The total number of questionnaires distributed was 405, and 371 were returned providing a response rate of more than 95 per cent.

Instrumentation

To collect the data for this study, a new scale for measuring causes of CMB in universities was developed (Doe and Puplampu, 2019) by pooling items from the works of Padilla *et al.* (2007), Brotheridge (2013) and Harvey *et al.* (2006). The developed instrument was measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree = 1" to "strongly agree = 5". Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed on each cause being responsible for the deployment of CMB. Some of the questions included:

- poorly defined cultural norms in the university;
- lack of punitive measures against perpetrators;

- power is centred in a few individual's hands; and
- council, academic boards and high-powered committee members are not fairly selected or elected leading to connivance with perpetrators of CMB.

The Cronbach's alpha was used for reliability and composite reliability (CR) to identify the internal consistencies of the items on the scale. The CFA was also used to validate the instrument (convergent and discriminant). The convergent and discriminant validity of the instrument was also tested using average variance extraction (AVE). According to Hair *et al.* (1998), the AVE should exceed 0.50 to show evidence of convergent validity. Fornell and Larcker (1981) proposed that an instrument has discriminant validity when the square root of the AVE is greater than the correlations between the constructs in the model. A second scale to measure dimensions was developed by Doe and Puplampu (2019) by adopting items from Björkqvist *et al.*'s (1994) work harassment scale and Tepper (2000)'s and Einarsen and Hoel (2001)'s negative acts questionnaire-revised. A total of 26 items were selected from these three scales above to develop the measuring scale for this study, and the Likert scale was used in measuring the items. These were subjected to an exploratory factor analysis. The exploratory factor analysis showed the dimensions to have five factors which have been identified and categorised based on prior literature as TPS, WRH, SI, $TP_{ER}S$ and INT. A reliability analysis of the 26 items was conducted and all the 26 items recorded 0.732, above the appropriate threshold of 0.7, indicating that there is internal consistency in the items, hence the instruments are reliable (Gliem and Gliem, 2003).

Finally, the least squares regression analysis was also used in testing the hypothesis. This tool was used because of its strength in estimating unknown parameters coefficients in a regression and to ensure goodness of fit of the coefficient values with the data (Field, 2009).

Results and analysis

A CFA was conducted to validate the constructs where all items loaded above the threshold of 0.5 (Table I), thus providing strong evidence of the validity of the constructs used for the study. Anderson and Gerbing (1988) and Bagozzi and Yi (1988) postulated that high factor loadings and high CR scores provide evidence for convergent validity. When the AVE of a construct is greater than 0.5, then it shows that there is convergent validity of the constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The AVEs of the main constructs were greater than 0.5. These are presented in Table I. These results showed adequate evidence of convergent validity of the constructs used for the study. However, to satisfy the requirement of the discriminative validity, the square root of the construct's AVE has to be greater than their correlations between the constructs (Table I). For example, the square root of the AVEs for two constructs, AE and CMB (0.488) and GE and CMB (0.722) are more than the correlation between them, 0.238 and 0.521, respectively, shown in Table I. This shows that the constructs are distinct from each other, hence there was sufficient discriminative validity. The study calculated the inter-factor correlation analysis among each construct of the studied constructs.

The results of the CFA were to validate the constructs of the dimensions (Table II), and all the items showed threshold above 0.5. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), when the AVE of a construct is greater than 0.5, then it shows that there is convergent validity of the constructs. These results showed adequate evidence of convergent validity of the constructs used for the study.

Items	Mean	SD	Loadings	Reliability	AVE	CR
AE	*3.86*	*1.20*			*0.70*	*0.74*
Lack of administrative support for targets	3.61	1.30	0.78	0.78		
Poorly defined cultural norms	3.78	1.27	0.76	0.78		
Poorly documented behavioural guidelines	3.73	1.23	0.73	0.77		
Apathy or mistrust in reporting systems	3.95	1.13	0.66	0.78		
Lack of punitive measures	3.77	1.23	0.58	0.78		
Bureaucratic system allowing managers to play God	3.81	1.06	0.58	0.78		
Centralisation of power in few hands	4.17	1.18	0.58	0.76		
SE	*3.68*	*1.10*			*0.64*	*0.76*
Superiority complex of certain tribes	3.67	1.12	0.78	0.80		
Deficiency in recruitment and selection to weed out	3.53	1.08	0.64	0.79		
Questioning wrong doing of the elderly frowned on.	3.76	1.14	0.61	0.79		
Male dominance allowing contemptuous actions towards females	3.77	1.07	0.53	0.79		
OE	*3.60*	*1.26*			*0.66*	*0.85*
Culture of fear/INT	3.13	1.24	0.74	0.78		
Backlash on witness' reporting	3.80	1.16	0.72	0.78		
Excessive politics in the university	3.01	1.30	0.65	0.78		
The hierarchical structure allowing reward of conformists	4.08	1.37	0.53	0.78		
GE	*3.81*	*1.35*			*0.53*	*0.75*
Unfair selection of Council/committee leading to connivance	3.71	1.27	0.55	0.79		
Lack of/poorly communicated complaint management systems	3.90	1.43	0.51	0.76		
CE	*3.72*	*1.42*			*0.71*	*0.76*
Priority given to physical and economic security over self-expression and quality of life	3.78	1.46	0.84	0.79		
Respect for strong and unyielding People	3.82	1.36	0.58	0.88		
Society trumpeting prosperity and progress	3.55	1.43	0 0.76	0.80		

Table I.
CFA of the CMB causes

Relationships between antecedents and individual dimensions of coercive management behaviour

Following the ascertaining of the normalcy of the data, SEM was run to establish the relationship between the individual antecedents and individual dimensions of CMB in Ghanaian universities. The study also analysed the individual effect of the five causes of CMB on each of the dimensions of CMB. The findings of this analysis are significant in addressing the root causes of CMB so as to forestall the deployment of CMBs in universities. Added to this, the relationships among the studied variables were presented in Table IV, which explain the direction of the variables.

Measurement and structural model

The study presented the results of the measurement and structural models as recommended (Akamavi *et al.*, 2015). The measurement model is given as: x^2 = 273.355, df = 192, p = 0.002, root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.092, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.915, Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = 0.922 and standardised root mean squared residual (SRMR) = 0.04, revealing unsatisfied goodness of fit. The model was refined through the modification indices. An examination of the modification indices suggested that an improvement in the overall goodness of fit of the model could be achieved by allowing WRH to correlate with $TP_{ER}S$, and this path was therefore added to the model. The final statistics for the structural model was $(x)^2$ = 177.208, df = 194, p = 0.002), RMSEA was

Constructs	Mean	SD	Reliability	Loading	AVE	CR
WRH	*3.78*	*0.81*			*0.66*	*0.93*
Uses sarcasm and dry jokes to humiliate in public	2.85	1.46	0.68	0.75		
Threatens	3.49	1.41	0.72	0.72		
Labels people as trouble-makers	4.23	0.39	0.69	0.72		
Constantly criticises one's work	3.92	0.76	0.74	0.69		
Denies a person his/her earned awards	4.22	0.39	0.77	0.68		
Constantly ignores requests for help or advice	3.22	1.12	0.69	0.68		
Attacks one's professionalism	3.21	1.11	0.68	0.63		
Sets extremely high targets for a person	3.91	0.76	0.69	0.63		
Always ridicules a person	3.84	0.73	0.68	0.61		
Shouts or screams at people repeatedly	3.93	0.75	0.68	0.54		
Gives me unpleasant jobs or positions	4.25	0.41	0.68	0.48		
Criticises in public	4.29	0.41	0.69	0.47		
$TP_{ER}S$	*3.82*	*0.68*			*0.71*	*0.88*
Constantly makes negative comments about one's pregnancy	3.29	1.11	0.72	0.84		
Harasses a person because of his/her disability	4.2	0.38	0.68	0.81		
Subjects one to religious or sexual harassment	3.11	1.12	0.68	0.78		
Denies a person the opportunity for further training or self-development or always postpones granting one's request	4.25	0.41	0.67	0.57		
Victimises a person for having complained about a previous action or behaviour meted to him/her	4.25	0.39	0.68	0.55		
TPS	*4.09*	*0.63*			*0.63*	*0.79*
Discriminates in his/her dealings with staff	3.34	1.11	0.68	0.83		
Tells lies on a person	3.79	0.73	0.69	0.61		
Undermines one's credibility with other staff	4.26	0.4	0.67	0.61		
Talks behind one's back	4.18	0.34	0.69	0.63		
Uses performance management/appraisal process to judge one's work unfairly	4.88	0.44	0.68	0.51		
SI	*3.5*	*0.61*			*0.66*	*0.83*
Constantly trivialises one's opinion especially in front of others	3.09	1.13	0.68	0.83		
Denies one access to information needed to do the job	4.02	0.11	0.69	0.64		
Changes aspects of one's work without consultation or prior notice	4.03	0.15	0.68	0.63		
Encourages colleagues or subordinates to gang-up on a person	2.84	1.06	0.69	0.57		
INT	*3.83*	*0.51*			*0.85*	*0.91*
Gives me unpleasant jobs or positions	3.23	1.01	0.73	0.86		
Discriminates in his/her dealings with staff	4.42	0.01	0.72	0.83		

Table II.
CFA of the CMB dimensions

0.001, CFI and TLI were 0.965 and 0.954, respectively, and SRMR was 0.001, revealing that the measurement model fit the data and had met the cut-off points (Steiger, 2007; Barrett, 2007). The goodness-of-fit indices for the CFA analysis were within the acceptable level (Chi-square > 0.05, RMSEA $\leq$ 0.08, CFI $\geq$ 0.90, TLI $\geq$ 0.90 and SRMSR $\leq$ 0.05) (Barrett, 2007; Steiger, 2007). Nonetheless, the significant Chi-square test is a common finding in research and was not surprising regarding the sample size (Bagozzi and Yi, 2012). The remaining fit indices (RMSEA, CFI, TLI and SRMR) of the model exceeded the suggested thresholds (Table III).

The results of the regression analysis provided support for the research hypotheses. It was revealed that SE (β = 0.015, p < 0.05) and GE (β = 0.028, p < 0.05) have positive effect on WRH, thus supporting *H1B* and *H1C*. AE (β = −0.017, p < 0.05), OE (β = −0.057, p < 0.05), CE (β = −0.015, p < 0.05), however, have negative effects on WRH, hence *H1A, H1D* and *H1E* were not supported. This implies that although within the Ghanaian university

context, SE and GE produce WRH, AE, OE and CE were not responsible for the deployment of the WRH dimension. Hence, if policymakers are considering rooting out WRH, what they should be looking at are the areas of SE and governance issues. They should tackle WRH from these perspectives.

Again, AE ($\beta = 0.056$, $p < 0.05$), SE ($\beta = 0.017$, $p < 0.05$) and GE ($\beta = 0.008$, $p < 0.05$), have positive effect on TP$_{ER}$S and supported *H2A, H2B* and *H2C*, whereas OE ($\beta = -0.089$, $p < 0.05$) and CE ($\beta = -0.020$, $p < 0.05$) had negative effects on TP$_{ER}$S. Hence, *H2D* and *H2E* were not supported. In respect to TP$_{ER}$S, the main roots of this dimension of CMB are AE, SE and GE. CE and OE therefore do not provide the breeding grounds for the deployment of TP$_{ER}$S. So the attempts to curb or eliminate TP$_{ER}$S should focus on taking out the cancerous tissues from the universities' administrative systems, as well as the social values espoused and the thorny issues in their governance.

For TPS, it was found that AE ($\beta = 0.014$, $p < 0.05$), GE ($\beta = 0.03$, $p < 0.05$), OE ($\beta = 0.05$, $p < 0.05$) had positive effects on TPS and supported *H3A, H3C* and *H3D*. However, SE ($\beta = -0.050$, $p < 0.05$) and CE ($\beta = -0.055$, $p < 0.05$) had negative effects on TPS, hence *H3B* and *H3E* were not supported. Just as in the first two dimensions, TPS was found to be resulting from administrative, governance and OE within the universities. More attention should therefore be paid to these aspects of the universities' management to effectively deal with TPS which has the greatest power to erode motivation and work satisfaction among university workers.

AE ($\beta = 0.139$, $p < 0.05$) and GE ($\beta = 0.013$, $p < 0.05$) have positive effect on SI. However, GE ($\beta = 0.014$, $p < 0.05$), OE ($\beta = 0.003$, $p < 0.05$) and CE ($\beta = 0.005$, $p < 0.05$) had negative effects on SI, thus not supporting *H4C, H4D* and *H4E*. SI in the Ghanaian universities was found to be the product of administrative and GE, implying that the administrative systems and governance provisions have created ideal situation where a manager in a university can socially isolate any member or target, making the university environment unsuitable for them. And because workers operate in communities, SI can be a dangerous tool to damage the work atmosphere (at least for the victim) and create a disharmonious environment not helpful for productivity.

Finally, AE ($\beta = 0.488$, $p < 0.05$), SE ($\beta = 0.248$, $p < 0.05$), GE ($\beta = 0.045$, $p < 0.05$) OE ($\beta = 0.069$, $p < 0.05$) had positive effects on INT, whereas only CE ($\beta = -0.023$, $p < 0.05$) had negative effects on INT. Hence *H5A-D* were confirmed while *H5E* was not supported.

With the exception of CE, all the other four causes provided the seedbed for the deployment of INT on workers in Ghanaian universities. INT has grave consequences on a person's sense of self-worth and personal confidence as well as healthy co-worker relationships. It is essential therefore that this dimension be dealt with from its roots.

In all, it can be seen that all five causes of CMB produce one or more dimension of CMB and therefore shows CMB to be a serious problem that needs to be tackled as a matter of

Constructs	1	2	3	4
INT	*0.92*	0.28**	0.27**	0.37**
AE	0.28**	*0.82*	0.34**	0.35**
TPS	0.27**	0.34**	*0.79*	0.44**
SE	0.37**	0.35**	0.44**	*0.80*

Notes: Diagonal in *italic* is the square root of AVE; for discriminant validity the square root of AVE should be higher than off-diagonal variables; correlation is significant at *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$

Table III.
Discriminant validity
assessment for the
constructs

urgency to bring sanity into working environments, particularly the university environment.

However, the result of the explained variance that is the R-squares of the five sets of hypotheses show 6.8, 11.4, 3.4, 20.1 and 7.0 per cent, respectively. In comparing the results in the hypotheses H2A-E to H1A-E, it shows that the R-squared was increased to 4.6 per cent, providing evidence of a better explained variance. The results in the hypotheses H3A-E to H2A-E show that the R-squared was decreased to 8.0 per cent, H4A-E to H3A-E show that an increase of 16.7 per cent providing evidence of a better explained variance and finally H5A-E to H4A-E show a decrease of 12.9 per cent. The effect size of the R-squares was also determined to measure the strength of the changes in the coefficients of determinations (Chin et al., 2003). The recommended method of testing effect size was applied (Cohen, 1988). The effect size threshold values of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 are regarded small, moderate and large effect, respectively (Cohen, 1988). The significance of the effect size was also confirmed using a p-value ($\leq$ 0.05), as recommended by Tabachnik and Fidell (2007). The calculated effect sizes of this study range from -0.08 to 0.167 with corresponding significant value (0.05) demonstrating that there is moderate effect (0.167 > 0.15) on IS, and remaining effect sizes were (-0.08, -0.13 and 0.046) revealing a weak effect size.

The coefficient of determinations ranges between 6.8 per cent and 20.1 per cent, indicating that the independent variables explain the dependent by this percentage.

Discussion and conclusion

This research finding is unequivocally significant because it has identified the potent effect of causality in determining CMB in organisations. This contradicts Krajcsák (2018) who discounts the significance of causality to organisational outcomes, although at the same time, emphasises the power of organisational culture in determining commitment. The significance of the find is that some dimensions of CMB can be forestalled by altering all or aspects of governance, administration and organisational structures.

The regression of the individual causes on individual dimensions of CMB shows clearly that there is a strong relationship between specific causes and individual dimensions of CMB (Table IV). The results show clearly that each CMB cause has a different effect and unequal level of significance in relation to specific dimensions. For instance, it reveals that the strongest causes of WRH are SE and GE in the organisation. Similarly, administrative, social and GE equally caused the experience of $TP_{ER}S$ in universities with the greatest significant cause of $TP_{ER}S$ being AE. The most significant causes of TPS, WRH, SI and INT were OE, CE, AE and SE, respectively. Administrative factors moreover contributed to two of the dimensions ($TP_{ER}S$ and SI). The influence of administrative systems through the political model of behaviour perspective was also examined by Abernethy and Vagnoni (2004) and found that changing economic, social and political landscapes resulted in the

Hypothesis	Unstandardised coefficients	Coefficient of determinations
AE, SE, GE, OE, CE → WRH (H1A-E)	-0.214, -0.350, 0.158, -0.155, 0.103	$R^2 = 0.068$
AE, SE, GE, OE, CE → $TP_{ER}S$ (H2A-E)	-0.017, 0.157, -0.157, -0.415, 0.328	$R^2 = 0.114$
AE, SE, GE, OE, CE → TPS (H3A-E)	0.139, 0.213, -0.161, 0.67, -0.024	$R^2 = 0.034$
AE, SE, GE, OE, CE → SI (H4A-E)	0.156, 0.317, -0.089, 0.220, 0.108	$R^2 = 0.201$
AE, SE, GE, OE, CE → INT (H5A-E)	-0.348, 0.323, 0.269, -0.123, 0.245	$R^2 = 0.070$

Table IV.
Relationships among the variables

erosion of physician power in a hospital. Similar findings were made by Thomas (2005) who confirmed the erosion of collegialism in Australian universities.

Although the cultural and SE are significant contributors to the CMB in the universities studied, they are also at the same time elements that are somewhat ingrained in the mental and behavioural composition of individuals and therefore are difficult to uproot but nevertheless somehow alterable (Puplampu, 2012) and a *sine qua non* to achieve maximum positive outcomes (Krajcsák, 2018). However, administrative systems are designed and therefore subject to variability. It is critical therefore that university managers audit their administrative systems to weed out elements within the system that can create the environment for coercive managers to thrive.

It is also significant to note that a mean rank test of the dimensions (Appendix) revealed that $TP_{ER}S$, SI and WRH were the dominant dimensions of CMB experienced by university staff in this research. This has implications for practice: threats to university's workers' professional standing through means such as denying them opportunities for training and self-development will impede any sense of innovation and initiative on the part of the staff and hinder progress in the university as a whole. University management should therefore endeavour to eliminate and/or provide effective interventions such as punitive measures to deal with CMB and also ensure that a culture of zero-tolerance for CMB has been established through policy, recruitment and selection and training. An improvement of administrative systems can contribute greatly to the reduction or total elimination of the three dimensions of CMB (SI, $TP_{ER}S$ and TPS) in Ghanaian universities.

Institutions should provide technical and professional support in the form counselling units where professional psychological treatment and support can be given both to perpetrators and victims. Second, as a policy, institutions need to establish support systems through peer-mentoring, effective and enforceable punitive sanctions for perpetrators, and power should be decentralised in tandem with the true tradition of collegialism in the university (Thomas, 2005).

Again, the results of the analysis show that though each cause has an effect on a dimension of CMB, they do not have an equal effect in terms of their ability to cause the deployment of the various dimensions of CMB. This confirms hypotheses of this study in that although some causes had positive effects on some dimensions, e.g. SE, OE and CE had positive effects on the INT dimension, others like AE and GE had negative effects on the same INT dimension. Consequently, it is important to match solutions to CMB in organisations to the core values and needs of the people of a particular profession and in so doing identify the dimension the most crucial to the welfare and health of the members of that particular profession or vocation. This is will dichotomise and zero in on the cause that has the strongest power to activate the occurrence of this dimension. So, from the above, it

Hypothesis	Standardised coefficients	Coefficient of determinations
AE, SE, GE, OE, CE → WRH (*H1A-E*)	−0.017, 0.015, 0.028, −0.057, −0.015,	$R^2 = 0.068$
AE, SE, GE, OE, CE → $TP_{ER}S$ (*H2A-E*)	*0.056, 0.017, 0.008*, −0.089, −0.020	$R^2 = 0.114$
AE, SE, GE, OE, CE → TPS (*H3A-E*)	*0.014*, −0.050, *0.003, 0.05*, −0.055	$R^2 = 0.034$
AE, SE, GE, OE, CE → SI (*H4A-E*)	*0.139, 0.013*, −0.067, −0.061, −0.024	$R^2 = 0.201$
AE, SE, GE, OE, CE → INT (*H5A-E*)	*0.488, 0.248, 0.045, 0.069*, −0.023	$R^2 = 0.070$

Note: The italic values have positive effects and also supported the hypotheses
Source: Doe (2020)

Table V.
Regression analysis

can be seen that although OE were the greatest cause of the TPS dimension, WRH was impacted the most by CE. AE had double greatest impact on the SI as well as the $TP_{ER}S$ dimension and SE were very significant and contributed the most to the INT dimension. For the university environment, the nature of work requires that individuals have very strong sense of personal standing ($P_{ER}S$) and professional standing (PS). Although INT, SI and WRH may be significant to a university professor, $P_{ER}S$ and PS are far more important to them than the above three because of the specialised nature of work at the university which gives each lecturer a certain leverage of expert power. The same situation may not prevail in other professions, hence the need to tailor solutions to each individual profession to minimise the impact if not totally eradicate CMB in organisations.

Limitation and research implications
Though this research attempted to find the relationship between causes of CMB and the CMB dimensions deployed in universities, the identified causes are only the causes elucidated through a new scale developed (Doe, 2018). Other possible causes of CMB were not factored into this research's objectives. It is possible therefore that further research can link some other causes not mentioned in this work to dimensions of CMB which are INT, $TP_{ER}S$, TPS, SI and WRH. It is therefore suggested that more research will be necessary to ascertain which dimensions produce which effects and in what proportion in victims of CMB. Second, as a result of the fact that this is a novel area, formulating a hypothesis for the mediation of occupational types in the relationship between causes and dimensions is difficult. Hence, although our findings present a theory of a moderation of occupational characteristics on the relationship between causes of CMB and specific dimensions of CMB in the university, this theory was not tested. However, in spite of this, the researcher proposes this perspective as the paper's contribution to the body of the literature as a novel research interest worth looking into. It is thus relevant and significant to ignite research interest in this direction.

Finally, data used in the study was conjoint, thereby leaving no room for a comparative analysis of public versus private universities. This limitation should therefore provide a base for further research.

Implications
The research findings have practical policy implications. This includes providing the basis for designing policies that suit the needs of employees in any organisation. This therefore prevents a one-size-fits-all approach which may not be effective in all cases. Second, corporate governance is enhanced through the identification and resolving of context specific factors that provide the seedbed for institutionalised bullying.

Theoretically, this article synthesises two sets of theories (TRA and TPB on one hand and situation strength and the trait activation theory on the other) in the organisational behaviour literature, thus contributing to knowledge in the field.

The findings also theoretically enhance the cause and effect discussion of the phenomenon in the sense that being able to identify what causes more harm to the well-being of employees in a given organisation provides the vital link to crafting the right context-specific antidote to the phenomenon. Again, the relationship between causes of CMB and dimensions of CMB has been established. Having established this relationship, it is recommended that research focus should be directed at investigating differences in organisational cultures of various occupations and how they contribute towards providing the ideal environment for the causative factors in the CMB phenomenon to thrive. The establishment of the relationship between occupation types

and causes and/or dimensions of CMB will unearth the critical nexus that needs to be found between type of occupations and the reverse relationship they have with causes through the lens of the dimensions deployed in the organisation. This will further enhance the understanding of the CMB phenomenon.

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Appendix

	Mean	SD	Ranking of the mean
Constantly trivialises one's opinion publicly	4.2878	0.41045	1st
Changes aspects of work without notice	4.2622	0.39547	2nd
Denies access to information needed	4.2541	0.40510	3rd
Constantly ignores requests for help/advice	4.2520	0.39009	4th
Encourages mobbing from colleagues	4.2459	0.39819	5th
Threatens	4.2278	0.39069	6th
Always ridicules a person	4.2170	0.38924	7th
Labels a person as a trouble maker	4.1995	0.37859	8th
Uses performance appraisal unfairly	4.1819	0.34212	9th
Victimises a person for previous complaints	4.0620	0.21759	10th
Harasses a person because of disability	4.0284	0.15134	11th
Subjects one to religious/sexual harassment	4.0189	0.11370	12th
Undermines one's credibility	3.9326	0.74854	13th
Talks behind one's back	3.9164	0.75768	14th
Tells lies on a person	3.9084	0.76208	15th
Attacks one's professionalism	3.8437	0.72584	16th
Denies opportunity to train/self-develop	3.7898	0.73079	17th
Gives me unpleasant jobs	3.4795	1.40244	18th
Constantly criticises one's work	3.3396	1.11162	19th
Uses sarcasm/dry jokes to humiliate	3.2938	1.11377	20th
Criticises in public	3.2183	1.12384	21st
Sets extremely high targets	3.2129	1.11037	22nd
Shouts/screams at people repeatedly	3.1105	1.11800	23rd
Denies a person awards duly earned	3.0943	1.12670	24th
Discriminates in his dealings	2.8527	1.45910	25th
Constantly makes negative remarks about one's pregnancy	2.8437	1.05643	26th

Table AI.
Ranking of
dimensions of CMB

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