

Coercive management behaviour causes scale: validation and reliability

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729

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to provide a link that will close the gap in the field in respect of the methods used to measure the causes of coercive management behaviour (CMB) in universities and analogous institutions. Second, cultural and geographical differences and absence of studies of the phenomenon in the African university context have instigated researchers' decision to design new scales to identify and measure the causes of CMB in the workplace.

Design/methodology/approach – A total of 371 respondents were surveyed in a cross-sectional survey using a developed scale which had 20 items. The study adopted the latent variable approach to scale development.

Findings – Following an exploratory factor analysis done, five factors were extracted for the measurement of causes of CMB. A Cronbach alpha for all five factors to measure causes of CMB revealed validity for the administrative, social, organisational, cultural and governance elements. The research therefore surmised that the instrument developed to measure causes of CMB proposed is valid.

Research limitations/implications – The study provides a vital bridge in the gap between the occurrence of CMB and the identification and measurement of its causes in universities thus contributing to knowledge.

Practical implications – As a nation that is heavily imbued with culture, there is need to push for modifications in culture at the national level and within the African setting so as to ensure curtailment or total eradication of CMB for the future.

Originality/value – The study brings to research attention hitherto unmarked causes of CMB by providing a validated instrument that can be used to measure causes of the phenomenon.

Keywords University, Scale, Causes, Coercive management behaviour, Cross-sectional

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Organisational life has been the focus of recent academic attention because of the increasing demand for healthier workplaces. Consequently research emphasis has been strong on negative behaviours of both employees and managers in all types of organisations such as interactive and procedural justice, organisational support, bullying and empowerment-related issues. In this study, the researchers investigate the occurrence of coercive management behaviour (CMB) and its antecedents in ten Ghanaian universities, comprising five private and five public universities.

The prevalence of CMB with attendant negative outcomes in organisations has gained ascendancy over the past two decades. The phenomenon has been defined in different ways by other researchers. Examples include: petty tyranny by Ashforth (1997, p. 1) who defined it as “the tendency to lord one’s power over others”. Keashly (1998, p. 1) called it “emotional abuse” and described it as “the hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors that are not explicitly



ties to sexual or racial content yet are directed at gaining compliance from others” Similar definition of the phenomenon was given by [Tepper \(2000, p. 178\)](#) who called it “abusive supervision”. [Lipman-Blumen \(2005, p. 2\)](#) called it “toxic leadership” and defined such leadership as “destructive behaviours and their dysfunctional personal qualities or characteristics, inflict serious and enduring harm on the individuals, groups, organisations, communities and even the nations that they lead”. Other descriptors used in the literature for the same phenomenon are perceived leader integrity ([Craig and Gustafson, 1998](#)), workplace aggression ([Schat and Kelloway, 2000](#)); bullying ([Hoel and Cooper, 2000](#)); supervisor undermining ([Duffy et al., 2002](#)); bad leadership ([Kellerman, 2004](#)); “darker side of power” ([Kets de Vries, 2006](#)), leader bullying ([Ferris et al., 2007](#)); destructive leadership ([Einarsen et al., 2007; Padilla et al., 2007](#)) etc.

A number of studies on the prevalence of this phenomenon in the academic environment, have been conducted by several authors such as [Thomas \(2005\)](#), [Thornton \(2005\)](#); [Djurkovic et al. \(2008\)](#); [Frazier \(2011\)](#); [Raineri et al. \(2011\)](#); [Zabrodska and Kveton \(2012\)](#) etc. The comparatively scanty study done in universities is due to traditionally held notions of the university as collegial institutions. However, research findings have proved that the university environment presents enough conditions for the phenomenon to occur ([Thornton, 2004](#); [Scott, 2011](#); [Sheard et al. \(2011\)](#); [Randall and Coakley \(2007\)](#)) and hence the necessity to ascertain the prevalence of the phenomenon and the causes of the prevalence in an academic environment specifically from the developing country perspective.

CMB is known to be power-indexed ([Thornton, 2004](#); [Kets de Vries, 2006](#); [Tepper, 2007](#); [Einarsen, Hoel and Notelaers, 2009](#); [Keashly and Neuman, 2010](#) and [Burnes, Wend and Todnem By, 2013](#)) and therefore tends to focus on a manager’s deployment of their coercive power ([French and Raven, 1959](#); [Kieseker and Marchant, 1999](#)). Coercive power is primarily pivoted on the use of fear and intimidation and gives managers and leaders the ability to punish, subject followers to unpleasant experiences if they do not perform well or do not conform to stated or tacit values. These punishments and unpleasant experiences include: withholding pay raise, withholding promotion, or privileges, allocating undesirable duties or responsibilities, withdrawal of friendship or support and generally creating unpleasant work condition for the victim.

The objective of this paper is to present a five-factor scale for measuring causes of CMB in universities and non-academic organisations labelled as Doe-Puplampu Scale for measuring causes of CMB (DPS-MCCMB). This scale was developed as part of a PHD work to measure CMB in universities and analogous institutions.

Literature review

Theoretical underpinnings

The development of the measuring instrument is undergirded by two theories that serve as a foundation. These are Merton’s (1938) Anomie and Strain Theory and [Sidanius and Pratto’s \(1999\)](#) social dominance theory. Both Anomie and social dominance theories are instrumental through the content and process theories of motivation in explaining how people behave in society and organisations. Whiles content theories explicate the needs of people, it also reflects the physiological and psychological deficiencies which culminate in CMB. Needs determine work behaviour and individual attributes, competencies and psychological characteristics. Merton’s (1938) theory of anomie and strains postulates that a person may resort to CMB if the people they lead or manage, serve as obstructions or are considered as part of the factors frustrating their pursuit of prosperity and success. The inability to achieve their dreams leads to anomie (disjuncture between their goals and chances of achieving them) and strain (resulting from the obstructions). [Brotheridge \(2013\)](#)

explains that anomie can be generated in an organisational environment where the end justifies the means.

The social dominance theory (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999) postulates that power pyramids exist and occur in every culture which makes some individuals want to dominate others. Social dominance elucidates the opportunities social, administrative, governance elements and cultural values provide for people to take and to demonstrate power. Policies and regulations also serve as a tool for individuals to dominate over others. In most cases, the power brokers use tyranny or duress to gain and maintain mastery over others and to establish their dominance. This also explains the approaches people engage in achieving their goals through the process theory of motivation.

CMB has been found to lead to the creation of destructive atmospheres such as micro-politics, toxic cultures, coercive control, and even the moral problem of administrative evil (Kets de Vries, 2006; Samier and Atkins, 2010) resulting in many workers feeling a discontented presence.

Causes of coercive management behaviour in organisations and learning institutions

Researchers are unanimous on the causes of CMB in organisations. However, most findings and schools of thought on causes of CMB suggest various factors including psychological, social, cultural, organisational, emotional right down to financial or economic. These probable causes are all contingent on the socio-cognitive theories such as the Anomie and Strain and the social dominance theories. Earlier framings of the theory on bullying proposed a number of factors as causes of the phenomenon such as envy and insecurity and a sense of inadequacy or poor appreciation of oneself; jealousy, (Signe, 1998 etc.); victims' annoying behaviour (Felson, 1992 etc.); self-image (both positive and negative such as low self-esteem, poor coping abilities, naivety, anxiety or oversensitivity, anger; low moral standards and deficiencies in leadership behaviour (Leymann, 1993) etc. which reflect the socio-cognitive concepts of behaviour. Similarly, other suggested or found causes of CMB identified such as disputed-related causes and predatory bullying-related causes (Felson and Tedeschi, 1993; Ashforth, 1994 etc.); competition and power struggles, poor communication (Björkqvist, 1994); deficiencies in work design, a socially exposed position of the victim, role-conflict organisational culture and hostile social climate (in the case of predatory bullying) (Espelage, Bosworth and Simon, 2000) all relate to theories of social dominance and anomie and strain. In disputed-related cases of CMB, inability of feuding parties to resolve their differences leads to an escalation and frustration during which the stronger of the two uses their power to intimidate and harass the other. In the predatory bullying however, the victim of an abuse does nothing to deserve or provoke an attack or abuse. Rather they may become victims of a power-drunk leader or manager seeking to show "where the power lies" or they may be picked on because of an institutionalised harassment which gives managers the power to scapegoat a person who belongs to an out-group or a marginalised unit. Goldman (2006) referred to this as borderline personality disorder of leaders. This position is also shared by Morrison and Nolan (2007). Others such as Heames and Harvey (2006) blame the occurrence of CMB on workplace diversity resulting in a highly polarised and extremely competitive atmosphere thereby creating stress and breeding grounds for CMB; pressures and stress emanating from business (Tepper, 2000); a combined effect of genetic composition and workplace cultures (Espelage *et al.*, 2000); contextual and environmental structures and systems, the individuals involved (Victim and Perpetrator), and external influences (Appelbaum and Roy-Girard, 2007). Some of the contextual and environmental structures and systems were identified in Padilla *et al.* (2007) as instability in the work environment, centralisation of power and decision; absence of checks and balances and

institutionalisation and “perceived threat”. When a person feels threatened or perceives an imminent threat, they may give in to or become an overbearing leader. Cultural values that call for strong leaders, collectivism, group identity and stamp out divergence of views are also seedbeds for CMB (Padilla *et al.*, 2007).

More recent findings have revealed many newer factors responsible for the deployment of CMB especially in academic settings. For instance Byrne *et al.* (2014) found that national culture and dispositional and developmental characteristics of the perpetrators were responsible for the deployment of CMB while Chadwick and Travaglia (2017) found that a dearth of management leadership and access of perpetrators to informal power were responsible for the deployment of CMB. These arguments lead in different directions making it difficult to draw conclusions. This divergence in both thought and research findings lend support to Tepper *et al.* (2017) that CMB is the outcome of social learning, sense of an endangered identity and inability to self-regulate. Tepper *et al.* (2017)’s finding was confirmed in Robertson *et al.* (2018) who iterate the mediation of cognitive source in evoking coercive behaviour in a manager. Linking cause of CMB to the attachment theory, Robertson *et al.* (2018) propose that a manager’s resort to CMB is attributable to uncertain attachment which results in shortfalls of proficiencies required to manage communal interactions. According to Robertson *et al.* (2018), a person’s sense of self-efficacy is instrumental to their ability to negotiate relationships, promote a positive working model of self and interpret social issues. Other causes that have occupied researchers’ attention have been the neo-liberalist ideology (Grey, 2013; Docherty, 2015).

Consequences of coercive management behaviour

The above cited causes of CMB especially the neo-liberalist ideology and new managerialism have engendered what is known in literary circles as the marketisation (Taberner, 2018) of the academic work environment. The marketisation of universities has been of concern to many academic researchers because of the repercussions it has had on academic institutions and people who work in them. For instance, Taberner (2018) conceive that marketisation has resulted in “hyper-commodification” (p. 130) of tertiary education thus reducing academia to a “creeping bureaucracy and rationality of management” (Martin, 2016) and commercial entities hence subordinating academic activity (Berg *et al.*, 2016) to a market place and an aggressive pursuit of resource maximisation where the academic has become a production capital. The commodification of tertiary education has in particular been a great concern because of its increasing negative effect on education (Docherty, 2015). In the words of Docherty (2015), university staff are no longer in command of their careers, become powerless in the face of threats of termination and have become what Morrish (2015) describes as “a generic functional worker [. . .] who must facilitate the flow of capital” This unfortunate development in universities across the globe has compromised academic life and “sped up the clock” (Berg and Seeber, 2016, p.10). In the end, “the competition for fewer resources in HE seems to have created a competitive, adversarial and aggressive academic work environment where bullying can thrive (which is) (emphasis mine) consequence of performativity and the lack of compassion shown staff by management. An academic dystopia has emerged” (Taberner, 2018, p. 147). The crusade to save universities from the crippling effect of commodification has resulted in the development of Critical University Studies (Journal of Academic Labour).

From the above, it can be seen that research into CMB has over the years made frantic efforts at establishing the causes of CMB. However to date, though various scales have been developed to identify CMB in organisations such as that of Einarsen *et al.* (2009) no scale has been provided in all the works reviewed to adequately measure the causes of CMB in

universities with any certainty of validity and reliability. It can be seen through the reviewed works that the causes of CMB in organisations is multi-factorial and embrace cultural, social, organisational, governance and administrative elements. In line with literature reviewed therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H1.* Administrative elements have a positive relationship with occurrence of CMB.
- H2.* Social elements have a positive relationship with occurrence of CMB.
- H3.* Organisational elements have a positive relationship with occurrence of CMB.
- H4.* Governance elements have a positive relationship with the occurrence of CMB.
- H5.* Cultural elements have a positive relationship with the occurrence of CMB.

Methodology

In the development and validation of the scale, first an item pool was developed based on review of the work of [Padilla *et al.* \(2007\)](#); [Brotheridge \(2013\)](#) and [Harvey, Heames, Richey and Leonard, \(2006\)](#) and an exploratory factor analysis was run on the pooled items. The pooled items were then submitted to a protocol of 5 reviewers comprising of senior lecturers and a professor. A multi-sampling approach was used to select the samples for this study. First, a simple random sampling using the ballot technique was used to select 5 private and 5 public universities to participate in the research, and then quota sampling was used to decide on sample numbers from the private and public universities. The use of quota sampling was deemed appropriate because it helps to obtain the desired representation a research requires ([Acharya *et al.*, 2013](#)). Two sets of homogenous groups were sampled. These are private universities and public universities. The quota sampling was used to arrive at fair representation of each group in a set. This ensures that the data is not skewed and biased in favour of one set of the research sample as against another.

The study samples were faculty and senior staff who were selected using a simple random sampling approach where, faculty members and senior staff were randomly picked from the audience gathered in convocations. By this method, the findings will be accurate and objective and not be biased on account of the sample that was selected for the study.

Measurement of the construct

The survey instrument had five parts. Part 1 captured the data on the respondents' socio-demographics; Part 2 captured data on their experience of CMB; Part 3 sampled for the nature of CMB experienced; Part 4 captured data on the causes with items adapted from [Padilla *et al.* \(2007\)](#), [Celeste \(2013\)](#) and [Harvey *et al.* \(2006\)](#) modified to suit the research setting; and Part 5 gathered data on the effects. In total, 20 items were developed to measure causes of CMB in this study. These included two items for governance; three items for culture; four items for social elements; four items for organisational elements; and seven items for administrative elements ([Table I](#)).

The data collected were subjected to analysis using statistical tools such as the test of normality, Cronbach Alpha internal consistency measurement. Their validity was also computed and confirmatory factor analysis was done to assess the fitness of the data. The convergent and discriminant validity of the instrument was also tested using average

Items	Mean	SSD	Item reliability	Composite reliability	Factor loadings	AVE	SQ ROOT OF AVE
Administrative Elements	3.75	0.9		0.74		0.59	0.76
LACS			0.78		0.78		
PDCN			0.77		0.76		
PDBG			0.77		0.72		
AMRS			0.77		0.66		
Ab.PM			0.78		0.88		
BSAMPG			0.78		0.78		
CPFH			0.57		0.78		
Social Elements	3.93	0.8		0.76		0.53	0.73
SCCT			0.80		0.78		
DRSP			0.79		0.64		
QWD.EF			0.79		0.74		
MDMLAC			0.79		0.76		
Organisational Elements	3.58	0.9		0.85		0.52	0.72
CFI			0.78		0.73		
BWR			0.78		0.71		
Ex. Pol			0.78		0.74		
HSARC			0.78		0.72		
Governance Elements	3.79	0.9		0.74		0.74	0.86
USCCM			0.79		0.86		
LPCCMS			0.78		0.87		
Cultural Elements	3.57	0.7		0.76		0.53	0.73
PESOSEQUL			0.79		0.84		
RSUP			0.87		0.57		
STPP			0.79		0.75		

Notes: PDCN = Poorly Defined Cultural Norms; PDBG= Poorly defined Behavioural Guidelines; AMRS=Apathy or mistrust in reporting system; Ex. Pol= Excessive Politics; CFI=Culture of Fear and Intimidation; BWR=Backlash on Witness reporting; Ab.PM=Absence of Punitive Measures; CPFH=Centralisation of Power in few hands; LACS=Lack of Administrative or co-worker support; DRSP=Deficiency in recruitment and selection process to weed out potential abusers; BSAMPG= Bureaucratic system allowing managers to play God; HSARC=Hierarchical structure allowing reward of conformists; LPCCMS=Lack/poorly communicated complaint management system; USCCM=Unfair selection of council and committee members leading connivance; STPP= Society trumpeting of prosperity and progress; QWD.EF=questioning wrong doing of the elderly frowned upon; MDMLAC=Male dominance making leaders act contemptuously; SCCT= Superiority Complex of certain tribes: RSUP= respect for strong and unyielding People; PESOSEQUL= Preference for economic security over self-expression and quality of life

Table I.
Scale items, reliability, composite reliability, factor loadings, AVE and sq. root of AVE

variance extraction (AVE). According to [Hair et al. \(1998\)](#), the AVE should exceed 0.50 to show evidence of convergent validity. This criterion was met. A five-point Likert ranging from 'strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) was used by the respondents to answer questions on the causes of CMB ([Appendix 1](#)).

Socio-Demographics of research respondents

Out of 371 of the respondents who answered the question on age, 1.6 per cent of the respondents were aged twenty-five years and below (<25); 14.0 per cent were aged 25-30 years; 46.2 per cent were between 31 and 40 years, 27.1 per cent were 41-50 years and the remaining 11.1 per cent were 51 and above. Again 36.4 per cent of the 371 were staff of private universities whiles (63.6 per cent) were from public universities. Of the Senior

Members and Senior Staff, 3.1 per cent were Junior Assistant Registrars; 8.5 per cent were Assistant Registrars; 9.9 per cent were Deputy Registrars and 10.4 per cent were Registrars. These represented 31.9 per cent of the total respondents sampled. The remaining 68.1 per cent of the sample were as follows: 17.5 per cent were Assistant Lecturers; 18.9 per cent were Lecturers; 41.7 per cent were Senior Lecturers; Associate Professors were 4.5 per cent; and Professors were 3.9 per cent. The others (unidentified group) were 3.1 per cent. The perpetrators of CMB were identified as Subordinates- 6.2 per cent; Colleagues- 2.5 per cent; Administrative Supervisors- 34.38 per cent; Heads of Departments (Academic) - 29.38 per cent; Deans - 13.75 per cent; Registrars -7.5 per cent, Pro Vice Chancellors- 6.5 per cent.

Exploratory factor analysis of causes of coercive management behaviour

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) revealed the causes of CMB to be multi-dimensional with the following factors: Administrative Elements (AE); Social Elements (SE); Organisational Elements (OE); Governance Elements (GE) and Cultural Elements (CE). Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's tests were also done to measure the adequacy of the sampling as an indication of the appropriateness of factor analysis (Williams *et al.*, 2010) and to produce estimates that were most likely to represent the true scores of the factors identified respectively. The KMO test showed 0.765 which is more than the recommended level of 0.50 suggested by Kaiser *et al.* (1974). Values gathered on destination image from KMO and Bartlett's test (KMO= 0.765, $df = 371$, $p < 0.05$) showed the adequacy of sampling and applicability of factor analysis (Hair *et al.*, 1998).

The research used the factor analysis with varimax rotation method to identify orthogonal factor dimensions extracted. The total variance explained accounted for a cumulative variance of 86.55 per cent where AE presented 53.40, SE 10.82, OE -7.76, GE 7.206 and CE 7.359 based on communalities indexes above the threshold of 0.4 and the latent root criterion of 1.0 used for factor extraction (Hair *et al.*, 1998; Nunnally, 1978) and these were included in the CMB scale. This means these factors reflected the same theme. The KMO test conducted resulted in a sample size adequacy of 0.765 which is more than the recommended level of 0.50 suggested by Kaiser *et al.* (1974). The data was examined to check its appropriateness for factor analysis and a factor analysis was done utilising varimax method through principal component analysis (PCA).

Table I above shows the mean, standard deviation, item reliability, composite reliability, factor loadings and AVE. Cronbach alpha of the items range from 0.74 to 0.85 for the measures showing acceptable internal consistency across the items in the construct (Composite reliability >0.70).

Composite reliability analysis of causes of coercive management behaviour

The composite reliability tests of the constructs of causes of CMB revealed that all the five (5) items recorded 0.714 and were accepted because they met the inclusion criteria of 0.7 (Gliem and Gliem, 2003) meaning there is internal consistency in the items hence the instruments are reliable.

In addition to the EFA and CFA conducted, a Pearson correlation coefficient test was also conducted to identify inter-correlations of the constructs. See table II below:

Table II shows the inter-correlation coefficient value which is below 0.700, indicating 0.461 correlation between dimensions of CMB and causes of CMB, which is significant at $p < 0.01$. The study therefore concluded that these variables relate to each other and move in the same directions. The table also confirms the discriminant validity of the constructs.

Results

A regression of the causes on the forms of CMB in organisations (Table III above) showed that all five hypotheses: H_1 , H_2 , H_3 , H_4 and H_5 were supported as AE ($\beta = 0.488$, $\rho < 0.05$), SE ($\beta = 0.058$, $\rho < 0.05$) OE ($\beta = 0.089$, $\rho < 0.05$), GE ($\beta = 0.023$, $\rho < 0.05$) and CE ($\beta = 0.058$, $p > 0.05$) were positively correlated and significant to CMB.

Discussion

The findings of this study satisfy the requirements for scale development and validation (Cabrera-Nguyen, 2010) and provide an essential tool for the study of this phenomenon. The significant effects these five causes of CMB have on forms of CMB signify the validity of the scale. Measuring CMB should hereafter have a strong basis but there is however need to ascertain the universality of this scale across cultures and in diverse work groups. Further use of this scale is recommended and improvement or modification of this scale to suit peculiar research interest is also welcome although it is the researchers' belief that this scale, a sterling contribution to knowledge, is capable of measuring the phenomenon cross-culturally and in all spheres of work.

One of the factors included in the measuring scale such was administrative factors found to be one of the causes of CMB in this study thus confirming prior studies and *H1* that *administrative elements have a positive relationship with occurrence of CMB*. Some administrative factors identified in literature to have influence on the deployment of CMB included unclear job roles, poor communication (Lewis and Gunn, 2007); lack of administrative or co-worker support (Djurkovic et al., 2008; Parzefall and Salin, 2010; Cooper-Thomas et al.,

Table II.
Inter-Correlations of
the Constructs

	Dimensions of CMB		CMB	Causes of CMB
<i>Dimensions of CMB</i>				
Pearson Correlation	0.285**	0.170**	1	0.020
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.001		0.707
<i>Causes of CMB</i>				
Pearson Correlation	0.461**	0.109*	0.020	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.036	0.707	

Notes: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); *correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table III.
Effect of causes on
CMB

Model	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	beta			
<i>I</i>						
(Constant)	3.192	0.247			12.915	0.000
AE	0.488	0.058	0.217		2.242	0.000
SE	0.058	0.061	0.156		1.993	0.000
OE	0.089	0.046	0.189		3.471	0.001
GE	0.023	0.047	0.164		3.153	0.000
CE	0.058	0.022	0.308		2.148	0.000

Notes: Dependent variable: CMB; $R = 0.183$, $R^2 = 0.034$, $F(df = 5, 365) = 2.537$, $p = 0.001$

2013); lack of punitive measures or poor deterrents to stop perpetrators of CMB (Tambur and Vadi (2012) among others. Another study by O'Farrell and Nordstrom, (2013) found that institutions which lacked effective administrative arrangements and behavioural guidelines provide a seedbed for CMB to occur. Therefore, the findings of researchers mentioned above were corroborated by the findings of this research.

This research's findings about the social values from the African perspective reinforce prior findings that they influence behaviour in individuals and organisations. For instance Rokeach (1979), Shahin and Wright (2004) and Tambur and Vadi (2012) established that actual behaviour is formed out of pre-established value systems which in turn determine the way people interpret issues. This research's findings agree with *H2*, thus: *social elements have a positive relationship with occurrence of CMB* and findings from prior literature. This research therefore concludes that CMB is correlated to social influence. This resonates with the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) which suggests that people are influenced by the approval or disapproval of those that matter to them and Reardon (1991)'s appropriateness-consistency-effectiveness model (ACE model). Hence, CMB can be influenced by any of the above depending on why they are engaging in such behaviour.

Thirdly, the findings of the research show a correlation between organisational characteristics and CMB, (Spector *et al.*, 2007) and between organisational climate (OC) and CMB (Giorgi, 2010). An organisation's climate include four-dimensional climate matrix individual autonomy; degree of structure; reward orientation and consideration, warmth and support (Campbell, Dunnette, Lawler and Weick (1970) Further on, Schneider (2000) and Patterson *et al.* (2005) have suggested that OC is instrumental in shaping behaviour in organisations. The importance of a positive OC is imbedded in the positive effects it has on employee's level of motivation, commitment and satisfaction (Maamari and Majdalani, 2017). Consequently employees' perception of the organisational climate determines largely, their interpretation and experience of CMB. The research tested the above suggestions by including dimensions of organisational climate. Consequently, the EFA conducted in this study delineated items such as culture or atmosphere of fear and intimidation; backlash on witness' reporting; excessive politics in the university; and hierarchical structure allows management to reward staff who conform as factors that influence CMB. The regression conducted to ascertain the influence of these elements confirms the theory that climate perceptions are associated with leader behaviour and organisational factors determine the prevalence or otherwise of CMB (Porteous, 2002). This research's findings therefore agree with *H3*, thus: *organisational elements have a positive relationship with occurrence of CMB* and findings from prior literature. This research therefore concludes that CMB is correlated to organisational elements.

Governance has received increased attention following over the years. For the Ghanaian university context in particular however, the call for research on governance in the university to fill the gap (Blackman and Kennedy, 2009) has resulted in scanty amounts of research except for the work of Effah and Mensa-Bonsu (2001) and Tetteh and Ofori (2010) with no study done on the role of governance in causing, reducing or preventing CMB in Ghanaian universities. The key objective of governance is effective management of stakeholder interests and maximum organisational output. Among other things, corporate governance involves ensures smooth organisational management with little or no excesses (Tetteh and Ofori, 2010). Hence governance in universities is pivotal to the determination of value positions, allocation of resources, decision-making and distribution of authority (Tetteh and Ofori, 2010). This research found that elements such as Unfair selection of Council and committee members and lack of/poorly communicated complaint management systems contributed towards the generation of CMB in universities. *H4, governance elements have a positive relationship with the occurrence of CMB*, was therefore confirmed.

Finally the research shows culture to predispose Ghanaian universities staff to acceding control and power to their superiors depicting organisational culture in Ghanaian universities as a control culture (Tharp, 2010) and CMB as a function of culture. Prior studies indicated that perpetrators of CMB are products of toxic cultures and toxic organisations (Appelbaum and Roy-Girard, 2007; Padilla *et al.*, 2007; Van Fleet and Griffin, 2006; Tsui *et al.*, 2006). Freytag and Thurick (2006); and Hemmelgarn *et al.* (2006) also found that cultural characteristics such as uncertainty avoidance and collectivism, encourage the emergence of strong leaders and create power asymmetries. Being a power-indexed phenomenon therefore, CMB has high probability of occurrence in many African universities because of the cultural hegemony among African nations. The newly developed scale will therefore be instrumental in testing this assumption in Africa. This research's finding therefore confirms prior findings and *H5 that cultural elements have a positive relationship with the occurrence of CMB.*

All the findings from this research show sufficiently that the deployment of CMB by university managers undermines the stimulus, self-confidence and willingness of staff (Santiago and Carvalho, 2004; Thornton, 2004, 2005) and gives credence to Lockwood (1985) that universities are not uniquely different from other organisations in so far as the prevalence of CMB is concerned.

Conclusion

This research's findings lead to the conclusion that culture and social values are the strong pillars that support the breeding and demonstration of CMB in organisations and in particular universities. In such collectivist cultures, the breeding grounds for CMB are very fertile and unless changes are made to Ghana's cultural and social values, CMB will continue and spread in time and make organisations cankerous. It can also be concluded that the design and implementation of governance, administrative and organisational structures are strongly related to the prevalence of CMB.

Implications

The research findings have theoretical, practical and policy implications. Theoretically, this work extends Hofstede (1991) and Global Leadership and Organisational Effectiveness (GLOBE) (House *et al.*, 2002)'s culture dimensions to include 'priority of economic security over self-expression and quality of life'; 'respect for the strong and unyielding'; and 'society trumpeting prosperity and progress as success' which 3 items correlate with 'uncertainty avoidance', 'assertiveness' and 'achievement-orientation' in the Hofstede (1991) and GLOBE cultural dimensions respectively. The administrative, organisational and governance elements found to be causes of CMB also confirm the attraction-selection-attrition theory that provide that the nature of organisations attract their kind. The ethos of an organisation will determine the kind of people it will attract.

Implications for practice

As a nation that is heavily imbued with culture, there is need to push for modifications in culture at the national level and within the African setting so as to ensure curtailment or total eradication of CMB for the future.

Implications for policy

Policy makers and governing boards need to consider the negative effect that social values and cultures have on organisational health, particularly their ability to influence the

breeding of CMB and be guided by it to structure organisations and develop policies that will sanitise university environments and minimise the chances if not prevent the occurrence of CMB in universities in particular and in organisations generally.

Limitation and future research direction

A number of limitations emanate from this research which should be addressed by future research.

First, this study used a cross-sectional approach. Our findings should therefore be confirmed through a longitudinal study.

Secondly, though our study found culture, social elements, organisational, governance and administrative elements to be the causes of CMB in Ghanaian Universities, our findings were based on ten (10) universities. This study should therefore be replicated taking samples from a larger population.

Thirdly, because this study looked at the negative dyadic relationship between university managers and their staff in the Ghanaian context only, we recommend an extension of the study to other African universities to give a wider generalisability to the findings.

Finally, though our data was validated through the deployment of Cronbach Alpha measurement, the research did not investigate the influence of any mediating variable in the attribution of causes by the respondents. We cannot therefore totally account for this concern. We thus recommend a future research inclusion of mediating variables.

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Appendix 1. Scale for measuring causes of CMB

On a scale of 1-5, being: 1-“I strongly disagree”(SDA), 2-“I disagree”(DA); 3-“Indifferent” (IND), 4- “I agree somewhat” (ASW); and 5-“I strongly agree (STA)”; please indicate the extent to which you agree with statements about the administrative, social, organisational, governance and cultural factors that foster CMB in Universities by ticking√ the box with the value of your choice.

Factors that give rise to coercive behaviour	1 SDA	2 DA	3 IND	4 ASW	5 STA
Poorly defined cultural norms in the university					
Poorly defined and poorly documented behavioural guidelines					
Apathy or mistrust in reporting systems					
Excessive politics in the university					
Culture of fear/intimidation among staff					
Witnesses who report or raise concerns about CMB become victims too					
Lack of punitive measures against perpetrators					
Power is centred in a few individual's hands					
No administrative or co-worker support for targets of coercive behaviour					
Recruitment and selection procedures do not sufficiently weed out potential abusers					
The bureaucratic systems allows management to “play God (Decide people’s fate)					
The hierarchical structure allows management to reward staff who ‘conform’ to their whims					
No or poorly communicated complaint management systems					
Council, academic boards and high-powered committee members are not fairly selected or elected leading to connivance with perpetrators of CMB					
Society trumpets prosperity and progress as success					
Male dominance in Ghanaian culture makes leaders act contemptuously towards females					
In Ghanaian society, questioning wrong things elderly or older people do is frowned upon or considered disrespectful					
In Ghanaian society, some tribes consider themselves superior to others					
Ghanaians respect people who are considered strong and unyielding					
Ghanaians give priority to physical and economic security over self-expression and quality of life					

Table AI.

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