TRIAL OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP IN INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT

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Purpose: The paper investigates challenges associated with institutional leadership engagement of main staff to fill inner vacancies.

Design/methodology/approach: The study rates merit, experience, rank, competencies, long service, in-depth knowledge, and deeper consultation as key requirements for appointment in some selected academic institutions. The survey collects data through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The SPSS and descriptive statistics were used for the analysis of data presented in percentages, tables, and graphs.

Findings: The results show that over 80% of respondents said that the prerogative of leaders in second-cycle institutions to share leadership needs a reassessment. As it undermines specific parameters and subsequently creates emotions among staff and unsatisfactory students' behaviours at school. The study found social and external factors as the basis for some nominations that weaken institutional unity and performance.

Recommendation/limitations: The legislative instrument should be amended to suit the current management environment. Besides, ethical leadership and emotional intelligence should be encouraged at schools for effective management and harmony.

Practical implications: Organizational failures across economies to a large extent are results of stimulus variables.

Originality/value: The paper demonstrates how institutional leaders are often torn between stimulus and prospective variables resulting in self-interest to the detriment of institutional vision.

Keywords: education, leadership, second-cycle institution.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

Education at the High School level has a diversified curriculum that enables students to identify and achieve different aptitudes, abilities, interests, and skills that would provide them with further educational training and occupational opportunities. The teacher plays a vital role in any educational setting. Teachers go through training to attain knowledge and that gives them a professional status to impart knowledge and skill to students. The employer and management actions influence the teacher's mode of delivery, competencies, confidence, and love for the job. Institutional leadership is central to every educational reform programme as leadership functions have consequences on the entire process.

The Ghana Education Bill 2015 for instance, amends the legal framework for the pre-tertiary regulatory bodies for education in the Education Act 2008 (Act 778) and provides a decentralized pre-tertiary education system (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). The Regional Department, in consultation with the Regional Co-ordinating Council, shall establish Boards of Governors for the human, material, and financial management of every second-cycle school in the region (Sekyere, 2016). The Regional Director of Education makes appointments, promotions and transfers, and recommends discipline and awards for staff at the second cycle institutions in the region on behalf of the Head of the Local Government Service (Ghana Education Service, 2010).

The head of schools allows distributed leadership in offices deemed suitable, but holders of these offices, substantive or acting, must have the professional qualifications that the position requires (Sekyere, 2016). The organizational leaders have three sources of power at their disposal to get things done. The legitimate power that the subordinates must accept is the administrative authority of the head and the coercive power where subordinates are punished by withholding some of their privileges and other entitlements (Sekyere, 2016). Again, the rewarding power to award subordinates either for hard work or to motivate them to work harder to achieve institutional goals (Sekyere, 2016). The institutional leader must act in ways that stimulate a positive response from the subordinates to achieve academic and moral superiority (Lonyian & Kuranchie, 2018).

However, High School Education under the Ghana Education Service (G.E.S.) supervision has been hard hit by rampant student unrest, destroying school properties and disrupting the academic calendar, and has been a problematic for the government, stakeholders, and students. A series of research has been conducted on the education sector, and still ongoing regarding educational leadership (Appiah & Amfo-Antiri, 2019), and educational policies (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016), but with little emphasis on distributed leadership within the second-cycle institutions in Ghana. The procedure involved and the consequences of distributed leadership in 21st-century second-cycle institutions are too open to discussion. Therefore, investigating to what extent the distributed leadership challenges fill the void. Academic institution leadership

needs current information concerning internal engagement for efficient management and high academic performance in Ghana and beyond. The study identifies trials of distributed leadership and highlights appropriate conditions that would allow institutions to arrive at harmony and transparency among the workforce for academic excellence.

2. Leadership

2.1. Institutional Leadership

Each day, we learn a new concept or a skill that adds value to our being. These things that we gain knowledge of during our daily activities and interactions are either structured or unstructured, though they school us in many ways. Education is the act of imparting knowledge, customs, and values to generations. Education is generally accepted as it serves as a foundation for economic growth and development (Lonyian & Kuranchie, 2018). Second-cycle education is a turning point in the life of a teenager because it is the level at which the individual decides on a career path. Therefore, leadership at this level is complicated as students are in transition, the adolescence age, a move from childhood to adulthood which comes with various behaviours and needs a system that everyone is happily put on board to enable successful management.

Leadership goes beyond just influencing behaviour and directing change in organizations. A leader's behaviour is shaped by culture and values, and these variables determine one's leadership when applied in the workplace (Akpamah et al., 2021). Wright and Taylor (1994) state that leadership is when the organizational head controls subordinates' behaviours and beliefs to achieve set objectives. Leadership is a skill that manipulates the entire organization's resources to align with the socially accepted norm and protects the organization's culture and its core values (Matkó, 2013). Leadership is devoid of behaviour enticement, a behaviour put up to avoid punishment (Appiah & Amfo-Antiri, 2019). Instead, the leader generates traits, nurtures attitude, and persuades others to behave in the desired direction (Politis, 2001).

Institutional leadership is an extensive consultation to achieve the institutional goal (Akpamah et al., 2021). The kind of management provided by heads of second-cycle institutions is crucial for developed and developing countries (Bush & Jackson, 2003). The leaders in the academic institution must not take actions that will undermine its essence (Zame et al., 2008). Nations' educational systems are constantly changing to meet the current occurrences in society that require a certain level of innovation and talent to perform professional and administrative duties (Lonyian & Kuranchie, 2018). The heads of schools are responsible for creating and maintaining quality and standards in their institutions. They owe it a duty to choose leaders to effectively manage various departments and units in their institutions (Esia-Donkoh, 2014). The heads or principals need an efficient delegation system with a trustworthy team for support,

since the heads are held responsible for the choice they made to accomplish organizational goals (Casper, 2002). In leadership, employee mobilization defines a leader's behaviour that builds internal commitment of staff for extra-institutional achievements (Mbah, 2016), a leader whose behaviour destabilises workforce mobilization and efficiency invariably creates discomfort amid the labour force.

A leader who encourages subordinates' intellectual stimulation to enhance their knowledge, creativity, and thinking deeply about problems of the institution (Tian-Syung et al., 2019) is respected and trusted for self-confidence, attitude, ideology, and emotional intelligence. The institutional leaders focus on fixing the rules and standards that are no longer on track and addressing issues of subordinates' emotions, reactions regarding negative comments and decisions previously made (Tian-Syung et al., 2019). They ensure subordinates of leadership's unbiased attitude, favourable responses, inspiring speeches, and compliments, these make the employee happy and very interactive (Tian-Syung et al., 2019). The management of an academic institution depends on one's ability not just to direct or order, but to motivate, work collaboratively with, and offer broad intellectual leadership to a diverse set of academic staff who might have attained little professional training (Rudenstine, 2002). The teachers function best when they can fulfil their institutional roles to make utmost use of their creative talents as scholars and educators (Rudenstine, 2002).

Teachers appointed to leadership positions in the western world are offered training to sufficiently prepare them for their responsibilities. It is, however, the opposite in most developing countries (Bush & Oduro, 2006). Moreover, orientation is rare for those allowed by the appointing authority to occupy certain internal positions in second-cycle institutions, subsequently, appointees take their appointment letters and could immediately move to the supposed office to start work (Bush & Oduro, 2006; Lonyian & Kuranchie, 2018). When an organization's workforce is allowed to become conscious of their interests, it reduces workplace anxiety and helps employees focus on achieving organizational goals (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). But leadership in deprived regions still practices centralization of authority where the leader controls management power and does not share with subordinates. Consequently, their terminologies and thoughts will not be made known to subordinates, and even if they did, they want to remain in authority and have control (Tian-Syung et al., 2019). The preparation for leadership positions in an academic institution is appreciated when it is based on experience, professional qualification, rank, and recognition of how work is defined and structured (Mulford, 2003). Leaders in educational institutions play a significant role in harmonizing relationships within their schools and beyond by mobilizing and deploying various resources (Chen, 2002). The heads of second-cycle institutions are responsible for protecting the peace and ensuring the smooth running of these institutions as they share leadership with significant offices (Lonyian & Kuranchie, 2018).

2.2. Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership explains a leadership model in the twenty-first century distinct from positional authority (Tang, 2019). The leadership engages internal staff with a certain degree of expertise to fill vacancies as and when they exist in the organization (Harris, 2004). Distributed leadership is best practised in schools as it is significantly associated with retention and students' academic performance (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Ghamrawi, 2011). Distributed leadership appears as a team with professional backing to achieve the organizational goal (Bennett et al., 2003). It describes a leadership position where organizations fill vacancies using their employees within the organization (Muhereza, 2019). Organizational leaders in charge of an internal appointment may avoid holding back when they can detect and re-evaluate factors that positively activate the employees' emotional life (Alina, 2009). Though, emotion at the personal level or subjective suggests an individual's self-control capacity and the ability to direct the positive and negative emotions to achieve emotional intelligence whereas a feeling at the interpersonal or social level is the settlement of emotional variance between the workforce and leadership. Alina (2009) states that divergence views governing internal commitment result in subjective sentiment while the organization experiences emotional behaviours such as anxiety, frustration, intolerance, shrunk self-esteem, and undue stress on the postholders leading to a drastic decline in output.

Emotions are made up of various components and usually not directed at a specific event. The physiological and behavioural responses such as facial expression and appraisal are some reactions of emotions (Totterdell & Niven, 2014). According to the affective events theory by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), behaviour is either affect-driven or judgment-driven with a direct response to an emotional experience and an indirect response mediated by a worker's attitude respectively. Both affect-driven and judgment-driven behaviours are reasons for counterproductive behaviours at work (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011). Besides, some characteristics of the leader promote events that could result in bitter sentiment and do not influence the positive feelings of the subordinate in which the workplace is occasioned by the presumption against tender feelings (Dahlum & Wig, 2019; Miner & Glomb, 2010). However, distributed leadership has challenges when implemented in organizations noted for bureaucracy because bureaucratic leaders will not let go of power and will only share leadership with those that they could control (Hartley, 2010). The interactions with others at work can result in momentary feelings, but leaders' actions are the most salient source of emotions in the workplace (Dimotakis et al., 2011). Lawrence (2008) argues that people's sentimentality arose at work when they profess that there is injustice in the system.

In addition, people express bad feelings when they compare themselves with others, they perceive them to be better off at work than they are. At the same time, they feel positive when making the comparison that shows others are worse off than them (Spence et al., 2011). The unwarranted management behaviour at the workplace can produce intense and longer-

lasting emotions in any organization (Rozin & Royzman, 2001). The actions of one or a group at the workplace may cause others social emotion as it perceives as unjust, frustrates one's goal attainment, and encourages interpersonal conflict (Gibson & Callister, 2010). In distributed leadership, injustice has been identified as the most severe cause of emotions in the workplace (Domagalski & Steelman, 2005), while the event that often leads to unfairness at work is discernment (Fitness, 2000).

The public worker in the developing country is never satisfied with the job concerning the conditions of service, as illustrated in Figure 1. In Ghana, a professional graduate teacher in a public school has a net salary of less than USD 500 at the study time, coupled with no rent allowance and a poor work environment. The teacher has no control over all of those, and already lost confidence in the work. Hence, a decision that places the teacher at a disadvantage irritates him the more, and the results become a pattern of bad leadership.
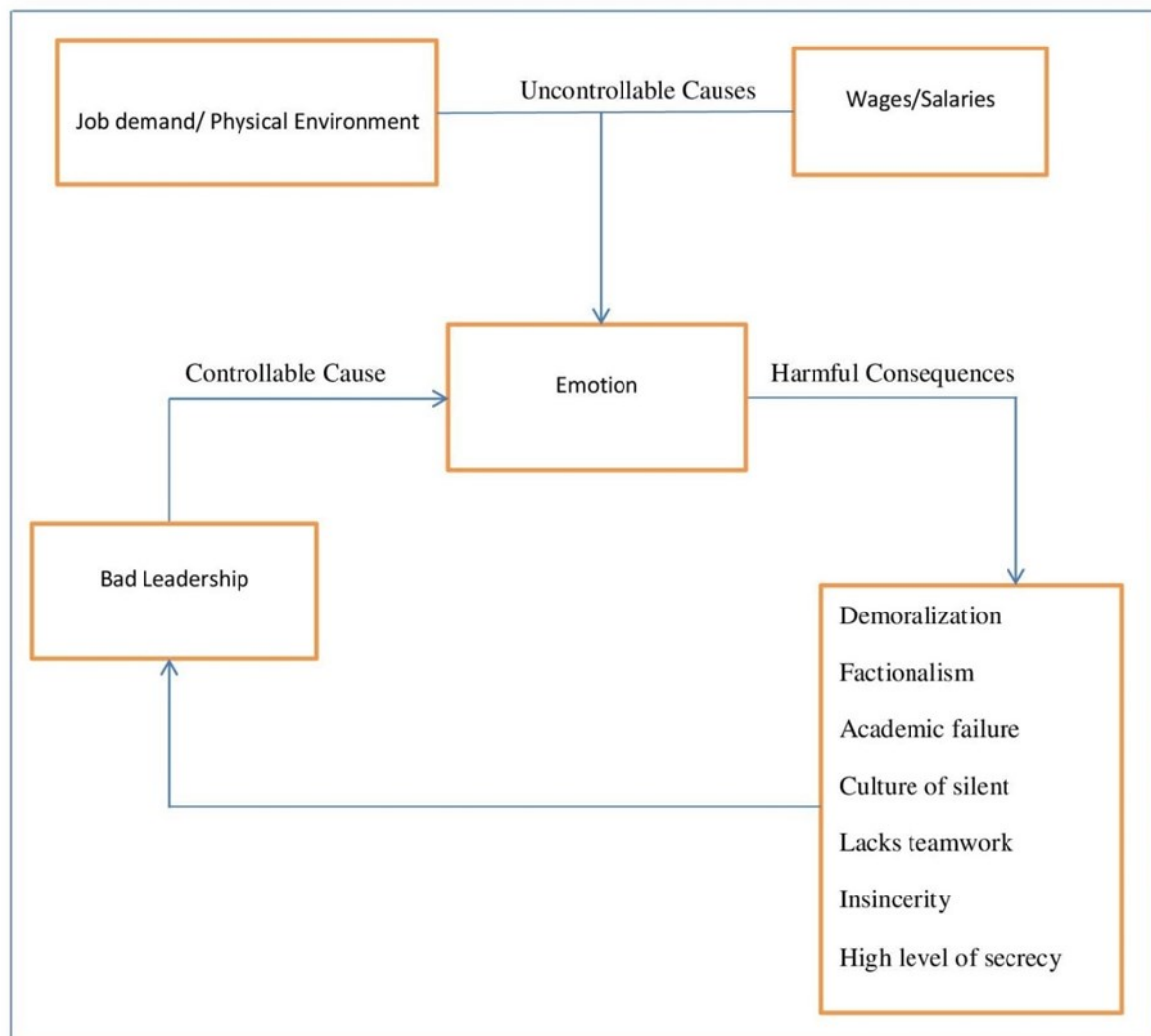

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework. Source: Authors' source.

3. Approach and Methodology

The study gathers data through extensive desk research from the library to various published relevant materials and worldwide web search. A piece of current knowledge about the topic was pulled together from one hundred and fifteen (115) research participants. Structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to solicit first-hand information from the staff of the selected public institutions alongside observation in Northern Ghana. The instrument was made anonymous, voluntary, and self-administered. The study had a sample of one hundred and twenty (120). The study uses purposive sampling of schools that experienced strikes not less than three times within six years (2015-2021) in Northern Ghana. Random sampling was applied to select respondents in the sample. Though, a quota was applied to select at least three (3) members from management in each school. After a thorough check of collected data, the questionnaires were coded and entered software version 22.0 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis with a broad description of the findings presented in percentages, tables, and graphs.

4. Results and Discussions

A total of one hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires were administered to the respondents, and one hundred and fifteen (115) questionnaires were retrieved representing 95.8% of responses which was considered satisfactory. The analyses were made based on the responses to the returned questionnaires, interviews and observations made during the administration of questionnaires, and casual discussions with the research participants demonstrated in tables and graphs.

The results in Figure 2 show that about 94% of respondents agreed that workers were not allowed positions in distributed leadership based on the number of years they might have served the organization closely, followed by professional rank representing 91.3% of the respondents who agreed that grades in academic institutions were not a guarantee for receiving shared leadership. The results substantiated the Esia-Donkoh (2014) survey, which states that the head chooses leaders for effective management of various departments at the school. The findings also agreed with Casper (2002) argument that the head of institutions needed to determine a trustworthy delegation team to accomplish organizational goals. The results suggest that merit is a major factor that antagonized management in distributed leadership among staff as confirmed by 90.4% of respondents.
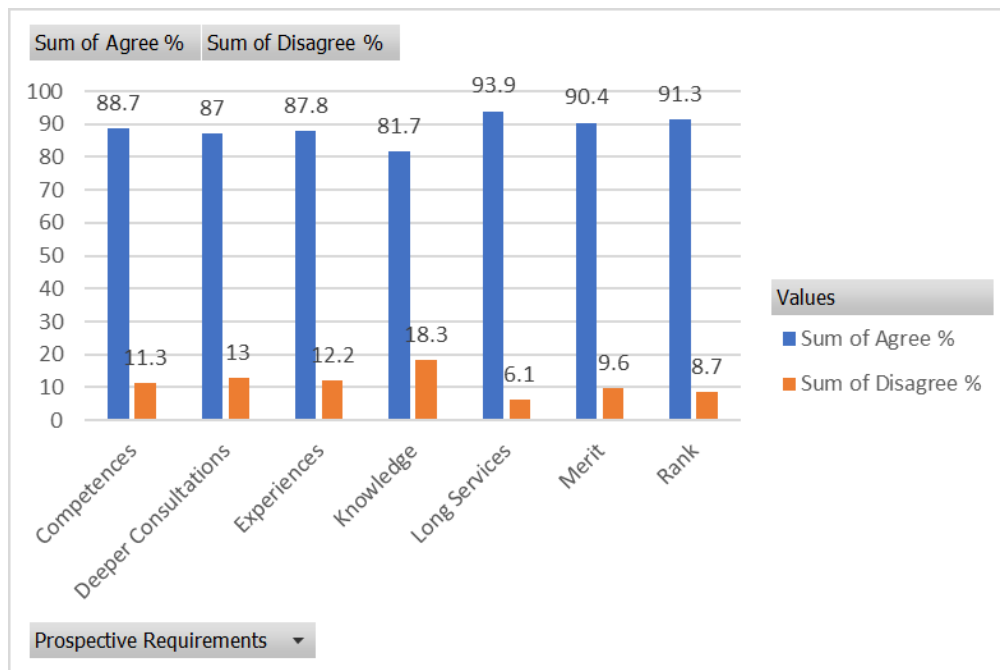
Figure 2. Required Prospective. Source: Authors' Fieldwork.

Besides, management was confronted with issues concerning competencies, and experiences in the distributed leadership within the organizations, about 88.7% and 87.8% of research participants confirmed that organizations often do not recognize and consider these as critical requirements in distributed leadership respectively, but only allowed 13% for consultation as demonstrated in Figure 2. The results disagreed with Akpamah et al. (2021) that institutional leadership is an extensive consultation that allows full participation in the decision-making process to achieve institutional goals.

The results establish that challenges regarding shared leadership based on requirements were not hidden, as a zero percentage of respondents represents no knowledge about appointments at the time of the study. Though, on average, 6.1% of the respondents could not explain how distributed leadership is allowed among staff at their institutions. Management tacked with favouritism was validated by respondents representing 91.3%, followed by external influence of 81.7 % of respondents, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
Stimulus Variables

Close Associates/conviction	Agree %	Disagree %	No Idea %
Relations	64.3	34	1.7
Friendship	62.6	36.5	0.9
Secret/Furtive keeper	41.7	40.9	17.4
Favouritism	91.3	7.9	0.8
Appeasement	41.7	41.8	16.5
Settlement of Internal Issues	73	25.2	1.8
External Influence	81.7	14.7	3.6

Source: Fieldwork.

The study authenticates Domagalski and Steelman (2005) and Fitness (2000) assertion that injustice is a serious cause of emotions in distributed leadership whereas the unfairness at work is as a result of discernment. However, only 0.1% spilt the respondents on distributed leadership for appeasement, while 40.9% opposed the statement that leadership is shared with people that will not disclose information either within or outside the organization. Institutional leaders nominating their close associates for internal positions stood at 62.6% for friends and 64.3% for relations. The results conflicted with Tian-Syung et al. (2019) postulation that effective leadership ensures subordinates leaders' unbiased attitude, favourable responses, inspiring speeches, and compliments to make the employee happy and very interactive.

In Figure 3, the diagram concludes that distributed leadership is the sole responsibility of management. Hence, advertising positions and vetting applicants would not be necessary as represented by 99.1 % and 98.2% of respondents respectively. The results contradict Lonyian and Kuranchie (2018) survey, which revealed that nations' educational systems are constantly changing to meet the current trials in society and require a certain level of innovation and talent to perform professional and administrative duties. Also, the authority responsible for distributed leadership had confidence in whosesoever they intended to share power with. Therefore, orientation was regarded as on-the-job training supported by 99.1% of respondents, whereas 0.9% represented those against the statement that management often does not consider organizing orientation for newly appointed staff to a higher office. The respondents' view partially agreed with the previous findings that the heads of schools are responsible for creating and maintaining quality and standards in their institutions, and give power to the selected few per their convictions (Lonyian & Kuranchie, 2018). An average of 0.9% represents the respondents' neutrality and disagreement with the process of distributed leadership, and that is a manifestation of organizational fracture.
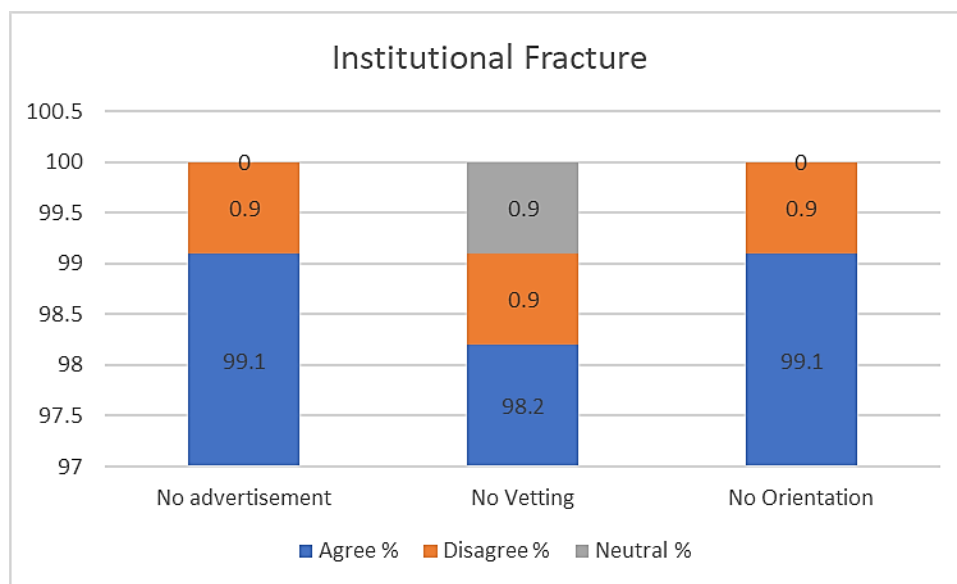

Figure 3. Institutional Fracture. Source: Fieldwork.

5. Interviews and Observation

Observation reveals the discontent of some staff in their responses to questions about why they are not in leadership positions. Resentment is a demonstration of social emotion as the actions that speed up bitterness are a direct deed of someone else (Totterdell & Niven, 2014). The atmosphere had shown evidence of no apparent balance between most subordinates and management in some of those institutions. The leadership had not shown conduct entirely transparent and acceptable to every staff member. The results were a direct opposite of Lonyian and Kuranchie (2018) findings that institutional leaders must act in ways that stimulate a positive response from their subordinates to achieve academic and moral excellence. Management somehow ignored employees' feelings which translated into a rejection of common agreement for any organization per participants' responses. The 4-V model, Value, Vision, Voice, and Virtue (Appiah & Amfo-Antiri, 2019), got lost in some academic institutions. Leadership had disregarded the 4-V model in management, which could integrate the inner beliefs and values with the peripheral behaviours and recommended actions for the accomplishment of the institutional objectives.

The staff common rooms purposely meant for teachers to have a rest and probably mark students' exercises and assignments were virtually empty in some schools. Some teachers preferred any other available space, even an inconvenient place to the staff common room, for personal reasons. Besides, some other teachers never stayed on campus for a second after their periods were over. They did not want to do anything with the school outside their obligations, and that speaks volumes about the atmosphere in some academic institutions. The behaviours of the teachers confirmed a lack of unity. The attitude of some staff members conflicts with the Tian-Syung et al. (2019) study that institutional leaders focus on fixing the rules and standards that were no longer on track. They emphasized addressing issues of a subordinate's emotions and reactions to certain behaviours of leadership especially unfair attitude and favouritism.

Some staff members in the distributed leadership position were not ready for the task. They suggested advertising inner leadership vacancies for those interested in taking up such places during the interview. However, the teachers were punctual in class, and management was delighted with the teachers' performance and anticipated excellent results, mainly from the final year students. The question remains whether the teachers were mindful of students' attendance and general behaviour in class. Again, whether they were happily teaching or just protecting their meagre salaries to survive, as majority expressed dissatisfaction with their condition of service and management approach to getting staff members in shared leadership positions.

6. Conclusion

Over the years, the educational system in Africa has gone through a series of changes to meet the changing environment of today's educational system. The transformation has always been associated with educational reforms and policies. In Ghana, the latest reforms and a noticeable policy were the Middle School changed to Junior Secondary School (J.S.S.) in 1987, and now, the Junior High School, Secondary School were replaced by Senior Secondary School (S.S.S.) in 1991, renamed Senior High School, and the recent implementation of the Free Senior High School (FSHS) Policy. Nonetheless, little emphasis is given to the teacher's condition of service. As a result, the teachers have not been pleased with their poor condition of service. Moreover, the activities of institutional leaders frequently generate emotions among staff, students rioting against certain decisions taken by management, general blatant disregard for directives from leadership, meagre input of personnel resulting in unsatisfactory academic performance and surrounded by unhealthy human relations within second-cycle institutions in less developed countries.

Also, the nomination of persons to leadership positions with no regard for best procedures such as vacancy declaration, proceeding ranks, and professional qualifications made the privilege of the authority responsible for getting individuals to fill organizations' internal vacancies outlived its usefulness. An upright dismissal of one's emotional distress expressed negatively influences professional performance and threatens the path of effective management. The inability of the authority mandated to share leadership at the second-cycle institutions to recognize differences between authentic and simulated staff emotions increases behavioural diversity in the organization's environment, associated with labour turnover and low productivity. The developments leading to shared leadership appear shrouded in secrecy. If distributed leadership is not open to interested applicants, the issue of free, fair, and transparent arises. The recruitment to certain leadership positions solely made by the head of institutions will always remain in the minds of staff and the public that their favourites were chosen and considered for the posts. Appointments in secret trigger emotions among the employees. The organizations that performed well and remained in business for so long never gave up assessing individuals' feelings and actions at the workplace. The Ghana Education Service should not be an exception to studying the worker's emotions to minimize the unwarranted students' agitations and needless factionalisms among staff in our academic institutions.

Though, in the Ghana Education Service constitution, the head of second-cycle institutions has the mandate to choose leaders from the core staff to manage various departments. Ironically, external influence has currently taken centre stage in these appointments in schools. The heads in some instances were compelled to accept unqualified individuals forced on them by the politicians just to protect their livelihood. In the same vein, the head choosing their close

associates for positions based on convictions often creates emotions among staff and dishonesty on the part of the appointing committee. The principle of ethical leadership is still not rooted in the management of most organizations in Africa, especially the second-cycle institutions. According to the Oxford Dictionary, Ethics is moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or conduct. Ethics is both good and bad deeds; a person's ability to distinguish between factual and erroneous defines one's leadership credentials and aptitude. Leadership led by ethics makes observable conduct that is suitable and acceptable to the organization. The leaders highlight ethical standards and promote peace and harmony within the organization and its environs to facilitate the accomplishment of organizational goals. Ethical leaders apply ethics to every aspect of management by noticing the wrong and the right in decision-making. They set up strategies that could bring about a sustainable peaceful co-existence in their organizations.

The inability of an organization's leader to accept and implement ethical leadership creates no opportunities for emotional bonding among staff and between management and the workforce. Leaders must forge positive emotional bonds within organizations because their behaviours are significant in transforming one's life and are meant to impact the attitudes of others within the organization. An appointment as an incentive is a fundamental human drive as employees may want to have a bond, form a network, and be part of mutually reinforcing relationships. Therefore, the sole right of heads of the second-cycle institutions to share leadership positions must be revised to suit the current management environment. Besides, leaders should be inspired to apply ethical leadership and emotional intelligence at school for unity and effective management. Future researchers are encouraged to research ethical leadership and emotional intelligence in managing academic institutions in Africa and beyond.

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