Socio-Cultural Factors and Competencies of Senior Staff in Public Universities: The Hierarchical Mediation Role of Staff Satisfaction and Sense of Belonging

ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of socio-cultural factors of public universities on senior staff competencies, taking into consideration the hierarchical mediation role of staff satisfaction and sense of belongingness. The design employed was descriptive cross-sectional survey. A recommended sample of 356 permanent staff was obtained from a population of 3,159 permanent senior staff of three autonomous public universities in Ghana. After selecting three premium universities, one from each of the zones in Ghana, purposively, the proportional and computer random sampling procedures were used to select the senior staff. A questionnaire was the instrument used. Statistical tools such as multivariate and hierarchical multiple regression analyses cum mediation analysis were used to analyse the data in order to test the stated hypotheses. The study found that socio-cultural factors such as social networks, reward/ promotion, discrimination free culture, orientation, control/power, roles/responsibilities and work value systems have malfunctional influence on staff competencies. However, the influence becomes eufunctional when staff satisfaction in the socio-cultural factors is considered sequentially. It is, therefore, recommended to management of the universities to ensure that there is discrimination free work environment with supportive social networking among all members of the university. This can be done through regular organisation of inter-staff and inter-departmental social re-orientation programmes and re-familiarisation parties with sporting, gaming and funfair activities. This intervention can be used as an administrative support system to help boost staff happiness.

Keywords: Public universities; Socio-cultural factors; Staff competencies; Staff satisfaction; Staff sense of belongingness

1. INTRODUCTION

As organisations within the service sector, particularly universities, try to survive in this our turbulent and dynamic world, strong emphasis must be laid on the larger scale forces within the cultures and societies that affect the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of staff. This is so because most stakeholders are now appreciating the role socio-cultural factors play in defining staff competencies and productivity (Nwodo, Okolo, Onah & Ikpo, 2020; Odanga, 2018). As part of their mandate, public universities in Ghana are expected to prepare and produce different degrees of responsible and competent labour force for the country and beyond.

In order for the universities to continue to meet their obligations, there is the need to look at the competency levels of their staff, particularly the senior staff who possess a focal spot in these micro societies. They may be seen as non-members of the university community on the basis of the work they do and their academic qualification. However, their jobs are pivotal and serve as a lubricant to keep the system going with ease (Saani, 2021). They are the middle level employees of the universities, and they include administrative, librarian, and accountant assistants. In some cases, some of them have risen through the ranks to earn top salaries, as a result of their years of work experience, higher qualification and professionalism.

Considering the eufunctional role of these staff, one may say the socio-cultural factors or powers within cultures and societies that affect their views, felling, attitudes, and competencies should be a concern to all. Enhancing public universities' socio-cultural factors such as social networking, reward/promotion, discrimination, orientation, control/power, roles/responsibilities, and value systems can help boost staff satisfaction (Abdulla, Djebarni & Mellahi, 2011; Abou-Hashish, 2017), sense of belongingness (Campbell & Hwa, 2014), performance and competencies (Boon, Van der Klink &

Janssen, 2013; Julius & Maru, 2020; Mutegi, 2016; Nwodo et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important for the universities to help staff understand their socio-cultural climate in order for them to appreciate the institutions' socio-cultural factors which may in turn help to enhance their satisfaction, sense of belonging and competencies.

Staff satisfaction represents the pleasurable or positive emotional response defining the degree to which staff are happy with the socio-cultural factors of the universities (Abdulla et al., 2011; Abou-Hashish, 2017). Staff sense of belonging, on the other hand, refers to staff attachment and bond to the university such that they are able to identify themselves with these universities (Ismail, 2016). That is, the relative strength of their identification with, and involvement in the activities of the university (Campbell & Hwa, 2014). Staff competencies also refer to series of capabilities that create room for staff to utilise their innovative, proactiveness and risk-taking ability to gain competitive advantage (Boon et al., 2013; Vargas-Halabí, Mora-Esquivel & Siles, 2017).

Senior staff competencies within the universities are important factors as they give meaning to the work life values and fulfilment of these staff (Gull et al., 2021; Kiyabo & Isaga, 2020). Therefore, it is important to examine the factors that help in boosting these competencies to help make the staff more productive for them to help the universities fulfil their objectives. When staff are satisfied with the socio-cultural manifestation of their workplace, they may develop a sense of belongingness to the establishment, a phenomenon which can influence their competencies in positive terms (Gull et al., 2021; Nwodo et al., 2020; Saani, 2021). Senior staff competencies are both qualitative and quantitative incremental changes that occur and have manifestations on staff effective management of resources, service to community, and relevance in the maximisation of capacity. This shows that social and cultural factors of the universities can be crucial in determining the staff competencies.

In today's Ghana, attracting and retaining senior staff who are risk-takers, innovators and proactive in the various public universities is becoming a problem (Saani, 2021). This phenomenon is manifesting at an increasing rate largely for the reason that competent senior staff are frequently drawn in the direction of well-paid careers, which are usually outside the ecological zone of public universities (Amoah & Afranie, 2014; Bayona & Gona-Legaz, 2017; Mutegi, 2016). Evidence suggests that senior staff pay in the various public universities are insufficient when compare to staff in the corporate world with same qualification and work experience (Bayona & Gona-Legaz, 2017; Saani, 2021). Also, other welfare related issues such as lodging facilities, office space and allowances for staff are not sufficient and attractive. Nonetheless, the volumes of work for these staff in the various public universities have increased with enormous number of enrolled students, increase bureaucratic structures and indiscipline culture in the campuses (Saani, 2021).

In addition, my observation and experience appear to suggest that the socio-cultural work environments of public universities are becoming more complex as a result of the current wave of transparency and accountability culture being propagated by the government. All public universities in Ghana are required to meet the requirement of the new public financial and accounting regulation systems. This new wave is putting more workload on senior staff and making their work more involving and difficult, because they are responsible for the entire middle level jobs on campus. In most cases, these staff have to work with dysfunctional equipment and from a contracting asset base (Amoah & Afranie, 2014; Bayona & Gona-Legaz, 2017; Saani, 2021), a situation which appears to be affecting their competencies and productivity.

For public universities to remain productive and competitive, their staff, particularly senior staff, need to be innovators, proactive, and be able to take calculated risk. However, anecdotal reports suggest that senior staff of public universities in Ghana are not competent enough, leading to their inability to meet adequately the ever-increasing demands and expectations of both students and management. This situation may be blamed on the dissatisfaction and non-sense of belongingness of staff, a situation that can be blamed on their experienced socio-cultural factors within the system (Amoah & Afranie, 2014; Nwodo et al., 2020; Saani, 2021). However, it seems research works on staff competencies have not considered socio-cultural variables (Boon et al., 2013; Vargas-Halabí et al., 2017). Considering staff competencies from the employee perspectives and how socio-cultural factors initiate it, will help to throw more light on the incidents.

In examining the sociocultural components and administrative practices in universities in Ghana, Amoah and Afranie (2014) posit that the interests of universities would be better off when the bureaucratic culture is designed to house some basic socio-cultural assumptions of staff, without compromising efficiency. Amoah and Afranie found that societal culture is influential in shaping the

bureaucratic behaviour and conducts of organisations' members. Even though they were able to use the mixed methods approach to show that there is the need to consider socio-cultural contexts in designing policies within our universities, they did not consider the satisfaction level of staff regarding these socio-cultural factors not to mention how these factors can predict staff sense of belongingness and competencies hierarchically.

Mutegi (2016) also concludes that socio-cultural factors affect employees' attitude towards performance in private universities in the greater Meru region, Kenya. The indicators used to measure socio-cultural factors by Mutegi were largely background factors. They include gender, religion, level of education, and income levels. There is the need to look at socio-cultural factors that are work related in order to examine it influence on staff competencies. Masovic (2018) also avers that strong interaction exists between social and cultural factors, and they significantly affect the economic activity of multinational companies and their performance as well. Julius and Maru (2020) also concluded in their study that socio-cultural factors immensely influence and relate to entrepreneurial performance. Similarly, Nwodo et al. (2020), in their study, also found that socio-cultural factors have significant influence on employee productivity. As indicated, none of these studies considered the influence socio-cultural factors have on staff competencies, not to mention the cumulative mediation role of staff satisfaction and sense of belonging on the influence socio-cultural factors have on staff competencies.

Most of the literature on public universities' socio-cultural factors and staff competencies seem to be biased towards management and junior staff while senior staff are somewhat overlooked (Boon et al., 2013; Saani, 2021; Saani & Tawiah, 2017). Also, the few research works on employee competencies did not look at the predicting role of socio-cultural factors from the perspectives of public universities' staff in a developing country like Ghana (Boon et al., 2013; Gull et al., 2021), not to mention the possible mediating roles of staff satisfaction and sense of belongingness.

The indicated paucity of evidences about socio-cultural factors and its influence on senior staff competencies presents a critical literature gap that ought to be filled. Therefore, the current study contributes to the bridging of this gap by examining some of the ways by which senior staff competencies such as proactiveness, innovativeness and risk-taking ability can be improved significantly to help enhance their productivity.

Overall, this study contributes to narrowing the lacunas in the literature as indicated earlier by developing a model to better explain the dynamics of socio-cultural factors and senior staff competencies, taking into consideration the mediating role of staff satisfaction and sense of belongingness hierarchically. Furthermore, an understanding of socio-cultural factors involved in staff competencies will be crucial for management of public universities to improve the happiness and competencies of staff. This would improve the wellbeing of senior staff as well as the quality of work they do.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The conceptual model links key variables to explain how socio-cultural factors of public universities affect staff competencies, taking into consideration the hierarchical mediating role of staff satisfaction and sense of belongingness. From the literature review, it is apparent that socio-cultural factors improve staff competencies significantly (Ajayi, 2015; Gull et al., 2021; Julius & Maru, 2020; Masovic, 2018; Mutegi, 2016; Nwodo et al., 2020). Specifically, Ajayi found that majority of teachers require basic competencies in several areas of environmental issues. This means, to ensure environmental sustainability, there is the need to help boost staff competencies through effective environmental education. On the basis of the findings from related literature one may infer that socio-cultural factors may have positive relationship with staff competencies.

The argument of the study was reinforced by the assumptions of the social exchange theory. Basically, expected socio-cultural benefits associated with working in public universities may influence staff to share their knowledge with others (Babalola & Omotayo, 2017) and also be satisfied with the system. This dynamics may influence the staff to develop strong sense of belongingness to the universities and in the long run enhance their levels of competencies. This may mean that senior staff can demonstrate high sense of innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking ability at the workplace as a result of their satisfaction with the socio-cultural factors of the universities and the strong sense of belongingness they have towards the universities (Nazir, Qun, Hui & Shafi, 2018). That is, when socio-cultural factors within the various public universities are able to ginger senior staff satisfaction and sense

3

of belongingness. This phenomenon will influence the staff to pay back by being proactive, innovative and be able to take calculated risk, as presented in Figure 1.
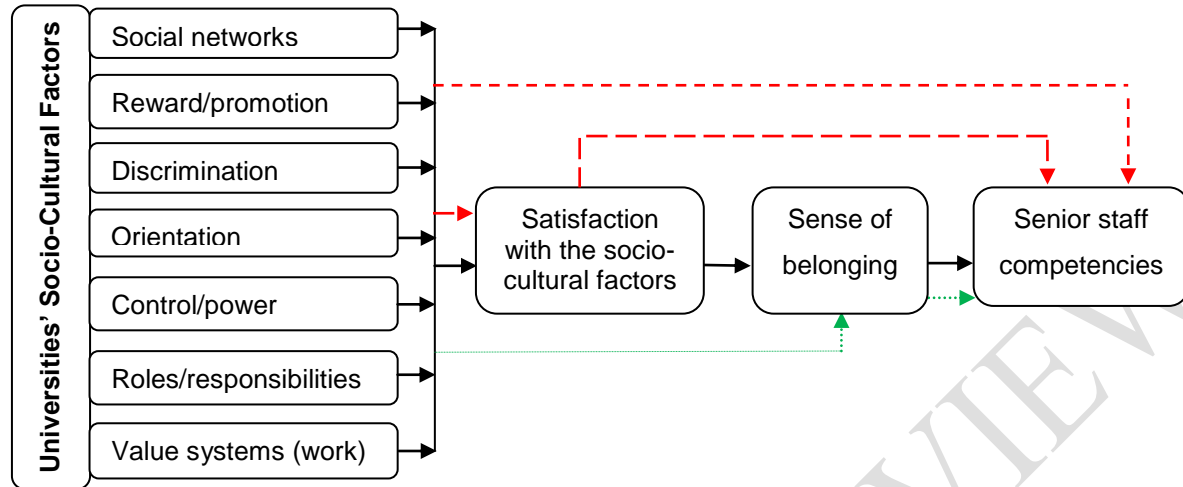

Figure 1: Direct and Indirect Influence of Socio-Cultural Factors on Senior staff Competencies
Source: Author's construct (2021).

As indicated in Figure 1, the influence can become more potent and stronger when staff satisfaction and sense of belongingness are considered (Abou-Hashish, 2017; Bayona & Gona-Legaz, 2017; Ismail, 2016). The assumptions of the study were as follows:

$H_0$1: *Socio-cultural factors of public universities have no statistically significant influence on their senior staff competencies.*

$H_0$1: *Staff satisfaction and sense of belongingness are not able to significantly mediate in a hierarchical manner the influence socio-cultural factors have on staff competencies.*

The study assumes that the forces within cultures and societies that affect the thoughts, felling and behaviours of staff within public universities (socio-cultural factors) have influence on their competencies. However, this influence becomes stronger when the staff are satisfied with the socio-cultural factors which may lead to a significant increase in their sense of belongingness to the universities. These dynamics cumulatively will help enhance the proactiveness, innovativeness and risk-taking ability of the staff.

As depicted in Figure 1, the independent variables, which were the seven socio-cultural factors, were adapted from the works of Amoah and Afranie (2014), Julius and Maru (2020), Masovic (2018), Mutegi (2016), Nwodo et al. (2020), and Odanga (2018). These factors were measured quantitatively using discrete scale items. Staff satisfaction and sense of belongingness were treated as hierarchical mediators. The thrust of the argument is that, socio-cultural factors can predict staff competencies directly or indirectly. This means, when common traditions, habits, patterns and beliefs within the universities are perceived positively by staff, it will lead to an increase in the pleasurable or positive emotional response defining the degree to which the staff are happy with what they do or their stay in the university. This dynamics will cumulatively boost their attachment and ability to identify themselves with the universities which will in turn increase their proactiveness, innovativeness and risk-taking ability significantly.

3. METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted the positivists' orientation which culminated into the usage of quantitative approach. This approach was used to measure the data collected numerically. However, in relation to the design, descriptive cross sectional was used. This design was used in order to appreciate better the research problem (Rosen, 2019), unveil in-depth knowledge on the issues and gain deeper knowledge of the problem (Howitt & Cramer, 2020).

3.1 Population and Sampling Procedure

4

In relation to the population, only permanent staff in the various public universities in Ghana were considered. In Ghana, public universities are those that are created by a legislative act and are usually governed by the university council (National Council for Tertiary Education [NCTE], 2020). The university council is the highest decision-making body and is made up of government appointees, academic staff representatives, representatives from university unionised groups, and students' representatives. All public universities in Ghana have established rules (statute) which management uses to run them. Currently, 13 public autonomous universities are recognised by the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC). The accessible population was all permanent senior staff of three autonomous public universities in Ghana, one from each of the three zones: northern, middle and southern zones. In each of the zones, emphasis was on a premier university. The three universities selected purposively and the number of senior staff in each university are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Senior Staff of Three Public Universities in Ghana

Zones	Institution	Teaching Departments			Central Administration and Support Units			Grand Total		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Southern	UG	441	416	857	457	389	846	898	805	1,703
Middle	KNUST	269	155	424	424	301	725	693	456	1,149
Northern	UDS	100	91	191	71	45	116	171	136	307
Grand Total		810	662	1,472	952	735	1,687	1,762	1,397	3,159

Source: National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE, 2020)
Where M = Male, F = Female and T = Total

A sample of 356 was used. This sample was based on the recommendations of most researchers who indicated on the basis of a tested formula that a sample of 5 – 10 percent of an accessible population in a survey is appropriate (Kelly, 2016; Yamane, 1967). The sample used was appropriate because it represents 11.3 percent of the accessible population. The sample was redistributed proportionally for fair representation on the basis of the accessible population. The sample used was appropriate since the senior staff were perceived to be homogeneous and representative enough when recommended sample and proportional random sampling procedure were used. The sample distribution is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Sample Distribution of Senior Staff of Three Public Universities

Zones	Institution	Teaching Departments			Central Administration and Support Units			Grand Total		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Southern	UG	50	47	97	52	44	96	102	91	193
Middle	KNUST	30	18	48	48	33	81	78	51	129
Northern	UDS	11	10	21	8	5	13	19	15	34
Grand Total		91	75	166	108	82	190	199	157	356

Source: Constructed from National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE, 2020)

In selecting the respondents, six (6) sample frames were created, two for each of the universities using Microsoft Excel 2016. The computer random number technique was used to select the respondents. In the selection process, I first identified each participant in the frame which I constructed using staff assigned numbers. I assigned numbers to each of the names of the staff for purpose of anonymity and easy selection. In each of the universities, two sample frames were created, one for males and the other for females. The positions of the numbers were used to select the staff whose list were collected and used to create the frames. Respondents who were selected but were not available to provide data were replaced by doing another selection using the same procedure. The process continued until the required number was obtained. The senior staff of the universities constituted the unit of analysis for the study.

3.2 Instrumentation, Data Collection Procedure and Ethical Consideration

A survey was the instrument used. The survey was considered fitting for the review since it gave a much faster method for getting the data from a relatively large literate populace. The survey comprised of five sections. The first section was used to collect data on staff background characteristics while the second section was used to gather data on socio-cultural factors of the universities. Three items/statements each were used to gather data on factors such as social networks, reward/promotion, discrimination, orientation, control/power, roles/responsibilities and work value systems. The third and fourth sections of the questionnaire were used to gather data on staff satisfaction and sense of belongingness using five (5) close-ended items each. The fifth section was used to collect data on staff competencies such as innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking ability, using three (3) items each. Responses to the items, with regard to sections B, C, D and E were estimated mathematically using seven-point stapel scale such that negative three (-3) addresses the most disagreed response while positive three (3) addresses the most agreed consent to the items. Respondents were supposed to address inquiries as per how it applies to them as senior staff of the universities.

To work on the legitimacy and unwavering quality of the survey, a pre-test was conducted at University of Cape Coast using 65 permanent senior staff. The dependability coefficients attained from the survey ranges from .706 to .873, which were deemed reliable (Mukherjee, Sinha & Chattopadhyay, 2018). To ensure truthfulness of the items used in the questionnaire, I established their content, face and construct validities. That is, I ensured that the items in the questionnaire were able to collect data that measured the variables appropriately as intended. The construct validity was obtained using confirmatory factor analysis.

Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, the office of the registrar and the local unions of the senior staff were contacted with a letter for authorisation to conduct the study in the institution. Familiarisation visits were made by me to the three universities mainly for the confirmation of the numbers and other relevant information about the staff and the universities. With the help of three of my colleagues and three field assistants, I was able to collect the data within eight (8) weeks period. These field assistants were principal research assistants in the universities, as a result had satisfactory experience in regards to information assortment process. In this way, involving them as field assistants was proper. They were given preparation and direction, which made it more straightforward for them to regulate the surveys. The preparation programme included making sense of the goals of the review, how to distinguish and move toward respondents and manage the data.

During the administration of the questionnaire, the staff were briefed on the objectives of the study and the need to respond as frankly as possible to the items. I assured the respondents that there will be no risks associated with participating in the study, and that they will have access to the outcome of the study. The identity of the respondents remained anonymous throughout the study and no traceable information were collected. Participation was voluntary. Respondents were also assured that they can withdraw from the study at any time without any cost to them when they fill to do so. All respondents were to submit their filled questionnaire to their immediate boss or supervisor for onward submission to me. The last section of the questionnaire was to be filled by the immediate bosses or supervisors of the respondents since it bordered on their competencies at work. At the end of the data collection, I was able to retrieved 356 completed questionnaire print-outs from the immediate bosses or supervisors of the respondents, representing 100 percent response rate.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data were analysed quantitatively using inferential statistical tools. Specifically, multivariate regression analysis was used to analyse data regarding the first hypothesis while hierarchical multiple regression analysis cum Hayes (2018) mediation analysis were used to analyse data regarding the second hypothesis. These statistical tools were employed in order to test the hypotheses because the preliminary analysis showed that the distribution was normal.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The basis of the first hypothesis was to examine the socio-cultural factors of public universities that influence senior staff competencies while the second hypothesis looked at the ways through which staff satisfaction and sense of belongingness are able to significantly mediate in a hierarchical manner

the influence that may exist in the first assumption. The study variables were composite in nature and were made up of many items that were pooled together using average response values. In relation to the multivariate regression analysis, the parameter estimates were performed as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Parameter Estimates of the Influence Socio-Cultural Factors have on Staff Competencies

Dependent Variable	Parameter	B	SE	t	Sig.	PES
Innovativeness	Intercept	.895	.485	1.847	.066	.010
	Social networks	.033	.091	.366	.714	.000
	Reward/Promotion	.315[**]	.044	7.131	.000	.127
	Discrimination	-.001	.080	-.009	.993	.000
	Orientation	.335[**]	.040	8.374	.000	.168
	Control/Power	-.120[*]	.058	-2.051	.041	.012
	Roles/Responsibilities	-.067	.082	-.814	.416	.002
	Value systems (work)	.054	.089	.607	.544	.001
Proactiveness	Intercept	.235	.322	.728	.467	.002
	Social networks	-.022	.061	-.357	.721	.000
	Reward/Promotion	.138[**]	.029	4.717	.000	.060
	Discrimination	.041	.053	.767	.444	.002
	Orientation	1.208[**]	.027	45.476	.000	.856
	Control/Power	-.021	.039	-.547	.585	.001
	Roles/Responsibilities	-.034	.055	-.625	.533	.001
	Value systems (work)	.024	.059	.402	.688	.000
Risk-taking ability	Intercept	.309[**]	.079	3.929	.000	.042
	Social networks	-.004	.015	-.260	.795	.000
	Reward/Promotion	.006	.007	.877	.381	.002
	Discrimination	.342[**]	.013	26.339	.000	.666
	Orientation	-.008	.006	-1.288	.199	.005
	Control/Power	-.001	.009	-.113	.910	.000
	Roles/Responsibilities	.259[**]	.013	19.441	.000	.521
	Value systems (work)	.299[**]	.014	20.673	.000	.551

Source: Field survey, 2021   **p < .01; *p < .05   (N = 356)
Dependent variables: Innovativeness, Proactiveness and Risk-taking ability
Where PES = Partial Eta Squared and SE = Standard error

As indicated in Table 3, reward/ promotion (B = .315 [.044], p = .000) and orientation (B = .335 [.040], p = .000) contributed positively to staff innovativeness while control/power (B = -.120 [.058], p = .041) contributed negatively to staff innovativeness. This shows that when the universities are able to use reward/promotion to motivate staff, this perceived desirables given in return for what the staff have done and also their advancement to a more senior or a higher rank will make them to be more creative, especially regarding the way their assigned work is done (Mutegi, 2016). Also, the level of stimulation and support received by senior staff from other staff during their first month of working with the university is able to make them more innovative. However, the level of work formation, the existence of rules and procedures and the importance of the hierarchy in the public universities contributed negatively to staff innovativeness. Thus, the degree to which control over the behaviour of senior staff is formalised and managed in the various public universities is not helping in boosting the staff innovativeness.

Also, the results in Table 3 show that reward/promotion (B = .138 [.029], p = .000) and orientation (B = 1.208 [.027], p = .000) contributed positively to staff proactiveness. This means the rate at which senior staff take initiative by acting rather than reacting to events becomes higher when their perceived desirables given to them by the university are high. Likewise, the level of stimulation and support received by senior staff is able to help enhance their ability to take the initiative by acting rather than reacting to events.

In relation to risk-taking ability, the results in Table 3 show that discrimination (B = .342 [.013], p = .000), roles/responsibilities (B = .259 [.013], p = .000) and work value systems (B = .299 [.014], p = .000) are able to contribute positively. This means, the way senior staff are treated differently through prejudices may lead to a significant increase in the rate at which they believe that damage or loss will occur in what they do at work. Also, the degree to which senior staff and other members of the university

7

clearly delegate authorities within a highly defined structure and also the acceptable set of personal work principles and standards that the staff have and belief in them at work are able to contribute meaningfully to their risk-taking ability.

The findings that emerged from Table 3 show that socio-cultural factors such as reward/promotion, orientation, control/power, discrimination, roles/responsibilities and value systems at work are able to predict senior staff competencies such as innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking ability. On the basis of this finding, I rejected the first hypothesis which states that socio-cultural factors of public universities have no statistically significant influence on their senior staff competencies because the evidence suggest otherwise. This finding is in line with the assertion of Masovic (2018) who averred that socio-cultural factors are one of the main environmental factors that significantly affect the economic activity of multinational companies and their performance as well. To understand the issues better from a more positivists perspective, innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking ability were pooled together to form the dependent variable, staff competencies. The results are presented in Table 4.

As depicted in Table 4, socio-cultural factors of the universities alone were able to predict 48.4 percent of the staff competencies. However, when staff satisfaction with the socio-cultural factors, which was the first mediator, was added to the independent variables, the total contribution increased to 81.5 percent, almost double. Staff level of satisfaction alone was able to contribute 39.5 percent when it was added into the first model. Nonetheless, staff sense of belongingness (β = .029 (.028), p = .153) to the university failed to contribute significantly to their competencies when it was added into the second mode, even though the total contribution increased from 81.5 percent to 85.1 percent. This means, the staff emotional need to affiliate with and be accepted by members of the university does not influence their competencies.

As shown in Table 4, staff satisfaction in the universities' socio-cultural factors can mediate the relationship between these factors and the competency levels of senior staff. The findings support the argument that when staff assign positive meaning and importance to the social and cultural factors of their institution, they end up being satisfied which in turn help in enhancing their innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking ability (Saani, 2021).

Table 4. Hierarchical Influence of Socio-Cultural Factors, Staff Satisfaction and Sense of Belongingness on Staff Competencies

Variables	Model I Standardized Coefficients Beta (Std. Error)	Model II Standardized Coefficients Beta (Std. Error)	Model III Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta (β)	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	VIF
Social networks	.002 (.037)	.009 (.033)	.016	.033	.009	.485	.628	.882	1.134
Reward/Promotion	.091 (.018)**	.171 (.024)**	.112	.024	.168**	4.738	.000	.264	3.791
Discrimination	.083 (.033)**	.077 (.029)**	.106	.030	.069**	3.518	.000	.871	1.149
Orientation	.846 (.016)**	.726 (.016)**	.439	.016	.727**	27.237	.000	.468	2.134
Control/Power	-.043 (.024)*	-.028 (.021)	-.032	.021	-.029	-1.515	.131	.890	1.123
Roles/Responsibilities	.034 (.034)	.036 (.030)*	.049	.030	.032	1.641	.102	.891	1.123
Value systems (work)	.076 (.036)**	.072 (.032)**	.114	.032	.069**	3.537	.000	.882	1.133
Staff satisfaction		.395 (.033)**	.326	.033	.391**	9.831	.000	.210	4.753
Sense of belongingness			.040	.028	.029	1.432	.153	.841	1.188
Constant	.894	.525	.479						
R	.540	.871	.922						
R Square	.484	.815	.851						
Adjusted R Square	.481	.812	.848						

Source: Field survey, 2021   **$p < .01$; *$p < .05$ (N = 356)

Dependent variables: Staff competencies

After examining the possible mediators, the Hayes (2018) mediation analysis was employed to further examine the issues. The composite of socio-cultural factors of the public universities were treated as independent variable while the composite of staff competencies was treated as dependent variable. Staff satisfaction and sense of belongingness were the first and second mediators respectively. The results are presented in Table 5. As indicated in the table, only the first indirect effect (SCF -> Sat -> SC) was significant. This shows that the factors that determine the suitability of the universities working life and corporate culture for the staff are able to influence the staff competencies such as innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking ability. However, this influence is strongly mediated by the staff contentedness with the universities socio-cultural factors.

Based on the findings that emerged from Table 5, I failed to reject the second hypothesis which states that staff satisfaction and sense of belongingness are not able to significantly mediate in a hierarchical manner the influence socio-cultural factors have on staff competencies. This decision was made because it was only staff satisfaction that was able to mediate the relationship as indicated in Table 5. Staff satisfaction is thus related to their work characteristics and they will evaluate their satisfaction level according to what they perceive as being important and meaningful to them (Abou-Hashish, 2017). The results support the assertion that apart from the importance of social networks and reward/motivation, other attributes such as the role/responsibility that comes with the job, work value systems and the recognition one receives from work greatly influenced his/her job satisfaction (Abdulla et al., 2011; Abou-Hashish, 2017). This changing aspect of the staff largely influences their corporate entrepreneurship competencies such as innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking ability (Gull et al., 2021).

Table 5. Total, Direct, and Indirect Effects of Socio-Cultural Factors on Senior Staff Competencies

Total effect of X on Y					
Effect	**se**	**t**	**p**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
1.73	.09	18.55	.00	1.55	1.92

Direct effect of X on Y					
Effect	**se**	**t**	**p**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
.99	.08	12.04	.00	.83	1.15

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:				
	Effect	**BootSE**	**BootLLCI**	**BootULCI**
TOTAL	.74	.10	.56	.96
Ind1	.75	.10	.57	.95 ----- Significant
Ind2	.00	.02	-.03	.03 ----- Not significant
Ind3	.00	.00	-.01	.01 ----- Not significant

Indirect effect key:						
Ind1 SCF	->	Sat	->	SC		
Ind2 SCF	->	SB	->	SC		
Ind3 SCF	->	Sat	->	SB	->	SC

Source: Field survey, 2021   **p < .01; *p < .05   (N = 356)

The tested and acceptable model of this study was that socio-cultural benefits associated with working in public universities are able to influence senior staff competencies. However, this dynamic becomes stronger when the staff are satisfied with the socio-cultural factors of the universities (Figure 2). However, the staff development of strong sense of belongingness to the universities does not necessary based on their satisfaction in the factors. This shows that senior staff can demonstrate high sense of innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking ability at the workplace as a result of their satisfaction with the socio-cultural factors of the universities, but not their strong sense of belongingness they have towards the universities. As indicated in Figure 2, the tested argument is that when common traditions, habits, patterns and beliefs within the universities are perceived positively by staff, it will lead to an increase in the pleasurable or positive emotional response defining the degree to which the staff are happy with what they do or their stay in the university. This dynamic will increase their competencies significantly.
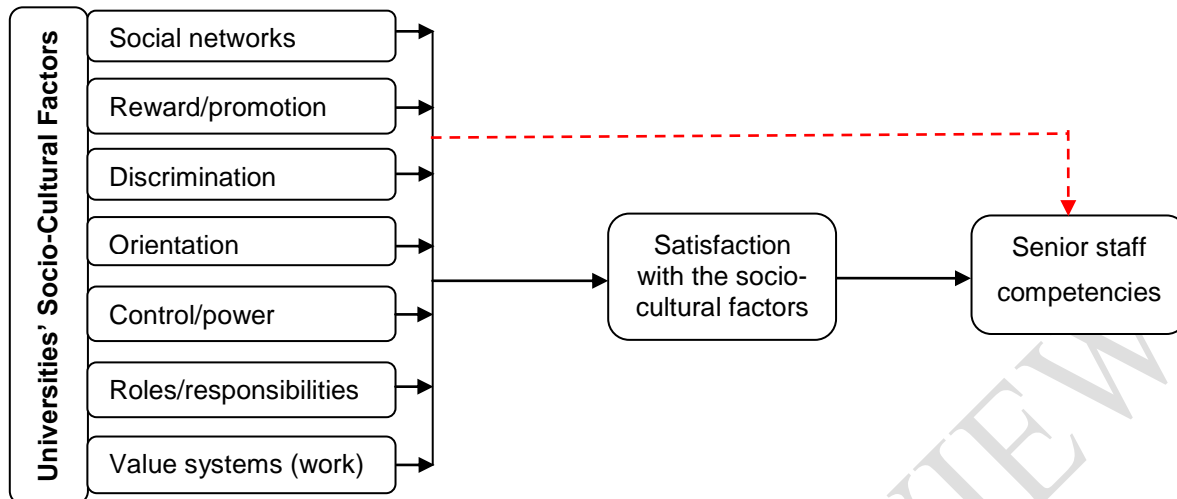
Figure 2: Tested Model
Source: Author's construct (2021).

As shown in Figure 2, it appears that socio-cultural factors of the universities do play important roles in promoting senior staff competencies. However, this could only be achieved strongly if we ensure that appropriate socio-cultural factors are being developed or shaped in the universities that matched both managerial and organisational values, attitudes and behaviours. These findings support that of Nwodo et al. (2020) who indicated that social-cultural factors are able to influence employee productivity. The findings from the current study expand the argument by showing that staff socio-cultural factors are able to influence staff competencies better and stronger when the staff are satisfied with the socio-cultural factors. Similarly, the findings are consistent with that of Julius and Maru (2020) who examined the effects of socio-cultural factors on entrepreneurial performance. Their study revealed that socio-cultural factors such as value systems, social networks and orientation are able to influence profitability and also innovativeness. It, therefore, imply that attractive socio-cultural factors can lead to competencies.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the emerged findings, I first conclude that common traditions, habits, patterns and beliefs present in the various public universities are able to help enhance staff competency levels. These factors are the most remarkable drivers behind the way the staff make decisions in the university and they significantly influence their satisfaction with the work they do. These factors, particularly, orientation, reward/promotion, discrimination free culture and work value systems are able to significantly boost staff level of competencies such as innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking ability when the staff are pleased with them. However, the acceptance, attention, and support the staff gain from members of the university as well as providing the same attention to other members does not help in mediating the power the various socio-cultural factors have on their levels of competencies.

Lastly, I conclude that as long as management of public universities are able to enhance the powers within the universities' cultures and societies that affect staff views, felling, and attitudes regarding socio-cultural factors of the universities, it will translate into the staff happiness in the work they do. Consequently, their contentment in the socio-cultural factors such as social networks, reward/promotion, discrimination free culture, orientation, control/power, roles/responsibilities and work value systems will sequentially manifest in an increase in the staff ability to demonstrate corporate entrepreneurship competencies such as innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking ability, all other factors being the same.

It is, therefore, recommended to management of the universities to ensure that there is discrimination free work environment with supportive social networking among all members of the university. This can be done through regular organisation of inter-staff and inter-departmental social re-orientation programmes and familiarisation party with sporting and gaming activities. This intervention can be used as an administrative support system to help boost staff happiness level. Also, management must

learn to praise staff for doing good job; they must ensure that there is equity in the reward/promotion system. In addition, I recommend that management of the universities should use findings from this study as an evidence-based resource material to roll out policies and programmes to review promotion criteria, requirements and processes in order to make them more flexible without compromising on quality. In doing so, emphasis should be on mentorship, networking and work value systems. Again, management should ensure that the staff feel that they matter and that their roles/responsibilities and contributions are crucial and indispensable for the success of the universities. Likewise, they must ensure that orientations of staff are made a regular feature of the university's life.

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