



Perceived “Godfatherism” in Higher Educational Institutions in Ghana

Joseph Attiah Seniwoliba¹, Yussif Abdallah²

¹Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Sciences, University for Development Studies.

²Main Registry, Central Administration, University for Development Studies.

Corresponding author: Joseph Attiah Seniwoliba, e-mail: ¹ jattiah@uds.edu.gh, ² yussif.abdallah@uds.edu.gh

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Abstract: The study explored the perceived Godfatherism in higher education in Ghana and how it affects employee performance in terms of productivity, brooding of indiscipline and supervisory challenges as a result of unequal distribution of work and resources. The primary data were collected from the staff of the UDS Guest Houses in Accra and Tamale using the convenient sampling approach while the secondary data were obtained from appropriate and related literature such as books, articles, magazines, and newspapers. One major finding was that godfatherism promoted mediocrity and failed to apply the principle of the merit system in recruitment and promotions where experience, expertise, and talent are no longer part of the requirements. The study therefore recommends that experience and academic qualifications in the business of governance should be emphasized at all levels of governance to discourage mediocrity from higher education institutions.

Keywords: Godfatherism, Higher education institutions, favouritism, employee, recruitment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human capital building in underdeveloped nations is impeded by the epidemic of godfatherism in higher education. It includes everything from the political takeover of higher education to partiality in hiring, admittance, funding misappropriation, academic fraud, and blackmail. As part of certification and assessment requirements, regulatory structures for higher education should

support nationalism and accountability (Adedeji, O. and Campbell, O., 2013).

Godfatherism, according to Kirya (2019), is another type of corruption that has detrimental effects on both society and higher education institutions. It damages universities' reputations, denies admission to candidates who do not meet the requirements, and spends funds on unqualified students. Godfatherism poses a risk to public

health, safety, and welfare, according to O'Malley (2010), when unskilled and inept professionals are given responsibility for tasks.

The relationship between individual work and the expectation of reward is broken by godfatherism and other fraudulent tactics in higher education. They uphold the belief that "the end justifies the means," which has the potential to further undermine morality and social cohesiveness in larger society. Workers and students start to think that taking shortcuts and manipulating the system is a better way to achieve personal achievement than hard work and merit (Kirya, 2019: p. 4).

Universities are the pinnacle of both modern knowledge-based societies and educational institutions. To facilitate scientific thinking and knowledge generation, they are primarily granted academic independence and institutional autonomy (Barblan et al., 2007). The fundamental tenets of society are put in jeopardy when godfatherism and unethical behaviour permeate higher education. The acceptance of godfatherism as a valid practice and its institutionalisation pose a challenge to universities' credibility as centres of knowledge creation and education. University autonomy, academic independence, and impartiality may be compromised by their corporate and political relationships, which can also lead to conflicts of interest. Universities exist because of people's need for welfare, order, truth, and meaning (Barblan et al., 2007, p. 21). Godfatherism is an existential threat to colleges and society at large because it subverts these ideals. This tendency has been reversed once more by the institutionalisation and acceptance of godfatherism in the political and public sector employment spheres, where experience, skill, and aptitude are no longer prerequisites for employment in Ghana and throughout Africa. Unequal treatment of people based on ethnicity is a common characteristic of political leadership in many African countries, particularly about employment in the public sector of most African economies. Although this behaviour is seen as a cultural standard, it is the same as corruption since, depending on whether the beneficiaries are friends, family, or coworkers, it often involves both explicit and tacit reciprocal responsibilities among the chosen groups (Yusuf,

A. T., et al.; 2022). It is more difficult for the state to run efficiently and enact growth-promoting policies when there is disagreement on issues that benefit all ethnic groups (Mauro, 1995; Easterly & Levine, 1997). People in positions of leadership often misuse the trust placed in them by the public and the authority granted to them for personal gain, endangering their accountability to the public (Rose-Ackerman, 1999:91).

The absence of appropriate accountability results in the political and public sector leadership's monopolisation of power, abuse of privileges, arrogance, and waste of resources, sometimes accompanied by a passive response from coerced and intimidated citizens, many of whom lack the courage to speak up for fear of reprisals. The sole element exacerbating this problem in the higher education industry is political influence over recruiting decisions. As a result, the word "Godfatherism" has come to characterise the work culture at universities where the development and growth of every country are emphasised. According to Mustapha et al., (2019), this mindset is awful and is reducing the calibre of human resources that higher education institutions should be creating.

This mindset has had a detrimental effect on the work performance of both students and employees because friends and family who disobey professors and direct supervisors cannot be disciplined due to their godfathers, which ultimately results in low productivity. One important factor that impacts an organisation's overall performance is productivity. Instead of "working harder," it is "working smarter" by integrating inputs and utilising innovation, technology, and fresh, viable business models (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2015). Productivity has garnered significant attention due to its association with economic growth (Sezer, 2016).

The productivity of organisations, which is frequently highlighted in society, is directly correlated with employee performance because it has garnered a lot of attention. Staff performance is often viewed as an indicator of the organization's performance and impacts the company's productivity, reputation, and image (Silitonga and

Sadeli, 2020). Performed excellence has been seen as the ultimate aim for a company and its personnel (Khan and Mashikhi, 2017). Employee innovation, inventiveness, and greater levels of dedication are the keys to an organization's success and glory. According to a study by Prange and Pinho (2017), an organization's output and productivity are dependent on the performance of its employees because human resources are an essential component of any business. The ability of the organisation to provide its staff with critical instructions will decide its survival. According to Rodriguez and Walters (2017), the organization's enhanced capacities, knowledge, and skills all of which have been absorbed via godfatherism are the foundation of its competitive advantage in the modern global market.

It has been suggested by sociologists that godfatherism, or favouritism, is a human characteristic and that no two ties inside an institution can be "equal" because no two people interact in the same way. It makes sense to be drawn to people who share your interests and who you get along well with (Morettini, 2006: p.24) Nepotism and favouritism in the hiring and advancement of academic and non-academic personnel at higher education institutions create a mockery of meritocracy and may have a detrimental impact on the standard of administration, instruction, and research because of these inherent disparities. According to a poll conducted among Ghanaian university students, nepotism and favouritism are two of the most common types of corruption in higher education (Kuranchie et al., 2014).

The majority of the scholarly literature about organisational Godfatherism highlights specific human resource roles that may have an impact on supervisory decision-making. Therefore, supervisors make decisions about work and task allocations, performance evaluations, promotions, and recruiting based on subjective criteria rather than quantitative metrics. Subjectivity "creates a space for favouritism, in which managers act based on their preferences to give preference to some employees over others" (Prendergast & Topel, 1996: 958). "In the workplace, Godfatherism can be said when someone—or perhaps a group of

people—appears to be treated better than others and not necessarily for reasons related to superior work performance," notes Basu (2009). According to Duran and Morales' (2009) theory of favouritism, the "preferred individuals are those who belong to the group of friends of the organisation." The fact that decision-makers deliberately choose to give preference to their buddies over those who are more worthy is the root of Godfatherism's injustice.

According to Bassman and London (1993:21), exhibiting favouritism "may be abusive in itself, especially if the "out-group" subordinates are routinely denied opportunities for advancement, desirable job assignments, pay raises, or other rewards." Scholarly research on the application of leader-member exchange theory, expectation theory, or ethical decision-making theory to the problem of favouritism in supervisory decision-making is few. Furthermore, favouritism has been examined in academic studies using antecedents and outcomes.

Partisanship, patronage, favouritism, and nepotism are all forms of scheming linked to "Godfatherism" in terms of social advantages in organisations and society at large, including political clout and job prospects. The influence of the institutionalisation of the godfather phenomenon on Ghana's contemporary politics, governance, and administration cannot be ignored.

The deeds of godfathers and the interactions between godsons and goddaughters are evident and have long been a source of debate among scholars. Nonetheless, a lot of scholars have responded mostly from a political and sociological standpoint. In this paper, I focus on the influence and effective performance of employees in higher education institutions, specifically in Ghana, where no research has been done in this area. It seeks to close this gap in the body of academic knowledge. In the process, the following subjects would be discussed: what is meant by godfatherism, how it is conceptualised, what theoretical underpinnings it is based on, how it affects organisations, and recommendations.

Problem Statement

The theoretical basis for efficient hiring is provided by the human capital theory, which maintains that

the knowledge, abilities, and capabilities of an organization's workforce comprise its human capital. According to the hypothesis, an organisation that adheres carefully to the hiring process selects candidates who possess the necessary skills, abilities, and expertise. It's thought that if a company does a job analysis, it will learn enough about the role from a pool of candidates to choose a suitable candidate who will support the company in achieving its goals. It is believed that hiring practices affect how well employees perform at work. Strong ethnic allegiances, however, might harm employment and workplace relationships because Ghana is seen as a multi-ethnic nation-state (Agyeman, 1998), especially when the merit system is not applied in the recruiting and promotion processes (Woode, 1997). Although some writers, like Albert (2005), contend that ethnicity is losing significance and isn't employed as often, ethnicity still affects how work is done in most businesses. According to Abdulai (2000), there have been complaints about unfair business tactics that lead to employee mistrust, antagonism, and conflict. This came to light when the University for Development Studies Guest House Limited Board Chairman established a committee to examine the working conditions of the facility's staff. The biggest obstacle to their failure to break even and turn a profit for the facility was the lack of discipline displayed by some staff members as a result of godfathers at the university hiring their friends, families and cronies who refused to follow orders from managers.

Given that belonging to a group imposes loyalty requirements, leaders may favour their friends and family (in-group) subordinates over other workers' (out-group) subordinates (Agyeman, 1986; Tonah, 2007). This is because both the member and the leader will appear to be having difficulty deciding whether to trust and work together. Consequently, subordinates within the group will have greater access to resources than those outside the group, which may result in different work attitudes and outcomes. Favoured in-group members can produce favourable outcomes like commitment, civic engagement, and enhanced productivity at work. Conversely, individuals who belong to the outgroup could develop negative work attitudes, which could show up as tardiness, slowdowns,

absenteeism, and unionism (Hodson and Sullivan, 1994). The productivity of both public and private enterprises may be harmed by these activities. Because productivity requires the efforts of all participants from a variety of backgrounds, this research aims to systematise the extent to which ethnic favouritism affects the quality of supervisor-subordinate interactions and the organisational commitment behaviour of subordinates.

Objectives of the Research

- a. To examine how Godfatherism affects employee performance and reduces productivity and loss of authority by supervisors in higher education institutions in Ghana.
- b. To examine the interaction between godfathers and godsons in Ghana's higher education management and administration.
- c. To proffer solutions to problems that have been identified by offering recommendations.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptualisation of Godfatherism

Like any other term used by social scientists, "godfatherism" is difficult to define precisely. To fully understand this, it is vital to define terms like godfather and godson. The godfather performs the roles of a teacher, mentor, kingmaker, and superior. A godfather is described as "someone who has gained enormous respect and followers (employees) in the community or the workplace and who wields the power to make unilateral choices without fear or favour." Various scholars have provided definitions of "godfatherism" depending on their understanding and perception of the term. In a study by Adeoye (2009), the term is used to characterise the relationship between a godfather and a godson. A godfather is a kingmaker, boss, mentor, and principal; a godson is a beneficiary and the one who inherits a godfather's legacy.

Possibly one of the most well-known and self-evident adverbs of our day is "godfatherism." It can mean two different things: something holy and seemingly harmless, and something political, administrative, managerial, and often harmful. A godfather is a guardian who pledges to instil

Christian principles and values in a kid (grandson) in the context of religion. For instance, the word has a very similar connotation in the tradition of the Catholic Church. Every young man wishing to be baptised or married in the Catholic Church needs a godfather. The godfather is chosen from the larger community; the Catholic Church does not need him to be a godson's relative. The latter gives guidance to a young person on how to live a responsible life. However, godfatherism is linked to unfair advantage, oppression, dictatorship, favouritism, and occasionally even betrayal in the fields of politics and administration.

Godfatherism gives one candidate an unfair advantage over rivals, so favouring them over other candidates, particularly in a race or contest. It allows tyranny to rule over the people and encourages the suppression of truth, justice, and equity. Above all, godfatherism is detrimental to the advancement of a nation. Godfatherism according to Scott (1972) is "a special case of dyadic (two persons) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which a person of higher socioeconomic status (patron or godfather) uses his influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client or godson), who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services to the patron or godfather." According to Albert (2005), godfatherism in the present day is an outlawed extension of an ancient tradition. However, as Ajayi (2005) pointed out, godfatherism is a global phenomenon. Godfathers are rarely absent and have some effect in all circumstances, albeit their influence varies.

Considering the importance of elders in traditional African civilisations, it is critical to comprehend that godfatherism is widespread. Because they are the keepers of customs and conventions and have experienced many lifetimes, parents and elders are held in high regard in the community (Lawal, 2010). Among the Akans of Ghana, for example, a godfather would be more appropriately called "wofa," which denotes an uncle who is always available and willing to help.

To keep things brief and contextually relevant, let us look at some fundamental problems brought on by "godfatherism" practices:

- a. The cooperative relationship and tendency between the godfather and the godson to embezzle and divert money meant for the state's growth into their own pockets is known as "godfatherism."
- b. Because godfatherism has led to the appointment of people to various departments and agencies who lack the necessary leadership skills to bring about good governance and development, the godfather sits at home controlling the pace of development and influencing institutional and governmental decisions on who gets what, when, and how.
- c. Another major problem with godfatherism is the mentality of concentrating only on one's family and neglecting neighbourhoods, society, and the nation. The people who are preferred are typically required to put in a lot of effort and make sacrifices to achieve the godfather's ultimate objectives.
- d. Many of our young people without jobs are being influenced to commit theft and acts of political violence by godfatherism programmes that offer fictitious promises of jobs or other dubious forms of government favouritism that ultimately never materialise.
- e. Godfatherism has always challenged the idea that all citizens have equal rights and has played a vital part in the decision-making process for most of our public policies, in all of its expressions throughout the years.
- f. Godfatherism controls who stands for election, wins, is considered for positions and is appointed in Ghanaian politics and government. Because our national objectives have been altered to promote their interests, godfatherism has resulted in a less representative and less responsive Parliament for the people of Ghana.
- g. Ghana is currently one of the countries with the highest unemployment rate in the world, poor medical care, inadequate infrastructure, poor educational standards, and intermittent power outages. The standard of living enjoyed by the majority of Ghanaians is not commensurate with the nation's natural riches. These are all the outcomes of the efforts of godfathers who

collaborate with their godsons to pool funds for personal advantage rather than the general improvement of the country's infrastructure.

Theoretical Framework

Although several theories can be used to explain this article and support the study, the researcher selected the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory, and the Idealistic Theory specifically for this investigation.

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory

The leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, which holds that leaders don't always employ the same type of leadership technique with each subordinate, is one of the many theories on how supervisors and subordinates interact (Graen et al., 1982). Rather, the theory argues that leaders discriminate and can produce undesirable conditions; in other words, leadership does not always provide beneficial results (Dansereau, 1995). The foundation of the LMX theory is the working connection that exists between a leader and the different members of a work unit, team, department, or organisation. One basic tenet is that leaders who invest the time and resources necessary to oversee the work unit develop trust with their subordinates (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Remarkably, very few of their subordinates ever establish high-quality exchange connections (high-quality LMX), according to Dansereau et al. (1975) and Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). Lower-quality LMX is impacted by poor levels of reciprocity and support, which makes subordinates become just mouthpieces for the official organization's policies (Graen et al., 1973). Compared to LMX of lesser quality, LMX of better quality entails behaviours that reinforce each other, including interpersonal attraction, mutual trust (Liden and Graen, 1980), loyalty, and communication channels (Dienesch and Liden, 1986). These subordinates may receive preferential treatment as well as opportunities for work rotation, advancement, and performance reviews. Consequently, work groups are divided between an in-group consisting of highly regarded employees who regularly contact and communicate with the leader, and an out-group consisting of

subordinates with whom the leader simply has a passing relationship (Van Breukelen et al., 2006). According to the LMX theory (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995), the relationship domain is fundamentally different from the leader domain, and the quality of the LMX is more predictive of organisational outcomes than leader traits. This is the fundamental difference between the ALS and LMX perspectives.

Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory

Victor Vroom's expectation theory—also referred to as the valence-expectancy theory—can be used to explain the actions of administrative godfathers in Ghanaian higher education institutions (Agbonifoh et al. 2005). According to him, people are driven to conduct specific acts because they think those behaviours will help them reach their desired goals. This indicates that, if the inexperienced candidate for public office is rooted in his position, an administrative godfather will be willing to offer his material resources if he predicts or feels that such "benevolence" will pay off monetarily (Epelle, 2007).

The theory has garnered widespread praise for acknowledging the role of individual differences and preferences in the process of human motivation. It can be summarised as $\text{force} = \text{valence} \times \text{expectancy}$, where valence is the intensity of a person's preference for a particular outcome, and expectancy is the likelihood that a specific action will result in a desired outcome. The theory emphasises the reality that people enter management and administration with a variety of needs that need to be met, despite harsh criticism that it is too complex to apply in practice and raises doubts about whether people perform these multiple calculations before taking any action (Koontz et al., 1980; Baridam, 1993). The latter is regarded by godfathers in Ghana as the context where authority is displayed. The godson usually responds to any attempt to renege on prior commitments with an injunction of violence, thuggery, arson, and murder, mimicking the Hobbesian state of nature. Unfortunately, every battle between ruling elites results in the loss of resources for the Ghanaian masses, who are being plundered and frittered away in the process of

egoistic struggle at the organisational and political levels.

Idealistic Theory

According to Nkom (1982), the theory is based on the assumption that people's beliefs influence their behaviour, culture, and social structure. As a result, corruption is a natural byproduct of the social norms and moral principles that people hold dear. This perspective says that corruption results from egotistical ideas that are rampant in society's value system (Kirya, 2019). This reasoning may be simply extended to the idea of corruption as a perversion of morality and value systems that are forming in society. This argument lays the groundwork for the different schools of thought's respective perspectives. Conservatism and Modernism are the two schools, in that order.

Traditionalists claim that Ghana's immorality and corruption are indicators of a compromised system of traditional values, ethics, and standards (Seniwoliba and Boahene, 2015.) This establishment claims that corruption results from the West's encroachment on African culture and that Europe has to disperse civilization across the continent. It was widely believed during the colonial era that African societies had become Europeanized, and therefore, the colonial masters actively pursued a cultural transformation in the areas of education, religion, value system, governance, politics, language, administrative and legal systems, and so on. Their goal was to produce a cultural revolution that would help African countries progress by eliminating customs and traits that they believed to be inferior to those of European civilizations (Seniwoliba and Boahene, 2015). Cultural contact with Western Europe caused a cultural transformation in traditional African cultures. Africans embraced several aspects of European culture and values. Their acceptance of European culture did not lead to the rejection of their traditional values; rather, it created a "culture conflict." Before colonialism arrived, African groups had their customs for punishing and preventing unethical behaviour.

As for those who identify as educated elites, devoted Christians, or Muslims, Seniwoliba and Boahene, (2015) say that to varied degrees,

traditional religious beliefs still influence people. This phenomenon is called the "culture conflict." Traditional African values are insufficient to control and prevent corrupt activities in Ghana due to present cultural disputes, while accepted European values have also been shown to be insufficient (Seniwoliba and Boahene, 2015). The original African value system based on community life was eroded by Western ideals of materialism, capitalism, and commercialised economy, as Africans and Ghanaians failed to adequately internalise the corruption control mechanisms in the new system that the West constructed in Africa. Consequently, the public's moral standards were tainted, leading to widespread corruption.

This implies that cultural interaction led to materialism, which in turn brought about avarice, a decline in loyalty to public services, and other unfavourable outcomes. This school maintains that there is a clear remedy and formula for the diseases of corruption. According to Seniwoliba and Boahene, (2015), it entails going back to the traditional African values of hard work, honesty, communal living, kindness, and respect for leadership achievements. However, this line of thinking is flawed because it ignores the importance of corruption in ancient African societies. But it doesn't seem likely that corruption was any more rife in traditional African communities than it is in Ghana now, post-independence.

The modernist perspective says that Ghana's corruption is a hangover from the inflexible structures and way of thinking seen in traditional African societies. Modernist idealists contend that although parochial tendencies such as the obligation to defend one's kin and country are often the source of corrupt behaviour, these tendencies can be restrained by embracing modern rationalist values (Anazodo, Okoye, & Ezenwile, 2012; Seniwoliba and Boahene, 2015).

3. METHODOLOGY

This paper is qualitative. The committee that was constituted to review the conditions of service interviewed one member each from the housekeeping department, the front desk supervisor, the food and beverage supervisor, one cook from the kitchen, a staff of the laundry

department, the finance manager, and the facility manager at the UDS Accra Guest House. At the Tamale Guest House, the committee interviewed the facility manager, and two staff from the food and beverages; front desk and accounts department. The researchers wanted to know whether there has been any form of favouritism such as strong ethnic allegiance, conjugal relations among staff who are specifically aligned to big people at the top management; how these favours affect the management of the University, what can be done to curb the menace of godfathers' favouritism in the University to have a fair and inclusive work environment. The researchers also used secondary sources of data to obtain appropriate and interrelated literature. Here, references were made to several documents such as books, articles, magazines, and newspapers. All the relevant literature accessed was thoroughly studied and reviewed for this study (Creswell, 2009; Zaleha, 2018).

Research Design

Considering the nature of this study, the researchers used a case study approach in approaching the topic under examination. This is because the approach helps the researchers tounderstand the phenomenon deeply. In addition to that, it also provides an in-depth understanding of a case or cases under inquiry. The case study approach helps in developing an in-depth explanation and examination of a case(s) (Creswell, 2009; Zaleha, 2018).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study revealed that 13 staff of the UDS Guest House Limited were interviewed both in Accra and Tamale. Table 1 gives a breakdown of the category of staff interviewed.

Table 1: Category of staff interviewed

No	Job Position	Respondents
1	Front Desk Supervisor	2
2	Food and Beverages Supervisor	3
3	Cook	2
4	Laundry Department	2
5	Finance Manager	2
6	Facility Manager	2
	Total	13

The study discovered that most of the workers employed in the Guest Houses were relatives of Principal Officers, Deans, and Directors who are at the top of the management team in the University. They indicated that those employees who were employed by these “Big Men” were placed at lucrative places and had more access to resources than the others yet work was retarded because there was no level playing grounds for all candidates. Management at Higher Education use Godfatherism as a tool to employ their friends, families and cronies. These Managers use their godsons to manipulate the system either to further their selfish interests or advance their cause of popularity (Kiryra, 2019). Godfatherism cuts across promotion, deployment, and posting exercises. Godfatherism in the recruitment process as variously described by many scholars such as Okoro (2010), Chukwuemeka, (2010), and Ude (2009) involves the interference of the godfather in the recruitment process to ensure that his godson is recruited whether qualified or not. This derails the reputation of academia, lowers educational standards, and stagnates national development, and causes a financial loss to the state. Mind you that some of these Godfathers are not really out there to make money but just to be respected and recognised at the most important sectors of the institution. Godfathers typically sway away from administrative policies and Ghanaian laws to enable them to fix their candidates to the corridor of power to remain relevant (Safianu , 2023). I In recent times, the University for Development Studies in its recruitment processes conducted examinations to test the knowledge and credibility of applicants, it eventually did not use the examination results to select the best applicants. The ruling government party shades, family and friends were used as recruitment centres to satisfy their parochial interests (Safianu, 2023)). One of the biggest disservices the study revealed was that these clout pushers (Godfathers) do to our higher education is putting square pegs in round holes to further advance their selfish cause (Kuranchie et al., 2014). A case in point is that the most qualified person who should be in charge of procurement and other related activities is denied for the simple reason that their adherence to laws governing the procurement processes would disadvantage the gains of godfather(s) (Safianu, 2023). So, you see

a democratic government governed by a few invisible crops of selfish Chief Executives who want nothing for the institution but create, loot and share.

The data also revealed that most of those employed did not have the minimum qualifications to occupy the vacancies available yet because they are mentored to champion their agenda, they prefer such candidates to more experienced and qualified candidates. It is also to ensure that even when the Godfather has retired still has a say in the management of the institution. The mentoring of administrators is largely restricted to the mentee serving as the godfather's walking stick day and night to reshape his or her administrative power destiny or conjugal power while the godfather issues command from his comfortably opulent house. Such tasks are seen by the godfather as advantages of being a godfather to the godson Rasak, et, al., (2017). Recent research suggests that the social structures in which people and organisations are entrenched may act as a mediator between the impacts of culture on favouritism (Liu et al. 2015; Skilton 2008). For instance, Begley et al. (2010) contend that the degree of cronyism changes depending on the nature of network competition and how flexible or tight the networks are sources of Godfatherism which is eminent in Higher Education in Ghana According to Liu et al. (2015), strong links inside family businesses might encourage nepotism since they skew the results. This renewed focus on social structures makes a variety of intriguing new questions about favouritism study possible.

The study found out that Godfatherism has become persistent in Higher Education in Ghana because when the Godfathers leave behind all the evil and corrupt activities the godsons would cover up and protect them whenever they do the unthinkable, all in the name of supporting the ills committed by the godfather (Vilfredo, 1935). This administrative dogma that most Ghanaian godfathers hold in high esteem is to continue frustrating the system to allow their children and unborn ones to be worshipped just like they are being worshipped. The godfathers see building the human resources of the people as a detriment to amassing a huge following forever. They would always want

godsons and mentees to remain as such and would not do anything that would spark a generation of sustainable work and financial freedom for them (Kuranchie et al., 2014). These are the godfathers who would always stifle the growth and development of godsons to keep their clout high as always. Their motto is: "Keep them hungry and they shall remain yours forever". However, in an event where the acts of the godson are far beyond human imagination, the godfathers distance themselves from it, as they are 'supposed' to be perfectly right all the time. So, only those willing to advance the selfish interests of the existing structures of power gain access to power.

The study disclosed that Godfatherism in the Ghanaian Higher Education system is in a mess because no matter how productive you are towards institutional productivity, the personal interests of godfathers come first in terms of recruitment, admissions, and appointments as heads of departments, sections and units. Bassey and Enetak (2008) conceptualized godfatherism in higher education institutions today as a path to aspire to be at the top for the rest of their lives. They do not plan on retiring in old age to mentor young people but rather help raise them to bear even beyond what they were unable to accomplish. These are leaders who intend to be involved throughout their lives. In Ghana's higher education sector, little has changed from this.

People who have positions want to hold them for the rest of their lives. They play the ostrich to maintain their relevance in the management of the institutions while recruiting and elevating their friends to ensure their positions are safe. A disturbing factor that is visibly seen in today's higher education management relative to the association of godfather and son is to always advance the selfish interests of your boss no matter where it might lead you. The godson is promised cover-up and protection whenever he or she does the unthinkable, all in the name of supporting the ills committed by the godfather. However, in an event where the acts of the godson are far beyond human imagination, the godfathers distance themselves from it, as they are 'supposed' to be perfectly right all the time. So, only those willing to advance the selfish interests of the existing structures of power gain access to power. This

means that only the highest bidders, measured in terms of willingness to do the unthinkable no matter what, and as well as swear an oath of eternal gratitude and loyalty to the godfather are considered loyal fans (Chukwuemaka, Oji, & Chukwurah, 2013).

The study found out that the Ghanaian Godfatherism system in higher education is in a mess because no matter how productive you are towards national productivity, the personal interests of godfathers come first. Godsons are seen as people who must continue lubricating their godfathers on the various social media platforms either for political office or to be seen as someone doing perfectly well in giving back to society (Rasak, et, al 2017). This is the system that the higher education institution managers seek to build and sustain. As Nnamani (2003) puts it...an impervious guardian figure who provided the lifeline and direction to the godson, perceived to live a life of total submission, subservience and protection of the oracular personality located in the large, material frame of opulence, affluence and decisiveness, that is, if not ruthless... strictly. The godfather is simply a self-seeking individual out there to use the government for his purposes. Godfatherism in Higher Education is seeing the godson as and always giving credit to the big boss. In this model, godsons are seen as people who are created to accept all kinds of blame on behalf of godfathers who are semi-gods, and thus, perfection is for none but them. This is the system we are told to help harness and build for future bearers. Your position as godson has a high percentage of being passed down to your children who would also 'worship' children of your godfather. As Louis XIV (1643-1715) of France was quoted as saying 'I am the state', meaning 'his opinion and view, no matter how chauvinistic and narrow-minded, remains the opinion of the people he ruled'. This is how godsons are supposed to act in the discharge of their duties to selfish godfathers. To them (selfish godfathers) you have no taste for anything soft, succulent and financially worth having. Personalised ties seldom promote efficiency and academic excellence in higher education globally. Dealing only with friends and loved ones limits students' entry to insiders, promotes mediocrity favours relatives and friends, and compromises an

important advantage of the image of the institution – its impersonality. Similarly, such ties in the higher education sector led to a patrimonial system characterised by favouritism and payoffs that undermine the transparency and effectiveness of formal institutions (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). The supposedly distinct responsibilities to a superior, considered to be separate from ties of loyalty, friendship and kinship, become difficult to accept as natural. Critics argue that the trust, reputation and reciprocal obligations created by personal ties can facilitate corruption, distorting the operation of the state (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). When formal state institutions such as higher education institutions are weak and ineffective, these personalised ties of Godfatherism and godsons can be useful for a short period, but in time can promote a patrimonial system and lead to favouritism and corruption (Easter, 1996; Rose-Ackerman, 1999).

Ethnic bias is a product of personalised ties established by the study between Higher Education Managers and their employees including certain interest groups within the same institution, both usually from the same ethnic group. Just like personalised ties, therefore, ethnic bias has features of corruption and favouritism and is anti-developmental. In higher education institutions that practice ethnic bias and favouritism, the behaviour of the leadership towards others varies depending on whether those others are from the in-group, with whom affinities are shared and who therefore should be treated fairly, or outsiders, including people from other ethnic groups, who must be politically and economically marginalised (Igbini and Okolie, 2020). The relationship between the godfather and the godson is not free-floating. It is contractual and the contract is sometimes written and even sealed spiritually with an oath or, at the extreme in a shrine.

Higher education Institutions are said to sit at the apex of our knowledge-based societies, and for this reason are imbued with academic freedom and institutional autonomy so that they can engage in scientific reflection and knowledge production (Roser and Ortiz-Ospina, 2019). When higher education is infiltrated by corrupt practices, such as godfatherism, the very foundations on which societies are based are threatened. "Cheating that

makes exams and degrees worthless reflects the failed internalisation of truth and honesty rules. Godfatherism threatens the legitimacy of universities as knowledge-producing and training institutions. Therefore, as much as possible, recruitment processes and promotion must be strictly adhered to as clearly stated in the University policies (Lee, 2015).

The article also argues that godfatherism has promoted mediocrity in HEIs in Ghana. To curtail this menace, the entire recruitment and promotion processes have to be re-examined with the aim of deemphasising ethnicity, family and friends in the higher education landscape of Ghana (Rasak, et, al 2017). To this end, managerial staff who form part of the recruitment processes should abide by all conflict-of-interest procedures openly. The merit system of recruitment and promotion should be applied strictly by screening properly to select the best applicants to avoid putting square pegs in round holes.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need to painstakingly seek to curb the existing widespread practice of godfatherism which has considerable implications for the integrity of Ghana's Higher Education recruitment, promotion and supervisory system. The conversion of the merit system from being the best approach to recruitment and promotion to a family and friends' enterprise through the practice of godfatherism, especially the predatory variant, portends a threat to the future of higher education in Ghana. The recruitment and appointment of state agents based on political patronage rather than meritocracy creates problems of poor strategic planning outputs and capacity deficit at the bureaucratic level regarding fiscal management and public institutions. It also creates institutional instability and loss of institutional memory as evident in an increased number of prolonged acting roles as a result of suspensions of more senior state agents by their political principals. Various successive reports in Ghana indicate the performance of many state institutions in the country is increasingly regressing due to the practice of godfatherism. In the course of this work, the following recommendations are made to ensure good

governance and high academic standards that will translate to national development and improve the standard of living of the citizenry.

- a. Public experience and academic qualification in the business of governance should be emphasised at all levels of governance to discourage mediocrity from attaining leadership positions in HEIs.
- b. There should be provisions in the law for a level playing ground with independent recruitment bodies that will ensure the effective application of the merit recruitment system.
- c. Laws be enacted to make illegal office holders be held accountable for the state fund expended and agreement signed during their illegal occupation of offices.
- d. The existing sentiments and parochial cleavages such as ethnicity and religion should not be a pre-requisite when it comes to attracting suitable qualified candidates for public/political offices;
- e. Moral regeneration on the part of all and sundry will go a long way in solving the existing and emerging problems. A morally sane society will produce morally inclined godfathers who will mentor and guide their godchildren as expected. Various ethical orientation and awareness programmes by past leadership must be revived while the present attempts at inculcating morality must be executed objectively, fearlessly and with sincerity of purpose.
- f. Universities should also monitor and punish cases of falsified academic records; paying for grades with gifts, money, or sexual favours intimidating examiners; and assaulting invigilators. Such practices undermine educational opportunities for students and produce ill-equipped graduates to succeed in their future careers. To do so, African countries should review their education systems to incorporate moral and ethical teachings, particularly at the primary and secondary levels.

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