INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE TOWARDS ADDRESSING SOCIAL JUSTICE IN SUB–SAHARAN AFRICA HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This article explored the role of institutional culture in instilling social justice in the workplace, sometimes referred to as organisational justice. The concern is whether institutional culture plays any role in social justice at higher education institutions. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the role institutional culture can play in enhancing organisational justice, due to workplace injustices that persist at institutions of higher learning. In the past decade, research has focused on discrimination, gender issues and corruption in the workplace. However, there has been little focus on changing the organisational culture of an organisation where managers need employees to achieve their objectives, sometimes to the detriment of social justice. Employee job performance and satisfaction are considered key variables that can influence organisational performance, and this pressure may lead to work injustice and affect teaching and learning. In the process of describing the role institutional culture can play towards enhancing organisational justice, we used the views of academics, students and support staff and analysed institutional policies from several universities that are part of the space and spatiality project in Sub–Saharan Africa by means of a qualitative enquiry. This article established that the culture of an institution plays a pivotal role in entrenching or affecting justice at institutions of higher education. The findings revealed that there is, generally, non–non-compliance with institutional policies which

affects teaching and learning, thereby contributing to workplace injustice which negatively affects various stakeholders in institutions of higher learning. The article recommends that an institutional–wide policy monitoring and evaluation system be developed and implemented and that the culture of the institution be aligned with the policies in place.

Keywords: culture; justice; organisation; policy; social.

This article explored the role of institutional culture in instilling social justice in the workplace, which at times is referred to as organisational justice. In the past decade, research has focused on discrimination, gender issues and corruption in the workplace (Dunn et al, 2011). There has been little focus on the change in organisational culture where managers need employees to achieve manager's objectives. Employee job performance and satisfaction are considered key variables that can influence organisational performance and this pressure may lead to work injustice and affect teaching and learning. Hence there is a dire need to achieve social justice in the workplace. Thus, companies and employees are obliged to take the necessary steps to address issues such as implementing policies and practices that promote equal pay, fair promotions, and a safe and inclusive work environment, including committing to social responsibility and ethical conduct. These issues are must-haves for workforces to address social justice to protect equal rights, opportunities, and treatment for all individuals. In this view, many companies would be able to incorporate economic justice as a fundamental part of their strategy for the transformation purpose. Pedagogical practices, still draw from Western philosophies and world views, despite most students in higher education being students from African cultures. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) declares the incessant domination and negligence of belief systems and values that African students bring to higher education as "epistemic violence". Additionally, (Blignaut 2020; Chilisa 2016; and Maistry 2021) show their concerns for "epistemic freedom" through decolonial and transformative pedagogies.

In the first section of the article, we introduce the concept of institutional culture and workplace injustice; secondly, we investigate the contribution of institutional culture to work injustice in the context of institutions of higher education followed by the methodology and discussion of the findings of the article. The last section focuses on the conclusion of the article and recommendations.

The following section reviews literature that defines institutional culture and injustice in the workplace. The literature reviewed helped to relate the study to the larger ongoing discourse about institutional culture and injustice in the workplace; and how the culture of an institution can deal with workplace injustices or promote it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a sequential summary of related literature. It critically engages previous studies published in the field of organisational culture and injustice in the workplace to beef up the discussion. Organisational culture is defined as the values, beliefs and assumptions held by members of an organisation and which beliefs share meaning and guide behaviour at varying levels of awareness (Denison; Nieminen & Kotrba, 2014). Also, Williams (2022), refers to organisational culture as embodied in the organisation's values, norms and deeply held beliefs of employees, underpins the operation and approach to conducting business. Considering this, institutional culture is based on shared attitudes, beliefs, customs and written and unwritten rules that have been developed over time and are considered valid. This definition expresses how the construct plays out in the workplace and employee behavioural components and how organisational culture directly influences the behaviours of employees within an organisation.

From the array of definitions or descriptions above, we can deduce that there must be justice as to how things are done in the workplace as the organisational culture affects how people and groups interact with one another, with clients and with stakeholders. This is a set of shared assumptions that guide what happens in organisations, by defining appropriate behaviour for various situations for such organisations to run smoothly for sustainable productivity; and for teaching and learning in the instance of higher education institutions.

ESTABLISHMENT OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

Organizational culture and communication are crucial aspects of any successful business or institution. Organizational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, norms, and attitudes that shape an organization's behaviour and guide its members' actions. Communication, on the other hand, is the process of exchanging information, ideas, and opinions among individuals and groups within an organization. Establishing a positive and effective organizational culture and communication is vital for creating a productive and cohesive work environment. Organisational culture, as explained earlier, refers to any type of way of doing things including that of schools, universities, not–for–profit groups, government agencies, or business entities (Williams, 2022). In business, terms such as "corporate culture" and "company culture" are often used to refer to a similar concept. In addition, Parker (2000) highlights that if organisational culture is seen as something that characterises an organisation, it can be manipulated and altered, depending on leadership and members. This is exactly what is happening at most universities that are part of the "space and place" project in Sub–Saharan Africa, as each institution has its own culture to run the organisation.

Boundless (2015) concurs with the above statement by arguing that culture is there to

mobilise information in the form of communication through hierarchy, whereby there is a leader who makes rapid decisions and controls the strategy. This type of culture requires a strong deference to the leader in charge (Boundless, 2015). Several universities that are part of the "space and spatiality" project in Sub–Saharan Africa practice what is called "role cultures". Brennan, Dioli, Jaffrey & Mosca (2013) indicate that role cultures are types of cultures that create functional structures where individuals know their jobs, report to their superiors and value efficiency and accuracy above all else. This is like hierarchy cultures in that they are highly structured as they focus on efficiency, stability and doing things right. Based on the discussion above, this article adopted the Cooke model. Cooke (1987) defines culture as the behaviours that members believe are required to fit in and meet expectations within their organisations. He further highlights constructive, adaptive and adhocracy culture.

Establishing effective communication channels encourages transparency and open dialogue among team members and across different hierarchical levels. This allows for the free flow of information, feedback, and ideas, fostering a culture of trust and collaboration.

IMPLEMENT COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

In today's digital age, utilizing communication technologies can significantly enhance organizational communication. Platforms such as instant messaging, collaboration tools, and project management systems facilitate seamless communication, especially in remote or geographically dispersed teams.

CONSTRUCTIVE CULTURES

In constructive cultures, people are encouraged to be in communication with their co-workers and work as teams rather than only as individuals. They are encouraged to interact and approach tasks in ways that help them meet their higher-order satisfaction needs. In positions where people do a complex job, rather than something simple, like a mechanical task, this culture is efficient and more common. The constructive culture is characterised by the following, as suggested by Cooke (1987):

- **Achievement**: completing a task successfully, typically by effort, courage or skill whereby a standard of excellence is highly pursued and exploring alternatives before acting. Based on the need to attain high–quality results on challenging projects, there is a belief that outcomes are linked to one's efforts rather than chance and the tendency to personally set challenging yet realistic goals. People high in this style think ahead and plan; explore alternatives before acting and learn from their mistakes.
- **Self–actualising**: realisation or fulfilment of one's talents and potentialities considered

as a drive or need present in everyone. This makes people think in unique and independent ways to do simple tasks well. People with this style demonstrate a strong desire to learn and experience things, creative yet realistic thinking and a balanced concern for people and tasks.

- **Humanistic encouragement**: help others to grow and develop to resolve conflicts constructively. This reflects an interest in the growth and development of people, a high positive regard for them and sensitivity to their needs. Thus, people high in this style devote energy to coaching and counselling others, are thoughtful and considerate and provide people with support and encouragement.
- **Affiliative**: treat people as more valuable than things and cooperate with others. This reflects an interest in developing and sustaining pleasant relationships. People high in this style share their thoughts and feelings, are friendly and cooperative and make others feel a part of things.

Based on Cooke's model above, organisations with constructive cultures encourage members to work to their full potential, resulting in high levels of motivation, satisfaction, teamwork, service quality and sales growth. Constructive norms are evident in environments where quality is valued over quantity; creativity is valued over conformity; cooperation is believed to lead to better results than competition and effectiveness is judged at a system level rather than the component level. These types of cultural norms are consistent with and supportive of the objectives behind empowerment, total quality management, transformational leadership, continuous improvement, re-engineering, and learning organisations.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING ORGANISATIONS

After the discussion above, transformation issues in sub–Saharan African higher education institutions are part of this article since they are not yet resolved (Blignaut 2020; Maistry 2021). Additionally, there is a call for transformative pedagogies that are culturally approachable and acquainted with social justice issues in higher education (Blignaut and Koopman 2020). In the meantime, Blignaut (2020:1) is concerned about the slow pace of transformation in sub–Saharan African higher education.

There is no complete transformation in higher education without redressing ways of enacting the curriculum and without–-centring social justice issues such as equal learning opportunities, fair participation, and language equity (Maistry 2021). (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018:8) concurs also indicate that the negative assumptions about African Indigenous knowledge systems affect students from African cultures and make them feel unwelcomed and isolated in higher

education. This results in a higher dropout from schooling.

This is the type of organisational culture we are striving for to work harmoniously in the workplace and have high productivity. In our institutions, we are currently operating under aggressive/defensive cultures that encourage and require members to appear competent, controlled, and superior. This means that employees who seek assistance, admit shortcomings, or concede their position are viewed as incompetent or weak. In most cases, employees feel pressured to think and behave in ways that are inconsistent with how they believe, as this is believed to contribute to being effective. People are expected to please superiors who do not follow rules, procedures, and orders; thereby, avoiding interpersonal conflict. Thus, this practice results in many unresolved conflicts and turnover. This style is characterised by more emphasis on tasks than people.

ADAPTIVE AND ADHOCRACY CULTURE

The extent to which freedom is allowed in decision–making, developing new ideas and personal expression are vital parts of adaptive and adhocracy cultures. Adaptive cultures value change and are action-oriented, increasing the likelihood of survival through time (Costanza et al., 2015). Adhocracy cultures are dynamic and entrepreneurial with a focus on risk-taking, innovation and doing things first.

Burman and Evans (2008) raise the issue of changing organisational culture, which is not an easy undertaking. They further indicate that employees often resist change and can rally against a new culture as leaders fail to convince their employees of the benefits of change and show, through collective experience with new behaviours, that the new culture is the best way to operate to yield success. The leaders just introduce changes and instruct the employees to implement them without their concerns and induction. Thus, this approach makes things very hard to change, as the employees need time to get used to the new way of doing things and organising.

In addition to the argument above, a needs assessment is required to identify and understand the current organisational culture before a cultural change initiative. This can be done through employee surveys, interviews, focus groups, observation, customer surveys, where appropriate, and other internal research to further identify areas that require change. Unfortunately, sub–Saharan African institutions are in a dilemma where no needs assessment is done, as management tends to implement the changes without the employees concerned. Hence, the Sub-Saharan African Institutions that are taking part in space and place project leadership oppression in which a top-down approach is the game of the day in the institution.

There is still no clear articulation of accountability and authority to engender trust and

confidence in all working relationships in practice, although rules and regulations are in place to govern universities, the authorities deliberately violate them for their own interest. Hence, this article focused more on organisational culture that encourages employees to exercise cultural values that are shaped by multiple factors such as the external environment; the size and nature of the organisation's workforce; technologies the organisation uses and the organisation's history and ownership. Zhang (2009) supports the idea above by highlighting that, in Europe, they are also fighting for this type of organisational culture to protect the employees from being oppressed by their superiors, as this is what is being practised.

Researchers, such as Flamholtz and Randle (2014), show that organisations that foster strong cultures by following the stipulated rules and regulations have clear values that give employees a reason to embrace the culture. They further add that a strong culture might be especially beneficial to firms operating in the service sector since members of these organisations are responsible for delivering the service and for evaluations that important constituents make about firms. Islam & Zyphur (2009) and Hatch & Cunliffe (2013) concur with the discussion above by suggesting the following aspects to assist the organisation in running smoothly and having a healthy and robust culture that would benefit both employers and employees:

- competitive edge derived from innovation and customer service.
- consistent, efficient employee performance
- team cohesiveness
- high employee morale
- strong company alignment towards goal achievement

Although little empirical research exists to support the link between organisational culture and organisational performance, there is little doubt among experts that this relationship exists. Organisational culture can be a factor in the survival or failure of an organisation, although this is difficult to prove, given that the necessary longitudinal analyses are hardly feasible.

While there is widespread agreement that organisational cultures do exist and that they are key drivers in shaping organisational behaviours, pinpointing an exact definition of the concept is a difficult undertaking. One thing undoubtedly known about culture is that it is constantly being created, changed, and splintered to ensure the success of its parent organisation. The arguments above informed us to write this article as an attempt to explore the role that institutional culture plays in instilling or destroying social justice in the workplace and how it affects teaching and learning. In the next section, we focus on the methodology employed in the article.

Based on the discussion above, Sibanda (2019) highlights that there is a connection between Ubuntu and social justice. He indicates that social justice is culturally specific, drawing on shared assumptions about the nature of being, how we arrive at this common understanding and the values that inform what is perceived to be in the best interest of all, and all possible relationships in that context. The importance of the I/We relationship cannot be overemphasised in this understanding of social justice. Thus, Justice, in this light is not based on individual rights but rather on the collective rights of the "WE" in the I/We relationship which are aspects of Ubuntu theory. Additionally, he further highlights that social justice and curriculum come from Maistry (2021) who recently theorised curriculum in South African higher education from the social justice framework.

Chilisa 2(016) and Sibanda (2019) have also attempted to explore Ubuntu theory and social justice in global contexts such as Zimbabwe. In this study, we largely draw from these recent works on social justice and Ubuntu philosophy to bring together these two frameworks in the context of South African higher education. We argued that there is a compelling connection between Ubuntu and social justice and that these two terms do not compete, but they harmonise each other. To base our argument, we draw from the notions provided by Sibanda (2019) who contended that Ubuntu embodies the essence of humanity in values such as respect, dignity, equity and interdependence. In that way, "Social justice is part and parcel of what it means to be human" (Sibanda 2019:76). Like Ubuntu philosophy, social justice. Blignaut (2020), on the other hand, advocate for social justice in the Sub–Saharan African schooling system as he believes that a curriculum that is anchored on social justice is likely to cultivate compassionate citizens who have enthusiasm for a sense of justice and creation of equal opportunities for all. Another important work on social justice and curriculum comes from Maistry (2021) who recently theorised curriculum in South African higher education from the social justice framework.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative phenomenological study described what participants experienced as unjust institutional culture in the workplace. Strauss and Corbin (1990) in Creswell (2007: 58), outline a phenomenological study as follows: "to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known". A researcher who conducts a phenomenological study focuses on describing what all the participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007: 58). The researcher then collects data from persons who have experienced the phenomenon and develops a composite description of "what" they experienced and "how" they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994). All in all, the researcher interprets the

experiences and elaborates on how such experiences have shaped the participants' understanding of the phenomenon.

In the process of describing the role institutional culture can play towards enhancing or lessoning organisational justice, we employed the views of academics and support staff and analysed the policies of seven universities, that are part of the space and spatiality project in the Sub–Saharan Africa, through a qualitative enquiry. A multiple case study design was used with two lead project leaders from each of the institutions (Baxter 2008). The project leaders attended to the codes of research ethics at their respective institutions. The research population comprised the education and human sciences faculties, based on the research areas of the research collaborators, from which academics, faculty/college managers at different levels, support staff and students were purposively sampled.

DATA COLLECTION

Two instruments of data collection were used namely document analyses (institutional policies, strategic plans, operational plans, etc.) and semi-structured interviews (with students, academics, faculty/college managers and administrative staff). The data collection process aimed to elicit a complete description of the experiences that participants lived through in the workplace; and how those experiences affect teaching and learning. The interviews not only produced information about the participants' experiences but also made possible spontaneous responses to reveal the true feelings, behaviours, and attitudes of the participants (Giorgi, 2009).

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is a systematic search for meaning. It is a way to process qualitative data so that what has been learned can be communicated to others (Creswell, 2013). The data are interrogated and organised in ways that allow the emergence of patterns, themes, and relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories, as suggested by Wiek and Lang (2016). The data were analysed accordingly, expounded on, coded, reduced, presented, and analysed while still fresh in our minds. As we engaged with the data, themes were identified and connected. In linking themes, there is more display in the form of narrative texts and vignettes (Creswell, 2009). The discussion and analysis of data in the next section are fused with the literature to establish if there is synergy between what the literature purports and the actual data collected.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings are on the lived cultural experiences of the stakeholders researched, discussed,

and fused with literature under the following subthemes which emerged.

- The extent to which institutional policies promote or hinder social justice.
- The extent to which the institutional culture and workplace injustice affect various stakeholders and teaching and learning in institutions of higher learning.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES PROMOTE OR HINDER SOCIAL JUSTICE.

The findings revealed that academics experience a culture of non-adherence to the institution's policies and rules. It transpired that some managers understand the importance of compliance with rules, regulations and policies and do their best to ensure fluidity, whereas others do not comply at all; and it is those who do not understand who hold back the progress of the institution. Noncompliance with the policies and rules of the institution may lead to infringements of employees' rights which could eventually lead to work injustice. The practice of non–compliance and holding back the progress of an institution is indicative of a workplace culture that is contrary to the one suggested by Cooke (1989). Cooke argues that people should be encouraged to be in communication with their co-workers and work as teams rather than only as individuals.

The procurement policy was highlighted as one example of the non–compliance and absence of policy implementation at institutional level. The participants alluded to a delay in purchasing equipment and resources needed for teaching and learning which can take up to two years. This is attributed to the institutional culture of the tender process, which results in sponsors and donors withdrawing their funds due to delays. The finding on non–non-compliance with procurement policy is in line with Badaso (2014) who maintains that the major obstacle has been inadequate regulatory compliance with the procurement policy and its practices. Non– compliance with the procurement policy is against the current practices of using e-procurement. With the use of information technology, the literature reveals that e-procurement has gained momentum in procurement. As a result, Drake and Lee (2009) argue that alignment of leadership and procurement strategies is required for procurement which plays a strategic role in the organisation.

It further transpired that all institutions that participated in the study have policies and rules in place for the exclusion of students on academic grounds, but these rules were not implemented as expected. as indicated in the following statement:

The first-time students fail, they receive a warning and then get excluded if they do not perform as

> per the rules, and yet we get students in the systems for 7 or 8 years. This happens because the warnings are not captured on the system, and as a result, students remain in the system for long. The capturing of the decision may be delayed by the SRC which has the right to appeal the decision (Lecturer 1: Institution 4).

Having been excluded but remaining in the system confirms Power and Taylor's (2020) argument that one may not be in the classroom but still on the register. This implies that one may write all the assessments and such assessment activities are recorded on the system. In this way, the exclusion is escaped, which implies that the exclusion policy is not effectively implemented.

One of the institutions which participated in the study was said to have clear and appropriate governance and administrative and academic structures that enabled the institution to provide quality services to its clients in a coherent and organised manner. With this, one would expect a culture promoting the implementation of institutional policies, but this did not seem to be the case, as the findings revealed that there was a lack of compliance with the Consultancy Policy and Regulations at this institution. As a result, some university employees and other stakeholders were not aware of the consultancy contribution to their academic development and that of the institution; and this led to a lack of proper partnerships forged by academic staff and the acquisition of consultancy skills. This is the culture of hiding information from those who are supposed to benefit from it. Non–participation in consultancy was aggravated by the fact that there was no Corporate Marketing Policy to regulate the proceeds from consultancy. It was argued that the institution received the lion's share in the finances from consultancies and this was not fair to the members of staff who participated in the consultancy. Failure to implement policies supports Hudson, Hunter and Peckham (2019: 3) who state four broad contributors to policy failure: "optimistic expectations, implementation in dispersed governance, inadequate collaborative policymaking and the vagaries of the policy cycle". While there may be proper structures in place, implementation may not be effective as it depends on those who implement policies. This means that high–level bureaucrats depend on the frontline employees who are instrumental in policy implementation. Therefore, policy implementation support is necessary.

The findings further revealed that at some institutions that participated in the study, there were no mechanisms in place to ensure that the various constituents of the institution, singularly and collectively, contribute to the implementation of their strategic plans. For instance, the current structure at one of the institutions is seen to be devoid of a stand-alone "progress chaser" who should ensure that all activities at all levels are compliant with the strategic plan; and yet that is not the case. This is contrary to Marmolejo (2007) who emphasises that strategic

management of higher education has become complex and yet seems to be ignored. As a result, the institution's strategic plan is not implemented.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE AND WORKPLACE INJUSTICE AFFECT VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS AND TEACHING AND LEARNING IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING.

The findings revealed that all the institutions have embedded cultural practices in their operations, and they affect stakeholders in different ways as well as teaching and learning. At some institutions that were studied, it became evident that there was no justice in the allocation of technology resources since new employees would wait for months before resources were allocated to them, as evident in the following statement:

> The ICT department has, historically been either understaffed or staffed with short–fixed–term contract employees, who are almost always stretched beyond their capacities. As a result, there are always huge backlogs and lengthy delays in getting new staff members' computers in place and getting them connected to the network (Lecturer 4: Institution 3).

Generally, the lack of resources is central to technical and higher education institutions in Uganda (Habibu, Al Mamun and Che Kum, 2012) as is the case in Sub–Saharan Africa. Based on the information above, it is evident that social justice is hampered by the institutional culture, thereby making it difficult for staff to perform their duties as expected. The delay in the provision of technological resources for new academic staff is a constraint and an epistemic injustice which delays the acquisition and generation of knowledge. The situation in Sub-Saharan Africa differs from Australia. Australia is rich in ICT resources where every three students have access to one computer, unlike the situation in Africa where 18 students share one computer (Marginson, Tytler, Freeman and Roberts 2013). Delay in purchasing ICT resources is tangential to the view of Habibu, Al Mamun and Che Kum (2012) who argue that delay contributes to the difficulty in using ICT in the teaching and learning process. The heads of departments (HoDs) also indicated that they cannot even purchase the required technological resources due to the institutional culture, as they do not control budgets for such. One manager argued that he/she would have loved to support staff when the need arises, especially with electronic resources, since technology is a tool to support educational objectives, but the institutional interdependence culture of executive managers makes it difficult to have conducive social relations.

Coupled with non–-non-availability of instructional resources, it transpired that one other aspect which affected teaching and learning was the non–non-availability of Wi-Fi hotspots on

and off campus residences. It was added that even where Wi-Fi was available, it was not reliable.

> Only a few residences have access to it, some had it but at some point, it was removed. The reliability is average; it just depends on the time of the day. The reliability is also affected by the number of students connected at the time (Admin Staff: Institution 2).

The non–non-availability of Wi-Fi at residences where students spend most of their time, is in contradiction with new learning approaches, such as blended learning, advocated by Abeysekera and Dawson (2015), cited in Beckers (2016). Beckers (2016) argues that with the increase of ICT in education, students can access huge sources of data; and yet it was not the case at institutions which participated in this study. While at one of the institutions, it was alluded that there was an improvement in Wi-Fi availability, it was not available in all the spaces and there was frequent loss of connectivity. This was a constraint to the lecturers and students as it affected teaching and learning.

In addition to the Wi-Fi challenges, the culture of ownership of technological resources was not promoted at some institutions, as evidenced by the vandalism of the projectors used for teaching, with no consequences for the offenders. The culture of ownership is indirectly related to Zhang (2009) who highlights that in Europe, there is an organisational culture of protecting employees from being oppressed by the superiors who tend to own the resources. Because projectors were vandalised in lecture halls, it transpired that computer labs were used for teaching most of the time; and this was a disadvantage for students who wished to use the labs to do research for their assignments. However, the culture of vandalism places a heavy burden on authorities and contributes to the collapse of teaching and learning (de Wet, 2004). Even those who use computers for teaching, do not use technologies as expected (Habibu, Al Mamun and Che Kum, 2012). Those in control of the computer labs allow this to happen which is seen as cultural injustice at most institutions. Although the labs were used for teaching, the Wi-Fi signal was not strong, even in the labs which affected teaching and learning. In addition to the aspect of injustice, students were blocked from watching tutorials on YouTube or accessing YouTube when using institutional internet.

> The YouTube connection has been a talking point and the university recently disallowed students from purchasing YouTube using the university internet, which we feel, is an injustice because we pay. We are not even allowed to watch tutorials which are very helpful to us on YouTube (Student 5: Institution 2).

Another aspect of institutional culture which hampered teaching and learning concerns physical

spaces as being negotiated and contested. The culture in most institutions involved in the study was that it was not clear who owned the teaching spaces and that they were allocated centrally, with a claim that space allocation was a project. The central allocation of teaching spaces was not accepted by the lecturers who had the following to say:

> Often, management does not understand the needs of the lecturers in allocating the venues. This is done without keeping in mind how many students the venue can accommodate. Further, when students are registered, the numbers are always bigger than the seating capacity of the venue in which teaching and learning must take place. This is a frustration to both students and lecturers for quality, which ultimately impacts teaching and learning and the students' pass rates (Lecturer 3: Institution 4).

The central allocation of physical space confirms Alou's (2009) argument that African countries follow international practices where cultural spaces are dominated by state actors, without considering the capacity of such spaces. Space allocation does not seem to consider the courses to be offered, with some having to be broken down or split into multiple sections (PATAT, 2006) because of the numbers to be offered.

> The physical spaces do not accommodate the students as the population has grown in this institution, and because of that, the physical spaces need to increase but we don't see that [happening]. So, we find a reverse type of scenario situation where you have the population growing, more staff that are needed to deliver the services and more learners, but the physical space does not increase. (Lecturer: Institution 6).

Owning of spaces by the project and the central allocation thereof leads to improper allocation of the spaces, where allocated venues are not suitable for student numbers and the courses allocated. This leads to overcrowded spaces; and as a result, teachers (lecturers) find themselves working within the constraints of space (Gultig, 2010). In this scenario, those using the allocated spaces have no choice but to accept what has been arranged for them.

The findings further revealed that the lecture halls are far from being regarded as flexible learning environments where students could work in groups during cooperative learning activities. Most lecture halls were built in an old-fashioned theatre configuration infrastructure, with many steps and fixed furniture. Such a space is not inclusive enough for staff and students with disabilities, especially for those in wheelchairs.

> Okay, concerning the physical spaces, I'm speaking about, specifically the lecture rooms, although they are satisfactory, I feel the design is not suitable due to the furniture. The furniture is fixed, as a result, it restricts active interaction and engagement, and it also prevents learners from doing group work and collaborating (Lecturer 1: Institution 2).

This is tangential to Alexander's (2018) assertion that the theatre configuration infrastructure does not provide students with the opportunity to personalise space by shifting the furniture around to make it more flexible; and for the lecturers to customise the space to accommodate the activity, as opposed to working in a dungeon-like space. This, according to Gultig (2010: 66), discards the ideas of ownership of space; and as a result, learners and teachers may be left with a sense that there is no area with which they can identify. Alexander (2018: 27) further argues that customised spaces meet the needs of a specific moment, and students should be able to claim a specific space as their own and do with it whatever they need to work productively. Deed and Alterator (2017), quoting Mc Auley et (2010) add that the educator and the learner can modify and adapt their teaching and learning behaviours to the special modes they are exposed to; and yet it was not the case in the institutions studied. With no attempt to provide conducive spaces, it can be argued that the institutional culture does not deal with issues of social justice, which implies that the quality of teaching and learning is affected.

The space challenge was aggravated by the lack of office space which led to colleagues sharing offices, with no privacy. The participants were not in favour of sharing offices, which seemed to be a norm at some institutions which participated in the study. All the participants acknowledged that it was not conducive to sharing an office with another person. This was reported to be compromising the quality of work as certain individuals might have conflicts.

> When you have 4 to 5 people in an office space, you cannot expect quality output from these members of staff. All these have a bearing, and they are affecting quality education (Lecturer: Institution 5).

Interaction in shared offices constrains relationships with colleagues. Marmolejo (2007) argues that insufficient facilities, including offices, are considered among the top threats to the success of higher education. It further transpired that the same situation also affected students, in instances where venues were shared for teaching. Sharing of space, even for teaching, is alluded to as a problem, especially with someone teaching a different subject (Gultig, 2010). The problem was compounded by some people who wanted to cling to their historical spaces and at times worked in isolation. These practices are indications of an unbecoming culture which hampers social justice.

Despite what seemed to be the unbecoming culture at most institutions, the findings revealed that there was a positive aspect of the institutional culture at one institution where student associations to showcase cultural and tribal diversity were recognised. This enables students not to lose their ethnic identity; to socialise and to formally network with the alumni

and other related professionals whom they invite to address them. In addition, it was the institution's culture to offer staff, through their different associations, physical spaces to socialise. This is an indication that the institutional culture is conducive and promotes social justice.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This article revealed that the culture of an organisation can play a pivotal role in creating a just and fair work environment. However, we generally conclude that the institutional culture at Sub–Saharan African institutions fails to deal with social justice in the workplace and this detrimentally affects teaching and learning. Although the policies are in place, there is a general culture of non–implementation of the available policies. Non–non-implementation of institutional policies affects stakeholders in different ways. In addition, physical spaces which are needed for learning, discussion and group work are not provided at institutions of higher learning. Most spaces are shared while others are not conducive for the current modes of teaching and learning. These problems are compounded by the unavailability of Wi-Fi and connectivity challenges.

Based on the findings, we recommend that institutional policies be implemented to the benefit of the employees, for example, there should be an increase in the percentage given to staff for consultancy as this would motivate them to solicit more consultancy projects; and in the long run, the university would still generate adequate revenue from various consultancy projects. In this regard, an institutional–wide policy monitoring and evaluation system should be developed and implemented. The findings are also helping in sharing a more nuanced understanding of both institutional culture and social justice at institutions of higher education. Practitioners at universities can incorporate the findings into their planning to make sure that there is a close relationship between institutional culture and social justice. In addition, all social teaching and learning conditions should be improved. Adhering to the suggested recommendations would contribute to social justice in the workplace, thereby improving teaching and learning.

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