

Leadership Style and Resource Allocation Inequalities as Correlates of Factionalism in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

Anecdotal evidence suggests that leadership style and inequitable resource allocation contribute to the persistence of factionalism in higher education institutions. However, empirical research directly examining these relationships remains limited. This study addressed this gap by investigating the extent to which university governance styles and resource allocation inequalities predict factionalism in public universities in Northern Ghana. The objective was to generate evidence-based insights to inform governance reforms, enhance inclusivity, and foster collegial and cohesive academic environments. Anchored in Social Identity Theory, the study employed Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to analyze data from 200 university staff, using a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. The results revealed that governance style and resource allocation inequalities significantly and positively predicted the prevalence of factionalism. Both governance and resource-related variables also exhibited significant direct effects on communication. Additionally, the analysis identified a modest but theoretically meaningful mediating role of communication climate in the relationship between governance, resource allocation inequalities, and factionalism. These findings underscore the critical role of internal communication climate in shaping identity-driven conflicts within higher education institutions. The study offers practical and policy implications, highlighting the need for inclusive and participatory governance models, equitable and transparent resource allocation frameworks, and deliberate investment in strengthening internal communication systems to mitigate the incidence of factionalism. Based on these insights, the study recommends that university leadership prioritize training in inclusive and transformational leadership, ensure fairness in resource distribution, and institutionalize mechanisms for two-way communication and grievance redress.

Keywords: Leadership, Resource allocation inequalities, Factionalism, Communication climate

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1. Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are key drivers of socio-economic development globally. They serve as hubs for human capital development, knowledge creation, and innovation (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009). As environments where individuals from diverse sociocultural and economic backgrounds converge, HEIs are inherently complex spaces characterized by competing interests, identities, and motivations. While such diversity is a valuable institutional asset, it can also generate internal tensions, identity-based divisions, and governance challenges. When not properly managed, these tensions may evolve into entrenched factionalism, where groups form along ideological, political, or ethnic lines, undermining institutional harmony, collegiality, and overall effectiveness (Gyimah-Boadi & Prempeh, 2012; Amponsah, 2020).

Factionalism erodes trust, hinders effective governance, and strains interpersonal and intergroup relationships within academic communities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Jehn, 1995). Its manifestations can range from interpersonal conflict and diminished staff morale to decreased motivation, productivity, and organizational commitment (Hogg, 2001; Brewer & Venaik, 2011; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). In more extreme cases, factionalism

contributes to intrapsychic conflict and alienation among staff, undermining institutional performance and reform efforts (Yidana, 2022).

In Ghana's public university system, growing ethnic diversity, traditional leadership influences, and political affiliations appear to shape the formation of factional groups (Alhassan & Amoako, 2021; Sawyerr, 2004; Yidana, 2025). These dynamics often intersect with institutional processes such as recruitment, promotions, and decision-making, leading to perceptions of exclusion, unfairness, and marginalization (Boateng, Atta, & Gyan, 2019). Although anecdotal evidence suggests that leadership style and inequitable resource allocation play a role in reinforcing factionalism, empirical research has yet to explore these relationships directly. While leadership studies tend to emphasize institutional performance outcomes (Eze, 2017) and literature on resource allocation often focuses on adequacy over equity (Mohamedbhai, 2014), few studies examine how these factors influence the emergence or persistence of internal divisions in higher education institutions.

Leadership styles perceived as biased, authoritarian, or exclusionary may exacerbate internal rifts, particularly in contexts already characterized by ethnic or political tensions (Essuman, 2019). Leadership significantly shapes organizational culture, communication climate, and staff engagement, and can either promote unity or exacerbate divisions. Similarly, perceptions of fairness in the allocation of institutional resources—such as research funding, infrastructure, promotions, and professional development opportunities—are critical to building organizational trust and cohesion (Adams, 1965; Mbatha, 2016). When resource distribution is perceived as inequitable or politically motivated, it can foster in-group favoritism and out-group resentment, further fuelling factional tensions.

Despite the increasing relevance of these issues, few studies have empirically investigated how leadership style and perceived inequalities in resource allocation contribute to factionalism in Ghana's higher education institutions. This study sought to address this gap by examining leadership and resource allocation inequalities as key correlates of factionalism in public universities in Northern Ghana. The aim was to generate evidence-based insights to inform governance reforms, promote inclusivity, and foster more cohesive and collegial academic environments.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The study aimed to investigate the impact of leadership style and resource allocation inequalities on the prevalence of Factionalism in Public Universities in Northern Ghana.

1.3. Research Hypotheses

Based on the research gaps identified, the following hypotheses were proposed:

1. **H1:** There is a higher prevalence of factionalism in HEIs in Northern Ghana.
2. **H2:** Leadership style is significantly associated with the prevalence of factionalism in higher education institutions.
3. **H3:** Perceptions of resource allocation inequalities are significantly associated with the prevalence of factionalism in higher education institutions.
4. **H4:** The communication climate positively mediates the relationship between leadership, resource allocation, and factionalism in higher education institutions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The Social Identity Theory (SIT) posits that individuals categorize themselves and others into various social groups (e.g., ethnic, professional, ideological) and derive part of their self-concept from membership in these groups. This in-group identification often results in preferential treatment for in-group members and negative stereotyping of out-group members. In HEIs, leadership styles that appear to favor one group over others can strengthen these divisions and lead to factional conflict (Turner, 1987; Hogg, 2001). Similarly, resource allocation inequalities may give rise to factionalism.

SIT provides a valuable lens for understanding how factionalism arises and is sustained through leadership style and resource allocation. Staff and administrators in HEIs often align themselves along ethnic, political, regional, or bureaucratic lines, leading to the formation of competing factions. Research (Hogg, 2006; Ellemers, 2012) shows that these factional divisions are frequently reflected in struggles over leadership positions, resource allocation, and institutional decision-making behaviors consistent with in-group favoritism and out-group exclusion. The SIT is employed as a link to determine how staff in higher education institutions align themselves

with factional groupings and how leadership and resource allocation strengthen these divisions.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1. *Prevalence of Factionalism in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)*

Factionalism in higher education institutions is a growing concern across global contexts, although its manifestations and drivers vary significantly. Most empirical studies on this phenomenon have been concentrated in Western, Asian, and Southern African settings, where political, ideological, and organizational factors have been shown to contribute to internal divisions and institutional fragmentation.

In Western and Asian contexts, the rise of managerialism, academic capitalism, and internationalization has reshaped the landscape of university governance. Altbach (2016) observed that the shift toward corporate-style administrative models has weakened traditional collegial structures, encouraging competition among academic units for resources, visibility, and strategic influence. These changes often lead to the formation of power blocs and internal rivalries that resemble factional alignments, even if they are not labeled as such.

Similarly, Kezar (2018) analyzed how coalitions and interest groups form within universities—often along disciplinary, ideological, or administrative lines—to influence decision-making and resist reform. These groups tend to dominate strategic processes, obstruct institutional transformation, and reinforce mistrust and structural fragmentation. While these behaviors may stem from legitimate concerns over academic freedom or access to resources, they often deteriorate into entrenched factions that prioritize group interests over institutional unity.

In African contexts, empirical evidence suggests that ethnic, political, and patronage-based dynamics significantly influence the formation of factions within universities. For instance, Mohammed (2024) reported that in Ethiopian universities, leadership appointments frequently reflect ethnic considerations, resulting in the marginalization of minority groups and the formation of ethnic-based coalitions. Such exclusionary practices create environments of mistrust and weaken the legitimacy of institutional governance.

In South African HEIs, Omal, Ndofirepi, and Cross (2019) found that cronyism, favoritism, and elite capture are deeply embedded in university governance structures. These practices not only undermine transparency and accountability but also lead to the emergence of cliques and loyalist groups that compete for influence and resources, often at the expense of institutional integrity and cohesion. Habib (2001) similarly highlighted how governance councils in South Africa have become politicized spaces where competing factions negotiate for power, further weakening institutional harmony.

Factionalism is not limited to academic staff or senior management. Evidence from student governance structures also reveals similar patterns. A case study from Makerere University in Uganda demonstrated how student unions are frequently influenced by national political patronage, resulting in the emergence of student factions that mirror national political divisions. These divisions often spill over into academic and administrative units, reinforcing broader institutional tensions.

From a political science perspective, Boucek (2009) and Kerr (2024) provide a theoretical lens through which to understand factionalism. They define factions as dynamic, internally cohesive groups that form based on shared interests and identities, often in response to perceived marginalization or competition for resources. These factions evolve and may shift allegiances depending on institutional leadership changes, governance decisions, or external pressures.

The empirical findings converge on the notion that access to resources, leadership style, and governance structures are central to understanding the persistence and intensity of factionalism in HEIs. Institutions where leadership is perceived as exclusionary, opaque, or ethnically biased are more likely to experience internal divisions. Similarly, where resource allocation is viewed as inequitable or politicized, staff and student groups are likely to organize along identity or interest lines to protect or advance their access to institutional power and benefits.

The reviewed literature reveals that factionalism in HEIs is a widespread and multifaceted phenomenon influenced by governance reforms, leadership dynamics, political patronage, and resource distribution. While studies from Western and Asian contexts emphasize ideological and administrative sources of division, research in African settings points to ethnicization, political alignment, and favoritism as key drivers. Across these contexts, a common thread emerges: the perception of exclusion or inequality—whether in leadership, decision-making, or access to resources—fuels Factionalism.

However, empirical studies on factionalism in Ghanaian universities remain limited, particularly in the Northern

regions, where ethnic and regional diversity intersect with public university governance. Moreover, while literature acknowledges the role of leadership and resource allocation in fueling divisions, few studies have systematically examined the direct relationship between resource allocation inequalities and factionalism, especially within the unique sociocultural and political landscape of Northern Ghana.

This study, therefore, sought to fill this gap by investigating how perceived and actual inequalities in resource allocation, alongside leadership styles, contribute to the emergence, sustenance, and impact of factionalism in public universities in Northern Ghana. In doing so, it offers a contextually grounded and empirically robust contribution to the understanding of governance and conflict dynamics in African higher education institutions.

2.2.2. Determinants of Factionalism

Research suggests that several factors contribute to the formation of factional groupings in HEIs. Leadership style and resource allocation inequalities are contributory factors.

2.2.2.1. Leadership and Governance Styles

Leadership approaches and governance structures play a significant role in intensifying or mitigating factionalism. Baldridge (1971) posited that bureaucratic and hierarchical governance frameworks create space for competing interest groups to vie for institutional control. Akech (2011) argued that authoritarian leadership styles contribute to factionalism by reinforcing exclusionary practices and favoritism.

Feng and Lyu (2025) investigated the contingency mechanisms by which shared leadership can damage team performance. Based on team power conflict theory, they predicted that in high leadership distribution disparity or team external environment complexity, shared leadership will induce factionalism within the team member exchange network (TMX) and further impair team performance. Using a sample of 90 knowledge-based teams in China, they found that the TMX network EI index partially mediates the relationship between shared leadership and team performance. They further found that leadership distribution disparity and environment complexity moderate the mediating effect of the TMX network EI index.

Olabiya et al. (2024) examined how toxic leadership styles, particularly authoritarianism, cronyism, and self-serving practices, affect the experiences of academic staff in South African universities. They found that leaders often favour inner-circle staff, creating cliques and exclusive decision-making. The authors argue that toxic leadership fosters mistrust, silences dissent, and exacerbates divisions among staff—conditions that promote factionalism. Based on the findings, the authors concluded that authoritarian and exclusionary leadership styles are breeding grounds for factional grouping.

Zelege (2021) assessed the link between leadership style and institutional culture in public Universities of Ethiopia. Her findings suggest that transformational leadership was positively associated with participatory and developmental cultures. The researcher further found that laissez-faire leadership correlated with rigid, non-collaborative cultures—environments more prone to internal tensions and potential factionalism. Based on these findings, the author concluded that leadership style significantly shapes institutional culture and can either prevent or contribute to factional tendencies.

In the same vein, a study by Maduegbuna (2019) on leadership practices across three African universities aimed to understand how management approaches affect staff relationships and institutional functioning. The study revealed that leaders who employed autocratic or inconsistent leadership styles created tension, staff dissatisfaction, and a sense of exclusion. It further indicated that favouritism, patronage, and unclear decision-making processes led to staff aligning into informal groups, early signs of factionalism. The study concluded that the style of leadership determines whether institutions foster cohesion or fall into factional divisions.

Empirical evidence from Nigerian universities supports this view. Sunday and Ajayi (2009) observed that leaders who engage in nepotism or favoritism erode institutional cohesion and empower factional divisions. These findings highlight the role of leadership dynamics as a structural factor that contributes to factional behavior in university governance.

The above literature suggests that leadership style is a fundamental determinant of factionalism within higher education institutions. Across different contexts—from African universities to team-based organizations in Asia—authoritarian, exclusionary, autocratic, or inconsistent leadership practices have been consistently linked to the emergence and intensification of factional behavior. These leadership approaches foster favoritism, exclusion, cliques, and mistrust, which fragment institutional unity and erode collegial governance.

While most studies establish the link conceptually or qualitatively, few explore it empirically within the unique socio-political and cultural context of Northern Ghana. This study aimed to fill that gap by examining the relationship between factionalism and leadership style in Public Universities in Northern Ghana.

2.2.2.2. Resource allocation Inequalities

The scarcity of resources such as funding, promotions, and research opportunities also fuels factionalism. Altbach (2007) observed that competition for limited resources in African universities often leads to perceptions of bias in allocation, fostering mistrust and rivalry among academic groups.

Mensah and Owusu (2017), in a study of Ghanaian universities, found that inequitable distribution of research grants and development opportunities led to the formation of factions based on perceived favoritism. These dynamics reflect the operationalization of group-based conflicts, as outlined by Social Identity Theory, and demonstrate how institutional politics drive identity-based divisions.

Afolabi and Ijaiya (2023) investigated the impact of internal politics, ethnicity, and favoritism on allocation decisions in Nigerian universities. They found that leadership committees often manipulate allocations to favor specific ethnic, religious, or political groups. This, according to them, leads to marginalization of specific departments or individuals. Based on their findings, they concluded that organizational politics and unequal resource allocation generate distrust and fuel factionalism by creating perceived “winners” and “losers.”

Similarly, Asante and Aikins (2006) examined equity in resource allocation in the Ghanaian health sector, focusing on intra-regional resource allocation in Northern and Ashanti Regions. They found that allocations in the Northern region were somewhat equitable, whereas allocations in the Ashanti region were skewed over time. They claimed that regions perceived as neglected reported growing dissatisfaction. The findings suggest that inequitable distribution exacerbates regional and institutional divides, encouraging faction-like behavior.

Azoulay et. al. (2023) assessed the long-term disparities in research grant allocations by UKRI (UK Research and Innovation). The findings indicated that prestigious universities (e.g., Russell Group) consistently receive disproportionate funding. The findings further revealed that less-resourced institutions often feel sidelined, which reduces morale and hinders institutional collaboration. Thus, it can be inferred from the findings that resource inequity fuels institutional resentment and fragmentation, echoing factional dynamics.

The existing literature emphasizes the importance of equitable resource distribution in maintaining institutional trust, cohesion, and effective governance. Studies from diverse contexts—including Nigeria, Ghana's health sector, the UK, and Brazil—demonstrate that perceived or actual inequalities in the allocation of financial, infrastructural, and developmental resources often lead to resentment, intra-institutional tension, and the formation of rival groups. These dynamics mirror the core features of factionalism: in-group favoritism, out-group alienation, and competition for influence.

Importantly, this body of work demonstrates that resource allocation is not merely a technical process, but a political one, where power relations, institutional culture, and socio-political identities often influence decisions. Where leadership fails to ensure fairness, transparency, and inclusivity in resource distribution, factional divisions are likely to intensify.

Despite this growing body of evidence from multiple sectors and countries, few empirical studies have directly examined how resource allocation inequalities contribute to the emergence and persistence of factionalism within higher education institutions in Ghana, particularly in the Northern Region, where ethnic, regional, and political affiliations often influence organizational life.

2.2.3. The Mediating Role of Communication Climate in the Relationship between Leadership, Resource Allocation, and Factionalism in Higher Education Institutions.

Effective communication within higher education institutions (HEIs) is not merely an administrative function but a strategic enabler of cohesion, trust, and institutional stability. The communication climate—defined as the shared perceptions of openness, inclusivity, transparency, and responsiveness in organizational communication has emerged as a critical mediator in the relationship between leadership practices, resource allocation patterns, and factional tendencies.

Leadership styles significantly shape the nature and quality of internal communication. Transformational leaders, for instance, are often associated with open, participatory, and dialogic communication climates that encourage mutual respect and shared decision-making (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Kezar, 2018). In contrast, authoritarian or

autocratic leadership tends to foster closed, top-down communication channels that suppress feedback and breed frustration among staff (Olabiyi, Du Plessis, & Van Vuuren, 2024). Where institutional leaders are perceived as non-transparent or selectively communicative, stakeholders may feel alienated or marginalized, prompting the formation of informal networks and factions as alternative spaces for voice and solidarity.

Similarly, inequities in resource allocation, whether real or perceived, are intensified in environments where communication is poor or exclusive. When decisions regarding funding, promotions, or infrastructural development are communicated in opaque or inconsistent ways, staff may question the legitimacy of those decisions and infer favoritism or bias. This lack of clarity and dialogue fosters suspicion and grievance, often along existing lines of identity, such as ethnicity, department, or political affiliation. Over time, these divisions crystallize into factions, as marginalized individuals seek collective strength to counter perceived injustices.

Studies show that in HEIs, a favorable communication climate serves as a buffer against the adverse effects of both poor leadership and resource disparities. Kezar (2018) found that institutions with transparent and inclusive communication practices were better able to navigate reforms and minimize internal resistance, even in contexts of limited resources or contentious leadership decisions. Likewise, Maduegbuna (2019) highlighted that unclear or inconsistent communication around resource allocation and policy changes contributed to staff dissatisfaction and factional behavior in African universities.

Therefore, communication climate plays a mediating role by influencing how leadership styles and resource allocation decisions are perceived and internalized by institutional members. A constructive communication climate can mitigate the polarizing effects of perceived inequalities and enhance trust in leadership, thereby weakening the appeal or necessity of factional affiliation. Conversely, a toxic or exclusionary communication environment amplifies grievances, accelerates misinformation, and legitimizes factionalism as an alternative means of expression and influence.

In the context of public universities in Northern Ghana, where ethnic, regional, and political identities often intersect with administrative processes, the communication climate may be especially critical. Transparent and inclusive communication can help counteract the perception of bias in leadership or resource decisions, fostering a sense of shared purpose and institutional loyalty. Conversely, poor communication may reinforce existing fault lines, entrench mistrust, and escalate factional divides.

Conceptual Framework.

This study is guided by a conceptual framework that illustrates the link between factionalism and its key determinants, namely, leadership style and resource allocation. The framework, which is presented in Figure 1, is informed by both Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and empirical studies on organizational behavior in higher education (Altbach, 2007; Hogg, 2006; Tettey, 2006).

Factionalism is conceptualized as an organizational phenomenon where individuals or groups within a university form competing alliances based on ethnic, political, or ideological affiliations. These alliances often emerge from perceived inequities in resource distribution, leadership opportunities, and policy decisions.

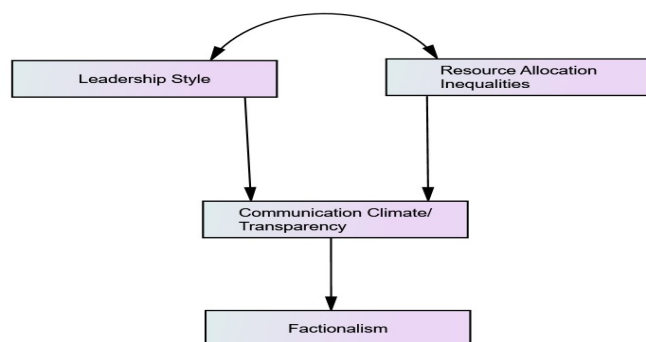


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

As illustrated in Figure 1, the conceptual framework diagram shows that leadership style and resource competition contribute to factionalism in higher education institutions, which is mediated by the communication

climate and transparency. The style of communication may either exacerbate or mitigate the phenomenon of higher education.

3.0. Methods and Materials

3.1. Research Approach

This study adopted a quantitative research approach to guide the collection and analysis of data. The choice of this approach was informed by the study's aim to quantify the prevalence of factionalism and examine its impact on staff morale and productivity within public universities in Northern Ghana. Quantitative methods are particularly suitable for identifying patterns, measuring relationships, and drawing generalizable conclusions from large datasets (Creswell, 2018; Babbie, 2021). By employing structured questionnaires, the study generated numerical data that reflected participants' experiences and perceptions. Moreover, the use of inferential statistical tools enabled the researcher to test hypotheses and establish correlations between factionalism and key staff outcomes, thereby enhancing the objectivity, reliability, and validity of the findings (Muijs, 2011; Bryman, 2016).

3.2 Research design

The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey design to guide data collection and analysis. This research design is particularly well-suited for studies that aim to observe, describe, and analyze phenomena as they exist at a specific point in time (Levin, 2006). It allows researchers to capture the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of a defined population without manipulating any variables, making it ideal for exploring naturally occurring relationships among variables (Setia, 2016). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the descriptive approach facilitates the systematic and objective description of a situation, while the cross-sectional nature of the design allows for the examination of relationships among variables across a sample at a single point in time. This design was, therefore, appropriate for the current study, as it enabled the researcher to assess the extent and implications of leadership style and resource allocation inequalities on factionalism within the institutional setting without altering the existing conditions.

3.3. Population and Sample

The target population for the study was all senior members of the three (3) public universities in Northern Ghana. The population of senior members at the three public universities is estimated at 2,200. The breakdown includes UDS (1,400), C.K.T-UTAS (318), and SD-Dombo (482). To determine the appropriate sample size for a cross-sectional survey of a population of 2,200, the researcher used the standard sample size calculation formula or Table based on the confidence level, margin of error, and population size (Israel, 1992; Cochran, 1977). Thus, for a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, the researcher sampled 327 respondents from a population of 2,200.

The proportionate stratified sampling technique was employed to sample from each of the universities. This technique ensured that each university was represented fairly in proportion to its size within the total population. First, the proportion each group represents in the total population of 2,200 was calculated:

1. UDS:
 $1400/2200 = 0.636 \rightarrow 63.6\%$
2. C.K.T-UTAS:
 $318/2200 = 0.1445 \rightarrow 14.5\%$
3. SD-Dombo:
 $482/2200 = 0.219 \rightarrow 21.9\%$

Applying those proportions to the target sample size of 327:

1. UDS: $0.636 \times 327 \approx 208$
2. C.K.T-UTAS: $0.145 \times 327 \approx 47$
3. SD-Dombo: $0.219 \times 327 \approx 72$

The final sample allocation is presented in the Table.

Table 1. Final Sample Allocation

University	Population	% of Total	Sample Size
UDS	1,400	63.6%	208
CKT-UTAS	318	14.5%	47
SD-Dombo	482	21.9%	72
Total	2,200	100%	327

In each of the universities, the proportionate sampling technique was adopted to sample male and female respondents. The final sample consisted of 206 male and 101 female staff.

3.4. Data Collection Instrument

The researcher employed a structured questionnaire for data collection. The questionnaire is ideally suited for cross-sectional designs because it facilitates the collection of data from a large population in a quick and efficient manner (Bryman, 2016). Self-administered, structured questionnaires are beneficial when investigating sensitive topics, as they reduce interviewer effects and enhance respondent confidentiality (Dillman, Smyth, & Christia, 2014). Additionally, the benefit of a structured questionnaire lies in the standardization of questions, which enables comparison between subgroups and facilitates statistical analysis of the data (Creswell, 2014).

The questionnaire comprised six sections. Section A focused on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while Section B assessed the prevalence of factionalism. Section C examined the predictors of factionalism, and Sections D to F explored the effects of factionalism on various staff outcomes. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (SD) to "Strongly Agree" (SA). The instrument was self-developed based on an extensive review of relevant literature on factionalism in institutional settings. To ensure its quality, the questionnaire underwent expert review, pilot testing, and assessments of both validity and reliability. Additionally, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to validate the construct structure and measurement properties further.

3.5. Piloting the Instrument.

Piloting the questionnaire is a crucial step in establishing the validity, reliability, and practicality of the data collection instrument. Conducting a pilot study allows the researcher to evaluate whether the questions are interpreted by respondents as intended and to identify any ambiguities or misunderstandings. Through piloting, the researcher was able to assess the reliability of the instrument—whether it consistently measured the intended variables—and its construct validity, ensuring the items accurately captured the underlying concepts being investigated. According to Creswell (2014), pilot testing is essential for refining research instruments and enhancing the logical soundness of the method. The pilot study also enabled adjustments to the questionnaire's format, timing, administration procedures, and overall data collection process to improve its effectiveness and usability in the main study.

3.6. Validity and Reliability Tests

To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the instrument, the researcher tested for its validity and reliability. For validity, the researcher tested for construct validity. Two forms of construct validity tests were carried out. They include convergent and discriminant validity. A convergent validity test was conducted to assess the extent to which multiple measures of constructs theoretically related to each other are indeed related (Geffen, Straub, and Boudreau, 2000). For instance, the multiple indicators measuring staff perceptions of the prevalence of factionalism were assessed under convergent validity to ascertain whether the indicators converged to measure the underlying construct (prevalence of factionalism). It was assessed using Average Variance extracted (AVE).

$$AVE = (\Sigma \text{Standardized Factor Loadings}^2) / (\Sigma \text{Standardized Factor Loadings}^2 + \Sigma \text{Error Variance})$$

Where:

- Standardized Factor Loadings = λ (lambda)
- Error Variance = $1 - \lambda^2$ for each item

The AVE indicates the proportion of the indicator variance that the latent variable can explain. An AVE greater than .50 provides empirical evidence for convergent validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). This implies that the construct explains at least 50% of the variance in its items, suggesting that the items share a high proportion of

variance in common and measure the same concept.

The discriminant validity test was performed to determine the degree to which the measures that should not be highly correlated with each other are distinct. Discriminant validity indicates the extent to which a given construct differs from other constructs (Anderson & Gerbig, 1988). For example, measures of the staff motivation construct should be completely distinct from those of the staff productivity construct. Fornell and Larcker (1981) recommended the shared variance approach for assessing the discriminant validity of constructs. The discriminant validity index was determined by taking the square root of the AVE. The formula is as follows:

For r_A and B , discriminant validity is established between A and B when

$$\sqrt{AVE_A} > r_{AB} \text{ and } \sqrt{AVE_B} > r_{BA}$$

Where:

- $\sqrt{AVE_A}$ is the square root of the Average Variance Extracted from Construct A .
- $\sqrt{AVE_B}$ is the square root of the Average Variance Extracted from Construct B .
- r_{AB} and r_{BA} is the correlation between Construct A and B .

Composite reliability (CR) was computed to assess the internal consistency of the latent constructs used in this study. Unlike Cronbach's alpha, which assumes equal factor loadings and may underestimate reliability, composite reliability accounts for the actual loadings of each item on its corresponding construct, providing a more accurate and robust measure of internal consistency (Hair et al., 2019; Raykov, 1997). CR values of 0.70 or higher are generally considered acceptable, indicating that the items consistently reflect the intended latent construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

3.7. Factor analysis

The purpose of the factor analysis was to reduce the large number of variables describing the prevalence of factionalism, intrapersonal conflicts, staff productivity, and motivation into fewer interpretable latent factors (Hair et al., 2010). The analysis followed two significant steps.

First, the factorability of the dataset was assessed using four indices: The Determinant, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. A small determinant (close to zero) indicates multicollinearity, suggesting redundancy among variables (Fabrigar et al., 1999; Field, 2013). The KMO index assesses the shared variance among variables; values between 0.8 and 1 suggest adequate sampling for factor analysis (Hair et al., 2010). Bartlett's Test checks whether the correlation matrix significantly differs from an identity matrix; a significant result ($p < .05$) supports factorability (Bartlett, 1954; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013; Field, 2013).

The second step was factor extraction. Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) was also used to reduce the data into a smaller number of components that explained most of the variance. PAF was appropriate due to the high intercorrelations among the variables and the exploratory nature of the study, which helped identify potential data structure.

4.0. Data collection procedure

The researcher notified the universities of his intention to conduct a study on factionalism in higher education institutions. After obtaining permission from the Registrars, the researcher proceeded to administer the questionnaire. He was assisted by four trained research assistants during the data collection exercise. The instrument was administered in the presence of the researcher and research assistants. Items that required further clarification were addressed.

4.1. Research ethics

All ethical considerations related to the research were thoroughly addressed. First, the researcher clearly explained the purpose of the study to the participants. The participants were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point, even after the initial

consent. The confidentiality of all research data was strictly maintained, and the anonymity of the respondents was upheld throughout the study.

Additionally, all sources cited in the literature review have been duly acknowledged. The researcher also utilized artificial intelligence (AI) tools solely for proofreading purposes and correcting grammatical errors without compromising the integrity or originality of the work.

4.2. Data Analysis Procedure

The researcher employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to investigate the predictors of factionalism, as well as the effect of factionalism on staff productivity and motivation. SEM is a powerful statistical tool that helps enhance our understanding of complex relationships by combining different types of data analysis techniques. It is beneficial because it can show both direct effects, such as how one variable leads directly to another, and indirect effects, where the relationship is more complex. Due to its strengths, the SEM was selected as the most suitable research method. The data were thoroughly reviewed to ensure their appropriateness for SEM analysis. This step was crucial to ensure the accuracy of our analysis. The processes included several key activities:

1. *Handling Missing Data.* Variables with too much missing data were removed entirely from the analysis. For other variables with fewer than three missing data points, various techniques were employed to fill in the gaps accurately.
2. *Checking for Normality:* The researcher ensured that the data followed a pattern that allowed for proper statistical analysis. The researcher performed this analysis by examining measures of shape (skewness) and peakedness (kurtosis) as well as conducting a specific test called the Q-Q test of normality.
3. *Identifying Outliers:* The researcher used the Mahalanobis distance to identify data points that were significantly different from others. These outliers could skew the analysis if not appropriately handled. No extreme outliers were found.

4.3. Confirming the Model

After preparing the data, we conducted a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to assess how well our proposed model fits the data. Several fit indices were checked:

1. Chi-square (χ^2) and degrees of freedom (df): evaluate the model's goodness of fit by comparing it to the observed data.
2. The comparative fit index (CFI): Assesses fit quality while adjusting for model complexity.
3. The Tucker-Lewis index (TLI): Another measure of model fit that accounts for model complexity.
4. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is a parameter that estimates how well the model fits the data in the population.

4.4. Testing Relationship Paths

Once the model was validated, we tested the hypothesis relationships. This stage involved analysing the standardized path coefficients (β) and assessing their significance using p-values. We also examined R^2 values to determine how well one variable predicted another. To ensure robustness, we employed bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples to test the reliability of direct, indirect, and total effects.

5.0 Results and Discussion

5.1 Results of the exploratory factor analysis

Suitability of Data for EFA (Factorability of Data): The researcher initially screened the data for univariate outliers. The study did not identify any extreme outliers. To assess the suitability of the data for factor analysis, the researcher conducted several tests: the determinant of the correlation matrix, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The study found the determinant of the correlation to be 0.038, which is higher than the commonly accepted threshold of 0.0001 (Field, 2018), indicating low multicollinearity among the variables.

The KMO measure was 0.709, which exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.6 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013), suggesting that the correlations between the variables were sufficient for factor analysis. Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant, $\chi^2(78) = 633.27$, $p < .001$, indicating that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix and that factor analysis was appropriate. Furthermore, the diagonals of the anti-image correlation matrix were all greater than 0.5, indicating that each item in the constructs shared some common variance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The commonalities for all items were greater than 0.5, further confirming the suitability of the data for exploratory factor analysis.

Factor analysis: The 20 questionnaire items went through exploratory factor analysis. The research employed Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) as the extraction method to identify six factors. The researcher removed seven (7) items to improve upon the 4-factor model. PFU4 (Decision-making is influenced by group loyalty rather than merit), LGS4 (Nepotism and favoritism are common in leadership appointments), PCS3 (Leaders encourage honest feedback from all units.), PCS4(When conflicts arise, the institution provides platforms for resolution through open discussion.) and PRAI2(Recruitment and training opportunities are not based on merit) were removed because they had loadings of less than .40. The researcher also removed PRAI6(Promotion opportunities are not equally accessible to all eligible staff) because it had a strong cross-loading with items on the staff productivity construct. The remaining 13 items were condensed into four factors, as demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Factor Loadings

Code	Variable	Factor	Loading
PFU1	Staff tend to form informal alliances based on identity or background.	Prevalence of Factionalism	.833
PFU2	There is a culture of “us versus them” among employees.		.698
PFU3	Staff are divided along ethnic, political, or ideological lines.		.591
LGS1	The Governance structure does not promote inclusiveness in decision-making	Leadership and governance style	.722
LGS3	Leadership favors certain groups or individuals over others		.687
LGS5	Leadership actions often create divisions among staff.		.831
PRAI1	Resource distribution in this institution favours certain departments or groups over others.	Perceived resource allocation inequalities	.594
PRAI3	Access to research funding is biased toward a particular group or faculty		.607
PRAI4	Infrastructure and logistics are unevenly distributed across faculties/departments.		.806
PRAI5	Resource allocation decisions are often made without transparency.		.830
PCS1	Communication between management and staff is clear and respectful.	Perceived communication style/Climate	.778
PCS2	Differences in opinion are handled constructively through dialogue.		.875
PCS5	Poor communication can sometimes exacerbate divisions within an institution.		.767

Results of the validity and reliability tests

The researcher assessed convergent and discriminant validity using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and the square root of the AVE, respectively. The researcher evaluated composite reliability using SPSS Software version 14. Table 3 shows the results.

Table 3. Results of the Validity and Reliability Test

Indicator	Latent Variable	Standardized Loading	AVE	Alpha	Composite Reliability
PFU1	Prevalence of Factionalism 1	.833	0.8389	0.9159	0.601
PFU2	Prevalence of Factionalism 2	.698			
PFU3	Prevalence of Factionalism 3	.591			
LGS1	Leadership & Governance 1	.722	0.8634	0.9291	0.701
LGS3	Leadership & Governance 3	.687			
LGS5	Leadership & Governance 5	.831			
PRAI1	Resource Allocation 1	.594	0.8396	0.9163	0.713
PRAI3	Resource Allocation 3	.607			
PRAI4	Resource Allocation 4	.806			
PRAI5	Resource Allocation 5	.830			
PCS1	Communication Style 1	.778	0.8977	0.9474	0.724
PCS2	Communication Style 2	.875			
PCS5	Communication Style 5	.767			

As shown in Table 3, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.839 to 0.897. According to Bagozzi and Yi (1988), an AVE greater than 0.50 provides empirical evidence of convergent validity, indicating that a construct explains at least 50% of the variance in its indicators. The result suggests that the items share a high proportion of variance and consistently measure the same underlying concept. Based on this guideline, the AVE results in this study were considered acceptable.

Regarding discriminant validity, the square root of the AVE for each construct should exceed its correlations with other constructs. The results confirmed that the square root of each construct's AVE was greater than its correlations with other constructs, indicating adequate discriminant validity. In addition, the factor loadings were all significant and demonstrated minimal cross-loadings, further supporting discriminant validity. Specifically, each item loaded more highly on its intended construct than on any other construct.

The composite reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.601 to 0.724. According to Hair et al. (2010), CR values between 0.60 and 0.70 are acceptable in exploratory research. Given the exploratory nature of this study, the observed CR values were deemed appropriate and indicative of acceptable internal consistency.

5.2 Confirmation of the Measurement Model

The researcher conducted confirmatory factor Analysis (CFA) on the measurement model to assess the fit of our proposed model to the data. The researcher evaluated the model using various fit indices. The model demonstrated an acceptable fit to the data: $\chi^2 (145.086) = 84$, $p = 0.024$; RMSEA = 0.050, CFI = 0.906, TLI = 0.901, NFI = 0.815. The results indicate that the model provided a good representation of the data. Figure 2 shows the model graphically.

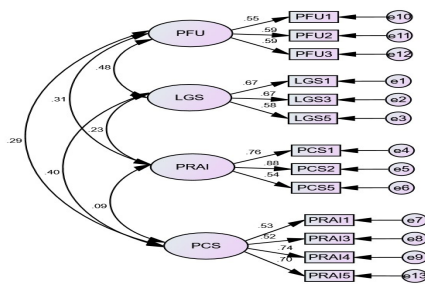


Figure 2. Measurement Model for the Relationship among Factionalism, Leadership Style, and Resource Allocation Inequalities.

Hypothesis H1: *There is a higher prevalence of Factionalism in HEIs in Northern Ghana.* This hypothesis sought to determine the level of prevalence of factionalism in HEIs in Northern Ghana. A 4-point Likert scale with five items was used to assess the level of prevalence of factionalism. The scores of the 4-point Likert scale were summed up (1+2+3+4) and divided by the number of responses (5) to get the test value of 2. Then, the mean scores of all the items were summed up and divided by the number of responses to get the mean of means. A mean of means scores higher than the test value (2) was considered a higher level of prevalence, while a mean of means scores below two was considered a low level of prevalence of factionalism. The results are presented in Table 4.

Item	Description	Mean	Std. Deviation
PFU1	Staff tend to form informal alliances based on identity or background.	3.0350	.85876
PFU2	There is a culture of “us versus them” among employees	2.9550	.86992
PFU3	Staff are divided along ethnic, political, or ideological lines.	2.7450	.91332
PFU4	I have observed open or covert conflict between factions in the institution.	2.7300	.91723
PFU5	Factional groupings influence key administrative decisions.	2.6450	1.03165
Mean of Means		2.823	0.9181

Table 4. Prevalence of Factionalism in HEIs

As presented in Table 4, the overall mean score ($M = 2.823$, $SD = 0.918$) out of a maximum of 4 indicates a relatively high prevalence of factionalism in higher education institutions (HEIs). This mean exceeds the test value of 2, suggesting that staff generally perceive factionalism as a significant issue within their institutions. A closer examination of the individual items reveals that all mean scores exceeded the threshold of 2, further reinforcing the conclusion that factional groupings are prevalent across the sampled HEIs.

This pattern supports the view that staff in HEIs, particularly in the Northern Regions of Ghana, tend to align themselves with socio-political and ethnic factions. Such affiliations may be motivated by perceived or actual advantages in areas such as promotions, appointments, or resource allocation. Alternatively, these alignments may emerge as a response to perceived deficiencies in transparency and effective communication from university leadership.

These findings align with the core assumptions of Social Identity Theory, which posits that individuals derive part of their identity from group membership, often resulting in in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination. They are also consistent with prior studies. For instance, Gyimah-Boadi (2004) and Moja (2000) documented how academic and administrative staff frequently affiliate with political or ethnic groups, influencing decision-making, appointments, and career advancement processes. Similarly, Tettey (2006) found that ethnic considerations significantly influence administrative appointments in Ghanaian universities, leading to perceptions of favoritism and marginalization. These dynamics contribute to the entrenchment of group identities and positions, thereby fueling factional tensions.

The implications of factionalism are far-reaching. It undermines trust, disrupts effective governance, and strains interpersonal and intergroup relations within academic environments (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Jehn, 1995). Its manifestations include interpersonal conflict, reduced staff morale, and diminished motivation, productivity, and organizational commitment (Hogg, 2001; Brewer & Venaik, 2011; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Given these consequences, HEIs in the Northern Regions must take deliberate steps to reduce factionalism and promote inclusive and transparent institutional cultures.

Research Hypothesis H2: Governance/Leadership style is significantly associated with the prevalence of factionalism in higher education institutions.

Research Hypothesis H3: Perceptions of resource allocation are significantly associated with the prevalence of factionalism in higher education institutions.

Hypotheses H2 and H3 examined the associations among governance styles, perceived resource allocation inequalities, and the prevalence of factionalism in higher education institutions. Specifically, Hypothesis H2 investigated whether the leadership or governance styles of university management are significantly associated with the prevalence of factionalism within the university. Conversely, Hypothesis H3 explored whether perceptions of inequality in resource allocation are significantly related to the occurrence of factionalism in higher education institutions. Both exogenous and endogenous variables were measured on a scale. To test these hypotheses, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed; Figures 2 and 5 present the results.

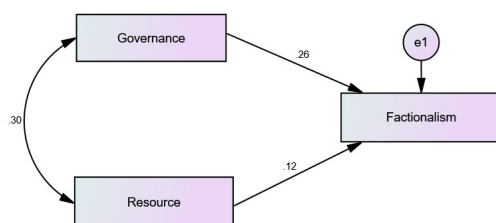


Figure 2. Path model for the association between governance style and resource allocation Inequalities and Factionalism.

According to the path model (Figure 2), governance or leadership style in the university predicts factionalism with a coefficient of 0.26, whereas resource allocation inequality predicts factionalism with a coefficient of 0.12. The significance of these path coefficients is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Regression Model for Factionalism, Governance/Leadership Style, and Resource Allocation Inequalities

Endogenous	Path	Exogenous	β	SE.	CR.	P
Factionalism	<---	Governance/leadership Style	.261	.067	3.712	***
Factionalism	<---	Resource allocation inequalities	.121	.050	1.715	***

*** Significant, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .08$

The results in Table 5 indicate that 8% of the variance in factionalism is explained by the combined effect of governance/leadership style, as well as resource allocation inequalities, in public universities. The structural model revealed a significant positive effect of governance or leadership style on factionalism, $\beta = .261$, $SE = 0.067$, $p < .05$. Although statistically significant, 92% of the variance remains unexplained, suggesting that other unmeasured factors (e.g., organizational culture, external political influence, and communication climate, ethnic or regional dynamics) may also play a role. This path suggests that poor or ineffective governance and leadership styles contribute significantly to the formation or intensification of factionalism within universities. The finding is consistent with Maduegbuna (2019), who found that leadership characterized by favouritism, patronage, and unclear decision-making processes led to staff aligning into informal groups—early signs of factionalism. Similarly, Olabiye et al. (2024) examined how toxic leadership styles—particularly authoritarianism, cronyism, and self-serving practices—affect academic staff experiences in South African universities. They found that leaders often favour inner-circle staff, creating cliques and exclusive decision-making.

The results of this current study underscore the importance of governance practices in shaping institutional cohesion. The significant positive association between governance style and factionalism implies that when university leadership is perceived as autocratic, exclusionary, or inconsistent, the likelihood of factional alignments among staff increases. Although the model explains a modest proportion of the variance in factionalism (8%), the results underscore the critical need for leadership reforms and equitable governance mechanisms to promote unity and mitigate factional divides in public universities.

The structural model further reveals that perceptions of resource allocation inequalities have a significant positive effect on factionalism ($\beta = .121$, $SE = 0.050$, $p < .05$). Although the effect size is modest, the finding suggests that disparities in how resources—such as funding, infrastructure, office space, or academic opportunities—are distributed can contribute to the formation and intensification of factional groupings within higher education institutions. This supports Tetey's (2006) assertion that unequal access to institutional resources often fuels resentment among staff and reinforces ethnic or political loyalties. When staff perceive that resources are inequitably allocated, often along ethnic, political, or regional lines, they may gravitate toward factions that advocate for their interests or offer a sense of collective protection and bargaining power.

This finding is also consistent with Social Identity Theory, which posits that individuals are motivated to affiliate with groups that enhance their self-esteem and status (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In contexts where institutional resource allocation is perceived as biased, group membership becomes a strategic and psychological tool for managing disadvantage and securing opportunities. Moja (2000) and Gyimah-Boadi (2004) similarly highlight how systemic inequalities in African HEIs drive identity-based alliances, which in turn influence organizational cohesion and decision-making.

The implication is that addressing factionalism in HEIs cannot be separated from promoting equity and transparency in the distribution of institutional resources. Universities in the Northern Regions of Ghana, therefore, need to prioritize fairness, accountability, and participatory budgeting practices to reduce perceptions of favoritism and to foster a more inclusive institutional climate.

Hypothesis H4: *Communication Climate positively mediates the relationship between Leadership, Resource Allocation, and Factionalism in Higher Education Institutions.*

This study examined the extent to which communication style mediates the relationship between governance style, resource allocation inequalities, and factionalism in public universities in Northern Ghana. Using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), the standardized direct, indirect, and total effects were analyzed to assess the hypothesized relationships. Figure 3 and Table 6 show the results.

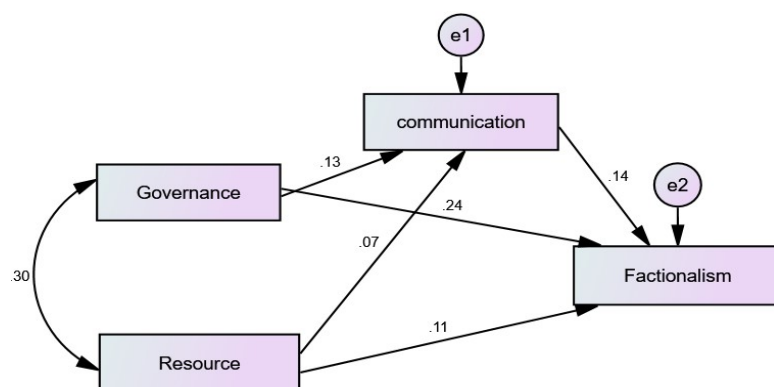


Figure 3. Model for the relationship among Factionalism, Resource allocation inequalities, and Governance Style Mediated by Communication Climate

Table 6. Model for the relationship among Factionalism, Resource allocation inequalities, and Governance Style Mediated by Communication Climate

Path	Direct effect (β)	Indirect effect (β)	Total effect (β)
Resource $\rightarrow$ Communication	0.071	0.000	0.071
Governance $\rightarrow$ Communication	0.131	0.000	0.131
Resource $\rightarrow$ Factionalism	0.111	0.010	0.121
Governance $\rightarrow$ Factionalism	0.243	0.019	0.261
Communication $\rightarrow$ Factionalism	0.14	0.000	0.123

Note: All direct effects are statistically significant at $p < .05$.

5.3. Direct Effects

The findings of this study reveal that both governance style and resource allocation inequalities have significant direct effects on the prevalence of factionalism in higher education institutions. Specifically, governance style demonstrated a moderate direct effect on factionalism ($\beta = 0.243$), while resource allocation inequalities exhibited a more negligible but still significant direct effect ($\beta = 0.111$). These results affirm earlier studies that have established a direct link between weak or authoritarian leadership and the rise of factions within academic institutions (Tettey, 2006; Tierney, 2008). In contexts where governance lacks transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability, factions may form as coping mechanisms or resistance strategies by marginalized groups within the institution.

Moreover, the significant effect of resource allocation practices on factionalism resonates with findings by Mamdani (2007) and Balogun (2003), who argue that perceptions of unfairness in the distribution of institutional resources (such as funding, office spaces, or research opportunities) can fuel grievances and identity-based alignments, thereby intensifying organizational fragmentation. In such cases, individuals or groups may mobilize around ethnic, regional, or political lines to advocate for their interests, creating fertile ground for factionalism.

Both governance style ($\beta = 0.131$) and resource allocation inequalities ($\beta = 0.071$) also exhibited significant direct effects on communication style. This supports the argument by Kezar and Eckel (2004) that institutional leadership directly shapes the internal communication climate through its practices, tone, and decision-making structures. Poor leadership often creates opaque, top-down communication systems that discourage dialogue and feedback, thereby intensifying organizational mistrust. Conversely, participatory and inclusive governance styles tend to foster open communication, mitigating the risk of factional divides.

Importantly, communication itself demonstrated a substantial direct effect on factionalism ($\beta = 0.243$), underscoring its critical role in either reinforcing or mitigating divisions. This finding aligns with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which suggests that communication processes influence how group identities are formed, perceived, and acted upon. Where communication is exclusionary or inconsistent, individuals are more likely to interpret organizational events through an "us-versus-them" lens, heightening factionalism.

5.4 Indirect Effects

Although smaller in magnitude, the indirect effects provide additional insight into the mediating role of communication. The indirect effect of resource allocation inequalities on factionalism was $\beta = 0.010$, while the indirect effect of governance style on factionalism was $\beta = 0.018$, both mediated through communication. These findings, while modest, are theoretically significant. They suggest that the influence of governance and resource allocation on factionalism is not solely a function of direct impacts, but is also partially shaped by how these structures affect internal communication climates. This aligns with the work of Bolman and Deal (2017), who note that dysfunctional communication patterns often emerge in environments where leadership and resource policies are perceived as unfair, thereby reinforcing perceptions of exclusion and motivating collective resistance.

The mediating role of communication also receives support from the work of Scott and Davis (2007), who argue that communication serves as both a reflection and a mechanism of organizational power dynamics. Thus, even when governance structures appear neutral or technocratic, how decisions are communicated (or not communicated) can amplify or suppress factional tendencies.

5.5 Total Effects

When examining the total effects, which capture both direct and indirect pathways, governance style emerges as the most influential factor on factionalism ($\beta = 0.261$), followed by communication ($\beta = 0.261$) and resource allocation inequalities ($\beta = 0.121$). These findings reinforce the central thesis that both structural and relational dynamics within HEIs contribute significantly to the emergence and perpetuation of factionalism. Taken together, the total effects highlight that governance structures and communication patterns are deeply intertwined in shaping the social fabric of universities. They influence not only how resources are distributed but also how identities are formed, decisions are contested, and factions are mobilized.

The findings of this study underscore the primacy of structural and institutional factors—particularly governance and resource distribution—in explaining Factionalism in Ghanaian higher education. The significant positive effects of governance and resource allocation on factionalism are consistent with the literature. Scholars such as Tetey (2006), Moja (2000), and Gyimah-Boadi (2004) have highlighted the influence of politicized governance and ethnically skewed appointments on internal divisions within universities. These divisions often manifest as factions based on shared identities or strategic interests, particularly in environments characterized by competition for limited resources and a perception of injustice.

The findings also align with the core tenets of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which asserts that individuals derive part of their identity and sense of belonging from group membership. In contexts where governance is perceived as biased or where resource distribution favors certain groups, staff members are more likely to gravitate toward in-groups (factions) for protection, advocacy, and influence. This fosters in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination, deepening institutional divisions.

This may reflect the entrenched nature of mistrust and structural inequalities in these institutions, where even transparent communication cannot substitute for institutional reform. As such, improving communication may enhance transparency, but it must be paired with substantive changes in governance and resource allocation practices to reduce factionalism significantly.

6.0. Conclusion

The study sought to investigate the effect of leadership style and resource allocation inequalities on the prevalence of factionalism in higher education institutions in the Northern Region of Ghana. Based on the findings, the study concludes that there is a higher prevalence of factionalism in the three (3) public universities in Northern Ghana. Leadership style and inequalities in resource allocation significantly engender factionalism. Communication climate exerts a modest but theoretically meaningful mediating role in the relationship between governance, resource allocation inequalities, and factionalism.

7.0. Implications and Recommendations

The study offers practical and policy implications, highlighting the need for inclusive and participatory governance models, equitable and transparent resource allocation frameworks, and deliberate investment in strengthening internal communication systems to mitigate the incidence of factionalism. Based on these insights, the study recommends that university leadership prioritize training in inclusive and transformational leadership, ensure fairness in resource distribution, and institutionalize mechanisms for two-way communication and

grievance redress.

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