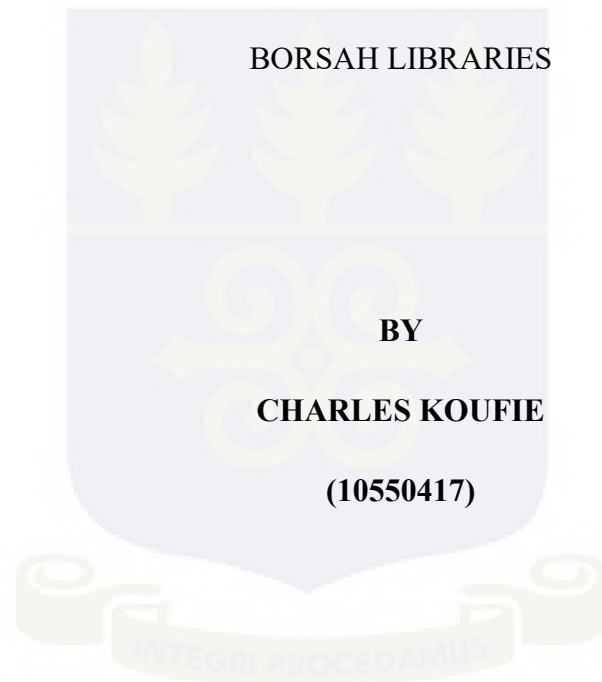


**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION STUDIES**

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN GHANA: A  
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SAM JONAH, OSAGYEFO AND JOHN KOFI**



**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,  
LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR  
THE AWARD OF MPhil INFORMATION STUDIES DEGREE**

**JULY 2018**

**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

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## ABSTRACT

Academic libraries, like any other organizations, are likely to encounter conflicts. This survey identified common, causes and types of conflicts encountered by Sam Jonah, Osagyefo and John Kofi Borsah Libraries and examined the conflicts management techniques employed in managing them. The sample for this study was made of two hundred and sixteen respondents selected from three academic libraries through the census sampling method. The study was a descriptive survey. A validated questionnaire and an interview guide were designed and administered to collect data on the occurrence of conflicts and conflicts management strategies. The data collected was analyzed using frequency counts and percentages and content thematic analysis.

The findings revealed that the main sources of conflicts were sharing of limited library resources, different interpretation of an individual's roles or responsibilities, poor communication channels, lack of respect because of position or rank, resistance to change at workplace, refusal to perform workplace duty, unrealized expectations, pressure to finish work on time, few people taking decisions for the staff, performing duty alone or one man's work or "good face", unclear lines of authority, territorial encroachments, interaction patterns, and lack of job experience by the supervisors.

Again, the study revealed that the library management and the members of staff of the academic libraries most often employed avoidance, accommodation, collaboration, compromise and competition as conflict management strategies, though some strategies were more dominant in particular academic library. Based on the findings, it is recommended that academic libraries should give prompt attention to causes of conflicts and their management strategies.

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**DEDICATION**

To my lovely wife, Efua Sekyiwah Koufie and my children, Josephine Glendoline

Ayeyi Koufie and Elizabeth Wendrine Adom Koufie

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDMENT	iv
DEDICATION	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Location of the Study	5
1.2.1 University of Cape Coast (UCC)	5
1.2.2 University of Education, Winneba (UEW)	8
1.2.3 Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU)	10
1.3 Statement of the Problem	12
1.4 Purpose of the Study	14
1.5 Research Objectives	14
1.6 Theoretical Framework	14
1.7 The Structural Conflict Theory	15
1.8 Human Needs Theory of Conflict	17
1.9 Scope of the Study	19
1.10 Significance of the Study	19

1.11 Ethical Considerations	20
1.12 Description of Chapters	20
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	22
2.0 Introduction	22
2.2 Types of Conflict	25
2.3 Causes of Conflict	30
2.4 Effects of Conflict	42
2.5 Prevention of Conflicts	47
2.6 Conflict Management	50
2.7 Summary of the Literature	64
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	66
3.0 Introduction	66
3.1 Research Design	66
3.2 Selection of Cases	69
3.3 Selection of Subjects	70
3.3.1 Population	70
3.3.2 Sample Size and Sampling Technique	71
3.4 Instrumentation	72
3.5 Pilot Testing	75
3.6 Data Collection Procedure	75
3.7 Data Analysis	75
3.7.1 Quantitative Analysis	76
Qualitative Analysis	77

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	79
4.0 Introduction	79
4.1 Biographic Data	79
4.1.1 Gender of the Respondents	80
4.1.2 Age Distribution of Respondents	81
4.1.3 Education Levels of the Respondents	82
4.1.4 Category of Staff	85
4.1.5 Years of Service	86
4.2 Distribution on Types of Conflicts	88
4.3 Causes of Conflicts	93
4.4 Effects of Unmanaged Conflicts	101
4.5 Preventive Measures of Conflicts	108
4.3 Findings from Qualitative Analysis	116
4.3.1 Types of Conflicts in Academic Libraries in Ghana	116
4.3.2 Causes of Conflicts in Academic Libraries	118
4.3.3 Effects of Conflicts in Academic Libraries	120
4.3.4 Prevention of Conflicts in Academic Libraries	121
4.3.5 Mechanisms used to Manage Conflicts in Academic Libraries	122
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS OF THE STUDY	123
5.0 Introduction	123
5.1 Biographic Data	123
5.2 Distribution on Types of Conflicts	125
5.3 Causes of Conflicts in Academic Libraries	128

5.4 Effects of Unmanaged Conflicts in Academic Libraries	134
5.5 Preventive Measures of Conflicts in Academic Libraries	140
5.6 Conflict Management Strategies in Academic Libraries	144
CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	148
6.0 Introduction	148
6.1 Summary of the Study	148
6.2 Conclusion	151
6.3 Recommendations	152
BIBLIOGRAPHY	154
APPENDIX A	172
APPENDIX B	181

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Study Population and Sample	71
2 Gender of the Respondents	80
3 Age of the Respondents	81
4 Education Levels of the Respondents	83
5 Years of Service of the Respondents	86
6 Distribution on Types of Conflicts	89
7 Causes of Conflicts	93
8 Effects of Unmanaged Conflicts	102
9 Preventive Measures of Conflicts	108
10 Conflict Management Strategies	113

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 Category of Staff	85

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Conflict is generally inevitable and can be experienced in all spheres of life. This is because no two human beings are so exactly alike that they can think and act the same way or agree on everything all the time. It is these differences in human beings that make educational institution inevitable of conflicts (Arthur, 2009). Fortunately, most human beings can be persuaded on course. This reality, notwithstanding, is also a fact that the way and manner which differences may be addressed can be difficult for any individual or group having to work in a conflict situation.

Conflict is like a two-edge sword and the way it may be handled determines its outcome. Conflict may bring about either development or progress or negative and devastating consequences in the society. Conflict in an organization can range from trivial to tragic and may occur within the individual, between people and groups. As people come together to satisfy a wide range of emotional needs, social relations in general are swamped with conflict. People interact; deal with differences as well as similarities; with strong dislikes as well as attractions.

Conflict, dispute and disagreement are part of life, so are the feelings that go along with them-hurt, anger, frustration, resentment and or disappointment, especially when individuals are engaged in competition. It is as results from our shared culture orientations regarding competition and getting ahead. Conflict is

always seen among individuals and organizations as well. Tertiary institutions in Ghana, especially University of Cape Coast (UCC), University of Education, Winneba, and Cape Coast Technical University libraries, are always prone to conflicts because human relations are very important. According to Hellriegel, Slocum & Woodman (1995), conflict is difficult to define because it occurs in many different settings. They further add that the fundamental nature of the conflict seems to be disagreement, contradiction or incompatibility.

Baker, Kathy, Kittie & Robert (2001) argue that a potential for conflict exists whenever and wherever people have contact with one another. They add that as people are organized into groups to seek a common goal, the probability of conflicts greatly increases since individuals may dislike certain people with whom they come into frequent contacts. There can be disagreements with family members, friends and co-workers and even, with people we meet for the first time. These conflict situations appear with frequency in daily, public and private life and may be either on a small or large scale. The devastating consequence of conflicts does not affect the individual alone, but the whole society. Conflict is not just a problem for development, but a threat to human life.

During conflicts and civil wars, society diverts some of the meaningful resources from production to violent areas (Stern, 2003). This existence of conflict may be triggered by ethnic, racial, religious and economic differences or may arise from differences in values, beliefs and attitudes regarding issues. The parties to conflict may be individuals or groups and for an organization to bring together diverse individuals and groups, it is bound to provide grounds for conflicts of many kinds.

According to Schein (1965), problems exist because as groups become more committed to their own goals and norms, they are likely to become competitive with one another and seek to undermine their rivals' activities.

Mullins (2005) sees conflict as "behavior intended to obstruct the achievement of some other person's goals". This seems to be in congruence with Robbins (1993) assertion that conflict is the act that arises when two or more parties have incompatible interests or goals. This means that conflict occurs as a result of our own actions and inactions. Based on the definitions above, a working definition has been coined by the researcher who sees conflict as a disagreement that occurs in an individual (intrapersonal), between individuals or groups (interpersonal) and among organizations in an attempt to discharge their daily activities or achieve a set goal.

It is obvious that not all conflicts are bad and not all co-operations are good (Robinson 1972). Some people turn to view conflict as a negative force operating against the successful completion of the groups' goals while others view conflict as a tool that brings about development and progress in an organization. It would be expedient to distinguish the different views people hold about conflict. Psychologists are of the view that human beings are need-driven, goal oriented individuals who aim at achieving desirable goals and it is not surprising that most conflicts are goal driven (Beebe, Beebe & Redmond 1999).

Traditionalists, coming from the organizational point of view, see conflict as an evidence of breakdown in the efforts of management to halt certain practices in an

organization. Marxists, adding to the view of the traditionalists, perceive conflict as a necessary way of establishing revolutionary changes in an organization. There are also the Pluralists who see conflict as a natural phenomenon that is found in any organization or institution.

This view depicts conflict as something one has to come to terms with because it is an inevitable and cannot be eliminated. From the above mentioned views, it can be concluded that conflict is not necessarily as wasteful as some may see it, but a normal process by which socially valuable differences register themselves for the enrichment of concern. The potential positive outcomes of conflict, such as providing feedback, indicating the need for change, making supervisors aware of problems and increasing motivation are being recognized (Arthur, 2009).

Wright and Noe (1996) point out that because conflict is usually uncomfortable; people tend to think of it as bad. They are, however, of the view that if people handle conflict with mutual respect and trust and achieve an outcome that is favorable to the organization, conflict can be a positive force.

Dissatisfaction among staff members and the library users has led to tensions and confrontations. These tensions and confrontations have weakened effective communication processes in that each party (staff members, library users) in conflict, lacks clear and unambiguous information regarding the others' point of view, something which is necessary requirement for effective co-existence. In addition, when staff members or library users or clients study a problem together,

they often assume that with the same facts at everyone's disposal, they should all agree on a single analysis.

This is not so, disagreement is even more likely when it is considered that in addition to natural differences stemming from an individual's background, there are other issues brought about by a range of other dimensions. These dimensions can be seen from the micro; interpersonal level through to the macro; groups such as organizations, communities and nations. Interestingly, because organizations and institutions have a greater number of people, these areas tend to be fertile grounds where conflict of many kinds are witnessed and felt. It should, therefore, not be surprising that conflict is common in institutions and for that matter, institutions of higher learning.

Hence, clearly, there is the need for face lifting of managing these conflicts in Africa, especially academic libraries in Ghana such as Sam Jonah of University of Cape Coast, Osagyefo of University of Education, Winneba, and John Kofi Borsah of Cape Coast Technical University so as to project the overwhelming impacts of conflicts.

## **1.2 Location of the Study**

### **1.2.1 University of Cape Coast (UCC)**

The University of Cape Coast (UCC), which is one of the largest universities in Ghana, was inaugurated in December, 15, 1962, as a University College and placed in a special relationship with the University of Ghana. According to (UCC Calendar 1971-1974 as cited in Alemna, 1994), University of Cape Coast is the

third university in Ghana, established basically as an institution for the training of educationalists and teachers.

The University of Cape Coast is found in Cape Coast, the first capital of Ghana, in the Central Region of Ghana. It is found along Accra-Takoradi road in the coastal zone that is the southern part of Ghana. The University was formally called University College of Cape Coast. On October, 1, 1971, the University attained the status of a full and independent university with the authority to confer its own degrees, diplomas, and certificates by an Act of Parliament-University of Cape Coast Act 1971 (Act 390) and subsequently, the UCC Law 1992 (PNDC Law 278) (UCC Corporate Strategy, 2012-2017). The formal relationship with the University of Ghana was thus terminated (Dwarko and Kwarteng, 2003). The University, which commenced with about 155 students, now, has students population of over 30,000.

The main purpose for the establishment of University of Cape Coast was to train graduate teachers for second cycle institutions, such as training colleges, secondary and technical institutions. The vision that the University seeks to achieve is to be a pivot of academic excellence in Africa for both human resource and entrepreneurship in education and related sectors since UCC was established (UCC Corporate Strategy, 2012-2017). The University began with a bachelor of education program on a regular basis.

The University of Cape Coast has now expanded its tentacles to different programs in addition to bachelor of education. Currently, UCC offers many

academic programs which are grouped under five (5) colleges headed by Provosts, namely College of Agricultural and Natural Sciences, College of Education Studies, College of Health and Allied Sciences, College of Humanities and Legal Studies and College of Distance Education (UCC, 2015). The University of Cape Coast has programs from certificate to doctorate levels.

These programs are run in diverse forms. Most of the programs are in sandwich, distance and regular bases. These are done in order to give affordable education to those who want to pursue any program based on the persons' own means. Apart from the students' population, the University also has staff population of about 2000 which has levels of staff such as junior, senior and senior members. These staff can also be categorized as administrative and academic staff.

The University of Cape Coast has a Main Library, Departmental and Hall libraries. The Main Library, which is the Sam Jonah Library, is the area of the study. The University of Cape Coast has two campuses that is the southern campus (old site) and the northern campus (new site or science). The Sam Jonah Library is found in the northern part of the University (new site or science). It is believed to be one of the largest libraries in West Africa. It is a hybrid library which has a collection of about 750,000, excluding pamphlets and journals. The library has a sitting capacity of 2000 (UCC Library Guide, 2012). The University has an institutional repository and has a collection of digital materials irrespective of purpose or provenance produced by the staff and the students of the university (UCC Institutional Repository Policy, 2012).

The institutional repository started in 2010 and currently has about 1,015 theses and other research articles. The library, which is the heart of the university, also subscribes to electronic resources through the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries of Ghana (CARLIGH). In addition, the library also has access to electronic journals with both abstract and full content for its users. The Library is an ultra-modern complex, which has sections such as Reference, Inter-library Loan and Document Delivery (ILL/DD), Cataloguing, Acquisition, Digital library, Physically Challenge, Electronic Support Unit, Information and Communication Technology Section, Africana Section, Periodicals, Visually Impaired Section, and Technical Support Unit.

### **1.2.2 University of Education, Winneba (UEW)**

. The University of Education, Winneba (UEW), which is located in Winneba in the Central Region of Ghana, was established in September, 1992, as a University College under PNDC Law 322. The aims of the University College were to

- i. Provide higher education and foster the systematic advancement of the science and art of teacher education.
- ii. Train tutors for the initial colleges; and
- iii. Provide teachers with professional competence for teaching in institutions such as pre-school, basic, senior secondary school and functionaries of Non-formal Education institutions. The University had a special relationship with the University of Cape Coast. The relationship required that the University College awarded diplomas and degrees of the University of Cape Coast. The University College

submitted programs, syllabuses and examinations to the University of Cape Coast for approval.

The University of Education, Winneba (UEW), was upgraded the status of the full university on 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2004, under the University of Education Act 672.

Apart from the Winneba campus, the University of Education has three other campuses which are Kumasi, Mampng and Ajumako. The University offers sandwich, distance and regular programs such as Special Education, Social Studies Education, Art Education, Music Education, Agricultural Education, Home Economics Education, etc. The University awards certificates, diplomas programs, and degrees such as Bachelors, Masters and Doctorates in Education to the deserving students after the programs of study. The University has staff strength of about 1,499.

For effective learning at the University, a library plays an essential role in the academic excellence of the students. Osagyefo, which is the area of the study, is the main library located at the South Campus of the Winneba Centre. The library has collections such as journals, monographs, reports, posters, electronic resources and publications of the international agencies. The library also renders services such as lending and reference services, book binding, interlibrary loan services, etc. The North Campus of the Winneba Centre also has a library. There is also one library at each branch of the University.

### **1.2.3 Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU)**

Cape Coast Technical University is situated about 5km from the Pedu Traffic Lights off the main road linking Cape Coast and Twifu Praso. According to the Directory of Tertiary Institutions in Ghana (2001), Cape Coast Technical University was established in 1976 as Technical Institute. In 1984, it was considered as one of the second cycle institutions operating under the administration of the Ghana Education Service to offer intermediate courses leading to the award of non-tertiary certificates.

It was in 1992 that the Polytechnic and other five others, namely, Accra, Takoradi, Kumasi, Ho and Tamale were upgraded to tertiary level (PNDC Law 321 (1992) to run both tertiary and non-tertiary programs for the award of Certificates, Diplomas and the Higher National Diplomas. The new Polytechnic Act of 2007, Act 745, gave its mandate to run degree programs. The Polytechnic became a full Technical University in 2016. The University runs programs such as DBS (Marketing), DBS (Secretaryship), DBS (Accounting), Intermediate (Catering), Intermediate (Fashion and Design), HND (Marketing), HND (Tourism and Hospitality) HND (Building and Construction), BSC (Mechanical Engineering), etc. These programs are run on both part-time and regular bases.

John Kofi Borsah Library, which is the area of the study, is a four-storey building complex. The ICT centre and book-bindery occupy the basement of the library. The General reference, Research and Digital libraries are also found on the ground floor. The Business library is on the second floor while the third floor

contains the Engineering, Applied sciences and Arts Library. The Conference, Presentation Hall and Distance Learning Centre are located the fourth floor.

The Library provides services such as lending and reference services, reprographic service, comb-binding and lamination, book-binding and repairs, e-resource and digital service.

The Library has a collection of both print and non-print materials which include the following: 26,020-plus volumes, Journals (12 titles); Magazines (8 titles); Government Publications (i.e. Acts, Executive and Legislative Instruments); 7,224 –plus students Project-works; CD ROMS 1,031-plus; Audio Tapes 29; Video Tapes 24; and E-journals 9.

Due to the advent of the Information Communication Technology, the services and the collections of libraries are becoming digital and global. The E-resources and Digital Section of the library has about 50 networked computers with internet access to enhance academic work.

The library has also built an Institutional Repository and can be temporarily accessed by the users of the library. CARLIGH and INASP provide support to access electronic resources and train library staff. There is also an arrangement with Elsevier publishers and Emerald publishers to supply publications and e-books to the Library.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Every academic library is established to support teaching and learning processes of that academic institution. Since library is an organization, it is characterized by a network of human interactions associated with expressing divergent views, disagreements, differences, complaints, quarrels and many other varying behavioral traits and attitudes which may affect the smooth operation of that particular institution. There are conflicts in academic libraries in Ghana. These conflicts erupt as a result of poor communication channels, lack of respect because of position, refusal to perform workplace duty, unrealized expectation, etc.

Conflict induces mainly negative and destructive outcomes such as anger, resentment, confusion, sadness and lack of cooperation, among others. It disrupts the smooth functioning of organizational processes, and creates chaos and disorder (Arthur, 2009). In some organizations, conflicts create enmity, lead to demonstrations and retard progress. In effect, conflict can disturb the processes of working to achieve academic library's corporate goals and objectives. In the workplace, a simple disagreement between team members, if unresolved, may escalate into avoidance, inability to work together, verbal assaults and resentment. Conflict in an academic library can also be characterized by petty squabbles, bickering, acrimony, rancor, low attendance to shelving, users trying to comply with library rules and idle talk, among others and these are disincentives to the implementation of major policy decisions.

In the interview that the researcher conducted and his observation, it was realized that there had been instances of conflicts in Sam Jonah (UCC), Osagyefo (UEW) and John Kofi Borsah (CCTU) libraries; these, conflicts were either avoided or not effectively managed, thereby, resulting in difficulty in the implementation of certain major policy decisions. Pierre and Peppers (1976) argue that the important aspect of conflict is how human participants relate and respond to it. Each academic library may have its own unique way of handling or managing conflict when it occurs and this may not be known to the masses.

There is quite a number of literature on conflict management world over. Most of them deal with conflict management in schools, academic institutions, communities, libraries and workplaces. For instance, Kofi (2004) looked at conflict management in University libraries in Ghana. Arthur (2009) also looked at conflict management mechanisms in the administration of Cape Coast Polytechnic. Banji (2014) also found out the management of staff conflicts in University of Cape Coast library.

However, there are little scholarly interests in conflict management in academic libraries in Ghana. Such an investigation is very essential in order to compare the various conflict management strategies used by the academic libraries under study. It is in the light of this that the present study examines conflict management in academic libraries in Ghana with emphasis on the Sam Jonah library of University of Cape Coast, Osagyefo library of University Education, Winneba, and John Kofi Borsah library of Cape Coast Technical University.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine conflict management mechanisms used in Sam Jonah Library (UCC), Osagyefo Library (UEW) and Kofi Borsah Library (CCTU).

#### **1.5 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this research were to determine:

1. The types of conflicts that exist in the Sam Jonah, Osagyefo and John Kofi Borsah libraries
2. The causes of conflicts among the staff and the users or clients of Sam Jonah, Osagyefo and John Kofi Borsah libraries
3. The effects of unmanaged conflicts in Sam Jonah, Osagyefo and John Kofi Borsah libraries
4. The preventive measures of conflicts in Sam Jonah, Osagyefo and John Kofi Borsah libraries
5. The conflict management mechanisms in Sam Jonah, Osagyefo and John Kofi Borsah libraries

#### **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

This part of the literature review is concerned with the statement of concepts related to the research which are to be used as a theoretical foundation for the development of the report. According to Thomas (1976), a theory advances an explanation to expand knowledge in a specific study. In a similar vein, Bacharach

(1989) posits that a theory is a system of constructs and propositions that collectively presents a systematic and coherent explanation of a phenomenon of interest. To Creswell (2014), a theory helps in explaining behaviors, attitudes and constructs for social occurrences and fundamental factors that underline a particular study.

Managing conflict at an academic library has been an age-old challenge for the individual staff as well as management. Initiating a conflict management or peer mediation program can be a proactive way to address concerns about violence. Conflict is a natural part of life and therefore, a natural part of academic libraries. Of the several theories on conflict, this study employs the Structural Conflict Theory and Human Needs Theory of Conflict. The Structural Conflict Theory would enable the researcher to determine the causes of conflict. On the other hand, the Human Needs Theory is used as the theoretical framework for determining the mechanisms for conflict management across academic libraries. A discussion of each theory is presented as follows:

### **1.6.1 The Structural Conflict Theory**

The Structural Conflict Theory attempts to explain conflict as a product of the tension that arises when groups must compete for scarce resources. The theorists of said conflict, observed that conflict occurred among groups, and that groups have structures which define the groups.

The Structural Conflict Theory which has been affiliated to Marxist dialectical school with exponents like Marx, Engels and Lenin has two orientations. These

are the radical and the liberal system theories of conflict. The radicals headed by Marx concluded that conflict is tied to economic structures and social institutions. They consider social problems such as political and economic exclusion, injustice, poverty, disease, exploitation, inequity among others as sources of conflict. Also, Marx, Engels and Lenin contended that these problems are the major features of the capitalist system which emerges to divide the society into proletarians and the bourgeoisies. According to them, the exploitation of the proletarian by the bourgeoisies under capitalism always gives birth to conflict.

The liberal conflict theorists like Galtung, Ross and Scarborough (1990) see conflict as a reaction from individuals, groups, cultures, institutions and societies as a result of change and incompatibility of interest based on competition for resources, which in most cases, is assumed to be scarce. However, the emphasis of the Structural Conflict Theory is how the competing interest group ties conflict into social, economic and political organisations of society as well as the nature or strength of social networks within and between community groups. Ross (1993) noted that for instance, where economic and political discrimination and weak kinship ties define the characteristics of a society, the chances that negative forms of conflict will result are higher than in situations where the conditions are exact opposites. Khotari (1979), a former director of the United Nations University's program on Peace and Global Transformation, who shares the view of the structuralists, stated that major causes of conflict between individuals and groups within a political system could be associated with resource distribution.

Structural Theory does have its usefulness. The theory provides a stark, clear explanation for conflict between groups which is always welcome when trying to make sense of social, economic, and political vectors that influence groups that eventually collide in conflict (Oakland, 2009). Yet, while this theory may seem self-evident, it does not explain conflict universally, but actually only finds expression when certain environmental conditions are met.

The Structural Theory of Conflict fails to explain why some societies have rigid group identities and animosities, but no inter-group conflict; why other societies have seemingly homogenous groups who intermarry and share economic opportunities, but seem to partition randomly and clash violently; and why other societies have groups which clash, but whose members flow between over time. The Structural Theory of Conflict is a snapshot that describes the condition of a society, but does not explain why conflict occurs within that society (Ross, 1993).

The Structural Theory of Conflict makes sense, but only when conflicts are viewed from the broadest possible perspective, and only if the observer insists on ignoring alternate causes to the conflict. Once the observer catalogues real conflicts of real groups, compelling additional reasons for the conflict rapidly come to light.

### **1.6.2 Human Needs Theory of Conflict**

The main underpinning of the human needs theory is that humans have a glut of needs which they seek to fulfill and any hindrance to the fulfilment of these needs can lead to conflicts. Maslow (1970), in his hierarchy of needs, identifies

physiological needs (security), love, or belongingness, self-esteem and self actualisation as important needs that all humans need tend to seek. Burton (1990) identifies response, stimulation, security, recognition, distributive justice, rational needs and the need for a sense of control as needs that are fundamental to humans. All these needs scholars identify are universal needs of human which they seek in order to fulfil and are integral part of human existence (Faleti, 2006).

Max-Neef (1991) asserts that inadequate satisfaction of the fundamental needs of human results into pathology and this pathology can be expressed economically through unemployment or poverty and politically through crime, violence, xenophobia and marginalization. Human needs, he contends, are met through satisfiers (those things that are denied). These satisfiers can be compromised but the needs themselves cannot.

Thus, the Human Needs Theory sees the sources of conflict and violence among staff and clients as resulting from the inability to meet their fundamental needs. The Human Needs Theory, therefore, believes that conflicts in organizations as well as libraries can be resolved when the needs of the workers are met. Lorenz (1966) also adds that all these human needs make human form dominant hierarchies to protect identity, territories and behave aggressively towards others.

This theory is very necessary for this study. Both users and the staff in every academic library have special human needs which they wish they could get. When such needs are not met, then, conflicts erupt. Conflict can also be prevented when human needs are met in academic libraries.

However, the human needs theory failed to explain which needs should be met with appropriate satisfiers to resolve or prevent a conflict and even, how these can be met from occurring (Faleti, 2006).

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This study was confined to Sam Jonah library of University of Cape Coast, Osagyefo library of University of Education and John Kofi Borsah Library of Cape Coast Technical University. The study identified and analyzed conflicts situations as existed in the libraries and the conflict management mechanisms employed by the management and the individual staff.

### **1.8 Significance of the Study**

The occurrence of conflict and its management is of great concern of all stakeholders, especially administrators (librarians) of institutions. This study is an attempt to make a modest contribution to the ongoing process of finding the causes of conflicts in academic libraries and finding ways of managing the conflicts effectively to benefit both the individual employees, users and the institution at large. The study is important because its findings will generate useful information for administrators, librarians, lecturers, and all other people in leadership positions on how to manage conflicts in educational institutions effectively.

It would also prepare the minds of prospective academic librarians with regard to the various conflict situations they are likely to encounter in their chosen professions so as to enhance their preparedness to deal with them. It is the hope of

the researcher that this study will create the desired awareness on conflict situations in the academic libraries so that more appropriate efforts will be made by all concerned to address conflicts effectively. This work will also serve as a useful literature for other research on conflict management in the field of academic libraries in Ghana. The work will also serve as a guide to the future researchers who will want to look at conflict management in any given library.

### **1.9 Ethical Considerations**

Payne and Payne (2004) share the view that ethical considerations are the embodiment of a moral stance that involves conducting research to achieve not just high professional standards of technical procedures, but also respect and protection for the people actively consenting to be studied. In relation to this, the researcher deemed it necessary to make it a point that ethical considerations, such as the approval from the Librarians through writing, inform the study participants' consent, confidentiality and objectivity in research reporting. The University of Ghana's code of ethics on research was duly adhered to.

### **1.10 Description of Chapters**

Chapter one of the study deals with the introduction which includes background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions, the scope of the study, the theoretical framework, significance of the study, and the organization of the study.

Chapter two consists of the review of the related literature on conflict management.

Chapter three comprises the methodology. They are the research design, the selection of the cases, selection of the subject, such as the population, sample and sampling techniques, and the research instrument.

Chapter four talks about the presentation of the data and analysis.

Chapter five is on the discussion of the findings of the study.

Chapter six presents the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

Like every research, the literature review chapter of this study seeks to identify and review works or scholarly articles in the area and the subject of the study. The purpose for this review is to acclimatize the researcher with works already done on the field. It is also aimed at identifying research gaps in the existing literature pertaining to the subject of the study as well as helping the researcher to identify the appropriate theoretical model or framework within which to situate his study. In the bid to achieve the aforementioned objectives, the review is undertaken along with certain thematic areas that are vital to this study. These themes are being discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

#### **2.1 Concept and Definition of Conflict**

Despite the numerous research on conflict in the past few decades, the researchers have not come out with a consensus definition of conflicts (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008). Hellriegel, Slocum and Woodman (1995) also argued that the term conflict is difficult to define because it occurs in many different settings. They further add that the fundamental nature of conflict seems to be disagreements, contradictions or incompatibilities and thus, refers to any situation which there is incompatible goals, cognitions or emotions within or between individuals or groups that lead to opposition or aggressive interaction.

Conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur (Deutseh, 2001). An activity that is incompatible with another is one that prevents blocks or interferes with the occurrence or effectiveness of the second activity. Weiten (1986) shared similar views when he explained that conflict exists when there is a coexistence of incompatible motives, behavioural impulses, beliefs or values. Owens (2004) also viewed conflict as a situation in which two or more individuals operate within a unit which appears to be incompatible.

Inability to agree on the definition of conflict contributes to the difficulty of studying conflict management. Conflict does not simply emerge, but it rather develops through various stages and in each stage, certain factors contribute to its possibility. Conflict normally occurs where two or more people interact with one another. It can either energize the organization or degenerate into a war of words and actions.

McShane and Glinow (2000) admit that conflict is a process which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party. Wagner and Holenbeck (2001) also add that conflict is a process of opposition and confrontation that can occur in organizations between either individuals or groups. This really occurs when parties exercise their franchise in the pursuit of value goals or objectives and hinder the progress of other parties. In view of this definition, conflict involves the use of power in confrontation, or disputes over clashing interests. As relevant, it is the notion that conflict is a process that takes time to unfold, rather an event that occurs in an instant and then disappears.

Deutsch (1973) shares this view more formally when he said that conflict exists when there is an action that is incompatible with another and it prevents, obstructs, interferes, injures, or in some ways, makes less likely the desired action of another person or group. Gunn (2000), on his part, asserts that conflict is an inescapable part of human nature involving a misunderstanding or disagreement that causes a problem or struggle to achieve goals between people, groups or nations. This infers that conflict is part and parcel of our lives and as human beings, on this earth; we are bound to face one kind or the other. In view of this, Wilson (1998) perpetuates that conflict is a struggle that involves opposing ideas, values and, or limited resources; while according to Nnadi (1997), conflict does surface when there is a bang amid divergent views. Thus, modest conflicts result when employees pursue limited resources. Anger during conflicts causes disruption such that employees may abandon pursuit of organizational goals and engage in irrational acts of aggression.

Robinson and Clifford (1974) defined conflict as a process involving behavioural threats by one party. The parties involved in a conflict see it as a threat to each other because one party seeks to attain goals or to achieve interest with enough behavioural intensity to the boundary as well as limit if not destroy, the goal attainment of another party. Warren (2005) argued that conflict in the strictness of the world is a situation where parties either refuse to recognize the issue or oppose the change agent's proposal. These are the results of sharp value and belief differences among the parties. The inability to recognize and deal with the issues

at stake pushes the conflicting parties to attack personalities instead of attacking the real problem.

## **2.2 Types of Conflict**

Conflict can be categorized into so many types. Some researchers prefer to use “forms” or “levels” but they are all essentially talking about analogous thing and for the tenacity of this study, the researcher will perimeter the discussion to the most common types. The first variety is the type that falls under national conflict.

National conflict is the type that engulfs the entire nation, particularly resulting from political activities. This type of conflict is normally derived from cultural, social and political sources. A good example of a national conflict is the Liberian conflict, which lasted well over a decade. Some of the recent conflicts in the continent include Libyan civil war in 2011 – 2012 and 2007 – 2008 Kenyan crises. In the case of Libya, it was factional fighting involving some of the indigenous people. The series of civil wars in Chad in 1965–1979, 1979-1982, 1998–2002 and 2005–2010 were typical example.

The following according to Moghalu (2008) are the causes of armed conflicts in the under listed countries in Africa:

- a) Ethnicity, discrimination and national rivalries - Rwanda and Burundi;
- b) The illegal exploitation and competition for natural resources - Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo;

- c) The proliferation of small arms and light weapons - Sierra Leone; d) Poverty - Sudan;
- e) Fundamentalism, religious cleavages, crises of identity within a society and exclusionary ideological beliefs - Nigeria and Somalia;
- f) Territorial disputes - Ethiopia and Eritrea
- g) The struggle for access to political power in Kenya and Zimbabwe

In line with national conflict, Sawyer (1997) remarks that political conflict is the kind of conflict which requires the involvement of the mechanisms in the political system for their management.

Another aspect of a national conflict is the ethnic conflict that whelms two particular ethnic groups and what is sometimes disquieting about this type of conflict is that it can swamp other groups if the appropriate actions are not pragmatic in its management. In Ghana, there have been several ethnic conflicts; the examples of which are the conflicts that existed between the people of Tsito and Peki; Mamprusi and Kusasi, Kokomba and Nanumba and the eighty-four year old conflict that existed between the people of Alavanyo and Nkonya.

Religious conflict is also the type that safeguards between two religious figures. The innumerable religious bodies adhere to diverse doctrines and practices, which bring about conflict. For example, Nigeria, for some time now, has been undergoing erratic religious conflict occurring between the Christians and the Moslem due to the implementation of the sharia law by the Moslem.

Vertical conflict is another type of conflict that occurs among supervisors and subordinates in an organization, whereas horizontal conflict occurs among members of the same level or departments. Vertical conflict is sometimes institutionalized in union groups and generally occurs between management and labor while the horizontal conflict is common among the department of a functionally structured division or organization (Hatch and Schultz, 1997).

There are other categories of conflicts, namely personality, group and organization. They also complement that conflict can be categorized into several types, forms or levels.

Personality conflicts which occur within and among persons can be grouped under intrapersonal and interpersonal. The intrapersonal conflicts happen within an individual's yearning to make a cautious choice between two or more conjointly exclusive activities. Intrapersonal conflicts sometimes involve unresolved problems where the individual finds it almost impossible to find a solution.

Wright and Noe (1996) clutch intrapersonal conflicts into three categories as approach-approach-avoidance-avoidance and avoidance-approach. In relation to the approach-approach, the individual has to choose between two equally attractive, pleasant and desirable alternatives. For example, a manager, who is torn between choosing two equally proficient minions to accomplish a task for him. Though there are approach tendencies towards two attractive goals, there is a drawback, which is choosing only one of them. The approach-approach variety

turns to be the least stressful because each alternative chosen has a reasonably happy wind-up. As a result of this pleasurable reality, it is comparatively easy to go ahead and make a decision.

The second type of intrapersonal conflict is the avoidance-avoidance, where the individual is torn between two equally repugnant, unwelcome and unappealing alternatives that are expected to result in negative outcomes. An instance is where an employer of an institution with serious financial constraints has to choose between ignoring the problems, thereby allowing them to become worse and laying off hundreds of employees. Either of these choices looks hostile. The last thing to talk under intrapersonal conflict is the approach-avoidance. This is also a choice among a set of opinions that are good and bad outcomes. It has to do with decisions that must be made between alternatives that are taught to involve both positive and negative outcomes. The approach-avoidance type of conflict seems to be more common today because many women are torn between getting married and pursuing a career.

On the contrast, interpersonal conflict involves two or more individuals rather than one individual. It is used to indicate the discrepancy that mostly relates to personal characteristics of individuals and it is sometimes expressed through more elusive nonverbal and friendly behaviours. Extreme cases can even be avoidance of eye contact between the individuals involved. Rao et al (1987) stipulate that the most commonly cited reasons for interpersonal conflict are temperament differences, perceptions, clashes of values and interest, status differences as well as scarce resources. Berne (2004) observes that interpersonal conflict mostly

occurs due to a person's play for power. Often, as career structure expands, roles certainly increase; thus, reducing interpersonal conflict among people.

The other type of conflict is the group conflict. There are two types of group conflict, namely intra and intergroup conflicts. Intra group conflict mostly occurs among the members in a group. Conflict within a group can allow displeased members to air their complaints and the group may streamline itself to deal with the internal cacophony and disapproval. Garvin (2002) says the intragroup conflict brings along with other types of conflict, namely cognitive and affective conflicts.

The inter-group conflict takes place between the two groups. Inter-group conflict develops between two or more departments or interest groups because of limited resources such as money, personnel and power. A vivid example could be a conflict between NDC and NPP supporters. For example, after NDC lost power in 2016 presidential and parliamentary elections, NPP supporters had to invade certain public places to take over from the claimed NDC supporters, especially the Passports Office in Accra, Toll both centres and Ports and Harbours in Accra. In the formation of the sides and taking a stance on an issue, arguments and positions are clarified, and people can more easily distinguish between two different points of view. Kinard (1988) observes that inter-group relations are vital to the success of large organizations.

Miles (1980) demonstrates that organizational conflict is widely used for almost all the levels of conflicts. The issues that result in most organizational conflicts

have bureaucratic connotations. He goes on to say that this type of conflict arises when the goals or values of diverse individuals or groups are dissenting and those individuals or groups impede one another's attempt to achieve their objectives. Kinard (1988) looked at conflict in the organization. He points out areas such as the chain of command, specialization and the Scalar Principle. The chain of command is based on the idea that an employee should be answerable to only one superior. If the conflict can be minimized, then authority must be well defined. The line of authority must be clear and straight so that people can understand who has authority over whom in every given situation. The authority which flows direct line from top to bottom starting from the top of the organization that is, the Chief Executive descending down is referred to as the Scalar Principle of an organization structure.

In academic libraries, the types of conflict that exist are conflict between library management and staff, conflict between subordinates and supervisors, conflict between users and staff, conflict among staff, conflict among users and conflict within individuals.

### **2.3 Causes of Conflict**

For one to know the cause of a given problem is a credit to its remedies. Knowing the cause of conflict may aid one to isolate its causes, sort through alternative strategies and decide what to do. Some of the major causes of conflict identified in academic libraries by Schnake (1987), Kreitner (1998), Stoner (1978), Wright and Noe (1996), and other researchers include limited resources, role ambiguity, communication obstacles, status and power differences, and task interdependence.

Walton and Dutton (1969) also traced the major causes of organizational conflict to include scarce resources, differences in goals between organizational units, the interdependence of activities in the organization, and differences in values or perceptions among organizational units which academic libraries are not exception. Wilson (1998) also adds ideas, status, power and goals as sources of conflicts.

Schnake (1987) posits that conflict develops between individuals and groups due to competition for limited resources. He further points out that when resources, such as office equipment or furniture are limited; individuals and groups have no option but to compete for them. He adds that if employees observe that the amount of money available for the execution of duties is limited, the opportunity for conflict is greatly high as each group contends for a greater share. In congruent with Schnake, Stoner (1978) notices that organisations are prone to conflict due to the vital resources which are limited.

He further elaborates that if every unit in an organization has access to unlimited amount of manpower, money, materials, equipment and space, the problem of how to share these resources would hardly arise. According to him, these resources must be shared and that, the likelihood of some groups getting less than they want or need is high and lack of co-operation can result in the struggle between groups for the greatest possible share of available resources. In order to authenticate Stoner's findings, Owens (2001) also with the view that the organization resources are deficient to meet the requirement of the sub-units to do their work; there is competition for scarce resources. In otherwise, people will

strive for resources like assigning teaching position, budget allocations, space for lectures, and other utilities that may be limited in number.

A lot of companies have been investing in Africa, especially in the oil sector. However, the incidence of natural resources, causing border conflicts is one that is becoming rampant and threatens to blight the putative gains to be earned from exploiting natural resources. Wherever one looks, there is natural resource border conflict. The panorama of natural resource border conflicts covers Nigeria-Cameroon Bakassi, Ghana-Côte D'Ivoire, Malawi-Tanzania, D. R. Congo-Uganda disputes.

Schnake (1987) sees role ambiguity as how the individuals and groups within an organization understand what is expected from them. They may not have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. According to him, role ambiguity can produce conflicts between groups or individuals because both may want to assume responsibility for the same thing or because they may both want to avoid it. Kreitner (1998) considers it as ambiguous or overlapping jurisdiction. He further explains it as unclear job borders which often create competition for resources and control. Stoner (1978) also sees it as ambiguously defined work responsibilities and under goals. One unit head, for example, may try to expand the role of his or her subunit. Such an expansion will unvaryingly cause a defensive or resistant from other units involved. He explains that if members of different groups know little about one another's job, they may unwittingly make unreasonable demands on each other, thereby generating conflict. Kathman & Kathman (1990) also add that within any one section in the library, you may have

librarians, paraprofessionals, and other administrative staff working interdependent tasks. Most often, the responsibilities are similar but the rewards are not the same, especially salary levels. For example, a conflict may occur if paraprofessionals perceive that the tasks they perform are similar to those performed by the librarians. They share the view that unclear reporting structures and job descriptions contribute to job ambiguity.

Schnake (1987) opines that the absence of frequent communication between groups or individuals representing different structural levels produces conflict. From his observation, it is difficult to understand another person or group of people if two-way communication is hindered in some way. Stoner (1978) also sees communication breakdown as a common cause of inter group conflict. He cites where the same phrase may have different meanings to different groups. Mostly, fragments, vague and ambiguous statements pose much problem when interpreting them. Undefined use of that phrase, according to him, may lead to harmful misunderstandings. The absence of frequent communication between groups or individuals representing different structural levels of the organization or different informal groups is referred to as communication obstacles by Schnake. In his view, when individuals or groups lack information about other individuals or groups, they develop mix-ups and misgiving. This means that actions and motives of other groups become suspicious and this may distort communication.

Pierre and Peppers (1976) on the other hand, perceive failure in communication as semantic. They explain further that semantic is the failure of two individuals to share fully the meaning of a communication process or actual differences in

perception and understanding. The result, according to them, is an absence of agreement, which invariably, is conflict. Nnadi (1997) confirms that poor communication, which results in misunderstanding, may cause conflict. Stoner also sees communication breakdowns as a common source of intergroup conflict. He observes further how the same phrase may have different meanings to different group, thereby creating a conflict. Kreitner (1998) confirms that because communication is a complex process beset by many barriers; these barriers often provoke conflict. This means that it is easy to understand another person or group of people if two-way communication is hampered in some way. This makes the battle for clear communication never to end.

From Kreitner's (1998) point of view, as long as industrious organisations continue to be arranged hierarchically, this initiate is inevitable. This is because superiors may scarcely value the subordinates' feelings and ideas and when the subordinates also observe that they are being undermined, it can result in conflict. When effective communication is lacking, the result may manifest in the form of misunderstanding of organisational goals.

Hatch (1997) said the speaking of different languages most often leads to disagreement on issues of mutual concern. She further adds that the differences in language can be ethnicity, but there are differences in professional language as well. She cites an example of the doctor and the administrator in the hospital setting. The conflict between these two categories of professionals can be traced in part to the different ways in which they communicate. Since the academic libraries deal with calibre of staff as well as the users and all these people have

different language they speak. When two or more people assemble and communicate in different language which other members of staff cannot understand, it may generate into conflict because the other members may think that they gossiping about them that is the reason they are using a particular language which is not familiar to them.

Robbins (1983) added that semantic difficulties, insufficient exchange of information and noise in the communication channel are all barriers to communication, which is a potential antecedent condition to conflict. Sometimes, when individuals in a group speak different languages, they are less likely to agree on issues. Conflict is more likely to occur when communication is not clear and when there is confusing about what is valued and rewarded.

Wright and Noe (1996) opine that conflict sometimes emerges because the organization fails to set goals and motivates groups or individuals in a manner which can ginger them to cooperate. In a situation where each unit's goal of improving its productivity obscures the set target of cooperating to meet the organization's demands, the potential for conflict increases. They echo that differences can also cause intergroup conflict when groups strive for scarce resources. Preferably, the management of the academic libraries is supposed to fund the sections and units that make economic sense, but on a more practical note, must work with limited resources. This implies that a department embarking on a particular project may have goals leading to securing resources for that project at the expense of other departments. When this happens, it can result in conflict. Schnake (1978) also comments that the differences in the goals that

individuals want to accomplish sometimes create a source of conflict. He goes on to elaborate by stating that when individuals have discordant personal goals, conflict may be the result.

This validates Pondy's (1967) surveillance that when two parties in the organization work together, but not in congruence, the source of conflict is goal convergence. For instance, a new employee who may perceive a need for change in the department may have conflicts with the old members of the department who are content with the old policy. In the same vein, the Head, who might have been in the department for quite a long period of time, may counterattack any attempt at any change and therefore work hard to keep things the way they are.

Stoner (1978) also discusses that organization sub-units tend to become segregated, as they develop unrelated goals, and complications. According to Stoner, such differentiation frequently leads to conflicts of interests, or priorities, even, when the overall goals of the organization are agreed upon.

According to Stoner (1978), work interdependence subsists when two or more units rely on each other so as to complete their respective tasks. In this case, higher degree of conflicts or friendliness may rear its head based on how such condition is managed. In this scenario, the tension among the individual members will increase and this may accuse each other dodging their accountabilities. Conflicts may be an issue of the day if the work is steadily circulated, but with

dissimilar rewards. This means when unit groups are not fairly treated; they are interdependent, conflict is probably to erupt.

Schnake (1987) explains interdependence as a situation whereby a successful accomplishment of a task depends on one party's task completion. This can be successful when, first, only a group is dependent; the independent group may not feel the need to comply with the requests. The task interdependence can lead to conflict when the parties have independent goals, priorities, or disagree upon the manner the tasks should be executed. With this view, when two or more individuals or groups are dependent upon one another for successful job performance, the opportunity for conflict may arise. From the words of Pierre and Peppers (1976), conflict may be in existence only within the context of interdependence. They contend that employees may become dependent on organizations to give them direction and meaning. According to them, such dependency allows employees to avoid the afflictions of personal responsibility.

Wright and Noe (1996) delve the explanation of interdependence discovering three types of interdependence, namely pooled interdependence, sequential interdependence, and reciprocal interdependence. According to Wright and Noe, pooled interdependence mostly occurs when each group operates independently, but the organization's overall success relies on the amalgamation of the outcome of the group. Sequential interdependence is where one group's output serves as another group's inputs. He repeats that a poor performance by the first group can easily make the second group to be passionate. Wright concludes by echoing that reciprocal interdependence describes each group's output as inputs to other

groups. From his perception, the close links among the groups provide a solid ground for potential conflict.

Kreitner (1998) shares the view that unreasonable deadlines and other forms of time pressure can stimulate prompt performance or ginger destructive emotional reactions. When such deadlines or time pressure are at the climax, individuals tend to fend off. He cautions managers to consider an individual's ability to cope with when imposing deadlines.

Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) examine that this is where a greater number of people take part in decision-making. From their view, when a quite number of people involve in the decision-making process, the greater the potential for conflict. This is so obvious because a committee, which constitutes a large membership, may have problems when agreeing on certain issue due to dragging by some members. Members, who converge at such meetings, may have conflicting views and each may want his views to be considered.

Conflict tends to increase as the number of organizational charts and specialized tasks increases. (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2001). This normally happens when the organization has a complex structure and this structure keeps on expanding. Individuals in the organization who may not find themselves in any of the structure and they think they are qualified can result in conflict, especially in the strategic and tactical levels.

According to Kreitner (1998), people are not content with their current situation when they do not meet their expectations. The likelihood of developing hatred for

those concerned keeps on increasing. The employers or the managers who sit on their employees' promotions, pay or end of service benefits can be prone to conflicts. He further posits that destructive conflict can be overcome by the management when time is being taken to discern through outspoken dialogue, what employees expect from their employers or managers. In this way, unrealistic expectations can be countered before they become a fertile ground for dysfunctional conflict.

Owens (2001) stipulates that a peculiar cause of conflict is autonomy. This really happens when one party tries to manage its own affairs and the second party tries to interfere or comes in. In this case, the beneficiaries will resist the interference. In a few years ago, the workers in all the public universities in Ghana were being asked by the NDC government to be paid by the Controller and Accountant General Department. This became an issue of the day because these universities are autonomous and they pay their workers through government's subvention. They did not want any second party to interfere in what they are doing.

According to Nnadi (1997), when employees find it difficult to know whom to report to when on duty due to numerous superiors available, it results in conflict. There will be conflicts among the superiors and between the superiors and the employees because there is no clear line of authority. This is clearly seen between shelf supervisors and other subordinate staff in academic libraries.

Conflicts can emerge when there is scrambling for the territory at the workplace. Many employees perceive a specific work area as personal territory. At times, a particular seat is reserved for a particular person, which no other person can have

access to that. In academic library, the individual staff has his or her work station and when there is an encroachment, it at times results into conflict. According to Nnadi (1997), conflicts may result when another employee gets into that area and the „rightful owner“ sees it as encroachment.

Nnadi (1997) observes that the way employees interact at work may cause conflict. People may cling together against other employees who are not part of their group. Workplace politics are very common in most of the institutions in Ghana. In a given workplace or working environment, you may see different factions or parties and if you are not in that group and you interfere in their affairs, conflicts may be the result. The administrative staff in a tertiary institution, for example, may cling against the academic staff of the same institution. In academic libraries, workplace politics is really causing a lot of conflicts. The issue of faction in the workplace also causes conflict in academic libraries.

This, according to Nnadi (1997), is where employees“ knowledge, skills, education and experiences have no bearing on their level of authority. It is just like someone who has put a round object in a square hole. For instance, if a supervisor is not knowledgeable about the work accomplished by subordinates, Nnadi admits that there is a high probability of conflict in the workplace. The subordinates may think that what he or she is doing is on the right path because the superior has little or no knowledge on that. The supervisor“s instructions may not be taken by the subordinates. In academic libraries, for instance, there are two categories of staff. These are professionals and paraprofessionals. The

professionals are those staff who has gone to library school and paraprofessionals has not gone to library school but they have other qualification. At times, the professional may not have much knowledge on the job as compared to the paraprofessional. Sometimes, paraprofessionals do not take instruction from the professionals because of job inefficiency on the part of the professionals.

This, Nnadi (1997), points out that incompatible style is when the management style is contrary to the employee's needs. He posits that when a supervisor's leadership style requires the initiative and autonomy of the employee, may conflict with an employee's desire for constant guidance, direction and supervision.

Nnadi (1997) points out that this becomes a source of conflict where there are disparities in the job description at the workplace. Some employees are loaded with work while others have little or nothing to do, especially if the work load could easily be allocated. In conclusion, when the librarians of the various institutions understand these conflicts triggers, they will be in a better position to manage conflict in a reasonable manner. Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) assert that certain situations produce more conflicts than others and that by knowing the antecedents of conflict, librarians can anticipate conflict and take steps to eradicate or manage it if it becomes dysfunctional disparities.

## **2.4 Effects of Conflict**

Conflict is an inherent aspect of human nature. At times, conflicts serve as an agent of development, but in some cases, they come about with destruction of lives and property. The literature cites war, poverty, instability, internally displaced persons, refugees, disease, underdevelopment, fear, mistrust, destruction of life and properties, and the inter-subjective meaning therein as some of the end results of conflicts in Africa (Ahorsu, 2009).

Countries suffer from many different consequences of violent conflict. Civilians and soldiers are killed in combat; and people die because of diseases, malnutrition, and violent crime. Wars force mass migration. Dealing with the consequences of violent conflict is not only a humanitarian imperative; it is also important because it decreases the risk of the conflict recurring. In the African context, conflict has undeniably exacted a heavy toll with regards to lost development opportunities as well as human suffering. According to the African Development Bank Report (ADBR) of 2008/9, Africa accounted for about half of the world's battle deaths between 1990 and 2005 (Africa Development Bank Report, 2008/9).

Moreover, in situations of conflict, more people die from disease, starvation, malnutrition, and breakdown of health services than from battle. Hence, a combination of battle deaths and conflict related deaths are often very high. Besides conflict related mortality, conflict affects people long after the fighting has stopped. As experienced in the conflicts of Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone, conflict is a major cause of disability, especially in Africa, where the combatants

have made a habit of amputating the arms and limbs of people. Also, conflicts create conducive environment for the spread of diseases such as cholera, HIV/AIDS, and by so doing, creating a public health problem. It is not surprising that HIV/AIDS is more prevalent in Africa than anywhere else in the world.

Further violent conflicts lead to civilians being subjected to human rights abuses, such as sexual violence, and displacement during war weakens social cohesion and relationships, which may lead to promiscuity. Violent conflicts traumatize people. Most of the victims of civil war are civilians, who is subjected to, or witness, killings, rape, torture and of family members (ADBR, 2008/9). As stated earlier, violent conflicts also come along with massive destruction to infrastructure and social amenities and existing systems of service delivery.

Quite related to the above is the devastating impact of violent conflict on children and girls in particular. During violent conflicts as was witnessed in Liberia and Sierra Leone most especially, children are captured and forced into child-soldiering. These child soldiers themselves are victims, become perpetrators of violence (ADBR, 2008/9). When the conflict is finally over, boys and girls face different reintegration problems. Girls who are more often than not, used as providers of sex for the rebels would end up with babies of their own; hence, making it difficult for them to catch up on education and job training. High male mortality during conflict leads to a high proportion of female-headed households, leaving women, with a much heavier burden of caring for the household in post-conflict societies.

Moreover, women face more difficulties than men in integrating into the labor market, even under normal circumstances. Undeniably, post-conflict countries have a low revenue base, high expenditure needs, and weak institutional capacity. In this regard, it is even more likely that the factors that led to the conflict may persist or may even have been aggravated during the conflict, with new issues possibly emerging. It is not surprising that most post conflict states slip back into conflict of job opportunities increases competition for jobs, further constricting women's access to the labor market.

Mcshane (2004) states that conflict ends in misapprehension and incongruity, which usually deteriorates and leads to negative outcomes for the organization. He further states that conflict is bad for any institutional business because it affects staff decisions and eradicates their focus out of optimal services. Socio-emotional conflict does not only reduce the services of workers, but increases frustrations, job dissatisfaction and job stress. In the long run, this leads to increased turnover and absenteeism (De Dreu, & Van Vianen, 1999). In a situation where the University Librarian may be battling with his deputies, or other librarians with their subordinates, workers abandon their job for cheap politicking and blethering. At this instance, relations wane as the colleagues respond by spreading malicious and disparaging falsehood. Conflict leads to considerable delay in giving out and implementing official decisions. It also leads to excessive firing and unnecessary hiring (Wallace, 2001).

Latent conflict, when manifested, at times, results in open combat, which most often, ends up with injuring staff, destroying library property and losing valuable

resource materials. At times, this situation leads to the staff trying to instigate students against the management, which may lead to burning down the library. If a conflict episode is not quickly and skilfully handled, workers could begin to do very mean things and many of them may be locked up, suspended or demoted. Latent conflict could remain latent, yet cripples the smooth running of the library. Really, conflict among individuals, management and subordinates puts an employee in touch with the darker side of his personality and that of other workers (Mcshane, 2004).

Conflict, at any level, leaves one in a state of uneasiness or strong anxiety until it is resolved. For this reason, conflict when dysfunctional makes one feel tense, irritable, sleepless and unable to concentrate on whatever he does. This is because most of the worker's time and attention will be on the conflicting issues as they get excessively involved in worrying and talking about it, even when it is inappropriate to do so (Sorenson, Malm, Forehand, 1971).

Atiah (2014) also contends that the win-lose conflicts in the individuals, groups, and organisations have some of the following negative effects:

- Conflicts divert time and much energy from the management, employees and culture organisation.
- In many situations, conflicts delay a whole lot of decision making processes.
- Organisation conflicts create many deadlocks

- Conflicts drive the unaggressive members of the committee to the sidelines
- Organisational conflicts obstruct exploration of more alternatives. Such as technologies, innovation, better quality and productivities
- Conflicts in organisation either decrease trusts, or totally destroy sensitivities
- Conflicts cause some working class of employees to drop out or resign their posts

The above, notwithstanding, how the conflict is, at times, constructive. This is so where inter-group conflict improves and escalates team dynamics within those units. Groups usually increase their cohesiveness and task orientation when they face any external threat. Under conditions of moderate threat or conflict, the team gets motivated to work more efficiently towards an organization's goal; thereby, increasing the group's productivity and efficient information delivery. Conflicts can improve group productivity through constructive criticisms and individuals adopting devil's advocate roles. Conflict management can avail themselves as the best drivers of positive change in an environment devoid of stress and rancour, especially when handled with a sense of maturity.

Conflict management in a library deals with discrepancies arising from differences in ideas or interests, and their efficient handling for optimal productivity and peaceful coexistence (Edwards & Walton, 2000). They enhance productivity and keep all stakeholders happy. However, ailing handled, the processes of conflict and conflict management undermine and damage team

cohesion, mutual respect, and alignment and trust. Again, task-related conflict helps people to recognize problems, identify a variety of solutions and better understand the issues that are relevant. The brief analysis of the dysfunctional and functional aspect of conflict in academic libraries depicts that conflict has a double face. And since it is an unavoidable phenomenon in human existence and interactions, what is vital is to devise a means of curtailing its constancy and excesses through management strategies.

## **2.5 Prevention of Conflicts**

Ugwuanyi & Idoko (2012) share the view that in order to avert or abate conflict meritoriously, one must first look at the clarification of rules and procedures. Some conflicts erupt due to ambiguous rules and decisions on scarce resources. Establishing clear rules and instructions can reduce these conflicts. In the library setting, effective rules clarify the distribution or the use of limited resources such as stating when the clientele can use personal computers and how long they can borrow library materials and the conditions involved in the late return of the books.

Adoni & Anie (2006) propose that clear rules and procedures will aid library users to know what to do and where to go or where to stop. In order for management or information professionals or librarians to avoid conflicts with their subordinates, colleagues or clientele, there is the need to clarify all rules and regulations, instructions and orders being passed on to the staff or the clientele. Notices and library guides will be very appropriate so that the clientele will know rules and regulations in the library.

Increasing resources are another strategy that according to Ugwuanyi & Idoko (2012) can be used to manage conflicts in academic libraries. In the library or any organization, there is competition among the workers or the users or other different units over scarce resources and this can result in conflicts, especially socio-emotional conflicts. Due to that there is the need to increase the limited resources available. Even though it is very difficult to achieve that because of financial and human resource constraints, the management has to gradually plan ahead. For example, in cases of low strength of personal computers, printers and lecture rooms, much effort should be put in place to enhance their provision. This is very essential in order to minimize the great cost of dysfunctional conflicts arising from competition over scarce.

Improvement of communication and understanding also play much role in conflict prevention. It is very difficult to discuss conflict without mentioning communication. Most of the conflicts are caused by ineffective communication between individual parties. For conflict to be reduced, the management in the library must encourage its workers to be meeting and communicating as individuals, groups or departments. In order to improve the opportunity, ability and motivation in order to share information, employees develop less negative perception of each other than when they rely on stereotypes and emotions. Wofford (1982) shares the view that there are some significant approaches, including communication styles that emphasize trust, openness, self-discourse, feedback, listening as well as avoidance of threats and defensiveness.

Pickering (2000) expresses similar sentiments when she says conflict prevention through better communication is eliminating negative language, since negative language focuses on what cannot be done and ignores positive actions or consequences. Poor communication compounds problems as individuals begin to project what they believe are the other party's motivations. When there is direct communication, it provides a better understanding of coworkers (Fisher, Maltz & Jaworsiki, 1997). In congruence with the above statement, Mcshane and Glinow (2000) quoted Janny Harvy by saying that the more informal communication that happens between various groups or individuals, they better they co-habit and work together as a team.

Another way of preventing conflict in the academic libraries is dialogue. This deals with bringing the parties in the conflict episode together to discuss their issues and the problems involved in the conflict. This is done in order to know the clear view of the factors causing and stimulating the conflict. The management does that by assembling the conflicting parties in a meaningful discussion, face to face, to examine and discuss the issues involved. During this dialogue, the parties are allowed to air their grievances and views on the matter at their disposal. This will help in reducing any grudges and bitterness and helps the workers to forget the past and move on. It will also help the participants to comprehend each other's mental model and basic assumptions so that they can create a common thinking process and mental models for the team (Ellinor & Gerald, 1994). Isaacs (1993) adds that dialogue, persuasive speeches, exchange of ideas, empathy and good communication can be used to achieve conflict management.

Ugwuanyi & Idoko (2012) pronounce that silence or ignoring method is very veritable way of preventing conflicts among library workers. This involves patiently overlooking or ignoring the conflict episodes to depict that conflict lacks due to merit and attention. This form of conflict prevention or management takes the delay tactics, which the parties or one of the parties decide to ignore the case due to the delay of the management to solve the issue. The accumulated emotional anger can get extinguished as the delay, neglect or silence continues. This delay method is mostly seen in the law courts where constant postponed wear out both the complaint and the plaintiff, and forces them to begin to dismiss their build-up emotions.

## **2.6 Conflict Management**

Naturally, conflict has the potential to become disruptive and violent if it is not properly managed. A conflict which is not suitably managed is a peril to the survival of the group and the least tends to make the group less effective. For these reasons, it is very essential to provide assistance when administrators need help in managing conflict. Conflict management is an expanded view of dealing with unresolved differences in an organization. It includes understanding the nature and sources of conflict as well as the costs of conflict, searching for the benefits in conflict situations and using a contingency approach to conflict resolution (Kathman &Kathman, 1990).

Contingency approaches to conflict management in academic libraries involve the analysis of the situation at stake and necessary action is being taken to deal with all and sundry problems. In dealing with conflict, the contingency view holds that

there is no better way of managing conflict under all conditions, but there are optimal ways of managing conflict under certain conditions (Owens, 2001).

Snowden and Gorton (2002) define conflict management as the “efforts designed to prevent, ameliorate, or resolve disagreements between and among individuals and groups”. Conflict management is the various strategies the individuals need to deal with everyday misunderstanding among individuals in the society or an organization. It is quite different from conflict resolution in that the successful resolution of a conflict usually involves a third party intervention and this also means that the issue once totally resolved is finished (Cassey & Cassey, 1977).

The issue of conflict management in academic libraries in Ghana, including the University of Cape Coast, University of Education, Winneba, and the Cape Coast Technical University continues to be a relevant topic in organizational behavior (Thomas & Schmidt 1976). Lorsch and Lawrence (2003) share the view that there are operational benefits of effective conflict management for the organization, especially academic libraries. It is the duty of the library management and the individual librarians to understand conflict situations in the academic libraries and use appropriate conflict management techniques for each given situation. The conditions generating a multiplicity of academic goals within the context of a potential model of the tactical methods for dealing with conflict between the staff and the users of the academic libraries in Ghana are considered when selecting an approach for conflict management.

If the conflict is understood, it can be effectively managed by reaching a consensus that meets both the individual's and society's needs. This results in mutual benefits and strengthens the relationship. The goal is for all to "win" by having at least some of their needs met. There are five steps to managing conflict.

These steps are

- i. Analyse the conflict
- ii. Determine management strategy
- iii. Pre-negotiation
- iv. Negotiation
- v. Post-negotiation

The first step in managing conflict is to analyse the nature and type of conflict. To do this you would find it helpful to ask questions. The answers may come from your own experience, partners or local media coverage. You may want to actually interview some of the groups involved.

The second type is to determine conflict management strategy. Once you have a general understanding of the conflict, the groups involved will need to analyse and select the most appropriate strategy.

Most certainly, conflict has the potential to become disruptive and violent in academic libraries. Conflict management is an expanded view of dealing with unresolved differences in an organization. It includes understanding the nature and sources of conflict as well as the cost of conflict, searching for the benefits in

conflict situations using a contingency approach to conflict resolution (Kathman & Kathman, 1990).

The contingency approach to conflict management involves the diagnosis of the situation whereby the necessary action is taken to deal with each and every problem. In dealing with conflict, the contingency view holds that there is no one best way of managing conflict under all conditions, but that there are optional ways of managing conflict under certain conditions (Owens, 2004).

Snowden and Gorton (2002) defined conflict management as the “efforts designated to prevent, ameliorate, or resolve disagreements between and among individuals and groups.” Conflict management is the ability to deal with everyday situations that involve interactions among different people with differences in position. It is different from conflict resolution in that the successful resolution of a conflict usually involves a third party intervention and this also meant that the issue once resolved is finished (Cassey & Cassey, 1977). This third party intervention in conflict management is very necessary in academic libraries, especially conflict between user and junior staff. The senior staff or the senior member available can easily intervene in order to manage it.

Lorsch and Lawrence (2003) were of the view that the benefits of effective conflict management for organizations or libraries has resulted in conflict management being valued as a tool for managers to use in dealing with peers or subordinates. The exhibition of skills in conflict management is seen in the ability

to understand conflict situations and the use of appropriate conflict management strategy for each given situation.

Various avenues to manage conflict are available to use and these are avoidance, accommodation, competition, compromising and collaboration.

Nebgen (1978), remarks that the avoidance approach to conflict management involves non-response or withdrawal of the statement in that skirmish. The withdrawal or non-response implies that “silence is golden or of much value in conflict management” and that the parties involved in a conflict may avoid contact with each other altogether. Where to meet each other is inevitable, the exchange of pleasantries is done so carefully so as to avoid meeting the problem. Avoidance can be one of the most appropriate approaches for managing disputes that are trivial in academic libraries. In order to achieve a long solution to serious issues that divide contending parties, avoidance may not be applicable antidote. The most straightforward strategy for suppressing organizational conflict is to remain silent. For Miles’ (1980) perspective, it is unfortunate that no response may eventually cause conflict to deteriorate to uncontrollable magnitudes. Robbins (1983) also adds that the recognition of a party’s conflict existence may be there, but react by withdrawing or suppressing the conflict. Lack of interest or the desire to dodge obvious expression of difference can result in withdrawal and that the parties acknowledge the physical division with each side taking a stance on a field that is distinct from others.

He mentions further that withdrawal is possible or desirable for parties who may want to suppress an existing conflict, thereby withholding their differences. When the group members are expected to react because of the liberty of their tasks, restriction is the most probable consequence than withdrawal. Involvement of irrelevance to the concerns of both parties reflects a withdrawal from or neglect of any party's interest (Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy, 1999).

Common withdrawal behaviours include avoiding the source of conflict, quitting, talking behind the other person's back and forming alliances with others (Martin & Bergmann, 1996). Though withdrawal may create inconveniences, most at times, it only suspends conflict than preventing it. It must be seen here that avoidance of conflict often leads to intensified hostility and may later cause greater problems for the group. In other words, avoidance explains that one cannot change. It allows conflict to calm down and heat up unnecessarily rather than to provide the avenue for its improvement. In addition to this it keeps one from working through conflict and reinforces the notion that conflict is dreadful; hence, the best way to handle it is to avoid it.

Contrarily, accommodation in conflict situations is where one gives in to others; sometimes, to the extent of involving oneself. This method of conflict management must be prudently used since it can exacerbate the conflict over time and cause conflict within oneself. Hughes et al. (1999) emphasize that accommodation replicates an image of competition and entirely giving in to someone else's concerns without making any effort to achieve one's own ends. From the words of Burke (1970), smoothing is a more sensible approach than the

withdrawal approach. It must be highlighted here that in trying to maintain a melodious rapport, one must not forget that the other party may take undue advantage of it.

This strategy, more often than not, hammers the protection of the individual or group interest; thereby, discounting the factual problem to be dealt with. Edem (1987) also suggests that for conflict to be effectively managed, training in organizations will be very crucial. He supports his assertion by claiming that training gives the workers opportunities to reflect on the appropriateness of their actions; thereby, helping to increase their role or perception that is immensely useful”.

In the words of Evans (1998), “there is no doubt that man is a competitive Animal.” Through the inference from Evans’ comment, one can say that a man always aims at winning his case at all costs; thereby, making the other party a loser. For instance, when there is a conflict between two parties in the workplace, say library, and you listen to each party’s view, you can see that each party wants to win the case. This is mostly seen in the academic libraries, especially conflict between a librarian and a user. It is even seen among the staff as well. There is the desire for the individual to win more than the opponent, even when there is a possibility of a good outcome for both sides.

Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) agree with Evans (1998) by denoting to the competition as “dominating” or “forcing” whereby there is reinforcement of high concern for self and low concern for others. In competition, the desire is on

achieving one's own goal at the expense of someone else. The placement is on working to get your way through rather than expounding and addressing the issues at hand. Competitors lose accomplice; hence, competition must be used when there is a strong conviction about one's position. Nebgen (1978) explicates that competition involves the use of force. She notices that the exertion of force communicates that one party is in a subsidiary position to the other. She moves on to elucidate that in every competition, there is intimidation and this is where one party tries to ploy in order to make the others yield from fear or actual injury by the use of implicit or explicit force.

From the Fisher's (1983) observation, competition is indispensable in emergencies; sometimes, tentative causes of actions need to be executed, especially when the parties are in opposing relationship to each other. Kriesburg (1993) thinks that the swiftest and trimmest strategy in conflict management can be a potent means since it can upshot in clear triumph and rout, but it may only serve to mark the end of one conflict and begin another conflict.

Many people may daunt the use of vigour or clout in favour of collaboration; however, the argument of Robbins (1983) sounds by perpetuating that value differences are a major source of conflict and very grim to deal with by other approaches or authority which lies in force, is an apt approach to use. Derr (1983) also argues that when power approaches are used tactically, to control and rational self-interest, they do not have all the negative consequences touted by adversaries of this technique. He points out that many people are highly competitive and feel more comfortable with a power play than with problem solving.

This is best referred to as “I win, you lose” approach where the process involves resolution through using power and winning by force or coercion. It may take the form of “pulling rank” or outmaneuvering the opposition. Furthermore, competitors always feel reluctant to share information or commit the energy required in collaboration. People who seek autonomy are likely to use power play to gain and maintain self-control. Power-play may then have to be used when all other approaches fail.

According to Kemp (1989), compromise can be explained as gaining partial satisfaction for all. It has to do with stomaching one’s position. The compromise strategy of conflict management is mostly adopted by the management in academic libraries because they think that conflict intrudes people from their work; hence, there is no need to protract it, rather it should be quickly dealt with. Compromise is often seen as a means of making the solution more tolerable for each party. It is cogent and often cunning conflict management approach which both ends recurrently played against the middle in an attempt to serve the common goal. Compromise is used when the goal is to get past the issue and move on. It has the mutual give and take nature. It is a negotiated resolution based on each person making some concessions to the other. This approach is sometimes the best possible response to conflict, depending on particular circumstances. One cannot solely depend on the compromise strategy.

It has weaknesses; however, in that compromise process, once instigated, precludes the search for better alternative solutions. According to Osgood (2004), one key to managing conflict is to minimize tension and maximize trust between

the two parties. This can be achieved by affirming the intention to condense tension, making intentions valiant and opening announcing the various strategies that will be taken to reduce the tautness. The other party has to be called upon and must be ready to take the necessary action to reduce tension, not overlooking the fact that each initiative offered is unequivocal (Fisher, 1983).

An example of a compromise conflict management is the typical lose-lose outcome. Neither side gets what it really wants. Although each side emerges as the partial winner, the propensity is to dwell on how much was given up rather than how much was won. Though it is not a total loss, both sides often see themselves to be losers. Compromise has the potential to deal more directly with the conflict itself than avoiding or forcing (Allred, 1987). It is very essential in distributing limited resources or in hegemony settings. Compromise, which is similar to bargaining, has similarities with both power play and collaboration. Just like the playing of power, it assumes self-interest and also allows for an initial combative liaison. Like collaboration, it requires sharing of information and requires agreement. Therefore, it can serve as a bridge in disputes between one party that has a power play style and another with a collaborative style (Derr, 1983). There can be an acceptable compromise when it falls within the settlement range for both sides.

Collaborating deals more with working together and this works well when the goal is to meet many current needs by using mutual resources. Fisher (1983) adds that in collaboration, the parties involved in a conflict work to reach a solution that satisfies the concerns of each party. He further emits that one must first share

all the necessary facts and feelings by clarifying and admitting differences. He reveals that two kinds of behaviour are the keys to collaboration, namely clearly expressing one's own position and listening fully to the other side's opinion. He notes that the full range of possible outcomes is considered in the search for a friendly outcome. He maintains that collaboration is effective when conflict stems from communication where open confrontation around the problems often reveals a faulty perception on both sides.

From Fisher's perspective, collaboration is a very complex process even though it has a greater latent of managing conflict. This is multifaceted because some fear that in reconnoitering the conflict situation, it may upset someone along the line. He further expounds that collaboration needs copious time than the other conflict management strategies. In certain situations where time is seen as a liability in the management of the conflict, other slants may be more pertinent. In the collaborative approach, both parties place a premium on their goals; hence, are engaged in the welfare of the relationships.

The most unique thing about this approach is the tolerance for the differences and recognition of the legitimacy of one's feelings. The rules of negotiation must be abided by the individuals concerned and also, agree to solve the conflict constructively. Any "hidden agenda" are openly brought out so that they may be effectively dealt with. Collaboration ends up in win-win outcome and encourages seeing the issues from each other's perspective and is based on the concept of zero-sum. Each party can achieve an acceptable outcome, which downfalls the problem instead of defeating each other. This is because positive total effect is

greater than what could be achieved by individual efforts (Filley, 1977). Collaboration entails adverse cooperation by the parties“ involved and momentous backing from the organization.

In this note, one can deduce that the parties which are involved in the dispute may lack the skills needed for taking problem – solving approach. Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) see collaboration as “integrating” or “problem solving”. Collaborating with the other party undoubtedly promotes creative solving and it is a way of nurturing mutual respect and support. Collaboration is time consuming, and many conflict situations are either very critical or too insignificant to justify the collaboration time (Whetten & Cameron, 2002). Classrooms can be laboratories for experimenting with collaboration rather than win-lose conflict styles.

The individuals or the groups often collaborate closely in order to reach a consent or pact. A unanimity demands that the agreement on certain issues must not be of detriment to another party. This means that there should be satisfaction of both parties before an approval of certain issues. Synchronization is not the goal; rather the goals to have individuals accept a point of view based on lucidity. When individuals can comprehend and accept the logic of a differing point of view, one must shoulder that a consensus has been grasped.

In managing conflict, Awedoba (2011) has enlisted several strategies of managing and resolving conflicts in Ghana. To him, conflicts in Ghana can be managed and resolved through education and information. The Youth are mostly involved in conflicts all over the country because of factually inaccurate information, coupled

with lack of education on their part. Anytime there is conflict, various associations and organization try to educate the adversaries and the youth on the importance of peace, need for nation building and respect for human rights.

Education corrects erroneous impressions on the Youth and letting them know that fighting and killing is not the best way to resolve misunderstanding. There are better channels to resolve misunderstanding than resorting to violent conflicts. When the people become aware of alternative avenues through education, conflicts become easier to resolve. In tertiary institutions, issues on conflict and its implications on the academic performance of students or the parties involved could be discussed during orientation of fresh students on campus.

Additionally, legislation is used by the Government to manage and resolve conflicts. When conflict arises in a community, the Government uses executive instruments, decrees to limit the movement of people in the warring community. Government limits their access to the interest in contention. Curfew is imposed to ensure security and the preservation of lives and properties. The curfew also brings down the tension for a lasting resolution. Conflict and resolution processes cannot be on at the same time, unless the stiffness and demolition are controlled before resolution.

Besides the above, the role of the earth and the earth priest is paramount in conflict management. The earth, in the restored peace in the country, especially in the Northern part of Ghana, is very eminent as it plays a vital role. In Ghana, for that matter, the Northern communities, it is a taboo for bloodshed and if such

happens, the community is purified through Traditional performance on the earth by the earth priest or certain people vested with such authority. Traditional authorities and people in a particular locality also have their indigenous ways of managing conflicts. When blood is shed, purifications and rituals are performed to mark the end of the bloodshed. Even, in times past, perpetrators were banished from the community or made to undertake expensive purification rituals as it was believed that if not done, can plague disaster such as diseases and droughts in the community. Therefore, in case, there is ethnic violence, purification is done to purify the land from the bloodshed to a peaceful settlement of the dispute. After the purification rituals, an oath is taken to anybody who wants to engage in bloodshed again will be visited by the wrath of the gods.

The use of the District and Regional security committees is among the tools of conflict management and resolution mentioned by Awedoba. All the Municipal, Metropolitan and District Assemblies have security committees that help in bringing peace within their purview or authority. These security committees are having the responsibility of maintaining peace in case there is an outburst of conflict and they used various conflict management and resolution methods such as calling on the security agencies to impose curfew. They also reward informants, offer cash to people who voluntarily give out their weaponry. These committees are not only to manage conflict, but also identify potential and triggering causes of conflict thus work towards ameliorating it. Ethnic and chieftaincy conflicts within the communities are the most conflicts that normally reach the doorstep of the committees. These committees ensure that rule of law is

applied to arrest violent conflict and bring lasting solutions to ethnic and chieftaincy conflicts.

Lastly, not least, police and military are used to maintain and settle conflicts among various ethnic groups in violent conflicts or disputants. When conflict erupts, the police and military are brought in to spiral the situation till final and amicable solution is reached. They intervene to protect lives, properties and contain the violence from exploding further. The Bureau of National Investigations (BNI) is also involved, they too pick secret information regarding the conflict and perpetrators.

## **2.7 Summary of the Literature**

In a nutshell, the presence of conflict in human relationship is an incontrovertible and inevitable element whose outcomes and management strategies need a critical examination. From international politics to everyday matters of work and family life, disputes and conflicts between individuals and between groups are a regular phenomenon. Conflict generates when a situation arises in which two or more parties are incompatible. From the literature, it was found out that conflict exists when the interaction between individuals involves one person trying to frustrate the desired outcomes of others.

Conflict can be classified into different types, namely interpersonal, intergroup and intragroup conflicts. From the literature reviewed, it was realised that limited resources, role ambiguity, communication obstacles, status, power differences, differences in goals, interdependence, time pressure, collective decision making,

organisation complexity, unrealised expectation, autonomy, territorial encroachments, unclear lines of authority and interaction patterns are responsible for most conflict in the organisations.

It was also observed that purging of conflict is out of the question because conflict can be a positive force in an organisation as well because it is absolutely necessary for an organisation to perform effectively. Many researchers have different views as to how conflicts could be prevented, managed and solved as well. With relation to the conflict management, strategies such as avoidance, accommodation, competition, compromising, collaboration, forcing and integrating could be used. From the literature, it was revealed that conflict has both negative and positive outcomes.

Conflict in a particular institution's delays decision making process of organisations or institutions which academic libraries are not exempted. On the other hand conflict can promote members' development as well as the development of new ideas and approaches, especially task-related conflicts. Poorly managed conflict is very bad, but properly managed one is very healthy because the creative tension that happens forces workers and management as a whole to grow and to learn. Conflict, in fact, is a normal part of life. It should however be well managed.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the method the researcher used in conducting the study on conflict management mechanisms in Sam Jonah library of University of Cape Coast library, Osagyefo library of University of Education and John Kofi Borsah library of Cape Coast Technical University. The sections contained in this chapter are the research design, study population, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis plan.

#### 3.1 Research Design

In order to understand the research design of a study, it is important to clarify the research philosophy upon which the study is grounded. Levin (1988) reveals that a research philosophy is a belief about the way in which data on a phenomenon should be gathered, analysed and used. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) support this assertion and indicates that research philosophy is the logical starting point because philosophy, be it implicit or explicit, has a fundamental influence on the purpose of research and, subsequently, the approach taken in the management of th research.

Mixed method approach was used in this research. Mixed method research according to Creswell, Clark, Gutmann & Hanson (2003), is the type of research which a researcher or team of researchers syndicate rudiments of qualitative and quantative research approaches (for instance, use of qualitative and quantitative

viewpoints, data collection analysis, and inference techniques) for comprehensive purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and substantiation. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner (2007) support this assertion and indicate that mixed method research has become a prevalent approach for combining qualitative and quantitative data in a single study. The development of the mixed method research approach began in the 1980's when scholars began expressing concerns about the mixing of quantitative and qualitative data without enunciating impregnable reasons for doing so (Creswell, 1999; Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989). Subsequently, scholars began identifying several rationales for combining data collection methods particular to different mixed method research designs. It is from this perspective that Creswell et al. (2003), argued that mixed method approach research with its practical approach does not align with a single system or philosophy. Instead, mixed method research is most often driven by the research question, rather than being restrained by paradigmatic assumptions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

The advantages of using a mixed method research design include the ability to strengthen the weakness of both quantitative and qualitative research by combining them. By combining the two approaches, it creates a stronger theory (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Further, Greene (2006) contends that mixed method provides more evidence when studying a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative research by themselves. Additionally, Maxwell (2012) submits that mixed method approach allows the use of all the tools of data collection available, rather than being constrained to the types of data for each

research type. Mixed method also allows collaboration across quantitative and qualitative researchers and hence, come up with a wealthier design to solve research problems in a study which cannot be solved by either the quantitative or qualitative design alone (Creswell, 2013).

However, mixed method design has its challenges. First, mixed method could be time consuming because it calls for application of both qualitative and quantitative tools of research (Morgan, 2007). Secondly, collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data can also be mystifying because of the amount of data that is collected (Husein, 2009). This therefore requires the researcher to apply different data analysis tools to extract meaning from all the data collected. Mixed method research design also requires clear presentation of the data and its analysis in order to get maximum benefit out of study.

Often times, researchers are only familiar with only one type of research and can only explain that one. Mixed form of design hence requires the researcher to be acquainted with both forms of data collection (Creswell, 2013).

The mixed method was deemed appropriate for this research due to various reasons. First, the crosscutting and diverse nature of this study required that the researcher adopts the mixed method research as it fits use of pragmatism philosophy (Creswell, 2013; Morgan, 2007). The study moreover sought to find explanations to conflict situations in academic libraries in Ghana.

This study, hence, entailed the use of both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (interviews) tools.

As explained, the mixed method research design, which falls in line with the pragmatist philosophy was favoured by this study as it enabled the researcher to obtain a more complete and less prejudiced picture of conflict situations in the academic libraries under study. The design was also useful in confirming that all respondents in key informant interviews. The mixed method design also allowed triangulation in the study's data collection process which was important in ensuring reliability (Creswell, 2013). The study adopted the mixed methods approach because it enhances results credibility, participant enrichment, instrument fidelity and treatment integrity (Collins, Onwuegbuzie & Jiao, 2007). Further, Bekhet & Zauszniewski (2012) emphasize that methodological triangulation has been found to be beneficial in providing confirmation of findings, more comprehensive data, increased validity and enhanced understanding of the studied phenomena.

### **3.2 Selection of Cases**

This research focused on Sam Jonah library, University of Cape Coast, Osagyefo library of University of Education, and John Kofi Borsah library of Cape Coast Technical University. These universities were selected because of their period of existence, accreditation, ranking as well as facilities. With the issues concerning the selection of the above mentioned universities for the study, the University of Cape Coast was selected because it is one of the oldest universities in Ghana. After the first three universities established in Ghana, one of the mid-way universities established in Ghana is University of Education, Winneba. Cape Coast Technical University is also one of the latest universities established in

Ghana. Since the researcher's aim was to target academic libraries, the above mentioned libraries were not exempted.

### **3.3 Selection of Subjects**

#### **3.3.1 Population**

Neuman (2006) opines that population is the total group of subjects that meet a designated set of criteria. The subject in the population has similar characteristics. Neuman (2006) also adds that it is the population that a sample size is taken. The University of Cape Coast had a total working population of about 2000 and Sam Jonah Library, which was the setting of the study, had a population of 134. The University of Education, Winneba, also had staff population of about 1499 and out of this 50 could be found in Osagyefo library while Cape Technical University had 32 library staff.

There are three categories of staff in the above mentioned research areas, namely junior staff, senior staff and senior members. The junior members of staff are the workers whose qualification is not above Senior High School certificates. The senior members of staff hold a diploma to post graduate (Masters) certificates. The senior members also hold post graduate certificates.

The staff in the above academic libraries can also be grouped under professional and paraprofessional librarians. According to Business Dictionary, professional is a person formally certified by a professional body of belonging to a specific profession by virtue of having completed a required course of studies and/ or practice and whose competence can usually be measured against an established

set of standards. The paraprofessional is a job title given to persons in various occupational fields, such as education, healthcare, engineering, and law, who is trained to assist professionals but do not have professional licensure ([www.businessdictionary.com/definition.com](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition.com)).

Even though the above mentioned areas have other staff, such as the cleaners, clerks and messengers, the researcher did not add them because the researcher's interest was those members of staff who perform professional library duties.

The table below indicates the total number of library staff.

**Table 1: Study Population and Sample**

<b>Area of the study</b>	<b>Junior staff</b>	<b>Senior staff</b>	<b>Senior members</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Sam Jonah Library</b>	34	89	11	<b>134</b>
<b>Osagyefo Library</b>	24	20	6	<b>50</b>
<b>John Kofi Borsah</b>	25	5	2	<b>32</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>216</b>

**Staff Directory (2017)**

**All members of the population were sampled as census approach**

### **3.3.2 Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2000), a sample should be selected in a way that will truly represent the population of the study. In cases where the sample

frame can be categorized, each category should be represented in the sample. They opine that sample size is the subset of a population.

Contrary to the view on the sample size by Fraenkel and Wallen (2000), this view did not hold in this research because the researcher did not use a subset of the population, but rather used the entire population of Sam Jonah library (134), Osagyefo library (50) and John Kofi Borsah library (32). This is what is called a census.

Harding (2006) shares the view that the census is the process of collecting and gathering data from every unit of a population under a study rather than choosing a sample. Harding further states that the census has to do with the use of the total enumeration of the target population for a study. This is to confirm Creswell's (2009) assertion that a researcher purposefully selects... respondents that will best suit its interest of the research. As with the view of Creswell (2009), the main purpose of selecting the entire population for the research was due to the small size of the total population.

### **3.4 Instrumentation**

Frankel and Wallen (2003) stipulate that instrumentation is the whole process of gathering data. In this research, the researcher used questionnaires and interview to collect the data for the study

Sarantakos (1993) describes questionnaires as being helpful because they standardize data collection and ensures high confidentiality of respondents; thus, eliciting truthful information from them. The questionnaires included a set of both

open-ended and close-ended items and it had 7 sections which were linked directly to the research objectives which were raised for the study. The open-ended questions were used because they did not restrict the respondents to give a particular answer.

Also, the respondents were free to use their own words to provide the response to the way they deemed fit. Open-ended questions give room for unanticipated but useful data and they are easy to construct as they do not require special skills and competencies. On the other hand, close-ended questions restrict the respondents to the options given. Close-ended questions make the respondent's work easier, there is an assurance of focus and it saves time. The merits of both the open-ended and the close-ended questions justify their combination. The questionnaire was completed by the respondents themselves because the study population was highly literate.

The first section of the questionnaire sought to solicit information on the background of the respondents. The variables covered here include the category of respondents, gender, academic/professional qualification and the number of years spent in serving.

These were important since they helped the researcher to determine the level of understanding of the respondents concerning the subject under investigation.

The second section of the questionnaire was to ascertain views on common types of conflicts that occur in the running of the academic libraries. The purpose for this section was to determine the magnitude of occurrence of each of the types of

conflicts that were reviewed in the literature. Both open-ended and close-ended questions were used to find out the various types of conflicts and their frequency of occurrence.

The third section of the questionnaire looked at the existence and the causes of conflicts. The reason here was to find out the various areas from which conflict arises in academic libraries and to isolate specific causes of conflicts from the normal daily exchanges of give and take associated with life in the academic libraries.

The fourth section focused on the effects of conflicts.

The fifth section looked at the prevention of conflicts.

The sixth section was on the effectiveness of the various methods/strategies that are employed in handling conflict. The questionnaire was given to the junior and senior staff to answer. Due to the large population of both junior and senior staff, the researcher could not interview all of them, but rather gave them some questionnaire to fill.

In addition to the questionnaire, semi-structured interview guide was used to conduct interviews with the respondents in the administrative positions (senior members) to obtain confidential data that the other respondents were not willing to put into writing. Open-ended questions were asked to enable the researcher delve into areas not captured in the questionnaire. The senior members were interviewed due to their small population.

### **3.5 Pilot Testing**

A pilot testing was carried out to ascertain the dependability, reliability and validity of the instrument and to revise and improve the questions to make them more specific and effective in eliciting the needed responses. The pre-testing was conducted at the Balme library of University of Ghana, Legon, since it had the characteristics of the population under study. A total of 50 copies of the questionnaire were distributed among the junior and senior members of staff of the library. Five senior members were also interviewed.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher solicited the help from three research assistants from each of the research areas in the administration of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were given to the respondents to fill them on the same day, but those who were busy filled them later.

The researcher used face-to-face interview approach and a tape recorder and field notebook were also used to record the interview that was conducted by the researcher.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The data analysis was started after the questionnaires had been collected from the field and interviews conducted. Data analysis is a process that involves inspecting, cleaning, coding and transforming data to change it into information that can be useful (Babbie 2011). The data collected were both qualitative and

quantitative. Throughout the period of collection, the data was checked for consistency and completeness and cleaned.

### **3.7.1 Quantitative Analysis**

The first section of the questionnaire deals with the background information of the respondents, while other sections deal with the objectives of the study. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The expected number of library staff to fill the questionnaires was one hundred and ninety-seven (197) and this consists of both junior and senior staff of the various libraries under study excluding the senior members. Out of the total number of the respondents, one hundred and fifty-six (156) library staff completed the questionnaires, given a response rate of 79.2%. The number of the respondents who filled the questionnaires in the research areas decreased because many of the workers had gone for their annual leave, so it was difficult to get them.

In analyzing the objectives of the study, a three-type scale was used in obtaining the responses. These are “agree”, “neutral”, and “disagree”. Moreover, in analyzing the items, the suggestion by Best and Kahn (1995) was adopted.

The researcher’s interest was to find out the frequency of each item in each academic library under study. According to Best & Kahn (1995), the category “agree” was interpreted to mean a high prevalence of an item because in the opinion of the respondents, the item was often present in the academic libraries. The category, “neutral” was interpreted to mean a verage prevalence of an item because the respondents felt the item was torn between agree and disagree in their

academic libraries. The category, “disagree”, was interpreted to mean no prevalence of an item because the respondents considered it to be not occurring at all in the academic libraries. Before processing the responses, the completed questionnaires from respondents were edited for consistency. The cleaned data were coded and entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 22. The analysis of quantitative data was done in terms of descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Analysis of results from the quantitative data was presented by the use of graphs, tables and charts.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

This section presents the results of the data collected using the semi-structured interview guide to investigate conflict management in academic libraries in Ghana. Also, the study sought to uncover the causes and effects of conflicts in academic libraries in Ghana. Most of the views expressed by respondents from the various academic libraries in Ghana were similar. As much as possible, such views were discussed together. However, where differences in opinions were expressed, this was treated separately. The interview data were categorized into five (5) main sections. The estimated time on each respondent was between 30-45 minutes and the interview took place at the convenience of the respondents. The ethical issues related to the conduct of interviews were observed by the researcher.

The total number of senior members in the three universities is twenty-eight (19) where (11) from University of Cape Coast (UCC), (6) from University of

Education, Winneba (UEW) and (2) from Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU). Even though all the respondents were selected for the interview, the researcher was unable to get all of them during the data gathering process. According to the management of the various academic libraries under study, the members of staff were asked to proceed on leave; otherwise, the outstanding leave days would be cancelled. As a result of that the researcher was able to get ten (10) respondents for the interview which five (5) from UCC, three (3) from UEW and two (2) from CCTU. The qualitative data collected from the 10 key informant interviews was analysed using thematic summary analysis approach. Babbie (2011) indicates that thematic summary analysis is a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analyzing and reporting key emerging patterns or themes within the data.

It minimally organizes but describes the data set in rich detail, enabling the interpretation of the various aspects of the research objectives. The emerging salient patterns were presented in narrative form in line with the specific objectives discussed.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses the results of conflict management in academic libraries in Ghana by looking at the causes and effects encountered by academic libraries in Ghana. It has been divided into two parts; the first part is the quantitative analysis of data while the second part is the qualitative analysis. The analysis was done based on the research objectives.

#### 4.1 Biographic Data

This section presents the results relating to biographic data collected from the respondents. This was necessitated by the fact that information on the biographic data did not relate to the objectives of this study but was important in presenting the distribution statistics of the respondents in relation to the different biographic characteristics. The background characteristics of the three academic libraries discovered in the study were gender, age, qualification, the type of library, category of staff and length of service. These variables were looked at in order to provide the setting within where the study was situated. Tables and bar graphs are used to depict grammatically the distribution of the respondents in different categories.

#### 4.1.1 Gender of the Respondents

The breakdown of respondents according to gender is to determine the views expressed by the males and females. This would enable the researcher to find out the perception of the males from the females from the areas of the study.

The Table 2 shows their responses.

**Table 2: Gender of the Respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Sam Jonah Library</b>	<b>Osagyefo Library</b>	<b>John Kofi Borsah Library</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
<b>Male</b>	54 (56.8)	30 (31.6)	11 (11.6)	<b>95 (60.9)</b>
<b>Female</b>	36 (59.0)	15 (24.6)	10 (16.4)	<b>61 (39.1)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>90 (57.7)</b>	<b>45 (28.8)</b>	<b>21 (13.5)</b>	<b>156 (100)</b>

**Source: Field data, 2018**

Table 2 illustrates the gender distribution of respondents who participated in the study. This was aimed at establishing whether the study had fairly represented both male and female respondents. Beins (2009) posited that it is precarious to report gender of respondents in a study involving men and women such that research outcomes can be compared and contrasted with other studies on gender distribution dimension. A majority of the respondents were males 95 (60.9%) than the females 61 (39.1%) in this study. To break it further, Sam Jonah library 54 (56.8%) had the highest male respondents. This was followed by Osagyefo library 30 (31%) and then, John Kofi Borsah library 11 (11.6%). The results also indicated that 36 (57.7%) of the female respondents were from Sam Jonah library,

15 (24.6) of the respondents from Osagyefo library and 10 (16.4) of the respondents were from John Kofi Borsah library. Thus, the views expressed in the study were predominantly those of men.

#### 4.1.2 Age Distribution of Respondents

In order to determine the age distribution of the respondents, they were asked to indicate their age when answering the questionnaires. This enabled him to find out the age pattern and sense of maturity among the library staff of the three academic libraries. The Table 3 below shows the age distribution of the respondents.

**Table 3: Age of the Respondents**

Age	Sam Jonah Library	Osagyefo Library	John Kofi Borsah Library	Total (%)
<b>20 – 29</b>	19 (42.2)	21 (46.7)	5 (11.1)	<b>45 (28.8)</b>
<b>30 – 39</b>	53 (73.6)	12 (16.7)	7 (9.7)	<b>72 (46.2)</b>
<b>40 – 49</b>	14 (50.0)	7 (25.0)	7 (25.0)	<b>28 (17.9)</b>
<b>50 – 59</b>	3 (30.0)	5 (50.0)	2 (20.0)	<b>10 (6.4)</b>
<b>60 &amp; Above</b>	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	<b>1 (0.6)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>90 (57.7)</b>	<b>45 (28.8)</b>	<b>21 (13.5)</b>	<b>156 (100)</b>

**Source: Field data, 2018**

Age, as a demographic element, was explored in order to get an indication on the age distribution of the sampled population used for the study. A majority of the age distribution of the respondents was from 30 to 39 years 72 (46.2%)

in this research. To probe further, 53 (73.6%) of the respondents were from Sam Jonah library, 12 (16.7%) of the respondents from Osagyefo library and 7 (9.7%) of the respondents from John Kofi Borsah library. The results also indicated that 20 to 29 years of the respondents formed 45 (28.8%), comprising Sam Jonah library 21 (46.7%), Sam Jonah library 19 (42.2%) and Osagyefo library 5 (11.1%). Moreover, the age distribution of 40-49 years formed 28 (17. %) of the respondents. This consists of 14 (50%) respondents from Sam Jonah library, 7 (25%) respondents from Osagyefo library and 7 (25%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library. In addition, the age distribution of the respondents from 50 to 39 years formed 10 (6.4%) of the respondents. The breakdown is as follows; Osagyefo library 5 (50%), Sam Jonah library 3(30%) and John Kofi Borsah library 2 (20%). The last age distribution this research looked at was those respondents who were above 60 years of age. Apart from 1 (0.6%) respondent from Sam Jonah library who was above 60 years, no one was above 60 years in other study areas. The indication was that the respondents were dominated by youthful and energetic people.

#### **4.1.3 Education Levels of the Respondents**

To determine the educational levels of the respondents, the researcher asked the respondents to indicate that. Table 4 determines the respondents' education levels.

**Table 4: Education Levels of the Respondents**

<b>Academic Qualification</b>	<b>Sam Jonah Library</b>	<b>Osagyefo Library</b>	<b>John Kofi Borsah Library</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
<b>Masters</b>	12 (44.4)	9 (33.3)	6 (22.2)	<b>27 (17.3)</b>
<b>Degree</b>	42 (65.6)	19 (29.7)	3 (4.7)	<b>64 (41.0)</b>
<b>Diploma</b>	24 (63.2)	9 (23.7)	5 (13.2)	<b>38 (24.4)</b>
<b>WASSCE/SSCE</b>	11 (44.4)	7 (28.0)	7 (28.0)	<b>25 (16.0)</b>
<b>Others</b>	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	<b>2 (1.3)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>90 (57.7)</b>	<b>45 (28.8)</b>	<b>21 (13.5)</b>	<b>156 (100.0)</b>

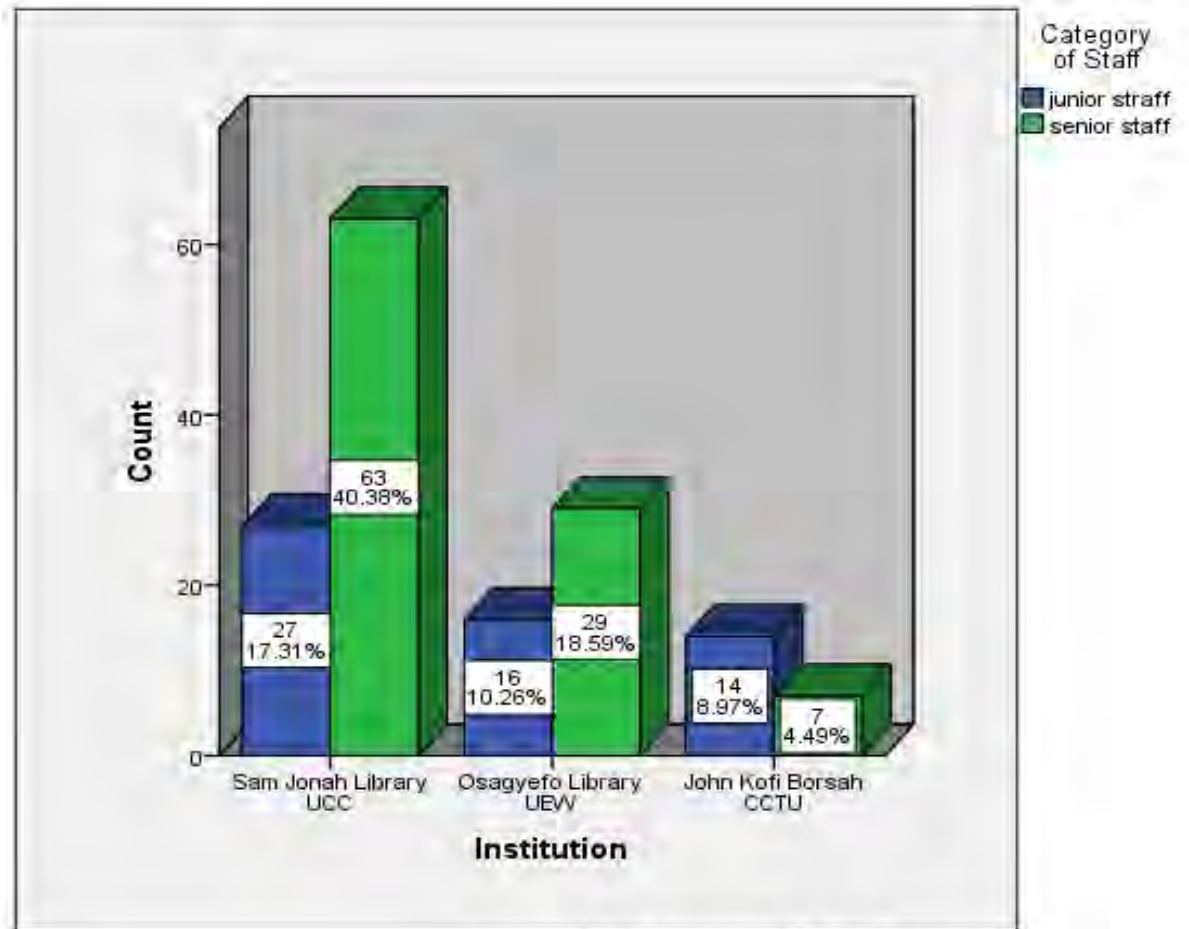
**Source: Field data, 2018**

From the sample drawn for the study in Table 4, it was obvious that educational levels were generally higher in the sampled population. In terms of respondents' educational qualification, a majority of the respondents 64 (41.0%) held first degree. This is shown from the responses from Sam Jonah library 42 (65.6%), Osagyefo library 19 (29.7%) and John Kofi Borsah library 3 (4.7%). Apart from those respondents who had first degree, a quite number of the respondents were diploma holders 38 (24.4%). In comparing the number of diploma holders in the areas of study, 24 (63.2%) respondents from Sam Jonah library, 9 (23.7%) respondents from Osagyefo and 5 (13) respondents from John Kofi Borsah libraries indicated that they had diploma. Also, the results indicated that 27 (17.3%) respondents had Masters degree. To explain further, 12(44%) respondents from Sam Jonah library, 9

(33.3%) respondents from Osagyefo library and 6 (22.2%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library had Masters degree. 25 (16%) respondents also had WASSCE/SSCE certificate. The data analysis indicated that 11 (44.4%) respondents from Sam Jonah library, 7 (28%) respondents from Sam Jonah library and 7 (28%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library were WASSCE/SSCE holders. In addition, each respondent from Sam Jonah 1(50%) and John Kofi Borsah 1 (50%) libraries indicated that they had different educational background but not captured in the questionnaire. Generally, it can be seen that the respondents had at least, one form of qualification or the other, but it was dominated by the first degree holders.

#### 4.1.4 Category of Staff

It was necessary for the researcher to know the category of the respondents and this is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Category of Staff**

**Source: Field data, 2018**

The category which members of library staff belong to was of interest to this study so as to have a fair idea of the background of the respondents. The predominant staff category was senior staff 99 (63.5%) as against

57 (36.5%) for the junior staff. In order to know the senior staff category across the academic libraries, 63 (40.4%) respondents were from Sam Jonah library, 29 (18.6%) respondents from Osagyefo library and 14 (9%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library. However, 27(17.3%) respondents from Sam Jonah were junior staff, 16 (10.3%) respondents from Osagyefo library were junior staff and 7 (4.4.5%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library were also junior staff.

#### 4.1.5 Years of Service

The researcher wanted to find out the number of years spent by the library staff in the three academic libraries in order to determine their knowledge in conflict management behaviors. Table 5 shows the years the respondents had spent at their present libraries.

**Table 5: Years of Service of the Respondents**

Age	Sam Jonah Library	Osagyefo Library	John Kofi Borsah Library	Total (%)
1 – 5	18 (48.6)	17 (45.9)	2 (5.4)	37 (23.7)
6 – 10	39 (65.0)	12 (20.0)	9 (15.0)	60 (38.5)
11 – 15	19 (70.4)	4 (14.8)	4 (14.8)	27 (17.3)
16 – 20	8 (44.4)	4 (22.2)	6 (33.3)	18 (11.5)
21 – 25	3 (42.9)	4 (57.1)		7 (4.5)
26 – 30	1 (100.0)			1 (0.6)
31& Above	2 (33.3)	4 (66.7)		6 (3.8)
<b>Total</b>	<b>90 (57.7)</b>	<b>45 (28.8)</b>	<b>21 (13.5)</b>	<b>156 (100)</b>

Source: Field data, 2018

The study also sought to find out the duration of the work of the respondents at these academic libraries. The findings indicated that majority 60 (38.5%) of the respondents had been working at these academic libraries between 6 and 10 years. To explain further, 39 (65%) respondents, 12 (20%) respondents and 9 (15%) respondents were from Sam Jonah, Osagyefo and John Kofi Borsah libraries respectively. The results also indicate that 37 (23%) respondents for the study had worked from 1-5 years. With this, 18 (48.6%) respondents from Sam Jonah library, 17 (45.9%) respondents from Osagyefo library and 2 (5.4%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library responded that they had worked from 1-5 years.

In addition, the number of respondents who had worked in the three libraries from 11-15 years was 27 (17.3%). To break it down, 19 (70.4%) respondents were from Sam Jonah library, 4 (14%) respondents from Osagyefo library and 4 (14.8%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library. This was followed by the respondents 18 (11.5%) who had been in the system from 16-20 years. As indicated in Table 6, 8 (44.4%) respondents from Sam Jonah library, 6 (33.3%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library and 4 (22.2%) respondents from Osagyefo library had worked from 16-20 years.

This was followed by 7 (4.5%) of the respondents who had worked in the areas under study from 21-25 years. Out of these, 4 (57.1%) respondents from Osagyefo library and 3 (42.9%) respondents from Sam Jonah library had worked from 21-25 years. The results also indicate that 6 (3.8%) of the respondents from the three academic libraries had worked from 31 years and above. To explain further, only 4 (66.7%) respondents from Osagyefo library and 2 (33.3%)

respondents from Sam Jonah library had worked from 31 years and above. It was also realized from the research that only 1 (0.6%) respondent had worked from 26-30 years and this was from Sam Jonah library 1 (100%).

#### **4.2 Distribution on Types of Conflicts**

The researcher tried to look at the type of conflicts that existed in the academic libraries under study.

**Table 6: Distribution on Types of Conflicts**

Types of Conflicts	Sam Jonah Library			Osagyefo Library			John Kofi Borsah Library		
	A	N <sub>e</sub>	D	A	N <sub>e</sub>	D	A	N <sub>e</sub>	D
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Conflicts between staff and library management	74 (81.4)	4 (4.4)	12 (13.2)	40 (88.9)	1 (2.2)	4 (8.9)	15 (71.4)	1 (4.8)	5 (23.8)
Conflicts between subordinates and supervisors	70 (77.8)	4 (4.4)	16 (17.8)	37 (82.2)		8 (17.8)	18 (85.7)	1 (4.7)	2 (9.6)
Conflicts between the patrons and staff	38 (76.4)		21 (23.6)	33 (82.2)	3 (6.7)	5 (11.1)	20 (95.3)		1 (4.8)
Conflicts among the staff	80 (88.9)	2 (2.2)	8 (8.9)	40 (88.8)	1 (2.2)	4 (8.9)	21 (100.0)		
Conflict among the patrons	56 (62.2)	3 (3.3)	30 (33.3)	32 (72.7)	2 (4.6)	10 (22.7)	8 (40.0)	1 (5.0)	11 (55.0)
Conflict within you	63 (70.0)		27 (30.0)	35 (79.5)	1 (2.3)	8 (18.2)	10 (47.6)	2 (9.5)	9 (42.9)

**Source: Field data, 2018**

**Footnote: A: Agree, D: Disagree, Ne: Neutral**

The types of conflicts that exist across the various libraries were identified and presented in Table 6. From table 6, 40 (88.9%) of the respondents from Osagyefo library (OL) agreed that conflicts between staff and management occurred and this view was not far from both Sam Jonah (SJL) 74 (81.4%) and John Kofi

Borsah (JKB) 15 (71.4%) libraries respectively. In order to know those who disagreed to this type of conflicts, the following responses were given; John Kofi Borsah library 5 (23.8%), Sam Jonah library 12 (13.2%) and Osagyefo library 4 (8.9%). On the other hand, 1 (4.8%) of the respondents from John Kofi Borsah was neutral that conflicts between staff and library management occurred. Also, 4 (4.4%) of the respondents from Sam Jonah library were neutral that conflicts between staff and library management occurred while Osagyefo library recorded 2 (2.2%). From the analysis, it was realized from the three academic libraries that majority of the respondents agreed that conflicts between staff and library management occurred in academic libraries.

Further indications from Table 6 showed that respondents agreed that conflicts between subordinates and supervisors at the three academic libraries occurred. These were the results recorded in the various academic libraries under study; John Kofi Borsah library 18 (85.7%), Osagyefo libraries 37 (82.2%) and Sam Jonah library 70 (77.8%). In looking at how often conflicts between the subordinates and supervisors occurred in these academic libraries, 16 (17.8%) of the respondents from Sam Jonah library, 8 (17.8%) of the respondents from Osagyefo library and 2 (9.6%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library disagreed with that. A handful of the respondents from Sam Jonah library 4 (4.4%) and 1 (4.7%) of the respondent from John Kofi Borsah library were in the neutral position but no neutral respondent from Osagyefo library. This means that conflicts between the subordinates and supervisors occurred more in John Kofi Borsah library than the two other academic libraries. In summary, a majority of

the respondents agreed that conflicts between subordinates and supervisors did occur in the three academic libraries but not often.

It could also be deduced from Table 6 that conflicts between the patrons and staff was more dominant at the John Kofi Borsah library 20 (95.3%) as compared to Osagyefo library 33 (82.2%) and Sam Jonah library 38 (76.4%). However, a substantial number of respondents from Sam Jonah library 21 (23.6%) disagreed that conflicts between subordinates and supervisors occurred as well as Osagyefo 5 (11.1%) and John Kofi Borsah library 1 (4.8%) respectively. A few number of the respondents in Osagyefo library 21 (23.6%) were in a neutral position that conflicts between but there was no response from other libraries. From the analysis in Table 7, it could be deduced that conflicts between patrons and staff did occur in academic libraries.

Whereas conflicts among the staff of John Kofi Borsah library 21 (100%) appeared to be more frequent, the same cannot be said of Sam Jonah 80 (88.9%) and Osagyefo 40 (88.8%) libraries. Apart from the respondents from John Kofi Borsah library, 8 (8.9%) respondents from Sam Jonah library and 4 (8.9%) respondents from Osagyefo library however disagreed that conflicts among staff did occur. A few from respondents from Sam Jonah library 2 (2.2%) and Osagyefo library 1 (2.2%) responded that they were in the neutral position that conflicts among staff did occur but there was no response from John Kofi Borsah library. In comparing the responses from the respondents from the three academic libraries, it could be concluded that conflicts among staff was predominant as compared to other types of conflicts.

It is also interesting to note that conflicts among the patrons of the libraries appeared to be more in Osagyefo library 32 (72.7%) and Sam Jonah library 56 (62.2%) than John Kofi Borsah library 8 (40%) but 11 (55%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library, Sam Jonah library 30 (33.3%) and Osagyefo library 10 (22.7%) disagreed that conflicts among patrons did occur in academic libraries. Other respondents from John Kofi Borsah library 1 (5%), Osagyefo library 2 (4.6%) and Sam Jonah library 3 (3.3%) were neutral that conflicts among patrons did occur in academic libraries. The research revealed that conflicts among patrons did occur always.

Conflicts within the respondents were also explored across the various academic libraries and the results indicated that it was more frequent at Osagyefo library 35 (79.5%) as compared to other two libraries-Sam Jonah 63 (70%) and John Kofi Borsah 10 (47.6%) libraries. Whereas 9 (42.9%) respondents from Osagyefo library disagreed that conflicts among themselves occurred, a substantial number of respondents from Sam Jonah library 27 (30%) and Osagyefo library 8 (18%) also reiterated that conflicts among themselves did not occur. Only 2 (9.5%) of the respondents from John Kofi library and Osagyefo library 1 (2.3%) were in neutral position that conflicts among staff did occur.

### 4.3 Causes of Conflicts

This study sought the views of the respondents on the causes of conflicts. This is illustrated in Table 7.

**Table 7: Causes of Conflicts**

Causes of Conflicts	Sam Jonah Library			Osagyefo Library			John Kofi Borsah Library		
	A	N <sub>e</sub>	D	A	N <sub>e</sub>	D	A	N <sub>e</sub>	D
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Sharing of limited library resources	69 (76.7)	1 (1.1)	20 (22.2)	42 (93.3)	1 (2.2)	2 (4.4)	15 (71.4)	1 (4.8)	5 (23.8)
Different interpretation of the individual's role or responsibilities	77 (85.6)	2 (2.2)	11 (12.2)	36 (83.7)	1 (2.3)	6 (14.0)	19 (95.0)		1 (5.0)
Poor communication channels	81 (90.0)	1 (1.1)	8 (8.9)	40 (88.9)	2 (4.4)	3 (6.7)	19 (90.5)	1 (4.8)	1 (4.8)
Lack of respect because of position or rank	74 (82.2)		16 (17.8)	39 (88.6)	1 (2.3)	4 (9.1)	18 (85.7)	1 (4.8)	2 (9.5)
Resistance to change at workplace	71 (79.9)		19 (21.1)	40 (91.0)		4 (9.0)	17 (80.9)		4 (19.1)
Refusal to perform workplace duty	66 (73.3)	2 (2.2)	22 (24.4)	33 (75.0)	1 (2.3)	10 (22.7)	17 (80.9)		4 (19.1)
Unrealized expectations	65 (72.2)	5 (5.6)	20 (22.2)	32 (78.1)		9 (22.0)	16 (76.2)	1 (4.8)	4 (19.0)
Pressure on you to finish work on time	68 (75.6)	1 (1.1)	21 (23.3)	39 (86.7)	3 (6.7)	3 (6.7)	15 (71.5)		6 (28.6)
Few people taking decision for staff	80 (88.9)	1 (1.1)	9 (10.0)	40 (90.9)	1 (2.3)	3 (6.8)	16 (76.2)	1 (4.8)	4 (19.0)

**Table 7 continued**

Performing duty alone or one man's work	70 (77.7)		20 (22.2)	38 (86.4)	2 (4.5)	4 (9.1)	16 (76.1)		5 (23.8)
Unclear lines of authority	67 (74.4)	1 (1.1)	22 (24.4)	37 (84.1)		7 (15.9)	17 (81.0)	1 (4.8)	3 (14.3)
Territorial encroachments (taking a workplace as personal property)	60 (66.7)	2 (2.2)	28 (31.1)	36 (83.7)	1 (2.3)	6 (13.3)	15 (71.4)		6 (28.6)
Interaction patterns (interfering in someone's or groups' affairs)	64 (71.1)	3 (3.3)	23 (25.6)	39 (86.4)	1 (2.3)	5 (11.4)	14 (66.7)		7 (33.3)
Lack of job experience by the superior	63 (70.0)		27 (30.0)	33 (75.0)	2 (4.5)	9 (20.5)	15 (71.4)	1 (4.8)	5 (23.8)

**Source: Field data, 2018**

**Footnote: A: Agree, D: Disagree, Ne: Neutral**

Table 7 discusses the causes of conflicts in the three academic libraries. From Table 7, it was agreed that sharing of limited library resources appeared to be more frequent at Osagyefo library 42 (93.3%) as compared to the other two libraries like Sam Jonah library 69 (76.7%) and John Kofi Borsah 15 (71.4%). However, 5 (23.8%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library, 20 (22.2%) respondents from Osagyefo library as well as 2 (4.4%) respondents from Sam Jonah library disagreed that the sharing of limited resources was a cause of conflicts at their workplaces.

In order to know those in the neutral position, 1 (4.8%) respondent from John Kofi Borsah library, 1 (2.2%) respondent from Osagyefo library and 1 (1.1%)

respondent from Sam Jonah library thought likewise. The responses from the respondents showed that the majority of the respondents agreed that conflicts caused by limited sharing of resources really occurred.

It can be also be deduced that one major cause of conflicts at the John Kofi Borsah library 21 (95%) was a different interpretation of individuals' roles or responsibilities. This was followed by Sam Jonah library 77 (85.6%). Also, 36 (83.7%) respondents from Osagyefo library admitted that conflicts occurred. Nevertheless, 6 (14%) respondents from Osagyefo library disagreed that different interpretations of individuals' roles or responsibilities caused conflicts. This view was not far from Sam Jonah 11 (12.2%) and John Kofi Borsah 1 (5%) libraries. A handful number of respondents from Osagyefo library 1 (2.3%) and Sam Jonah library 2 (2.2%) shared the view that they were in a neutral position as to different interpretations of individuals' roles or responsibilities cause conflicts or not, but no response was recorded in John Kofi Borsah library.

It is also noteworthy that poor communication channels were identified to be a frequent cause of conflicts at John Kofi Borsah 19 (90.5%), Sam Jonah 64 (71.1%) and Osagyefo 40 (88.9%) libraries. However, 8 (8.9%) respondents from Sam Jonah library, 3 (6.7%) respondents from Osagyefo library and 1 (4.8%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library disagreed that poor communication channels caused conflicts in academic libraries. Findings from Table 7, 1 (4.8%) respondent from John Kofi Borsah library, 2 (4.4%) respondents from Osagyefo library and 1 (1.1%) respondent from Sam Jonah library responded that they were

in a neutral position that poor communication channels cause conflicts in academic libraries.

Results from the study also indicated that lack of respect because of position or rank appeared to be dominant across all the libraries albeit with minor differences in the frequency of occurrence. While 39 (88.6%) respondents from Osagyefo library agreed that lack of respect due to position or rank was a frequent cause of conflicts, 18 (85.7%) as well as 74 (85.7%) respondents from Osagyefo and John Kofi Borsah libraries respectively also indicated same. A few number respondents from John Kofi library 16 (17.8%), Osagyefo library 4 (9.1%) and John Kofi Borsah library 21 (9.5%) disagreed that conflicts caused by lack of respect because of position or rank did occur. Apart from 1 (4.8%) respondent and

1 (2.3%) respondent from John Kofi Borsah and Osagyefo libraries respectively who were in a neutral position that lack of respect because of position or rank cause conflicts in academic libraries, no response was recorded in Sam Jonah library.

Resistance to change at workplace as a cause of conflicts at these libraries was also examined. This can be seen from the following responses from the respondents from the various academic libraries in Table 8; Osagyefo library 40 (91%), John Kofi Borsah library 17 (80.9%) and Sam Jonah library 71 (79.9%). However, 19 (21.1%) respondents from Sam Jonah library, 4 (19.1%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library and 4 (9.1%) respondents from Osagyefo library

contended that resistance to change never created conflicts in academic libraries, but no respondent was in a neutral position in the three academic libraries.

The results illustrated in Table 7 also indicate that refusal to perform workplace duty is also a major cause of conflicts at John Kofi Borsah library 17 (80.9%) as compared to Osagyefo 33 (75%) and Sam Jonah 66 (733.3%) libraries 13 (29.6%). However, 22 (24.4%) respondents from Sam Jonah library, 10 (22.7%) respondents from Osagyefo library and 4 (19.1%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library also disagreed that refusal to perform workplace duty is a cause of conflicts at the workplace. From Table 7, it is shown that only respondents from Osagyefo library 1 (2.3%) and Sam Jonah library 2 (2.2%) responded that they were in a neutral position that refusal to perform workplace duty causes conflicts in academic libraries.

Across all the libraries examined for this study, unrealized expectations as a cause of conflicts, was found to be generally high in Osagyefo library 32 (78.1%) and John Kofi library 16 (76.2%) as compared to Sam Jonah library 65 (72.2%). On the other hand, 20 (22.2%) respondents from Sam Jonah library, 9 (22%) respondents from Osagyefo library and 4 (19%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library disagreed to this assertion that unrealized expectations as a cause of conflicts in academic libraries. A handful of the respondents from Sam Jonah library 5 (5.6%) and John Kofi library 1 (4.8%) responded that they were in a neutral position that unrealized expectations as a cause of conflicts in academic libraries, but no response from other academic library.

Pressure on staff to finish work on time frequently escalates into conflicts. This view is not far from 39 (86.7%) respondents from Osagyefo library, 68 (75.6%) respondents from Sam Jonah library and 15 (71.5%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library. On the other hand, 6 (28.6%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library, 21 (23.3%) respondents from Sam Jonah library and 3 (6.7%) respondents from Osagyefo library disagreed that conflicts caused by pressure on someone to finish work on time did occur in academic libraries in Ghana while 3 (6.7%) respondents from Osagyefo library and 1 (1.1%) respondent from Sam Jonah library reiterated that they were in a neutral position to this assertion. No response on this view was recorded in John Kofi Borsah library.

It is interesting to observe from Table 7 that a significant number of respondents from Osagyefo library 40 (90.9%) indicated that a major cause of conflicts at the workplace was as a result of few people taking decisions for other members of staff. Also, 80 (88.9%) respondents from Sam Jonah library and 16 (76.2%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library shared similar views that few people taking decisions for staff really caused conflicts in academic libraries. 4 (19%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library, 9 (10%) respondents from Sam Jonah library and 3 (6.8%) respondents from Osagyefo library disagreed that few people taking decision for other staff in academic libraries could cause conflicts. Notwithstanding, 1 (4.8%) of the respondents from John Kofi Borsah library, 1 (1.1%) respondent from Osagyefo library and 1 (1.1%) respondent from Sam Jonah library were neither in support of those respondents who agreed to the assertion nor in support of those respondents who disagreed to that.

A majority of the respondents from each academic library agreed that performing duties was a cause of conflicts at Osagyefo library 38 (86.4%), Sam Jonah library 70 (77.7%) and John Kofi Borsah library 16 (76.1%). However, 5 (23.8%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library, 20 (22.2%) respondents from Sam Jonah library and 4 (9.1%) respondents from Osagyefo Library, were not in agreement that conflicts occurred when some library staff performed duty alone without involving others. Apart from respondents from Osagyefo library 2 (9.1%) who were in a neutral position that conflicts occurred when someone performed duties alone without involving other staff, there was no response from other academic libraries.

Furthermore, a majority of the respondents from the three libraries were of the opinion that unclear lines of authority resulted in conflicts in academic libraries. Although the respondents agreed that the frequency with which this issue occurred varied across the various academic libraries, it could be deduced that it was more at Osagyefo library 37 (84.1%) than John Kofi Borsah library 17 (81%) and Sam Jonah library 67 (74.4%). Some of the respondents from Sam Jonah library 22 (24.4%), Osagyefo library 7 (15.9%) and John Kofi Borsah library 3 (14.3%) were of the view that unclear lines of authority never created conflicts in academic libraries. A respondent from John Kofi Borsah 1 (4.8%) and Sam Jonah 1 (1.1%) libraries were in the middle ground that a cause of conflicts in academic libraries as a result of unclear lines of authority did occur.

It can also be seen from Table 7 that a majority of the respondents from the three academic libraries agreed that territorial encroachments (taking a workplace as personal property) frequently led to conflicts at Osagyefo library 36 (83.7%) than John Kofi Borsah library 15 (71.4%) and Sam Jonah library 67 (66.7%). Results from Table 8 also indicated that 28 (31.1%) respondents from Sam Jonah library, 6 (28.6%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library, and 6 (13.3%) respondents from Osagyefo library responded that they were not congruent with the assertion that conflicts caused by territorial encroachment (taking a workplace as personal property) really occurred in academic libraries. However, 1 (2.3%) respondent from Osagyefo library and 1 (2.2%) from Sam Jonah library were in a neutral position that territorial encroachment at workplace could lead to conflicts.

Results in Table 7 revealed that a majority of the respondents across the various academic libraries indicated that interaction patterns, i.e. interfering in someone's or groups' affairs led to conflicts. This can be seen from the responses from Osagyefo library 39 (86.4%), Sam Jonah library 64 (71.1%) and John Kofi Borsah library 14 (66.7%). However, 7 (33.3%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah, 23 (25.6%) respondents from Sam Jonah library and 6 (13.3%) respondents from Osagyefo library argued that conflicts caused by interaction patterns did not occur in academic libraries. With the exclusion of respondents from John Kofi Borsah library, 3 (3.3%) respondents from Sam Jonah library and 1 (2.3%) respondent from Osagyefo library were in a neutral position that conflicts occurred in academic libraries as a result of interaction patterns.

Generally, lack of job experience by superiors really leads to conflicts across the libraries. Whereas 33 (75%) respondents from Osagyefo library, 15 (71.4%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library and 63 (70%) respondents from Sam Jonah library in support that lack of job experience by superiors frequently led to conflicts, 27 (30%) respondents from Sam Jonah library, 5 (23.8%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library and 9 (20.5%) respondents from Osagyefo library thought otherwise. 2 (4.5%) respondents from Osagyefo library and 1 (4.8%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library were in a neutral position that lack of job experience by superiors could lead to conflicts in academic libraries but no response was recorded in Sam Jonah library.

#### **4.4 Effects of Unmanaged Conflicts**

The respondents were asked to answer questions on the effects of unmanaged conflicts in the academic libraries. The researcher looked at both positive and negative effects of unmanaged conflicts. The responses are depicted in Table 8.

**Table 8: Effects of Unmanaged Conflicts**

Effects of Unmanaged Conflicts	Sam Jonah Library			Osagyefo Library			John Kofi Borsah Library		
	A	Ne	D	A	Ne	D	A	Ne	D
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
<b>Negative Effects</b>									
Brings division among staff or patrons	79 (87.7)	2 (2.2)	9 (10.0)	40 (91.0)	2 (4.5)	2 (4.5)	18 (85.7)	1 (4.8)	2 (9.5)
Decrease in the level of commitment to work	80 (88.9)		10 (11.1)	41 (93.2)	1 (2.3)	2 (4.5)	19 (90.4)	1 (4.8)	1 (4.8)
Poor treatment of patrons by staff	69 (76.7)	1 (1.1)	20 (22.2)	37 (84.1)	1 (2.3)	6 (13.6)	19 (90.4)	1 (4.8)	1 (4.8)
Instigating the patrons against the staff	59 (65.5)		31 (34.4)	36 (83.7)		7 (16.3)	10 (47.6)	3 (14.3)	8 (38.1)
Delay in decision-making process by the management	77 (85.6)	1 (1.1)	12 (13.3)	44 (100.0)			20 (95.2)		1 (4.8)
Low patronage of library services	56 (62.2)	6 (6.7)	28 (31.1)	34 (79.1)	1 (2.3)	8 (18.6)	13 (61.9)	5 (23.8)	3 (14.3)
Staff resigning from work	61 (67.7)		29 (32.2)	32 (76.2)		10 (23.8)	9 (42.8)		12 (57.1)
Destruction of library resources	40 (44.4)	8 (8.9)	42 (46.7)	26 (61.9)	5 (11.9)	11 (26.2)	8 (40.0)	2 (10.0)	10 (50.0)
<b>Positive Effects</b>									
Increase in job output	57 (63.4)		33 (36.7)	32 (84.2)		6 (15.8)	16 (76.2)	1 (4.8)	4 (19.0)
An avenue for change of bad attitude of patrons or staff	75 (83.3)	2 (2.2)	13 (14.4)	41 (91.1)		4 (8.9)	18 (85.8)		3 (14.3)
Change work environment devoid of stress	70 (77.7)		20 (22.2)	41 (93.1)	1 (2.3)	2 (4.5)	17 (81.0)		4 (19.0)
Improve quality decisions in resolving conflict	74 (82.2)		16 (17.8)	42 (95.4)		2 (4.5)	18 (85.7)		3 (14.3)

**Source: Field data, 2018****Footnote: A: Agree, D: Disagree, Ne: Neutral**

Generally, a majority of the respondents across the three academic libraries indicated that unmanaged conflicts brought about division among staff or patrons as can be seen from Table 8. This effect is more rampant at Osagyefo library

40 (91%). This is followed by Sam Jonah library 79 (87.7%) and John Kofi Borsah library 18 (85.7%). Respondents from Sam Jonah library 9 (10%), John Kofi Borsah library 2 (9.5%) and Osagyefo library 2 (4.5%) reprimanded that unmanaged conflicts can never bring about division among staff or patrons. Notwithstanding, 1 (4.8%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library, 2 (4.5%) respondents from Osagyefo library and 2 (2.2%) respondents from Sam Jonah library were in a neutral position that unmanaged conflicts could bring about division among staff or patrons.

Whereas 41 (93.2%) respondents from Osagyefo library, 19 (90.4%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library and 80 (88.9%) respondents from Sam Jonah library indicated that unmanaged conflicts frequently led to a decrease in the level of commitment to work, 10 (11.1%) respondents from Sam Jonah library,

1 (4.8%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library and 2 (4.5%) respondents from Osagyefo library disagreed that unmanaged conflicts could lead to decrease in the level of commitment to work. A handful of the respondents from John Kofi Borsah library 1 (4.8%) and Osagyefo library 1 (2.3%) were in a neutral position that unmanaged conflicts could lead to decrease in the level of commitment to work.

Unmanaged conflicts can also lead to poor treatment of patrons by staff of the academic libraries. Although 20 (22.2%) respondents from Sam Jonah library,

6 (13.6%) respondents from Osagyefo library and 1 (4.8%) respondent from John Kofi Borsah library disagreed that unmanaged conflicts could lead to poor treatment of patrons by staff of the academic libraries, a substantial number of respondents from John Kofi Borsah library 19 (90.4%), Osagyefo library 37 (84.1%) and Sam Jonah library 69 (76.7%) indicated that unmanaged conflicts resulted in the poor treatment of patrons by staff of the academic libraries. Each respondent from John Kofi Borsah library 1 (4.8%), Osagyefo library 1 (2.3%) and Sam Jonah library 1 (1.1%) was in a neutral position that unmanaged conflicts could lead to poor treatment of patrons by staff of the academic libraries.

The respondents from Osagyefo library 36 (83.7%), Sam Jonah library 59 (65.5%) and John Kofi Borsah library 10 (47.6) agreed that always, unmanaged conflicts led to instigating the patrons against the staff, but this is not so by some respondents from John Kofi Borsah library 8 (38.1%), Sam Jonah library 31 (34.4%) and Osagyefo library 7 (16.3) who argued that unmanaged conflicts could never lead to instigating the patrons against the staff. Only 3 (14.3%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library were in a neutral position that unmanaged conflicts could lead to instigating the patrons against the staff, but no response from other academic libraries.

Delay in decision-making process by management of these libraries was also identified by the respondents as a major negative effect of unmanaged conflicts.

Across all the libraries, Osagyefo library 44 (100%) happened to experience this effect more frequently as compared to other libraries-John Kofi Borsah library 20 (90%) and Sam Jonah library 77 (85.6%). According to the responses as indicated in Table 9, 12 (13.3%) respondents from Sam Jonah library and 1 (4.8%) respondent disagreed that conflicts could bring about delays in decision-making process by the management, but no response was recorded in Osagyefo library. Only 1 (1.1%) respondent was in a neutral position that unmanaged conflicts could delay in decision-making process by the management.

A majority of the respondents from Osagyefo library 34 (79.1%), Sam Jonah library 56 (62.2%) and John Kofi Borsah library 13 (61.9%) shared the view that unmanaged conflicts could lead to low patronage of library services. On the other hand, 28 (31.1%) respondents from Sam Jonah library, 8 (18.6%) of the respondents from Osagyefo library and 3 (14.3%) of the respondents from John Kofi Borsah library disagreed that unmanaged conflicts could never lead to low patronage of library services. 5 (23.8%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library, 6 (6.7%) respondents from Sam Jonah library and 1 (2.3%) respondent from Osagyefo library were in a neutral position that unmanaged conflicts could lead to low patronage of library services.

Generally speaking, on many occasions, unmanaged conflicts led to staff resigning from their workplaces. This occurrence can be seen to be more likely to occur at Osagyefo library 34 (76.2%) as compared to Sam Jonah 61 (67.7%) and Osagyefo 9 (42.8%) libraries. A majority of the respondents from John Kofi Borsah library 12 (57.1%) disagreed that unmanaged conflicts could lead to staff

resigning from their workplaces. This was followed by respondents from Sam Jonah library 29 (32.2%) and Osagyefo library 10 (23.8%). No response was recorded in any of the academic libraries.

Destruction of library resources was found to be more frequent 26 (61.9%) at Osagyefo library than at Sam Jonah library 40 (44.4%) and John Kofi Borsah library 8 (40%). According to Table 9, it was noticed that 10 (50%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library, 42 (46.7%) respondents from Sam Jonah Library and 11 (26.2%) respondents from Osagyefo library argued that unmanaged conflicts did not lead to the destruction of library resources. 5 (11.9%) respondents from Osagyefo library, 2 (10%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library and 8(8.9%) respondents from Sam Jonah library were torn between agree and disagree with regards to destruction of library resources as an effect of conflicts.

Table 8 also presents findings on the positive effects of unmanaged conflicts at these libraries. A majority of the respondents from the three academic libraries indicated that conflicts could lead to increase in job output. This could be confirmed through the responses from Osagyefo library 32 (84.2%), John Kofi Borsah library 16 (76.2%) and Sam Jonah library 57 (63.4%). However, 33(36.7%) respondents from Sam Jonah library, 4 (19%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library and 6 (15.8%) respondents from Osagyefo library disagreed that unmanaged conflicts could lead to increase in job output. Only 1 (4.8%) respondent from John Kofi Borsah library was in a neutral position that unmanaged conflicts could lead to increase in job output.

Furthermore, as indicated in Table 8, 41 (91.1%) respondents from Osagyefo library, 18 (85.8%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library and 75 (83.3%) respondents from Sam Jonah library agreed that unmanaged conflicts could be an avenue for change of bad attitude of patrons or staff. A few number of respondents from Sam Jonah library 13 (14.4%), John Kofi Borsah library 3 (14.3%) and Osagyefo library 4 (8.9%) disagreed that unmanaged conflicts could be an avenue for change of bad attitude of patrons or staff. Only 2 (2.2%) respondents from Sam John library were neutral that unmanaged conflicts could be an avenue for change of bad attitude of patrons or staff.

As shown in Table 8, 41 (93.1%) respondents from Osagyefo library, 17 (81%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library and 70 (77.7%) respondents from Sam Jonah library agreed that unmanaged conflicts contributed to a change in the working environment devoid of stress. Nevertheless, 20 (22.2%) respondents from Sam Jonah library, 4 (19%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library and 2 (4.5%) respondents from Osagyefo library 2 (4.5%) disagreed that unmanaged conflicts contributed to a change in the working environment devoid of stress but only 2 (4.5%) respondents from Osagyefo library were neutral.

Moreover, whereas 41 (95.4%) respondents from Osagyefo library, 18 (85.7%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library and 74 (82.2%) respondents from Sam Jonah library indicated that unmanaged conflicts led to an improvement in the quality of decisions in resolving conflicts at the workplace, 16 (17.8%) respondents from Sam Jonah library, 3 (14.3%) respondents from John Kofi Sam Jonah Borsah library and 2 (4.5%) respondents from Osagyefo library disagreed

that unmanaged conflicts led to an improvement in the quality of decisions in resolving conflicts. No respondent was in a neutral position.

#### 4.5 Preventive Measures of Conflicts

The respondents were asked to give measures that could be used to prevent conflicts in academic libraries. Below table shows the various responses.

**Table 9: Preventive Measures of Conflicts**

Preventive Measures of Conflicts	Sam Jonah Library			Osagyefo Library			John Kofi Borsah Library		
	A	Ne	D	A	Ne	D	A	Ne	D
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Silence or ignoring certain issues	79 (87.9)		11 (12.2)	43 (97.7)		1 (2.3)	20 (95.2)		1 (4.8)
Being fair in dealing with issues	82 (91.0)		8 (8.9)	42 (95.4)	1 (2.3)	1 (2.3)	20 (95.2)		1 (4.8)
Improvement in information flow	78 (86.7)	2 (2.2)	10 (11.1)	45 (100.0)			19 (90.4)	1 (4.8)	1 (4.8)
Expansion of library resources	72 (80.0)	5 (5.6)	13 (14.4)	44 (100.0)			11 (52.4)	4 (19.0)	6 (28.6)
Clearly defined rules and procedures	84 (93.4)		6 (6.7)	45 (100.0)			20 (95.2)		1 (4.8)
Implementation of decision by the library	77 (85.6)	2 (2.2)	11 (12.2)	44 (100.0)			19 (90.4)	1 (4.8)	1 (4.8)
Good communication skills	85 (94.5)		5 (5.6)	44 (100.0)			17 (85.0)	1 (5.0)	2 (10.0)

**Source: Field data, 201**

**Footnote: A: Agree, D: Disagree, Ne: Neutral**

Results in Table 9 present the varied responses that were given by respondents on the preventive measures that they deemed appropriate in handling conflicts at their respective workplaces. It is noteworthy that silence or ignoring certain issues as a preventive measure seemed to be a general consensus by majority of respondents across the three libraries. Specifically, 43 (97.7%) respondents from Osagyefo library agreed that this option was frequently adopted at their workplaces as a preventive measure in handling conflicts. Moreover, 11 (12.2%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library as well as 79 (87.9%) respondents from Sam Jonah library agreed that silence or ignoring certain issues was frequently adopted as a preventive measure. However, 11 (12.2%) from Sam Jonah library, 1 (4.8%) from John Kofi Borsah library and 1 (2.3%) from Osagyefo library did not agree that silence or ignoring certain issues could be a preventive measure of conflicts, but no respondent was in a neutral position.

Generally, a majority of the respondents across the three libraries agreed that being fair in dealing with issues that arise at their workplaces was also a frequently used preventive technique in tackling conflicts at the workplace. This preventive measure was moreover more frequently used in Osagyefo library 42 (95.4%), John Kofi Borsah library 20 (95.2%) library and Sam Jonah library 82 (91%) but few of the respondents from Sam Jonah library 8 (8.9%), John Kofi Borsah library 1 (4.8%) and Osagyefo library 1 (2.3%) never agreed that being fair in dealing with issues could be a preventive measure to conflicts in academic libraries.

It is also interesting to observe that improvement in information flow as a preventive measure of conflicts was more dominant in the Osagyefo library 45 (100%) than John Kofi Borsah library 19 (90.4%) and Sam Jonah library 78 (86.7%). However, only the respondents from Sam Jonah library 10 (11.1%) and John Kofi Borsah library 1 (4.8%) disagreed that improvement in information flow may never be one of the preventive measures of conflicts in academic libraries. The results also indicate that 1 (4.8%) respondent from John Kofi Borsah library and 2 (2.2%) respondents from Sam Jonah library were neutral that improvement in information flow could prevent conflicts in academic libraries.

From Table 10, the respondents agreed that expansion of resources as a preventive measure of conflicts was very effective and this could be seen from the responses from Osagyefo library 44 (100%), Sam Jonah library 72 (80%) and John Kofi Borsah library 11 (52.4%). The respondents from John Kofi Borsah library 6 (28.6%) and Sam Jonah library 13 (14.4%) disagreed that expansion of library resources could be a preventive measure to conflicts in academic libraries. The results also show that only 4 (19%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library and 5 (5.6%) respondents from Sam Jonah library shared the view that they were in a neutral position.

It can also be seen from Table 9 that majority of the respondents across the three academic libraries indicated that setting clearly defined rules and procedures at their respective workplaces was one of the surest ways to prevent conflicts from occurring in academic libraries.. More than fifty percent (50%) of the respondents from Osagyefo library 45 (100%), John Kofi Borsah library 20 (95.2%) library

agreed that clearly defined rules and procedures in academic libraries was one of the essential elements of preventing conflicts as against 6 (6.7%) respondents from Sam Jonah library and 1 (4.8%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library who also argued that conflicts could never be prevented when there were clearly defined rules and procedures in the academic libraries. There was no response from respondents in neutral position.

Implementation of decisions by management of Osagyefo library was found to be a frequently used preventive measure. This is according to 44 (100%) respondents Osagyefo library who indicated that this technique was frequently adopted by management in preventing conflicts as well as John Kofi Borsah 19 (90.4%) and Sam Jonah 77 (85.6%) libraries. Notwithstanding, only 11(12.2%) respondents from Sam Jonah and 1 (4.8%) respondent from John Kofi Borsah libraries argued that implementation of decisions by the management of the academic libraries could be one of the preventive measures in conflicts. The results from Table 9 also indicate that 1 (4.8%) respondent from John Kofi Borsah library and 2 (2.2%) respondents from Sam Jonah library were neutral that implementation of decision by management could prevent conflicts in academic libraries.

Undoubtedly, good communication skills play a vital role in human relations of staff of these libraries. A majority of the respondents across all the libraries opined that adoption of good communication skills frequently prevents conflicts from occurring at the workplace.

The results in Table 9 show that 44 (100%) respondents from Osagyefo library, 85 (94.5%) respondents from Sam Jonah library and 17 (85%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library supported the idea that good communication skills was the most pivotal tool in preventing conflicts in academic libraries. On the other hand, 2 (10%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library and 5 (5.6%) respondents from Sam Jonah library disagreed that good communication skills could prevent conflicts in academic libraries. Only 1 (5%) respondent from John Kofi Borsah library was in a neutral position that good communication skills could be prevent conflicts in academic libraries.

#### **4.6 Conflicts Management Strategies**

The respondents were questioned on the conflicts management strategies adopted by both the management and the individual library staff in the academic libraries. The responses are indicated in the Table 10 below.

**Table 10: Conflict Management Strategies**

<b>Conflict management Strategies</b>	Sam Jonah Library			Osagyefo Library			John Kofi Borsah Library		
	A	N <sub>e</sub>	D	A	N <sub>e</sub>	D	A	N <sub>e</sub>	D
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Avoidance (non-response or withdrawal)	77 (85.6)		13 (14.4)	40 (95.2)		2 (4.8)	16 (76.3)		5 (23.8)
Accommodation (sacrifice one's own concern in favour of the others)	75 (83.4)	3 (3.3)	12 (13.3)	42 (95.5)		2 (4.5)	17 (81.0)	1 (4.8)	3 (14.3)
Collaboration (allow the parties to express their feelings before intervening)	80 (88.9)	1 (1.1)	9 (10.0)	42 (95.4)	1 (2.3)	1 (2.3)	20 (95.2)		1 (4.8)
Compromise (be in agreement to solve the problem due to approximately equivalent power or rank)	72 (80.0)		18 (20.0)	43 (100.0)			17 (80.9)		4 (19.1)
Competition (the attempt to satisfy your concern at the other's concern due to your position)	53 (58.9)	9 (10.0)	28 (31.1)	39 (90.7)		4 (9.3)	12 (57.1)	3 (14.3)	6 (28.6)

**Source: Field data, 2018****Footnote: A: Agree, D: Disagree, Ne: Neutral**

It can be seen from Table 10 that respondents from the various libraries indicated the varied conflict management strategies that were used at their workplaces. Avoidance (non-response or withdrawal) was more frequently used at the Osagyefo library 40 (95.2%) than Sam Jonah 77 (85.6%) and John Kofi Borsah 16 (76.3%) libraries, but respondents from John Kofi Borsah 5 (23.8%), Sam Jonah 13 (14.4%) and Osagyefo 2 (4.8%) also shared the view that avoidance could never be effective strategy in managing conflicts in academic libraries. No respondent was in a neutral position.

A majority of respondents 42 (95.5%) from Osagyefo library agreed that accommodation (sacrificing one's own concern in favour of the others) was frequently used at their workplace as a conflicts management strategy. However, few respondents from John Kofi Borsah 3 (14.3%), Sam Jonah 12 (13.3%) and Osagyefo 2 (4.5%) argued that accommodation (sacrificing one's own concern in favor of the others) could never be used as conflicts management strategy in academic libraries. 1 (4.8%) respondent from John Kofi Borsah library and 3 (3.3%) respondents from Sam Jonah library were in a neutral position that accommodation as a management was effective in managing conflicts in academic libraries.

Although the respondents agreed that collaboration (allowing the parties to express their feelings before intervening) was frequently used at Sam Jonah library 80 (88.9%) in managing conflicts, it was used more in Osagyefo 42 (95.4%) and John Kofi Borsah 20 (95.2%) libraries. A handful of the respondents from Sam Jonah 9 (10%), John Kofi Borsah 1 (4.8%) and Osagyefo 1 (2.3%) said

that collaboration could not be used to manage conflicts in academic libraries. Each respondent from Osagyefo library 1 (2.3%) and Sam Jonah library 1 (1.1%) was in neutral position that collaboration could be used as a conflict management strategy in academic libraries.

Generally, compromise (being in agreement to solve the problem due to approximately equivalent power or rank) appeared to be more frequently used as a conflict management strategy across the three libraries. A majority of the respondents from Osagyefo library 43 (100%), John Kofi Borsah library 17 (80%) and Sam Jonah library 72 (80%) responded that the use of compromise to manage conflicts in academic libraries was very effective, but 18 (20%) respondents from Sam Jonah and 4 (19%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah libraries indicated that the use of compromise could not be used as means of managing conflicts in academic libraries. No respondent was neutral that compromise could be used as a conflict management strategy in academic.

Competition (the attempt to satisfy your concern at the other's concern due to one's position) appeared to be frequently used to manage conflicts across all the three academic libraries. This is clearly shown from the responses from Osagyefo library 39 (90.7%), Sam Jonah library 53 (58.9%) and John Kofi Borsah library 12 (57.1%). According to Table 10, the respondents from Sam Jonah library 28(31.1%), John Kofi Borsah library 6 (28.6%) and Osagyefo library 4 (9.3%) also shared the view that competition could never be used as a conflict management strategy in academic libraries. 3 (14.3%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah library and 9 (10%) respondents from Sam Jonah library were neutral

that competition could be used as a conflict management strategy in academic libraries.

### **4.3 Findings from Qualitative Analysis**

#### **4.3.1 Types of Conflicts in Academic Libraries in Ghana**

One of the items on the interview guide was the type of conflicts in the academic libraries. Their responses suggested that there were different types of conflicts in the academic libraries. They emphasised that looking at the types of conflicts in the academic libraries, it depended on the type of the library or the section in the library. From the interview, it was realized that each academic library encountered one or two types of conflicts such as conflicts between the library management and staff, the staff and the users, supervisors and staff, conflicts among the staff and conflicts among the users. When probed further, Sam Jonah Library Respondent-1 and Osagyefo Library Respondent-3 shared similar comments by saying supervisors who were very strict could put pressure on the library staff and it would result in conflicts.

Also, John Kofi Borsah Library Respondent-1 had similar view by saying:

*“Some workers get information from different sections of the library and from different universities make comparisons, especially with regard to the salary”*

*“Some supervisors are strict in dealing with the subordinates, especially those staff who have weekend duties and have lectures at the same time. The staff will come early and write his or her name and leaves for lectures, but the supervisor will query the person and that results in conflict”*

Sam Jonah library Respondent-2 supported the idea of Respondent 1 of Osagyefo library by saying that at times, conflicts existed among the individual staff, especially absence of some staff from shelving every morning. Through the interview, the Respondent 2 of John Kofi Borsah library also confirmed that conflicts among the individual staff really happened in the library. In addition, the Respondent 2 from Osagyefo library and Respondent 4 from Sam Jonah library shared the view that sometimes, there existed conflicts among the senior members, especially when decisions are taken in the absence of some of the members. It was revealed that even, some senior members refused to talk or associate with one another since what the person said was not in agreement with.

Sam Jonah Library Respondent 2 had that

*“There are several issues or complaints which come before me concerning individual members of staff who do not come to work early to release their colleagues at work.”*

According to the respondent, either the individual staff has misunderstanding before the issue would come before him or her.

Respondent 3 from Sam Jonah and Respondent 1 from Osagyefo libraries also agreed that there were conflicts between the library staff and the users. According to the respondents, this type of conflicts occurred when the library staff tried to let the users to conform to the rules and regulations regarding the use of the library facilities.

#### 4.3.2 Causes of Conflicts in Academic Libraries

When asked about the major causes of conflicts, most of the interviewees noted that lack of openness by some members of staff as a result of differences in education levels. Respondents 5 from Sam Jonah library revealed that “even, some of the senior members try to look down upon some people because of rank or the number of publications that they have.” This idea was not far from the Respondent 2 from John Kofi Borsah library who lamented that “some staff would just pass by without saying hi and when you approach the person, the type of answer that you would get is irritating.”

No participation in the decisions making process or activities in the library was also a major cause of conflicts. This was realized during the interview from Respondent 1 from Osagyefo library and Respondent 2 from Sam Jonah library. From the interview, it was realized that some of the staff refused to attend staff meetings or durbars where decisions were being taken. Since some of the decisions did not favour them, it resulted in conflicts. They also added that even though some of the members might be there, they would not talk and move around to incite other members of staff on the decision taken. Respondent 1 from Osagyefo library said,

*“The majority of library staff will not participate in any activity, but they will speak against any decision taken by the members of the library staff who are present”*

Another cause of conflicts that the researcher noticed from the interview was communication obstacles, especially the use of rumour. According to the respondents interviewed, it was noticed that many library staff would not find out the truth in what they had heard and they began to act on it. This was revealed during the interview with Respondent 4 from Sam Jonah library and Respondent 2 from the Osagyefo as well as Respondent 1 from John Kofi Borsah libraries. During the interaction with Respondent 2 from the Osagyefo library, the respondent lamented that “My best friend is now not in good terms with me because she believes I said something about her which was not true.”

The interview conducted by the researcher also revealed that resistance to change was another cause of conflicts in academic libraries. The respondents interviewed showed that many staff did not want to change the way they did things. Any time there was a change in the library services, some of the library staff would disagree with it. As a result, some group of staff would fight against the change. This was due to lack of experience by the staff members. This was clearly shown from the responses from Respondent 5 from Sam Jonah Library, Respondent 3 from Osagyefo library as well as Respondent 2 from John Kofi Borsah library.

Osagyefo Library Respondent-3 affirmed that:

*“Some members of library staff see it as a punishment when they are assigned different task or job. This, in a way, will help the staff to learn new things at the new post. Some even, not greet you when they see you because of new assignment”*

#### **4.3.3 Effects of Conflicts in Academic Libraries**

The outcome of conflicts was a priority in this research. The researcher investigated the effects that unmanaged conflicts could bring to the academic libraries. Almost all the respondents interviewed confirmed that unmanaged conflicts negatively affected work output of the various academic libraries. They also added that there would be no unity among the staff members.

This view was attested by the Respondent 2 from the Kofi Borsah library that:

“If there is conflict in the library, the staff involved will not be happy to work hard and because of that it will negatively affect the library work”

During the interview, it was also realized that conflicts in the library could lead to disrespect among the staff, especially conflicts between the superior/supervisor and the subordinates. Since there was misunderstanding between them, the junior or the subordinate would no longer respect the superior. This was seen from the responses from the Respondents 5 from Sam Jonah library and Respondent 3 from Osagyefo library. Respondent 3 from Osagyefo library even pointed out that there was conflicts between him and a subordinate and the subordinate no longer greeted him. He added that at times, the subordinate refused to obey his instructions.

The results from the interview indicated that sometimes, conflicts in the academic libraries could lead the individual parties to work independently since there was separation. Respondent 1 from Osagyefo library and Respondent 2 from Sam Jonah library indicated that since some library staff interacted while at work, if

there was misunderstanding between the parties involved in the conflicts, they would be working independently.

#### **4.3.4 Prevention of Conflicts in Academic Libraries**

Here, the respondents were interviewed in order to know the measures that could be used to prevent conflicts in academic libraries. During the interview, it was noticed from the respondents that good relationships with the members of the library staff could be effective in terms of prevention of conflicts. Almost all the respondents from the three academic libraries interviewed shared the view that good relationships among the staff, especially the superiors and the subordinates.

Most of the interviewees were particularly concerned about good relationships among the library staff devoid of discrimination. Respondent 2 from Sam Jonah library remarked, “Conflicts in the library can be prevented when there is good relationship among the staff. If there is no good relationship, conflicts will always occur.”

Respondent 1 from Osagyefo library and Respondent 3 from Sam Jonah Library suggested that conflict could only be prevented when there was respect for the staff, even if the person is a subordinate or not. They argued that lack of respect among the staff created conflicts in the academic libraries. This was seen from the response from Respondent 1 from Osagyefo library, “Respect for staff at the workplace is very important if you want to prevent conflict”

#### **4.3.5 Mechanisms used to Manage Conflicts in Academic Libraries**

This is an area that the researcher was much interested because that was the core of the research. It deals with the conflict management practices exhibited by the respondents in their academic libraries. The respondents were asked to share their views on the management strategies that could be put in place to manage conflicts. Respondent 1 from John Kofi Borsah library and Respondent 2 from Sam Jonah library indicated that at times, ignoring or remaining silent when conflicts erupted would be the best in managing conflicts in academic libraries. Respondent 2 from Sam Jonah Library remarked, “At times, I remain silent in order to minimize conflict in my section”

In order to manage conflicts in the academic libraries, the respondents interviewed revealed that advising the parties involved in the conflicts was the best method of managing conflicts in academic libraries. Respondent 2 from Osagyefo library and Respondent 4 from Sam Jonah library indicated that anytime they encountered any conflicts involving them or other staff, they would go to the other party and say sorry if they were at fault or call the parties involved and advised.

Communication is a very important tool in managing conflicts in academic libraries. The respondents interviewed affirmed that allowing the parties involved in the conflicts to air their grievances was the best means to manage conflicts. It was out of that the conflict manager could deduce from their views and base on that to manage the conflicts. This view was shared by Respondent 5 from Sam Jonah library and Respondent 1 from Osagyefo library.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

#### 5.0 Introduction

Chapter four discusses research findings, by stressing the major themes to make data more meaningful. The chapter critically discusses the data in relation to relevant literature in an attempt to explore the deeper meanings of the responses, and to unravel the issues and understand the phenomenon. As seen earlier, the purpose of the study was to investigate conflict management in academic libraries in Ghana. Again, the study sought to uncover the causes and effects of conflicts in the academic libraries in Ghana.

#### 5.1 Biographic Data

The data for the study was collected from the three academic libraries of the study. The researcher considered areas such as gender, age, qualification, the type of library, category of staff and length of service. This was to enable the researcher to compare the views of the respondents with one another. A majority of the respondents 95 (60.9%) of the study were males and Sam Jonah library 54 (56.8%) recorded the highest response. The highest female respondents were from Sam Jonah library 36 (59%). It means that the respondents for the research were predominantly males. This is not encouraging in our current dispensation where gender equity is being advocated.

Aside the gender, the age distribution of the respondents was very necessary. The study revealed that most of the respondents were between the ages of 30 and 39.

The research revealed that a majority of the age distribution of the respondents from Sam Jonah library 53 (73.6%) were from 30-39 years. In Osagyefo library, a majority of the respondents 21 (46.7%) were from 20-29 years. Respondents from John Kofi Borsah library 7 (25%) had age distribution from 40-49 years as the highest. It can be deduced from this that the academic libraries under study had able personnel who could take over from the seniors when they go on retirement. Also, if the juniors are motivated at the workplace, productivity will increase because they are energetic.

Apart from the age distribution of the respondents, the researcher also looked at the educational background of the respondents. From the analysis, it was realized that a greater number of the respondents 64 (41%) for the research were degree holders. While both Sam Jonah 42 (65.6%) and Osagyefo 19 (29.7%) libraries were dominated by degree holders, John Kofi Borsah library was dominated by WASSCE/SSCE holders. Since most of the users of the academic libraries were intellectuals, it is expected that the members of staff in such libraries would have levels of educational qualifications which would help them to meet the information needs of the users. It is a credit to the academic libraries under study because of the good academic background of their library staff.

In addition, since Sam Jonah library is the biggest library among the rest of the libraries under study, it had the majority of the respondents 90 (57.7%). The respondents of the study were predominantly senior staff 99 (63.5%) and this is seen in their levels of academic qualification. Each academic library was dominated by senior staff.

A majority of the respondents, 60 (38.5%) had served from 6-10 years in the three academic libraries. In Sam Jonah library, 39 (65%) respondents, forming the majority, had served from 6-10 years. This is not so in Osagyefo library. A majority of the respondents from Osagyefo library 17 (45.9%) had worked from 1-5 years. 9 (15%) respondents from John Kofi Borsah, constituting the majority had worked from 6-10 years. This means that these libraries would not lose a lot of their staff members any moment from then because of retirement. Many of the staff members had more years to serve.

Therefore, the research looked at biographic data of the respondents. The research discussed biographic data such as age, qualification, the type of library, category of staff and length of service. The results indicated that a majority of the respondents were males and the respondents too were between the ages of 30 and 39. It was also realized that most of the respondents for the research were degree holders. The category of respondents who took part in this research was senior staff. Moreover, a majority of the respondents had worked from 6-10 years.

## **5.2 Distribution on Types of Conflicts**

There was the need to look at the distribution of the types of conflicts that existed in the three academic libraries under study. From the responses from both the questionnaire and the interview, it was realized that each academic library had a particular type of conflicts that one could associate with. The research findings through the use of questionnaire and interview indicated that conflicts between the library staff and the library management was more dominant in the Osagyefo Library as compared to other academic libraries. Mallapa & Manoj (2015) argue

that when there is conflict between management and other staff, it is very difficult to run the library activities smoothly and successfully.

Conflicts between the subordinates and the superiors were more dominant in Sam Jonah Library than other libraries. From the view of Mallappa & Manoj (2015), conflicts between the superiors and the subordinates do not help in the progress of the library, especially conflicts between the library management and staff and conflicts between library staff and supervisors as well. They also add that when such thing happens, teamwork and unity would be lacking in such libraries, which in a way, negatively affects the work output. From Kreitner's (1998) point of view, as long as industrious organisations continue to be arranged hierarchically, this initiative is inevitable. This is because superiors may scarcely value the subordinates' feelings and ideas and when the subordinates also observe that they are being undermined, it can result in conflicts.

In analyzing the existence of conflicts between the patrons and staff, it was revealed that it was predominantly high in John Kofi Borsah Library 9 (42.9%) as compared to other academic libraries. At times, some of the users may stop using the library facilities when conflicts erupt between users and library staff. Moreover, the responses from the questionnaires and the interview indicated that conflicts among the staff of John Kofi Borsah library 11 (52.4%) were more than other academic libraries.

Conflicts among staff do not bring good tidings to organizations since individuals have roles to play in order to bring development. This can also be achieved

through teamwork. In support of this view, Owens (2001) argues that people in organizations have definite roles to perform and many interactive factors help to determine precisely their particular performances, so when conflicts crop up, it is very difficult for the individual staff to perform well. With the issue relating to the occurrence of conflicts among the patrons of the academic libraries, Osagyefo library experienced more cases than the other academic libraries. In effect, the library environment will not be user-friendly so that it will attract users in order to patronize library services. From the data collected through both questionnaire and interview, it was revealed that the academic library staff experienced some sort of conflicts within individual staff, but John Kofi Borsah library had the majority of them.

Conflicts within individual staff are considered as intrapersonal conflicts and according to Kinard (1988), this type of conflict often resulted from conflicting needs or frustrations. He also added that such conflict sometimes involves unresolved problems where the individual finds it almost impossible to get a solution. In addition, this may affect job performance of the individual staff in the library.

Therefore, the types of conflict in academic libraries have been looked at and through the analysis, it was realized that both Osagyefo and John Kofi Borsah libraries recorded the highest occurrence.

### **5.3 Causes of Conflicts in Academic Libraries**

Another research objective noteworthy of mention is the causes of conflicts in academic libraries. The analysis of the data gathered shows that individual academic libraries had unique cause(s) of conflicts. The responses show the rate which each cause of conflicts occurred in the academic library. Comparatively, through the data collected with the help of questionnaires and interview, Osagyefo library 21 (46.6%) appeared to encounter more conflicts caused by sharing of limited resources even though other academic libraries experienced such type of conflicts. This is a confirmation to Kreitner & Kinicki (2004). According to them, competition for limited resources can also inhibit the desired performance of individual staff in academic libraries. In congruent with them, Boahie-Mensah & Marfo-Yiadom (2005) were of the view that limited resources have been a common source of conflicts. They continue to assert that sometimes, it is surprising to find out that even section heads fight for what is best for them and their groups instead of what is good for the organization. This is all because the resources are highly inadequate; a situation which turns into “everyone for himself and God for us all” syndrome.

Respondents were also asked to express their views on the occurrence of conflicts caused by different interpretations of individuals’ role or responsibilities. From the data analysis, it was realized that John Kofi Borsah library 10 (50%) had the highest number of respondents. Arthur (2009) affirms that different interpretations of individuals’ roles or responsibilities or role ambiguities have always created difficulties over responsibility or authority. He adds that individuals or groups

may be uncertain as to who is responsible for performing which tasks or duties and who has direct authority to whom. Each party may claim or reject responsibility and the result can be conflicts. This can particularly occur when individual roles and responsibilities are not explicitly spelt out, as in the case of shelving and shelf reading in academic libraries.

The study also sought to find out the occurrence of conflicts caused by lack of good communication flow through proper channels. It was gathered from the interview and questionnaire that communication flow through proper channels was very good for the smooth running of the academic libraries, but sometimes, could create conflicts. This type of conflicts was predominantly found in Kofi Borsah library 15 (71.4%). In view of this, Schnake (1987) points out that the absence of frequent communication between groups or individuals representing different structural level of the organization or different informal groups can trigger conflicts.

Another cause of conflicts as indicated from the questionnaire given and the interview conducted was lack of respect because of position or rank. From the data analysis, Sam Jonah library 44 (48.9%) had the highest number of respondents expressing their views on the type of conflicts caused by lack of respect because of position or rank. This tends to support the argument raised by Kreitner & Kinicki (2004) that conflicts tend to increase as the number of hierarchical layers and specialized tasks increased.

The need to look at the resistance to change at the workplace as a cause of conflicts at these libraries was of much importance. The research findings revealed that a majority of the respondents from Osagyefo Library 23 (52.3%) agreed strongly that resistance to change at the workplace caused conflicts. This is supported by the views of Khan & Rehman (2008), who stated that even though change is very essential at every workplace, it is at times, very challenging and complex and great amount of care should be taken while making changes.

They also reiterate that one of the major problems/threats to organizational change is employees' resistance and has usually very unpleasant and negative implications for the organization. This is clearly seen in the academic libraries where certain services need to be changed, especially changing from manual to automation of the library. Some staff members are not willing to change because of the lack of skills on the current job description. Even though they may go through in-service training to learn the new skill, they may not practice and this may create conflicts between library staff and the supervisors.

From the analysis of the data, it was realized that refusing to perform workplace duties was another cause of conflicts in academic libraries. Responses from the respondents indicated that most of the conflicts caused by refusing of the library staff to perform workplace duties were clearly seen in John Kofi Borsah library 12 (57.1%). Since the individual staff has some duties to perform at the workplace, any lackadaisical attitudes towards workplace duties trigger conflicts, especially between the subordinates and the supervisors. In addition, this can also create conflicts among individual staff, especially if one or few members of staff

shelve materials all the time without the rest co-operating. In view of this, Wright (1996) posits that the organisation's overall success depends on the combination of the group outcomes.

Another common cause of conflicts was the issue of unrealized expectations. In comparing the responses from the three academic libraries, it was revealed that this occurred more in John Kofi Borsah library 8 (38.1%) than the other academic libraries. This is because the employees entered the work environment with expectations that their demands would be met, especially performing special duties in addition to their routine duties. When such disappointment surfaces, conflicts may appear. According to Kreitner & Kinick (2001), employees who have unrealistic expectations about job assignments, pay, promotion and reassignment can lead to conflicts. In addition, this can also create conflicts among individual staff, especially if one or fewer members of staff shelve all the time without the rest co-operating. In view of this Wright (1996) posits that the organization's overall success depends on the combination of the group outcomes to conflicts.

Another cause of conflicts in academic libraries is the pressure on staff to finish work on time. It was revealed from the questionnaires and interview that at times, the supervisors or the library management put pressure on library staff to finish a particular task assigned to them. From responses given, a majority of the respondents from Osagyefo library 21 (46.6%) indicated that pressure on staff to finish work early really caused conflicts. This affirms the view of Kreitner (1998)

that unreasonable deadlines and other forms of time pressure can stimulate prompt performance or ginger destructive emotional reactions.

A type of conflict caused by a few people taking decisions for staff was a major issue in Sam Jonah library 56 (62.2%) as compared to the other academic libraries under study. From the data collected, it was realized that anytime members of staff met, especially on staff meetings or durbars, some members of staff did not attend and if any decision taken was not in favor of them, they opposed to that. At times, some members of staff who were absent from the meeting use some provoking words which resulted into conflicts at the workplace. Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) express the view that this is where a greater number of people take part in decision-making. Conflicts caused by performing duties alone or one man's work were also looked at in the course of the study. This issue was of major concern in Osagyefo library 20 (45.4%). During the research, a group of library staff lamented that some staff had taken workplace duties as their individual properties. Owens (2001) confirms that a particular cause of conflicts is autonomy. He also adds that this really creates conflicts when one or few persons take full responsibilities of duties which are supposed to be performed by the majority.

Furthermore, for effective decision-making process in any organization, the chain of command plays a pivotal role. When there is no clear cut chain of command, it really escalates into conflicts in the organization. The research indicated that this was not popular in the academic libraries under study, but with the few respondents who shared their views, a majority of the respondents were from John

Kofi Borsah library 8 (38.1%). In support of the argument, Nnadi (1997) postulates that when employees find it difficult to know who to report to, it creates conflicts in an organization.

Conflicts can really occur when there is scrambling for the territory at the workplace. Many members of library staff find the work environment as their personal territories. At times, a particular seat is reserved for a particular person, which no other person can have access to, especially at the reference desk of the library. Some members of staff put passwords on library computers that they normally use in the workplace. Any encroachment by a different library staff generates into conflicts. Through the research, it came to light that the conflicts caused by territorial encroachments was predominantly in Osagyefo library 21 (47.1%). From the submission of Nnadi (1997), conflicts may result when another employee gets into that area and the „rightful owner“ sees it as encroachment.

In addition, when the participants were asked to indicate the occurrence of conflicts caused by interaction patterns, i.e. interfering in someone“s or groups“ affairs, a majority of the responses came from Osagyefo library 17 (38.6%). From observation by Nnadi (1997), the way employees interact at work may cause conflict. To add to the view of Nnadi, at a workplace, some people are interested in other people“s affairs, even if they are not invited into the conversation. When such a thing happens, it may cause conflicts.

Considering the conflicts caused by lack of job experience by superiors across all the academic libraries, a majority of the responses were recorded at Sam Jonah

library 32 (35.6%). From the interview conducted, it was revealed that some supervisors did not care about capacity building. In effect, some subordinates even know a lot on the job prescribed by the supervisor. A technical area in the library like cataloguing, needs a lot of reading and constant practice, otherwise one may forget the basic principles of cataloguing. One must be abreast of the current version of cataloguing software. The most dangerous thing is that if the subordinates are on top of issues than the supervisor, the supervisor may not be given the maximum respect needed by the superiors.

Hence, the research looked at causes of conflicts in academic libraries. Through the analysis, it was realized that Osagyefo library had the majority of the causes than other libraries. This was followed by John Kofi Borsah library.

#### **5.4 Effects of Unmanaged Conflicts in Academic Libraries**

The study sought to find out whether the respondents experienced the effects conflicts had on the academic libraries when not properly managed. The researcher tried to unveil both positive and negative aspects of conflicts on academic libraries. As a result, various views were shared by the respondents. Unity among staff members is very essential in every organization's development. The research findings indicated that unmanaged conflicts could bring divisions among staff or patrons. A majority of the respondents agreed to that, especially respondents from John Kofi Borsah library 12 (57.1%). In effect, a majority of the respondents added that this could lead to job output of staff. Ugwuanyi & Idoko (2012) add that when such conflicts erupt, workers abandon their job for cheap

politicking and gossiping. They also add that conflicts in academic libraries do not only reduce the services of workers but increases frustrations.

Also, conflicts in academic libraries negatively affect staff. The research conducted revealed that conflicts could lead to decrease in the level of commitment to work. The respondents commented that when conflicts ensued, workers were reluctant to discharge their duties effectively and efficiently. This effect of conflicts was more dominant in Sam Jonah library 54 (60%). From the responses from the respondents, especially during the interview, it was realized that some members of library staff even stopped performing their daily duties like shelving because they had problems with their colleague workers or the supervisors. This confirms the views of Dedreu&Vianen (1999) who reiterate that conflicts in academic libraries could lead to increased turnover and absenteeism at the workplace.

The main objective of every information center is to meet the information needs of its users. Due to that the management of every information center tries to put measures in place in order to achieve that. In order to achieve that, the individual workers at every information center contribute a lot to its achievement. At times, this is not so because of conflicts among the workers. But, the research indicated that conflicts in academic libraries did not always lead to poor treatment of library users by the staff and a majority of the respondents attested to that. With the few respondents who agreed to its frequency of occurrence, a majority of them came from Osagyefo Library 16 (36.4%). Mcshane (2004) shares the view that when conflicts are not carefully handled, workers could begin to do very mean things

and many of them may be locked up, suspended or demoted. He also adds that conflicts among individuals, management and subordinates put an employee in touch with the darker side of his personality and that of other workers.

Furthermore, instigating the patrons against the management of the academic libraries is one of the effects of conflicts. Through the interview conducted, it was revealed that some members of library staff tried to “pollute” the patrons or the users to misbehave towards the management or the individual staff. Among the few who agreed that conflicts could lead to the instigation of patrons against the management or individual staff, the respondents from Osagyefo library 15 (34.9%) recorded the highest. To explain things further, Mchshane (2004) adds that conflicts could lead to staff trying to instigate students against the management, which may lead to the burning down of the library.

There was also the need to look at the negative effects of conflicts in academic libraries. The research findings revealed that conflicts in academic libraries affected decision-making process by the library management. A majority of the respondents from Sam Jonah library 45 (50.0%) happened to experience this effect even though some of the staff were of the opinion that sometimes, conflicts affected the decision-making process of the management as well as the individual staff, especially socio-emotional conflicts. From the interview conducted, it was realized that since there was division among the staff, the library management found it difficult to take decisions concerning library services. In support of this view, Mcshane (2004) stipulates that conflicts are bad for any institutional business because they affect staff decisions and remove their focus out of optimal

services. Also, Dreu & Vianen (1999) posit that unmanaged conflicts lead to delay in giving out and implementing official decisions.

Low patronage of library services is discredit to the library management. It even makes the work environment more boredom. This necessitated the researcher to look at the low patronage of library services as an effect of unmanaged conflicts in academic libraries. The research findings revealed that unmanaged conflicts could lead to the low patronage of the library services. From the respondents' views, the users of the library needed conducive environment for research and any disruption puts them off. This view was predominantly shared by the respondents from the John Kofi Borsah library 11 (52.3%). Some of the respondents agitated through the interviews conducted and questionnaires issued that even, some attitudes of the library staff discouraged some users to visit the library, especially when responding to the queries of the users.

Moreover, the result from the research indicated that some members of staff resigned from the work environment when there were conflicts. Through the interview conducted, some of the members of staff postulated that those who did not resign were asked to be transferred to either satellite libraries or different sections of the library. From the responses, this type of effect was sometimes, seen in the academic libraries. Generally speaking, some of the respondents said that on a few occasions, unmanaged conflicts led to staff resigning from their workplaces. The few respondents who agreed that unmanaged conflicts could lead to staff resigning from the workplace was clearly seen in the Osagyefo library 11 (26.2%). Even, the immediate boss or the supervisor of the employee could

suggest to the librarian that the staff should be transferred or sacked from the workplace. To add to this, Wallace (2001) posits that conflicts could lead to excessive firing and unnecessary hiring.

The issue of destruction of library resources as one of the effects of unmanaged conflict in academic libraries was very necessary to be discussed. It was realized from the responses that unmanaged conflicts could hardly happen in the academic libraries. Mcshane (2004) argues that unmanaged conflicts could lead to the destruction of library property and losing valuable resource materials.

On the other hand, the result from the research indicated that unmanaged conflicts could have positive effects. The increment of work output as result of unmanaged conflicts in academic libraries was highly argued by the respondents. Through the responses given, it was realized that sometimes, unmanaged conflicts could lead to increase in the work output of the library. This was seen from the responses indicated by the respondents from the Osagyefo library 14 (66.7%), but the majority of the few who also argued that unmanaged conflicts could lead to increase in work output were seen in Sam Jonah Library 19 (21.2%). To explain further, through the interview, it was realized that when conflicts were unmanaged, the individual staff would work independently and as a result, this could lead to the increase in work output. Edwards & Walton (2000) argue that when there are conflicts, the individual groups increase their cohesiveness and task orientation. They further posit that when there are conflicts, the team gets motivated to work more efficiently towards the organization's goal, thereby increasing the group's productivity and efficient information delivery.

The next item to consider when dealing with the positive effects of conflicts was unmanaged conflicts leading to a change of bad attitude of patrons or staff. This was critically looked at during the data analysis. Through the analysis, it was revealed that sometimes, conflicts could lead to a change of bad attitude of patrons or staff and this was clearly seen from the Sam Jonah library 49 (54.4%), but a quite number of the respondents from Osagyefo library 16 (42.1%) argued that conflicts could lead to a change of the bad attitude of the users or staff. Through the interview conducted, it was realized that when conflicts did happen in the workplace, the parties involved were advised or talked to depending on the issue at hand. In addition, if for instance, there were conflicts among staff as a result of irregular shelving, the culprit could change his or her attitude through confrontation or misunderstanding did occur. To validate this assertion, Edwards & Walton (2000) encapsulate that conflicts and conflicts management in the library can be best drivers of positive change in an environment devoid of stress and rancor, especially when handled with a sense of maturity. Since an environment cannot exist without human beings, the change in the environment directly affects the lifestyle of the individuals who live in it.

Moreover, the improvement in the quality of decisions in managing conflicts at the workplace when it comes to the effect of conflicts was very important to look at in this research. The views which were solicited from the respondents showed that unmanaged conflicts could lead to the improvement in decisions in managing conflicts at the workplace. In comparing the views expressed by the various respondents from the research areas, a majority of the views were shared by the

respondents from John Kofi Borsah library 11 (52.4%). Through the interview conducted, it was further revealed that since there were different conflict management strategies, if there were conflicts and a strategy which was used to manage them could not work or was not the best, different ones could be used or improved. An instance was given by one respondent through the interview that a group of staff was given an individual query which contained the same language and when such incidence happened, it generated into conflict between some of the staff and the sectional head. Later, the language that was used in giving the query was changed for the next batch of workers who were queried. To buttress this point, Edwards & Walton (2000) emphasize that conflicts help people to recognize problems, identify a variety of solutions and better understand the issues that are relevant.

Conflicts are likely to occur so long as there exist interrelationships among individuals in an organization or society. When conflicts occur, the management strategy that is used to curtail their impacts on the individuals and the organization (library) at large is a crucial element in resolving these issues.

### **5.5 Preventive Measures of Conflicts in Academic Libraries**

The researcher found out the measures put in place by management to reduce conflicts in academic libraries. Different views were expressed by the respondents from the academic libraries selected for the study. From the research, it was revealed that a particular preventive measure of conflicts was associated more with a particular academic library of study. In soliciting the views on the preventive measures to conflicts, one preventive measure was silence or ignoring

certain issues. The views gathered from the academic libraries clearly showed that Sam Jonah library 47 (52.3%) had the majority of occurrence. Among the three academic libraries under study, the respondents from the above mentioned library argued that silence was the best means of preventing conflicts. This is supported by the views of Ugwuanyi & Idoko (2012). According to them, silence or ignoring method is a very effective way of preventing conflicts among library workers.

Furthermore, the responses conducted showed that being fair in dealing with issues that arise at their workplaces was very effective in preventing conflicts in academic libraries. This means that individuals' views must be respected in dealing with conflicts in academic libraries. This preventive measure was mostly found in Sam Jonah 50 (57.7%) library. To support this view, Kazan & Ergin (1999) propose that conflicts can be prevented when everybody's needs are equally treated. They also add that a situation where one party's needs are met at the expense of the other party, can create conflicts and such case should be avoided.

Information flow in any organization is very vital in the organization's progress. This necessitated the researcher to critically analyze the views the respondents had on the improvement in information flow as a preventive measure of conflicts in academic libraries. The response rate on this issue was very high from the three academic libraries, but it was more dominant at the Osagyefo library 31 (68.9%). Among the preventive measures, information flow had the highest percentage. This really showed that employees place much premium on

information flow in workplaces. Darling & Walker (2001) argue that failure to share ideas and feelings leaves one person to “fill in the gap.” This “fill in the gap” means that if the information disseminated is not complete, individuals can easily put in their own words to complete that and this brings in the issue of rumour. That is why Fisher, Maltz & Jaworsiki (1997) add that when there is direct communication, it provides a better understanding of coworkers.

Also, expansion of resources as a means of preventing conflicts in academic libraries was of much importance to look at in this research. From the views gathered, a majority of responses were from the Sam Jonah library 40 (44.4%) even though respondents from other academic libraries had similar views. From the interview, it was revealed that the library management did not often ensure provision of enough resources. Therefore, there was competition for scarce resources. According to Kreitner (1998), sometimes, as in the case of money and people, competition for scarce resources can be avoided by enlarging the resources.

Again, there was the need to also look at the setting of clearly defined rules or roles as a preventive measure of conflicts in academic libraries. From the interview conducted, it was indicated that some users did not know the rules governing the patronage of library services. As a result, conflicts usually erupted when users went contrary to library rules. In addition, the individual staff, at times, does not know their roles at the workplace. Moreover, Adoni & Anie (2006) propose that clear rules and procedures will aid library users to know what to do and where to go or where to stop. This means that when the library

management as well as the supervisors give clearly defined roles at the various academic libraries, conflicts can be minimized, especially staff-user conflicts.

In addition, the researcher tried to seek the views of the respondents on the implementation of the decisions by the library management as well as the supervisors as a means of preventing conflicts in academic libraries. A majority of the respondents were observed from the Sam Jonah library 55 (61.1%). More than 50% of the respondents suggested that if decisions were implemented by superiors, conflicts could be prevented in academic libraries. According to Esadze (2013), conflicts can be prevented when there is the demonstration of leadership commitment. This can be achieved when there is an establishment of a consistent decision-making process and enhancing or modifying the policy to make it more effective.

Prevention of conflicts in academic libraries was also relevant for this study. Views from the respondents were analysed and indications showed that good communication could be the most effective measure of preventing conflicts in academic libraries. A majority of the opinions came from the Osagyefo library 30 (67.1%). To support this, Wofford (1982) shares the view that there are some significant approaches, including communication styles that emphasize trust, openness, self-discourse, feedback, listening as well as avoidance of threats and defensiveness.

## 5.6 Conflict Management Strategies in Academic Libraries

This section sought to find out the frequency of conflict management practices used in conflict situations in the academic libraries. Views of the respondents were sought through the use of questionnaire and interview and this discussion was also based on the data analysis in chapter four.

On the issue of avoidance (non-response or withdrawal) as a conflict management strategy in academic libraries, most respondents indicated that this method was very useful in managing conflicts in academic libraries. Even though some respondents disapproved to this fact, a majority of the respondents argued that this method was effective, especially the respondents from Osagyefo library (54.7%). To authenticate this assertion, from Miles' (1980) perspective, it is unfortunate that no response may eventually cause conflicts to deteriorate to uncontrollable magnitudes. Robbins (1983) also adds that the recognition of a party's conflicts existence may be there, but react by withdrawing or suppressing the conflicts.

In the case of conflicts occurring in the academic libraries, views on the use of accommodation (sacrificing one's own concern in favor of the others) was sought from the respondents. It was revealed that using accommodation as a management practice is aimed at maintaining a working relationship with others. This type of conflict management strategy was not mostly used in academic libraries. A majority of the respondents indicated that this type of conflict management strategy was sometimes used and this was strongly argued in John Kofi Borsah 14(66.7%) and Osagyefo 29(65.9%) libraries. The use of this strategy was more dominant in Osagyefo library 13(29.6%). Through the research, it was revealed

that sacrificing for others was quite difficult due to individual differences. According to Kinard (1988), conflicts within an individual staff often result from conflicting needs and frustrating situations. Thus, a person entering an organization comes with high ambitions and attitudes. This ambition may necessitate sacrificing an equally important role such as time at home with family in order to perform some extra tasks. Owens (2004) points out that as accommodation being typified by appeasement and that the motive behind the use of accommodation must be associated with the desire to maintain a working relationship with others even at some sacrifice of one's own interest, but which most workers will not do.

Another conflict management strategy noteworthy in this study was the use of collaboration (allowing the parties to express their feelings before intervening). Views from the respondents were sought through the use of questionnaires and interviews. Submissions from the respondents indicated that the use of collaboration as conflict management strategy was the most appropriate in academic libraries, but it was more frequent in Osagyefo library 29 (59.1%). In support of this, Fisher (1983) adds that in collaboration, the parties involved in a conflict work to reach a solution that satisfies the concerns of each party. Also, each party can achieve an acceptable outcome, which downfalls the problem instead of defeating each other. To add this, Filley (1977) asserts that this is because positive total effect is greater than what could be achieved by individual efforts.

With respect to the views of respondents on compromising as conflict management practice in academic libraries, the results indicated that this strategy was not mostly used in academic libraries. A majority of the respondents agreed that this strategy was sometimes used, but its frequency of occurrence was seen in Sam Jonah library 38 (42.2%). According to Kemp (1989), compromise has to do with gaining partial satisfaction for all. Osgood (2004) argues that since one key to managing conflicts is to minimize tension and maximize trust between the two parties, the use of compromise is very effective, but the responses from the questionnaire administered and interview conducted revealed that many workers were not willing to compromise when dealing with conflict. They added that they wanted full satisfaction or win the case if not at fault. This is contrary to the argument raised by Kemp (1989).

On the issue of whether competition (the attempt to satisfy your concern at the other's concern due to one's position) was an effective conflict management practice, views from the respondents were sought through administration of questionnaires and conducting of interviews. Through the interaction with the respondents, it was indicated that the use of competition as a strategy for conflict management in academic libraries was frequently used. This was clearly shown from the responses from John Kofi Borsah library 10 (47.6%) which had the majority of the respondents. To add more value to this, Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) agree with Evans (1998) by denoting to the competition as "dominating" or "forcing" whereby there is reinforcement of high concern for self and low concern for others. In competition, the desire is on achieving one's own goal at

the expense of someone else. Kriesburg (1993) also encapsulates that the use of competition as conflicts management strategy only serves to mark the end of one conflict and begins another conflict. Even though this strategy is not all that the best strategy in conflict management in academic libraries as indicated by Kriesburg (1993), many library staff prefer to use it because they want to have dominance over their colleagues or the library users.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the major findings of the study. Also, it gives conclusions and offers recommendations for further studies. The main aim of the study was to investigate the management of conflicts and to unveil the types, causes and effects of conflicts encountered by academic libraries in Ghana.

#### 6.1 Summary of the Study

This study basically investigated the management conflict in academic libraries in Ghana with a particular reference to Sam Jonah, Osagyefo and John Kofi Borsah libraries. The major purpose of this study was to look at the types, examine the causes, preventive measures, and determine the effects as well as the management strategies that are employed by the academic libraries in the conflict situations.

Two hundred and sixteen respondents were sampled for the entire study by using census method. The researcher could not get all the respondents to take part in the research. This was because some of the respondents were on leave, so it was very difficult for the researcher to trace them. In effect, the number of respondents reduced to one hundred and fifty-six. Questionnaires were given to both junior and senior staff to fill and a semi-structured interview guide was prepared for the senior members in order to gather data. The questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages and frequency generated from the

responses elicited from the survey and content thematic analysis was also used in analyzing the interviews conducted.

The study revealed that the issue of conflicts in academic libraries was not a mirage. In relation to the various types of conflicts in academic libraries, the research revealed that each academic library encountered one or more types of conflicts. These include conflicts between the library management and staff, conflicts between the staff and the users, conflicts between the supervisors and staff, conflicts among the staff and conflicts among the users. Even though almost all the types of conflicts could be found in the academic libraries under study, the key findings under this objective revealed that a majority of the types of conflicts were found in John Kofi Borsah library and Osagyefo library.

Also, the findings of the study showed that the emergence of conflicts in academic libraries was due to the following causes; sharing of limited library resources, different interpretation of the individuals roles or responsibilities, poor communication channels, lack of respect because of position or rank, resistance to change at workplace, refusal to perform workplace duties, unrealized expectations, pressure to finish work on time, few people taking decisions for the staff, performing duty alone or one man's work or "good face", unclear lines of authority, territorial encroachments, interaction patterns, and lack of job experience by the superior. From the research, it was realized that each cause of conflict was more dominant in a particular academic library under study. In comparing the occurrence of each cause of conflicts in academic libraries, a majority of them were found in Osagyefo library.

Moreover, the research results revealed that there were both positive and negative effects of conflicts in academic libraries. Various views were sought during the data collection. The research findings indicated that each effect of conflicts was associated with a particular academic library. From the research findings, the unmanaged conflicts could lead to good decision-making process among staff or patrons, decrease in the level of commitment to work, bring about poor treatment of patrons by staff, instigate the patrons against management, delay in decision making-process by management, lead to low patronage of library services, let staff to resign from work, lead to destruction of library resources, lead to increase in job output, create an avenue for change of bad attitude of patrons or staff, change work environment devoid of stress, and improve quality decisions in resolving conflicts. From the data analysis, a majority of the effects were recorded in Osagyefo library.

In addition, the ways in which conflicts could be prevented were discussed in the research. The research findings indicated that conflicts could be prevented if adequate measures were put in place. The preventive measures put in place by the academic libraries to remain or ignore certain issues, being fair in dealing with issues, improvement of information flow, expansion of libraries, clearly defined rules and procedures, implementation of decisions by the library management and good communication skills by staff. From the research, it was also realized that a majority of the preventive measures discussed in the research were implemented in Osagyefo library.

Furthermore, the views on conflict management strategies in academic libraries were analysed. The research findings indicated that individual libraries had a unique conflict management strategy. The conflict management strategies discussed in the research was avoidance, accommodation, collaboration, compromise and competition. All the conflict management strategies were practiced in Osagyefo library even though each strategy was unique the academic libraries of the study.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

In line with the findings of the study, the following conclusions could be drawn. Gibson, Ivancerich, &Donnelly (2000) contend that conflicts are inevitable in organizations such as academic libraries. The various causes of conflicts have been established. Respondents indicated the extent to which they thought issues on the causes of conflicts in academic libraries such as limited resources, deficiencies in information flow, conflicting interest, overlapping tasks, interdependence, time pressure and collective decision-making resulted in conflicts.

However, because conflicts can be both positive (constructive) and a negative (destructive) force, management should not strive to eliminate all conflicts, only that which has disruptive effects on the organization's efforts to achieve its goals. Such conflicts situation led to positive movement toward goals. It promoted innovation, change, search for problem solutions, creativity and quick adoption for environmental changes.

The prevention of destructive/dysfunctional conflicts is the most desirable approach to conflicts management. Academic libraries which attached great importance to conflicts prevention techniques experienced reduced levels of conflicts intensity. By preventing destructive conflicts, the academic libraries can resolve concerns before they become problems and save the libraries from unnecessary stress.

Therefore, even though these conflicts management strategies available such as avoidance, accommodation, collaboration, compromise and competition were being implemented by the academic libraries under study, each strategy was dominant in a particular academic library. Inferences could be made from the findings of the study that the academic libraries have a good knowledge of conflicts management.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are made.

Management of the academic libraries should educate their staff and users that because of differences in cultural orientations, educational background, gender and other such considerations, there are bound to be differences and disagreements at the workplace from time to time. Such differences and disagreements should be taken in good faith for the growth of the libraries.

Also, there is the need for the management of academic libraries to carefully study the various causes of conflicts in their respective sections and adopt

appropriate conflicts management strategies to enhance effective and maximum results.

Again, there is the need for the management of academic libraries to be willing to shift ground on some demands, instead of the practice of fighting to the end. This calls for a little bit of compromise and dialogue from both sides in conflicts, and in the spirit of give and take.

In addition, it is necessary for the management of the academic libraries to address themselves to how they can curtail the emergence of conflicts rather than concentrating on how to manage conflicts in their various sections so that individual workers in the academic libraries to be on good terms with co-workers in order to create good working relationships with supervisors and other members of the management.

Moreover, the superiors should also be fair-minded, articulate, and be committed to high quality service in order to set the tone for the creation of a healthy organizational climate. They should also ensure that individual roles and responsibilities are clearly spelt out and on the basis that seniority should play a leading part.

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**APPENDIX A**

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON**

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

**SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION STUDIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION STUDIES**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE JUNIOR AND THE SENIOR STAFF OF**

**THE SAM JONAH, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST; SAGYEFO,**

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA, AND JOHN KOFI BORSAH,**

**CAPE COAST TECHNICAL LIBRARIES**

**INTRODUCTION**

I am Charles Koufie, a Master of Philosophy student from the Department of Information Studies at the University of Ghana-Legon. As part of a Master's programme of the University, I have to submit a research work as a requirement for the award of the Master of Philosophy degree and my research work is titled:

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN GHANA: A  
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SAM JONAH, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE  
COAST; SAGYEFO, UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA, AND  
JOHN KOFI BORSAH, CAPE COAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARIES**

The main objective of the work is to find out the causes of the conflict in Sam Jonah, Osagyefo and John Kofi Borsah Libraries and the management strategies be put in place. Conflict is serious disagreement and argument about something important. This research work is purely for academic purposes and your privacy is assured. I will appreciate it if you could respond to this questionnaire, so as to enable me to successfully complete my study. All deliberations and remarks will be confidentially treated. Please, you could contact me through: 0246428579 for any further information or guidelines concerning the questionnaire. I am much grateful for your time.

### INSTRUCTION

Please, tick (✓) or provide the appropriate answer where applicable

### SECTION A

#### SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Gender: (a) Male  (b) Female

1. Age : (a) 20-29 yrs  (b) 30-39 yrs  (c) 40-49 yrs  (d) 50-59 yrs  (e) above 60

2. Category of staff: (a) Junior staff  (b) Senior staff

3. Academic qualification: (a) Masters  (b) Degree  (c) Diploma

(d) WASSCE/SSCE  (e) Any other, specify.....

5. How long have you worked in this library? (a) 1-5yrs

(b) 6-10 yrs [ ]

(c) 11-15 yrs [ ] (d) 16-20 yrs [ ] (e) 21-25 yrs [ ] (f) 26-30

yrs [ ] (g) 31 yrs and above [ ]

**SECTION B**

**TYPES/SOURCES OF CONFLICTS**

Kindly show how regularly the type(s) of conflict mentioned in this section occurs in your library.

Please, tick (✓) one of the following in the table below

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
6	Conflict between staff and library management			
7.	Conflict between subordinates and supervisors			
8.	Conflict between the patrons and the staff			
9.	Conflict among the staff			
10	Conflict among the patrons			
11	Conflict within you			

12. Any other apart from the above mentioned, please,

specify.....

.....

**SECTION C**

**CAUSES OF CONFLICTS**

Please, indicate the causes of conflict in your library by ticking (√) as many as you know from the table below

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
13. Sharing of limited library resources			
14. Different interpretation of the individual's roles or responsibilities			
15. Poor Communication channels			
16. Lack of respect because of position or rank			
17. Resistance to change at workplace			
18. Refusal to perform workplace duty			
19. Unrealised expectations			
20. Pressure on you to finish work on time			
21. Few people taking decision for the staff			
22. Performing duty alone or one man's			

work or “good face”			
23. Unclear lines of authority			
24. Territorial encroachments (taking a workplace as personal property)			
25. Interaction patterns (interfering in someone’s or group’s affairs )			
26. Lack of job experience by the superior			

27. Any other apart from the above mentioned, please, specify.....

.....

**SECTION D**  
**EFFECTS OF CONFLICTS**

**Negative effects**

Please, indicate the effects the unresolved conflict may result to in your library by ticking (√) as many as you can from the table below

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
28. Bring division among staff or patrons			
29. Decrease in the level of commitment to work			
30. Poor treatment of patrons by staff			
31. Instigating the patrons against the management			
32. Delay in decision making-process by the management			
33. Low patronage of library services			
34. Staff resigning from work			
35. Destruction of library resources			

36. Any other apart from the above mentioned please,  
specify.....

**Positive effects of conflicts**

Please, indicate by ticking (√) the appropriate response (s) on the effects of conflict

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
37. Increase in job output			
48. An avenue for change of bad attitude of patrons or staff			
49. Change work environment devoid of stress			
40. Improve quality decisions in resolving conflict			

41. Any other apart from the above mentioned, please, specify.....

.....

.....

.....

**SECTION D**

**WAYS OF PREVENTION CONFLICTS**

Please, indicate by ticking (√) the appropriate response (s) on the prevention strategies used in dealing with conflict situations

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
42.Silence or ignoring certain issues			
43.Being fair in dealing with issues			
44.Improvement of information flow			
45.Expansion of library resources			
46.Clearly defined rules and procedures			
47. Implementation of decision by the library management			
48.Good communication skills by staff			

49. Any other apart from the above mentioned, please, specify.....

.....

.....

**SECTION E**

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

Please, indicate by ticking (√) the appropriate response (s) on how you manage conflict

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
50. Avoidance (non-response or withdrawal)			
51. Accommodation (Sacrifice one's own concern in favour of the others)			
52. Collaboration (Allow the parties to express their feelings before intervening)			
53. Compromise (Be in agreement to solve the problem due to approximately equivalent power or rank)			
54. Competition (The attempt to satisfy your concern at the other's concern due to your position)			

55. Any other apart from the above mentioned, please, specify.....

56. Your general comments  
.....

**Thank you once again for your precious time and contributions**

**APPENDIX B**

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

**SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION STUDIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION STUDIES**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE SAM JONAH, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST; SAGYEFO, UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA, AND JOHN KOFI BORSAH, CAPE COAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES**

**INTRODUCTION**

I am Charles Koufie, a Master of Philosophy student from the Department of Information Studies at the University of Ghana-Legon. As part of a master's programme of the University, I have to submit a research work as a requirement for the award of the Master of Philosophy degree; my research work is titled:

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN GHANA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SAM JONAH LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, OSAGYEFO, UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA, AND JOHN KOFI BORSAH, CAPE COAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES**

The main objective of the work is to find out the causes of conflict in Sam Jonah, Osagyefo and John Kofi Borsah Libraries and the management strategies being put in place. This research work is purely for academic purposes and your privacy is assured. With your permission, the interview will be recorded for better transcription later. All deliberations and remarks will be confidentially treated. Thank you.

### **BIO DATA**

1. What is your academic qualification?
2. What is your current position?
3. How long have you been in service?
4. What role do you play in the library?

### **VIEW ON CONFLICT**

1. What is your view on conflict?

### **TYPES OF CONFLICTS**

1. What type of conflicts exists in this library?
  - a. Conflict between the library management and staff
  - b. Conflict between the staff and the users
  - c. Conflict between supervisors and staff
  - d. Conflict among the staff
  - e. Conflict among the users

### **CAUSES OF CONFLICTS**

1. What do you think is/are the other root causes of the conflict in this library?

### **PREVENTION OF CONFLICTS**

1. What are some of the preventive measures of conflicts in this library?

### **MECHANISMS USED CONFLICTS**

1. What mechanisms/strategies are used to manage conflicts by the following agencies?
  - i. User-staff conflict
  - ii. Staff-staff conflict
  - iii. User-user conflict?



**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**  
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Ref. No.: .....

January 25, 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

**INTRODUCTORY LETTER**

I write to introduce to you Mr. Charles Koufie, an M. Phil student of the Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

He is researching on the topic "Conflict Management in Academic Libraries in Ghana: A Comparative Study of Sam Jonah, Osagyefo and John Kofi Borsah Libraries".

Please assist him with the necessary information that he will need to undertake the research.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

**Dr. Emmanuel Adjei**  
Head of Department

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

25/1/18

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