

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON

MANAGEMENT OF STAFF CONFLICTS IN UNIVERSITY OF CAPE

COAST LIBRARY

BY

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DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE

I hereby declare that this dissertation 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.

Candidate: Date.....

George Tesilimi Banji

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Ghana.

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ABSTRACT

Despite the apparent silence of librarians on the issue of conflict, conflict is alive in libraries as in other complex organisations. Peace and agreement among staff of libraries are required in order to provide efficient service to patrons and also guarantee the survival of libraries in Ghana

This study set out to investigate how conflicts are managed among the staff of University of Cape Coast library. The study assessed the common sources of conflict, types of conflict, and the positive and negative effects of conflict on the performance of library staff. The study employed descriptive research design and used questionnaire to collect data from 64 respondents who were drawn from various sections and units of the library. The questionnaires were all retrieved for analysis. Tables, frequencies, and percentages were used to analyze and present the data. Five conflict management approaches were reviewed and discussed.

The main results of the study were that conflict existed among staff, and the management techniques mostly employed were accommodation, compromising and collaboration. The study revealed power struggle, communication barrier, and poor rewarding system as the major causes of conflict, and that conflict have both negative and positive effects on the library.

The study recommended that in order to enhance the management of conflicts among library staff, management should ensure equitable distribution of resources, open up their lines of communication and discourage aggressive competition for positions in the library. Rules and regulations regarding promotions and other rewarding systems should be properly spelt out.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Bridget, my dear wife and my daughter, Benedicta as well as my mother Louise for their love and patience.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Organisations including university libraries require peace and agreement among their staff or workers in order to provide efficient service to patrons and also guarantee the survival of libraries in Ghana. It is imperative therefore that both staff and managers of libraries must always strive to deal with the real or imagined conflict situations that are likely to threaten peace and harmony in libraries.

University libraries require people to work together and communicate with one another in order to achieve the organisational goals. However, it is an indisputable fact that anyone working in a library has probably encountered conflict - perhaps with students, faculty and department members, co-workers, supervisors as well as managers. According to Bryson (1990) conflict has a place within libraries and information centres. Conflict can serve as a unifying function within a group and as a source of feedback. Veaner (1990) also observes that, "significant levels of conflict exist in academic libraries which in some cases are so severe enough to demoralise personnel and impoverish service". Even though conflict is now recognised as a necessary part of change and thus, of moving organizations forward, there are various ways of defining conflict, and dealing with it since it is a difficult challenge.

Conflict is generally regarded as disagreement regarding interests or ideas (Esquivel & Kleiner, 1997). It is an inevitable part of organisational life since the goals of different stakeholders such as managers and staff are often incompatible (Jones, George & Hill, 2000). Bagshow (1998) notes that conflict is a fact of life in organisations as well as other

areas of life, as people compete for jobs, resources, power, acknowledgment and security. Dealing with it is difficult because it arouses primitive emotions such as people feeling threatened, which creates a version of the age-old stress response fight or flight.

Within libraries, conflict may refer to the discord that occurs when the goals, interests or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible and those individuals or groups block or frustrate each other's attempt to achieve their objectives. Fisher, et al., (2000) indicate that conflict is a relationship between two or more parties (individuals or groups) who have, or think they have, incompatible goals. It can originate between two or more people, or between two or more groups.

Conflict in libraries may be triggered by ethnic, religious, racial and economic differences, or may arise from divergent personalities and differences in values, beliefs and attitude regarding issues. In addition, people who are assigned jobs that have contrasting characteristics may frequently experience some levels of competition. Conflict may arise in response to interpersonal or interdepartmental differences, job ambiguities, a deficient system of communication, or environmental stress. The probability of conflict occurring is higher when there is a larger group of people than when the group is small. This is so because diversity among members of a group results in differences in goals, beliefs, perceptions, and preferences. Conflict therefore occurs on the basis of the fact that human wants are insatiable but our resources to satisfy these wants are limited or relatively scarce hence the competition leading to conflict situations in libraries.

Again, in libraries in Ghanaian tertiary educational institutions, there are workers with different qualifications. This may involve people with low academic qualifications who have stayed on the job for a longer period of time, as against those with high qualifications, but have been on the job for a relatively short period. Thus, it should not be a surprise that an organisation such as University library could be a fertile ground for conflict since it has a great number of people with diverse views and aspirations.

Despite the apparent silence of librarians on the issue of conflict, conflict is alive and well in libraries, as in other complex organisations. Most features that exist in business organization are present in the library. Kreisburg (1993) has observed that “libraries have many of the same elements as other organisations... set performance goals, and operate with a staff hierarchy”. Conflict is an integral part of library work life, just as it is an important aspect of organisational experience. Almost everyone has had some personal experience, with or involved in a conflict situation either as a member of the senior or junior staff in a library as they work together and communicate with one another. Even in our interaction with other colleagues in meetings, programmes, and discussions, conflicts have arisen. Ideally, these interpersonal relationships should be productive, cooperative and satisfying. In reality however, managers find that they are not always that way.

Almost every working relationship will produce some degree of conflict across time. In view of this, French (2000) and Dahrendorf (1989), in separate studies, commonly discovered four conditions which are vital for a conflict situation to exist. These conditions are:

1. There must be some level of interaction among members because without contact and communication there can be no conflict. The contact may merely be propaganda about other people, culture, or group since it need not be personal.
2. There must be sets of individuals exhibiting some levels of togetherness in an organization. These could be voluntary groups, religious groups, families, communities, nations, or some other collections of individuals.
3. There must be different levels of position/status ranks to be occupied by group members, implying a hierarchy of relationships. All individuals cannot occupy the same position at the same time.
4. There must be existence of scarcity of needed resources and a general dissatisfaction.

According to Olorunsala (1997) conflict is an essential aspect of all organizations and almost every library staff has some personal experience with conflict situations either as a junior staff, senior staff, or senior member. This is because conflict could be experienced as people interact with other colleagues at meetings, programmes and discussions. Yet, it is commonly believed that very few managers accept the reality of conflict. Although it is true that conflict brings about discomfort and can be a source of problems, it is additionally true that conflict has a positive dimension in organisations.

This means that conflicts can have beneficial effects on staff. In this case, the library staff will get the knowledge and the skills needed to deal with and minimize staff conflicts. Managing conflicts can enhance the staff's experience in the University libraries and can also help the staff to learn how to handle such issues when they come up.

Additionally, managers of libraries feel uncomfortable with conflict. Many even see it as something to be suppressed and stifled in all situations. However, conflicts handled well can provide priceless prospects for learning and adjustment. Some of these prospects are: boosting of relationships among staff, allowing for better decision making, and stimulating involvement in discussions and the building of group cohesion, empowering people to discover constructive solutions in problem solving (Robinson & Clifford, 1974). It is hoped that when conflicts among library staff are effectively managed and utilized positively, it would serve as a step towards achieving efficient service to users of the library. It is against this backdrop that a study on managing staff conflicts in university libraries has become imperative.

1.1.1 Brief Profile of University of Cape Coast (UCC) Library

The University of Cape Coast Library forms an integral part of the University's core business of teaching, learning and research. The library was established in 1962 with an initial collection of 650 books mainly on English Literature, Economics, History and Geography transferred from the erstwhile Kumasi College of Arts and Education, which is now Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST, 1963). The library's collection was first housed in one of the lecture rooms at old site which is now regarded as old library.

In April 1963 the library was moved into a temporary building with a capacity for 40 readers and 20,000 volumes. From the earliest years of its existence to 1980, the growth of the library was quite rapid but has slowed down in recent times due to the declining levels of financial support and rising cost of library materials. The ultra-modern library complex has a capacity of 750,000 volumes and 500 titles and is situated on the North

campus which is also known as science. It also has a reading space for 2,000 people, E-mail, internet, inter-Library Loan and Document Delivery facility (ILL/DD) as at December, 2013.

The University of Cape Coast library has the following objectives with regards to broadening access to resources of other libraries and maintaining mediation between users and information. The objectives are to:

1. Provide services to students and staff of the University in the form of lending, providing library user education and library publications pertinent to the effective utilization of the library resources.
2. Select, acquire, organise and utilise equipment and materials for the purpose of information dissemination relevant to the aims and objectives of the University.
3. Work closely with lectures in their teaching and research especially in those areas that require artistic work as in the charts and posters, photographic, reprographic and film projection services.
4. Carry out research in areas of need and interest in the library with a view to improving resources and services of the library. (University of Cape Coast Silver Jubilee Brochure, 1987)

Beside the University Library, there are Faculty and Departmental Libraries. Prominent among these are the French, English, Geography, Faculty of Education, Institute for Development Studies, School of Agriculture and School of Business. The collections of these libraries are designed to meet the academic needs of faculty, students and the entire University community.

Currently, the entire strength of staff in this library is about 225. Out of this, ten are Senior Members, 55 are Senior Staff, and about 160 are Junior Staff. The senior members are staff who have acquired a second degree or higher in Information Studies. Senior staffs are also made up of staff with a first degree/ diploma in Library studies and Junior staff is made up of Junior Library Assistants, Typists, Messengers, Photocopying Operators, Janitors and Cleaners. The management of the library therefore needs good and effective conflict management strategies among the staff to be able to achieve the various objectives of the library.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The main problem facing University libraries in Ghana is the inadequate recognition given to the issues of the library and other information centers in the country by development planners and policymakers. This attitude has gone a very long way to influence the attitude of managers of the public university libraries in Ghana.

Alemna (2000) opined that in Ghana, the promotion and the development of library and information systems have not been accorded the priority it deserves. According to Alemna, one reason why their provision has not been taken seriously is that the potential contribution of information to economic and socio-cultural development has never been seriously appreciated.

As a result of the above, the attitude of library managers about the demands of the library staff; be it Senior or Junior Staff has never been encouraging. This has also been reflected in the reduction of staff's overtime allowances which brought about the recent demonstrations among the staff of the University of Cape Coast Library. In view of the

inadequate recognition and low remuneration, Junior and Senior Library Assistants were forced to take private jobs such as taxi driving, photocopier operation, part time teaching, petty trades and the like so as to meet the compelling and urgent economic demands and thereby compromising their official duties. This situation has made some of the staff either not to come to work, and even if they come at all, come in late. This has also led to the introduction of the biometric attendance machine by management so as to monitor absenteeism and coming to work late. Badu (2001) notes that university libraries in Ghana have been plagued with petty squabbles, interpersonal and intersectional conflicts as well as coalitions of factions whose activities run counter-productive to their goals and objectives. He further argues that internal politics in some university libraries in Ghana is so rife that this prevents or delays the implementation of some major policy decisions.

University of Cape Coast's library has over the years witnessed many conflicts situations among its staff; the recent one was between the management and the senior and junior staff over the discrepancies in the payment of their overtime allowances which resulted to the closure of the library for some weeks as a means of demonstrating to back their demand for this situation to be normalized. One may wonder whether the university as well as the library has done enough in the area of managing staff conflicts.

It is also the perception of most library staff that managers are in the habit of forcing all kinds of decisions down their throats. Another cause of conflict is the preferential treatment among managers of libraries in Ghana. With this, one's ethnic group becomes enough qualification for certain favours from some library managers. In some instances too, some library managers have informally delegated authority to library staff that are

subordinates while sidelining superior officers who from time to time ask their members to stay away from work to back their demands.

In addition, some library staff have no clear-cut job roles and this leads to frequent violation of one another's territory. Also, immoral activities between and among some superiors and subordinates especially between superior male staff and subordinate female staff are on the ascendency in some university libraries in Ghana.

Library conflicts occur when people or parties perceive that, as a consequence of disagreement, there is a threat to their needs, interests or concerns. The effects of conflict become negative if proper conflict management is not done. The negative effects consist of increase in stress among staff; decrease in production; degradation in relationships and worsening cooperation which invariably increase the possibilities of violent conflict among staff. Conflict can also result in poor communication; ruin friendships, fuel feelings of distrust, fear and injustice among workers. These negative effects of conflict can lead to disintegration among staff.

It is hoped that when conflicts among staff are effectively managed and utilized positively, it would serve as a step towards achieving efficient service to students and other users of the library. To what extent is the management of the library able to manage these existing conflicts? What structures are available for managing the conflicts? Questions such as these are critical in our understanding of the state of conflict management in the University libraries. Yet, little evidence exists to help us achieve this feat. It is to fill this gap that the study into the conflict management practices among staff of the university of Cape Coast library is imperative.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the conflict management practices that exist among the staff of the University of Cape Coast Library. Over the years, people have written extensively on conflict among nations and business organizations. These writings have informed other researchers to situate their studies within varied working environment. Secondly, studies have also revealed that extensive studies have been done on the use of the various library resources and materials without due consideration for the staff who organise or put these resources together for use by patrons. It is against this deficiency that a study on the management of conflicts among the staff of the University of Cape Coast library has become imperative.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study was to investigate the conflict management practices that exist among the staff of the University of Cape Coast Library. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. identify the common causes of conflicts among the staff of the University of Cape Coast library;
2. examine the basic types of conflicts that exist among the staff of the University of Cape Coast library;
3. investigate how conflicts positively and negatively affect staff performance;
4. analyze the conflict management techniques employed by the staff of the University of Cape Coast library to resolve conflicts;
5. assess the effectiveness of the conflict management techniques adopted by the staff of the University of Cape Coast library.

1.5 Research questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the common causes of conflicts among the staff of the University of Cape Coast library?
2. What types of conflicts can be identified among the staff of the University of Cape Coast library?
3. What are the positive and negative effects of conflict on the staff's performance
4. What conflict management techniques do the staffs of the University of Cape Coast library employ?
5. How effective is the conflict management techniques employed by the staff of the University of Cape Coast library?

1.6 Scope of the study

The study focuses on investigating conflicts among the staff of the University of Cape Coast library which comprises of Senior Members, Senior Staff and Junior Staff. The study also covers mainly stages and characteristics of conflict, causes of conflicts among staff, the basic types of conflicts that are experienced, positive and negative effects of conflicts on staff performance as well as the management techniques that are employed and how effective are the conflict management techniques employed by the staff of the University of Cape Coast library.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

Almost all studies in the Social Sciences regardless of discipline or programme require a rationale for conducting the study. This rationale is often referred to as the theoretical

framework. According to Creswell (2009) the theoretical framework is any empirical or quasi-empirical theory of special or psychological process at a variety of levels that can be applied as 'lens' to the understanding of the phenomenon. Theoretical framework is therefore, a collection of interrelated concepts, principles or models that directed the researcher in determining what to measure.

Many theories of conflict exist in explaining the nature of conflict in the university library. The framework for this study was informed by the Human Needs Theory and Relative Deprivation Theory. These theories were chosen because staff conflicts in the University of Cape Coast library hinge on the issues that these theories deal with.

1.7.1 Human Needs Theory of Conflict

The human needs theory of conflict is akin to the relative deprivation and the frustration-aggression theories of conflict. However, the main underpinning of the human needs theory is that humans have a plethora of needs which they seek to fulfil and any hindrance to the fulfilment of these needs can lead to conflict. Abraham Maslow (1970) in his hierarchy of needs identifies physiological needs (security), love or belongingness, self-esteem and self actualization as important needs that all humans 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) posits that the 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 source of conflict and violence among staff as resulting from the inability to meet their fundamental needs. The Human needs theory therefore believes that conflict in organisations as well as the library can be resolved when needs of the workers are met. 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).

1.7.2 Relative Deprivation Theory

This theory is a corollary to the human needs theory of conflict, and mainly sees conflict as arising from the denial (deprivation of the satisfaction of human needs). Unlike the human needs theory, the relative deprivation theory looks at the needs of two individuals or groups relative to each other. Humans have basic needs which they seek to fulfil. The denial (deprivation) of these needs by other groups or an individual can lead to conflict between the two groups or individuals. Any attempt by one group or individual to prevent another group from satisfying these needs will result in strong resistance from that group through violence.

Human needs are non-negotiable and cannot be countenanced. Thus, to provide access to one and deny access to another is comparable to complete denial and could make people to resort to violence (Faleti, 2006). A group that has been denied access to power or a resource such as an allowance that they claim legitimacy will find a way to defend that

need. The group compares that need relative to another group and could resort to violence in order to satisfy their quest (need) for that power or resource. Conflict between the management and the Senior and Junior staff of the University of Cape Coast Library which is the subject of this research arises from expression of deprivation of their basic needs for identity, recognition, security, power and resource. These issues make that need uncompromising and non-negotiable. Both groups compare that need relative to each other and this makes the resolution of the conflict somewhat difficult. It is not possible to negotiate a settlement to a conflict that requires one of the parties to compromise a basic need (UN DESA, 2001).

1.8 Significance of the study

The study would be useful for academic purposes, by way of providing a platform for discussion and learning to equip library staff with effective conflict management techniques so as to ensure positive returns from conflicts. Sources of conflict, types of conflict, effects of conflict and the management techniques required to deal with conflicts were some of the issues studied.

Secondly, the outcome of this study would provide important information to the management of the library. Data obtained from the study would provide valuable information for enhancing policy guidelines and procedures on conflict management among staff of University libraries.

Consequently, the study would also create awareness on the various means of improving decision making and also ensure efficient allocation of resources and responsibilities

among staff of the library. This would help provide practical solutions or remedies to the problems of conflict.

Finally, on the broader scope, the results of this study would help policy makers of the university to formulate comprehensive and workable policies so as to minimize the rate of conflict occurrence among the staff of the university.

1.9 Operational definition of terms

The following are terms that will be used in this study:

Behavioural view of conflict: A situation where conflict is seen as a natural and frequent occurrence in all groups and organisations.

Conflict Management: It is the interventions that management of the library put in place to alter the level and form of conflict in ways that maximize its benefits and minimize its dysfunctional consequences at the library

Conflict: It is a situation in which incompatible goals, attitudes, emotions exhibited by the University of Cape Coast Library staff lead to tension, disagreement and opposition among staff or between staff and management within the library.

Cooperation: A situation where the library staffs work together as a team to reach mutually desired goals the library.

Dysfunctional Conflict: It is an unhealthy destructive disagreement between staff and management or among staff that hinders the achievement of the library.

Functional Conflict: This is a healthy constructive disagreement among staff or between staff and management that promote quality performance at the library.

Interactionist view of conflict: A situation where conflict is seen as dysfunctional in that it can harm persons and can inhibit the achievement of the library's goals.

Junior Staff: They constitute the lower level manpower group in the library who holds either the General Certificate of Education, "Advanced" Level or "Ordinary Level or Senior Secondary School Certificate of Education or lower qualification whose skills are needed to do reference and practical work in the library.

Senior Member: They constitute the top level manpower group of the library. They consist of both academic and non-academic staff of the Library not below the rank of Lecturer or Assistant Registrar.

Senior Staff: They are the middle level manpower group or library assistant not below the rank of an administrative assistant, research assistant, accounting assistant, auditing assistant, and technicians.

Traditional view of conflict: A situation where the library staff viewed conflict negatively, and was used synonymously with such terms as violence, destruction, and irrationality to reinforce its negative connotation.

1.10 Organisation of the study

The study is organised into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction, which includes the background to the study, problem statement, purpose of the study,

objectives of the study, research questions, the justification for the study and operational definition of terms. The second chapter is devoted to the review of relevant literature. This includes the theoretical and empirical evidence of conflict issues ranging from local to international perspectives. A definition, perspectives, stages, characteristics, types, causes, positive and negative effects, and studies on conflict management techniques were discussed in this chapter.

The third chapter focus on methodology, which describes the research design, sample size, instruments to be used, data collection and analysis procedures. Chapter four deals with the presentation of results and discussion of the findings of the study. The Chapter five provides summary of the findings, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature relevant to the study. It looks at the dynamics of conflicts in libraries. It begins by defining conflict, followed by describing the various perspectives on conflict, stages and types of conflict. Various causes of conflicts in libraries, the positive and the negative effects of conflict were also discussed. The final sections of this chapter introduce various techniques for managing conflict.

2.1 Definition of Conflict

The term conflict has been variously defined in the literature. Robbins has viewed conflict as “all kinds of opposition or antagonistic interaction” from mild forms of disagreement, such as differences of opinion, to serious conflicts characterized by extreme hostility and open strife (Robbins, 1987). According to Allred (1987), little attention has been given to conflict in the literature of librarianship. However, Bundy has focused extensively on the sources of library conflict, but her observation of the subject was ostensibly derived from the management literature and her knowledge of libraries (1966).

Robinson and Clifford (1974) define 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 achieve interests with enough behavioural intensity to change the boundary as well as limit if not destroy the goal attainment of the other party. The parties in conflict can be individuals or entire groups within the organisation. Coser

(1965) also defines conflict as a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources in which the aims of the conflict parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals. Such conflict may take place between individuals and groups.

According to Thomas (1976), conflict is a process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated or is about to frustrate some concerns of his or her. By this definition, conflict in libraries begins the moment one party perceives that another party is about to prevent the satisfaction of an important need or goal. The individual or group being regarded as the adversary or threat would start to be affected by his perception. Deustch (1973) also held a similar view that “a conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur.” By inference, attitude of the staff in the University of Cape Coast library could create or lead to tension and confrontation between and among staff.

Conflict may therefore be defined as an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles. Robbins (1989) also defines conflict as “a process in which an effort is purposely made by one person to offset the efforts of another by some form of blocking activity that will result in frustrating him or her in attaining his or her interest.

From the above definitions, there is no consensus on a specific definition for conflict. However, three things are essential to any conflict. One, conflict does not happen in isolation. Secondly, parties in conflict pursue incompatibility goals and thirdly, there are divergent views among people on an issue.

2.2 Perspectives on Conflict

This part of the study explains various theoretical standpoints on conflict so as to understand how the concept conflict applies in library system. According to Shani and Lau (2000), conflict dynamics are an integral ingredient of human and organisational life. Robbins (1983) identified some views or attitudes towards conflict in organisations. He identified them as traditional, behavioural and interactionist, which is the current way of thinking about conflict.

2.2.1 The traditional view of conflict

By this perspective, conflict was viewed negatively, and was used synonymously with such terms as violence, destruction, and irrationality to reinforce its negative connotation. In addition, conflict was seen as a dysfunctional outcome resulting from poor communication, lack of openness and trust between people, and the failure of managers to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of their employees (Robbins, 1983).

Conflict was considered unnecessary and harmful and children were often taught not to argue or disagree. Coudron (1999) reminded people that many of us are taught to believe that conflicts are reserved for the callous and insensitive, and not for cultured orderly people. Whetten and Cameron (1995) intimated that managers label people who are frequently involved in conflicts as troublemakers or bad nuts in the organisation.

According to Pierres and Peppers (1976), the traditionalist, following social teachings believed that all conflicts were destructive and management's role was to get them out of the organisation. This confirms Robbins' (1974) assertion that early managers were generally thought that the appearance of conflict indicates there was something wrong

with the organisation. Basing their argument on the rational systems theory, DiPaola and Hoy (2001) pointed that conflict is a problem that interferes with achieving organisational goals because it threatens hierarchical authority. Rational systems theorists emphasize organisational goals, roles, technologies, social control and norms of rationality. The traditional view therefore argues that, “conflict must be avoided, as it indicates a malfunction within an organisation” (Shani & Lau, 2000).

2.2.2 The behavioural view of conflict

According to Robbins (1974), the behavioural view of conflict is that, conflict is a natural and frequent occurrence in all groups and organisations. He pointed further that organisation members are human beings with varied needs and interests that can often clash. This therefore makes the behaviouralists argue that conflict is a natural and inevitable phenomenon in any unit and therefore serves as an important positive force in influencing an organisation’s performance (Shani & Lau, 2000).

Pierres and Peppers (1976) also observe that conflict of some form is inevitable whenever two or more humans are in some interdependent relationship. This is to say that the behaviouralist seeks to rationalize the existence of conflict and perceives conflict as inevitable in complex organisations or relationship. In a similar vein, subordinates may also have conflict with superiors over whether or not an assigned task can be executed within the given time. Again, subordinates at the same level may disagree on the best way of accomplishing a task.

The behaviouralists therefore suggest that conflict can sometimes be functional because it can bring out problems in organisations and how best to solve such problems. They on

the other hand, see conflict as something harmful which needs to be resolved or eliminated once it arises. This is in consonance with Burns' (1978) assertion that "the potential of conflict permeates the relations of human kind, and that potential is a force for health and growth as well as for destruction and barbarism."

2.2.3 The interactionist view of conflict

While the human relations approach accepted conflict, the interactionist approach encourages conflict on the grounds that a harmonious, peaceful, tranquil, and cooperative group is prone to becoming static, apathetic, and nonresponsive to needs for change and innovation. Robbins (1974) opined that the interactionists are the current thinkers. They proposed that conflict within organisations such as the library is inevitable and even necessary, no matter how organisations are designed and operated.

Pondy (1989) sees conflict as not only functional for the organisation, but also, essential to its very existence. This means conflict is not only inevitable but also absolutely necessary for any unit or library to perform effectively.

Deutsch (1991) also pointed out that "conflict is the root of personal and social change and that it is the medium through which problems can be aimed and solutions arrived at."

Schnake (1987) buttressed it by saying conflict makes supervisors and managers aware of problems that need their attention. Conflict is an indication that something needs to be attended to, just as a physical discomfort may signal a more serious personal physical problem which needs attention.

Darling and Walker (2001) state that it is impossible to eliminate conflict totally. Circumstances and individuals change, with such changes creating the possibility of creative positive growth. Thus, eliminating conflict is clearly impossible and likely undesirable because of the close link between conflict and creative constructive change. Managers who try to eliminate conflict will not last long.

Conflict is therefore necessary for effective problem solving and for effective interpersonal relationship. When conflict is appropriately dealt with, it can generate many positive results for the library. Rico (1964) also observes that the absence of conflict may indicate autocracy, uniformity, stagnation, and mental fixity. The presence of conflict may indicate democracy, diversity and growth.

2.3 Phases of Conflict

Many conflicts in university libraries arise because people or groups want the same resources such as funding for purchasing of materials, promotions, desirable work or working conditions. Often, employees perceive that too little of the desired resources are available to meet everyone's objectives. This makes the workers and the managers of university libraries to argue among themselves in search of these objectives. Individuals in university libraries do not move suddenly from peaceful coexistence to conflict-ridden relationships. Rather they move through various stages.

Pondy (1967) has suggested that conflict can be understood best if it is viewed as a dynamic process made up of five stages or phases namely; Latent, Perceived, Felt, Manifest and Conflict Aftermath. A summary of these is presented in Table 2.3

Table 2.3: Phases of Organisational Conflict

Phase	Description
Latent conflict	Grounds for conflict exist because parties are interacting in interdependent relations in which incompatible goals are possible.
Perceived conflict	One or more parties perceived conflict that their situation is characterized by incompatibility and interdependence.
Felt conflict	Parties begin to personalize perceived conflict by focusing on the conflict issue and planning conflict management strategies.
Manifest conflict	Conflict is enacted through communication. Interaction might involve cycles of escalation and de-escalation as various strategies are used.
Conflict aftermath	Conflict episode has both short-term and long-term effects on the individuals, their relationship, and the organisation.

Source: Adapted from Pondy (1967).

2.3.1 Latent conflict stage

This is the first stage of conflict during which employees' differences in goals, aspirations and opinions lead to an awareness of conflict (Wright & Noe, 1996). Here, the employees may sense a basis for arguing and sometimes, the outcome of an earlier conflict leads to such conditions. Often, latent conflict is initiated by a change, for example, a decrease in resources or the establishment of new objectives. Latent conflict refers to factors in the person, group, or organisation that might lead to conflict

behaviour. These conditions are the antecedent to conflict and are a potential for conflict in an organisation.

2.3.2 Perceived conflict stage

According to Wright and Noe (1996), this is the second stage of conflict during which employees either act on or ignores the problem. There is a perception by the people involved that a conflict exists. An action taken at this stage can prevent the conflict from moving to the later stages. Even when latent conflict factors are present, conflict may not be perceived by those potentially in conflict. Two mechanisms limit the perception of conflict. People can block out mild conflict by suppressing their awareness of it. If many conditions exist for conflict in an organisation, individuals may focus on them selectively, letting them successfully manage the conflict (Champoux, 1996)

Latent conflict does not always precede the perception of conflict. People can perceive themselves in conflict when no latent conditions exist. A common example is misunderstanding another person's position on an issue. The misconception substitutes for the antecedent. Increased communication can reduce the perception of conflict in such a case.

2.3.3 Felt conflict stage

Felt conflict is the emotional part of a conflict episode. At least one person personalises the conflict and focuses on the parties involved, losing sight of the underlying issues. Wright and Noe (1996) indicate that employees at this stage have an emotional reaction to the problem. The employees may be angry, tense, or worried. These feelings emerge as

the employees become personally involved and try to cope with the conflict. Any attempt to defuse a conflict at this stage must involve giving employees a chance to pour out their grievances of feelings. For instance, two individuals disagree but neither feels any hostility toward the other. They treat the disagreement as an issue to settle that has nothing to do with them personally.

2.3.4 Manifest conflict stage

This is the next stage where employees “act out conflict by intentionally frustrating their opponents” (Wright & Noe, 1996). Behaviours put up may be diplomatic such as a gentle refusal to co-operate with colleagues, or as visible as a physical attack or sabotage on colleagues. It becomes difficult for employees to work together at this stage or achieve common organisational objectives. This behaviour is destructive, so conflict must be resolved quickly at this stage.

According to Champoux (1996), manifest conflict is the actual conflict behaviour between the parties to the conflict episode. It can be oral, written, or physical aggression. Oral manifestations are the arguments we often see either between ourselves and another person or between other people. Written manifest conflict is the exchange of memoranda or other documents designed to make a point or win an argument. Physical aggression behaviour is strongly negative behaviour intended to injure an opponent.

2.3.5 Conflict aftermath stage

Wright and Noe (1996) see this as the final stage during which conditions created for later situations are either positive or negative. If the conflict was resolved positively, the aftermath includes ingredients for greater cooperation. If the conflict was suppressed or

avoided, its aftermath effect is an emergence of new conflicts, which may be even more problematic. (Wright & Noe, 1996) concluded by saying that “the early stages of conflict are especially important to recognize because conflicts then are easier to resolve than in the late stages.” Conclusively, a lack of open conflict in an organisation doesn’t mean conflict is absent but rather it is latent because whenever a group of people come together, they are bound to have differences leading to conflict.

According to Champoux (1996) when conflict ends but the basis of the conflict is still present, the aftermath holds the latent conflicts for a new conflict episode. For example, disputes over the allocation of scarce resources often are settled by compromise. No one gets exactly what he wants so the aftermath contains the latent desires for more resources.

2.4 Types of Conflict in Libraries

Conflict in university libraries occurs at several levels and appears in different forms. The various levels and types of conflict often have different sources and roots. Conflict may occur anywhere two or more people interact with each other. Some conflict experts prefer to use the term “levels” or “types” but they are all referring to the same thing. However, for the purpose of this study, the discussion was limited to the common types of conflict. Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) probed the nature and organisational implications of four basic types of conflict as personality conflict, value conflict, intergroup conflict and cross-cultural conflict.

2.4.1 Personality conflict

Gardenswartz and Rowe (1994) professed that each of us has a unique way of interacting with others. “Whether we are seen as charming, irritating, fascinating, nondescript, and

approachable or intimidating depends in part on our personality, or what others might describe as our style.” One’s personality is the package of stable traits and characteristics that makes him or her a unique individual. Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) see personality conflict as interpersonal opposition based on personal dislike and or disagreement. They serve as a breeding place for workplace aggression and violence.

Workplace incivility was seen as the seeds of personality conflict. Quite similar to physical pain, acute personality conflict often begins with seemingly insignificant discomfort. For instance, a co-worker in the library can grow to deeply dislike a colleague who persistently chats aloud on his or her mobile phone while the other colleagues are busily working in the office. Workplace incivility can wreak havoc in a crowded and pressure-packed workplace.

2.4.2 Value conflict

Value conflict, according to Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) could erupt when opposition is based on interpersonal differences in instrumental and terminal values. According to Rokeach (1973), instrumental values are alternative behaviours or means by which one could achieve desired ends. Examples are ambition, honesty, independence, love and obedience. Terminal values on the other hand are personally preferred end-states such as accomplishment, happiness, pleasure, salvation and wisdom.

Finally, Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) attest to three kinds of value conflict: intrapersonal value conflict, interpersonal value conflict, and individual-organisation value conflict. Sources of conflict are respectively from inside the person, between people, and between the person and the organisation.

2.4.3 Intrapersonal value conflict

Schnake (1987) notes intrapersonal conflict as conflict within an individual. He illustrated interpersonal with a supervisor who has given an order to an employee to do something that the employee considers to be morally wrong. The employee is faced with conflict between wanting to do as the supervisor says, and doing something he or she believes to be wrong.

Basically, this conflict occurs because of goal conflict. Goal conflict results when “an individual wants to accomplish two or more mutually exclusive goals, meaning that nature of these goals is such that to achieve one of them is to preclude the achievement of others.” Goal conflict could equally arise in the opposite situation. Here, a library staff may have to make a choice between two alternatives, for instance, a choice between accepting a valued promotion in the library and taking a desirable new job offer with another library. In this situation the staff could be faced with forcing to choose between two undesirable goals or alternatives. Both may be unpleasant but a choice must be made. Schnake (1987) identifies three basic types of intrapersonal conflict namely; approach-approach, avoidance-avoidance and approach-avoidance.

Approach-approach conflict: is when an individual is faced with a choice between two or more mutually exclusive alternatives, all of which are desirable. Upon graduation from the library school for example, one may be faced with a decision between two very attractive jobs. One of the jobs may offer a higher salary while the other promises to be more challenging and interesting. One may be attracted to both jobs but cannot, obviously, accept both and is battled with a matter of choice.

Avoidance-avoidance conflict: results when an individual is faced with choosing between two or more undesirable alternatives. Employees are quite often faced with either performing an undesirable activity or facing some form of punishment. Neither of the two is desirable, yet one must be chosen. For instance, a staff could be asked to accept a transfer from a more lucrative section of the library to an area which is identified to be less lucrative or have his or her employment terminated.

Approach-avoidance conflict: results when an individual is faced with single alternative, which has both desirable and undesirable effects. For example, you may be offered a new job with splendid accommodation at a time when accommodation is badly needed. However, this new job may also require that you report to work at 7:00 am; an aspect of the job you may not enjoy.

According to Wright and Noe (1996), parents routinely experience this type of conflict between their dual roles as parents, and employees. Finally, the approach-avoidance conflict is also a choice among set of options that have good or bad outcomes. It has to do with decisions that must be made between alternatives that are thought to involve both positive and negative outcomes. A summary of these types of conflict, their causes and possible solutions are presented in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Types of Intrapersonal Conflict

Type	Causes	Possible Solution
Approach-approach	Choice between two equally attractive alternatives	Redefinition of one-alternative as more attractive
Avoidance-avoidance	Choice between two equally unattractive alternatives	Redefinition of one-alternative as less attractive
Approach-avoidance	Choice among set of opinions that have good and bad outcomes	Solution is complex, depending on the number of alternatives involved

Source: Wright & Noe, (1996).

Stoner (1978) however, contented that intrapersonal conflict occurs when an individual is uncertain about what work he or she is expected to perform, when some work demands conflict with other demands, or when the individual is expected to do more than he or she is capable of doing. This means intrapersonal conflict refers to the internal conflict people experience as they cope with their drives, needs, wants and fears on one hand and the society that has been programmed into their mental processes on the other hand.

2.4.4 Interpersonal value conflict

Interpersonal conflict on the other hand involves two or more individuals rather than one individual. It is used to indicate the disagreement that mostly relate to the personal

characteristics of individuals and it is sometimes expressed through more subtle nonverbal unfriendly behaviours. Extreme cases can even be avoidance of eye contact among the individuals involved.

Schnake (1987) notes that the differences in the goals individuals want to accomplish, sometimes create a source of conflict. This means when individual in an organisation have incompatible goals, the probability for conflict is high. Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) buttress this by observing that “just as people have different styles that may or may not interlock, they equally welcome unique combinations of instrumental and terminal values that inevitably spark disagreement”.

According to Wright and Noe (1996), interpersonal conflict is between two or more individuals who hold positions at different levels within the organisational system with differing values, goals or needs. Interpersonal conflicts involve what are commonly called “personally clashes,” that is when one person’s style of behaviour continually irritates the other persons. This conflict may arise because of personality differences, competition over resources, differences in basic beliefs and values, or incompatible goals.

Stoner (1978) pointed out that more often, such conflict crop out of role-related pressures, such as between superiors and subordinates, or from the manner in which colleagues personalize conflict between groups. If members fail to overlook one’s weaknesses and recognize his strengths, such a relationship can degenerate into distrust and active dislike. Schnake saw age, as an example of a constant source of interpersonal conflict. Employees who differ widely in age very often entertain equally dissimilar

beliefs and values. Such differences are what tend to create suspicion or lack of trust among younger and older employees.

2.4.5 Intra group conflict

According to Schnake (1987), intra group conflict is conflict that occurs within groups. It takes place among members of a single work group and most of the group members are likely to be affected by this type of conflict. It is one that is most likely to affect the performance of the group and the extent to which members cooperate with one another.

There are three types of intragroup conflict, which can influence group functioning. They are task conflict, relationship conflict and process conflict (Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly & Konospaske, 2003). The task conflict has reference to members having differences in viewpoints and opinions pertaining to the task to be accomplished. Relationship conflict has to do with interpersonal incompatibilities between group members, which can also lead to feelings of dislike, tension, irritation, and frustration, whilst the process conflict is the awareness of controversies regarding how tasks will be accomplished with reference to the delegation of tasks and responsibilities to different team members.

Guetzkow and Gyr (1954) identified two forms of intra group conflict. These are substantive conflict and effective conflict. Substantive conflictive refers to conflict over the content of objectives or the tasks. Disagreement about what should be set as a group's goals or about the way the task is to be performed could be considered substantive conflict. Intra group conflict is sometimes easier to resolve since it is concerned with more objective issues. Affective conflict refers to conflict resulting from personality clashes or issues unrelated to the group's tasks. It however, creates a more difficult stage

to resolve since it centres upon more subjective and emotional issues. Group members should strive to be critical with ideas, not of people while the views of the minority should also be encouraged.

Barker and others (2001) prefer to term it “procedural conflict” because it is most likely to affect the performance of the group and the degree to which members cooperate with one another especially during meeting proceedings.

2.4.6 Intergroup conflict

Shani and Lau (2000) refer to inter group conflict as clashes and opposition between two teams or groups in an organisation. Wright and Noe (1996) indicate that it is a type of conflict which occurs between two or more groups with differences in values, goals or needs. The reasons for inter group conflict are interdependence, differences in goals, differences in perceptions and greater demand for specialists.

Hellriegel, Slocum and Woodman (1998) threw light on four different categories of inter group conflicts within organisations. These are:

- Vertical conflict – conflict between groups of employees at different levels. For instance, conflict between senior and junior staff, and between senior staff and senior members of library.
- Horizontal conflict - conflict between groups of employees at the same level. For instance, between junior and junior staff, senior and senior staff and also among senior members.
- Line-staff control – conflict between support teams and teams responsible for creating services.

- Diversity based conflict – conflict between groups due to the nature of diversity such as age, gender, race, religion and ethnicity.

Shani and Lau (2000) intimated that inter group conflict can be better understood by first considering conflict within the individual. In the socialization process, individuals learn the conforming behaviours of society at the expense of freely satisfying their own drives and desires. This process can spark off internal conflicts that could easily be directed against other people. The second aspect of socialization process where the individual develops a self-identity, which can be thought of as an integration of all the groups he or she has been a member of and has admired.

2.4.7 Cross-cultural conflict

In our world of global economy, doing business or working with people from different countries is very common. Because of differing assumptions about how to think and act, the likelihood for cross-cultural conflict is very great. Organisations such as university libraries have to accommodate cultural differences for a successful business transaction and service delivery to its patrons. According to Schnake (1987), supervisors should be able to recognize different types of conflict if they want to correctly diagnose the situation.

2.5 Causes of Conflicts in University Libraries in Ghana

As stated by Schmidt and Kochan (1972), different definitions and conceptions of conflict exist. For the same reason, causes of conflicts in libraries have been traced to different factors by various scholars and writers. According to Hybels, Richard and Weaver (2001), conflict generally occurs for one of several reasons, their discussion

focuses on four sources of group conflict and these are procedure, power, work distribution and substantive conflict. Procedure, which happens to be the first source of conflict mentioned by them, is perhaps the easiest to eliminate. This kind of conflict comes about as a result of differing views on procedure for meetings.

Bryson discussed a number of different aspects of conflict in libraries and information centres, covering the sources and functions of conflict, and methods for detection of conflicts in libraries and information centres (Bryson, 1990). Some of the causes of conflict between individuals and groups in university libraries include: communication obstacles or barriers among staff, dependence on scarce resources leading to competition among staff, role ambiguity, goals incompatibility, task interdependence, reward system, power struggle, superior- subordinate relationship, inequitable treatment of staff, favouritism, desire for autonomy, differences in perception, grapevine or spreading of false information about colleagues, space acquisition.

2.5.1 Communication obstacles

Conflict often occurs due to the lack of opportunity, ability, or motivation to communicate effectively. Failure to share ideas and feelings allows the other person to read meanings into your actions. Meanings are read into what one thinks the other person will say or anticipate, how the other person will respond. Meanwhile, suspicion about negative things will provoke anxiety, leading to lack of trust and subsequently taking a defensive stance (McShane, 2004). DeDreu (1997) confirms that poor communication, which results in misunderstanding, may cause conflict. For example, a well-meaning suggestion from one employee to another on how to improve job performance may be

misunderstood or resisted because the suggestion is seen as one employee telling the other what to do.

Schnake (1987) refers to the absence of frequent communication between groups or individual representing different structural levels of the organisation or different information groups as communication obstacles. When individuals or groups lack information about other individuals or groups, they develop misperceptions and distrust. This means that actions and motives of other groups become suspicious and this may distort communication. Kreitner (1998) supported this view by stating that because communication is a complex process beset by many barriers, these barriers often provoke conflict and this makes the battle for clear communication never to end.

According to Champoux (1996), conflict as a result of communication barrier is common in organisations with shift work. For instance, in the university libraries where shift work is practiced, the likelihood of conflict is high because the day shift does not interact enough with the evening shift except briefly at the change of shifts where members of each shift develop opinions about the quality of the other shift's work. As those opinions become diverse, the potential for conflict during the change in shifts increases.

2.5.2 Dependence on scarce or limited resources

Scarce resources generate conflict because scarcity motivates people to compete with others who also need those resources to achieve their objectives (McSchane & Glinow, 2004). According to Kreitner and Kinicki (2004), competition for limited resources can also inhibit the desired performance of a school setting such as a university library. Employees compete because of limited resources. The limited or scarce resources can be

tangible such as financial, promotion, manpower equipment, and facilities, or intangible such as knowledge and expertise. The dependence on single facility can bring individuals into conflict. A common example is a single copying machine within a department or section of the library. Several people could want to use the machine simultaneously, and an argument could erupt between two potential users. The single machine as a scarce resource was the latency for the conflict episode.

Schnake (1987) asserts that one major reason for conflict development between individuals and groups is “competition for limited resources” which creates win-lose situations. When employees perceive that the only way to get more of any limited resource is to ensure that the other party gets less, such perceptions undoubtedly set the stage for conflict. When resources such as office equipment or furnishings are limited, individuals and groups have no option but to compete for them. Owens (2001) also observes that, when the organisation’s resources are insufficient to meet the requirements of the sub-units to do their work, there is competition for scarce resources. This means people would compete for resources like assigned office positions, budget allocations for the various sections of the library and even space for parking of cars.

2.5.3 Role ambiguity

Role ambiguity among university libraries breeds conflict because the uncertainty increases the risk that one party intends to interfere with the other party’s goals. Ambiguity also encourages political tactics and, in some cases, employees enter a free-for-all battle to win decisions in their favour. When rules exist, on the other hand,

everybody knows what to expect from each other and have agreed to abide by those rules (McShane & Glinow 2004).

Schnake (1987) also refers to role ambiguity as the extent to which individuals and groups within an organisation understand what is expected of them. Role ambiguity can produce conflicts between groups or individuals because both may want to assume responsibility for the same thing or avoid it. Kreitner (1998) termed it ambiguous or overlapping jurisdiction. This refers to unclear job boundaries which often create competition for resources and control. Stoner (1978) sees it as ambiguously defined work responsibilities and unclear goals. If members of different groups know little about each other's jobs, they may unwittingly make unreasonable demand on each other, thereby triggering conflict.

2.5.4 Goals incompatibility

According to McShane and Glinow (2004), goals incompatibility occurs when people or work units have goals that interfere with each other. Financial rewards for goal accomplishment further entrench the perceived conflict because employees are more motivated to pursue their own goals. Wright and Noe (1996) observed that in some cases, conflict occurs because the organisation fails to set goals and reward groups in ways that encourage cooperation. Where each unit's goal of improving its productivity eclipses the goal of cooperating to meet the organisation's needs, the potential for conflict increases.

Goal differences also cause intergroup conflicts when groups must compete for scarce resources. In university libraries, acquisitions, cataloguing, readers' service, lending and periodicals as well as the library instruction all strive to provide excellent and cost

effective services to the university community. Each department develops goals, values and objectives and procedures appropriate to its type and level of service and consequently assigns higher premium to its mission than to that of others. For example, cataloguers take great delight in accuracy with which original cataloguing is done, while reference librarians may be more concerned about how fast it is accomplished. When departments need to co-operate with each other this can be a frequent source of conflict. Kathman and Kathman (1990) indicate that when an organization has several inter-departmental relations, this relationship becomes a cause of conflict in large academic libraries because such differentiation, frequently leads to conflict of interests, or priorities even when the overall goals of the organisation are agreed upon.

2.5.5 Task interdependence

Conflict tends to increase with the level of task interdependence. Task interdependence is the degree to which team members must share common inputs, interact in the process of executing their work, or receive outcomes determined partly by their mutual performance. The higher the level of task interdependence, the greater the risk of conflict, because there is a greater chance that each side will disrupt or interfere with the other side's goals (McShane & Glinow 2004). For instance, in the situation of processing a book for the library, after the book is acquired or purchased, it has to be forwarded to the cataloguing section, after the book is catalogued; it is also forwarded to the lettering section for the call mark to be indicated on it. This therefore means that a delay in one section could impede the work schedule of other sections of the library.

Stoner (1978) also stressed that work interdependence exists when two or more units depend on each other in order to complete their respective tasks. In such cases, the likelihood for a high degree of conflicts or friendliness crops up depending on how such situations is managed. Tension among the various group members will increase and they may then accuse each other of shirking their responsibilities. Conflicts may also flare up if the work is evenly distributed but with dissimilar rewards. This means when unit groups are not treated fairly, when they are interdependent, conflict is likely to rear its head.

Wright and Noe (1996) gave a more elaborated explanation by coming out with three types of interdependence. These were: Pooled interdependence, Sequential interdependence and Reciprocal interdependence. Pooled interdependence is where each group operates independently, but the organisation's overall success depends on the combination of the outcome of the groups. Sequential interdependence is where one group's outputs serve as another group's inputs. This means a poor performance by the first group can easily make the second group perform poorly as well. Wright and Noe ended with reciprocal interdependence which they described as each group's outputs serving as inputs to other groups. The close links which exist among the groups provide fertile grounds for potential conflict.

Another way to minimize dysfunctional conflict is to reduce the level of interdependence between parties. If cost effective, this might occur by dividing the shared resource so that each party has exclusive use of part of it. For example, rather than having one library

staff serving patrons and another processing the books, each staff could handle both activities. Figure 1 illustrates the various levels of task interdependence.

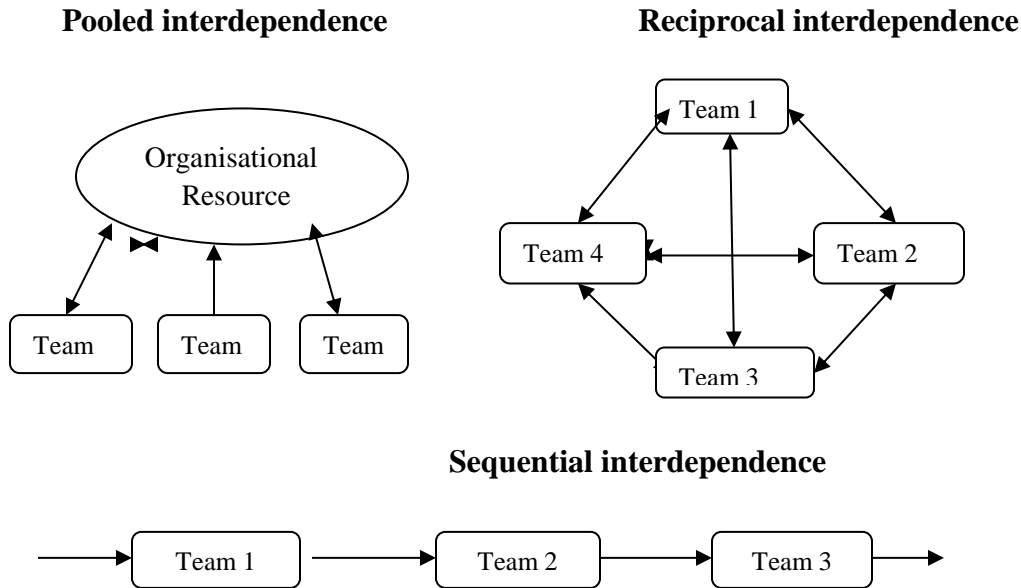


Figure 1: Levels of task interdependence

Source: Based on Thompson (1967).

2.5.6 Reward system

According to Champoux (1996), the reward system of an organisation is another area of latent conflict. Reward systems that encourage different and incompatible behaviour are a significant source of latent conflict. A common example is the design of reward systems for acquisition librarians and cataloguers. Acquisition librarians receive a commission for acquiring or purchasing the book whereas the people who do the processing (cataloguing) are not given anything. Under this situation, the cataloguers may feel cheated. The conflict potential is high when the acquisition librarian and the cataloguers interact.

2.5.7 Power struggle

In an organisation such as a university library, when two or more people struggle for power there is the tendency for leaders to woo a group of workers to their support. This situation can create fragmentation among staff and thereby affect job performance.

2.5.8 Superior- subordinate relationship

Individuals with wide age differences in university libraries working together can also generate conflict of some sort. Mullins (2005) shares the same view when he states that age gap between older employees and younger managers sometimes lead to conflict. The younger managers would want to demonstrate power whilst the older employees on the other side exhibit experience which invariably leads to conflict of interest among them.

In addition, when the manager of the library always looks down on the junior staff even when the junior deserves to be appreciated or praised for performing well a task, some managers do not see any sense in this. This can frustrate workers.

2.5.9 Inequitable treatment of staff

This is the situation where the librarians of the university libraries gives different punishment or reward to different workers for the same offence or work, there can be conflict among staff. This is because staff may feel being unfairly treated by the manager. In university libraries where the bulk of work is routine, junior staff have cause to complain when they at times, even work harder than their superior officers but received meagre salaries with no allowances. This can lead to low job satisfaction and eventual conflict.

According to Mullins (2010) a person's perception of unjust treatment, for example in the operation of personnel policies and practices or in reward and punishment systems, can lead to tension and conflict. For example, according to the equity theory of motivation the perception of inequity will motivate a person to take action to restore equity, including changes to inputs or outputs, or through acting on others.

2.5.10 Favouritism

In a situation where the manager of the library over-concentrates on workers from his or her hometown and ethnic group, there are bound to be suspicion among workers in the organisation and this can lead to conflict.

Favouritism by management of libraries can also make the manager to always create favourable opportunities for staff who hail from his or her hometown all to the detriment of staff who does not hail from his ethnic background. In most cases, this situation make work to be compromised leading to poor performance of work.

2.5.11 Desire for autonomy

Owens (2001) found a peculiar cause of conflict which he terms, autonomy. Autonomy is referred to as when one party seeks to control the activities 'belonging' to another unit and the second unit seeks to fend off such interference. This can be seen in an instance where a staff always entertained opposite sex in the office which he or she sees not to be wrong but other staff might term it to be a way of inconveniencing them and may express their displeasure. This can also be seen in the form of workplace romance which is the situation where male staff engages in unhealthy or sexual relationship with their opposite

sex who are also staff. In some cases, the subordinate who has a relationship with the senior may become pompous and refuse to take instructions from other seniors.

2.5.12 Differences in perception

According to Glinow (2004), conflict occurs when one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party. Conflict is as a result of perception, because it exists whenever someone believes or feels that another person or group might obstruct its efforts. This perception generates feelings of aggression toward the other party. For instance, a staff may feel angry with another staff because he or she has realized his colleague said something unpleasant about him which is likely to tarnish his image.

Mullins (2010) also indicates that we all see things in different ways and have our own set of values, beliefs and opinions. We all have our own, unique picture or image of how we see the 'real' world. Differences in perception result in different people attaching different meanings to the same stimuli. The underlying issue may have nothing specifically to do with work but as perceptions become a person's reality, value judgements can be a potential major source of conflict among library staff.

In conclusion, it is clear that people respond to the perceived threat rather than the true threat facing them. Thus, while perception doesn't become reality per se, people's behaviours, feelings and ongoing responses become modified by that evolving sense of the threat they confront. If managers of university libraries can work to understand the true threat (issues) and develop strategies (solutions) to manage it (agreement), then we are acting constructively to manage conflict in libraries in Ghana. As supported by

Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) in their claim that certain situations produce more conflict than others and that, by knowing the antecedents of conflict, staff can anticipate conflict and take steps to manage it before it becomes dysfunctional.

2.6 Effects of Conflicts on University Libraries

Conflict can produce both positive and negative results. The specific nature of these results depends largely on the way the conflict is managed. Many approaches can be applied in dealing with conflict and how effectively it is managed will have a major influence in determining its potential in producing a positive or negative result (Capozzoli, 1995; Garrison & Bly, 1996).

According to Mensa-Bonsu and Effah (2003) conflict can be positive or negative with regard to the circumstances under which it occurs. Conflict is positive when it produces gains, innovations, new ideas as well as fostering unity and understanding among members. However, the negative aspect of conflict is seen when it leads to stress, hostility and fear, thereby resulting in physical illness such as headache and hypertension among staff.

2.6.1 Positive Effects of Conflicts

Boulding (1993) points out that despite the adverse effect conflict can produce, disagreement between people has its good side. Robbins (2000) asserts that a certain amount of conflict in an organisation is healthy as it prevents the organisation from stagnating and from producing myopic decisions. Conflict is a pivot around which change takes place in workplaces and the society at large. When we disagree it sharpens our focus and defines what the important issues are.

The first positive effect of conflict on university libraries is that it helps long standing problems among staff to be brought to the surface and resolved. Schmidt (1985) asserted that conflict can produce better ideas, force people to search for new approaches; create the opportunity for long-standing problems to be brought to the surface and resolved; bring about the clarification of individual views; stimulation of interest and creativity; and also create a chance for people to test their capacities.

Secondly, conflict among staff helps to diffuse more serious conflicts within the library organisation. Filley (1975) suggests that games can be used to moderate the attitudes of people by providing a competitive situation which can liberate tension in the conflicting parties, as well as having some entertainment value. In an organisation such as the university library where members participate in decision making, disputes are usually minor and the likelihood of major fights are minimised.

Another benefit of conflict among university libraries is that it helps to increase group's cohesion and performance. According to Filley (1975), when two or more parties are in conflict, the performance and cohesion of each party is likely to improve. This is because in a conflict situation, an opponent's position is evaluated negatively, and group allegiance is strongly reinforced, leading to increased group effort and cohesion. Eccles and Gabbaro (1995) note that conflict makes groups become more cohesive and operate more effectively as teams, increasing group and individual motivation which goes a long way to boost standards of performance as a result of commitment and concern to make better decisions. When a group is threatened, its members pull together in solidarity.

Conflict enables library staff to achieve their goals and objectives. Through conflict, people in an organisation are able to *achieve* their goals and objectives (Filley, 1975).

Jennings and Wattam (2005) agree to this assertion by saying that conflict is a necessary agent to stimulate change and innovation and those problems and inefficiencies in working will be highlighted by conflict whereas attempts to eliminate conflict can lead to such matters being “swept under the carpet”. This means a healthy competition and rivalry can lead to better decisions being made as attention is more clearly focused on the issue.

Finally, conflict stimulates a search for new facts, ideas or resolutions in the library. When two staff who respect each other face a conflict situation, the conflict resolution process may help in clarifying the facts and stimulating a search for mutually acceptable solutions. Conflict therefore brings harmony in the library.

2.6.2 Negative effects of Conflicts

Just as conflict has its good side, it has a negative side as well in university libraries in Ghana. According to Aldag and Stearns (1994), anyone who has ever worked in an organisation knows that conflict exists and that it can have destructive effects on the organisation and the members’ activities.

Firstly, conflict reduces the productivity and performance of university libraries. As libraries devote their precious time to dealing with conflict situations, productivity and quality of work will also suffer. This is because staffs rather divert their time towards winning the conflict rather than towards achieving the libraries’ goals. Nelson (1995) explains that not only can conflict in the workplace cause great stress and unhappiness but it can also lower output and in extreme cases, bring strikes.

Secondly, conflict situations in university libraries in Ghana hamper their decision making processes. Barker and Gum (1994) state that in the midst of conflict, opposing individuals or groups will put their own interests and goals above those of the organisation resulting in the lessening in the organisation's effectiveness. Kirchoff and Adams (1982) assert that conflict in an organisation impedes the smooth running of the organisation since the decision making processes may be obstructed.

Furthermore, conflict causes fragmentation or division among the staff of university libraries in Ghana. Schmidt (1972) records that one of the negative effects of conflict is that it causes an increase in the distance between people. Kirchoff and Adams (1982) assert that the destructive effect of conflict is the formation of competing affiliations within the organisation. The overall result of such negative effects is to reduce employees' commitment to organisational goals and organisational efficiency.

Conflict among staff of university libraries in Ghana makes some people feel defeated and demeaned. Schmidt (1985) buttresses this by indicating that people who lost in conflict situations feel defeated and demeaned by their colleagues.

Another negative effect of conflict among libraries in Ghana is the development of the climate of mistrust, suspicion and tension or stress among staff. Since university libraries are divided into departments and units, there is the need for rapid exchange of information from one department to the other. In conflict situations, the pathway for messages among staff may be littered with obstacles and the true sharing of information may be hindered. Some workers in the library may always be suspicious of what management says and may therefore look at every word of management in different

ways. According to Schmidt (1972) conflicts in organisations bring about the development of a climate of mistrust and suspicion among workers.

Conflict in university libraries may lead to the development of resistance rather than team work among staff. Kirchoff and Adams (1982) assert that conflict among workers leads to the formation of competing affiliations within the organisation. They added that sometimes workers emotions become so strong that some people want to strike at the other person. Schmidt (1985) buttresses it by saying that since in conflict individuals and groups concentrate on their own interests, development of resistance rather than teamwork becomes the result.

2.7 Strategies for Managing Conflicts in Libraries

Library literature contains relatively little on the subject of conflict management in libraries. However, as a closer links are being forged between librarianship and other disciplines such as organisational behaviour, business management and public administration, the subject of conflict as well as its management is beginning to receive more attention. In some of the few articles on library conflict, Bundy (1970) focuses extensively on the sources of library conflict. Her treatment of the subject was ostensibly derived from her understanding of the libraries and from the management literature.

Rizzo also gives an extensive attention to the issue of conflict among groups in a library environment. Evan (1983) has a section on sources of conflict, control and management in his book *Management Techniques for Librarians*. In this book, he notes that formal organisations are social unit formed in order to accomplish certain objectives. Individuals join organisations because their objectives represent to some extent objectives that they

wish to achieve personally or both. As these organisations become complex one objective may come into conflict with another. He added that whatever the source of conflict it must be controlled if organisations are to operate efficiently. Therefore, persons in management positions must have a tolerance for conflict situations, adding that methods of dealing with conflict situations range from using personal judgement to attempting bargaining to all the two popular muddling through.

Conflict management therefore focuses on maintaining conflict at functional levels for a department, work unit, or an entire organisation. Conflict management does not mean complete elimination of conflict, nor does it refer only to conflict reduction. It means maintaining conflict at the right level to help the department, work unit, or organisation reach its goals. Conflict management is an expanded view of dealing with unresolved differences in an organisation. 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 contingency approach to conflict resolution (Kathman & Kathman, 1990).

Mullins (2010) suggests some strategies for managing conflict in organisation which was resorted to for this study. He asserts that although conflict may be seen as inevitable, there are a number of ways in which management can attempt to avoid it. Firstly, library management must try to clarify the goals and objectives of the organisation. University libraries must continually clarify and redefine their goals and objectives. Role definitions and performance standards will help to avoid misunderstandings and conflict among staff in the performance of their duties. Focusing attention on superordinate goals that are

shared by the parties in conflict may also help to defuse hostility and lead to more co-operative behaviour among staff of university libraries.

The second point is in the area of resource distribution among the various departments and units of university libraries. Although it may not always be possible for managers of university libraries to increase their allocated share of resources, they may be able to use imagination and initiative to help overcome conflict situations. For instance, making a special case to higher management of university libraries; greater flexibility to transfer funds between budget headings and delaying staff appointments in one area to provide more money or resources for another area.

Human resource management policies and procedures should be carefully looked at. Careful and detailed attention to just and equitable human resource management policies and procedures may help to reduce possible areas of conflict among staff of university libraries in Ghana. Examples are periodic job analysis; reviewing systems of reward and punishment; appeals, grievance and disciplinary procedures; arbitration and mediation; recognition of trade unions and their officials; training various heads of section of the library and negotiation skills.

The use of non-monetary rewards by the library manager makes staff feel motivated. Where financial resources of libraries are limited, it may be possible to pay greater attention to non-monetary rewards. For instance, a word of commendation given verbally to a worker in the company of fellow employees is enough to stimulate that worker to higher productivity as well as avoiding conflict of interest. In addition, increased delegation or empowerment; improved equipment; flexible working condition and hours;

attendance at courses or conferences; unofficial perks; or more relaxed working conditions could also help to calm the nerves of aggrieved workers.

Development of interpersonal or group process skills. This may help engender a better understanding of one's own behaviour, the other person's point of view, communication processes and problem-solving. It may also assist people to work through conflict situations in a constructive manner. Where possible, one should encourage addressing disputes early on a one-to-one basis.

Group activities such as attention to the composition of groups and to factors that affect group cohesiveness may reduce dysfunctional conflict. Overlapping group membership with a 'linking-pin' process, and the careful selection of project teams or task forces for problems affecting more than one group, may also be beneficial.

A more participative and supportive style of leadership and managerial behaviour is likely to assist in conflict management of libraries in Ghana. For example, showing an attitude of respect and trust; encouraging personal self-development; creating a work environment in which staff can work co-operatively. An open-door policy and identifying potential causes of disputes may help avoid conflict in university libraries in Ghana.

Conflict situations in libraries may be reduced by attention to such features as the nature of the authority or organisational structure; work organisation; patterns of communication and sharing of information; democratic functioning of the library; unnecessary adherence to bureaucratic procedures and official rules and regulations. Management must open their lines of communication with all categories of staff. This will prevent bootlicking, gossips and other

Socio-technical approach. Thus, viewing university libraries as a socio-technical system, in which psychological and social factors are developed in keeping with structural and technical requirements, will help in reducing dysfunctional conflict.

Exemplary leadership. Managers and supervisors of university libraries should learn to lead by example. This could be in the area of coming to work earlier than their subordinates, strictly following the code of conduct of the library and the like. This makes it easier for managers to instil discipline without conflicts.

Ethnicity and religious alliance should not be encouraged in libraries. Ethnicity should not be encouraged on the simple premise that university libraries are not family or ethnic establishment. It is therefore important that in the selection and recruitment of staff for the library, management should base their decisions on the qualifications and competence of the people rather than places of origin.

Managers of libraries should stick to rules and regulations as much as possible. Any attempt at deviation can lead to conflict. Every line of duty and responsibility in an organization must be clearly stated and understood. Aggressive competition for vacant positions must also be decreased. In order to minimize competition in the workplace, management of libraries should create an environment where all staff can freely compete and realize their ambitions. Library managers should also try to decrease competition between individuals and departments.

Personality differences should be recognised by management of university libraries. All human beings have personality differences. Even twins do not behave the same way. It is

therefore important for managers to give in a little for individual differences. This will minimize disagreement and enhance good work.

The issue of conflict management in organisations including universities libraries continues to be an important and relevant topic in organisational behaviour (Thomas & Schmidt, 1976). However, the argument should be advanced that if one seeks to use conflict management as a vehicle for the study and comprehension of organisations then biases and discrimination on the part of management must be looked at seriously.

2.8 Conflict Management Approaches

Numerous techniques to deal with conflict are suggested in current management literature. Widely discussed conflict management approaches include competition, avoidance, compromise, accommodation and collaboration. Generally speaking, all these approaches focus on three interactive methods of conflict management grouped according to lose-lose, win-lose and win-win.

The analysis of conflict management styles was most completely developed by Thomas (1976) using the basic structure of the Managerial Grid as a way of exploring the styles and strategies people use when involved in interpersonal conflict. According to Thomas (1976), two critical behavioural dimensions shape the way one conceptualises conflicts. The behaviour pattern can be found in the extent to which one wishes to satisfy the concerns of the other, referred to as cooperativeness and the extent to which one wishes to satisfy his or her own concerns, also known as assertiveness.

In adapting the managerial grid for conflict situations, Thomas (1976) reconceptualised these two dimensions as *concern for self* and *concern for others*. He then identified five

conflict management styles that would fall at various points on this conflict grid. This conflict grid and resulting management styles are presented in Figure 2.

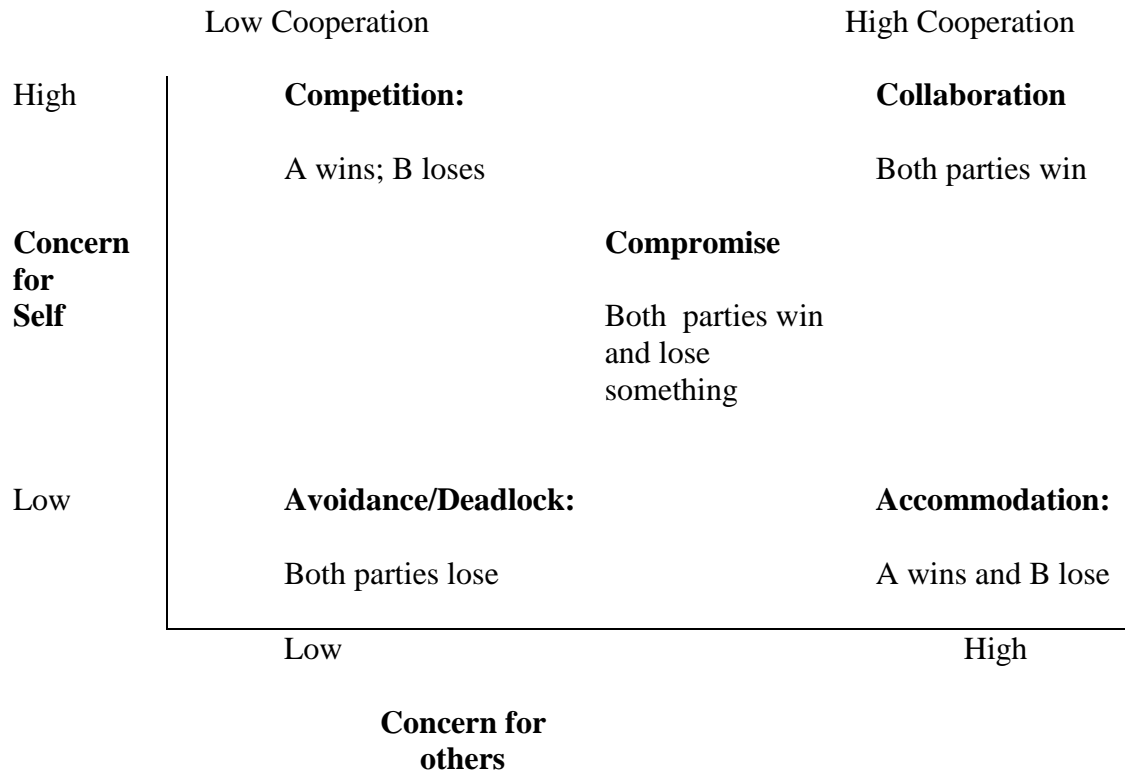


Figure 2: Conflict Management Styles

Source: Adapted from Thomas (1976).

From the figure above, it is clear that the way one manages interpersonal or inter-group conflict depends on the degree to which he or she seeks to satisfy one's own concerns (assertiveness) and the degree to which one tries to satisfy the other person's concerns (cooperativeness). This therefore implies that library managers and their subordinates should be flexible and capable of switching between approaches otherwise their ability to manage conflicts effectively would be limited. Out of this concept, various avenues of managing conflict are made available to the library staff and these are the win-lose, lose-

lose, win-win, avoidance or withdrawal, compromising, collaborating or integrative problem solving, smoothing, forcing or competing and third party intervention.

According to Nnadi (1997) the basic strategies or techniques for dealing with conflict include:

- The win-lose strategy
- The lose-lose strategy
- The win-win strategy
- Other strategies include: avoiding, accommodating, collaborating, compromising, and competing.

2.8.1 **The win-lose strategy**

Win-lose conflict reduction methods make one party to the conflict a clear winner and the other a clear loser. Such techniques leave a conflict aftermath that can result in a new conflict. According to Mchane and Glinow (2000), the win-lose orientation is the strategy where persons in the conflict adopt the belief that they are drawing from a fixed pie, so the more one party receives, the more the other party forfeits. Conflict tends to escalate when the parties develop a win-lose orientation because they rely on power and politics to gain advantage. A win-lose orientation may occasionally be appropriate when the conflict is due to perfectly opposing interests with fixed resources.

Nnadi (1997) advocates that win-lose methods create winners and losers often similar to the results achieved through majority vote. A library supervisor who views conflict as a personal threat may use the win-lose approach, using supervisory authority to impose a

decision on subordinates. The library supervisor feels like a winner, while the subordinates who may not be in a position to complain, end up becoming the losers.

2.8.2 **The lose-lose strategy**

Lose-lose methods of conflict management do not try to deal directly with the conflict. None of the parties to the conflict episode get what they want. Sometimes the lose-lose approaches ignore the conflict altogether and do not try to reduce it. According to Nnadi (1997), the lose-lose strategy results from compromise where individuals in the conflict do not achieve all they wanted. The individuals get only part of what they require, based on the assumptions that 'half a loaf is better than none', and that the avoidance of conflict is preferable to personal confrontation.

In lose-lose situation no one emerges a winner. This occurs when subordinates have a definite solution to a problem but feel that those in charge of operations would not accept it. What happen here is that the subordinates and the supervisors try to compromise to avoid offending each other. The Lose-lose strategy revolves around personal perspectives rather than the organisational perspective. This is so because the individual as an entity, other than ways of finding a solution to a problem, is what is considered most under such circumstances. Nnadi (1997) points out that while compromise may sometimes be necessary; it is not the best means of managing conflict. The lose-lose method of conflict resolution is ineffective in dealing with problems that require solutions of high quality and high acceptance.

2.8.3 The win-win strategy

With win-win conflict reduction method, each party to the conflict episode gets what he or she wants. Win-win approaches do not leave a conflict aftermath because they directly address the causes of the conflict and try to remove them. Although these techniques do not strongly differ, they have some useful distinctions.

Nnadi (1997) points out that the win-win strategy not only focuses on consensus but requires individuals to express their needs and ideas. This approach seeks to produce solutions acceptable to all parties involved in the conflict. When all parties are open and honest about facts, opinions and feelings, whereas defensiveness, apprehension and aggression are diminished, win-win results could be achieved. This is based on the premise that one can hardly solve a conflict without information.

To achieve a win-win solution in conflict resolution supervisors should adopt and practice a problem-solving style of approaching and managing conflict that allows open participation and commitment to a solution that is acceptable to all.

Other strategies can equally be used in managing conflicts. These techniques may overlap, facilitate or complement the win-lose, lose-lose, or win-win strategies. They include: avoidance, accommodation, collaboration, compromise, and competition as discussed as follows.

2.8.3 Avoidance (Withdrawal)

This is conflict management approach where people withdraw from discussing problems or smooth over differences quickly without really resolving them. The avoidance or withdrawal strategy is designed to protect one from being caught up in endless struggles

that cannot be won. An expectation of “losing” characterises this approach rather than undergo such frustration, one will physically leave the conflict (McShane & Glinow, 2004). Wright and Noe (1996) assert that avoiding means as the term sounds like: not seeking to meet your own objectives or the objectives of the other person. It is seen as sweeping conflict under the rug and hoping that it will go away.

Kreitner & Kinicki (2001) describe avoidance by referring to conflict specialist Afzalur Rahim’s model that, the tactic may involve either passive withdrawal from the problem or active suppression of the issue. Thus, pretending one is unaware that conflict exists. Avoidance is appropriate for trivial issues or when the cost of confrontation outweighs the benefits of resolving the conflict. Owens (2001) buttresses it by stating that avoidance is useful when it is not likely the conflict can be resolved, and also when the issues are not so important to the parties so as to require the time and other resources to settle them. Avoidance and denial can be considered as the least productive approaches to conflict management.

Ruble and Thomas (1976) see avoidance as a strategy usually expressed by apathy, withdrawal, and indifference. People who use this technique simply withdraw from the conflict and attempt to ignore it. This does not mean that there is an absence of conflict but that it has been conceptualized as something not to deal with. Since nothing is done to eliminate the reasons for the conflict, it is likely to resurface and in a more serious manner. Supervisors and subordinates feel uncomfortable bringing conflict into the open for discussion, and therefore resort to the frequent use of avoidance. However, avoidance is the most ineffective technique for dealing with conflict, in that, when conflict is

mismanaged or avoided, bad ideas can go unchecked, leading to poor decision-making and unconstructive outcomes.

2.8.4 **Compromise**

According to Kemp (1989), compromise means trying to gain partial satisfaction for all. It has to do with finding an intermediate position tolerable to everyone. The motive behind compromise is that conflict distracts people from their work hence it should not be prolonged rather it should be dealt with quickly. Compromise is often seen as a means for making the solution more tolerable for each party. It is a persuasive and often manipulative conflict management approach in which both ends frequently play against the middle in an attempt to serve the common good.

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 concession to the other. This approach is sometimes the best possible response to conflict depending on particular circumstances. It has weaknesses however, in that the compromise process once initiated precludes the search for better alternative solutions to the problem leaving the outcome often times less appealing to both merits (Fisher, 1983).

Schnake (1987) observes that compromise occurs when both parties try to satisfy some of their concerns. Thus, the premise behind compromise is that partial victory is better than winning nothing at all. Ideally, in a compromise, each side gives up something of lesser value in order to achieve or retain a great goal. A compromising strategy often prevents the conflict from escalating to more perilous stages. Compromise is an example of a typical lose-lose outcome. That is, neither side gets what it really wants. Although each

side emerges a partial winner, the tendency is to dwell on how much was given up rather than how much was won. Even though it is not a total lose for either side, both sides often perceives themselves to be losers.

2.8.5 **Competition (Forcing)**

In competition, the desire is on achieving one's own ends at the expense of someone else. It is also referred to as power play. The focus is on working to get your way rather than clarifying and addressing the issues at stake. Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) state that competing is also referred to as dominating and it relies on formal authority to force compliance. Here, there is high concern for self and low concern for others. This tactic brings about "I win, and you lose" situation. This is in support of Owen's (2001) assertion that domination is the search to satisfy one's own concern at the expense of others.

Fisher (1983) observes that competition is necessary in emergencies; sometimes uncertain courses of actions need to be implemented, when the parties are in opposition relationship to each other. The use of force may be the quickest and neatest method in conflict management since it results in clear victors but, it may only serve to mark the end of one conflict and the beginning of another (Kriesburg, 1993). Robbins (1983) points out that many people are highly competitive and feel more comfortable with 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 "polling rank" or outmanoeuvring the opposition. The use of force is the assumption that one party is in super-ordinate position to the other.

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.

2.8.6 Collaboration (Integrative problem solving)

Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) refer to this technique as a situation where conflicting parties take the time to identify and correct the source of the conflict. This approach is based on the assumption that causes must be rooted out and attacked if anything is really to change. Problem solving encourages managers to focus their attention on causes, factual information, and promising alternatives rather than on personalities or scapegoats.

Collaboration requires commitment to cooperation by the parties' involved in significant support from the organisation. Collaborating with the other party undoubtedly promotes creative problem solving and it is a way of fostering mutual respect and rapport. Parties involved in the dispute may lack the skills needed for taking a problem-solving approach. This is why this researcher agrees with Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) when they referred to collaboration as "integrating" or "problem solving."

Fisher (1983) contends that in collaboration, the parties involved in a conflict work to reach a solution that satisfies the concerns of each other. Sharing of relevant facts and feelings, allowing differences to be verified and admitted and expressing one's own position as clearly as possible and listening fully to the other side's point of view were the keys to collaboration. Collaboration is effective when the conflict stems from communication.

Tolerance for differences and recognition for the legitimacy of feelings are central to collaboration. Each individual must agree to abide by the rules of negotiation and agree

to solve the conflict constructively. Any “hidden agenda” must openly be brought out so that they may be dealt with effectively. Collaboration results in win-win outcome and encourages seeing the issues from each other’s perspectives and is based on the concept of zero-sum. Both sides can achieve an acceptable outcome which defeats the problem instead of defeating each other. Since the positive total effect is greater than what could be achieved by individual efforts (Filley, 1977).

The problem solving technique however is based on the principle that the two parties in conflict have the potential to solve the problem and achieve a better solution through collaboration. There is an open exchange of information regarding the problem as each side sees it as working through of their differences to arrive at a solution that is mutually beneficial to both parties. Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) contend that integration has a longer lasting impact. In that it deals with underlying problems rather than merely with symptoms

Stoner (1978) identified three types of integrative methods. These are consensus, confrontation and the use of super-ordinate goals. In consensus, the conflicting parties meet together to find the best solution to their problem, rather than trying to attain victory for either side. With confrontation, the opposing parties air their respective views directly to each other. The reasons for the conflict are examined, and the right methods of resolving it are sought. According to Nnadi (1997), the confrontational approach is based on the perspective that conflict is an inherent part of organisational life and ongoing conflict resolution processes must be developed, executed, and periodically evaluated. In doing that the attitudes and opinions of everyone involved need to be aired. By so doing,

the employees would recognize that their cooperation is essential in solving the problems if the goals in the workplace are to be met. With the use of super-ordinate goals, all parties involved share the same goal (Schnake, 1987).

Kreitner (1998) in support of Schnake's observation viewed super-ordinate goal as "when the supervisor tries to bring conflicting parties together by letting them know that they are all in the organisation together and should bury their differences to get the job done."

2.8.7 Accommodation (Smoothing)

Robbins (2001) refers to accommodation as a situation where one party in a conflict seeks to appease an opponent. Thus, in order for their relationship to be maintained, one party must be willing to place the opponent's interests above his or her own. Smoothing person neglects his or her own concern to satisfy the concerns of the other party.

Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) on the other hand, explained that smoothing involves playing down disparities while stressing commonalities. A supervisor who relies on smoothing says to the conflicting parties something like, "settle down, and don't rock the boat. Things will work out by themselves". This strategy may tone down conflict in the short run, but does not solve the underlying problems. Accommodation encourages cooperation but is inappropriate for complex or worsening problems as confirms by Kreitner (1998) that smoothing is only useful when management is attempting to contain things until a vital project is accomplished or when there is no time for problem solving or compromise and forcing is deemed unsuitable.

Stoner (1978) indicates that smoothing is a more diplomatic way of suppressing conflict. Instead of forcing acceptance of a solution, the supervisor tries to talk one faction into

giving in. This strategy is effective where the supervisor has more information than the other factions and is only making a reasonable suggestion. However, when it comes out that the supervisor is merely favouring one side; the losing side is likely to be resentful.

2.9 Summary

The literature reveals that conflict begins the moment one party perceives that the other is about to prevent the satisfaction of an important need or the accomplishment of an important goal. The absence of cooperation in an organisation does not necessarily mean the presence of conflict, nor does the absence of conflict mean the presence of cooperation. Having cooperation without any conflict could result in a stagnant organisation and complacent management. In short, conflict is seen as an act of being in disagreement.

Three distinct orientations about conflict in organisations were identified. These were the traditionalist, the behaviourist, and the interactionist views. Various phases of conflict discussed were the latent, perceived, felt, manifest, and the conflict aftermath stages. Again, types of conflicts reviewed in the literature were personality conflict, value conflicts, intra-group conflict, intergroup conflict, and cross-cultural conflict.

Communication barriers, dependence on scarce or limited resources, role ambiguity, goals incompatibility, task interdependence, reward system, power struggle, superior and subordinate relationship, inequitable treatment of staff, favouritism, desire for autonomy and differences in perception were reviewed as some of the causes of conflict in libraries.

Some of the positive effects of conflict discussed were: long standing problems were brought to the surface and resolved, diffusion of more serious conflicts, increase in group

cohesion and performance, enable staff achieve their goals and objectives and finally stimulates the search for new ideas and facts among staff of university libraries. Negatively, conflict reduces productivity and performance, hampers the decision making processes, causes fragmentation or division among staff, makes people feel defeated and demeaned; it leads to the development of a climate of mistrust and suspicion which hinders smooth working, and also leads to the development of resistance rather than teamwork.

Various strategies for managing staff conflicts including: win-lose, lose-lose, and win-win were discussed. The Conflict management approaches discussed were: avoidance; compromise; competition; collaboration; and accommodation.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This study was conducted in order to investigate how the staffs of University of Cape Coast Library manage their conflicts. This chapter outlines the various methods that were used to achieve the objectives of the study. Primary data were collected from respondents using the questionnaire whilst literature from academic sources constituted the secondary source. The methodology covers the description of the research design or strategy, selection of cases, selection of subjects, study population, determination of the sample size, sampling procedures or technique, pre-test, research instruments and the various data analysis procedures.

3.1 Research Design

Every type of empirical research has an implicit, if not explicit, research design. In social scientific study, research design refers to the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately its conclusions (Yin, 2003). Nachimias and Nachimias (1992) consider research design as 'a plan that guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting observations. It is a logical model of proof that allows the research to draw inferences concerning casual relations among the variables under investigation'.

The research design that was used for this study is a descriptive survey type. Descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or answer research questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study. According to Best and Khan (1995), descriptive research is concerned with the conditions or relationships that exist,

such as determining the nature of prevailing conditions, practices and attitudes; opinions that are held; processes that are going on; or trends that are developed. One major purpose of the descriptive survey is that it attempts to generalize from a sample to a population so that inferences can be made about some characteristics, attitudes, or behaviour of the population (Babbie, 1990). The descriptive design enables the researcher find out the extent to which library staffs are able to manage their own conflicts. This survey technique was used in order to obtain the desired information more easily and less expensively. This is in agreement with Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill's (1997) observations that, survey method allows the collection of a large data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way.

The researcher used a descriptive survey in order to provide a methodical account that will be accurate and precise. The descriptive survey helps deal with facts, opinions, attitudes or perceptions in order to answer questions analytically since it involves describing, recording, analyzing and interpreting situations as they are presented. The descriptive design also helps the researcher identify events and also describe the frequency of occurrence. As Anderson (1990) recommends, a descriptive survey is conducted where, the researcher attempts to reach a sample of the desired group and collect detailed data from respondents.

The descriptive research carried with it an observer's paradox. This means if a participant knows that someone is observing them, they may change the way they act. Subjectivity and error also play a disadvantageous role in descriptive research. Questions presented by a researcher are predetermined and prescriptive, while studies can contain errors. A

researcher may choose what information to use and ignore data that does not conform to their hypothesis.

In terms of approach, the study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative approach focused on obtaining numerical findings from the survey method. The interview, on the other hand, made up the qualitative approach of the study as this focused on personal description and individual insights of the key persons. This study employed the combined approach so as to overcome the limitations of only a single approach.

3.2 Selection of case

The case for the investigation is the University of Cape Coast library. The choice of the University of Cape Coast library stems from the fact that, the library is the hub of any academic institution and its main objective is to support teaching, learning and research. And because of its sensitive nature and pressure of work resulting from the support they give to students, lecturers and other patrons, as well as other departments and faculties in the University, there is high tendency of conflict among the staffs who deliver these essential services.

In addition, it is an indisputable fact that any conflicts that occur among the staff of this organization may go a very long way to affect service delivery to the clients of this department. Indeed, the library has experienced conflicts over the years, all in the direction of demanding for a good working condition of service for its workers. The recent one was between the management and TEWU as well as FUSSAG as they demanded for an upward adjustment in their overtime and other allowances.

3.3 Selection of Subjects

3.3.1 Population

A population may be referred to as any collection of specified group of human beings or non-human entities (Koul, 2002). Babbie (1998) buttressed this by referring to population as the “aggregate of the study elements from which the sample is actually collected and from whom to draw conclusions”. The population in this library is composed of Senior members, Senior staff and Junior Staff.

Currently, the entire strength of staff in this library is about 225. Out of this, ten are Senior Members, 55 are Senior Staff, and about 160 are Junior Staff. The senior members are staff who have acquired a second degree or higher in Information Studies. Senior staff are also made up of staff with a first degree/ diploma in Library studies and Junior staff is made up of Junior Library Assistants, Typists, Messengers, Photocopying Operators, Janitors and Cleaners. This therefore means that the Junior Staff form the majority of the library staff. The table below shows the distribution of staff in the library.

Table 3.1.1: Target Population

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF STAFF
Senior Members	10
Senior Staff	55
Junior Staff	160
Total	225

Source: Library Administrator, (2014)

3.3.2 Sample size

Sample refers to any group on which information is obtained in a research (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2000). According to Fraenkel and Warren, for any scientific study, if the population is large, five percent of the population could be selected as the sample.

However, for this study, considering the time factor and the logistics available, the researcher chose twenty five percent (25%) of the Senior and Junior staff respectively. In addition, since the Senior members were only ten in number. Therefore all of them were included in the study.

In view of this, a sample size of 64 out of 225 of the population was selected for this study. The sample size therefore constitutes twenty eight point four percent (28.4%) of the target population. The sample was made up of the ten senior members, 14 senior staff and 40 junior staff. These categories of staff from the various sections of the library, including the departmental and faculty libraries were randomly and purposively invited to participate in the study.

The aim of a sample in research is to get a representative sample or a small collection of units from a much larger collection or population such that the researcher can study the smaller group and produce accurate generalization about the larger group or it may be done in order to clarify and deepen understanding (Newman, 2003). The table below shows the sample frame and sample size used for this study.

3.3.2: Sample Frame and Size

Category of Staff	Population	Sample Size
Senior Members	10	10
Senior Staff	55	14
Junior Staff	160	40
Total	225	64

Source: Fieldwork, 2014

3.3.3 Sampling Technique

The researcher used the purposive and simple random sampling techniques to select the respondents. The purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents in the Senior Members category whereas the simple random technique was also used to select respondents in the Senior and Junior staff categories. These techniques were used to ensure that the sample adequately represents the target population and to obtain the most relevant information, and to allow informational adequacy and appropriateness of data.

In order to conduct this sampling strategy, the researcher used the lottery method. Under this strategy, the researcher first defined the population, listed down all members of the population by assigning numbers against their names, placed them into a container, and mixed well and removed one slip or paper at a time from the container without looking into it. The researcher therefore recorded the number or name on the slip. When a slip was picked or selected already, it was however thrown back into the container, mixed properly before the next one was picked. This process was continued until the required

number of respondents was recorded. If an already drawn number is selected for a second or third time it is ignored, that is, it is thrown back into the container.

In addition, the ten senior members were selected purposively because certain vital information could only be obtained from such level of staff or management. In purposive sampling, as Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) intimated "... researchers use their judgment to select a sample that they based on prior information, believe will provide the data they need." Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2008) opine that in purposive sampling the researcher handpicks the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought.

The selected members made up the sample of this study. For this purpose, a self-administered survey questionnaire was given to the staff to express their views and opinions on the topic under study.

3.4 Instrumentation

To accomplish the purpose of this study, both primary and secondary data were collected. Primary data were comprised the first-hand information directly collected by the researcher from the respondents through the use of the questionnaires and the structured interview. On the other hand, secondary data were gathered from the relevant articles in journals, internet information, reports and published and unpublished thesis, literature from books and other academic sources. The instrument that was used to elicit relevant data for this study was a set of questionnaire. (See Appendix A). Data collection was done personally with three Research Assistants who were also trained. Orientation was conducted for the Assistants so that they could be able to explain the nature of the study

and the part they play in it. The questionnaire was personally administered with all additional instructions personally given to ensure effective data collection on the research problem.

3.4.1 Questionnaires

Sarantakos (1993) observes that the use of the questionnaire promises a wider coverage, and is less expensive and produces quick result since researchers can approach respondents more easily. The questionnaire is widely used for collecting data in educational research because it is effective for obtaining factual information about practices and conditions and for enquiring into the opinion and attitude of subjects.

Questionnaires have their strengths and weaknesses. They have the advantage of assuring respondents greater anonymity; they offer more stable, consistent and uniform measure of information, and they enable the researcher to have wide coverage. On the other hand, the weakness associated with questionnaire has to do with their inability to probe and clarify questions (Sarantakos, 1993).

The questionnaire consisted of six sections. Section A consists of seven items and was on the background information of respondents. Some of the issues addressed were respondent's category, department, gender, age range, marital status, period of work and highest academic qualification.

Section B focused on the common causes of conflicts among staff in University of Cape Coast library as identified in the literature reviewed. There were 12 items in this section. Respondents were requested to rate their response on the items to indicate their own orientations about the causes of conflict on a continuous scale of 4 to 0 as follows:

Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. Respondents were also asked to list or state other sources of conflict that had not been mentioned in the instrument.

Section C which had five items was on the types of conflict among the library staff. Participants were asked to show on a four point scale the negative effects. The order of response started from: Very often, Often, Seldom and ended at Never. Section D of the questionnaire also sought to collect respondents' views on the positive and negative effects of conflicts on staff performance in the library. On the part of the negative effects, seven items were raised for the respondents to indicate their views on using the available response indicated in the questionnaire. On the part of the positive effects, seven items were indicated for the respondents to indicate their views by ticking one of the options stated.

Section E consisted of thirteen items and was on the extent to which the library staffs employ the conflict management techniques listed. The researcher requested the respondents to indicate their response by using the rating scale provided to rank the degree of use. The rating scale was: Very often (4), Often (3), Sometimes (2), Rarely (1) and Never (0). The researcher also requested the respondents to indicate whether conflict can be managed successfully in the library. In addition, the respondents were also asked to share any two other ways conflicts can be managed in the University library. Section F sought respondents view on the effectiveness of the conflict management techniques discussed in the literature reviewed. The questionnaire consisted of four items and the respondents were expected to indicate their views by ticking their response among the following: Always, Never and Sometimes.

3.5 Pilot Study

Pre-testing of the instrument was carried out to check the validity and the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was tried on 20 staff selected randomly from the Cape Coast Polytechnic Library which has similar characteristics of the University of Cape Coast Library such as the organisational structure, staff composition and the structure of programme. The pre-testing was done in two stages. In the first stage, the researcher visited the staff and administered the instrument to each of the respondents. This took three days (between 13th - 15th January, 2014).

In the second stage, the questionnaire was retrieved within two days (15th - 16th January, 2014). Out of the 20 copies of questionnaire distributed to the staff of the Cape Coast polytechnic library (Senior members, Senior staff and Junior staff), 19 (95.0%) completed questionnaires were received. Based on the pre-test, some weaknesses, inadequacies, and ambiguities were identified and some response options were expanded.

3.6 Mode of Data Collection

A set of questionnaire was administered to the staff of the library to elicit their responses on the common causes of conflict, types of conflict, the negative and positive effects of conflicts, conflict management techniques employed by staff and the effectiveness of the conflict management techniques adopted.

In order to access information without any difficulties, a letter of introduction was obtained from the Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana. This letter helped to get the necessary assistance and co-operation from the administrator, Librarian,

Senior members and other categories of library staff who were the respondents of this study.

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The questionnaire formed the basis of the primary data collected for the study. The ideas, opinions and perceptions that were expressed by the respondents with regard to the topic formed the primary sources of information. The secondary source constituted text books, published and unpublished articles in the dailies, magazines, journals, library and internet search, official documents of the university on conflict among library staff.

Copies of the questionnaire were administered personally with the assistance of three Research Assistants representing the senior member, senior staff and the junior staff respectively. The three Research Assistants representing the three categories of staff were all trained to enable them explain the nature of the study to the respondents and to encourage effective participation. Opportunity was also given to the Assistants to make any enquiries with regard to the administration of the questionnaire. All terms and items with regard to the questionnaire were clearly explained to remove all ambiguities.

The Research Assistants helped to distribute the questionnaire to the various categories of respondents. Respondents were given sometime to respond to the demands of the questionnaire. It is important to note that the questionnaires were answered (in written form) by the staff since all could read and write. Besides, this offered them the opportunity to refer to situations around them in order to give accurate responses.

In all, 64 copies of questionnaire were distributed and all were collected due to the proper supervision done by the researcher. All questions were clearly discussed one after the

other to help, especially those respondents who were not clear with an aspect of the questionnaire. Respondents were then informed to answer the questions for collection within one week. The Research Assistants also took three days to retrieve the completed questionnaire from the respondents and then subsequently handed them over to the researcher after they went through and realized all was well. It took the researcher one week to complete this exercise. This was to ensure that good, quality, reliable and valid data are collected.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis and Presentation of Result

The analysis of data allows the researcher to manipulate information collected during the study in order to assess and evaluate the findings and arrive at some valid, meaningful and relevant conclusions. Since the study was purely descriptive, the data was processed and analyzed according to the format required by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0. Percentages and frequencies were calculated, and tables were also constructed to illustrate the analysis and findings of the study.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

Social research usually takes place in a social context. A context within which exist a myriad of economic, cultural, legal and political issues. Thus, there is the need for ethical considerations in conducting research (Mitchel & Jolley, 2004). Ethics may be referred to as the norms for conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

The American Psychological Association (2002) as cited in Gravetter & Forzano (2003) defines ethic in research as the “responsibility of researchers to be honest and respectful to all individuals who may be affected by their research studies or their reports of the studies’ results”. Though the issues of what is considered proper conduct is difficult to

agree on, general agreements do exist as guidelines in the conduct of research (Barbie, 1990). Ethical issues on community entry, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity were handled with respect to this study.

With regard to community entry procedures, proper permission was sought from the Librarian and the management of the library. The Administrators as well as the staff or their representatives were also duly informed about the study and permission sought before the study commenced. The researcher properly identified himself with his student Identification Card and a letter of introduction from the Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana and also explained the purpose of the study.

Informed consent is another ethical issue in every study. Barbie (1990) buttresses this by stating that informed consent emphasises the importance of both accurately informing your subject or respondent as to the nature of the research and obtaining his or her verbal or written consent to participate. Participation in this study was free and respondents were fully informed. All the necessary information that would enable the respondents decide to either partake in the study or not were provided. A verbal consent was also sought from the respondents before the instrument was administered to them.

To deal with confidentiality and anonymity, one area of concern for protection of subjects is their identity (Barbie, 1990). On the issue of confidentiality, names and contact details of the respondents were not used for any other purpose other than the one for which it was solicited. In research report, where possible, clues that might lead to the easy identification of respondents were avoided during the administration of the questionnaire. To ensure anonymity, codes were assigned to respondents and all identifying information were removed.

3.9 Problems Encountered and Limitation

Some fundamental problems were encountered during the fieldwork. Nonetheless, much effort was put in place to minimize their effect on the validity and reliability of the findings. Some senior members were difficult to contact due to their tight schedules. However, much effort was adopted by the researcher and his assistants to get them.

In addition, some of the Junior and Senior staff misplaced the questionnaires given to them resulting in the printing of extra ones to replace those missing. Also, the study depended on the information provided by the respondents through their responses to the questionnaire. Nevertheless, as the case is in all social surveys involving the use of questionnaires, some of the responses may not be valid. Nonetheless, the best was done to ensure the validity and reliability by crosschecking some of the responses by personal observation.

Nevertheless, the findings presented offer valuable insights into techniques of managing conflicts among staff of University libraries. The results should, thus, be interpreted with caution and serve as a springboard for further research and analysis into this vital area.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents results and discussion emerging from the study. It begins with the background information of the respondents. It then focuses on the various issues related to the specific objectives of the study. Frequencies and percentages, tables, figures and pie charts are provided to illustrate the results. It is organised into five sections namely A, B, C, D, E and F. Section A deals with the background information of respondents, Section B deals with causes of conflict among staff of UCC library, Section C deals with types of conflict, Section D deals with the effects of conflict on staff performance, Section E deals with the various conflict management techniques and Section F analysed the effectiveness of the conflict management techniques.

4.1 Background information of Respondents

The personal data of the respondents are discussed under the following sub-headings: category of staff; department or section of work; gender; age range; marital status; length of service; academic and professional qualification. The reason for this aspect of the analysis was to determine the caliber of people used for the study and also aimed at putting the study into context.

4.1.1 Category of Staff

Table 4.1.1 below indicates the status or category of respondents in the University of Cape Coast Library. In the university system in Ghana, staff of libraries are classified into three distinct categories namely: senior members, senior staff and junior staff. At the top

of the staff are the senior members, follow by senior staff and junior staff categories. The breakdown of the respondents according to their status is presented in Table 4.2

Category/ Status of Staff	Frequency	Percentage
Senior member	10	15.6
Senior staff	14	21.9
Junior staff	40	62.5
Total	64	100.0

Table 4.1.1 Category/ Status of Staff

With regard to the category of staff, majority of the respondents investigated were in the junior staff category. The responses show that 40 (62.5%) of the 64 respondents were in the junior staff category. The senior staff consists of 14 (21.9%) with 10 (15.6%) being in the senior member status. This shows that all the categories of staff in the university of Cape Coast library were represented in this study since conflict cuts across all these categories. The categorisation of staff of libraries into senior members, senior and junior staff indeed forms the basis of conflict situations in libraries in Ghana. Klinberg (1990) has identified that libraries have many of the same elements as other organisations... set performance goals, and operate with a staff hierarchy that forms the basis of conflicts among staff in libraries. He asserts that in the interaction of these categories of staff during meetings, programmes and discussions, conflicts have arisen. Rogers and Weber (1971) have also identified that the division of the library staff into professional and non-professional is a fundamental problem for libraries.

4.1.2 Department / Section of Respondents

Table 4.1.2 below shows the various sections of the library under studied and their corresponding respondents. On a whole, eight (8) sections of the library were represented in the study as presented in the table below.

Sections of UCC Library	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Administration	3	4.7
Acquisition	7	10.9
Cataloguing	10	15.6
Periodicals	8	12.5
Reference/Circulation/Readers	10	15.6
Technical support	6	9.4
ILL/DD	6	9.4
Department/Faculty/School libraries	14	21.9
Total	64	100.0

Table 4.1.2 Department / Sections of Respondents

4.1.3 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

This section sought out the gender distribution of respondents. It was discovered that out of the total respondents of 64, 38 (59.4%) were male and 26 (40.6%) were female. The analysis indicates that the composition of library staff in the University of Cape Coast library is predominantly male as in other organisations in Ghana. The views of male staff of the library dominate this study. This is illustrated in Table 4.1.3 below.

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	38	59.4
Female	26	40.6
Total	64	100.0

Table 4.1.3 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

4.1.4 Age distribution of Respondents

Table 4.1.4 below is the breakdown of respondents according to their age. The results depict that 24 (37.5%) of the respondents were within the age range of 21- 30 years while 21 (32.8%) belonged to the 31-40 age group while 9 (14.1%) were within the age group of 41-50. However, the respondents that were between 51 and 60+ years were 10 (15.6%).

Mullins (2005) asserts that individuals with wide age differences in an organisation working together can also generate conflict of some sort. He shares that age gap between older employees and younger managers sometimes lead to conflict. This is because the younger managers would want to demonstrate power whilst the older employees on the other side exhibit experience which invariably leads to conflict of interest among staff. The age distribution is illustrates in the table 4.1.4 below.

Age Distribution	Frequency	Percentage
21-30	24	37.5
31-40	21	32.8
41-50	9	14.1
51-60+	10	15.7
Total	65	100.0

Table 4.1.4 Age distribution of Respondents

4.1.5 Marital Status of Respondents

Table 4.1.5 indicates that 30 (46.9%) of the respondents were single. About 33 (51.6%) were married whereas 1 (1.6%) of the respondents were divorced.

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	30	46.9
Married	33	51.6
Divorced	1	1.6
Total	64	100.0

Table 4.1.5 Marital Status of Respondents

4.1.6 Length of Service of Respondents

Table 4.1.6 below presents the views of respondents on number of years they had served in the library. The analysis reveals that 13 (20.3%) of the respondents served between 1-5 years, whilst 25 (39.1%) were with the library for 6 -10 years. About 6 (9.4%) of the respondents spent 16-20 years working with the library whereas 7.8 percent of the

respondents spent 21 years and above in the library investigated. Majority of the staff served in the library more than six (6) to twenty one (21) years and this implies that they were capable of identifying the various factors that could be responsible for the various levels of conflict in libraries in Ghana as well as the strategies that could be used to manage these conflicts. The table below illustrates the views of the respondents.

Length of Service	Frequency	Percent
1-5yrs	13	20.3
6-10yrs	25	39.1
11-15yrs	15	23.4
16-20yrs	6	9.4
21yrs and above	5	7.8
Total	64	100.0

Table 4.1.6 Length of Service of Respondents

4.1.7 Highest Educational / Professional Qualification of Staff

Table 4.1.7 presents the summary of the highest educational and professional qualifications of the respondents. The results indicate that the majority 19 (29.7%) of the respondents were with SSSCE qualification. This is followed by 14 (21.9%) which were also diplomats whilst 15 (23.4%) of the respondents were holders of first degree followed by 12 (18.7%) of the respondents holding various categories of second degree. Per the University of Cape Coast's statutes, holders of second degree form the senior members category of staff. The senior members form the academic and administrative staff such as

the Librarian, Head of Sections as well as the Administrator of the library. Table 4.1.7 shows the academic and professional qualifications of staff.

Highest Qualification of Staff	Frequency	Percent
SSSCE	19	29.7
O' Level	3	4.7
A' Level	1	1.6
Diploma	14	21.9
B.A / B.ED	15	23.4
M.A / M.ED / M.Sc / M.Phil	12	18.7
Total	64	100.0

Table 4.1.7 Highest Educational / Professional Qualification of Staff

4.2 CAUSES OF CONFLICT AMONG STAFF OF UCC LIBRARY

This section sought to investigate the causes of conflicts among the staff of the University of Cape Coast Library. Table 4.2.1 presents the summary of the respondents' views on the causes of conflict among staff of University of Cape Coast library. Respondents were asked to choose from the multiple options presented by the researcher and the results illustrated in the table below.

Causes of Conflict	SA Freq. (%)	A Freq. (%)	D Freq. (%)	SD Freq. (%)	U Freq. (%)	Total Freq. (%)
Communication barrier	21(32.8)	26(40.6)	8(12.5)	3(4.7)	6(9.4)	64(100)
Spreading of false information about colleagues	24(37.5)	25(39.1)	8(12.5)	2(3.1)	5(7.8)	64(100)
Dependence on Scarce resources	15(23.4)	25(39.1)	13(20.3)	1(1.6)	10(15.6)	64(100)
Inequitable treatment of staff	21(32.8)	26(40.6)	8(12.5)	3(4.7)	6(9.4)	64(100)
Favouritism	17(26.6)	20(31.3)	15(23.4)	2(3.1)	10(15.6)	64(100)
Poor human relation between superiors and subordinates	22(34.4)	29(45.3)	6(9.4)	4(6.3)	3(4.7)	64(100)
Over occupation of space	11(17.2)	28(43.8)	12(18.8)	2(3.1)	11(17.2)	64(100)
Poor rewarding system	24(37.5)	28(43.8)	5(7.8)	4(6.3)	3(4.7)	64(100)
Use of derogatory remarks by colleague staff	17(26.6)	23(35.9)	13(20.3)	3(4.7)	8(12.5)	64(100)
Going against code of ethics laid down in the library	11(17.2)	31(48.4)	12(18.8)	4(6.3)	6(9.4)	64(100)

Table 4.2.1 Continued

High interdependence among staff	20(31.1)	23(35.9)	10(15.6)	5(7.8)	6(9.4)	64(100)
Power Struggle	42(65.6)	21(32.8)	1(1.6)	0(0)	(0)	64(100)

Table 4.2.1 Causes of Conflict among library staff

Table 4.9.1 shows that communication failure is one of the major causes of conflict among the library staff of University of Cape Coast. About 22(34.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed that communication failure is a source of conflict, 35(54.7%) agreed while 4(6.3%) disagreed and 1(1.6%) strongly disagreed on the issue. About 2(3.1%) were undecided on the issue. This means that the greater portion 57(89.1%) of the respondents agreed to communication failure as the cause of conflict in the library. This confirms Schnake's (1987) assertion that absence of frequent communication between groups or individuals representing different structural levels in an organisation is a factor which produces conflict. He buttresses that when individuals or groups lack information about other individuals or groups, misconception and distrust can develop. Misconception and distrust, he pointed out, are typical precursors of conflict. Kreitner (2000) also supported this view by stating that because communication is a complex process beset by many barriers, these barriers often provoke conflict. It is not 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.

Another source of conflict among the library staff is the spread of false information about colleague staff. About 24(37.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 25(39.1%) agreed, 12.5 percent disagreed whilst 3.1 percent strongly disagreed. However, 7.8 percent were undecided on the statement. These findings revealed that the majority of the respondents were in favour of the assertion that spreading of false information about a colleague staff is a fundamental cause of conflict in the library. This confirms Mensah-Bonsu and Efah's (2003) assertion that one's behaviour could be a source of conflict. They indicate that it is through the making of unreasonable demands that one spreads false information about others, and those institutions that harbour such character traits do not enjoy peace in any form and is tantamount to blackmailing, which can be detrimental to lives either individually or collectively. Information gathered from the field also revealed that some of the library staff use most of their working and meeting hours to gossip about others who are not part of their group. The fact is that some of the gossips are so detrimental that it goes a long way to tarnish the image of the victims.

With the statement that dependence on scarce resources is a source of conflict, 15(23.4%) of the 64 respondents strongly agreed, 39.1 percent agreed, 13(20.3%) of the respondents disagreed while 1.6 percent strongly disagreed and 15.6 percent were undecided. Thus, the majority (62.5%) were in the agreement that dependence on limited resources is a source of conflict among the library staff. This finding substantiates Schnake's (1987) view that one of the major reasons for conflict development between individuals and groups is "competition for limited resources" which creates win-lose situations.

When employees perceive that the only way to get more of any limited resource is to ensure that the other party gets less, such perceptions undoubtedly would set the stage for

conflict. The limited or scarce resources can be tangible such as financial, promotion, manpower equipment, and facilities. For instance, the dependence on single facility such as copying machine within a department or section of the library can bring individuals into conflict. This is because several people could want to use the machine simultaneously, and an argument could erupt between the two potential users. This therefore means the single machine as a limited resource is responsible for the conflict episode among the library staff. Owens (2001) asserted that competition for scarce resources occurs when organisation's resources are insufficient to meet the requirements of the sub-units to do their work. People tend to compete for the limited resources. Lack of co-operation can result as organisation and group fight for the greatest possible share of the available resources.

Inequitable treatment of staff is another source of conflict among library staff. On this assertion, 21(32.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 26(40.6%) agreed, about 12.5 percent disagreed and 4.7 percent strongly disagreed whereas 9.4 percent were undecided on this assertion. Most of the respondents about 73.4 percent were in an agreement that inequitable treatment of staff is a source of conflict among staff. Mullins (2010) also confirms that a person's perception of unjust treatment, for example in the operation of personnel policies and practices or in reward and punishment systems, can lead to tension and conflict. He adds that according to the equity theory of motivation the perception of inequity will motivate a person to take action to restore equity through acting on others.

In the area favouritism as a source of conflict, about 17(26.6%) have strongly agreed, 20 (31.3%) agreed, 23.4 percent disagreed, 3.1 percent strongly disagreed and 15.6 percent were undecided on this statement. The study established that where the manager of the

library over-concentrates on workers from his or her ethnic group, there are bound to be suspicion among workers in the library and this can spark conflict. Favouritism by management of libraries can also make the manager to always create favourable opportunities for staff who hail from his or her ethnic background, all to the detriment of staff who do not hail from his ethnic background. In most cases, this situation make work to be compromised leading to poor performance of work.

Poor relationship between superiors and subordinates can lead to conflict situation among staff of university libraries in Ghana. With this assertion, a total of 49 representing 79.7 percent agreed to it. About 15.7 percent disagreed and 4.7 percent were undecided on the issue. This confirms Mullins (2005)'s assertion that the relationship between older employees and younger managers sometimes lead to conflict. The younger managers would want to demonstrate power whilst the older employees on the other side exhibit experience which invariably leads to conflict of interest among them. In addition, when the manager of the library always looks down on the junior staff even when the junior deserves to be appreciated or praised for performing well a task, some managers do not see any sense in this. This can frustrate workers.

Another potential source of conflict has to do with space acquisition among library staff of University of Cape Coast. This space could be in the form of office space, chair space in an office and most especially parking space for cars. Total respondents of 61 percent representing 39 out of the total respondents of 64 agreed to this statement. About 14(21.9%) disagreed and 11 (17.2) were undecided on this issue. This result is in agreement with Mullins (2005)'s assertion that people become attached to their own 'territory' with regard to their own room, chair or parking space to the extent that they

become suspicious and even resent when someone else enters their territory. Deutsch (2001) buttress this by contending that there is jurisdictional ambiguity when geographical boundaries are unclear hence the likelihood of conflict.

Poor rewarding system was also considered as a source of conflict among staff of the library. About 24(37.5%) strongly agreed, 28(43.8%) agreed, 5(7.8%) disagreed, 4(6.3%) strongly disagreed whilst 3(4.7%) were undecided on poor rewarding system as a cause of conflict in the library. The analysis indicates that majority of people 52(81.3%) agreed that poor reward system of the library could be a source of conflict among staff. This is in agreement with Champoux's (1996) assertion that the reward system of an organisation is another area of latent conflict. Reward systems that encourage different and incompatible behaviour are a significant source of latent conflict. A common example is the design of reward systems for acquisition librarians and cataloguers. Acquisition librarians receive a commission for acquiring or purchasing books whereas the people who do the processing (cataloguers) are not given anything. Under this situation, the cataloguers may feel cheated. The conflict potential is high when the acquisition librarian and the cataloguers interact.

The other cause of conflict among library staff as indicated by respondents was the high task interdependence among staff. About 20(31.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 23(35.9%) agreed, 15.6 percent disagreed and 7.8 strongly disagreed whereas 9.4 percent of the respondents were undecided on this assertion. Thus, majority of the respondents contended that task interdependence among staff and departments could be responsible for conflict among staff. This is in support of Stoner (1978) who indicates that work interdependence exists when two or more units depend on each other in order to complete

their respective tasks. In such cases, the likelihood for a high degree of conflicts or friendliness crops up depending on how such situation is managed. McShane & Glinow (2004) also support Stoner by indicating that the higher the level of task interdependence, the greater the risk of conflict, because there is a greater chance that each side will disrupt or interfere with the other side's goals. For instance, in the situation of processing a book for the library, after the book is acquired or purchased, it has to be forwarded to the cataloguing section, after the book is catalogued; it is also forwarded to the lettering section for the call mark to be indicated on it. This therefore means that a delay in one section could impede the work schedule of other sections of the library which could spark conflict.

With the statement that power struggle is a major precursor to conflict, a total of 63 out of 64 representing (98.4%) have unilaterally agreed to the statement that power struggle is responsible for conflict among the staff of university libraries. This is in agreement with the researcher's assertion that in an organisation such as a university library, when two or more people struggle for power there is the tendency for leaders to woo a group of workers to their support. This situation can create fragmentation among staff and thereby affect job performance. This finding gives credence to McShane and Glinow (2004) who asserted that conflict occurs when one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party. Perception generates feelings of aggression toward the other party.

4.3 TYPES OF CONFLICT AMONG STAFF OF UCC LIBRARY

Table 4.3.1 below provides respondents' views on the various types of conflict and their occurrence among the staff of University of Cape Coast library.

Occurrence					
Types of conflict	Very often	Often	Seldom	Never	Total
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
Interpersonal	21 (32.8)	22 (34.4)	18 (28.1)	3 (4.7)	64 (100)
Intrapersonal	9 (14.1)	21 (32.8)	28 (43.8)	6 (9.4)	64 (100)
Intergroup	11 (17.2)	22 (34.4)	23 (35.9)	8 (12.5)	64 (100)
Intra-group	9 (14.1)	18 (28.1)	27 (42.2)	10 (15.6)	64 (100)

Table 4.3.1 Respondents' view on the types of conflict and their occurrence

Table 4.3.1 reveals that 67.2 percent of the 64 respondents reported that interpersonal conflict (conflict between individuals) often occurs among the staff of the library. Around 18 (28.1%) agreed that interpersonal conflict seldom occurs whereas 4.7 percent asserted that interpersonal conflict never occurs among the staff of the library. This confirms that since the library is made up of people from different backgrounds (different beliefs, norms, values, attitudes and goals) such differences serve as a source of conflict between and among staff. Schnake (1987) buttresses this by observing that interpersonal conflict may arise because of personality differences, thus, differences in basic beliefs and values or incompatible goals.

On the other hand, 30 (46.9%) respondents agreed that intrapersonal conflict (conflict within the individual) occurs among library staff. About 43.8 percent indicated that intrapersonal conflict seldomly occurs among staff. However, 9.4 percent disagreed that this type of conflict occurs among staff. Perhaps, conflict within an individual can hardly manifest itself for people to see, the general consensus was that, it hardly occurred.

Schnake (1987)'s observation points out that intrapersonal conflict is conflict within an individual. This presupposes that participants might have found it extremely difficult determining its occurrence.

When respondents were asked to indicate their views on the occurrence of intergroup conflict (conflict among workgroups or teams in the library), their views revealed that 33 respondents representing 51.6 percent agreed that intergroup conflict occurs among library staff. About 35.9 percent of the respondents said it seldom occurs and 8 (12.5%) indicated it never occurs. This confirms Kreitner and Kinicki's (2001) assertion that in-group thinking, an organisational life guarantees conflict. In the case of university libraries, the categorization of staff into the various sections and units of the library makes the staff to develop the spirit of "we-feeling" which binds group members together. Too much cohesiveness can breed group thinking because a desire to get along pushes aside critical thinking.

Finally, 42.2 percent of the respondents agreed that intragroup conflict (conflict among members of a single work group) occurs frequently among staff of the library. About 42.2 percent of the respondents indicated that intragroup conflict seldom occurs among staff, while 21.8 percent indicated that it never occurred.

4.4 EFFECTS OF CONFLICT ON PERFORMANCE OF LIBRARY STAFF

Table 4.4 presents the respondents' views on both negative and positive effects of conflict on the performance of the library staff.

4.4.1 Negative Effects of Conflict on Staff Performance

Negative Effects of Conflict	SA	A	SD	D	U	Total
	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Reduces the productivity and performance of staff	31 (48.4)	26 (40.6)	2 (3.1)	2 (3.1)	3 (4.7)	64 (100)
Hampers the decision making process among staff	21 (32.8)	33 (51.6)	3 (4.7)	3 (4.7)	4 (6.3)	64 (100)
Causes fragmentation (division) among staff	36 (56.3)	20 (31.3)	1 (1.6)	4 (6.3)	3 (4.7)	64 (100)
Some people (workers) may feel defeated and demeaned	19 (29.7)	36 (56.3)	1 (1.6)	1 (1.6)	7 (10.9)	64 (100)
Development of a climate of mistrust, suspicion and tension (stress) among staff	25 (39.1)	30 (46.9)	2 (3.1)	2 (3.1)	5 (7.8)	64 (100)
Development of resistance rather than teamwork	29 (45.3)	26 (40.6)	1 (1.6)	3 (6.3)	4 (6.3)	64 (100)

Table 4.4.1 Negative Effects of Conflict on Staff Performance

Table 4.4.1 provides the respondents views on the negative impact of conflict on staff performance in the library investigated. Out of the total respondents of 64, 31 representing 48.4 percent strongly agreed that conflict among staff could reduce the productivity and performance of staff. About 26 (40.6) respondents also agreed to this statement, a total of 6.2 percent of the respondents disagreed and 4.7 percent were

undecided on the issue. Thus, a total of 89 percent of the respondents agreed that conflict in libraries reduces performance and productivity of university libraries. This confirms Nelson's (1995) assertion that not only can conflict in the workplace cause great stress and unhappiness but it can also lower output and in extreme cases, bring strikes. This means that as managers of libraries devote their precious time to dealing with conflict situations, productivity and quality of work will also suffer. This is because staffs rather divert their time towards winning the conflict rather than towards achieving the libraries' goals.

Another negative effect of conflict in libraries is that it frustrates or hampers the decision making processes of staff. The result reveals that 32.8 percent strongly agreed and about 51.6 percent also agreed that conflict can disturb the decision making process of libraries. About 3(4.7%) strongly disagreed and 3(24.7%) disagreed while 4(6.3%) of the respondents remained undecided. About 84.4 percent agreed that conflict hampers decision making processes as confirmed by Kirchoff and Adams's (1982) assertion that conflict in an organisation impedes the smooth running of organisations since the decision making processes may be obstructed.

On the issue of conflict causing fragmentation or divisions among staff, 56.3 percent of the respondents strongly agreed, 20 respondents representing 31.3 percent agreed, 1.6 percent strongly disagreed, and 1.6 percent agreed while 3 (4.7%) were undecided on the statement. Schmidt records that one of the negative effects of conflict is that it causes an increase in the distance between people. Kirchoff and Adams (1982) also support this by indicating that the destructive effect of conflict is the formation of competing affiliations

within the organisation. The overall result of such negative effects is to reduce employees' commitment to organisational goals and organisational efficiency.

With respect to the views of staff on the assertion that conflict makes some people feel defeated and demeaned, a total of 55 respondents representing 86 percent agreed to this, 2 respondents representing 3.2 percent disagreed and 7 (10.9%) were undecided on the issue. Schmidt (1985) buttresses this by indicating that people who lost in conflict situations feel defeated and demeaned by their colleagues.

Conflict leads to the development of climate of mistrust, suspicion and tension or stress among staff. About 55 (86%) agreed, 4 (6.2%) disagreed and 5 (7.8%) were undecided. The data revealed that majority of the respondents accepted that conflict creates a platform for the development of a climate of mistrust and suspicion among workers, which is in agreement with Schmidt's (1985) statement that conflicts in organisations bring about the development of a climate of mistrust and suspicion among workers. Thus, since university libraries are divided into sections and units, there is the need for rapid exchange of information from one department to the other. In conflict situations, the pathway for messages among staff may be littered with obstacles and the true sharing of information may be hindered. Some workers in the library may always be suspicious of what management says and may therefore look at every word of management in different ways.

Finally, with the issue on conflict leading to the development of resistance rather than teamwork among staff, 29 (45.3%) strongly agreed, 26 (40.6%) agreed, 1 (1.6%) strongly disagreed, 4 (6.3%) disagreed and 4 (6.3%) were undecided on this statement. Schmidt

(1985) buttresses it by saying that since in conflict, individuals and groups concentrate on their own interests, development of resistance rather than teamwork becomes the result.

4.4.2 Positive Effects of Conflict on Staff Performance

The table 4.4.2 below presents a summary of the respondents' views on the positive effects of conflict on the library under investigation.

Positive Effects of Conflict	SA	A	SD	D	U	Total
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
Increases staff's cohesion and performance	29 (45.3)	26 (40.6)	1 (1.6)	4 (6.3)	4 (6.3)	64 (100)
Helps to diffuse more serious conflicts among staff	12 (18.8)	30 (46.9)	3 (4.7)	8 (12.5)	11 (17.2)	64 (100)
Improves quality decisions among staff	21 (32.8)	28 (43.8)	4 (6.3)	8 (12.5)	3 (4.7)	64 (100)
Enables staff of the library to achieve their goals and objectives	15 (23.4)	19 (29.7)	10 (15.6)	14 (21.9)	6 (9.4)	64 (100)
Enables long standing problems to be brought to the surface and resolved	13 (20.3)	36 (56.3)	3 (4.7)	3 (4.7)	9 (14.1)	64 (100)
Stimulates a search for new ideas and approaches among staff	18 (28.1)	30 (46.9)	3 (4.7)	3 (4.7)	10 (15.6)	64 (100)

Table 4.4.2 Positive Effects of Conflict on Staff Performance

From the table 4.4.2 above, out of the 64 respondents, 28.1 percent strongly agreed that conflict that occurs serves as a means of increasing staff's cohesion and performance of staff. About 28.1 percent of the respondents agreed and 14.1 percent strongly disagreed while 21.9 percent disagreed. However, 7.8 percent were undecided on the issue. It has been realised that majority (56.2) percent of the total respondents agreed to the assertion that conflict increases staff's cohesion and performance. This is in support of Filley's (1975) view that when two or more parties are in conflict, the performance and cohesion of each party is likely to improve. This is because in a conflict situation, an opponent's position is evaluated negatively, and group allegiance is strongly reinforced, leading to increased group effort and cohesion. Eccles and Gabbaro (1995) buttressed this by indicating that the impact of conflict is that, groups become more cohesive and operate more effectively as teams, which boost standards of performance as a result of commitment and concern to make better decisions.

Another positive effect of conflict in the library is that it helps to diffuse more serious conflicts among staff because it facilitates the clarification of individual views. The views of the respondents revealed that 12 (18.8%) strongly agreed, 30 (46.9%) agreed, 4.7 percent strongly disagreed, 8 (12.5%) disagreed and 11 (17.2) were undecided on this issue. The analysis indicates that about 65.7 percent were in agreement to Filley's (1975) assertion that "conflict situations help to diffuse more serious conflicts in an organisation. "And to diffuse conflict, games can be used to moderate the attitudes of people by providing a competitive situation which can liberate tension in the conflicting parties, as well as having some entertainment value".

Respondents also observed that conflict helps in improving quality decisions among staff in the library. About 32.8 percent of the respondents strongly accepted this assertion. About 43.8 percent agreed and 6.3 percent strongly disagreed, 12.5 percent disagreed while 4.7 percent were undecided. The finding indicates that the majority of the respondents agreed that conflict brings about innovations which improve quality decision making in resolving conflict. Owens (2001) confirms this by noting that conflict can lead to better decisions being made as attention is more clearly focused on the issue. Filley (1975) buttressed it that in an organisation where members participate in decision making, disputes are usually minor and not acute as the closeness of members' moderate aggressive and assertive behaviour.

Conflict is also noted to enable staff achieve their goals and objectives. With reference to the assertion, 23.4 percent strongly agreed, 29.7 percent agreed whereas 9.4 percent remained undecided. About 15.6 percent strongly disagreed while 21.9 percent disagreed. The result indicates that, greater numbers of respondents were in an agreement with the assertion; conflict encourages innovativeness and improves quality decisions which enable staff to achieve their goals and objectives. Filley (1975) buttresses these by saying through conflict people in an organisation are able to achieve their objectives.

With respect to conflict enabling long standing problems among staff to be brought to the surface and resolved, out of the total respondents of 64, about 76.6 percent agreed, 9.4 percent disagreed and 9 (14.1%) were undecided on the issue. The analysis revealed that majority of the respondents agreed to the statement. Schmidt (1985) also confirms that conflict can produce better ideas, force people to search for new approaches; create the opportunity for long-standing problems to be brought to the surface and resolved; bring

about the clarification of individual views; stimulation of interest and creativity; and also create a chance for people to test their capacities.

Finally, conflict is responsible for producing better ideas, and forcing staff to search for new approaches of handling issues in the library. With respect to this, 18 (28.1%) strongly agreed, 30 (46.9%) agreed, 6 (9.4%) disagreed and 10 (15.6%) could not decide on this statement. However, majority making 75.0 percent of the respondents agreed to this assertion thereby confirming Schmidt's (1985) statement that conflict can produce better ideas, force people to search for new approaches; bring about the clarification of individual views and stimulation of interest and creativity in an organisation.

4.5 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED BY STAFF

Numerous techniques to deal with conflict are suggested in current management literature. Widely discussed conflict management approaches include competition, avoidance, compromise, accommodation and collaboration as indicated by Thomas and Schmidt (1976). All these approaches focus on three interactive methods of conflict management grouped according to lose-lose, win-lose and win-win.

These techniques were presented in the instrument to remind the respondents of the different conflict management approaches available. The respondents were also encouraged to identify which approach they often use. The table 4.5.1 presents the summary of the respondents' views on their level of use of the conflict management techniques presented.

Conflict Management Technique	Very Often Freq. (%)	Often Freq. (%)	Sometimes Freq. (%)	Rarely Freq. (%)	Never Freq. (%)
Avoiding	10 (15.6)	9 (14.1)	22 (34.4.)	11 (17.2)	12 (18.8)
Accommodation	9 (14.1)	12 (18.8)	30 (46.9)	6 (9.4)	7 (10.9)
Collaboration	13 (20.3)	18 (28.1)	24 (37.5)	8 (12.5)	1 (1.6)
Compromise	11 (17.2)	17 (26.6)	26 (40.6)	8 (12.5)	2 (3.1)
Competing	10 (15.6)	16 (25.0)	29 (45.3)	4 (6.3)	5 (7.8)

Table 4.5.1 Conflict Management Techniques

Table 4.5.1 reports on the conflict management techniques used by the staff of University of Cape Coast library. With regard to avoidance which occurs when staff withdraw from discussing problems or keep their opinions to themselves rather than openly disagreeing with colleagues, 10 (15.6%) of the respondents agreed they very often use it. About 9 (14.1%) often use it while 22 (34.4%) sometimes use avoidance and 17.2 percent rarely use this technique. However, about 18.8 percent never accepted avoidance as a means of conflict management technique. This finding indicates that majority 64.1 percent of the respondents accepted avoidance as a conflict management technique. This confirms Owens' (2001) assertion that avoidance is useful when it is not likely the conflict can be resolved, and also when the issues are not so important to the parties so as to require the time and other resources to settle them. This therefore justifies why the staff of the library adopt the avoidance approach to manage conflict amongst them.

On the issue of accommodation which is a situation where staff allow their colleagues to have their own way rather than jeopardizing their relationship. Thus, a staff may neglect his or her own concern to satisfy the concerns of the other party, 9 (14.1%) of the respondents stated they use it very often. About 12 (18.8%) often use this technique.

However, 30 (46.9%) sometimes use this technique and 9.4 percent rarely use accommodation while 7 (10.9%) of the respondents never use accommodation as a technique for managing conflict. This result indicates that more than half of the respondents use accommodation regularly. Using accommodation as a conflict management technique is a strategy that aims at maintaining a good working relationship among workers. This is in line with what Owens (2001) points out that 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 to the point that some sacrifice their own interests.

With respect to the views of the respondents on collaboration also known as cooperative approach which tries to exploit the possible mutual gains of the parties in the dispute and views the conflict as a creative force pushing them to achieve an improved state of affairs to which both sides are fully committed, 13 (20.3%) very often use it. About 28.1 percent of the respondents often use this technique and 37.5 percent sometimes use it, while 12.5 percent rarely use it and 1.6 percent never use this technique. This indicates that majority of the respondents agreed that collaboration is one of the best conflict management techniques. Fisher (1983) sees collaboration to help bring parties in conflict work together to reach a solution that satisfies the concerns of each other. Two kinds of behaviour are the keys to collaboration. These are expressing one's own position as

clearly as possible and listening fully to the other side's point of view. Collaboration is effective when the conflict stems from communication, where open confrontation around the problems often reveals faulty perceptions on both sides.

Out of the respondents who expressed their views on the issue of compromise which tries to gain partial satisfaction for all parties in the conflict thus, even if you do not agree with your colleague on an issue, you go along with suggestions from him or her 17.2 percent stated they use it very often; 17 (26.6%) also use it often whereas 40.6 percent sometimes use it. The totals of 12.5 percent rarely use this technique while 3.1 percent stated they never use it. From this analysis, it has been noticed that the majority of the respondents making 84.4 percent used compromise as a technique to manage conflict. Perhaps this management technique is often used because it enables both parties in a conflict to satisfy some of their concerns. This confirms Schnake's statement that the premise behind compromise is that partial victory is better than winning nothing at all. This technique prevents conflict from escalating to more perilous stage.

Finally, on the issue of competition which deals with achieving one's own ends at the expense of someone else, the results of the study indicate that out of the total respondents of 64 only 10 (15.6%) indicated that they very often use competition. About 25.0 percent often use it, 45.3 percent sometimes use it, 6.3 percent rarely use it and about 7.8 percent indicated they never use it. About 85.9 percent of the total respondents accepted they used competition as a conflict management technique. From this analysis, it has been identified that respondents see competition as a tool for managing conflict and thus leading to arguments among staff, agitation for promotion, recognition, and salary

increase, power struggle, and features of arguing and debating, using rank or influence which forms the basis for this study.

4.5.2 Possibility of managing Conflict

This part of the analysis presents a summary of the views of respondents on whether conflict can be managed successfully in the library. The views are presented in table 4.5.2 below.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	62	96.9
No	2	3.1
Total	64	100.0

Table 4.5.2 Possibility of managing Conflict

The analysis reveals that about 96.9 percent accepted that conflict could be managed among staff of the library while 3.1 percent rejected the possibility of the assertion. In support of the respondents' views, Pierres and Peppers (1976) buttressed that there is the need to manage conflict in order to obtain profitable returns from it.

4.6 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

The table below summarises the views of respondents on the effectiveness of use of the various conflict management approaches. Respondents' views are presented as below.

Effectiveness	Always Freq. (%)	Never Freq. (%)	Sometimes Freq. (%)	Total Freq. (%)
Staff adjust to good behaviour after conflict settlement	22 (34.4)	5 (7.8)	37 (57.8)	64 (100)
Staff tend to perform their duties diligently so as to avoid conflict	28 (43.8)	3 (4.7)	33 (51.6)	64 (100)
Conflicts arise again among staff after previous cases of conflict	16 (25.0)	10 (15.6)	38 (59.4)	64 (100)

Table 4.6.1 Effectiveness of the use of the conflict management techniques

As shown in Table 4.6, the results reveal that 22 percent of the respondents agreed that they always adjust to good behaviour after conflict settlement. About 7.8 percent indicated that staff never adjusts to good behaviour after conflict settlement. However, the majority (57.8%) of the respondents asserted that they sometimes adjust to good behaviour after conflict settlement. This confirms that conflict management is beneficial to both the individual and the library as a whole.

On the assertion that staff tends to perform their duties diligently so as to avoid any form of disagreement after conflict settlement, 43.8 percent of the respondents agreed that they perform their duties diligently after conflict settlement. About 4.7 percent disagreed with this assertion and 51.6 percent indicated that they sometimes perform their duties diligently so as to avoid any form of disagreement with their colleagues after previous settlement.

In reaction to the issue of whether conflict arises again among library staff after previous settlement, 25.0 percent agreed that conflict always occurs, 15.6 percent also rejected this notion while majority (59.4%) of the respondents agreed that conflict sometimes occurs again.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents summary of the study, conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

5.1 Summary

This study set out to investigate how conflicts are managed among the staff of University of Cape Coast library. To achieve this objective, the study was carried out by investigating the common sources of conflict, types of conflict, and the positive and negative effects of conflict on the performance of staff and the University library as a whole. The descriptive survey design approach was used. The main respondents were drawn from various sections and units of the library including the satellite libraries in the Departments, Faculties and the Halls of residence of the University.

A sample size of 64 out of 225 of the population was selected for this study. The sample size therefore constitutes twenty eight point four percent (28.4%) of the target population. The sample was made up of the ten senior members, 14 senior staff and 40 junior staff. These categories of staff from the various sections of the library, including the Departmental and Faculty libraries were randomly and purposively selected to participate in the study. In order to ensure representativeness of the target population, the sample size was determined proportionally. Questionnaire was used to collect data from 64 respondents comprising 38 male and 26 female staff of the university library. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 20.0.

The research instrument was pre-tested at the Cape Coast Polytechnic Library which has similar characteristics of the University of Cape Coast Library in order to discover at first-hand information on the ground and also facilitate the appropriate revision of the instrument.

The study revealed that: power struggle, communication barrier, poor rewarding system, poor human relation between superiors and subordinates, spreading of false information about colleague staff (grapevine) and inequitable treatment of staff are the major sources of conflict and that conflict have both negative and positive effects on the performance of the staff and the library as a whole.

5.2 Main Findings

The main findings of the study are summarised as follows:

1. The staff perceived the various sources of conflict in university libraries as a result of:
 - Communication barrier.
 - Spreading of false information about a colleague staff (Grapevine).
 - Dependence or competition over scarce resources
 - Inequitable treatment of staff
 - Favouritism
 - Poor human relationship between superiors and subordinates
 - Over occupation of office space and parking space for cars.
 - Poor rewarding system for staff
 - Use of disrespectful or derogatory remarks by staff to their colleagues.
 - Going against the code of ethics lay down in the library.

- High interdependence among people at work
 - Power struggle
2. The types of conflict prevalent among University of Cape Coast library staff were: interpersonal conflict, intrapersonal conflict, intergroup conflict and intra-group conflicts.
 3. Conflicts among library staff could not be eliminated completely but could be managed. The conflict management techniques employed by the staff were: avoidance, accommodation, collaboration, compromising, and competing.
 4. The positive effects of conflicts were: increase in staff cohesion and performance, helps diffuse more serious conflicts, improves quality decisions in resolving conflict among staff, enables staff to achieve their goals or objectives, and also helps long standing problems among staff to be brought to the surface and resolved.
 5. The negative effects of conflicts among staff included reduction in productivity and performance of staff, hampering of decision making process of staff, causes fragmentation or division, some people may feel defeated and demeaned, leads to a climate of mistrust, suspicion and tension (stress) among staff, and development of resistance rather than teamwork among staff.
 6. Effective conflict management helped library staff to: adjust to good behaviour, perform their duties diligently, and also enhances the chances of solving the conflicts in a way satisfactory to all parties concerned.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the results and discussion as well as the main findings of the study, the following conclusions could be drawn:

Despite the apparent silence of librarians on the issue of conflict, conflict is alive and well in libraries, as in other complex organisations. University libraries require peace and agreement among their staff or workers in order to provide efficient service to patrons and also guarantee the survival of libraries and information centres in Ghana. It is imperative therefore that both staff and managers of libraries be equipped with skills and knowledge on how to manage conflict competently so as to always strive to deal with the real or imagined conflict situations that are likely to threaten peace and harmony in libraries.

Conflict is therefore viewed as an active disagreement between people with differing principles, procedures, practices and opinions. Thus, conflict is a process in which an effort is purposely made by one person to offset the efforts of another by some form of blocking activity that will result in frustrating him or her in attaining his or her interest. The study identified that an organisation such as a University library is a fertile ground for conflict since it has a great number of people with diverse views and aspirations working together and communicating with one another in order to achieve the organisational goals.

The major sources of conflict identified among staff of the library was as a result of power struggle, communication failure, poor rewarding system, and poor superior-subordinate relationship thereby making staff to agitate for recognition. Though conflict is often viewed as negative, it is capable of improving quality decisions, as long standing problems among staff are brought to the surface and resolved, thereby increasing innovativeness and productivity, which could improve staff performance. Conflicts when

properly managed among staff could lead to the attainment and achievement of staff goals and objectives, and build the spirit of teamwork and co-operation.

The staff, as much as possible, avoided open confrontation, and therefore, relied mostly on the use of accommodation, collaboration and compromising management techniques to ensure peace in the performance of their duties.

5.4 Recommendations

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

- a. On the issue of personality differences among staff, library staff should constantly remind themselves that because of individual differences in cultural orientation, length of service, educational background, gender characteristics and other such considerations, there are bound to be disagreements in the performance of their duties from time to time. However, by discussing issues related to conflict management, managers and staff of libraries can establish an expected protocol to be followed by them when in conflict.
- b. On the issue of communication barrier as the second major cause of conflict among staff of the library, it is recommended that proper communication procedures should be put in place by management to resolve conflict among staff. For instance, when any disagreement arises among workers, it should be reported to the management and then management should get statements from the parties involved, brainstorm the issue and make recommendations on how to manage the conflict. This may help engender a better understanding of one's own behaviour, the other person's point of view, and efficient problem-solving among staff.

- c. Management of the library should develop diverse but appropriate strategies to resolve and manage conflicts as they arise before escalating to unmanageable level. When handling conflict, threat, demand and ultimatum should also be avoided because it is capable of obstructing true communication and resolution. In order to ensure free, fast, and fair conflict management among staff, management should establish conflict handling section within the library to promptly resolve conflicts among staff. When conflict emerges, staff should endeavour to handle it immediately, rather than avoiding it.
- d. Seminars and workshops on conflict management should be organised from time to time by the management of the library. This would enable the staff learn about conflicts and how they could be effectively managed for staff to derive positive outcomes of conflicts. There should also be a programme line out to help staff improve on the already existing conflict management skills that they possess.
- e. On the issue of poor human relationship between superiors and subordinates, it is recommended that management should pay close attention to such features as the nature of authority or organisational structure; work organisation; patterns of communication and sharing of information; democratic functioning of the library; unnecessary adherence to bureaucratic procedures and official rules and regulations. Management also must open their lines of communication with all categories of staff. This will prevent bootlicking, gossips and other conflict situations in the library.
- f. Management of the library should clearly spell out rules and regulations regarding promotions and other rewarding systems of the library. Every line of duty and

- responsibility in the library must clearly be stated by management and understood by staff.
- g. On the issue of power struggle which was discovered to be the major cause of conflict among library staff, the Library Manager should make sure that aggressive competition for vacant positions in the library is discouraged. In order to minimize competition in the workplace, management of libraries should also create an environment where all staff can freely compete and realize their ambitions.
 - h. Appropriate management of conflicts would help staff spend less energy and time on conflicts and be focused on their work which is the prime motive of being in the University.
 - i. Management of the University library should ensure equitable distribution of scarce resources to the various sections or departments of the library. This would encourage optimal utilisation of the limited resources for the benefit of staff and the library as a whole.
 - j. Ethnicity should not be encouraged in the library on the simple premise that university libraries are not family or ethnic establishments. It is therefore important that in the selection and recruitment of staff for the library, management should base their decisions on the qualifications and competence of the people rather than places of origin. Programmes and activities of the staff that promote ethnic integration should be encouraged in the library.

5.5 Recommendations for Further research

Suggested areas for further research are as follows:

1. Assessing the impact of library conflicts on Users of Academic libraries in Ghana.

2. Conflict management practices among the staff of University libraries in Ghana.
3. The anatomy and management of staff conflicts in Public universities in Ghana.
4. Effect of Conflict on the performance of the staff of Public universities in Ghana.

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APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE ON MANAGEMENT OF STAFF CONFLICTS IN
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST LIBRARY

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire has been designed to solicit your opinion on “Management of staff conflicts in the University of Cape Coast library. It is part of the requirements of an M.A. Information Studies Degree and solely for academic purposes and your responses will strictly remain confidential.

I shall therefore be grateful if you can spare some of your precious time to respond to questions that follows by either ticking or writing your answer.

Thank you in advance for agreeing to participate in the study.

Please Note: If you have any questions or queries concerning the instrument, please contact me by Mobile No. 0243-324528. George Banji, Main Library, University of Cape Coast.

To be completed by respondent

Date and time of filling the questionnaire:

Day of the week (e.g. Monday):

Date (DD/MM/YYYY):

Time Started: Time Ended:

Section A: Background information of respondent

Please indicate your response by placing a tick (✓) or writing the appropriate response in the space provided.

1. Category of staff: Junior staff [] Senior Staff [] Senior Member []
2. Department/Section of work. (Please indicate).....
3. Gender: Male [] Female []
4. Age range: 21 – 30yrs []
31 - 40yrs []
41 - 50yrs []
51 – 60+ yrs []
5. Marital Status (check only one)
[] Single
[] Married
[] Separated
[] Divorced
[] Widowed
6. How long have you worked in this Library?
1 - 5 yrs [] 6 – 10 yrs [] 11 – 15 [] 16 – 20 [] 21yrs and
above []
7. Highest academic qualification:
SSSCE [] O' Level [] A' Level [] Diploma []
B.A/ B.ED [] M.A/ M.ED/ M.Sc [] M.Phil [] Ph.D []

Section B: Common causes of conflict among UCC library staff

Please indicate your preferred response by ticking (√):

Statements	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Undecided 0	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
8. Communication barrier; (insufficient exchange of information)					
9. Spreading of false information about a colleague / staff					
10. Dependence on scarce resources (resources such as money, equipment and facilities)					
11. Inequitable treatment of staff					
12. Favouritism (superiors concentrate on people from their hometown.					
13. Poor human relation between superiors and subordinates					

14. Over occupation of space (i.e. office space, chair, parking space etc.					
15. Poor rewarding system (allowances, salary etc.)					
16. Use of disrespectful or derogatory remarks by colleague staff					
17. Going against code of ethics lay down in the library.					
18. High interdependence among people at work (one party depends on another group or individual to work)					
19. Power struggle					

(b) Please list or state other causes of conflicts that have not been mentioned.

(a).....

(b).....

(c).....

(d).....

Section C: Types of conflict

Kindly indicate the type of conflict that occurs in the University of Cape Coast library by ticking (√) the appropriate response.

Statements	Very Often 4	Often 3	Seldom 2	Never 1
20. Interpersonal conflict (which occurs between individuals)				
21. Intrapersonal conflict (It occurs within the individual)				
22. Intergroup conflict (Conflict among workgroups or teams)				
23. Intra-group conflict (It takes place among members of a single work group)				

24. Kindly list or state other types of conflict that have not been mentioned in the table above.

- (a).....
- (b).....
- (c).....

Section D: Effects of conflicts on staff performance in the library

Negative Effects

Please indicate by ticking (√) the appropriate response on what you consider to be the negative effects of conflict on the performance of the library staff.

Statement	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Undecided 0	Strongly Disagree 2	Disagree 1
25. Reduces productivity or performance of staff					
26. Hampers the decision making process among staff					
27. Causes fragmentation (division) among staff					
28. Some people may feel defeated and demeaned					
29. Development of a climate of mistrust, suspicion and tension (stress) among staff					
30. Development of resistance rather than teamwork					

31. Kindly list other negative effect of conflicts on the performance of the library staff.

.....

Positive Effects

Please indicate by ticking (√) the appropriate response on what you consider to be the positive effects of conflict.

Statement	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Undecided 0	Strongly Disagree 2	Disagree 1
32. Helps to increases group cohesion and performance					
33. Helps to diffuse more serious conflicts within the library					
34. Improves quality decisions in resolving conflict					
35. Enables the staff to achieve their goals and objectives					
36. It enables long- standing problems among staff to be brought to the surface and resolve					
37. Responsible for better ideas, and forces staff to search for new approaches of handling issues					

38. Kindly state other positive effect of conflicts on the performance of library staff.....

Section E: Conflict management techniques

Please indicate by ticking the appropriate column on the extent to which the library staff employ conflict management techniques listed below.

Statements	Very often 5	Often 4	Sometimes 3	Rarely 2	Never 1
39. Co-operative approach (The staff try to bring the parties involved for a compromise.(Win-Win situation)					
40. I always try to win my position in any discussion					
41. I allow colleague staff to have their way rather than jeopardize our relationship					
42. I accommodate the views of people who have different points of view from my own					
43. I strongly defend my side of the issue, if someone disagree with me					
44. I always hold on to my views/position rather than give in					

45. Even if I do not agree with my 5 colleague, I go along with 0 suggestions from them					
46. I believe in give- and- take to reach a consensus on all issues					
47. I keep my opinions to myself rather a than openly disagree with n colleague staff					
48. I confront whoever wants to advise c me on an issue					
49. I sacrifice my gains in order to n satisfy the concerns of the other f person					

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50. Can conflict be managed successfully in UCC library?

Yes [] No []

51. Kindly state in order of effectiveness two other ways conflicts can be managed in the UCC library.

(a).....

(b).....

Section F: Effectiveness of the conflict management techniques

Kindly read the statements carefully and indicate your response by ticking the appropriate conflict management techniques

Statement	Always 3	Never 2	Sometimes 1
52. Staff of the library adjust to good behaviour after conflict settlement			
53. Staff of the library tend to perform their duties diligently so as to avoid conflict among them			
54. Conflicts arise among the staff of the library after previous cases of conflicts			

55. Kindly list or state other conflict management techniques employed by the staff of UCC library which have not been stated.

- (a).....
- (b).....
- (c).....
- (d).....

Thank you again for your time and ideas