

# Assessment of Staff Conflicts in University of Cape Coast Library, 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. This study assesses the common causes of conflict and the types that can be identified among management and staff of the University of Cape Coast library. 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 main results of the study were that conflict existed among staff and power struggle, communication barrier, and poor rewarding system are the major causes of conflict in this library. The types of conflict identified were interpersonal and intersectional and the management techniques mostly employed were accommodation, compromising and collaboration.

**Keywords:** Staff conflict; Conflict management; Library, Communication barrier.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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. 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. And this internal politics in some university libraries in Ghana is so rife that this prevents or delays the implementation of some major policy decisions.

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.

## 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 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 due to the inability of people to appreciate the contributions of information to economic and socio-cultural development of Ghana. In view of the inadequate recognition and low remuneration, Junior and Senior Library Assistants of university of cape coast were forced to take private jobs such as taxi driving, photocopier operation, part time teaching, petty trading and the like so as to meet the compelling and urgent economic demands and thereby compromising their official duties. This has therefore led to the introduction of the biometric attendance machine by management so as to monitor

absenteeism and coming to work late. Another cause of conflict among staff is the preferential treatment among managers of the library. With this, one's ethnic group becomes enough qualification for certain favors from some library managers. The recent conflict 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 university's library for some weeks as a means of demonstrating to back their demand. One may wonder whether the university as well as the library has done enough in the area of managing staff conflicts. This paper therefore examined the major causes and types of conflicts in University of Cape Coast library. The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. What are the causes of conflicts among the staff of University of Cape Coast library?
2. What types of conflicts can be identified among management and staff of the University of Cape Coast library?

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Causes of Conflicts in University of Cape Coast Library:

As stated by Schmidt and Kochan (1972), different definitions and conceptions of conflict exist. For the same reason, causes of conflict 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.

#### 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.

#### 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

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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. 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.

**Role ambiguity:**

Role ambiguity among staff of university of cape coast library 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.

**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 of cape coast library, 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.

**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. The close links which exist among the groups provide fertile grounds for potential conflict.

#### 4. TYPES OF CONFLICT IN UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST LIBRARY

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.

##### **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 unique individual. Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) see personality conflict as interpersonal opposition based on personal dislike and or disagreement. 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.

##### **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.

##### **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.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

This section describes the various activities and strategies that were employed to achieve the objectives of this study. The methodology covers description of the research design or strategy, population, sample size and sampling techniques, research instrument, data collection procedures and analysis.

### Research Design:

The descriptive research design is used for this study. 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 helps the researcher identify events and also describe the frequency of occurrence.

### Sample size:

A sample size of 64 out of the population of 225 was selected for this study. This sample size constitutes twenty eight point four percent (28.4%) of the target population. The sample was made up of 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. According to Fraenkel and Warren (2000), for any scientific study, if the population is large, five percent of the population could be selected as the sample.

### 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. 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. 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.

**Instrumentation:**

The instrument that was used to elicit relevant data for this study was a set of questionnaire. 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.

**Data analysis:**

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 analysed 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.

**6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Causes of Conflict among Staff of University of Cape Coast Library:**

Table 1 presents the summary of the respondents’ views on the causes of conflicts among staff of University of Cape Coast library.

**Table 1: Causes of Conflict among library staff**

| 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)         |
| Favoritism   | 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)         |
| Power Struggle   | 42(65.6)     | 21(32.8)    | 1(1.6)      | 0(0)         | 0(0)        | 64(100)         |

Source: Field Data, 2014

Table 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. 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.

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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. 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 also leads to conflict situation among staff of university of cape coast library. 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 (1991) buttress this by contending that there is jurisdictional ambiguity when geographical boundaries are unclear hence the likelihood of conflict.

With poor rewarding systems, 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 and Von 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 of cape coast library. 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 Von 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.

**Types of Conflict among Staff of UCC Library:**

Table 2 provides respondents' views on the various types of conflict and their occurrence among the staff of University of Cape Coast library.

**Table 2: Respondents' view on the types of conflict and their occurrence**

| Types of conflict | Occurrence           |                 |                  |                 | Total Freq. (%) |
|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                   | Very often Freq. (%) | Often Freq. (%) | Seldom Freq. (%) | Never 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)        |

Source: Field Data, 2014



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Table 2 reveals that 67.2 per cent 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 3 (4.7%) 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 28 (43.8%) indicated that intrapersonal conflict seldomly occurs among staff. However, 6 (9.4%) 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, 27 (42.2%) of the respondents agreed that intragroup conflict (conflict among members of a single work group) occurs frequently among staff of the library. About 27 (42.2%) of the respondents indicated that intragroup conflict seldom occurs among staff, while 21.8 percent indicated that it never occurred.

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