INTERPERSONAL CONFLICTS IN GHANAIAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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Abstract

The paper reports on the results of a survey that identified the sources responsible for interpersonal conflicts in university libraries in Ghana. The case studies of three university libraries in Ghana are presented. A sample size of 150 was chosen from a population of 321 staff members to conduct the survey. Results indicate that personality differences, superior/subordinate relationships, power struggle and competition are responsible for interpersonal conflicts in Ghanaian university libraries. It then makes recommendations on how to manage the various types of interpersonal conflicts within university libraries.

Introduction

Organizations including university libraries require people to work together and communicate with one another. Ideally, these interpersonal relationships should be productive, cooperative and satisfying. However, managers find that they are always not the case. Almost every working relationship will produce some degree of conflict with time.

Indeed anyone working in a university library may have probably experienced conflict perhaps with colleague workers and supervisors. Veaner (1990) observes that, "significant levels of conflict exist in academic libraries which in some cases are severe enough to

demoralize personnel and impoverish service." According to Bryson (1990) conflict has a place within libraries and information centres. On the job, "conflict is a stubborn fact of organizational life" (Kolb & Putnam, 1992). Conflict induces mainly negative and destructive outcomes such as anger, resentment, confusion, and lack of cooperation among others. It disrupts the smooth functioning of organizational processes and creates chaos and disorder. In effect, conflict can disturb the processes of working to achieve the library's corporate goals and objectives. However, in some cases, conflict may not only be evil; it may also determine the library's performance. In addition, conflict in the form of healthy competition is essential for an organization to perform effectively.

One of the problems that has existed in university libraries in Ghana has been that of perceived interpersonal conflict. These libraries have been characterized by petty squabbles, bickering, acrimony, rancour and idle talk among others. Badu (2000) notes that university libraries in Ghana have been plagued with petty squabbles, interpersonal and intersectional conflicts as well as coalitions or factions whose activities are counter-productive to their goals and objectives. He further argues that these are disincentives to the implementation of some major policy decisions.

This study became necessary as a follow-up to an earlier submission (Badu, 2000) and the major instances of conflict in UnivLib C. These conflicts were either avoided or not being effectively managed thereby resulting in difficulty in the implementation of certain major policy decisions. The end product of these conflicts has been an inefficient service delivery and demoralized personnel. The principal objective of this paper therefore, is to assess the factors that engender interpersonal conflict in university libraries in Ghana and to recommend how to manage them effectively.

Literature Review

Conflict Defined

Coser (1965) defines conflict as a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. Such may take place between individuals and collectives. Crawley (1992) defines conflict as manifestation of differences working against one another. Robbins (1997) also defines conflict as "a process in which an effort is purposely made by one person to offset the efforts of another person by some form of blocking activity that will result in frustrating him/her in attaining his/her interests." For the purpose of this study, library conflict is defined as an active disagreement between people with differing principles, procedural practices and opinions.

Theoretical Rationale

Kelly (1970) identified three different managerial attitudes towards conflict, namely the classical/traditional, behavioural and interactionist philosophies. According to him, the classical approach viewed conflict as an organizational abnormality and a potentially dangerous process. The behavioural philosophy argues that conflict is a natural and inevitable outcome in any organization and that it needs not be evil, but rather has the potential to be a positive force in determining an organization's performance. The interactionist perspective of conflict proposes not only that conflict can be a positive force in an organization but also explicitly argues that conflict is absolutely necessary for an organization to perform effectively.

Interpersonal Conflict

Understanding interpersonal conflict can help librarians manage this level of conflict in their libraries effectively. Interpersonal conflict involves two or more individuals rather than one individual. Interpersonal conflicts usually result in such cases where each person is jockeying to possess a scarce resource, which may be a material thing or immaterial state such as status, prestige, fame, power or money (Rao et al, 1987). They observe that the most commonly cited reasons for interpersonal conflict are personality differences, perceptions, clashes of values and interests, power and status differences as well as scarce resources.

Kinard (1988) views interpersonal conflict as involving confrontation or rivalries in the work environment between individuals or between individuals and groups. On reasons for interpersonal conflicts, he observes that conflicts between individuals most often occur when two people compete for the same job or for limited resources. Conflict also arises between employees and their superiors. Individual versus group conflict arises whenever a group member resists conforming to group norms in an effort to promote his or her own selfish interests.

When two or more individuals have differing values, goals or needs, the result is interpersonal conflict (Wright & Noe, 1995). In their view, this level of conflict is likely in situations where individuals are competing for resources such as promotions or work assignments. It is also likely within groups that are heterogeneous-not only in the sense of representing the diversity of the workforce but also when representing different functions as in the case of a cross-functional team.

Studies on Conflict in Academic Libraries

Writing on conflict in academic libraries, Kathman and Kathman (1990) describe conflict as appearing in organizations "whenever there are important unresolved differences

among people, groups, or departments" adding that "conflict may arise in response to interpersonal or interdepartmental differences, system of communication, or environmental stress". They perceive conflict resolution as of limited value in comparison to conflict management; conflict resolution presents the limited view that conflict is bad for an organization by implying that it is only concerned with unresolved differences. When the coin is tossed, conflict management presents an expanded view where costs, nature, sources and benefits of conflict are understood.

Albritton and Shaughnessy (1990) perceive conflict in libraries as an indication of healthy interpersonal or intergroup competition. It is mainly for this reason that conflict management in university libraries should be recognized as important and that conflict avoidance is not the best.

Conflicts of various kinds have always existed in university libraries and according to Pettas and Gilliland (1992), "they are a normal concomitant of the bureaucratic nature of the organizational structure of libraries and universities". Libraries are bureaucratic in nature and, like other bureaucracies embody certain characteristics that invariably generate conflict. University libraries function in accordance with policies and procedures typically established by upper-echelon library management and the parent institution. The occupant of a management position at any level of the hierarchy has control over a defined sphere of responsibility. Staff members are expected to demonstrate obedience and loyalty to those above them in the hierarchy, although not necessarily to the actual occupant of the position.

Pettas and Gilliland (1992) corroborated Allred's (1987) assertion when they observed how little has been published in the library literature on the subject of conflict and hypothesize that this is related to librarians' reluctance to deal openly with conflict. Like Kathman and Kathman (1990), Pettas and Gilliland (1992) considered the impact of environmental change on conflict in the academic library context, adding that, rapid technological change is very significant, culminating in conflict on different scales and levels which have serious implications for the library.

A major empirical African study on conflict in a university library is the one conducted by Olorunsola (1997). He notes that to achieve peace, harmony and stability in libraries, there is the need to deal with internal strife – both real and imagined. His study showed that bureaucratic structure, poor communication, organizational policies, and inadequate material resources are the major causes of conflict in the library. The study further reveals that the close interdependency between units in the library is a source of friction

among staff. All in all, the study provides evidence for the effective management of conflicts through prevention, by means of enhanced communication and canvasses for a proactive approach to handling conflict.

Walton and Edwards (2000) note that invariably the intensity of change will cause conflict on different scales and levels and have serious implications for library and information services. Their investigation provides an overview concerning how theories and ideas of conflict drawn from the management discipline apply within an academic library context.

Unlike Allred (1987) and Pettas and Gilliland (1992) who observe how little attention has been given to the issue of library conflict, Veaner (1990) holds an opposing view. He notes that "while almost all organizations have some degree of conflict, academic libraries are made to order it to flourish, adding that, conflict is not sporadic but chronic and far more intense than in industry".

Methodology

The research design for the study is the survey. It is intended to study a population by selecting and studying a sample of people who belong to it. The case studies are three state university libraries in Ghana. These are the UnivLib A, UnivLib B and UnivLib C respectively.

The target population in these libraries is composed of senior members, senior staff and junior staff. A senior member is a library staff who holds a second degree or higher in library studies. A senior staff is one who holds a first degree or diploma in library studies while a junior staff is one who holds a General Certificate of Education 'Ordinary' Level and/or 'Advanced' Level or the Senior Secondary School Certificate. Table 1 below illustrates the population for the study.

Table 1: The Composition of Staff in the Population

Library	Senior Members	Senior Staff	Junior Staff	Total
UnivLib A	15	33	66	114
UnivLib B	8	10	68	86
UnivLib C	9	12	100	121
TOTAL	**32**	**55**	**234**	**321**

Source: Field Survey, 2005

The study was conducted in May, 2005. Using the survey method, a sample of the library staff was selected from the three university libraries. A sample size of 150 was chosen from the total population of 321 library staff. The total number of staff in all the libraries formed the unit of analysis. Table 2 below, illustrates the number of subjects per each of the three libraries.

Table 2. The Selection of Subjects for the Survey

Library	Senior Members	Senior Staff	Junior Staff	Total
UnivLib A	15	15	20	50
UnivLib B	8	10	22	40
UnivLib C	9	12	39	60
Total	**32**	**37**	**81**	**150**

Source: Field Survey, 2005

The questionnaire was used in the survey to gather data. The items on personal data on respondents and sources of interpersonal conflicts were developed by the researcher. On personal data of respondents, the survey instrument requested that all respondents indicate their respective libraries, status, sex, age and length of service. To identify the sources of interpersonal conflict in those university libraries, the questionnaire included one item with a variety of options. There was also an open-ended option so that respondents could capture what the researcher did not initially think of.

A total of one hundred and fifty (150) copies of the questionnaire were personally distributed and retrieved by the researcher. Table 3 below illustrates the number of respondents in each university library. It is clear that 44 (34.4%), 39 (30.5%) and 45 (35.1%) constituted the number of respondents in UnivLib A, UnivLib B and UnivLib C libraries respectively. This brings the total number of respondents to 128 (100%) representing 85.0% response rate of the total number of 150 copies of the questionnaires administered. The non-response rate was mainly due to the non-return of the completed questionnaire within the period assigned for the entire exercise.

Table 3: Questionnaire – samples and responses

Name of University Library	Population	Sample size	Total number of responses	Percentage responses
UnivLib A	114	50	44	34.4%
UnivLib B	86	40	39	30.5%
UnivLib C	121	60	45	35.1%
Total	**321**	**150**	**128**	**100**

Source: **Field Survey, 2005**

Results

Status of respondents

Table 4: Status of Respondents

Status of staff	Name of University Library					
	UnivLib A		UnivLib B		UnivLib C	
	Freq.	**%**	**Freq.**	**%**	**Freq.**	**%**
Senior Members	10	22.7	8	20.5	10	22.2
Senior Staff	15	34.1	9	23.1	11	24.4
Junior Staff	19	43.2	22	56.4	24	53.3
Total	**44**	**100.0**	**39**	**100.0**	**45**	**100.0**

Source: **Field Survey, 2005**

Table 4 illustrates the status or category of respondents in the libraries and the nomenclature of university library staff. In the university system in Ghana, staff are generally classified into three distinct parts: Senior Members, Senior Staff and Junior Staff. At the apex of the pyramid are Senior Members. The Senior Staff and the Junior Staff follow them. Clearly, all categories of staff are therefore well represented here since conflict situations cut across these artificial boundaries, especially between Senior Members and Senior Staff. Rogers and Weber (1971) think that the division of the library staff into professional and nonprofessional is a fundamental problem and a source of conflict for libraries. This nomenclature can be a source of conflict in university libraries because the Senior Members who enter the library profession at a higher level may see

themselves as superior to their non-professional counterparts. On the other hand, when some non-professionals resist this view of the professionals, probably because they are more knowledgeable, this may result in interpersonal conflict.

Sex of respondents
Table 5: Sex of Respondents

| Sex Distribution | Name of University Library | | | | | | Total | |
| | UnivLib A | | UnivLib B | | UnivLibC | | | |
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	% in all libraries
Male	30	68.2	29	74.4	27	60.0	86	67.2
Female	14	31.8	10	25.6	18	4.0	42	32.8
Total	**44**	**100**	**39**	**100**	**45**	**100**	**128**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2005

Table 5 above gives a visual picture of the sex of respondents captured in the survey. Data collected established that out of the 128 (100.0%) respondents, 86 (67.2%) are male while 42 (32.8%) are female. The analysis reveals that the composition of library staff in university libraries in Ghana is predominantly male and that this situation is not peculiar to the library profession alone. A closer look at the sex distribution of respondents in the individual libraries under study reveals a similar pattern. This is illustrated in Table 5 above.

Age of respondents
Clearly, conflict situations in university libraries are more pronounced within the 18-29 (33.6%) and 40-54 (39.1%) age brackets than the 30-39 (19.5%) and 55-60 (7.8%). The high conflict situations within the 18-29 age group may be attributed to lack of experience in conflict matters whereas those within the 40-54 age group may be due to the struggle for positions. However, there is a drop in conflict situations within the 30-39 (19.5%) probably because they had become emotionally mature to handle some conflict episodes. Finally, there is a significant drop in conflict situations within the 55-60 (7.8%) age group probably because library staff in this category had assumed their ultimate positions prior to retirement and therefore there is little or no room for bitter rivalry.

Length of service of respondents
Table 7: Length of Service of Respondents

Length of service	Name of University Library						Total	
	UnivLib A		UnivLib B		UnivLib C		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	% in all libraries
1 – 5 years	18	40.9	17	43.6	21	46.7	56	43.8
6 – 11 years	11	25.0	3	7.7	4	8.9	18	14.1
12 – 19 years	6	13.6	9	23.1	10	22.2	25	19.5
20 years & above	9	20.5	10	25.6	10	22.2	29	22.7
Total	**44**	**100**	**39**	**100**	**45**	**100**	**128**	**100**

Source: **Field Survey, 2005**

Respondents were asked to choose the category which represents their length of service. Data collected is presented in Table 7. This shows that the length of service of respondents varied considerably and library staff who had worked for between one and five years tended to have most of the interpersonal conflict situations in libraries than any of the other categories. This may be due to the fact that they are now trying to know one another. Between six to eleven years, when they may have become very familiar with one another, interpersonal conflict situations are considerably reduced. This is illustrated by the drop in the response rate from 43.8% to 14.8%. Thereafter, interpersonal conflict situations in libraries begin to rise gradually, probably as a result of power struggle at the top in the libraries by library staff. This is illustrated by the rise in the response rate from 19.5% (12-19 years) to 22.7% (20 years and above).

Sources of interpersonal conflict
Table 8 below provides an insight into the causes of interpersonal conflict in university libraries in Ghana. From the multiple choice options provided by the researcher, respondents were asked to choose as many as were applicable to their libraries. It is important to state that some of them were their personal opinions, experiences or perceptions (perceived conflict).

Table 8: Causes of Interpersonal Conflict.

Causes of interpersonal conflict	Name of University Library						Total	
	UnivLib A		UnivLib B		UnivLib C			
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	% in all libraries
• No response	2	2.0					2	0.7
• Personality differences	13	33.0	30	29.7	30	42.3	93	34.2
• Superior and subordinate relationships	35	35.0	35	34.7	22	31.0	92	33.8
• Power struggle	14	14.0	17	16.8	9	12.7	40	14.7
• Competition	13	13.0	13	12.9	4	5.6	30	11.0
• Preferential treatment			2	2.0	1	1.4	3	1.1
• Workplace romance			1	1.0	1	1.4	2	0.7
• Grapevine					2	2.8	2	0.7
• Work attitudes	1	1.0					1	0.4
• Bootlicking			1	1.0	1	1.4	2	0.7
• Ethnicity	2	2.0	1	1.0			3	1.1
• Victimization			1	1.0			1	0.4
• Jealousy			1	1.0	1	0.4		
Total	**100**	**100**	**101**	**100**	**71**	**100**	**272**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2005

Discussion

On personal data, it emerged from the study that all categories of university library staff (Senior Members, Senior Staff and Junior Staff) experience interpersonal conflict. In effect, interpersonal conflict is not only horizontal; it is also vertical. In addition, both male and female staff of Ghanaian university libraries experience interpersonal conflict. Furthermore, irrespective of age, university library staff in Ghana experience interpersonal conflict and finally, no matter the length of service of university library staff in Ghana, they experience interpersonal conflict.

Sources of interpersonal conflict

The objective was to identify the factors that engender interpersonal conflict in Ghanaian university libraries. Interpersonal conflict involves confrontations or rivalries in the work environment between individuals or between individuals and groups (Kinard, 1988).

The evidence in Table 8 indicates that 93 respondents, representing 34.2% identified personality differences as one of the factors that engender interpersonal conflicts in Ghanaian university libraries. Some people have difficulty in getting along with others at the workplace. Personality differences are probably the most pervasive form of conflicts in organisations including libraries (Kathman & Kathman, 1990). A host of factors give rise to this and they include age, social status, educational background, and length of service and salary disparities. There is no doubt that such differences cause and even exacerbate friction between library staff.

Another dimension of personality difference has to do with the personality or personal style of the individual. The impact of this cause of conflict in the library can be devastating when such people are in management positions. This is consistent with earlier works on the subject by Kathman and Kathman (1990), Pettas and Gilliland (1992) and Walton and Edwards (2000) who reported that personality differences cause conflict in libraries. Respondents also identified superior and subordinate relationships as another cause of interpersonal conflict in Ghanaian university libraries with 33.8% of the responses attesting to this as shown by Table 8. This vertical conflict occurs between levels in an organization's hierarchy of authority. A handy example is conflict between a superior and a subordinate over such issues as task goals, deadlines and performance accomplishments.

The evidence in Table 8 reveals that there were 40 (14.7%) responses, which are fairly significant, for power struggle as a factor that gives rise to interpersonal conflict in Ghanaian university libraries. Interpersonal conflict may also arise from unequal distribution of power and status. This brings the issue of power struggle to the fore.

Furthermore, demarcation or boundary disputes have always created difficulties and ambiguity over responsibility or authority is one example of this. Individuals or groups may be uncertain as to who is responsible for performing which tasks or duties and who has the authority to direct whom. Each party may claim or reject responsibility and the result can be conflict. This can occur particularly when individual roles and responsibilities are not explicitly spelt out. Similarly, status inconsistencies lead to interpersonal conflict. Power struggle as a cause of conflict in Ghanaian university libraries confirms an earlier observation made by Pettas and Gilliland (1992) that "library managers and middle managers have positions conferred on them by the parent organization by virtue of their holding positions of responsibility". However, with time, conflict over boundary may arise with other managers or other administrators in universities. This way, a feeling of frustration and unimportance in staff members can result.

Some of the respondents identified competition as a cause of interpersonal conflict. The evidence in Table 8 shows 30 (11.0%) responses to this end. Competition implies that certain ground rules apply and that there has been some prior planning by a higher authority (French et al, 1985). Competition might, initially at least, be comparatively healthy. But if the situation develops into one of greater antagonism, and behaviour intended to obstruct the other person, then a conflict situation could develop. An example of competition could be members of staff vying for promotion. The unsuccessful members will not lose their present level of pay, status or responsibilities; and they still have other options open, including the opportunity for promotion into some other position at a latter date.

The following causes of perceived interpersonal conflicts in Ghanaian university libraries reveal serious statistical weaknesses as far as the results of the survey indicate. It is the view of the researcher that they should be subjected to further testing to ascertain their veracity or otherwise. Table 8 reveals that there were 3 (1.1%) responses for preferential treatment. Indeed perceptions of unjust treatment can lead to tension and conflict. This fuels feelings of inequity, which may or may not be justified.

Another cause of perceived interpersonal conflict is workplace romance. There were two (0.7%) responses for workplace romance, one each from UnivLib B and UnivLib C libraries. Workplace romance is either between two or more consenting staff of equal status or between a superior and a subordinate. As a consequence, the female subordinate may become pompous and finds it difficult to take instructions from other superiors. Such workplace romance can lead to friction and tension thereby exploding into interpersonal conflict.

Two (2 i.e. 0.7%) of the respondents perceive that the grapevine can lead to interpersonal conflict in Ghanaian university libraries. These responses were peculiar to UnivLib C alone probably because meetings were not held regularly. Perhaps, a more plausible reason may be that majority of the staff employed in this library, especially the junior staff, are relatives of staff already serving the university in different capacities, who instead of concentrating on official work choose to engage in idle talk. Other opinions expressed by some respondents as causes of interpersonal conflict include work attitudes (0.4%), bootlicking (0.7%), ethnicity (1.1%), victimization (0.4%) and jealousy (0.4%).

Conclusion
The study has established that interpersonal conflict exists in Ghanaian university libraries and the various factors responsible for the occurrence of interpersonal conflict have also been established. It has also demonstrated that the factors that engender interpersonal

conflict in Ghanaian university libraries are no different from those that have been postulated by earlier researchers in the literature on organizational behaviour. There are, however, peculiar causes such as bootlicking, nepotism and ethnicity, which had been identified by some library staff. The survey thus confirms that university libraries are indeed subject to conflicts, which in some cases are severe enough to demoralize employees, reduce their efficiency and impoverish service (Veaner, 1990). Such conflict also militates against the implementation of certain major policy decisions in libraries (Badu, 2000).

University librarians and their subordinates in Ghana should not think of conflict as something to suppress (classical view) noting that conflict will always exist in their libraries (behaviourist). Rather, they should view conflict as absolutely necessary if their libraries are to grow and develop (interactionist).

Recommendations

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

On interpersonal conflict in university libraries in Ghana, it is recommended that:

i.   On personality differences, library staff should be constantly educated and reminded that because of differences in cultural orientations, educational background, age, sex and other such considerations, there are bound to be differences and disagreements at the work place from time to time. Such differences and disagreements should be taken in good faith for the growth of university libraries. It is also important to be on good terms with co-workers as it is to have good working relationships with your supervisors and other members of management. It is proper to foster positive collegial relationships with not only your counterparts in other departments, but also staff members within and outside your department as well as such support staff as systems experts, mail clerks, telephone operators and the janitorial staff.

ii.   On superior and subordinate relationships, and as mentioned earlier, conflict is part of the human condition and both superiors and subordinates, as human beings, are likely to view things in conflicting ways. When this happens:

- Stick to the facts basing your argument on numbers, events or documents that can be closely and verifiably scrutinized, rather than opinion.
- Assist either your superior or subordinate to re-examine the situation. Ideally, you should both be willing to look at the situation from the other's point of view.

- As much as possible, subordinates should not antagonize their superiors. Subordinates should avoid verbalizing their frustration with terms like "unrealistic", "unfair", "flawed", and "mistaken". Words such as these tend to antagonize others.
- Subordinates should know when to back off. They should keep in mind that they are talking to their superiors and can only go so far trying to persuade them to accept their views.
- Superiors should also be fair-minded, articulate, and be committed to high quality service in order to set the tone for the creation of a healthy organizational climate.

iii. On the question of power struggle between library staff, the Librarian should ensure that individual roles and responsibilities are clearly spelt out, adding that, seniority should play a leading part here and staff should be encouraged to work as a team.

iv. On competition as a cause of interpersonal conflict in university libraries in Ghana, it is recommended that as much as possible, librarians should try to decrease it between individuals and departments. Librarians should impress upon their subordinates that whatever their interests, such interests must be in consonance with the overall goals of the Library.

v. On unequal treatment of library staff, it is recommended that librarians demonstrate evenhandedness, thereby preventing the appearance or the reality of a pattern of favouritism from developing.

vi. On workplace romance between superior and subordinate staff, it is suggested that all library staff be given sound education on the subject as well as the implications for the library profession.

vii. On the issue of grapevine as a cause of interpersonal conflict, the Librarian should ensure that information flows freely adding that library staff should be allowed to communicate with every member of staff. This way, inaccurate information that normally characterizes the grapevine will be drastically reduced to the barest minimum.

viii. Librarians should impress upon all manner of library staff to have positive attitudes about the Library and its services. The Librarian should work upon the negative work attitudes of some library staff such as lateness to work, early closure and non-attendance of staff meetings.

ix. Librarians should discourage bootlicking in the library environment by insisting that whatever information is relayed to him/her will be discussed in the presence of the reporting party and the party that spread the information.

x. Ethnicity should not be encouraged on the simple premise that university libraries are not family or ethnic establishments. It is therefore important that, in selecting and recruiting staff for the Library and other considerations, employers should base their decisions on competence.

xi. Librarians should try as much as possible to discourage victimization in libraries. Library staff should rather be encouraged to give of their best. A complaint desk could also be established in libraries to look into issues of victimization before they explode into serious conflict. Such an avenue will serve as an early warning system.

xii. Jealousy is part and parcel of human kind. To tone down jealousy at the workplace, librarians should create an environment where all library staff can freely compete in order for them to realize their ambitions.

Recommendations for further research

A number of issues that invite further research have emerged from the study. A minority of library staff identified preferential treatment, bootlicking, victimization, ethnicity and workplace romance among others as some 'other' causes of conflict in university libraries in Ghana. At best, they can be described as perceived causes. These 'causes' should be subjected to further testing in order to ascertain how widespread they are or the extent to which they qualify as major sources of conflict in Ghanaian university libraries. This is because library staff who stated other reasons were actually proffering alternative options that the designer of the instrument did not think of.

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