

**UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**CONFLICTS AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER  
EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA: A STUDY OF THE  
DR. HILLA LIMANN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY**

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**ESTHER SHENA NAAGYIE**

**2025**

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**(MPHIL. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT)**

**UDS/DSA/0007/18**

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



**THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL  
AND HISTORICAL STUDIES, FACULTY OF INTEGRATED  
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT  
STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN SOCIAL  
ADMINISTRATION**

**MARCH, 2025**

## DECLARATION


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

Candidate's Signature:  Date: 10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025

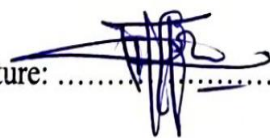
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## ABSTRACT

In recent times the Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU) has witnessed several institutional conflict situations that have attracted a lot of concerns in the higher education sector in Ghana. The study sought to ascertain the major causes of conflicts at the DHLTU and how conflicts can be handled to enhance individual and institutional performance. The study used the explanatory sequential mixed method design which integrated quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively explore the causes, impacts, and management strategies of conflicts in DHLTU. It was guided by the human needs, structural, and economic conflict theories. A total of 140 respondents were selected, comprising faculty, administrative personnel, and other stakeholders directly involved in or affected by institutional conflicts. All 130 respondents were selected using the census approach in addition to 10 others selected purposely. Data collection was conducted using structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews, ensuring both breadth and depth in understanding the phenomenon. Data obtained were analysed (quantitatively and qualitatively) to describe and draw inferences from the responses. Kendall rank correlation was a major statistical technique used to measure agreement among respondents. The study found that leadership style, indiscipline, favouritism, past unresolved conflicts, communication breakdown, delay/denial in promotion and unqualified leadership were the major causes of conflicts. Conflicts were dysfunctional and had led to loss of contact hours, sabotage of leadership, lack of commitment to duty, high turnover of staff, communication breakdown, low morale, low productivity, low student enrolment and retrogression. Positively, conflicts enhanced teamwork and corrected some management ills. The University, in managing conflicts, resorted to the law courts and other third-party interventions which did not yield the desired results. These strategies were not effective enough to bring lasting peace. Leadership style, institutional structure, lack of skills, resorting to courts, unfair application of the rules and regulations, lack of conflict policy and communication breakdown were identified as major barriers to effective conflict management. The study recommends, among other things, re-orientation of all employees of the University to appreciate the fact that conflicts are natural and have some opportunities imbibed in them; leadership varying their leadership approaches based on the situation and avoiding discrimination and favouritism; and the development of conflict management policy, effective communication and strict implementation of such a policy.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I want to thank the University for Development Studies for giving me the opportunity to embark on such an academic journey. My sincere gratitude also goes to my supervisors, Professor Daniel A. Bagah and Dr. Frank K. Teng-Zeng, for supervising this thesis. Your critical comments, contributions, and generous encouragement have brought me this far.

I also want to say thank you to Professor Paul K. Nkegbe for his advice and encouragement. He has been instrumental in my doctoral studies. I also thank Dr. Gynadu Abubakar, postdoctoral fellow on the UDS PEAFI Project, for his immense assistance. I remain grateful to my family and friends for your prayers throughout my studies. I am especially highly indebted to Mr. Mubashir Ahmed Bamie, a Lecturer at the Department of ICT-DHLTU, and my son, Benedict B. Naagyie, who generated codes and entered the data for this thesis.

Finally, I want to thank the Management and Staff of the Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University for providing responses that have served as data for this work.

God bless you all, Barika yagazaa!



## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my siblings, Lucy Naagyie and Rev. Fr. Godfrey Naagyie, both of blessed memory, and all loved ones whose contributions have brought me this far.



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADR	-	Alternative Dispute Resolution
CM	-	Conflict Management
CMS	-	Conflict Management Strategy/Style
DHLTU	-	Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University
GETFund	-	Ghana Education Trust Fund
GTEC	-	Ghana Tertiary Education Commission
HEIs	-	Higher Education Institutions
HNT	-	Human Needs Theory
HR	-	Human Resource
IMC	-	Interim Management Committee
KNUST	-	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
KReF	-	KNUST Research Fund
NAB	-	National Accreditation Board
NABPTEX	-	National Board for Professional and Technicians Examinations
NCTE	-	National Council for Tertiary Education
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TUAAG	-	Technical University Administrators Association of Ghana
TUTAG	-	Technical University Teachers Association of Ghana
TUWAG	-	Technical University Workers Association of Ghana
UTAG	-	University Teachers Association
UDS	-	University for Development Studies



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. Background of the Study

Conflict encompasses a wide spectrum of oppositional interactions, as noted by Adeyemi & Ademilua (2012). Adeyemi & Ademilua (2012) define conflict as any form of discord, dissent, or tension between two or more parties, which can manifest as quarrels, protests, demonstrations, hostility, or other detrimental behaviours. The root of conflicts lies in the divergence of needs, values, interests, and perspectives among the disputing parties. Conflict in higher education institutions is defined as a condition where individuals or groups experience a clash of opposing aspirations, interests, or values, leading to disagreements that can disrupt academic and administrative functions. According to Chaudhary (2022), conflict in Higher educational institution arises from disparities in goals and needs among stakeholders, including students, faculty, and administration. Factors contributing to these conflicts include competition for limited resources, differing expectations regarding academic performance, and communication breakdowns (Chaudhary, 2022; Valente *et al.*, 2020).

As it has been already established, conflicts are an inherent and pervasive aspect of human interactions, particularly in organizational settings. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are no exception to this reality. As complex social organizations comprised of diverse individuals working towards specific goals, HEIs are prone to various forms of conflict arising from differences in philosophies, cultures, values, and roles among personnel (Grossman, 2014; Richards, 2016). Employees at schools may argue, protest, or take other actions to convey their disagreements or positions on various issues and these can lead to conflicts. Conflicts between



instructors, students, and school management are also unavoidable, as highlighted by Atieno *et al.* (2016).

The global landscape of higher education has witnessed numerous instances of conflict that underscore the significance of this issue. In 2015, the University of Missouri in the United States experienced sustained student protests over racial inequality and perceived administrative inaction. This conflict escalated to the point where both the university president and chancellor were compelled to resign, highlighting the profound impact unresolved conflicts can have on institutional stability and governance in higher education (Trachtenberg, 2018). The administration's failure to adequately address the specific demands of student protestors contributed significantly to rising tensions. Instead of engaging in meaningful dialogue, the leaders appeared dismissive, which fueled frustration among students who felt their concerns were being ignored (Trachtenberg, 2018).

In Africa, Nigerian universities have been particularly affected by conflicts. Adeyemi & Ademilua, (2012) describe conflicts in Nigerian HEIs as “expanding monsters”, with students and organizations increasingly using conflict as a tool to advance individual and group objectives. A case in point was the University of Lagos, which in 2020 faced prolonged conflicts between academic staff and management over unpaid salaries and poor working conditions. These disputes led to multiple strikes, severely disrupting the academic calendar and causing delays in student graduations (Olaleru *et al.*, 2023).

Ghana's higher education sector has not been immune to these conflicts either. Marfo *et al.* (2020) conducted a case study at the University for Development Studies (UDS) examining the impact of







religious group conflicts among students. Their research revealed how these tensions disrupted campus harmony and necessitated the implementation of new policies on religious expression and tolerance. This study underscored the diverse nature of conflicts in HEIs and the need for adaptive management strategies. Further illustrating the complexity of conflicts in Ghanaian HEIs, Akparep *et al.* (2019) documented student-management conflicts at UDS related to resource allocation and governance transparency. Their research showed how unresolved administrative conflicts can lead to recurring student protests, further challenging institutional governance. These empirical cases from Ghana demonstrate that conflicts in HEIs are not isolated incidents but rather systemic challenges requiring comprehensive understanding and management.

The prevalence and impact of conflicts in HEIs extend beyond student-administration dynamics. Bampoh-Addo & Abedi-Boafo (2014) critically examined issues of conflict in academic staff promotion in Ghanaian public universities, revealing how internal competition and perceived unfairness can create tensions within faculty ranks. Additionally, Arthur (2009) investigated conflict management mechanisms in the administration of Cape Coast Polytechnic, highlighting the need for tailored approaches to conflict resolution in different institutional contexts. Recent study by Benson and Manu (2024) assessed conflict resolution mechanisms in use by Ghanaian public universities, providing valuable insights into current practices and their effectiveness. Their study emphasizes the ongoing nature of conflict management challenges in Ghana's higher education sector and the need for continuous improvement in resolution strategies.

### **1.1.1 Challenges and Consequences of Conflicts in Higher Education Institutions**

Higher education institutions (HEIs) serve as critical pillars for the intellectual, social, and economic advancement of nations (González & Vásquez, 2023; Nwosu *et al.*, 2023). They are



essential in producing skilled labour, facilitating research and innovation, and contributing to the global knowledge exchange (Campbell, 2022). However, HEIs are also susceptible to various forms of conflict, which can severely impact their ability to fulfil these roles. In West Africa, Ghana represents a dynamic context in which the higher education sector has expanded significantly over the last few decades. Despite this growth, the countries have faced numerous challenges in managing conflicts that arise within their academic institutions. These conflicts, which vary from disputes between students and administrations to faculty governance issues, affect the operational and academic integrity of HEIs.

Conflicts in HEIs in Ghana in several forms, ranging from student-administration disagreements, faculty-administration conflicts, inter and intra-faculty disputes, to labor-related conflicts involving non-academic staff (Bampoh-Addo & Abedi-Boafo, 2014; Akparep *et al.*, 2019). These conflicts arise from various sources, including but not limited to governance structures, policy implementations, competition for limited resources, personal animosities, and the complex socio-political environments in which these institutions operate. Conflicts in these institutions, particularly in Ghana, are compounded by weak administrative frameworks, political interference, inadequate infrastructure, and limited financial resources, all of which contribute to a highly volatile environment for academic work and institutional governance.

In 2018, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) faced significant unrest following the university's decision to convert two traditional male residence halls, University Hall (popularly known as Katanga) and Unity Hall (commonly referred to as "Conti"), into mixed-gender halls. This decision was met with strong opposition from students and alumni, who viewed the change as an infringement on the historical identity of the halls. Tensions escalated

on October 22, 2018, when a student-led protest, which began as a peaceful demonstration against what they perceived as administrative “oppression”, quickly turned violent. The protest spiraled into a full-blown crisis, leading to the deployment of military personnel, the imposition of curfews, a temporary shutdown of the university, and ultimately, government intervention. In the aftermath, the university’s governing council was dissolved, highlighting the severe consequences of unresolved conflicts in higher education (Daily Graphic, October 22, 2018).

At the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), conflict erupted in 2018 when the university’s Governing Council dismissed the Vice-Chancellor on allegations of financial misconduct. This action, which also led to the termination of over 20 other employees, caused considerable tension within the institution. Disgruntled parties, seeking justice, escalated the matter to the Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO) and pursued further legal action through the courts. The scale of the conflict and the high-profile nature of the dismissals underscored the deep divisions within the institution, demonstrating how governance-related conflicts can disrupt academic and administrative harmony (Daily Graphic, October 22, 2018).



In 2010, the University of Ghana faced significant unrest when university administrators decided to convert Commonwealth Hall, the only all-male residence hall, into a graduate mixed hall. This decision sparked outrage from the University of Ghana’s Old Vandals Association (OVA), a group of former residents of Commonwealth Hall, who strongly opposed the move. Tensions escalated when the university administration suspended the Senior Tutor and Hall Master following a clash between the residents of Commonwealth Hall (the “Vandals”) and the residents of Mensah Sarbah Hall (the “Vikings”). This series of events intensified the conflict, leading to heightened tensions and protests, which further strained the relationship between students and university management.



These case studies illustrate the profound impact that governance decisions and administrative conflicts can have on institutional stability. In each instance, conflicts arising from administrative decisions resulted in disruptions to academic life, strained relationships between stakeholders, and in some cases, required government or legal intervention to restore order. These cases highlight the importance of effective conflict management strategies to prevent the escalation of disputes in higher education institutions.

Akparep *et al.* (2019) conducted a comprehensive review of conflicts in the University for Development Studies (UDS) between 1999 and 2009, revealing that student-management conflicts were common during that period. These conflicts often arose from disagreements over academic policies, fee structures, and the general administration of the university. Additionally, the increasing demand for higher education and the competition for limited resources had intensified conflicts between various groups within universities, including students and administrators (Akparep *et al.*, 2019)

In comparison, Nigerian HEIs have faced similar challenges. The University of Ibadan, Nigeria's oldest and one of its most prestigious universities, has been embroiled in long-standing disputes between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the federal government. These conflicts are primarily centred around issues of funding, infrastructural decay, and unfavourable working conditions. Odiagbe (2012) notes that prolonged strike actions, such as those seen at the University of Ibadan, often lead to extended academic sessions, a decline in educational quality, and a loss of international collaborations. The challenges arising from these conflicts are exacerbated by the brain drain, where highly skilled academics leave the country in search of better working conditions, further weakening the educational framework (Odiagbe, 2012).



Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) provides another case study from Nigeria, where internal conflicts have largely been linked to the appointment of key administrative figures, leading to factionalism within the institution. Adeyemi *et al.* (2010) discuss how political interference in the appointment processes has eroded institutional autonomy and created divisions among staff and students. These governance-related conflicts have disrupted academic activities and destabilized the institutional culture, reducing morale and diverting focus from core academic missions (Adesanya *et al.*, 2018; Adeyemi *et al.*, 2010). The case of OAU illustrates how administrative and political conflicts, when intertwined, can undermine meritocracy and create environments where internal power struggles take precedence over educational excellence.

Across both Ghanaian and Nigerian HEIs, certain common themes emerge. One of the most immediate consequences of conflicts in these institutions is the disruption of academic activities. Whether it is through strikes, protests, or administrative disputes, teaching, learning, and research are often suspended, affecting student performance and institutional productivity (Fakunle and Omodan, 2017). The long-term effects of these disruptions are profound, with students graduating late, staff morale dwindling, and institutional reputations suffering significant damage (Akpapere *et al.*, 2019; Marfo, *et al.*, 2020). This disruption of academic life often has a ripple effect, where delays in research output, the deterioration of partnerships, and the loss of skilled personnel are not uncommon.

In conclusion, the challenges and consequences of conflicts in HEIs in Ghana and Nigeria are multifaceted, affecting every aspect of institutional life from academic performance to governance and resource allocation. These conflicts not only disrupt the immediate functioning of institutions but also have far-reaching implications for the quality of education, research output, and overall



institutional development. The case studies presented highlight the urgent need for proactive conflict management strategies, improved communication channels, and more inclusive decision-making processes. As Oni & Adetoro (2015) suggest, addressing these conflicts requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account the specific socio-political contexts of each institution, while drawing on best practices in conflict resolution and management.

The next section of the background will delve into conflict management practices in higher education institutions, examining how various conflict management frameworks have been adopted in different institutional contexts to mitigate the negative impacts of conflict and ensure the smooth operation of HEIs.

### **1.1.2 Conflict Management Practices in Higher Educational Institutions**

To address the diverse range of conflicts, various conflict management strategies and mechanisms have been developed and employed by HEIs in Ghana. Arthur (2009) explored the conflict management mechanisms used at Cape Coast Polytechnic, emphasizing the role of institutional policies and administrative practices in resolving disputes. His research indicated that a combination of formal and informal conflict resolution methods was often employed, including negotiation, mediation, and arbitration. These methods aimed to de-escalate tensions and foster collaboration between conflicting parties.

Efficient conflict management is essential for the smooth operation of HEIs, as it helps to maintain peace and order. Monney *et al.* (2017) analyzed conflict management strategies adopted by heads of educational institutions in Ghana. Their findings suggested that successful conflict management were often the result of proactive measures, such as promoting open communication channels, offering mediation services, and encouraging inclusive decision-making processes. These

strategies helped to create an environment where conflicts are addressed before they escalate into larger disputes.

A recent study by Benson and Manu (2024) assessed the effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanisms in Ghanaian public universities. They noted that many institutions have adopted formal structures such as disciplinary committees and grievance resolution panels to address conflicts. However, the success of these mechanisms often depends on the willingness of stakeholders to engage constructively in the resolution process. Marfo *et al.* (2020) also argue that fostering intergroup dialogue and understanding among student religious groups is key to minimizing religious conflicts. Furthermore, effective conflict management training for university administrators and student leaders can equip them with the skills necessary to manage disputes constructively.

Despite these various studies and attempts to address conflicts, many Ghanaian HEIs, including DR. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU) face significant challenges. The persistent nature of these issues suggests that existing conflict management approaches may be inadequate or ineffectively implemented. This gap between the theoretical understanding of conflict management and its practical application in Ghanaian HEIs forms the core rationale for this study. By examining the specific context of DHLTU, this research aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of conflict dynamics in Ghanaian higher education and to propose more effective management strategies.

In light of these challenges, there is a clear need for comprehensive research that not only identifies the sources and types of conflicts in Ghanaian HEIs but also evaluates the effectiveness of current management strategies. This study seeks to address this gap by focusing on DHLTU as a case



study, to develop insights that can inform more effective conflict management practices across the Ghanaian higher education sector.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Higher education institutions (HEIs) play a critical role in the development of human capital and are essential to the socio-economic advancement of nations. They contribute to the development of higher-level competencies and skills necessary for national growth, especially in an era of globalization and knowledge-based economies (Akindele *et al.*, 2012). These institutions serve as catalysts for societal transformation through their triple mandate of teaching, research, and community service, making their effective functioning crucial for national development (Abba & Mugizi, 2018). However, these institutions, especially in developing countries like Ghana, face persistent internal conflicts that significantly undermine their ability to fulfill these critical roles effectively. Conflicts between staff and management, student protests, and governance disputes are commonplace in many HEIs, leading to disruptions in academic programs, staff demoralization, and reduced institutional effectiveness (Bloisi, 2007; Fatile & Adejuwon, 2011). According to Abba and Mugizi (2018), community service, research/publication, and teaching are essential to any country's development on a global scale since they foster social service, financial literacy, health, and a decrease in crime. But despite all of these admirable aims and objectives that should be achieved as previously explained, the situation seems to be the opposite. Some limitations have been noted, including staff demoralization and sporadic strikes due to unsatisfactory conditions of service, lack of money, inadequate educational facilities, and poor leadership on the part of the school administration (Asiyai, 2006; Ekundayo, 2012).







Higher education institutions in Ghana such as universities, colleges of education and organisations with distinct mono-technic goals are sometimes seen as challenging institutions to manage in terms of conflict (Bloisi, 2007). Students and staff (academic, non-academic, and administrators) are the institutions' stakeholders. Conflict between them can rise to protests, revolts, unrest, and violence, which can shut down academic programs for months at a time (Adeyemi *et al.*, 2010). Conflict in higher education institutions poses a concern that if not effectively managed, could impede the institutions' success and development.

The persistence of these conflicts suggests that existing conflict management strategies may be inadequate or poorly implemented. The complexity of conflicts in HEIs stems from their unique organizational structure, which differs significantly from conventional corporate entities. Unlike traditional organizations, HEIs operate within a complex web of stakeholder relationships, including academic staff, administrative personnel, students, governing councils, and various external stakeholders such as government agencies and regulatory bodies (Bloisi, 2007). This complexity is further compounded by the distinctive characteristics of academic institutions, including shared governance models, academic freedom principles, and the often-competing demands of various stakeholder groups (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2011). These conflicts manifest in various forms, ranging from staff-management disputes and student protests to governance issues, leading to disrupted academic programs, diminished institutional effectiveness, and staff demoralization (Asiyai, 2006; Ekundayo, 2012).

The management of conflicts in HEIs presents unique challenges that conventional conflict resolution approaches may not adequately address. Traditional conflict management theories and practices, often developed in corporate contexts, may not fully account for the peculiarities of

academic institutions, particularly in developing countries where resource constraints, political interference, and systemic challenges further complicate conflict dynamics (Olaleye & Arogundade, 2013). This suggests a critical need for context-specific understanding and approaches to conflict management in HEIs.

The Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU) serves as a compelling case study that exemplifies these challenges. The institution has experienced at least ten significant conflicts between 2011 and 2019, as detailed below:

**Table 1.1: Some Conflicts in DHLTU, 2011-2019**

Period	Parties Involved	Cause	Strategy used	Outcome/Ruling
2018	Internal Auditor VRS Management	The use of an official vehicle	Court action	Termination of appointment in 2018
2018-2019	Internal Auditor VRS Management	Termination of appointment	Court action	Still pending in court
2018	Transport Officer VRS Management	Wrongful termination of appointment	Court action	Reinstatement of the Transport Officer, in 2018
2017	Section of Staff VRS Rector	Procurement breaches, verbal assault and unilateral decisions by the Rector	Court action	Suspension of the Rector, in 2018
2016	Member of Staff VRS Interim Management Committee (IMC)	Termination of appointment for vacation of post	Court action	Still pending in court
2014-2015	Internal Auditor VRS Management	Challenging harmonized Conditions of Service	Court action	Court referred the case for Wa Polytechnic Council decision in 2018
2014 – 2015	Union Leaders VRS Rector	Extension of tenure of the Rector	Court action and dissolution of Council	Suspension of the Rector and IMC inaugurated in May 2016
2014	Section of Staff VRS Rector	Delay and denial of promotions	BNI/Police	Petition to Wa Polytechnic Council and was granted clemency for promotion in 2014
2011 – 2013	Registrar/Finance Officer VRS Management	Unauthorized payment of	Court action	Suspension of Registrar/Finance Officer for a year (2012)



		allowances to selected staff		
2011-2012	Security Guard VRS Management	Termination of appointment for leaving duty post without permission	Court action	Case dropped due to death of the Security guard

**Source: Wa Polytechnic, 2019**

One classic example is the 2018 standoff between the then-Rector of Wa Polytechnic and some irate staff members. In an interview with the Daily Graphic on April 12, 2018, Prof. Kwesi Yankah, the then-Minister of State in charge of tertiary education, urged calm at Wa Polytechnic. He begged that all violent altercations on campus stop in light of the government's desperate attempts to end the standoff between the staff and the then-embattled Polytechnic Rector, Professor Emmanuel Marfo-Owusu, over accusations of mismanagement. The Rector attempted to enter the office on Monday, April 9, but the angry staff locked him out (Daily Graphic, April 12, 2018).

The institution made an effort to manage some of these disagreements to lessen their detrimental effects. For example, the Ministry of Education (MoE), the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), and the then government of the Republic of Ghana intervened in the case of staff-management conflicts by dissolving the Governing Council and establishing an Interim Management Committee (IMC) in May 2016 to oversee the institution's daily operations. The institution has stagnated, if not regressed, despite efforts by individuals, religious organisations, regulatory bodies, and the government at large to find a long-term solution to these disagreements. Staff effectiveness appeared to have suffered significantly as a result of unresolved conflicts in HEIs, as evidenced by low employee morale, decreased productivity, quality issues, decreased collaboration, passive/aggressive behaviour, ineffective management credibility, negative upward attention, and mistrust (Cram & MacWilliams, 2011).





A critical analysis of these conflicts reveals several concerning patterns. First, the recurring nature of these conflicts suggests underlying systemic issues that periodic interventions have failed to address. Second, the prevalence of court actions as a resolution mechanism indicates a possible overreliance on legal remedies rather than internal conflict management mechanisms. Third, the diversity of conflict types, ranging from employment disputes to governance crises, points to multifaceted organizational challenges that require comprehensive solutions. Despite various intervention attempts, including court actions, government initiatives, and regulatory body involvement, these conflicts persist. This persistence raises several critical questions that demand scholarly attention. First, it is necessary to identify the underlying causes of recurring conflicts in this institutional context, particularly examining how organizational structure, leadership approaches, and institutional culture interact to create or exacerbate conflicts. The impact of unresolved conflicts on employee productivity and institutional effectiveness, including both quantifiable outcomes and less tangible effects on organizational climate and institutional reputation is an important area to look at. The adequacy of existing conflict management strategies and systems, especially considering the unique context of technical universities in Ghana is also an important area to look at. Other areas that need attention are identifying the barriers to effective conflict resolution, including structural, cultural, and resource-related constraints, and also the role of institutional policies and procedures in addressing these challenges, particularly examining the effectiveness of current regulatory frameworks.

A critical review of current literature on conflict management in Ghanaian HEIs reveals several significant gaps in understanding. While existing research has examined conflict management in higher education settings (Olaleye & Arogundade, 2013; Nkwotama, 2014), substantial knowledge gaps persist. Notably, there is limited understanding of how leadership styles interact with



administrative structures to influence conflict patterns in technical universities. The relationship between institutional policies and conflict resolution outcomes remains understudied, particularly within Ghana's evolving higher education landscape. Furthermore, the specific challenges faced by technical universities in managing conflicts, considering their unique mandate have not been adequately explored. The literature also lacks a comprehensive analysis of how unresolved conflicts impact both individual and organizational performance, including immediate and long-term effects (Cram & MacWilliams, 2011). Additionally, there is limited research on the effectiveness of various conflict management approaches across different institutional contexts within Ghana's higher education sector.

To address these significant gaps in knowledge, this research undertakes a comprehensive investigation of conflict dynamics at DHLTU. The study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the primary sources and causes of conflicts, examining both immediate triggers and underlying systemic factors that contribute to institutional discord. It will pursue a detailed assessment of how unresolved conflicts impact institutional performance, employing both quantitative and qualitative measures to ensure a comprehensive understanding. The research will evaluate the effectiveness of current conflict management strategies, taking into account both formal mechanisms and informal approaches that shape conflict resolution outcomes. Furthermore, it will analyze the various barriers to effective conflict management. The study will also examine the role and effectiveness of institutional policies and procedures in managing conflicts, seeking to understand how these formal frameworks influence conflict dynamics and resolution processes.

Understanding these complex dynamics is crucial as unresolved conflicts significantly impact institutional effectiveness, manifesting in decreased productivity, reduced collaboration, and

diminished management credibility (Cram & MacWilliams, 2011). The implications of these conflicts extend far beyond the immediate institutional context, creating ripple effects that influence the broader higher education sector and potentially impede national development goals. This comprehensive approach to studying conflict management in technical universities promises to contribute valuable insights for both theoretical understanding and practical application in Ghana's higher education landscape.

### 1.3 Research Questions

The goal of the study is to provide an answer to the following query: What are the main causes and sources of disputes, and how can they be controlled to improve performance both personally and professionally?

To answer the goal, the research specifically answered the following queries:

1. What are the main reasons why disputes arise at DHLTU?
2. What impact do unresolved disputes have on the productivity of employees and the functioning of the institution?
3. What are the tactics and procedures DHLTU uses to handle conflicts?
4. What obstacles stand in the way of DHLTU's efficient conflict Management?
5. What institutional standards, rules, and procedures are available to address obstacles and difficulties in managing conflicts?



## 1.4 Study Goals

The primary goal of the study is to investigate the main causes and origins of disputes as well as the management strategies that can be used to improve both individual and organizational performance.

The study specifically aims to:

1. Determine the primary causes of conflicts at DHLTU.
2. Analyze how unresolved disputes affect the productivity of employees and the success of the organization.
3. Examine the tactics and systems employed by DHLTU to resolve disputes.
4. Determine the obstacles that DHLTU faces in managing conflicts effectively.
5. Investigate the institutional guidelines, policies, and procedures that are available for resolving disputes and how they handle the obstacles to efficient conflict management.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

The creation of an accumulative body of verifiable information, which enables us to explain, forecast, and comprehend the empirical occurrences that interest us, is said to be the ultimate purpose of social scientific research (Powell and Maoz, 2014). This research will add to the body of knowledge regarding the management of conflict and the empirical impacts of prolonged conflicts on development within the setting of higher education. The study's conclusions will offer suggestions and policy guidelines to aid in the management of conflicts at DHLTU and other Ghanaian postsecondary institutions. Other committees and conflict managers in Ghana's higher education institutions who are interested in settling disputes would find great value in the research.





The study's findings would give the investigated institution's policymakers important information for improving conflict management policies and procedures. When handled well, conflict can be beneficial to an organisation's expansion. Therefore, the study's conclusions will help the DHLTU's management and governing council better understand the advantages of having disagreements and the many advantages they may provide when handled skillfully.

The results of the study will also improve the efficacy of guidance counselors and school administrators in handling conflicts. The implications of this result for policy planners include the inclusion of mitigating policies that will lessen the negative impacts of conflict on employees, particularly those in lower cadres who are most negatively impacted in terms of their ability to do their jobs effectively.

Additionally, it will help universities, both public and private, pinpoint some of the main sources of conflict and effective conflict resolution strategies. The study will be valuable literature for conflict management in Ghanaian tertiary institutions and a reference for scholars in the future who wish to examine conflict management in other industries.

### **1.6 Limitations of the Study**

The study's shortcomings, or limitations, are typically outside the researcher's control (Dillard, 2017; Simon & Goes, 2013). The primary research constraint in this study was the challenge of gathering research data. When asked questions, the majority of respondents hesitated to answer. This was primarily due to certain respondents' attempts at secrecy, as they withheld some crucial facts to preserve the institution's reputation. Some respondents did not finish and return copies of the questionnaire because they were upset over earlier experiences. Nonetheless, the majority of



the respondents' concerns were slightly alleviated when the researcher promised to remain anonymous.

Even though parents, instructors, and students play a significant role in the management of educational institutions, their opinions were not included because they are not direct employees of the university. A further constraint linked to his research pertains to the study's implementation. The ideas and conclusions of this study and related research may apply to other educational institutions generally, but as a case study, they are particularly pertinent to the DHLTU.

### 1.7 Operational Definitions

For better comprehension, the following terminology was used in the study and has been operationalized as follows:

**Assess:** Look into and gauge how well a conflict-resolution technique is working.

**Avoiding Conflict Management Style:** This is the process through which parties to a dispute distance themselves from the conflict as a whole. This is a passive, unconfident style.

**Bureaucracy:** This is an institutional or organizational hierarchy that is based on qualifications and competencies and is regulated by a uniform set of abstract rules, regulations, and procedures that serve to systematically control and discipline the behaviour of the officials

**Compromising Conflict Management Style:** The parties to the dispute accept the settlement that has been reached for them and accomplish very little aside from what they truly desire. Unlike the integrating method, which entails finding a lasting solution, this style calls for the parties to be partially cooperative and aggressive, resulting in a temporary solution. In this situation, neither



party truly gets what they desire, and the communication style alternates between being cooperative and assertive.

**Conflict Management:** This involves reducing the potentially harmful and negative effects of conflict by using specific techniques, collaborating with the people involved, meeting their basic needs, and working through them.

**Conflict Management Strategies:** The term “conflict management” also encompasses the range of approaches, demeanors, aptitudes, and procedures needed to handle disputes within the company. They refer to the strategies, tactics, and approaches employed to handle disputes, particularly those arising between students and university administration, to lessen their potentially harmful effects.

**Conflict Resolution:** This procedure helps parties involved in a conflict come to a peaceful resolution of their differences. It refers to the lessening, eradication, or resolution of disputes through bargaining, arbitration, mediation, and negotiation.

**Conflict:** When people engage in circumstances where their goals are incompatible and their capacity to achieve their goals depends on the actions, decisions, and choices of others, conflict results. It is the result of incompatible aims, which frequently result from the parties’ divergent behaviours. It describes the chaos that results from having incompatible goals between and among individuals and groups. This dispute involves diverse viewpoints, values, and ideas held by individuals, groups, and organizations.

**Dialogue:** Exchange and discussion of ideas, particularly when they are honest and open and aimed at achieving harmony or mutual understanding.



**Dominating Conflict Management Style:** This is what's referred to as the competing and forcing style, or a win-lose scenario. To accomplish their objectives, the parties in this style behave assertively and do not collaborate. Since there is no regard for others in this win-lose strategy, each person prioritizes achieving their goals over those of others.

**Dysfunctional Conflict:** This kind of disagreement makes it more difficult for an organisation to function well and achieve its objectives. Destructive conflict is another name for it.

**Effective Communication:** The information sharing necessary for the disputing parties to make choices that will lead to a resolution.

**Effectiveness:** The capacity of a conflict resolution approach to reduce tensions in a way that is agreeable and satisfactory to all parties involved.

**Employees:** These are the individuals that organizations hire to carry out certain activities in order to achieve a variety of organizational objectives.

**Employee Performance:** This is the act of individual workers carrying out their duties following the organization's established standards. Employee performance is defined as each worker's contribution to the achievement of organizational objectives as well as their level of competence in carrying out their specific roles inside the company.

**Functional Conflict:** The type of conflict known as functional conflict, sometimes referred to as cooperative or constructive conflict, is one that helps the organisation achieve its objectives and boost productivity. It is predicated on a resolution approach that is a win-win.



**Higher Education Institution:** A higher education institution founded to offer courses leading to professional certifications and degrees in specific disciplines.

**Integrating Conflict Management Style:** When parties employ the integrating style, they reach a consensus and gain advantages; as a result, the style is aggressive and cooperative. When it comes to handling conflict, those who value both themselves and other people highly employ the integrating technique.

**Leadership:** The art of leadership is persuading and inspiring a group of people to take action toward a shared objective, and guiding employees and colleagues with a plan to satisfy organizational goals.

**Management:** In this study, the term “management” has two meanings: First and foremost, it refers to university authorities and administrators, such as the pro vice-chancellor, vice-chancellor, registrar, finance officer, directors, university librarian, faculty deans, and student deans. It also entails the process of utilizing an organization’s limited human and material resources to carry out its planned mission and achieve its stated objectives.

**Negotiation:** In a negotiation, parties with conflicting interests engage in a give-and-take process of decision-making.

**Obliging Conflict Management Style:** A person who has considerable concern for others but low worry for themselves employs the obliging conflict management strategy. Frequently, the person adopts a lose-win strategy, sacrificing their own demands in favor of the other party’s.

**Organization:** An organization is a social unit or human gathering that is purposefully set up to pursue particular objectives. Among others, churches, jails, and universities serve as examples.

**Power:** This is the capacity to persuade people to do what one wants, whether or whether they are willing to do so. It is the capacity to influence others to do what one wants them to do or to bring about the outcomes one desires despite opposition.

**Staff Productivity:** Staff productivity is the ratio of the amount of time and effort employees put into their work to the final product.

**Tertiary Institutions:** These are higher education institutions that students attend to gain information beyond what they study in basic and secondary schools, such as universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and colleges of technology.

## 1.8 Organization of the Study

Five (5) chapters make up the organization of the thesis. The first chapter serves as an introduction, including the study's history, problem description, goals, and research questions. It also discusses the study's importance. The review of pertinent and related literature on the subject is covered in chapter 2. The theoretical framework, research on conflict and its effects in the workplace, and the value and significance of conflict management are all covered in this chapter. The chapter also reviews literature on conflict management techniques, the impact and ramifications of conflicts in the workplace, and the causes and consequences of conflicts. The elements and obstacles to efficient dispute resolution in the workplace are also covered in this chapter.

The study's methodological approach is covered in chapter 3. The study area profile, the study's philosophical foundation, the research design and methodology, a population description, the

sample and its methods, the sources and tools used for data collecting, and the data analysis procedure are all presented in this part. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations taken into account in the study and the validity and reliability of the research tool used. The study's findings are shown in graphs and tables in chapter 4. While chapter four discusses the causes and impacts of conflicts and the mechanisms or strategies for managing conflicts at Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University, chapter 4 again, covers barriers to conflict management and policies and institutional guidelines available for conflict management at Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University. The chapter gives an interpretation and discussion of the results of the study. The findings are discussed with the study's key objectives and research questions. Chapter 5 summarizes the main findings, conclusions, and recommendations. It also elaborates on the study's contributions to knowledge and offers suggestions for further research.

### **1.9 Summary of the Chapter**

Conflict inevitably arises in any human institution involving two or more individuals. In a school setting, disputes may arise between administration and employees, among employees, between students and staff, and among students themselves. The history of disputes between the investigated institution's staff and management, as well as the current interventions, were provided in this part. This chapter covered a variety of topics, including the idea of conflict in organisations and how Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) might handle it to enhance organisational performance. A concise overview of the conflict situation at HEIs, with a focus on Ghanaian HEIs, was provided by the research problem analysis. It also discussed some of the conflicts that occurred in the investigated institution and the different approaches taken to resolve them by the organization, certain people, and the government as a whole. The goals of the study are outlined

in this chapter, along with its importance for policy direction for the government as a whole, higher education institutions, management of other organizations, and the institution under investigation.

The chapter ends with an overview of how the chapters are structured.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter contains a detailed literature analysis on conflicts in institutions and conflict management. It begins by defining conflict and providing background context, then explores various functional and dysfunctional conflict types, and their levels within organizations. The chapter further examines the various theories underpinning this study as well as individual and structural causes of conflict and their impact on educational environments. It provides relevant cases to support various arguments and relates them to DHLTU. This chapter also highlights the importance of conflict management and reviews relevant strategies and approaches to conflict management. It concludes by assessing factors and challenges in effectively managing conflicts in educational settings.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study provides an essential foundation for understanding the dynamics of conflict within educational institutions like Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU). This framework will be built upon four core theories, the Conflict Theory, Human Needs Theory, Structural Theory of Conflict, and Economic Conflict Theory. Each of these theories provides a distinct insight into the causes and nature of conflict. The combination of these theories allows for a detailed view of the factors contributing to disputes within academic settings, especially in Ghana and other African contexts.







### 2.2.1 General Perspective of Conflict Theory

Conflict Theory is a foundational framework that explains social conflict as an inevitable aspect of structured societal interactions, particularly in environments where resources, power, or status are unevenly distributed. Developed by Karl Marx, this theory posits that society is inherently conflictual due to the opposing interests of different social classes: the bourgeoisie (power holders) and the proletariat (working class) (Marx, 1867). In Marx's view, these class distinctions lead to systemic inequalities that drive conflict as the oppressed strive for equity and the powerful resist any threat to their status (Collins, 1971).

In educational institutions like DHLTU, conflict theory can be applied to understand tensions between various groups such as faculty, administrative staff, and students. For instance, when administrative policies prioritize certain departments or student groups, other groups may feel marginalized, fueling resentment and potentially leading to disputes. Furthermore, administrative decisions that concentrate power within senior management often provoke opposition among faculty or students, who may feel that their input and interests are undervalued (Arthur, 2009).

Conflict Theory provides a lens to examine how institutional structures within Ghanaian universities perpetuate power asymmetries that lead to ongoing tension between management and other stakeholders (Dahrendorf, 1959).

In line with the (Dahrendorf, 1959) interpretation, authority structures within institutions contribute to conflict. Dahrendorf expanded on Marx's framework by arguing that conflict arises not only from economic divides but also from hierarchical authority that grants one group power over another. This dynamic is evident in educational settings where faculty may feel subordinated by administrative decisions made without their involvement (Gyan & Tandoh-Offin, 2014).

Dahrendorf's concept of "imperatively coordinated associations" underlines the need for institutional policies that encourage inclusive decision-making to mitigate conflicts arising from rigid authority structures (Dahrendorf, 1959).

### **2.2.2 Human Needs Theory of Conflict**

The Human Needs Theory was founded by Abraham Maslow which postulates that conflict arises when fundamental human needs such as security, identity, and recognition are unmet (Maslow, 1943). John Burton (1990) asserts that these needs are non-negotiable and distinct from wants or desires; hence, when institutions fail to recognize and fulfill these needs, conflicts are likely to emerge. In educational institutions, unmet needs among faculty and students can drive persistent dissatisfaction, often manifesting in disputes over resource allocation, recognition, and participation in decision-making processes (Burton, 1990; Gallo, 2013).

For example, within DHLTU, faculty members may experience low morale if their contributions to academic advancements are not acknowledged by the administration, leading to a sense of marginalization and discontent. Similarly, students who feel their developmental needs are overlooked may exhibit hostility toward institutional policies. Maslow's hierarchy of needs complements this theory by categorizing needs into levels, from basic physiological requirements to self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). This hierarchical approach suggests that when educational institutions meet faculty and students' esteem and belonging needs, they foster a stable environment where conflicts are minimized (Maslow, 1943; Burton, 1990).

The human needs theory has been criticised as often assumes a universal set of needs, but different cultures and societies may prioritize needs differently. Needs can be socially constructed and influenced by historical or economic contexts, which the theory does not fully account for. Critics





opine that the theory assumes that human behaviour is primarily driven by unmet needs, neglecting other factors like ideology, emotions, and situational constraints. Critics are of the view that people may act irrationally or against their own needs due to political, social, or psychological influences. Rubenstein (2001) for instance, critiques the theory's tendency to overlook specific cultural contexts by aiming to provide an objective basis for understanding conflicts that transcends local political and cultural differences. Notwithstanding these criticisms, the theory provides valuable insights into conflict resolution and human motivation in managing and addressing conflict in human social settings as in educational institutions.

### **2.2.3 Structural Theory of Conflict**

The Structural Theory of Conflict, as introduced by Ralf Dahrendorf expanded from Karl Marx's idea about social conflict argues that conflict is an intrinsic aspect of social and organizational structures. Dahrendorf expanded on Karl Marx's ideas about social conflict, but he shifted the focus from economic class struggles to conflicts arising from authority structures within organizations and institutions. In his paper, (Dahrendorf, 1959) argued that social conflict is rooted in the structure of authority within society, where different groups possess varying levels of power and authority, leading to inevitable conflicts. It also posits that hierarchies and systematic inequalities embedded within institutions generate conflicts as individuals and groups struggle against restrictive administrative practices (Kühne, 2020). In the context of higher education, structural conflicts frequently stem from policies that prioritize the needs of one group often the administrative leaders over others, such as faculty or students, thereby perpetuating tension.

At DHLTU, structural conflicts could emerge if, for instance, institutional funding disproportionately favours certain departments or administrative roles while leaving academic



departments with limited resources. This inequitable distribution may create resentment among underfunded departments, sparking conflict between faculty members and administration (Arthur, 2009). The Structural Theory also emphasizes the need to address these underlying inequities through inclusive governance and equitable resource allocation to mitigate the deep-rooted tensions within educational settings (Folarin, 2016).

Structural conflicts are prevalent in African universities, where bureaucratic hierarchies often dictate decision-making power. For example, studies from public universities in Ghana reveal that top-down administrative processes tend to exclude faculty input, creating structural imbalances that foster dissatisfaction and opposition (Gyan & Tandoh-Offin, 2014). Addressing structural sources of conflict requires reforming governance models to promote inclusivity and transparency, especially in institutions with deeply entrenched hierarchies (Iravo, 2012).

Critics including classical author Miliband, (1969) argue that Structural Conflict Theory places excessive emphasis on societal structures as the primary sources of conflict, potentially overlooking individual agency and interpersonal dynamics. This perspective may lead to deterministic conclusions, suggesting that individuals are merely products of structural forces without the capacity to effect change. Regardless of the issues raised, in this thesis, Structural Conflict Theory provides a valuable lens for analyzing how societal structures can perpetuate conflict and inequality in higher educational institutions such as DHLTU.

#### **2.2.4 Economic Theory of Conflict**

The Economic Theory of Conflict is notably associated with the research works of Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler in modern times. Their work, especially in the 1990s and early 2000s, examined

how economic factors such as resource scarcity, poverty, and incentives for personal gain can drive conflicts, particularly in developing regions. The Economic Theory of Conflict posits that competition over scarce resources is a primary driver of conflict within organizations (Collier, 2000). This theory suggests that when individuals or groups perceive an inequitable distribution of resources, tensions are likely to arise. In educational institutions, economic conflicts often manifest as competition among departments for funding, research grants, or access to facilities (Mitra & Ray, 2014). At DHLTU, limited institutional resources can lead to disputes as departments vie for financial support, faculty positions, or physical space, creating friction among administrative and academic stakeholders.

Additionally, the concept of “conflict entrepreneurs”, as described in economic theory, highlights individuals who may exploit institutional instability for personal gain (Collier, 2003). At DHLTU, conflict entrepreneurs might manipulate funding allocations or use their influence to prioritize certain projects, exacerbating tensions within the institution. The Economic Theory underscores the importance of transparent resource management to prevent individuals from exacerbating conflict by exploiting administrative weaknesses.

Equitable resource distribution is particularly crucial in Ghanaian and African educational institutions where financial resources are often limited, and competition among departments is high. For instance, in many Ghanaian public universities, funding constraints have led to interdepartmental conflicts as faculty and administrators compete for scarce resources (Benson & Manu, 2024). Mitra and Ray (2014) support the view that transparent and fair resource allocation reduces conflict by promoting trust and cooperation within institutions.



Critics argue that focusing solely on economic determinants oversimplifies the complex nature of conflicts. Keen (2008), in his work on complex emergencies, emphasizes that conflicts cannot be attributed solely to economic greed or grievances; instead, they are multifaceted, involving political, social, and cultural dimensions. Keen espouses the necessity of considering a broader spectrum of motivations beyond economic factors. The theory nonetheless, is considered important in this thesis in that it posits that economic disparities and competition over resources are fundamental drivers of social conflicts especially in organisations such as educational institutions as documented in the literature.

### **2.3.1 The Concept of Conflict**

Conflict is an inherent aspect of social and organizational life, commonly defined as a state of discord or opposition arising when individuals or groups perceive a threat to their interests, needs, or goals (Thomas, 1992). Pondy (1967) elaborates on this by describing conflict as an ongoing process influenced by emotions, perceptions, and behaviours that shape interactions. Conflict can range from minor disagreements to severe disputes and is viewed by many scholars as both an inevitable and potentially constructive element within organizations (Opoku-Asare, *et al.*, 2015).

In educational settings, conflict arises from the interplay between various groups of faculty, administration, and students each with differing priorities, responsibilities, and values. For instance, faculty members may have educational goals that conflict with administrative policies, or students may perceive institutional decisions as unfavorable to their welfare (Anku-Tsedé & Adjadogo, 2016). For example, in 2018, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) faced significant unrest on the university campus following the university's management decision to convert two traditional male residence halls, University Hall (popularly

known as Katanga) and Unity Hall (commonly referred to as "Conti"), into mixed-gender halls. This decision was met with strong opposition from students and alumni, who viewed the change as an infringement on the historical identity of the halls. Tensions escalated on October 22, 2018, when a student-led protest, which began as a peaceful demonstration against what they perceived as administrative “oppression”, quickly turned violent. The protest spiraled into a full-blown crisis, leading to the deployment of military personnel, the imposition of curfews, a temporary shutdown of the university, and ultimately, government intervention. In the aftermath, the university’s governing council was dissolved, highlighting the severe consequences of unresolved conflicts in higher education (Daily Graphic, October 2018). This situation sparked conflict on the KNUST campus among students, the university council, some alumni, and the university management. This is an example of a case of conflict in a Ghanaian university.

According to Gallo (2013), understanding conflict involves not only identifying its causes but also recognizing how it impacts the broader organizational climate.

### **2.3.2 Conceptualizing Conflict in the Ghanaian and African Context**

In the African and Ghanaian educational context, conflict often stems from systemic issues such as limited resources, hierarchical governance, and cultural diversity within institutions. These dynamic situations are apparent in many Ghanaian universities, where administrators and faculty frequently experience disagreements over resource allocation and policy implementation (Gyan & Tandoh-Offin, 2014). Conflict in these institutions is not only a by-product of organizational structure but also reflects broader socio-political issues, such as economic constraints and cultural tensions.

Defining conflict with precision is critical in academic research as it informs the selection of conflict management strategies. Without a clear understanding of the nature and sources of conflict, institutions may fail to implement effective interventions, allowing discord to persist and potentially disrupt the academic environment (Thakore, 2013). This highlights the need for institutions like DHLTU to adopt a nuanced view of conflict, recognizing it as both a challenge and a potential driver of growth if managed constructively.

## **2.4 Types of Conflict**

Conflicts within organizations, particularly in educational institutions, can be categorized into functional (constructive) and dysfunctional (destructive) conflicts. This categorization allows us to understand the nature of disagreements, enabling the promotion of positive outcomes while minimizing negative impacts. Functional and dysfunctional conflicts are important concepts, especially in higher education, where the balance between competition and collaboration can significantly influence institutional dynamics.

### **2.4.1 Functional (Constructive) Conflicts**

Functional or Constructive Conflicts refer to disagreements that lead to positive outcomes by fostering open dialogue, innovation, and adaptability within organizations. Tjosvold (2008) notes that functional conflicts are beneficial because they encourage the sharing of ideas, critical examination of assumptions, and collaborative problem-solving, all of which are vital in educational settings where diversity of thought and critical inquiry are central to progress.

Within the context of Ghana and Africa, functional conflict can serve as a catalyst for change, especially within rigid academic systems that often resist innovation due to hierarchical structures. For example, at DHLTU, functional conflicts may arise when faculty members debate curriculum





design or student assessment methods. These discussions, although potentially contentious, can lead to better pedagogical practices, updated curricula, and more inclusive educational policies, ultimately enhancing the quality of education (Gyan & Tandoh-Offin, 2014).

In many African educational institutions, functional conflict also provides a platform for addressing issues related to equity and inclusivity. Conflicts that challenge existing norms can bring marginalized voices into the conversation, allowing for more representative and responsive institutional policies. Research on public universities in Ghana suggests that constructive conflict has led to the inclusion of previously neglected perspectives in governance, particularly those of junior faculty and students, who traditionally have limited input in decision-making processes (Arthur, 2009; Göksoy & Argon, 2016).

Functional conflict is especially valuable in diverse academic environments, as it allows for the healthy exchange of ideas. When managed well, this type of conflict can help African universities navigate cultural, ideological, and academic diversity, which are crucial in preparing students for global challenges (Gallo, 2013). However, for functional conflict to be beneficial, it requires a supportive institutional framework that encourages respect, inclusivity, and constructive dialogue.

#### ***2.4. 2 Dysfunctional (Destructive) Conflicts***

Dysfunctional or destructive conflicts are those that harm organizational cohesion and disrupt productivity. These conflicts often stem from personality clashes, miscommunication, or power struggles and can result in decreased morale, absenteeism, and turnover among staff and students (Thomas, 1992). In educational institutions like DHLTU, destructive conflicts may emerge when administrative policies are perceived as unfair or when leadership practices marginalize certain



groups. Such situations can lead to a breakdown of trust, making it challenging to maintain a collaborative work environment (Benson & Manu, 2024).

Dysfunctional conflicts are particularly problematic in African educational institutions, where limited resources and competitive environments exacerbate tensions. In many Ghanaian universities, for example, faculty members often compete over scarce resources like research funding, office space, and promotions. When these competitions are not managed transparently, they can lead to resentment and hostility, weakening relationships among staff and creating a toxic work environment (Kimani, 2024).

In the broader African context, destructive conflict is frequently exacerbated by inadequate conflict resolution mechanisms and hierarchical governance structures that limit open communication. For instance, administrative decisions that disregard faculty or student input can lead to widespread dissatisfaction, potentially culminating in protests or strikes. This type of conflict has been documented in various African institutions where unresolved disputes have disrupted academic schedules and even led to temporary school closures (Prah & Yeboah, 2011; Anim, *et al.*, 2022).

Such outcomes underscore the need for African educational institutions to prioritize effective conflict management systems to prevent functional conflicts from escalating into dysfunctional ones.

## **2.5 Levels of Conflict**

Understanding the different levels of conflict within educational institutions is essential for selecting appropriate conflict management strategies. Conflicts can manifest at various levels, each with distinct characteristics and implications.

### **2.5.1 Intra-Personal Conflict**

Intra-personal conflict occurs within an individual, often stemming from internal struggles regarding values, ethical dilemmas, or conflicting professional and personal goals (Pondy, 1967).

In the context of educational institutions like DHLTU, faculty members may experience intra-personal conflict when they face competing pressures to publish research, teach effectively, and engage in community service. Balancing these demands can lead to stress, dissatisfaction, and reduced productivity if not managed constructively (Thapa, 2015).

In Ghanaian and other African universities, intra-personal conflict is particularly prevalent among young faculty members who are often torn between their professional aspirations and the challenging work environment, which may include limited resources and high expectations from management. Studies indicate that faculty in Ghana face considerable intra-personal conflict due to cultural expectations that emphasize academic excellence despite resource limitations (Sulley, 2023).

### **2.5.2 Inter-Personal Conflict**

Inter-personal conflict refers to disagreements between individuals, often due to personality differences, role ambiguities, or communication breakdowns. Such conflicts are common in educational settings where faculty, administrators, and students regularly interact (Iravo, 2012).

At DHLTU, interpersonal conflicts might arise between faculty members and administrative staff over scheduling or resource allocation, when two or more people vie for the same job which, if not addressed, can disrupt collaboration and academic productivity.

In Ghana, interpersonal conflicts are often exacerbated by hierarchical structures that restrict direct communication across different levels of the institution. For example, junior faculty may feel



uncomfortable expressing concerns directly to senior administrators, leading to unresolved issues and simmering resentment (Alipui, 2020). Addressing interpersonal conflicts in African institutions requires fostering an environment of open communication and mutual respect, where conflicts can be discussed openly without fear of retribution.

### **2.5.3 Intra-Group Conflict**

Intra-group conflict occurs within a specific group, such as a faculty department, administrative unit, or student organization. These conflicts often stem from competition for resources, differences in work style, or incompatible objectives within the group (Gallo, 2013). At DHLTU, for example, intra-group conflicts may arise when faculty members within a department disagree over research priorities, resource allocation, or course content, potentially impacting group cohesion and productivity.

In many African institutions, intra-group conflict is intensified by resource scarcity and workload pressures. Departments with limited funding or support from the administration may experience heightened internal tensions as faculty members compete for scarce resources or professional recognition (Frimpong *et al.*, 2021). Addressing intra-group conflicts in such environments requires institutions to allocate resources equitably and foster a collaborative culture within departments.

### **2.5.4 Inter-Group Conflicts**

Inter-group conflict takes place between different groups within an institution, such as faculty versus administration or students versus faculty. These conflicts typically arise from divergent goals, such as when faculty prioritize academic standards while administration focuses on



budgetary constraints (Riaz & Junaid, 2011). At DHLTU, inter-group conflicts may develop if, for example, academic departments feel that administrative decisions on budget allocations undermine their educational objectives.

In Ghanaian universities, inter-group conflicts are often intensified by structural factors, including rigid hierarchies and centralized decision-making that exclude faculty and student input in the decision-making process. Research indicates that such conflicts can lead to significant disruptions, including strikes or protests, when faculty and students feel their voices are ignored in major decisions (Arthur, 2009). African institutions must therefore create channels for dialogue between groups to reconcile differing priorities and reduce tension between groups.

### **2.5.5 Inter-Organizational Conflicts**

Intra-organizational conflicts commonly arise when external agencies impose requirements that educational institutions find restrictive or incompatible with their mission and vision. In the African and Ghanaian educational context, inter-organizational conflicts are often intensified by systemic issues such as limited financial resources, government control over university policies, and regulatory mandates that may not align with the institutional goals of autonomy and academic freedom. For instance, government agencies in Ghana may introduce policies on student intake, course requirements, or funding allocation that universities perceive as infringing on their operational independence (Prah & Yeboah, 2011; Anim *et al.*, 2022).

At institutions like Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU), inter-organizational conflicts could emerge if governmental or accrediting bodies mandate specific programs or curriculum structures that do not align with the institution's academic focus or resource capacity. Such mandates can place pressure on the university administration to divert resources from



existing programs to meet regulatory standards, potentially causing friction not only with the regulatory body but also within the institution as departments adjust to new expectations (Amedome *et al.*, 2024).

Inter-organizational conflicts in Ghana have been exemplified by disputes between universities and the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC). For example, the imposition of strict enrolment caps or requirements for certain programs has led to disagreements, as universities argue that these restrictions hinder their ability to meet student demand and academic goals. In one case, the University of Cape Coast faced challenges with governmental expectations for increased enrolment in STEM fields, which strained the university's resources and created tension between the university administration and the Ministry of Education (Arthur, 2009).

Moreover, in many African countries, funding and budget allocations from government sources are a frequent source of inter-organizational conflict. For example, public universities often depend on government subsidies, which come with stipulations on how the funds are to be used. If universities perceive these stipulations as overly restrictive, limiting their flexibility in resource allocation, conflicts may ensue. Such conflicts are exacerbated by the hierarchical relationship between educational institutions and governmental bodies, where the former may feel compelled to comply with decisions from the latter despite misalignment with institutional priorities (Gyan & Tandoh-Offin, 2014; Ampomah *et al.*, 2022).

## **2.6 Causes/reasons of Conflict**

The causes of conflict within educational institutions are complex, arising from both structural and personal factors. Structural factors relate to the organization's framework and policies that may

inadvertently foster discord, while personal factors involve individual traits, behaviours, and interpersonal dynamics that contribute to disagreements. In the context of African universities, these causes are often interwoven with economic constraints, cultural diversity, and hierarchical governance structures.

### **2.6.1 Leadership Style**

Leadership style profoundly influences organizational dynamics and can either mitigate or exacerbate conflicts within institutions. In educational settings, leaders who adopt an authoritarian or top-down approach often make unilateral decisions without consulting stakeholders, fostering resentment and frustration among faculty and staff. Studies by Anku-Tsedde & Adjadogo (2016) reveal that autocratic leadership styles are particularly problematic in Ghanaian universities, where academic staff may feel that their input is undervalued or ignored.

In Kenya, Kimani (2024) suggests that conflicts often emerge when university leaders adopt top-down approaches that limit faculty input. In Nigeria, Olu and Abolade, (2014) found that conflicts between faculty unions and university administrators often stem from leadership styles that prioritize administrative goals over academic concerns, leading to protests and strikes. This demonstrates how exclusionary leadership can result in conflicts, as stakeholders feel their expertise and insights are undervalued. Research suggests that adopting a democratic leadership style, which promotes inclusivity and participatory decision-making, can reduce such conflicts and foster a more cooperative environment (Gyan & Tandoh-Offin, 2014).



### 2.6.2 Authority Relationships

The hierarchical authority structures in African educational institutions are another significant source of conflict. Authority relationships often create power imbalances, especially when administrators exercise control over faculty in ways that limit academic freedom. Such dynamics can lead to a perception among faculty that their roles are subordinate to those in administrative positions, which can foster resentment and diminish morale (Arthur, 2009).

As demonstrated by the types of conflicts listed in table 1.1 under the problem statement, authority-related conflicts are prevalent in Ghanaian institutions such as Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University, where administrative staff make decisions about academic operations without enough faculty input. This often results in disputes, as faculty members may feel that administrative policies undermine their academic responsibilities and autonomy. Research conducted in other African institutions, including South African universities, has found similar issues, with authority-related conflicts arising when university management overrides academic considerations with bureaucratic objectives. For example, the FeesMustFall movement in South Africa brought to light tensions over authority structures, as students and faculty alike challenged the perceived authoritarianism of university administrations (Langa, 2017).

Addressing authority-related conflicts requires institutions to adopt more decentralized governance models, allowing faculty and administrative staff to collaborate on key decisions. This approach helps to balance power dynamics, making faculty members feel more empowered and respected, which can mitigate conflicts stemming from authority issues.







### 2.6.3 Specialization

Specialization, which refers to employees focusing on specific roles or tasks within an organization, can lead to conflict when it fosters silos and inhibits cross-departmental collaboration. In educational institutions, faculty and administrative staff often operate in separate spheres, with little understanding or appreciation for each other's roles. This lack of interdepartmental integration can create misunderstandings and misaligned priorities, leading to conflict (Akinwale, 2013).

In Ghanaian universities, specialization-related conflicts are particularly evident between academic and administrative departments. Academic staff may feel that administrative procedures, which prioritize efficiency and compliance, detract from academic objectives that emphasize research and student engagement. This dissonance can lead to friction, as departments view each other's specialized roles as impediments to their own goals (Ampofo *et al.*, 2021).

A similar situation has been observed in Nigerian universities, where specialization has created divides between academic and support staff. Faculty members often express frustration when administrative procedures such as budgeting, scheduling, and resource allocation seem to overlook academic needs (Akinwale, 2013). Addressing specialization-related conflicts requires institutions to implement integrated frameworks for collaboration that encourage departments to work towards shared institutional goals, rather than narrowly focused objectives that create divisions.

### 2.6.4 Indiscipline or unethical Behaviour

Indiscipline and unethical behaviours such as absenteeism, favoritism, and the misuse of institutional resources are significant sources of conflict in African universities. These behaviours disrupt institutional workflows and erode trust among faculty and staff. For instance, absenteeism

among faculty not only affects students' learning experience but also places additional pressure on colleagues who must cover for absent staff, potentially leading to resentment (Opoku-Asare, *et al.*, 2015).

In Ghana, indiscipline among university staff has led to notable conflicts. For example, favouritism in recruitment and promotions can lead to perceptions of unfairness, particularly when it appears that administrators are selecting candidates based on personal relationships rather than merit. This issue has been reported in multiple Ghanaian institutions, where such practices have resulted in formal grievances and, in some cases, even legal challenges (Frimpong *et al.*, 2021).

In Kenyan universities, similar issues have been documented, with cases of academic dishonesty and favouritism creating tensions among faculty. Iravo (2012) research in Kenya found that when unethical behaviour goes unchecked, it can severely damage morale and foster a toxic work environment. Addressing indiscipline and unethical behaviour as structural sources of conflict requires institutions to enforce stringent policies on ethics, merit-based recruitment, and transparent disciplinary measures to maintain institutional integrity and trust.

#### **2.6.5 Limited Resources**

Resource constraints are a pervasive issue in many African universities, where departments often compete for limited funding, facilities, and equipment. This scarcity of resources can create competition and tension between departments, as each seeks to secure its share to fulfill its objectives (Benson & Manu, 2024). In Ghana, for instance, universities such as the University of Ghana have reported conflicts over resource distribution, with departments vying for limited funding to support their research and programs (Ampofo *et al.*, 2021).

A case at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) highlights the impact of competition for limited research funding, leading to interdepartmental conflicts. The KNUST Research Fund (KReF), which provides grants for research that addresses socio-economic challenges, has a competitive application process that sometimes leads to perceptions of preferential treatment among departments. For instance, some faculty members feel that certain departments receive more funding or higher prioritization, fostering resentment and conflict as departments prioritize their own needs over institutional goals (KNUST Office of Grants and Research, 2023).

In Nigeria, the limited availability of research funding has led to competition between departments, as faculty members seek resources to support their academic work. Olu and Abolade, (2014) notes that, this scarcity often results in feelings of inequity and frustration, with departments perceiving that they are disadvantaged compared to others. This dynamic illustrates how competition over limited resources can create a divisive environment in which departments focus more on securing funds for their specific projects rather than working towards collective institutional objectives.

Clear and transparent processes for grant distribution could mitigate some of these conflicts by establishing fairness and trust across departments (Anim *et al.*, 2022). Addressing resource-related conflicts requires institutions to adopt transparent allocation policies that ensure equitable distribution of resources based on institutional needs and strategic priorities.

#### **2.6.6 Task Interdependence**

Task interdependence occurs when the successful completion of a task depends on the coordinated efforts of multiple individuals or departments. In educational institutions, task interdependence is a source of conflict when departments rely on each other for crucial services but have differing



priorities or expectations. For example, faculty may depend on administrative staff for scheduling, facilities management, and financial support, which can create tension if these services are delayed or perceived as inefficient (Ampomah *et al.*, 2022).

In South African universities, studies indicate that conflicts often arise when faculty members perceive administrative tasks as obstructive to academic work. Langa (2017) describes instances where interdepartmental conflicts emerged due to delays in processing research grants, which hindered faculty research projects and created resentment towards administrative staff. Effective conflict management in task interdependence requires clear communication and defined service agreements between departments, ensuring that expectations are understood and respected across interdependent units.

#### **2.6.7 Jurisdictional Ambiguity**

Jurisdictional ambiguities arise when roles and responsibilities are unclear, leading to confusion over authority and accountability. In educational institutions, these ambiguities often cause friction between academic and administrative staff, as both groups may feel that their roles are being encroached upon or insufficiently recognized (Opoku-Asare *et al.*, 2015).

At DHLTU in Ghana, jurisdictional ambiguities can lead to conflicts between faculty and administrative staff, particularly in areas where academic policies intersect with administrative procedures. For instance, disagreements may arise over who has authority over budget decisions related to academic programs. Such conflicts underscore the need for clearly defined roles and responsibilities, as well as regular communication to establish boundaries (Frimpong *et al.*, 2021).

In Nigeria, Akinwale (2013) highlights similar issues, noting that jurisdictional conflicts are common when faculty members feel that administrators are overstepping their boundaries.

Addressing these ambiguities requires clear job descriptions and a well-defined organizational structure to prevent overlaps and ensure accountability.

### **2.6.8 Goal Incompatibility**

Goal incompatibility arises when different groups within an institution pursue conflicting objectives. In educational settings, administrators often prioritize financial efficiency and operational stability, while faculty members may focus on academic rigor and student engagement. This divergence in goals frequently leads to disagreements over policy implementation, resource allocation, and program priorities (Gallo, 2013).

In Kenyan universities, goal incompatibility has surfaced as a common issue, especially in cases where revenue-generating programs are introduced. These programs are often prioritized by the administration due to their financial benefits, whereas faculty may view them as detracting from the institution's academic mission. Iravo (2012) describes instances where administrative priorities conflicted with academic standards, leading to dissatisfaction among faculty who felt that financial motives compromised educational quality. Effective management of goal incompatibility requires institutions to align departmental objectives with overarching strategic goals, ensuring that all parties are working towards common outcomes.

### **2.6.9 Poor Working Conditions**

Poor working conditions, such as inadequate facilities, overcrowded classrooms, and lack of resources, contribute significantly to workplace conflict in educational institutions. In Ghana, public universities frequently face infrastructural challenges, with faculty and students often working in substandard conditions. This can lead to frustration and conflict, particularly when



faculty feel that their concerns about working conditions are disregarded by the administration (Opoku-Asare *et al.*, 2015).

At KNUST, inadequate facilities and overcrowded classrooms have been cited as sources of conflict between faculty and administration. These issues affect teaching quality and create a stressful work environment, leading to grievances and tensions within the institution (Ampofo *et al.*, 2021). Addressing these conflicts requires a commitment to improving working conditions to foster a more positive and productive academic environment.

#### **2.6.10 Roles and Expectations**

Conflicts can arise when roles and expectations are not aligned, particularly when faculty and staff are expected to perform duties outside of their formal roles. In many Ghanaian universities, faculty members are often required to take on additional administrative tasks due to staffing shortages, which can lead to dissatisfaction if these duties conflict with their primary responsibilities (Frimpong *et al.*, 2021).

In Nigerian universities, role conflicts are similarly prevalent, especially when academic staff are expected to take on administrative duties without adequate support. These role conflicts often lead to tension, as faculty members may feel that their scholarly work is undervalued (Akinwale, 2013). Institutions should ensure that roles and expectations are clearly defined and avoid assigning additional duties that detract from an employee's primary responsibilities.

### **2.7 Impact of Conflict on Organizations and Educational Institutions**

Conflict within organizations or educational institutions can have both positive and negative impacts, shaping their culture, productivity, and overall functioning. In educational institutions,



particularly in Africa, the impacts of conflict are profound as they influence teaching quality, administrative efficiency, faculty-student relationships, and the institution's reputation. An understanding of these impacts is crucial to implementing effective conflict management strategies and maintaining an environment conducive to learning and academic excellence.

## **2.7.1 Negative Impacts of Conflict in Educational Institutions**

### ***2.7.1.1 Reduced Productivity and Efficiency***

One of the primary negative effects of conflict in educational institutions is a reduction in productivity and efficiency. Unresolved conflicts, particularly between faculty and administration or within departments, can lead to a lack of focus and motivation among staff, reducing the overall efficiency of academic and administrative functions. According to Opoku-Asare, *et al.*, (2015), conflicts at Ghanaian universities frequently arise from disagreements over resource allocation, leadership decisions, and role ambiguities. These conflicts often result in reduced collaboration among staff, disrupted workflows, and delays in administrative processes, ultimately affecting the quality of education provided to students.



In Nigeria, studies have highlighted similar issues where unresolved disputes between staff have disrupted academic calendars, leading to cancelled classes and postponed examinations (Akinwale, 2013). Recently in Ghana between September and October 2024, the leadership of the University Teacher's Association (UTAG), members of the University Teachers Association, and the government had issues concerning action against illegal mining. UTAG and the leadership of UTAG had a disagreement with the government in its refusal to take stringent action against illegal mining ("galamsey") in Ghana. This conflict between the parties caused the University Teachers Association (UTAG) in Ghana to go on strike for over 3 weeks and some of the ripple effects of

the strike were delays in academic calendars leading to a halt in learning and research within public universities in Ghana.

When faculty are preoccupied with conflicts or grievances, they are less able to focus on their primary responsibilities, leading to lower productivity and compromised academic standards. This aligns with the findings of Ampofo, *et al.*, (2021), who note that conflicts rooted in authority relationships and resource scarcity can hinder effective communication and collaboration, which are essential for productivity in educational settings.

#### ***2.7.1.2 Increased Absenteeism and Staff Turnover***

Conflicts, particularly those related to leadership style and job dissatisfaction, can lead to high rates of absenteeism and staff turnover. In educational institutions, absenteeism and turnover disrupt the continuity of academic programs and hinder students' learning experience. When faculty members feel that their grievances are not addressed or that their work environment is toxic, they are more likely to take leave or resign (Gyan & Tandoh-Offin, 2014).

For instance, at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana, conflicts over administrative policies and working conditions have been reported to contribute to high turnover rates among junior faculty, who often feel marginalized by hierarchical structures (Arthur, 2009). This turnover creates challenges in maintaining teaching quality, as frequent faculty changes disrupt academic programs and create uncertainty among students. Similarly, Iravo (2012) found that in Kenyan universities, prolonged disputes between faculty and administration over remuneration and working conditions led to a rise in absenteeism, further affecting the consistency of academic delivery.





### **2.7.1.3 Poor Organizational Climate and Low Morale**

Conflict in educational institutions can also create a negative organizational climate, diminishing morale among faculty, staff, and students. An organization's climate work environment and culture greatly influence employee satisfaction, engagement, and motivation. In universities, conflicts arising from unfair treatment, lack of recognition, and favoritism can create an atmosphere of mistrust and frustration, where faculty and staff feel unsupported and undervalued (Frimpong *et al.*, 2021).

Research from Nigerian universities shows that unresolved conflicts lead to hostile work environments, where employees are less likely to collaborate or support one another (Akinwale, 2013). This toxic climate can extend to student-faculty relationships, as dissatisfied faculty may become disengaged, affecting their interactions with students and diminishing the overall educational experience. Ampomah *et al.* (2022) emphasize that low morale among faculty often correlates with reduced student satisfaction, as teachers who are demotivated and frustrated by conflict are less likely to be effective and inspiring educators.

### **2.7.1.4 Diminished Academic Quality and Reputation**

Conflicts within educational institutions, especially when publicized, can harm the institution's reputation and affect the perceived quality of its academic programs. In Africa, where universities compete for limited government funding and international recognition, conflicts that lead to faculty strikes or student protests can damage an institution's public image, making it difficult to attract high-quality faculty, students, and funding (Langa, 2017).

In Ghana, for example, KNUST faced reputational challenges due to publicized student protests and faculty grievances over administrative decisions. These conflicts were widely reported, casting



the university in a negative light and potentially affecting its appeal to prospective students and faculty (Ampofo *et al.*, 2021).

Similarly, Nigerian universities have experienced reputational damage due to recurring conflicts, as ongoing strikes and protests disrupt academic schedules and raise questions about the institution's stability and commitment to educational excellence (Iravo, 2012).

### **2.7.2 Positive Impacts of Conflicts in Educational Institutions**

While conflict often has detrimental effects, it can also yield constructive outcomes when managed effectively. Conflicts that challenge outdated norms, encourage critical thinking, and stimulate reform can lead to improvements in organizational practices, policies, and overall performance.

#### ***2.7.2.1 Enhanced Innovation and Creativity***

Conflict can foster innovation and creativity, if it encourages individuals to explore alternative solutions and perspectives. Functional or constructive conflicts, where differing viewpoints are respectfully debated, can lead to new ideas and improvements in academic practices, curriculum design, and research initiatives (Gallo, 2013). For instance, conflicts related to teaching methods or course content at universities can prompt faculty to re-evaluate their approaches, potentially leading to more effective pedagogical strategies (Sulley, 2023).

At the University of Cape Coast, discussions and debates over curriculum changes and student assessment practices have led to the adoption of more inclusive and diversified teaching methods, enhancing the quality of education offered (Arthur, 2009). These types of constructive conflicts encourage faculty and administrators to adapt to changing educational needs, ultimately improving institutional performance and academic standards.



### **2.7.2.2 Strengthened Policies and Procedures**

Conflict can also expose weaknesses in institutional policies and procedures, prompting reforms that strengthen the organization. In educational institutions, conflicts over administrative processes or resource allocation can lead to the establishment of clearer guidelines, ensuring more transparent and fair practices. Ampofo, *et al.*, (2021) argue that well-managed conflicts help institutions identify areas of improvement and implement policies that better address the needs of all stakeholders.

For example, at the University of Ghana, faculty grievances over unclear promotion criteria led to a review of promotion policies, resulting in more transparent and equitable guidelines. This improvement in policy not only resolved the immediate conflict but also helped prevent similar issues in the future by setting clear expectations and procedures (Frimpong *et al.*, 2021).

### **2.7.2.3 Improved Communication and Collaboration**

Conflict, when managed constructively, can lead to improved communication and stronger relationships within an organization. In educational institutions, conflict encourages dialogue between faculty, administration, and students, fostering a culture of openness and mutual respect (Thakore, 2013). For instance, conflicts between academic departments at KNUST over resource allocation have, in some cases, led to cross-departmental discussions and collaborative solutions, helping departments align their goals with the university's broader mission (Ampofo *et al.*, 2021).

In Ghanaian universities, constructive conflict management has been shown to promote team-building and enhance trust among faculty members. By encouraging departments to work together

in resolving disputes, universities can build a more cohesive and supportive academic environment that values collaboration over competition (Opoku-Asare *et al.*, 2015).

## 2.8 Conflict Management in Educational Institutions

Conflict management is a structured approach to preventing, addressing, and mitigating the negative effects of conflicts, focusing on ensuring stability and enhancing organizational outcomes (Rahim, 2002). It is also a strategic approach to addressing and controlling organizational conflicts to minimize their negative impact while leveraging any potential constructive outcomes (Tandoh-Offin, 2014). According to Thakore (2013), conflict management is not about eradicating conflict but about creating a productive organizational environment that can handle diverse opinions and priorities constructively.

This approach is especially relevant in academic settings, where faculty, administration, and students may have conflicting goals and responsibilities. Unlike conflict resolution, which aims to actively solve a conflict by addressing its root causes and reaching a definitive solution, conflict management focuses on mitigating the negative impacts of a conflict and controlling its escalation, without necessarily fully resolving it, thereby fostering a balanced organizational environment where differing perspectives can coexist and contribute to organizational growth (Robbins & Judge, 2019). In educational institutions, conflict management is essential because conflicts often arise from diverse interests, hierarchical structures, and resource limitations. Effective conflict management is vital to maintaining academic productivity, fostering collaboration, and promoting a healthy organizational culture (De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001).

Educational institutions are unique environments where the convergence of academic freedom, administrative protocols, and diverse stakeholder interests often leads to tension (Gallo, 2013). In





African universities, and particularly in Ghana, conflict management is crucial due to the structural and resource-related challenges faced by many institutions (Arthur, 2009). Conflict, if left unmanaged, can disrupt academic activities, lower morale, and reduce the quality of education (Anku-Tsedé & Adjadogo, 2016). For instance, unaddressed conflicts over resource allocation or departmental roles can lead to absenteeism, high turnover rates, and diminished institutional performance. Effective conflict management, therefore, is essential for fostering a stable academic environment that promotes both personal and professional growth (Sulley, 2023).

### **2.8.1 Conflict Management Strategies in Educational Institutions**

Conflict management strategies in educational settings are essential for maintaining a collaborative and productive environment. The presence of diverse stakeholders; administrators, faculty, students, and staff; each with distinct interests and roles, makes higher education institutions particularly prone to conflicts. Effective conflict management not only mitigates disruptions but also enhances academic and organizational outcomes by fostering a culture of cooperation and mutual respect. Below are several key conflict management strategies that have been widely studied in organizational and educational research.

#### ***2.8.1.1 The Dual Concern Strategy***

The Dual Concern Model, initially developed by Pruitt and Rubin (1986) and adopted by Rahim (2002), presents a framework that categorizes conflict management strategies based on two primary dimensions: concern for self and concern for others. This model, widely referenced in conflict management literature, delineates five core strategies for managing conflicts: integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding, and compromising. Integrating, also known as collaboration, represents a high concern for both self and others, aiming for win-win outcomes through problem-



solving and cooperation, which aligns well with the values of inclusivity and participatory governance emphasized in African educational institutions, particularly in Ghana (Rahim, 2002; Gyan & Tandoh-Offin, 2014).

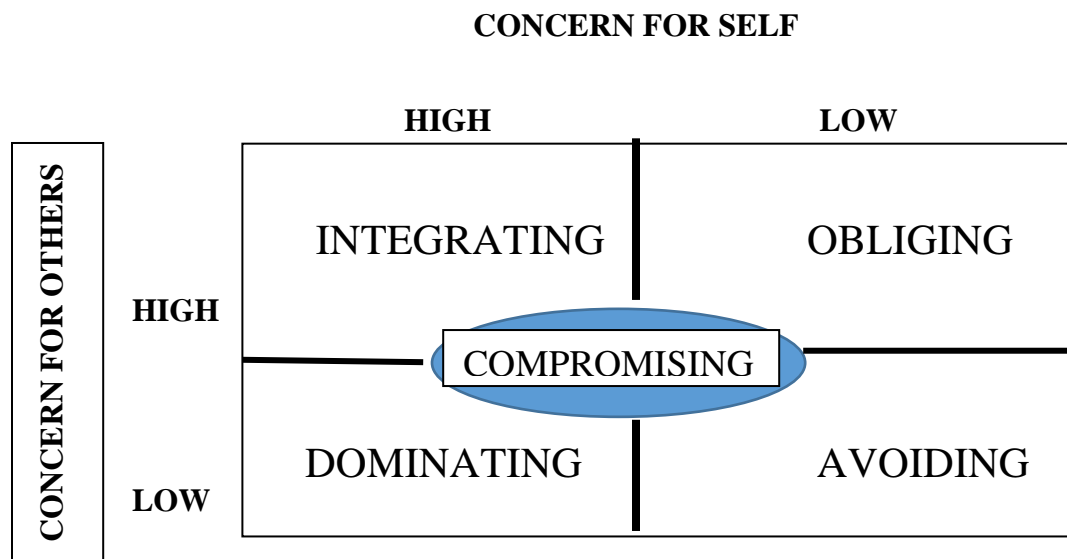
Dominating, characterized by high concern for self but low concern for others, focuses on achieving individual goals often at the expense of others, leading to win-lose scenarios. This approach is common in hierarchical structures where leadership prioritizes swift decision-making; however, it often creates resentment and conflict, as observed in African universities where competition over resources, particularly funding and budget allocations, exacerbates inter-departmental tensions (Amoah & Sam, 2017; Arthur, 2009).

The obliging strategy, involving low concern for self and high concern for others, prioritizes the goals of others over one's own, which can maintain harmony but may lead to unmet needs if overused. In Ghanaian institutions, this strategy may appear when junior faculty or administrative staff accommodate decisions from senior leaders to preserve relationships, potentially hindering assertive advocacy for departmental resources (Anim, *et al.*, 2022). The avoiding strategy, marked by low concern for both self and others, involves withdrawing or sidestepping the conflict. Avoidance may reduce immediate tensions but often leaves issues unresolved, which can lead to cumulative frustrations within academic settings. Avoiding conflict is prevalent in African educational settings, where staff or faculty may evade conflicts, especially with authority figures, to avoid potential repercussions (Asiedu & Kwasi, 2018).

Compromising, with moderate concern for both self and others, seeks a balanced solution that partially satisfies each party, which is practical when time constraints prevent in-depth negotiations. Compromising can be effective in Ghanaian universities, especially when faculty and

administrators have to make quick resource allocation decisions that reasonably address both academic and administrative needs (Rahim, 2002; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986).

The Dual Concern Model's framework, illustrated in the diagram, visually presents each strategy within a matrix, showing the balance of self-interest and consideration for others. "Integrating" and "Obliging" strategies fall on opposite ends with a high concern for others, while "Dominating" and "Avoiding" emphasize self-interest or disengagement. The central "Compromising" strategy represents a moderate approach. This model's flexibility allows administrators and faculty in African educational contexts to choose strategies suited to specific conflicts, accommodating both organizational goals and cultural preferences for harmony and inclusion, which are central to conflict resolution in these settings (Adu-Gyamfi, 2015).



**Figure 2.1: The Dual Concern Model**  
**Source: Adopted from Rahim (2002)**



### **2.8.1.2 Integrating Model**

Rahim's (2002) Integrative Conflict Management Model is a widely adopted approach in organizational conflict literature, emphasizing collaborative strategies for managing conflicts through open communication, mutual understanding, and cooperative problem-solving. This model advocates for a conflict management style that prioritizes inclusivity, where all parties are encouraged to share their views openly and work collectively toward solutions that satisfy shared goals (Rahim, 2002). The Integrative Conflict Management Model is particularly well-suited for complex organizational settings like educational institutions, where diverse stakeholder's faculty, administrators, and students have overlapping and sometimes competing interests.

The model is structured around the idea that conflict can be beneficial if managed constructively, a view supported by Tjosvold (2008), who argues that conflict, when approached collaboratively, can enhance creativity, deepen understanding, and strengthen relationships among organizational members.

In educational contexts, especially in African universities such as Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU) in Ghana, the model aligns well with participatory governance values, fostering an environment where faculty and administration can engage in joint decision-making. This inclusivity reduces power imbalances, promotes shared responsibility, and fosters a culture of mutual respect, all of which contribute to a reduction in organizational tensions (Gyan & Tandoh-Offin, 2014).

Rahim's model incorporates several key components, each designed to enhance the conflict management process. First, it emphasizes collaborative problem-solving, encouraging conflicting parties to view conflict as an opportunity to generate solutions that accommodate multiple





perspectives (Rahim, 2002). This approach not only enhances organizational harmony but also fosters a sense of ownership among stakeholders, as all parties actively participate in the resolution process. Research by Opoku-Asare *et al.*, (2015) highlights how collaborative problem-solving in Ghanaian universities has positively influenced faculty-administration relationships, particularly in matters concerning resource allocation and policy implementation.

Another critical aspect of Rahim's model is its focus on dialogue and active listening, which allows individuals to voice their concerns and feel heard. This element is crucial in educational settings, where power imbalances between faculty and administration can often stifle open communication. Tjosvold and Sun (2003) emphasize that active listening and respect for diverse perspectives are essential for creating a conflict-positive organization, where disagreements are viewed as opportunities for growth and learning rather than as threats. The importance of dialogue in conflict management aligns well with African cultural values of communalism and consensus-building, which prioritize group harmony and collective decision-making (Ampofo *et al.*, 2021).

In African universities, where resources are often limited and hierarchical structures are prevalent, the Integrative Conflict Management Model is increasingly recognized as an effective strategy for addressing organizational challenges. For instance, Gyan and Tandoh-Offin (2014) argue that collaborative conflict management approaches help mitigate tensions that arise from resource constraints, as stakeholders can work together to identify creative solutions and prioritize institutional goals. This model has proven particularly effective in Ghana, where universities like DHLTU are beginning to adopt participatory governance frameworks that emphasize shared decision-making between faculty and administration.



The model's application in African contexts is further supported by the findings of Iravo (2012), who explored conflict management strategies in Kenyan universities and found that integrative approaches improved stakeholder relations and increased trust between faculty and administrative staff. Iravo's study highlights that, in environments where top-down decision-making is the norm, collaborative strategies provide an alternative pathway that empowers faculty and reduces resistance to administrative policies. Similarly, the use of Rahim's model in South African universities has been linked to improved workplace morale, as it fosters a climate where all voices are valued, leading to a more cohesive organizational culture (Langa, 2017).

### ***2.8.1.3 The Dominating Strategy***

The Dominating strategy in conflict management emphasizes assertiveness, where individuals or leaders prioritize their own goals, often with limited regard for others' perspectives. This strategy, sometimes called "competing," is marked by high concern for self and low concern for others, aiming to secure desired outcomes at the potential expense of collaboration. As Thomas (1992) describes, the competing strategy may be effective in high-stakes situations requiring immediate action, such as crises or conflicts over limited resources. However, the approach can also lead to negative consequences, particularly in settings where inclusivity and shared decision-making are valued, such as educational institutions.

In the African university context, the competing strategy frequently proves problematic due to the communal and inclusive expectations within these environments. Research highlights that in African educational institutions, hierarchical and top-down decision-making often clashes with the participatory culture expected by staff and faculty. Iravo (2012) examined Kenyan universities and found that administrators' reliance on a dominating approach often led to faculty dissatisfaction,



resistance, and even protests. Faculty members felt excluded from decision-making processes, leading to a breakdown in trust and cooperation. Similarly, in Ghanaian universities, the lack of inclusivity in administrative decisions has been shown to undermine morale and create divisions between faculty and administrators (Osei & Amponsah, 2019).

The long-term impact of the dominating strategy can be detrimental to institutional cohesion. Boateng and Mensah (2020) suggest that while the competing approach might manage conflicts in the short term, it often alienates stakeholders, particularly when used repeatedly by leadership. Over time, this creates a divisive atmosphere, as stakeholders begin to prioritize personal interests over collective goals, weakening the sense of shared responsibility. This issue is especially relevant in African institutions, where administrators' perceived lack of transparency and disregard for collaborative governance can erode staff morale, commitment, and productivity (Iravo, 2012; Boateng & Mensah, 2020).

The model's reliance on assertiveness over inclusivity presents particular challenges in academic environments where diverse perspectives are necessary for intellectual growth and collaborative problem-solving. This model's limitation becomes apparent in contexts like Ghanaian universities, where staff expect to have a voice in decisions affecting their roles and working conditions. For example, unilateral decisions on workload allocation or funding distribution have often led to faculty discontent and strained faculty-administration relationships, as seen in several Ghanaian institutions (Arthur, 2009; Osei & Amponsah, 2019).

While the dominating may serve its purpose in urgent situations where rapid decision-making is paramount, its repeated application in African educational settings can lead to resistance, decreased trust, and weakened morale. A balanced approach that incorporates other conflict

management strategies, such as integrating or compromising, may better support sustainable conflict resolution in institutions where collaboration and inclusivity are essential (Thomas, 1992; Iravo, 2012).

#### ***2.8.1.4 The Compromising Strategy***

The Compromising Strategy in conflict management focuses on finding a mutually acceptable middle ground where each party relinquishes some demands. According to Rahim (2002), compromise is beneficial for achieving temporary solutions when parties need a quick resolution, though it might leave some stakeholders feeling partially dissatisfied, as their needs are not fully met. Compromising can be practical in organizational settings, particularly when conflicting parties have equal power and prioritize maintaining relationships (Rahim, 2002).

In the context of educational institutions, compromising often serves as a practical approach for managing conflicts around resource allocation, scheduling, and administrative decisions, especially in resource-constrained environments (Rahim, 2011). Studies indicate that in African universities, compromise helps to maintain operational harmony by preventing disagreements from escalating into larger disputes. For instance, research on Ghanaian universities by Amponsah and Mensah (2020) found that compromising allowed departments to negotiate for limited resources, which helped manage prolonged conflict and maintained institutional stability. However, while this approach may avert immediate tension, it may result in latent dissatisfaction among stakeholders if their core needs are continually unmet (Amponsah & Mensah, 2020).

Some scholars have highlighted limitations to the Compromising Strategy. According to Muriithi (2019), frequent use of compromise in Kenyan universities sometimes led to inability to manage underlying issues, creating a perception of inequity and fostering long-term dissatisfaction. Otieno





and Mwangi (2018) also observed that while compromise can prevent conflicts from escalating, it might not address the root causes of the disputes. They argue that in cases where structural inequities exist, relying solely on compromise could perpetuate dissatisfaction, as temporary resolutions do not resolve fundamental issues (Otieno & Mwangi, 2018).

To address these limitations, experts suggest that educational institutions adopt a balanced approach, combining compromise with integrative conflict management techniques, which seek to address the underlying causes of conflicts rather than merely managing surface-level disagreements. Integrative approaches encourage collaboration and mutual problem-solving, which can lead to more sustainable resolutions (Mensah & Obeng, 2022). By blending compromise with integrative methods, institutions can achieve immediate conflict management while working toward long-term solutions that enhance stakeholder satisfaction and organizational coherence (Mensah & Obeng, 2022).

#### ***2.8.1.5 Avoidance Strategy***

The Avoidance Strategy in conflict management is characterized by an intentional decision to sidestep confrontation, hoping that issues may be managed independently or at least not escalate in the short term. While avoiding conflict can be beneficial in situations where direct engagement might exacerbate tensions or when issues are relatively trivial (Rothman & Friedman, 2001), avoidance often leads to unmanaged grievances and increased tension over time. In educational settings, unaddressed conflicts can undermine trust, hinder collaboration, and deteriorate the institutional climate, as issues tend to resurface later with greater intensity (Thakore, 2013).

Research in African academic institutions, including universities in Ghana, highlights the complexities surrounding the use of the avoidance strategy. Ampofo *et al.* (2021) observed that in



certain Ghanaian universities, administrators sometimes avoid addressing conflicts related to contentious issues like faculty promotions and resource allocations to maintain temporary peace. This approach, though intended to prevent immediate disputes, often leads to feelings of neglect and marginalization among faculty members, ultimately decreasing morale and loyalty to the institution (Ampofo *et al.*, 2021). Similarly, a study by Nudzor (2014) on Ghanaian educational institutions noted that the accumulation of unmanaged and unresolved issues could lead to distrust among faculty and staff, as well as resentment toward the administration.

Moreover, the avoidance strategy has been criticized for its impact on organizational effectiveness and cohesion. Opoku-Asare, *et al.*, (2015) argue that when administrators regularly use avoidance to evade difficult conversations or decisions, it fosters a culture where accountability is weak and employee concerns are systematically ignored. In the long term, this can create an environment where conflicts become deeply embedded in the institutional structure, making future conflict management more challenging and potentially leading to collective actions such as protests or strikes. According to Asante and Amponsah (2020), avoidance not only hampers transparency but also erodes employees' motivation to contribute meaningfully to institutional goals, as they may feel that their grievances are perpetually overlooked.

In other African contexts, such as Nigerian universities, the avoidance strategy has similarly proven to be problematic. For instance, a study by Adebayo and Olayiwola (2022) indicates that in universities where conflict is often avoided, staff members tend to perceive the administration as indifferent to their concerns. This perception has led to increased turnover rates and a reduction in organizational loyalty, as faculty and staff members seek environments where their voices are valued. This suggests that the avoidance strategy might be effective only as a short-term measure,

and over-reliance on it may erode institutional cohesion, as unresolved issues and perceptions of indifference accumulate (Adebayo & Olayiwola, 2022).

The challenges of avoidance as a long-term conflict management strategy underscore the need for a balanced approach. As Eshun and Sarpong (2021) suggest, combining avoidance with other strategies such as integrative and collaborative approaches can help administrators in African universities address conflict in a way that respects the perspectives of all parties while maintaining institutional stability. Such balanced strategies can prevent the negative consequences of unchecked avoidance, promoting a healthier and more inclusive organizational culture.

#### ***2.8.1.6 Obliging Strategy***

The Obliging Strategy in conflict management involves placing others' concerns above one's own to foster cooperation, maintain harmony, or avoid confrontation (Rahim, 2002). In this approach, one party may concede or yield to another, typically in conflicts over minor issues or when maintaining a positive relationship is a priority (Tjosvold, 2008). This strategy is particularly useful in educational settings for minor disagreements, such as misunderstandings between faculty and students or trivial issues between colleagues. By prioritizing cohesion over individual interests, the obliging strategy can help maintain a collaborative and peaceful environment, especially in institutions where mutual respect and interpersonal relationships are valued.

In African contexts, the obliging strategy has been observed in various institutions as a method to avoid escalating tensions. For example, in a study of faculty and administrative interactions in Nigeria, Akinwale (2013) found that faculty members often conceded to administrative demands to maintain harmony, even if they felt that their own needs were not met. This approach, however, had its drawbacks. Akinwale observed that repeated use of obliging led to feelings of





marginalization and dissatisfaction among faculty members, who began to feel that their contributions were undervalued. Over time, this resentment created latent tensions, indicating that while obliging may prevent immediate conflict, it might not be ideal for resolving long-term or substantial disagreements.

Similarly, in Ghanaian universities, the obliging strategy is sometimes used by faculty members in interactions with administration and other stakeholders. In a study on conflict management in Ghanaian higher education, Nudzor (2014) noted that faculty members often refrained from asserting their needs during resource allocation discussions to avoid tension. Although this approach helped maintain a peaceful working environment, it sometimes resulted in unequal distribution of resources, as administrators did not always recognize the needs of those who chose to oblige. This highlights the limitations of the obliging strategy, as it may unintentionally reinforce inequities, particularly in resource-constrained environments where decision-making processes require balanced consideration of all parties.

The obliging strategy's effectiveness largely depends on the type of conflict and the parties involved. In situations where relationships are more valuable than the subject of the disagreement, obliging can facilitate conflict resolution and build goodwill. However, researchers such as Opoku-Asare *et al.* (2015) caution that overuse of this approach can have adverse effects. Their research in Ghanaian educational institutions found that consistent deference to others' interests without asserting one's own needs led to feelings of frustration and a perception of power imbalance. They argued that particularly in conflicts requiring fair negotiation such as those involving resource distribution or policy changes relying solely on obliging may undermine morale and institutional fairness.





Moreover, Danso and Adu-Gyamfi (2019) in their study of conflict resolution among Ghanaian university staff noted that while the obliging strategy was generally appreciated for its role in preserving institutional harmony, it could also create an environment where concerns of less assertive individuals were often overlooked. They pointed out that in contexts where hierarchies are pronounced, such as many African universities, obliging may unintentionally favor dominant voices, leading to one-sided decision-making that does not fully account for the needs of all stakeholders. This reinforces the argument that obliging should be used selectively, ideally in combination with other strategies that promote a more equitable exchange of perspectives.

The obliging strategy can be effective for maintaining relationships and managing minor conflicts, excessive reliance on it may create issues of undervaluation, power imbalances, and unaddressed grievances. It is most effective when applied in contexts where preserving relationships is more important than resolving substantive issues, or when paired with other strategies that allow for a fairer exchange of interests. The Ghanaian and Nigerian cases underscore that obliging, though useful, must be applied cautiously within academic settings to avoid eroding morale and trust among staff and faculty.

## **2.9 Barriers to Effective Conflict Management in Educational Institutions**

Despite the availability of various conflict management strategies, several barriers hinder their effective implementation in educational institutions, particularly in resource-limited contexts like those in Ghana and Africa. These barriers not only complicate the conflict management process but also contribute to persistent organizational challenges.



### **2.9.1 Leadership and Management Style**

Leadership and management style play a crucial role in shaping the success of conflict management efforts. Autocratic or authoritarian leadership styles can impede effective conflict resolution by limiting open dialogue and discouraging stakeholder participation (Thomas, 1992). In Ghanaian universities, Ampofo *et al.* (2021) found that when leaders do not foster inclusive environments, conflicts are more likely to escalate, as faculty and staff feel their perspectives are ignored.

Similarly, in Nigerian universities, Iravo (2012) observed that top-down decision-making without faculty involvement led to resentment and resistance among staff, creating a hostile work environment. Effective conflict management in educational institutions requires a participative leadership style that values input from all stakeholders, thereby building trust and cooperation.

### **2.9.2 Organizational Culture and Organizational Structure**

Organizational culture significantly influences how conflicts are perceived and managed. In universities where the culture discourages open communication or values hierarchy over collaboration, conflicts may be left unresolved or inadequately addressed. According to Gyan and Tandoh-Offin, (2014), Ghanaian universities with rigid, hierarchical cultures often struggle with conflict management, as faculty members may feel discouraged from voicing dissenting opinions.

The impact of organizational culture on conflict management is also evident in South African universities, where administrative structures sometimes stifle open discussion, creating an environment where conflicts are suppressed rather than resolved (Langa, 2017). Institutions that cultivate a culture of transparency and inclusivity are better equipped to address conflicts constructively.

The structure of an institution, particularly its hierarchical nature, can be a significant barrier to effective conflict management. In rigidly hierarchical institutions, authority is concentrated in the upper echelons, often limiting the ability of lower-level staff to participate in decision-making. This structure can lead to a sense of disempowerment among faculty and staff, increasing the likelihood of conflict (Opoku-Asare *et al.*, 2015).

In Ghana, hierarchical organizational structures within universities have been linked to conflicts, as faculty members perceive administrative decisions as imposed rather than negotiated. Such structures inhibit collaborative problem-solving, as lower-level staff may feel their voices are not heard (Arthur, 2009). Reducing these barriers requires a more decentralized structure that empowers all levels of staff in conflict resolution.

## **2.10 Institutional Guidelines, Policies, and Procedures for Resolving Disputes and Overcoming Obstacles of Conflict Management**

Institutional guidelines, policies, and procedures for resolving disputes are crucial frameworks that ensure effective conflict management in organizations. In Ghana and across Africa, many institutions have adopted structured mechanisms to handle disputes within the workplace, aimed at preventing conflicts from escalating and disrupting organizational goals. These frameworks, which range from informal mediation to formal arbitration, are designed to foster fairness, transparency, and impartiality in resolving conflicts. Adu-Amoah (2020) highlights that conflict management strategies must be clear, and institutions should have well-defined channels for addressing grievances. Similarly, Osei (2018) notes that the Ghana Civil Service Commission has established comprehensive policies that provide multiple avenues for resolving workplace disputes, including formal mediation and arbitration procedures, thus enabling employees to seek resolution without fear of retaliation.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is one of the key frameworks adopted in Ghana and Africa, providing a less adversarial and more cost-effective approach to conflict resolution. The ADR Act of 2010 has been particularly influential in promoting arbitration and mediation as primary methods of dispute resolution, which have been effective in sectors like banking and public services (Owusu-Mensah, 2019). However, despite the availability of these institutional guidelines, obstacles such as bureaucracy, lack of awareness, and cultural factors often impede their efficiency. Bureaucratic delays are a major challenge, as formal procedures may become lengthy, causing frustration among employees. Agyeman-Duah (2017) emphasizes that the inefficiency of dispute resolution mechanisms can discourage employees from reporting conflicts, which can lead to unresolved tensions. Moreover, cultural norms often play a role in hindering the effectiveness of conflict resolution procedures, particularly in contexts where open confrontation is discouraged. As Boadu (2021) explains, in many African cultures, hierarchical respect limits employees' willingness to challenge authority figures, thereby reducing the efficacy of formal conflict resolution mechanisms.

To mitigate these challenges, organizations need to invest in training and awareness programs. Many employees lack knowledge about the specific conflict resolution procedures available to them, which leads to the underutilization of these processes (Asante, 2015). Appiah and Adjei (2018) argue that regular workshops and training sessions on conflict resolution can empower employees to resolve disputes early and avoid escalation. Furthermore, there is a need to streamline bureaucratic processes to improve the efficiency of institutional mechanisms. Reducing procedural delays and simplifying the steps involved in conflict resolution will encourage more employees to seek formal resolution when disputes arise.

Cultural sensitivity is also essential in improving conflict management processes in African organizations. Traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, which often emphasize dialogue and community-based conflict resolution, can be incorporated into formal institutional policies to make the procedures more culturally relevant. Nketia (2019) advocates for the integration of these traditional practices into formal organizational policies, arguing that doing so can enhance the overall effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanisms.

In Ghana, institutions such as the Public Services Commission (PSC) and the Ghana Labour Commission have played key roles in implementing conflict resolution frameworks. The Labour Commission, in particular, has established a reputation for resolving employment-related disputes through arbitration and mediation. According to Mensah (2020), the Commission has been instrumental in addressing disputes related to wage negotiations, wrongful dismissals, and unfair labor practices, ensuring that both employees and employers comply with Ghana's labor laws. However, challenges remain, including resource constraints and delays that sometimes hinder the commission's ability to resolve disputes promptly.

Inconsistent or unclear policies can complicate conflict management in educational institutions. Policies that lack transparency or are perceived as unfair may foster resentment and exacerbate existing conflicts. Akinwale (2013) found that in Nigerian universities, unclear or inconsistently applied policies regarding promotions and resource allocation contributed to conflicts among faculty, who felt disadvantaged by the perceived lack of equity.

Similarly, in Ghana, universities that do not establish clear policies for conflict resolution often face challenges when disputes arise, as stakeholders lack a defined framework for addressing grievances (Opoku-Asare *et al.*, 2015). Implementing consistent, transparent policies for conflict



management can improve clarity and fairness, reducing the potential for misunderstandings and grievances.

The willingness of conflicting parties to cooperate is essential for successful conflict resolution. In educational settings, faculty, students, and administrators may have competing interests, making cooperation challenging. Furthermore, the skills of the conflict manager are critical; poorly managed discussions may exacerbate the issues rather than resolve them (Rahim, 2002).

In Ghana, research indicates that administrators often lack formal training in conflict resolution, which can lead to ineffective management of disputes (Frimpong *et al.*, 2021). Institutions should prioritize training for administrators in conflict management skills to ensure that they are equipped to mediate disputes constructively and foster a cooperative environment.

The timing and location of conflict resolution meetings can impact their effectiveness. Scheduling meetings at inconvenient times or in intimidating settings may discourage full participation, particularly from faculty members who may already feel marginalized. According to Benson and Manu (2024), effective conflict management requires careful consideration of when and where discussions take place, ensuring that all parties feel comfortable and can participate fully.

## **2.11 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework presented in the figure 2.2 below outlines the various aspects of conflict management, focusing on causes, types, strategies, roles, and external factors. At the center of the framework is the "Role of Management", which plays a crucial role in managing and resolving conflicts within an organization. The framework starts by identifying the Causes of Conflicts, such as poor working conditions, indiscipline, goal incompatibility, leadership styles, limited resources,

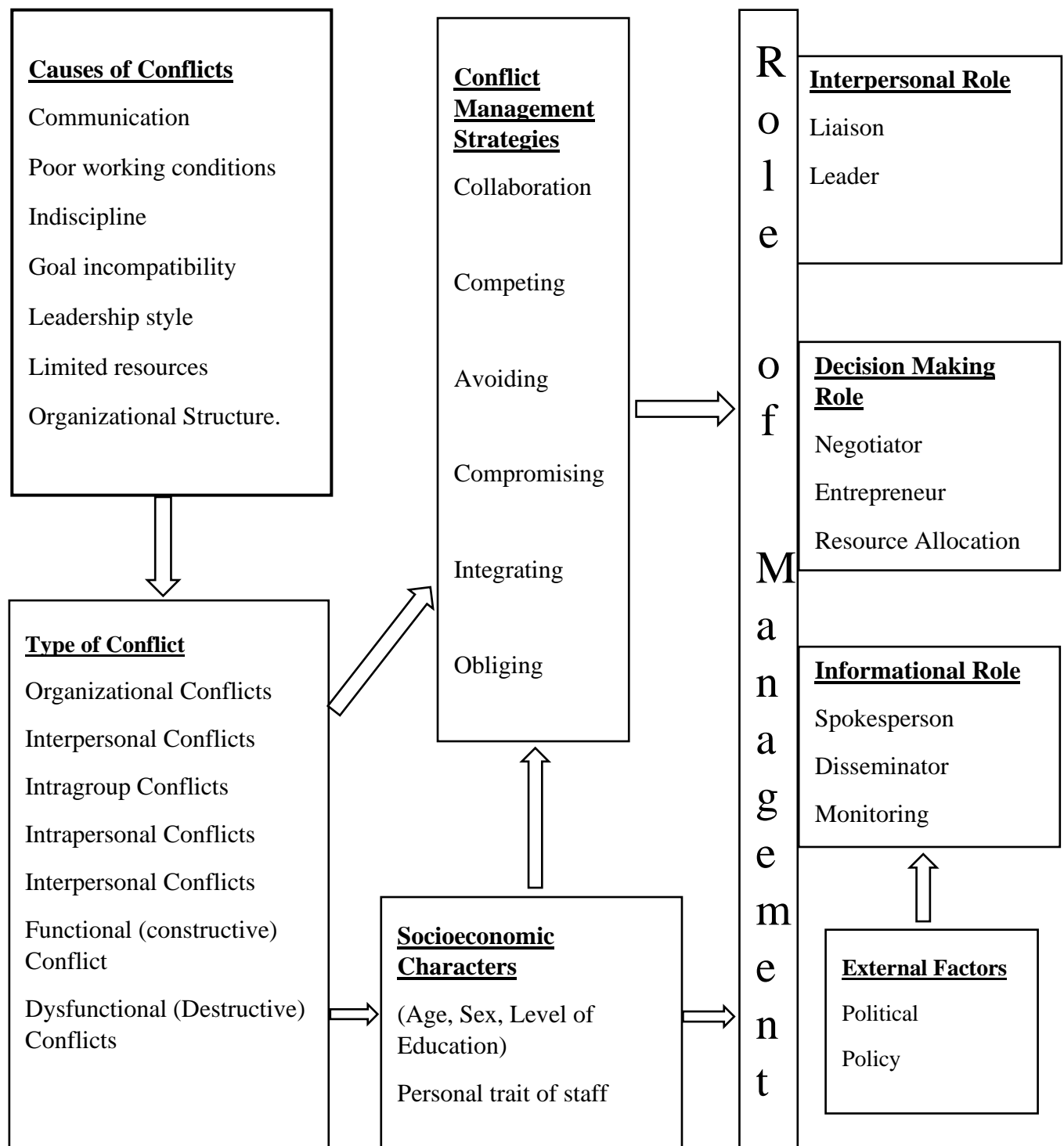


and organizational structure. These causes trigger different types of conflicts, including organizational, interpersonal, intergroup, and intrapersonal conflicts, as well as functional (constructive) and dysfunctional (destructive) conflicts.

To address these issues, the framework emphasizes various Conflict Management Strategies, which are divided into collaboration, competition, avoidance, compromise, integration, and obligation. These strategies help university management or any organization manage conflicts and reach resolutions. This is very important due to the dynamics of conflicts which require various theoretical perspectives and resolution approaches. It also explains why the study used multiple theories including; Human Needs Theory, Structural Theory and Economic Conflict Theory.

The framework also highlights the roles of management in conflict resolution, such as the Interpersonal Role (liaison, leader), the Decision-Making Role (negotiator, entrepreneur, resource allocation), and the Informational Role (spokesperson, disseminator, monitor). Management's decisions are influenced by Socioeconomic Characteristics (such as age, sex, education, and personal traits of staff) and External Factors, including political and government policy influences.

This conceptual framework from the authors own description, illustrates a comprehensive approach to understanding and managing conflicts at the Dr. Hilla Limann University.



**Fig. 2.2: Developed Conceptual Framework (Research Model)**

**Source: Author's construct, 2021**



## 2.12 Summary of Chapter

This chapter provided a comprehensive review of the literature on conflict and conflict management within educational institutions, particularly in the context of Ghana and African settings. It began by defining conflict and examining its different types and levels, discussing how both functional and dysfunctional conflicts can arise within organizations. The review delved into how conflicts in academic environments often stem from the interplay of individual and structural factors, impacting the organizational climate and effectiveness.

The theoretical framework established in this chapter laid the foundation for understanding conflict in higher education institutions. Four major theories were explored: Conflict Theory, Human Needs Theory, Structural Theory, and Economic Conflict Theory. Conflict Theory, rooted in the work of Karl Marx, provided insights into the tensions between different social groups, highlighting the power dynamics between administrative bodies and other stakeholders. Human Needs Theory emphasized that unresolved fundamental needs can lead to persistent conflict, underscoring the importance of addressing faculty and student needs to foster a harmonious environment. Structural Theory suggests that hierarchical authority structures within institutions can generate conflict, especially when there is an inequitable distribution of power. Finally, Economic Conflict Theory posits that competition over limited resources drives conflicts within educational institutions, particularly in resource-scarce environments.

The chapter also reviewed conflict management strategies relevant to the academic context, discussing competing, compromising, avoiding, and obliging approaches. It explored the strengths and weaknesses of each strategy and assessed their applicability in academic settings. Notably, the chapter highlighted that while some strategies, like obliging, may foster short-term harmony, they



can result in dissatisfaction if overused. Furthermore, examples from African universities illustrated how different strategies manifest in practice, providing context-specific insights into conflict management.

In conclusion, this chapter identified various factors that affect the management of conflicts in educational institutions. It emphasized the need for inclusive and transparent governance structures to mitigate conflicts arising from power imbalances and resource constraints. The chapter's findings underscore the complex nature of conflict within academic institutions and the necessity for tailored management approaches to address both the immediate and underlying causes of disputes.

These insights will serve as a basis for analyzing the conflict dynamics and management practices at Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University in the subsequent chapters.



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

The research approach employed for the study is presented in this chapter. Research methodology, according to Ormrod (2010), is the overall strategy a researcher employs to complete a project. The precise steps or methods used to find, pick, process, and analyse data regarding a given subject are known as the research methodology. According to Saunders and Rojon (2014), a research methodology is the methodical theoretical examination of the theory and presumptions that form the basis of a study. Furthermore, a research methodology is defined by Saunders *et al.*, (2012) as the procedures used in research projects that incorporate logical standards derived from the findings and the outcomes of those procedures. Methods are tools used in data collecting and analysis to provide context. These are broad research guidelines that specify how research should be conducted.

This section provides an overview of DHLTU and emphasizes the theoretical foundations of the research. The research methodology, conceptual framework, research design, population, sample strategy, and sampling procedure are all covered in detail in this chapter. This section provides further examples of the data gathering tool, data collection process (es), data processing, and data analysis. It also describes the steps involved in data analysis, how results are interpreted, and how to communicate the results. The last section addresses the study's ethical concerns.



### 3.2 Profile of the Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU)

Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU), formerly known as Wa Polytechnic, is a prominent higher education institution in Ghana's Upper West Region. Established with a mandate to provide quality technical and vocational education, DHLTU focuses on developing skilled professionals capable of addressing Ghana's developmental challenges. DHLTU offers a variety of technical and professional programs at diploma and bachelor's levels, particularly in fields related to applied sciences, engineering, business, and technology. In September 1999, the Wa Polytechnic was established as the Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University. However, the government did not appoint the Interim Governing Council to give the Polytechnic policy direction until 2002. In 2003, the first group of postsecondary students was accepted to study for an HND in Agricultural Engineering and a Secretaryship and Management Studies. After the Technical Universities Act, 2016 (Act 922), the Technical Universities (Amendment) Act 2018 (Act 974), and the Technical Universities (Amendment) Act 2020 (Act 1016) were passed, Wa Polytechnic was converted to a Technical University and renamed Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University.

The institution had several difficulties and had to start from “scratch”. The school operated out of borrowed space for almost ten years following its founding until it was able to secure land for a permanent location and, with support from the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund), create a master plan that would direct the construction of physical infrastructure. The University is now able to operate a state-of-the-art administration building, a lecture theater complex, workshops, and bungalows for some staff members thanks to the help of GETFund. But the amount that GETFund is currently allotted does not cover all of the University's urgent needs. There were never any residential facilities for students, and they still do not. The organisation created a strategy plan to direct its operations, with the goal of becoming a preeminent hub for applied technology

and offering career-focused education to alleviate rural poverty and promote national growth. The strategic plan's five main points are: Instruction, Study, and Originality Development of Human Resources Development of Physical Infrastructure Application and Growth of ICT Financial Resource Mobilization and Administration.

### **3.3 Mission**

The Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University is a government institution committed to provide top-notch postsecondary education via non-formal short-term programs and courses, Bachelor of Technology programs, and Higher National Diploma (HND) programs. With a focus on engineering, applied science and technology, management, and applied arts, the university hopes to become a pioneer in competency-based learning course delivery, catering to the demands of business and industry, the service sector, and the general public. There are now 2,062 students enrolled in the university's three faculties and one school.

### **3.4 Institutional Structure and Governance**

The governance structure of DHLTU comprises multiple layers, including the University Council, Executive Management Team, academic staff, administrative staff, and a vibrant student body. This structure is designed to foster decision-making processes that reflect the institution's academic and operational priorities. The management team of DHLTU includes key decision-makers and administrators responsible for overseeing both academic and operational functions. The executive management typically consists of the Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Finance Officer, and Heads of Departments across various academic disciplines. Additionally, the Director of Human Resources and Dean of Students are instrumental in shaping institutional policies and



managing internal affairs, including conflict resolution. In total, DHLTU's management team includes approximately 12 key individuals who contribute to high-level decision-making and governance. DHLTU employs a diverse workforce comprising faculty members (academic staff), administrative personnel, and support staff. The faculty includes lecturers, senior lecturers, and professors who are responsible for the delivery of academic programs. In total, the institution has about 178 full-time employees, segmented as follows:

- **Senior Members:** This category includes academic staff with significant teaching and research responsibilities, as well as senior administrators involved in high-level decision-making.
- **Senior Staff:** These employees serve in administrative and technical roles that support both academic and operational functions.
- **Junior Staff:** Junior staff members provide essential services across various departments and are critical to the day-to-day operations of the institution.

Each employee category has distinct roles and responsibilities, contributing to the institution's overall mission while sometimes experiencing different challenges, which may be sources of conflict.

### 3.5 Student Population

The student body at DHLTU is an essential component of the university's community, with enrollment figures that reflect the institution's role in providing accessible higher education in the region. DHLTU serves approximately 3,500 students, enrolled across various diploma and bachelor's degree programs. The student population includes individuals from diverse cultural and

socio-economic backgrounds, bringing a variety of perspectives and needs to the campus environment. This diversity, while enriching the campus experience, can also present resource allocation, academic competition, and social integration challenges.

### **3.6 Institutional Policies and Culture**

DHLTU's institutional culture is shaped by a combination of formal policies and informal practices. The university has established a Code of Ethics, disciplinary procedures, and conflict resolution mechanisms to promote a conducive environment for academic and administrative interactions. However, the diversity of the staff and student body, combined with resource constraints, can sometimes lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. Management is responsible for upholding these policies, addressing grievances, and fostering an inclusive campus environment.

In summary, DHLTU's structure comprises a multi-layered management team, a diverse workforce, and a sizable student population, each with unique roles and responsibilities. Understanding the composition of these groups and their interactions is crucial for analyzing conflicts and developing effective conflict management strategies within the institution.

### **3.7 Philosophical Underpinning**

Research philosophy, according to Saunders *et al.* (2016), is the evolution of the research background, research knowledge, and its character. A researcher's presumptions about how they perceive the world can be argued to depend on their choice of philosophy, which in turn influences their research strategy and methodology (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Easterby-Smith *et al.*, (2012)





argue that research philosophy is the most important element of methodology and it sets in motion the journey through the research process. They contend that three main reasons are to be considered in understanding the philosophical underpinning of research. Firstly, it clarifies and formulates the designs and structure of the research, leading to its techniques for collecting and interpreting the data.

Secondly, it guides researchers to make the correct and most suitable methodological decisions, indicating the benefits and limitations of each aspect of the process. Finally, it helps researchers generate new ideas in relation to research design and adapt existing knowledge in accordance with the subject being investigated (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2012).

Modern social science research is structured and organized by a number of paradigms or worldviews, including constructivism, pragmatism, and positivism. According to Creswell (2014), positivism is frequently connected to extremely formal rhetoric and quantitative techniques that emphasize accuracy, generalizability, dependability, and reproducibility. Constructivism is usually linked to literary informal rhetoric and qualitative approaches, where the researcher creates subjective interpretations of the phenomena by drawing as much as possible from the participants' perspectives (Creswell, 2014). The paradigm of pragmatism, which this study embraces, tries to close the gap between the naturalistic techniques and free-form orientation of newer approaches and the scientific method and structuralist orientation of older approaches (Creswell, 2014).

The tenet of pragmatic research methodology is that investigators ought to apply the philosophical and/or methodological strategy that best suits the specific research question under investigation. This approach is frequently linked to mixed-methods or multiple-method approaches (Biesta, 2010; Creswell 2014; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Maxcy, 2003; Morgan, 2014; Teddlie &





Tashakkori, 2009), in which the outcomes and research objectives are given more weight than the methods themselves. Both formal and informal rhetoric may be used (Creswell, 2014). One of the main tenets of pragmatic philosophy is that reality and knowledge are socially produced habits and beliefs (Yefimov, 2004). Most pragmatics concur that all knowledge in the world is socially built, although different social constructions of knowledge tend to fit different people's experiences more or less (Morgan, 2014).

While constructivism emphasizes qualitative methods and inductive reasoning, positivism usually promotes quantitative methods and deductive reasoning. Nonetheless, pragmatism accepts both extremes and offers a more adaptable and introspective method for designing research projects (Feilzer, 2010; Morgan, 2007; Pansiri, 2005). By taking this position, the pragmatist researcher can decide which methodology and study design will best answer the research issue. According to pragmatics, the definition of truth is everything reliable or enduring via repeated usage by one person (Baker & Schaltegger, 2015).

This study used a pragmatic approach to gather information from staff members of the investigated institution using interviews and a questionnaire to better understand the reasons behind how conflicts are handled to improve staff effectiveness. Pragmatists believe that there is a "real world" out there, but they also think that everyone has a different interpretation of it, since their main goal is to solve problems by selecting the explanations that lead to the desired results (Morgan, 2007).

Pragmatists hold that as reality is ever-changing, the best way to learn is to apply our knowledge and reasoning to new situations as they come up. Pragmatism places focus on the real-world issues that individuals face, the research questions that are put forth, and the findings of the investigation. The DHLTU has experienced a variety of conflict situations, which has made it necessary to

determine the underlying reasons of disputes and the best ways to resolve them in order to promote institutional growth. Pragmatism provides a practical element as the researcher strives to examine ever-changing organisational settings as this study examines conflict management tactics that improve staff effectiveness in Higher Education Institutions.

### 3.8 Research Approach

Scholarly research approaches include mixed, qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell, 2014). Variables are measured, numerical data is analysed using statistical techniques, and objective ideas are tested by looking at the correlations between variables (Creswell, 2014; Taylor *et al.*, 2015). To understand the meanings people, attribute to certain events and phenomena, qualitative research is employed. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015) assert that qualitative research facilitates the understanding and interpretation of specific phenomena. The mixed methods research (MMR) strategy combines qualitative and quantitative data to completely understand the study problem (Creswell, 2014). Mixed-methods studies combine qualitative and quantitative research techniques at different phases of the study (Ritchie *et al.*, 2013). Dedoose (2012) asserts that the MMR approach is essential for approaching research subjects from multiple relevant angles. This is demonstrated by the current study, which attempts to collect information from management and employees alike.

To compensate for any limitations arising from the use of either methodology in isolation, this study utilizes the MMR, which combines the most advantageous aspects of the qualitative and quantitative techniques. Researchers can add extra meaning to words, numbers, visuals, and stories by using the MMR. MMR seeks to reduce the disadvantages of both quantitative and qualitative approaches in research projects, as opposed to attempting to replace one strategy (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). According to Silverman (2013),



MMR offers a more comprehensive picture since it uses a variety of approaches to gather as many distinct perspectives and facets of the subject as feasible.

### **3.9 Mixed-Method Research and Triangulation**

This study adopted a mixed-method research approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. The mixed-method approach is grounded in pragmatist philosophy, which focuses on practical problem-solving and integrating different methods to address research questions more comprehensively (Creswell, 2014). This approach allowed for a broader understanding of conflict management at Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU) by collecting both numerical data (quantitative) and in-depth insights (qualitative) to form a holistic view of the issue.

The use of a mixed-method approach in conflict management research is well-supported in the literature. Researchers have emphasized the value of integrating qualitative and quantitative methods to gain a deeper understanding of complex organizational dynamics (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Molina-Azorín, 2016). Qualitative data can provide rich contextual information and help uncover underlying factors, while quantitative data offers statistical trends and measurable outcomes. By combining these complementary approaches, researchers can develop a more comprehensive analysis and generate robust findings (Creswell, 2014).

In this research, methodological triangulation was employed as a strategy to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. Triangulation in mixed-method research refers to the use of multiple data collection methods to confirm and cross-verify results from different sources (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 2015). By utilizing both a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, this study aimed





to validate the quantitative findings with qualitative insights and vice versa. This process ensured that any potential biases or limitations in one method were compensated for by the strengths of the other method, enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the overall findings (Flick, 2018).

The combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques was applied sequentially, with the quantitative data collected first, followed by qualitative data collection. This allowed the researcher to explore statistical trends through the quantitative phase, which were then explored in more depth through the qualitative phase (Ivankova *et al.*, 2006). Triangulation was therefore used as a tool within the mixed-method framework to enhance the credibility and comprehensiveness of the study's findings, as recommended by various methodological scholars (Creswell 2014; Bryman and Bell, 2015).

Overall, the mixed-method approach, combined with methodological triangulation, provided a robust and rigorous research design to investigate the complex phenomenon of conflict management at DHLTU. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative data, the study aimed to generate a more holistic understanding of the underlying issues and develop evidence-based solutions to address the challenges faced by the institution.

The explanatory sequential research design employed in this study ensured that quantitative data were collected and analyzed first, and then qualitative data second to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results. This approach is common and more robust (Creswell, 2014).

This design is well-suited for the present study on conflict management in higher education institutions for a few key reasons:

1. The initial quantitative phase allows the researcher to gather numerical data and identify statistical trends related to the nature and impact of conflicts at DHLTU.

2. The subsequent qualitative phase can then delve deeper into these quantitative findings, providing contextual insights and in-depth explanations that help interpret and validate the statistical results.
3. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data provides a more comprehensive understanding of the complex phenomenon of conflict management, leveraging the strengths of both approaches.
4. The sequential structure enables the qualitative findings to build upon and elaborate on the initial quantitative results, leading to a richer overall analysis.

This research design aligns well with the stated objectives of the study, which include identifying the sources and causes of conflicts, assessing the impact of unresolved conflicts, evaluating current conflict management strategies, and understanding the barriers to effective resolution. The integration of quantitative and qualitative methods is crucial to address these multi-faceted research questions thoroughly.

By employing the sequential explanatory design, the researcher can capitalize on the benefits of methodological triangulation discussed earlier, using the qualitative phase to corroborate, explain, and expand upon the quantitative findings. This mixed-methods approach is widely recommended for complex organizational studies, as it allows for a more holistic and robust investigation of the research problem (Creswell 2014; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).



### **3.10 Population and Sampling**

#### **3.10.1 Population of the Study**

A research population is a group that the study design aims to provide information about (Jensen & Laurie, 2016). According to Faeni (2016), the population is the entirety of a collection of people or things that have predetermined common features that are pertinent to the study. According to Bell and Waters (2014), a population is the entire set of people or units that the researcher is interested in and the people at which the study's conclusions can be applied. One hundred and seventy-eight (178) full-time University personnel make up the study's population. They are divided into three categories: Junior Staff, Senior Staff and Senior Members (DHLTU, 2020). Because only institutional personnel are uniquely prepared and in the best position to share information and express their experiences regarding the impact of disputes within the University, this population was deemed appropriate.

#### **3.10.2 Sampling Procedure**

The process of choosing a representative element or subset of the specified target population is known as sampling (Orcher, 2016). It entails taking a sample from a larger population, observing the smaller group, and then extrapolating the results to the larger population. Drawing a predetermined number of items from a sampling pool to represent all potential components present in the population is known as sampling (Joo & Jo, 2017). The goal of gathering data from a sample is to allow the researcher to conclude the population that the sample is representative of. Representativeness and precision are crucial for sampling, according to Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2012). Therefore, all three groups of university staff members made up the sample for this study. Based on this information, the sampling procedure for this study was carefully designed to ensure that the perspectives of all key stakeholders within DHLTU were represented, allowing for a

comprehensive analysis of conflict dynamics and management strategies. The study population includes Senior Members (management and senior academic staff), Senior Staff (administrative personnel), and Junior Staff (support staff). These groups were selected to capture diverse viewpoints across different organizational roles, responsibilities, and experiences with conflict within the institution.

### **3.10.2.1 Sample and Sample Size Determination**

According to Banerjee and Chaudhury (2022), samples are smaller subgroups that reflect their populations and help draw conclusions and opinions from the population. According to Burgess (2001), a sample is a subset of the population that is typically selected because it would be too costly, time-consuming, or need too many additional resources to contact every member of the community. According to Ojo (2003), the sample size of a research study consists of elements chosen for analysis from a population, keeping in mind that the elements chosen are representative of the population. Thus, the sample must be sufficiently large and representative, necessitating the objective determination of its size and distribution (Shaw, 2012).



In academic research, two different kinds of sampling strategies are employed: probability and non-probability (Orcher, 2016; Sarstedt *et al.*, 2017). Probability sampling approaches include random, cluster, and stratified sampling (Creswell 2014; Sarstedt *et al.*, 2017). These are generally utilized when there is an equal likelihood that every member of the population will be selected for the sample population (Creswell 2014; Sarstedt *et al.*, 2017). Non-probability sampling, on the other hand, usually places restrictions on the size and makeup of the sample population, relies more on human judgment, and uses less random sample selection (Orcher, 2016; Sarstedt *et al.*,

2017). A well-managed non-probability sample can yield valid and meaningful results (Cooper & Schindler, 2011).

To get significant results, the size of a study sample is always important (High, 2000). All those staff with four years and above experience, willing and available were selected using the census approach. With this the researcher was able to select 130 respondents which was a manageable sample size as shown in Table 3.1. Sargeant (2012) is of the view that research participants must be qualified to answer the research question and must possess experience in, or with, the researched phenomenon. As such, the participants' qualifications for this study included at least four (4) years of full-time service as an institutional employee. These personalities in one way or another might have experienced or witnessed conflicts at DHLTU and can better respond to related issues of conflicts and have the potential to contribute significant information towards addressing the research problem.

**Table 3.1: Summary of Respondents**

Category of Staff	Population	Sample size
Senior Members	104	65
Senior Staff	26	23
Junior Staff	48	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>130</b>

**Source: Field Study (2020)**





Besides, purposive sampling technique was utilised to select 10 key informants. According to Bryman and Bell (2015), Purposive sampling is the process of selecting individuals who have experienced a specific phenomenon and allows for the sole inclusion of research participants who are aligned with the researched phenomenon (Mark, 2017). The individuals identified as part of the purposive sampling process must be uniquely qualified to describe their experiences articulately and reflectively (Palinkas *et al.*, 2015). According to Edmonds and Kennedy (2016), this type of sampling is thought to be the most widely utilized method for selecting sample members who fit particular requirements linked to answering the study question. Through this technique, 10 full-time employees (key management personnel) of DHLTU were purposely selected. The selection was informed by the principle of saturation (Merriam, 2009). These respondents had the necessary experience and insight to support this study. The study thus, made use of a combined sample size of 140 respondents.

### **3.11 Data Collection**

The research collected data from primary and secondary sources. In-depth interviews and questionnaires are primary sources of data, according to Skaik (2013), whereas published theses, internet resources, and articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers are secondary sources. A few policy documents from DHLTU and other postsecondary institutions, as well as published books, journals, magazines, bulletins, newspapers, reports, essays, and other research works of this study, were among the secondary sources of data.



### 3.11.1 In-depth Interviews

When performing mixed-method research which involves qualitative analysis, Bordenave (2017), Chan *et al.*, (2013), Hartas (2015), and Zhang *et al.*, (2018) emphasize that open-ended questions work best. Interviews with people who were there at the researched event, according to Trickel (2015), are essential to the mixed method design's effective execution. Because interviews are frequently used to investigate lived experiences and human perspectives, this study used semi-structured interviews as its primary data-gathering approach (Charbonneau & Freeman, 2016; Desai *et al.*, 2016). It is believed that conflict is a lived experience that is finest comprehended from the viewpoints of those who have gone through it.

Benefits of interviewing in qualitative research, interviews are widely acknowledged as the most popular technique for gathering data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Flick, 2014). Furthermore, it is recommended that the main way case study researchers comprehend the instance, event, or phenomena they are studying is through interviews (Englander, 2012; Yin, 2017). Researchers can gather comprehensive information regarding the subject of their investigation through interviews (Saunders *et al.*, 2003).

According to Easterby *et al.* (2012), semi-structured interviews are suitable when it is important to comprehend the background information that the interviewee utilizes to form his or her thoughts and beliefs about a specific issue or circumstance. Because the researcher can direct the interview while adjusting to participants, questions, and interview flow, semi-structured interviews are thought to be the best interview method for qualitative study research (Bordenave, 2017; Dillard, 2017). Getting a thorough account and comprehension of the researched experience from the interviewee's point of view is the ultimate aim of a semi-structured interview (Bordenave, 2017; Dillard, 2017). By answering a predetermined set of interview questions and distinctive follow-up

questions, research participants are able to express their points of view (Englander, 2012). When researchers are unable to watch participants in person, interviews provide them with valuable information and enable participants to provide in-depth personal details (Creswell, 2012).

The management of the studied institution provided information for this study through semi-structured interviews. The researcher can elicit more information during this kind of interview in order to address the research topic. Interviews are the best method for interviewing people like Management of DHLTU in this study, who are eloquent, talk freely, and feel comfortable sharing their thoughts (Creswell, 2014). Appendix A, the interview guide, is included.

Nonetheless, there are certain drawbacks to interviewing as a method of gathering qualitative data. For instance, the data that respondents supply is filtered through the interviewer's perspective (the research report only includes the interviewer's interpretation of the interviewees) (Creswell, 2014). Interviewees may only provide the information they want the investigator to hear, therefore the information gathered from them could be misleading. Moreover, the interviewer's presence could affect the interviewee's answers (Creswell, 2014).

### **3.11.2 Structured Questionnaire**

According to Collis and Hussey (2014), the main purpose of a survey is to collect data from a sample to statistically analyse the data and extrapolate the results to the entire population. Because it allows the researcher to collect quantitative data that can be used to model the correlations between variables and provide reasons for them, this method is widely used in business and management research (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). When collecting a large amount of data from a large number of people, this method offers several advantages, such as enhanced process control and time and cost savings (Saunders *et al.*, 2016).



Compared to interviews, questionnaires allow for a quicker polling of a larger number of respondents. Respondents who wish to participate in questionnaire-based surveys can do so at any convenient moment, and the researcher is not necessarily needed to be present (Townsend, 2013). As long as they are properly designed, questionnaires are simple to administer, take less time to complete, and help prevent researcher bias because participants are not pressured to provide a specific response. A questionnaire is an unchanging, homogeneous, stable, and consistent measure (Best & Kahn, 2004).

Many people would rather write than speak about specific topics, especially when the researcher is present and they are discussing their own experiences with the subject under study. A questionnaire's drawback, according to Best and Kahn (2004), is that certain participants might not comprehend the questions or return it, giving the researcher inaccurate information.

Given the many benefits of questionnaires, the study asks respondents directly both closed and open-ended questions to find out what they think about conflicts and how they handle them. There were follow-up questions with infinite fields to collect more data when using open-ended inquiries.

The Five-Point Likert Scale was taken into consideration in creating the questionnaires, which were intended to address the study's objectives by identifying the main causes of conflicts, how they affect staff effectiveness, what obstacles exist for managing conflicts, and how to overcome them to enhance institutional performance. Refer to Appendix B for the utilized questionnaire.

### **3.11.3 Reliability and Validity**

According to Lub (2015) and Noble and Smith (2015), the credibility of academic research is strongly correlated with its validity, dependability, and related conclusions. Statistical techniques, which are employed in quantitative research studies to increase the validity of the study findings,



cannot be applied to qualitative research (Noble & Smith, 2015). Qualitative research develops strategies to guarantee the validity of the research study and results (Lub, 2015; Noble & Smith, 2015). In qualitative research, reliability and validity are supported by trustworthiness, which also helps to establish the validity of the research findings (Noble & Smith, 2015). If scholarly research is to be applied in professional and academic domains, it must be of the highest caliber and exhibit credibility (Noble & Smith, 2015; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

### ***3.11.3.1 Reliability***

Qualitative and quantitative research have rather different definitions of reliability (Golafshani, 2003; Leung, 2015). The precise reproducibility of the findings and related procedures is the definition of reliability in quantitative research (Golafshani, 2003; Leung, 2015). In qualitative research, consistency is a key component of reliability. Though the data can vary in terms of richness and atmosphere, the methods used in qualitative research should always produce the same results (Golafshani, 2003; Leung, 2015). Reliability in the study is established if the procedures and techniques produce data or conclusions that are consistently generated (Baškarada, 2017; Golafshani, 2003; Leung, 2015; Yin, 2017). In this study, steps were taken to ensure that the research design and instruments were reliable, increasing the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Given the mixed-methods design, which incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, specific strategies were used to maintain high reliability in each aspect of the study.

The research design was structured to capture consistent responses from diverse participants across DHLTU's organizational levels. To achieve this, stratified sampling was employed to ensure each job category (Senior Members, Senior Staff, and Junior Staff) was adequately represented, and



purposive sampling within each stratum helped identify key respondents across these groups. This structure increases reliability by reducing sampling bias and ensuring the data accurately reflects the perspectives of different employee categories within the institution.

In addition, the sequential mixed-method approach strengthens reliability by using methodological triangulation, where data collected through surveys is complemented by in-depth qualitative interviews. This cross-verification from multiple data sources helps to confirm findings, enhancing the reliability of the results.

To further improve reliability, the research instruments, including the survey questionnaire and interview guide were pretested on a sample group within DHLTU before full-scale data collection. The pretest included four part-time Senior Members and Senior Staff each, and two casual Junior Staff categories. This provided a representative sample for testing the instrument's effectiveness across different respondent types. This pilot group was selected from the DHLTU campus to emulate the actual data collection environment and ensure that the instruments were tailored to the context of the study. During the pretest, participants were asked to complete the questionnaire and participate in a sample interview, allowing the researcher to identify any questions that were difficult to understand or ambiguously worded. They were assured of their anonymity and their views were not part of the main study. To avoid any unintended diffusion of information, a 4-week time gap was allowed before the actual study was conducted. Key adjustments made after the pretest included, rephrasing unclear questions to improve clarity, particularly in items addressing complex concepts related to conflict types and management strategies. Also, some responses were simplified on certain Likert-scale items to reduce respondent confusion and improve response accuracy. Finally, questions were reorganized to ensure logical flow and increase the overall coherence of the survey. These adjustments, informed by feedback from the

pretest participants, enhanced the instrument's reliability by reducing potential misunderstandings and ensuring that questions were interpreted consistently by respondents. By improving the clarity and coherence of the instruments, the pretest process helped to ensure that the data collected would be reliable, reflecting respondents' true perspectives on conflict management at DHLTU.

### **3.11.3.2 Validity**

According to Silverman (2013), validity is often understood to be the degree to which an account accurately depicts the social phenomenon it refers to. The degree to which the survey captures the necessary elements for measurement is referred to as research validity. To put it simply, validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. The appropriateness of the study procedures, instruments, and data is referred to as validity in academic research (Leung, 2015). To maximize validity across qualitative and quantitative findings, the study employs methodological triangulation by collecting data from surveys, interviews, and document analysis. This triangulation helps to cross-verify data from multiple sources, ensuring that the findings are not reliant on a single method or viewpoint. For example, if both survey responses and interview insights indicate similar causes of conflict, the study's findings are more robust and credible. By incorporating content, construct, face, and criterion validity measures, as well as triangulating data across methods, this study ensures a high level of validity in capturing the complex nature of conflicts at DHLTU. These efforts contribute to the reliability and credibility of the findings, allowing the study to draw meaningful conclusions and provide actionable recommendations.





### 3.12 Data Analysis

#### 3.12.1 Determine the Primary Causes of Conflicts at DHLTU

To determine the primary causes of conflicts at DHLTU, a mixed-methods approach was employed, combining insights from qualitative interviews, a quantitative survey questionnaire, and a literature review. This approach aligned with the study's mixed method design, allowing both in-depth exploration and broader quantification of conflict causes within the institution. By triangulating data from multiple sources, this objective sought a comprehensive understanding of the factors leading to workplace conflicts, ensuring that findings are both detailed and representative of various perspectives. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews with DHLTU management was the primary qualitative data source, capturing management perspectives on the underlying causes of conflicts. Bryman and Bell (2015) advocate for semi-structured interviews in organizational research, noting their effectiveness in uncovering nuanced perspectives on workplace dynamics. This approach also aligns with Yin's (2017) case study methodology, which emphasizes gathering rich, contextual data from key organisational stakeholders. Interview questions were also designed to probe both institutional and individual factors that may contribute to conflicts, such as leadership styles, organizational structure, or job roles. The management interviews were coded and analyzed thematically to identify recurring themes in perceived causes of conflicts. This analysis helped examine the language and attitudes expressed by management to understand potential biases or assumptions that may influence conflict dynamics. The focus on management insights through interviews is supported by Saunders *et al.*, (2019) and Wang *et al.*, (2020), who argue that leadership perspectives are crucial in understanding organizational conflict dynamics. This qualitative data enriched the findings by revealing complex, nuanced causes of conflicts that may not be evident in survey responses, providing a managerial perspective on





internal challenges (Edmondson & McManus 2007; Maxwell, 2013). A structured questionnaire was distributed to DHLTU employees to quantitatively assess the prevalence and perceived causes of conflicts. The survey covered various potential conflict causes, such as resource scarcity, role ambiguity, and interpersonal issues, allowing employees to rate their level of agreement with each factor on a 5-point Likert scale. This scale included options such as (1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree), allowing management and employees to rank their perceptions on the causes of conflicts in causes of conflicts. Data from the questionnaire was analyzed statistically using frequencies, percentages, and, where applicable, mixed-method approach Kendall's rank correlation analyses to determine the strength of association between different causes and the occurrence of conflicts.

Kendall's rank correlation also known as Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance is a statistical measure that quantifies the level of agreement or concordance among multiple raters or respondents regarding a specific set of variables, causes or constraints (Munduate *et al.*, 1999; Yildirim *et al.*, 2020; Tehrani & Yamini, 2020). Kendall's W ranges from 0 to 1, where a value close to 1 indicates a high degree of agreement among the respondents. Kendall's coefficient of concordance will be used to test the agreement among the analysis of the constraints by the respondents. This expressed as

This is expressed as: 
$$W = \frac{12[st^2 - s(\frac{t}{n})^2]}{nm^2(n^2-1)}$$

where W = Kendall's coefficient of concordance

t = sum of ranks for each cause

n = number of causes

m = number of respondents.

### **3.12.2. Analyze How Unresolved Disputes Affect Employee Productivity and Organizational Success**

This objective was explored using a combination of qualitative interviews, a survey questionnaire, and document analysis. Each data source addressed different facets of the impact of unresolved conflicts, allowing for a holistic assessment that incorporates management insights, employee perceptions, and institutional records. In-depth interviews with DHLTU management helped investigate how unresolved conflicts influence key performance areas, including employee productivity, academic outcomes, and institutional cohesion. The interviews included questions aimed at uncovering specific examples of productivity loss, decreased morale, and potential effects on organizational success. The interview data was further analyzed under thematic areas to identify patterns in management perceptions regarding the consequences of unresolved conflicts. Themes such as employee disengagement, lowered academic output, and organizational instability was coded to assess the pervasiveness and depth of these impacts. A structured questionnaire was used capture employee perceptions on how unresolved conflicts impact their work experience and productivity. The survey addressed factors such as motivation, job satisfaction, collaboration, and willingness to stay at DHLTU, offering a quantitative perspective on the impact of conflicts from the employees' viewpoint. Through these methods, this objective captured the perceived impacts of unresolved conflicts on productivity and success, offering a well-rounded view of their consequences.

### **3.12.3. Examine the Tactics and Systems Employed by DHLTU to Resolve Disputes**

To examine DHLTU's conflict resolution tactics and systems, a combination of qualitative interviews, a survey questionnaire, and document analysis were used. This mixed-methods





approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the institution's formal and informal conflict resolution practices, as well as employee perceptions of their effectiveness. Management interviews focused on the specific conflict resolution strategies, policies, and procedures used by DHLTU. Questions explored various strategies such as mediation, direct negotiation, and formal grievance mechanisms, along with their perceived effectiveness.

Interview data were coded to reveal common themes and specific strategies, examining how management adapts or adjusts tactics based on different conflict types. Analysis focused on identifying which tactics are most favored and why, and any perceived gaps in existing conflict resolution systems. The employee survey included questions on awareness, accessibility, and perceptions of DHLTU's conflict management tactics. Employees rated their agreement with statements regarding the effectiveness of various strategies and their confidence in the institution's ability to manage conflicts effectively. Descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation analyses were used to identify patterns in employee perceptions across different demographics. For instance, comparing responses by length of service or job category could reveal if certain groups have differing experiences or views on conflict resolution effectiveness. This approach provides a comprehensive view of DHLTU's conflict management practices, with data from both management and employees on the perceived effectiveness of these systems. Data from the questionnaire was analyzed statistically using frequencies, percentages, and, where applicable, Kendall's rank correlation analysis to determine the strength of agreement between different tactics and Systems Employed by DHLTU to Resolve Disputes.



#### **3.12.4. Determine the Obstacles DHLTU Faces in Managing Conflicts Effectively**

This objective was addressed by using qualitative interviews and a survey questionnaire and identifying both institution-specific and general obstacles to effective conflict management. Management interviews delved into perceived barriers to effective conflict management, such as organizational culture, resource constraints, and leadership challenges. Questions explored both systemic and situational obstacles, helping to identify internal barriers that may prevent conflict resolution. Data from these interviews were analyzed to categorize common themes, focusing on factors cited frequently by different respondents. This thematic analysis helped prioritize the most significant obstacles from management's perspective. The employee survey included items about perceived obstacles to conflict management, enabling quantitative assessment of commonly encountered barriers. Statements focused on issues such as communication breakdown, policy gaps, and leadership responsiveness, with respondents rating their agreement. Statistical analysis will be used to determine if certain demographic groups experience specific obstacles more acutely, identifying patterns in obstacles faced by different staff categories. A review of existing literature on conflict management barriers in higher education helped contextualize DHLTU's challenges within broader themes. This review highlighted whether DHLTU's obstacles are typical in higher education settings or if unique factors exist. By comparing DHLTU's data with findings from the literature, this analysis provided insights into areas where DHLTU aligns with or diverges from common barriers.

The use of qualitative interviews and survey questionnaires to assess conflict management obstacles aligns with the approach recommended by Rahim (2017), who emphasized the importance of incorporating both management and employee perspectives when analyzing organizational conflict dynamics. Additionally, the thematic analysis of interview data followed



the coding framework outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), which has been widely applied in conflict research within higher education settings (Watson *et al.*, 2017).

The review of existing literature on conflict management barriers in higher education settings built upon the work of (Monney *et al.*, 2017; Akparep *et al.*, (2019), who identified common obstacles such as resource constraints, cultural norms, and leadership challenges across various academic institutions. This contextual understanding helped situate DHLTU's experiences within the broader landscape of conflict management in the higher education sector.

### **3.12.5 Investigate the Institutional Guidelines, Policies, and Procedures Available for Resolving Disputes and How They Address Obstacles to Conflict Management**

This objective was analyzed through document analysis, qualitative interviews, and comparative analysis, examining DHLTU's policies alongside best practices from other institutions. Institutional documents such as the Code of Ethics, grievance procedures, and conflict resolution policies will be thoroughly reviewed to assess DHLTU's formal framework for managing conflicts. Analysis focused on the comprehensiveness, clarity, and accessibility of these documents. Specific attention was given to identifying policies that address known barriers (e.g., communication, resource limitations) and any procedural gaps that may hinder effective conflict resolution. Management interviews investigated the implementation of DHLTU's policies.

### **3.13 Ethical Considerations**

When conducting research, ethical considerations are extremely important and need to be followed. The prevention of harm for each participant is the first concern when it comes to research ethics. According to Farquhar (2012), the method of doing ethical research should be advantageous



to participants, and the fundamental tenet of not inflicting damage is acknowledged. Bryman and Bell (2015) state that all researchers should carefully consider the subjects of their studies and whether there are any actions that they should avoid doing.

Chilisa (2005) asserts that norms of conduct that protect study participants from physical, mental, and/or psychological harm are fundamental to ethical considerations in social investigation. In general, research ethics pertain to the conduct of the project's researchers, the research participants, and the ways in which the research is planned, gathered, and analyzed (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). In order to uphold the dignity of their subjects and properly publish their findings, researchers must adhere to research ethics, which is crucial in today's world (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011). The research took into account and followed these ethical considerations:

The supervisors were given the data collection equipment to carefully inspect and verify their scientific validity. Informed permission was the only need for study participation. Before starting the data collection process, the researcher requested approval from the research institution's leadership (copy of the letter provided as in Appendix C). To prevent deceit, the goal of the study was communicated to participants in advance. Additionally, respondents were made aware of their freedom to query the research team at any point during the procedure and request explanation if needed. Participants were guaranteed that their answers would be utilized solely for scholarly purposes, and not in the researcher's role as an employee of the studied establishment.

Because participants in the study were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality of their answers, neither the interview guide nor the questionnaire asked for personal information. According to Creswell (2014), research subjects' privacy must be respected by not going beyond what is necessary for the study's boundaries or disclosing personal information. The study acknowledged

the contributions of all authors and sources of data acquired to solve the research topic since the researcher is aware of the consequences of plagiarism and the falsification of authorship, evidence, data, findings, and conclusions.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the study, focusing on the five objectives outlined in Chapter One. The analysis is based on data collected through structured questionnaires completed by staff members of Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU) and semi-structured interviews conducted with members of the university's leadership team. These methods provided a blend of quantitative and qualitative insights, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of conflict at DHLTU.

The primary goal of this chapter is to discuss findings concerning the study's overarching aim of identifying the main causes and sources of conflicts at DHLTU and determining effective management strategies to improve individual and organizational performance. Specifically, this chapter addresses the following five objectives:

1. Determine the primary causes of conflicts at DHLTU.
2. Analyze how unresolved disputes affect the productivity of employees and the success of the organization.
3. Examine the tactics and systems employed by DHLTU to resolve disputes.
4. Determine the obstacles that DHLTU faces in managing conflicts effectively.
5. Investigate the institutional guidelines, policies, and procedures that are available for resolving disputes and how they handle the obstacles to efficient conflict management.







A mixed-methods approach, underpinned by the pragmatic research paradigm, was employed to address these objectives. Quantitative data were gathered through questionnaires, which provided statistical trends and measurable outcomes, while qualitative data from interviews offered in-depth perspectives on the causes, impacts, and management of conflicts. This combination of methods, supported by methodological triangulation, ensures the reliability and validity of the findings.

The discussion in this chapter is organized according to the five objectives, starting with the identification of conflict causes, followed by an analysis of their impacts on employee productivity and organizational success. Subsequently, the chapter explores the conflict resolution tactics and systems employed by DHLTU and examines the barriers to effective conflict management. Finally, it assesses the institutional guidelines and policies in place to address conflicts and overcome these barriers. The findings are discussed with existing literature to contextualize the results within broader frameworks of conflict management in higher education institutions.

By addressing these objectives comprehensively, this chapter provides a detailed understanding of conflict dynamics at DHLTU and offers insights to guide the development of effective conflict management strategies that align with the university's goals for growth and institutional harmony.

## **4.2 Background Information of Respondents**

### **4.2.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

The table 4.1 provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the study's respondents. Of the 130 participants, 28.5% were female, and 71.5% were males, indicating a significant gender imbalance within the university's workforce. This male predominance mirrors broader trends in tertiary education institutions across Ghana, where gender disparities persist in employment (Prah,

2002; Annan, 2022). While this observation is noteworthy, it does not directly affect the study's findings, as the research did not focus on gender-specific roles or perceptions.

The educational qualifications of the respondents reflect a diverse academic composition. Approximately 9.3% held doctoral degrees, 43.4% possessed master's degrees, 7% had bachelor's degrees, 13.2% were Higher National Diploma (HND) holders, and 27.7% reported having no formal qualifications or other credentials ranging from primary to senior high school. This distribution illustrates a concentration of postgraduate qualifications, which aligns with the advanced academic environment of the institution. However, the substantial proportion of respondents without formal higher education qualifications underscores a notable gap, likely attributable to the inclusion of non-academic staff in the respondent pool.

In terms of tenure, Table 4.1 reveals considerable variation in the respondents' length of service. A significant proportion, 50.8%, had been employed at the university for 11 to 15 years, while only 3.8% had served for over 21 years. This tenure distribution suggests an experienced workforce, particularly among the senior members, which could influence institutional dynamics and conflict management practices.



**Table 4.1: Respondents' background information**

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	93	71.5
	Female	37	28.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Educational Qualification	PhD	12	9.2
	Masters	56	43.1
	Bachelor's Degree	9	6.9
	HND	17	13.1
	Others	35	26.9
	Missing	1	0.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Length of service	1-5yrs	4	3.1
	6-10yrs	38	29.2
	11-15yrs	66	50.8
	16-20yrs	17	13.1
	21yrs and above	5	3.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Category	Senior Member	65	50.0
	Senior staff	23	17.7
	Junior staff	42	32.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Held Leadership Position	Yes	53	40.8
	No	77	59.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2020**





The employment categories further highlight the composition of the workforce. Junior staff constituted 32.3% of the respondents, senior staff made up 17.7%, and 50% were categorized as senior members. The predominance of senior members, who occupy administrative and academic leadership positions, suggests that they play a critical role in decision-making processes. This hierarchical structure, coupled with the relatively small proportion of middle-level staff, may have implications for conflict dynamics and resolution strategies at the university.

Leadership experience among the respondents was another critical aspect of the analysis. Of all participants, 40.8% reported having held a leadership position at some point, while 59.2% had not. This finding indicates that a considerable proportion of the respondents were familiar with leadership roles, which could influence their perspectives on conflict management and organizational governance.

#### **4.2.2 Results on Conflicts at DHLTU**

The analysis of conflict awareness and involvement at Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU) reveals significant insights into the nature of conflicts within the institution. From table 4.2, 95.4% of respondents indicated they were aware of conflicts, while 38.5% reported personal involvement in such disputes. This high awareness, coupled with the substantial percentage of those directly involved in conflicts, underscores the prevalence of tension and friction within the university environment. Notably, the frequency of conflicts is also alarming, with 32.3% of respondents describing the occurrence of conflicts as “very high”, while 38.5% rated it as “high”. This indicates that conflicts are common and often disruptive to both personal and institutional operations.



The types of conflicts observed are overwhelmingly dysfunctional, with 85.4% of respondents categorizing the disputes as such. Dysfunctional conflicts typically hamper communication, teamwork, and overall organizational performance, as indicated by previous research (Bano *et al.*, 2013; Makaye & Ndofirepi, 2012). Functional conflicts, which can lead to positive outcomes such as innovation and improved problem-solving, were reported by only 14.6% of the respondents. This discrepancy suggests that conflicts at DHLTU primarily have negative effects, likely impeding both staff morale and institutional growth.

The results further show that interpersonal and intergroup conflicts dominate at DHLTU, as indicated by 35.6% and 33.9% of respondents, respectively. These findings align with the structural theory of conflicts, which suggests that competition for resources, differing responsibilities, and value clashes often spark interpersonal conflicts (Kipruto & Kipkemboi, 2013). Intergroup conflicts, involving different departments or teams, contribute to “us versus them” dynamics, which exacerbate hostility and weaken cooperation. Intrapersonal conflicts, while less common, were also reported by 11.1% of respondents, often stemming from misalignments between personal goals and job requirements.

The implications of these findings are significant. The high occurrence of dysfunctional and interpersonal conflicts indicates that there is a pressing need for effective conflict management strategies at DHLTU. The dominance of interpersonal and intergroup conflicts suggests that internal policies and practices around communication and resource allocation may be contributing factors. For instance, the reported high level of intergroup conflict could be indicative of poor coordination between departments, where a lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities fosters tension.

**Table 4.2: Information on conflicts** at DHLTU

Variations		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Awareness of conflicts	Yes	124	95.4
	No	6	4.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Involvement in conflicts	Yes	50	38.5
	No	79	60.8
	Missing	1	0.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Frequency of conflicts	Very High	42	32.3
	High	50	38.5
	Moderate	29	22.3
	Low	9	6.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Type of conflicts	Functional	19	14.6
	Dysfunctional	111	85.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Kind/level of conflicts	Intrapersonal conflict	20	11.1
	Interpersonal conflict	64	35.6
	Intragroup conflict	35	19.4
	Intergroup conflict	61	33.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2020**





### **4.3 The Primary Causes of Conflicts at DHLTU**

#### **4.3.1 Causes of Conflicts at DHLTU**

The first objective of determining the primary causes of conflicts at Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU) reveals several key factors contributing to workplace disputes, as outlined in Table 4.3. The results indicate that leadership style is the most significant cause of conflict, followed by gossip and backbiting, unqualified and incompetent leadership, past unresolved conflicts, and delay or denial of promotions. Additional causes, such as favoritism and tribalism, non-adherence to rules and regulations, and communication breakdown, further highlight the complexities within the institution. The analysis of these factors provides a comprehensive understanding of the conflict dynamics at DHLTU.

Leadership style, with a mean ranking of 8.47, is identified as the top contributor to conflicts. This finding aligns with existing literature, which suggests that leadership plays a crucial role in fostering or mitigating conflict in organizations. A leadership style that is perceived as autocratic, rigid, or uncommunicative can lead to dissatisfaction among employees and trigger conflicts (Rahim, 2017). In educational institutions like DHLTU, where collaboration and consensus are often required, poor leadership can exacerbate tensions. Studies have shown that leadership behavior significantly impacts workplace harmony, and ineffective leadership tends to create environments where conflicts are more likely to arise (Zhang, *et al.*, 2018). The data from DHLTU suggests that many employees perceive leadership practices as a major source of frustration, indicating a need for leadership development programs that promote more inclusive and transparent decision-making processes.

**Table 4.3: Causes of Conflicts in the University**

Factors That Cause Conflicts	Mean Ranking	Rank
Leadership style	8.47	1 <sup>st</sup>
Gossip and back-biting	9.02	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Unqualified and incompetent leadership	9.85	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Past unresolved conflict	10.00	4 <sup>th</sup>
Delay or denial of promotion	10.21	5 <sup>th</sup>
Favoritism and tribalism	10.72	6 <sup>th</sup>
Non-adherence to rules and regulations	10.74	7 <sup>th</sup>
Quest for power	10.81	8 <sup>th</sup>
Insecure leadership	11.75	9 <sup>th</sup>
Communications breakdown	11.98	10 <sup>th</sup>
Authority relationship	12.05	11 <sup>th</sup>
Poor working conditions	12.13	12 <sup>th</sup>
Serving personal interest	12.19	13 <sup>th</sup>
Indiscipline	12.21	14 <sup>th</sup>
Common Resources	12.87	15 <sup>th</sup>
Jurisdictional ambiguities	13.99	16 <sup>th</sup>
Perceptions	14.34	17 <sup>th</sup>
Role and expectations	14.56	18 <sup>th</sup>
Status difference	14.60	19 <sup>th</sup>
Interdependence	15.04	20 <sup>th</sup>
Specialization	15.07	21 <sup>st</sup>
Goal difference	15.10	22 <sup>nd</sup>
Skills and abilities	15.97	23 <sup>rd</sup>
Diversity	16.33	24 <sup>th</sup>

**Test Statistics**

Number of observations = 130

Kendall's W = 0.147

Chi-Square = 438.979

Df = 23

Asymp. Sig. = < 0.000

**Source: Field Survey, 2020**







Ranked second with a mean score of 9.02, gossip and backbiting are another prevalent cause of conflict at DHLTU. This finding is consistent with research indicating that informal communication, such as gossip, can lead to the breakdown of trust among employees and foster a toxic work environment (Tessema, & Embaye, 2019). Gossip not only damages interpersonal relationships but also undermines team cohesion, creating an atmosphere of suspicion and hostility. In an academic environment, where cooperation and mutual respect are essential for productivity, the presence of gossip can have a particularly detrimental impact on both staff morale and performance. The high ranking of gossip as a cause of conflict at DHLTU suggests that there may be underlying communication issues within the institution that need to be addressed.

The third-ranked cause of conflict is unqualified and incompetent leadership, with a mean score of 9.85. This indicates a perception among employees that some leaders at DHLTU lack the necessary skills and qualifications to manage the institution effectively. Incompetent leadership can lead to poor decision-making, mismanagement of resources, and an inability to resolve conflicts, which in turn can create frustration and dissatisfaction among staff (Alam, 2017). Research suggests that leadership competency is critical for effective conflict resolution, as leaders who possess the appropriate skills and knowledge are better equipped to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics and mediate disputes (Longe, 2017).

Past unresolved conflicts, ranked fourth with a mean score of 10.00, highlight the long-term effects of unresolved disputes within the institution. When conflicts are left unresolved, they tend to resurface, often escalating into larger issues over time. This is supported by existing literature, which suggests that unresolved conflicts can lead to persistent grievances, lowering morale and

reducing productivity (Cai, *et al.*, 2018). At DHLTU, the presence of unresolved conflicts may indicate weaknesses in the institution's conflict resolution mechanisms.

The fifth-ranked cause of conflict is delay or denial of promotions, with a mean score of 10.21. This finding reflects dissatisfaction among employees regarding career advancement opportunities at DHLTU. Delays or perceived unfairness in promotion processes can lead to feelings of resentment and disengagement, as employees may feel undervalued or overlooked (Schneidhofer, & Mayrhofer, 2020). Promotion-related conflicts are common in hierarchical organizations, where opportunities for advancement are limited and competition is high. The data from DHLTU suggest that employees view the promotion process as a significant source of conflict, indicating a need for more transparent and merit-based promotion criteria.

Favoritism and tribalism, ranked sixth, further emphasize the challenges related to equity and inclusivity at DHLTU. Favoritism, whether real or perceived, can create divisions among staff, leading to resentment and conflict. Tribalism, particularly in diverse workplaces, can exacerbate these divisions, as employees may feel that their ethnic or cultural backgrounds are being used as a basis for preferential treatment (Gyasi & Teye, 2020). This issue is particularly pertinent in Ghana, where cultural diversity is a defining feature of many institutions.

Non-adherence to rules and regulations, ranked seventh, also plays a significant role in the emergence of conflicts at DHLTU. When organizational rules are not consistently enforced or adhered to, it creates a sense of unfairness and disorder, leading to frustration among employees (Perlman & Smith, 2017). This finding suggests that there may be inconsistencies in how policies are applied at DHLTU, which can undermine organizational integrity and lead to disputes.



Finally, communication breakdown, ranked 10th, underscores the importance of effective communication in preventing conflicts. Miscommunication or a lack of communication can lead to misunderstandings, mistrust, and, ultimately, disputes. Research has consistently shown that clear and open communication is essential for conflict prevention and resolution (Zacher & Rudolph, 2017). At DHLTU, communication breakdowns may be contributing to a lack of clarity regarding roles, responsibilities, and expectations, which in turn leads to conflicts.

Kendall's W of 0.147 indicates a statistically significant level of agreement among respondents regarding the primary causes of conflicts at DHLTU. This suggests that the factors identified as conflict triggers are widely recognized across the institution, reinforcing the need for management to address these issues comprehensively. The high level of agreement among employees highlights the urgency of implementing effective conflict management strategies that address leadership quality, communication, promotion practices, and inclusivity.

According to some key officials at DHLTU, they mentioned the following factors contributed to the causes of conflict:

*Envy, laziness, pettiness, and individuals seeking their personal interests have become the norms of this institution and are largely responsible for conflicts in the institution. These factors create an unstable work environment, increase suspicion among employees, and bring about unnecessary and unproductive criticisms (Respondent, DHLTU, March 2021).*

*It is quite unfortunate the University does not have any system in place to reward deserving employees with outstanding performance and punish recalcitrant employees. This in my view is one of the policies that could aid in reducing conflicts. No one gets punished for wrongdoing and no one gets rewarded for hard work (Respondent, DHLTU, March 2021).*

The findings of this study are consistent with recent literature, which emphasizes the importance of leadership, communication, and equity in reducing workplace conflicts (Alam, 2017; Zhang *et al.*, 2018).

#### **4.3.2 Comparative Views on Causes of Workplace Conflicts Using Demographics of Respondents**

##### ***4.3.2.1 Causes of Conflicts Based on the Gender of Respondents***

The findings from Table 4.4 on the causes of conflict based on gender at Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University offer crucial insights into the differing perceptions of male and female respondents regarding conflict triggers in the institution. The results demonstrate that while both genders largely agree on key causes of conflicts, notable differences exist in the intensity of their agreement. These results not only emphasize the nature of conflicts in higher education institutions but also highlight the need for a nuanced, gender-sensitive approach to conflict management.

The results show that leadership style is the most significant factor, with 82.8% of males and 86.5% of females strongly agreeing that it contributes to conflicts. The high level of agreement among both genders underscores the central role of leadership in shaping workplace dynamics. Poor leadership practices, such as autocratic decision-making, favoritism, and lack of communication, have been shown to foster misunderstandings and tensions among employees. This finding aligns with studies by Mwesigwa *et al.* (2020), who noted that ineffective leadership often creates a hostile work environment, leading to interpersonal conflicts and reduced organizational cohesion. Furthermore, Khajeh (2018) emphasizes that transformational leadership, which prioritizes inclusivity and transparency, is essential for mitigating workplace disputes. The slightly higher





agreement among females may indicate that women are more affected by leadership deficiencies, possibly due to systemic biases that disadvantage women in male-dominated institutions.

Indiscipline also ranked highly as a cause of conflict, with 47.3% of males and 64.9% of females strongly agreeing on its role. The higher percentage of females strongly agreeing suggests that women may perceive or experience indiscipline more acutely. This could be attributed to gendered workplace dynamics, where women often face challenges related to unequal enforcement of rules, unprofessional behaviour, or discriminatory practices. Edeh *et al.* (2021) argue that indiscipline in organizations frequently stems from unclear policies, favoritism, and lax enforcement, which can disproportionately affect women. Addressing indiscipline through equitable and transparent policy enforcement is therefore critical to minimizing gendered perceptions of workplace conflict.

Communication breakdown was another major cause of conflict, with 57.0% of males and 59.5% of females strongly agreeing on its significance. Effective communication is a cornerstone of conflict resolution, and its absence can lead to misunderstandings, mistrust, and inefficiencies. The slight variation between male and female respondents reflects differences in how communication issues are perceived or experienced. Adeniji *et al.* (2017) suggest that gender differences in communication styles and expectations may amplify these perceptions, with women possibly being more sensitive to interpersonal communication challenges. The results further highlight the importance of fostering open, transparent, and inclusive communication channels within the institution to address misunderstandings and build trust among employees.

Favouritism was also identified as a significant cause of conflict, with 62.4% of males and 73.0% of females strongly agreeing. Favouritism undermines workplace morale, creates divisions among employees, and fosters resentment, particularly among those who feel excluded or undervalued.

This finding is consistent with the work of Abugu, *et al.*, (2020), who observed that favouritism is a major source of workplace dissatisfaction and conflict, particularly in hierarchical institutions. The higher percentage of females strongly agreeing may reflect their greater vulnerability to biases and discriminatory practices in male-dominated institutions, as highlighted by Onyebuchi *et al.*, (2021). Addressing favoritism through objective, merit-based decision-making processes can help reduce these tensions and foster a more inclusive work environment.

Past unresolved conflicts were another key factor, with 65.6% of males and 73.0% of females strongly agreeing on their impact. The persistence of unresolved conflicts suggests systemic weaknesses in the institution's conflict resolution mechanisms. When conflicts are not adequately addressed, they tend to resurface, creating long-term divisions and undermining organizational harmony. This finding aligns with Li *et al.* (2020), who emphasize the importance of timely and effective conflict resolution in preventing the escalation of disputes. The higher agreement among females may indicate that unresolved conflicts disproportionately affect women, possibly due to their increased sensitivity to workplace dynamics or the accumulation of grievances over time.

Delay or denial of promotion was another prominent factor, with 66.7% of males and 73.0% of females strongly agreeing on its role in causing conflicts. Delays in promotion can create frustration and resentment among employees, particularly when such delays are perceived as unfair or discriminatory. This finding corroborates the work of Chandna and Krishnan (2019), who noted that perceptions of inequity in career advancement often led to dissatisfaction and conflict, particularly in organizations with opaque promotion processes. The slightly higher agreement among females may reflect their heightened awareness of or vulnerability to gender-based disparities in promotion decisions.



Unqualified and incompetent leadership also ranked highly as a cause of conflict, with 75.3% of males and 67.6% of females strongly agreeing. Ineffective leadership can exacerbate workplace tensions by creating confusion, mismanagement, and dissatisfaction among employees. This finding is consistent with Mwesigwa, *et al.* (2020), who observed that poor leadership competencies are a significant source of workplace conflict in higher education institutions. The slightly lower agreement among females may reflect differing expectations or experiences with leadership, but the overall high percentages highlight the need for leadership development programs to address competency gaps.

The results from Table 4.4 highlight the complex nature of workplace conflicts and show clear gender differences in how their causes are perceived. These findings point to the need for a gender-sensitive approach to conflict management at Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University. Strong leadership practices, open communication, and fair policy enforcement are essential for dealing with these issues and creating a positive work environment. Recent studies suggest that training programs in emotional intelligence and conflict resolution can provide leaders and employees with the skills needed to manage workplace tensions effectively (Chandna & Krishnan, 2019; Li *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, encouraging participatory decision-making and promoting gender equality can help reduce gaps in perceptions of favoritism and leadership-related issues.

By addressing these challenges, institutions like Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University can build a more inclusive and united organizational culture, ultimately improving both individual and institutional performance. The results also highlight the need for proactive conflict management policies that tackle systemic problems, such as leadership weaknesses, communication breakdowns, and unfair practices, while supporting a culture of openness, fairness, and teamwork.

**Table 4.4: Causes of Conflict based on Gender of Respondents**

Causes of Conflicts	Sex	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Leadership Style	Male	1.1%	0.00%	2.2%	14.0%	82.8%
	Female	2.7%	2.7%	0.00%	8.1%	86.5%
Indiscipline	Male	2.2%	6.5%	7.5%	36.6%	47.3%
	Female	2.7%	0.00%	0.00%	32.4%	64.9%
Communication Breakdown	Male	2.2%	5.4%	10.8%	24.7%	57.0%
	Female	5.4%	2.7%	5.4%	27.0%	59.5%
Favouritism	Male	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%	28.0%	62.4%
	Female	0.00%	0.00%	5.4%	21.6%	73.0%
Past Unresolved Conflict	Male	0.00%	0.00%	6.5%	28.0%	65.6%
	Female	0.00%	0.00%	2.7%	24.3%	73.0%
Delay/Denial of Promotion	Male	1.1%	2.2%	3.2%	26.9%	66.7%
	Female	0.00%	0.00%	8.1%	18.9%	73.0%
Unqualified and Incompetent Leadership	Male	0.00%	4.3%	3.2%	17.2%	75.3%
	Female	0.00%	2.7%	8.1%	21.6%	67.6%

**Source: Field Survey, 2020**

#### ***4.3.2.2 Causes of Conflicts Based on the Category of Staff***

Table 4.5 explores the causes of workplace conflicts at Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University based on the category of staff, highlighting differences in perceptions among senior members, senior staff, and junior staff. Leadership style again stands out as a key factor, with 87.7% of senior





members, 87.0% of senior staff, and 76.2% of junior staff strongly agreeing on its role in causing conflicts. The slightly lower agreement among junior staff may reflect their limited interaction with higher-level decision-making processes, while senior members and senior staff, who are closer to leadership structures, may be more directly affected by leadership shortcomings. This finding aligns with Mwesigwa *et al.*, (2020) conclusion that leadership challenges are more evident to employees in senior positions, who often experience the direct consequences of poor decision-making.

Indiscipline is perceived as another major cause of conflict, with 50.8% of senior members and 56.5% of senior staff strongly agreeing, compared to 52.4% of junior staff. The relatively similar responses across categories suggest that indiscipline is a pervasive issue affecting all staff levels. However, senior members may experience this differently, as they are often responsible for enforcing rules and may perceive resistance to authority as a source of conflict. According to Edeh, *et al.*, (2021), addressing indiscipline requires clear policies and consistent enforcement to ensure fairness and prevent frustration across all staff categories.

Communication breakdown is another significant concern, with 55.4% of senior members, 65.2% of senior staff, and 57.1% of junior staff strongly agreeing on its role in causing conflicts. The slightly higher agreement among senior staff may reflect their intermediary role between leadership and junior staff, where communication gaps are more likely to occur. Adeniji *et al.*, (2017) emphasize that effective communication across organizational levels is critical for maintaining trust and preventing misunderstandings.

Favoritism and unresolved conflicts are also highlighted as significant issues. For example, 78.3% of senior staff strongly agree that favoritism causes conflicts, compared to 64.3% of junior staff.

This may reflect a perception among senior staff of unequal opportunities or biases in leadership decisions, which could create divisions within their ranks. Similarly, unresolved conflicts are perceived as a major issue, with 78.3% of senior staff and 64.3% of junior staff strongly agreeing. Li, *et al.*, (2020) note that unresolved conflicts can erode trust and create long-term dissatisfaction, particularly in hierarchical institutions.

The results suggest that conflict management strategies at the university must be tailored to address the unique challenges faced by different staff categories. Senior members may require leadership training to address systemic issues and improve decision-making processes, while senior staff and junior staff may benefit from initiatives aimed at fostering open communication and equitable treatment. Encouraging participatory decision-making and implementing transparent policies can help reduce perceptions of favoritism and foster trust across all staff levels (Chandna & Krishnan, 2019; Li *et al.*, 2020). By addressing these issues, the university can create a more inclusive and supportive work environment, ultimately improving both individual and organizational performance.



**Table 4.5: Causes of Conflicts and Category of Staff**

Causes of Conflicts	Category of Staff	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Leadership Style	Senior Member	0.00%	1.5%	0.00%	10.8%	87.7%
	Senior Staff	4.3%	0.00%	0.00%	8.7%	87.0%
	Junior Staff	2.4%	0.00%	4.8%	16.7%	76.2%
Indiscipline	Senior Member	1.5%	4.6%	3.1%	40.0%	50.8%
	Senior Staff	4.3%	0.00%	4.3%	34.8%	56.5%
	Junior Staff	2.4%	7.1%	9.5%	28.6%	52.4%
Communication Breakdown	Senior Member	0.00%	6.2%	9.2%	29.2%	55.4%
	Senior Staff	4.3%	0.00%	0.00%	30.4%	65.2%
	Junior Staff	7.1%	4.8%	14.3%	16.7%	57.1%
Favouritism	Senior Member	1.5%	1.5%	3.1%	32.3%	61.5%
	Senior Staff	0.00%	4.3%	4.3%	13.0%	78.3%
	Junior Staff	4.8%	2.4%	4.8%	23.8%	64.3%
Past Unresolved Conflict	Senior Member	0.00%	0.00%	4.8%	2.4%	4.8%
	Senior Staff	0.00%	0.00%	8.7%	13.0%	78.3%
	Junior Staff	0.00%	0.00%	4.8%	31.0%	64.3%
Delay/Denial of Promotion	Senior Member	0.00%	1.5%	4.6%	30.8%	63.1%
	Senior Staff	0.00%	0.00%	13.0%	13.0%	73.9%
	Junior Staff	2.4%	2.4%	0.00%	21.4%	73.8%
Unqualified and Incompetent Leadership	Senior Member	0.00%	1.5%	1.5%	16.9%	80.0%
	Senior Staff	0.00%	8.7%	4.3%	8.7%	78.3%
	Junior Staff	0.00%	4.8%	9.5%	26.2%	59.5%

**Source: Field Survey, 2020**





## **4.4 Impact of Unresolved Conflicts at DHLTU**

### **4.4.1 Positive Impacts of Unresolved Conflicts at DHLTU**

Table 4.6 analyzes the perceived positive impacts of conflict at Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU). The results indicate that conflict, despite its negative connotations, can sometimes serve constructive purposes within organizations. Correcting some management ills and lapses ranks as the most significant positive impact with the lowest mean rank (6.18), indicating that respondents recognize conflict as an opportunity to address and rectify weaknesses in management practices. This finding aligns with studies by Mughal and Khan (2019), who argue that workplace conflicts often expose organizational inefficiencies, creating an impetus for improvement. In academic institutions like DHLTU, conflicts may bring to light issues such as ineffective leadership, poor resource allocation, or outdated policies, compelling management to take corrective action.

Enhancing teamwork and fostering employee relationships, which ranks second (6.99), highlights how conflict when constructively managed, can strengthen interpersonal relationships. Disagreements can encourage dialogue, collaboration, and mutual understanding among employees. This finding resonates with Li *et al.* (2020), who emphasize that conflicts, when resolved constructively, foster trust and communication, leading to stronger workplace cohesion. For example, conflicts involving resource distribution or workload allocation can encourage employees to develop mechanisms for equitable sharing and problem-solving, ultimately enhancing their working relationships.

Creation of avenues for appreciating other perspectives also emerges as a key positive outcome, ranking third (7.12). This result suggests that conflicts can challenge entrenched beliefs and encourage employees to consider diverse viewpoints. This aligns with the work of Edeh *et al.*



(2021), who note that exposure to conflicting opinions fosters empathy and critical thinking, particularly in diverse organizations. At DHLTU, where staff and students may have varying professional and academic backgrounds, conflict can create opportunities for mutual learning and understanding.

Other positive impacts, such as improving teaching and learning (9.23) and increasing institutional performance (9.86), rank lower. This indicates that while conflict may indirectly contribute to academic or operational improvements, these are not its most immediate benefits. For instance, teaching and learning may benefit from conflicts that expose gaps in curriculum design or instructional delivery, prompting improvements. However, the lower rankings of these outcomes suggest that respondents do not perceive such impacts as frequent or consistent.

Kendall's W, which measures agreement among respondents on ranking positive impacts, is 0.072, indicating a relatively low consensus. This suggests that while respondents generally agree about the top-ranked effects (e.g., correcting management lapses), there is variability in perceptions of the less frequently observed benefits. The chi-square test result  $\chi^2 = 152.783$ ,  $p < 0.001$  confirms the rankings' statistical significance, validating the findings' reliability.

The results underscore the importance of adopting constructive conflict management strategies to maximize the positive impacts identified in Table 4.6. By addressing conflicts proactively and transparently, DHLTU can leverage them as tools for organizational improvement and collaboration. This aligns with Chandna and Krishnan's (2019) assertion that emotional intelligence and participatory leadership are critical for transforming conflicts into opportunities for growth. Efforts should focus on training leaders and staff in conflict resolution, fostering open communication, and promoting a culture of continuous improvement.

**Table 4.6 Positive Impacts of Unresolved Conflicts**

Positive Impact of Conflicts	Mean Ranking	Rank
Corrects some Management ills and lapses	6.18	1st
Enhance teamwork and foster good employee relationship	6.99	2nd
Creates avenue for employees to appreciate other peoples' perspective	7.06	3rd
Improves the capacity to respect other peoples' views	7.09	4th
Avenue for change of bad attitude of employees	7.69	5th
Clarifications of goals and roles	7.55	6th
Improve quality decisions in resolving conflict	7.81	7th
Change work environment devoid of stress	7.97	8th
Foster self-control	7.90	9th
Enhance interpersonal communication skills	8.14	10th
Reduce tensions and suspicions	8.66	11th
Prevent violence	8.80	12th
Growth and development of individuals and the institution	9.10	13th
Improves teaching and learning	9.23	14th
Increase individual and institutional performance	9.86	15th

**Test Statistics**

Number of observations = 130

Kendall's W = 0.072

Chi-Square = 129.874

Df = 14

Asymp. Sig. = < 0.001

**Source: Field Survey, 2020**



#### 4.4.2 Negative Impacts of Unresolved Conflicts at DHLTU

Table 4.7 examines the negative impacts of unresolved conflicts at DHLTU, providing valuable insights into how persistent tensions affect the institution's functioning. Retrogression/no development ranks as the most severe consequence, with the lowest mean rank (9.38). This finding highlights that unresolved conflicts stagnate organizational growth by diverting attention and resources away from productive activities. Mughal and Khan (2019) similarly found that unresolved disputes in educational institutions create barriers to innovation, collaboration, and progress. For DHLTU, conflicts that remain unresolved may hinder curriculum development, infrastructure improvements, or strategic planning, leading to institutional stagnation.

Sabotage ranks second (10.00) and reflects the destructive tendencies that can arise when conflicts escalate or are left unaddressed. Employees who feel unheard or unfairly treated may resort to counterproductive behaviors, such as withholding information, deliberately undermining processes, or even damaging institutional assets. This aligns with Onyebuchi *et al.* (2021), who found that unresolved tensions often lead to deliberate acts of resistance, particularly in hierarchical workplaces where employees feel powerless.

An unfriendly environment unsuitable for serious academic work, ranked third (10.28), emphasizes the deteriorating workplace atmosphere that unresolved conflicts create. Persistent tension among staff or students creates stress, mistrust, and a lack of focus, all of which are detrimental to academic productivity. According to Li *et al.* (2020), unresolved conflicts reduce morale and engagement, making it difficult for employees and students to thrive. At DHLTU, this could manifest as reduced classroom participation, strained relationships between faculty and students, or a decline in research output.

**Table 4.7: Negative Impact of Conflict at DHLTU**

Negative Impacts of Conflicts	Mean Rank	Rank
Retrogression/ no development	9.38	1 <sup>st</sup>
Sabotage	10.00	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Unfriendly environment, unsuitable for serious academic work	10.28	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Low student enrolment	10.53	4 <sup>th</sup>
Poor treatment of staff	10.91	5 <sup>th</sup>
Low productivity	10.93	6 <sup>th</sup>
Division among employees	11.13	7 <sup>th</sup>
Delay in decision-making process by Management	11.15	8 <sup>th</sup>
Decrease in level of commitment to work	11.23	9 <sup>th</sup>
Protracted disharmony in employee relationship	11.56	10 <sup>th</sup>
Lack of new ideas	11.62	11 <sup>th</sup>
Low morale of employees	11.68	12 <sup>th</sup>
Lack of direction	11.87	13 <sup>th</sup>
Communication breakdown	12.09	14 <sup>th</sup>
Fragmentation/Disintegration	12.54	15 <sup>th</sup>
Unhealthy competition among conflicting parties	12.05	16 <sup>th</sup>
Loss of productive teaching and contact hours	12.87	17 <sup>th</sup>
Insubordination	12.89	18 <sup>th</sup>
Truncated academic calendar	14.53	19 <sup>th</sup>
Resignation of staff/ High turnover of staff	14.34	20 <sup>th</sup>
Production of unemployable graduates	15.67	21 <sup>st</sup>
Violent and aggression	15.79	22 <sup>nd</sup>
Unhealthy competition	17.23	23 <sup>rd</sup>
Destruction of school property/resources	17.74	24 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Test Statistics</b>		
Number of observation	= 130	
Kendall's W	= 0.150	
Chi-Square	= 437.126	
Df	= 23	
Asymp. Sig.	= < 0.001	

Lower-ranked impacts, such as low student enrollment (10.53) and poor treatment of staff (10.91), highlight the broader institutional consequences of unresolved conflicts. Conflicts that are visible to external stakeholders, such as prospective students or donors, can tarnish the institution's





reputation, reducing enrollment and financial support. Similarly, unresolved disputes often result in unfair treatment or neglect of staff needs, leading to dissatisfaction and high turnover rates (Adeniji *et al.*, 2017).

The Kendall's W value of 0.150 indicates moderate agreement among respondents regarding the ranking of negative impacts. This suggests that most respondents share similar views on the most critical consequences, such as stagnation and sabotage, but diverge slightly on less immediate effects like student enrollment. The chi-square test result  $\chi^2 = 230.745$ ,  $p < 0.001$  confirms the statistical significance of these rankings.

The findings from Table 4.7 reinforce the urgent need for conflict resolution mechanisms at DHLTU. Left unaddressed, conflicts have far-reaching consequences that undermine both individual and institutional performance. Implementing structured grievance procedures, fostering open communication, and promoting equity in decision-making are critical steps toward minimizing these negative impacts. As highlighted by Chandna and Krishnan (2019), conflict resolution requires emotional intelligence, effective leadership, and inclusive policies that address the root causes of disputes.

#### **4.4.3 Comparative Views on Impacts of Conflicts Using Demographics of Respondents at DHLTU**

##### ***4.4.3.1 Positive Impact of Conflict Based on Gender***

Table 4.8 presents the gendered perceptions of the positive impacts of conflict at Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU). It highlights how males and females perceive various constructive outcomes that can result from conflict. The data demonstrates notable similarities and differences between the two groups, reflecting diverse gendered experiences in organizational contexts.





Increase in productivity is one of the key indicators measured, with 34.4% of males and 35.1% of females strongly disagreeing that conflict contributes to productivity. While slightly more males (11.8%) than females (8.1%) strongly agree with this impact, a large percentage in both groups remain neutral or disagree. These results suggest a shared skepticism about conflict directly boosting productivity. Mughal and Khan (2019) emphasize that unresolved conflicts are more likely to disrupt workflows than lead to productivity improvements unless effectively managed. At DHLTU, this skepticism may stem from a lack of visible mechanisms for channeling conflict constructively into organizational development.

Change in the work environment is another area where gendered perceptions diverge. While 22.6% of males agree that conflicts create opportunities for positive environmental change, this view is shared by a higher percentage of females (27.0%). Similarly, 18.9% of females strongly agree compared to 9.7% of males. These findings reflect a stronger perception among women that conflicts can drive institutional reforms and adjustments. Li, Rivera, and Henry (2020) note that organizational conflicts often serve as a mechanism for exposing inefficiencies, leading to policy reviews or leadership changes. At DHLTU, female staff may be more attuned to such shifts or value them more positively due to their specific workplace experiences.

Growth and development sees relatively lower levels of strong agreement from both genders, with 11.8% of males and 8.1% of females strongly agreeing. This result suggests that while some respondents view conflict as an avenue for personal or institutional growth, many remain skeptical. Adeniji *et al.*, (2017) argue that growth and development through conflict depend heavily on whether disputes are resolved constructively. At DHLTU, this perception gap could indicate that conflicts are not always managed in ways that highlight their potential for driving self-improvement or organizational learning.



Regarding improve teaching and learning, 24.7% of males and 29.7% of females strongly disagree with this outcome. However, slightly more females (10.8%) strongly agree compared to males (9.7%). This pattern indicates that females may view conflict as having more potential to expose weaknesses in teaching practices or administrative structures, prompting improvements. Onyebuchi, *et al.*, (2021) suggest that academic institutions that foster open dialogue about conflicts are better positioned to use them as tools for pedagogical innovation.

Enhancing communication ranks relatively high among positive impacts. A higher percentage of males (24.3%) than females (13.5%) strongly agree that conflict can enhance communication. This result highlights a gender-based difference in viewing conflict as a means to improve dialogue and understanding. Chandna and Krishnan (2019) note that open conflict often forces parties to articulate their positions more clearly, thereby improving overall communication. At DHLTU, males may experience or participate in more direct conflict resolution processes, influencing their perception of this benefit.

Enhancing teamwork sees similar patterns, with 28.0% of males and 18.9% of females agreeing that conflicts can foster collaboration. Additionally, 16.1% of males and 24.3% of females strongly agree. This higher agreement among females suggests that they may value the team-building potential of conflict more, possibly due to their collaborative roles within the institution. Li *et al.*, (2020) found that workplace conflicts, when resolved effectively, often strengthen interpersonal relationships by fostering trust and mutual understanding.

**Table 4.8: Positive Impacts of Conflicts based on Gender**

Positive Impact	Sex	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Increase Productivity	Male	34.4%	33.3%	11.8%	8.6%	11.8%
	Female	35.1%	21.6%	18.9%	16.2%	8.1%
Change Work Environment	Male	18.3%	32.3%	17.2%	22.6%	9.7%
	Female	8.1%	27.0%	18.9%	27.0%	18.9%
Growth and Development	Male	26.9%	35.5%	9.7%	16.1%	11.8%
	Female	27.0%	21.6%	18.9%	24.3%	8.1%
Improve Teaching and Learning	Male	24.7%	37.6%	11.8%	16.1%	9.7%
	Female	29.7%	24.3%	16.2%	18.9%	10.8%
Reduce Tension	Male	25.8%	36.6%	10.8%	17.2%	9.7%
	Female	16.2%	24.3%	18.9%	27.0%	13.5%
Enhance Communication	Male	13.5%	21.6%	21.6%	18.9%	24.3%
	Female	16.2%	29.7%	16.2%	24.3%	13.5%
Enhance Teamwork	Male	15.1%	24.7%	16.1%	28.0%	16.1%
	Female	13.5%	21.6%	21.6%	18.9%	24.3%

**Source: Field Survey, 2020**



The results reveal varied perceptions of conflict's positive impacts between genders. A substantial portion of respondents in both groups either disagree or remains neutral about the positive impacts, indicating a potential lack of awareness or effectiveness in leveraging conflict for institutional benefits. The findings emphasize the need for DHLTU to adopt gender-sensitive conflict management strategies that acknowledge and address these perceptual differences. For instance, creating platforms for inclusive dialogue where all genders can express their views on conflicts could help foster a shared understanding of their positive potential. Training programs tailored to highlight the constructive outcomes of conflict, such as improved communication, teamwork, and decision-making, would be beneficial.

The results from Table 4.8 also highlight both shared and differing gendered perceptions of conflict's positive impacts at DHLTU. While males and females recognize some benefits, such as improved communication and teamwork, their experiences and expectations regarding productivity, growth, and teaching improvements vary. Addressing these differences through inclusive policies and transparent conflict resolution mechanisms can help DHLTU harness the full potential of conflicts to drive institutional development.

#### ***4.4.3.2 Positive Impact of Conflict Based on the Category of Respondents***

Table 4.9 examines the positive impacts of conflict at Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU) based on respondents' job categories (senior members, senior staff, and junior staff). The table highlights varying perceptions of how conflict can yield constructive outcomes depending on the respondent's role within the institution. These findings reveal significant insights into how institutional hierarchies and job responsibilities influence perceptions of conflict's benefits.



An increase in productivity was perceived differently across the three groups. Among senior members, 40.0% strongly disagreed, suggesting a predominant view that conflict hinders rather than enhances productivity. Conversely, junior staff displayed slightly more optimism, with 16.7% strongly agreeing compared to 4.3% of senior staff. This contrast could stem from the nature of job roles, where junior staff may view conflict as a catalyst for addressing operational inefficiencies that directly impact their work, while senior members, who are often tasked with resolving conflicts, might see disputes as disruptive to institutional goals. Mughal and Khan (2019) emphasize that conflicts are only productive when managed effectively, allowing them to foster innovation rather than impede progress.

**Table 4.9: Positive Impacts of Conflicts based on the Category of Respondents**

Positive Impact	Category of Staff	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Increase Productivity	Senior member	40.0	32.3	12.3	6.2	9.2
	Senior staff	26.1	30.4	17.4	21.7	4.3
	Junior staff	31.0	26.2	14.3	11.9	16.7
Change Work Environment	Senior member	18.5	30.8	16.9	21.5	12.3
	Senior staff	8.7	21.7	17.4	39.1	13.0
	Junior staff	14.3	35.7	19.0	19.0	11.9
Growth and Development	Senior member	35.4	32.3	10.8	12.3	9.2
	Senior staff	17.4	21.7	17.4	43.5	0.00
	Junior staff	19.0	35.7	11.9	14.3	19.0
Improve Teaching and Learning	Senior member	35.4	32.3	10.8	16.9	4.6
	Senior staff	13.0	21.7	26.1	26.1	13.0
	Junior staff	19.0	42.9	9.5	11.9	16.7
Reduce Tension	Senior member	36.9	32.3	9.2	16.9	4.6
	Senior staff	17.4	21.7	13.0	30.4	17.4
	Junior staff	4.8	40.5	19.0	19.0	16.7
Enhance Communication	Senior member	23.1	33.8	18.5	16.9	7.7
	Senior staff	21.7	17.4	4.3	39.1	17.4
	Junior staff	9.5	35.7	21.4	14.3	19.0
Enhance Teamwork	Senior member	12.3	23.1	20.0	30.8	13.8
	Senior staff	21.7	21.7	8.7	26.1	21.7
	Junior staff	14.3	26.2	19.0	16.7	23.8

**Source: Field Survey, 2020**

Change in the work environment showed more balanced perceptions. Senior staff exhibited the highest levels of agreement, with 39.1% agreeing and 13.0% strongly agreeing, compared to





12.3% of senior members and 11.9% of junior staff. This trend suggests that senior staff, who often act as intermediaries between senior management and junior employees, may recognize conflict's potential to instigate reforms and improve organizational practices. Li *et al.* (2020) argue that conflicts can expose inefficiencies and motivate institutions to adopt more equitable policies, which aligns with the positive outlook observed among senior staff.

Growth and development was viewed positively by senior staff, with 43.5% agreeing the highest level of agreement among the three groups. Meanwhile, 35.4% of senior members strongly disagreed, and 19.0% of junior staff strongly agreed. This disparity highlights the differing ways conflicts are experienced across roles. For senior staff, growth may stem from opportunities to refine leadership skills or implement new policies, while junior staff may perceive personal development through exposure to conflict resolution processes. Adeniji *et al.* (2017) note that workplace conflicts, when resolved constructively, contribute to individual and organizational growth by encouraging adaptation and resilience.

Improving teaching and learning was less commonly recognized as a positive outcome of conflict. Among senior members, 35.4% strongly disagreed, while 13.0% of senior staff and 16.7% of junior staff strongly agreed. This lower recognition could reflect the indirect nature of this impact, where conflict-induced changes in policies or resource allocation eventually trickle down to teaching and learning outcomes. Onyebuchi *et al.* (2021) argue that while conflicts in educational institutions primarily address operational inefficiencies, they can indirectly improve academic quality through better alignment of institutional priorities.

Reducing tension saw varying levels of agreement. Junior staff exhibited the most balanced perspective, with 16.7% strongly agreeing and 19.0% agreeing, compared to 17.4% of senior staff





and 4.6% of senior members. This pattern suggests that junior staff may experience conflict as a tool for clarifying expectations and resolving misunderstandings, whereas senior members are more likely to view conflicts as a source of stress due to their responsibility for managing disputes. Chandna and Krishnan (2019) highlight that conflicts resolved through dialogue and mediation can significantly reduce workplace tensions and foster healthier relationships.

Enhancing communication garnered moderate agreement across all categories, with senior staff showing the highest optimism (17.4% strongly agreeing, 39.1% agreeing). In comparison, 7.7% of senior members strongly agreed and 19.0% of junior staff strongly agreed. This finding underscores the potential of conflicts to prompt open discussions and improve information sharing, particularly when formal communication channels are insufficient. Li *et al.* (2020) assert that conflicts often force organizations to address communication breakdowns, thereby fostering clearer and more inclusive dialogue.

Enhancing teamwork was viewed most positively by junior staff, with 23.8% strongly agreeing compared to 13.8% of senior members and 21.7% of senior staff. This difference likely reflects junior staff's reliance on collaboration for task completion and their recognition of conflict as a means to strengthen interpersonal bonds. Mughal and Khan (2019) note that well-managed conflicts often improve teamwork by encouraging mutual understanding and joint problem-solving.

The findings emphasize the need for DHLTU to adopt role-specific conflict management strategies. Senior members, who view conflict primarily as disruptive, could benefit from training programs that highlight the constructive potential of disputes, such as fostering innovation or improving decision-making processes. Senior staff, who already recognize many positive impacts

of conflict, should be empowered to act as mediators and facilitators in resolving disputes. For junior staff, conflict management efforts should focus on leveraging their optimism about teamwork and communication to foster a more inclusive and collaborative organizational culture.

By aligning conflict resolution strategies with the unique needs and perspectives of each job category, DHLTU can maximize the positive impacts of conflicts while minimizing their disruptive effects. Implementing mechanisms such as structured mediation, transparent communication channels, and leadership training programs can further enhance the institution's capacity to manage conflicts constructively.

#### ***4.4.3.4 Negative Impact of Conflict at DHLTU Based on Negative Impacts of Conflicts Based on Gender***

Table 4.10 presents the negative impacts of conflicts at Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU), differentiated by gender. It examines perceptions among male and female respondents on how conflicts disrupt organizational operations, productivity, and morale. The findings reveal both similarities and differences in how genders experience and interpret the adverse effects of conflicts, offering insights into the need for targeted and inclusive conflict management strategies.

Loss of contact hours was identified as one of the most significant impacts, with 39.8% of males and a notably higher 54.1% of females strongly agreeing that conflicts disrupt scheduled teaching and learning activities. The disruption of contact hours can hinder academic progress, delay course completions, and negatively affect student outcomes. Female respondents, who may have roles that are more directly tied to teaching schedules or caregiving responsibilities, might perceive this impact as more critical. This aligns with findings by Mughal and Khan (2019), who note that unresolved conflicts in academic institutions disproportionately affect stakeholders involved in

daily operations, such as teaching staff. At DHLTU, ensuring structured conflict resolution mechanisms is crucial to mitigating such disruptions.

**Table 4.10: Negative Impacts of Conflicts based on Gender**

Negative Impact of Conflicts	Sex	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Loss of Contact Hours	Male	4.3	7.5	9.7	38.7	39.8
	Female	0.00	5.4	8.1	32.4	54.1
High Turnover of Staff	Male	3.3	10.9	14.1	35.9	35.9
	Female	0.00	5.4	29.7	32.4	32.4
Communication Breakdown	Male	3.2	2.2	7.5	43.0	44.1
	Female	2.7	5.4	0.00	37.8	54.1
Low Morale	Male	1.1	4.3	7.6	41.3	45.7
	Female	0.00	5.4	8.1	29.7	56.8
Low Productivity	Male	1.1	5.4	6.5	33.3	53.8
	Female	0.00	5.4	8.1	21.6	64.9
Low Enrolment	Male	1.1	5.4	6.5	25.8	61.3
	Female	2.7	8.1	2.7	18.9	67.6
Retrogression	Male	1.1	2.2	4.3	15.1	77.4
	Female	2.7	2.7	8.1	24.3	62.2

**Source: Field Survey, 2020**

High turnover of staff is another significant concern, with 35.9% of males and 32.4% of females strongly agreeing. Both groups recognize that conflicts contribute to employee dissatisfaction, burnout, and eventual departure. This trend could undermine institutional stability, particularly when skilled and experienced staff leave due to unresolved grievances. Adeniji *et al.* (2017) found that high turnover not only incurs recruitment and training costs but also disrupts organizational continuity and institutional memory. Female respondents might perceive this issue as less acute





because they are often underrepresented in leadership roles, where such turnover is more visible. However, the impact on workloads and team dynamics remains considerable for all genders.

Communication breakdown, as a negative impact, garnered strong agreement from 44.1% of males and an even higher 54.1% of females. This highlights how conflicts erode effective communication channels, leading to misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and a lack of collaboration among staff. Effective communication is essential for academic and administrative cohesion, and its breakdown can exacerbate existing disputes. Li *et al.* (2020) argue that communication breakdowns often arise when conflicts are mishandled, creating an environment of distrust and hostility. At DHLTU, females may perceive this impact more strongly due to their reliance on clear communication to balance multiple professional and personal responsibilities.

Low morale is another significant outcome, with 45.7% of males and 56.8% of females strongly agreeing. Workplace conflicts often diminish employee motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction. Females appear to perceive this impact more strongly, possibly due to additional stressors such as gender-based discrimination or limited support systems. Onyebuchi *et al.* (2021) note that low morale resulting from conflicts disproportionately affects marginalized groups within organizations, compounding existing inequalities. At DHLTU, fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment could help mitigate the negative impact of conflicts on morale.

Low productivity was highlighted by 53.8% of males and an even higher 64.9% of females who strongly agreed. Conflicts disrupt workflows, impede collaboration, and create an atmosphere of tension, reducing overall efficiency. Females may perceive this impact as more severe due to their roles often requiring multitasking and coordination, which are particularly affected by workplace disruptions. Mughal and Khan (2019) emphasize that unresolved conflicts undermine

organizational productivity, especially in institutions where teamwork and cooperation are essential.

Low enrollment was strongly agreed upon by 61.3% of males and 67.6% of females. This finding underscores the broader institutional impacts of conflicts, particularly when disputes become public or affect the quality of education and student services. Reduced enrollment can have far-reaching consequences, including diminished revenue, reduced program offerings, and reputational damage. Adeniji *et al.* (2017) argue that the negative publicity generated by unresolved conflicts can deter prospective students, undermining institutional growth.

Finally, retrogression, or lack of progress, was overwhelmingly agreed upon, with 77.4% of males and 62.2% of females strongly agreeing. This finding reflects a shared recognition that conflicts stall institutional development by diverting attention and resources away from core academic and administrative goals. Females' slightly lower agreement might indicate different experiences of institutional stagnation, possibly due to their underrepresentation in decision-making roles where such retrogression is more apparent.

The results emphasize the need for gender-sensitive conflict resolution strategies that address the unique experiences and challenges faced by male and female staff. For instance, targeted interventions to improve communication and morale, such as mediation training and team-building activities, could help reduce the negative impacts of conflicts. Addressing issues such as staff turnover and loss of contact hours requires transparent and consistent conflict resolution policies that prioritize fairness and inclusivity.



#### ***4.4.3.5 Negative Impact of Conflicts at DHLTU Based on Category of Respondents***

Table 4.11 examines the negative impacts of conflicts at DHLTU based on the category of staff—senior members, senior staff, and junior staff. The results reveal that staff in different categories experience conflicts differently, with varying perceptions of the severity of the consequences. This table offers a comprehensive view of the institutional challenges posed by conflicts, as perceived by those at different levels of the organizational hierarchy.

Loss of contact hours is viewed as a significant impact by 43.1% of senior members and 60.9% of senior staff who strongly agree that conflicts lead to disruptions in teaching schedules. Junior staff also express concern (35.7% strongly agree), although to a lesser extent. The disparity in perceptions can be attributed to the different levels of responsibility for managing and mitigating such disruptions. Senior staff may experience greater frustration due to their involvement in ensuring smooth operations, while junior staff may feel the effects more acutely due to the immediate disruption to their teaching schedules. Li *et al.* (2020) assert that academic institutions are particularly vulnerable to conflicts that affect teaching, as delays in class schedules and curriculum implementation directly impact student learning outcomes.



**Table 4.11: Negative Impacts of Conflicts Based on the Category of Respondents**

Negative Impact	Category of staff	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Loss of contact hours	Senior member	3.1	4.6	7.7	41.5	43.1
	Senior staff	0.00	8.7	8.7	21.7	60.9
	Junior staff	4.8	9.5	11.9	38.1	35.7
High turnover of staff	Senior member	1.5	7.7	20.0	32.3	38.5
	Senior staff	0.00	13.6	22.7	40.9	22.7
	Junior staff	4.8	9.5	14.3	35.7	35.7
Communication breakdown	Senior member	0.00	0.00	4.6	43.1	52.3
	Senior staff	4.3	8.7	4.3	39.1	43.5
	Junior staff	7.1	4.8	7.1	40.5	40.5
Low morale	Senior member	0.00	1.5	3.1	38.5	56.9
	Senior staff	0.00	9.1	13.6	40.9	36.4
	Junior staff	2.4	7.1	11.9	35.7	42.9
Low productivity	Senior member	0.00	3.1	3.1	38.5	55.4
	Senior staff	0.00	13.0	13.0	17.4	56.5
	Junior staff	2.4	4.8	9.5	23.8	59.5
Low enrolment	Senior member	0.00	3.1	1.5	27.7	67.7
	Senior staff	4.3	13.0	8.7	26.1	47.8
	Junior staff	2.4	7.1	9.5	16.7	64.3
Retrogression	Senior member	1.5	0.00	1.5	12.3	84.6
	Senior staff	0.00	4.3	8.7	17.4	69.6
	Junior staff	2.4	4.8	9.5	26.2	57.1

**Source: Field Survey, 2020**

High turnover of staff is a concern across all staff categories, though it is most strongly felt by senior members, with 38.5% strongly agreeing. Senior staff and junior staff report slightly lower



levels of agreement (32.4% and 35.7%, respectively). This suggests that senior members, who may have longer institutional tenures, feel the weight of staff departures more deeply. The literature on turnover, such as Adeniji *et al.* (2017), highlights that unresolved conflicts contribute to job dissatisfaction and resignations, particularly when staff feel that their concerns are not addressed by management. At DHLTU, proactive conflict resolution strategies could help stem the high turnover rates by addressing root causes like workload, leadership issues, and communication breakdowns.

Communication breakdown is identified as a major issue across all categories, with 52.3% of senior members, 43.5% of senior staff, and 40.5% of junior staff strongly agreeing that conflicts result in poor communication. This breakdown not only affects interpersonal relationships but also hampers effective decision-making and organizational coherence. Mughal and Khan (2019) argue that unresolved conflicts create an environment of distrust, which in turn disrupts communication channels. This is a critical issue at DHLTU, where the flow of information is key to the functioning of both academic and administrative operations.

Low morale is a widely shared concern, especially among senior members, with 56.9% strongly agreeing that conflict negatively impacts staff motivation. Junior staff also report significant morale issues (42.9% strongly agree), while senior staff report slightly less impact (36.4% strongly agree). The lower levels of morale in junior staff might be linked to feelings of being undervalued or excluded from decision-making processes. As noted by Onyebuchi *et al.* (2021), conflict, particularly when unresolved, can lead to a lack of engagement, which diminishes job satisfaction and reduces productivity.



Low productivity is a particularly significant concern, with 55.4% of senior members and 56.5% of senior staff strongly agreeing that conflict decreases efficiency. Junior staff also feel the effects (40.0% strongly agree). This finding highlights the pervasive impact of conflict on organizational output, with employees often distracted by interpersonal issues and grievances. Li *et al.* (2020) note that when conflicts remain unresolved, they consume resources and reduce staff focus, ultimately hindering organizational performance.

Given the varied perceptions of conflict's negative impacts across staff categories, DHLTU should implement conflict management strategies that are tailored to the needs of different employee groups. Senior staff, who are more likely to face the consequences of turnover and communication breakdown, should be empowered to take a leadership role in conflict resolution. Junior staff, on the other hand, would benefit from training in conflict management skills and greater involvement in decision-making processes to mitigate feelings of low morale and disengagement.

#### **4.5 Tactics/Strategies and Procedures DHLTU Uses to Handle Conflicts**

##### **4.5.1 Effective Conflict Management**

The respondents expressed their opinion, on how the following can best enhance effective conflict management. Respondents had varied views on the best way to realise effective conflict management in the institution. In a multiple-response question, respondents were asked to select from pre-listed items.

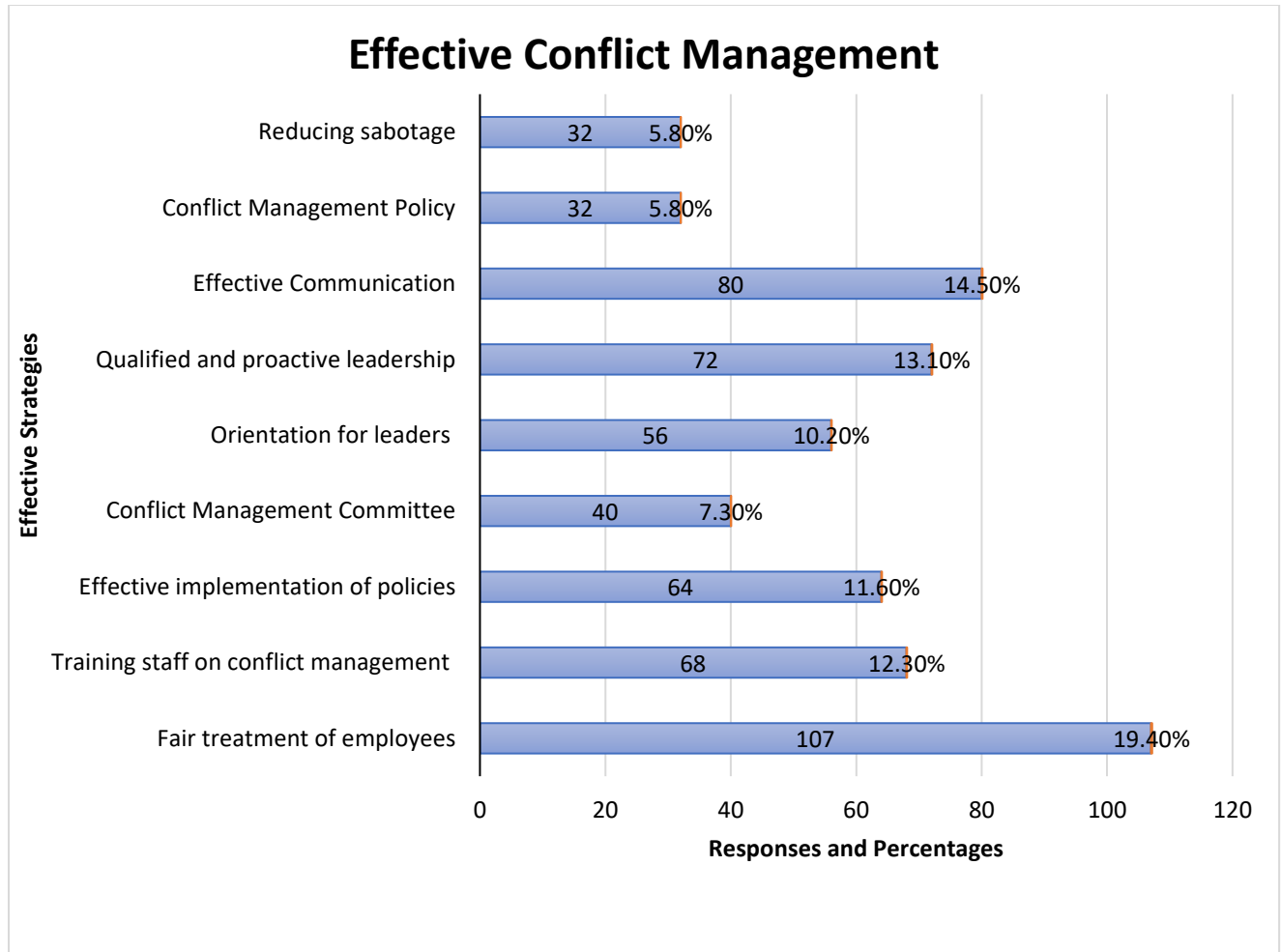
The results show that 19.4% of the total respondents believed that when employees are fairly treated in the institution it will enhance conflict management as illustrated in Figure 4.1. Reuben *et al.* (2016) posit that unfair treatment to favour certain people in an organisation disturbs the state

of employees and affects job satisfaction among employees. In favouritism, decision-makers consciously favour their friends at the expense of others who are more deserving. By not treating everyone equally, a manager is fostering a sense of resentment and separation that can de-motivate employees and damage team unity.

Approximately 15% of respondents feel that handling conflicts will yield the desired results if there is effective communication. Johdi and Apitree (2012) contend that both too little and too much communication can lead to conflict arguing that when there is too little communication, teachers and departments do not know enough about each other's intentions, goals and plans and coordination can become difficult, and misunderstandings are more likely to occur which can result in conflict. This is also the position held by Kpinpuo *et al.* (2023) when they concluded that succession planning and open communication should be upheld if the desire of organisational leadership is sustainable.

Respondents (13%) were of the view that conflict management can be effective when the University employs qualified, substantive and proactive employees to occupy the leadership positions. Respondents believe that most leadership positions were occupied by the staff without the required qualification and capacity who tend to feel insecure in their decision making.





**Figure 4.1: Effective Conflict Management Strategies/Tactics Used at DHLU**

*Source: Field Survey, 2020*

This notwithstanding, the analysis also indicated that 12.3% of the respondents believed offering employees the needed training to handle conflicts would enhance effective conflict management. From the study, 11.6% of respondents indicated that instituting a conflict management policy or guideline to direct leadership of the University will enhance effective conflict management. About 10% of respondents mentioned that proper orientation should be given to leaders before they assume leadership offices/positions. The analysis further revealed that 5.8% of respondents believe

that effective conflict management is feasible when employees reduce sabotage and when leadership effectively implement policy documents available as shown in figure 4.1.

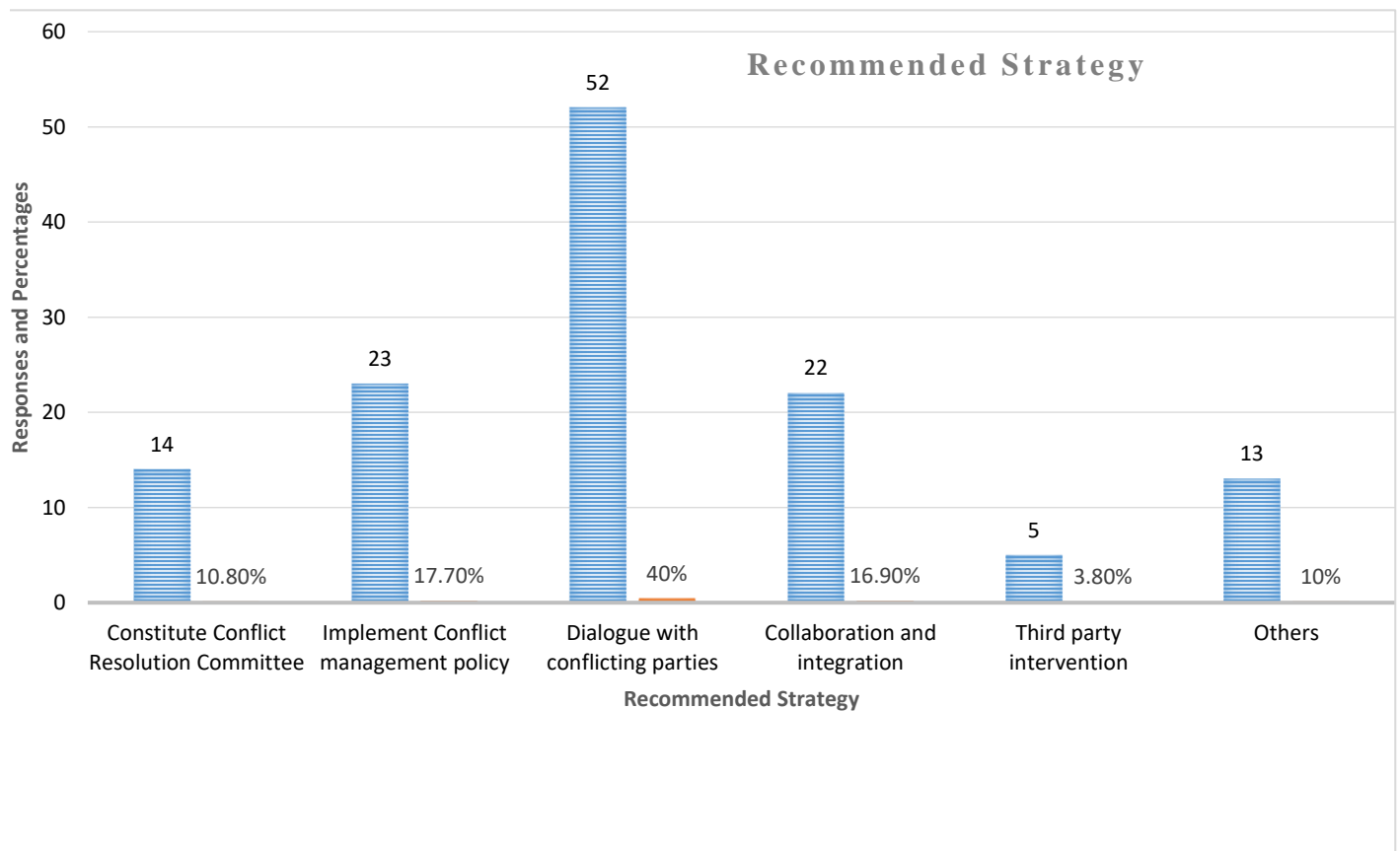
Respondents recommended that heads of educational institutions to set up Conflict Management Committees with professionals to handle conflicts when they arise, adding that the committee should be made of experts with the requisite knowledge to discuss issues with conflicting parties amicably without raising tempers. They also recommended that conflict managers dialogue with conflicting parties to get a better understanding of the opinions and concerns of the affected individuals. Oboegbulem and Aphonusu-alfa (2013) believes that through dialogue the conflicting parties share their feelings and fears, are open to listening to the other parties' needs, are willing to be changed by what they hear, and are open to the idea of being vulnerable. It corroborates the view of Benson (2016) that without dialogue, individuals and groups can neither exchange ideas effectively, nor develop shared understanding. The goal of dialogue is to develop a joint and collective approach to conflict resolution. Dialogue enables the stakeholders to identify, involve, be sensitive and plan to represent one's interests as well as understand the interests and intentions of the opponent groups. Respondents mentioned negotiation as one of the easiest, affordable and best strategy heads of institutions can use to effectively manage conflicts among employees instead of the law court. Negotiations offer the opportunity for personal growth by exposing each party to the views of the other, providing a situation for learning.

#### **4.5.2 Recommendations of Conflict Management Strategies for Heads of Educational Institutions**

Respondents were asked to recommend a conflict management strategy for heads of educational institutions. It was observed that the majority of respondents (40%) recommended a dialogue with conflicting parties. The recommendations are presented in figure 4.2. This finding is in line with



that of Aja (2013) that dialogue sessions offered the team a relative sense of psychological safety. It also corroborates Benson's (2016) view that without dialogue, individuals and groups can neither exchange ideas effectively nor develop shared understanding. As a strategy for conflict management, 17.8% recommended the institution and implementation of a conflict management policy to serve as a guide in handling conflicts.



**Figure 4.2: Recommended Strategy for Heads of Educational Institution**

Source: Field Survey, 2020

This notwithstanding, 16.9% of the respondents recommended the collaboration and integration strategy for heads of educational institutions. The existence of a conflict management policy is not



enough to handle conflicts, 10.8% mentioned that educational institutions need to constitute a Conflict Management Committee to handle conflicts. It is often said that familiarity breeds content, 3.8% of the respondents recommended the intervention of third parties (neutral) in handling conflicts. Others (10%), recommended effective training, better leadership, mediation, fair application of the rules and involving the traditional authorities to help manage conflicts. When asked whether respondents would recommend training of employees on how to handle conflict, 89.9% of the respondents were affirmative while 10.1% were not in support.

#### **4.6 Obstacles/Barriers to Efficient Conflict Management at DHLTU**

##### **4.6.1 Barriers to Effective Conflict Management at DHLTU**

Table 4.12 identifies several barriers to effective conflict management at Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU). The barriers are ranked based on the responses from respondents, reflecting the challenges that hinder the implementation of successful conflict resolution strategies. The most frequently cited barrier is Leadership and Management style (8.19% strongly disagree), which suggests that the leadership approach at DHLTU is perceived as a major obstacle to effective conflict management. This result aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of leadership in conflict resolution. A top-down, authoritarian management style limits open communication and may discourage employees from participating in conflict-resolution processes (Thomas, 1992). This issue is particularly relevant at DHLTU, where leadership might not sufficiently encourage staff participation in decision-making or conflict resolution.

The second-highest ranked barrier is Favouritism (8.47% strongly disagree), which highlights the perception that preferential treatment of certain employees contributes to unresolved conflicts.

**Table 4.12: Barriers to Effective Conflict Management at DHLTU**

Barrier	Disagree (%)	Rank
Leadership and Management Style	8.19	1st
Favouritism	8.47	2nd
Unfair application of rules	8.65	3rd
Communications breakdown	8.82	4th
Lack of appropriate skills and experience	8.81	5th
Unconcerned management	9.33	6th
Unclear/ambiguous procedures	9.99	7th
Personal/Selfish interest	10.25	8th
No Conflict Management Policy	10.94	9th
Cooperation of conflicting parties	11.16	10th
Lack of resources	11.29	11th
Resorting to court system instead of internal structures	11.38	12th
Religious and ethnic differences	11.47	13th
Inadequate planning	11.53	14th
Strained relationship between employees and management	11.65	15th
Policies and procedures of the University	12.55	16th
Culture of the organization	12.58	17th
Unknown causes of conflicts	12.08	18th
Structure of the organization	13.08	19th
Bureaucracy	12.75	20th
Time and venue	16.02	21st

**Test Statistics**

Number of observation = 130

Kendall's W = 0.131



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Chi-Square	= 331.857
Df	= 20
Asymp. Sig.	= < 0.001

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**Source: Field Survey, 2020**

Favouritism can create an environment of inequality, where conflicts are not addressed fairly, and some employees may feel excluded from the resolution process. Studies have shown that when employees perceive favouritism, it leads to resentment, low morale, and decreased trust in management (Adeniji *et al.*, 2017). At DHLTU, ensuring equal treatment for all staff is crucial for minimizing conflicts and improving conflict management outcomes.

Another significant barrier identified is unfair application of rules (8.65% strongly disagree). This finding reflects the perception that inconsistent application of policies and procedures can foster conflicts. When rules are perceived as unfairly enforced, staff members may feel that they are being treated unjustly, which can lead to dissatisfaction and heightened tension. As Li *et al.* (2020) note, policies that are not transparently applied can exacerbate conflict and reduce the legitimacy of management's actions.

Communication breakdown (8.82% strongly disagree) is also highlighted as a critical barrier. This is consistent with the finding that poor communication is one of the most common causes of conflict in organizations. Ineffective communication leads to misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and a lack of clarity on conflict resolution processes, making it difficult to resolve disputes effectively. A study by Mughal and Khan (2019) supports this, asserting that communication breakdowns often prolong conflicts and contribute to a toxic work environment. At DHLTU, enhancing communication channels and ensuring clear and transparent dialogue among staff is essential for resolving conflicts in a timely and constructive manner.







Other barriers identified include the lack of appropriate skills and experience (8.81% strongly disagree), Unconcerned Management (9.33% strongly disagree), and unclear or ambiguous procedures (9.99% strongly disagree). These barriers suggest that insufficient training in conflict management, a lack of engagement from management, and ambiguous conflict resolution procedures are critical obstacles at DHLTU. As highlighted by Rahim (2002), the ability of conflict managers to address disputes effectively relies on their skill level and experience. DHLTU should consider investing in conflict resolution training and developing clearer procedures for handling disputes to improve overall conflict management effectiveness.

The remaining barriers, including personal/selfish interest, no conflict management policy, and cooperation of conflicting parties, emphasize the need for a structured approach to conflict resolution, one that ensures a shared commitment to resolving conflicts and fosters an environment of mutual respect.

The Kendall's W value of 0.131 and the chi-square test result  $p < 0.001$  indicate that the ranking of barriers to conflict management is statistically significant. This suggests that the barriers identified are consistent across respondents and provide valuable insight into the primary obstacles faced at DHLTU.

The results underscore the importance of addressing leadership style, fairness, and communication issues to improve conflict management at DHLTU. Training programs for leadership and conflict managers, aimed at promoting participatory decision-making and transparent communication, can help mitigate these barriers. Additionally, the development of clear conflict management policies and consistent application of rules will ensure fairness and reduce resentment among staff.

## **4.6.2 Comparative Views on Effective Conflict Management Using Demographics of Respondents at DHLTU**

### ***4.6.2.1 Barriers to Effective Conflict Management at DHLTU Based on Gender***

Table 4.13 highlights the barriers to effective conflict management based on gender, revealing differences in how male and female respondents perceive these barriers. Leadership and management style emerges as a prominent barrier for both genders, with 66.7% of males and 81.1% of females strongly agreeing that leadership style impedes conflict resolution. This suggests that leadership approaches at DHLTU are seen as authoritarian or insufficiently participatory, which aligns with findings in existing literature (Ampofo *et al.*, 2021). Both male and female employees believe that a more inclusive leadership style could improve conflict management by allowing for greater staff involvement in decision-making processes.

Favouritism is also cited as a major barrier, with 62.4% of males and 73.0% of females strongly agreeing that preferential treatment contributes to unresolved conflicts. This is consistent with previous studies, which highlight that perceived favouritism leads to organizational divisions, making it difficult to resolve conflicts equitably (Gyan & Tandoh-Offin, 2014). Both genders agree that resolving conflicts requires fair treatment of all employees, which will help foster a more inclusive and collaborative work environment at DHLTU.

Communication breakdown is another barrier with significant agreement, particularly among 62.4% of males and 64.9% of females who strongly agree that poor communication impedes effective conflict management. This finding emphasizes the need for improved communication channels and clearer messaging regarding conflict resolution procedures. Mughal and Khan (2019) emphasize that effective communication is essential for understanding the perspectives of all parties involved and ensuring that conflicts are resolved constructively.



**Table 4.14: Barriers to Effective Conflict Management Based on Gender**

Barriers	Gender	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Leadership and Management Style	Male	3.2	6.5	0.00	23.7	66.7
	Female	0.00	5.4	2.7	10.8	81.1
Structure of the Organisation	Male	9.7	9.7	12.9	41.9	25.8
	Female	5.4	0.00	21.6	32.4	40.5
Lack of Appropriate Skills	Male	2.2	6.5	6.5	21.5	63.4
	Female	2.7	5.4	8.1	13.5	70.3
Resort to Court System	Male	5.4	9.7	5.4	41.9	37.6
	Female	2.7	10.8	5.4	24.3	56.8
Strained Relationships	Male	6.5	4.3	14.0	40.9	34.4
	Female	0.00	2.7	5.4	45.9	45.9
No Conflict Policy	Male	5.4	9.7	5.4	38.7	40.9
	Female	0.00	5.4	2.7	40.5	51.4
Communication Breakdown	Male	2.2	5.4	7.5	22.6	62.4
	Female	0.00	0.00	5.4	29.7	64.9

**Source: Field Survey, 2020**

Lack of appropriate skills also ranks highly, with 63.4% of males and 70.3% of females strongly agreeing that a lack of conflict management skills hinders the resolution process. This underscores the importance of training in conflict resolution, particularly in leadership and management positions, to ensure that those responsible for managing conflicts are adequately prepared to handle disputes in a way that benefits all parties involved.



The findings from Table 4.13 suggest that DHLTU should focus on improving leadership skills, addressing favouritism, and enhancing communication strategies to overcome the barriers to effective conflict management. Gender-specific training and awareness programs can also be implemented to address differences in how male and female employees perceive and experience conflict in the workplace.

#### ***4.6.2.2 Barriers to Effective Conflict Management at DHLTU Based on Category of Staff***

Table 4.14 identifies barriers to effective conflict management at DHLTU based on the perspectives of different staff categories—senior members, senior staff, and junior staff. The findings provide valuable insights into how various roles within the institution experience and perceive obstacles to managing conflicts effectively.



**Table 4.14: Barriers to Effective Conflict Management Based on Category of Staff**

Barrier	Category of Respondents	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Leadership and Management Style	Senior Member	1.5	6.2	0.00	15.4	76.9
	Senior Staff	0.00	4.3	4.3	30.4	60.9
	Junior Staff	4.8	7.1	0.00	21.4	66.7
Structure of the Organisation	Senior Member	7.7	7.7	15.4	36.9	32.3
	Senior Staff	4.3	4.3	30.4	30.4	30.4
	Junior Staff	11.9	7.1	7.1	47.6	26.2
Lack of Appropriate Skills	Senior Member	0.00	1.5	3.1	12.3	83.1
	Senior Staff	8.7	4.3	17.4	13.0	56.5
	Junior Staff	2.4	14.3	7.1	33.3	42.9
Resort to Court System	Senior Member	3.1	4.6	4.6	40.0	47.7
	Senior Staff	4.3	8.7	8.7	39.1	39.1
	Junior Staff	7.1	19.0	4.8	31.0	38.1
Strained Relationships	Senior Member	3.1	1.5	12.3	47.7	35.4
	Senior Staff	0.00	8.7	13.0	47.8	30.4
	Junior Staff	9.5	4.8	9.5	31.0	45.2
No Conflict Policy	Senior Member	4.6	1.5	3.1	50.8	40.0
	Senior Staff	0.00	8.7	13.0	17.4	60.9
	Junior Staff	4.8	19.0	2.4	33.3	40.5
Communication Breakdown	Senior Member	1.5	1.5	3.1	20.0	73.8
	Senior Staff	4.3	0.00	8.7	17.4	69.6
	Junior Staff	0.00	9.5	11.9	35.7	42.9

**Source: Field Survey, 2020**

Leadership and management style was the most significant barrier across all categories, with 76.9% of senior members, 60.9% of senior staff, and 66.7% of junior staff strongly agreeing. This





result highlights the universal role of leadership in shaping the conflict management process. Poor leadership styles such as authoritarian, inconsistent, or overly passive approaches—are widely recognized as catalysts for workplace tensions. Transformational leadership, which emphasizes collaboration, motivation, and effective communication, has been shown to significantly reduce workplace conflicts by fostering trust and inclusivity (Sahu & Pathardikar, 2015; Singh & Kumar, 2013). At DHLTU, reliance on top-down decision-making processes might exacerbate tensions and discourage participatory conflict resolution efforts. Addressing this barrier requires leadership training programs to equip managers with the emotional intelligence and communication skills necessary for effective conflict management (Ellis & Abbott, 2017; Goleman, 1998).

Strained relationships were identified as another key barrier, particularly for 47.8% of senior staff and 45.2% of junior staff. This finding underscores the impact of unresolved conflicts on interpersonal dynamics, which can erode trust and make future collaboration more difficult. Singh and Antony (2006) argue that strained relationships often arise when conflicts are left unaddressed or poorly managed, leading to resentment and reduced teamwork. For example, in academic institutions like DHLTU, strained relationships between administrative staff and faculty could disrupt workflows and undermine institutional goals. Interventions such as team-building activities, counseling services, and mediated dialogue can help rebuild trust and strengthen relationships (Aston *et al.*, 2010; Labraque *et al.*, 2016).

The absence of conflict policy was noted as a critical barrier for 60.9% of senior staff and 40.5% of junior staff, highlighting the absence of formal procedures for addressing disputes. The lack of a structured conflict resolution framework leaves employees uncertain about how to handle conflicts, often resulting in delays and frustration. According to Rahim (2002), organizations with well-defined conflict management policies are better equipped to resolve disputes efficiently and

equitably. For DHLTU, developing a comprehensive conflict management policy that outlines clear procedures, timelines, and roles for all stakeholders is essential. Such policies should emphasize fairness, transparency, and accessibility to ensure that all staff feel supported during the conflict resolution process (Alan *et al.*, 2019).

#### **4.7 Institutional Standards, Rules, and Procedures Available to Address Obstacles and Difficulties in Managing Conflicts**

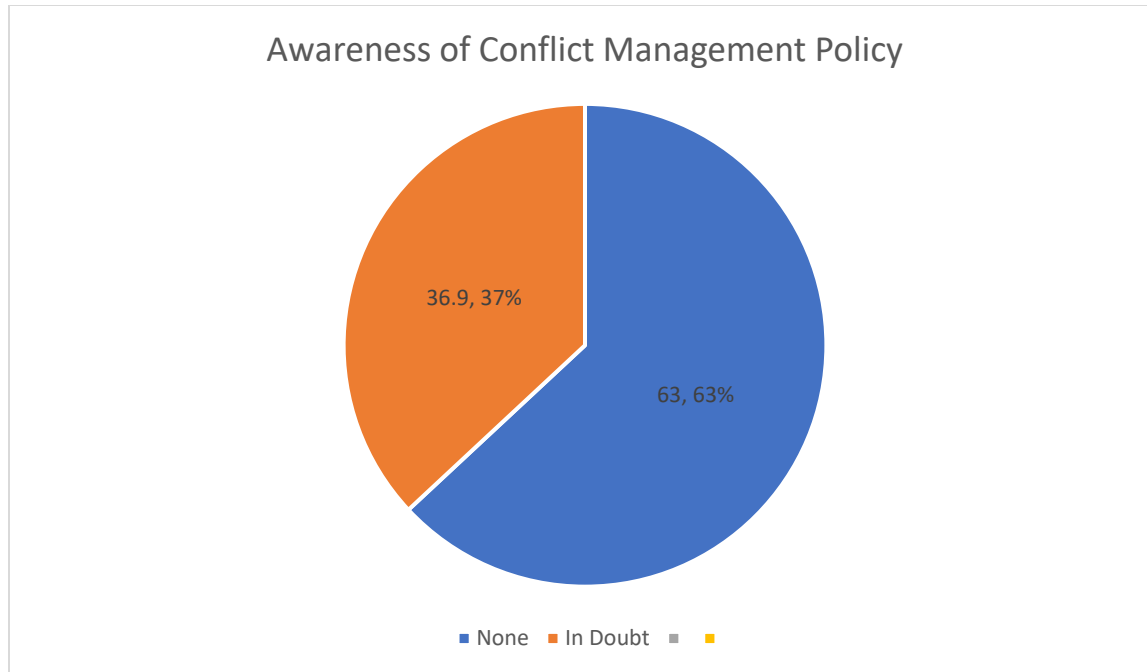
##### **4.7.1 Institutional Policies Available for Managing Conflicts**

The last research objective was to examine institutional policies, policy guidelines and procedures available for resolving conflicts in the university and how they address the barriers and challenges to conflict management. The aim of this was to solicit the views of respondents on the awareness of institutional guidelines and policies for managing conflicts and how functional they were.

##### **4.7.2 Awareness of Conflict Management Policy**

The study investigated respondents' awareness of the availability of a Conflict Management Policy in the institution. The majority of respondents (63%) indicated clearly that they were not aware of the Policy in the University, and 36.9% of the respondents were in doubt as to the existence or otherwise of a conflict management policy in DHLTU. Figure 4.3 contains the details of the responses.





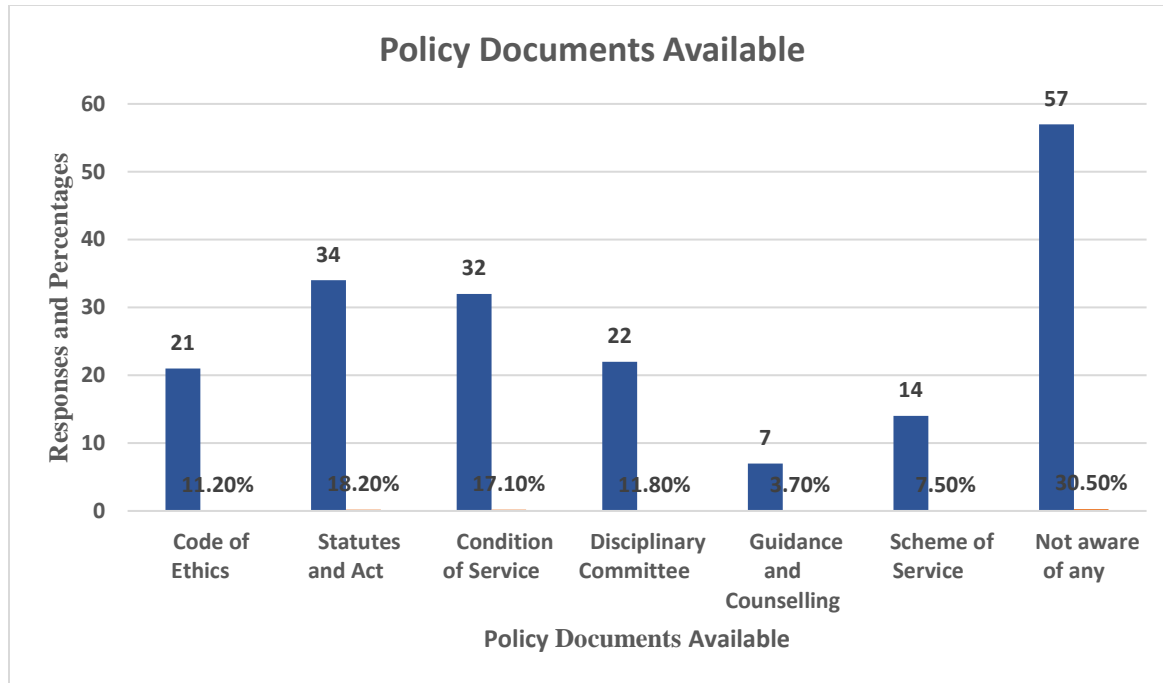
**Figure 4.3: Awareness of Conflict Management Policy**

Source: Field Survey, 2020

#### 4.7.3 Institutional Policies Available

In a multiple response question, respondents were asked to indicate which of the listed policies or guidelines were available for effective Conflict Management in the institution. Approximately thirty-one percent of the respondents said they were not aware of any conflict management policy guideline while 3.7% indicated they were aware of the document on guidance and counselling as on Figure 4.4.





**Figure 4.4: Policy Documents Available**

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Asked how functional the existing policy documents were, 46.9% of the respondents had no idea regarding the functionality of the policy documents available. About forty-four percent of respondents declared that the policy documents available were not functional while 8.5% said the policies and guidelines were functional.

The interview results revealed that the institution had no functional conflict management policy in place to guide the management of conflicts. Further probes indicated that the institution was still working on the conflict management policy document. Even though the institution does not have a working document for handling conflicts, respondents indicated that there were procedures inherent in the rules and regulations governing the institution (such as the Statutes, code of ethics, the Scheme of Service, among others) for managing disputes among staff.

*Instead of referring to the other policies, a clear conflict management policy would serve as a guide in conflict resolution. In my opinion the non-availability of a functional policy to guide conflict management had been a major barrier to effective conflict management in this institution (Respondent, DHLTU, March 2021).*

Respondents believed that the others policy documents were general and applicable to other Technical Universities and does not address the specific problems of DHLTU. There were divided responses as to whether there were any other institutional policies or guidelines for effective conflict management. Some agreed there was no policy while others felt the policy documents governing the running of the institution could serve as a guide to conflict management since these are rules and regulations which shape behaviour of employees.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The final chapter summarises the findings of the study, with the research objectives serving as a guide for the arrangement of the discussions. The conclusions are derived from the findings of the study. The chapter also contains recommendations and suggestions for further studies. The predominant purpose of this research was to investigate the main causes and origins of disputes as well as the management strategies that can be used to improve both individual and organizational performance. To achieve this, the following supporting goals were pursued:

- 1) To determine the primary causes of conflicts at DHLTU.
- 2) To analyse how unresolved disputes affect the productivity of employees and the success of the organisation.
- 3) To examine the strategies and systems employed by DHLTU to resolve disputes.
- 4) To determine the obstacles that DHLTU faces in managing conflicts effectively.
- 5) To investigate the institutional guidelines, policies, and procedures that are available for resolving disputes and how they handle the obstacles to efficient conflict resolution.

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, rooted in pragmatist philosophy, to integrate quantitative and qualitative techniques for a comprehensive exploration of conflict dynamics. A sequential explanatory design was employed, where quantitative data collection and analysis preceded qualitative methods. This approach allowed statistical trends to be complemented with deeper insights, ensuring a thorough understanding of the research objectives. The study's population consisted of 178 full-time employees across three categories which are Senior



Members, Senior Staff, and Junior Staff. All 130 respondents meeting the 4-year bench mark experience, were surveyed in addition to 10 others who were purposely selected, resulting in a final combined sample size of 140.

Primary data collection involved the use of structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, complemented by document analysis and secondary data from institutional reports and literature. Questionnaires captured employee perspectives on conflict causes, impacts, and resolution tactics, while interviews with management provided nuanced insights into conflict dynamics and institutional practices. To enhance the reliability and validity of the instruments, a pretest was conducted, leading to refinements in question clarity and structure. Methodological triangulation, combining multiple data sources, ensured the credibility and robustness of the findings.

Data analysis techniques were tailored to address each research objective. Quantitative data, including survey responses, were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Kendall's rank correlation, to identify trends and levels of agreement. Qualitative data, derived from interviews, were subjected to thematic review to uncover deeper patterns and managerial perspectives. Institutional guidelines and policies were assessed through document analysis and benchmarking against best practices to evaluate comprehensiveness and effectiveness. This rigorous methodological approach provided a reliable framework for exploring the causes, impacts, and management of conflicts at DHLTU, offering valuable insights for institutional growth.





## **5.2 Summary of Major Findings**

### **5.2.1 Background of Respondents**

The respondents were made up of 72% male and 28% female. Regarding the educational background of respondents, 9.2% had a PhD, 43.1% had a second degree, and 6.9% were first degree holders, while 13.1% were HND holders and 26.9% held other certificates or had no formal education. Based on the length of service with the institution, close to 68% of the respondents had served the institution for more than 10 years, 50% of respondents were senior members, 17.7% were senior staff and 32.3% were junior staff. Those who held leadership positions were 40.8% of the respondents.

### **5.2.2 General Knowledge of Conflicts**

The study found that the employees of the University were aware of the existence of conflicts considering 95.4% positive responses from the respondents. About 39% of the respondents mentioned that they had been involved in conflicts before. The study established that the occurrence of conflicts was on the higher side and described conflicts in the institution as dysfunctional and destructive that had hampered progress and institutional performance. Mba (2013) points out that the word conflict brings to mind images such as antagonism, struggles between parties, opposition processes and threats to cooperation. The study established that conflicts in DHLTU were usually inter-personal and inter-group conflicts.

### **5.2.3 Causes of Conflicts**

The study observed that respondents were aware of the factors that promote conflicts in the University. Prominent among the possible factors that cause conflict in the institution were leadership style, indiscipline, communication breakdown, favouritism, past unresolved conflict,

delay/denial of promotion, and incompetent leadership. Others were gossiping and backbiting, serving selfish interests, and non-adherence to the rules and regulations of the institution.

The style of leadership was the major cause of conflicts in the University. The style of leadership imbibed in every leader influence decision made in handling conflicts. A good leadership approach in organizations according to Kasimoto (2013), leads to a reduction in the number of disciplinary and grievance cases, and an improvement in employee morale, team performance, and productivity. Leadership style together with other leadership-related activities such as unqualified and incompetent leaders, the quest for power had contributed to recurring conflicts in the University. Past unresolved conflicts have been a major source of recurring conflicts. Suppressing, avoiding, or mishandling conflicts could escalate the conflict situation and the pattern keeps repeating until the right method is used.

Delay or denial in promoting employees who are duly qualified as a condition for conflicts and dragged the leadership of the institution to court in the past. Unfair treatment/favouritism and tribalism were other common causes of conflicts in the institution. Intentionally giving unfair treatment to employees and other acts of discrimination in the institution generate unnecessary tension and hatred among employees. Reuben *et al.*, (2016) believe that unfair treatment to favour certain people in an organization disturbs the state of employees and affects job satisfaction among employees which fosters a sense of resentment and separation that can de-motivate employees and damage team unity. Gossip or backbiting was another indicator of conflicts in the institution.

The analysis of the primary causes of conflicts at Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU) highlighted the complex interplay of factors driving workplace disputes. It can be concluded that Leadership style is the most significant contributor conflicts in that educational environment,





underscoring the critical role of effective leadership in fostering workplace harmony. The findings emphasize the need for transparent leadership practices, structured conflict resolution mechanisms, and fair systems for promotion and recognition to mitigate conflicts and enhance institutional cohesion. The statistically significant agreement among respondents reinforces the urgency of addressing these challenges comprehensively. Implementing targeted interventions in leadership development, communication enhancement, and policy adherence will be crucial to creating a more harmonious work environment at DHLTU.

## **5.2.4 Impact of Conflicts**

### ***5.2.4.1 Positive Impact of Conflicts***

The study revealed that the majority of the respondents supported the traditional view that organisational conflict often has only negative impacts. Supporters of this school of thought consider the presence of conflict in an organisation as evidence of a defect in the organisational structure (Al-Rajhi, 2008). Even though respondents affirmed that conflicts in the institution could be positive and bring about some innovation and creativity, increase productivity, enhance communication, improve teamwork, and enhance growth and development, their level of agreement was insignificant as compared to that of the negatives. Conflicts in the DHLTU generally were dysfunctional with minimal benefits. From the results, it can be concluded that conflicts at DHLTU, despite their challenges, can have constructive impacts when effectively managed. The most significant positive outcome as revealed by respondents was that conflicts can lead to correcting management lapses. This revealed that conflicts often expose inefficiencies in leadership and operational practices, prompting necessary improvements. Enhancing teamwork and fostering relationships emerged as another critical benefit, as conflicts encourage dialogue and

collaboration among employees. The creation of avenues for appreciating diverse perspectives highlights the role of conflict in challenging entrenched beliefs and fostering mutual understanding in a diverse academic environment. While improving teaching, learning, and institutional performance were ranked lower as positive impacts of conflicts, they still underscore conflict's potential to drive incremental improvements in curriculum design and operational processes. It can be concluded from the results that although conflicts arise with some negative impacts, it sometimes creates an avenue that exposes inefficiencies in institutional structures therefore leading to necessary improvements.

#### ***5.2.4.2 Negative Impacts of Conflicts***

Findings from the study indicated that unmanaged conflicts in the University had resulted in sabotage, low employee commitment, loss of contact hours, unfriendly environment, and high turnover of staff, communication breakdown, low morale, low productivity, low students' enrolment and retrogression in the institution. Others were division among employees, unfair treatment, truncated academic calendar, protracted disharmony among employees, disintegration and production of unemployable graduates.

From the results of Kendall's rank correlation, no development and sabotage were ranked as the top negative impacts experienced by DHLTU as a result of the numerous institutional conflicts they have experienced over the years. The unmanaged conflicts created an unfriendly environment which was not suitable for serious academic work and led to a decline in the level of commitment to work. Protracted conflicts had dragged the name of the institution backward and retarded development and progress. Disagreement of any kind brings about disharmony between parties, and this was evident as the conflicts had brought about protracted disharmony among employees.





Conflicts have created communication barriers as aggrieved employees keep to themselves and might not want to share anything beneficial with other parties. Awan and Anjum (2015) argued that unmanaged conflict can also promote dysfunctional communication and poor behaviour among employees which have an effect on overall employee morale thereby resulting in lower productivity. It was found that conflicts decrease the morale of employees, in that employees are not willing to share ideas during meetings because they are not sure of their role in the office and might get agitated or annoyed with the least misunderstanding. Conflicts within the institution deter prospective students from enrolling and contribute to the rate at which employees leave the institution in search of better employment.

Unresolved/recurring conflicts in the institution have fragmented and disintegrated the institution, retarded innovation and creativity, resulted in poor treatment of staff, and resulted in unhealthy competition among conflicting parties. This is contrary to the concern of Osad and Osas (2013) that conflict in work relations is not an aberration, since it creates or provides an opportunity for correction and reconciliation for the betterment of both the organisation and the workers. Respondents described the work environment as unstable and frustrating.

### **5.2.5 Conflict Management Strategies**

The study results underscore that good and exemplary leadership at the top level significantly reduces conflicts in the university. Respondents emphasized that fair treatment of employees, effective communication, and appointing qualified personnel to leadership positions are crucial strategies for mitigating conflicts. Interestingly, the court system emerged as the most commonly used mechanism for resolving disputes at DHLTU. However, its frequent use may suggest a lack of proactive conflict management strategies within the institution.



The study also revealed that the avoiding conflict management strategy is perceived as more effective among respondents. This preference can be attributed to the traditional view of conflict, where it is predominantly seen as negative, prompting individuals to avoid confrontation wherever possible. While avoidance may reduce immediate tensions, it does not address the underlying causes of conflict, leaving the potential for recurrence.

It is imperative for university management, particularly key officers, to take an active role in conflict management. Addressing underlying tensions among employees before they escalate into major disputes is essential. This requires fostering open communication, building trust, and establishing clear procedures for conflict resolution. Furthermore, the development and effective implementation of a comprehensive conflict management policy could serve as a valuable guide for addressing disputes in a structured and efficient manner.

The findings align with the views of Doğan (2016) and Rawlings (1996), as cited in Dick and Thodlana (2013), who argue that properly managed conflicts present opportunities for learning, improving efficiency, enhancing communication, and addressing underlying problems. Effective conflict management can build trust, reduce anxiety, and contribute to sustainable institutional development.

The reliance on the court system as a primary strategy, however, highlights a gap in internal mechanisms for resolving conflicts. University leadership must prioritize dialogue with conflicting parties to understand their concerns and develop mutually beneficial solutions. Integrating participatory and restorative approaches to conflict resolution can improve institutional performance, foster a harmonious environment, and reduce the need for external interventions.

In conclusion, effective conflict management at DHLTU requires a combination of exemplary leadership, proactive policies, and an emphasis on fostering a collaborative and transparent culture. These strategies will not only mitigate conflicts but also leverage them as opportunities for organizational growth and improved performance.

#### **5.2.6 Barriers to Effective Conflict Management**

The findings of the study further established that leadership and management style, the structure of the organisation, lack of skills, resorting to the court system, strained relationships, lack of conflict policy and communication breakdown were the major barriers to effective management of conflicts in the university as revealed from the results of Kendall's rank correlation. Other factors included favouritism, selfishness, inadequate planning, unconcerned management and unfair application of the rules and regulations.

The majority of the respondents agreed that leadership and management style were a major determinant of effective conflict management in the institution. Adeyemi *et al.*, (2010) stated that managing conflicts in schools requires an appropriate leadership style of the school administrators. The unfair application of rules and regulations in the institution was a barrier to successful conflict management. Partial or unfair application of rules and regulations to employees (especially conflicting parties) affects effective conflict management.

Communication was a common determinant of effective conflict management in the institution. Conflict managers of the researched institution lacked the skills and experience needed to effectively handle conflicts. Resorting to the court system instead of using internal mechanisms



and structures was seen as an influential factor that had prevented effective conflict management in the university.

### **5.2.7 Institutional Policies/Guidelines Available for Managing Conflicts**

The study found that there was no functional Conflict Management Policy in DHLTU, making conflict management a tedious task. Respondents however mentioned that adhering to the Statutes and Act of the institution could assist in reducing the occurrence of conflicts. Fair treatment of employees, effective communication and the appointment of qualified personnel to occupy leadership positions will help reduce conflicts in the University.

## **5.3 Conclusions**

According to Atieno *et al.*, (2016), conflicts are inevitable in every human institution. It is believed that there will always be disagreements among educational administrators, teachers, and students. Olaleye and Arogundade (2013) see conflict as a by-product of the interaction of people or groups with different expectations, interests, and backgrounds in society. Therefore, if the conflict is a by-product of interaction among people, it is inevitable in any organisation especially in a place like the University system with several subsystems/departments/units.

Conflict is the product of human interaction and since the University employs persons from diverse backgrounds with different ideologies, conflict is inevitable. This study therefore sought to identify the major sources and causes of conflicts and how these conflicts can be managed to enhance individual and institutional performance. To help address this aim, the study looked at the causes of conflicts, the effects of such conflicts, the strategies used in managing conflicts, the factors that



influence effective conflict management and institutional policies available for effective conflict management.

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that:

1. Conflicts were recurring in DHLTU and had been at the inter-personal and inter-group levels.
2. Leadership style, indiscipline, favouritism, past unresolved conflicts, communication breakdown, delay/denial in the promotion, and unqualified leadership were the major causes of conflicts.
3. Conflicts were dysfunctional and had led to the loss of contact hours, sabotage, lack of commitment to duty, high turnover of staff, communication breakdown, low morale, low productivity, low student enrolment, and retrogression.
4. The results of conflict situations in the DHLTU tend to lend credence to the human needs theory of conflict, the structural theory of conflict, and to a lesser extent the traditional conflict theory.
5. Effective conflict management would have a positive impact on the overall performance of the institution.
6. It is the duty of the Management (Key Officers) of the University to manage conflicts by ensuring better leadership from the top and addressing the underlying tensions among employees before they escalate into major conflicts.
7. The Court system had been commonly used by conflicting parties in settling conflicts. The strategies employed by the University in managing conflicts in the past were not effective. The strategies were either not appropriate or effective for such conflicts to enable them to attain lasting peace.



8. For effective conflict management, heads of educational institutions and conflict managers should dialogue with conflicting parties first to appreciate their concerns before taking any action.
9. Leadership and management style, structure of the organisation, lack of skills, resorting to court system, strained relationships, unfair application of the rules and regulations, lack of conflict policy and communication breakdown were the major barriers to effective conflict management in the University.
10. There was no functional conflict management policy in the University and as a result conflict managers relied on the Act and Statutes for guidance. Fair treatment of employees, effective communication and implementation of the policies and the appointment of qualified personnel to occupy leadership positions will help reduce the occurrence of dysfunctional conflicts in the University.

#### **5.4 Implications of the Economic Conflict Theory, Human Needs Theory, and Structural Conflict Theory**

The Economic Conflict Theory, Human Needs Theory, and Structural Conflict Theory were found to be highly relevant to this PhD thesis, as they help to explain the root causes, nature, and consequences of conflicts in DHLTU, as well as propose effective strategies for conflict resolution.

##### **5.4.1. Economic Conflict Theory**

The Economic Conflict Theory suggests that conflicts arise due to competition over scarce resources, such as money, jobs, power, and privileges. This theory is relevant to the findings of the thesis in several ways:

- **Delay/denial in promotion and unqualified leadership** (Finding 2) suggest economic-based grievances where employees feel unfairly treated in career progression, leading to dissatisfaction and conflict.
- **Low morale, low productivity, and high turnover of staff** (Finding 3) indicate that economic factors such as job security and incentives play a role in shaping workplace conflict.
- **Lack of conflict policy and unfair application of rules and regulations** (Finding 9) suggest that power and economic resources are unequally distributed, leading to perceived injustices and resulting in conflicts.

#### 5.4.2 Human Needs Theory

Human Needs Theory, as proposed by John Burton, argues that conflicts arise when fundamental human needs (such as security, recognition, identity, and participation) are denied. This theory is relevant to the findings in the following ways:

- **Conflicts occurring at inter-personal and inter-group levels** (Finding 1) indicate that individuals and groups in the university feel their basic needs (such as recognition, fair treatment, and job security) are not being met.
- **Leadership style, indiscipline, favouritism, and unresolved past conflicts** (Finding 2) suggest that employees feel excluded, unrecognized, or unfairly treated, reinforcing the notion that their fundamental human needs are being denied.
- **Breakdown of communication, strained relationships, and lack of commitment** (Finding 3 and 9) reflect frustrations from unfulfilled psychological and social needs.

### 5.4. 3 Structural Conflict Theory

Structural Conflict Theory emphasizes that conflicts arise from the underlying structures of society or organizations, including power imbalances, institutional policies, and hierarchical relationships.

This theory applies to the thesis findings in the following ways:

- **The structure of the organization and unqualified leadership** (Finding 2 and 9) suggest that institutional frameworks create systemic inequalities that fuel conflicts.
- **The lack of a functional conflict management policy** (Finding 10) supports the structural conflict perspective, as the absence of clear policies allows conflicts to escalate.
- **The reliance on the court system rather than dialogue for conflict resolution** (Finding 7) highlights how rigid institutional structures may lead to adversarial instead of cooperative conflict resolution.

These three theories provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing the recurring conflicts in DHLTU. Economic Conflict Theory explains conflicts stemming from competition over promotions and leadership positions. Human Needs Theory accounts for conflicts resulting from unfulfilled psychological, emotional, and social needs. Structural Conflict Theory highlights the role of institutional deficiencies, unfair leadership structures, and ineffective conflict resolution mechanisms. For effective conflict management, as suggested in Finding 8 and 10, integrating these theories into policy reforms, leadership development, and institutional restructuring will be essential in reducing conflicts and improving overall institutional performance.





## 5.5 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study the following are recommended:

### 1. Promoting Conflict Awareness and Tolerance Through Orientation

The University, through the Human Resource Directorate, should provide targeted orientation programs for management and staff to foster an understanding that disagreements and misunderstandings are natural in a diverse academic environment. Given the University's composition of individuals from different cultural, educational, and social backgrounds, such differences should be seen as opportunities for constructive engagement rather than sources of division. Training sessions should emphasize conflict resolution strategies that encourage mutual respect, dialogue, and peaceful co-existence to maintain a healthy and productive working environment.

### 2. Ensuring Fair and Transparent Leadership

University leadership should uphold institutional rules and regulations with fairness and consistency, ensuring that policies are clearly communicated to staff to prevent misinformation and unnecessary tension. Leaders must adopt flexible leadership styles suited to different conflict scenarios, as no single approach works for all situations. Instead of exercising authority for personal gain, leaders should foster a culture of meritocracy, where disciplinary actions and rewards are based on performance, integrity, and contribution to the institution. A transparent appraisal system should be established to recognize and reward excellence while addressing misconduct without bias. Leaders should also lead by example, encourage teamwork, and prioritize inclusive decision-making. Rather than resorting to avoidance or prolonged legal



battles, conflict resolution mechanisms should prioritize dialogue, compromise, and negotiation to strengthen institutional cohesion.

### **3. Shifting Perspectives on Conflict as a Growth Opportunity**

The Human Resource Directorate should educate employees on the constructive role conflict can play in institutional and personal growth. Employees should be guided to reframe conflicts not as threats but as opportunities for problem-solving, innovation, and performance improvement. To ensure transparency and accountability, there should be an open flow of communication, consistent implementation of decisions made at meetings, and timely feedback on issues affecting staff. Creating a culture where employees feel heard and valued will enhance trust and collaboration.

### **4. Regular Capacity Building for Conflict Management**

The University should implement periodic refresher training sessions for both management and staff on effective conflict resolution strategies. Specialized in-service training in leadership, human resource management, conflict resolution, and communication skills will equip staff with the tools to address disputes effectively before they escalate. Regular staff durbars should also be organized to clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations while fostering a sense of belonging and social cohesion. Strengthening these capacities will not only improve workplace harmony but also enhance overall institutional effectiveness.





## **5. Establishing a Formal Conflict Management Policy**

The University should develop a comprehensive Conflict Management Policy, backed by a dedicated Board or Committee composed of neutral, well-trained, and experienced conflict resolution experts. This body should be responsible for handling conflicts efficiently, ensuring impartiality, and maintaining institutional harmony. Additionally, external conflict resolution experts should be engaged when necessary to provide an objective perspective and mediate complex disputes effectively.

### **5.5.1 Contribution to Knowledge**

Most conflict studies especially in the Ghanaian setting have focused on conflict management strategies. The current study, however, was case-specific and provided insights into the major causes of conflicts, effects of conflicts, and some barriers to effective conflict management in DHLTU. The study further provided information on institutional policies and guidelines available for managing conflicts at the DHLTU. The study has also proffered suggestions and recommendations on how conflicts can be managed among staff of DHLTU to enhance employee and institutional productivity.

This study has contributed to and enriched the extant conflict management and staff productivity literature as well as argued that Human Needs Theory and Structural Theory of Conflict constituted the better theoretical frameworks for understanding conflicts recorded by the University given that the employees of DHLTU just like every human institution have an accumulation of needs and aspirations which they desire to fulfil and any hindrance to the fulfilment of these needs can lead to conflict and the fact that most conflicts in the institution emanate from the struggle for influence, power, and resources.



The results of this study disputed a typical justification in literature that conflict in an institution is not an aberration, since it creates or provides an opportunity for correction and reconciliation for the betterment of both the organisation and the workers. Findings from the current study indicate that the outcome of conflicts at DHLTU has been dysfunctional and does not support individual and institutional growth. The study affirms the belief that conflict brings to mind images such as antagonism, unfair treatment, struggles between parties, opposition processes, and threats to cooperation.

Extant conflict studies have been conducted in multiple institutions and have applied a single methodology in data collection and analysis. This current study was case specific and looked at conflicts exclusively within the context of DHLTU using the Methodological Triangulation mixed method research approach. The combined use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in this study revealed some key findings and further recommended ways of handling conflicts with particular reference to DHLTU. A final contribution is based on the practical implications for organisations especially Higher Education Institutions to improve their practices in managing conflicts.

### **5.5.2 Recommendation for Further Research**

The study proposes the following areas, not covered by the current study, for future researchers who are interested in researching conflicts in higher education institutions:

1. Assessment of the interventions employed by DHLTU in handling conflicts in the past.
2. Conflicts emanating from appointments and promotions related activities in the University.
3. Conflicts emanating from discrimination and unfair practices.

4. Perception of stakeholders (students, parents, graduates, and employers) on conflicts and their effect on productivity within the University system.
5. There is a need for research that would ascertain the moderating effects of gender, leadership style, and personality traits on the relationships between conflict management strategies and productivity.



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## APPENDIXES

### Appendix A: Interview Guide for Management of DHLTU (formerly Wa Polytechnic)

#### UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (UDS)

*The goal of this interview-guide is to gather data for research on the topic: “Conflicts and Conflict Management in Higher Education Institutions in Ghana: A Study of the Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University”. The research is in partial fulfilment of academic work leading to the award of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Social Administration. Please be assured that all information provided is strictly for academic purposes and shall be treated objectively and handled with maximum confidentiality. You may withdraw from this study at any point if you do not wish to continue. Thank you for your participation.*

#### A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. Highest Educational Qualification: PhD [ ] Masters [ ] 1<sup>st</sup> Degree [ ] HND [ ]  
Others (please specify) .....
3. Length of service with the institution:  
1-5yrs [ ] 6-10yrs [ ] 11-15yrs [ ] 16-20yrs [ ] 21yrs and above [ ]
4. Which category do you belong? Senior Member [ ] Senior Staff [ ] Junior Staff [ ]
5. How long have you served in your current position?

#### B. GENERAL INFORMATION ON WORKPLACE CONFLICTS

1. What is your general view of conflict in Higher Education Institutions?





.....

.....

2. How frequent do you experience conflicts in the institution?

☐ Most Frequent                      ☐ Frequent                      ☐ Less Frequent

3. Would you describe conflicts in DHLTU as functional (positive) or dysfunctional (negative)? Please explain your response.

.....

.....

4. How will you describe the level of conflicts in the institution?

☐ Intra-personal   ☐ Inter-personal              ☐ Intra-group              ☐ Inter-group

5. Are these conflicts easily resolved?

If yes, how? .....

If no, why?.....

### C. CAUSES OF WORKPLACE CONFLICTS

1. What are some of the organisational factors that cause conflicts in DHLTU?

.....

.....

2. What are the personal factors that cause conflicts in DHLTU?



.....

.....

3. How would you describe the work environment?

.....

.....

4. What do think can be done to reduce these causes?

.....

.....

#### **D. IMPACT OF WORKPLACE CONFLICTS**

1. What are the negative effects of conflicts in DHLTU?

.....

.....

2. What are the common problems you encounter with employees as a result of conflicts?

.....

.....

3. What are the benefits of conflicts to individual employees?

4. Describe the positive impact of conflicts on institutional performance?

.....

.....

## **E. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

1. What is your understanding of conflict management?

.....

.....

2. What type of training have you given to employees on conflicts and conflict management?

.....

.....

3. Please describe the strategies that have been used by the institution in handling conflicts?

.....

.....

4. How effective were these strategies in resolving conflicts?

.....

.....





5. Would you say the institution have effectively managed conflicts in the past?

a. If yes, how?

b. If no, why?

6. Has there been third party intervention in managing conflicts in DHLTU and how objective or neutral were the actions of third parties?

.....

.....

7. How did the intervention of thirty parties affect the outcome of conflicts?

.....

.....

8. What motivated you to manage conflicts?

.....

.....

9. Which conflict management style would you recommend for other heads of educational institutions?

.....

.....

10. Why would you recommend this style of managing conflicts?



.....

.....

## **F. BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

1. How would you describe successful conflict management?

.....

.....

2. Which factors influence conflict management in DHLTU?

.....

.....

3. What challenges have you encountered in trying to manage conflicts?

.....

.....

4. How would you overcome the barriers to effective conflict management?

.....

.....

5. Describe the positive impact of conflict management on the overall performance of the institution?

.....

.....

## G. INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

1. Do you have a functional conflict resolution/management policy? If No, Why?

.....

.....

2. What institutional policies or guidelines are available for effective conflict management?

.....

.....

3. What suggestions would you like to propose for effective conflict management in the institution?

.....

.....

4. Any other comment?

**Thank you**



## Appendix B: Questionnaire for employees of DHLTU

### UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (UDS)

*The goal of this questionnaire is to gather data for research on the topic: “Conflicts and Conflict Management in Higher Education Institutions in Ghana: Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University”. The research is in partial fulfillment of academic work leading to the award of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Social Administration. Please be assured that all information provided is for academic purposes and shall be treated objectively and handled with maximum confidentiality. Please do not indicate your name or any form of identity on this questionnaire. You may withdraw from this study at any point if you do not wish to continue. Thank you for your participation.*

#### A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

*Instruction: please tick appropriately in the area provided.*

1. Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. Highest Educational Qualification: PhD [ ] Masters [ ] 1<sup>st</sup> Degree [ ] HND [ ]

Others (please specify) .....

3. Length of service with the institution:

1-5yrs [ ] 6-10yrs [ ] 11-15yrs [ ] 16-20yrs [ ] 21yrs and above [ ]

4. Which category do you belong? Senior Member [ ] Senior Staff [ ] Junior Staff [ ]

5. Do you currently hold any leadership position Yes [ ] No [ ]





## B. GENERAL INFORMATION ON WORKPLACE CONFLICTS

6. Are you aware of conflicts in this institution? Yes ☐ No ☐

7. Have you been involved in any conflict? Yes ☐ No ☐

8. What is the frequency of occurrence of conflicts in the institution?

Very High ☐

High ☐

Moderate ☐

Low ☐

### 9. Please tick the type of conflicts

☐ Functional/Constructive conflict (Conflict that leads to innovation, increase in productivity and helps employees/institutions to identify their strengths and weaknesses).

☐ Dysfunctional/Destructive conflict (Conflict that prevent a group from achieving its goals, caused by competing individual interests which override the main objective of the organisation).

### 10. Please tick the kind/level of conflicts

☐ Intrapersonal conflict (Conflict that occurs within an individual, such as performing roles that do not correspond with one's interests, goals or values)

☐ Interpersonal conflict (conflict between two or more people competing for the same job, position or resources)

☐ Intragroup conflict (Conflict between members of the same group, team or department).

☐ Intergroup conflict (Conflict between different groups, team or departments).

## C. CAUSES OF WORKPLACE CONFLICTS

Which of the following are some of the factors responsible for conflicts in the institution? **Please, tick as applicable** and indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each. (**SA**-Strongly Agree, **A**-Agree, **N**-Neutral, **D**-Disagree **SD**-Strongly Disagree)

S/N	FACTORS/CAUSES	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Leadership Style (leadership style in the administration of an institution can influence conflict)					
2	Specialisation (when employees have little knowledge of one another person's job responsibilities)					
3	Common Resources (sharing of scarce resources creates a greater opportunity for conflict)					
4	Goal Differences (groups or departments in the institution have different and incompatible goals, increasing the chances of employees experiencing conflicts)					
5	Interdependence (when workers are in an interdependent situation, it is easy to blame a co-worker when something goes wrong)					
6	Authority Relationships (when there is underlying tension between Management and employees in an institution)					
7	Indiscipline (unethical behaviour among workers)					
8	Status Differences (when an individual has questionable influence like power or status over others)					
9	Jurisdictional Ambiguities (when job boundaries and task responsibilities are unclear, individuals may disagree about who has the responsibility for tasks and resources)					
10	Poor working Conditions (de-motivating conditions in an organisation)					
11	Role and Expectations (misalignment between the requirements of the job and the person selected to do the job)					
12	Skills and Abilities (when an experienced employee must work with a learner who has good theoretical knowledge with little practical skills)					
13	Perceptions (employees and managers have different perceptions about situations)					
14	Diversity (differences in age, cultural background, ethics, and values can be a source of conflict among employees)					
15	Communication Breakdown (communication barriers in terms of differences in speaking styles, writing styles and nonverbal communication styles and delays in giving feedback)					



16	Favoritism and tribalism (unfair treatment to favour certain people in an organisation)
17	Insecure Leadership (the feeling that one is not up to the tasks they face)
18	Past unresolved conflict (conflict which remain unsettled over time create anxiety and stress can further intensify existing conflict)
19	Quest for power (desire to enjoy the remuneration attached to leadership positions creates opportunity for conflicts)
20	Delay or denial of promotion and upgrading of employees
21	Serving personal interest first at the detriment of others and the institution as a whole
22	Unqualified and incompetent leadership (when most employees in leadership positions do not have the right qualification)
23	Non-adherence to rules and regulations (bias in applying the rules)
24	Gossip and backbiting (spreading false/unofficial information or twisting information to suit one's desires)

25. How would you describe the current work environment? Highly stable [ ], Secured and non-frustrating [ ], Stable and less frustrating [ ], Moderately stable and less frustrating [ ], Unstable and frustrating [ ], Highly unstable and more frustrating [ ]

## D. IMPACT OF WORKPLACE CONFLICTS

i. What are the negative effects of conflicts? **Please, tick as applicable** and indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each. (SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree SD-Strongly Disagree)

S/N	EFFECTS/CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICTS	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Truncated academic calendar					
2	Loss of productive teaching and learning contact hours					
3	Production of unemployable graduates					
4	Protracted disharmony in employee relationship					
5	Unfriendly environment, unsuitable for serious academic work					

6	Division among employees
7	Decrease in the level of commitment to work
8	Poor treatment of staff
9	Delay in decision making process by the Management
10	Resignation/High turnover of staff
11	Destruction of school property and other resources
12	Unhealthy competition
13	Violent and aggression
14	Communication breakdown/distorted communication
15	Low morale of employees and psychological imbalance
16	Low productivity
17	Lack of direction
18	Apathy/lack of new ideas
19	Competition among conflicting parties
20	Insubordination
21	Fragmentation/Disintegration
22	Low student enrolment
23	Retrogression/no development
24	Sabotage

ii. Positive impact of Conflict. **Please, tick as applicable** and indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each. (SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree SD-Strongly Disagree)

S/N	BENEFITS OF CONFLICTS	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Increases individual productivity and institutional performance					
2	Avenue for change of bad attitude of employees					
3	Changed work environment devoid of stress					
4	Improve quality decisions in resolving conflict					
5	Growth and development of individuals and the institution					
6	Improves the quality of teaching and learning					



7	Fosters self-control
8	Enhances interpersonal communication skills
9	Reduces tensions and suspicions
10	Prevents violence
11	Corrects some Management ills and lapses
12	Improves the capacity to respect other peoples' views
13	Creates an avenue for employees to appreciate different perspectives
14	Enhances teamwork and foster good employee relationships
15	Clarification of goals and roles

## E. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

1. Which of these strategies have been used by authorities in managing conflicts?

[ ] Avoiding/Withdrawing (denying, giving up, pulling out, or retreating and as such constitutes a refusal to deal with the conflict by ignoring it as much as possible).

[ ] Obliging/Smoothing/Accommodating (the desire of one party in a conflict to satisfy the needs of others while ignoring or sacrificing their own needs – low concern for self and high concern for others).

[ ] Dominating/Competing/Forcing (individual pursues their goals at the expense of the other party in a conflict situation – high concern for self and low concern for others).

[ ] Compromising (intermediate level of concern for self and others – “give and take” approach).

[ ] Collaborating/Problem-Solving/Integrating (represent the desire to fully satisfy the needs of self and others).

2. Whose duty do you think it is to manage conflicts in this institution?

All Employees [ ]    Conflicting Parties [ ]    Management [ ]    Conflict Professionals [ ]

3. What is the single most important thing that could be done to help manage conflict?

Better leadership from top ☐

Better leadership from Supervisors ☐

More clearly defined roles ☐

Better conflict management services ☐

Better staff empowerment ☐

Address underlying tensions before conflict erupts ☐

4. Does conflict management have any positive impact on overall performance of the institution?

Yes ☐

No ☐

No idea ☐

5. Which of these strategies or mechanisms has the institution ever used in managing conflicts?

☐ Not aware of any

☐ Court System

☐ Petitions to Management/Council

☐ Dialogue/Reconciliation

☐ Collaborating

☐ Government intervention

☐ Third Party Intervention

☐ Traditional authorities

Others (please specify).....

6. How effective was/were the strategy (ies)?

☐ Not effective

☐ Less effective

☐ Neutral

☐ Effective

☐ Very effective

7. Which conflict management strategy would you recommend for heads of educational institutions?

☐ Constitute Conflict Resolution Committee

☐ Implement Conflict Management Policy

☐ Dialogue with conflicting parties

☐ Collaboration and integration

☐ Third Party Intervention

Others (please specify).....

8. Would you recommend training of employees on how to handle conflict? Yes [ ] No [ ]

## F. BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Which of these factors prevent conflict management in this institution? **Please, tick as applicable** and indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each. (SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree SD-Strongly Disagree)

S/N	STATEMENT	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Leadership and Management style					
2	Organisational Culture					
3	Organisational Structure					
4	Organisational Policies and Procedures					
5	Time and Venue					
6	Cooperation of conflicting parties					
7	Lack of skills and expertise (Management lack the skills to manage conflicts effectively)					
8	Resorting to court system instead of internal structures					
9	Strained relationship between employees and Management					
10	Lack of resources					
11	Personal/selfish interest					
12	No Conflict Management Policy					
13	Communication breakdown					
14	Unclear/ambiguous procedures					
15	Religious and ethnic affiliations					
16	Unknown causes of conflicts					
17	Inadequate planning					
18	Bureaucracy					
19	Unconcern Management/Leaders					
20	Favoritism					
21	Unfair application of institutional rules					



## G. INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES & GUIDELINES

1. Are you aware of any Conflict Management Policy in the institution?

Yes ☐

No ☐

No idea ☐

2. Which of these policies or guidelines are available for effective Conflict Management?

☐ Code of Ethics Policy

☐ Statutes and Act

☐ Condition of Service

☐ Disciplinary Committee

☐ Guidance and Counseling

☐ Scheme of Service

☐ Not aware of any

Others (please specify).....

3. How functional are these policy documents?

Functional ☐

Not functional ☐

No idea ☐

4. In your opinion, which of these can best enhance effective conflict management? Tick as many as applicable.

☐ Fair treatment of employees  
leadership

☐ Qualified and proactive

☐ Training staff on Conflict Management

☐ Effective communication

☐ Conflict Management Committee

☐ Conflict Management Policy

☐ Effective implementation of policy documents

☐ Reducing sabotage



[ ] Orientation before assuming leadership positions      Others (please specify).....

5. What other suggestions would you like to propose for effective conflict management DHLTU?

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**Thank you**

