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Librarians' Insight on Managing and Securing Library Resources at Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (UBIDS)

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Abstract: This study aims to explore the security challenges faced by academic libraries at the Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (UBIDS) from the perspective of librarians. The study purposefully sampled nine (9) key informants who are library staff with different qualifications and levels of experience in the area. The study adopted the qualitative approach. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews, transcribed by hand, and analysed. The study participants indicated that the academic library of UBIDS experienced security challenges, which was revealed in the fact that tables, print materials, electrical sockets, internet cables, computer cables, and computer mouse were susceptible to security breaches in the academic library. To prevent the occurrence of these security challenges in the library, the librarians used classification numbers on library materials, permitted students to duplicate library materials that could not be borrowed, librarians and library security personnel patrolled, monitored, and inspected library users from time to time. This implies that the number of electrical and computer equipment should be increased to prevent overloading and overuse, which subsequently causes their damage and depletion. This research offers state-of-the-art information that helps library managers in developing nations deal with their libraries' various difficulties.

Keywords: Library resources, security challenges, staff, SDD-UBIDS, Ghana.

Introduction

The library consists of information resources, users, and librarians. It provides a confluence for the academic community where students and faculty glean knowledge to advance their research (Jeyasekar and Aishwarya, 2020). Hence, academic libraries are expected to gather scholarly resources, protect them from defacement, loss, or deterioration, and make these materials easily accessible. Libraries are seen as the heart of academic bodies (Revez, 2018). Therefore, just as the heart is essential to the human body, so is the library to academic institutions. Libraries are so pertinent that they are included in the basic requirements for the accreditation of tertiary institutions (Ekwelem et al., 2011). The library's primary goal is to give patrons access to print and digital collections to close the gap between ownership and access to information.

Librarians and other library staff serve as the bridge between library resources and patrons by providing a wide range of essential services tailored to satisfy the individual needs and interests of library users. Librarians are responsible for the day-to-day administration of library services and ensure that library materials are safe and in excellent condition. One of the challenges that has saddled libraries and librarians is security. This challenge is as old as the institution of the library system. Library security has been present since the establishment of libraries in the seventh century BC to prevent the destruction and loss of archives of information (Abduldayan et al., 2018; Watstein, 1983).

Library security systems aim to provide a safe and secure atmosphere for library users, librarians, and materials (Amoah, 2016). Library security therefore refers to all the means employed to safeguard the libraries' collections to ensure their availability, and accessibility as well as their

continuous existence for the effective use of their user population (Yusuf et al., 2022). Since the library serves as a form of storehouse for both digitised and hard information materials, it is susceptible to some security challenges. Among these security challenges are theft, mutilation, and loss of library resources, which have presented a serious global problem to the library profession (Pradhan & Bhoi, 2015). Similarly, dealing with disruptive or noisy users and managing attacks on users and librarians are security-related challenges (Ansari & Ali, 2021). Other prevalent illegal practices that pose security challenges to academic libraries are hiding and misplacement, non-returning of borrowed books, etc. Some students take library books without permission, and others tear pages from these materials (Gupta & Madhusudhan, 2017). The security of library resources is essential since the replacement costs of mutilated, missing, or stolen materials are exorbitant. Despite the concerted efforts of librarians to protect library materials, some users are also hellbent on becoming threats to this information service (Nath & Deka, 2020).

The library is a warehouse of library materials. It is not only a storehouse for books and collections but also for computers, electronic devices, internet cables, etc (Gupta & Madhusudhan, 2017). In the literature, about research on library materials that suffer security breaches in the library, many times, the studies focus on books (Ayoung et al., 2014; Jagadish & Sarasvathy, 2016; Olajide, 2017). However, in this digital age, some library materials that could face security challenges are technological equipment. Yet, many researchers have not examined this phenomenon. It is against this background that this study seeks to explore the security challenges faced by the library resources in the academic libraries, at the Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (SDD-UBIDS) by focusing on electronic equipment, from the perspective of the librarian.

Research Problem

Thus, this paper seeks to answer the following question: What are the security challenges faced by academic libraries at the Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (SDD-UBIDS) from the perspective of librarians?

It is necessary to analyse the problem today to shed light on the electronic equipment susceptible to security breaches in the library and how to secure these library pieces. In addition, this will benefit the society by helping to reduce the illiteracy rate in Ghana and by providing the university community with a source of secure information. This can help spread innovation and knowledge in the scientific field by preserving crucial and critical data.

Research Focus

This study aims to explore the security challenges faced by the academic libraries at the Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (SDD-UBIDS) from the perspective of providing some innovative and sustainable solutions to tackle these security challenges. This will help maintain the integrity of scientific data and provide some preventive measures to prevent data loss.

Research Aim and Research Questions

This research addresses security challenges academic libraries face at the Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (SDD-UBIDS). Thus, the specific research questions that this research seeks to answer are:

1. The first specific question is: What library resources are susceptible to security breaches?
2. The second specific question is: what methods do libraries adopt to deter and prevent unacceptable behaviours among users?
3. The third specific question is: What is the role of librarians in securing library resources from depletion and theft?

Literature Review

A literature review is essential to discover knowledge gaps and unresolved issues that your research can address and familiarise researchers with existing knowledge on the research topic (Nassè, 2018).

Librarians, since time immemorial, have been at the forefront of dealing with the security challenges happening in libraries. To prevent book theft during the Middle Ages, librarians chained library materials. Also, in the Renaissance era, some borrowers of books made no effort to return them. Therefore, Pope Nicholas V gave a decree to excommunicate anyone who did not return books which were the property of the Church (Constantinou, 1995). Nonetheless, library security challenges persist to this day.

In the United States of America, it was not until 1909 that libraries began to report the loss of materials. However, librarians could not fathom the possibility of users stealing these books. Therefore, they attributed the losses to improper inventory procedures. Similarly, the American Library Association (1982) conducted a survey. Also, it came out with a finding buttressing the earlier views that, missing library materials were only misplaced in inventory practices but not stolen. Conversely, Munn (1935) posited that library users engaged in theft and mutilation of books infrequently. An article by Thompson (1975), in which he coined the term bibliokleptomania, shed more light and brought awareness to this problem. After that, solutions began to be proffered to curb these library security challenges (Elser, 1967).

The most widespread security challenge experienced by librarians is the theft of library materials. However, according to Hamilton (1994) many librarians in those times tended to use the term “non-return” to classify this act. This term was used subtly to describe the menace of library theft. Jagadish and Sarasvathy (2016) conducted a survey using 7 university librarians. The findings suggest that 71.42% chose theft and mutilation as their libraries' highly recorded security challenges. Misplacements of books and mutilation or tearing of the pages of books obtained 100% and 85.7% respectively regarding the forms of security challenges happening in academic libraries. Similarly, 87.1% of the respondents linked the tearing and mutilation of books to the paucity of materials for reading and research.

The absence of library security policies in academic institutions could be highlighted as a reason for the frequent breach of security protocols in libraries. Most academic institutions do not have library security policies to mitigate the security challenges happening in their libraries. Ayoung et al. (2014) conducted a survey using 23 respondents who were the librarians of five Polytechnics in Ghana. All the respondents alluded to the fact that their institutions do not have any written library security policy. Ninety-six percent of the librarians admitted that they experienced security challenges in their libraries daily. From the respondents, sixty-two percent of the common security occurrences were theft, thirteen percent were impersonating other users, 70.8 percent were mutating library materials, and 69.2 percent were purposely mis-shelving books. Sixty-seven percent of the librarians identified students as the most culpable in library security offenses. Even though there was no guiding security policy, the librarians of these institutions have put in place measures to quell the security challenges in the library. These include searching users at the point of entry and exit, prohibiting items that could damage library materials, and frequently orienting users on how to handle library materials effectively.

Higgins (2015) posited that the risk of serious security issues in academic libraries becomes rampant when these libraries are not secured. Even though most librarians in academic libraries are qualified staff, the lack of in-service training has reduced the awareness, alertness, and effectiveness of some librarians to manage and combat security challenges. According to Yamson and Cobblah (2016), eighty percent of the respondents from their survey on the Central University Library in Ghana stated that the institution did not organise in-service training for librarians concerning library security.

According to Lorenzen (1996), not all thefts are committed by library users. Sometimes, librarians are also guilty of these practices. They take books without checking them out. Most do these to stock their libraries at home or for immediate information needs. A librarian stealing library resources is the most complex library security challenge to curb.

Parvathamma and Anandhalli (2001) conducted a survey using librarians from eight engineering colleges in Karnataka State to solicit their ideas on preventing library security challenges. All the respondents proffered that libraries should provide enough reference materials and textbooks for borrowing, sufficient security devices should be installed, and security personnel should be well-trained. All the librarians also agreed that students and faculty identity cards should be required before entry into the library. Most importantly, librarians should be vigilant and proactive in dealing with security breaches in the library. When the respondents were interviewed on how to deal with users caught violating library policies, all the respondents opined that recalcitrant users should be warned. 85.7 percent of the respondents proposed that hefty fines should be imposed on disruptive users, and 57.14 percent of respondents suggested that the library membership of these delinquent users should be withdrawn. Regarding serious library offenses, 28.57 percent of the interviewees recommended the dismissal of students caught committing library infractions from the college and enforcing legal actions.

Ayoung et al. (2014) posited that fines are not enough punishment to deter users from overkeeping borrowed books. Thus, Isebe (2015) stated that in case these students are caught stealing library books, they should be surcharged to pay the full cost of the book, reported to the disciplinary committee, their library membership should be withdrawn and in extreme cases, they should be expelled from the school. Furthermore, students caught breaching library protocols should be expelled for about four semesters. More so, according to the Council for Museums (2003), if the security infraction is criminal, the culprit should be handed over to the police to face the full rigours of the law.

Despite the influx of modern security technology to deal with security challenges in the library, there are some security challenges that librarians cannot easily pre-empt even though they can be curbed. One such incident is the verbal abuse of librarians by users. Forty-five percent of respondents in a study conducted on libraries in fifty states admitted that library patrons have verbally abused them (Fescemyer, 2002).

The focus of library security is often on securing books, collections, and other library materials without paying much attention to the welfare of librarians and users. However, other extreme but rare situations pose a security threat to library materials, librarians, and users. For example, the Brigham Young University's library in Utah survived a bomb scare. Similarly, a gunman entered the Genealogical library in Salt Lake, and started shooting sporadically, killing two and wounding four (Arndt, 2001).

Methodology

Sample and Participants

The research used a qualitative research design as its methodology. The research approach used here was case study research. The participants were the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (UBIDS) library employees. The purposive sampling technique was used to choose participants who would provide relevant information appropriate for the study's goal.

Instrument and Procedure

The interview guide served as the research tool, and some semi-structured interviews were utilised to gather information on participants' opinions on security and library resources. With the participants' consent, the semi-structured interviews were videotaped to prevent data from the interviews from being misrepresented. Each semi-structured interview was approximately thirty minutes. The recorded semi-structured interviews were manually transcribed using Microsoft Word 2013.

Data Analysis

The participants whose comments and/or ideas for validation were included in the transcripts were contacted since Nassè (2021) showed that validation is important in qualitative research.

Qualitative data analysis was done. Nine (9) significant informants willingly participated in the research, and saturation reached seven (7) respondents.

Ethical Considerations

Research ethical standards keep respondents' identity and information confidential (Nassè et al., 2022).

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Background Information of Participants

Participant	Campus	Gender	Job Title	Experience	Qualification
Participant (1)	Bamahu	Female	Senior Library Assistant	10+	Masters
Participant (2)	Bamahu	Female	Senior Library Assistant	less than 5 years	Degree
Participant (3)	Bamahu	Male	Library Assistant	10+	Masters
Participant (4)	Old campus/36-unit block	Female	Junior Assistant librarian	10+	Masters
Participant (5)	Bamahu	Male	Senior Assistant librarian	6-10	Masters
Participant (6)	Bamahu	Male	Junior Assistant librarian	less than 5 years	Diploma
Participant (7)	Bamahu	Female	Library Assistant	10+	Degree
Participant (8)	Bamahu	Male	Junior Assistant librarian	10+	Masters
Participant (9)	Old campus/36-unit block	Female	Senior library Assistant	10+	Masters

Source: Authors' construct.

The qualitative face-to-face interview approach was used and nine (9) interviewees participated. Table 1 shows that out of the nine (9) participants, five (5) were female and four (4) were male from two different campuses of the University of Business Integration and Development Studies (UBIDS). This diversity was necessary since different campuses may have distinct security challenges and have unique ways of addressing them. Seven (7) participants were from the Bamahu campus and two (2) were from the old campus/36-unit block. The study gathered that the participants had different levels of qualification necessary for the library staff position. All the participants had at least a tertiary level of education. One (1) participant had a diploma, two (2) participants had

undergraduate degrees and six (6) other participants had master's degrees. Similarly, the participants held different job titles. Four (4) of the participants were Senior Assistant Librarians, three (3) were Junior Assistant Librarians, and two (2) were Assistant Librarians. The participants also possessed vast years of experience as library staff with the least experience being about five (5) years. That is, six (6) of the participants worked as library staff for more than ten (10) years, one (1) of the participants worked in the library for between six (6) to ten (10) years, and two (2) of the participants worked for about five (5) years in the library. The qualifications and levels of experience of the participants indicate that they are not novices in the library profession but are well versed in library service delivery and thus are qualified to answer questions about the security of the library concerning library resources.

Library Resources Susceptible to Security Breaches in the Library

Table 2

Thematic Areas Explored in Library Resources Susceptible to Security Breaches

Theme	Resources Susceptible to Security Breaches (Sub-themes)	Percentage
Electrical Equipment	Electricity sockets	100 %
Cabling and Network	Internet cables	55.56 %
	Computer cables and a computer mouse	55.56 %
Furniture and Facilities	Tables, chairs, print	55.56 %
	Materials, library walls, and library notice boards	22.22 %

Source: Authors' construct.

The academic library houses many library materials which could be prone to security breaches due to the unacceptable behaviours of some users. With the number of years, the participants have as library staff, the study asked them about the library resources likely to experience security breaches. All the participants indicated that electrical equipment is susceptible to security breaches in the library. According to one participant,

> "…*electrical equipment, especially electrical sockets, are likely to suffer security breaches in the library*". (Participant 3, Bahamu Campus)

Many a time, the university experiences power fluctuations. However, the library has a standby generator that complements the national grid to supply uninterrupted electricity power to the library. Due to the library's stable electricity, most users now go to the library to charge their phones, tablets, and laptops, which could put pressure on the electrical sockets and eventually destroy them. Similarly, users go to the library to study on their laptops while connected to the power sockets for the entire duration of their stay there. This could also cause the sockets to heat up, melt, and eventually get damaged.

The academic library also has internet facilities to enhance users' effective learning. However, they are not spared security breaches. Table 2 shows that 55.56 percent of the participants indicated that internet cables were susceptible to security breaches in the library. Similarly, another 55.56

percent of participants stated that computer cables and mouse were likely to suffer security breaches in the library. Even though SDD-UBIDS has Wi-Fi connectivity, the signal is stronger in the library and stronger when using the internet cables. The internet cables are mostly connected to the desktop computers in the library. Users come to the library to fulfil their internet needs. Final years especially, do research for their thesis in the library. When users remove the internet cables from the desktop computers and connect to their laptops, they do not connect them back to the library computers, contributing to a security breach. Also, because the computer mouse is tiny, students could easily hide and take them out of the library for personal use at home. This agrees with the findings of Ajayi and Omotayo (2004), who found that the most typical method employed to steal library materials was to hide them in clothing and leave the library during rush hours when the librarian was busy and overwhelmed with exiting users. This also reveals that most of the users of the library in this computer age are technology enthusiasts. Therefore, they are more likely to cause security challenges to the technological equipment in the library.

Furthermore, to make the academic library a friendly environment for learning, it is stocked with furniture and other facilities. The participants were asked about their perspectives on whether furniture and other facilities put in place at the library were also susceptible to security breaches in the library. Approximately 55.56 percent of the participants agreed that tables, chairs, and print materials are susceptible to security breaches in the library. Close to 22.22 percent of the participants indicated that library materials, library walls, and library noticeboards are all susceptible to library security breaches. Users steal and mutilate library material such as books. This agrees with the findings of Jagadish and Sarasvathy (2016), that 71.42 percent of participants chose theft and mutilation of print materials as the highly recorded security challenge in their libraries. According to Maidabino (2013), academic pressures contribute to the theft and mutilation of library materials. Akor (2012) asserted that users of academic libraries engage in the theft and mutilation of library resources due to financial hardship, and sheer selfishness. Users could also move library chairs around, which weakens the chairs. Some students sit on the library tables during group discussions, which could also break the tables, making them susceptible to security breaches. Also, students write their nicknames on the library walls thereby defacing them. This agrees with the findings of Abioye and Rasaki (2013) that library walls are also susceptible to library security breaches.

Methods Libraries Adopt to Deter and Prevent Unacceptable Behaviours among Users

Table 3

Thematic Areas Explored in Ways Libraries Prevent Users' Unacceptable Behaviours

Theme	Sub-theme	Percentage
Awareness and Education	Library code of conduct	22.22 %
	Cataloguing rules and sanctions	11.11 %
Security Personnel and Monitoring	Library security personnel	33.33 %
	Librarians and security patrols	33.33%
Penalties and Enforcement	Suspension from library use	11.11%

	Naming and shaming	44.44 %
Preventive Measures	Duplicate materials	11.11 %
	Borrow informational materials	55.56 %

Source: Authors' construct.

The unacceptable behaviours of users result in security breaches in the library. Therefore, to prevent the prevalence of unacceptable behaviours in the library, interviewees were asked what the library does to prevent unacceptable behaviours in the library. Table 3 shows that 22.22 percent of the interviewees indicated that the library creates awareness and educates library users on the rules and regulations that regulate unacceptable behaviours in the library. According to one interviewee,

> "*…to prevent unacceptable behaviours in the library, the library code of conduct is posted there*". (Participant 9, old campus/36-unit block)

This gesture is a way to remind library users of their responsibilities towards the library, which could appeal to their consciences to refrain from unacceptable behaviours in the library. The library rules and sanctions are also catalogued on the university website so that mostly online users can easily access them. This agrees with the findings of Ayoung et al. (2014) that, creating awareness about the rules and regulations of the library is also an effective tool to curb illegalities in the library. Similarly, 33.33 percent of the participants indicated that the vigilance of library security personnel and the monitoring of users prevent unacceptable behaviours in the library. Security personnel and librarians occasionally patrol the library to prevent unacceptable user behaviours. The visibility of security personnel monitoring users could discourage users from engaging in unacceptable behaviours since they could be caught in the act.

Furthermore, 11.11 percent of participants indicated that recalcitrant users of the library are suspended from using the library. The library staff is tasked to enforce sanctions on students who engage in unacceptable behaviours to curtail security breaches. One such sanction employed to deter users from engaging in unacceptable behaviours in the library is to suspend recalcitrant users from using the library. Suspension denies users access to the library and thus denies them the opportunity to engage in unacceptable behaviours. This agrees with the findings of Isebe (2015) that library users caught engaging in unacceptable behaviours in the library should be suspended from the library for about four semesters. Similarly, the names of library users who engage in unacceptable behaviours could be publicised on the library notice board. Naming and shaming such users could discourage them from engaging in such behaviours in the library.

The library staff adopts other preventive measures to curtail unacceptable behaviours. 11.11 percent of the participants indicated that students can duplicate library materials that could not be borrowed. These could prevent students who are pressured academically, from stealing or mutilating library materials since they can run photocopies of them. Similarly, 55.56 percent of the participants indicated that informational materials are lent to students to reduce the urge of theft. These agree with the findings of Parvathamma and Anandhalli (2001) that making library materials and books available to users prevents theft and mutilation of these materials.

Role Librarians Play in Securing Resources of the Library from Depletion and Theft

Table 4

Thematic areas explored on the roles librarians play in securing resources

Theme	Sub-theme	Percentage
Librarian's Role	Labelling library resources	77.78 %
	Accession Stamps	88.89 %
	Identification Checks	66.67 %
	User Reminders	55.56 %
	Library Patrolling	55.56 %

Source: Authors' construct.

According to Quinsee and McDonald (1991), the ultimate responsibility of security in the library rests on the shoulders of librarians. Thus, librarians should be proactive and alert in dealing with the security challenges to protect the library resources. Notwithstanding the rules and regulations that guide users on how to conduct themselves in the library, some users still engage in library security infractions unabated. It is as though these users are on a mission to steal and/or destroy library properties. Therefore, the participants were asked about their role in securing library resources from depletion, damage, and theft. In Table 4, it is indicated that 77.78 percent of the participants indicated that they labeled books in the library. According to one participant,

> "*…one of the roles we play to ensure the security of library materials is by labelling the books with classification numbers*". (Participant 7, Bamahu campus)

Labelling library books could make them easily identifiable from users' books. By doing this, users who steal library books could be caught. The book will be retrieved and returned to the shelves. Internet cables, computers, and library accessories are also labelled with classification numbers. Since internet cables and computer mice are small, users could hide them in their bags, but with the labels of library classification numbers on them, they could be found and returned to the library stock. This implies that, but for the classification numbers, the stock of computer cables, internet cables, and computer mice in the library will be depleted. Similarly, 88.89 percent of the participants indicated using the library accession stamps on library materials. The library accession stamp identifies the book as belonging to the university. Thus, stamping each page of library books could go a long way to discourage theft and mutilation of library books. This, therefore, helps to protect library books from depletion. Furthermore, 66.67 interviewees ensured users completed identification checks before borrowing library materials. This agrees with the findings of Parvathamma and Anandhalli (2001) that users' identity cards should be checked before they enter the library and before borrowing library material. Checking the ID cards of a library user confirms the user's identity and thus the borrower could be traced in case there is a non-return of a borrowed library material. This helps librarians track down and retrieve library materials from borrowers who intentionally default in returning library materials. More so, 55.56 percent of the participants indicated that reminders are sent to users who borrow library materials. Some borrowers of library

books could forget about the return date of the book. Therefore, sending reminders in the form of text messages, phone calls, and e-mails to students who borrowed books could prevent them from defaulting on the date of return. Another 55.56 percent of participants indicated they frequently patrolled the library to discourage users from tampering with library materials. The more the library staff patrol the library, the more they become visible in the library. The visibility of library staff could decrease security breaches since it could increase the chances of apprehending a recalcitrant library user. This implies that staff frequently patrolling the library could prevent users from damaging library materials.

Limitations of the Study

Though representative for a qualitative approach, the sample size is limited to nine key informants. A more consistent sample may have increased credibility and validity, and thus make the findings generalizable (Nassè, 2018). In addition, the lack of time and resources might have affected the quality of the data collected.

Conclusion

The study concludes that from the perspective of librarians, the academic library of the University of Business and Integrated Development is susceptible to security challenges. This was revealed when the participants indicated that tables, print materials, electrical sockets, internet cables, computer cables, and computer mice were susceptible to security breaches in the academic library. The study also revealed that the users were technologically inclined and mostly tampered with electrical gadgets and computer equipment. To curb these security challenges in the library, the librarians used accession stamps on library materials, permitted students to duplicate library materials that could not be borrowed, librarians and library security personnel patrolled, monitored and inspected library users from time to time and also displayed the library code of conduct in the library to remind library users of their responsibilities towards the library. The librarians also used classification numbers on the library resources to deter users from stealing them. To prevent their damage and depletion.

The study therefore recommends that the library install closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras, especially in the corners of the library to discourage users from engaging in unacceptable behaviours. Internet and computer cables should also be clipped to the library's walls to prevent users from damaging them. Furthermore, the university should adopt a library policy to curb the proliferation of security challenges. Also, the number of electrical and computer equipment should be increased to prevent overloading and overuse of these equipment, which subsequently damages them.

Suggestions for Future Research

This research was carried out at the Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies in Wa Municipal in Ghana. Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies is a new academic institution still growing. This might explain why the researchers have the above findings. First, the researchers can extend this research to other academic institutions in Ghana to compare the findings. Second, the researchers can extend this research to other countries outside Ghana to see if the findings will be the same.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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