

Coping Strategies of Students Affected by University Teachers’ Strike Actions in Ghana

A study of students’ perception and coping strategies in a recent strike in public universities.

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Abstract

Strike actions in universities is surging in our Ghanaian society and with each strike arise a number of educational consequences. The Government of Ghana (GoG) is a critical player in the industrial relations system, firstly as a body responsible for policy formulation and policy implementation and, secondly, as the large employer in Ghana. Quite recently, the University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG) embarked on a long period of strike, calling on the government of Ghana to restore the conditions of service. The challenges confronting lecturers in their duties have necessitated series of strike actions in universities with numerous undesirable impacts.

Strike actions in universities are one of the facets of strikes, prevalent in Ghana. It happens mostly in the public universities, and this includes not doing any work-related activity. In some cases, universities get closed down for months thereby causing a setback in the academic calendar. Observing closely, the educational sector has received the greatest hit among all sectors, forcing students to bear the worst brunt of strikes. Students are typically caught between the administration and unionized workers with the strike occurring when it is maximally inconvenient for students to pressure the administration to settle.

The perception of students on strike and the key coping strategies they adopt during strike actions is among the few information missing in most literature, undermining a holistic approach to addressing strike actions. The purpose of this study is to assess the perception and coping strategies of public university students during strike actions in Ghana. Applying a quantitative research approach by distributing survey questionnaires to students from three selected public universities in the country's capital city (Accra), the researcher gathered data on three variables, perception of students on strike, impact of lecturers strike, and key coping strategies adopted by students. Using MS Excel and SPSS, the researcher performed the data analysis using percentage analysis, tables and figures.

The findings from the survey shows that majority of the students perceive strike actions as lecturers ceasing to report to work to carry out their teaching responsibility; failure of lecturers to mark examination script; and unexpected changes in academic calendar. Out of the three major impacts of strike actions on the students which are psychological, emotional and academic, the findings showed that students are mostly affected academically and economically. In order to make the best out of their academics, the students' major coping strategies during strike actions are reliance on educational websites, buying coursebooks and extensive use of their schools' libraries.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADP	Accelerated Development Plan
AGI	The Association of Ghana Industries
AMA	Accra Metropolitan Area
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
ECD	Early Childhood Development
FWSC	Factories Inspectorate and the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission
GIMPA	Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration
GoG	Government of Ghana
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
LS	Likert Scale
MOFEP	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MOTI	Ministry of Trade and Industry
MOU	Memorandum of Agreement
MS	Microsoft
NCTE	National Council for Tertiary Education
NLC	The National Labour Commission
NSD	Norwegian Centre for Research Data
SHS	Senior High School
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TEWU	Tertiary Educational Workers Union

TQM	Total Quality Management
UPSA	University of Professional Studies, Accra
UTAG	University Teachers Association of Ghana

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Education is lauded in the literature as indispensable in building a strong and viable economy. Through education, citizens of every nation become highly skilled, well-informed, and morally sound (Armah, 2017). For this reason, major policies and reforms are undertaken by countries to ensure quality education and lifelong learning. Ghana is no exception considering past and present structural reforms rolled out by various governments and administrations.

The Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) in 1951 and Education Reform Legislation in 1961 were significant reforms under Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's (The first President of the Ghana) regime which impacted greatly on the educational needs at that time (Bawakyillenuo, Akoto, Ahiadeke, Aryeetey & Agbe, 2013). This was followed by the Kwapong Review Committee, set up to undertake a comprehensive review of the entire formal educational system (Ansong, 2020) and upon its recommendations, extolled Ghana's educational system as one of the best until the mid-1970. However, when the educational standards began to fall, the Dzobo Education Review Committee was set up in 1973 to determine the causes of falling standards and to recommend a recovery plan. The committee chaired by Professor N.K. Dzobo of the University of Cape Coast reported that the nation's educational establishment needed revamping (Ansong, 2020; Adu-Gyamfi, Donkor & Addo 2016). According to the committee, the 17-year pre-tertiary education structure at that time failed to take into consideration the needs of the disadvantaged, deprived and special persons. In this vein, the Dzobo committee recommended for the necessary adjustments to be made, including changing the school system which was earlier based on 6,4,7 to 6,3,3 (Ansong, 2020). This shortened pre-tertiary education from 17 to 12 years. Despite all these efforts, there were still persistent problems affecting policy initiatives due to the changing world of science and technology.

In accordance, the government in 2002 set up the Anamuah-Mensah review committee to look into the content and structure of education (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). Chaired by Prof. Jophus Anamuah-Mensah, the committee introduced the early childhood development (ECD) and

proposed the Senior High School (SHS) system, which was a change from the Senior Secondary School (SSS). This was a complete structural change with an emphasis on science, technology, innovation, and skill development. Although the Anamuah-Mensah Committee maintained the 3-year SHS with some suggested remedial measures to be put in place, the government white paper on the reform recommended a change from 3 to 4-years to afford teachers and students enough time to complete their syllabi (Ansong, 2020). The policy was cut short by Late President Mills' government with the justification that the available infrastructure of the various SHS was inadequate to support the program. Former President John Dramani Mahama after assuming office in 2013 decided to roll out free SHS progressively and build community day schools to absorb more students into the SHS. Regardless, full tuition at the SHS was not absorbed. The Akuffo-Addo government started the comprehensive free SHS policy in 2017/2018. In this policy, every child in Ghana who qualifies for, and is placed in a public Senior High School for his secondary school education will have his/her fees absorbed by the government. The implementation of free SHS resulted in a massive increase in enrollment (Kwegyiriba, 2021). This situation necessitated the proposal to adopt a double-track calendar system as opposed to the usual single-track system. This change was to deal with the large number of students desiring to enter into the SHS. In addition to these numerous reforms, there have also been several curriculum reviews aimed at ensuring that every learner receives quality education in the classroom.

Currently, Ghana operates the "2-6-3-3-4" education system structured along three progressive levels comprising basic education, second cycle education and tertiary education (Armah, 2017). After basic education and subject to the results of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), pupils have the option to enroll in either a 3-year senior high education leading to tertiary education or parallel technical/vocational education leading to polytechnic/technical university or the world of work. All post-secondary schooling including training colleges, polytechnics and university education are classified as tertiary education and have a duration spanning 3-4 years to graduation, determined by an Act of Parliament or the National Accreditation Board (Armah, 2017).

According to Sabo & Usman (2019) tertiary education is the most important and crucial component in human capital development. Accelerated industrial growth in a country requires that tertiary education provides graduates with job-relevant skills to meet the demands of industry and the economy as a whole. Based on this overarching development objective, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MOFEP); The Association of Ghana Industries (AGI); the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE); and the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MOTI) have in various national documents called for the need to build effective and strong linkages between tertiary education and industry (Bawakyillenuo et al., 2013). This is because the acquisition of knowledge in tertiary schools and its application in various industries have immense benefits on the social, political, economic, and cultural development of a country (Ogunode & Adanna, 2022). Owing to the pervasive role of tertiary education, lecturers and educational workers are placed on a high pedestal while remaining an integral part of the education process. According to Karimi (2020), lecturers stimulate critical thinking and problem-solving capacities among their students while captivating and inspiring them on the basis of academic content. Regardless of new introductions to the syllabi, they are to offer state-of-the-art knowledge, making them expert in their fields and role models for their students (Asante, 2015). Therefore, a withdrawal of the services of university lecturers and educational workers via strike action can have direct and indirect consequential effects.

The challenges confronting lectures in their duties have necessitated series of strike actions in universities with numerous undesirable impacts. In a study by Voss and Gruber (2006), they found that students want lecturers to be knowledgeable, enthusiastic, approachable, and friendly. Additionally, students like to encounter valuable teaching experiences to be able to pass tests and to be prepared for their professions. On the other hand, lecturers expect students to ace their academics while demonstrating an appreciable comprehension of their courses. Therefore, both students and lecturers require the needed resources as well as better conditions to function effectively. Lack of educational infrastructures and vital resources spark strike actions which negatively affect both lecturers and students (Sabo et al., 2019).

Ogunode and Adanna (2022) identified the devastating impacts of strikes on academic staff in Nigeria to include: death, stoppage of staff development programme, sickness, psychological-stress, wastage of manpower and reduction of moral of academic staff, stoppage of staff development programme, brain-drain, suspension of teaching programme and research programme. Their findings coincide with other countries like Canada, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Ghana (Karimi, 2020; Offem et al., 2018; Adavbiele, 2015; Ibrahim & Alhaji, 2015; Abiwu, 2016; Amoako-Gyampah, 2015) and among others. Unfortunately, the literature on the impacts of strike actions on university students in Ghana is quite low albeit the increasing number of strike actions in universities. The author is positive that since the few available literature fails to focus on students; governments and stakeholders probably lose sight of the general damages caused by strike actions in universities, which may undermine the efficacy of their resolution mechanisms to nib strike actions in the bud. It will be informative to investigate this topic later in my studies, however, the current study as part of its objectives seek to examine the influence of strike actions on university students in Ghana.

Strike action, also called labour strike or industrial strike is perceived as a concerted and sustained refusal by workmen to perform some or all of the services for which they were hired (Sabo & Usman, 2019). For Diedrich & Young (2019), it is a work stoppage used as a form of protest, hence strike actions cause a breakdown of cordial relationship between employees and employers. While strike is seen as a useful means for employees to press and meet their demands, its negative effect is difficult to measure in economic terms (Ezeagba, 2014). Strike actions in universities are one of the facets of strikes, prevalent in Ghana. It happens mostly in the public universities, and this includes not doing any work-related activity, such as teaching students, marking coursework, attending meetings, sending emails related to work and carrying out administrative tasks (Ogunode & Adanna, 2022). In some cases, universities get closed down for months thereby causing a setback in the academic calendar. Private universities in Ghana may go on strike but this hardly makes wave compared to public universities. This is because private universities are owned by private individuals, hence have little interference from government.

The dominant reason for strike actions in universities is poor conditions of service, enmeshed in issues of low remuneration, unpaid book, and research allowance (Asante, 2015; Wickens, Fiksenbaum, Greenglass & Wiesenthal, 2006). For example, Ghana has seen several strikes instigated by failure of the government to make funds available for books and research allowances (Asante, 2015). Yet typically, strike actions in Ghanaian universities occur when contract negotiations breakdown, or as a response to unfair alleged labour practices on the part of the employer (i.e., government).

Quite recently, the University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG) embarked on a long period of strike, calling on the government of Ghana to restore the conditions of service agreed upon in 2012 (Adogla-Bessa, 2022). UTAG is a professional association for university teachers in Ghana that helps in bargaining for the welfare of lecturers across all public universities in Ghana (Kaledzi, 2022). The memorandum of agreement (MOA) for the 2012 conditions of service pegged the Basic plus Market Premium of a lecturer at \$2,084.42, which in the opinion of the UTAG president, the government of Ghana is failing to satisfy (Adogla-Bessa, 2022). Specifically, UTAG complained that the current arrangement has reduced its member's basic premiums to \$997.84 (ibid.) which the government needs to rectify. The issue of poor working conditions equally resonates with other strike actions experienced in universities from academic and non-academic staff union such as Tertiary Educational Workers Union (TEWU).

Observing closely, the educational sector has received the greatest hit among all sectors, forcing students to bear the worst brunt of strikes (Wojuade, 2019). The perception of students on strike is among the few information missing in most literature, undermining a holistic approach to addressing strike actions. The presumption is that students during strike actions are rather happy than disadvantaged as most of them consider it as "free periods" to engage in extra-curricular activities. However, Olusegun (2014) opined that incessant strikes hinder the academic performance of the students. As learning is suspended for a long period, the students' reading abilities fall and learnt concepts are forgotten. In a similar vein, Odubela (2012) observed that disruption in academic programmes occasioned by strike action breeds disappointment, frustration, emotional and psychological trauma, and a situation that dampen human

development for both students and lecturers. This mostly turns some students into certificate seekers than knowledge seekers (Albar & Onye, 2016). The after-effect is prolonged school year that exceeds stipulated periods, being one major cause of producing unqualified graduates who are deficient in their fields of study. In the same vein, students who are supposed to do a four-year course end up spending six years in the school for a programme (Sarpong et al., 2022; Jamal-Deen, 2017). Corroborating the above, Arukaimo (2013) asserted that idling youths at home could cause security problems. This is in tandem with Eckson (2017) as well as Albar and Onye (2019) study that strike periods have the tendency of leading undergraduates into some social vices like prostitution, oil bunkering etc. Other impacts ranges from poor academic performance, interruption of career progress, worsening their financial situations and increasing their recreational and social activities (Wojuade, 2019; Wickens et al., 2006). Considering the negative impact associated with strike actions on university students, the study seeks to find out if it can impact negatively on students' perception? Again, if students understand teachers more about why they engage in strikes, will they be more sympathetic or positive to lecturers and strike actions? These are among the few reflections and questions that have propelled the current study to explore the perception of students on strike actions as part of its objectives. Despite the expression of dissatisfaction and anger of students at being treated unfairly, there is scanty literature on how students cope with strike actions to make the best out of their academic life. It widens the objectives net to also examine the coping strategies university students adopts to facilitate their studies.

1.2 Research Problem

Strike actions in universities is surging in our Ghanaian society and with each strike arise a number of educational consequences. The Government of Ghana (GoG) is a critical player in the industrial relations system, firstly as a body responsible for policy formulation and policy implementation and, secondly, as a large employer in Ghana (Asante, 2015). As a large employer, he functions through the ministry responsible for employment and labour issues in the industrial relations system. The Labour Department, the National Labour Commission (NLC), the Factories Inspectorate and the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission (FWSC) are important institutions under the Ministry responsible for employment and labour issues who oversee

employment relations between the government and its employees, who are represented by their respective unions. In the case of universities, UTAG oversees the welfare of its members by deliberating with the government (Boye, 2021) on adequate remuneration, better working conditions and other meritorious allowances for their erudite research and book writing. The inability of the government or the employer to meet these needs are met with strikes. Aside from faculty strikes, other labour actions afflicting universities have involved teaching assistants and contract faculty, as well as non-teaching staff including librarians, caretakers and among others.

Despite the frequency of university strikes, it has not reflected in the number of literature available on the subject, and the little material published seems to focus more on the implications of strike for the striking party (lecturers) rather than the perception of students on strike actions in universities and how the students cope during the protest. Students are typically caught between the administration and unionized workers with the strike occurring when it is maximally inconvenient for students to pressure the administration to settle. Delays in scheduling examination, restricted access to instructors and academic resources, and general confusion characterize some of the effects of university strikes on students.

Research on university strikes in Ghana has been conducted with contextual and methodological differences. For example, Lamptey et al. (2013) using the quantitative method assessed the motivation and performance of librarians in public universities in Ghana. Critical to their study was to discover how motivation prevents the occurrence of strikes among librarians in public universities. Similarly, Sarpong, Kpabi, Abiew & Adomako (2022) in their recent study assessed empirically the place of leadership in contributing to strike action among college of health sciences in the University of Ghana. Their study adopted the quantitative approach. Jamal-Deen (2017) using a mixed methodology identified strike actions as one of the key barriers to the delivery of quality education for students through the concept of total quality management (TQM) in Tamale Technical University (TaTU). Using the black letter law research module, Asante (2015) reviewed the law and practice of the right to strike in Ghana. The list goes on with a number of scholars resorting to quantitative method. Thus, the current study complements theirs, as it adopts the quantitative methodology for a more comprehensive analysis.

It is against this backdrop that the researcher conducted an empirical study into strike actions in public universities in Ghana.

1.3 Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to assess the perception and coping strategies of public university students during strike actions in Ghana.

1.4 Research Objectives

The study has the main objective of assessing the coping strategies of university students during strike actions in Ghana. In order to achieve the main objective, the sub-objectives below will be carefully considered.

1. To explore the perception of university students on strike actions in public universities in Ghana
2. To examine the major influences of strike actions on university students in Ghana
3. To identify the key academic coping strategies of university students during strike actions in public universities in Ghana

1.5 Research Questions

The empirical questions guiding the study are:

1. What are the perceptions of university students on strike actions in public universities in Ghana?
2. What are the major influences of strike actions on university students in Ghana?
3. What are the key academic coping strategies adopted by university students during strike actions in public universities Ghana?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study will bring to light the impact of university strike actions on students and the coping strategies devised to facilitate their academics. In effect, it will inform policy makers, government and other stakeholders on how best both parties at the ends of the industrial action are to act in resolving underlying issues. Educationally, it will inform university students on the effects of strike actions and basic strategies that will guarantee effective academic studies in the event of strikes. This study will also contribute to the body of knowledge on university strike actions in Ghana, particularly, university strike actions on students. The author remains positive that existing scholars and future scholars will take a cue from the findings of this research and extend the literature on university strikes in Ghana.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The subject matter of this study is quite broad; therefore, a researcher needs to be conscious of its facets to do a diligent inquiry. Using quantitative approach, the study is narrowed to the usage of survey in gathering the field data from the key informants.

The current study is guided by three key objectives: an exploration of the perception of students on strike actions in public universities in Ghana; an assessment of the major influences of strike actions on public university students in Ghana; and an examination of the key strategies adopted by public university students during strike actions in Ghana. It does not include the reasons for the strike, differences in the coping strategies regarding the different study programs (natural sciences/humanities). Moreover, the study focused on public university students in Accra as the only key informants of the study. It will not extend to private universities, lecturers, government or any other educational stakeholders. Thus, the findings will only be particular to the selected public university students in Accra.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

This research is organised into six main chapters. Chapter one comprises the study's background; research problem; purpose of the study; research objectives; research questions, significance of

the study; scope of the study; and organisation of the study. Chapter two discusses the literature review, taking into consideration the definition of terms and concepts and empirical literature on the subject matter. Chapter three describes the theoretical framework, conceptual model and operationalization of the framework. Chapter four covers the study's methodology which includes the research design; study population; research philosophy; research validity; ethical consideration; sample size and sampling technique and study's limitations. Chapter five presents the findings, analysis of the field data and discussion of the findings. Lastly, Chapter six summarizes the key findings of the study, draws conclusions and makes strategic recommendations.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature on university lecturers' strike action in the international, African, and Ghanaian contexts. It is organized under themes to understand existing works on the causes of strikes and their impact on students learning and academic performance. It sets the foundation for the research and builds upon the conclusion drawn in previous studies. The literature on the subject focuses on a brief section on the causes of strikes and the effects on students as well as coping strategies students adopt during such periods. According to Babbie (2020; 2013), the purpose of literature review is to gather relevant, timely information on a particular topic and synthesise into a cohesive summary of existing knowledge in the field. It carefully assess with guidance from the research objectives of the present study; the conceptual, theoretical and empirical works bothering on strike actions in the educational domain.

Although numerous studies on teachers' strikes have been done in other African contexts like Nigeria and South Africa, they were mostly studied at the pre-tertiary level (primary, secondary). Similarly, studies conducted on strikes in Ghana focus on industrial action outside the educational context with little empirical evidence at the tertiary level, given graduates' direct immersion in the professional/occupational sector. The researcher began the literature search by typing keywords such as 'university strike'; 'students coping strategies'; 'causes of strike'; 'strike actions by lecturers'; 'strike and its impacts'; 'effects of strike'. These keywords provided a thon of materials through the UIO library, google scholar, Microsoft edge, google chrome and University of Ghana library portal.

Literature on the impact of strikes on students show three main variables and explanations: emotional, academic and financial impacts. Several authors have shown that strike actions have adverse effects on students (Wickens, Labrish, Masoumi Fiksenbaum & Greenglass, 2019). A study by Wickens et al. (2019) conducted in Canada on the "effects of and remediation strategies of students affected by a University Work Stoppage" will be replicated in the Ghanaian context using quantitative methods to explore students' experiences. They reveal that students face psychological distress, financial constraints and low academic performance during and after

strike actions. The study used a mixed method approach where they compared two institutions that experienced the strike on different scales. Both universities reveal the negative impact of work stoppage and discuss the universities' various remediation strategies.

2.1 Concept of Strike

Generally, strikes explain the tension between employers and employees over breach of contractual agreement, poor working conditions or any other unresolved grievances. However, several international and local researchers define the term either detailed or succinctly paying close attention to the geography of the people (Edinyang & Ubi, 2013; Ahmed, 2014; Gikungu & Karanja, 2014; Bendix, 2015; Abiwu, 2016; Offem, Anashie & Aniah, 2018; Egwu, 2018). It is obvious that the meaning of strike varies across time and space despite sharing similarities. The term strike as defined in the literature are discussed below.

Strike action is defined by Edinyang and Ubi (2013) as a planned cessation of work by employees with the intention of exerting pressure on their employer to fulfil their demands. Allen (2007) defined a strike as an effort by employees to cease work so as to compel the employer to make greater concessions at the bargaining table. These definitions bring to light two key characteristics of strike actions which include (1) stoppage of work and (2) compelling a redress of employees' needs. However, employees may employ either the internal or nationwide strike actions to vent their grievances (Edinyang & Ubi, 2013). The internal strike takes place within the organisation while the nationwide strike involves many institutions across the country withdrawing their services (Ahmed, 2014; Abiwu, 2016). A careful look at their definitions unveils few technical gaps. Firstly, the definition of strike action is limited to employees of the primary employer. Thus, it fails to refer to secondary employers or sympathy strikes as contained in the definitions offered by labour laws or statutes (Abiwu, 2016).

Another definition observed in the literature is that of Venter and Levy (2011) cited in Abiwu (2016, p. 9). Drawing from Section 213 of the South African Labour Relations Act [LRA] 66 of

1995, Venter and Levy (2011, p.513) define strike as: a partial or total coordinated refusal to work, or the delaying or obstructing of work by employees of the same employer or by different employers, with the intention of addressing a grievance or resolving a dispute regarding any matter of mutual interest between the employer and employees. In the light of this definition, Venter and Levy (2014) informs that strike actions have three main elements. First, it must represent a total cessation of work or a slowdown of the work process, integrating go-slows and similar measures. Secondly, that it is a concerted action, one that the workers are intentional about getting the needed results. Lastly, that it must be the last resort of employees or worker's union in pursuit of their demands. However, Abiwu (2016), argues that the definition of strike actions by Venter and Levy (2014) suffers a universal application since the modus operandi of strike actions varies from country to country with their accompanying laws.

Abiwu (2016, p. 12) defines strike actions as any “deliberate attempt by workers to restrict the services they provide to the employer or to abandon their work in order to exert strong influence on their employer(s) to meet their demands”. His definition assumes strike actions are solely in the interest of the employee, however this is not the case in sympathetic strikes. Similarly, Offem et al., (2018), describe strike actions in four ways: (1) an action taken in response to employee grievances (2) actions sometimes used to pressure governments to change policies of universities infrastructural development and welfare of both academic and non-academic staff union of universities (3) often a part of a broader social movement taking the form of a campaign of civil resistance undertaken by unions during collective bargaining (4) consisting of workers refusing to attend work and picketing outside the workplace to prevent or dissuade people from working in their place or conducting businesses with their employer. In the light of Offem et al. (2018), it can be argued that strike actions are not always undertaken by employees to serve their personal interests but sometimes for the public good which may either be to cause a change in a political, social, educational or economic policy. Considering the comprehensiveness of Offem et al. (2018), the current study tilts in its favour. Also, understanding the main concept of strike allows for the impacts on students to be analysed.

2.2 Overview of University Strike Actions in Africa

Strike actions vary with respect to the challenges or problems facing employees. The different types of strike actions in the workplace include wildcat, economic, secondary/sympathy, general, sit-down amongst others (Abiwu, 2016). The most recurring type of these strikes have been assessed briefly below.

2.2.1 Wildcat strike

As the name suggests, a wildcat strike is a fast, sudden and intense type of work stoppage (Abiwu, 2016). It is often unauthorized because it lacks the support of the union leaders (Bendix, 2015). Researchers (Abiwu, 2016; Adaviele, 2015) have argued that a wildcat strike is frequently coordinated by certain groups of workers who are dissatisfied with the collective labour negotiations. It may also result from unsolved conflicts or perceived unfair dismissal which results mostly in chaos and unrests because there is failure of negotiations between the parties (Nel, Kirsten, Swanepoel, Erasmus & Poisat, 2012).

This form of strike is considered unlawful and unprotected by law. For example, in Ghana, section 168(4) of the Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651) states that “without prejudice to subsection (2), an employer who takes part in an illegal strike may have the services terminated by the employer without notice for breach of contract of employment or may forfeit remuneration in respect of the period during which the worker is engaged in the illegal strike”. Subsection 2 states that “a person who declares or instigates or incites others to take part in a strike or lockout or acts in furtherance of a strike or lockout which is illegal...is liable for the damage, loss or injury suffered by any other person as a result of the illegal strike or lockout”. This means that employees in Ghana engage minimally in the wildcat strike considering the repercussions attached to it. One incident of this type of strike is in March 2015 where a coalition of opposition parties embarked on a strike in order to seek a new voter registration list for the impending 2016 elections.

2.2.2 Economic Strike

This is one of the commonest strikes in several African countries including South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana (Adavbiele, 2015; Bendix 2015; Clark, 2012). It is caused by the refusal of employers to meet the demands of their employees over issues related to remuneration, working conditions etc. (Nel et al., 2013). Likewise, Odeku (2014) found that economic strike is initiated by the employees to compel the employer to enforce their economic demands, some of which include an increase in their wages and salaries, allowances, bonuses, and other entitlements.

An example of this type of strike is recorded in 2013 when the University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG) in order to mount further pressure on the government to pay their wages, bonuses, and research allowances, the university embarked on an economic strike (Seniwoliba, 2013). Also, the South African Airways refused to add a 0.4% once-off payment to their offer of 6.5%, prompting workers from the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) to go on economic strike in August 2013 (Murwirapachena & Sibanda, 2014, p.555).

2.2.3 Sympathy strike

Sympathy strike is seen as a solidarity action undertaken by employees who are not directly involved in the labour dispute (Clark, 2012). This type of strike is employed by trade unions to demonstrate moral and fractional solidarity with others who are on strike in order to exert pressure on the principal employer to resolve the challenges of employees. Adaviele (2015) and Grogan (2014) similarly express the view that a sympathetic strike is where workers of one organisation or unit join their colleagues in other organisations who are on strike to compel the primary employer in meeting the employees demands. This form of strike is protected provided the specified procedures in the labour laws are followed and if the nature and scope of the strike are justified in terms of the impact on the employer in the other organizations (Grogan, 2014, p.284).

Employees who embark upon a sympathy strike must give a prior notice to their employer or suffer liabilities in the hands of the employer such as suspension or forfeiture of job. In 2015, the Trade Union Congress in Ghana engaged in a sympathy strike in solidarity with workers at the Ghana Jubilee Field who were on strike owing to unfair wages and bad working conditions (Abiwu, 2016). In a similar vein, the Academic Staff Union of Universities in Nigeria launched a strike in 2014, and the Non-Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASUU) supported it by engaging in a sympathy strike (Adaviele, 2015).

2.2.4 General strikes

A general strike most often targets the government of the country rather than a single employer (Abiwu, 2016). This type of strike is often initiated by all legally recognized trade unions within a nation to press for demands common to all employees across the nation (Odeku, 2014). Thus, sympathy strikes is a subset of general strikes where all trade unions in solidarity participate in an ongoing strike to express their concerns. An example of this type of strike occurred in 2014 when all registered trade unions in Ghana embarked on a national strike in protest against deplorable working conditions in the country (Adeniji, 2015).

2.2.5 Sit-down strike

The sit-down strike is amongst the type of strike which have been described by several scholars (Abiwu, 2016; Adeniji, 2015; Gyamfi, 2011) as dangerous and costive because the employer stands to lose so much. With this strike, the employees report to work but refuse to engage in any of their job roles. In October 2008, over a thousand registered nurses and other health professionals in California, United States of America, embarked on a 24-hour sit-down strike in demand of a decrease in their working hours(Gyamfi, 2011). Also, on August 8, 2008, nurses in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, staged a similar strike. Six people died in Sri Lanka as a result of a similar strike by nurses (ibid.).

Ghana's circumstances are similar to those of the aforementioned nations. For instance, the National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT), University Teacher Association of Ghana (UTAG), Pharmaceutical Society of Ghana (PSGH), and Ghana Medical Association (GMA) laid down their tools over poor working conditions (Seniwoliba, 2013).

2.2.6 Go-slow strike

According to Adaviele (2015), during a go-slow strike, employees are present or remain on the job, but they reduce their rate of production in a coordinated way. Similarly, Nel et al. (2013) records workers do not abandon the work premises or leave the organisation, instead they work at a slow pace. Employees use a method known as 'go-slow' to put greater pressure on the employer to satisfy their requests. Adaviele (2015) notes that this type of strike occurs when employees take longer than normal to perform a certain task. However, in order for this sort of strike to be legally recognized and be protected, it must be coordinated, impede work progress, and be coupled with an industrial demand.

However, Venter and Levy (2014) contend that while workers continue to perform their job roles, it is quite difficult for employers to enforce statutory restrictions. Additionally, it become challenging for the employer(s) to defend a wage reduction in this case, much alone commence disciplinary action against the workers (Abiwu, 2016).

2.3 University Education

University education in Ghana consists of three cycles, namely bachelor's degree programmes, master's degree programmes and PhD programmes (Amoako-Gyampah, 2015). The section below reviews these broad programmes.

2.3.1 Bachelor's degree programmes

Admission to bachelor's degree programmes centres on a candidate holding West African Senior High School Certificate with six passes and a maximum aggregate score of 24 (Adu-Gyamfi, Donkor & Addo, 2016). The bachelor's programme has a nominal duration of two (2) to four (4) years depending on a person's chosen specialization. However, specialization programmes in medicine and surgery or dental surgery have a nominal duration of six (6) years (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2015). Each year of a bachelor's programme is assigned a level. The first year is level 100, the second year is level 200, the third year is level 300 and level 400 for the fourth year. Bachelor's degree programmes in Ghana generally involve a very large degree of specialization. Programmes usually focus on one major subject, although it is possible to choose a second (related) specialization. Not all bachelor's degree programmes conclude with a final paper. In principle, a bachelor's degree grants Ghanaian students access to master's degree programmes. In practice, however, students must hold a bachelor's degree with at least second-class honours in order to be admitted to master's degree programmes (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2015).

2.3.2 Master's degree programmes

The qualification for an entry into a master's degree programme is a bachelor's degree. This programme spans between 1-2 years and mostly as specialization of the bachelor's degree obtained previously. During these programmes, students spend one (1) year studying theoretical subjects or carry out independent research and conclude the programme with a final paper (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2015). In principle, both types of master's degrees enable students to pursue a doctorate program.

2.3.3 PhD

A doctorate is conferred after a period of at least three (3) years of research in the context of the doctoral programme (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2015). Students must hold a master's degree in order to pursue a doctorate. The titles that are awarded following successful completion of the doctoral programme are PhD and DPhil.

2.3.4 Higher professional education

Higher education programmes with a professional focus are primarily provided in Ghana by polytechnics. Similarly, admission to a polytechnic requires a West African Senior School Certificate with six passes and a maximum aggregate score of 24.

Originally, polytechnics were not higher education institutions, but vocational training institutes. Following an educational reform in 1993 (the Polytechnic Law), polytechnics started to provide higher education (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2015). In addition to higher education programmes with a professional focus, some polytechnics also offer secondary vocational training programmes. Additionally, there are polytechnics that also offer bachelor's degree programmes in addition to programmes that lead to the Higher National Diploma (HND). Until recently, this was still exclusive to universities. In this study, University education is operationalized as higher education in Ghana. Thus, students from tertiary sector are assessed in this study.

2.4 Empirical Literature

Empirical literature refers to the scholarly works gleaned from empirical findings. By empirical findings, it suggests real occurrences or actual happenings reported whether or not the facts support the researcher's original hypotheses (Holosko, 2006).

2.4. Causes of lecturers' strike action in Africa

These factors can be divided into two categories: economic and non-economic. The economic category relate to issues of compensation like wages, bonuses and allowances (Seniwoliba, 2014). Researchers have economic reasons contributing to strikes in public institutions worldwide, and Ghana is no different (Adavbiele, 2015; Ukaogo, Orabueze & Ojukwu, 2021). First, workers' requests for salary increments are a typical occurrence that has resulted in several strikes worldwide. According to studies, demands for pay and salary increment primarily cause strikes, notably in Sub-Saharan Africa (Gyamfi, 2011; Ibrahim & Alhaji, 2015). Education workers went on strike in 2012, demanding improved working conditions (Seniwoliba, 2013).

Studies such as (Ige Akindele, 2014; Seniwoliba, 2014) show that government failure to honour its promises to employees contributes to strikes in many countries.

2.4.1 Low remuneration

According to Albert (2015), one of the influential factors of strike actions is low remuneration. Where an institution fails to meet the financial goals of the employees, there may be an impasse which is likely to degenerate into strike actions. Globally, the demand for wage increment is a common phenomenon that has incited several strike actions. Researchers (Gyamfi, 2011; Ibrahim & Alhaji, 2015; Murwirapachena & Sibanda, 2014; Seniwoliba, 2013; Seniwoliba, 2014; Surujlal, 2014) have shown that the demand for wage and salary increments is the main cause of strikes, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to Murwirapachena and Sibanda (2014), a substantial number of strikes in South Africa are the outcome of employees petition for salary increment. They further note that the 2013 edition of the Industrial Action Report in South Africa shows that salaries, bonuses, and compensation are the primary causes for strikes.

According to Seniwoliba (2014), remuneration is the leading reason for strikes not only in Ghana, but also in Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Canada, Australia, and the United States of America. Ghanaian educators requested a fifteen percent increase in their wages and salaries in 2012. However, the government stated that such a demand was unsustainable and that owing to the global economic crisis, it could only pay 8% (Seniwoliba, 2013). Educational workers rejected the government's proposition to pay 8% and embarked on a statewide strike to express their demands.

2.4.2 Conditions of Service

Some of the causes related to conditions of service include either the imposition of a payment system or the abolition of an existing payment scheme. In the British context, Gibney (2018); Bergfeld (2018) note that the 2018 strike had to do with changes in the lecturers' pension scheme where the university management proposed to abolish the defined benefit system of pension.

Ukaogo et al. (2018) also show the university academic staff's forceful imposition and enrolment on the IPPIS payment platform. They further note that the major causes of strikes reflect the lack of autonomy of universities as the identity of public universities as an organisation is often challenged by the government by the constant meddling of government in university affairs. Likewise, inadequate funding, poor budgetary allocation in financing education, academic freedom, poor remuneration, government breach of a previous agreement, non-implementation of agreement and abysmal treatment of lecturers are some reasons for lecturer's strikes. Lecturers embark on strike action because of the demand for increment in wages and salaries, inadequate funding, books and research allowances and poor working conditions (Abiwu, 2016).

One of the things that gave rise to the nationwide strikes in Ghana's public universities was the National Democratic Congress's adoption of a new research fund (Seniwoliba, 2014). According to the scholar, public universities in Ghana have seen a series of strikes since the government decided to exchange the old books and research stipend with newly created fund (Abiwu, 2016; Seniwoliba, 2014). The lecturers stressed that the book and research allowance formed part of their conditions of service stemming from a collective decision between government and University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG). The union challenged that s9(13) of the Unified Conditions of Service for Public Universities in Ghana states that, "the existing books and research allowances guarantee minimum and immediate support across the board for all lecturers and research fellows" (Abiwu, 2016, p. 51). The aforementioned provision aims to facilitate Ghanaian lecturers and researchers professional growth and careers by purchasing research books and other instructional resources (Abiwu, 2016). Hence, the removal of the allowances will hinder the career development and growth of lecturers. UTAG made many fruitless attempts to prevent the government from withdrawing the old research and book allowances. Several successful strikes at public universities constituted the outcome of the government's unilateral action (Seniwoliba 2014).

2.5 Emotional impact

Studies such as Wickens et al. (2019); Wills (2014); Obindu (2021); Abaekwume (2022) reflect emotional distress in the course of strike activity. They note increased stress, especially after lecturers resume academic activities. Most students cannot cope with the perceived pressure of these strikes coupled with rushed schedules, as most teachers want to cover the curriculum. In their study, Wickens et al. (2019) showed that final-year and first-year students are profoundly affected, although all students are affected during strike actions. They note that as first years look forward to adjusting to university life, this enthusiasm is curtailed when strikes occur as they often face confusion, disorientation and heightened distress. In addition, fatigue and dissatisfaction occur among students as there may be an extension of the academic calendar in situations where lecturers have to compensate for lost contact hours. Final years also confirmed unspecified periods for education completion, losing jobs from potential employers, anxiety to improve or maintain their GPAs and unknown graduation dates. In the work of Greenglass, Fiksenbaum, Goldstein & Desiato (2002), a strike triggers students' experience of angry feelings because of the extent of the strike and how it affects their plans involving meaningful planned life experiences such as graduation, travel and employment. Students' enthusiasm toward academic work was short-lived and replaced by confusion and lack of motivation and eventually, students began to express frustration and anger at their perceived victimisation (Fiksenbaum, Wickens, Greenglass & Wiesenthal, 2012).

2.5.1 Students stress level

Incessant strike actions have great implication on the stress level of tertiary students. According to Offem et al. (2018), disruptions in academic program serve as a non-motivational factor to students. The accompanying stress affects the learning performance of students. Imeokparia and Ediagbonya (2013) defined stress as a structural imbalance within the individual as a result of deficiency or shortfall in the individual's expectations. Once there is a strike, it has a tendency of leading to a shortfall in the expectation of both lecturers and students. In the case of tertiary educationists, their expected salaries will not be paid until the end of the strike because of the Government policy of 'no work, no pay' (Offem et al., 2018). In a similar vein, tertiary students'

expectations may be cut short which causes structural imbalance within the lecturers and students.

2.6 Academic Impact

The academic impacts of strikes reflect one of the adverse effects scholars note as students go through the educational process. Studies such as Obindu (2021); Abaekwume (2022); Olusegun (2014) Wickens et al. (2019) show that there is a loss of structured schedule, cancellation of academic activities which may or may not be rescheduled, disruption of the core function of universities (teaching, research), and low academic performance. These academic impacts are further developed below:

2.6.1 Impact of strike on student performance

In the early periods of strikes, students may view industrial action as an opportunity to catch up with studies and an indirect extension of deadlines for academic activities. However, as the resumption of teaching and learning becomes unknown, the initial enthusiasm diminishes and is replaced by a lack of motivation and apathy for studies (Wickens et al., 2019). When university lecturers go on strike, students are the ones who suffer the most. Olusegun (2014) investigated the harmful impact of university Teachers' strikes on student performance and discovered that strikes had such a severe impact on students that even clever students graduate with bad grades. Furthermore, because university learning has been rendered irregular, students may have forgotten what they have learned before the disruption of an academic session upon returning to school, causing learning to be disturbed and leading to poor performance (Akintoye & Uhunmwangho, 2018). In the works of Wills (2014), strike affects the total output and students' achievement scores affecting their academic performance.

2.6.2 Impact of strike on the academic calendar/curriculum

Strike action by university lecturers halts academic activities, causing the academic calendar to be disrupted (Kazeem & Ige, 2010). According to Olakunle (2011), students become highly affected when an academic program is disrupted due to a strike, especially if they believed it would force them to stay at school longer than intended. Furthermore, Kazeem and Ige (2010) discovered that a strike necessitates calendar modifications, which have various effects on the institutional program and the smooth operation of the institution. Wickens et al. (2019) aver that the loss of a structured schedule affects the completion of the curriculum, hence the quality of education. They note the cancellation of teaching, tutorials, and laboratory activities and how courses are rushed to ensure the completion of course requirements as outlined initially. Due to this strike action, tertiary students may not complete their academic work within the prescribed period as stated in their prospectus. Likewise, the authors claim that students record lower grades after strike actions as they appear exhausted and unprepared for examinations and other forms of assessments. Similarly, they argue that disciplines and courses that involve practical work felt the most impact as students lamented that self-studies do not compensate for the experiential and practical work lost during strikes; hence, a concern about the potential impact of low-quality education on their future professions and academic goals.

2.6.3 Skill acquisition

The skills acquired by tertiary graduates are also greatly affected by the incessant strike actions. There is no doubt that strike actions alter the normal skill acquisition process in tertiary education. Tertiary education which is stuffed with skill-based courses require little/no disruption in the process in order to guarantee easy transmission of skills (Edinyang & Ubi, 2013). Once there are incessant strike actions, the skill acquisition process may be truncated and as such, tertiary students will be poorly prepared for the realities in the labour market. Researchers have often documented and emphasized the poor core skills possessed by tertiary students and have linked it to the series of strike in the educational sector (Adaviele, 2015; Ibrahim, 2015; Offem et al., 2018; Wills, 2020).

2.6.4 Disruption of effective teaching and learning

As mentioned, strike action on students in public colleges also disrupts teaching. University strike action has negatively influenced effective teaching in studies (Wills, 2014; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2010). According to Wills (2014), strike action in South African colleges has evident negative consequences for disrupting teaching programs. Students are well-equipped due to excellent instruction, which leads to good student achievement. Evidence suggests that strike action has disrupted instruction in some schools in recent years, according to Clotfelter et al. (2010). The loss of academic support from lecturers and teaching assistants negatively affects the quality of their education. Others, such as Wickens et al. (2019), report in their study that some lecturers, in empathising with students, often eliminate portions of course activities/assignments and reading materials to make courses more manageable leading students to question the integrity of the quality, of education they receive as compared to other contexts.

2.7 Financial impact

Wickens et al. (2019) perceive strike action as costly for students. This cost shows up through high living conditions, extension of housing lease and rental agreements not initially catered for. Others include cancellation or rescheduling of travel plans. Wickens et al. (2019) further shows that international students were mainly affected financially. Students lamented that given their higher tuition fees for the same education as local citizens, they indirectly lost quality of education and quality as value for money as the tuition fees they paid did not reflect the total value of the education. Additionally, they face restrictive measures on their study permits and visas in the country as they are expected to complete their education within a specified period.

2.8 Coping strategies used by students during strike action

Coping techniques are people's unique behavioral and psychological methods to control, tolerate, lessen, or minimize stressful situations. According to a 2017 article by Kwaah and Essilfie, students employed a variety of coping mechanisms, primarily prayer/meditation, self-distracting activities like watching TV and listening to music to deal with the stress of strike action. Other crucial stress management techniques included the emotional and practical

assistance of family, friends, and lecturers (Kwaah & Essilfie, 2017). Strike action affects students emotionally which can lead to an undesirable outcome or even episodes of violence if certain coping strategies are not put in place (Greenglass et al, 2002). Regulating emotions requires effort, focused on different points. For example, exercise control over the processes that underlie the activation based on the psychological regulation systems; emphasize the attention and input of information that directly affects the emotional state of students; interpret information that is emotionally significant; manage the internal signals of emotional activation, to be able to access coping strategies if necessary, whether material or interpersonal; predict and control the emotional requirements and select adaptive modes (behaviors that meet the demands of the context) to express themselves emotionally (Delvecchio et al., 2022). Students tend to exhibit higher self-efficacy which lessen the level of anxiety in them (Bonilla et al., 2020).

Adaptiveness is a coping mechanism used by students in times of strike and it is the ability to cope consistently so as to reduce distress, or, at worst, not aggravate it (Kumah, 2020). Adaptiveness combines three characteristics: a) judgment, meaning the ability to distinguish controllable situations that call for active coping from uncontrollable ones that are better handled passively; b) determination, needed to overcome obstacles that arise in situations judged to be controllable; and c) self-control, needed to react passively in provocative situations judged to be uncontrollable (Kumah, 2020). According to Wickens et al. 2006, Internet support was assessed as a coping mechanism used by students using an adapted version of a measure developed by Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison, and Pinneau. According to students, the extent to which the Internet provides them with information and guidance on the strike and also acts as a source of morale boosting during the strike (Wills, 2014). Specifically, students may employ more numerous or effective coping strategies, including social support, which may contribute to a delay in reported stress levels (Wickens et al., 2006).

2.9 Gaps in the Literature and Chapter Summary

Literature on strike action, most importantly in the context of Africa, has been examined and reviewed. The chapter commenced by reviewing various definitions of strike actions by

prominent scholars with a focus on Africa and beyond. It extended further to review the causes of strike actions in tertiary education. These included: low remuneration, poor working conditions. The chapter further discussed the impact that strike action has on tertiary education namely: disruption of the academic calendar, poor student performance, disruption of effective learning, quality of education and students, core skills acquisition, delay in graduation of students and disruption of teaching. Further, the chapter examined how university strike action impacts negatively on the country. Finally, it presented extensive discussion on the measures that should be put in place by stakeholders of the public universities in order to address strike action. Unfortunately, the literature on strike actions in public universities in Ghana is rather scanty compared to the other countries like Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and among others.

The literature review also unveiled the minimal research done in the area of students' coping strategies during strike actions as well as the effects strike actions have on tertiary students in Ghana. Thus, the current study is significant to providing appreciable knowledge on university strike actions. It will contribute to fill the relevant gaps in the Ghanaian literature on strike actions in public universities. The gaps identified in the review will help in developing the survey instrument for data collection.

3.0 THEORITICAL LITERATURE AND FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework connects the researcher's reasonings to existing knowledge (Chidi & Okpala, 2012). The importance of theories in research is emphasized in relation to the selection of a topic, the development of research questions, the conceptualization of the literature review, the design approach and the analysis plan of the study (Grant & Osanloo 2014). In basic terms, theories give structure and vision to study. Industrial relations as a field of study have many theories because of its multidisciplinary nature. Theories such as Marxist, social action, and systems approaches are significant in describing the nature of employment relations (Seniwoliba, 2013). Thus, this research is grounded in two distinct schools of thought [i.e., the Marxist theory and social action theory] in explaining the research objectives of the study.

3.1 Marxist Theory

The Marxist theory or approach is significant to understanding employment relations in every sector. The theory developed out of the limitations of the pluralist model (Ogundele, Alaka, Oginni & Ogunyomi, 2013). The Marxist theory has its proponent by name Karl Marx, and he posits that in capitalist economies, productive systems and profit are key indicators which influences policies. In other words, companies are driven by profit and so put in place measures to minimise expenditure and maximize profit. The Marxist approach can be referred to as the "radical approach," as noted by Onyemaechi (2014). It took effect in capitalist societies at a period of heightened employee militancy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Onyemaechi (2014) maintains that radicals or Marxists believe that conflicts within an organisation can be resolved and that, in most cases, mutual interests may arise amongst the participants. In the light of this theory, industrial or employment relations are viewed as a means to settling conflicts between social groups. A fundamental principle of Marxism is that the struggle for economic dominance is linked to the conflicts that develop between employees (labour) and employers (capital). In summary, conflict arising from social groups is not only an industrial issue; it affects every aspect of society. Marxists emphasise exploitation and alienation because they believe that the capitalist economic system has an uneven distribution of power and economic wealth (Francis et al., 2012).

Oludele (2014) cited in Abiwu (2016) reports that the Marxist approach make several assumptions which explains the different interests between the capitalist and labour. Some of these assumptions include the support the employer receives from the government in the event where there are divergent interests between the employer and employee (Ogundele et al., 2013). In other words, the government frequently sides with employers in order to protect and promote their interests, often at the expense of employees (Adebisi, 2013). Thus, the interests of workers remain unprotected by such government actions. Additionally, Ogundele and Olajide (2012) note that labour and capital are constantly divided in a capitalist society. Thus, whereas employers aims to expand their wealth, employees strive to optimise their well-being.

Unlike the unitarists and pluralists, Marxists hold a different view about workplace conflict. According to Francis et al. (2012), Marxists hold the view that workplace conflicts are inevitable as management aim to decrease expenses and employees seek equitable or adequate wages for their labour. Furthermore, conflicts in capitalist society are only reflections of the dominating power base of employers. Conflict emerges in the employment relation owing to imbalances and inequalities in society. In short, the basis of conflict according to Marxists is exploitation (Abiwu, 2016). Oginni & Faseyiku (2012) contend the economic and societal systems and institutions serve as a catalyst for the nature of this conflict which is just a reflection not just of organisational conflict, but of broader societal differences (Venter and Levy, 2014).

Reflecting carefully on Marxism, the researcher is convinced of its significant contribution to employment relations, particularly in understanding strike actions in the corporate sphere. A few of the model's relevance have been reviewed accordingly. In his work, Kuehn (2012) maintains that the theory of Marx helps to study the influence of capitalism on workers by providing a fair and equal distribution of factors of production (land, capital, and interest) and analysing conflict between classes as a central theme in the analysis of social development. Omoyibo (2012), also opines that Marxism makes a significant contribution to our understanding of how different classes in a capitalist society could interact to form a whole and, as a result, carry out the

functions of society as an entity. Again, it aids in determining the present in the long run through Marx's historical sense, as well as offering a clear knowledge of the basic functioning and fundamental processes of society as a whole. Furthermore, it provides an understanding of how ownership, power, and social change are related (Abiwu, 2016).

In Fuchs and Mosco (2015), they suggested that the approach helps in understanding the overall dynamics of society by exposing the ideals of society like healthy employment relationship which keeps society functional. Seniwoliba (2013) notes that the Marxist method has made significant contributions to the study of industrial relations. He further adds that Marxism stresses alienation and exploitation claims. As a result, the production, distribution, and exchange mechanisms of capitalist society depend heavily on this notion. He further stresses that the Marxist perspective is crucial because it highlights the significance of collective action, including industrial action and any other kind of action that does not reflect strike action (ibid.).

Despite the usefulness of the Marxist theory, it has received sharp criticism from researchers (Chidi & Okpala, 2012; Omoyibo, 2014; Rahat, Kifayatullah & Tammanna, 2012; Seniwoliba 2012). Rahat et al. (2012) criticised on grounds that capitalist societies cherish material gain (economic wealth) over human beings. In other words, wealth is valued far over the individuals (i.e., employees) through whose sweat or labour the wealth is made. Thus, there is no respect for human rights and dignity unless one falls within the rich or wealthy category. The social action theory discussed below originated as a result of criticisms raised against it.

3.2 Social Action Theory

Social action theory is credited to Max Weber, and it attempts to examine people's actions and the underlying reasons for those actions (Seniwoliba, 2013). The theory relates employment interactions from the perspective and motivation of an individual (Abiwu, 2016, p. 89).

According to the proponents of the theory, these actions may emanate from psychological contracts, beliefs, events, and goals of the individuals who are part of the system. The theory

emphasizes understanding specific industrial relations activities rather than simply observing the conduct of industrial relations. In his *Economy and Society*, Weber defines action as “social” if it attaches a subjective meaning to the behavior, be it overt or covert, omission or acquiescence (Weber, 1922; 1964). In other words, action is social so long as its subjective meaning takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course (Trueman, 2015). Weber identified four forms of social action:

1. **Rational action:** Individuals have expectations about the behavior of others and act to take account of these expectations in order to attain their own rationally chosen outcomes.
2. **Evaluative action:** Individuals take account of absolute values (beliefs, ethics, aesthetics or other form of behavior) entirely for their own sake and independently of any prospects of external benefit or success.
3. **Emotional actions:** these actions are based on feelings and emotions of the individual and other actors.
4. **Traditional actions:** these are actions based on long-established and habitually practiced traditional expectations

According to Priya (2013), the rational action may be rationally expedient if it has its foundation on logical grounds. This action comprises a complex set of means and ends. The ends of action, such as values and goals, are viewed as means to achieve other ends or as actual objectives. In this regard, action tends to be merely instrumental (Priya, 2013). In the case of value-rational action, Weber explains that they emerge from commitments to specific subjective goals that employ effective techniques to achieve these goals. Efficiency guides the choice of means while values determines the ends. Additionally, the affective action merges means and ends, causing the action to become spontaneous and emotional. Such behavior is the reverse of rationality because the person involved is unable to evaluate the connection between the goals of the action and the tools that are purportedly available to achieve these ends in a calm and impartial manner (Priya, 2013). On the contrary, the means themselves become ends in and of themselves and are emotionally fulfilling. Lastly, the traditional action arises when the ends and means of actions are established by traditions and customs. An important feature of traditional action is that the end of

the action is presupposed and feel natural to the persons involved due to their inability to recognize that there may be alternative ends (Priya, 2013).

Applying the social action theory to employment relations, we understand the reasons for strike actions in organisations. Indeed, both employers and employees are driven by goals, values, customs and ethics that inform their actions in any given situation. For example, while employers seek to maximize profit and expand their business, employees seek high remuneration and better conditions of service. This increases the tension between both employers and employees in the event where one party has the needs unsatisfied. The aggrieved party undertakes varied actions in resolving the problem although it may be influencers of any of the action types stated by Max Weber. So, in effect, strike actions embarked upon by employees are but an embodiment of rational, evaluative, emotional and traditional actions which demands same from employers in resolving it. Weber's focus on actions and meanings has provided a very useful way to assess social actions. By connecting social action to employment relationships, it helps to develop policies and strategies to regularize the behavioral patterns and conducts of both employers and employees, especially in resolving workplace conflicts and challenges. On the flip side, the social action theory also helps to understand the likely influences in the choices or actions of a student pertaining to the adoption of an academic strategy during strike actions in public universities.

3.3 Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping

The transactional theory of stress and coping guides this study. The key factor influencing the selection of the transactional theory of stress and coping is that students face various challenges during strike actions. These challenges can result in financial and academic stress for students. As a result, students mobilize various dimensions of coping mechanisms to deal with their stress. Therefore, this study is underpinned by the transactional theory of stress and coping. According to the transactional theory of stress and coping, people choose how much they feel they can prevent the loss, lessen injury, or handle a challenge by acting in ways that directly alter outcomes when confronted with potentially emotional situations. This concept was used by Lazarus (2012) to

analyze flight crew performance under stressful situations. Lazarus agreed with Grinker and Spiegel's (1945) claim that an individual's capacity to affect probable outcomes and the processing of pertinent personal and situational ideas and experiences preceded the manifestation of emotional responses to potentially emotionally provoking events.

These pioneering theorists provided the foundation for Lazarus & Folkman, 1987; Lazarus, 2012 early concepts of appraisal theory, which underwent significant revisions between his early publications and his later assertions. Lazarus's focus on assessing persisted despite certain alterations. To differentiate between the output of the assessment and the process of creating meaning, he stressed the verb form of the word. Even though the two words are frequently used synonymously, Lazarus argued that the word "appraising" should emphasize the active construction of meaning, which is subject to change as circumstances are assessed, and new experiences, knowledge, and beliefs are applied to the constructed meaning. Lazarus first distinguished between primary appraising and secondary appraising. Primary appraising evaluates a situation's applicability, the extent to which it interacts with one's views, values, ambitions, and commitments, and the likely results of situational investment (Lazarus, 2012). The scenario is not given further attention if the person recognizes no significance, no intersection with views, values, aspirations, or commitments, or no investment in future outcomes (Lazarus, 2012).

Motivational congruence and motivational relevance make up the bulk of primary appraisal (Smith & Lazarus, 1993). Motivational congruence refers to the intersection with objectives and aspirations, while motivational relevance refers to the junction with beliefs, commitments, and values (Smith & Lazarus, 1993). The secondary appraisal is done when there is significance in the interactions between a person and their surroundings (Lazarus, 2012). During the second evaluation phase, the person determines the various courses of action that may be taken to address the problem at hand. The concepts of responsibility, problem-focused coping potential, emotion-focused coping potential, and future anticipation are included in secondary appraising, as described by Smith and Lazarus (1993). The process of determining who is to blame or get credit for specific results is called accountability (*ibid.*). The assessment of whether or not the

circumstance and its motivating congruence are likely to alter is what we mean when we talk about future anticipation (Smith & Lazarus, 1993). Individuals evaluate their coping self-efficacy as part of the secondary appraising process. Coping self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to successfully handle a given scenario (Chesney, Neilands, Chambers, Taylor, & Folkman, 2006). Bandura's (1991; 1999; 1997) self-efficacy theory and Benight and Bandura's (2004) social cognitive theory of posttraumatic growth are the theoretical foundations for coping with self-efficacy. Both theories emphasize personal agency in the process of creating change through belief in one's ability to do so.

Therefore, the study uses the transactional theory of stress and coping to understand how students cope during strike action. The theory will be used to understand the coping mechanisms adopted by the students to deal with the consequences of a strike in terms of financial, emotional and academic consequences.

4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the methodology used in this study. The main themes in relation to the methodology of the study are discussed below. It describes how the research was conducted and includes the research design, data collection methods and ethical consideration. This study aims to assess the coping strategies of public university students during strike actions in Ghana. Specifically, it analyses the main influence of strike actions among university students and the strategies they employ in the event of strikes.

4.2 Research Philosophy

Philosophies, also known as research paradigm, are assumptions about enriching knowledge (Mason, 2002). These assumptions provide a guideline for conducting research (Creswell, 2011). Four paradigms are mainly used in analyzing social theory – radical humanist; interpretive; radical Structuralist; and functionalist (Karnevio, 2007; Burrell & Morgan, 1979). However, the two paradigms that have advanced over the course of years in social and business literature are positivism and interpretivism (Mingers, 2004). However, this study relies mainly on the positivist approach.

4.2.1 Positivism

Positivism as epistemology assesses the normalities and causal linkages between constituent components to explain and forecast phenomena (Karnevio, 2007). This paradigm thrives mainly on deductive reasoning and proposes hypotheses that are experimentally testable so as to understand rational human actions (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Positivists contend that a phenomenon should be isolated, and that observation should be repeatable. This often involves manipulations of reality with variations in only a single independent variable so as to identify regularities in, and to form relationships between some constituent elements of the social world (Mingers, 2004)

Due to this paradigm's objective nature, it employs geometric data in making predictions, making it a more preferred approach in quantitative research (Sobh & Perry, 2006; Greener, 2008; Bhattacharjee, 2012). Unlike interpretivism which has been criticized for being subjective and hence biased in its applications, the positivist philosophy ensures apparent consistency in variables which makes it evenly applicable in every field of study. Hence, the positivist paradigm guides this study.

4.3 Research Design

The research design refers to the overall strategy that guides a researcher to assess a given problem in a coherent and logical way so as to effectively address it (De Vaus, 2006). According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2018) research design details the plan that is drawn up for organizing the research and making it practicable so that the research questions can be answered (p. 173). McMillan and Schumacher (2001) also define research design as a plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer research questions. Labaree (2013) opines the research design possesses the 'overall strategy that you use to incorporate the different components of the study coherently and logically' (p. 1). In essence a research design provides a framework for the gathering, measurement and examination of data.

According to Creswell (2007), the research design is divided into three categories: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method. Case study research, action research, descripto-interpretive, laboratory experiment to name a few are some of the other classifications of research methods and designs in research (Babbie, 2020).

Quantitative and qualitative approaches are the two primary categories of extensively utilized research methods (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The quantitative approach describes phenomena in numerical value which is achieved using objective measurements based on statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys (Babbie, 2020). It makes use of numbers in data collection and further uses statistical techniques in analyzing the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In research literature, this

method has been linked to the positivist paradigm (Karnevio, 2007). The qualitative approach on the other hand answers questions of why and how. It explores the meanings, values and beliefs of people associated with the research problem to understand the depth of it. The mixed method approach is a combination of both the quantitative and qualitative methods in research (De Vaus, 2006).

Deciding on a research approach is influenced by several factors including the research question, study population and the extent of research conducted on the subject matter within the context of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The objectives of this research are to understand how variables (strike actions in public universities, coping strategies of students and their academic performance) are related and the quantitative approach provide the needed numerical information to achieve an objective output. Thus, the quantitative approach guides the research questions and facilitate the development of the survey instrument in collecting the field data. The quantitative approach gives a fair balance between the numerical data while providing an explanation to the results given the Likert Scale procedure adopted in constructing the survey. Again, was relatively economical, simple, and time-efficient for both the researcher and the respondents (Babbie, 2020).

4.4 Study Population

In academic research, population is defined as a group of people or individuals who share similar characteristics based on what a researcher is interested in and therefore qualify to be included in a study (Gravetter & Forzano, 2018; Shank & Brown, 2007). Public university students in the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), particularly Accra, constitutes the population of this study.

4.4.1 Profile of the Study Population

Accra is the capital city of Ghana and a very important economic and political center. Officially, Accra today covers approximately 139.7 km² with its Administrative area known as the Accra

Metropolitan Area (AMA) (Acheampong, 2021). The AMA is the most urbanized area within the Greater Accra Region, one of the sixteen (16) administrative regions in Ghana. At the sub-regional level, Accra forms part of the Accra-City Region- a newly designated functional geography comprising AMA and twelve (12) neighboring administrative districts (Acheampong, 2021). At the national level, Accra has strong economic links with other major urban centres in Ghana, including Kumasi, the second largest city, Cape Coast and Sekondi-Takoradi.

Accra is also recognized as an important educational center in Ghana and hosts most of the top private and public universities (Acheampong, 2021). This study focuses on three of the public universities in Accra; University of Ghana (UG), University of Professional Studies (UPSA), and Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). The target population will include students offering Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Business Administration. Considering the sample frame, the target population size is estimated at 1000 and the sample size at 200. In choosing the target population, the researcher was guided by the availability of the respondents, the complex nature of the respondents' course of study and their experiences with strike actions. Thus, the researcher is assured of getting the relevant information to answer the research questions.

4.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Sampling technique is the process of selecting a part of a population for research (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In this study, both probability (simple random sampling) and non-probability (convenience, purposive and quota) sampling methods was used as the nature of the schools vary. As earlier indicated, Accra hosts the highest number of schools and for the study to possess reliability the public universities were selected as they host a large number of students. Also, these universities serve the purpose for the research objectives to be attained and also offer convenience and proximity to the researcher. A convenience sampling was used to select the Greater Accra region which is easily accessible to the researcher as the research site. Simple random sampling and the purposive sampling methods was used to select the respondents for the study. The simple random sampling ensures that each member of the population has an equal

chance for the selection or the chance of getting a response which can be more than equal to the chance depending on the data analysis justification (Babbie, 2020; Bryman & Bell 2015). This will facilitate the analysis of the data and increase the reliability of the research outcome and its decision. According to Mouton and Babbie (2001, p. 203), a sample means “a special subset of a population observed in order to make inferences about the nature of the total population”. This choice of sample size was informed by the fact that “decisions about sample size represent a compromise between the constraints of time and cost and the need for precision” (Bryman, 2008, p. 179).

The sample size was determined in reference to the Cochran (1977) formula. The formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where n = sample size

p = the population proportions

e =acceptable sampling error ($e=0.05$)

z =A 95% confidence interval gives a z value of 1.96, per the normal table (Gorsuch, Lehmann, 2010). Since the estimated sample size is 200 and the population size is 1000, the Cochran formula will be modified for calculating the actual sample size for the study. The formula is given:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + \frac{(N - 1)}{n_0}}$$

In this case, n_0 is Cochran’s sample size estimation, N is the population size, and n is the new, adjusted sample size. The $N = 1000$

$$n = \frac{1000}{1 + \frac{999}{200}}$$

$$n = \frac{1000}{5.9}$$

$n = 170$

Thus, the calculated sample size for the study is 170. However out of the 170 questionnaires distributed, five (5) were missing hence 165 respondents participated in the study.

4.6 Data Collection Methods

The study used survey in gathering data. Guided by the purpose of the study, a questionnaire was developed into structured and unstructured questions. The format of the questionnaire includes dichotomous questions and Likert Scale (LS) (Reja, Manfreda, Hlebec & Vehovar, 2003). The LS questions have five to seven-point scale responses (De Vaus, 2006). However, this study limits the responses to a five-point Likert Scale, where 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, and 5= Strongly Agree. This format is reliable, comprehensive and easily applicable (Babbie 2020; De Vaus, 2006).

The questionnaire was made up of four distinct parts. Section A required the demographic data of the respondents whereas section B assessed the perception of the students on strike actions in public universities. Section C examined the respondents on the major influences of strike actions on the students and Section D gathered from respondents their key academic coping strategies during strike actions in their schools.

4.7 Data Collection Procedure

The survey is designed using the software SurveyMonkey and administered to the respondents electronically via their e-mail address provided. However, hard copies of the survey were made available only by preference. The data collection was scheduled for two week. However, given the academic life of the respondent, the researcher took into consideration students' busy schedule and allowed flexibility in the data gathering process. Additionally, constant reminders were sent to respondents to answer the survey. Although the data collection was scheduled for two weeks, it lasted for almost a month as students were in their examination period and had little time to participate in a survey.

4.7.1 Research Validity and Reliability

According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009), research validity reflects whether the obtained findings is a true reflection of the collected data. Validity may be assessed through internal, external, and measurement validity (Singh & Masuku, 2014). External validity concerns whether the obtained research findings can be equally applicable to other research settings (May, 2001) while internal validity is the ability of the research instrument to measure what it intends to measure (Saunders et al., 2009).

The external validity concerned focuses on the data analysis and a determination of whether it can serve inferential purposes. With measurement reliability, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to calculate the Cronbach alpha of the scale items in the survey instrument before assessing the findings. This helped assess the variables' internal consistency.

4.8 Data Analysis Method

The SPSS was used in analyzing the field data. The SPSS is a comprehensive statistical software that facilitates the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative research (Arkkelin, 2014). According to Saunders et al. (2009), data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the data collected. Additionally, since the objectives of the study were straightforward without focusing on variations or relationship between variables, the researcher relied exclusively on percentage analysis in assessing each of the research objectives. This proved simple, explicit and effective in discussing the research findings. The presentation of the findings were done using Tables and graphics with the help of Microsoft (MS) Excel and SPSS.

4.9 Ethical Consideration

In research, ethical and non-ethical considerations hinge on what is right or wrong in the data collection or gathering process. Strict adherence to ethical consideration is an important part of the research process (Saunders et al., 2012) hence, recognized in the current study. Ethical research concerns what researchers ought and ought not to do in their research and research behavior. Likewise, ethical issues are not a once and for all matter which can be decided before

the research commences and then forgotten but rather, they run throughout the entire research process (Cohen et. al., 2018 p.111).

This study will take into consideration ethical issues as reiterated by Oliver (2003), that ethical issues arise from the nature of research project itself, the context for the research, procedures to be adopted; methods of data collection; nature of participants; types of data collected; what is to be done with the data and reporting of the data (p.17). These range from issues of confidentiality, anonymity, and non-traceability of participants, informed consent, and non-maleficence towards participants. An information letter and consent form was provided to participants before collecting data to explain the purpose of the research and how their data will be processed clearly stating any impact for the participants or the researcher. Also, the researcher identified herself to the respondents prior to seeking their full consent. In addition, the consent of participants was verbally obtained, and consent forms signed by participants before participating in the survey. To ensure that required ethical standards are met, the study was registered with the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) to seek approval in collecting personal data. With regards to confidentiality, respondents were assured that the information given would be well protected and strictly used for academic purposes. Likewise, the institutional ethical guidelines of UIO were efficiently adhered. Thus, this study applied itself to the core principles outlined in Nardi (2018) and Bryman and Bell (2007) respectively.

4.10 Chapter Summary

From the research methodology, the study used the positivist paradigm and adopted the quantitative research approach. The study population focused on three public universities where the purposive, convenience and simple random sampling technique guided the selection of the respondents. Survey (self-administered questionnaires) was used in the data collection while the SPSS software assisted in computing the data, data analysis and drawing out conclusions.

5.0 ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter analyses the data and discusses the findings of the field data. The number of questionnaires distributed were 170, however 165 were received with (five)5 missing. The analysis is structured as follows: socio-demographical information and the research objectives. Additionally, each of the findings are graphically presented in Tables and Figures.

5.2 Analysis of Socio-Demographic Data of Respondents

The purpose of participants' demography is to provide readers an insight into the nature of the study's participants (Saunders et al., 2015). In this study, demographic information was collected on respondents' age, gender, university enrolled, course pursued and level of study. The results are presented in Table 1 and 2 respectively.

5.2.1 Analysis of respondents' age and gender

The respondents' gender were narrowed to only male and females since that is the only recognized gender in Ghana. The age distribution was categorized into two and the results of which are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Analysis of respondents' age and gender

Age (Yrs.)	No. of Respondents (N)	Percentage (%)
18-30	113	68.0
31+	52	32.0
Total	165	100.0
Gender		
Male	90	55.0
Female	75	45.0
Total	165	100.0

Author's construct (2023)

From Table 1 above, the age distribution of the respondents shows 113(68.0%) of the respondents aged between 18-30yrs whereas 52(32.0) of the respondents aged 31 years and above. This shows that the dominant age group in Ghanaian universities fall within 18-30yrs which doubles as the youthful age. This finding corroborates the Ghana 2021 Housing and Population Census report of the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS). According to the report, Ghana's population age structure is transitioning from one dominated by children (0-14years) to one dominated by young people (15-35years). The implication is that the average youth in Ghana is at least enrolled in university or has tertiary experience. It further explains that younger people between the age of (18-35) in the course of their tertiary education may have experienced one or more strike before they graduate out of HEI(Higher Education Institutions).

The gender distribution shown in Table 1 further reveals a percentage of 55.0% for male and 45.0% for females. This means more than 50% of the respondents are males, hence the voice of the current study is more masculine. Although the number of respondents are few given the total population of the individual universities and all Universities in the country, the current finding confirms a report by Sasu (2020) that the gender parity index for tertiary education has more male students than females. Although, a 10% difference may seem negligible, the percentage of female enrolment in universities is still low despite educational gender reforms and other social intervention policies targeted at influencing female tertiary enrolment. Alua, Agalga & Akamba (2022) identifies causal factors such as poor parental control, peer pressure, teenage pregnancy, early marriage and betrothal as persistent in denying the mass enrolment of females into universities. Other causal factors are observed in patriarchy, cultural influence and low recognition of women in most Ghanaian societies (Allah-Mensah, 2005). These causes should guide the enactment of relevant policies and structural reforms to remedy the situation.

5.2.2 Analysis of respondents' school and course of study

Data was gathered on the respondents' schools to ensure that every respondent belonged to any of the three public universities (UG, GIMPA and UPSA) used in this study. Also, they were

pursuing a course either in business administration, law, medicine or pharmacy. The results are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Analysis of respondents' school and course of study

University enrolled	No. of Respondents (N)	Percentage (%)
UG	68	41.0
GIMPA	47	29.0
UPSA	50	30.0
Total	165	100.0
Course of Study		
Business Administration	43	26.0
Law	42	26.0
Pharmacy	41	25.0
Medicine	39	24.0
Total	165	100.0

Author's construct (2023)

From Table 2, most of the respondents were university of Ghana students hence represented 41% of the total percentage. This is followed by University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA) with 30% and Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) with 29%. Given the percentage differences, the feedback adequately reflects the views of the three schools. Also, the same table shows that none of the course of study occupied 50% of the total percentage. However, it is obvious the majority of the students who partook in this study had business administration, law, and pharmacy backgrounds. This is represented by a total of 126 (76%) which is more than half of the overall percentage of students.

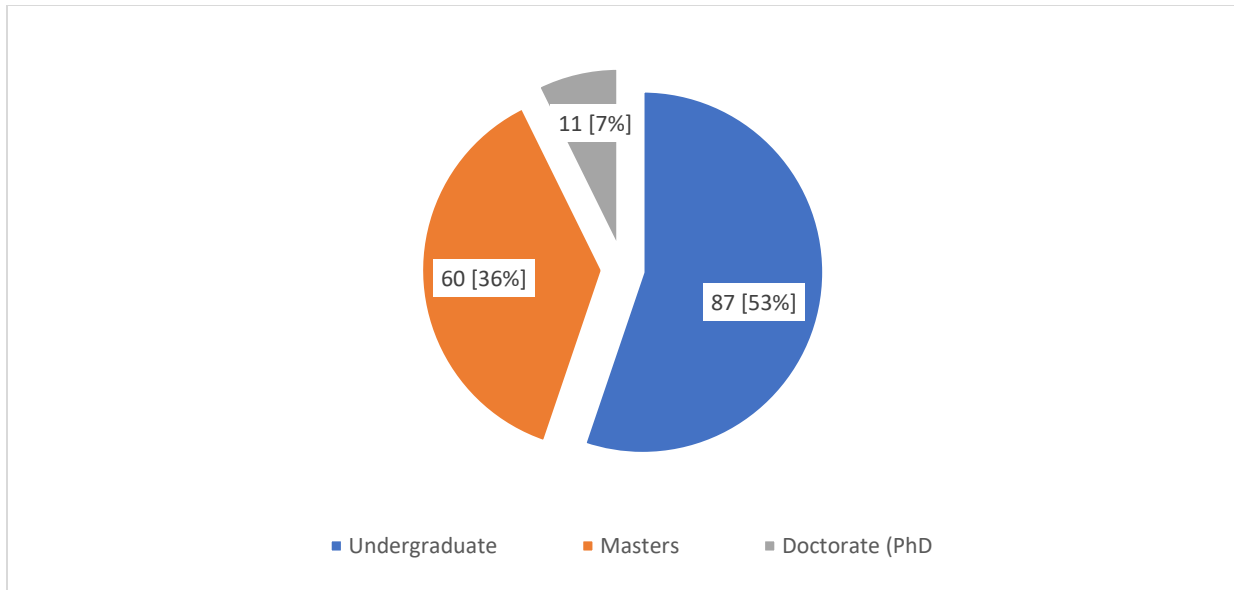
The Universities selected for the study are public universities which houses a large number of the tertiary population in Ghana. Similarly, proximity and location of the schools in the capital city was efficient to obtain data. However, a limitation to the study may be that the survey looked at students living in the capital city who may have access to some forms of coping strategies that

may be difficult to access in other remote regions where educational resources are inadequate or unavailable. Thus, the researcher understands that the study may be a voice to well-equipped, greatly resourced students who may have different perceptions and impacts of strike actions in their various universities.

Likewise, as university lifestyles differ from school to school and from department to department, the study may show an unbalanced impact level across the three(3) institutions selected and the coping mechanisms lecturers or the school as a whole may put in place to assist students. Notably, the course of study (Law, Business Administration, Medicine, Pharmacy) reflects distinct disciplines which could influence the data results. The coping strategies that may help a Law student may be ineffective to another student that belongs to any of the other three study course. A discontinuation of practicals, laboratory work, student-training/visits to firms/companies as a result of the strike in relation to students' field of study may create differing levels of impact and perception. Based on the impact levels students' experience may be severe, limited or insignificant to them.

5.2.3 Analysis of respondents' level of study

All years and level of study were represented in the sample, but the majority of respondents at the time of survey completion across the three universities were undergraduates. The level of study of the respondents included undergraduate, masters and doctorates. The results are presented in Figure 1 below.



Author's construct (2023)

Figure 1: Distribution of the students' level of study

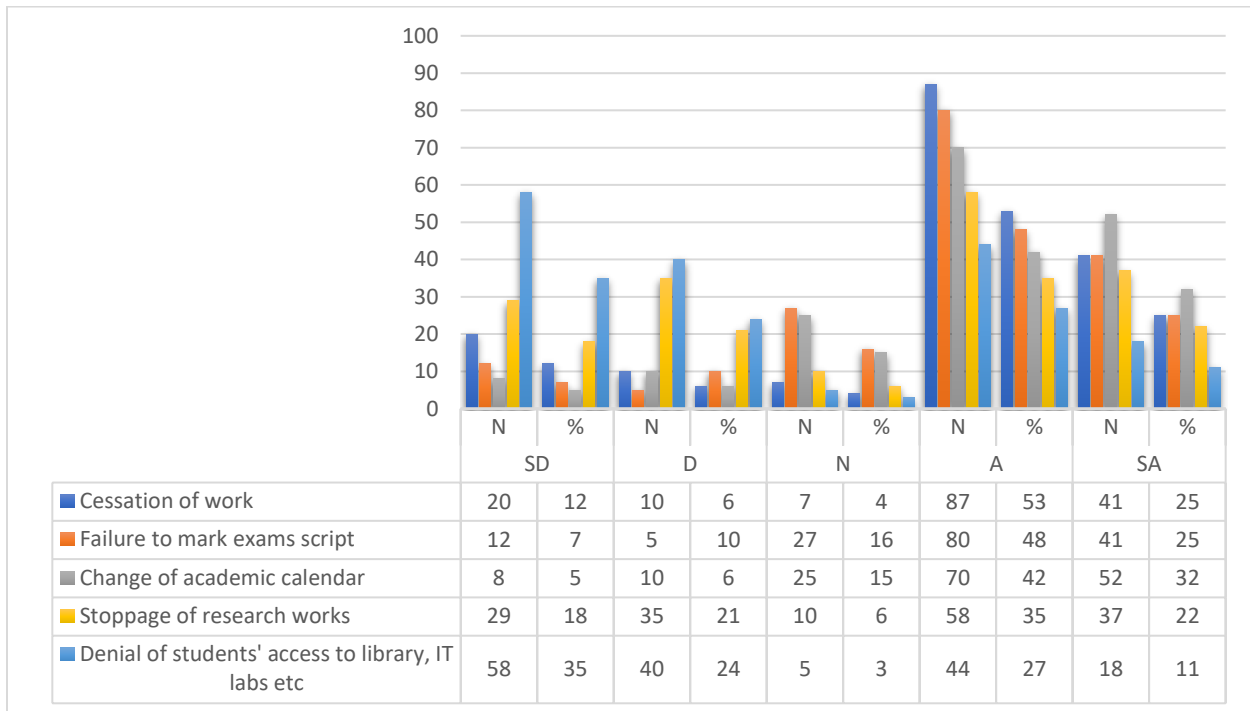
The results in Figure 1 presents undergraduates and master students as the level of study with the highest frequencies (i.e., 87 and 60) and the total percentage as 89 per cent. Thus, the views and opinions shared are from undergraduates and master students; hence provided comprehensive information on the topic. . Similarly, these group of students have classroom/lecture activities as part of their study and the presence of strike and limitation of their learning journey through classroom activities may be felt, as classroom teacher-student engagements forms part of their studies towards a successful completion. Thus, a break in the teaching-learning relationship may impact students at the master and undergraduate level as compared to doctorate students.

Doctoral studies is characterized by some measure of study independence, research projects and students at this level of study may acknowledge the impact of strikes on different level as well as adopting different coping strategies that helps to minimize the level of impact.

5.3 Perception of Students on University Strike Actions in Ghana

The first objective of the study is to understand the perception of university students on strike actions in public universities. Multiple measures assessed the perception of students on university lecturers strike in public universities. Seven item statement were used to measure

students' perceptions of strike which were summarized as cessation of work, failure to mark exams script, change of academic calendar, stoppage of research work, inaccessibility to IT resources, libraries. Rated on a five-point Likert-type scale, higher scores indicated agreement with the item statement and lower scores indicated disagreement. The feedback revealed different ways by which strike actions in universities are perceived by the students. A summary of the results is presented in Figure 2 below.



Author's construct (2023)

Figure 2: Perception of Students on University Strike Actions in Ghana

According to the distribution in Figure 2, eighty-seven(87) representing 53.0% of the respondents perceive university strike actions as lecturers ceasing to report to work to carry out their teaching responsibility whereas 41(25.0%) strongly agreed. Conversely, 10(6.0%) of the respondents disagreed with this statement whereas 20(12.0%) strongly disagreed. However, 7(4.0%) of the respondents remain neutral. In sum, a total of 128(78.0%) of the respondents perceive university strike actions as lecturers ceasing to report to work to carry out their teaching responsibility whereas 30(18.0%) disagreed and 7(4.0%) remained neutral. From the study, some students remained neutral or strongly disagreed with strike actions as lecturers ceasing to report to work. This may explain the type of strike actions faculty member engage in. Some common

types of strike such as sit-down strikes and sympathy strike may explain such responses. The literature section explains several types of strikes with their characteristics. From the literature, strike in Ghanaian HEIs is characterized by absence or cessation of work and the most common types of strike in HEIs include economic or general strikes. From the study, several respondents did not perceive strike as the cessation of work. Therefore, it would have been interesting to identify what activities lecturers perform in schools or course of study when there is a strike. Future researchers using qualitative research method can study to gain deeper insights to further understand students perception on strike. A further study using focus groups or interview sessions may explain these responses. Thus, more than 70% of public university students in Ghana hold the perception that strike actions in universities is when lecturers cease to report to school to carry out their teaching responsibilities. This finding coincides with Edinyang and Ubi (2013) whose definition of strike actions incorporated cessation of work by employees or deliberate stoppage of work by employees to exert influence on their employers to meet their demands.

The distribution further shows that 80(48.0%) of the respondents perceive strike actions in universities as failure of lecturers to mark examination script while 41(25.0%) strongly agreed. On the other hand, 5(10.0%) of the respondents disagreed with this statement whereas 12(7.0%) strongly disagreed. However, 27(16.0%) of the respondents remained neutral to this statement. In sum, 121(73.0%) of the respondents perceive strike actions in universities as failure of lecturers to mark examination scripts while 17(10.0%) disagree and 27(16.0%) remain neutral. Therefore, more than 70% of the public university students in Ghana perceive strike actions in universities as failure of lecturers to mark examination script. This result affirms the findings by Abiwu (2016) that strike actions in universities stops lecturers from carrying out their responsibilities in the classroom including marking examination papers, teaching and among others.

Again, the analysis shows out of the 165 respondents, 70(42.0%) of them perceive strike actions in universities as unexpected changes in academic calendar whereas 52(32.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed. On the contrary, 10(6.0%) of the respondents disagree while 8(5.0%) strongly disagree. But 25(15.0%) of the respondents remain neutral. In general, the

analysis shows 122(74.0%) of the students perceive university strike actions as unexpected disruptions in the academic calendar whereas 18(11.0%) of them disagree and 25(15.0%) remain neutral. Thus, over 70% of the public university students in Ghana consider strike actions in their universities as unexpected disruptions in the academic calendar of their schools. This finding upholds Kazeem and Ige (2010) and Wojuade (2019) respectively. They found that strike actions in universities disrupts academic calendar prolonging the duration of the course program of the students. In the works of Offem et al. (2018), they realised that such disruptions in academic program causes stress to students which can demotivates them in the long run.

Figure 2 further shows 58(35.0%) of the respondents perceive university strike actions as the deliberate stoppage of research works by lecturers while 37(22.0%) of them strongly agreed. However, 35(21.0%) of the respondents disagreed and 29(18.0%) strongly disagreed leaving 10(6.0%) of the respondents who were not sure. In sum, 95(58.0%) of the respondents perceive strike actions in universities as the deliberate stoppage of research works by lecturers, whereas 64(39.0%) disagree and 10(6.0%) remain neutral. So, the analysis reveals over 50% of the students hold the perception that strike actions in universities is the deliberate stoppage of research works by lecturers. The current results find support in Seniwoliba (2014) who found one of the causes of strike actions as lecturers being refused their book and research allowance.

Lastly, the results show 44(27.0%) of the respondents perceive strike actions in universities as the denial of students' access to library, IT labs and other academic resources while 18(11.0%) strongly agree. On the contrary, 40(24.0%) of the respondents disagreed whereas 58(35.0%) strongly disagreed. However, 5(3.0%) of them remain neutral. The total analysis reveals that 62(38.0%) perceive strike actions in universities as the denial of students' access to library, IT labs and other academic resources while 98(59.0%) of them disagree and 5(3.0%) are not sure. Therefore, more than 50% of the students disapprove of the perception that strike actions in universities deny students access to library, IT labs and other academic resources. This finding contradicts Asante (2015) who opined that strike actions closes universities, sometimes for months, denying students' access to academic resources. During the preliminary stages of strikes, students may resolve to access library facilities or IT resources to study. These resource

centres remain unclosed or shut down during any type of strike actions. However, when lasting resolution is not achieved, there may be reduced opening hours, staff capacity as well as contact hours. Other centres like the libraries are not shut down as employees of these facilities constitute non-teaching staff. Meanwhile, a total closure of university library happens as a result of a different form of strike actions by library employees.

5.4 Influence of Strike Actions on Public University Students in Ghana

The influence of strike actions on the respondents were analysed and categorized into emotional/psychological impacts, academic impacts and economic impacts. The feedback is presented in Figure 3, 4, and 5 respectively.

5.4.1 Analysis of the emotional/psychological impacts of strike actions on public university students in Ghana

The emotional/psychological impacts of strike actions on the respondents were assessed using a five-point Likert scale. Students indicated their level of agreement with the scale items and the feedback of the analysis displayed in Figure 3. However, a reliability test was first conducted using the SPSS (version 25) to assess the internal consistency of the variables before employing them in the analyses. The feedback is shown in Table 3 below.

The calculations for Cronbach alpha measure the internal consistency or reliability of a set of survey items (Arkkelin, 2014). In other words, it helps to determine whether the statements or scale items measuring “economic/psychological impacts of strike actions in public universities” is indeed valid.

The formula for calculating Cronbach alpha or the alpha score is given as: $\alpha = \frac{N*\bar{c}}{\bar{v} + (N-1)*\bar{c}}$

Where: N = number of items

\bar{c} = mean covariance within items

\bar{v} = mean item variance

The mean covariance is calculated using the formula: $Cov(x, y) = \frac{\sum(X_i - \bar{X})(Y_i - \bar{Y})}{N-1}$

Where: X_i = data value of x

Y_i = data value of y

\bar{X} = mean of x

\bar{Y} = mean of y

The covariance measures the direction of the relationship between two variables (Saunders et al., 2015). In other words, it defines the changes between two variables such that a change in one variable is equal to a change in another variable. The calculations for Cronbach alpha involve taking the average covariance and dividing it by the average total variance (Koonce, 2014). Therefore, a high alpha value requires the covariance to be high relative to the item variance. The relationships between the questions or scale items account for most of the overall variability. Also, the number of items or variables is a factor in determining the value of the Cronbach alpha. According to Arkkelin (2014), the alpha score tends to increase as the variables increases.

Table 3: Reliability analysis for emotional/psychological impacts of strike actions in public universities in Ghana

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.837	0.815	5

Author's construct (2023)

From Table 3 above, the Cronbach alpha value is given as 0.837 for the five variables measuring “emotional/psychological impacts of strike actions in public universities”. As stated by Arkkelin (2014), the minimum acceptable value for Cronbach alpha is 0.7 while the maximum acceptable value is 0.9. Therefore, an alpha score of **0.837** shows a better consistency of the variables. Given the reliability of the data, the researcher proceeded to analyse the responses of the participants; the outcome of which is shown in Figure 3 below.

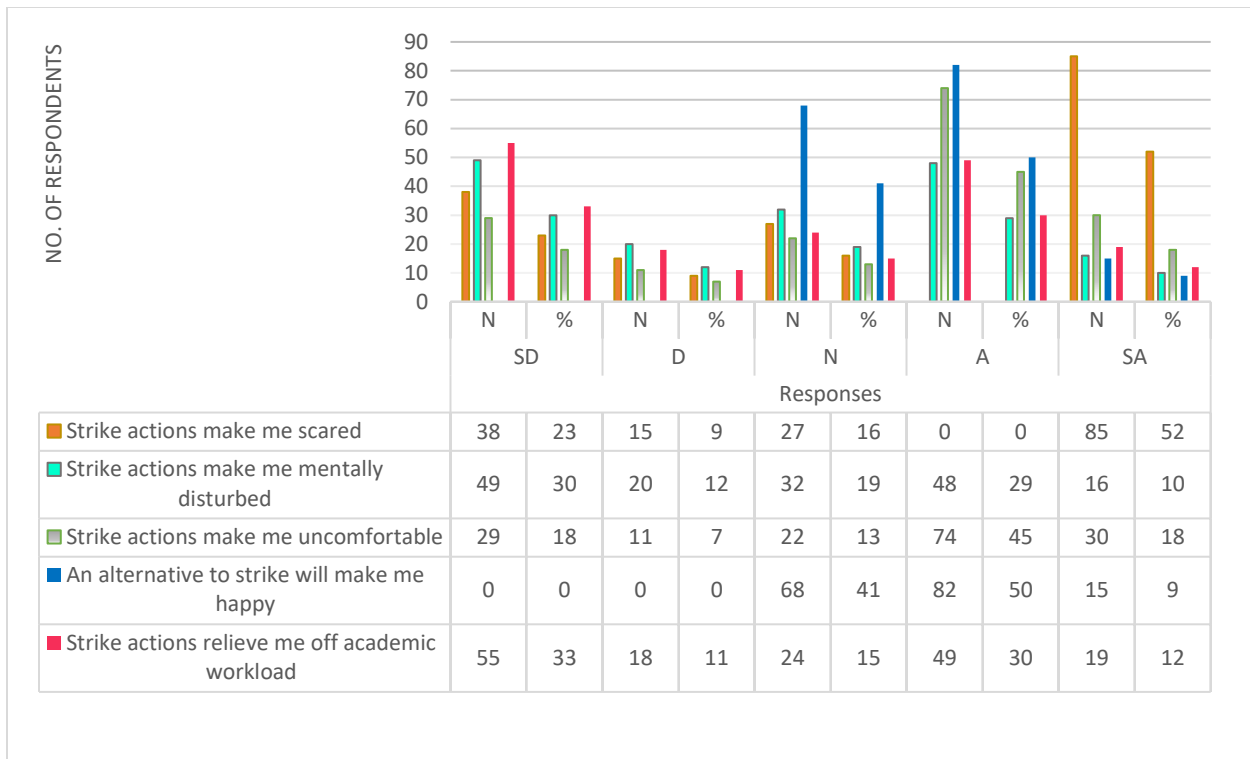


Figure 3: Emotional/Psychological impacts of strike actions on public university students

Author's construct (2023)

The analysis in Figure 3 above informs that 85(52.0%) of the respondents strongly agree with the statement that they are scared when they hear or read about strike actions in their schools. Conversely, 15(9.0%) disagree with this statement and 38(23.0%) strongly disagree. However, 27(16.0%) of them remain neutral. In sum, 85(52.0%) of the respondents agree with the statement that they are scared when they hear or read about strike actions in their schools whereas 53(32.0%) of them disagree and 27(16.0%) remain neutral. So, the analysis reveals over 50% of the students feel scared when they hear or read about strike actions in their schools. This finding corroborates Odubela (2012) that strike actions in schools are emotionally traumatizing to students.

Also, the same distribution shows 48(29.0%) of the respondents agree with the statement that they get mentally disturbed when they read or hear about strike actions in their school whereas

16(10.0%) of them strongly agree. On the contrary, 20(12.0%) of the respondents disagree with this statement and 49(30.0%) of them strongly disagree. However, 32(19.0%) were neutral. Thus, the total computation shows 64(39.0%) agree with the statement that they are mentally disturbed when they hear or read about strike actions in their school while 69(42.0%) of them disagree with the statement and 32(19.0%) are unsure. In effect, more than 40% of the students disapprove of the statement that they feel mentally disturbed when they read or hear about strike actions in their school. However, there is an insignificant difference between those who feel mentally disturbed and those who do not. The results here further support Odubela (2012) who observed that strike actions in school breeds frustration, disappointments and psychological trauma which impinges the mental stability of the students.

Again, the results show 74(45.0%) of the respondents agree with the statement that “they feel uncomfortable when they are informed about strike actions in their school” whereas 30(18.0%) of them strongly agree. On the contrary, 11(7.0%) of the respondents disagree with this statement and 29(17.0%) of them strongly disagree. However, 22(13.0%) were neutral. In sum, 104(63.0%) of the respondents agree with the statement that they feel uncomfortable when they are informed about strike actions in their school whereas 40(24.0%) of them disagree and 22(13.0%) remain neutral. This means the majority of the students (63.0%) feel uncomfortable when they are informed about strike actions in their schools. The result supports Albar and Onye (2016) and Sarpong et al. (2022) who discovered that the prolonged school calendar caused by strikes is discomfoting to students since they are rushed through the semester. In the end, they become mere certificate seekers and not knowledge seekers.

The distribution revealed further that 82(50.0%) of the respondents agree with the statement that an alternative to strike actions in their schools will make them happy while 15(9.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed. Conversely, 68(41.0%) of the respondents remained neutral to this statement. Generally, 97(59.0%) of the respondents agree that an alternative to strike actions in their schools will make them happy whereas 68(41.0%) of them remained neutral. This means over 50% of the students will be happy if lecturers adopt an alternative to strike actions in venting their grievances. From the high response generated from participants who remained

neutral to this item statement. It can be explained that as students become a party to the strike actions, they are limited in the resolution process between the striking party (lecturers) and the employer (government). Thus, the students' have no direct influence either through recommendations or addressing the challenges of staff in using another alternative to vent their grievances. The current finding supports Odeku (2014) and Gyamfi (2011) who suggested collective bargaining as an alternative to strike actions in schools.

On the last statement in assessing the emotional/psychological impact of strike actions on the students, the work of Albas & Albas (2000) and Wickens et al. (2019) were adopted in the survey. These authors identified similar emotional responses. Wickens et al. (2019, p. 435) used the term *apathy* to measure the item "Strike actions relieve me off academic workload". According to figure 3, 49(30.0%) of the respondents agree strike actions relieve them from academic workload whereas 19(12.0%) strongly agree. On the other hand, 18(11.0%) of the respondents disagreed while 55(33.0%) strongly disagreed. However, 24(15.0%) are not sure. The total analysis shows 68(41.0%) of the respondents agree strike actions relieve them from their academic workloads while 73(44.0%) of them disagree and 24(15.0%) remain neutral. In effect, 41% of the students see strike actions in their schools as an opportunity to relieve them of their academic workload whereas a good number of them do not. This finding supports Seniwoliba (2013) and Nweke (2015) but disagrees with the findings of Asante (2015) who found strike actions as "free periods" for students to be relieved off their academic workloads and engage in other extra-curricular activities.

5.4.2 Academic impacts of strike actions on public university students in Ghana

The distribution in Figure 4 below shows the feedback of tertiary students on the academic impacts of strike actions in Ghana. Again, to assess the internal validity of the statements, a reliability test was conducted on the variables. The results are shown in Table 4 below.

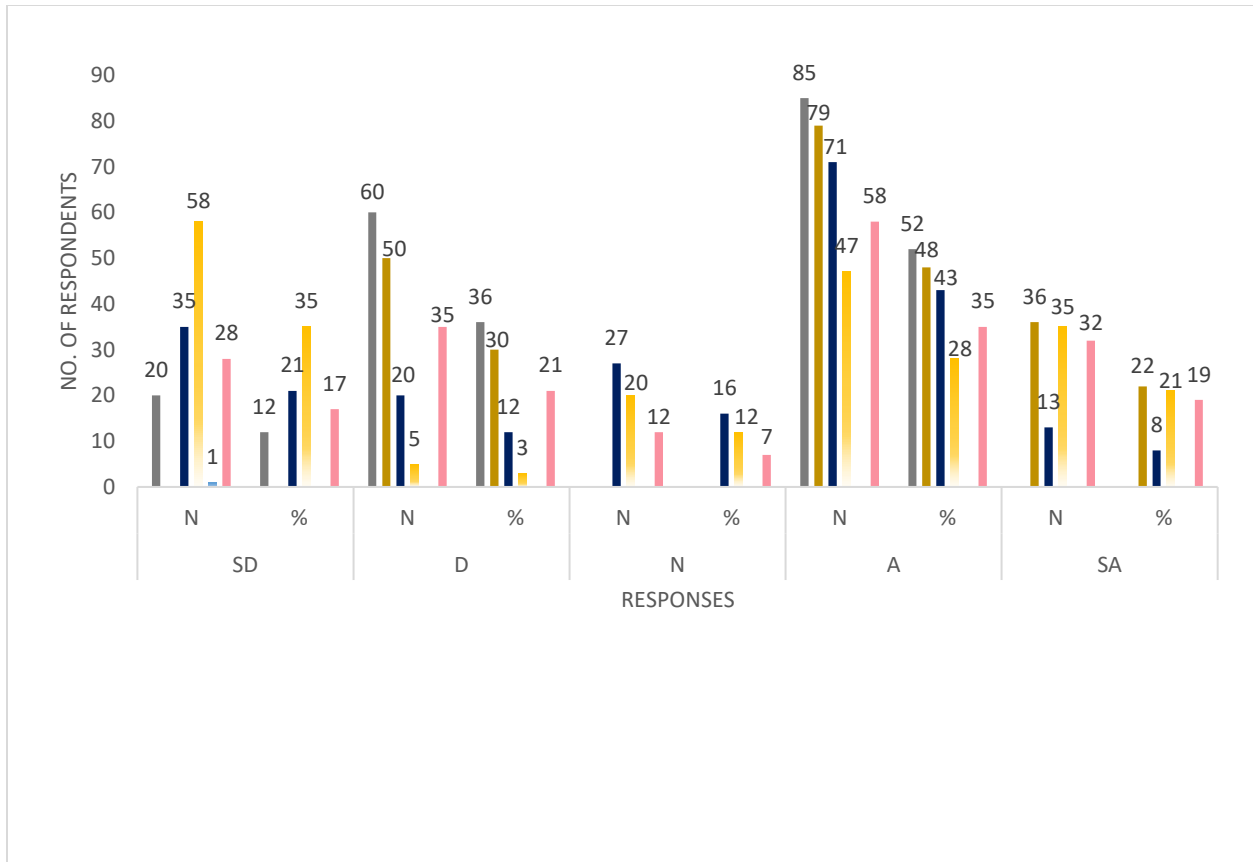
Table 4: Reliability analysis for academic impacts of strike actions in public universities in Ghana

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.812	0.795	5

Author's construct (2023)

The Cronbach alpha in Table 4 also shows a value of 0.812 for the variables measuring “academic impact of strike actions in public universities”. As established earlier under Table 4, the minimum acceptable value for Cronbach alpha is 0.7 while the maximum acceptable value is 0.9 (Arkkelin 2014). Therefore, an alpha score of **0.812** shows a better reliability of the variables. Having proved the consistency test, the author proceeded to analyse the academic impacts of strike actions on the students.

The results as shown in Figure 4 below informs that out of the 165 respondents who answered to this question, 85(52.0%) of them agree they have poor grades during strike actions in their schools. Conversely, 60(36.0%) of the respondents disagree and 20(12.0%) strongly agree.



Author's construct (2023)

Figure 4: Analysis of the academic impacts of strike actions on public university students

In sum, 85(52.0%) of the respondents agree that their grades are poor during strike actions in their schools while 80(48.0%) of them disagree. Therefore, more than 50% of the students agree that strike actions affect their grades. This finding supports Offem et al. (2018) and Abiwu (2016) as discussed in the literature. Several scholars have noted the negative impacts of strikes on students in relation to their academic work and student performance. Notably, lower grades were reported right after strike actions as a result of a change in student learning patterns experienced during strikes.

The distribution in Figure 4 above also informs that 79(48.0%) of the respondents agree that they do not understand their course materials without guidance from their lecturer's during strike

actions in their schools, whereas 36(22.0%) strongly agree. Conversely, 50(30.0%) of the respondents disagree. In sum, 115(70.0%) of the respondents agree that they do not understand their course materials without guidance from their lecturer's during strike actions while 50(30.0%) disagree. Therefore, 70% of the students hold the perception that strike actions affect their academic life because they are unable to understand their course materials without guidance from their lecturers. This finding buttresses Eckson (2017) who equally found that incessant strikes hinder the academic performance of students.

Again, the analysis revealed that 71(43.0%) of the respondents agree that their assignments and project works are not timely reviewed and marked during strike actions in their school whereas 13(8.0%) of them strongly agree. On the contrary, 20(12.0%) of the respondents disagree with this statement while 35(21.0%) strongly disagree. However, 27(16.0%) of the respondents are not sure. In general, 84(51.0%) of the respondents agree their assignments and project works are not timely reviewed and marked during strike actions in their school whereas 55(33.0%) of them disagree and 27(16.0%) of them remain neutral. Thus, 51% of the students share in the opinion that strike actions affect them academically since their project works and assignments are not timely reviewed and marked. This finding coincides with Wojuade (2019) who opined that students bear the worst brunt of university strike actions which mainly affects their academics.

The distribution in Figure 4 further revealed 47(28.0%) of the respondents agree that they experience poor concentration and focus on studies during strike actions in their school whereas 35(21.0%) of them strongly agree. On the contrary, 5(3.0%) of the respondents disagree with this statement while 58(35.0%) strongly disagree. However, 20(12.0%) of the respondents are not sure. In general, 82(50.0%) of the respondents agree they experience poor concentration and focus on studies during strike actions in their school whereas 63(38.0%) of them disagree and 20(12.0%) of them are not sure. Thus, 50% of the students share in the opinion that they experience poor concentration and focus on studies during strike actions in their school. This finding corroborates that of Sarpong et al. (2022) in the literature.

Lastly, the distribution informs that 58(35.0%) of the respondents agree that they are able to catch-up with their notes and readings during strike actions in their schools whereas 32(19.0%) strongly agree. Conversely, 35(21.0%) of the respondents disagree and 28(17.0%) strongly disagree. However, 12(7.0%) remain neutral. In sum, 90(55.0%) of the respondents agree that they are able to catch-up with their notes and readings during strike actions in their schools while 63(38.0%) disagree and 12(7.0%) remain neutral. Therefore, more than 50% of the students hold the perception that strike actions in their schools help them to catch-up with their notes and readings. This finding contradicts Sarpong et al. (2022); Wojuade, (2019); Asante (2015) whose research outcomes portrayed only the negative effects of strike actions on students in universities. Thus, it aligns with Wickens et al. (2019) who stated that students also noted a positive impacts in their academic work as they recorded higher grades due to the break in studies and their ability to catch up on lost periods and notes

5.4.3 Economic Impacts of Strike Actions on Public University Students in Ghana

The economic impacts of strike actions were analysed taking into consideration four item statements. The respondents' feedback was analysed accordingly. However, a reliability analysis was undertaken to assess the validity of the statements in measuring economic impacts of strike actions on public university students. The results are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Reliability analysis of the economic impacts of strike actions on public universities in Ghana

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.753	0.733	4

Author's construct (2023)

Table 5 provides for the reliability analysis of the four statements measuring "economic impacts of strike actions on public universities". The value of the Cronbach alpha determines the reliability level of the items. From the table, the Cronbach alpha is **0.753**. As aforementioned, the minimum acceptable value for Cronbach alpha falls within the minimum 0.7 and the maximum

0.9 (Arkkelin, 2014). Therefore, an alpha score of 0.753 shows a good consistency between the four variables stated in the survey.

Given the reliability of the data, the author assessed the responses of the participants on the economic impacts of strike actions on public university students in Ghana. Figure 5 presents the findings.

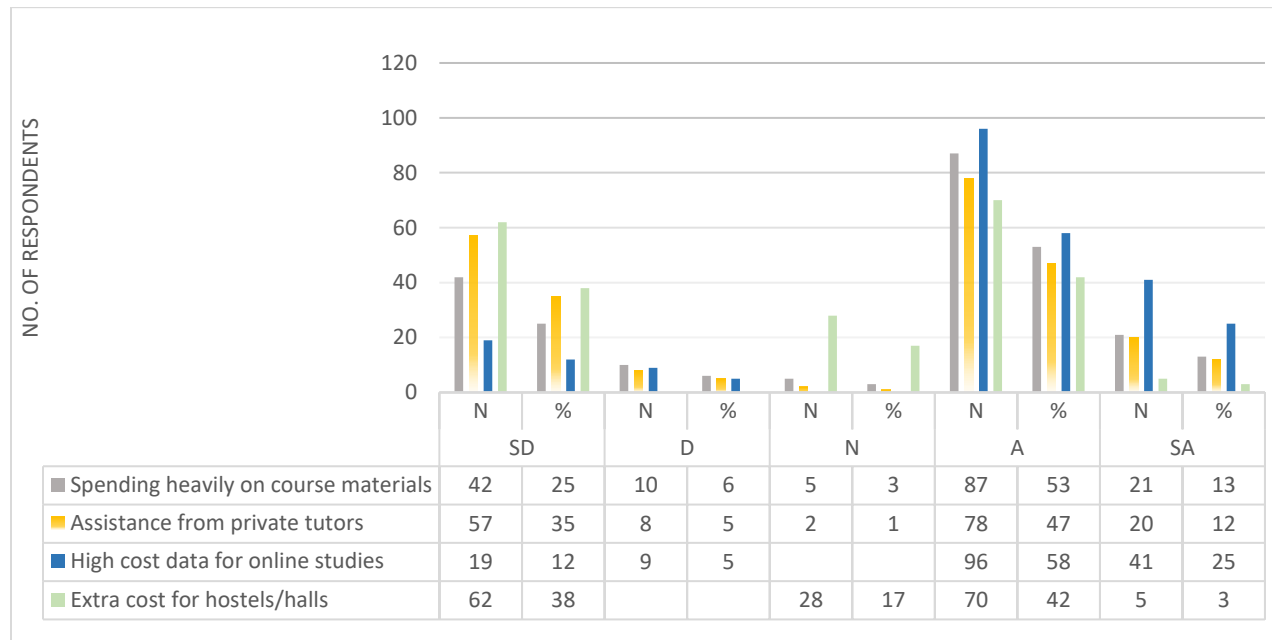


Figure 5: Analysis of the economic impacts of strike actions on public university students

Author’s construct (2023)

The distribution in Figure 5 shows that out of the 165 respondents who answered the questionnaire, 87(53.0%) of them agree that their inability to access the library during strike actions makes them spend heavily on books in their schools, while 21(13.0%) strongly agree. On the other hand, 10(6.0%) of the respondents disagree with this statement while 42(25.0%) of them strongly disagree. However, 5(3.0%) of the participants remain neutral. The total computation shows 108(65.0%) of the respondents agree that their inability to access the library during strike actions makes them spend heavily on books in their schools, while 52(32.0%) of them disagree and 5(3.0%) remain neutral. Thus, more than 60% of the students share the

opinion that their inability to access the library during strike actions make them spend heavily on books in their schools. This finding supports Wojuade (2019) who identified increase in financial expenses as one of the effects of strike actions on students.

Again, the analysis informs that 78(47.0%) of the respondents agree they contract the services of a private tutor to assist them in their studies during strike actions whereas 20(12.0%) of them strongly agree. On the contrary, 8(5.0%) of the respondents disagree with this statement while 57(35.0%) strongly disagree. However, 2(1.0%) of the respondents are not sure. In general, 98(59.0%) of the respondents agree they contract the services of a private tutor to assist them in their studies during strike actions whereas 65(39.0%) of them disagree and 2(1.0%) of them are not sure. Thus, over 50% of the students share in the opinion that strike actions causes them to contract the services of a private tutor to assist them in their studies. This finding corresponds to earlier research by Wickens et al. (2006) that students' financial situations worsen during strike actions since many rely on private tutorship and other paid teaching services to facilitate their studies.

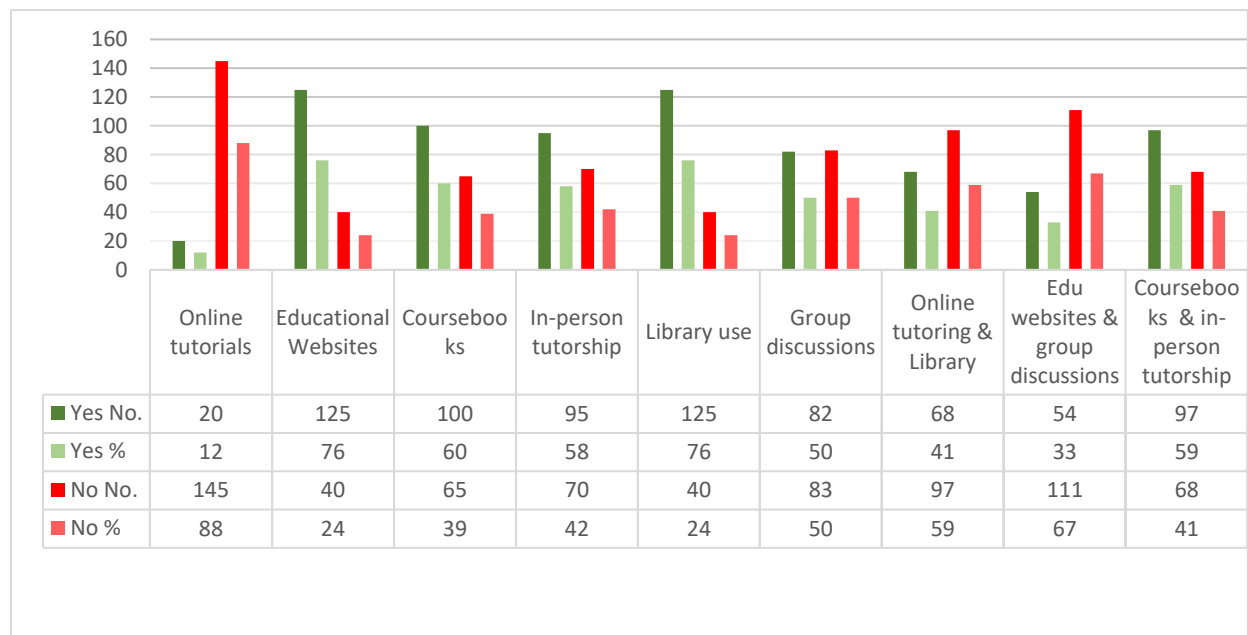
The distribution in Figure 5 above further shows 96(58.0%) of the respondents agree that they spend heavily on data to access relevant study materials during strike actions in their school whereas 41(25.0%) of them strongly agree. On the contrary, 9(5.0%) of the respondents disagree with this statement while 19(12.0%) strongly disagree. In sum, 137(83.0%) of the respondents agree they spend heavily on data to access relevant study materials during strike actions in their school whereas 28(17.0%) of them disagree. Therefore, the analysis informs that over 80% of the students hold the view that strike actions cause them to spend much money on data to access relevant study materials. Similarly, this finding supports Wojuade (2019).

Lastly, the distribution shows 70(42.0%) of the respondents agree they pay extra cost to secure hostels/halls for their project work and assignments during strike actions whereas 5(3.0%) strongly agree. Conversely, 62(38.0%) of the respondents strongly disagree and 28(17.0%) remain neutral. In sum, 75(45.0%) of the respondents agree they pay extra cost to secure

hostels/halls for their project work and assignments during strike actions while 62(38.0%) disagree and 28(17.0%) remain neutral. Thus, over 40% of the students pay extra costs to secure hostels/halls for their project work and assignments during strike actions. This finding coincides with Abiwu (2016) and Offem et al. (2018) respectively. In a similar study, Wickens et al. (2019) argue that students incurred huge financial burdens during strike in Canada as they had to extend hostel fees, cancel and rebook flights especially among international students.

5.4 Academic Coping Strategies of Students During Strike Actions in Public Universities in Ghana

The last objective focused on identifying the coping strategies of students during strike actions in their schools. The nature of the question in the survey involved a multiple response with two nominal variables (Yes/No). The respondents were allowed to tick as many as applies to them. The data analysis on the academic coping strategies of the students provided the information in Figure 6 below.



Authors construct 2023

Figure 6: Analysis of the academic coping strategies of students during strike actions in public universities

From the distribution, 20(12.0%) of the respondents indicated they use online tutoring as their academic coping strategy during strike actions in their school while 145(88.0%) do not. Also, 125(76.0%) of the respondents rely on educational websites for their studies during strike actions while 40(24) do not. This is followed by 100(60.0%) of the respondents who started buying coursebooks and engaging in private studies as their academic coping strategy. On the other hand, 65(39.0%) of them opined otherwise. The distribution also showed 95(58.0%) of the respondents pay for extra in-person tutorship to facilitate their studies during strike actions while 70(42.0%) do not. On the extensive usage of the library as an academic coping strategy, 125(76.0%) of the respondents were positive to using this mechanism during strike actions while 40(24.0%) responded No. Furthermore, 82(50.0%) of the respondents shared that they participate in group discussions to facilitate their studies whereas 83(50.0%) of them stated otherwise. The distribution also reveals 68(41.0%) of the respondents combine online tutorials and extensive use of library in easing their studies during strike actions while 97(59.0%) do not. In addition, 54(33.0%) of the respondents used both educational websites and group discussions while 111(67.0%) did not. Lastly, ninety-seven(97) representing 59.0% of the respondents, rely on their coursebooks and in-person tutorship to cope academically during strike actions in their schools but 68(41.0%) do not.

From the analysis, the key academic coping strategies by public university students during strike actions in Ghana are reliance on educational websites, coursebooks and their school's libraries. These findings challenge Chijioke (2013); Asante (2015) and Ampofo et al. (2022) who found that during strike actions educational facilities such as libraries are abandoned by students. However, the evidence from this study shows over 70% of the students resort to extensive use of libraries during strike actions. Similarly, the findings criticize Imeokparia and Ediagbonya (2013) as well as Offem et al. (2018) who found that strike actions in the educational sector demotivate students to learn.

6.0 Chapter Summary

The objectives of the study were each assessed using the field data and relying on the SPSS. The results are presented using tables, simple percentages and figures. Most of the findings

substantiated that of earlier scholars in the literature while a few contradicted, making them susceptible to further studies by existing and future researchers. Specifically, the majority of the students perceive strike actions as lecturers ceasing to report to work to carry out their teaching responsibility; failure of lecturers to mark examination script; and unexpected changes in academic calendar. Out of the three major impacts of strike actions on the students which are psychological, emotional and academic, the findings showed that they are mostly affected academically and economically. In order to make the best out of their academics, the students' major coping strategies during strike actions are reliance on educational websites, buying coursebooks and extensive use of their schools' libraries.

6.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Chapter Summary

The chapter summarizes the findings of the data analysis and concludes on the current research. Based on the findings, the relevant recommendations are suggested accordingly. Also, the study's limitations and road map for future research are discussed.

6.2 Summary of Findings

The summary of the findings as gleaned from assessing the research objectives computationally have been presented below.

6.2.1 Perception of University Students on Strike Actions in Ghana

The first objective explored the perception of students on strike actions in their various universities. The analysis presented interesting findings which were graphically presented using Figures. It is relevant to know that the perception of the students was in tandem with most of the scholarly works discussed in the literature. The analysis of the perception of university students on strike actions revealed the following:

- I. Seventy eight percent of public university students in Ghana hold the perception that strike actions in universities is when lecturers cease to report to school to carry out their teaching responsibilities.
- II. Seventy three percent of the public university students in Ghana perceive strike actions in universities as failure of lecturers to mark examination script.
- III. Seventy four percent of the public university students in Ghana consider strike actions in their universities as unexpected disruptions in the academic calendar of their schools.
- IV. Fifty eight percent of the students hold the perception that strike actions in universities is the deliberate stoppage of research works by lecturers.
- V. Fifty nine percent of the students disapprove of the statement that strike actions in universities deny students access to library, IT labs and other academic resources.

6.2.2 Analysis of the influence of strike actions on public university students in Ghana

The second objective of the study was assessed statistically to identify the impacts of strike actions on public university students in Ghana. The results showed three categories of impacts (emotional/psychological, academic and economic). **On the emotional/psychological impacts, the following findings were deduced:**

- I. Fifty-two percent of the students feel scared when they hear or read about strike actions in their schools.
- II. Forty-two percent of the students disapproved of the statement that they are mentally disturbed when they hear or read about strike actions in their schools.
- III. Sixty three percent of the students feel uncomfortable when they are informed about strike actions in their schools.
- IV. Fifty nine percent of the students approve that an alternative to strike actions will make them happy.
- V. Forty four percent of the students disapprove of the statement that they are relieved of academic workload during strike actions in their schools.

On academic impacts, the summary of the findings shows:

- VI. Fifty-two percent of the students agree that strike actions affect their grades.
- VII. Seventy percent of the students hold the perception that strike actions affect their academic life because they are unable to understand their course materials without guidance from their lecturers.
- VIII. Fifty one percent of the students share in the opinion that strike actions affect them academically since their project works and assignments are not timely reviewed and marked.
- IX. Fifty percent of the students share in the opinion that they experience poor concentration and focus on studies during strike actions in their school.
- X. Fifty five percent of the students hold the perception that strike actions in their schools help them to catch up with their notes and readings.

On the economic impacts of strike actions on the students, the findings revealed that:

- I. Sixty-five percent of the students share the opinion that their inability to access the library during strike actions make them spend heavily on books.
- II. Fifty nine percent of the students share in the opinion that strike actions causes them to contract the services of a private tutor to assist them in their studies
- III. Eighty three percent of the students hold the view that strike actions cause them to spend much money on data to access relevant study materials
- IV. Forty five percent of the students pay extra costs to secure hostels/halls for their project work and assignments during strike actions

6.2.3 Analysis of the academic coping strategies of students during strike actions in public universities

Establishing that strike actions have impact on the students' academics, the author sought the strategies of students in coping with the situation. Below is a summary of how the students academically cope with strike actions in their schools.

- I. Seventy six percent of the students attested to using the library extensively during strike actions in their schools.
- II. Eighty eight percent of the students do not resort to online tutorials during strike actions in their schools.
- III. Seventy six percent of the students rely on educational websites for their studies during strike actions in their schools.
- IV. Sixty percent of the students buy coursebooks and engage in private studies as a means of coping with their academic work during strike actions.
- V. Fifty nine percent of the students rely on both coursebooks and in-person tutorship in coping academically during strike actions.
- VI. Fifty eight percent of the students pay for extra in-person tutorship to facilitate their studies during strike actions.
- VII. Fifty percent of the students participate in group discussions to facilitate their studies during strike actions in their schools.

6.3 Conclusion of the study

Nibbing strike actions in the bud is significant to improving the general academic welfare of students hence, the findings of the current study are notable to University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG), Tertiary Educational Workers Union (TEWU), Ministry of Education (MoE), private universities, governmental bodies and other educational stakeholders. In the light of Ghana's goal towards accelerated industrial growth (Offem et al., 2018; Bawakyillenuo et al., 2013) the quest of adroit human resource base remains imperative. This therefore necessitates that tertiary education provides graduates with state-of-the-art knowledge and skills to meet the demands of firms and industries. With the series of strike actions in the country, these dreams may be curtailed since lecturers have a role to play. Therefore, just as state agencies, private and public sector organisations, ministries and government have expressed interest on the need to make tertiary institutions more relevant to the development of the country, attention must equally be given to address the grievances and challenges of tertiary workers in order to keep them in their respective schools to carry out their responsibilities to students.

The evidence from the findings informs that strike actions persist in public universities in Ghana with drastic effects on students who become a party to the striking groups. A peek into the students' mind disclosed that during strike actions, there are incidences of lecturers failing to report to school to carry out their teaching responsibilities and marking of examination scripts and assignments. Also, there are unexpected disruptions in the school's calendar as well as a halt in academic research. Nonetheless, students are allowed access to the libraries, IT centres and usage of other academic resources. These findings coincided with (Offem et al., 2018; Abiwu, 2016; Asante, 2015; Odeku, 2014; Ige Akindele, 2014; Seniwoliba, 2013; Gyamfi, 2011) in the literature.

Strike actions affect the students psychologically, academically and economically; however, the weight of the impact is felt in their academics and finances. Given these impacts on the students, they resort to extensive use of the library, relying on educational websites, purchasing of coursebooks and engaging in private studies to aid their academics. Others also sign up for private tutorship and join group studies and discussions. Interestingly, the students' extensive use

of the library challenged the findings of (Abiwu, 2016; Asante, 2015; Gyamfi, 2011) who highlighted that students are denied access and usage of academic resources during strike actions.

6.4 Recommendations of the study

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher proposes the following tactics to mitigating strike actions and its accompanying impacts on the students:

1. Effective Payment System for Employees

To address strike actions in public universities, the government must ensure that lecturers are not only given adequate wages and salaries but have in place an effective payment system for its employees. An effective payment system will stop unnecessary delays and ensure consistency in salary and wage payment. This proposal alludes to (Abiwu, 2016; Ige Akindele, 2014; Seniwoliba, 2013; Gyamfi 2011). For instance, Abiwu (2016) proposed the need for adequate wages and salaries in reducing strikes in Ghanaian public universities. Ige Akindele (2014) also found adequate wages and salaries as significant in addressing the most pressing issues of strike actions and recommends government to increase the remuneration of workers. Gyamfi (2011) earlier research identified adequate salaries and wages as pivotal to reducing strike actions in Ghana. Thus, putting in place an effective payment system for tertiary workers or employees will minimize the occurrence of strikes. It is one thing to ensure adequate payment of employees and another to have an effective payment system that works against delays and other contingencies.

2. Improvement in working conditions

For a sustainable quality tertiary education and general welfare of lecturers, working conditions of tertiary institutions is highly indispensable. Better working conditions may include equipped modern offices, rest periods, hours of work, work schedules, incentives and bonuses, physical and mental demands among others. This study recommends that the government takes concrete steps to improve the working conditions of universities in Ghana since this will not only prevent strike actions among lecturers but help to keep the most skilled teaching personnels in the institutions, impacting on the overall employability of its students (Abiwu, 2016). This recommendation concurs with (Offem et al., 2016; Chaubey and Rawat, 2016; and Abiwu, 2016)

who suggested for government and stakeholders to seek the welfare of university lecturers and introduce the right interventions to improve work conditions.

3. Adequate library centres and resources

The study found that university students commit to extensive use of the library during strike actions. This means so long as strike actions persist, library populations will increase impacting on the quality of learning. This study recommends adequate library infrastructures to assist the huge number of students in tertiary institutions. Currently, the Balme library located in the University of Ghana is observed as the biggest and widely used library among tertiary students in Ghana. The huge turnout in the library puts pressure on the facility hence continuous renovations are undertaken every year. This affects the serenity of studies and regular usage of the facility. Again, the location of the library makes it inconvenient for students coming from distant regions hence creating uneven use and benefit. Nonetheless, having a well-resourced library like the Balme library in almost all the regions of Ghana with enhanced digitalization will influence academic performance of students.

4. Adequate funding of the universities

The incessant strike actions are largely blamed on insufficient funding of the universities. This study recommends government and other stakeholders to allocate substantial amount of money to the universities as funding. In addition to this, the universities should develop other mechanisms of generating funds. This can be done through public private partnership, consultancy, running more foreign programmes and other joint ventures. Also, the university should strengthen their alumni networks. This proposal corroborates other researchers (Abiwu, 2016 and Momodu, Matudi & Momodu, 2014).

Momodu et al. (2014) recommended to government, ministries and private stakeholders, the benefits of earmarking funds to support universities in Nigeria. Abiwu (2016) also suggested funding of tertiary institutions by government, private businesses etc., in Ghana to make available capital and other resources to support the smooth running of the institutions. This

funding will also improve student loan schemes as well as provide scholarship opportunities for brilliant but needy students in the various universities.

5. Collective bargaining or collective agreements

It was deduced from the current findings that the students will be happy if an alternative to strike actions is undertaken by the parties. It is on this basis that the study recommends to the parties involved in strike actions to consider exploring collective bargaining as a better alternative to strike actions. Collective bargaining was equally proposed by (Abiwu, 2016; Odeku, 2014) who stressed its effectiveness in addressing the grievances of employees.

According to Sarpong et al. (2022) collective bargaining is directly linked to strike actions yet leaves the parties to tactically determine whether the challenges confronting them is one that merits strike actions or can be deliberated upon until a suitable decision is reached. The collective bargaining process ensures cooperation and coordination among the parties and communicates to the parties that there is mutual agreement and a collaborated effort towards resolving the challenges. Similarly, Abiwu (2016) recommended collective bargaining to employees and employers indicating that it prevents strike actions in the workplace through consensus building. This ensures that the parties are involved in working out a settlement that is best suited. Again, Odeku (2014) in his findings suggested collective bargaining to employers tagging it as a powerful tool with the potential to minimise strike actions in any organisation.

6.5 Limitations and Further Studies

The main limitation of the study is seen in its target population which is narrowed to public universities in Greater Accra Region of Ghana to the exclusion of all others. This means the findings of the current study reflect the views of the students from University of Ghana (Legon); Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) and University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA). Nonetheless, they do not override the validity of the study since relevant inferences can be drawn on the larger population.

The study was conducted several months after the strike action had occurred. Biases in the results may occur through memory failures and inaccurate recall. Regardless of the strong diversity in the samples, students recruitment does not reflect the entire population at these institutions given the convenience and purposive sampling methods used for the study. The difficulty computing a response rate for the survey is related to this, as well as the possibility of a non-response bias, where students who opted not to participate may have responded differently from those who did.

Again, research on strike actions in tertiary institutions in Ghana is terribly low although the evidence suggests there is a growing number of strikes in the country. Perhaps inadequate research on the subject underlines the continuous strike actions in the country. It is obvious employers are not much informed about the repercussions of strikes and the drastic impacts it has on the educational sector as well as the entire Ghanaian economy. This study has succeeded in adding to the body of knowledge of strike actions with special attention on the students yet inexhaustive on the subject. Therefore, the researcher considers it as a clarion call to existing and future researchers to narrow their expertise towards the subject of strike actions in tertiary institutions.

Further studies could focus on the extent to which strike actions affect the academics and finances of university students in Ghana. In addition, researchers can undertake a correlational study on the academic coping strategy of university students and academic performance during/after strike actions in Ghana. For example, the findings raised a number of questions which demands the use of mixed method or qualitative method to gain rich details and deeper insights into the phenomena of strike from students' point of view. Questions such as what activities do lecturers perform in the event where strike does not reflect cessation of work, Do lecturers report to school or not? During strikes who reviews the assignments, coursework and research works of students? Are they done by other teaching staff or temporary staff? From the study a large number of participants responded otherwise on item statements, and it will be expedient to understand these differences.

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Appendix A – Survey instrument

Research Topic: Assessing the coping strategies of university students during strike actions in public universities in Ghana.

Dear Respondent

I am a Master student pursuing [Higher Education] at the [University of Oslo]. I am making an enquiry into the above topic, and I humbly seek your indulgence in responding to this questionnaire. Attached to this questionnaire is a consent form which provide further details on the current study. Kindly peruse before responding to this questionnaire.

The questionnaire is in four sections: A, B, C & D. Kindly **tick** [√] where appropriate and **write the responses** in the spaces provided.

Thank You

Section A: Socio-Demographic Data of Respondents

1. Age of respondent.....
2. Gender of Respondent
 - Male
 - Female
3. Which of the public universities are you currently enrolled?
 - University of Ghana (UG)
 - Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA)
 - University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA)
4. Which of the following courses are you currently pursuing?
 - Law
 - Medicine
 - Pharmacy
 - Business Administration
5. Which level of study are you currently?

- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate
- Masters
- Doctorate
- Other (Specify).....

Section B: Perception of Students on University Strike Actions in Ghana

6. On a scale of 1-5 where (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree and 5=strongly agree) what is your perception of strike actions in public universities in Ghana?

Item statement	1	2	3	4	5
University strike actions is when lecturers cease to report to school to carry out their teaching responsibilities					
Strike actions in universities stop lecturers from marking exams scripts and assignments of students					
Strike actions in universities changes the academic calendar of the school					
Strike actions in universities prevent lecturers from carrying out research works to deepen their knowledge to help students					
During strike actions students are prevented from accessing academic resources like IT lab, library and reading rooms					
Lecturers have their needs addressed always when they embark on strike actions					
Strike actions is the most effective in resolving the grievances of lecturers					

Section B: Influence of Strike Actions on Public University Students in Ghana

7. On a scale of 1-5 where (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree and 5=strongly agree), what is your perception on the influence of strike actions on university students.

NB: The impacts have been categorized into Emotional/psychological; Academic impacts and Economic impacts

Item statements	1	2	3	4	5
Emotional/Psychological Impacts					
I get scared when I hear or read about strike actions in my school					
I am mentally disturbed when I read or hear about strike actions in my school					
I feel uncomfortable when I am informed about strike actions in my school					
If I had my way, I would rather strike actions do not happen in my school					
I will be happy if UTAG adopts another mechanism other than strikes to vent their grievances					
I make time for other important extra curricula-activities during strike actions in my school					
Academic Impacts					
My grades are poor during strike actions in my school					
I do not understand my notes or course materials without guidance from my lecturers during strike actions in my school					
My assignments are not timely reviewed and marked during strike actions in my school					
My project work gets halted during strike actions in my school					
I lose focus on my studies during strike actions in my school					
I have a disorganized academic life during strike actions in my school					
I am able to catchup with my notes and prepare well for mid-semester exams and main exams during strike actions					
Economic Impacts					

Since I cannot access the library, I spend heavily on books than I would have during strike actions in my school					
I contract the services of a tutor to assist me with my studies during strike actions in my school					
I spend heavily on data than I would have to access relevant materials online during strike actions in my school					
I pay extra cost to secure hostels/halls for my project work and assignments during strike actions in my school					
My parents spend more on my tuition than they would have during strike actions in my school					
Since I am mostly in my hostel/hall during strike actions in my school, I save more than enough money					

8. I am psychologically/emotionally affected during strike actions in my school.
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
9. I experience poor academic performance during strike actions in my school.
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
10. My financial expenses increase during strike actions in my school.
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure

Section C: Academic Coping Strategies of Students During Strike Actions in Public Universities

11. In relation to ensuring a good academic life in school, which of the strategies do you use in coping with strike actions in your school? **You can select more than one**
- I pay to use online tutoring
 - I rely on paid educational websites

- I buy the course books and study on my own
- I enroll in a private institution where there is no strike incidence
- I use the library extensively (i.e., if it is made accessible)
- I start a group discussion with my colleagues
- I pay for an extra in-person tutorship
- Other
(specify).....

12. On a scale of 1-5, (**where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree and 5=strongly agree**) indicate your satisfaction level for the academic coping strategies used during strike actions in your school

Item statement	1	2	3	4	5
I am satisfied when I use online tutorial to guide my studies during strike actions in my school					
I am satisfied when I rely on educational websites for my studies during strike actions in my school					
I am satisfied when I study on my own during strike actions in my school					
I am happy that using only my course books impacts positively on my academic performance during strike actions in my school					
I am satisfied when I pay for an in-person tutorship during strike actions in my school					
I am satisfied when I join a group study during strike actions in my school					
I am satisfied when I use the library extensively during strike actions in my school					
I am happy that I maintain a good academic life during strike actions in my school					

13. In my opinion, the academic coping strategies selected in **Q11** are very effective in coping with strike actions in my school?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Appendix B – Information Letter and Consent Form

Are you interested in taking part in the research project
**“Coping Strategies of Students Affected by University Teachers
Strike Actions in Ghana”?**

Purpose of the project

You are invited to participate in a research project where the main purpose is to assess the coping strategies of public university students during strike actions in Ghana.

The challenges confronting lecturers in their duties have necessitated series of strike actions in universities with numerous undesirable impacts. Quite recently, the University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG) embarked on a long period of strike, calling on the government of Ghana to restore conditions of service. This study will bring to light the impact of university strike actions on students and the coping strategies devised to facilitate their academics.

In order to fulfil the requirements towards a master’s degree in higher education at the University of Oslo’s (UiO) Department of Education, I am conducting a study that has the main objective of assessing the coping strategies of university students during strike actions in Ghana. In order to achieve the main objective, the sub-objectives below will be carefully considered:

1. To explore the perception of university students on strike actions in public universities in Ghana
2. To examine the major influences of strike actions on university students in Ghana
3. To identify the key academic coping strategies of university students during strike actions in public universities in Ghana

Which institution is responsible for the research project?

[University of Oslo] is responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You have been selected because you possess the characteristics of the study population. That is, you are in one of the level of study (year of study) and attend a University selected for the study. The level of study will help the researcher understand how students from different levels of study and course of study perceive strikes and the impacts it has on them academically, socially or emotionally. Also, your course of study is relevant to understand the coping strategies adopted in the event of strike actions. Finally, that you belong to one of the gender that provides insights into how male or female students look at strikes in general and how they cope. A total of 170 participants are included in the survey across the major Universities selected for the study

What does participation involve for you?

« If you chose to take part in the project, this will involve that you fill in a paper survey. It will take approx. 10-15 minutes. The survey includes questions about (your perception about strikes

in public universities, the impacts strike has on your emotional, academic and economic aspects and the academic coping methos you employ in the event of strike»

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified here and we will process your personal data in accordance with data protection legislation (the GDPR).

•I will only use your personal data for the purpose specified in this information letter, which is for the master’s thesis project. I will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act GDPR) and will follow the UiO’s data guidelines and procedures based on GDPR legislation.

•I will personally collect the data and the paper survey from participants. The survey will not collect names and contact information, but will solely collect data on age, gender, school and course of study.

- *Participants will not be recognizable in publications.*

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The planned end date of the project is [1 Dec 2023]. The paper survey collected will be destroyed

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with [University of Oslo], The Data Protection Services of Sikt – Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project meets requirements in data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- [University of Oslo, Department of Education]
- [Peter Maassen via peter.maassen@iped.uio.no +47 22 84 41 22].
- Our Data Protection Officer: [behandlingsansvarlig@uio.no]

If you have questions about how data protection has been assessed in this project by Sikt, contact:

- email: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 73 98 40 40.

Yours sincerely,
Student: Rosemary Owusu Koranteng

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project [Coping Strategies of Students affected by University Teachers Strike Actions in Ghana] and have been given the opportunity to ask questions.

I give consent:

- to participate in (a paper survey)

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end of the project, 1 June 2024.

(Signed by participant, date)

