

# Strike Actions in the Health Sector: Does Leadership Play a Role? A Study of College of Health Sciences, University of Ghana

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which leadership style contributes to striking actions in the Health Sector. The study adopted a quantitative approach with a sample size of 149. A Structured Standardize Questionnaire was used to gather data from the respondents. Mean, standard deviation and frequency count were used to analyze the data. The study revealed that bureaucratic and autocratic leadership styles were among the causes of the strike action; coupled with delays in salary increments, poor working conditions, unfairness in promotion, and non-involvement of union leaders in decision-making. The study also revealed that the strike action of the college affects patient care, students' academic programmes, and productivity as well as cause loss of employees' wages. The study recommended measures to curtail strike action such as improvement in the condition of service for employees, involvement of union leaders in decision-making, fairness in promotion procedure and more importantly, adoption of democratic, transformational and transactional leadership instead of bureaucratic and autocratic style would create industrial harmony in the school.

## Keywords

Leadership Behaviour, Strike Action, Industrial Harmony, Dispute

## 1. Introduction

For an organisation to be successful, the employees are required to work in harmony to achieve its goals. In any organization, the leaders may function in releasing tensions, harmonizing misunderstandings and dealing with disruptive

behaviour (Fisher, 2000). Leaders respond to problems and challenges, resolve crises, and do reward and punish followers, and provide encouragement and support to their followers. Leaders are also concerned with innovation; they seek to foster cultural practices that are conducive to creativity, innovation, conflict-free and challenging environments (Nauta, 1998).

Employees' perception of leadership behaviour is an important predictor of employee job satisfaction, commitment and loyalty (Jaskyte, 2004). The style of a leader can either motivate an employee to increase his or her level of performance or discourage employee, which in turn can cause a decrease in their level of performance or even lead to a high turnover rate. When employees of an organisation feel that their needs are not being adequately met, they tend to develop negative attitudes towards work or the organization they work for (Edmonson et al., 2001). Insufficient wages, poor working conditions and lack of avenues to air grievances have for a long time led to industrial unrest (Twala, 2012). A wrongful leadership style is a recipe for negative consequences, which might further trigger the sensitivity and susceptibility and misunderstanding which may lead to organizational dysfunction such as a decrease in work performance, absenteeism and high turnover (LePine et al., 2000). According to Osabuohien and Ogunrinola (2007), industrial conflict entails absence of industrial peace in the workplace. This includes any form of work dissatisfaction that can manifest in several ways such as absenteeism, strike, and high turnover, amongst others. Kreitner and Kinicki (2010) define conflict as a process in which one party perceives that its interest is being opposed or negatively affected by another party's action.

Ghana as a nation has witnessed a lot of industrial unrest challenges from both private and government institutions. Although it is difficult for one to assign a specific date that marks the commencement of labour unrest or labour disputes in Ghana. However, the strike action by the workers of Public Works Department in 1919 over the non-increment of their wages is said to be the precursor in Ghana (Obeng-Fosu, 2007). In fact, the consequences of strikes can hardly be quantified, more especially strikes from institutions that provide essential services like the Health Sector.

A case worth mentioning happened on February 3, 2016 by junior nurses and midwives when they embarked on strike action over unpaid salary. This strike was also embarked upon on the grounds of government's failure to settle their unpaid salary arrears and amend their conditions of service. The strike saw about 7000 nurses and midwives participating in the strike action (Peacefmonline, 2016).

Another striking case is that of Government and Hospital Pharmacists Association (GHOSPA) on August 3, 2015. GHOSPA embarked on the strike base on wrong placement of their members on the Single Spine Salary Structure (SSSS). The strike action saw the participation of about 600 members across Ghana. The strike greatly affected all out-patient departments in regional hospitals across the country (Graphic Online, 2016). In Ghana, strike actions by health workers in

the public health sector have been recurring since independence. The rampant strikes by workers in the sector are indicators that inherent problems may not have been solved satisfactorily (Boateng, 2011).

The Labour Act of 2003 (Act 651) recognizes the right of individuals to freely associate with others in pursuit of their economic interest by way of joining a labour union and the importance of strike action as an essential tool for unionized labour in pursuit of their interests. Statistics from the Ghana Labour Commission in 2008 depicted that out of twenty-eight (28) major strikes which occurred in Ghana during the period of this study, Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital recorded the highest i.e. thirteen, representing 46%. The College of Health Sciences, Korle-Bu campus is amongst one of the Colleges in University of Ghana and a beacon of producing health professionals. Over the years, the College has witnessed a series of strike actions intermittently. The strike action was embarked upon by the Federation of Universities Senior Staff Association of Ghana (FUSSAG), Korle-Bu local and Teachers and Educational Workers Union (TEWU), Korle-Bu local and it dates back to 2013. The strike was embarked upon on the grounds of College Management's failure to implement the payment of Interim Market Premium (IMP) to all staff of the University working in the University Hospital. The strike action occurred intermittently for three years, affecting a lot of activities both within and outside the College, i.e. closure of some clinical departments, withdrawal of final year student practical exams, the dental clinic, etc.

It is in light of this that the study seeks to investigate the role leadership behaviour play's in labour unrest in the Health Educational Sector. The study's specific objectives are as follows; 1) to examine factors that cause strike actions at the College of Health Sciences; 2) to examine the effects of strike action on productivity of the college and 3) to identify the prevalent leadership style exhibited at the college.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Factor That Undermine Industrial Harmony and Productivity in Organizations

#### *Leadership Behaviour*

Leadership behaviour is a potent tool in managing employee or employer relations in workplace. Employees in the organization need leaders to guide them towards the attainment of the goals and objectives, both of the individual and the organization (Ushie, 2002). Leadership stimulates, encourages, motivate, and recognize the subordinates' in relation to key performance. These assertions imply that the leader must have a good sense of human relations and adopt approaches that will lead to the attainment of the stated goals and objectives of the organization and the needs of the individual employees at work. This is necessary because a supervisor who enjoys autocratic kind of leadership will always have conflict waiting for him at his doorstep. In essence, an autocratic leadership

style will definitely breed a conflict atmosphere (Bankole, 2000).

#### ***Lack of Effective Communication***

Communication which involves the transmission of some information and understanding from one person to another is one of the most requisite functions of management (Ushie, 2002). Communication is vital to any social system as it creates an environment of trust, harmony and proficiency. Worker's involvement is essential because it boosts mutual understanding between management and employees likewise enhance organizational performance and productivity (Akpoovwaire, 2013). In the perception of Fajana (2005), lack of communication may cause problems in labour-management relations. According to Akpoovwaire (2013), communication is the live-wire of any human organization and will promote more effective management practices and greater trust between management and workers when it forms part of corporate culture of the organization. The above exposition suggests that when employees are deprived of effective communication in the organization or have poor perceptions of management's business strategies, it will instigate conflict that may hamper industrial harmony.

#### ***Work Environment***

Work environment is generally discussed from the industrial (physical) and psychological perspectives as factors that play significant role in employee's disposition at workplace. The physical aspect of work environment consists of noise, toxic substance exposure and heavy lift etc, while on the other hand psychological dimension consists of work-load, decision, support, stressor, latitude, work-life imbalance, status and role adjustment problem, etc (Austin-Egole, Wokoma, & Iheriohanma, 2014). Workers dissatisfaction with the physical or psychological work environment, especially when it threatens the security and safety, could provoke grievance that may result to conflict, especially in a unionized workplace (Jinyemiema, 2008). Productivity and efficiency are directly affected by employees work, vis-a-vis the effect of work environment and research has also shown that conducive work environment promotes industrial harmony. It is assumed that work environment should be properly assessed for its impact on the organizational workforce that will influence employees' perception of work related tasks, as well as affect ones emotional and motivational state. This is because the impact on outcome and variables such as satisfaction, motivation and behaviour are determinants to engineering industrial harmony in organization or vice versa.

#### ***Conflict Management***

When organizations make changes in their environment they face major conflicts, addressing them and reorganizing the necessity to deal with them and conflict management in practice is identifying and handling of issues in fair, sensible, and efficient manner, which requires effective communication skills, problem and negotiating skill with a focus on interests, conflict is a pervasive phenomenon in both social and professional circles of interactions (Landau & Landau, 2001). According to Boohar (2001), those that do not experience con-

conflict at the workplace are living in a dream world, and are blind to their surroundings. Marquis and Huston (1996) define conflict as: the internal discord that results from differences in ideas, values, or feelings between two or more people.

Conflict resolution is prescribed as a mechanism for dealing with differences within an existing social system, or as an approach that can facilitate constructive social change toward a responsive and equitable system (Fisher, 2000). Today's successful organizations need to develop the processes, cultures and behaviours capable of accommodating and resolving conflicts in ways that benefit employers and employees (Nadler & Tushman, 1996). Many researchers have developed conceptual model of conflict management using Blake and Mouton (1964) model. The two dimensions labeled as "concern for self" and "concern for other" (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979). Typologies presented by Rahim are; integrating or collaborating, obliging, compromising, dominating or competing style and avoiding.

1) Collaborating style; this is a win-win approach in dealing with conflict. This style of conflict management is suitable in cases where there is ample time to deal with the issue by debating and working towards positive outcome that will be beneficial to all parties involve.

2) Accommodating style; this style of conflict management allows one party to forego its own concern for that of the other party. This style is used when one party has a high concern for the other and a low concern for itself.

3) Dominating style; this conflict management style does not take into consideration the concern of the other party but rather self-concern. There is less concern for one party in the conflict and high concern for the other. This style of conflict management is suitable when a decision needs to be taken immediately and there is no agreement between the parties involve.

4) Avoiding style; this style is said to give less concern for self and for the other party also. This approach is most often used by leaders that have difficulty dealing with conflict, and are unwilling to either accept blame, or place it on the other party.

Compromising style; this style of conflict management gives some level of moderate concern for self and the other party in resolving issues. This approach uses less time in taking a stand unlike collaborating which seeks to bring out all the best ideas together before taking decision.

## 2.2. Leadership Styles

The development of leadership concept within industry and academia has significantly gain attention over the past two decades. Leaders are subject to tighter parameters for accountability and transparency and higher expectations of performance and outcomes (Crawford & Kelder, 2019). Leadership is vital for defining the path for the pursuance of goals or the provision of guidance to the attainment of goals of every organisation (Dartey-Baah, 2016). Research has shown that leadership plays a significant role in organisations and has a direct

influence on team process and outcomes. Leaders most often control many outcomes that affect employees due to their power position (i.e. strategies, goal-setting, promotions, appraisals, resources). Leadership also entails providing an environment that will inspire and motivate people to overcome obstacles (Abdul-Razak, Prince, & Elias, 2014). Leaders are not only responsible for an organisation's strategy and how it is operationalized and implemented but also for the well-being of their followers (Arnold & Connelly, 2013). The relationship between supervisor and employee is an important influence on employee well-being (Arnold & Connelly, 2013). Organisations are open systems: they affect and are affected by their environment. Every leader in every organisation performs certain roles/tasks for the smooth running of the organisation and improvement of performance. The manner the leader performs these roles and directs the affairs of the organisation is referred to as his/her leadership style. Leadership style therefore is the way a leader leads. The approaches to leadership concept can be studied under four main categories: traits, behavioural, contingency and transformational leadership. Traits theory focuses on the individual personal traits such as bravery; behavioural theories focus on the kind of behaviours a leader displays in order to affect his/her subordinates and contingency approach focuses on evaluating the leadership behaviours in terms of situational factors. Transformational leadership is a relatively new concept compared to other approaches in the leadership literature (Şahin, Akyurek, & Yavuz, 2014). In the last 80 years, a number of leadership theories have been developed by many leadership and psychology scholars to explain the phenomenon of leadership. Below are some of the leadership theories.

### 2.2.1. Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid

The Managerial Grid is a leadership model defined by Blake and Mouton in the early 1960s. The Managerial Grid is also called "The Leadership Grid" and is a framework that classifies leadership behaviour focusing on a leader's concern for people and task accomplishment at the same time. Blake and Mouton (1964) came out with five basic leadership behaviour namely;

1) Impoverished [1, 1]; Blake and Mouton (1964) described a leader with such behaviour as someone who tries to avoid being blamed for any mistakes. Such a leader's minimum effort towards getting work done. A leader with such behaviour suppresses innovation and creativity amongst the subordinates.

2) Authoritarian [9, 1]; Leaders with this behaviour according to Blake and Mouton (1964), views employees needs as unimportant. Such leaders are of the view that once a worker is paid salary, he or she is expected to work and as a result rules, punishment and sanctions are used in order to ensure goals of the organisation are met. Leaders with such behaviour expect very high productivity from employees whilst they show little concern for the welfare of employees.

3) Country Club [1, 9]; Blake and Mouton (1964) described a leader with such behaviour cares and has concern for the employees. The principle behind this behaviour is that as long as people are happy and secured they will work hard.

They concluded that a leader with such behaviour creates more comfortable and friendly environment for employee productivity, but downside of such leadership is a loss of productivity due to low direction and control.

4) Middle of the Road [5, 5]; According to [Blake and Mouton \(1964\)](#), leaders having this behaviour balance the needs of their staff with that of the organisation. Such leaders always aim for average performance. They do not push employees for work deadline.

5) Team leader [9, 9]; [Blake and Mouton \(1964\)](#) described team management as the pinnacle of leadership. Leaders with this attitude encourage commitment and teamwork. Such leader's make employees feel that they are constructively part of the organisation. They believe in creativity and innovation and motivation, they expect high productivity.

### 2.2.2. The Hersey and Blanchard (1999) Model of Leadership

The [Hersey and Blanchard \(1999\)](#) Leadership Model also take a situational perspective of leadership. [Hersey and Blanchard \(1999\)](#) work was based on Ohio studies on leadership. The model suggest that the developmental levels of a leader's subordinates play the greatest role in determining which leadership styles (leader behaviour) are most appropriate. Their theory is based on the amount of direction (task behaviour) and socio-emotional support (relationship behaviour) a leader must provide in a given situation to the level of maturity of the followers ([Hersey & Blanchard, 1999](#)).

[Hersey and Blanchard \(1999\)](#) proposed three factors for leader's to engage in with their subordinates and they are as follows: one is relationship behaviour; this is the extent to which the leader engages in two-way or multi-way communications. Two is Maturity level; which is the willingness and ability of a person to take responsibility for directing his or her own behaviour. Third is Task behaviour; this is the extent to which the leader engages in spelling out the duties and responsibilities to an individual or group. Base on the three leadership engagement factors proposed, [Hersey and Blanchard \(1999\)](#) developed four leadership styles namely;

1) Directing (S1): High directive/high supportive behaviour. Leaders at this level gives assignment, spells out the role and task, explains what the targets are and closely sees to the completion of the task. This style is applicable where subordinates have low competency but is highly motivated.

2) Coaching (S2): High directive/high supportive behaviour. At this stage leaders explain every decision made and also allows employees to make input. Leaders still monitor employees till task is executed. This style of approach is appropriate for followers with low competency and low motivation. Unlike directing, the coaching style requires leaders to define roles and tasks clearly, and as well seek ideas and contributions or suggestions from subordinates.

3) Supporting (S3): High competency/low motivation behaviour. With this style, leaders and employees take decisions together, and at the same time give support to employees in the execution of their task.



4) Delegating (S4): Low supportive/low directive behaviour. Leaders using this style allow employees to make decisions. At this stage leaders give low support and directions to their subordinates in executing their task. Leaders using this style are often involved in the decisions and problem-solving process, but completion of task is mostly in the hands of the subordinate.

In determining the appropriate leadership style to be used in a given situation, the leader must first determine the maturity level of his employees in relation to the task to be assigned (Hersey & Blanchard, 1999). The model is used to determine the kind of leadership styles (i.e. directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating) that best fits a given situation (the subordinates maturity level in performing and completing task) to enhance performance (Hersey & Blanchard, 1999).

### 2.2.3. Transformational Leadership

According to Burns (1978), Transformational leadership is a mutual stimulation relationship and elevation that converts followers into leaders and convert leaders also into moral agents (Burns, 1978). Burns (1978) added that, transformational leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in a manner that both the leaders and employees are highly motivated. Burns (1978) sees the power of transformational leadership as more noble and different from charismatic leadership, which he terms heroic leadership, and executive or business leadership. Bass (1985), developed Burns (1978), transformational leadership concept into Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations into transformational leadership where the leader transforms subordinates direction of influence.

It is a behavioural process capable of being learned. Transformational leadership is closer to the prototype of leadership that people have in mind when they describe their ideal leader, and it is more likely to provide a role model with which subordinates want to identify (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Goal of transformational leadership is to transform people and organisations in a literal sense, that change them in mind and heart; enlarge vision, insight, and understanding; clarify purposes; make behaviour congruent with beliefs, principles, or values; and bring about changes that are permanent, self-perpetuating, and momentum building. Transformational leadership is a process whereby the leader tries to increase awareness of subordinates to its importance and right of the organisation and also motivates them to go beyond their own self-interests for that of the group, the society and organization.

Again transformational leaders motivate, and inspire their subordinates to go extra miles in their output in order to achieve some target goals; According to Bass and Avolio (1994), transformational leaders display five leadership styles (the “5 I’s”):

1) Idealized Behaviours: which is also known as Charisma. According to Bass and Riggio (2006) this style has to do with trust, love and regard for leader by employees. That is leaders that exhibit this style are highly admired by their em-



employees and are considered exemplary leaders by their subordinates (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Prasad & Junni, 2016). Prasad and Junni (2016) also added that transformational leaders often present themselves as role models, as well as exhibit exemplary behaviours for employees.

2) Inspirational Motivation: this where the leader is able to inspire others; to be optimistic about the future goals, and enthusiastic about what needs to be accomplished, by articulating a compelling vision of the future, and being confidence that goals will be achieved, as well as providing an exciting image of what is essential to consider and taking a stand on controversial issues. Prasad and Junni (2016) also added that, leaders that exhibit inspirational motivation are highly optimistic and excited about the organisational goals, helping employees to understand their task and as well motivate them to produce finest performance. Bass and Riggio (2006) posit that Leaders who practice this style are able to cultivate strong team spirit as a means of directing the team to attain expected objectives.

3) Intellectual Stimulation: This has to do with leaders ability to challenge expectations, stimulates and inspires followers to be creative by providing a guideline to followers to enable them identify the relationship that exist between them and the leader, and the organisation.. According to Bass (1997), transformational leaders challenge the status quo, that is, the existing values, traditions and culture within the organisation so as to generate new and better ways of handling problems and carrying out tasks. According to Prasad & Junni (2016), such leaders encourage followers to assess the status quo and take risks when undertaking assigned tasks.

4) Individualized Consideration: leader using this approach deals with subordinates on individual basis. Leaders using this approach, spend time teaching, developing and coaching, and treating others as individuals rather than just as members of the group, and as well as consider individuals as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others. That is, leaders serve as mentors and tutors to their subordinates. According to Prasad and Junni (2016), leaders in this dimension creates learning atmosphere for followers, coach them in order to stimulate their development.

5) Idealized Attributes: such leaders show respect, trust, faith, and instil pride in others for being allied with them. They go beyond their self-interests for the good of the group, act in ways that build others' respect, display a sense of power and competence and help others to overcome obstacles.

#### **2.2.4. Transactional Leadership**

Transactional leadership style is one leadership style often used by managers. This type of leadership style focuses on basic management process of controlling, organizing, and short-term planning. According to Riaz and Haider (2010), it is an exchange method of leadership which is between the leader and subordinates. Transactional leadership style is a style based on traditional bureaucratic authority and legitimacy (Bass & Avolio, 1997). As the basic principle of this leadership is on “exchanges” between a leader and subordinates. Here the leader

deliberately outline and provides the kind of rewards to be given in exchange for subordinates' performance (Trottier, Van Wart, & Wang, 2008).

Transactional leaders view their style of exchange as a process, whereby leader give subordinates directions as to what needs to be done and how to go about it, and the reward of punishment thereof. Transactional leader emphasizes on clarification of goals, work principles standards, and assignments (Bass, 1985). Transactional leaders focus on task completion and compliance, rewards, and punishments to influence employee performance, with reward being contingent on subordinates carrying out the roles and assignments as defined by the leader (Bass & Avolio, 2000). Nemaei (2012) also posit that transactional leaders identify the needs of their subordinates and as well as manage their internal and external environment in order to create an impact on subordinate with the use of rewards, punishment and agreement systems. Unlike transformational leadership, transactional leaders do not take into account individual subordinates needs and development's. That is transactional leader do not go beyond the relations between task and reward.

Bass (1990) developed (4) dimensions of transactional leadership exchange between leader and follower in the achievement of routine performance goals.

1) Contingent Rewards; According to Prasad and Junni (2016), leaders that use this approach establish clear expectation, and rewards for subordinate for task performance. Transactional leaders set mutual agreement upon goals and provide various kinds of rewards for successful performance. According to Popli and Rizvi (2016), this nature of expectations are usually short-term and measurable. According to Bass (1985), employees put up their best performance and commitment when leaders specify rewards for achievement of goals. Again Leaders link the goal to rewards, provide necessary resources, and clarify expectations. Such leaders set SMART goals (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely) for their subordinates.

2) Management by Exception (Active); According to Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013), leaders using this exchange approach focus is generally on maintaining institutional structures or routines and procedures (status quo) and existing institutional culture. Focus of this dimension is to enable leaders watch out for variance, and take corrective measures to improve upon specific issue and then allow staff to handle all other things else. If nothing comes up, then leaders can assume that everything is going according to plans or it implies giving of close monitoring to employees so as to check for deviations and errors to correct them quickly before they lead to greater problems (Cherry, 2013; Obiwuru et al., 2011; Nikezic, Puric, & Puric, 2012).

3) Management by Exception (Passive); this dimension focus on leaders non-interference with workflow unless objectives have not been met or after problems have become serious. Here leaders only intervene when subordinates do not met or when performance is not as expected. That is, like the active leaders, passive leaders only intervene when there are problems to be solved or needs to be provided. Leaders that used this approach do not set standards of perfor-

mance for subordinates (Mullins & Weeks, 2006; Omolayo, 2007), hence making it largely reactive (Cherry, 2013; Lai, 2011). The difference between active and passive management-by-exceptions is that, active leaders closely monitor subordinates to check for deviations and errors in order to correct them quickly before issues escalate while passive leaders would wait until problems arise and then deal with them (Tarsik et al., 2014).

4) Laissez-faire; with this kind of leader style, the leader creates an opportunistic environment for subordinates to make many decisions. The leader at this point delegates his/her duties to the subordinates and then allows them to take decision as well.

### 2.2.5. Democratic Leadership

According to Starrat (2001), such leaders consult team members before taking any decision. They act as the team unit controller. Democratic leaders facilitate the initial task given to the team and allows them to carry out the task on their own accord through mutual understanding. Democratic leader allows participation and delegates but bears in mind as the ultimate decision maker. Such leader normally lay problem before the subordinates and invite discussion. Here he or she acts as conference leader rather than decision maker. Such leadership style is appropriate in situations where group members are willing to share with their leader and to accept responsibility for decisions, which he or she has not made personally. Democratic leadership is viewed as an important aspect of empowerment, teamwork and collaboration (Starrat, 2001).

Goleman et al. (2002) posit that a democratic leader keeps staff morale high and therefore positive climate prevails in the organisation. In a study by Damachi (1979) and Fashoyin (1999) found that democratic leadership promotes harmonious working relations between the leader and the employees. Damachi (1979) and Fashoyin (1999) added that, a democratic leader make employees feel comfortable with the trust reposed in them and gives them the confidence to build a strong cooperation, team spirit and high morale. They concluded that, in an organization where the trust of the leader is eroded, it leads to conflict that undermines industrial harmony with the attendant resultant effect on organizational productivity and growth.

### 2.2.6. Bureaucratic Leadership

According to Simpson (2012), bureaucratic leaders exhibit characteristics such as; they follow rules and procedures to the latter without deviation; when they are unsure of what to do they defer up the chain of command, and they act as an enforcer rather than leaders. Bureaucratic leaders are often promoted to leadership position because they follow rules rather than qualification or expertise and this can produce a culture of resentment. In a study by Alo (1999) and Nwoko-cha (2015), it was shown that, in organisation where workers are denied participation due to dictatorial political structure and arrogant conduct of management, the results are indolence, absenteeism, espionage and sabotage of industrial peace. The denial of opportunity to participate in decision-making in the or-

ganization often times breeds conflict, and deprives the workers of broader knowledge of organization activities that will enable them to contribute to the organizational process. They concluded that participatory management offers the best situation to ensuring industrial harmony.

Another study by Miebaka & Isaac (2002) also suggested that if employees are properly informed and have direct access to management, grievances can be nipped in the bud. He added that in achieving this, bottom-up reporting structure and broad-based consultation structure must be encouraged by employers to abreast the management on positions of events in the organization, as the top-down communication line is embroiled with flaws, hence not yielding much desire result. He concluded that the rigid authoritarian management structure which provides for top-down decision-making process in the organisation should be re-structured.

### **2.2.7. Autocratic Leadership**

According to Adair (1984), autocratic leaders control team-members, whiles achieving a singular objective and they exhibit the following characteristics: first, they have total authority and control. Second, their focus is on goal completion. Third, they adopt a dictatorial approach when allocating tasks. Four, they show little concern for the opinion of their team, even if it would be beneficial. Finally, they think of themselves as being the sole decision maker. With autocratic leadership, managers retain most authority for themselves and make decision with the mind that subordinates will implement it. He or she is not worried about attitudes of the subordinates toward a decision; he is rather concerned about getting the task done. He or she tells the staff what to do and how to do it. This style is viewed as task-oriented (DuBrin, 1995). According to Mullins (1999), the leader solely exercises decision-making and authority for determining policy, procedures for achieving goals, work tasks and relationships, and control of rewards or punishments. However, this style would be most appropriate in emergency situations, and would normally be considered justified by the group, that is, where the general climate of the group is supportive and mature.

A study by Gordon (2013) revealed that autocratic leadership style tends to discourage innovation and lower employees' morale in the organization. He maintained that managers who use an autocratic leadership style will be meted with conflict that may result to employees' dissatisfaction and high turnover among their most talented employees and high ability workers. The implication of all these for the organization is the erosion of industrial harmony and productivity. Researchers have explained that autocratic leadership style creates two types of behaviours. It makes workers to be either aggressive or apathetic and withdrawn (Lippit, 1960; Pugh, 1971).

## **3. Data and Methodology**

This study examines the role of leadership style in industrial dispute in the College of Health Sciences of University of Ghana. Junior and senior non-academic

teaching staffs are the study respondents.

### 3.1. Instrument

First and foremost leadership styles were measured in this paper with management style scale developed by Raybould (2014). The measure consists of 20 items, with responses on a five-point ranging from: 1) Strongly Disagree, 2) Moderately Disagree, 3) Neutral, 4) Moderately Agree, and 5) Strongly Agree, which were coded 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively.

### 3.2. Data Collection Procedure

The method adopted for this study was a cross-sectional survey approach that sought to investigate the role leadership plays in industrial dispute, using College of Health Sciences, University of Ghana, Korle-Bu campus as a case study. The study utilized quantitative techniques for its analysis. The rationale for using quantitative technique is because the study quantified and measured leadership behaviour and the management of labour unrest at the College of Health Sciences, University of Ghana. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), numbers are basically used in reporting results of quantitative research. Descriptive approach was used because this method examines the current situation. Descriptive research involves identification of attributes of a particular phenomenon based on observational basis, or the exploration of correlation between two or more phenomena.

### 3.3. Sample and Sampling Technique

Considering that all members of the targeted population cannot be contacted, a portion of the whole population can be selected as a representative of the entire population as sample population. Based on this, the study employs Yamane Taro's simplified formula for calculating minimum sample size. Therefore the sample size  $n = 831 / \{1 + [831 * (0.05 * 0.05)]\} = 270$ . The calculated sample size is 270 for this study's. Out of 270 questionnaires distributed, 149 were returned giving a response rate of 55% which is more than half of the sample population, which is deemed appropriate for the study. As this is in line with accession by different authors regarding sample size as most of them agree that samples of 30 to 50 are considered minimum samples to be used in the available statistical analysis (Makuch & Simon, 1978; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). Respondents were only full time employed junior and senior staff of the College of Health Sciences. Convenience sampling technique was used in selecting respondents for this study's.

## 4. Results and Analysis

### 4.1. Demographic Details of Respondents

Tables 1-4 show socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. From the study analysis, it is observed that majority of the respondents (56%) in this study

were males, and (44%) female as shown in **Table 1**. Age of female respondents' ranges from 24 to 59 years with a median age of 35 years, while men's age ranged from 25 to 58 years with a median age of 34 years as shown in **Table 2**. Additionally, majority of respondents had 5 to 10 years of job experience as shown in **Table 3**. Furthermore 110 (73.8%) of respondents being majority had tertiary education, with 3 (2%) having basic education as shown in **Table 4**. Per this study's results, it is observed that the College of Health Sciences have a youthful workforce as it reflects in the age group and length of service of respondents with had high level of education.

**Table 1.** Gender distribution of respondents.

Gender distribution	Male	Female	Total
Frequency	84	65	149
Percentage	56%	44%	100%

**Table 2.** Age distribution of respondents.

Descriptive statistics	Female Age (years)	Male Age (years)
Mean	35.7258	35.8795
Median	35.0000	34.0000
Mode	30.00	30.00
Range	35.00	33.00
Minimum	24.00	25.00
Maximum	59.00	58.00

**Table 3.** Work experience of respondents.

Years of work	1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 20	21+	Total
Junior Staff	16	12	6	1	4	39
	41.0%	30.8%	15.4%	2.6%	10.3%	100.0%
senior staff	35	38	18	6	5	102
	34.3%	37.3%	17.6%	5.9%	4.9%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>141</b>

**Table 4.** Educational level of respondents.

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Basic	3	2.0
Secondary	36	24.2
Tertiary	110	73.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## 4.2. Factors That Causes Strike Actions (Respondents' Perspective)

Results from **Table 5** reveals that, the total cumulative average mean score of 3.8734 and cumulative average standard deviation of 0.31845 which is very close to the mean in **Table 4**, implies that respondents generally agreed that leadership behaviour, delay in salary increment for workers, poor working conditions, unfairness in promotion and non-involvement of union leaders in decision-making are major cause of strike actions in the College of Health Sciences. Majority of respondents strongly agreed that the system of promotion at the College of Health Sciences is very unfair as some said they have been on one grade for many years without promotion.

## 4.3. Effects of Strike Action on Productivity

Results from **Table 6**, reveals that, the total cumulative average mean score of 3.7734 and standard deviation of 0.31745, which is very close to the mean in **Table 6**,

**Table 5.** Causes of strike actions (Respondents' perspective).

Item-Total Statistics				
Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Interpretation
Leadership behaviour	3.8523	0.49502	149	Strongly Agreed
Delay in salary increment	3.8312	0.48384	149	Moderately Agree
Poor working conditions	3.9578	0.47092	149	Moderately Agree
Unfairness in Promotion	3.8521	0.47760	149	Strongly Agreed
Non-involvement of union leaders in decision-making can motivate strike actions	3.7523	0.48502	149	Strongly Agreed
<b>Total cumulative average mean and Std.</b>	<b>3.8734</b>	<b>0.31845</b>		

**Table 6.** Effects of strike actions on productivity.

Item-Total Statistics				
Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Interpretation
Strike action affects patients care	3.7523	0.48502	149	Strongly Agreed
Strike actions affects students' academic programme	3.7313	0.48354	149	Strongly Agreed
Strike action adversely affects productivity	3.7578	0.47072	149	Strongly Agreed
Strike action can cause loss of employees' wages	3.8101	0.53065	149	Strongly Agreed
<b>Total cumulative average mean and Std.</b>	<b>3.7734</b>	<b>0.31745</b>		



indicates that respondents generally agreed that strike actions affect patients care, students' academic programme, productivity as well as loss of employees' wages were the effects of strike action on staff and the College at large.

#### 4.4. Prevalent of Leadership Style Exhibited at the College

In **Table 7**, the study reveals bureaucratic leadership style 66 (44.3%) as the most prevalent leadership style exhibited by heads of department in the College of Health Sciences. This is followed by autocratic with frequency of 37 (24.8%), and Paternalistic style with frequency of 36 (24.2%). The least of the leadership styles exhibited by HOD's of the College of Health Sciences in this study is transformational and transactional leadership style with frequency 5 (3.4%) and 1 (0.7%) respectively.

#### 4.5. Inspiring Leadership Style Preferred by Staff (Respondents' Perspective)

As shown in **Table 8**, the most inspiring leadership style preferred by respondents in this study is democratic leadership with a frequency of 66 (44.3%). This is followed by relationship-oriented leadership style and transformational leadership style with the frequencies of 37 (24.8%) and 36 (24.2%), respectively.

#### 4.6. Preventions of Strike Actions at the College (Respondents' Perspective)

Results from **Table 9**, reveals that total cumulative average mean score of 3.8042 and standard deviation of 0.51002 is very close to the mean in **Table 9**, which suggests that respondents generally agreed that change in behaviour of leadership, improvement in condition of service, involvement of union leaders in decision-making, fairness in promotion, regular adjustment in salary are factors that respondents in this study perceived to prevent staff from embarking on strike action at College of Health Sciences. This means that respondents agreed that all these factors contribute greatly in preventing in industrial actions in the College.

**Table 7.** Prevalent leadership style exhibited at the College (Respondents perspective).

Behaviour exhibited	Frequency	Percentage
Autocratic	37	24.8
Bureaucratic	66	44.3
Democratic	2	1.3
Relation-oriented	2	1.3
Paternalistic	36	24.2
Transactional	1	0.7
Transformational	5	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 8.** Inspiring leadership style preferred by staff (Respondents' perspective).

Opinions	Frequency	Percentage
Bureaucratic	2	1.3
Democratic	66	44.3
Relationship-oriented	37	24.8
Paternalistic	3	2.0
Transactional	5	3.4
Transformational	36	24.2
Autocratic	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 9.** Factors to prevent strike actions in the college.

Items	Item-Total Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Interpretation
Change in some leadership behaviour can prevent strike actions	3.8059	0.53311	149	Strongly Agreed
Improvement in condition of service can prevent employees from embarking on strike	3.8101	0.53065	149	Strongly Agreed
Involvement of union leaders in decision-making can help decrease strike action.	3.7932	0.54799	149	Moderately Agree
Fairness in promotion procedure can prevent strike actions	3.8228	0.45360	149	Strongly Agree
Regular adjustment in salary can prevent employees from embarking on strike	3.7890	0.48473	149	Strongly Agreed
<b>Total cumulative average mean and Std.</b>	<b>3.8042</b>	<b>0.51002</b>		

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study based on objective one revealed that leadership behaviour, delay in salary increments for workers, poor working conditions, unfairness in promotion and non-involvement of union leaders in decision-making are major causes of strike actions in the College of Health Sciences. Based on respondents' view, the display of leadership styles such as autocratic and bureaucratic by management of the College counted for most industrial unrest among the staffs of the College. This finding is consistent with the findings of [Seniwoliba \(2014\)](#) who stated that there are numerous reasons why Ghanaian workers embark on

strikes; he identified one as unfairness and lack of equity in determining working conditions. Jinyemiema (2008) also added that, if workers are dissatisfied with the physical or psychological work environment (especially in a unionized workplace), their security and safety is threatened, and they will result in industrial action.

Additionally, based on objective two, this study reveals strike action by the College staff affected patient care, students' academic programme, and staff productivity and as well as caused loss of employees' wages. This implies the important role junior and senior staff of the College play although they do not form part of top management and the withdrawal of their services has a tremendous effect on the College as a whole.

Furthermore, in this study, it was revealed that bureaucratic leadership style was the most prevalent leadership style exhibited by Heads of Departments of the College, followed by autocratic leadership style. Transformational and transactional leadership styles appeared to be the least leadership style exhibited by Heads of Department in the College of Health Sciences. Autocratic and bureaucratic leadership emerging as the two top prevalent leadership styles exhibited in this study suggests that employees (junior and senior staff) of the College are not given the chance to participate in decision-making process. Nwokocha (2015) stressed that in an organization where workers are denied participation due to dictatorial political structure and arrogant conduct of management, the results are discontent, apathy, and industrial unrest that disrupt the peace in the organization. Conflict arises when employees are denied the chance to participate in democratic decision-making within the organization. Motowidlo (2000) added that a wrongful leadership style is a recipe for negative consequences, which might further trigger the sensitivity, susceptibility and misunderstanding which may lead to dysfunction such as a decrease in work performance, absenteeism and high turnover.

Again, it is revealed in this study that respondents were inspired by leaders that exhibit a democratic leadership style, followed by those leaders who exhibit a relationship-oriented leadership style. Autocratic style was the least preferred leadership style by respondents in this study. This suggests that respondents prefer inspirational leaders that run all-inclusive administration by providing an alluring vision, a sense of mission, and gaining respect and trust through charisma. Additionally, desire leaders would be attentive to their needs, personal development, and create a conducive working environment. This view was shared by Damach (1999), who stated that democratic, transformational, and transactional leadership promotes harmonious working relations between the leaders and the follower. These leaderships offer subordinates the needed well-being, trust and confidence to build strong cooperation, team spirit and high self-esteem working relationship with the leaders (Castro et al., 2008; Rafferty & Griffin, 2004; Rowold & Rohmann, 2009; Yukl, 2006).

Finally, the study reveals that factors such as improvement in the condition of service, involvement of union leaders in decision-making, and fairness in pro-

motion procedure, are the measures when put in place will help to reduce the rate at which staff of the College of Health Sciences embarks on industrial strike. Again, the exhibition of leadership styles such as democratic, transformational, and transactional by Heads of Department in this study will also help to enhance industrial harmony in the College.

The study, therefore concludes that strike action has a negative impact on both the individual and the organisation at large, but in all, there are always measures when put in place would go a long way to reduce the rampant strike actions by staff of the College of Health Sciences such as management practicing leadership styles such as transformational, democratic, ethical, authentic, etc., which are sensitive to employees needs and development. This study therefore recommends that management of College provides an effective system of collective bargaining and addressing employee's grievances. Again, this study recommends quarterly leadership training workshops for Heads of Department or Unit Heads of College.

Finally, the present study contains gaps for future scholars who want to explore the role of leadership style in employee's industrial dispute, which constitutes study's limitations. This study did not include management staff as respondents. In addition, the present study scope was limited to one college out of four colleges of the University, while future scholars may study strike actions in relation to other universities or institutions or professionals such as medical practitioners, nursing, and midwifery, industrial and commercial workers union, University Teachers Association, etc. Lastly, the current study focused on the leadership style of management authority of the College of Health Sciences but upcoming researchers may examine the leadership style of Union leaders in the fight for employee's welfare in their literature.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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