



**ANALYZING THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IN  
MITIGATING EMPLOYEE ACTIVISM: A STUDY OF GHANA'S  
PUBLIC SECTOR**

**BY**

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### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my own original research and that, no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute. I further declare that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

YAW BOAITEY BOATENG MASPRM23002 .....  ..... 01/02/2025

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### CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR

This Dissertation has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of Dissertation laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC).

DR. ALBERT ANANI-BOSSMAN .....  ..... 01/02/2025

Supervisor	Signature	Date
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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my colleagues at work, my siblings, and the entire Ghanaian working space.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Almighty God for the precious gift of life and how far He has brought me.

I also extend an immeasurable gratitude to Dr. Albert Anani-Bossman, my supervisor, for his indescribable level of commitment, patience, tolerance and ingenious charisma toward me.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The dynamics of employee activism within public sector organizations pose significant challenges for strategic communication and organizational management. In Ghana's public sector, employee activism is a growing phenomenon that necessitates a strategic approach to fostering mutual relationships between employees and employers, thereby mitigating potential conflicts. This study aims to identify key communication protocols, leadership approaches, and institutional mechanisms that can effectively manage conflicts and transform employee activism into a constructive force for organizational development. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research employed a descriptive survey design. The first phase involved administering both electronic and manual questionnaires to 200 public sector employees across various union groups. This was followed by in-depth qualitative interviews with 10 key government representatives, union leaders, and labor experts. The study seeks to uncover strategic communication interventions that can mediate employee activism by establishing transparent dialogue channels, addressing employee concerns, and promoting participatory decision-making. Findings revealed that 97% of participants identified remuneration issues, poor working conditions, strikes, petitions, and social media mobilization as the primary causes and forms of employee activism in Ghana's public sector. To manage activism, public sector organizations primarily rely on stakeholder meetings, employee surveys, town hall meetings, and resolution timelines as communication strategies and evaluation mechanisms. The study recommends enhancing employee participation in policy creation and decision-making processes within public organizations. Establishing joint management-employee committees to address workplace policies, development, and welfare concerns can foster employee ownership and reduce the likelihood of activism.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Background of Study

Activism as a term embodies complexities upon its definitions, as there exists a variety of connotations of how activism is perceived. An online study about what activism means to different individuals identified nine categories of positive and/or negative connotations to activism: emotional, committed, political, arrogant, courageous, disruptive, attention seeking, irrelevant and engaging (Day-Duro et al., 2021). Bobel (2007) points out arrogance as an intertwined word with activism, proclaiming the connotation arising from issues around language and early misuse of the word, to the extent where people are “sick of hearing [it]” now. A true activist as an individual is expected to be dedicated, work hard, make selfless sacrifices to achieve commitments, yet several individuals who in other people’s eyes are indeed partaking in such actions, those so-called activists continue to question whether they can be considered as one or not (Bobel, 2007). This only discloses complexities behind what activism is and who should be considered as one, motivating scholars to continue exploring it and renewing the knowledge around it. Additionally, the notion of activism, precisely its intentions, are positively associated with making a change for the better (Day-Duro et al., 2021). Martin et al., (2007) state that, activism “always involves creating change, but creating change can mean simply intervening when and where one happens to be”, making sure that the needs and feelings of the people are heard. On the other hand, when referring to the influence of the execution of activism, it shares more negative interpretations, to the extent of individuals mentioning persuasion, manipulation, and personal power as words that come to mind (Day-Duro et al., 2021).

Employee activism in the public sector describes the initiatives taken by staff members of public institutions and government agencies to promote modifications to workplace regulations, public policy, and organizational norms (Briscoe & Gupta 2021). Workers' desire for a voice in decisions affecting their working conditions, the quality of public services, and more general social or political issues is fueling this growing phenomenon (Briscoe & Gupta 2021). Because government organizations serve the public interest and because public sector activism may have an impact on policy decisions, taxpayer funds, and local or national governance, it is typically associated with broader implications than private sector activism (Allen, 2016).

Public sector workers typically take part in activism as a means of promoting improved working conditions, benefits, and wages (International Labor Organization, 2022). Budget cuts, understaffing, and austerity measures are common sources of pressure for public sector employees, such as teachers, healthcare providers, police officers, and civil servants. The activism of this sector aims to improve working conditions, wages, and job security. Employees in the public sector frequently observe firsthand how laws and financial limitations affect the standard of public services like social services, healthcare, and education. Therefore, the main objectives of activism may be to promote more financing, improved resources, and laws that enhance the provision of services to the general public.

Many public sector employees, especially those in fields like education, healthcare, and environmental protection, are motivated by moral convictions to support more general social justice issues (Lee, 2021). They might take up activism, for instance, to combat institutional corruption in government agencies, systemic racism, inequality, and climate change (Wakabayashi et al., 2018). For example, Public school teachers went on widespread strikes in a number of states, including West Virginia, Oklahoma, and Arizona, in response to their demands for improved

working conditions, more funding for schools, and higher pay. Despite the fact that the strikes were typically coordinated by unions, the public supported them because they brought attention to the underfunding of public education and its detrimental effects on students (Briscoe & Gupta 2021). Increased teacher pay, more state funding for education, and more public discussion about the necessity of funding public education were all outcomes of these strikes. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, National Health Service (NHS) employees in the UK organized protests and participated in activism, demanding better pay, safer working conditions, and increased government funding for healthcare services (Wingard, 2020). In light of the health crisis, the workers expressed concerns about being overworked, underpaid, and lacking in resources and protection (Briscoe & Gupta 2021). Because of the activism, more people were made aware of the difficulties faced by healthcare professionals and were in favor of government programs aimed at raising pay and improving working conditions.

In Ghana, there has been an upward trend in employee activism in the public sector of Ghana (ILO, 2022). It is in the form of protest, strike, or other collective actions to address issues like slow promotion, poor working conditions, and remuneration. These forms of activist behavior usually cause serious disruption to important socioeconomically high-impact public services in health, education, and transport (Dwomoh & Kwarteng, 2015). A fine example of employee activism in Ghana's public sector for improved working conditions is the national strike action taken by nurses and midwives in the country in July 2021. The Ghana Registered Nurses and Midwives Association was joined by its sister associations, the Ghana Physician Assistants Association and the Ghana Association of Certified Registered Anesthetists, in organizing the walkout. Again, the Judicial Service Staff Association of Ghana (JUSSAG) in 2022 engaged in strikes over salary disputes, highlighting poor remuneration systems. Ghana Medical Association (GMA) organized

protests for better pay and working conditions, reflecting widespread dissatisfaction with compensation in 2020. Last but not least, the University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG) conducted strikes to address issues related to salaries and working conditions, impacting the academic calendar significantly. These actions underscore ongoing challenges in employee motivation and job satisfaction within the public sector.

Ghanaian public sector workers are legally forbidden from engaging in specific forms of activism or going on strike due to the importance of their work (Dwomoh & Kwarteng, 2015). For example, public employees, law enforcement officers, and medical professionals may be subject to legal limitations on taking part in industrial action. Due to severe budgetary constraints, governments may not be able to comply with employee demands for increased resources, better pay, or better benefits (Dwomoh & Kwarteng, 2015)

Strategic communication, which ensures that staff members are informed of policies, decisions, and changes in an understandable and concise way, promotes transparency in the public sector (Deloitte, 2022). Because government agencies are hierarchical, workers in the public sector often feel excluded from decision-making processes. By using strategic communication, management can promptly and honestly communicate information about decisions, changes to policies, and organizational changes (Workday, 2022). Through strategic communication, management can anticipate and address employee concerns before they become more radicalized. If workers in the public sector feel their concerns about policies, wages, working conditions, or other issues are not being addressed, they may become involved in activism. Management can assess employee sentiment and make necessary policy adjustments through focus groups, town hall meetings, and regular surveys (Hewlett et al., 2009). Early problem solving keeps resentment from growing into widespread demonstrations or public actions, which can impair the government's capacity to

function. Additionally, it supports the preservation of the business's standing and the public's faith in its capacity to handle employee relations (Cone Communications, 2016).

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

Dwomoh and Kwarteng (2015) said the fundamental causes of activism are frequently connected to more significant socio-political dynamics, issues with governance, unsatisfactory working conditions, and inadequate compensation. Employee activism in Ghana typically takes the form of protests, strikes, or calls for better labor rights (Dwomoh & Kwarteng, 2015). Dissatisfaction with wages is one of the main causes of employee activism in Ghana's public sector. Teachers, healthcare providers, and civil servants are among the public sector workers who frequently believe that their pay is disproportionate for the amount of work they perform or the cost of living (Dwomoh & Kwarteng, 2015). Furthermore, wages for certain positions in the public and private sectors can differ significantly (Osei-Boateng & Torgbe, 2012).

In response, various strikes and protests have been organized by the Ghana Medical Association (GMA), the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), the Judicial Service Staff Association of Ghana (JUSSAG), the University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG), and other labor unions and associations (Dwomoh & Kwarteng, 2015; Osei-Boateng & Torgbe, 2012). Activism, generally, is driven by various factors, including; social and political context, communication and technology, roles in movements, employee activism, and so on. Activists respond to perceived injustices or failures in governance, often mobilizing during times of political or economic instability. The rise of social media facilitates rapid information dissemination, allowing movements to gain traction and engage broader audiences. Activists often adopt different roles (citizen, rebel, change agent, reformer) that shape their strategies and effectiveness. Employees increasingly advocate for social issues related to their organizations, driven by

perceived misconduct and a desire for change. These drivers collectively influence the success and impact of social movements. In Ghana's public sector, unpaid salaries and benefits are another common source of employee activism (Okpalibekwe et al., 2015; Opute & Mahmoud, 2023). Salary, promotion, and retirement benefit delays have been commonplace for public sector workers, especially those in the healthcare and education sectors (Okpalibekwe et al., 2015; Opute & Mahmoud, 2023).

Due to their financial insecurity as a result of these delays, the workers are more likely to go on strike or file a lawsuit to defend their rights. For example, there have frequently been large-scale protests when teachers' and healthcare workers' salary arrears are not paid on time. In addition to interfering with the provision of services, these protests increase public dissatisfaction with the way the government is handling labor welfare (Dwomoh & Kwarteng, 2015).

Many Ghanaian public sector workers endure poor working conditions, including outdated equipment, inadequate facilities, and a dearth of basic supplies necessary for them to do their jobs effectively (Dwomoh & Kwarteng, 2015). Healthcare workers typically deal with understocked hospitals; teachers, on the other hand, typically deal with packed classrooms and inadequate teaching supplies. Employees are more likely to request better workspaces and equipment so they can perform their jobs well when subpar working conditions cause them to become frustrated and burned out. Particularly in the healthcare and education industries, unsafe and subpar working conditions are now frequently the source of protests.

One of the main things that also promotes employee activism in Ghana's public sector is the poor communication between management and workers. This gap shows up in a number of ways, such as poor communication of information, a dearth of avenues for receiving feedback, and mistrust (Krishna, 2021). Top-down communication is widely used in public sector organizations, where

management distributes policies and makes decisions without first consulting staff members. Because they have little influence over decisions that directly affect them, employees under this hierarchical approach feel marginalized and voiceless (Krishna, 2021). A disconnect is created when consultation is lacking, which eventually fuels discontent and activism. If workers believe that regular channels of communication are not being used to acknowledge or address their concerns, they may turn to strikes or protests (Krishna, 2021).

Effective strategic communication is crucial for addressing the issues of employee activism in the public sector due to the complexity and diversity of labor relations in Ghana (Dwomoh & Kwarteng, 2015). Thus, management can recognize and resolve employee concerns before they get worse by being proactive in communicating with them (Day-Duro et al. 2021). When dealing with situations involving disgruntled employees, effective communication is crucial. Okpalibekwe et al. (2015) said it preserves public confidence, guarantees the continuation of essential public services, and lessens hostilities in the event of disruptions.

Although there are studies on employee activism, the majority of them have been carried out in the private sector or in Western nations (Gamage & Hewagama, 2012; Patrice, 2020), with little focus on the Ghanaian public sector. This creates a knowledge gap regarding the distinct organizational, political, and cultural factors that influence activism in Ghana. Furthermore, research on strategic communication techniques created specially to control employee activism in the public sector is lacking. In Ghana's public sector, there is a dearth of empirical evidence regarding the efficacy of strategic communication frameworks in lowering conflict or enhancing ties between management and staff.

Studies that assess the effects of these frameworks may prove to be very helpful. Importantly, the bureaucratic, and occasionally politicized nature of the Ghanaian public sector may have a

different impact on employee activism than other sectors. Therefore, this investigation accordingly adds to filling the gap by examining strategic communication framework for navigating employee activism at the workplace, precisely, within the Ghanaian public sector.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

The general objective of the study is to develop a strategic framework that will enhance engagement.

Specifically, the following objectives are the focus of this study;

- (i) To identify the main causes and forms of Public Sector Activism in Ghana.
- (ii) To identify communication strategies employed by Public Sector organizations in Ghana to address activism.
- (iii) To evaluate the effectiveness of these communication strategies.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

The following questions should be addressed by this study's findings in light of the aforementioned objectives:

- (i) What are the main causes and forms of Public Sector Activism in Ghana?
- (ii) What are the communication strategies employed by Public Sector organizations in Ghana to address activism?
- (iii) How effective are these communication strategies in managing employee activism in Ghana's Public Sector?

## **1.4 Significance of the study**

Theoretically, the work can bridge labor relations theories (which focus on collective bargaining, conflict resolution, and employee rights) with strategic communication models (such as two-way symmetrical communication and crisis communication theory). This integration provides a

framework for addressing employee activism not just as a labor issue but as a communication challenge. It positions strategic communication as a proactive tool in managing employee relations, emphasizing dialogue, mutual understanding, and negotiation to reduce the adversarial nature of activism.

In practical terms, public sector organizations and legislators can gain important insights by comprehending the framework of strategic communication for managing employee activism. The framework places a strong emphasis on the idea that proactive, ongoing communication can help keep disputes from turning into acts of activism. In order to lessen the possibility of strikes, protests, or disruptions, public sector organizations and legislators should learn to establish regular, structured communication channels where employee concerns are addressed early.

Management and staff can collaborate more effectively when there is strategic communication. The framework sees employee activism as a conversation starter rather than an adversarial action. Regular, open, and sincere communication between public sector organizations and labor unions and employee representatives can strengthen ties. Legislators may support collective bargaining agreements that incorporate communication techniques to guarantee amicable dispute resolution and prevent deadlocks.

The study will be filling this knowledge gap through an in-depth strategic communication framework, combining a category of communication strategies, including media relations, internal communication, and public engagement, which manages employees' activism in the Ghanaian public sector. With a better understanding of the dynamics between employee activism and strategic communication, one is well-placed to have an influence on or come up with organizational policies that would support a positive work environment. By providing empirical insights and a tailored framework, this research will contribute to academic knowledge and

practical tools for managing employee activism within the Ghanaian public sector. The results could be a useful tool for leaders in the public sector to deal with employee activism in a way that promotes more peaceful workplaces.

### **1.5 Scope and limitation of the study**

In terms of geographical scope, the study will be limited to some selected public sector workers in Accra by examining how communication practices of government functionaries deal with activism. The goal is to develop a strategic framework that will enhance engagement. Thorough investigation of the situation should have included a review of all or a significant percentage of other public sector workers. Nevertheless, the scope of the study could not have been supported by the researcher's abilities and resources. Hence, the study will be conducted in the Greater Accra Region and will take place in August- December, 2024.

### **1.6 Definitions of Key Terms**

- **Strategic communication:** Zerfass et al. (2018) define strategic communication as any communication that is vital to the survival and prosperity of an entity. Specifically, strategic communication is the intentional use of communication by an organization or other entity to have conversations that are critical to its goals from a strategic standpoint.
- **Employee activism:** initiatives with a clear purpose that are organized, mediated, and supported by individuals or groups of workers in order to advance organizational policy and/or decision-making both internally and externally and effect social change (Krishna, 2021).
- **Public Sector:** institutional units can be classified as being public or private units on the basis of whether they are being owned or controlled by public or private units. The grouping of units owned or controlled by public units is referred to in the SNA as the public sector. It consists

of all government units, all nonprofit institutions (NPIs) controlled and mainly financed by government, and all public corporations.

- Government units: Government units are legal entities established by political processes which have legislative, judicial or executive authority over other institutional units within a given area (SNA4. 104).

### **1.7 Structure of the Thesis**

There will be five primary chapters or divisions in the study. The study's background, problem statement, research objectives, research question, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study as well as the operational definitions are all covered in the first chapter, and study structure. The research literature, which includes the opinions and writings of other practitioners regarding the strategic communication and employee activism, will be given a lot of weight in Chapter two. Chapter three provides an explanation of the study's methodology. A thorough explanation of the data analysis and interpretation is given in Chapter four. The study is concluded in Chapter five, which also includes a summary of the research and a discussion of the conclusions and findings. Chapter five concludes with a summary of the results, a conclusion, and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

In order to set the stage for the study and clarify its necessity, this chapter reviews pertinent research and works by other authors discussing the forms and causes of employee activism within the Public Sector, and theories that explain why employees decide to register their displeasure publicly are being thoroughly discussed. To help better illustrate the knowledge gap that the study aims to fill and to provide a clear direction for future research, this chapter provides a summary of the pertinent literature on the topic. The review serves as the foundation for the work.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

##### **2.1.1 Stakeholder theory**

Freeman (1984) said organizations have multiple stakeholders who ought to be considered by executives to ensure a business organization's success in the current and future environment. The stakeholder theory acknowledges that there are other groups beyond the stockholders who are within the reach of a firm's responsibility (Freeman & Reed, 1983). But other groups can impact the achievements of the firm's objectives. The broad range of groups and individuals could need to be distinguished, to exclude certain groups that have little or no impact on the firm.

Clarkson (1998) argues that, the stakeholder theory has been utilized in various ways, but its ultimate intentions are described as to accommodate firms' operations through guidance and explanation. The stakeholder literature has oftentimes covered different theoretical approaches simultaneously and is distinguished by Clarkson (1998) into three aspects: Descriptive / empirical (describing e.g., the nature of the firm and how it is managed), Instrumental (identifying the

connections between the achievements of corporate objectives and stakeholder management), and normative (function of the firm and its moral guidelines).

De Gooyert et al. (2017) divides stakeholder theory into three issues that distinguish different approaches of viewing stakeholders. Accordingly, the first issue is “instrumental versus moral” stakeholder theory. From the instrumental stakeholder theory viewpoint, the organization expects to benefit from the interest they have put into their stakeholders to satisfy them. Improved organizational performance in terms of increased trust and improved reputation are examples of outcomes from satisfying the interest of multiple stakeholders.

The moral stakeholder theory’s opposing view emphasizes that, it is the right thing to consider the stakeholders, not for organizational benefits (De Gooyert et al., 2017). The second issue is “avoiding trade-offs versus making trade-offs”. Avoiding trade-offs focuses more on aligning the interests of the stakeholders to not prioritize other stakeholders. Making trade-offs is however focused on the characteristics of the stakeholders, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and characteristics of the firm, and prioritizing between them. Lastly, the third issue is “stakeholder engagement” (De Gooyert et al., 2017). The difference between the stakeholders’ actual interests and what the organization believes it to be. Decision making is supported or resisted based on correctly identifying the interests of the stakeholders. Direct communication is beneficial to clarify the interests and can promote positive link between the stakeholders and the organization (De Gooyert et al., 2017).

The stakeholder theory has faced more recent criticism regarding its vagueness and even broadness (Fassin, 2019; de Gooyert et al., 2017). The ambiguity of the stakeholder theory has been addressed by several researchers. For instance, Pesqueux and Damak-Ayadi (2015) argued that stakeholder theory views organizations as ethical entities that ought to manage relationships with a variety of

stakeholders to create value (Pesqueux & Damak-Ayadi, 2015). Fassin (2019) mentions that it can also be used by organizations as a strategic tool to expand the management perspective by considering the interests of the business community and socio-economic region surrounding the organization.

Stakeholder theory has connections to the field of strategic management, business ethics, organization theory, social issues in management, and more recently sustainable development (Laplume et al., 2018). The vast changes within the business environment (e.g., increase of activism, takeovers, rising consumer movement, technological changes, and environmental concerns) urged for adequate theoretical advancements. The relevance of the theory is thus especially accepted due to the growing concern of some organizations' unethical behavior (Laplume et al., 2018), and connection to strategic management (Fassin, 2019).

Pesqueux and Damak-Ayadi (2015) raised whether stakeholders can be drivers of a new strategic organizational discourse by developing proactive strategies when having a voice in the values of a firm. By having a joint purpose and collaboration between stakeholders and organizations, it can motivate transformation processes towards sustainable solutions (Freudenreich et al., 2020). The specific purpose of stakeholder cooperation can guide efforts towards sustainable development and align the interests of a number of stakeholders (Freudenreich et al., 2020).

#### **2.1.1.1 Application of the theory to employee activism**

Stakeholder theory can be especially useful when discussing employee activism in the public sector. According to the theory, every person or group impacted by an organization's operations is a stakeholder whose interests need to be taken into consideration. Because they directly support the public service mission, employees are a crucial stakeholder group in the public sector. Employee activism focuses on how workers try to voice their concerns, which are frequently

connected to working conditions, health, or moral principles. According to the Stakeholder theory, these interests are essential to the organization's mission and success rather than merely being incidental. Stakeholder theory states that organizations have an obligation to fairly address the needs of all parties. Consequently, it is the responsibility of government functionaries to consider employee concerns, especially when those concerns are expressed through activism. In this sense, employee activism can be seen as an attempt to make the organization more socially responsible overall by putting pressure on it to fulfill its moral commitment to its workers. This alignment with the stakeholder theory supports an approach that views activism as a form of stakeholder engagement rather than opposition.

Stakeholder theory states that employee activism is a legitimate and necessary way for public sector employees to express their concerns and influence organizational policies. By recognizing employees as important stakeholders and considering proactive activism as a beneficial contribution rather than resistance, public sector organizations can use the stakeholder theory to support their actions. This approach enhances organizational cohesion, aligns public sector operations with ethical standards, and fosters trust between staff and the public in addition to helping to resolve employee complaints in a constructive manner.

### **2.1.2 Organizational Justice Theory**

Organizational justice is ethical and fair conduct of people within the organization (Adeel et al., 2018). Treating the employees fairly in the organization provides the resource to the employees that leads toward the organizational embeddedness and hence increased performance. Employees' advocacy is the act of working for the interests of the employees as well as to show the transparent policy of the organization (Yeh, 2014). Employees' advocacy includes considering the employee's complaints, protecting the employee against unfair treatment and harassment and to address the

complaints and worries of employees in a rightful manner (Kim, 2009), hence further enhancing the in-role performance.

Organizational justice is based on the social exchange theory (Ghosh et al., 2017). Social exchange focuses on the fair treatment of the employees that induces the positive attitude towards the work performance (Haines et al., 2018). Similarly, Zhang et al. (2014) stressed when employees perceives the fair treatment, they respond more promptly by contributing toward the organizational and performance goals. Various studies Colquitt et al. (2012); Nadiri and Tanova, 2010; Sahin, (2017) argued justice to be associated with the satisfaction, commitment and proactive behavior towards in-role as well as the extra role performance. Furthermore, Fischer and Smith (2006) predicted justice to be fundamental element that induces the self- reported behavior of the employees, consequently increasing the overall performance.

According to COR theory, it can be argued that an organization wants to conserve the existing resources. One such resource is organizational justice. As employer provides this resource to the employees, which builds trust between them and resultantly employees get embedded in the organization. This effect is further enhanced by the employee's advocacy, as employees feel more loyal to the organization. Therefore, it can be argued that both these factors would improve employees' in-role performance (Ghosh et al., 2017).

Various studies found employees with higher level of distributive justice face less dissatisfaction (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Kim et al., 2009; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992; Schappe, 1998). Similarly, Lee et al. (2010) argued distributive justice to be important factor in embedding employees as it suppresses the employees' turn over intentions. Negative outcomes arise when the employees find that they are not being treated equally as their co-workers (Burton et al., 2010). Greenberg (2004) argued that employees having higher perception of procedural, distributive and

interactional justice are more embedded in their jobs. This performance can be further improved through employees' advocacy.

When the employees receive the justice from the organization, they show more level of trust (Chen et al., 2015) increased cooperation (Chathoth et al., 2007; Hubbell & Chory-Assad, 2005) and organizational citizenship behavior (Adeel et al., 2018). Obviously working with more level of trust and cooperation will make the employees more motivated towards the workplace therefore their in-role performance increases. Likewise, low level of the organizational justice evidently affects counterproductive behavior of the employees, disengagement, retaliation (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2021; Colquitt et al., 2021) and negative behavior.

#### **2.1.2.1 Application of the theory to employee activism**

Employee activism in the public sector is frequently sparked by workers who feel that there is injustice in one or more of these areas. Concerns about distributive justice, for instance, may arise from unfair promotion practices or unequal pay distribution, whereas procedural justice issues may arise from a lack of transparency in the decision-making processes. The way management interacts with staff is often influenced by interactional justice, and mistreatment can result in distrust and actions from the workforce.

### **2.2 Definition and Scope of Strategic Communication**

Several definitions of what strategic communication is have been developed. Heath et al. (2018) define strategic communication as purposeful, normative use of functions and discourse processes by organizations to accomplish their missions, visions, and core values. Another definition says that strategic communication is the purposeful use of communication by an organization or other entity to engage in conversations of strategic significance to its goals" (Zerfass et al., 2018). In order for public relations to be strategic, communication must be reflective and analytical, and

must benefit society through dialogue and accountability measures (Zerfass et al., 2018). Macnamara (2018) further argues that in order to elevate strategic communication, it is necessary to incorporate open, dynamic, and expanded approaches that facilitate two-way communication.

The first definition is a bit limited since it only refers to organizations, while the latter definition has a more open approach, referring to entities, which includes people (such as celebrities or individual politicians) as well as social formations other than organizations (Macnamara, 2018).

The latter definition is normative, highlighting engagement and conversation, while the first one is more descriptive (Zerfass et al., 2018). In other words, strategic communication may be used for good (such as creating engagement, or positive social or organizational change), or for evil (such as propaganda, disinformation or other forms of distorted communication) (Zerfass et al., 2018). Based on the same reasoning as Falkheimer and Heide (2023), strategic communication can be different things depending on the perspective and context.

Strategic communication contributes to creating and developing strategies that enable organizations to compete in their industries. Strategic communications include operational planning strategies, innovative strategic planning, and business development planning strategies (Christensen & Christensen, 2018; Aggerholm & Asmuß, 2016). Effective integration of these processes into strategic organizational communication and strategic thinking platforms that are coherent, interactive, and encompassing decision-making frameworks could allow organizations to succeed. Researchers have acknowledged that strategic communication and strategic thinking should be considered vital to implementing strategies to increase the organization's competitive position (Calabrese & Costa, 2016; Bäck, Schwarz, von, Hasson & Richter, 2020, p.231).

Ershadi and Eskandari (2019) suggested that not integrating strategic communication into the leaders' thought processes when developing organizational strategies, including process

performance planning, may ensure that such plans would not succeed. Dhir and Dhir (2020) and Halevy (2020) indicated that, strategic communication has many interrelated qualities, including creativity, a systematic approach concerning problem-solving, and long-term orientation. As a result, Goldman and Scott (2016), Hunitie (2018), Starr (2016) posited that strategic communications transcend resources, space, and time and also offer innovative solutions to perplexing and complicated problems that organizations may face.

### **2.3 Key Element and Determination of Strategic Communication**

According to Paul (2011), strategic communication in attending to be successful must include the communicative content and signals of actions, images, and policies. He suggests an understanding of the term as enterprise level strategic communication, strategic communication planning, integration, and synchronization processes, communication strategies and themes, communication, information, and influence capabilities and knowledge of human dynamics and analysis or assessment capabilities. Hallahan et al. (2017) suggests aspects that would be implemented in communication strategy designing. This includes the ability of communicators to differentiate between traditional communication channels and to choose the most effective ones. Also, important changes in public communication based on technology and by media economics as well as usage of expanding variety of methods to influence on relationships and attitudes toward organizations. Strategic communication recognizes purposeful influence as the fundamental goal of communications by organizations.

van Ruler (2018) said strategic communication as the management of the amalgam of communication processes in the context of continuous strategy development, and therefore include the presentation, promotion, and realization aspects as well as the building and rebuilding aspects

of strategy and see this as a continuous loop. Strategic communication follows strategy, and strategic communication is the aid with which to attain set goals by influencing the public sphere to accept these set goals.

Hallahan (2004) identified six communication specialties in organizations: management marketing, technical communication, political communication, public relations and information/social marketing campaigns. All listed areas of communication are in the pool of corporative communications and have a crucial impact on the company's mission fulfillment. The conclusion is that corporative communication is a structural part, or even more 'spine' of the company's strategic communication efforts. It could be said, that strategic communication is the overall communication efforts of the organization to achieve maximum possible fulfillment of their mission through most effective communication with all their target publics. The role of strategic communication is to ensure information transfer and creation of relation upon them among of all public segments, which are in correlation with the organization. This perspective includes the concepts of strategic message design, management of culture, and total quality management (Holtzhausen, 2012).

#### **2.4 Strategic Communication Within the Public Sector**

Studies on public sector communication are still limited (Graber, 2013; Lee, 2017; Liu and Horsely, 2017; Gelders and Ihlen, 2010; Laursen and Valentini, 2010), despite the fact that communications about policies, initiatives and activities have an important role in democratic societies. It is believed, in fact, that informed citizens can make reasoned choices and participate in policy discussions and public decisions (Thomas, 2015).

Interestingly, most of the studies (Édes, 2014; Heise, 2015; Laursen and Valentini, 2015; Lee, 2015; Mancini, 2016) on public sector communication focused on country and/or institution-based

government communications and practices. These investigations show that civil servants working in information and communication often deal with: monitoring media coverage, briefing and advising political officials, managing media relations, informing the public directly, sharing information across the administration and formulating communication strategies and campaigns, and researching and assessing public opinion (Lee, 2007). However, there are areas of research in public sector communication which have not yet been tackled, for example the extent of involvement by public communication officers in the strategic management of public sector organizations. Public sector communication is essential for fostering transparency, accountability, and public engagement. It operates within a democratic context, emphasizing the need for organizations to inform citizens about public duties and the use of tax money (Barber, 2016; King et al., 2018). Unlike commercial communication, which focuses on profit, public sector communication aims to motivate behavioral changes for societal benefits through both one-way and interactive campaigns (Moynihan, 2013). Challenges include outdated systems and inter-departmental disconnects, necessitating digital transformation to enhance real-time communication and efficiency. It is characterized by structured, goal-oriented messaging to effectively engage with the public (Koteen, 1989). Effective public sector communication significantly enhances engagement with employees by fostering transparency, trust, and collaboration. Clear communication channels allow employees to voice concerns and contribute ideas, promoting a sense of belonging and commitment to organizational goals (Gelders et al., 2017). Utilizing digital tools streamlines communication and facilitates real-time feedback, which is crucial for maintaining engagement, especially in remote work settings (Krasil'nikov et al., 2014). Furthermore, involving employees in decision-making processes and recognizing their contributions can lead to higher motivation and improved public service outcomes. Public sector

communication is often one-way in nature. One-way communication involves the government transmitting information to citizens without expecting feedback, often used for alerts and announcements (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Conversely, two-way communication encourages interaction and feedback, promoting citizen engagement and trust through consultations and feedback mechanisms. Effective Public communication strategies increasingly emphasize this two-way approach to enhance transparency, accountability, inclusive, and participatory governance (Edes, 2014). Thus, while traditional practices leaned towards one-way communication, there is a growing shift towards more interactive methods (Lenkova, 2017).

## **2.5 Employee Activism**

Brush (2020) described employee activism as activities taken by workers to speak out for or against their employers on contentious social issues and stated that it is characterized by actions performed consciously to achieve social change. Krishna (2021) defined employee activism as goal-oriented efforts organized and negotiated by individuals and or groups of employees to internally and/or externally advocate for or against organizational policy and or decision making to generate social change. Employee activists make their engagement visible, and their actions are assumed to have either adversary or advocacy impact on organizations.

Shandwick (2014) reported that one third of employee activism is stimulated by employers and the rest arises organically out of self-motivation and determination. The research also shows that both highly engaged and disengaged employees go to great lengths to show it. Nataros (2020) highlighted that employee activists use various social activism methods, including social media campaigns, staged walkouts, and protests to make their actions visible and generate social change. These studies suggest employee activism encompasses not only campaigning for change within the organization to senior management but also the use of public relations techniques to solicit

external attention to support the employees' purpose. The report further noted that employee activism is not always a result of the human resources department failing to recognize or respond to problems before they boil over. Employers may not have caused harm to employees either.

Peachey (2020) ascribed the recent surge in high-profile cases of employee activism to technological improvements that enable individuals and employee groups to reach massive audiences quickly, adding external social pressure to organization's internal pressure. The potential that employee activism may offer to an organization has prompted them to treat it holistically as both pro- and anti-organizational initiatives. Krishna (2021) said, this conversation offers up various avenues for future study on employee activism and internal communication. Internal communication is critical in creating a mutually beneficial connection with employee activists, according to industry experts, particularly at the convergence of internal communication, digital media, social networks, and employee activism (Comcowich, 2019).

## **2.6 Public Sector Employee Activism**

Scholars highlight employee activism as exponentially growing and a new norm for the future of business landscapes (Briscoe & Gupta, 2021; Miles et al., 2021), however the research of this specific form of activism is limited (Krishna, 2021). Yet, there is a significantly increasing number of employees criticizing their organizations practices, decisions and policies that imply questionable ethical principles, but additionally feel the urge to raise voice about external societal issues that their employer may leave in the shade. Evidently, current literature indicates three key contributors to the progression of employee activism that include rising workforce expectations, generational shift at the workplace and use of technologies including social media (Briscoe & Gupta, 2021; Day-Duro et al., 2021; Krishna, 2021).

The contributors unfold from younger generations being more demanding for their public sector organizations to operate responsibly and from growing up with the internet and technologies, possessing great skills at using social media as a platform to share any of such sustainability concerns (Rheinhardt & Gioia, 2021). Miles et al. (2021) identify that nowadays the focus of those partaking in employee activism has become broader than before. Researchers state that currently the focus of employee activism is grasping social, political and environmental issues, unlike when looking back to 2018, it was merely focused on gender equality related issues at workplaces (Rheinhardt & Gioia, 2021; Miles et al., 2021).

Biscoe and Gupta (2021) propose that with the presence of employee activism, the line between employees ideating to “improving business” and the employees demanding for “addressing social issues” is blurred. This means that it is becoming difficult for employers to understand whether the employee act with the goal to benefit the company or with the goal to benefit society as a whole. Briscoe & Gupta (2021) suggested that employees base their course of action based on a spectrum of disruptiveness they aim to cause for the company, following the two tactics at the far ends: disruption and persuasion. Disruption tactics are headline-grabbing actions with intention to shake up an organization's internal routines and the public image, while persuasion tactics are less visible and controversial, aiming to influence colleagues and executives through communication techniques and other more discreet approaches.

## **2.7 Impacts of Employee Activism on Public Sector Organizations**

Public sector employee activism frequently calls for inclusive policies, equitable treatment, and improved working conditions, forcing organizations to reevaluate long-standing practices and standards (Heery, 2021). To promote a more just and equitable workplace culture, activism acts as a call to address complaints that might otherwise go unheard. Employees in the public sector, for

example, might support laws that promote fair compensation, mental health initiatives, or work-life balance. Organizations show their dedication to workers' well-being by meeting these demands, which could lower attrition and boost morale (Thompson & Zald, 2020).

Public sector organizations are also compelled by activism to increase transparency and accountability. These businesses must honestly address employee concerns if they hope to preserve their reputation and the confidence of the public. Freeman and Reed (1983) asserted that, in order to engage stakeholders in activism-driven stakeholder engagement, organizations must address their concerns in a proactive and responsible manner. Therefore, activism is a means of encouraging internal accountability and creating a culture that values honesty and timeliness. On the down side, if employee activism is not adequately controlled, it may cause operational disruptions. Through actions like protests, work stoppages, and even derogatory social media social media campaigns, activism can make it more difficult for the public sector to provide necessary services (Goodman et al., 2018). If activism increases as a result of inadequate engagement, a fractured workplace can affect productivity and create a feeling of alienation between management and employees (Goodman et al., 2018).

### **2.7.1 Employee Activism within the Public Sector in Ghana**

Employee activism is a crucial aspect of labor relations in Ghana's public sector (ILO, 2022). It entails workers' collective efforts to voice their complaints, demand better working conditions, and advocate for organizational reform (ILO, 2022). Activism can take many different forms. Some examples include protests, strikes, petitions, social media campaigns, and official meetings held by labor unions. Employee activism in the public sector has a long history in Ghana, as shown by a number of well-known cases that have affected labor relations in the country. These cases often

involve significant industries where workers have protested against poor working conditions, low pay, and inadequate resources, such as the education, healthcare, and civil service (ILO, 2022).

Employee activism in Ghana's public sector has evolved significantly over the years, particularly influenced by issues of pay equity and labor rights. Historically, labor agitations began as early as the colonial era, with organized strikes emerging in the 1920's and 1930's, leading to the establishment of trade unions (Dwomoh & Kwarteng, 2015). In recent decades, major reforms like the Single Spine Salary Structure (SSSS) introduced in 2010 aimed to address wage disparities and improve conditions for public workers. However, implementation challenges have often sparked protests and strikes, reflecting ongoing discontent with government policies and economic conditions. This activism underscores a persistent struggle for fair treatment and equitable compensation in the public sector. Activism in Ghana reflects a dynamic interplay of social and political factors over the decades, marked by student movements, labor protest, and civil society actions. In a historical context, early activism; Post-independence, student activism emerged as a confrontational force against government policies, notably during Nkrumah's regime. Labor unions and labor movements joined forces with students to oppose government oppression, leading to significant changes (Dwomoh & Kwarteng, 2018). In contemporary trends, recent activism focuses on issues like high living costs, corruption, and unemployment, with trade unions and civil society playing crucial roles. Key mobilization themes include; proletarian (economic grievances), republican (governance issues), and corporatist (labor conditions) protests (Tyson et al., 2021). Ghanaian public sector employee activism has evolved significantly, particularly in response to urban development issues and political accountability. Examples to illustrate a shift towards more organized and strategic forms of activism within the public sector are; Urban Activism, in Kumasi, trader activists protested against urban regeneration projects, employing strategies like media

campaigns and petitions to secure rights and compensate from authorities. Youth Activism, influential youth activists, such as Ernesto Yeboah and KalyJay, have mobilized peers for social justice and accountability, notably through the #FixTheCountry movement, which gained traction during the COVID-19 pandemic. Student movements have played a crucial role in promoting democratic values and addressing governance issues in Ghana. Digital media has significantly influenced public sector activism in Ghana by enhancing political participation and mobilization (Miles et al., 2021). Social media platforms, particularly Facebook and X (formerly Twitter), have become vital for activists to raise awareness on critical issues like water sanitation and illegal mining (galamsey). The hashtags #FixTheCountry and #WeGoDemonstrate exemplify how digital activism can challenge government policies and garner public support, especially during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. This shift has democratized public discourse, allowing citizens to voice grievances directly to authorities, thus reshaping the political landscape in Ghana.

Many Ghanaian public sector workers endure poor working conditions, including outdated equipment, inadequate facilities, and a dearth of basic supplies necessary for them to do their jobs effectively (Dwomoh & Kwarteng, 2015). Healthcare workers typically deal with understocked hospitals; teachers, on the other hand, typically deal with packed classrooms and inadequate teaching supplies. Employees are more likely to request better workspaces and equipment so they can perform their jobs well when subpar working conditions cause them to become frustrated and burned out. Particularly, in the healthcare and education space, unsafe and subpar working conditions are now frequently the source of protests.

## **2.8 The Role of Strategic Communication in Managing Employee Activism**

Managing employee activism requires strategic communication, particularly when employees start speaking up more in their workplaces. By ensuring an honest, open, and productive dialogue

between management and employees, matching organizational objectives with employee needs, and fostering a positive work environment, effective strategic communication helps organizations navigate employee activism. The following provides a detailed explanation of its main purposes as suggested by Miles et al. (2021) and Krishna (2021):

➤ **Encouraging sincere communication**

An open exchange of ideas, complaints, and feedback between staff members and management is fostered by strategic communication. To make sure that employees' opinions are heard, organizations use digital platforms, town hall meetings, and suggestion boxes. When employees don't feel heard, they are more likely to start acting as activists. Organizations can address issues before they become strikes, open demonstrations, or social media campaigns by actively listening to their concerns.

➤ **Balancing employee concerns with organizational values**

Aligning the company's mission and values with those of its employees can be facilitated through strategic communication. This entails emphasizing common objectives and making sure staff members are aware of the company's dedication to their welfare and advancement. By making sure that their internal and external messaging supports values that are important to their workers like diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as environmental responsibility and ethical labor practices, organizations can prevent activism before it starts. Workers are less likely to be activists if they believe their employer shares their values.

➤ **Quick and forceful crisis intervention**

Experts in strategic communication are able to identify potential triggers for activism, such as unjust laws, unfavorable working conditions, or low pay, and act before the situation gets worse. Strategic communication aids in the development of a response that upholds organizational

integrity and tackles the main concerns brought forth by the workforce in the event that activism occurs. This calls for concise communication outlining the organization's position and the steps it plans to take to address the problems.

➤ **Improving management and leadership**

It is essential that managers and other leaders receive training on effective team communication, particularly in turbulent times. Strategic communicators are more suited to navigate challenging conversations with grace and empathy and to deal with delicate subjects. A respectful and understanding culture is promoted through strategic communication, which finds a balance between top-down (from leadership to employees) and bottom-up (from employees to leadership).

➤ **Establishing transparency and trust**

Maintaining a trusting relationship between management and staff requires transparency. Strategic communication lowers the possibility of misunderstandings and miscommunication by ensuring that the organization's messaging is consistent across all platforms. The integration of PR strategies and internal communication programs is facilitated by strategic communication. This is especially crucial to do when handling employee activism that attracts the interest of outside media. A coherent message guarantees accurate and consistent information for both employees and the general public.

➤ **Involving workers in the procedure**

Employees are less likely to become activists when they believe they have a say in organizational decisions. Creating platforms for staff members to make decisions is an essential part of strategic communication. Employees feel appreciated and involved when they are able to consistently express their concerns through continuous feedback mechanisms. This can assist in identifying complaints before they become more severe.

➤ **Managing the settlement of disputes**

Strategic communication provides impartial and knowledgeable channels of communication during conflict, such as HR departments, impartial committees, or ombudspersons who can arbitrate disputes between employees and management. Effective messaging can help control expectations, calm fears, and communicate organizational efforts to resolve conflicts when tensions are high.

➤ **Preserving employee morale and engagement**

When there is a possibility of unrest, organizations frequently use strategic communication to launch internal campaigns aimed at boosting staff morale. These ads celebrate the company's accomplishments, uphold a supportive workplace environment, and acknowledge staff members' contributions. In order to promote a more engaged and motivated workforce, strategic communication can also be utilized to support reward and recognition programs that address problems and acknowledge employee efforts.

➤ **Managing social and digital media communications**

Activism can swiftly center around social media and internal digital platforms like intranets and messaging apps. Experts in strategic communication keep an eye on these channels to learn about employee sentiment, address concerns, and make sure that unfavorable issues are quickly resolved. In the era of digitalization, employees might air their grievances on social media sites. By interacting with employee activists online, maintaining open channels of communication, and stopping the spread of misleading information, strategic communication aids in the management of these digital campaigns.

➤ **Speaking up and building trust following activism**

Relationships need to be mend after employee activism and trust needs to be restored. This is where effective communication becomes essential. This means expressing an honest and open assessment of the issues raised, demonstrating your commitment to resolving the issues, and giving frequent updates on advancements. When employee activism results in organizational changes, strategic communication helps manage the transition by ensuring that employees are informed of the changes and are encouraged to stay involved.

**2.9 Challenges in Implementing Strategic Communication in Managing Employee Activism within the Public Sector in Ghana**

There are a number of issues to be resolved when using strategic communication to reduce employee activism in Ghana's public sector. Issues with politics, culture, technology, and structure are the root cause of these barriers. A thorough explanation of these difficulties were posited by (Dwomoh & Kwarteng, 2015; & ILO 2022) which can be found below:

➤ **Political Difficulties**

Political decisions frequently have an effect on Ghanaian public sector organizations. These organizations' bureaucratic structures can make it difficult to respond quickly to activism and causes communication plans to be delayed. Furthermore, political favoritism and patronage have the potential to erode trust between management and staff, which makes effective communication more difficult. Uncertainty is a result of frequently changing government policies. Since various administrations may have different priorities, this instability affects long-term planning for employee grievance procedures and communication strategies. Labor unions frequently share political affinities, which may result in conflicts of interest. Managing communication-based

activism becomes difficult when political goals take precedence over legitimate employee concerns.

➤ **Cultural Difficulties**

Seniority and authority are traditionally respected in Ghanaian culture. Employees may find it difficult to express their displeasure or take an active stance in public for fear of coming across as disrespectful or rebellious. Transparent communication between management and staff may be more challenging as a result of this cultural norm. Until employee dissatisfaction reaches a critical point, management finds it difficult to gauge it because many Ghanaian workers would prefer to avoid conflict. Plans for communication aimed at curbing activism should consider this resistance as it may make it more challenging to detect disturbances in their early stages. Ghanaians have a propensity to place a high importance on group identity, which may lead workers to perceive injustice collectively. Because of this, management finds it difficult to resolve individual complaints and is forced to deal with more complicated collective grievances.

➤ **Difficulties with Technology**

Access to contemporary communication technologies is restricted for the public sector in certain regions of Ghana. It becomes more difficult as a result to involve all stakeholders equally in communication strategies meant to control or prevent activism. It also makes it more difficult to get in touch with employees, especially in remote areas. Urban areas may have easier access to technology, but many public institutions lack a strong ICT infrastructure overall. Inadequate integration of communication platforms such as digital feedback channels, intranet systems, or social media can impede effective employee communication. Workers may now more easily organize and mobilize activism more quickly thanks to social media platforms. This makes it difficult for Ghanaian public sector management to maintain real-time communication because

employee protests and grievances may gain traction before management is able to take appropriate action.

➤ **Structure-Specific Issues**

The public sector in Ghana typically follows a rigid hierarchical structure. Upward communication can be difficult since lower-level employees usually have limited access to senior management. It can be difficult and time-consuming to get employee concerns in front of decision-makers, which jeopardizes strategic communication initiatives meant to curb activism (ILO, 2022). Decision-making in a great deal of public sector organizations is highly centralized. This could cause a delay in the implementation of communication plans or reforms intended to address employee concerns. Workers may feel alienated if their opinions are not valued or taken into consideration, which may lead to increased activism (ILO, 2022). In Ghana, public sector organizations typically lack a well-thought-out strategic communication plan. Ineffective communication resulting from departments handling issues independently could lead to an increase in activism instead of a decrease. If departments are not coordinated, management may find it more difficult to communicate to employees the company's position on issues like work policies, benefits, and labor conditions (ILO, 2022).

➤ **Overcoming Obstacles in Putting Strategic Communication into Practice**

Implementing strategic communication to curb employee activism can be challenging, but overcoming these obstacles calls for a thorough plan that combines tactical strategies with theoretical understanding (ILO, 2022). Managing employee activism can be achieved through external strategies that emphasize forging closer ties with stakeholders, government agencies, the media, and the public at large. Employee concerns or changes that employees push for within an organization are referred to as "employee activism (ILO, 2022).

Public Relations experts, Prof. James .E. Grunig, Larissa .A. Grunig, David .M. Dozier, and others created the Excellence Theory in the 1980s and 1990s. The Excellence study (1985- 1992), a comprehensive study supported by the international Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Foundation, served as its model. By emphasizing how strategic communication increases organizational effectiveness and cultivates mutually beneficial relationships with significant publics, the theory aims to pinpoint the components that contribute to effective Public Relations practices. The theory suggests that, organizations should use two-way symmetrical communication to communicate with their stakeholders. This method encourages cooperation and understanding between the environment and the object. During employee activism, strategic communication can be used to control how the public views the company. Campaigns of this nature possess the power to alter the trajectory of events and guarantee that the public and media are appropriately and impartially informed about the organization's view. For instance, businesses can hold press conferences, interviews, and media briefings in order to address concerns raised by employees and provide an overview of the steps being taken to address them.

The Stakeholder Theory, created by Freeman in 1984, highlights the importance of communicating with all parties affected by organizational decisions, including employees, clients, investors, regulators, and communities. Reducing external pressures can be achieved by giving these stakeholders' concerns due consideration. Employers can get in touch with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), trade unions, and civil society groups that might be interested in the issues brought up by workers. Through communication with these external parties, organizations can work together to find solutions. Working with labor unions, for instance, can offer a discussion forum and guarantee that worker concerns are handled methodically while preserving labor harmony.

Institutional Theory by Meyer and Rowan (1977) states that rules, laws, and regulations form the framework within which organizations operate. Respecting legal and regulatory requirements is essential when managing employee activism. Businesses can ensure compliance with legal requirements regarding working conditions and employee rights by collaborating with government agencies, labor departments, and regulatory bodies. To ensure compliance with labor laws and demonstrate their commitment to addressing activism through the appropriate legal channels, companies can arrange meetings with labor regulators.

In an emergency, direct and timely communication is encouraged by Coombs' 2007 Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). Social media is an excellent tool for transparently and swiftly sharing information. Social media or not, external communications about employee activism must be succinct, precise, and delivered on time. Employers can use social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter to address any misinformation and give updates on how they are addressing employee concerns. Social media use that is proactive can manage public opinion and halt the propagation of negative rumors and sentiments.

Coombs' (1995) Crisis Communication Theory states that organizations should have a clear communication plan in place and be ready for any kind of crisis. By working with the media, organizations can mitigate the effects of crises, including employee activism. Building a good relationship with the media ensures that the business can voice its opinion about employee activism. This means putting together crisis communication plans with media contacts, press kits, and spokespersons qualified to answer difficult questions. By controlling the media narrative, organizations can avoid escalation and maintain a positive public perception during employee protests or walkouts.

The basis for employee-employer relations is provided by legal frameworks and compliance procedures. Following laws and regulations is essential to preventing conflicts and legal actions, according to Kelman's 1958 Compliance Theory. Organizations must ensure that, when it comes to labor and employment laws, they follow the law when handling employee activism. It might be essential for this to get legal counsel on how to handle particular circumstances, like protests, strikes, or whistleblowing. In order to prevent legal issues during activism, organizations can also set up compliance programs that match their internal policies with international and national labor standards.

### **2.10 Empirical Review**

Holtzhausen's (2019), evaluated the contribution of strategic communication to lowering employee activism in multinational firms. Holtzhausen (2019) discovered that efficient communication channels were essential for lowering conflict and promoting productive conversation through a mixed-method approach that included surveys and interviews with communication managers. Transparent internal communication frameworks that enable staff members to safely express their concerns are crucial, the study concludes. The results showed that frequent feedback loops, structured discussion forums, and active listening considerably reduced the rise in employee activism (Holtzhausen, 2019).

Scott and Coombs' (2020), examined how strategic crisis communication frameworks affected employee activism in tech companies. The researchers found that a lack of strategic planning and delayed responses exacerbated activism incidents through case studies and surveys conducted across large companies, such as Google and Amazon. Scott and Coombs (2020) advised putting crisis communication models into practice that include a dedication to complaint resolution, prompt response times, and clear policy articulation. They contended that a strategic crisis

communication plan that foresees possible employee concerns can greatly contribute to the stability of the workplace (Scott & Coombs, 2020).

Akinwale (2021), examined the function of internal communication in handling labor activism in Sub-Saharan Africa Perspective. The researcher discovered through interviewing and document analysis that workers frequently reacted as activists when labor policies were not explained clearly. According to the study's findings, Nigerian banks must have a systematic communication framework that quickly resolves employee concerns in order to reduce activism. To effectively handle activism, Akinwale (2021) suggested utilizing channels of communication such as frequent Facebook session, grievance redressed meetings, and policy transparency (Akinwale, 2021).

In their paper, Waweru and Muturi (2018) investigated strategic communication practices in Kenya's public sector with a focus on their effectiveness in lowering employee activism. Through a survey of public sector employees, they found that poor communication was a significant factor in employee dissatisfaction and activism. The study recommends using a dialogic communication framework that provides clear grievance redressal procedures and encourages two-way communication between management and employees. This approach showed promise in lowering activism and addressing workers' expectations and concerns by involving them in decision-making processes (Waweru & Muturi, 2018).

Fosu and Adomako's (2022), examined how well strategic communication works in Ghana's public sector to control activism. The researchers discovered that inconsistent communication tactics frequently resulted in higher employee dissatisfaction through case studies of significant Accra public organizations. They concluded that activism in Ghana's public institutions could be successfully reduced by implementing a thorough strategic communication framework that included frequent town hall meetings, active feedback mechanisms, and open communication

about organizational changes. According to Fosu and Adomako's findings, communication strategies should be tailored to Ghana's local cultural context in order to increase their efficacy (Fosu & Adomako, 2022).

### **2.11 Summary**

The literature review looks at the intricate and multidimensional process of handling employee dissent in Ghana's public sector through the prism of the strategic communication framework for navigating employee activism. Employee activism poses a serious threat to public sector organizations. It is influenced by various organizational and socioeconomic factors. The analysis shows how important it is to have effective strategic communication in order to solve these issues and keep the organization stable. The next chapter is the research methodology.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter explains the data collection techniques and the methodologies that were employed to achieve the basic aims and purposes of this study. These include the research philosophy, population, research design, sampling technique, sources of data, data collection instrument and data collection procedure, as well as data analysis and ethical consideration of the study.

#### **3.1 Research Philosophy**

The study underpins interpretivism, which emphasizes using people's subjective interpretations of their social and cultural contexts to understand social processes (Elliott & Timulak, 2005). According to interpretivism, perception is shaped by experiences, beliefs, and values and is socially produced (Myers, 2008). The dissertation, which is interpretivist in nature, aims to analyze the role of strategic communication in mitigating employee activism within the Ghanaian public sector.

Interpretive research is ideal because it seeks to understand people's feelings and how they interpret daily life (Idowu, 2017). Interpretation helps comprehend the complexities of human events and the motivations of historical actors (Divya, 2016). Interpretivism uses both subjective and objective methodologies to study social constructions and phenomena in order to bridge the gap between positivism and critical points of view. In order to comprehend the subject matter more thoroughly, the study employed an interpretivist methodology. This research strategy aims to provide a contextual, subjective, and reflective understanding of the role of strategic communication in mitigating employee activism at the workplace.

The interpretivist paradigm is thought to be the most appropriate for answering the questions this research raises. This paradigm's selection as the primary paradigm allows the study to focus on rich and subjective data, leading to important evidence from selected employees through in-depth interviews and questionnaires. The values-driven interpretivist paradigm has been widely adopted by qualitative researchers as well (Roulston & Shelton, 2015).

### **3.2 Research Design**

The study uses a descriptive survey design. According to Saunders et al., (2016), a descriptive survey aims to document, observe, and describe specific aspects of a situation as it occurs. The design has the advantage of drawing in a sizable number of responses from a wide range of people. The same set of questions is asked to a large number of respondents in person, over the phone, or by mail in a descriptive survey (Roulston & Shelton, 2015). This design uses data collected at a specific point in time to attempt to explain people's behaviors and perceptions in addition to accurately portraying the events. It is also important to keep in mind that this design is suitable for research that selects a neutral sample of participants and asks them to take part in questionnaires, interviews, or tests in order to characterize specific aspects of a population.

Using this design, data is also gathered from multiple groups to investigate the differences between the subgroups at the same time (Saunders et al., 2016). According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2000), one of the primary benefits of a descriptive survey is its capacity to generate a sizable amount of data from a sizable sample of participants. When using a descriptive survey question, it is important to critically assess it because it should be truthful and not deceptive. This is due to the fact that the descriptive survey results can be greatly impacted by the precise wording of the survey questions (Saunders et al., 2016). The study can investigate problems and learn more about them in order to provide perceptive solutions by employing this style of inquiry (Saunders et al., 2016).

### **3.2.1 Research Approach**

For this study, a mixed method approach was applied. It combines both quantitative and qualitative methods to enhance a full understanding of a phenomenon under study. According to Gunnell (2016), the central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. It combines numerical trends and stories or experiences to study problems. Aina (2012) argued that, using the mixed methods overcomes the weakness found in the qualitative and the quantitative methods. However, Creswell and Plano-Clarke (2017) indicated that, qualitative and quantitative approaches are used to reinforce each other, so the use of the overall strength of a study is greater when the mixed method approach is used. Furthermore, this decision is supported by the rationale of availing the merits and overcoming the demerits of both approaches as discussed by Creswell (2013), the use of multiple data sets can inform the research, by yielding insight and methodological changes that improve the study and strengthen findings as well as collecting diverse data which best provide an understanding of a research problem.

### **3.3 Population of the Study**

The population, also referred to as the target population, is the total population from which a sample is drawn for the study. The entire population or group to which the researcher intends to apply the study's findings is referred to as the "target population" (Polit & Hungler, 2021). Therefore, the study's target population consists of some selected employees from various unions such as; Civil and Local Government Staff Association of Ghana (CLOSSAG), Teachers' and Educational Workers' Union (TEWU), Ghana Union of Traders Associations (GUTA), Association of Ghana Industries (AGI), Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), National Association of Graduate Teachers Ghana (NAGRAT), Ghana Registered Nurses and

Midwives Association (GRNMA), Ghana Medical Association (GMA), Cocoa Research Workers' Union (CRWU), Communication Workers' Union (CWU), Construction and Building Materials Workers' Union (CBMWU), and General Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU), their union leaders, some labor experts, Human Resource Directors and Public Relations practitioners (Government representatives) in Accra. The main reason for this is that, the respondents have a great deal of expertise regarding the research that is being conducted. Their perspectives and experiences are therefore very important to this research.

### **3.4 Sampling Technique**

A researcher needs to employ a sampling procedure to obtain a sample. Probability and non-probability sampling techniques are the two primary types of sampling methods. The purposive sampling technique which is a non-probability sampling technique was utilized in the study for the respondents (LoBlondo-Wood & Haber, 2018). Purposive sampling seeks to identify and select individuals or groups of individuals with knowledge of or experience with an intriguing phenomenon (Cresswell & Plano-Clarke, 2017). The researcher selects participants who are knowledgeable about the study area to get the best results. Purposive sampling is used to select respondents with in-depth knowledge of the subject matter who would best answer the research questions by providing accurate information regarding the study, in order to achieve the research objectives. The basis for the respondent selection process is identifying relevant characteristics among the possible respondents in the sample size. Thus, the researcher uses the purposive sampling technique to choose participants who are able and willing to provide the data needed to finish the study. Using this strategy, the researcher will be able to collect diverse perspectives on the subjects under inquiry from a variety of people. Furthermore, this technique will be critical in determining the study population who will be able to supply the necessary information.

### **3.5 Sample Size**

A sample size is a set of participants chosen from the target population who are thought to be representatives of the overall population for that particular study (Brink, 2022). Kothari (2019) states that, the ideal sample satisfies the following criteria: it is representative, dependable, flexible, and efficient. Its goal is to estimate the population's unknown characteristics. Studying everyone or everything is generally very difficult, particularly when doing qualitative research. Typically, a small representative sample is chosen, and it is thoroughly examined. Given that the study used a descriptive survey design, ten (10) key informants made up of labor experts, union leaders, Human Resource Directors and Public Relations practitioners, and then two hundred (200) employees representing the various unions were involved in the data collection process and subsequently interviewed for the study.

Consequently, the study employed a sample size of two hundred and ten (210) participants. The study selected these because of accessibility. This sample size was chosen for the study with the confidence that it would yield descriptive data that would be useful for the investigation. Moreover, the rationale behind the selection of this sample size was that, the participants possess first-hand knowledge and an in-depth understanding of the topic which improves the study's implementation.

### **3.6 Sources of Data Collection**

#### **3.6.1 Primary Data Collection**

For this study, an interview guide and a questionnaire were used as the main research tool. Items on the interview guide were predominantly open-ended questions and this made it simpler for the participants to respond in a semi-structured manner. This free frame method to inquiry is usually categorized as qualitative research. This method allows flexibility in all ways of the research

procedure. The way the study was conducted was to break down everything to participants, and also assure them of confidentiality. The reason for this was to ensure that opinions from participants were free from bias. Information for this research was obtained from both primary and secondary sources.

### **3.6.2 Secondary Data Collection**

However, the secondary sourcing of information is inexpensive, easily accessible and timesaving and it provides data that have already been used in previous studies and articles. Again, much attention and priority were given to sources that have information on activism. Electronic sources such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, Sage publications and other websites were used. The secondary data sought to provide a better understanding as well as a rich picture of the empirical study. Further to this, the study identified discussions in the secondary data that were considered relevant to this research. This was made possible by organizing the study into themes that go with the objectives of the study. Besides, the data obtained from the secondary sources were subjected to critical contextual analyses.

### **3.7 Data Collection Instrument**

For union leaders, managers and labor experts, semi-structured interviews were used to collect the study's essential data. According to Boyce and Neale (2006), in-depth interviewing is a qualitative research method that involves speaking with a small number of respondents one-on-one for extended periods to understand their viewpoints on a particular idea, project, or situation. For instance, questions about the beliefs, perspectives, experiences, and expectations of a chosen group of respondents on a subject or occasion of interest for the study might be posed. Therefore, to address the research questions and achieve the objectives, semi-structured interviews are used to collect data for analysis and improve interpretations. Qualitative research can benefit from the use

of documents, focus groups, interviews, and observations (Bell et al., 2019). According to Polonsky and Waller (2011), researchers primarily use open-ended questions to arrange semi-structured interviews in an effort to cover a wide range of topics relevant to the subject matter. A semi-structured interview also incorporates the best aspects of both structured and unstructured interviews since it allows for some improvisation while still offering some structure.

For employees, questionnaires were used in gathering the required information for the study. Saunders et al., (2012) argues that, they are suitable tools for collecting data from respondents who are geographically dispersed. The researcher used questionnaire as a data collection instrument because its cheap, time saving, easy to administer, effective, and the best form of obtaining information. The questionnaire was designed on open-ended questions and Likert 5 Rating Scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree), to examine the effect of the variables. The study adopted close-ended questionnaire due to the fact that it allows the researcher to guide the respondents in the desired scope of answers and facilitate the collection of large amounts of data in a relatively short period.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

For union leaders, labor experts and managers, interviews took place at the respondents' offices without interfering with the primary data collection process. The researcher greeted the participant and introduced himself before the interview began. Participants had the chance to ask questions to get any question answered before each interview. In addition to using the interview schedule and guide, written consent was requested before recording audio interviews with each participant. The researcher's tools during the interviews was an audio recorder and a notebook for note taking. During the interview, the researcher had the chance to clarify unclear responses and followed up. Following the interview, the researcher closed the session by thanking the subject for agreeing to

participate in the study. The twenty to thirty minutes that each interview lasted was spent in the participants' offices or other natural settings.

For some employees, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents. Other employees also received the questionnaires electronically via google forms. The researcher sought the permission of the respondents individually and separately to participate in the study. Once the permission was granted, the researcher briefed the respondents individually and separately as to what the study is about in order to get the needed attention, support and cooperation of the respondents. Questionnaires that were administered to some respondents were hand-delivered over a period of fifteen (15) days due to the time scale of the study. Respondents were asked to anonymously complete the survey for immediate collection whereas the time spent with each participant by research lasted fifteen (15) minutes.

### **3.9 Data Processing and Analysis**

The data collected from the participants were mixed in nature. According to Creswell (2014), in order to derive significant conclusions from the analysis of qualitative data (interviews), text data must first be dissected and then reassembled. For union leaders, managers and labor experts, content analysis was used to highlight the key elements and connections between the data. This will make it possible to identify specific outcomes, identify behavioral patterns, and make generalizations (Creswell, 2014). The researcher first records interview and then uses a thematic analysis method. The results are analyzed after similar responses are grouped into themes. Thematic analysis is a useful method for examining the perspectives of different research participants, highlighting similarities and differences, and generating unanticipated insights (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This study employed the thematic analysis method as it is best suited for data collected using interviews. However, for employees, the completed questionnaires were

edited for completeness and accuracy before being processed. The information was then coded, allowing the responses to be categorized. Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program, the collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. To allow for easy analysis and recommendations, the results were described using frequency distribution tables and percentages, mean, standard deviation, and rank ratings. The outcome of the questionnaire being quantitative in nature was subjected to detailed analysis and conclusions drawn.

### **3.10 Ethical Consideration**

The researcher's ethical considerations include autonomy, anonymity, and secrecy, as well as the guarantee that the cumulative data obtained from the respondents would not be manipulated by the researcher. More crucially, the purpose of ethics is to ensure that no one is harmed or experiences a negative outcome as a result of the research. Given the frequently delicate nature of connections between researchers and respondents, this study is cognizant of reasonable precautions based on ethical considerations and regulations. As a result, all information obtained by the researcher over the course of this study is kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes. Hence, identities of respondents were not disclosed.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The aim of the study is to analyze the role of strategic communication in mitigating employee activism at the workplace within the Ghanaian Public Sector. It presents the results of data collection and analysis pertaining to the research questions that guided the study. This chapter focuses on the analysis of the responses received from respondents through questionnaires and interviews. For the purpose of this study, a total of two-hundred and five (205) copies of questionnaires were distributed to respondents, of which two hundred (200) copies were duly filled and returned; three (3) copies were filled wrongly, while two (2) were not returned. This brings the total for the analysis to two hundred (200), which amounts to a response rate of 97.5% which is considered as being very good as it would have fairly represented the views of the entire research population.

Accordingly, the study adopted the qualitative research strategy where semi-structured interviews with key informants were used in collecting appropriate data and information that fulfil the study objectives. The data was gathered exclusively from an interview guide as the research instrument. The interview guide was designed in line with the objectives of the study. It contains primarily data attained through the use of interviews. To enhance data quality, unstructured propping questions were used whereby interviewees were free to indicate their views and opinion. As a result, information gathered were analyzed and discussed in themes that relate to the study objectives. With the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), descriptive statistics

such as frequency distribution tables, mean, standard deviation and rank score are used to analyze the quantitative data to make interpretation more meaningful.

#### 4.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

This section sets out the analysis of the demographic data in order to capture the general information of the respondents, issues such as gender, age of the respondents, level of education, years of experience, position of respondents and union membership were addressed in the first section of the questionnaire and represented the information as depicted below;

<b>Table 4.2: Demographic characteristics of respondents</b>		
<b>Demographic characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent%</b>
<b><i>Gender of respondents</i></b>		
Male	108	54
Female	92	46
<b><i>Age of respondents</i></b>		
18-25years	9	4.5
26-33years	10	5.0
34-41years	40	20.0
Above 42 years	140	79.0
<b><i>Highest level of Education</i></b>		
BECE/SSSCE Certificate	12	6.0
Diploma	31	15.5
HND	36	18.0
First Degree	58	29.0
Master's Degree	63	31.5
<b><i>Tenure of respondents</i></b>		
Less than 1year	18	9.0
1-3years	11	5.5
3-5years	21	10.5
5-7years	80	40.0
<b><i>Position of respondents</i></b>		
Junior staff	109	54.5
Mid-level	59	29.5
Senior management	32	16.0
<b><i>Union membership</i></b>		
Yes	123	61.5
No	77	38.5

Source: Researcher Field Data (2024)

The population were asked to indicate their gender, and the results presented in Table 4.2 above indicate that 54% of the respondents were males while 46% were females. Regarding age, 70.5% of the respondents were above 42 years, 20.0% were 31-41 years, and five percent were 26-33 years old, with about four-point five percent of the respondents within the age range of 18-25 years. Again, the data shows the level of education held by the respondents who participated in the study. The findings revealed that only six-point zero percent and 18.0% of the respondents were BECE/SSSCE Certificate holders and HND Degree holders. This was followed by 15.5% of diploma holders, while 31.5% had Master's Degree. However, 29.0% respondents had a bachelor's degree. It can therefore be deduced in this study that; a significant proportion of respondents possess at least a first degree or higher suggesting a well-educated workforce. This could enhance the organization's capacity for strategic thinking and innovation. However, the lower representation of BECE/SSSCE holders might indicate a limited focus on roles requiring lower educational qualifications.

Respondents were required yet to indicate the duration they had been working in their respective public sector Ghanaian organizations. According to the results displayed in the figure above, it was established that most (40.0%) of the respondents have been working for their organizations for a duration of 5-7years, 9.0% had been working for less than 1year duration, and 10.5% of the respondents have been working for 3-5years respectively. Also, 5.5% of the respondents had worked for just 1-3years while 35.0% of respondents have been working for a period of more than 7 years. On the level of the respondents in the organizational hierarchy, 54.5% of the respondents were junior level management, 29.5% were middle level management, while 16% were senior level management. It can be observed that this structure could indicate a hierarchical organization with fewer opportunities for upwards mobility which might affect morale and long-term retention.

Furthermore, the majority of respondents are union members (61.5%) with union groups highlighting the importance of collective bargaining and employee representation. Organizations with strong union membership often experience better communication of employees concerns but may face challenges during negotiations. With (61.5%) union membership, employees' relations are likely influenced by collective agreements.

#### 4.2.1 Understanding and causes of activism in Ghana's public sector

**Table 4.3: The data focuses on various factors contributing to employee activism**

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>					
	<i>N</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
1. I have experienced or witnessed employee activism in the public sector in the last three years	200	1.00	5.00	3.6550	1.04952
2. Poor working conditions	200	1.00	5.00	3.8450	.87453
3. Delayed salaries	200	1.00	5.00	3.6750	1.04635
4. Lack of communication from management	200	1.00	5.00	2.5800	1.29304
5. Policy challenges	200	1.00	5.00	3.4650	1.34081
6. Management/government decisions	200	1.00	5.00	3.5250	1.21935
7. Career progression issues/lack of opportunities for growth	200	1.00	5.00	3.4750	1.06539
8. Inequitable treatment of employees	200	1.00	5.00	3.8350	1.20208
9. Mismanagement/corruption	200	1.00	5.00	3.4100	1.34945
Valid N (listwise)	200				

**Source: Researcher Field Data (2024)**

Table 4.3 reveals the understanding and causes of activism in Ghana's public sector. The mean score recorded ranged from 3.84 to 2.58 meaning that most of the responses were between "agree and strongly agree". Ultimately, "experienced or witnessed employee activism in the public

sector” recorded the mean of  $M=3.6550$ ,  $SD=1.04952$ , indicating that on average, respondents moderately agreed that they have experienced or witnessed employee activism in the past three years. The moderate standard deviation showed some variability in experiences among respondents. Again, “poor working conditions” recorded the mean of  $M=3.8450$ ;  $SD=0.87453$  indicates that poor working conditions are a significant concern among employees. The relatively low standard deviation suggests that responses are consistent emphasizing widespread disaffection.

On the issue of “delayed salaries”, a mean of  $M=3.6750$ ;  $SD=1.04635$  was recorded. The responses indicate that delayed salaries are not a notable issue, with the mean suggesting agreement that it contributes to employee activism. The moderate standard deviation reflects some variability in how this issue is perceived. Per the table, “lack of communication from management” recorded a mean of  $M=2.5800$ ;  $SD=1.29304$ . This lower mean indicates a less significant but notable issue as not all respondents perceive communication gaps as a critical problem. The higher standard deviation reflects diverse experiences or perceptions. Regarding “policy challenges”, the mean score was  $M=3.4650$ ;  $SD=1.34081$ . This indicates that policy challenges are seen as moderate to significant concerns. The high standard deviation shows significant variation in perceptions. Again, “management/government” had a mean of  $M=3.5250$ ,  $SD=1.21935$ . This implies that this factor is moderately associated with employee activism. The standard deviation indicates differing views on the impact of decisions by management or government. Furthermore, “career progression issues”  $M=3.4750$ ,  $SD=1.06539$  indicates that issues around career progression are moderately significant with a moderate standard deviation showing some variation in responses. In the same vein, “inequitable treatment of employee”  $M=3.8350$ ,  $SD=1.20208$  suggests that, inequitable

treatment is a primary concern for employees. The standard deviation indicates a consistent perception of unfair treatment.

These responses show that poor working conditions and inequitable treatment are the top issues during employee activism. This implied systemic problem that needs urgent attention to improve morale and equality. Furthermore, delayed salaries and lack of career progression opportunities highlight financial instability and limited professional growth, both of which are critical for employee satisfaction and retention. Although lack of communication scored lower than other factors, it reflects an area for improvement. Transparent and regular communication can build trust and mitigate activism. Policy-related issues and corruption/mismanagement while not highest-ranked, show significant variability, indicating that targeted interventions may be needed in specific areas. Addressing working, salary and fairness should be the primary focus for management to reduce activism. Enhancing communication and revising policies for fairness clarity are secondary priorities.

**Table 4.4: Most common forms of employee activism**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Strikes	114	57.0	57.0
Petitions	32	16.0	16.0
Protests	25	12.5	12.5
Social media campaigns	17	8.5	8.5
Corruption and economic mismanagement	12	6.0	6.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0

**Source: Researcher Field Data (2024)**

From the table above, 114 respondents, representing (57%) indicated that, strike is the predominant form of employee activism accounting for over half of all instances. This suggest that employees primarily resort to direct action such as work stoppages to express dissatisfaction or demand changes. Therefore, strikes are typically a response to critical issues like poor working conditions, delayed salaries or inequitable treatment. Again, petitions (16%) indicate a preference for dialogue and resolution through documented communication. This implied that petitions represent a formal and less disruptive form of activism. Employees use petitions to request changes or express collective grievances in writing. Furthermore, (12.5%) of the respondents said protest may arise from unaddressed issues such as policy challenges or management decisions. This implied that protests often involving public demonstrations are the third most common form of activism. They highlight visible discontent and are likely employed when employees feel ignored or unsupported.

With social media campaigns, eight-point five percent of respondents said social media, while less common, represents a modern and increasingly popular form of activism. Employees use digital platforms to raise awareness and garner public support for their causes. This trend reflects the growing influence of technology in amplifying voices and holding organizations accountable.

While the lowest, frequency six percent of corruption and economic mismanagement indicates a specific focus on ethical governance and accountability. This form of activism is likely driven by systemic issues affecting the organization's efficiency and employee morale. This implies that, the prevalence of strikes suggests systemic challenges that push employees to engage in disruptive action. Addressing root causes such as poor working condition, inequity and delayed salaries. The presence of petitions, protests and social media campaigns highlights that employees use diverse approaches to express dissatisfaction. This variety shows that employees seek both direct and indirect means to effect change.

### 4.3.1 Communication Strategies During Activism

**Table 4.5: Communication Strategies During Activism**

Descriptive Statistics	<i>N</i>	<i>Mini</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
1. My institution/government communicates effectively with employees during periods of activism.	200	1.00	5.00	3.8400	1.16239
2. Management uses regular meetings to address employee concerns during activism	200	1.00	5.00	4.0900	.95207
3. Official memos or emails are the primary communication tools used during activism	200	1.00	5.00	3.8000	1.07039
4. Employees are often involved in discussions about workplace issues before activism occurs	200	1.00	5.00	3.7600	1.16153
5. Union representatives are actively involved in communicating employee concerns to management	200	1.00	5.00	3.7700	1.09228
6. Communication efforts by management/government help to prevent activism in my organization	200	1.00	5.00	3.7650	1.06558
7. The communication strategies used by management/government effectively address employee concerns during activism	200	1.00	5.00	3.7350	1.14951
Valid N (listwise)	200				

**Source: Researcher Field Data (2024)**

Table 4.5 reveals the communication strategies during activism. The mean score recorded ranged from 4.0900 to 3.7700, meaning that most of the responses were between “agree and strongly agree”. “My institution/government communicates effectively with employees during periods of activism”, recorded the mean  $M=3.84$ ,  $SD=1.16239$ , indicating a moderate-to-high agreement that institutions or governments communicate effectively with employees during activism. However, the standard deviation suggests varying opinions amongst respondents, highlighting that while

some may perceive communication as effective, others do not. This implied that there is room for improvement in communication strategies to ensure consistency and reliability across the organization.

Again, “regular meetings to address concerns” recorded the mean of  $M=4.09$ ;  $SD=0.95207$  indicating the highest mean among the variables that regular meetings are viewed as an effective and commonly used tool to address employee concerns during activism. The lower standard deviations indicate consistent agreement. This implied that management should continue leveraging regular meetings as they are perceived positively, ensuring inclusivity and follow-through on discussions. On the issue of “use of official memos/emails”, mean of  $M=3.80$ ;  $SD=1.07039$  was recorded. The score indicates a moderate agreement on the use of official memos or emails as primary communication tools during activism, with some variability in responses. This implied that while memos/emails are useful they might not be sufficient as a standalone communication tool. Thus, incorporating additional interactive methods could enhance effectiveness.

Per the table, “involving an employee in pre-activism discussions” recorded a mean of  $M=3.76$ ;  $SD=1.16153$ . This moderate mean indicates that employees feel somewhat involved in discussions about workplace issues before activism occurs. The variability highlights different levels of involvement across the organization. This implied that increasing employee involvement in pre-activism discussions could foster trust and potentially mitigate activism. Regarding “union representatives’ role”, the mean score was  $M=3.77$ ;  $SD=1.09228$ . This indicates that employees moderately agree that union representatives are actively communicating their concerns to management. The standard deviation reflects some inconsistencies in how this is perceived. This

implied that strengthening the role of union representative and their collaboration with management may improve trust and address concerns more effectively.

Again, “preventing activism through communication” had a mean of  $M=3.765$ ,  $SD=1.06558$  indicating that a moderate agreement level suggests that communication efforts play a role in preventing activism though not universally effective. This implied that communication strategies should be tailored to address specific employee concerns and anticipate potential triggers of activism. Furthermore, “effectiveness of communication strategies”  $M=3.735$ ,  $SD=1.1451$  showed the lowest mean score indicating a moderate level of agreement about the effectiveness of communication strategies during activism. The variability suggests that while some strategies work, others may fall short. This implied that management should evaluate the effectiveness of current strategies and adopt evidence-based communication practices to address gaps.

**Table 4.6: Effectiveness of these strategies in managing employee activism**

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>					
	<i>N</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
Face-to-face meetings	200	1.00	5.00	3.8900	1.10635
Written communications	200	1.00	5.00	3.3800	1.16722
Union representatives	200	1.00	5.00	3.7900	1.25850
Digital/social media platforms	200	1.00	5.00	3.5400	1.15110
Traditional media	200	1.00	5.00	3.8100	.99945
Valid N (listwise)	200				

**Source: Researcher Field Data (2024)**

The table represents the effectiveness rating of five communication channels used in managing public sector activities based on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (least effective) to 5 (most effective).

This channel, face-to-face, with the mean  $M=3.89$ ,  $SD=1.106$  has the highest average rating suggesting that direct interpersonal communication is considered highly effective. However, the variation in responses indicates some disparity in perceptions. This implied that the high mean rating underscores the importance of interpersonal interactions in building trust and facilitating clear communication. Public sector organizations should prioritize face-face engagement particularly for complex or sensitive matters.

Again, written communications with a mean score of  $M=3.38$ ,  $SD=1.167$  is moderately effective but it's slightly lower mean and higher standard deviation suggest that its effectiveness may vary depending on specific contexts or audiences. This implies that despite its moderate effectiveness, written communication remains crucial for formal and legal documentation. Efforts should be made to simplify and tailor written materials to enhance clarity and accessibility. Furthermore,  $M=3.79$ ,  $SD=1.259$  mean score for union representatives are seen as a highly effective communication channel though there is considerable variability in opinions as shown by the relatively high standard deviation. This implies that union representatives are pivotal in bridging the gap between management employees. Organizations should empower union representatives with training and resources to ensure they can effectively convey messages and negotiate on behalf of employees.

Digital/social media platforms with a mean score of  $M=3.89$ ,  $SD=1.106$  are perceived as effective but slightly less than face-to-face or traditional media. The variability suggests that these platforms may not be equally or effective for all stakeholders. This implies that the effectiveness of digital platforms highlights their growing relevance. Public sector organizations should invest in robust digital communication strategies while addressing challenges such as digital literacy and accessibility to maximize their impact. Ultimately, traditional media with a mean score of  $M=3.89$ ,

SD=1.106 is also highly rated for its effectiveness with relatively low variability in responses indicating consistent perceptions across respondents. Therefore, the high effectiveness rating of traditional media implies its continued importance in reaching broader audiences. Public sector organizations should integrate traditional media campaigns with modern channels for a comprehensive communication strategy.

From the responses, it was revealed that there are several additional communication channels the government and its representatives in Ghana can adopt to effectively engage public sector workers during periods of activism. These channels can complement existing methods and address gaps in engagement. There were listed by the respondents as town hall meetings, social media platforms, dedicated communication hotlines, employee advocacy committees, workplace forums, surveys and polls, media outlets, workplace notice boards and digital display a conflict resolution and mediation platforms.

**Table 4.7: Communication barriers to increased activism**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Delayed responses	81	40.5	40.5
Unclear messages	34	17.0	17.0
Lack of transparency by government/institution	32	16.0	16.0
Limited access to decision-makers	30	15.0	15.0
Lack of feedback mechanisms	23	11.5	11.5
Total	200	100.0	100.0

**Source: Researcher Field Data (2024)**

The data provided identifies key communication barriers to increased activism and presents their frequency and percentage distribution. From the table, (40.5%) delayed response, the most

communication barrier with nearly half of the respondents identifying it as a critical issue. Delayed response suggests inefficiencies in communication channel or reluctance to address concerns promptly. This implies activist may feel undervalued or ignore potentially escalating dissatisfaction and fostering distrust between the institution/government and the public.

Again, (17%) of the respondents said unclear messages indicating miscommunication or ambiguous messaging which ranked second as a barrier. Activists may find it challenging to interpret or act on vague or incomplete information. This suggested that this can lead to confusion, misinterpretation of intentions or policies and reduced alignment between the institution's actions and activist demands. With the lack of transparency by government/institution (16%), a considerable number of respondents highlight a lack of openness and accountability as a barrier.

Transparency is critical in building trust and fostering meaningful dialogue. This implies that perceived or real opacity can exacerbate suspicions leading to intensified activism and a potential breakdown in institutional credibility. Also, (15%) of the respondents said limited access to decision-makers. Therefore, limited accessibility creates a significant gap between activist and those in authority. Activist may feel powerless without direct avenues to express their concerns to decision-makers. This implies that barriers can hinder meaningful engagement reducing the likelihood of collaborative solutions and increasing frustration among activists. The least frequency (11.5%), but still notable barrier indicates a deficiency in two-way communication. Feedback loops are vital for addressing concerns and demonstrating responsiveness. Without proper feedback channels, activists may feel disconnected from the decision-making process reducing their trust and increasing their likelihood of persistent activism.

**Table 4.8: Communication to navigate/minimize public sector employee activism**

Descriptive Statistics	<i>N</i>	<i>Mini</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>
My organization/ government should use more inclusive communication methods to engage employees	200	1.00	5.00	3.7600	1.16153
Regular feedback sessions between employees and management/government can help reduce employee activism	200	1.00	5.00	3.7700	1.09228
Increased transparency from management/government would improve employee satisfaction	200	1.00	5.00	3.7650	1.06558
Early involvement of employees in decision-making processes can prevent activism	200	1.00	5.00	3.7350	1.14951
Regular feedback mechanisms should be included in the communication strategies	200	1.00	5.00	3.8900	1.10635
Management/government should proactively address workplace concerns to foster a harmonious environment.	200	1.00	5.00	3.3800	1.16722
Valid N (listwise)	200				

**Source: Researcher Field Data (2024)**

The descriptive statistic provided include responses on various statements about ascertaining an effective strategic communication in mitigating employee activism in Ghana’s public sector. Most statements have mean values close to or above 3.7, suggesting overall agreement on the need for improved communication, feedback and proactive measures. Regular feedback mechanisms should be included in the communication strategies with a mean score of M=3.89. This implies

that respondents strongly emphasize the importance of regular feedback mechanisms in communication strategies. It highlights a critical area for public sector organizations to focus on. Furthermore, management/government should proactively address workplace concerns to foster a harmonious environment after it had a mean score of  $M=2.38$ . While there is agreement, it is weaker compared to other statement. This might indicate a perception that current efforts to address workplace concern are inadequate or less prioritized.

With a mean of (3.76) for the statement about inclusive communication methods, there is a clear call for public sector organizations to adopt strategies that ensure all employees feel heard and engaged. Furthermore, regular mechanisms are considered vital as evidence by the highest mean score (3.89). Public sector organizations should prioritize implementing structured feedback systems to enhance communication and address concerns effectively. Transparency  $M=3.735$ , involving employees in decision-making process is seen as a preventive measure against activism. Collaborative decision-making fosters a sense of ownership and reduces discontent. Therefore, the higher SD for proactive measures suggests a need to address diverse perspectives and tailor initiatives to meet varied expectations.

## **4.9 Qualitative Analysis**

### **Analysis of Interview Granted with union leaders, government representatives, and labor experts/policy analysts**

The objectives of the study enshrined in the research questions were to identify the main causes and forms of public sector activism in Ghana, to identify communication strategies employed by public sector organizations in Ghana to address activism, and to evaluate the effectiveness of these communication strategies. To fulfill these objectives, the study involved ten (10) participants comprising union leaders, government representatives, and labor experts whose interviews provided valuable insights into the research. The demographic analysis covered gender, age disparities, years of professional experiences, work positions and academic qualifications offering a comprehensive understanding of their backgrounds. The gender composition of the participants reflected a predominance of males, with seven participants (70%) being male and three (30%) being females. This distribution highlights a notable gender gap which is often reflective of leadership and labor expert roles in certain sectors. However, the inclusion of females' participants provided a balance perspective enriching the depth of the study with diverse viewpoints. The participants' age spanned a broad range demonstrating a mix of early-career, mid-career and senior professional. Two participants (20%) were between 30 and 40 years representing the younger demographic. The majority comprising for participants (40%) were aged between 41 and 50 indicating a significant representation of experienced professionals in their prime career years. Three participants' (30%) fell within the 51-60 years age bracket, while one participant (10%) was over 60 bringing a wealth of experience and historical context to the discussions.

In terms of professional experience, the participants exhibited substantial expertise across the respective fields. Two individuals (20%) had 5 to 10 years of experience indicating emerging

professionals who have gained foundational knowledge in their roles. Three participants (30%) had 11 to 20 years of experience reflecting a nature level of expertise. A significant proportion of four participants (40%) had 21 to 30 years of experience representing seasoned professionals with deep institutional knowledge. One participant (10%) had over 30 years of experience embodying a veteran perspective critical to understanding long-term trends and challenges in labor and management.

The participants' professional roles were even distributed across the categories of union leaders, government representatives, and labor experts. Union leaders accounted for four participants (40%) bringing grassroots perspectives on labor issues and collective bargaining processes. Managers constituted three participants (30%), offering insights into organizational leadership, decision-making and human resource management. Labor experts also represented by three participants (30%), provided a specialized understanding of labor laws, policies and industrial relations.

The academic qualification of the participants demonstrated a high level of education which is essential for their roles as union leaders, managers and labor experts. Four participants (40%) held bachelor's degree showcasing a solid educational foundation for their professional responsibilities. The majority, five participants (50%), possess a master's degree reflecting advanced academic training in their fields. One participant (10%) held a PhD, highlighting a commitment to scholarly excellence and a deep understanding of complex labor issues

For union leaders, government representatives, and labor experts, semi-structured interviews were used to collect the study's essential data. It was further established based on the study variables that, ten (10) respondents made up of labor/industrial relations experts, public policy analysts,

activist/protest leaders, HR Directors, Public Relations/Communication officers/managers, and union representatives were interviewed because they were directly responsible for strategic employee engagements within the Ghanaian Public Sector workplace. Therefore, the responses of the respondents were classified with codes by using Respondent 1 for the findings of labor/industrial relations expert, Respondent 2 for the public policy analyst, Respondent 3 for the activist/protest leader, Respondent for 4 the HR Director, Respondent 5 for the Public Relations/Communication officer/manager, and Respondent 6-10 for union representatives to different their various responses.

The findings of the respondents are indicated below;

#### **4.9.1 RQ1: What are the main causes and forms of Public Sector Activism in Ghana?**

In relation to the first research objective which sought to identify the main causes and forms of public sector activism in Ghana, the findings demonstrated a shared understanding of activism and among the participants with activism in Ghana's public sector often driven by a combination of socio-economic, political, organizational and psychological factors. Insights from union leaders, labor experts and stakeholders highlight key causes Shandwick (2014) reported that one third of employee activism is stimulated by employers and the rest arises organically out of self-motivation and determination. All the participants indicated that many workers in Ghana's public sector earn wages that are insufficient to meet the rising cost of living fueling dissatisfaction. They further added that insufficient resources, outdated equipment and unsafe work environments lead to dissatisfaction and unrest. Miles et al. (2021) identify that nowadays the focus of those partaking in employee activism has become broader than before. Researchers state that currently the focus of employee activism is grasping social, political and environmental issues, unlike when looking

back to 2018, it was merely focused on gender equality related issues at workplaces (Rheinhardt & Gioia, 2021; Miles et al., 2021).

Respondent 1 narrated that:

Hmm, well, the main causes I see are things like poor remuneration, bad working conditions, and a lack of career progression opportunities. You know, employees sometimes feel frustrated when things like salary adjustments are delayed, or there's a lack of clarity around promotions. Policy changes that are seen as unfair or detrimental to the employees often spark a lot of activism too. Oh, and the communication gaps, if employees don't feel heard or if management isn't transparent, that can really intensify things. So yeah, there's definitely a need for constant engagement to make sure concerns are addressed before they snowball into something bigger. It's about making sure the channels for communication are always open, you know?

Although the data indicated strong agreement on the understanding and causes of activism in Ghana's public sector, differences emerged in the extent of participants' perceptions of its forms. For instance, R2 mentioned that: "Triggers include unmet agreements, poor working conditions, and policy changes that negatively affect employees". Furthermore, R3 noted that: "From my experience, the main causes of employee activism in our sector are policy changes, remuneration issues, working conditions, and concerns about job security. I have seen employees go to strike to demand for sack of their bosses for lack of transparency and communication. Which I believe communication a very key to organizational growth and work efficiency". According to the ILO, (2022), public sector workers typically take part in activism as a means of promoting improved working conditions, benefits, and wages. Budget cuts, understaffing, and austerity measures are common sources of pressure for public sector employees, such as teachers, healthcare providers, police officers, and civil servants. The activism of this sector aims to improve working conditions, wages, and job security (ILO, 2022).

Based on these outcomes from the study, R5 posited that: "Common causes include remuneration issues, unfavorable policy changes, and inadequate working conditions". Respondents 8 indicated

that; More often activism by our members is triggered by unmet agreements, unfair working conditions, policy changes and many more

Respondents such as R6 and R9 further underscored that employers in the public sector sometimes fail to comply with labor regulations such as collective bargaining agreements. Gaps in labor law awareness and ineffective grievance mechanisms worsen the issue. In contrast, all the respondents further highlighted that persistent delays in addressing workers' concerns or implementing agreed-upon policies fuel frustration. Government inability to fulfill commitments made during labour negotiations damages credibility. From the analysis, it is important to note that addressing these causes requires multi-shareholder collaboration, improved policy frameworks, better communication and strengthened labor-management relations. Dwomoh and Kwarteng (2015) said the fundamental causes of activism are frequently connected to more significant socio-political dynamics, issues with governance, unsatisfactory working conditions, and inadequate compensation. He further mentioned that teachers, healthcare providers, and civil servants are among the public sector workers who frequently believe that their pay is excessive for the amount of work they perform or the cost of living. Furthermore, wages for certain positions in the public and private sectors can differ significantly (Osei-Boateng & Torgbe, 2012). In Ghana's public sector, unpaid salaries and benefits are another common source of employee activism (Okpalibekwe et al., 2015; Opute & Mahmoud, 2023). Salary, promotion, and retirement benefit delays have been commonplace for public sector workers, especially those in the healthcare and education sectors (Okpalibekwe et al., 2015; Opute & Mahmoud, 2023).

#### **4.9.2 RQ2: What are the communication strategies employed by Public Sector**

##### **Organizations in Ghana to address activism?**

In relation to the second research objective which sought to identify the communication strategies employed by public organizations in Ghana to address activism, the findings demonstrated that, public organizations use various communication strategies to address employee activism effectively. These strategies aim to foster dialogue, manage conflicts and align organisational goals with employees' concerns. Hallahan et al. (2017) suggests that, aspects of these would be implemented in communication strategy designing. This includes the ability of communicators to differentiate between traditional communication channels and to choose the most effective ones. All the participants agreed that organizations often organize open forums where employees can voice their concerns directly to management. As a result, active engagement with labor unions or employee representatives facilitates dialogue and conflict resolution. The respondents again mentioned collaborating with governmental bodies to ensure compliance with labor laws and regulations by recognizing employees' efforts and addressing their concerns, increase morale, and reduce activism. Also, the interviewees were of the opinion that suggestion boxes, survey, or feedback forms are used to gather employee opinions and address issues proactively with dedicated teams assigned to employee concerns efficiently and fairly. According to Paul (2011), strategic communication in an attempt to be successful must include the communicative content and signals of actions, images, and policies. He suggests an understanding of the term as enterprise level strategic communication, strategic communication planning, integration, and synchronization processes, communication strategies and themes, communication, information, and influence capabilities and knowledge of human dynamics and analysis or assessment capabilities. This echoes the findings of Miles et al. (2021) and Krishna (2021) who indicated that an open exchange

of ideas, complaints, and feedback between staff members and management is fostered by strategic communication. To make sure that employees' opinions are heard, organizations use digital platforms, town hall meetings, and suggestion boxes. When employees don't feel heard, they are more likely to start acting as activists. Organizations can address issues before they become strikes, open demonstrations, or social media campaigns by actively listening to their concerns.

Respondent 1 narrated that: “We’ve got a few preventive communication measures in place, you know, to keep things running smoothly. Regular stakeholder meetings are definitely important; they provide a space for open conversation and help build trust. We also have employee surveys and open-door policies so staff can express concerns in a more informal way. Town hall meetings are another big one; they give employees a chance to ask questions and get direct answers from management. Additionally, we use feedback systems like suggestion boxes and online platforms where employees can share their ideas anonymously”. On the other hand, Respondent 3 noted that: “Our agency uses various preventive communication measures, including regular town halls, employee feedback systems, and stakeholder meetings to engage with employees and address concerns before they escalate. These measures help us build trust which is very important for our agency, ensure transparency and also before I forget, our feedback systems include suggestion boxes at vantage places and online platforms. And we ensure anonymity”.

Employees are less likely to become activists when they believe they have a say in organizational decisions. Creating platforms for staff members to make decisions is an essential part of strategic communication. Employees feel appreciated and involved when they are able to consistently express their concerns through continuous feedback mechanisms. This can assist in identifying complaints before they become more severe. Again, the findings corroborate with Miles et al. (2021), who posited that managing employee activism requires strategic communication,

particularly when employees start speaking up more in their workplaces. By ensuring an honest, open, and productive dialogue between management and employees, matching organizational objectives with employee needs, and fostering a positive work environment, effective strategic communication helps organizations navigate employee activism.

#### **4.9.3 RQ3: How effective are these communication strategies in managing employee activism in Ghana's Public Sector?**

Per this research objective, the study sought to evaluate the effectiveness of these communication in managing employee activism in Ghana public sector. The findings demonstrated that, public organizations in Ghana evaluate the effectiveness of communication strategies in managing employee activism through various methods and approaches. These methods aim to assess whether the strategies employed adequately address the concerns of employees, mitigate activism and main a productive environment. Kiselitsa et al. (2017) posited that the formation of an effective communication strategy is a complex multi-dimensional process that ensures the achievement of public policy goals by using all communication resources and organizing the communication space. Furthermore, Freeman and Reed (1983) asserted that in order to improve mutual trust and understanding, effective stakeholder engagement requires a two-way dialogue. In addition to decreasing the possibility of activism, employee involvement in decision-making increases loyalty and morale because employees see themselves as co-creators of the organization's mission. Macnamara (2018) further argues that in order to elevate strategic communication, it is necessary to incorporate open, dynamic, and expanded approaches that facilitate two-way communication. All the participants agreed that public organizations often use feedback channels to gather input from employees and assess the effectiveness of communication strategies. For instance, they used surveys and questionnaires which are distributed to employees to gauge their perceptions of the

organization's communication practices and the level of satisfaction with how their concerns are addressed. Furthermore, all the respondents agreed that employees are invited to participate in discussions where they share their experiences and opinions about the organization's handling of activism-related issues. As a result, platforms where employees can anonymously or openly submit suggestions or concerns which are reviewed and acted upon by management. The findings are supported by the ILO (2022) who mentioned that management can assess employee sentiment and make necessary policy adjustments through focus groups, town hall meetings, and regular surveys. Respondent 1 narrated that: "To assess how well communication is working, we look at a few key metrics. Resolution time is one of them how quickly are we able to address conflicts or grievances? Shorter resolution times generally mean we're communicating effectively. Employee satisfaction surveys are also a good indicator—they show how employees feel about the communication process. A reduction in activism incidents is another sign that things are improving. "For example, after implementing regular stakeholder meetings, we saw fewer grievances turning into protests. These metrics help us refine our communication strategies and improve overall satisfaction"

Again, all the respondents said that organizations evaluate the effectiveness of communication through specific metrics such as emails, newsletters and meeting in reaching employees. Respondent 3 noted that: "We use metrics like resolution time that is time taken to resolve conflicts or address concerns. Also, we use employee satisfaction surveys to gauge employee satisfaction and engagement, and reduced incidents to assess communication effectiveness. We also conduct regular media monitoring and sentiment analysis". Respondent 5 posited that: "Metrics include resolution time, employee satisfaction surveys, and the reduction in activism incidents. For instance, a recent feedback survey indicated improved satisfaction post-negotiation". This is

supportive with the results of an investigation led by Christensen and Christensen (2018); Aggerholm and Asmuß (2016) who suggested that strategic communication contributes to creating and developing strategies that enable organizations to compete in their industries. Strategic communications include operational planning strategies, innovative strategic planning, and business development planning strategies. Effective integration of these processes into strategic organizational communication and strategic thinking platforms that are coherent, interactive, and encompassing decision-making frameworks could allow organizations to succeed.

#### **4.10 Discussion**

The findings of the study indicate that, employees within the Ghanaian public sector organizations may rise up against their employers as a result of delays in salary payments, poor working conditions, and limited opportunities for professional development and career advancement. Additionally, the research findings also suggest that, employees in the Ghanaian public sector organizations often resort to organized strikes disrupting public services, street petitions and demonstrations. Public petitions and media campaigns, and then social media mobilization and awareness campaigns. Moreover, the research revealed that, organizations employ effective communication strategies such as stakeholder meetings, employee surveys, and town hall meetings to foster dialogue during engagements. These findings demonstrate that Ghanaian public sector employee activism is a complex interplay of economic and social dynamics. The motivations are deeply rooted in systemic challenges and a desire for fair treatment, improved working conditions, and meaningful economic opportunities. Such activism is not merely about immediate financial gains but represents a broader struggle for dignity, recognition, and meaningful participation in nation development. Relevant themes that popped up from the data set are explored below;

#### **4.10.1 Remuneration Issues and Working Conditions**

An emerging theme which ran through the responses of the participants about understanding what are the main causes and forms of employee activism in Ghana's public sector was that, remuneration issues and working conditions remain the main cause of public sector employee activism in Ghana. It was established that, amongst the various responses by the participants, public sector workers in Ghana frequently experience low pay that fails to match the rising cost of living. Moreover, poor working environments, where many public sector workplaces suffer from inadequate infrastructure contribute to employee dissatisfaction. According to the participants, significant wage gaps between different levels of government employees create internal tensions. This was accentuated in the submission of respondents 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 9, who stated that, "More often, activism by our members is triggered by huge salary gaps and unfair working conditions". Again, organized strikes, petitions, social media mobilization and awareness campaigns constitute the main forms of public sector employee activism in Ghana according to the respondents.

#### **4.10.2 Stakeholder Meetings, Surveys, and Town Hall Meetings**

It was discovered in the study that, respondents constantly have a sense of belonging when their employers engage them in dialogic communication when asked by the interviewer what are the communication strategies employed by their respective organizations in Ghana to address activism. This was evident in the responses by interviewees 1,3,4,5,7,9, and 10, who purported that, "We have got communication strategies in place, you know, to keep things running smoothly. Regular stakeholder meetings are definitely important, they provide a space for open conversation and help build trust. We also have employee surveys and town hall meetings to give employees the chance to ask questions and get direct answers from management". The finding of the study supports the argument of Miles et al., (2021) that, managing employee activism requires strategic

communication particularly when employees start speaking up more in their workplaces. By ensuring an honest, open, and productive dialogue between management and employees, effective strategic communication helps organizations navigate employee activism.

#### **4.10.3 Resolution Time**

Another relevant theme that popped up from the data set after respondents were asked how effective communication strategies are in managing employee activism in Ghana's public sector was resolution time. It was common among the responses of the participants that, public organizations in Ghana evaluate the effectiveness of communication strategies through various methods and approaches. Resolution time in employee activism management refers to the speed and effectiveness which organizational leadership addresses workforce concern, grievances, and potential points of conflict. In Ghana's public sector, this strategy is particularly crucial due to the complex dynamics of labor relations and historical context of public sector employment. Macnamara (2018) discovered that, while resolution time is crucial, it must be complemented by genuine engagement, substantive problem-solving, and a culture of mutual respect to be truly effective in managing employee activism. It is imperative for Ghanaian public sector organizations to adopt this approach since it transforms potential confrontational dynamics into collaborative problem-solving opportunities, particularly important in Ghana's evolving public sector landscape.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

The key findings, suggestions, and conclusions of the study are outlined in this chapter. Three themes are used to summarize the chapter in order to replicate the aforementioned research questions.

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

The aim of this study is to analyse the role of strategic communication in mitigating employee activism within the Ghanaian public sector. The study had three specific objectives, that is; firstly, to identify the main causes and forms of public sector activism in Ghana; secondly, to identify the communication strategies employed by public organizations in Ghana to address activism; and thirdly, to evaluate the effectiveness of these communication in managing employee activism in Ghana public sector. In this regard, the study underpins interpretivism, adopted descriptive research design and the mixed research approach using questionnaire and interview analysed using thorough descriptive statistics and thematic analysis.

The following sections provide a summary of findings of the study in respect of the objectives.

The first objective sought to identify the main causes and forms of public sector activism in Ghana. Results from the study revealed that the primary causes of public sector activism include low wages, delayed salary payments, poor working conditions, lack of career development opportunities and insufficient stakeholder engagement in decision-making. Common forms of activism observed include strikes, protests, sit-ins, petition and public statements through traditional and social media

The second objective of the study sought to identify the communication strategies employed by public organizations in Ghana to address activism. In relation to this objective, the study found that, public organizations primarily use traditional communication methods such as meetings, circular, and memos to address employee concerns. Digital [platforms including emails and social media are increasingly being leverage to disseminate information and manage grievances. Informal communication channels such as one-one-one discussions and consultations are also frequently utilised to defuse tension

The third objective of the study evaluate the effectiveness of these communication in managing employee activism in Ghana public sector. Results revealed that communication strategies are moderately effective in preventing escalations but often fail to address root causes due to lack of transparency, delayed responses and inadequate follow-through on resolutions. Trust deficits between employees and management were noted stemming from inconsistent communication and perceived insincerity. Public organizations with participatory approaches involving employees in decisions-making processes reported higher success rates in mitigating activism.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The study on analyzing the role of strategic communication in mitigating employee activism, with specific focus on the Ghanaian public sector underscores the critical roles of effective communication in managing employees concerns and fostering a collaborative organizational culture. The effectiveness and stability of an organization are seriously threatened when employee activism is motivated by discontent with workplace rules, corporate culture, or socioeconomic problems. However, a potent tool for proactively addressing these issues is strategic communication. The study's main conclusions show that employee activism in Ghana's public sector can be due to a variety of factors, including structural problems like perceived injustices

and unclear organizational processes, as well as unfulfilled expectations and low stakeholder engagement. To mitigate these issues, public sector organizations must use communication strategies like open dialogue, employee feedback systems, and transparent information dissemination. However, the degree to which these tactics complement the company's goals and the needs of its employees determines how effective they are.

Credibility and trust are increased when organizational decisions, policies, and procedures are communicated openly. To show a dedication to resolving employee concerns, communication strategies should incorporate accountability measures. It is essential to recognize and remove organizational and cultural barriers. Inclusion and relevance are guaranteed when communication tactics are adapted to the particular sociocultural dynamics of the Ghanaian public sector. Communication strategies should be developed and implemented using data-driven methods. Effective responses to activism can be informed by empirical research and regular evaluations, which can also reveal new trends. A collaborative approach reduces animosity and boosts employee ownership by incorporating workers in decision-making. Cooperation and respect between people are enhanced by promoting involvement in discussions and policymaking.

These components are combined in the suggested analysis of the role of strategic communication for the Ghanaian public sector to produce an environment that is inclusive, dynamic, and responsive. Organizations can reduce conflict, boost employee morale, and foster organizational resilience by tackling the underlying causes of employee activism and putting effective communication strategies into place. The study concludes that managing employee activism necessitates more than merely resolving conflicts; it also calls for cultivating an environment of cooperation, inclusivity, and trust. Potential conflicts can be turned into chances for development

and innovation with the support of a comprehensive strategic communication that is in line with organizational goals and employee expectations. This approach must be used by Ghana's public sector to curb employee activism, promote sustainable development,

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study on analyzing the role of strategic communication in mitigating employee activism within the Ghanaian sector, the following recommendations are proposed to address the challenges and enhance the management of employee activism.

Organizations in the public sector ought to switch from reactive to proactive communication strategies. Town hall meetings, employee surveys, and regular forums can all be used to proactively address issues before they become activist ones.

To deliver timely and accurate information about decisions, policies, and changes in the workplace, public organizations must set up clear and consistent communication channels. Transparency in decision-making procedures, including the justification for resource and policy allocations, will reduce disinformation and increase trust.

Employees can be encouraged to constructively voice concerns without fear of retaliation by implementing a formal feedback mechanism, such as suggestion boxes or anonymous reporting tools. Therefore, to guarantee that employee concerns are properly addressed, it is essential to set up explicit grievance redress procedures with deadlines and accountability measures.

Employee participation in the creation of policies and decision-making procedures should be promoted by public organizations. Establishing joint management-employee committees to address issues related to development, welfare, and workplace policies will boost employee ownership and reduce the possibility of resistance or activism.

Public organizations should give managers and supervisors the tools they need to handle disagreements, control communication, and cultivate a good rapport with staff members. To deal with activism in a positive way, training programs should incorporate modules on emotional intelligence, cultural sensitivity, and negotiation strategies.

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR ACTIVISM**

#### **UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION**

##### **UniMAC-IJ**

Dear Participants,

My name is Yaw Boaiteny Boateng, a Post-Graduate student of UniMAC-IJ. I am carrying out an academic study on analyzing the role of strategic communication in mitigating employee activism within the Ghanaian public sector. Your invaluable knowledge and experiences will help me better understand this subject. The interview will be conducted in a conversational style and last between thirty and forty-five minutes. With your permission, this interview will be recorded to guarantee that your answers are accurately captured. Your identity will remain anonymous in any reports or publications, and all information will be kept private. You can choose not to participate at any moment. I appreciate your willingness to take part in this interview.

#### **GUIDE FOR GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES**

(HR Directors, Government Communicators, Civil Service Directors)

Can you please tell me a bit about yourself? What do you do? How would you categorize your age?

How would you classify yourself (e.g., labor/industrial relations expert, public policy analyst, activist/protest leader, HR Director, Public Relations/Communication officer/manager etc)

How long have you been involved in public sector labor issues? (if you have)

How would you conceptualize employee activism in general? Can you cite some examples of employee activism you know of? How do you understand public sector employee activism?

### Understanding Activism

What are the main causes of employee activism in your sector? (e.g., policy changes, remuneration issues, working conditions)

How would you describe the most common forms of activism? (e.g., strikes, work-to-rule, social media campaigns).

How does organizational culture influence activism in your institution? (e.g., hierarchical structure, communication patterns, decision-making processes)

### Current Communication Strategies

What preventive communication measures exist? (e.g., regular stakeholder meetings, feedback systems, town halls).

During Activism, which communication channels do you prioritize and why? (e.g., official memos, press releases, direct engagement). Can you provide specific examples?

How do you involve employee representatives in communication processes? (e.g., consultation meetings, negotiation committees).

### Strategy Effectiveness

What metrics do you use to assess communication effectiveness? (e.g., resolution time, employee satisfaction, reduced incidents). What were the outcomes?

What are your main communication challenges during activism? (e.g., bureaucratic delays, coordination issues, message consistency).

Can you share a case where your communication strategy was particularly effective/ineffective? (e.g., specific strike action, policy implementation). What lessons were learned?

## **GUIDE FOR UNION REPRESENTATIVES**

Can you please tell me a bit about yourself? What do you do? How would you categorize your age?

How would you classify yourself (e.g., labor/industrial relations expert, public policy analyst, activist/protest leader, HR Director, Public Relations/Communication officer/manager etc)

How long have you been involved in public sector labor issues? (if you have)

How would you conceptualize employee activism in general? Can you cite some examples of employee activism you know of? How do you understand public sector employee activism?

### **Understanding Member Activism**

What triggers activism among your members? (e.g., unmet agreements, policy changes, working conditions).

How do you decide on different forms of activism? (e.g., strategic considerations, member preferences, past experiences).

### **Communication Assessment**

How frequently do you engage with management on employee concerns? (e.g., scheduled meetings, crisis communication, informal dialogue).

What communication barriers do you encounter? (e.g., delayed responses, unclear channels, lack of access).

How would you rate management's responsiveness to concerns? (e.g., timeliness, transparency, action taken).

### Recommendations

What improvements would you suggest to current communication framework/strategies? (e.g., structured dialogue processes, feedback mechanisms).

How can union-management communication be more effective? (e.g., joint committees, regular forums, clear protocols).

### GUIDE FOR LABOR/PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSTS

Can you please tell me a bit about yourself? What do you do? How would you categorize your age?

How would you classify yourself (e.g., labor/industrial relations expert, public policy analyst, activist/protest leader, HR Director, Public Relations/Communication officer/manager etc)

How long have you been involved in public sector labor issues? (if you have)

How would you conceptualize employee activism in general? Can you cite some examples of employee activism you know of? How do you understand public sector employee activism?

### Contextual Analysis

How has public sector activism evolved in Ghana? (e.g., changing tactics, new issues, technological influence).

How does Ghana's socio-economic context shape public sector activism? (e.g., economic conditions, political factors, cultural aspects).

#### Strategic Assessment

What trends do you observe in institutional communication approaches? (e.g., shifting strategies, adoption of new channels).

What best practices have proven effective globally? (e.g., successful models from other countries).

#### Future Outlook

How do you see employee activism evolving? (e.g., new forms, changing priorities).

What role should strategic communication play in future labor relations? (e.g., preventive measures, engagement frameworks).

## APPENDIX 2

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES

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#### STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK FOR NAVIGATING EMPLOYEE ACTIVISM AT THE WORKPLACE: THE CASE OF THE GHANAIAN PUBLIC SECTOR

**Dear Participants,**

I am carrying out a research for academic purposes on “ANALYZING THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IN MITIGATING EMPLOYEE ACTIVISM: A STUDY OF GHANA’S PUBLIC SECTOR”. In order for me to complete my study, I kindheartedly appeal you to fill this questionnaire. This questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to be completed. Your responses will be used only for research purposes and shall be treated with supreme confidence. Thank you for your participation in the success of my studies.

#### SECTION A: Demographic Information

Please respond to the following statements by ticking (✓) one answer from each question that applies to your circumstances.

1. Gender?  
 Male     Female
  
2. Please indicate your age group.  
 18-25years     26-33years     34-41years     Above 42 years
  
3. Educational level?  
 BECE/SSSCE Certificate  
 Diploma  
 HND  
 First Degree  
 Master’s Degree  
Others (Please specify) .....
  
4. How long have you been an employee at your organization?  
 Less than 1year     1-3years     3-5years     5-7years     Above 7years

5. What is your current position or role in your organization?  
 Junior staff  
 Mid-level staff  
 Senior management
6. Which department/institution are you in .....
7. Union membership: a) Yes                      b) No
8. Most common forms of employee activism I have encountered or been involved in (Select all that apply)  
 Strikes  
 Petitions  
 Protests  
 Social media campaigns  
 Other (please specify).....

**SECTION B: Main causes and forms of public sector activism in Ghana**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Answer by ticking (√) **only one** answer in each case. Use the scales below as a guide.

1. Strongly Disagree (SD)
2. Disagree (D)
3. Neutral (N)
4. Agree (A)
5. Strongly Agree (SA)

Questions	SD	D	N	A	A
1. To what extent do you agree that delayed salaries is a major cause of public sector activism					
2. Poor working conditions contribute significantly to employee activism in the public sector.					
3. Policy challenges is a key factor driving activism in Ghana’s public sector.					
4. Inequitable treatment of employees often leads to activism in public sector					
5. I believe mismanagement and corruption trigger public sector activism					
6. Management/government decisions is a primary cause of employee activism in Ghana’s public sector.					

7. Employees engage in activism because they lack the opportunities for growth and career progression.					
8. Public sector activism is often a result of dissatisfaction with employee benefits and welfare packages					

**SECTION C: Communication strategies to address activism**

Questions	SD	D	N	A	A
1. My organization communicates effectively with employees during periods of activism.					
2. Management uses regular meetings to address employee concerns during activism.					
3. Official memos or emails are the primary communication tools used during activism.					
4. Employees are often involved in discussions about workplace issues before activism occurs.					
5. Union representatives are actively involved in communicating employee concerns during to management.					
6. Communication efforts by management help to prevent activism in my organization.					
7. The communication strategies used by management effectively address employee concerns during activism.					

**SECTION D: Effectiveness of these strategies in managing employee activism**

Questions	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. Dialogue sessions with employees effectively reduce the incidence of activism					
2. Formal communication methods adequately address the concerns of employees					
3. Union involvement enhance the effectiveness of communication strategies					
4. Social media engagement has reduced employee dissatisfaction.					
5. Town hall meetings are effective in resolving disputes in public sector organizations					
6. Communication strategies have led to a significant reduction in strikes and protests					
7. Transparent communication has improved employee satisfaction and reduced activism.					
8. The existing communication are sufficient to address future activism challenges.					

**SECTION D: Framework for effective strategic communication in managing employee activism**

Questions	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. Face-to-face meetings are effective in managing employee activism.					
2. Written communications are effective in enhancing employee relationship.					
3. Union representatives are effective channels in managing employee activism.					
4. Digital/social media platforms are essential in determining the effectiveness of the current communication channels.					
5. Regular feedback mechanisms should be included in the communication framework					
6. Traditional media is an effective communication channel in managing employee activism.					
7. Staff durbar is the most effective communication channel in managing employee activism.					

**SECTION E: What would you regard as the communication barriers to increased activism? (Select all that apply)**

- Delayed responses
- Unclear messages
- Lack of transparency by government/institution
- Limited access to decision makers
- Lack of feedback mechanisms
- Any other (please specify).....

**SECTION F: Suggestions for Improvement**

- My organization should use more inclusive communication methods to engage employees.
- Regular feedback sessions between employees and management can help reduce employee activism.
- Increased transparency from management would improve employee satisfaction.
- Early involvement of employees in decision-making processes can prevent activism.
- Management should proactively address workplace concerns to foster a harmonious environment.
- Any other suggestion.....

