

# An Investigation into Factors Fuelling Industrial Action by Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality Workers in South Africa

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## ABSTRACT

All stakeholders are concerned about the growing number of municipal worker strikes. Local government officials understand that this has a negative impact on service delivery and, as a result, the quality of life for all residents. Residents are also concerned about the growing number of strikes because they are not getting value for money in terms of service delivery. The purpose of this study was to look into the factors that contribute to the high rate of industrial action among Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipal employees. The study sought human resource solutions that could be used to address the causes of industrial unrest in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. The methodology relied on quantitative research through the use of a questionnaire. Despite the fact that there are many strikes taking place across the country, the study only focused on the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province. The researcher posited that because there have been numerous strikes at the BCMM over the years, the study will attempt to identify the causes of these strikes. The study will add to the scarcity of research on the subject, it will also provide ground breaking strategies for the South African government and the South African Municipal Workers' Union in dealing with industrial strikes. The study recommends that a well-constructed salary scale be implemented in all municipalities across the country.

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**KEYWORDS:** Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, Eastern Cape Province, Service delivery, Industrial action, South African Municipal Workers' Union, COSATU, Municipal workers

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (BCMM) is situated in the Eastern Cape Province. It encompasses major towns like East London and King Williams Town. South African local government municipalities are experiencing increasing industrial action from disgruntled workers in the post-apartheid era. The Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality is no exception to this common local government problem. This study sought to investigate factors that are fuelling industrial action by BCMM workers. The following areas are covered in this chapter: research background; research problem statement; aim of the study; study objectives; research questions, significance of the study; and research format.

### 1.1. Research Context: Background

Nowadays strikes have literally become a certainty worldwide, especially in countries such as Canada,

China, South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Kenya (Chan, 2011; Lee, 2012; Murwirapachena & Sibanda, 2014; Olusegun Ajayi, 2014; Rapatsa & Matloga, 2014; Seniwoliba, 2013). According to Olusegun Ajayi (2014), strike action is perceived as a global phenomenon due to its prevalence worldwide. Studies (Momodu, Matudi & Momodu, 2014; Seniwoliba, 2013) have suggested that the university education systems in Ghana, South Africa and Nigeria continue to suffer from perennial interruptions of academic sessions as a result of constant strikes being embarked upon by the employees of the universities, as well as by students. Strike action is a common mechanism through which workers express their dissatisfaction with their working conditions in order to achieve a desired result. They are legitimate deadlock breaking tactics

used by employees when negotiations between trade unions and management reach an impasse (Matudi et al., 2014).

The attainment of majority rule in South Africa in 1994 created hope for the wider community. The majority of workers, especially the indigenous Blacks felt that their working conditions were poor and unjust in pre 1994 era. This caused workers' union organisations like the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) to join the liberation movements like the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) to fight for the change of the status quo of the time in order to improve workers' conditions of work (Nleya -et al. 2011:4 ). However, despite the advent of democracy in recent years there has been an increase in industrial action in both private and public sectors. An increasing number of workers are now joining trade unions to ensure their rights are represented adequately. According to COSATU membership increased from 450 000 in 1985 to over 2 million in 2014. There has also been an emergence of militant workers' unions due to the increased discontent of the working class. Accordingly local government municipalities have been at loggerheads with South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) and its members leading to destabilising industrial action (Paret, 2019:318).

Local government municipalities are constitutional structures charged with providing essential services to the local residents. These services include cleaning, collecting garbage, maintaining infrastructure, providing water and electricity, as well as maintaining law and order in line with local ordinances (BCMM IDP, 2012:24-27). Failure of a municipality to provide these services inevitably negatively affects the quality of life for the local residents leading to social, economic and political instability. This makes it paramount for a municipality to meet its constitutional mandate. However, it is important to note that there are always internal and external factors acting as a hindrance to the optimal operations of the municipality (Moloto, Mkhomazi & Worku, 2020: pp 648 - 649). Financial budgets are often regarded as the most integral factor in a municipality's service delivery (BCMM IDP, 2012:72). However, industrial relations is another important factor that has a bearing on an organisation's operations (Edinyang and Ubi, 2013:2). It is important to note that industrial relations cannot be divorced completely from financial budgets as poor financial budgets are likely to lead to poor industrial relations due to poor employer – employee relations. The capacity of a municipality to provide optimal services therefore

also largely depends on its relations with the workforce. Workers have expectations which they expect the employer to fulfil (Simpson et al. 2019:pp 2-3; Ngcamu 2019:pp 1-2)

Vroom in his Expectancy Theory of 1964 argues that workers join organisations with expectations about their needs, motivations and past experiences (Lunenburt, 2011:1). If employees and their unions perceive that the employers' actions are not to the common good of workers they embark on industrial action. The industrial action may only end when unions and workers feel the triggers of the industrial action have been adequately addressed. If the factors leading to industrial action are not addressed fully there is a potential of continuous wildcat strikes or the possibility of the situation exacerbating further.

Industrial action can take a number of forms. It can include strikes, stoppages of work, work bans, lock-outs and the performance of work by an employee in a manner different from that in which it is customarily performed. Strikes became important during the industrial revolution especially in mines and factories where labour was sought after in masses. Industrial action is generally unlawful and prohibited unless it is protected industrial action. Employees who engage in industrial action which is not protected under the Fair Work Act can be exposed to penalties and disciplinary action (YUSUF.2011:1).

In public employment, there has been an increasing resort to strikes in all parts of the nation by employees in the public sector. The strike fever is contagious, and who's numerous demands and multiplying disputes often than not leave the government hesitant, defensive, and distracted from the unresolved problems of the economic crisis. The basic question and great challenge is how to prevent strikes that imperil the public interest while still providing millions of public employees with the opportunity to participate in the process of determining the conditions of their work, an opportunity not only guaranteed to employees in the private sector but also accepted as socially beneficial. The new Constitution also guarantees the right to bargain collectively, but it is not clear whether this right can be enjoyed by all employees in the public sector. With regard to the right to strike, a long dispute resolution procedure must be exhausted before a lawful strike can be called. A strike must also concern the terms and conditions of employment or the recognition of a trade union, and sympathy strikes are prohibited (International Trade Union Confederation, 2011:4). Despite the existence of these trade unions, the strikes in South Africa are increasing at an increasing rate. Societies under collective bargaining have

continuously walked out of negotiations whose result ensued in numerous working days lost during these strikes, strikes whose occurrence would have been averted had the industrial court intervened in time.

Some countries exclude the effects of disputes in specific industrial sectors. Thus in France, Portugal and Belgium, public-sector strikes were omitted resulting in increased unreliability of the official statistics as an indicator of strike trends, given the growing importance of public sector disputes in recent years (Bean, 1994). In China, Barboza and Bradsher (2010:17) states that wages were merely rising to make up for lost ground due to wage freezes, and China's inflationary monetary environment at the time which was at an average of 3.17% made regular pay rises a necessity for workers concerned with maintaining a high quality of life. The Chinese government sought balance on the issue; while it had recently repeatedly called for increased domestic consumption through wage increases and regulations, it was also aware that labour unrest could cause political instability. China also considered taking policy steps to double average wages over the five years from 2011, and several Chinese provinces raised the legal minimum wage. State media also stated that higher wages would help boost domestic consumption and help move China away from a reliance on exports for growth towards an economy more driven by domestic consumption.

According to Gall (1998:43), Britain, France, Ireland and Italy were the countries in the western Europe which noted a sharp reduction in the past decade in strike activity, countries which had previously held high strike records. During the post-Bretton Woods period, in an attempt to stabilize inflation and stop large exchange-rate fluctuations, most of the founding members of the Euro area adopted target-zone type inflation stabilization policies and target-zone type exchange rate policy as early as the arrangement of European —currency snake in 1972 or since the formation of the European Monetary System (EMS) in 1979. In a study by Blejer 1981, Chile provided an example of a situation in which labour unrest had been very much influenced by the inflationary environment within which collective bargaining had to take place. Labour unrest was seen to both affect and be affected by the process of wage inflation and the existence of simultaneity between the incidence of strikes and the wage formation process cannot be ignored. He concluded that the large amount of strike activity in the 1970s reflected a temporary reaction to high inflation rates, rather than an intrinsic breakdown in labour-management relations (Kaufman, 1994:38). The government imposed

prohibitions on strikes, collective labour conflicts and union political activity and claimed that any gains achieved through collective bargaining would be transitory due to inflationary pressures that they would generate (Blum, 1981:69).

Cohen et al (2008:4) in the article 'South African miners are trapped in debt' showed that banks offering unsecured loans charged high interests as high as 80% a year and this led to the upsurge of industrial action in South Africa. Education guarantees that the labour demand is constantly supplied with qualified personnel. Higher industry employment reduces the probability of strikes. This is because the number of jobs is usually more than the available qualified workforce. When economic policies are directed towards the creation of full employment and the maximizing of economic growth, the relative bargaining power of the employer is weakened but that of the employee is strengthened. This makes the employee feel that the employer must bend to all his requirements failure to which the employer will be left with vacancies that he cannot fill. According to Birech (2010:18), when Government economic policies reduce inflation by lowering household and corporate spending and public expenditure, then the result is that the demand for labour will fall as the spending power in the economy falls. This is because they have an impact on the relative balance of bargaining power between the buyers and sellers of labor services and thereby the rules and regulations that govern employment conditions. For example, in a period of high inflation, high levels of taxation and high interest rates, the stability of business is threatened (Birech, 2010:35). This can lead to higher levels of unemployment and a consequent reduction in employment conditions or redundancies and layoffs. In the Finnish economy, the reasons for regarding a high level of employment as necessary included a desire for internal peace in the society and to limit large scale emigration to Finland's wealthier neighbor, Sweden (Blum, 1981:57). Card (1990:49) showed that there is need for caution when interpreting the systematic effects of unemployment as despite all individuals being employed, when the economic climate becomes less favorable, it will still have an impact on the relative balance of bargaining power. This is often taken as evidence in favour of the joint-cost hypothesis, on the assumption that higher unemployment reduces the earnings opportunities of striking workers. But, the joint-cost hypothesis also predicts a relation between dispute rates and the state of firm or industry-specific product demand. It could also be stated that external labour market conditions affect the union's ability to withhold labour services thus the government's



economic and legal policies have major implications for the outcome of industrial relations behavior.

The consequences of a strike range from economic to sociopolitical. Strikes have a significant impact on the economy as a whole (Murwirapachena & Sibanda, 2014: 556). According to Israelstam (2011), "strike means disaster for both parties": firms that experience a drop in production and lose business contracts, and workers who may lose their jobs. As a result, employers, the government, third parties, workers, and the entire economy suffer as a result of strikes. Although strikes have a direct impact on employment, there are also indirect effects such as firm closures, trade shortages, and a drop in investment, among other things. The mining industry's relatively high strike incidences in August 2012 had the potential to increase public unrest in the economy (Bhorat, Naidoo & Yu, 2014).

As a result, strikes have a significant impact on mining sector output and, as a result, indirectly affect the entire economy. Strikes have an impact on the economy's social fabric as well as its economic fabric. In some cases, strike action can be disastrous, with many people dying or being injured as a result of the strikes' violent nature (Murwirapachena & Sibanda, 2014:558). As a result of striking employees being unable to work due to injuries, retrenchments, or even death, employees and their families may face poverty.

As a result, the government will be forced to intervene by providing financial assistance to employees and families who have suffered from strike injuries, retrenchment, or the death of a loved one (Murwirapachena & Sibanda, 2014:558). Major strikes erupted in South Africa's labour history during the twentieth century as a result of widespread and severe endemic industrial unrest. This industrial conflict was part of a liberating process in which labour disputes arose, particularly concerning the relationship between capital and the government (Visser, 2004: 2). Surprisingly, there have been few publications on strikes in South Africa's labour history up to this point. The main reason for the lack of local studies is the lack of comprehensive strike data prior to 2002. Since 2003, the Department of Labor (DoL) has been publishing the data publicly and on a regular basis with the publication of the Annual Industrial Action Report. As a result of the lack of publicly available strike data until 2002, the older studies are very superficial, lacking in-depth research on how strikes affect the South African economy.

The increasing number of strikes by municipal workers is a concern to all stakeholders. Local government authorities know that this has a negative

effect on service delivery and therefore the quality of life for all the residents. Residents are also worried by the increasing number of strikes as they are not getting value for their money in respect to service delivery. Striking municipal workers are also negatively affected by the never-ending strikes due to the "no work-no pay" policy. It is therefore paramount to seek solutions to end the increasing number of industrial action in local government municipalities (Ehoro and Konya, 2020:pp 71-72).

The study thus sought to investigate the quality of human resources management in local government municipalities to understand the increasing discontent of workers. The study envisaged that municipal industrial relations are greatly influenced by human resources management policies. Furthermore, the study postulated that a lower industrial action rate will ensure a positive impact on the municipality's service delivery to residents (Morudu, 2017:pp13-14). Although the industrial action is being experienced countrywide the study only concentrated on the Eastern Cape Province's Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. The research problem statement is presented in the next section.

## 1.2. The Research Problem

Increased industrial action by the BCMM workers is having a negative effect on the municipality's service delivery to local communities (Ncokazi, 2014:1). Ncokazi (2014:1) reported that street cleaning, refuse collection and payment of rates by rate-payers is being negatively affected by the industrial action. Furthermore, the newspaper notes that the strikes are associated with thuggery and violence leading to destruction of public and private property as well as injury to human beings. The Department of Labour (2012:4) notes that strikes are on the increase in South Africa notably by municipal workers. The Department notes that strikes increased from 57 in 2008 to 99 in 2012. The Department further reports that there was an increase in work-stoppages due to strikes by 18% from 2011 to 2012 thereby decreasing productivity in organisations like the BCMM (2012:5). Ncube, Yeyeka, Mugerwa and Murinde (2013:2) argue that the increase in industrial action in the BCMM and the rest of the country is dampening investor confidence causing capital outflow as well as reduction in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The authors note that GDP increased by only 2.1% from 2011 to 2012 but by a mere 0.9% from 2012 to 2013. It is clear that industrial action by the BCMM workers is negatively affecting the municipality's service delivery as well as investor confidence in the BCMM. Furthermore, the fact that the BCMM is the second biggest urban municipality after Nelson

Mandela Metropolitan Municipality in Eastern Cape Province (BCMM, 2012:19) the industrial actions are therefore decreasing the province's contribution to the national economy. The study therefore seeks to address poor service delivery and investor confidence in the BCMM as well as improving national economic performance by proposing strategies to improve the municipality's human resources management.

### 1.3. Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the factors influencing the high rate of industrial action by Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipal workers. The research is positioned at finding human resource solutions that can be used to address the causes of industrial unrest at the buffalo city metropolitan municipality. The methodology is based on quantitative research using a questionnaire.

### 1.4. Research Objectives

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To investigate weaknesses in the BCMM human resources management policies that may be fuelling industrial action.
- To investigate if the industrial action is also due to national factors beyond the control of the BCMM.
- To investigate the impact of industrial action on the performance of the BCMM.
- To formulate best human resources management strategies for the BCMM to diminish the rate of industrial action.

### 1.5. Research Questions

The research seeks to answer the following questions:

- What are the factors fuelling industrial action at BCMM?
- What is the impact of industrial action on the performance of BCMM?
- What are the best human resources management strategies or policies that are needed to address the problem of industrial action at BCMM?
- What are the best human resources management strategies which can be formulated for the BCMM to diminish the rate of industrial action?

### 1.6. Significance of the Study

The findings of the study are of great value for both empirical and practical reasons. The BCMM management is likely to find the results helpful in improving its human resources management policies and other work related issues with a view to limiting industrial action. A reduction in industrial action will inevitably lead to improved service delivery by the BCMM. Thus the residents can also benefit from improved service delivery. SAMWU can also use the results to improve the way it represents its members

to ensure maximum possible benefits to the members. The no work – no pay policy in South Africa means workers lose income during work stoppages as a result of industrial action. The drop of industrial action at BCMM can therefore improve the livelihoods of BCMM workers through avoiding loss of income as well as from improved human resources management policies. Future researchers can also use the results as empirical evidence in their studies.

### 1.7. Chapter Organisation

The research report is presented as follows:

#### Chapter One: Introduction

This first chapter covered the research background, the research problem, aim and objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study.

#### Chapter Two: Literature Review

In this chapter theories and empirical evidence that form the foundation of the study are reviewed.

#### Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodologies

Research design and methodology are outlined in this chapter. The study's target population, sampling, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques and ethical principles complied to in the study are discussed.

#### Chapter Four: Research Findings

The research findings and discussions are presented in this fourth chapter.

#### Chapter Five: Recommendations and Conclusion

This last chapter presents strategies that are necessary to overcome the high rate of industrial action in the BCMM. The conclusion to the study is also covered in this chapter.

### 1.8. Conclusion

This chapter essentially presented the background to the study that is premised on increasing industrial action in South African municipalities including BCMM. According to the problem statement BCMM is experiencing increasing industrial action that is leading to poor service delivery, destruction of property and reduced national or provincial economic contribution by the BCMM. The study therefore also presented research objectives needed to address the prevailing poor industrial relations at BCMM. Finally the importance of the study to future researchers, BCMM management and workers, and SAMWU is fully explained. The next chapter presents the theories and empirical evidence that support this study.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews theories and empirical evidence in support of the study. Literature on industrial action

relating to types of industrial action, factors that influence industrial action and state of industrial action in South Africa is presented first. The chapter ends by discussing theories that form foundation of this study. The study is based on Conflict Theory, Expectancy Theory and Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. The conceptual framework and literature on forms of industrial action is presented next.

### 2.1.1. Conceptual framework

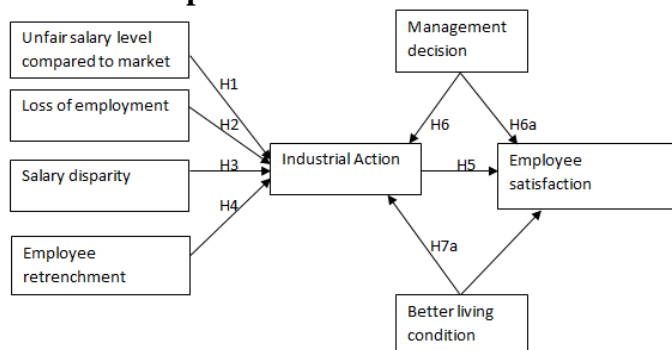


Figure 2.1. Research model

#### Industrial action and unfair salary levels compared to market.

The figure above shows the relationship between industrial action and factors influencing industrial action. Unfair salaries lead to industrial action among the employees. Employees are likely to embark on industrial action if the management ignore the grievance of the employees and if the condition that led to the industrial action worsens. Unhappiness with wages and earnings by employees is reported to be the cause of industrial action hence there is a positive relationship between unfair salaries and industrial action. The workers of this will be unhappy with their salary and behavior of the management (Sirajul, 2010), hence leading to industrial action.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a positive relationship between industrial action and unfair salary levels compared to market

#### Industrial action and loss of employment.

An unprotected strike has a negative effect on employment and may result in the dismissal of employees. S 67(5) of the LRA, In South Africa, it seems that everyone agrees that unemployment is the major economic problem and that government policy needs to address this scourge. The high levels of unemployment could pose a danger as stretches the government's ability to provide people with social services. Generally, the LRA prohibits the dismissal of employees if the reason for their dismissal is participation in a protected strike ss 64(1) and 65(1) of the LRA. However, and despite this prohibition, the employer may dismiss employees if they commit misconduct, S 188(1) of the LRA, during a strike or on the basis of operational requirements (FAWU,

2010). Since it is expected that the employer will not make production or profit during a strike as a result of work stoppage, he or she may put forward economic conditions that have turned around since the commencement of the strike as a reason to cut down his or her workforce. In this regard, he or she will attempt to justify dismissal based on operational requirements.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a positive relationship between industrial action and loss of employment

#### Industrial action and salary disparity

Pay disparity, as used with respect to a locality means the extent to which rates of pay payable are generally lower than the rates paid for the same levels of work in the same locality. Employees can also resort to industrial action if employees deem that their pay is unfair, Equity Theory predicts that they will take actions to recoup their compensation in ways that are detrimental to the firm, such as striking (Akerlof and Yellen 1990). Bloom and Michel (2002) finds empirical evidence that greater pay disparity among firm managers leads to a higher likelihood of strikes. The willingness to quit in response to unjustified pay disparity, though, is likely partially determined by an employee's outside options. When the labor market is tighter (i.e., more job openings and fewer layoffs), it is less risky for employees to quit in response to perceived pay inequity since the probability of getting a new job is greater. Without equal pay in place it is impossible for individuals and households to make decisions that do not reflect and reinforce current inequalities. Moreover, while differences in the gender division of labour and such factors provide the long term historical explanation for unequal pay, their removal will not necessarily do much actually to change the causes of current wage inequalities, which are embedded in the whole structure of pay and operation of the labour market, hence this may lead to industrial action. Pay disparity created by factors unrelated to economics, such as the distribution of rents or favoritism, may create feelings of resentment, leading to actions that are detrimental to the firm, consistent with Equity Theory.

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a positive relationship between industrial action and salary disparity.

#### Industrial action and employee retrenchment.

Employee dismissal is a common phenomenon worldwide. Strike action has been identified as one of the leading causes of global employee dismissals. According to Venter and Levy (2014), 29 dismissal refers to the termination of a contract of employment for reasons that relate to misconduct, incapacity and operational requirements of the job. There are several reasons for which employers can dismiss employees



and one such reason is when an employee participates in an unprotected strike (Grogan, 2014). Previous studies (Ahmed, 2014; Arshad & Nadeem, 2012; Odeku, 2014; Majokweni, 2013; Olusegun Ajayi, 2014; Surujlal, 2014) have also found that participation in unprotected strikes may constitute the basis for dismissal of employees. Majokweni (2013) suggests that although the ILO Conventions and other laws permit industrial action or strikes, yet the employer can dismiss the strikers when the strike is unprotected.

Odeku (2014) notes that even though s23 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa guarantees the right to strike, s65 of the LRA imposes restrictions and limitations on this right. Similarly, s12 of the 1992 Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Ghana guarantees every worker the right to strike. However, s168(4) of the Ghana Labour Act 200 (No.651) states that without prejudice to s168(2), anybody who participates in an unlawful or unprotected strike may have his/her contract of employment terminated by the employer, without notice of termination, for the breach of contract.

A study conducted by Arshad and Nadeem (2012) revealed that, in 2005, more than 31,000 employees were dismissed for union activities in the United State of America. Jordaan (2016) discovered that one possible effect of strike action on the employment relations is that it could result in job loss in the organisation. According to the Jordaan (2016), a total of 24,989 fulltime equivalent jobs were lost in the year 2012 due to the impact of the strike actions in South Africa.

Ige Akindele (2014) also contends that strike action has the potential to affect the employment contract of employees, especially when the employees embark on unprotected strikes. According to Ige Akindele (2014), in 1985, management of the University of Benin dismissed a former President of ASUU, due to his active role in the strike at the university and the country wide. Furthermore, forty nine (49) academic staff members of the University of Ilorin, Nigeria, were dismissed in 2001 for their involvement in a nationwide strike. In light of the above discussion, Bendix (2015) argues that participation in a lawful strike does not justify dismissal of the strikers. The discussion below covers the extent to which strikes lead to organisational conflict. There is a link between retrenchment and strikes as employees will demonstrate as a result of uncertainties that arise when there is industrial action.

H<sub>4</sub>: There is a positive relationship between industrial action and employee retrenchment

### **Employee satisfaction and industrial action**

Industrial actions have an association with employee satisfaction. When strikes are done and common grounds reached, it leads to employee satisfaction. Sometimes, the behavior of the management including high overtime work, lack of leisure time and holidays, and overall working environment become more dominant even compared to the financial benefits of these workers. Hence, a kind of dissatisfaction is always prevailing among the workers that lead to labor unrest in this sector.

H<sub>5</sub>: There is a positive relationship between industrial action and employee satisfaction

### **Management decisions and industrial action.**

There is a positive association between management decisions and industrial action in the sense that workers can take industrial action if they feel a management representative is behaving improperly during wages negotiations. This can be as a result of failure to respect other negotiating partners as well as failure to compromise in issues of importance to negotiating partners. On the other hand, management decisions can lead to employee satisfaction that is if the decisions by the management benefits the employees. The decisions made by managements motivates employees. Intrinsic motivator aspects include personal achievement, status, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, growth, promotion, and opportunities for advancement (Herzberg, 1987). Intangible intrinsic components tend to deal with higher emotional requirements. Work in which you are interested and enjoy yourself is a good example. The presence of motivator variables can improve motivation, satisfaction, and hence commitment, but their absence will not necessarily lower motivation (Pardee, 1990). Institutional politics, decisions from management, management style, supervision, pay, work relationships, and working conditions are all factors that can demoralize employees, according to Herzberg and it leads to industrial action. The notion is important because it emphasizes the significance of giving sufficient hygienic aspects to employees as a means of incentive and, thus, satisfaction. Demotivation will result if hygiene aspects are missing; nevertheless, having them is insufficient to drive people. As a result, managers focus on increasing motivator factors such as job enrichment: creating an interesting job and working environment, giving employees more opportunities for advancement, maximizing competencies, taking on more responsibilities, experiencing new challenges, and praising employees as needed to curb strikes.

H<sub>6</sub>: There is a positive relationship between management decisions and industrial action.

H<sub>6a</sub>: There is a positive relationship between management decisions and employee satisfaction

### **Industrial action and better living condition.**

There is an association between better living conditions of employees and industrial action. If employees lack better living conditions for example inadequate housing and transportation, it leads to strikes, however industrial action also leads to better living conditions of employees. Physiological needs, safety needs, social requirements, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs are the five needs identified by Maslow for employees. The Maslow Theory notes that a person cannot progress to the next level of needs unless the prior level is met (Maslow 1954). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is commonly depicted as a pyramid, with the most basic and greatest needs at the bottom and the need for self-actualization at the top (Steere 1988). Although managers believe that motivational variables help employees do better job and want to do better work, this is not the case. However, when people's working conditions are terrible, they aren't supported, aren't paid enough, aren't acknowledged, or are forced to follow corporate policies that don't make sense, their motivation suffers. Physiological needs include food, shelter, and clothing; safety needs include safe working conditions and clear work procedures to reduce stress and anxiety; social needs include positive work relationships, teamwork, and work social events to encourage team building; and esteem needs include the ability to achieve and secure job promotions. Employee development programs should assist people in reaching their full potential in the workplace by addressing self-actualization demand.

H<sub>7</sub>: There is a positive relationship between industrial action and better living condition.

H<sub>7a</sub>: There is a positive relationship between better living condition and employee satisfaction.

### **Research Hypotheses**

To develop a model of the factors influencing the high rate of industrial action by Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipal workers the following nine hypotheses will be tested in the study:

#### **2.1.2. Hypotheses of the study**

H<sub>1</sub>: there is a positive relationship between industrial action and unfair salary levels compared to market.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a positive relationship between industrial action and loss of employment.

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a positive relationship between industrial action and salary disparity.

H<sub>4</sub>: There is a positive relationship between industrial action and employee retrenchment.

H<sub>5</sub>: There is a positive relationship between industrial action and employee satisfaction.

H<sub>6</sub>: There is a positive relationship between management decisions and industrial action.

H<sub>6a</sub>: There is a positive relationship between management decisions and employee satisfaction.

H<sub>7</sub>: There is a positive relationship between industrial action and better living condition.

H<sub>7a</sub>: There is a positive relationship between better living condition and employee satisfaction.

### **2.2. Meaning of Industrial Action**

Industrial action (strike) is caused by a clash between employees and employers mainly on wage demands, working conditions, management policies, political goals, and other social issues (Salamon, 2000). In industrial relations, a dispute officially exists when workers withdraw from work or place bans on work (Edward, 2003). Lockouts, pickets and strikes are the overt forms of industrial actions, absenteeism, sabotage and turnover are the covert forms of industrial actions (Salamon, 2000). Several approaches have been developed to account for differences in strikes activities across countries, some studies have focused on industrial relation systems of concerned countries, while others looked at the economic, social and technological achievements in which such systems are operating, attempted to explain the observed variations in level of strikes. Blyton and Turnbull (1998), have counted numbers of factors involved in different level of industrial actions in different geographical areas. Many researchers have attempted to determine the factors as noted by (Beardwell, 2002 and Bean, 1996) that gives rise to the secular and cyclical movement in strikes activities and manners in which those movements are related to various economic, political and social developments.

Industrial conflict between employees and employers is prevalent in all world economies due to opposing interests between employers and employees. While company management primarily aim to increase shareholder value / company value, employees are primarily concerned with getting a living wage or maximising labour earnings. Industrial conflict can lead to industrial action by disgruntled employees (Ndevu, 2019: pp 2-3). Squire, Stroud and Healy (2010:1) defined industrial action as a range of types of action where employees, with or without trade union support take action in concert to pressurise an employer to do or refrain from doing something. According to the Fair Work Ombudsman (2013:1) industrial action means any of the following: employees performing work in a manner different to how it is normally performed; employees adopting a



practice that restricts, limits or delays the performance of work; a ban, limitation and restriction by employees on performing or accepting work; failure or refusal by employees to attend for work or perform any work; and the lockout of employees from their employment by their employer. Thus, industrial action centres on work cancellation or slowdown and can be engineered by either employees or employer with a view to coerce the other part into making a favourable decision.

The Macquarie Dictionary defines 'industrial action' as "organised disruptive action, such as a strike or go-slow, taken by a group of workers to promote what they conceive to be either their own interests or the general public good." Strikes are the most visible form of industrial action, defined by Macquarie as "a concerted stopping of work or withdrawal of workers' services in order to compel an employer to accede to demands or in protest against terms and conditions imposed by an employer." Indeed, in many ways, the terms "industrial action" and "strike" are synonymous, especially if the latter is given the broad interpretation that the International Labour Organization has adopted (see below) (ILO). Industrial action, however defined, can include a wide range of activities that go beyond the dictionary definition of "strike."

Surprisingly, the Macquarie definition excludes employer-led strike action. Employers, on the other hand, can and do take industrial action, either to promote their own interests or in response to employee action. A lockout, for example, is defined by Macquarie as "the closing of a business, or wholesale dismissal of employees by the employer because the employees refuse to accept his terms or because the employer refuses to operate on terms set by a union." Employer industrial action, on the other hand, can take a variety of forms, such as denying opportunities to work overtime, withholding non-contractual bonus payments, relocating a business, and shifting investment decisions away from industrially militant workplaces. As shown below, the FW Act gives only very limited recognition to employers' ability to take industrial action, whereas international standards on the right to strike do not require, nor do they prohibit, formal recognition of employers' ability to take industrial action.

The movement of unions and employees to force the other party into continuous strike disputes is referred to as industrial action. It is important to note that industrial action may include protesting, imposing product sanctions, employee marches, work stoppages, and other actions that could disrupt the production process (Department of Labour, 2013:50).

It is argued that industrial action is both debatable and essential (Venter & Levy, 2014:532): it is debatable in the sense that it exemplifies an important demonstration of workplace disputes and, by itself, contributes to economic disruptions. As a result, industrial action is critical because if it does not occur (particularly strike action), there will be no significant collective bargaining or an equivalent relationship (Venter & Levy, 2014:532).

### 2.3. Types of Industrial Action

Industrial action can be categorised in terms of legalistic view. Crompton (2009) reported that industrial action can either be protected or unprotected. Protected industrial action should comply with the Labour Relations Act (LRA) of 1995 provisions (Crompton, 2009:29). The provisions include initial conciliation efforts, giving notice for commencement of the industrial action and advisory arbitration where applicable (Crompton, 2009:29). On the other hand unprotected industrial action is action taken in contravention of the provisions of the Labour Relations Act (LRA) of 1995 (Crompton, 2009:32). It therefore follows that the legalistic view on industrial action categorise industrial action into lawful and unlawful action. Unprotected industrial action is unlawful while protected industrial action is lawful.

Industrial action can also be grouped in terms of the nature of the action chosen either by the employer or employees. Industrial action can take any of the following form: strike, protest action, picketing, go-slow and lockout (LRA; and Crompton, 2009). According to LRA of 1995 strike is the partial or complete concerted refusal to work by employees for the purpose of remedying grievances in respect of any matter of mutual interest between the employer and concerned workers. A strike can either be primary or secondary strike. A primary strike is when employees take strike action against their actual employer while secondary strike concerns a strike action by employees in solidarity with other employees employed by a different employer (Crompton, 2009:35). A strike can further be in the form of overtime ban, a work-to-rule and go-slows with a view to disrupt the productive processes of the employer (Crompton, 2009:11). Crompton (2009) defined go-slow as a collective action where workers work slowly in order to put pressure on the employer to agree to demands. Protest action on the other hand is defined as the partial or complete refusal to work or obstruction of work in defence of economic interests of workers (LRA). Thus strike action and protest action only differ in the sense that protest action might only be limited to obstructing work or defending of economic interests of workers.

Picketing is action by employees to publicise the existence of a labour dispute by patrolling or standing near or outside the location where the dispute is taking place, in most cases with placards indicating the nature of the dispute (Crompton, 2009:36). The action is intended to communicate the grievance to the public or to persuade other employees not to work as well as to disrupt the normal operations of the employer (Compton, 2009:36). Lockout is the exclusion of employees by the employer from the workplace for the purpose of pressurising the employees to accept a demand in respect of a matter of mutual interest to the employer and employees (LRA). Thus, lockout is the only industrial action that is instigated by an employer.

### 2.3.1. Strikes

A strike, according to Hyman (1984:17), is a brief stoppage of work by a group of employees to express a complaint or to carry out a demand, whereas Garbers and Potgieter (2007:300) define a strike action as an incentive and a brief suspension of workers' services from the firm to remove concerns in the employment relationship that the employer is willing to offer when negotiations take place. Bendix (1996:521), on the other hand, defines a strike as a short-term, collective deferral of work with the goal of halting production and forcing the employer to take the workers' demands seriously. All of the above-mentioned definitions of strikes are consistent with the agreed-upon definition of strike action according to Section 213 of the 1995 Labour Relations Act (South Africa, 2002: s213): strike actions represent a 6 temporary or a deferral of work by individuals who are currently or have been employed by the same employer, in order to resolve a complaint or solve a conflict that is in the best interests of both employers and employees.

Strike action also called labour strike or industrial action is a work stoppage caused by the mass refusal of employee(s) to work. A strike usually takes place in respond to employee grievances. Strike became important during the Industrial Revolution, when mass labour became important in factories and mines. In most countries, they were quietly made illegal, as factory owners had far more political power than workers. Most western countries partially legalize striking in the late 19th or early 20th centuries.

Strikes are sometimes used to put pressure on government to change policies. Occasionally, strike destabilizes the rule of a particular political party or ruler. In such cases, strikes are often part of a broader social movement taking the form of a campaign of civil resistance. A notable example is the stoppage of work by the indigenous railways workers in (1932)

led by Pa Michael Imodu during the colonial era and the first general strike of (1945) in Nigeria. Since 1970 to present time, workers demand for improved condition of work and wages have increased the number of strike actions as management most times would not accurately satisfy the needs and requests of employees even in the face of economic recession.

### 2.3.2. Lockouts

A lockout is the employer's form of industrial action, and it is defined as the magnitude of the final decision made by employees to persuade them to agree or yield to a specific ultimatum set by the employers. During a lockout, employers attempt to impose a demand by preventing employees from entering their workplace (Venter & Levy, 2014:548). Employers use lockouts to put pressure on unions and workers, such as losing income capacity and accepting unfavourable changes in working conditions offered by the organisation (SASBO, 1998:3).

### 2.3.3. Work stoppage

A work stoppage is created by following a series of procedures that involve similar actions. A work stoppage has two main characteristics: type and degree (Department of Labour, 2013: 49-50). A strike (an action initiated by the workers) and a lockout are both examples of acts (behavior taking place as a result of the employer). A strike action, also known as a labour strike or industrial action, is a work stoppage that results in a large number of employees refusing to work. This refusal to work by employee(s) is not specifically related to a demand, however if it is linked to a demand, such a demand will not be associated with the employment relationship (Nel, Kirsten, Swanepoel, Erasmus & Poisat, 2012:241). Employees refuse to complete their assigned tasks in order to force their employer to listen to their demands for wage increases or better working conditions. When arguing about wages or employment conditions, a work stoppage is seen as the last resort in labour management. The reason for this is that workers are not compensated when they strike, and employers lose critical production work as a result, so both parties normally try to avoid such an outcome.

### 2.3.4. Secondary strike

A secondary strike is defined as a strike or behaviour that expands a strike by workers from another employer. The LRA defines a secondary strike as a strike or action by workers who have disagreements with their employer in support of a strike. It does not, however, include a strike in pursuit of a specific demand that has already been mentioned to a committee, if the striking employees are hired within

the committee's listed range and have a significant concern with the demand (SASBO, 1998:3).

### 2.3.5. Picketing

Picketing is an additional preparation for a strike (Venter & Levy, 2014:558). It is defined as an action taken by employers or other individuals to publicise the presence of labour disputes by guarding or monitoring and being close to the location where the strike is taking place, usually with posters displaying the reason for their disputes (Department of Labour, 2003:49-50). The goal of picketing is simply to make workplace disputes public or to influence other employees to stop working and to motivate employees to join the disputes, to prevent scab labour, to sway or force clients not to come into the workplace, to disrupt distributions, or to gain public support (Department of Labour, 2003:49-50).

### 2.3.6. Protected and unprotected strikes

A strike is considered safe if it occurs after all debate-clearing processes outlined in the Labour Relations Act, or in any negotiating committee, or acknowledgment/mutual settlement that may occur among revelries, have been eliminated (SASBO, 1998:3). Unprotected strikes occur when there is a lack of, or a process of, resolving disagreements that are settled under stipulated procedures or those anticipated in the Labour Relations Act (SASBO, 1998:3-4). These strikes are formally referred to as illegal or bureaucratic strikes. Unprotected strikes are typically impulsive employee actions that occur without the authorization of union representatives. They are used as a tool to increase pressure during indirect debates or when an organization's behaviour is deemed illegal (SASBO, 1998:4). Unprotected strikes, on the other hand, must be stopped as soon as possible.

It is also critical that organisations focus their efforts on resolving workplace disputes through negotiations with unions (SASBO, 1998:4). There is currently an extraordinary spark of unprotected strikes being carried out by employees. This occurs when all of the requirements of the act are not met. While protected strikes are legally binding and help employees retain their jobs after the strike (SASBO, 1998:3), employers have the legal right to lay off workers by following court procedures in the case of unprotected strikes (Norton Rose Global, 2009). Unprotected strikes are perceived as illegal, resulting in more disputes than protected strikes that follow the correct legal procedures. Employers could also adequately prepare and implement controls to reduce the impact of strikes (Israelstam, 2013).

### 2.3.7. Collective bargaining

Collective bargaining is the result of a determined sense of balance, such as comparative bargaining authority or power between employers and employees (Venter & Levy, 2014:532). If the parties involved in collective bargaining are unable to resolve their differences, industrial action is frequently the result. Employees will use collective action to make their demands known. Collective action under these conditions includes a labour supply delay aimed at a specific time frame, otherwise known as a strike action. Collective bargaining and strike action should not be viewed as a negative economic phenomenon; if done legally, it could be viewed as a sign of a well-functioning economy where negotiation and communication take place (Bhana, 1997:43-49).

### 2.4. Causes of Industrial Action

Many factors have been given in literature as instigators of industrial action. These factors are related to disputes between employees and employers. Isiaka (2010) reported on a number of drivers of industrial action. Industrial action can be as a result of health hazards to employees in the course of executing tasks (Isiaka, 2010:40). Isiaka (2010:40) noted that the health hazard factors can include low temperatures at work place, extreme noise, smoke and poor ventilation. Employees are likely to embark on industrial action if the management ignore the grievance of the employees and if the condition that led to the industrial action worsens. Unhappiness with wages and earnings by employees is reported to be the cause of more than half of industrial action (Isiaka, 2010). Grievances with wages and earnings can be linked to low wages in comparison to market or prevailing inflation rate, unpaid wages, low allowances, prolonged wage negotiations and wide wage disparities between management and lower level employees. Employees can also resort to industrial action if management fail to honour agreed salary increments between employer and trade unions.

Abuse of managerial authority by people in senior positions can also lead to workers embarking on industrial action (Isiaka, 2010:40). Misuse of managerial authority can include curtailing workers' rights through imposing of unnecessary rules and regulations. In some instances management can treat workers' unions with dissident as well as ignoring the implementation of collective bargaining agreements which can infuriate workers thereby aggravating the industrial conflict. Isiaka (2010) also reported that workers can embark on an industrial action as a result of perceived unfair disciplinary measures. Employees can undertake strike action if they feel that fellow



workers are being victimised and harassed in disciplinary processes or if they feel the penalties imposed are not in line with the wrong act committed.

Isiaka (2010) also reported that workers can take industrial action if they feel a management representative is behaving improperly during wages negotiations. This can be as a result of failure to respect other negotiating partners as well as failure to compromise in issues of importance to negotiating partners. Improper behaviour by management representative can also be prevalent in other areas like supervisors failing to treat their subordinates reasonably in matters concerning time keeping or merely being autocratic in relating to workers (Isiaka, 2010:41). According to Isiaka (2010:41) employees can also embark on an industrial action to force other disloyal employees to join them in the strike action. This is so as rewards of industrial action accrue to both workers that participated and the non-participants. This therefore makes active employees to feel betrayed by the non-participants leading to industrial action to demand loyalty or oneness.

In 2007, the last national postal strike ended after both sides signed a 14-page agreement on pay and changes to working practices. As deals go, the agreement to end the 2007 nationwide postal strike was certainly woolly in parts. There was plenty of opportunity for both sides to disagree on exactly what it meant in practice. At the very least, the tortuous discussions on implementing the agreement have proved that “give and take” has one attribute very much in short supply. The stated aim of the agreement, which now seems ironic, was to “move away from the adversarial relationships that persist in too many parts of the business”. As members of the Communication Workers Union (CWU) are now out on another nationwide strike, that goal seems further away than ever. Walk sequencing machines were to be trialled using computer programmes to produce the sensible delivery round for a postal worker. The 2007 deal set a concrete deadline of the end of January 2008 to agree a framework to deal with the trialling and implementation of all new technology and automation. But two years on, there is still no agreement according to Royal Mail, which says that a framework was twice agreed between negotiators, but each time it was subsequently rejected by the executive committee of the CWU. The union declined to comment. Another clause in the agreement pledged is the early shift payment is ceased in delivery on agreement to pay restructuring. But Royal Mail says that the early shift payment still technically exists, and the company continues to be “keen to discuss pay restructuring with the union”. So in other words it seems nothing has changed.

So the 2007 agreement on modernisation has led to some significant changes in the way Royal Mail staff operate. But with CWU members now out on another nationwide strike, the great prize of replacing confrontation with trust between the two sides, seems as far away as ever. During industrial disputes, sometimes employees use strike as a anti-impasse weapon.

It is more useful to view both phenomena as part and parcel of the conflict situation, not as opposite. Rarely does a strike occur over a single issue for an obvious cause may be linked with several other issues that not immediately apparent to the observation that have caused dissatisfaction because solutions to them have been long in coming. The actual occurrence of strike depends on several factors including prevailing circumstances. This also goes to show that few strikes occur spontaneously especially as there is no way of guaranteeing that strike actions instead of the other forms of industrial action would be decided upon by workers involved. Each time strike occurs substantial man-hour is lost, a good example is the first general strike of (1945), the (1993) ASU strike where universities in the country was closed for couple of months thereby causing set back in the tertiary institution.

Strikes are generally caused by issues such as wages and salaries, working conditions, and unfavourable management/government policies toward workers. The approach taken by management or the government to these issues determines whether the strike will be peaceful or violent. When the government/management grants all or part of the workers' demands, the strike is considered successful.

On the other hand, a strike can re-bounce, resulting in the dismissal or termination of the employment of the workers involved, or the lesser evil of non-payment of salaries during the strike period, property destruction, general decline in productivity, and unintended loss of life from either the workers, management officials, or the general public. The strike has had a general impact on South Africa's economic development.

## 2.5. Impact of Industrial Action

Industrial action has impact on employees, employers, national economy and national social cohesion. The effects of industrial action on these four fronts as reported in literature are considered in this section.

### A. Effect on Employees

UNISON (2009) reported on a number of negative consequences of industrial action on employees. Loss of pay during the industrial action period is common

(UNISON, 2009:10). UNISON (2009) noted that employers are legally permitted to withhold salary and wages payments to employees taking part in an industrial action. Industrial action period is also not counted on period qualifying for days of long service or continuous service (UNISON, 2009). According to UNISON (2009) employers are likely to deny workers annual leave days during days of industrial action. Industrial action also impact pension schemes negatively as strike days do not count on pensionable service (UNISON, 2009). Pay lost during strike days reduces pension benefits as it is excluded in the calculations. Employers can also dismiss employees taking part in an unprotected or unlawful industrial action (UNISON, 2009).

Employee education in Kenya has increased in recent years, with a large percentage of the population having completed at least secondary school (Birech, 2010:26). Employees are becoming more aware of their rights. The challenge for employers is to ensure that they follow company law, or risk being sued by their employees if their needs are not met. Women, for example, are now aware of a new employment act that allows them to be paid for three months of maternity leave without forfeiting their leave. The government's revision of the retirement age from 55 to 60 years has increased the retention rates of older employees, causing a work-demand imbalance. Education raises the unemployment rate.

According to Sahin and Willis (2011:98), employment and population trends indicate that a lack of demand, rather than a mismatch between workers and jobs, is the primary cause of the slow recovery. While highly educated workers have seen the greatest job gains, demand for these workers has not kept up with the growing population of highly educated workers. For example, the number of doctors in Kenya does not match the demand for doctors, giving doctors bargaining power and increasing industrial action. According to Owoye (2001:23), the existence of surplus labour would weaken bargaining power and the ability of labour unions to engage in 13 strikes under voluntary collective bargaining. The government should encourage its citizens to be job creators rather than job seekers.

### **B. Effect on Employer (or Organisation)**

Akkerman and Torenvlied (2010) reported on both negative and positive effects of industrial action on an organisation. An organisation experiencing industrial action from its employees is likely to experience decrease in market share, productivity and profitability (Akkerman and Torenvlied, 2010). However, Akkerman and Torenvlied (2010) noted that an industrial action in one organisation is likely

to benefit competing firms in profitability, market share and profitability. A business organisation experiencing industrial action is also likely to experience drop in market share price, negative public image, poisoned internal relations between employees and employer as well as between different groups of workers (Akkerman and Torenvlied, 2010). This is because during industrial action emotions run very high thereby creating enmity between different parties with different interests. Akkerman and Torenvlied (2010) further noted that an industrial action in one firm has contagion effect to workers in other companies to take action with the same demands. Seedat (2013) reported that protected industrial action and unprotected industrial action have different effect on share price, with protected having a bigger negative impact on the share price than the unprotected industrial action.

Inflation and interest rates are inextricably linked and frequently mentioned in macroeconomics. The Federal Reserve sets interest rates in the United States (the amount of interest paid by a borrower to a lender). According to Folger (2012), when interest rates are lowered, more people are able to borrow more money, resulting in more money for consumers to spend, causing the economy to grow and inflation to rise. He claims, however, that less spending slows the economy and lowers inflation. He goes on to say that the Federal Reserve adjusts interest rates upwards or downwards in order to achieve maximum employment, stable prices, and stable economic growth.

On a macroeconomic scale, interest rates are the most important determinant of investment. The current thinking is that if interest rates rise across the board, investment will fall, resulting in a drop in national income. Higher rates, on the other hand, encourage more saving and thus more investment and thus more jobs in order to increase production and thus profits. Higher interest rates also deter economically inefficient lending, such as consumer credit and mortgage lending. Also, consumer credit is typically used to purchase imported goods, whereas business loans are typically used to create more domestic jobs and/or capital investment in machinery in order to increase output and profit (Austrian School of Economics, 2004).

### **C. Effect on National Economy**

Industrial action has devastating impact on the national economy from different perspectives. The African Development Bank (ADB) reported on the different effects of industrial action on the economy of a country during and after the industrial action. The Gross Domestic Product is always reduced as a result

of stopped production during an industrial action (ADB, 2013). For instance, the national treasury reported a loss of US\$500 million in platinum and gold mining production during the time of labour unrest between August and September 2012 (ADB, 2013). The fact that mining constitute a big proportion of South African GDP means the GDP and national exports regressed during this period. Continued industrial actions can also negatively affect the economy through creating negative investor sentiments for the industry and the country (ADB, 2013). The ADB (2013) further reported that the negative investor sentiments have negative effect on the value of the currency, share prices, commodity prices and risk grading by international credit rating organisations.

Taxation is collected by governments in both developed and developing countries to fund public services. According to Marina et al. (2002:19), taxation is the only known practical method for collecting resources to finance public expenditure for goods and services consumed by any citizenry. From taxes and other sources of revenue, governments provide a variety of services to their citizens, including education, health care, water, security, roads, and social security. As a result, taxes are mandatory payments that do not always correspond to the benefits of government goods and services received (Hyman, 1990). According to Mutua (2012:57), one of the reasons why employees pay taxes is that one person cannot afford to fully pay for a service that they use, and thus it is the responsibility of governments to collect taxes in order to fund public goods and services for the benefit of citizens.

Furthermore, the employee receives no direct and immediate service, such as healthcare or education. He goes on to say that direct taxes, such as pay as you earn and corporate income tax, are calculated as a percentage of income or assets and can be paid personally by taxpayers or by employers through the agency mandated to collect taxes on behalf of the Treasury, whereas indirect taxes, such as VAT and excise duty, are borne by the end user of consumer goods and services. only the tax cut rates and regulate them through legislation (Blum, 1981:34).

In economics, inflation is defined as a long-term increase in the general price level of goods and services in an economy. Inflation reflects a decrease in purchasing power per unit of money (a loss of real value in the economy's medium of exchange and unit of account) as each unit of currency buys fewer and fewer goods and services. The inflation rate, which is given by the annualised percentage change in a general price index over time, can be used to calculate

price inflation. The effects of inflation on an economy can be negative, as evidenced by an increase in the opportunity cost of holding money, uncertainty about future inflation, which may discourage investment and savings, and, if inflation is rapid enough, shortages of goods as consumers begin hoarding out of fear of future price increases. Positive effects include ensuring that central banks can adjust real interest rates to avoid recessions and encouraging non-monetary capital investment.

The inflation rate has steadily increased (around 18 percent in February, rising to 30 percent by the end of June 2008), raising the cost of living in the country. The number of people living in poverty is said to be increasing, with many families living on less than a dollar per day (Yusuf.2011:15). As a result, employers who are unable to proof employee salaries against inflation face the challenge of strikes and go-slows from employees who are demanding pay increases to help them deal with the new level of increased spending. According to Owoye (2001:58), in his study income policies, inflation, and strikes in Nigeria, inflation had a significant influence on strike activity in Nigeria. This meant that workers were concerned about the purchasing power of their wages during inflationary periods and would go on strike to demand wage increases that would allow them to keep up with inflation and maintain their standard of living.

#### **D. Effect on National Social Cohesion**

Akkerman and Torenvlied (2010) reported that industrial action is very contagious meaning it can spread to other organisations or within the community. Chalwe (2010) recognised that industrial action has the propensity to affect people that have nothing to do with the dispute. Thus, conflicts can be created within the community as a result of contagion effect of the industrial action as well as groups with conflicting views. This can lead to instability and violence within the community. Odeku (2014) reported that the Marikana massacre took place as a result of instability in the Rustenburg community after a long labour unrest. Thus unabated industrial action can cost human lives and cause political instability.

Unhealthy employment relationship has been identified as one of the negative implications of industrial action on employment relations. Researchers (Arputharaj & Gayatri, 2014; Awe & Ayeni, 2012; Selala, 2014) have found that one effect of strike action is that it leads to poor employment relationships, especially between the employers and employees. Arputharaj and Gayatri (2014) found that when employees and their unions embark on strike



action there is the possibility of unhealthy relationships in the organisation. According to Arputharaj and Gayatri (2014), each time employees embark on a strike action the trust in the organisation is said to be broken and this eventually affects the employment relations. A similar study conducted by Awe and Ayeni (2012) on the effect of conflict on employment relations in Nigeria has discovered that strikes have negative implications for employment relations in an organisation. According to the authors, action can bring about division between the parties in the workplace which can have lasting effects on the kind of relationship that exists between them. Awe and Ayeni (2012) contend that due to strike action, parties might view each other as enemies and this may have a major implication on the employment relations that exist within the working environment. Selala (2014) also found that strike action can impact negatively on the employment relationship. According to Selala (2014), during strike action there is hostility between employees and the employer because the employer may perceive the employees as opposing his authority. Findings by Awe and Ayeni (2012) and Selala (2014) affirm the previous assertion made by Arputharaj and Gayatri (2014) that strike action may contribute to unhealthy relationship among the parties. The following discussion focuses on how strike action may lead to employee dismissal.

## 2.6. State of Industrial Action in South Africa

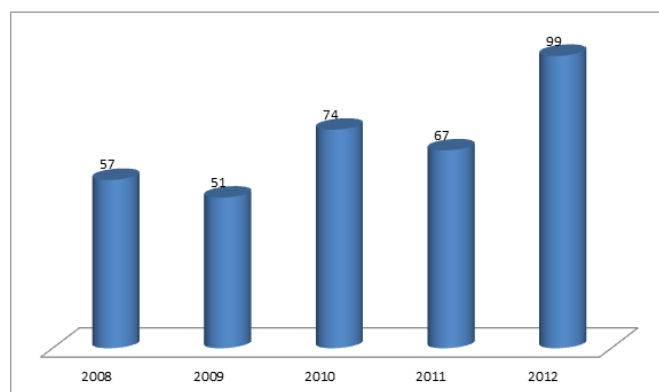
South Africa has been experiencing devastating industrial action in all sectors of the economy. This has generally negatively affected the wellbeing of the economy as well as poisoning industrial relations. Odeku (2014) noted that workers are embarking on protected and unprotected strikes. Bhorat and Cheadle (2009) reported that in South Africa workers have a right to take industrial action in accordance with section 23 of the Constitution of the of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 and other labour legislation that regulates labour relationships. However, the industrial action irrespective of being protected or unprotected has had negative consequences for the country.

Jacobs (2013) recognised that workers and trade unions in South Africa are using industrial action as a tool to arm twist employers in industrial disputes. Thus the right for workers to strike always makes workers unions to resort to industrial action to force employers to negotiations or to achieve a certain position in collective bargaining. However, Bendix (2010) reported that despite employees in South Africa resorting to industrial action, collective bargaining is a better way of solving issues arising in industrial relations. Basson (2009) noted that

although the constitution guarantees the right of workers to embark on industrial action the Labour Relations Act restricts the same right through making it unlawful for workers that offer essential services like South African Police Service (SAPS) members to embark on strike. This restriction is a realisation of negative impacts of strikes on the stability of the country if they are not regulated.

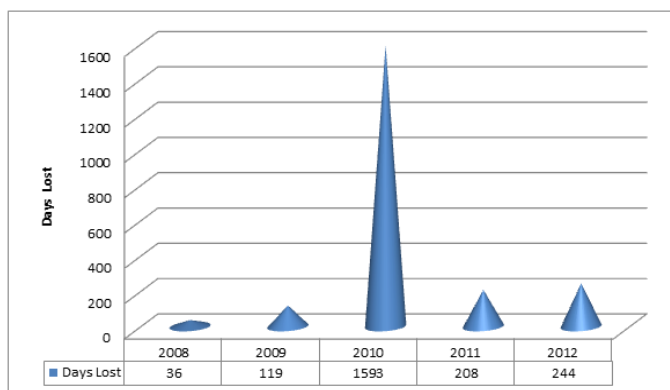
The Department of Corporate Governance and Traditional Affairs (DCGTA) (2009) reported high prevalence of labour strikes in South African municipalities. DCGTA (2009) noted the underlying reasons to the industrial action as: indifference or incapacity to end pay parity issue; poor health and safety for workers; ignoring signed agreements; poor communication; poor cooperation between management and employees; and political interference in management of the municipalities. The department (2009) noted that the rampant industrial actions in municipalities are leading to low productivity and are largely as result of dysfunctional human resources management and weak ethics and integrity in most municipalities.

The Department of Labour (2013) reported of increasing strike actions in the country that are becoming violent by noting the Marikana mining strike action that led to the killing of dozens of mining workers as well as private security personnel and members of SAPS. The Department of Labour noted the Marikana tragedy has made government to strengthen social dialogue and collective bargaining in solving labour disputes. The department (2013) reported on various statistics relating to strike actions in South Africa. The graph below presents the number of strike actions that led to work stoppages in South Africa from 2008 to 2012 according to the Department of Labour (2013).



**Figure 2.2: Annual Strikes**

The diagram above shows an increase in strike actions in South Africa from 2008 to 2012. The graph below presents days lost per 1000 employees as a result of industrial action from 2008 to 2012 (Department of Labour, 2013).



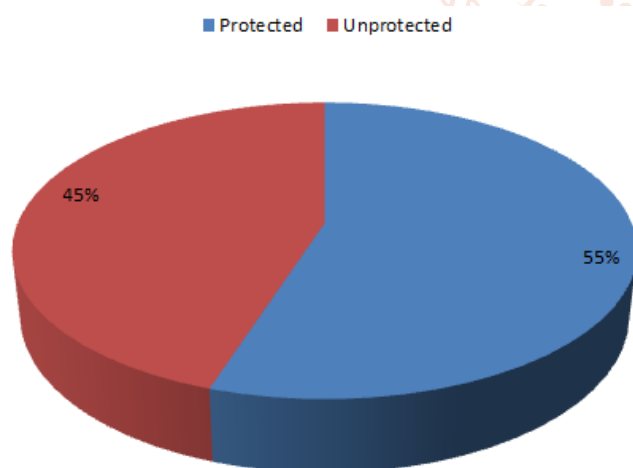
**Figure 2.3: Number of Lost Days**

The above diagram confirms that days lost due to strike actions per 1000 employees shoot from 36 to 1593 strikes from 2008 to 2010 and drop to 208 in 2011. The Department of Labour (2013) further reported lost wages from 2008 to 2012 as presented by the next table.

**Table 2.1: Wages Lost**

Year	Wages Lost
2008	47 705 846
2009	235 458 414
2010	407 082 302
2011	1 073 109 003
2012	6 666 103 906

The table above shows that from 2008 to 2010 employees lost millions of rands of wages but billions from 2011 to 2012. The Department (2013) also reported on distribution of strike action between protected and unprotected in 2012 as presented in the following pie chart.



**Figure 2.4: Legality of Strike**

Thus in 2012 45% of the strike actions were unprotected while 55% were protected. The distribution of strike actions into legal categories show that there was an almost even distribution between protected and unprotected in 2012.

## 2.7. Theoretical Review

Industrial relations is the study of the collective and individual regulation of the employment relationship

between employer and employee, as well as the determination of substantive and procedural issues at the industrial, organisational, and workplace levels (Rose, 2008:7). Kaufman (2010:36) defines industrial relations as the process of developing workplace rules, whereas Edwards (2005:49) defines industrial relations as structured antagonism. Industrial relations, according to Hyman (1995:19), are the social regulation of market forces. According to Caire (1996, cited in Kaufman 2010:25), industrial relations are the process of capitalist production and accumulation, as well as the resulting political and social class relations. According to Kochan (1998:57), industrial relations are defined by the conflict of interests and pluralist governance of the workplace, as well as class mobilisation and social justice (Kelly, 1998:45); the advancement of efficiency, equity, and voice in the employment relationship (Budd, 2004:35). Individuals' efforts to achieve logical consistent ways of understanding and explaining social behaviour and real-life activities are referred to as industrial relation theories. The foundation of this research is Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Expectations Theory, and Conflict Theory. This section explains and connects these theories to the study.

## 2.8. Conflict Theory

Conflict theory holds the basic assumption that conflict is common in labour/ management relationship based on the fact that these two classes have conflicting interests which are diametrically opposed to each other (Anyim et al., 2012:39). Anyim et al. (2012:39) further note that in a capitalist economy, the state is always on the side of the employer in an attempt to protect the interest of the bourgeoisie. In the opinion of Miliband in 1969 reported in Anyim et al. (2012:39) the state stands for a number of institutions that are constantly used to harass and repress the trade unions. The government is thus seen as a coercive instrument of the ruling capitalist class. Hyman in 1975 as reported in Anyim et al. (2012:39) also notes that the quest for control of work brings workers into direct confrontation with the management and considers government and its regulatory agencies as mere tools of influential individuals or groups who perpetrate their selfish interests. Conflict is therefore common in industrial society hence there is the need to resolve it through agreed rules between the contending parties in order to avoid the use of violence or other non-legitimate means. It is therefore postulated that the conflicting interests of BCMM workers and management makes industrial action always likely.

It contends that industrial conflict is evident in the economic structures of a capitalistic society. Industrial conflict between employer and employee, management and union is simply a reflection of those buying and selling labour in the market place (Farnham 2000:34). It is the result of economic constraints within the capitalistic mode of production. It is thus the function of the trade union to uphold and protect working people's class interests through direct and indirect action. Marxism is a general theory of society and social change with implications for the analysis of industrial relations within capitalist societies; however, it does not strictly explain industrial relations theory. Hyman (1995:109) defines industrial relations as the study of processes of control over work relation processes, particularly those involving collective worker organisations. He also contends that an unending power struggle for control is a central feature of industrial relations because it is inherent in the nature and characteristics of a capitalist society to struggle for control.

He summarizes the major characteristics of capitalism as a small minority owning or controlling the means of production, profit as the primary determinant of economic activity, and the obligation of the majority of society to sell their productive abilities on the market as a commodity. He also emphasizes that the interests of employers and employees are diametrically opposed and contradictory in nature, as capitalists seek to purchase labour at the lowest possible price, whereas labour seeks to sell his only asset at the highest possible price in order to ensure his survival.

Capitalists seek to maximise profit, whereas workers seek to maximise wages/salaries. As a result, in a capitalist industrial society, the interests and aspirations of both labour and employers are divergent and conflicting. Workplace relations, according to Marxist perspectives, are a reflection of societal inequalities and their inevitable expression at work. Hyman goes on to say that industrial relations are all about power, interests, and conflict, and that the economic society will always shape the character of relations between industrial relations actors, which he refers to as the political economy of industrial relations. Conflict is viewed as a disorder precursor to change, and resolving conflict means changing societal imbalances and inequalities in terms of power and wealth. This industrial relations system, however, did not work for the Chilean government in the 1970s because it was perceived to be a grave threat to the survival of a defenceless democracy due to its idealist application of liberalism (Blum, 1981). The Maoist application of Marxism revealed ongoing conflicts in

the workers' interests in relation to the state (Blum, 1981).

Marxists contend that in workplace relations, there are competing interests among the parties (employer and employees), with the government frequently siding with the employer (Ogundele et al., 2013). They argue that in capitalist societies, the government frequently sides with employers to protect and promote their interests, often at the expense of employees. Adebisi (2013) agrees that in capitalist society, the state always sides with capitalists to protect the bourgeoisie's interests. According to Adebisi (2013), such government actions put workers' interests at risk.

According to Ogundele and Olajide (2012), there is always a division between capital and labour in capitalist society. Thus, labour seeks to maximise its well-being, whereas capital seeks to increase or maximise its wealth. According to Venter and Levy (2014), Marxists advocate a system in which the factors of production (land, labour, and capital) and their fruits are owned and shared by the people.

The Marxists have a different perspective on workplace conflict than the unitarists and pluralists. According to Francis et al. (2012), Marxists believe that workplace conflicts are unavoidable because business owners seek to reduce costs and workers seek equitable or fair compensation for their efforts; and conflicts in capitalist society are simply reflections of the bourgeoisie's dominant power bases and differences in class ideologies. According to Onyemaechi (2014), Marxists believe that the source of conflict in employment relationships is exploitation. According to Oginni and Faseyiku (2012), conflict is a permanent feature of employment relations under the Marxist approach. According to Oginni and Faseyiku (2012), conflict arises between the employer (capital) and the employees (labour) as a result of societal imbalances and inequalities. According to Oginni and Faseyiku (2012), the nature of the conflict is inherited from the economic and social systems. According to Venter and Levy (2014), Marxists believe that workplace conflict is an expression of societal divisions rather than just organisational conflict. According to Bendix (2015, p.42), Marxists believe that because the "employee is continually exploited conflict is inherent to the socioeconomic system and not only to employment."

Marxists have expressed many views on trade unions that differ from those of unitarists and pluralists. According to Seniwoliba (2013), Marxists believe or assume the following about trade unions: union leaders who accommodate or tolerate management



betray their members or workers; and trade unions should not limit their efforts to improving the material lot of workers but must ensure the good of all employees in the organisation. According to Ogundele et al. (2013), the growth and expansion of trade unions in various countries is seen as an unavoidable employee response to capitalism. According to Ogundele et al. (2013), Marxists believe that trade unions not only improve collective employment power by reducing competition among individual employees, but they also provide a mechanism for the expression and protection of the working classes' interests.

Furthermore, Venter and Levy (2014, 9) assert that Marxists regard trade unions as "vehicles of fundamental societal changes." Marxists see trade unions as "necessary to conscientize the working class, but cannot achieve equality while operating within the system," according to Bendix (2015, 42).

**3.3.3.4 Marxist perspectives on collective bargaining**  
Marxists have a different perspective on collective bargaining. According to Marxists, collective bargaining levels the playing field between management and labour unions (Omoyibo, 2012). Those who subscribe to this viewpoint recognise the importance of trade union formation and clearly support trade union struggles, but they believe that trade unions frequently challenge society's existing structures only at their own expense. Marxists deny the significance of collective bargaining in employment relationships. They believe that even when agreements are reached through collective bargaining, management retains control. According to Ogundele et al. (2013), Marxists believe that collective bargaining is ineffective in organisations because employees only fight for their collective interests at the expense of the employer.

Marxists made important contributions to the field of labour relations. Their approach is still applicable in modern organisations. According to Kuehn (2012), this approach is still relevant because it serves as a critique of capitalism's development. According to Kuehn (2012), the Marxist approach aids in the analysis of the impact of capitalism on labour by ensuring the fair and equitable distribution of factors of production (land, capital, and interest) and proposing class struggle as a central theme in the analysis of social change in Western societies.

According to Omoyibo (2012), the Marxist approach is important in the following ways: it contributes to how various classes in capitalist society can interact to form a whole and thus perform society's functions as one entity. It assists individuals in determining the present in the long run through Marx's historical

sense, as well as providing a clear understanding of the inherent dynamics of society as a whole; it also assists in examining the relationship between ownership, power, and social change; and, finally, it assists in providing a theory of society that is in accordance with a very high level of human ideals.

According to Fuchs and Mosco (2015), despite the fact that Marxist theory has been called into question on several occasions, it remains one of the most influential theories. According to Fuchs and Mosco (2015), the Marxist approach highlights important concepts about society's ideals as a functioning body made up of several separate units. Fuchs and Mosco (2015) go on to say that this approach can help you understand the dynamics of society as a whole. The authors go on to say that Marxism allows them to examine different relationships in society from various perspectives without any constraints. According to Seniwoliba (2013), the Marxist approach has made significant contributions to the field of industrial relations. Marxism, according to Seniwoliba (2013), emphasises exploitation and alienation. As a result, its theory is important in capitalist society and its production, distribution, and exchange systems.

Seniwoliba (2013) further suggests that the Marxist approach is critical because it emphasises the importance of collective action such as industrial action and any other action that falls short of strike action.

Despite its significant contributions to the field of employment or industrial relations, Marxism has received harsh criticism from researchers (Chidi & Okpala, 2012; Frege, Kelly & McGovern, 2012; Omoyibo, 2014; Rahat, Kifayatullah & Tammanna, 2012; Seniwoliba 2013). Hyman's theoretical work, according to Frege et al. (2012), is not without flaws. According to Frege et al. (2012, p.216), the first criticism levelled against this theory is the "privileged status given to class conflict as an explanatory mechanism." According to the authors, while critics agree with Hyman that conflict is an important feature of any employment relationship, this conflict is not always the result of class conflict.

According to Frege et al. (2012, p.216), another criticism of this approach is the assumption that conflict is inherent in capitalism. According to Hyman's strike book, "industrial conflict is not irrational, irresponsible, or illegitimate, but rather the result of irreconcilable contradictions within capitalism." The book focuses primarily on conflict's "powerful underlying causes" or "mainsprings" (Frege et al, p.87). However, critics have argued that if conflict is unavoidable in the workplace, "given the

structured antagonism built into the capitalist employment relationship, how can the Marxist perspective account for the extraordinary decline in the number of strikes over the past 30 years?" (Frege et al., 2012, p.217). Rahat et al. (2013) agree that Marxist theory is heavily criticised by employment relations scholars. According to Rahat et al. (2013), the Marxist approach has been criticised because capitalists have no regard for human beings and only regard material entities. According to Rahat et al. (2013), there is no respect for human rights and dignity in capitalist societies because the rich control the society. According to the authors, another criticism of this theory is that capitalists use force to achieve their ostensible interests. People in capitalist society are frequently oppressed because of their social class.

According to Seniwoliba (2013), critics argue that while the Marxist approach is admirable, it cannot be applied in practise. According to Seniwoliba (2013), other scholars (Ackers 2014; Guest 2014; Samuel 2014) claim that this approach is nothing more than a realignment of thought with reality. According to Omoyibo (2014), the Marxist approach has been called into question on two grounds. To begin with, the radical ideas and social changes advanced by Marxists in the early days no longer fit into the social order and reality of the time. This is due to conservative reactions to the disruptions and dislocations of the Enlightenment and French Revolution. Second, the approach has been criticised because "Marx' propositions were too dangerous and stood in opposition to Western bourgeois ideology and the interest it represents that professes conservative reforms and orderly social change in the system, hence the urgency to tame the theory" (p.20). Criticism of this approach has resulted in the emergence of new approaches.

## 2.9. Expectancy Theory

Expectancy theory was presented by Vroom in 1964. It is based on the following four assumptions (Lunenburg, 2011:1):

- People join organisations with expectations about their needs, motivations and past expectations;
- An individual's behaviour is as a result of conscious choice. This means people's behaviour is determined by their own expectations;
- People want different things from that of the organisations; and
- People will choose among different choices in order to optimise outcomes that are highly beneficial to them.

In accordance with the expectancy theory this study postulates that strikes in BCMM are due to municipal

management failing to meet workers' expectations as well as contradicting interests between management and workers.

## 2.10. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow in 1943 modelled a hierarchy of needs after investigating how human needs influence action (Thielke, 2011:473). Maslow identifies five levels of needs in ascending order as physical needs; safety and security needs; belonging and love needs; esteem needs; and self-actualisation needs. Higher level needs are not satisfied until lower level needs are satisfied (Thielke, 2011:473). Individual needs or drives are unlimited, insatiable and endless but the resources to satisfy them are limited. Maslow concludes that at any point in time there is an active need that should be satisfied and that satisfied needs are not motivational (Ifedili and Ifedili, 2012:79). This study postulates that industrial action at BCMM is as a result of municipal management failing to meet employees' hierarchy of needs as presented by Abraham Maslow.

## 2.11. Review of past empirical studies

This section will review the past local and international empirical studies conducted on industrial actions, and it is evident that there are only few studies done in South Africa.

### 2.11.1. Review of past local studies

To the best of the author's knowledge, only ten local empirical studies on strikes have been conducted, with two of them being highly descriptive. First, Van der Velden and Visser (2006) compared strike activity in the Netherlands and South Africa between 1900 and 1998. With a focus on South Africa, the authors first provided a comprehensive review of strike history before conducting a descriptive analysis of the four indicators listed below: (1) number of strikes (N); (2) number of workers involved in strikes (S); (3) intensity of strikes (S/E, where "E" stands for total number of workers); (4) duration of strikes (total number of work days lost (D)).

Jacobs and Yu (2013) presented long-term trends in strike activity across trade unions, provinces, and industries using the DoL's Industrial Action Reports from 1999 to 2011. They discovered that, despite significant fluctuations in the number of work days lost, there was an upward trend in industrial action throughout the entire period. The authors also conducted a brief correlation analysis between the number of working days lost due to strikes, the inflation rate, and the real GDP growth rate, and discovered that the correlation coefficient between the first two variables was very strong between 2004 and 2007. (0.98). Otherwise, the empirical work in this

factsheet was very brief, consisting primarily of basic descriptive statistics.

Murwirapachena and Sibanda (2014) investigated strike action in post-apartheid South Africa. Murwirapachena and Sibanda (2014) investigated the frequency, causes, and consequences of strikes in South Africa using newspaper and other published articles. The expansion of labour movements is a critical component of strike incidences in South Africa. South Africa has adopted Kaufman's (2010) core principle, which is based on the theoretical and policy formulation of industrial relations, as evidenced by the country's workers' right and ability to strike. According to Visser (2007), South Africa's industrial relations history, particularly its strike history, is a reflection of the apartheid era. According to Visser (2007), while data on strike occurrences in South Africa have recently surfaced, it does not provide a comprehensive chronological picture of strike activities in South Africa. As a result, there is a scarcity of research on strike activities in South Africa, emphasising the importance of this paper.

Wage increases and/or better working conditions are the most common causes of strikes in post-apartheid South Africa. According to Murwirapachena and Sibanda (2014:554), there are additional factors that contribute to labour unrest in the country. These factors include, among others, union competition, poverty, unemployment, and discrimination, the use of migrant workers, the legacy of apartheid, and job cuts (Murwirapachena & Sibanda, 2014:554).

Furthermore, as a result of strikes, production levels fall. During strikes, productive work hours are lost due to negotiations, protests, and sit-ins (Murwirapachena & Sibanda, 2014:557). According to Pulse (2012), the 41-day strike at Lonmin's Marikana mine in 2011 resulted in a 15% decrease in output. Murwirapachena and Sibanda (2014:557) revealed that the mine's 41-day strike resulted in massive production and export losses. Since then, mining has contributed nearly 5% of South Africa's GDP and roughly 50% of the country's total exports. According to Murwirapachena and Sibanda (2014:556), factors such as inequality, poverty, and unemployment provide social and economic needs for future wage increases.

According to Hartford (2012), regular workers were outraged by the lavish spending of newly empowered black entrepreneurs as well as the lavish spending of newly empowered and affluent white individuals. This fueled their demands for a larger piece of the economic pie. However, it is also important to consider the massive disparity in wage differentials between the remuneration structures of CEOs and

owners, who earn exorbitant remuneration (ratios that are a thousand times higher) than entry level employees in South Africa. Strikes are motivated by factors such as poverty, inequality, and the fear of losing their jobs.

The main findings of this paper by Murwirapachena and Sibanda (2014) show that strikes are triggered by inequality, unemployment, poverty, union competition, and the inequitable nature of labour relations. The effects of strikes were also discussed, and it was acknowledged that they were both social and economic in nature. In contrast, the paper proposed that labour market stability could be achieved through the development of good stakeholder relations, labour relations equality, the rotation of employees into employers through the use of indigenization policies, and the imposition of a national minimum wage.

Wood and Glaister (2008) investigated the econometric relationship between unionisation and employee collectivism, as well as managerial strategies for employee involvement and participation. The authors developed a composite index on employee collectivism and union organisational presence using data from a primary survey with a sample size of 663, namely the 2004 Taking Democracy Seriously Survey. This index included variables such as "having participated in industrial action," "having shop stewards in the workplace," and "attending union meetings at least once a month," as well as "having a workplace forum," "having a health and safety committee," and "having team work." It was discovered that older male workers who spoke indigenous (African) languages and were permanently employed were significantly more likely to be union members and to participate in quality groups at work (i.e. associated with a higher composite index score).

Schoeman, Botha, and Blaauw (2010) investigated the impact of labour conflict on the persistence of underemployment. The capital/labor ratio was used as a proxy variable for underemployment in their empirical analysis, and the following regression was run for the period 1970-2004:  $CO = f(LS, STRIKES, RR, DUM, AIDS)$ , where  $CO$  = capital/labor ratio;  $LS$  = labour share;  $STRIKES$  = strike frequency;  $RR$  = real interest rate;  $DUM$  an institutional dummy equal to 1 for years when institutions intervened in favour of labour (i.e. abolishment of influx control in 1986, implementation of LRA in 1995, its amendment in 1996, 1998, 2000, and 2002);  $AIDS$  = a dummy variable

Finally, the authors discovered a significant positive relationship between strike frequency (two years lag)



and capital/labor ratio. This implies that as the frequency of strikes increases, the shift to capital is more likely, with the potential for higher unemployment as a side effect. There was also a significant negative relationship between the institutional dummy (two years lag) and the capital/labor ratio. This suggests that labour market regulation increases employment; this is not surprising given that labour relations in favour of labour may have created certainty in the labour market as a whole. Furthermore, the impulse response function results showed that the capital/labor ratio reacted to strikes (positive coefficient) and shifted away from equilibrium.

Lacroix (1986) investigated the relationship between strikes and the level of negotiated wage agreements in the Canadian manufacturing industry using data from wage settlements signed between 1968 and 1981. The author conducted an OLS econometric analysis on approximately 400 wage settlements involving strikes to determine the impact of various explanatory variables (vacancy rate, expected inflation, strikes, among others) on wages. The analysis found that when there was more excess demand in the labour market (i.e. a higher vacancy rate) and inflation was expected to rise, wages increased more quickly. Most importantly, the strike dummy (which was equal to 1 when the collective agreement was signed after the strike) was found to be statistically significant and positive.

Card (1990) examined wage settlements in the manufacturing industry in Canada from 1964 to 1985, which included 2 258 contracts negotiated by 299 firm-union pairs, involving more than 500 employees. Card conducted an econometric analysis to investigate how various explanatory variables, including strike indicators, influenced the first difference of the expected average real wage. After controlling for inflation, regional unemployment, and the real wage at the end of the previous contract, it was discovered that strike duration had a significant non-linear effect on real wages. The effect was positive and increasing until the strike lasted 98 days, at which point the relationship turned negative for longer strike periods (99 days or above).

Blumenfeld and Victorio (2012) investigated the impact of strike intensity on the firm-level negotiated hourly wage of janitors (sample size 3 140) in the United States from 1972 to 1986. The strike intensity was calculated by dividing the total number of work hours spent on strikes by the total number of work hours not spent on strikes, and multiplying the result by the average duration of each strike in days. After controlling for bargaining characteristics (e.g., union

density), firm-level characteristics (e.g., firm size), employee-level characteristics (e.g., gender, race), unemployment rate, and inflation rate, it was discovered that there was a significant and negative relationship between strike intensity and the negotiated hourly wage: a one-unit increase in strike intensity would reduce the hourly wage by US\$3.

## 2.12. Conclusion

This chapter presented the empirical evidence and theoretical evidence in support of this study. A description of industrial action and the types thereof are first presented followed by the causes of industrial action. The impact of industrial action on employees, employers, economy and social stability are then discussed in terms of losses incurred. The chapter linking conflict theory, expectancy theory and hierarchy of needs theory to the study. The chapter ends with discussing empirical reviews. The next chapter discusses the research methods and design followed for the study.

## 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents research methods and design employed for the study in order to solve the identified research problem as well as meeting the research objectives. Sub sections covered in this chapter include research methodology, population, sampling, data collection, pilot study, data analysis, limitations of the study and ethical considerations for the study.

### 3.2. Research Design

Rahi (2017) defined research design as an arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data. Alternatively it is a conceptual structure within which a study is conducted (Rahi, 2017). Rahi further noted that research design is essential as it facilitates the smooth sailing of research operations thereby improving efficiencies in the research process. Various aspects of research design are covered in the following topics: sampling, target population, data collection, pre-testing and data analysis.

Research approach is defined, (Tuffour 2017:52) as the general method the researcher takes in carrying out the research project. The three common approaches to conducting research are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Kansteiner and König (2020:1) state the most used three types of research approaches as the quantitative approach, qualitative approach, and the mixed methods approaches. The quantitative research designs are well-structured, precise and their soundness and dependability has been tested (Kumar, 2018:116). The quantitative strategies can therefore be openly

defined and recognised. This approach is also described as a scientific process that examines the relationship between variables which can be numerically measured and analysed using statistical techniques (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016:162).

A research design is defined by, Anastas and Zimmerman (2018:78) as a structure and strategy of examination which is designed to gain answers to research questions. This strategy gives a comprehensive programme of the study (Kumar, 2018:96). As such, the function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables you to effectively address the research problem as unambiguously as possible. According to Spector, (2019:125) there are several research designs such as explorative, longitudinal, historical, descriptive and many more, generally, the research design must be able to address the following:

1. Identify the research problem clearly and justify its selection,
2. Review previously published literature associated with the problem area,
3. Clearly and explicitly specify hypotheses [i.e., research questions] central to the problem selected,
4. Effectively describe the data which will be necessary for an adequate test of the hypotheses and explain how such data will be obtained.

### 3.3. Research Methodology

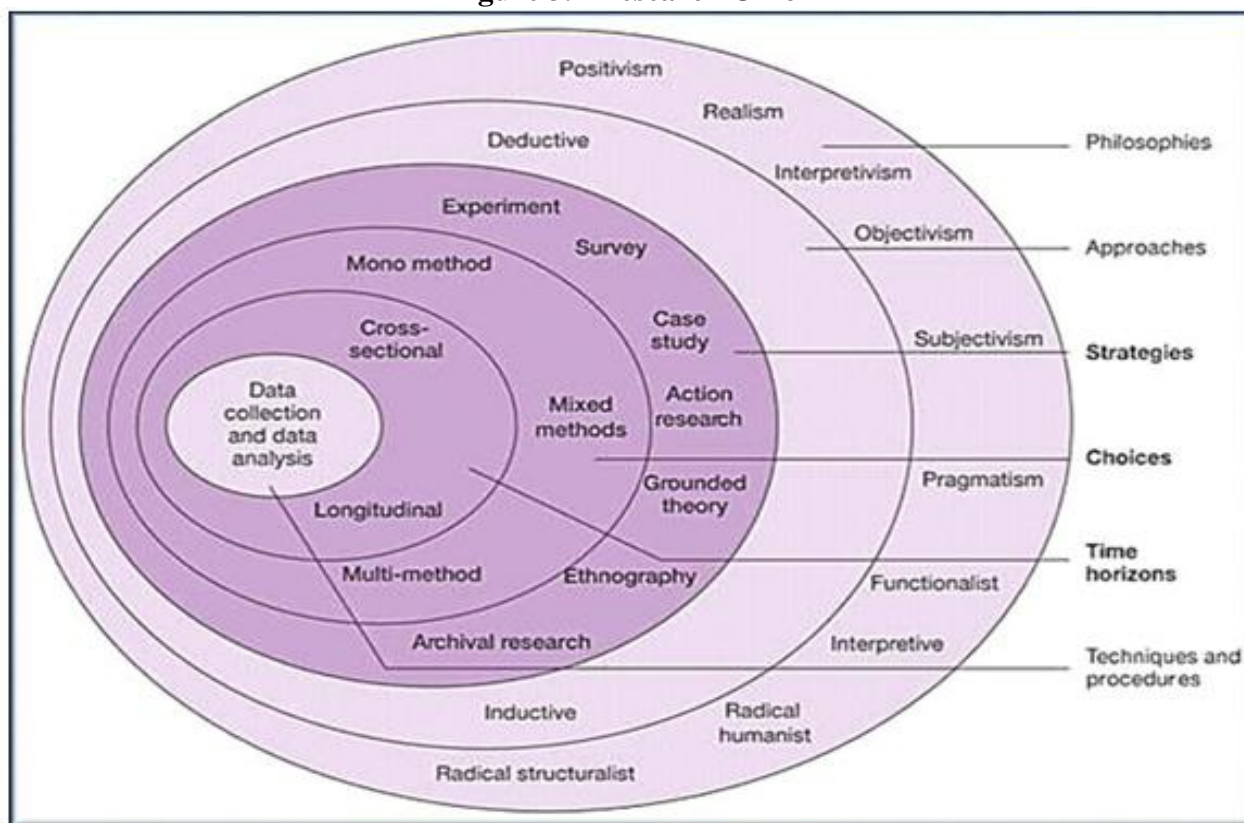
The theme of research methodology has been covered widely in literature. Rajasekar, Philominathan and Chinnathambi (2013) reported that research is broadly categorised into quantitative research and qualitative research. Research methodology is a systematic way of solving a problem (Rajasekar et al, 2013). According to Fischler (2011) quantitative research is a type of research in which a researcher decides what to study; asks specific narrow questions; collects quantifiable data from participants; analyses these numbers using statistics; and conducts the inquiry in an objective, unbiased manner. On the other, hand Khothari (2013) described qualitative research as research concerned with qualitative phenomenon and that it is concerned with discovering underlying motives and desires using in-depth interviews for the purpose. According to Rajasekar et al (2013) quantitative research has the following characteristics: it is numerical; it is an iterative process that evaluates evidence; results are often presented in tables and graphs; it is objective; it is conclusive; is used in large samples; collects large

volume of data and it asks the questions what, where and when. Qualitative approach is on the other hand characterised by the following: it is non-numerical; aims to get meaning feeling and description; it is explanatory; it cannot be graphed; it is subjective; and it asks the questions why and how. Thus qualitative and quantitative approaches are extreme opposite research approaches that must be chosen carefully by researchers.

Quantitative approach has been chosen for this study. The approach has been chosen due to its objectivity, applicability in large samples, ability to collect large volume of data and its presentation of data in tables and graphs. Objectivity is essential in this study due to the need to generalise the results to the total population. The results of the study are presented in frequencies, percentages, graphs and tables thereby making quantitative research the most appropriate approach. The sample of the study is 100 employees and is too big for qualitative approach.

#### 3.3.1. Research Strategies

There are various strategies that can be used in research. These include action research, surveys, case studies, experiments, and content analysis (Kienzler, and Kowalkowski, 2017). These are depicted on the research onion in Figure 4.1. Surveys are used to collect data on a wider scale and the standing they take is of a positivism stance, realism or is value free based on the sampling techniques used. Case studies on the other hand seek to interpret issues and they are both used in qualitative or quantitative methods (Saunders et al. 2012). Action research is often used in are out of the laboratory and often require a lot of field work. This approach is argued it suits any research study, but it must be carried out with a group. Experiment research strategy is often in a controlled space. These strategies are often used in pure science fields and are objective in nature (Buscher, and Fletcher, 2020). Lastly, content analysis is an interpretive approach that review existing literature such as the one in a document analysis or literature review (Omotayo and Kulatunga, 2015:9). This study adopted a case study approach as it sort to understand factors influencing the high rate of industrial action by Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipal workers. A cross-sectional approach under the case study was adopted to better understand the issues at hand. A survey was used to gather data from a larger population. The advantages of using a survey or questionnaire are given later and why this was adopted.

**Figure 3.1 Research Onion**

Source: Saunders et al (2012)

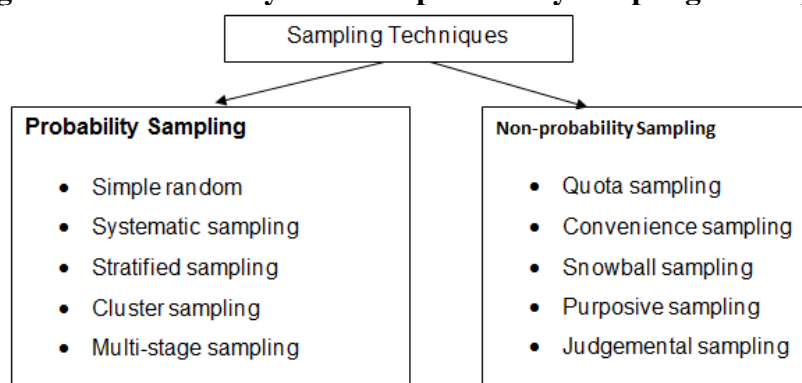
### 3.4. Population

A population refers to a target of individuals or groups with common characteristics that suit the researcher's interest when conducting a study (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim 2016:1). In many instances the total population is too large; the researcher selects a sample from the population, with fewer respondents that are representative of the whole population (Cooper and Schindler, 2016:128). The target population for the study is Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (BCMM) permanent employees. The BCMM is the second largest municipality in the Eastern Cape Province. This also means its workforce is equally massive in numbers, averaging about 5 000 (BCMM, 2013). To work with a reasonable number, this study was limited to the municipal workers who are permanently employed. The fact that BCMM is also large in size it was also reasonable for the research to only concentrate on East London (including Mdantsane) and King Williams Town (including Bhisho), the two largest towns of the metropolitan. The two towns were easily accessible to the researcher. According to the BCMM there are about 1 200 permanent staff members working in both East London and King Williams Town. This therefore means the target population of the study is 1 200 permanently employed mainly non managerial staff based in East London and King Williams Town including Bhisho and Mdantsane.

### 3.5. Sampling

#### 3.5.1. Sampling techniques

There are two major sampling techniques, namely probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Figure 3.2 depicts the different methods found under these two broad methods of samplings.

**Figure: 3.2 Probability and Non-probability sampling techniques**



Adopted from: Taherdoost (2016:20)

The Figure 3.2 above shows some of the sampling techniques that can be used in research. Under probability sampling there is simple-random sampling, systematic, stratified, cluster and multi-stage sampling. When it comes to non-probability sampling, there is quota, convenience, snowball, purposive and judgmental sampling. These techniques are discussed in detail below.

### 3.5.1.1. Probability Sampling

Probability sampling refers to whether each unit in the population has an equal opportunity of being included in the sample or not. It is a method that of sampling that is often used in quantitative research (Du Plooy Cilliers et al., 2014:136 cited in Etikan, Musa and Alkassim 2016). Du Plooy Cilliers et al. (2014:136 cited in Etikan, Musa and Alkassim 2016) found that human bias is removed from the sampling process using random and systematic methods. There are different types of probability sampling namely, simple random sampling, systematic, stratified and cluster sampling. Alvi (2016:46) in a comparison between probability and non-probability sampling is of the view that probability sampling removes the subjective judgement of the researcher in the selection of the participants of units of the research. However, Taherdoost (2016:20) advises us that this type of sampling provides the greatest freedom from bias but in most cases, it is costly to come up with a sample using this technique. The argument this author raise here is that more time and energy need to be dedicated by the researcher to come up with the sample of a given study. The various techniques that fall under probability sampling are going to be given below and giving their advantages and weaknesses.

#### 3.5.1.1.1. Simple random Sampling

According to Bryman and Bell (2011:172) cited in Dabo (2017), simple random sampling gives each unit the chance of being equally selected into the sample. Similarly, in the words of Taherdoost (2016:21) 'a simple random sample means that every case of the population has an equal probability of inclusion in the sample. The main essence of this technique is that elements are selected randomly. The key benefit of such a technique is that it eliminates the biases of the researcher as well as omitting the systematic errors (Alvi, 2016:49). However, one of the limitations of this sampling technique is that in the case of survey, is that it may be costly if participants are geographically spaced. Adding to this limitation, Sharma (2017:750) shares that there is the need to know or have a complete list of members of the population. This list from what we pick from this limitation of simple random sampling and in practical

sense is not always available given the size of the population for instance a municipality or a town. Sharma (2017:750) proposes that when such is the case it is advisable to use other sampling techniques that are not affected by such a scenario for which the researcher used.

To ensure the findings are representative and can be extrapolated to other municipalities it was decided to use simple random sampling a sub-set of probability sampling. A sample size of 100 permanently employed workers was selected from the 1 200 permanently employed employees to take part in the study. This sample is made up of 70 municipal workers based in East London and 30 based in King Williams Town. The study is treating Bhisho as part of King Williams Town and Mdantsane as part of East London.

### 3.6. Data Collection instrument

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), two kinds of data that can be gathered is primary data that refers to data that are collected for a particular study and secondary data that refers to data that has already been collected for some other purpose which has already passed through some analysis processes. The common instruments that are used are the questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, interviews, and observations. A questionnaire (**Appendix A**) was used to collect data from 100 chosen employees. It was chosen due to the following advantages noted by Hove (2013:73): it is effective in collecting large volumes of data from a large sample as well as its ability for timely collection of predetermined data. The sample of the study is large and the data that is required for analysis is also large in volume making a questionnaire the appropriate instrument over other techniques like observation and interviews. The questionnaire is structured on the basis of previous studies done on related topics (Moloto Mkhomazi and Worku, 2020:pp 649-650). The questions are multi-item questions, based on the Likert scale. The scale is used to assess how people are satisfied about services rendered to them (Wu and Leung, 2017:pp 1-2).

Saunders et al. (2016:305) define a research instrument as any tool that is utilised to collect data from the participants. The researcher used questionnaires and interviews to get data from participants of this study, located on appendix section page 187-195.

#### 3.6.1. Questionnaires

A questionnaire can be defined as a document containing questions and other types of items designed to solicit information appropriate to analysis (Boparai, Singh, and Kathuria 2018). Additionally, questionnaires can either be open ended or close

ended. An open-ended question is one which permits a free response for an individual while close ended questions also referred to as fixed alternatives, provides a set to which the respondent must choose the answer from the provided alternatives (Afolayan and Oniyinde 2019:51). The researcher was able to use a questionnaire with both open-ended questions and closed ended questions which enhance the richness of the data collected. Moreover, questions from the questionnaire were designed in such a way that they meet the demands of this research, which aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of IDP as a strategic tool for service delivery for Municipalities of Ehlanzeni District in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa.

### 3.6.1.1. Questionnaire strengths and weaknesses

According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989, cited in Nohumba 2016:92), closed-ended questionnaires are more efficient due to their ease of analysis. Gillham (2000:5 cited in Nohumba, 2016:92), on the other hand, contends that 'open questions can lead to a greater level of discovery'. Gillham too admits that analysing open-ended questionnaires is difficult. In this regard, Alderson and Scott (1996: 53) acknowledge the utility of qualitative data but states that '...their open-ended nature made comparing reports of discussions and interviews more difficult...'. The statements that follow highlight some of the benefits of questionnaires.:

They are one of the efficient means of collecting data on a large-scale basis (Seliger and Shohamy 1989 cited in Nohumba 2016:92).

- They can be sent simultaneously to a great number of people (Robinson 1991 cited in Nohumba 2016:92). This was done as the questionnaires were sent to different local municipalities in Ehlanzeni District Municipality.
- The inquirer can easily gather data in field sites (Lynch 1996 cited in Nohumba 2016:92). This was also achieved as there was a high response rate from the questionnaire which was able to generate more data.
- Respondents' anonymity makes them to share information more easily (Nunan 1999 cited in Nohumba 2016:92). The respondents were not asked to provide their names and self-identifying information to ensure their anonymity.
- When similar questions are administered simultaneously to many people the acquired data are more identical, correct, and standard (Gillham 2000 cited in Nohumba 2016:92). The same questions were asked to many participants which

enable to understand the issues from a wide range of sources.

- They are a time-efficient way of collecting data from many people (Brown 2001 cited in Nohumba 2016:92). The researcher was able to access several people in a short space of time and with the assistance of stratified sampling the benefits of time saving was also enhanced.

On the one hand, closed-ended questionnaires are simple to analyse and cost-effective. Questionnaires, on the other hand, have some drawbacks that should be considered whenever and wherever they are used (Gillham 2000; Brown 2001 cited in Nohumba 2016:92). When sent by post or email, the answers are sometimes inaccurate and questionable, and there is usually a low return rate, while ambiguity and unclearness of some questions may lead to inaccurate and unrelated responses. Furthermore, some questions may cause misunderstanding, with the wording of the questions potentially influencing the respondents' responses. The use of different language assisted in resolving this and there was a high response rate as the study was explained well to the participants.

### 3.7. Data collection procedure

Data was collected through face to face interviews with participants and telephonic interviews of some participants using the questionnaire and the use of journals and newspapers were also employed (Asante, 2018: pp 26-27). During the research I will be guided by two principles of data quality, which are error avoidance and error detection (Paul, 2017: pp 161-162). Permission was sought from BCMM management to conduct the study with the municipality employees. Upon granting of the permission, the municipal management was asked for the list of employees based in East London and King Williams Town. Simple random sampling was conducted to choose 70 employees from East London and 30 from King Williams Town. Access to the 100 chosen employees was then granted by municipal management and they were given questionnaires for completion after being given a brief on the purpose and importance of the study. Upon completing the questionnaires the employees submitted the questionnaires to municipal management which were then collected by the researcher.

### 3.8. Research Instrument

The questionnaire is divided into four segments namely demographic information; nature and causes of industrial action; impact of industrial action; and industrial action resolutions. Demographic information section has 8 questions that sought to understand the profile of the 100 employees that took part in the study. The study profiled the employees in

terms of gender, age, educational qualifications, salary level, length of employment, job grade and directorate of employment. The second category of nature and causes of industrial action is there to understand the form of industrial action undertaken by employees and the drivers of industrial action. The third category has 6 questions that seek to understand the impact of industrial action on employees and BCMM. The final segment of the questionnaire allows respondents to propose solutions for the rampant industrial action in the municipality.

### 3.9. Pilot study

Bryman and Bell (2017:358) highlight that before gathering data, the researcher must test the questions on a much smaller sample. A pilot study serves to expose the flaws in some questions with the goal of recommending possible improvements. It also helps to generate a range of possible answers to the open-ended questions. Bryman and Bell (2017:358) add that a pilot is useful for identification and implication of any additional amendments so as to maximise return and reduce the error rate on answers. Pre-testing or pilot study is testing the research instrument on a small number of respondents that have the same characteristics with those of the target group (Chikandiwa, 2010:87). The purpose of the pilot study is to ascertain if the research instrument has mistakes or whether it is understandable. The pre-testing was conducted in East London on 10 BCMM permanently employed workers that were excluded from the comprehensive study. The 10 employees were excluded from the comprehensive study to avoid sensitising the participants of the actual study. The pre-testing of the research instrument assisted to determine whether the questionnaire is understandable by the respondents and after the pre-test, the researcher was able to conclude that the instrument is reliable and valid for the study (Emma, 2015:9).

### 3.10. Data Analysis

Data analysis is making sense of the data collected (Hove, 2013:81). SPSS Version 21 was used for production of descriptive statistics, tables and graphs. SPSS is statistical software that is used for analysing quantitative data and it is appropriate as the study is quantitative in nature. The data was coded in shortened version before being entered in the analysing software. The coding of the data ensured the data was handled easily during analysis. Microsoft word and excel was also used to support SPSS to produce appealing graphs and tables. The study employed inferential statistics because it allows small sampling size from the population.

### 3.11. Reliability and Validity

The two most common technical concepts in measurement are reliability and validity. Reliability and validity are tools of an essentially positivist epistemology. Thus, if two events are measured at different times, the instrument used to measure should be stable, dependable, trustworthy, and consistent in measuring the same thing each time (Hedge, Powell and Sumner 2018). On the other hand, validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration (Mohajan 2017). So, whether validity is a measure found only in a quantitative study is still a matter of academic contestation.

#### 3.11.1. Construct Validity

According to Taherdoost (2016:31), construct validity is defined as how well a researcher translates a theoretical idea or concept into something that can be operationalised or be made functioning. It is also concerned with 'the degree to which the research instrument measures the concept, behaviour, idea or quality- that is, a theoretical construct that it purports to measure' (Surucu and Maslkeci, 2020:2700). Gate et al (2018:189) posits that there are three steps that need to be taken when researchers seek to ensure construct validity is established. These steps were followed by the researcher to ensure that construct validity is established in this study. Firstly, correlational evidence must be given and also showing that the construct and a relationship with the variables of the study. Secondly, 'show that certain groups obtain higher mean scores on the new instrument than other groups, with the high or low scoring groups being determined on logical grounds prior to the administration of the new instrument' (Gates et al 2018:190). Lastly, Huck (2008:92) cited in Gates et al. (2018:190) propounds that there is also the need to conduct a factor analysis from the scores generated by the new instrument

#### 3.11.2. Content Validity

Creswell (2005 cited in Mohajan (2017:15) argues that this measures the extent to which the questions on a given instrument give and present all the possible questions that could be asked about the content. Similarly, Gates, Johnson and Shoulders (2018:189) posits that content validity measures the degree to which the instrument used in the research includes and covers the content it intends to measure. What this means is that content validity ensures that the instrument which in our case the questionnaire adequately includes the items that help understand the concept better. Mohajan (2017:15) adds that there is no statistical measure that is single headedly used to measure whether the content of the study has



adequately been included in the study. What this implies is that the judgement of experts must be used to be able to achieve this. The researcher through consultation managed to ensure this is achieved with experts on the field in BCMM. This therefore means that the unclear questions are easily picked, revised, or amended and those that cannot be amended and are ineffective are discarded through the advice of the expert reviewers. The way this was done gets the support of Gates et al (2018:189) as they argue that to have content validity the expert's advice should be based on the skills they have in the issue of study. This had the effect of ensuring that the content that needed to be included in the instruments was incorporated in this study.

### 3.11.3. Criterion Validity

This type of validity is said to measure and predict the future and current performance of an instrument (Mohajan, 2017:16). Simply put, criterion validity is defined as the extent to which a measure is related to an outcome (Taherdoost, 2016:32). The author further adds that this type of valid is the association of empirical and test scores on a particular criterion such as service delivery in our case. There are two type of validity that fall under this type of validity that is concurrent validity and predictive validity. A questionnaire is deemed predictively valid if the tests are accurate enough to predict what it is supposed to predict. A larger sample also assisted in establishing this type of validity. Taherdoost (2016:33) advises us that when an instrument is able to have its results correspond with past research for the same construct it has such validity.

According to Mathiyazhagan and Nandan (2010:41) validity is concerned with considering if the research measurements measure what they claim to measure. Validity is categorised into two, namely internal validity and external validity. External validity tests the ability of the research findings being generalised to beyond elements that were part of the study (Mathiyazhagan and Nandan, 2010). External validity of the study is ensured by a large sample size of 100 employees. Simple random sampling also ensured the representativeness of the sample. Internal validity refers to the use of different methodological tools to triangulate the data (Mathiyazhagan and Nandan, 2010). The use of questionnaire ensured internal validity as all respondents responded to the same questions without subjective influence from the data collector. Pre-testing of the questionnaire also promoted internal validity of the research instrument.

Reliability on the other hand refers to the ability of the questionnaire to produce the same results if it is tested more than 2 times (Mathiyazhagan and Nandan

(2010: 41). Pre-testing of the research instrument also increased the reliability of the research findings. The scientific research approach utilised for the study also guarantees the reliability of the study.

Reliability is concerned with ensuring that the instrument used measure was it opts or purports to measure. The reliability of the questionnaire, with reference to this study, was ensured by the way the researcher administered the questionnaires. Face to face interviews gave the researcher an opportunity to follow up on questions. The researcher was to be also able to record gestures and body language. The questions were also asked in the same format for all participants to improve the reliability of the results. Testing and retesting of the instruments was done during the pilot study. This ensured that reliability is ensured as it is concerned with the findings being inherently replicable by other researchers. By ensuring this, it makes it possible for the scholarly community to corroborate and accept the finding of this study. This research is also open to the scrutiny of other researchers to check whether the finding and instruments used were reliable.

### 3.11.4. Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness, the questionnaires were checked to determine which content is covered and which content is lacking, also known as the conformability, dependability, and credibility (Saunders, 2016:50). Moon et al. (2016:2) juxtaposes the methods of gaining trustworthiness to the ones that are used in quantitative research of validity and reliability. According to Korstjens and Moser (2018:121) methods that are used to generate trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and reflexivity. The research ensured trustworthiness of the research through the use and understanding of these concepts during the study.

#### 3.11.4.1. Credibility

Korstjens and Moser (2018:121) posit that credibility is concerned with establishing whether the findings of the study represent plausible information and provide a correct position as given by the participants of the study. This follows Korstjens and Moser's (2018:121) argument that a researcher must be able to familiarise themselves with the study area and build trust with participants if rich data is to be gathered. Taking data from different data sources thus also enabled credibility as these data sets can be compared to check for patterns and consistencies.

#### 3.11.4.2. Confirmability and dependability

This simply measures the degree to which the data and findings of the research can be confirmed by other researchers (Korstjens and Moser, 2018:121).

Dependability follows a similar position as it is concerned with checking for consistencies and keeping an audit trail of the methods used to open the ideas to scrutiny by other researchers. To ensure this the researcher detailed in this chapter how data was collected and the steps that were taken to analyse the data. These steps that were taken were kept on record throughout the course of this study.

#### 3.11.4.3. Reflexivity

Reflexivity is concerned with a process of self-evaluation as a researcher and critically evaluating one's own conceptual and theoretical lens. Korstjens (2018:121) proposes diarising the events which the researcher used in this study. The researcher also critically evaluated their preconceptions and assumption by listening and observing the study area with an open mind. Noting down the assumptions the researcher had before going in the field helped improve the reflexivity of this study. The researcher also consulted with experts in the field to avoid biases towards a particular issue.

### 3.12. Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles and guidelines are a means of establishing and articulating the values and obligations that a researcher is supposed to adhere to during the conducting of a study (European Commission, 2010:10). The research ethics are largely intended to protect research participants from any liability that might arise from participation in the study. The adherence to ethical principles can also increase the willingness of targeted people to take part in the research due to protection assurance. The following research principles as proposed by the European Commission (2010:10) were adhered to:

- A cover letter (**Appendix A**) was attached to the research instrument containing relevant information explaining the research as well as seeking participation consent from the targeted municipal workers. The covering letter fully explains to participants that the study is a bona-fide academic research with no malice intents to a participant;
- The covering letter also affirmed adherence to confidentiality and anonymity by the researcher during and after the study. The participants' information such as personal information would not be shared with any person without prior permission of the participants. Furthermore the participants' names would not be reported in the research report; and
- A letter (**Appendix C**) was written to the BCMM management seeking permission to conduct research on the municipality's industrial relations.

#### 3.12.1. Ensuring that permission is obtained

In academic research, it is required that the researcher should formally request permission to carry out the study from the required organisations (Saunders et al., 2016:194). In this study, the permission to carry out the study was sought from the relevant authorities. When the permission was granted, all potential and actual participants were engaged to outline the implications of participating in the study. The permission letter to conduct this study is attached in the Appendix section. It detailed what the study was about for participants to know what would be required of them.

#### 3.12.2. Ensuring no harm to participants

The researcher ensured that no harm would come to participants. Du Plooy et al. (2014:264) argue that researcher should always put measure in place to ensure that no harm befalls to the participants. The authors add that there are different harms such as emotional, painful recollections, physical and embarrassing questions that the researcher must ensure do not occur. Since the research was conducted at the municipalities, the researcher ensured that masks, social distancing, and the sanitising of hands was done to protect both the participants and the researcher during the data collection period. Additionally, no psychological hurting questions were asked to the participants.

#### 3.12.3. Ensuring participants have given informed consent

According to (Arifin 2018), participants are supposed to know when they are taking part in the study and not forced into giving data to fulfil an individual's research objectives. As such, the participants were informed formally and freely gave their consent to be part of this study. In this study, a letter was sent to every participant attached to the questionnaire requesting their consent to take part in the study. The letter also explained the type of study and what is expected of them as well. The sample of the informed consent letter is attached in the Appendix section.

#### 3.12.4. Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity

Research is intended to answer six intrinsic questions: who, when, what, where why and how. It is not designed to directly focus on the participants who are the source of the data used to tackle these questions. Saunders et al. (2016:231) highlight that 'Individuals and organisations should therefore remain anonymous and the data they provide should be processed to make it non-attributable unless there is an explicit agreement to attribute comments'

This study ensured anonymity of all participants by avoiding individual names through coding the data provided during data analysis. The researcher

observed confidentiality by making sure that the information obtained is not accessible to any unauthorised persons except the research team. Employees were bound by the oath of secrecy and confidentiality. The researcher assured them that such information would remain confidential and signed a form to assure the participants of this.

### 3.13. Limitations of the Study

Although every effort was made to ensure the study is flawless by choosing the best research methodology and design, there is still a limitation in the study. The limitation of the study is the fact that the research is a cross sectional survey that might not take all possible factors into consideration such as it requires a larger sample size to give accuracy and it also allows bias to affect results to reach to unquestionable conclusions. The study was limited to 6 months in order to comply with the academic calendar. Thus there was time constraint as well as financial constraint such as printing flyers and transportation to and from that limited the research to be done within a short period of time. A cross sectional survey was therefore reasonable as longitudinal survey was not applicable in the circumstances. However, longitudinal could have been better to reach better conclusions especially when considering the impact of industrial action in South African municipalities of which BCMM is no exception.

### 3.14. Conclusion

This chapter presented research methods and design employed for the research. Quantitative research approach was utilised for the study due to many advantages of the approach that are in support of the research. Simple random sampling was used to select 100 employees from 1200 permanently employed workers that form the population of the study. A questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaire has 4 segments that are: demographic information, nature and causes of industrial action, impact of industrial action and industrial action resolutions. In order to ensure reliability and validity of the questionnaire a pilot study was conducted in East London with 10 employees that did not take part in the comprehensive study. The chapter also outlined that SPSS 21 and Microsoft word were used for descriptive statistics, and production of graphs and frequency tables. This chapter ended by noting the limitation of the study which is making the study cross sectional due to limited time and financial resources. The next chapter presents the research findings.

## 4. RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

### 4.1. Introduction

A questionnaire was used to collect data because of its effectiveness in large sampling. Buffalo city metropolitan municipality is a large metro which comprises of East London, Bhisho, King William's town, Mdantsane and Zwelitsha. The research was made such that respondents were taken from all these towns to give the study more credibility. A total of 100 participants took part in the survey; all of them were from the buffalo city Metropolitan municipality. The work of (Nleya et al., 2011) posited that there is a relation between grievances of workers and workers going on a strike. During the survey the questions that were asked the respondents were pointed to finding answers to general research questions like, the human resources management factors fuelling industrial action at Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, the external factors or national factors fuelling industrial action at Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, the impact of industrial action on the performance of Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, the best human resources management strategies or policies that are needed to address the problem of industrial action at Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality.

### 4.2. Challenges faced by BCMM residents when there is a strike

#### 4.2.1. Health challenges

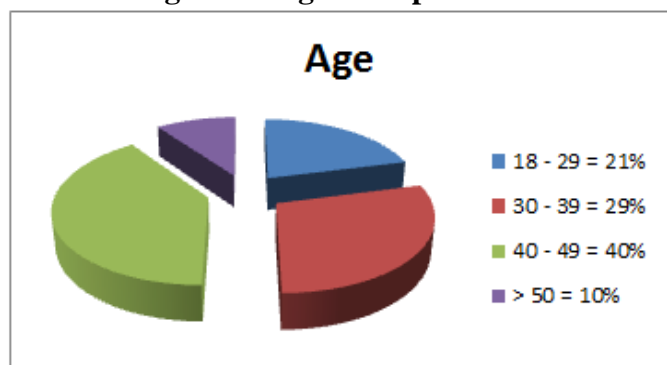
Striking workers at the BCMM always fail to clean the streets and collect the garbage which poses major health issue. There is massive pollution in the municipality during industrial action because people throw garbage in water bodies which causes air pollution and water pollution (Niekerk and Wegmann, 2019:5). When garbage is dumped in water bodies they cause the rivers to choke which cause flooding during raining season. The water also become stagnant and become a breeding place for mosquitoes and diseases like malaria and cholera spreads as a result (Niekerk and Wegmann, 2019:5). Buffalo city Metropolitan Municipality is situated near the Indian Ocean and constant industrial action poses a major health risk because the waste mismanagement during strike are dumped in the Ocean which will endanger the lives of the aquatic animals (Niekerk and Wegmann, 2019:6).



### 4.3. Demography

#### 4.3.1. Age of respondents

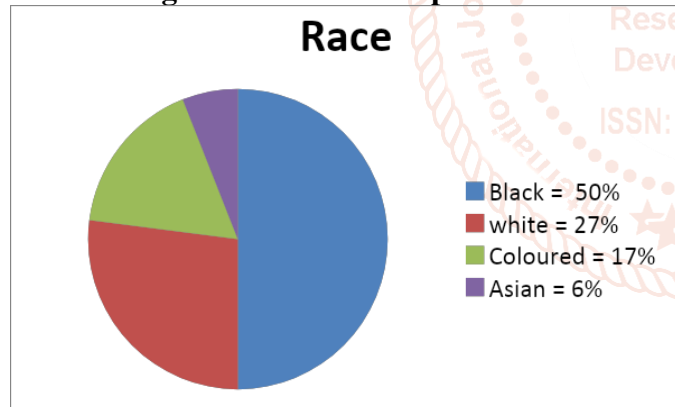
**Figure 4.1 Age of respondents**



The figure 4.1 above indicates that the largest group of participants who took part in the survey are of the ages between 40 years and 49 years old. This represents 40% of the participants who took part in the survey. A total of 29% of the people who took part in the survey are between the ages of 30 years to 39 years. A total of 21% of the participants representing the ages between 18 years and 29 years took part in the survey. The smallest group of participants who took part in the survey are between the ages of 50 years and above. This represents about 10% of the total participants.

#### 4.3.2. Race of respondents

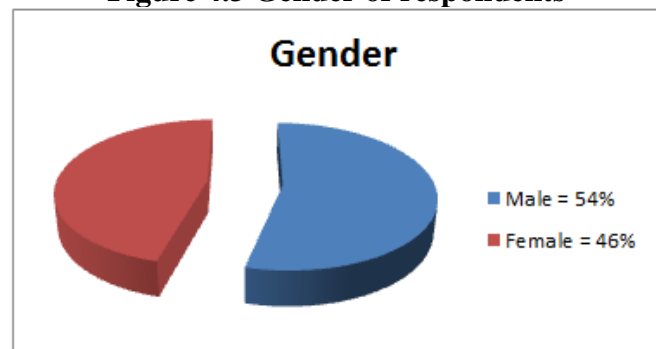
**Figure 4.2 Race of respondents**



The figure 4.2 above shows that 50% of the participants are blacks. A total of 27% of the population are whites. The coloured participants who took part in the survey are 17% and 6% are Asians.

#### 4.3.3. Gender of respondents

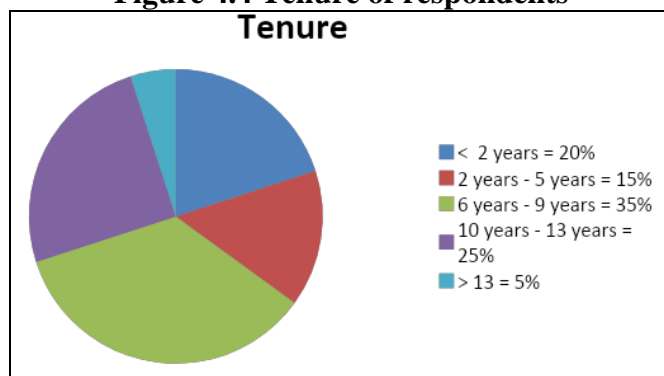
**Figure 4.3 Gender of respondents**



In the figure above we can deduce that 54 % of the participants are males and 46 % are female. This shows that the BCMM is a well-balanced gender based workplace.

#### 4.3.4. Tenure of respondents

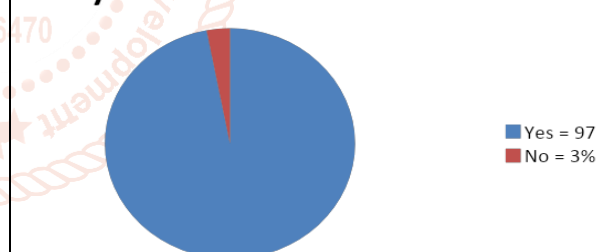
**Figure 4.4 Tenure of respondents**



The figure above shows that 20% of the participants have worked at the BCMM for less than two years. A total of 15% of the participants have worked at the BCMM between 2 years to 5 years. The majority of the participants representing 35% have worked at the BCMM for 6 years to 9 years, whilst 25 % of the participants have worked at the BCMM for 10 years .Whereas 5% of the respondent have worked at the BCMM for more than 13 years.

#### 4.3.5. Involvement in industrial action

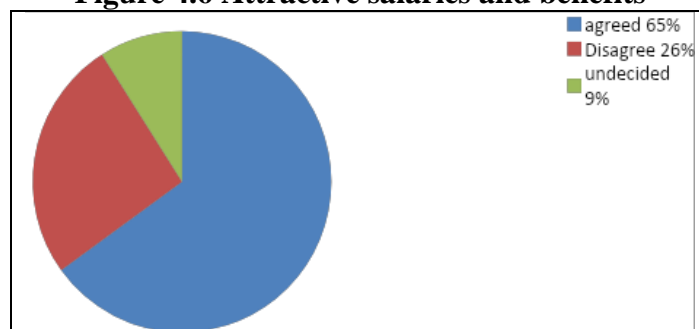
**Figure 4.5 Involvement in industrial action**  
**Have you ever been involved in any form of industrial action?**



The figure above shows that 97 % of the participants have been involved in some form of industrial action before. The remaining 3% have not been involved in any industrial action at all before. This shows that most workers who took part in the survey will choose industrial action to resolve issues at the workplace.

#### 4.4. Attractive salaries and benefits

**Figure 4.6 Attractive salaries and benefits**



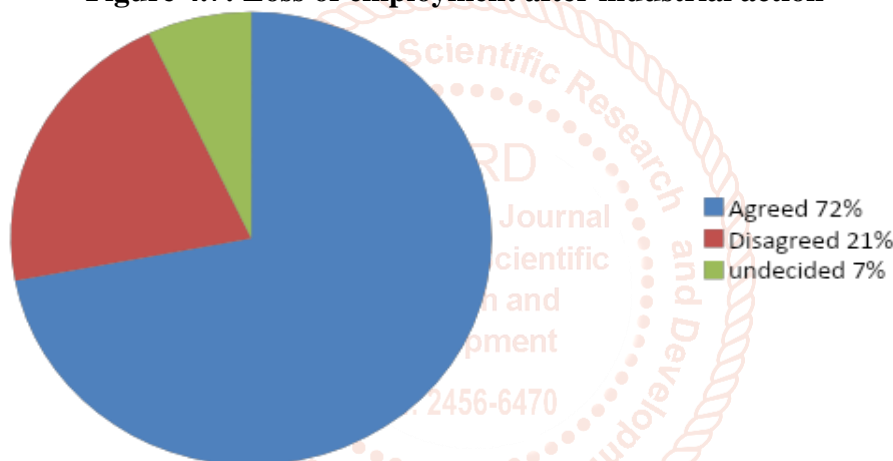
According to the above figure, the researcher was able to conclude that there is a relationship between strikes and attractive salaries with benefits. The majority of workers in the Buffalo city metropolitan area are of the view that, industrial actions like strike influence the government to heed to worker's demand. About 65% of the workers who took part in the survey agreed that there is the need to strike when salary negotiations are stalled. There are 26% participants who do not agree and 9% participants who are undecided about the relationship between industrial actions and salaries. According to table 1, there are 74% respondents who believe that there are disparities in salary levels between managers and lower employees. This also proves that there is a relationship between industrial action and salaries disparities. In table 1 below there is evidence of an unfair salary level compared to the market. According

to the study, 82% of the responds believe that their salaries are below market levels.

The study results are in line with Murwirapachena & Sibanda (2014:556) as they indicated that factors such as inequality, poverty, and unemployment provide social and economic needs for prospective wage increases. According to Hartford (2012), regular workers are deeply angered by the lavish spending of newly empowered black entrepreneurs and the lavish spending by newly, and affluent white individuals. This fuelled their demands to secure a bigger slice of the economic cake. However, it is also important to take into consideration the huge inequality of wage differentials between the remuneration structures of CEOs and owners who earn exorbitant remuneration (ratios that are a thousand times more) than that of entry level employees in South Africa.

#### 4.5. Loss of employment after industrial action

**Figure 4.7: Loss of employment after industrial action**



According to the diagram above there is a relationship between industrial action and unfair dismissal. The diagram depicts 72% of the participants agreeing, 21% disagreeing and 7% undecided that the BCMM tends to employ temporary workers and lay off the strikers. During strikes at the buffalo city municipality, striking workers do not only fail to go to work but they also throw garbage on the streets to show their anger and grievances. The striking workers cut the source of electricity and water, leaving the citizens with no water and electricity for days and weeks (Rodina, 2016). The evidence from table 2 shows that there is a positive relationship between industrial action and better living condition due to increased salaries. According to table 2, 75% of the participants who responded agreed that they go on strikes to help better their standards of living due to increased salaries. The government has a no work no pay policy so 89% of the participants agreed that they lose their salaries when they go on strike. This creates a positive relationship between industrial action and loss of salary.

The study results are in line with UNISON (2009) who reported on a number of negative consequences of industrial action on employees. Loss of pay during the industrial action period is common (UNISON, 2009:10). UNISON (2009) noted that employers are legally permitted to withhold salary and wages payments to employees taking part in an industrial action. Industrial action period is also not counted on period qualifying for days of long service or continuous service (UNISON, 2009).

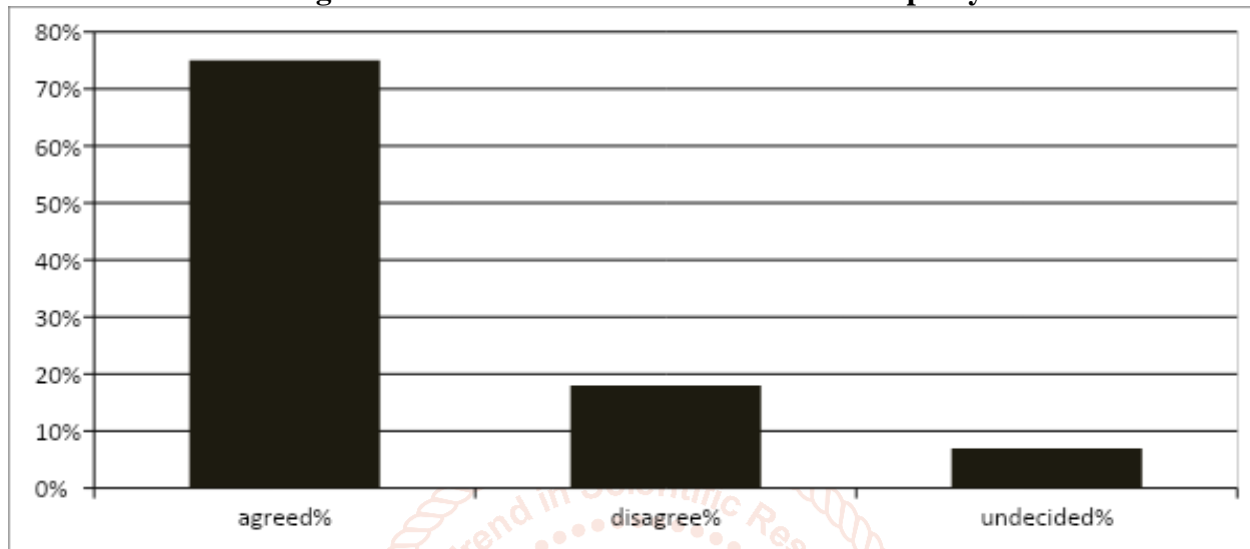
**Table 4.1 Causes of industrial actions**

Causes of industrial action	Number of respondents	Percentage
Unfair salary level compared to the market	82	82%
Salary disparity	74	74%
Attractive salary and Benefits	79	79%

**Table 4.2 impact of industrial action**

Impact of industrial action	number of respondents	percentage
Loss of employment	87	87%
Employee retrenchments	84	84%
Loss of salary	89	89%
Better living condition	75	75%

#### 4.6. Strikes are common in the municipality

**Figure 4.8: Strikes are common in the municipality**

Response from the survey in Figure 3 shows that strikes are common in the municipality. The figure shows that 75% of the participants agreed that there are rampant strikes at the BCMM where as 18% disagree and 8% remain undecided. The study was able to deduce that industrial action has a positive relationship with go-slow by workers. The table above shows that 82% of the participants are of the view that go-slow is a good form of industrial action whilst another 74% also agreed that picketing during non-working hours is also a good form. The study also found out that 94% of the respondents agreed that strikes are necessary cause of action.

The common worker feels that they are been neglected when it comes to the issue of dispute resolution. It also depicts the need for all-inclusiveness in addressing work place disputes. The collective bargaining agreement is a document that has been drafted by government, labour unions and the workers to address all work place disputes in other to avoid strikes (Odaku, 2014). The common worker believes that during dispute negotiations and dispute resolutions they are always side-lined.

**Table 4.3 nature of industrial action**

Nature of industrial action	no of respondents	Percentage
Go-slow by workers	82	82%
Picketing during non-working hour	74	74%
Strikes are common	90	90%
Strikes are necessary	94	94%

#### 4.7. Conclusion

The research posited that salary played a huge row in workers strikes; workers during a salary negotiation by unions neglected the directions of the unions and went ahead on a strike that led to the deaths of many workers (Duncan, 2013). Mehlape (2017) also believes that wage disparity is also a major influential factor when it comes to industrial action. During the survey, the study discovered that the common worker at the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality with a low salary is more attracted to industrial strike than the managers because of the wide salary disparity. A good work relation between the workers and the managers and their employers is very important in resolving labour disputes (Akhaukwa, Maru, and Byaruhanga 2013). If there is a cordial relationship between all the parties, it makes it easy to follow the collective bargaining agreement which is a fundamental document used in resolving labour disputes. The study posited that industrial action impact negatively on the performance of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. When workers resort to industrial action, they either do not come to work at all or work slowly. These actions are counterproductive and slow down the progress of the municipality.



## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### 5.1. Introduction

The constitution of the republic of South Africa permits the citizens to per take industrial action. The reason why worker go on strike is that, they are not happy with their salaries and are trying to get the attention of the government to that effect. When workers go on strike, they vandalized properties and brutalize innocent people who get in their way (Paret, 2019: p 324). This creates a very bad image for all the workers at the BCMM even though not all the workers take part in a strike action (Mlungisi Tenza, 2015)

### 5.2. Findings from the study

In the next steps, the study seeks to explain the findings from literature review and findings from the primary study.

#### 5.2.1. Findings from literature review

The number of quantitative researches on industrial action in South Africa municipalities is not many (Morudu, 2017: pp 4-5). Most of the researches so far on municipality strikes has been qualitative this is so because of data challenges that the researchers encounter (Morudu, 2017: pp 4-5). Poor living conditions and bad working environments at the workplace of municipal workers has also contributed to many industrial strikes in south Africa (Ngcamu, 2019: p 5). Thus, industrial conflict is an inevitable and continuous struggle necessary for survival of both labour and management, though none has been able to advance workable solution to their differences. They rather contend that either management must win by weakening or eliminating the unions or that the organized labour force must win and take over the reins of power in the industry.

#### 5.2.2. Findings from the Primary Research

Industrial actions in South Africa dates back before independence. Some of these protects have been moderate whilst others have been bloody (Ngcamu, 2019: p 4) and BCMM is no exception. The primary findings were able to deduce that there are factors that can be controlled internally by the BCMM and others that are external motivated.

#### 5.2.3. Conclusions

Municipalities' strikers do not only put their salaries at risk but they also put the lives of the municipal they are serving at risk. When they strike they fail to clean the communities they are working hence exposing the lives of the citizens to diseases (Paret, 2019: pp 324-325).

### 5.3. Recommendations

The study is of the recommendation that the government of South Africa must set a national salary

board to implement a national salary level scale for all workers so that workers know why others are being paid better than others (Nleya, 2011). These strikes deprive the community from their basic social amenities such as garbage collection access to running water and street light. Hence there should be common grounds by the workers, unions and government to form a legal framework that governs strikes; it should interpret the constitutional rights to strike, when to strike and the consequences of strikes so as to eliminate dismissal of workers and the abuse of innocent citizens (Selala, 2014).

### 5.4. Areas for further research

This research is primarily based on quantitative data collection approach using a questionnaire and it is recommended that future studies should also use other forms of data collection approach like qualitative method. This research collected data from only permanently employed employees of the BCMM it is recommended that future research should include temporary workers.

### 5.5. Conclusion

There is a collective bargaining agreement in South Africa where Labour Unions negotiate wage increase for workers. The government and unions must include the common workers in the negotiations and also implement it at the correct time. Some municipal workers are of the view that the unions and the directors are in this wage negotiations to enrich themselves but not the poor worker (Murwirapachena and Sibanda, 2014). Many municipal workers are of the view that, there is a large disparity in salaries among municipal workers and therefore the government must act and end it. The South African Government, the Labour unions, Municipal policy makers and the municipal workers must adapt technological online platforms, like Facebook, WhatsApp, twitter and Instagram where workers can put forward their grievances so that the leaders can resolve them and also help them to learn current trends in the municipalities (Yeboah, Yuan & Xuan, 2021).

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