COPING STRATEGY OF UNIVERSITY HOST COMMUNITIES DURING INDUSTRIAL ACTION: NIGER DELTA UNIVERSITY IN VIEW

Woyengitari Imbazi
Department of Sociology, Niger Delta University, Nigeria
imbaziwoyengitari@gmail.com

Abstract
Industrial actions are complex social problems with debilitating socio-economic consequences on an organisation and its host communities. Notwithstanding this, a number of studies have neglected the coping mechanisms employed by host communities to deal with industrial strikes, focusing solely on the effects of labour disputes on workers and production. This study therefore investigates how host communities deal with industrial activities at the Niger Delta University (NDU). The latency theory served as the framework, while a cross-sectional research design was employed. Amassoma and Ogbiriri communities were purposively selected for the study due to their proximity to NDU. A total sample of 418 respondents (aged ≥18 years) were selected, using Yamane’s (1965) sample size determination formula. Simple random sampling was used to administer a structured questionnaire to respondents in the selected host communities. Twelve In-Depth Interviews and six Focus Group Discussion sessions were held among business owners, farmers, landlords, commercial motorcyclists, and students to complement the quantitative data. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while the qualitative data were content-analyzed. Findings from the study indicated that location change, occupation change, involvement in social vices, partying, etc were the main coping strategies adopted by members of host communities to deal with industrial actions at the Niger Delta University. The study, therefore, concluded that industrial actions affected host communities negatively. It is thus recommended that members of the host communities seek alternative vocational skills as livelihood sources to reduce the likely impact of NDU labour actions.

Keywords: Industrial action, Host communities, Coping strategies, Niger Delta University
Introduction

Industrial actions generally, have negative effects on business activities which may lead to a decrease in productivity and the laying off of organizational employees (Ochieno, 2013). Maunganidze et al, (2013) contended that one of the negative implications of work cessation as a form of industrial action is that it leads to job loss in an organisation. This means that, when industrial actions occur, business operations and the employer may decide to cut down operational costs in one way or the other, and one of the ways to achieve this is through retrenchment (Maunganidze et al., 2013). The consequences of retrenchment are complex. First, it is not only stressful for the employees but also has negative consequences on their families. It also results in loss of skills and productivity among others. In some cases, employee salary is reduced and delayed.

The consequences of incessant industrial actions in the university environment are of complex social and economic dimensions. This is not only limited only to the university communities, but extends to its environment. Most often than not, Academic Staff Union of University (ASUU), Non-Academic Staff Union of University (NASU) and Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), (NAAT) National Association of Academic Technologists embark on industrial actions, especially in the form of strikes to express their grievances on the perceived poor conditions of their services. However, the cessation of work by these unions has a lot of implications on the social and economic activities of the host communities. These range from low patronage of businesses within and outside the university’s businesses, intimidation of community members during strike action, and loss of employment (Ochieno, 2013; Maunganidze, et al., 2013). In addition to this, most of the employees and business owners engaged in unlawful acts as a coping mechanism to strike actions (Abiwu, 2016). This also affects the host communities, especially when they engage in acts that violate fundamental human rights such as restriction of
movement of people within or around the university, unnecessary sound pollution when singing solidarity songs, picketing or blockade of the access road to the university in the host communities. Several studies have explored the socio-economic implications of industrial actions on students and host communities. For example, Ani and Ojakorotu (2018), studied the crisis between the government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), while focusing on the impact on academic staff, it was found that strike action among ASUU has affected the quality of education due to incessant suspension of academic programmes in the public universities. Ineme and Ineme (2016) examined job satisfaction among striking tertiary educational employees, and it was found that workers who had low job satisfaction and high burnout were more likely to exhibit positive attitudes towards cessation of work when compared to those who had high job satisfaction with low burnout.

Ezeagba (2014) examined the economic costs of strike actions in Nigeria while taking into account the cost of production and productivity such as the wages and salaries, as well as other unavoidable payments that are paid during strike periods. It was discovered that strike action is a factor in economic costs and it affects economic development. Abiwu (2016), on the other hand, studied the effects of workers’ strike action on employment relations in selected Ghana public school in Ghana. It was found that loss of remuneration, unhealthy relationship, loss of investment and loss of productive hours were the common consequences of industrial conflicts (strike) in the education sector.

Studies have also shown that academic staff union strike action impact significantly on students’ academic performances, the welfare of staff, and job performances in Nigeria (Aremu, et al., 2015; Amadi & Precious, 2015; Adavbiele, 2015; Ibrahim, 2015; Badekale et al., 2016; Akintoye & Uhunmwuangho, 2018).

Despite the fact that these studies have shed light on fundamental issues concerning the impact of industrial actions on employees, students, and the education sector as a whole, there appears to be
no empirical studies documenting the coping strategies employed by people in host communities to cope with labour disputes.

Coping strategy can be defined as any mechanism or arrangement adopted by individuals to manage stressful situations or actions encountered during various stages of the crisis. According to Folkman and Lazarus (1984), coping strategies can be grouped into four categories, namely; (i) problem-focused coping strategy, (ii) emotion-focused coping strategy, (iii) support-seeking coping strategy, and (iv) meaning-making coping strategy. In identifying the types of coping strategies, Weiten and Lloyd (2008) who have associated coping strategies with people’s cognition, pointed out that there are: (i) appraisal-focused or adaptive cognitive type, (ii) problem-focused or adaptive behavioural type, (iii) emotion-focused type, and (iv) occupation-focused type or reactive and proactive strategy.

However, it should be noteworthy that each category or type of coping strategies might not be independent of one another during a crisis, rather, they are mutually interdependent of one another. Several scholars have noted that multiple coping strategies could be used by individuals during a crisis, depending on its ability to manage stress (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984; Weiten&Lloyd, 2008).

While the coping strategies highlighted above seem to be positive mechanisms, there could be negative measures referred to as maladaptive coping adopted by some members of host communities to manage the industrial strike actions by the university employees. Although usually effective as a short-term mechanism compared to those with positive techniques, they also aim at reducing the stressor. These techniques include sensitization, dissociation, safety behaviour, rationalization, escape and anxious avoidance. It is obvious that these negative techniques interfere with an individual’s ability to associate the situation with the symptoms of the anxiety, let people adopt it as a mechanism to adjust themselves during a crisis. In the case of the industrial actions
of the university, due to loss of livelihoods sources as an example, members of the host communities may engage in criminal activities as a short-term mechanism, rather than being proactive or adjust to the labour crisis positively.

An understanding of the coping strategy is necessary to have a holistic understanding of industrial actions and how members of host communities mitigate its negative effects. Because of this knowledge gap, this study examined the coping strategies of members of the host communities of the Niger Delta University (NDU) to industrial actions.

**Theoretical Framework: Theory of Latency Function**

Latency theory is a sub-strand of the structural functionalist theory developed by Robert Merton. To distinguish between "the conscious motives of social behaviour and its objective consequences," or, as he puts it, "observable objective consequences from subjective dispositions," (Merton, 1957:67). Merton proposed a distinction between public and latent functions (Helm, 1971). Merton made a distinction between functions and dysfunctions depending on how much the consequences were beneficial or detrimental for a particular social system when attempting to explain the relationship between functions, consequences, and intentions. He also made a distinction between manifest and latent functions based on the presence or absence of intention. Latent functions by definition might be either functional (good) or dysfunctional (bad) for a given system, making it conceptually different from those that Merton famously referred to as the unintended consequences of purposeful (or purposive) activity. Peter L. Berger provides a number of examples to demonstrate the distinction between manifest and latent dysfunctions:

"...the “manifest” function of antigambling legislation may be to suppress gambling, its “latent” function to create an illegal empire for the gambling syndicates. Or Christian missions in parts of Africa “manifestly” tried to convert Africans to Christianity, “latently” helped to destroy the indigenous tribal cultures and this provided an important impetus towards rapid social transformation. Or the control of the Communist Party over all sectors of social life in Russia “manifestly” was to assure the continued dominance of
the revolutionary ethos, “latently” created a new class of comfortable bureaucrats uncannily bourgeois in its aspirations and increasingly disinclined toward the self-denial of Bolshevik dedication (*nomenklatura*). Or the “manifest” function of many voluntary associations in America is sociability and public service, the “latent” function to attach status indices to those permitted to belong to such associations” (Berger, 1963: 40-41).

More often than not, latent functions are first found after they become apparent as a result of materially changing organisational operations or the organization's dissolution, both of which have a negative impact on previous latent beneficiaries. The disengagement of such beneficiaries could endanger future organisational existence because previously unacknowledged support from such latent beneficiaries may have been essential to organisational well-being (and even survival) (Drysdale & Hoecker-Drysdale, 2007).

Within the context of our study, while the manifest function of industrial action is to improve workers’ welfare and the condition of service in general, there are unintended consequences (latent function) such as disruption in the social and economic life of the host communities. In order to adjust to these disruptions according to this theory, people might adopt different coping strategies to meet up with the new realities on the ground. Sometimes the coping mechanism could be engaging in deviant behaviour, or finding another status that is similar to a previously held role.

**Materials and Methods**

This research adopted a cross-sectional research design. The use of cross-sectional research design was informed by its systematic procedure in sampling with a view to generalizing the results to the target population at one point in time, and to a representative sampled population.

The study setting is Wilberforce Island, with focus on Amassoma and Ogobiri communities in Southern Ijaw and Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. These settlements were
chosen as research locations because they are close to the Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State.

The Amassoma/Ogobiri communities' inhabitants make up the study population. Ojile (2012) estimates that 119,301 people will live in both settlements in 2016 (Amassoma = 114,469, Ogobiri = 4,832). Adult residents who are 18 years of age or older and who have been in these communities for at least a year prior to this survey.

Given the fact that the population is known, the Taro Yamane’s sample size determination formula is used to guide the calculation of the sample size for the quantitative aspect of this study. This yielded a total of 398. However, a 5% attrition rate was added to make it 418 subjects.

This study used a multi-stage sampling methodology that included probability and non-probability sampling methods. First, since Amassoma and Ogobiri are both key hosts for the Niger Delta University, the study used purposive non-probability sampling to choose these two localities. In contrast, the multi-stage sampling technique was employed to collect respondents from host communities using the systematic probability sampling. Streets were created within the Amassoma and Ogobiri settlements. Using a sampling frame, respondents were methodically chosen in each of the communities. Respondents were chosen from each household in each community in accordance with the suggested sample size for the study. This was accomplished by numbering the homes in the streets where each home included in the sampling frame was chosen for the purpose of gathering respondents inside the homes.

The two types of data collection methods were quantitative and qualitative. In order to gather the quantitative data for the study, a structured questionnaire was predominantly used as a
source of information. Each of the study-specific objectives was expressed in each section of the questionnaire in accordance with the overall and specific study objectives.

The methods used for the qualitative data collection were in-depth interviews and focus group discussion. The in-depth interview that was conducted among participants was based on occupational statuses using a guide. In this regard, in-depth interviews were conducted with business owners (2), students (2), farmers/fishermen (2), motorcyclists (2), teachers/lecturers (2) and clerics (2). The total number of participants that were recruited for the in-depth interviews was 12.

The focus group discussion was used to gather qualitative data from some homogenous group members within the NDU host community with the aid of FGD guide. Each focus group consisted of between 6-12 members. In total, six FGDs were conducted with (i) motorcycle operators, (ii) business owners, (iii) students , (iv) artisans, (v) Male residents of host communities, (vi) and female residents of host communities. Twelve (12) FGDs was conducted because of gathering non-numerical data suitable for qualitative data analysis.

Face and content validity were used for this study, in which experts in measurements and evaluation, as well as other social research expertswere asked to judge whether the assessment instrument's items and contents are appropriate to the targeted construct and assessment objectives. When experts make ideas, the study's instrument is altered to reflect the experts’ perspectives. In order to establish the reliability test, a pilot study was carried out in two separate places within the study's area (one in Amassoma and another in Ogobiri) with 42 respondents (i.e., 10% of the sample size). These regions were not included in the sites where the later investigation was conducted. Based on the average inter-item correlation, the results of the pilot study were calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α), which produced an overall value of = 0.785, showing a strong dependability degree of internal consistency.
In line with the canon of qualitative research, the reliability of qualitative data was achieved through reflexivity. Research assistants recruited to help with data collection were trained on how to collect the relevant data that was suitable for the study.

The method of analysis of the research was based on the two methods of social inquiry that was adopted: quantitative and qualitative method. On the one hand, the univariate level of analysis was used for the quantitative data. Simple percentage distribution tables and charts were employed for the univariate analysis to analyse the data that had been gathered.

Thematic content analysis was used for the qualitative data. This method of analysis showed the contextual interpretation of data based on the themes captured in the study objectives. This provided relevant information about the coping strategies of residents in NDU during industrial actions on the host community to buttress and complement the information that was gathered from the quantitative data.

**Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents**

The reports on the respondents' sociodemographic details are shown in Table 1. These details include age, gender, educational qualification, income etc. In contrast to the female respondents who made up just two-fifths of the total, it was discovered that more than half of the respondents were men. The average age of the respondents which indicates that they were a young population, was 38.5 years.

The highest level of education among the respondents is also shown in the study. Over fifty percent of the people surveyed had completed their university education, with the remaining respondents having only completed their primary or secondary education or none at all. Nearly 80% of the interviewees were followers of Christianity with regard to their religion.
Table 1: Distribution of respondents by socio-demographic characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic variables</th>
<th>Frequency (n=418)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>58.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>41.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age group (38.52±15.65)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 20</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 29</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>28.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>22.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>13.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 and above</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>26.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest Level of Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No schooling</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>18.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>11.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>15.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>54.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious affiliation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>83.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Religion</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ijaw</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hausa</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>63.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>12.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Igbo</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of family</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monogamous</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>39.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polygamous</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>46.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parenthood</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>13.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>17.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil service</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>19.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trader</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>21.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>38.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income level (N61088.09±N192452.40)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)
Low income (≤N30000) & 197 & 47.10 \\
Medium income (N30000 – N100000) & 141 & 33.70 \\
High income (≥N100000) & 80 & 19.10 

Over fifty per cent of those surveyed (63.2%) identified as Ijaw, with the other responders coming from Yoruba (12.9%), Igbo (12.0%), and Hausa (7.4%) ethnic g. According to the respondents' family types, about half of them came from polygamous families, while about two-fifths came from monogamous families.

According to the respondents' occupations, students made up the majority of the sample, followed by one-fifth of those who worked in trading, one-fifth in the public service, one-fifth in farming, and one-fifth in other occupations including professional motorcycle riders and artisans, among others. Additionally, it was discovered that respondents who made low incomes made up the largest percentage of the sample (47.1%), followed by those who made medium incomes (33.7%), and those who made high incomes (19.1%).

**Coping strategies of NDU host communities during industrial actions**

The coping strategies of the respondents when there are NDU industrial strike actions were investigated and the results are presented in this section. The respondents were first asked the strategies adopted to adjust during industrial action. Figure 1 reports that nearly two-fifths of the respondents changed to another location for adjustment, 30.2% of them remained in the same occupation, 21.5% of the respondents changed their occupation, while 12.6% of them resorted to social vices. This implies that the highest proportion of the respondents changed to another community with some changing their occupation to cope with the social, psychological and economic consequences of NDU industrial actions.
Figure 1: Distribution of respondents by strategies for adjustment during NDU Industrial action

In specific terms, the coping strategies or mechanism for those in an intimate relationship was examined in this study. Figure 2 reveals that the highest proportion of the respondents indicated that they used partying as a coping strategy (32.5%), 23.5% of them said they coped by conflicts and changing to another community, while 20.5% of the respondents revealed that they coped by
changing intimate partners. This suggests that those in an intimate relationship also have a means of adjusting to the negative consequences of NDU industrial action when it occurs.

**Figure 2: Distribution of the respondents by coping mechanism for those in an intimate relationship**

To explore the coping mechanism for religious activities of the respondents in the host communities, respondents were first asked what happens to religious activities during NDU industrial actions. Figure 3 reports that majority of the respondents indicated that there used to be low attendance (73.6%), while 13.5% of them said there used to be no religious activities. This
suggests that religious activities are also affected at the host communities when NDU embarked on industrial actions. It also means that those attending these religious activities could be those who are NDU staff or students of the institutions.

Figure 3: Distribution of the respondents by what happen to religious activities during NDU Industrial actions

Further results of coping strategy for NDU industrial action is presented in Figure 4. When the level of social activities or events during NDU industrial actions was ascertained from the respondents, it was revealed that more than half of the respondents signified that it used to be low during industrial actions, 31.1% of them indicated it used to be moderate, while 11.1% of them
pointed out that it used to be high. This means that majority alluded to the fact that social activities are low during NDU industrial action.

Figure 4: Percentage distribution of the respondents by the level of social activities or events during NDU industrial actions

The coping strategies for those in business were also explored. Figure 5 reports the percentage distribution of respondents by how business owners cope during industrial actions. While the
majority of the respondents indicated that they stopped taking stocks (61.0%) during NDU industrial actions, 16.6% of the respondents disclosed that they changed their location, 11.3% of them said they change to another business and 11.1% of them said they give out goods already in their stores to avoid expiration. This means that the business owners coped either positively or negatively during NDU industrial actions.

![Bar chart showing percentage distribution of respondents by how business owners cope during industrial actions]

**Figure 5: Percentage distribution of respondents by how business owners cope during industrial actions**
From the focus group discussion session held with the commercial motorcycle riders, they coped by:

**FGD 1:** I'll go to the farm and get small things from there.
**FGD 2:** I have handwork, so during the strike, I do plastering and building works until the strike is called off.
**FGD 3:** My mother has a boat which she uses to carry wood, so during the strike, I use her boat to carry woods.
**FGD 4:** I relocate to another community during industrial action.
**FGD 5:** During the strike, I manage with the savings I made until the strike is off.

When focus group discussion (FGD) session was held with the bus drivers in Amassoma, it was reported that they cope by changing to another occupation. As the discussants pointed out:

**FGD 1:** The strike is usually peaceful and it is not regular. I am not happy whenever I hear of a strike in NDU because I don’t make as much money as I used to. I cope by getting assistance from my wife.
**FGD 2:** I cope by getting assistance from friends and family members.
**FGD 3:** I cope with changing business.
**FGD 4:** The strike is usually bad for me. I make 12,000 daily, but during strikes, u make only 4,000. I survive by riding *okada* at that period.
**FGD 5:** I also cope by changing business.

A further report from a shop owner on the consequences and how they coped with strike actions was explained as:

The strike is usually peaceful, it is not always frequent, but last year, it was very frequent. I feel very sad whenever I hear of a strike. Social activities are reduced whenever there is a strike because all the students that help to make the place lively have all gone home. Whenever they want to go back home, I usually feel pity for them because I hear most of them complain bitterly. The strike affects me badly because I do not have many people buying from me again. Whenever students are around, I sell up to 50,000 a day, but during strikes, I hardly make 10,000. I survive by falling back on my savings (Business owner/Male/Ogoiri).
Another business owner added that:

The strike is usually peaceful. Initially, the rate of the strike was very low but since the second tenure of Seriake (The Governor), the strike has become very frequent. I am not happy with the strikes. The population in our social activities reduces during strikes. The strike affects me very badly because I don’t make many sales. Sometimes when the students want to leave, I feel very bad for them. I am a landlady and I always have issues with my tenants concerning rents because most of them will refuse to pay their rent, claiming that they were not in the house during that period the strike was on. I cope by fishing and farming (Business Owner/Female/Ogobiri).

One coping strategy from a member of the Non-Academic Staff of University was that:

The most common type of strike NDU observes is the sit at home strike. The strike has recently become very frequent. I have a negative perception of the strike. It makes me feel sad. I however, cope by going to the farm and I also get assistance from friends and family (NASU Member/Amassoma).

A pharmacist also noted that she copes with the savings she has made when they have not gone on strike action: As she narrated:

The strike always affects me badly because people that use to patronize me no longer do so. I cope by using the savings I have made (Pharmacist/Female/Ogobiri).

A barber also narrated what he encountered during the strike action but explained that he coped by doing manual jobs. As he noted:

The strike is usually not friendly with me. We are three in the shop and on a normal day, we all go home with 3,000 each, but during strikes, we hardly even see up to 1,000. I cope by doing manual jobs and most times I lock up my shop entirely during strikes (Barber/Male/Ogobiri).
Another participant who was an owner of a saloon explained that the strike action in NDU seriously affected her during strikes. It was as bad as not making anything at all. Though she noted that she coped by selling liquors in a liquor shop. This means she coped by changing to another business. The coping strategy for a business owner who has a business centre was not only limit to laying off workers, but led to opening of another shop in a different community. As he stated:

> The industrial action harms business centres more than any other business because we deal mostly with academic work. If school is not in session, nobody comes to patronize. It is so severe that some business centres even close down. I react negatively towards the strike. I however, cope by doing agricultural activities and also look for new partners outside the university environment. That is I open another business outside my former business; although to me, it is not so healthy considering the nature of the state. I also lay off workers and sometimes use my savings. I can tell you that Industrial actions create massive unemployment as many employers lay off their workers due to drain in the business. I advise that the industrial actors use other means more preferable dialogue instead of strike (Business owner/male/Amassoma).

To another participant, who was a POS/phone businessman, I was revealed that he coped by changing to another business. As he noted:

> I am not happy whenever I hear of strikes because its impact is very high on me. My sales reduce from 8,000 per day to less than 1,000. Most days it’s eating what you see. I cope with changing business (POS/ Phone business/Male/Amassoma).

A participant who is a dealer in electronic appliances said that he coped by reducing the prices of his items. As he stated:

> The industrial actions in NDU usually cut off my business life . . I end up reducing the price of my goods just to survive (Electronic shop/Male/Amassoma).

A similar coping mechanism was adopted by a supermarket owner who explained that:
The action has a serious impact on my business. During strikes, my business drops from 100,000 sales to 20,000. I cope by reducing my savings and call for assistance from family and friends (Supermarket owner/female/Amassoma).

From these findings, it implies that although the industrial actions of NDU as an organization have devastating effects on the socio-economic activities of the host communities, there were coping strategies they adopted to adjust themselves which ranged from changing to another community or business or resorting to savings from friends. This suggests that in any given social system, there must be the maintenance of social equilibrium as opined by the theorist of the social system.

**Discussion of Findings**

This study focused on the socioeconomic context of industrial actions and coping strategies among NDU host communities. Following the canon of research, this section is concerned with the discussion of findings in line with the previous or related literature in the subject matter.

This study also found that despite the fact that NDU industrial actions impact negatively on the host communities, there was adaptive mechanism rely on or adopted as coping strategies by respondents to cope with the situation of work cessation in NDU. For example, findings revealed that while a majority of those who were business owners changed to another community for business activities, others adjusted by changing their occupation to another occupation or by stop taking new stocks. This is in line with Greenglass *et al.* (2002) that students deploy different strategies to cope with the stressful effects of a university strike.

By extension, though not the same stress as the students, host communities of the institution have in one way or the other cope with their economic situations by either changing to another business venture or another community for the continuation of their business activities. It was revealed that majority of the respondents who had intimate partners coped by resorting to partying, or conflicts...
and by changing their intimate partners. This suggests that those in an intimate relationship also have a means of adjusting to the negative consequences of NDU industrial actions when most of their intimate partners who are either staff or students of NDU left the environment as a result of work cessation in the institution. However, to Folkman and Lazarus (1984), Weiten and Lloyd (2008), and Brannon & Feist (2009), coping strategies used during industrial actions by students and other stakeholders can be grouped into four categories, namely; (i) problem-focused coping strategy, (ii) emotion-focused coping strategy, (iii) support-seeking coping strategy, and (iv) meaning-making coping strategy.

Conclusion and Recommendations
As a result of the negative consequences of industrial actions on the host communities, some of the coping mechanisms people resort to may not be interesting enough to sustain the growth of the entire social system. Thus, it is high time that all stakeholders in the universities were sensitized on the negative consequences of industrial actions not only on the institution, but also the host communities in terms of increase in social vices and other associated problems. In order to mitigate the potential adverse impacts of NDU industrial actions on their sources of income, it is suggested that members of the host communities who primarily engage in businesses, commercial motorbike riding, or other sources of livelihood should be motivated to acquire alternative vocational skills.

References


**Author Biography**

Imbazi Woyengitari has a BSC in Sociology and an MSc in Industrial Sociology. He is currently a PhD candidate at the Niger Delta University (NDU) where he teaches as an Assistant Lecturer.