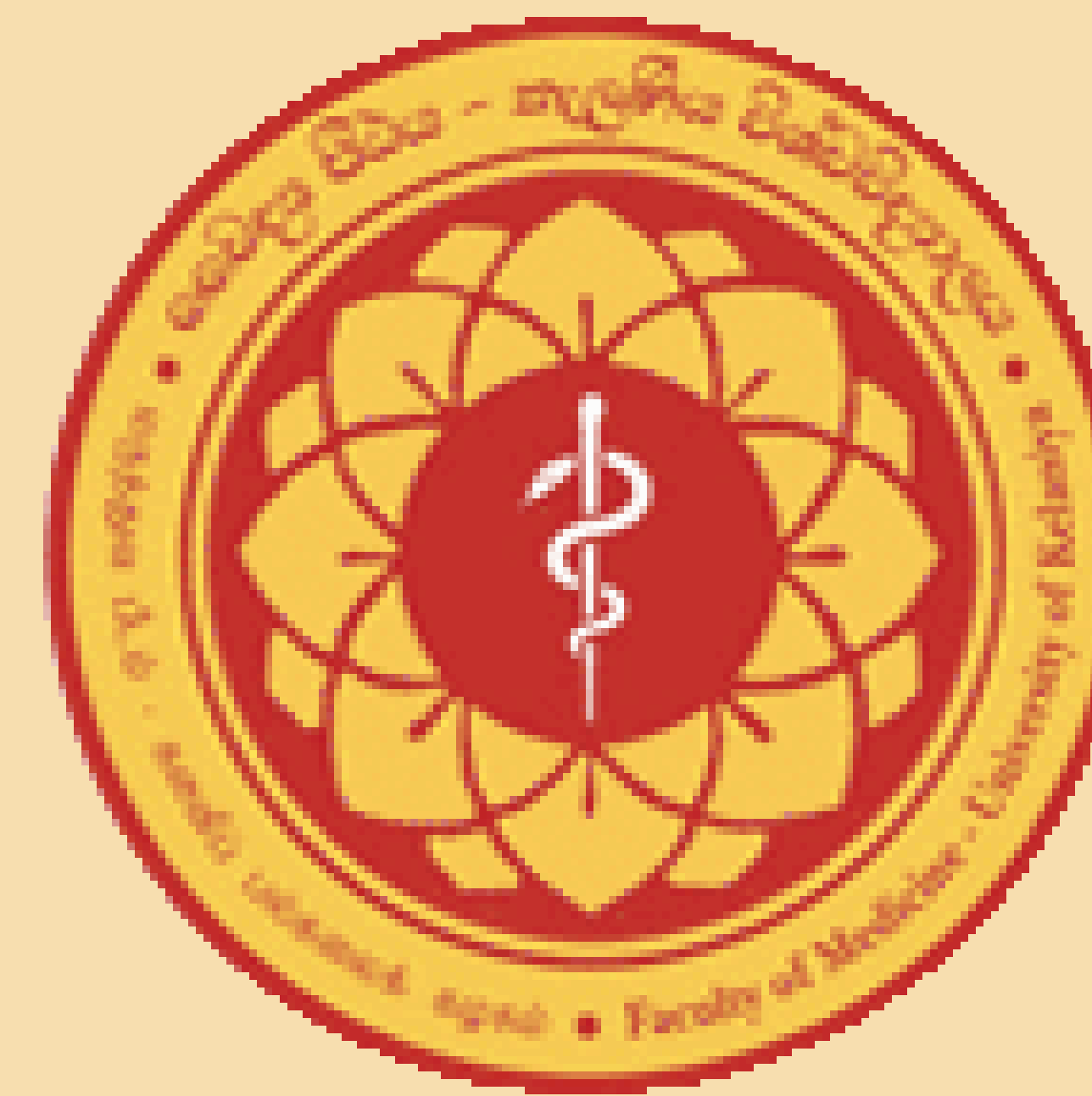




# Relationship Between Island Wide Medical Students' Strike In 2017 and Its Perceived Impact on Psychological, Socioeconomic and Educational Status Of Current Medical Students in Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya



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## Introduction

In 2017, protesting a private medical university by the name South Asian Institute of Technology and Medicine (SAITM), student bodies of government medical faculties entered a joint union action resulting in an island wide medical students' academic strike. It was a subject of public interest and was argued to have a lasting impact on the lives of medical students. This research aims to explore the impact of the academic strike on students' lives and academic performances.

## Objectives

To determine the perceived impact of medical students' strike in 2017 on **socioeconomic**, **educational** and **psychological status** of current medical students

## Method

**Study Design** - Descriptive cross-sectional study  
**Study Setting** – Batches 27(2014/15), 26(2013/14) and 25 (2012/13) of Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya  
**Study Period** - 15<sup>th</sup> November to 15<sup>th</sup> December 2019  
**Study Population** –  
Inclusion criteria  
 Students of Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya who were enrolled to the faculty before the beginning of the strike  
Exclusion criteria  
 Students of batches who have not faced a continuous assessment before the beginning of the strike.  
 Students of batches who are not undergraduates during the data collection period  
**Sampling** – No sampling  
**Sample Size**- 511 , Entire study population  
**Data Collection Instrument** - a self-administered questionnaire consisting of 4 parts  
 Part 1-Demographic data  
 Part 2-Perceived Impact on Socio-Economic Status  
 Part 3- Perceived Impact on Education  
 Part 4- Perceived Impact on Psychological Status  
**Data Analysis** - Entered in Microsoft Excel and analyzed using R and SPSS version 26.

## Results

A total of 511 questionnaires were distributed out of which 361 consented filled questionnaires were retrieved and used in analysis. The sample consisted of students aged 23 to 29 with a mean age of 25.6 (SD=1.186) representing 3 academic years and the highest participation was from batch 27. (Figure 1)

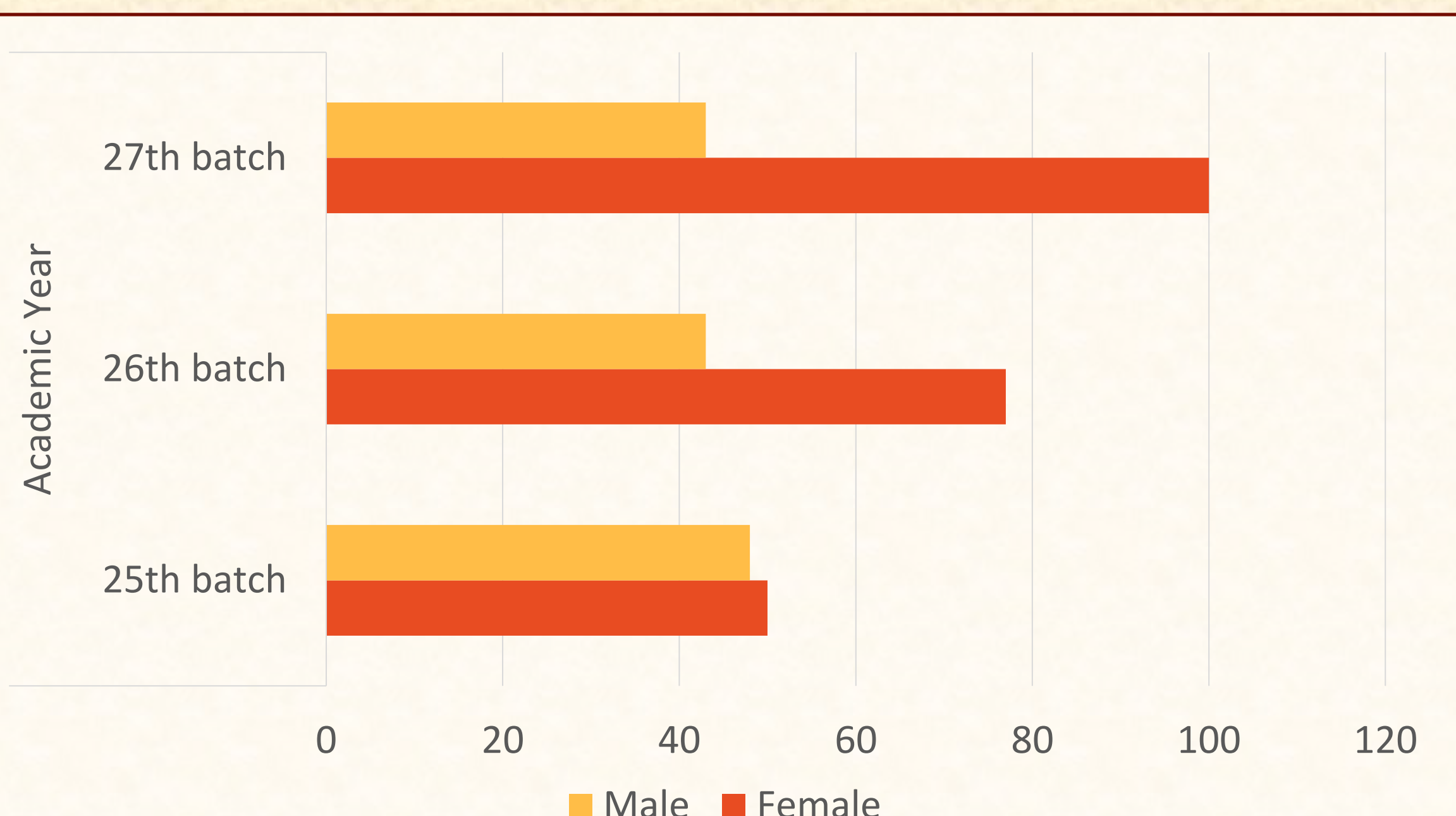


Figure 1: Participation by Academic Year

63.4% of the participants thought the strike was justified and the majority (62%) had participated in the strike willingly. (Figure 2)

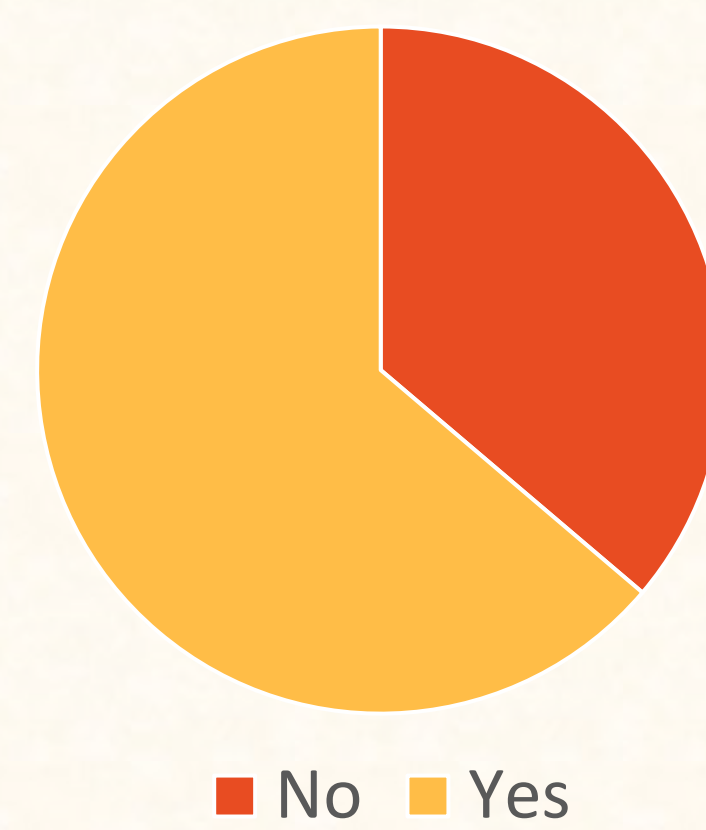


Figure 2: Strike is Justified

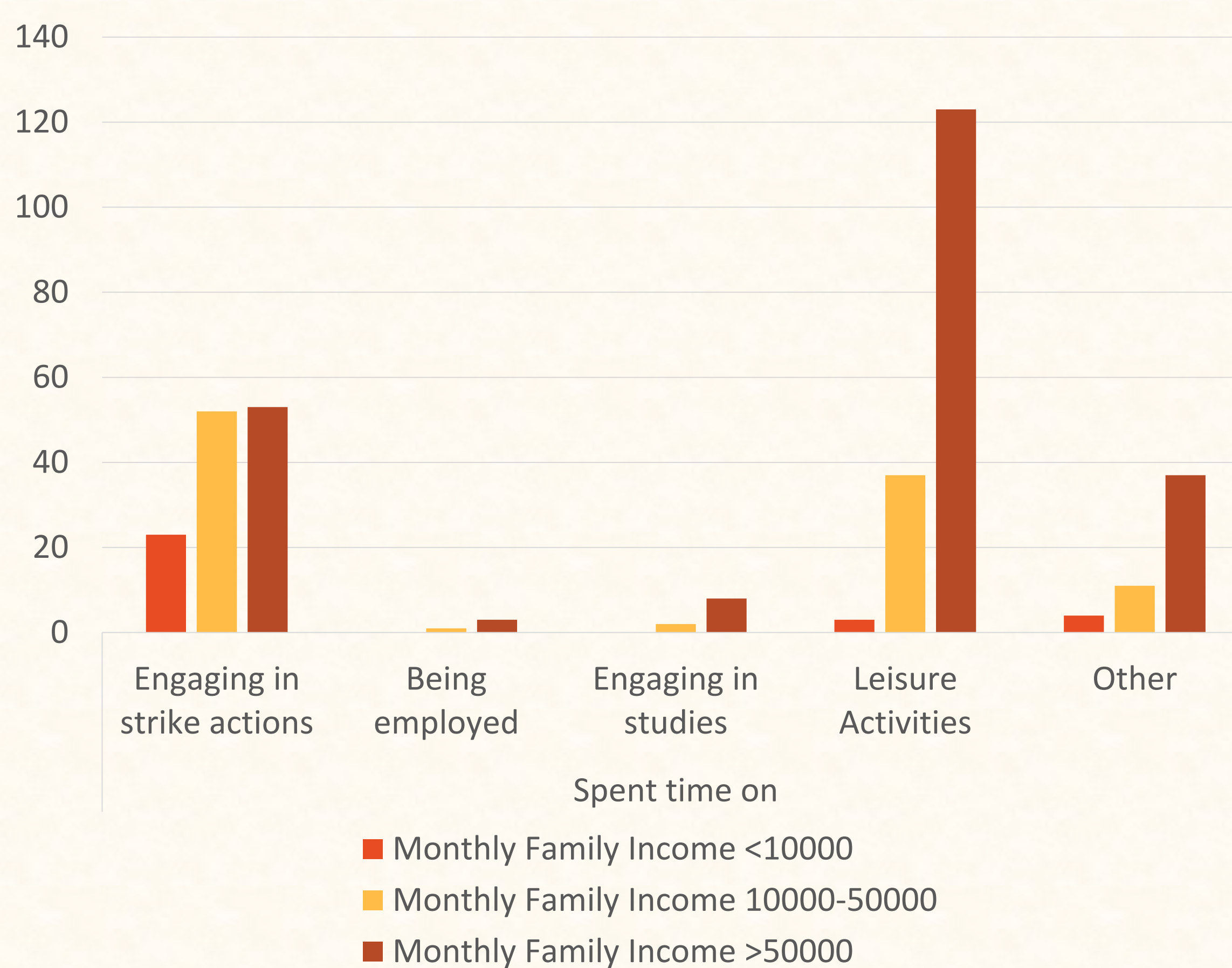


Figure 3: How time was spent during strike

It was evident most had engaged in leisure activities while the least were employed. (Figure 3)  
 Out of 273 (72.9%) participants who thought the strike had an impact on their studies 73. 2% thought that the said impact was negative.

Out of 361 participants, 13.3% very often and 24.4% fairly often felt that they were nervous and stressed, during the period of strike but 4.2% very often and 32.1% fairly often felt confident about their ability to handle their personal problems. Varying degrees of perceived psychological impact on the participants were observed. (Figures 4 and 5)

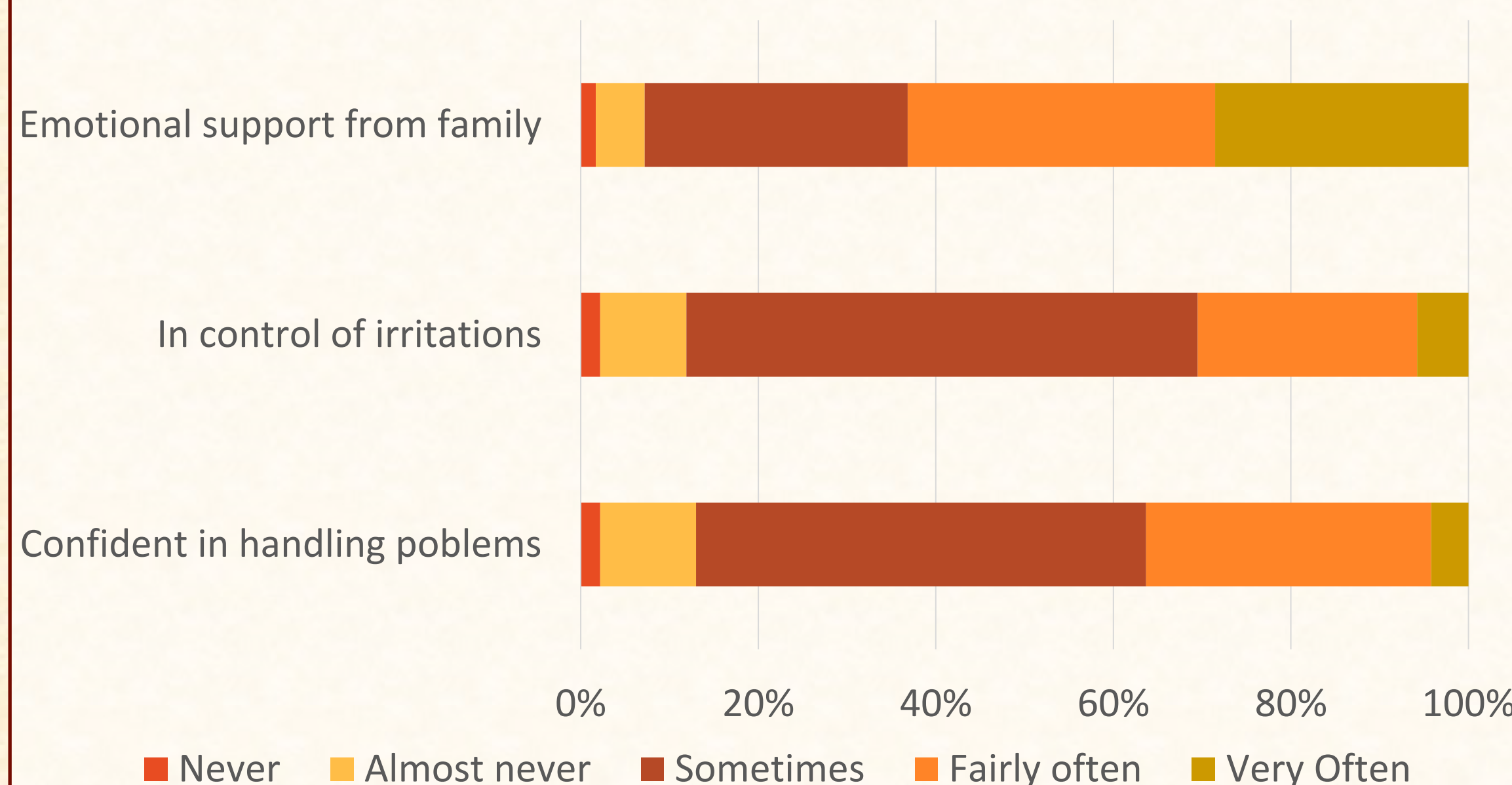


Figure 4: Psychological Impact

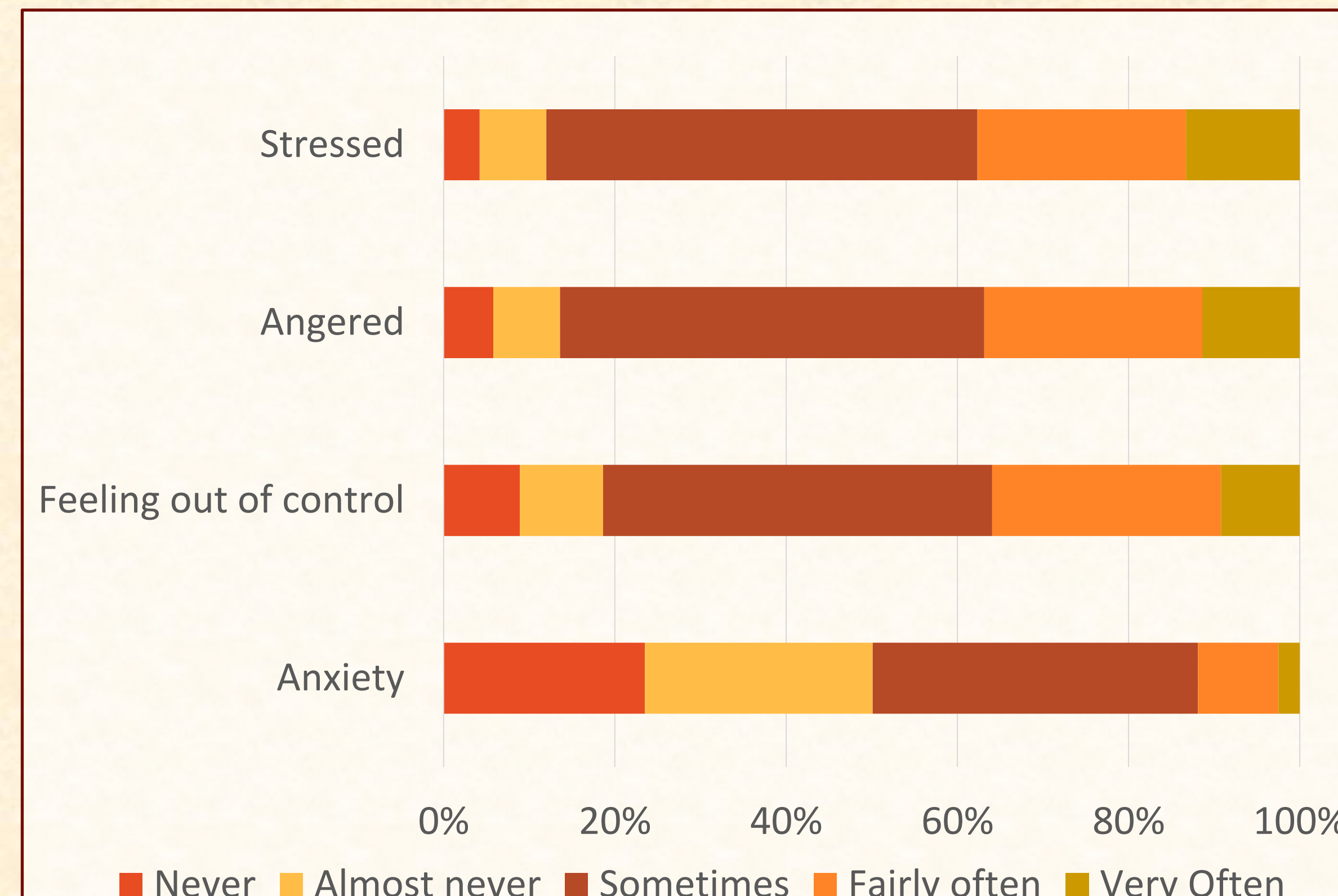


Figure 5: Psychological Impact

## Limitations

The study is limited to 3 batches of Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya. Involving all relevant faculties would generalize the results.

## Conclusion

Majority of the students exhibited willing participation in the strike and majority perceives the strike is justified. Meanwhile majority agreed that it had mostly a negative impact on their education, economy and interpersonal relationships. Most of the participants had experienced negative psychological impacts at sometimes or at a lesser frequency.

## Discussion

Larger scale studies could be conducted to further investigate impacts of situations causing disruption of continuation of university academic activities like long-term strikes. Drawing attention of policymakers and university officials towards identified areas of impact would help minimize the said effects.

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