

The Effect of Union Activities on Employee's Performance- a Case Study at the Bawku Presbyterian Hospital

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Abstract: The Labour Act 2003, Act 651 serves as guide to help foster a harmonious relationship between management and employees. It is paramount to acknowledge the significant role that Union activities have played. Amongst them are; bargaining on behalf of employees, bringing industrial harmony among employees and employers, serving as a guide and direction for employees to direct their grievances and many more. The study was to find out the impact of union activities on the performance of employees. The specific objectives of the study were: To identify the main strategies used by trade unions to protect the interest of members, to find out the benefits associated with joining trade unions and, to find out the effects of trade unions on workers performance. The significance of the study was to find out the socioeconomic good of workers at the Bawku Presbyterian Hospital and help unveil the problems associated with trade unions and its impact on their performance. The researchers through questionnaires used 70 respondents from the Bawku Presbyterian hospital who are members of Health Service Workers Union. Out of the findings 64% of the health workers said trade unions help workers to get their demands. The methodology used for the study was descriptive in nature. The findings of this study corroborate that of other researches that union activities have effect on workers performance at the workplace. Union activities have impact on the performance on work. This implies that it sounds appropriate for employers to put in place enough structure. Through that, industrial action will be reduced. Base on concrete satisfactory measures, it will be very difficult for workers to embark on strike action.

Keywords: paramount, harmony, harmonious.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Throughout history, trade unions have struggled for the protection and improvement in the real incomes, security of tenure at the work place (by shielding members from unfair dismissals); safety and healthy working environment for their members. Trade unions in Africa are no exception in the pursuit of these noble objectives. The principal instrument that has been used by trade unions either at enterprise or national level is collective bargaining. Trade unions are also increasingly engaging in lobbying governments and their agencies for legislations that favour workers and their families [1].

The underlying motivation for forming or joining unions and undertaking collective bargaining is, therefore, to equalize or at least reduce the power asymmetry between employers and employees. By this, unions are able to bring about equality, equity, fairness, respect for human and workers' rights, and social and economic justice not only at the workplace but equally importantly, in the broader society. And this is based on the recognition that individually, workers are too weak

and not resourceful to demand their rights at the workplace. There is also the recognition that there is strength in the unity and collectivism of workers [2].

Trade unions in Africa have played very important roles in the political, social and economic development of the continent. In the 1960s, trade unions in Africa were very instrumental in the struggle for independence across the continent. During independence struggle, trade unions across the continent offered the most important platform for ordinary people to voice their frustrations and to demand for self-determination. Post-political independence, trade unions in the continent have been at the forefront of the struggle for good governance, democracy, equality, fairness, respect for humans and workers' rights and social and economic justice [3].

International Labour Organisation (ILO) came immediately after independence. In some countries such as Ghana, more than 70 percent of all ratified ILO conventions were made in the first decade after independence. With the massive expansion of the public sector along with the close shop arrangement, union

membership increased exponentially across the continent. However, since the 1980s and the 1990s, the labour movement in Africa has been facing several daunting challenges in their effort to protect workers' rights and the rights of the weak, the poor and the vulnerable in society. In most countries in Africa, trade union density remains low and union membership has been declining due to the rapid rate of informalisation and casualization of work [4].

The trade union movements in Ghana started in areas with large concentration of wage-earning labour. The British colonial administration greatly supported the unionization of employees yet they faced a lot of difficulties such as fighting employers so as to be given the necessary recognition and negotiation rights. Trade unions in this country started after the enactment of the Trade Unions Ordinance Cap 91 of 1941. It became effective on the 27 of September, 1941. This led to the creation of multiple trade unions as at that time totalling about 135 registered in the country between 1943 and 1948 [5].

With the enactment of the Industrial Relations Act 1958 and finally amended –Act 299 of 1965, there emerged in Ghana for the first time the National trade Unions structured along industrial lines. Under this act the number of trade unions that popped up during the early stages of their developments was drastically pruned down through some measures to twenty four. Currently there are seventeen (17) national unions which come together to form the Ghana Trade Unions Congress with majority emanating from the public sector. This study has become necessary due to the encouragement from the government on private sector investment. It is therefore envisaged that with the growth of the private sector, a considerable number of Ghanaians would be employed into the sector hence the need for unionization [6].

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The major focus of the study was to examine the effect of union activities on employee's performance. Considering the significant role of unions in the public sector in policing their employers, it was quite important to undertake this study. The study would be to the socio economic good of workers at the Bawku Presbyterian Hospital and help unveil the problems associated with trade unions and its effect on their performance. Additionally, the outcome of this study would add to the body of literature concerning the impact of union activities on the performance of employees. The data generated will serve as a useful source of information for future researchers of similar research, and other organizations interested in the study.

Scope and limitations of the Study

The study is limited to the Bawku Presbyterian Hospital which has a trade union. The study is limited to the Bawku Presbyterian Hospital because of its

nearness to the researchers and availability of needed data. The costs of transportation to and from research sites, cost of materials needed, some of which were books, and electronic data, were some of the limitations.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Concept and Definition of Trade Unions

A trade union (or labour union) is an organization of workers who have banded together to achieve common goals like better working conditions. Also it could be an organization whose members belong to the same trade and that acts collectively to address common issues. A trade union could again be explained as a group of employees who come together as a unit in fighting for a common purpose such as better working conditions, wages, salaries etc [7].

A trade union is an organization whose membership consists of workers and union leaders, and whose principal purposes are to negotiate wages and working condition terms, regulate relations between workers (its members) and the employer, take collective action to enforce the terms of collective bargaining, raise new demands on behalf of its members and help settle their grievances. A labour union, or trade union, is an organization of workers who have joined together to achieve goals in areas such as wages and working conditions. The union negotiates contracts and conditions with employers, keeping employee satisfaction high and protecting workers from unsafe or unfair working conditions [8].

A modern definition by the Australian Bureau of Statistics states that a trade union is organizations consisting predominantly of employees, the principal activities of which include the negotiation of rates of pay and conditions of employment for its members.

History of Trade Unions

Union history traces back to the guild system in Europe that sought to protect certain professions by controlling of skill mastery and advancement. Although the relationship between guilds and unions is not perfectly linear, and is therefore sometimes disputed, guilds as the forerunners of unions make sense. It is the first example of workers organizing according to their own rules rather than those of their employer. The industrial revolution during the eighteenth century in Europe prompted a new surge of new workers to enter the job market that had previously remained at home, and now needed representation as more and more people left farming as an occupation and began to work for employers, often in appalling conditions and for very low wages. The labour movement arose as an outgrowth of the disparity between the power of employers and the powerlessness of individual employees [9].

Unions were illegal for many years in most countries. There were severe penalties for attempting to

organize unions, up to and including execution. Despite this, unions were formed and began to acquire political power, eventually resulting in a body of labour law which not only legalized organizing efforts, but codified the relationship between employers and those employees organized into unions. Many consider it an issue of fairness that workers be allowed to pool their resources in a special legal entity in a similar way to the pooling of capital resources in the form of corporations. Today a government-imposed ban on joining a union is generally considered a human rights abuse. Most democratic countries have many unions, while most authoritarian regimes do not [10].

Trade Union Strategies

The core mandate of trade unions is to promote and protect the rights and socio-economic interests of workers. Unions have sought to achieve these objectives using four main strategies namely organizing, collective bargaining, collective action and alliance building with other social actors [11]. According to Renaud [10], the contribution of workers well-being through trade unions cannot be underestimated at all. Over the years the activities of employees have been secured base on the effective operations of trade unions. Even though trade unions have numerous challenges they still manage to handle and manage well the plight of their members.

Organizing

Organizing or mass mobilization of workers is the fact around which all union activities revolve. Workers' struggles for a just and fair society have, at all times, been pursued through organizing. Unions fully recognize that challenges that confront workers cannot be dealt with individually. Expanding trade union membership to all the sectors and building and maintaining a united labour front are the major challenges facing the union movement today [12].

Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining is at the heart of trade unionism and industrial relations. Generally Collective bargaining rests on four fundamental principles. First is the principle of collectivism as opposed to individualism that together there can be purposeful achievement. This means that the numerous workplace problems facing workers can be best resolved by trade unions. The second principle is cooperation as opposed to competition. The third is solidarity as opposed to survival of the fittest. The fourth principle underlying collective bargaining is economic and social justice and fairness or equity [12].

Collective bargaining remains the most important service that unions provide for their members in the formal sector. Unions have used the collective bargaining process to negotiate standards that govern employment and labour relations for their members. Collective bargaining is one of the three main pillars of industrial relations and it remains at the centre of

industrial relations. The other pillars are conflict prevention and conflict resolution both of which are addressed within the collective bargaining framework. Collective bargaining becomes necessary when individual action fails or is likely to fail in fulfilling the expectations of workers. The effectiveness of collective bargaining depends on the ability of unions to organize [13].

Collective Action/Industrial Action

Collective bargaining has become the main tool by which unions deal with employers and attempt to address the concerns of their members. Nevertheless, unions have occasionally resorted to collective or industrial action to back their demands when collective bargaining fails to yield the desired results. Such actions often take the form of demonstrations and strikes. Every bargaining round faces the threat of a strike reflecting the ability of workers and their organizations to impose cost on employers through the withdrawal of their services. It is one of the most important and enduring tools available to trade unions [14].

Alliance Building

Unions have always found it necessary to intervene in national policies and decisions. Such interventions are aimed at influencing and changing government policies and making sure they are in favour of workers and their families. There are other like-minded institutions and organisations in civil society with which the trade union movement can form alliance as a strategy for achieving its ultimate goal of protecting the interests of workers. There have been situations where unions have successfully formed strong alliance even with political parties and governments [15].

A case in point is the Siamese twin relationship between TUC and Kwame Nkrumah's Convention Peoples Party (CPP) in the 1960s. TUC gained a lot from this strong alliance with Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah and his party. But, at the same time, TUC lost its independence as a trade union movement. It is for this and other reasons that the TUC introduced a non-partisan clause in its Constitution. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has formed a very strong alliance with the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). COSATU is a very strong member of this tripartite alliance. This relationship enables COSATU to influence social, economic and labour market policies in South Africa [16].

Unions must, however, assess their own strength before they enter into such alliances. TUC lost its independence in its alliance with CPP because the party was much stronger at the time. COSATU is a well-respected member of the tripartite alliance because it is very strong in terms of membership and in terms of the spread of its members across the South African economy. Unions can gain such strength only from

large numbers.

Clearly, it is very hard to overstate the importance of organizing or mass mobilization. Collective bargaining, which is the main tool for unions, cannot be effective without organizing. Similarly, collective action or strike, which is used occasionally to back the demands for improved salaries and working conditions, cannot be successful if union coverage is low. Unions cannot enter into any serious alliance with strong partners if the unions are weak. If unions want to survive the capitalist onslaught and continue to grow they must organize [17].

Effects of Trade Unions on Workers Performance

By far the smallest category of studies finds a positive impact of unions on organizational performance. Even the expectation of productivity gains due to increased unionization [18]. Gunderson posits that in addition to the more well-known rent seeking behavior of unions, they may have a positive effect on performance by giving voice to worker concerns, improving management/labour communication, increasing morale, and decreasing turnover. Subsequent work has suggested that this effect might be even larger in the public sector due to the increased loyalty and decreased exit propensity of public employees [18].

A larger number of studies have failed to find any relationship between public employee unions and organizational performance. Unionization has no direct impact on the outcomes produced by public agencies [19]. It is important to note, however, that when coupled with the increased expenditures associated with unionization null performance gains for public organizations are often treated as negative productivity outcomes by scholars.

Following an extensive analysis of the literature on wage and productivity effects of public unions, Moe [4] conclude that there is an absence of a sizeable productivity effect on workers output, despite the significant union premiums and suggest the need for greater competition in the production of public services. Hoxby similarly finds that teachers unions increase teachers' salaries with no resultant improvement in student performance, and concludes that unions are a potential answer to the puzzle of increased school spending and stagnant student performance in the post-1960 period [20].

There are a number of studies, particularly in education, that find a direct negative impact of unionization on public organizational performance. Meador and Walters find a large negative impact on productivity in union versus non-union academic departments in public universities [21]. In the area of secondary education, scholars have concluded that increased unionization was a significant contributor to

the decline in abysmal performance of most students. Lynn, Heinrich, and Hill [22] find that dropout rates worsened by 2.3% after schools unionized. The most recent work on teachers unions and student performance also finds a large negative relationship in both elementary and secondary schools.

One other way in which unions are assumed to influence (or potentially influence) productivity is through the creation of rules and procedures that force organizations alter their personnel practices and limit discretion in the management of human resources [23]. More importantly, the structures and procedures that unions create are often not aligned with organizational performance. Speaking specifically of health workers unions, Moe [4] argues that, the core interests they pursue in negotiations are rooted in their own survival and well-being as organizations not in patients' achievement. Others have made similar arguments, suggesting that limitations on managerial discretion and overhead control sought by unions are primarily designed to attract and retain members, rather than promote higher performance [24].

Benefits of working with a trade union

Working with a recognised trade union can bring many benefits to retailers and suppliers around the world. According to Salamon [1] trade unions help in building trust among the workforce. Unions provide a mechanism for dialogue between workers and employers, which help build trust and commitment among the workforce and ensures that problems can be identified and resolved quickly and fairly. This brings significant productivity benefits for companies. Recognizing a union also means there is a single point of contact for negotiating terms and conditions for workers, which is simpler, more efficient for the employer and fairer than dealing with workers individually.

A study carried out by Land [2] asserts that trade union as an organized body ensures workplaces are safe. Union representatives help to lower accident rates at work by ensuring safe working practices and reducing stress-related ill health caused by, for example, working long hours, being bullied or working in poor quality environments. Evidence shows that unionized workplaces are safer which has the added benefit for employers of significantly reducing the costs of ill health and accidents.

According to Oscar [25] the significance associated with trade unions cannot be underestimated at all. Unions are well placed to work with employers to identify and address poor working practices and non-compliance with labour standards. By surveying their members about workplace conditions, coordinating workers to monitor workplace practices, and providing a safe route for workers to report non-compliance, trade unions help employers achieve more than traditional

audit and social compliance approaches, thus reducing dependence on social audit.

Rutherford opines that one major contributory tool towards staff retention is trade unions [26]. Trade unions negotiate on their members' behalf with employers to find solutions that meet business needs, while ensuring that workers are treated fairly. By giving employees a voice and supporting them when they are unhappy at work, unions significantly improve staff retention and reduce absenteeism. Improved working conditions in unionized workplaces also give employees a powerful incentive to remain in their jobs for longer, and to use their time at work more productively.

Because unions represent workers from a large number of similar organizations, they have a broad perspective on issues affecting companies and industry knowledge that can be very useful to companies. Informing and consulting with experienced union representatives can also help companies take better-informed business decisions, for example in relation to shift patterns or the type of equipment to invest in [27]. This shows that trade unions help in making better business decisions.

In furtherance to the above, Charles [28] looking at the benefits associated with trade unions concluded that they help in the promotion equality in organizations. Trade unions actively fight discrimination and help to promote equal opportunities at work. Union representatives are well placed to identify incidences of discrimination, and to work with employers to ensure that anti-discrimination policies are properly implemented. This helps make workplaces more attractive to workers improving staff retention, absenteeism and productivity as well as reducing management time spent addressing grievances.

Development of Trade Unions in Ghana

Trade union origins in Ghana have been attributed to two main factors, the reaction of workers to situations they consider to infringe on their rights and colonial labour policy. Popular grassroots organizations in reaction to felt threats to workers' interests first gave impetus for workers to organize. Later efforts of the colonial government offered the environment for organizing union activities which were described then as haphazard and lacking structure [29].

Trade Unions movement in Ghana started in areas with large concentration of wage-earning labor. For example, mining centers like Obuasi, Tarkwa, Bibiani, Nsuta, and harbor towns like Takoradi. Though the British Colonial Administration greatly encouraged and supported workers to constitute themselves into Trade Union (or form Trade Unions), Trade unions faced a lot of difficulties. They had to fight hard against employers to accord them recognition and negotiation rights. It was not until the enactment of

Trade Unions Ordinance Cap [30].

According to Alchian [31] it became effective on 27th September 1941. Trade Unions in this country derived their legal status and continuous existence from this Ordinance. Section 8 of the Ordinance allowed five or more employees to form a trade union and register with the Registrar of Unions. This led to the emergence of a multiple of Trade of Unions. There were 135 registered Trade Union in the country between 1943 and 1958. Following mass development of Trade Unions, a National Union Centre with its headquarters in Takoradi was formed in the Gold Coast in 1945 under the name GOLD COAST TRADE UNION CONGRESS. It had a total membership of 6,030 workers represented by 14 unions. It was formed mainly to co-ordinate the activities of the various unions which were badly organized and financially weak.

According to Acker with the enactment of the Industrial Relation Act 1958 and finally amended – Act 299 of 1965 there emerged in Ghana for the first time National Trade Unions structured along industrial lines [30]. Under this Act the number of trade unions that mushroomed during the early stages of their development was drastically reduced, through some measures to 24. Through a series of amendments to the original Act the number was further reduced to 16 then to 10 and back to 16. Currently, there are 17 National Unions which come together to form the Trade Union Congress in Ghana. It is headed by a General Secretary who is elected for a four year term.

The Trade Union Congress of Ghana is also affiliated to the International Labour Organization (I.L.O) with its headquarters in Geneva (Switzerland). The basis of union membership in Ghana is largely determined by the economic activity or industry in which one works rather than a profession or occupation. For example a messenger with a government would belong to the Health Service Workers Union but if the same messenger resigns from the government hospital to work with an agriculture establishment then that messenger will be a member of the General Agricultural Workers Union [32].

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Quantitative technique was adopted for the study. The quantitative technique involved a questionnaire survey of members of the health workers union at the Bawku Presbyterian Hospital. The quantitative technique involved a survey where data was collected through questioning a fraction of the population. The survey method using questionnaire was used for this study primarily because it reduced cost and time associated with census and they are capable of generating quantitative data.

Research Type

The study is a descriptive survey. It provides an accurate account of the characteristics of a particular individual, event, or group in real-life situations for the purpose of discovering new meaning, describing what exists, determining the frequency with which something occurs and categorizing information [33].

The study Population

Frankel and Wallen [34], point out that, "Population is the group of interest to the researcher, the group to whom the researcher would like to generalize the results of the study". Jankowicz [35] points out that in order to draw a sample; you have to know how many people are in the population, and how this total is made up from people falling into various subgroups in which you might be interested. The population for this study consists of the entire staff of Bawku Presbyterian Hospital.

Sample/ Sampling Technique

The study depended on simple random sampling technique to select the respondents for the study. With this type of sampling technique, the researcher gets opportunity to use the respondents who were available during data collection. The decision to use convenience sampling technique is due to the busy schedule of the respondents.

Sampling Size

Fraenkel and Wallen refer to a "sample" in a research study as any group from which information is obtained [34]. Jankowicz defines sampling as the deliberate choice of a number of people, the sample provides data from which to draw conclusions about a larger group, the population, whom these people represent [35]. Therefore, not all the members of the study population were surveyed. Also it is considered economically feasible to use part of the population. This enables the research to be conducted within the limited time frame. Per this study, the researchers used 70 respondents from the Bawku Presbyterian Hospital who are members of the Health Service Workers Union.

The Research Instruments

Several methods are used to collect data in a social science research. These include questionnaires, interviews, and observational techniques. Twumasi mentioned that the selection of a particular method to collect data must be decided upon in the light of one's problem [36]. Twumasi asserts that in making this decision, the researcher must keep in mind the type of people he or she is dealing with, the nature of the social situation, the mood of the social environment and the psychology of the people [36]. The study therefore combined questionnaire and structured interview methods.

The data for the study was thus collected using questionnaires. Questionnaires consisting of mainly structured or close-ended questions was used to collect the primary data for the study. Close-ended questions are known to provide control over the participant's range of responses by providing specific response alternatives [37]. This makes it easier to summarize and analyze the responses. The reasons for using the questionnaire method as an instrument of data collection was based on the fact that it provides a wider coverage of the sample and also it facilitates the collection of a large amount of data [34].

Data Analysis Method

The statistical software, Statistical Package Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows (Version 11) was used to analyze the quantitative data generated with the questionnaires whilst the data from the interviews was analyzed qualitatively by content analysis.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Considerably, the analysis was grouped into bio data and main data, while the main data emphasis was on the main objective.

Personal Data of Respondents

The demographic data gives vivid information about the personal information on the respondents used for the study. Educational background, marital status, age and gender of respondents were captured.

Table-1: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Response	Frequency	Percentage
21-23	14	20
24-26	26	37
27-28	6	9
29-31	4	6
32+	20	28
Total	70	100

Source: Researcher's Field Data, 2014

From Table-1, 14% (n=10) of the respondents were within 21-23 years while 43% of them were 24-26 years and 8% (n=6) were within 27-28 years. Additionally, 6% (n=4) of the respondents were 29-31 years. The remaining 29% (n=20) were above 32 years.

Table-2: Distribution of Respondents by Educational background

Response	Frequency	Percentage
University	10	14
Nurses' Training College	60	86
Total	70	100

Source: Researcher's Field Data, 2014

From table-2, 14% (n=10) of the respondents had university education while 86% (n=60) attended nurses' training college.

Table-3: Distribution of Respondents by Religious background

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Christian	61	87
Muslim	9	13
Total	70	100

Source: Researcher's Field Data, 2014

From Table-3, 87% (n=61) of the respondents were Christians while 13% (n=9) were Muslims.

Table-4: Distribution of Respondents by Marital status

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Single	45	64
Married	25	36
Total	70	100

Source: Researcher's Field Data, 2014

From Table 4, 64% (n=45) of the respondents were single while 36% (n=25) of them were married.

To identify the main strategies in use by trade unions in Bawku Presbyterian Hospital

Table-5: Strategies commonly used by trade unions

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Organizing, collective bargaining, collective action and alliance building	50	72
Plan, action and evaluation	5	7
Formulation, membership drive and power sharing	15	21
Total	70	100

Source: Researcher's Field Data, 2014

From Table-5, 72% (n=50) of the respondents said the main strategy used by trade union is organization , collective bargaining , collective action and alliance building while 21% (n=15) of them said,

plan , action and evaluation. The remaining 7% (n=5) of the respondents said formulation, membership drive and power.

Table-6: Core mandate of trade unions

Response	Frequency	Percentage
To promote and protect the rights and socio- economic interests of workers	40	57
To fight for the needs of members at workplace	25	36
To promote unity amongst members	5	7
Total	70	100

Source: Researcher's Field Data, 2014

From table 6, 57% (n=40) of the respondents disclosed that the core mandate of trade union is to promote and protect the right and socio-economic interest of workers while 36% (n=25) of them said to

fight for the needs of members at workplace. The remaining 7% (n=5) said to promote unity amongst members.

Table-7: Best way workers can rely on to press home their demand

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Trade union	70	100
Total	70	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Data, 2014

From Table-7, all the 70 health workers used in this study said workers do rely on trade unions to press home their demand.

Table-8: Main challenge militating against the operations of trade union

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Membership drive	45	64
Lack of Bargaining Skills	25	34
Total	70	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Data, 2014

From Table-8, 64% (n=45) of the respondents said the main challenge militating against the operations of trade unions is membership drive while 34% (n=25) of the respondents said lack of

bargaining skills. Accordingly, 64% of the health workers noted that the key challenge associated with trade union activities is membership drive.

The benefits of working with a trade union

Table-13: Period of being with Trade Union Congress

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Over five years	35	50
Three years	30	43
Four years	5	7
Total	70	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Data, 2014

From Table-13, 50% (n=35) of the respondents said they have been with the Trade Union Congress for over five years while 43% (n=30) of the

respondents said three years. The remaining 7% (n=7) said four years.

Table-14: Reason for Joining the Trade Union Congress

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Protection of workers’ rights	15	21
To make ones’ voice heard	20	29
Collective bargaining	35	50
Total	70	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Data, 2014

From Table-14, 50% (n=35) of the respondents said they joined the Trade Union Congress for the purpose of collective bargaining while 29% (n=20) said

to make ones’ voice heard. The remaining 21% (n=15) said protection of workers’ rights.

Table-15: Comfort ability with the health workers union

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	70	100
Total	70	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Data, 2014

From table 15, all the respondents representing 100% disclosed that they are conformability with the health workers union.

The effects of Trade Unions on Workers Performance

Table-9: Effect of trade unions on workers performance

Response	Response	Frequency
Help worker get their demands	45	64
Serve as collective voice for workers	5	7
Increase productivity	20	29
Total	70	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Data, 2014

From table-9, 64% (n=45) of the respondents said one major effect of trade union helps workers to get their demands while 29% (n=20) said trade union

increase productivity. The remaining 7% (n=5) said trade union serves as collective voice for workers.

Table-10: Negative impact of trade union on workers performance

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Industrial action	70	70
Total	70	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Data, 2014

From table-10, all the 70 respondents used in this study representing 100% said one negative effect of trade union on workers performance is continues strike action.

All the respondents responded “Yes” indicating that all the health workers who took part in the study are partakers of trade union activities (Table-11).

Table-11: Involvement of Workers in trade union activities

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	70	100
Total	70	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Data, 2014

Table-12: Rate of Involvement in Trade Unions’ Activities

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	50	71
Sometimes	20	29
Total	70	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Data, 2014

From table-12, 71% (n=50) of the respondents said they always involve themselves in trade unions’ activities while 29% (n=20) said they do involve themselves in trade unions’ activities sometimes.

principle is cooperation as opposed to competition. The third is solidarity as opposed to survival of the fittest. The fourth principle underlying collective bargaining is economic and social justice and fairness or equity.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

With reference to the field data, majority (72%) of the health workers concur the most dominant strategy normally use by trade unions are organization, collective bargaining, collective action and alliance building. Supportively, Budd *et al.*, [12] argued that collective bargaining is at the heart of trade unionism and industrial relations, generally. Collective bargaining rests on four fundamental principles. First is the principle of collectivism as opposed to individualism that together there can be purposeful achievement. This means that the numerous workplace problems facing workers can be best resolved by trade unions. The second

Inferring to the data from the field data 57% of the respondents were of the view that that the core mandate of trade union is to promote the right and socio-economic interest of workers, to Rutherford [11] trade unions in both developed and developing world re bent on protecting the labour rights of their members. Through collective bargaining they always see to it that the labour rights of their members are not trampled upon by their employers. Out of the data gathered from the field the respondents (100%) made it known that trade union is an effective tool to handle workers workplace problems. Supporting the respondents’ view, Renaud stressed that the contribution of workers well-

being through trade unions cannot be underestimated at all [38]. Over the years the activities of employees have been secured base on the effective operations of trade unions. Even though trade unions have numerous challenges they still manage to handle and manage well the plight of their members.

Accordingly, 64% of the health workers noted that the key challenge associated with trade union activities is membership drive. Contrary to the field data, Baker posited that poor bargaining power is the leading drawback surrounding the operations of trade unions [14]. Due to the poor bargaining power leaders of trade unions, especially those in Africa do find it difficult to achieve the expected results for their mass followers. In most cases ineffective bargaining power force members of trade unions to kowtow to dictatorial policies and bias decisions by head of states and governments. Until trade unions get collective bargaining power to press home their demands they will always wonder and be compelled to abandon their genuine operating objectives.

Out of the findings 64% of the health workers said trade unions help workers to get their demands. Sharing the concerns of the respondents, Gunderson posited that in addition to the more well-known rent seeking behaviour of unions, they may have a positive effect on performance by giving voice to worker concerns, improving management/labour communication and increasing morale [18]. The respondents (100%) bemoaned that continuous strike action affects productivity. This tally with a study conducted by Gunderson that the activities of trade unions decrease turnover [18]. Subsequent work has suggested that this effect might be even larger in the public sector due to the increased loyalty and decreased exit propensity of public employees. On the contrary, Ash and Seago argue that larger number of studies have failed to find any relationship between public employee unions and organizational performance [19]. Unionization has no direct impact on the outcomes produced by public agencies. It is important to note, however, that when coupled with the increased expenditures associated with unionization null performance gains for public organizations are often treated as negative productivity outcomes by scholars.

The study helped established that the health workers are interested in trade unions' activities and do take part. Ash and Seago asserted that with the unhealthy development at workplace from poor remuneration up to poor condition of services workers do take interest to involve themselves in the activities of trade unions [19]. This is not necessary whether it is active involvement or partial involvement because virtually almost a sizeable number of employees are members of Trade Union Congress (TUC).

The 71% response from the respondents that

they do take active part in the activities of the health workers union confirms their willingness to work and avail themselves for the union considering the positive impact it would make in their lives. Analytically, the health workers explained that they have been with the Trade Union Congress for over five years, three years and four years respectively however, majority (50%) of them said they been members of the union for over five years now. The health workers said they joined the Trade Union Congress in order for it to protect their rights as workers, protect their labour needs and for the purpose of collective bargaining. Meanwhile, majority said for the purpose of collective bargaining. The result is consistent with a study by Moe that the purposeful operation of Trade Union is to bargain on behalf of workers, particularly members of the association [4]. Knowing the vociferous power of TUC most workers have their hopes and strength in it all because they know their needs and rights can be protected through it. At the same time their voices may be heard indirectly through their executive leaders.

The unanimous (100%) of the respondents showed that they will continue to pledge their solidarity for the health workers union and abide by all the ethics associated with it. In contrast Agranoff posited that quite a number of members belonging to trade unions have expressed resentment against their leaders for continuously using industrial strike action as the common way of pressing home their demands [24]. Some of the members would have wished for their leaders to result to regular dialogue with policy makers instead of strike action.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study investigated the impact of union activities on the performance of employees. There is a general perception that union activities have effects on the operations of workers. This called for this study. Health workers at the Bawku Presbyterian Hospital constituted population of the study. The sample size was 70. Simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the staff for the study. The instrument used for this study was questionnaires.

The main strategy used by trade union is collective bargaining, collective action and alliance building. It was revealed that the core mandate of trade union is to promote and protect the right and socio-economic interest of workers. The health workers said workers do rely on trade unions to press home their demands. The health workers noted that the key challenge associated with trade union activities is membership drive. It became clear that, the major problem of trade union is how to help workers to get their demands. Meanwhile, the activities of trade unions have negative effect on production. The health workers made it known that they always involve themselves in trade unions' activities. People have various reasons for joining Trade Union. However this study revealed

for the purpose of collective bargaining, the protection of workers' and protection of workers' rights were the main reasons that compel workers to join Trade Unions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings the following recommendations were made. Considering the fact that industrial action has serious effect on productivity it will be on a safer direction if policy makers put in place contingency measures, proactive enough to manage workers claim before they degenerate into serious issues.

It would also be good for members of the health workers union to stick to the bargaining principles as a key operating tenet. This is due to the fact that the aftermath effect of strike action by health workers cannot be underestimated at all.

Also, authorities should find effective way to dialogue with executives of health workers union to arrive at a mutual consensus on issues of urgent concern in order not for members of the association led by their executive members result to strike action as alternative way to press home their demands.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study corroborated that of other researches that the best strategy used by unions is organising, which is the greatest tool for bringing them together.

Union activities have effect on workers performance at the workplace. This implies that it sounds appropriate for employers to put in place enough structures. Through that,

Industrial Action will be reduced. Base on concrete satisfactory measures, it will be very difficult for workers to embark on strike action.

However, if authorities continue to look down upon the genuine demand of workers they will continue to rely on trade unions to press home their demand, as it's become the major benefits that unions enjoy he study had made it clear that the activities of trade union most especially the industrial strike action do have effect on productivity, therefore it will be necessary for employers not to flout over the needs of employees. Under no circumstance will workers embark on any kind of strike when all their needs are responded to without any discrimination.

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