

## Trade Union Leadership Integrity and Collective Bargaining Effectiveness of Oil and Gas Trade Unions in Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT:** This study investigated the relationship between trade union leaders' integrity and collective bargaining effectiveness of oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through self-administered questionnaire. The population of the study was 2305 employees of 2 oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt. The sample size of 341 was determined using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. The study findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between trade union leaders' integrity and collective bargaining effectiveness of oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The result of the findings further revealed that integrity gave rise to enhanced conditions of service, employees' welfare and workplace harmony of oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt. The study recommends that trade union leaders of oil and gas companies should endeavour to display integrity in all ramifications of life so that they can be trusted to fight the course of the people they are representing.

**KEYWORDS:** *Trade Union Leaders' Integrity, Collective Bargaining Effectiveness Enhanced Conditions of Service, Employees' Welfare and Workplace Harmony*

### I. INTRODUCTION

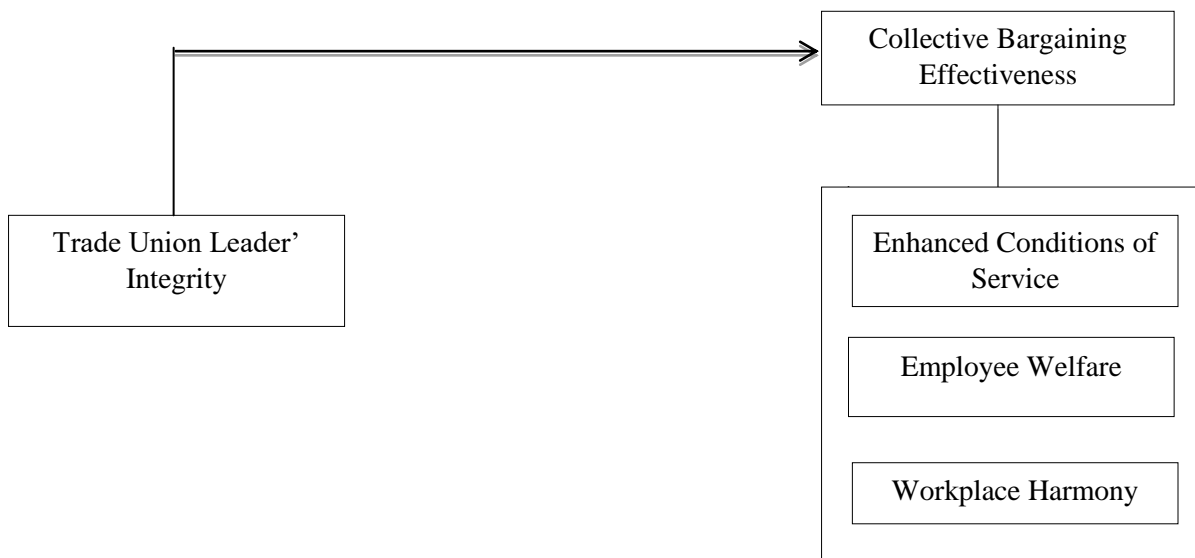
Leadership has been identified as a critical factor behind growth, strength and effectiveness of a trade union (Rao, 2008). However, there is no clear understanding regarding the character and quality of leadership available to these unions, while a great deal has been written on the trade union movement, hardly any attention is focused on trade union leadership profile and the extent to which it might affect workers. The rapid growth of industrial and commercial activities in Nigeria has led to an enormous increase in the industrial workforce with their attendant industrial relations challenges. More often than not, conflicts and disagreement occur between employers and employees in the workplace, thereby in a bid to resolve it they form unions in the workplace (Hannel, 2007). Labour unions and industrial unions plays a major role in the social interactions and partners of the employers in the actualization of their views, desires, projects and goals in a bid to protect, promote and improve the working conditions of workers in the organization (Alalade, 2009). Thus, union leaders are seen as agitators who encourage employees to be sensitive to their environment and to find fault. To some union members, "a great" union leader is one who finds it difficult to accept management viewpoint. Many union leaders have been elected because of these qualities - being vocal, uncompromising and belligerent. Jonnasen (2007) however opines that the effectiveness of bargaining power of trade union leadership is defined by the extent to which it promotes workers welfare and this largely draws from the leaders' integrity, charisma and trustworthiness. Crucially, trade union leaders see trustworthiness as a virtue which is inherent in a leader and the ability to exercise it effectively makes them to achieve goals. However, there has been a distinction between trust and trustworthiness among leaders because often, and wrongly, the two are used interchangeably (Greenwood & Buren, 2010). We posit that trustworthiness is a characteristic of the trustee, which is in turn informed by a set of expressed or implied values and previous behaviours (Ben-Ner & Halldorsson, 2010; Bews & Roussouw, 2002).

Leadership trustworthiness, competence, integrity and consistency communications shows a shared values concern and benevolence in the organization which affects the trust of the followers in the leader. It may not always-be the case (Colquitt, 2007), but normally for trust to emerge, the followers must make an assessment of the trustworthiness of their leader based on the accumulated knowledge of that leader. Further, Hodson (2004) suggested that trustworthiness is a set of behaviours on the part of the leader that support expectations on the part of the followers and are essentially a characteristic of the leaders concerned.

According to Katyal (2009), the promotion of employees' welfare is unarguably one of the roles of labour union leadership. Thus, the quality and adequacy of employees' welfare might be a function of union leadership, especially where workers are unionized. The poor condition of service prevailing in many business organizations might be traced among other things to the absence of affective union leadership, none actualization of union collective objectives and goals and management non-compliance to labour laws and regulation has been identified as some of the challenges facing the ineffective actualization of collective goals. Similarly, a survey conducted by Yakubu, Jonna and Alalade (2010) shows the dehumanization of employees in many organizations investigated because union leadership was of poor quality representation. This study therefore study examined the relationship between trade union leaders' integrity and collective bargaining effectiveness of oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt.

This study was also be guided by the following research question:

- i. What is the relationship between integrity of trade union leaders relate to enhanced conditions of service in oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt?
- ii. What is the relationship between integrity of trade union leaders relate to Employees' Welfare in oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt?
- iii. What is the relationship between integrity of trade union leaders relate to Workplace Harmony in oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt?



*Fig.1 Conceptual framework for the relationship between trade union leaders' integrity and collective bargaining effectiveness*

*Source: Author's Desk Research, 2019*

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Trade Union Leaders' Integrity

The definition of leader's integrity has been the subject of significant disagreement in both the philosophy and leadership literature (Grover & Moorman, 2007). Palanski & Yammarino (2007) suggested that integrity research suffers from confusion and disagreement about the term and that this disagreement has prevented both the development of theoretical models on cause and effect relationships of integrity and the development of empirical tests of those relationships. Palanski & Yammarino suggested further that the central point of disagreement is whether integrity describes more narrow conceptions of wholeness or consistency or whether integrity is better thought of more expansively to include references to authenticity, ethicality, morality, or character (Dunn, 2009).

The root of all integrity judgments is a sense of consistency or congruence between seemingly disparate elements. To have integrity means that things fit together in a coherent form. Reviews of integrity definitions, like (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007) and Dunn (2009) have found little disagreement on the importance of consistency; however, where things get more interesting is when discussions turn toward just what should be consistent to indicate integrity. For example, Palanski & Yammarino (2007) began their discussion of integrity definitions with the general but vague definition of integrity as - wholeness, reflecting its Latin root of integer. Integrity as wholeness may refer to something like the integrity of the hull of a ship, suggesting that the hull is watertight, or the integrity of a bridge, where the two ends are anchored and the span supported.

A more specific definition of leader integrity is the definition and operationalization of behavioral integrity developed by Simons (2002) and adopted, with some adjustment, by (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007). Simons (2002) defined behavioral integrity as the perceived pattern of alignment between a leader's words and deeds. Behavioral integrity refers to both a pattern of consistency between leaders' espoused values and their actions and also the extent to which promises are kept (Simons, Friedman, Liu & McLean, 2007). Palanski & Yammarino (2007) considered this to be a more restricted definition of integrity because it did not include consideration of the nature of the leader's actions beyond their consistency with the leader's words

### **Collective Bargaining Effectiveness**

The significance of collective bargaining as a means to develop sound industrial relations and cooperation cannot be overlooked. However, in practice, its role may differ on degree because of the nature of the economy, work, culture, bargaining strength of the partners and the various institutional as well as socio-economic factors Awujo (2012). The employer's association is fond of arbitrariness, inhumanity, inflexibility, authoritarianism and the like. All forms of discipline, however rigid is to maximize profit and minimize cost. This imperfection Found in every organization brings about conflicts and deviations between the employers and employees (Awujo, 2012). Collective bargaining can be described as the practice by which employers and employees in conference, from time to time agree upon the terms under which labour shall be performed. It could therefore be said to be a process of social interaction where each party uses various tactics to accomplish his goals to manipulate the other party in the desired direction. These tactics may include bluffing argumentation, concession, threats, strikes, etc.

Negotiation in modern times is quite different from what is used to be; it used to be full of threat and table-pounding, and involved a shouting competition among ill-prepared and uninformed people. Nowadays, people are more sophisticated and have at their disposal the services of top-flight lawyers, prominent economist, efficient accountants and professional negotiators. People recognize that one of the main advantage of the bargaining process is arrives at a contract that will help to promote labour relations in future. On the other hand, collective bargaining can be seen as a method of establishing wages, working conditions and other aspects of employment by means of negotiation between employers and the employees. It is assumed to be a mechanism for worker's participation in industries, extensions of the rights citizenship into the economic sphere and the resolution of conflict in industries (Ake, 2011). With the processes and function, collective bargaining is assumed to be a very effective mechanism for resolving conflicts in industries. However, evidences available shows that this has not always been the case. The observation is that in some cases, the crisis which lead to collective agreement in labour relation, between employees (union) and employer's representatives are not always successfully resolved. Instead of settlements arising during negotiation, dispute arises and at some other times, disagreements, deadlocks, walkouts and negligence of agreement reached would occur.

### **Measures of Collective Bargaining Effectiveness**

#### **Enhance Conditions of Service**

Unions achieve a wage differential over non-union workers, firms respond by increasing the capital intensity of production and employing better quality labour, both of which raise labour productivity. However, this route to higher productivity needs careful interpretation. It should come as no surprise that unions raise wages because this has always been one of the main goals of unions and a major reason that workers seek collective bargaining. How much union raise wages, for whom, and the consequences of unionization for workers, firms and the economy have been studied by economists and other researchers for over a century. Pierce (1999) used the new Bureau of Labour Statistics survey of employers and the National Compensation Survey to study wage determination and found a union wage premium of 17.4% in 1997. That study was based on observations of 145,054 non-Unions achieve a wage differential over non-union workers, firms respond by increasing the capital intensity of production and employing better quality labour, both of which raise labour productivity. However, this route to higher productivity needs careful interpretation. It should come as no surprise that unions raise wages because this has always been one of the main goals of unions and a major reason that workers seek collective bargaining. How much union raise wages, for whom, and the consequences of unionization for

workers, firms and the economy have been studied by economists and other researchers for over a century.

Pierce (1999) used the new Bureau of Labour Statistics survey of employers and the National Compensation Survey to study wage determination and found a union wage premium of 17.4% in 1997. That study was based on observations of 145,054 non-agricultural jobs from 17,246 different establishments, excluding the federal government. Kearney and Carnevale (2001) found that in the public sector, workers with collective bargaining rights earn 5-8% more than those without such rights. One well-established finding is that unionized low level employees earn more in the public sector than those in comparable positions in the private sector. Although unions can bargain for wage increases for their members, public sector wages are often limited by budgets and, particularly, by public opinion (Kearney & Carnevale, 2001). Good working environment, attractive salary package, participative management and regular promotion are the main factors influencing workers to exhibit high career commitment (Olatunji, 2004).

### **Employees' Welfare**

The Oxford dictionary (2001) defines employee welfare as efforts to make life worth living for workers". In the words of Rhopkins (2005) welfare is fundamentally an attitude of the mind on the part of management activities is undertaken. In industrial relations literature, the terms "labour welfare" and "employee welfare" are used interchangeably by scholars. Thus, in this study, the two terms are used in the same sense. Thompson (2002) avers that employee welfare implies the setting up of minimum desirable standards and the provision of facilities like health, food, clothing, housing, education and job security etc; such facilities enable the worker and his family to lead a good work like family and social life. Employee welfare also operates to naturalize the harmful effects of large scale industrializations and urbanizations.

As Elems (2007) asserts, welfare suggests the wellbeing, happiness, prosperity and the development of human resource. Labour in the work force means the adoption of measures to promote the physical, social, psychological and general well being of the employees. In the broader sense, Katyal (2008) contends that labour or employee welfare means providing social security and other activities as medical, canteen, recreation, housing, education, and arrangement for the transportation of the labour to and from the work place. As far as Katyal (2008) is concerned, the main aim of labour welfare is to provide welfare facilities and amenities as would enable the workers employed in industries (or) factories to perform their work in health and high moral. Wendy (2003) aptly defines welfare as "faring or doing well" He stated that after employees have been hired, trained and remunerated, they need to be retained and maintained to serve the organization better. Welfare facilities re designed to take care of the well being of the employees. They do not generally result in any monetary benefit to the employees. Nor are these facilities provided by employers alone. Governmental and non- governmental agencies and trade unions too, contribute towards employee welfare. The welfare facilities together contribute to better work (Mangbelo, 2006).

### **Workplace Harmony**

Workplace harmony refers to the peaceful and harmonious co-existence or harmonious working relationship between employees, employers and between employers and employees of an organization (Nwibere, 2005). The importance of workplace harmony to the success of organization cannot be overemphasized. The essence of workplace harmony is to ensure that members of the organization coexisted mutually in cognizance with the culture, values, norms and policies laid down by the organization towards the achievement of set objectives. The workplace is one of the most common places for conflicts. Considering the workplace situation, employees establish a kind of relationship among each other that keeps a diplomatic approach but usually does not go beyond personal level, though there are other relationships that develop into a deeper stage. Employees have to socialize with their co-workers because people in the workplace work collaboratively. Each individual and department does not have their own rules and goals. Everyone works and takes an effort to achieve a common goal for the benefit of the organization. Office departments are interrelated in their functions. Even the management and the employees need to work hand in hand when working on a big project, for example.

### **Relationship between Trade Union Leaders' Integrity and Collective Bargaining Effectiveness**

In trade unionism, unscrupulous union leaders have sold out their members and compromised their positions. Many have been accused of corruption, hence their inability to agitate for the promotion of worker's interest and welfare. Today, many trade union members have passed a vote of no confidence on their leaders as a result of integrity problems (Akanimo, 2006). Unions have played a prominent role in the enactment of a broad range of labour laws and regulations covering areas as diverse as overtime pay, minimum wage, the treatment of immigrant workers, health and retirement coverage, civil rights, unemployment insurance and workers' compensation, and leave for care of new borns and sick family members. Common to all of these rules is a desire to provide protections for workers, either by regulating the behaviour of employers or by giving workers

access to certain benefits in times of need (Davis, 1986; Amberg, 1998; Weil, 2003). Over the years, these rules have become mainstays of the American workplace experience, constituting expressions of cherished public values (Freeman & Medoff 1984; Gottesman 1991).

Unions try to obtain a higher wage for their members than would be offered in the absence of the union which, other things equal, results in workers taking a greater share of profits at the expense of the firm. This monopoly face of unions might lead to deteriorating management employee relations where it leads to management adopting anti-union strategies, intensifying conflict, while the union mobilization needed for the union to have monopoly power may lead to anti management views on the part of the workforce (Kelly, 1998). Pay bargaining may have similar effects in the public sector where wage demands must be satisfied, along with competing claims for resources, from fixed budgets set by university management and vice chancellors. On the other hand, union voice can lead to improved employment terms and conditions of work and job security through effective communication between management and employees and the resolution of employee grievances (Freeman & Medoff, 1984). In theory, then, union effects on employee terms and conditions and job security depend on the weight unions attach to their monopoly and voice roles. Indeed, this is the starting point for some who maintain the future of unions may lie in them placing greater emphasis on their voice role (Rubinstein, 2001; Wachter, 2003). However, the relationship between union activity and employment relations is mediated by a range of factors making union effects more contingent on institutional arrangements within and beyond the workplace.

Bargaining arrangements mediate the relationship between unions and perceptions of employment relations for various reasons. Fernie and Metcalf (1995) argue that 'the benefits from having a union representing the bulk of the labour force in a workplace flow from greater voice and representativeness and less fragmentation of workplace employee relations'. Gains may come through avoidance of inter-union rivalry in the bargaining process that can result in 'leapfrogging' claims, while single unionism has the added benefit of avoiding 'competitive militancy' between unions (Dobson, 1997). Analyzing employer perceptions of employment relations in the

From the foregoing arguments the study thus hypothesized that:

- Ho<sub>1</sub>** There is no significant relationship between trade union leaders' integrity enhanced conditions of service in oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>** There is no significant relationship between trade union leaders' integrity and employee welfare in oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt.
- Ho<sub>3</sub>** There is no significant relationship between trade union leaders' integrity and workplace harmony in oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through self-administered questionnaire. The population of the study was 2305 employees of 2 oil and gas trade union in Port Harcourt. The sample size of 341 was determined using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

### IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The tests of hypotheses were carried out at the level of significance 0.05 which was adopted as a criterion for the probability of accepting the null hypothesis in ( $p > 0.05$ ) or rejecting the null hypothesis in ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 1: Correlations Matrix Between Integrity and Collective Bargaining Effectiveness

			Integrity	Enhanced Condition of Service	Employee Welfare	Workplace Harmony
Spearman's rho	Integrity	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.521**	.679**	.558**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	275	275	275	275
	Enhanced Condition of Service	Correlation Coefficient	.521**	1.000	.680**	.580**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	275	275	275	275
	Employee Welfare	Correlation Coefficient	.679**	.680**	1.000	.839**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	275	275	275	275
	Workplace Harmony	Correlation Coefficient	.558**	.580**	.839**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	275	275	275	275

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source: Research Data 2019 and SPSS output version 23.0**

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** *There is no significant relationship between trade union leaders' integrity enhanced conditions of service in oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt.*

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between trade union leaders' integrity enhanced conditions of service. The *rho* value 0.521 indicates this relationship and it is significant at  $p < 0.000 < 0.05$ . The correlation coefficient indicates moderate correlation. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated was hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between trade union leaders' integrity enhanced conditions of service in oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** *There is no significant relationship between trade union leaders' integrity and employee welfare in oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt.*

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between trade union leaders' integrity and employee welfare. The *rho* value 0.679 indicates this relationship and it is significant at  $p < 0.000 < 0.05$ . The correlation coefficient indicates a strong correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated was hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between trade union leaders' integrity and employee welfare in oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** *There is no significant relationship between trade union leaders' integrity and workplace harmony in oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt.*

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between trade union leaders' integrity and workplace harmony. The *rho* value 0.558 indicates this relationship and it is significant at  $p < 0.000 < 0.05$ . The correlation coefficient indicates a moderate correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between trade union leaders' integrity and workplace harmony in oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt.

## V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study examined the relationship between trade union leaders' integrity and collective bargaining effectiveness of oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt. The study findings revealed a significant relationship between trade union leaders' integrity and collective bargaining effectiveness of oil and gas trade unions in Port Harcourt. This finding is in line with the views of Palanski & Yammarino suggested further that the central point of disagreement is whether integrity describes more narrow conceptions of wholeness or consistency or whether integrity is better thought of more expansively to include references to authenticity, ethicality, morality, or character (Dunn, 2009). The root of all integrity judgments is a sense of consistency or congruence between seemingly disparate elements. To have integrity means that things fit together in a coherent form. Reviews of integrity definitions, like (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007) and Dunn (2009) have found little disagreement on the importance of consistency; however, where things get more interesting is when discussions turn toward just what should be consistent to indicate integrity.

## VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Because effective leadership is at the core of successful businesses, the understanding of what makes a successful leader is an issue that has been debated for decades. Leadership has become even more important due to the noticeable decline of enduring successful leaders in the business world today. The study concludes that trade union leadership significantly enhanced conditions, employee welfare and workplace harmony of oil and gas companies in Port Harcourt.

The study thus recommends that the trade union leaders of these oil and gas companies should endeavor to display integrity in all ramification of life so that he or she can be trusted to fight the course of the people they are representing.

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