

Impact of Unionisation and Non-Unionisation of Workers on Organisational Efficiency in Work Organisations in Southwestern Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of unionisation and non-unionisation of workers on the efficiency of workplaces in Southwestern Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design method was adopted for the study. Two hundred and ten (210) respondents from seven different organisations were selected using the 1978 World Health Organisations (WHO) 30 by 70 cluster survey technique. Questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. The questionnaire was titled: Impact of Unionisation and Non-unionisation of Workers on Organisational Efficiency Scale (IUNWOES). Collected data were analysed, summarised, and interpreted accordingly with the aid of descriptive statistical techniques such as total score and simple percentage. Analysis of variance, linear regression and t-test statistical methods were used to test all the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha levels. Findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between organisational efficiency and non-unionisation in both public and private sectors. There was no significant relationship between organisational efficiency and unionisation in public and private sectors. Organisational efficiency was less significantly linked to workers' unionisation. The finding also showed that workers performed their tasks not because they were union members but because of their interests in their jobs and other factors like leadership style and reward systems. As a result of these findings, it is recommended that appropriate leadership styles should be used at all times and that workers should be beautifully rewarded to spur them to perform optimally for overall organisational efficiency. Howbeit, where the national labour policy allows unionisation, workers should be allowed to join unions. In organisations where unionisation is prohibited, workers should be well treated to enhance their welfare and promote organisational efficiency.

Key words: *unionisation, non-unionisation, organisational efficiency, productivity*

JEL Classification: *J41, J53*

Introduction

There have been many labour strikes in Nigeria recently all of which border on poor conditions of service and unfair labour practices. Some of the grievances include inadequate provision of equipments to work with, wage increases generally and upward review of salaries for some professionals.

These incessant strikes affect the employees, employers, consumers and the organisations. The managers and the labour have different aims in going into employment relations. For instance,

the employers want to maximize profit and continue in business, these can only be achieved if the organisation is efficient in its service delivery and production of goods and services to consumers. Whereas the labour wants the interest of the workers protected. (Dessler, 2008; Cole, 2005; Rose, 2001; Fasoyin, 1999; Webb and Webb, 1920).

Ash and Seago (2004) find out that heart attack recovery rates are higher in hospitals where nurses are unionised compared to hospitals where nurses are not unionised. Freeman and Medoff (1984) find out in their study that about one-fifth of union productivity effect stem from lower worker turnover. This seems to explain that unions ensure job stability. In unionised establishment, workers are more likely to be trained on the job or off the job to enhance their productivity and organisational efficiency (Frazis, Herz and Horrigan, 1999).

Freeman and Kleiner (1999) state that unionism has a statistically insignificant effect on firm solvency, that unions on an average do not drive firms or business lines out of business or produce high displacement rates for unionised workers. Bernhardt, Dresser and Rogers (2002) citing the example of Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership explain that unions also play a positive role in economic development. They state that members of the WRTP have stabilised manufacturing employment and contribute about 6,000 additional industrial jobs in the last five years then; that among member firms, productivity is very high compared to the productivity growth of non-union members firms.

Despite the plethora of studies on the effect of unionization and non-unionisation on organizational efficiency in the last few decades, there is no widely accepted causal relationship between unionization and non-unionisation and organizational efficiency. The empirical evidence emerging from various studies has so far yielded mixed results that are inconclusive and contradictory.

Because of these contradictory results, the question of whether unionisation and non-unionisation improves or worsens organisational efficiency is still worthy of further research such as the one being undertaken in this study. In addition, despite the existence of these studies, very little attention has been given to developing countries. This means that the effect of unionisation and non-unionisation on organisational efficiency in developing countries has not received adequate research attention especially in Nigeria. Thus, there is a major gap in the relevant literature on Nigeria, which has to be covered by research. This research attempts to fill this gap by studying the situation of the Nigerian organisations. Thus, it is against this backdrop that this study investigates the impact of unionisation and non-unionisation of workers on organisational efficiency in South-western Nigeria. The essence of this was to ascertain the relevance of unionisation and non-unionisation of workers to organisational efficiency in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Many consumers of goods and services in the country complain of inefficiency of various organisations so much that the Federal Government instituted the Consumer Protection Council (CPC) and Servi-com to ensure that people are served appropriately and have value for their money.

In many public and some organised private sectors, new entrants are scarcely admitted hence the hue and cry of lack of employment for university graduates in the country. There are some privately owned organisations that do not allow unionisation and their employees do not go on strike yet they are in business in spite of the economic downturn in the nation and even globally. However, Trebilock (1994), states that trade unions have influenced development in the world of work at the regional and international levels. Yet, some scholars explain that trade unions have suffered membership losses in some developed countries like the US and Europe (Dessler,

2008; Cole, 2005; Rose, 2001). Trade unions could be over bearing and aid low productivity with incessant strikes and miss-use of members' loyalty to the union to hamper productivity.

The protective fatherly status that is assumed by labour unions seems too towering to anyone not within a work organisation and this could make such outsider imagine that union members could be sacred cows in workplaces and therefore become carefree about their jobs to the detriment of effective job performance in the organisation and inefficiency of such organisations (Fitzgerald, 2001). Batstone (1986) opines that trade unions appear to increase productivity in the unionised sectors and this could be by increasing employees to substitute capital for labour, he explains that the consequent distortion of the general wage structure would adversely affect the overall performance since it leads to sub-optimal allocation of resources between unionised non-unionised sectors. Shaiken (2004) explains that unions are associated with higher productivity, lower employee turnover, improved workplace communication and a better trained workforce. With all these, one could easily assume that efficiency will be optimal in organisations

Hirsch and Bonn (2010, 2011), comparing unionised and nonunionised workplace governance opine that in non-union workplace, there is substantial managerial discretion which is constrained by market forces and law; that union governance is formal, deliberate and often sluggish. Unionised companies often fare poorly in dynamic and highly competitive economic settings. They explain that there is poorer economic performance among union than non-union establishments and firms. Steelman (2002) says the goal of 'doing good' is typically a more important objective in government than profit. Therefore, measuring 'successful' performance in government is usually different from using profit measure that is often critical to private business *p3*.

Organisational efficiency is determined by various factors but the main determinant of organisational efficiency is the human resource. The job performance of the personnel determines the efficiency of the organisation. Efficiency itself is the capacity of human resource to turn out output with minimal wastage for the overall performance of the organisation. Rose and Woolley (1992) opine that high levels of unionisation encourage productivity. Rose (2001) explains that discouraging union involvement and representation is inappropriate as this would not hinder the organisation's positive performance and that non-unionised labour market is not supportive of improved organisational competitiveness

Dauda (2010) states that union may be recognised and also be used by management to stimulate creativity and innovation among its members. This no doubt might enhance better performance of the organisation. He also makes reference to the empirical research of Sienghtal and Beckter of (2001) which finds out that unionised workplace promote integration and cooperation between workers and management for enhancement of better productivity.

Rose (2001) states that non-union phenomenon has always been with us (in industrial relations) even at the heights of unionisation where almost half of the work-force was nonunionised. Larger non-union companies have well-developed strategies designed to avoid union recognition; employees are provided with superior working environments and better pay than their unionised counterpart.

Smaller organisations are not likely to have unionised workers more so, most of these small organisations are privately owned. In this kind of situation, the employees may not think it necessary to join unions and they are likely to be very efficient and productive which will lead to the satisfaction of their customers. It is noteworthy that the public sector in Nigeria is heavily unionised with the exception of such organisations as the Police Force, the Customs, the Army the Federal Road Safety Corps and other arms carrying organisations.

Guest and Hoques (1994) give four non-union types of establishment two of which are relevant to this study. The *good*, which is type one, is of the establishment that has a clear HRM strategy

which encourages and aids high level of employee involvement and commitment. Type two is referred to as the *ugly* face of non- unionism and it is the efficiency driven model. In this model, workers could be deprived of their traditional rights where they might not even have a voice. This seems that the efficiency here is gotten out of not allowing workers to have their right, the carrot and stick method of some sort.

Whereas, trade union membership enjoy tremendous increase in some other countries to the extent that countries where trade unions were non-existent or inactive in the past now have trade unions though in some cases, they are under serious restrictions, such countries include Korea, The Philippines and some other countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Trebillock, 1994). She explains that there are some counterweighing tendencies towards the *de-collectivisation* which is also called *atomisation* of labour relations which is the bedfellow of increased economic globalisation and ideological individualism.

Locke (1990) explains that local unions in Italy enjoy great autonomy in the areas of working time, bonuses and profit sharing, new technologies and wages; a form of management/ leadership style; all these are with local agreements which precede national ones. In this wise therefore, unions are able to participate in and influence managerial decision making. One therefore, could induce that these will enhance organisational efficiency in that region. Also in United Kingdom, Northern Europe and Japan, union members participate in joint management union decision making (Slomp, 1999; Hiwatari, 1993; Perline and Poynter, 1991).

It will be a blanket statement to state that unions only negatively impact organisations based on the general view and belief of employers about unions. For instance, professionalising the staff and systematising company practices could improve performance of the employees and by extension, of the organisation. For example, Ash and Seago (2004) find out that heart attack mortality among patients in hospitals with unionised registered nurses are 5% to 9% lower than in non-unionised hospitals.

According to Hiwatari (1993), enterprise unionism is almost exclusively devoted to productivity growth, it has been fully involved with lifetime welfare provisions for union members; at the same time becoming integrative and cooperative in their various workplaces. There is also a management inspired form of worker integration and participation in Japan that is tagged *Toyotism*.

Rose (2001), referring to Flood and Toner (1977) research, explains that the duo find out that unions promote adversarial climate and cause strikes and stoppages. Recently, union members in the public sectors complained openly about perceived connivance of union executives with management to short-change the union members. By and large, with these beliefs of the workers, effectiveness, productivity and commitment will suffer in workplaces and organisations will not perform maximally.

Many workers whose opinions were sampled seemed not to see the positive impacts of unions on their work life, but rather the style of the leaders in their units and the reward they get in the workplace. One now wonders if unionisation or non-unionisation really has effect on the efficiency of the organisation in the contemporary competitive market. In non-unionised organisations, workers are mainly at the mercy of management. Since collective bargaining seems not to be part of employment relations in most privately owned organisations, workers do not have such a document of agreement to refer to in the event of unfair labour practice, except in organised private sectors. In some instances, university graduates who work 10 to 12 hours a day are poorly and irregularly paid, where many workers are owed 6 to 10 months salary. Probably because white collar job is scarce, these ones still go to work and though looking impoverished still put in their best, it seems a case of unitary system in practice in most of these places with no paternalistic side.

In the evidence given to the Royal Commission on Trade Union and Employers' Association (the Donovan Commission) in 1965, the TUC stated its aims and objectives which included these: to achieve full employment and national prosperity; to improve public and social services. What is observable now is that the density of unions is decreasing to a great extent, which then puts a question mark on the objectives of union for the state and the employees. According to Rose (2001), TUC as an umbrella body for other unions is losing its affiliates in Britain, the 108 affiliates of 1981 have reduced to 73 in 1998; the reason for this is not only a factor of structural change in economy and increase in unemployment but rather the conscious intent of key industrial relation actors, the state and the employers who exclude trade unions from control of employment relations. Rose (2001) states that large non-union firms are characterised among many other points as profitable or highly profitable and commercially successful in expanding product markets; *justifying their non-union status by substituting alternative forms of employee representation, providing higher rates of pay and better conditions of work than unionised organisation* (p.438).

Considering all the pros and cons of unionisation and non-unionisation in workplaces, it is ideal to investigate the impact of the two on the efficiency of organisation.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design to investigate the impact of unionisation and non-unionisation of workers on organisational efficiency in work organisations in South-western Nigeria.

Two hundred and ten workers from seven work organisations in Southwest were selected as participants using the 1978 World Health Organisation's (WHO) '30 by 70 cluster' survey technique (also known as the modified two-stage sample). Thirty participants were randomly selected from seven organisations in the Southwest which summed up to 210 participants. For the purpose of anonymity, the participants would not want their organisations mentioned in this study.

To ensure that workers are not new hands in the organisations, purposive sampling method was used to select workers who have been working in the organisations for upwards of three years and above. The respondents were made up of 102 females (48.57%) and 108 males (51.42%) workers. The age range of the respondents was between 20 to 65 years.

A set of self-developed questionnaire titled 'Impact of Unionisation and Non-unionisation of Workers on Organisational Efficiency Scale' (IUNWOES) was the main instrument used for data collection. It consisted of three sections. Section A elicited demographic information of the respondents (management staff and the employees). Section B elicited information from management staff on the impact of unionisation and non-unionisation of workers on organisational efficiency. Section C elicited information from the employees on the impact of unionisation and non-unionisation of workers on organisational efficiency.

The 'IUNWOES' has a co-efficient reliability of ($\alpha = 0.82$) using the cronbach alpha method. In all the organisations used for the study, the researcher consulted the personnel managers who were very cooperative and helped greatly. The researcher and her assistants were present in all these places to ensure that the respondents fill the questionnaire properly and returned the entire filled questionnaire.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section deals with the presentation and analysis of data collected from the respondents through the research instrument. All the items in the questionnaire were analysed.

The first data to be presented and analysed is based on the respondents' age.

Table 1. Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-29 years	19	9.0
30-39 years	42	20.0
40-49 years	75	35.7
50-59 years	58	27.6
60-65 years	16	7.6
Total	210	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2011

In Table 1 above, 19(9.0%) of the respondents are within the age range of 20-29 years, 42(20.0%) are within the age range of 30-39 years, 75(35.7%) are within the age range of 40-49 years, 58(27.6%) are within the age range of 50-59 years while the remaining 16(7.6%) of the respondents are within the age range of 60-65 years respectively. What can be deduced from this table is that all our respondents fell in all the age brackets of between 20-65 years. Even though 75(35.7%) were in age range of 40-49 years, the majority of them have many years of working experience in either unionised or nonunionised organisations.

The next data presented deals with the marital status of the respondents.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	165	78.6
Married	43	20.5
Separated	2	1.0
Total	210	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2011

Table 2 shows that 165(78.6%) of respondents are single, 43(20.5%) were married while the remaining 2(1.0%) were separated. The inference to be drawn from the above table is that the overwhelming majority of the respondents is single.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Teaching	54	25.7
Accounting	31	14.8
Clerical work	36	17.1
Broadcasting	7	3.3
Secretary	26	12.4
Others	56	26.7
Total	210	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2011

Table 3 reveals that 54(25.7%) of the respondents were Teacher, 31(14.8%) were Accountants, 36(17.1%) were into Clerical works, 7(3.3%) were Broadcasters, 26(12.4%) were Secretary while 56(26.7%) engage in other occupations which were not disclosed in the study. This means that our respondents were engaged in different types of vocations and that our study covers a number of different organisations where unionised and nonunionised workers can be found.

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents by Educational Level

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage
Tertiary	157	74.8
Secondary	9	4.3
Technical	25	11.9
Others	19	9.0
Total	210	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2011

Table 4 shows that 157(74.8%) of the respondents had Tertiary education, 9(4.3%) had Secondary school education, 25(11.9%) had Technical education while the remaining 19(9.0%) had other types of education apart from those mentioned above which may be professional qualifications such as ACA, CIPMN, and CIS among others. From the above, we can infer that all our respondents are well educated and that the overwhelming majority 157(74.8%) of them have tertiary education.

The next question deals with the type of organisation our respondents are working with.

Table 5. Distribution of Respondents by Type of Organisation

Organisation Type	Frequency	Percentage
Private sector	79	37.6
Public sector	131	62.6
Total	210	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2011

In table 5, 79(37.6%) of the respondents were from the Private sector organisations while 131(62.6%) were from the Public sector organisations. Based on the above data, we can infer that the overwhelming majority of the respondents is working in public sector organisations.

Table 6. Distribution of Respondents by Organisation Types of Workers

Types of Workers	Frequency	Percentage
Unionised workers	156	74.3
Non-unionised workers	54	25.7
Total	210	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2011

Table 6 shows that 156(74.3%) of the respondents were working in unionised organisations while the remaining 54(25.7%) were working in non-unionised organisations. Thus, we can conclude that majority of our respondents are unionised workers.

Table 7. Distribution of Respondents by Size of Firm

Size of Firm	Frequency	Percentage
30-50 workers	65	31.0
50-70 workers	21	10.0
70-90 workers	4	1.9
100 & above workers	120	57.1
Total	210	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2011

Table 7 shows that 65(31.0%) of the respondents were from a firms with 30-50 workers, 21(10.0%) were from firms with 50-70 workers, 4(1.9%) were from firms with 70-90 workers while the remaining 120(57.1%) respondents came from firm having more than 100 workers. Thus, we can infer that majority of our respondents are working in firms with great number of people.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Ho: There is no significant difference in the organisations' effectiveness between unionised and non-unionised workers (by the management staff).

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics of Unionised and Non-unionised by Management Staff

Efficiency of the organisation	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t.	DF	P
Unionised	153	20.8105	1.4945	1.96	6.782	208	.000
Non-unionised	57	22.6316	2.2491				

Source: Author's Computation, 2011

Decision Rule: The decision rule here is to reject H_0 if t-calculated is greater than t-tabulated (i. e. $t_{cal} > t_{tab}$). Therefore, the above table depicts the t-calculated to be 6.782 while the t-tabulated is 1.96. Thus, the t-calculated is greater than the t-tabulated.

This shows that there was significant in the organisations' effectiveness between unionised and non-unionised workers (Crit-t = 1.96, Cal.t = 6.782, df = 208, $P < .05$ level of significance). The null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2

Ho: There is no significant difference between the organisations' effectiveness between unionised and non-unionised workers (by non-management staff).

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics of Unionised and Non-unionised by non-Management Staff

Perception of the Effectiveness of the organisation	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t.	DF	P
Unionised	153	50.3464	3.8871	1.96	4.403	208	.000
Non-unionised	57	46.5088	8.7262				

Source: Author's Computation, 2011

Decision Rule: The decision rule here is to reject H_0 if t-calculated is greater than t-tabulated (i. e. $t_{cal} > t_{tab}$). Therefore, the above table depicts the t-calculated to be 4.403 while the t-tabulated is 1.96. Thus, the t-calculated is greater than the t-tabulated.

This shows that there was significant difference in the perception of the organisations' effectiveness (by the non-management staff) between unionised and non-unionised workers (Crit-t = 1.96, Cal.t = 4.403, df = 208, $P < .05$ level of significance). The null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 3

Ho: There will be no significant difference in organisations' effectiveness between unionised and non-unionised workers (by both management and non- management employees)

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics of Unionised and Non-unionised Workers by both Management and Non-management Staff

Perception of the Effectiveness of the organisation	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t.	DF	P
Unionised	153	71.1569	3.8834	1.96	2.271	208	.024
Non-unionised	57	69.1404	8.9830				

Source: Author's Computation, 2011

Decision Rule: The decision rule here is to reject H_0 if t -calculated is greater than t -tabulated (i. e. $t\text{-cal} > t\text{-tab}$). Therefore, the above table depicts the t -calculated to be 2.271 while the t -tabulated is 1.96. Thus, the t -calculated is greater than the t -tabulated.

This shows that there was significant difference in organisations' effectiveness (by both management and non-management employees) between unionised and non-unionised workers (Crit- $t = 1.96$, Cal. $t = 2.271$, $df = 208$, $P < .05$ level of significance). The null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one predicted that there was no significant relationship between unionisation and organisational efficiency. The findings revealed that unionisation does not significantly influence organisational efficiency. The finding shows that leadership style and reward system are predictors of organisational efficiency. This is in line with the findings of Steellman, 2002, who submitted that organisational efficiency is a function of many factors like leadership style, better working conditions, greater worker autonomy, security, dignity, improved administration, better training and greater levels of professionalism.

Brown and Medoff (1978) find out that unionised establishments are about 22% more productive than those not unionised. Survey of 73 independent studies on unions and productivity reveal that positive and statistically significant relationships exist between unions and productivity in the United States, manufacturing sector having 10% and 7% for education sector (Doucolagos and Laroche, 2004).

It is expressed that union members earn 30% more than non-union members that union raise productivity by 19% to 24% (www.americanrightatwork.org). Ash and Seago (2001) find out that hospitals with unionised nurses (RN) workforce have 5.5% lower AMI (acute myocardial infarction) mortality than do non-union hospitals (-0.8% point/14.6% average AMI mortality.)

Union effects on performance are typically measured by outcome differences between union and non-union firm and sectors (Hirsch, 2011). He says that unionised companies have had lower profits and growth than similar non-union companies; that poor performance in union establishments and firms should lead to a shift of production and employment out of union sector and into non-union sector.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study established that unionisation does not determine organisation efficiency, that non-unionised workers in any establishment could aid organisation efficiency. Based on the finding of this study, it is recommended that participatory management style and excellent reward system should be adopted so as to have the workers perform optimally for the overall efficiency of the organisation whether the workers are unionised or non-unionised. Workers should be given excellent work environment and condition for their well-being and efficiency of the organisation and satisfaction of the customers and consumers of their goods and services.

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Impactul sindicalizării și non-sindicalizării muncitorilor asupra eficienței organizaționale în organizațiile lucrativă din sud-vestul Nigeriei

Acest studiu supune investigării influența sindicalizării și a non-sindicalizării muncitorilor asupra eficienței locurilor de muncă din sud-vestul Nigeriei. În vederea realizării acestui studiu s-a utilizat o metodă de cercetare descriptivă de tip anchetă. Au fost selectați 210 respondenți din șapte organizații diferite, folosindu-se tehnica eșantionării pe etape sau tehnica „30-70” a Organizației Mondiale a Sănătății, 1978. Chestionarul a fost utilizat ca instrument de colectare a datelor. Chestionarul a fost intitulat: Impactul Sindicalizării și Non-sindicalizării Muncitorilor asupra Eficienței Organizaționale (IUNWOES). Datele colectate au fost analizate, rezumate și interpretate adecvat cu ajutorul tehnicilor statistice descriptive precum scorul total și procentajul simplu. Analiza variației, regresia lineară și a t-testul au fost utilizate pentru a testa toate ipotezele la nivelurile 0.05 alfa. Rezultatele indică faptul că există o relație semnificativă între eficiența organizațională și sindicalizarea în sectorul public, dar și privat. Eficiența organizațională a fost într-o relație mai puțin semnificativă cu sindicalizarea muncitorilor. Rezultatul a indicat de asemenea faptul că muncitorii își îndeplinesc sarcinile nu fiindcă sunt membri de sindicat, ci datorită intereselor lor de serviciu și a altor factori, precum stilul de conducere și sistemele de recompensare. Prin urmare, se recomandă utilizarea unor stiluri adecvate de conducere și recompensarea muncitorilor pentru a-i stimula să lucreze optim în vederea eficienței de ansamblu a organizației. Cu toate acestea, acolo unde politica națională a forței de muncă permite sindicalizarea, muncitorilor ar trebui să li se permită organizarea în sindicate. În organizațiile în care sindicalizarea este interzisă, muncitorii ar trebui să fie tratați bine pentru a spori bunăstarea lor și a promova eficiența organizațională.