

Causes and Management of Industrial Disputes between University Management and the Junior Staff at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana

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Abstract

The study examined the causes and management of industrial disputes between University management and the junior staff represented by the Teachers and Educational Workers Union (TEWU) at the University of Cape Coast. The study which was descriptive employed 337 respondents. Two sets of questionnaire were used to gather data for the study. The study showed that issues concerning wages and salaries are the leading factors that account for disputes between the union and management in the University of Cape Coast. However, according to the study, such issues are mostly resolved amicably through negotiation without external intervention. The study further revealed that majority of the junior staff did not have knowledge about the conditions of service which is supposed to be their reference material when they want issues to be addressed. Based on the findings from the study, it is recommended that issues concerning salaries and wages and other economic benefits to staff be addressed by management promptly to prevent the occurrence of industrial unrest. Management and the TEWU executives should periodically update the junior staff on policies, rules, regulations and the conditions of service.

Key words: Labour, Junior Staff, University Management

Introduction

Conflicts that occur within the employment relationship are usually referred to as industrial disputes. As described by Hollinshead, Nicholls and Tailby (1999), they are considered as an inherent part of the employment relationship as it is in every social structure. Fajana (2000) citing Kornhauser, Dubin and Ross, indicates that industrial disputes arise out of the total range of behaviour and attitudes that express opposition and different orientations between individual owners or management, on the one hand, and their employees or their associations on the other. From the pluralist point of view, such disagreements may be seen as a means of expressing opposing interests and therefore emerge as a necessary element in maintaining the stability of the institution but to the unitary perspective, it may appear as unconventional. While the dominant group in the social structure may perceive it as a threat to the established order which must be controlled or even suppressed, those who seek to challenge the status quo may regard it as a necessary part of the process of developing a new order.

Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act, 1992 (TULRCA) (as cited in Cole, 2002), also states that for a dispute to be called a trade dispute, the dispute must be between workers and their own employer and the dispute must be wholly or mainly about matters directly affecting their terms and conditions of employment. Cole adds that the legal definition of industrial dispute is very important to trade unions because the law provides protection against civil action for those organising strike action or other forms of industrial action on

behalf of a trade union. If immunity was not provided, the leaders concerned would be liable to civil action for inducing employees to break their contracts of employment.

The potential for dispute in every social structure cannot be over-emphasised as relationships are prone to disputes and the relationship between management and the junior staff represented by their union, Teachers and Educational Workers Union (TEWU), at the University of Cape Coast is no exception. However sound the underlying relationship between a management team and the workforce may be, there will always be a scope for disagreements and misunderstandings between them because of differing interests. Since employers and employees have congruent and partly divergent interests, the interaction between them can create both agreements or consensus and disagreements or conflicts. The ensuing conflict is inevitable but can be managed by both parties accommodating each other through dialogue and negotiations (Fajana, 2000).

Hodgetts (2002) observes that managers of organizations are mostly concerned with objectives such as survival, growth and profit making while workers are interested in good remuneration, adequate and better working conditions, a chance to interact with other personnel and the opportunity to do interesting and meaningful tasks. The fundamental objectives of tertiary educational institutions are to produce high calibre human resource for all sectors of the economy, promote scientific discovery by way of research, engage in outreach programmes and achieve technological breakthroughs.

However, in these institutions of which the University of Cape Coast is not an exception, whereas management is focused on achieving the set objectives and accomplishing its vision and mission, the rank-and-file employees on the other hand seek to maximise the immediate and long-run returns on the skills and efforts they exert in employment, expect job security and management's ability and willingness to provide better conditions of service.

The existence of these differing interests between management and labour often result in industrial disputes which affect the academic calendar and other programmes of the University. For example, in the recent years, industrial action embarked upon by the junior staff of all the public universities in Ghana affected the operations of these universities including the University of Cape Coast. There was therefore the need to find out the factors that account for industrial disputes between management and TEWU of the University of Cape Coast and how these disputes are managed by the two parties.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What factors account for industrial disputes between management and TEWU in the University of Cape Coast?
2. What are the mechanisms for settling labour-management disputes in the University of Cape Coast?

Review of Related Literature

Causes of Industrial Disputes

Fajana (2000) citing Kornhauser, Dubin and Ross, refers to industrial disputes as the total range of behaviour and attitudes that express opposition and divergent orientations between individual owners or management, on the one hand, and the working people or their associations on the other. Ahuja (1988), also describes industrial dispute as any disagreement or difference between employer and employer or between employer and workmen or between workmen and workmen which is connected with the employment, or their terms or conditions of employment. Ahuja again noted that causes of industrial disputes can be broadly classified into two categories namely, economic and non-economic. The economic causes include issues relating to compensation such as payment of wages and salaries, bonuses and allowances. Employees' demand for better working conditions, flexible working hours, leave and holidays with pay, unjust layoffs and retrenchment are also classified as economic issues. The non-economic factors include victimisation of workers, ill-treatment by senior officers or colleagues, sympathetic strikes, political interference and staff indiscipline.

According to Obeng-Ofosu(2007), in Ghana, the Labour Department's record on strikes reveals that most of the causes of strike actions have been mainly due to the demand for increase in wages, non-payment of wages and allowances, claim for yearly bonus, unfavourable conditions of service, and delay in the implementation of collective agreement. Other causes include the demand for the re-instatement of dismissed colleagues and demand for the removal of management staff. A study conducted by Ubeku (1983) in Nigeria indicates that the most frequent causes of industrial disputes in Nigeria are issues concerning wages and salaries and on interpretation and implementation of collective agreement.

As stated by Teachers and Educational Workers Union (1991), in some cases when union and management are unable to agree on an issue not partly or wholly covered by the terms of the agreement or there is a disagreement on an issue to be included or not in the agreement, there may arise a dispute. As observed by Ubeku (1983), a dispute that begins as a result of an individual grievance can develop into collective dispute. Individual grievances are about their rights and what they think they are entitled to as workmen. These are regarded as legal rights because the claims are based on the contractual relations between the parties. Pettinger (1999) asserts that an industrial dispute may result into industrial action if not handled well.

Industrial Actions

There are a number of industrial actions taken by either employers or employees in the event of unresolved impasse between them. Two of such actions are strike and lockout.

Strike

Donnelly, Gibson and Ivancevich (1992) and Fajana (2000) describe strike as the refusal of employees to work. It may be a protest, sometimes with some open expression of aggression, by a group of aggrieved workers of a particular workplace who may decide to lay down their tools and refuse to work in support of their demands, which in their view are being denied by their employer. Strike may take the form of absence from work, sit-down, slow-down work, sick-out, picketing, or lock-in. Employees may lose their wages and in some cases lose their jobs when they embark on illegal strike action.

Beach (1980) opines that generally, the right to strike is considered a fundamental right of the working people. It is a legitimate weapon in the hands of workmen to be used for asserting their bargaining power. He, however, adds that this does not mean workers have an unrestricted right to strike under all circumstances.

In the opinion of Ubeku (1983), there appears to be a general feeling among workers that an employer will not recognise their power until they have gone on strike with consequences of economic damage to the employer. Yet, as provided by the Labour Act 2003 (Act 651), industrial actions such as strike or lockout should be used as the last resort only when all the avenues for dispute resolution have proved futile. This requirement is often flouted. As Obeng-Fosu (1991) observes, in most cases, industrial actions are embarked upon even when the laid down procedures have not been exhausted.

Lock-Out

A lock-out, on the other hand, is an industrial action taken by an employer against employees. It is an employer's decision not to permit employees to work and therefore closes the workplace temporarily or suspends employees from work or refuses to continue to employ such persons until certain conditions are met by the employees. Employers lock out workers if they feel pressurised by workers to take decisions which in the view of the employers are detrimental to the survival of the organisation. Such conditions may be the demand for very high increase in wages, better working conditions/environment, or reinstatement of a dismissed employee (Ahuja, 1988).

Fossum (1999) opines that unions are usually initiators of work stoppages. When unions are unable to get management to agree to their request, they may resort to slow-down to work, sit down, or may decide not to come to work at all until their demands are met. Employers, on their part, are normally not so quick to lock out

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employees. They desire to keep their business in full operation because they consider stoppages as costly. Lock-out brings production to a halt, interrupts sales, may cause a company to lose its customers and also incur additional cost in recruiting and training new staff. The state or government being a third party to labour-management negotiations also loses when there is a strike action or a lock-out of employees because the waste of man hours affect the national income especially in the area of tax collection.

Industrial Disputes Resolution Mechanisms

The government, as a social partner and a third party to the resolution of industrial disputes through its agencies, enacts laws to regulate the activities of the parties involved in labour issues. These laws serve as legal framework and a guide which is necessary for employers, employees and their institutions. Labour laws in Ghana emanate from conventions, rules, regulations and superior court decisions and these can be described as industrial laws or employment laws.

The major sources of employment laws in Ghana are International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions, provisions in the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana and Ghana Labour Act. Under Article 1 of the Unified Conditions of Service for Unionised Staff of the Public Universities of Ghana (2008), management recognises TEWU as being the officially certified Trade Union under the Labour Act 2003, (Act 651). Management also recognises the union as the sole representative of its employees and the sole negotiating body for all matters connected with the terms of employment or with the conditions of service for all the employees who are covered by the agreement.

Ghana Labour Act 2003 (Act 651) allows for the settlement of industrial disputes and sets out the procedure for the resolution of such disputes. Section 153 encourages the parties to negotiate to reach a settlement using their own internal procedures agreed upon in their collective bargaining agreement or contract of employment and this mechanism does not call for any external help. Where this is not in place, the parties may resort to external machinery which is statutory and established by the state (Obeng-Ofosu, 2007).

According to Beach (1980), when there are disagreements between labour and management, they normally meet with one another as part of their internal mechanisms to dialogue and negotiate a settlement that will be acceptable to both parties over matters of right. However, there are times when an impasse is reached and the parties may be at loggerheads. It is at this point that one of the other dispute resolution approaches such as mediation or arbitration may be applied.

Mediation is a method by which experienced neutral third party is called in to help the union and management resolve their impasse. The mediator makes suggestions and attempts to facilitate the establishment of a cooperative relationship. The mediator has no power to impose a settlement but acts to counsel the parties, re-opens communication channels, clarifies offers to each of the parties and suggests strategies and tactics that will lead to a mutually acceptable settlement.

Arbitration, on the other hand, refers to a dispute resolution mechanism through which a third party listens to both sides, analyses the arguments and makes a decision that is binding on the union and management. The arbitrator, who is experienced, determines the agreement and the decision is final. The decision to go for arbitration may be ad-hoc, or may be an agreed stage in the parties' procedure. Such a stage may be triggered either on a joint, unilateral or mandatory basis (Beach, 1980).

In the view of Odgers and Keeling (2000), employees are less likely to want a third party's help if steps are taken to improve work-place policies and open-door communication mechanisms. The literature review showed that disputes are inevitable, however, there are steps in place to deal with them and therefore must be resolved promptly and amicably when they occur.

Methodology

The research was a descriptive survey. The total population was 2162 comprising four Management Personnel (Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Registrar and Director of Finance) who deal with labour negotiations, the Deputy Registrar in charge of Division of Human Resource who is also part of the Management side of the Labour-Management negotiating team, five TEWU executive members (Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer) and 2152 junior staff of UCC. The four Management Personnel, the Deputy Registrar in charge of Division of Human Resource, and the five TEWU executive members were purposively selected while 327 junior staff respondents were randomly selected. The sample size was 337. Two sets of questionnaire were developed and used to gather data for the study. One set of the questionnaire was administered to the four Management Personnel and the Deputy Registrar in charge of the Division of Human Resource, and the other set to the five TEWU executive members and the 327 sampled junior staff. Out of the 337 questionnaire administered, 315 (93%) were retrieved with 305 coming from the junior staff, five from the Management Personnel and the Deputy Registrar and five from the TEWU executives.

Findings and Discussion

Some of the issues which emerged from the study and were examined include factors that account for industrial disputes in UCC, briefing/informing workers about the unified conditions of service/collective agreement, grievance/complaint procedure in UCC, and mechanisms for settling labour-management disputes in UCC.

Factors that Account for Industrial Disputes in UCC

By their objectives, both labour and management have differing interests and in trying to achieve their respective interests there is bound to be dispute between them. Research question 1 therefore sought to find out the views of the respondents on the factors that account for industrial disputes between management and TEWU in the University of Cape Coast. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Views of Respondents on Factors that Account for Industrial Disputes

Factors that Account for Industrial Disputes	Junior Staff Frequency (%)	TEWU Exec. Frequency (%)	Management Frequency (%)	Total Frequency (%)
Staff indiscipline	41(13.4)	0(0.0)	1(20.0)	42(13.3)
Victimisation of workers by Heads of Dept.	45(14.8)	0(0.0)	1(20.0)	46(14.6)
Issues concerning wages and salaries.	138(45.2)	2(40.0)	3(60.0)	143(45.4)
Non-payment of allowances.	123(40.3)	1(20.0)	0(0.0)	124(39.4)
Inadequate health and safety measures	46(15.0)	1(20.0)	0(0.0)	47(14.9)
Long working hours.	42(13.8)	0(0.0)	1(20.0)	43(13.7)
Non-payment for overtime work	47(15.4)	0(0.0)	1(20.0)	48(15.2)

As shown in Table 1, 45.4% of the respondents indicated that the most frequently occurring factor that accounts for industrial disputes in UCC are issues concerning payment of wages and salaries. Others (39.4%) also rated non-payment of allowances as one of the most frequent causes of dispute between labour and management, while 15.2% also held the opinion that non-payment for overtime work also contributes to industrial disputes in UCC. The results suggest that workers' agitations are mostly to demand compensation for their contributions made in the face of economic situations. Employees expect to be paid wages and salaries for their capabilities or qualifications and attendance to work and be paid for extra duties performed, including work done after the stipulated working hours and/or after the normal working days.

As additional information, some management respondents stated that there were occasions when TEWU executives refused to enter into collective bargaining with management because the percentage increase in salary offered by government was not acceptable to them. Furthermore, some management respondents indicated that the executives of the union sometimes did not give the right feedback on salary negotiations to their rank and file and this at times raised tension which if not addressed quickly led to labour unrest. All these are indications that workers attach importance to the economic benefits they expect from their employers.

The finding supports the study conducted by Ubeku (1983) in Nigeria which came out that issues concerning salaries and wages and the implementation of collective agreement are mostly the causes of industrial disputes. This presupposes that in exerting their energy, skills, knowledge and abilities for the institution, employees also expect some compensation. Thus, if the remuneration is not forth coming or falls below employees' expectations, they become agitated. From Table 1, 14.9% of the respondents had the opinion that inadequate health and safety measures is a cause to industrial dispute while 14.6% stated that victimization of workers by heads of department also stirs up industrial dispute. The least among the causes are long working hours and staff indiscipline with responses of 13.7% and 13.3% respectively.

The finding also confirms the observation by Obeng-Fosu (2007) that in Ghana, the Labour Department's record of strikes reveals that issues such as demand for increase in wages, non-payment of wages and allowances, unfavourable conditions of service, delay in implementation of collective agreement and claim for yearly bonus are the main causes of industrial disputes. Other causes such as demand for the removal of management staff and demand for the re-instatement of dismissed colleagues as mentioned by Obeng-Fosu did not apply to the University of Cape Coast according to the findings of this study.

Briefing/Informing Workers about the Unified Conditions of Service/Collective Agreement

The Unified Conditions of Service for Unionised Staff of the Public Universities of Ghana or the Collective Agreement which is the outcome of negotiations between management and union on working conditions and terms of employment is reviewed from time to time. Employees are, therefore, to be informed periodically about the existing conditions. The study, therefore, sought to find out the views of respondents on whether workers are informed about the conditions of service from time to time. The responses are as in Table 2.

Table 2: Views of Respondents on Whether Workers are Briefed on Conditions of Service or Collective Agreements

Statement	Response	Junior Staff Freq. (%)	TEWU Exec. Frequency (%)	Management Frequency (%)	Total Frequency (%)
Are workers briefed from time to time on conditions of service?	Yes	152(49.8)	4(80.0)	3(60.0)	159(50.5)
	No	106(34.8)	1(20.0)	2(40.0)	109(34.6)
	No Res.	47(15.4)	0(0)	0(0)	47(14.9)
Total		305(100.0)	5(100.0)	5(100.0)	315(100.0)

Table 2 shows that 50.5% of the responses on whether workers are briefed from time to time on conditions of service are positive with 34.6% responding in the negative while 14.9% did not give any response. It could be inferred from the responses that even though 50.5% is on the majority side, it did not in any way show clearly that workers are from time to time informed about the updates in the conditions of service. The responses also suggest that although workers are informed about the conditions of service, it is not done periodically, that is, as and when the conditions are reviewed. This shows that there is more room for improvement. This again suggests that employees are not informed regularly about what they should expect from management and vice-versa.

This could lead staff to act out of ignorance and may make demands that management may consider as unnecessary.

In a follow-up question as to who briefs or informs workers about the conditions of service and how it was done, majority (70%) of the respondents stated that briefing was done by the TEWU executives at workers durbar while (20%) also responded that it was management who informed them through circulars. Others (10%) indicated that it was the heads of department who informed them at departmental meetings. The result suggests that the union does more talking than management in this regard. The finding as well confirms the assertion expressed by Ahuja (1988) in respect of the role the union plays in organisational communication as it is seen as a recognised channel for dissemination of information. The union is also fulfilled as it conveys information from management to employees and vice-versa because through this it establishes rapport with workers and gains their support.

Because union executives are also part of the workforce, employees tend to rely on information which come from them. In some circumstances, employees even accept information from the union more than from any other source and will usually want their union executives to confirm information relating to payment of salaries and wages and conditions of service which come from management. However, in the view of Applbaum and Anatol (1982), it is the responsibility of management to administer, interpret, and provide an update on conditions of work and organisational policies to employees. It is management’s responsibility to ensure that workers are informed and educated on issues concerning workplace policies, statutes, scheme of work, conditions of service and other rules and regulations. According to Odgers and Keeling (2000), whether through employee meetings (formal or informal), newsletters or memos from management, employers must focus on improving organisational communication.

In view of the fact that conditions of service undergo review from time to time, it is imperative that employees are briefed or informed about new developments as and when reviews are done to enable staff to be abreast with issues and also to guide them in the performance of their duties.

Grievance/Complaint Procedure in UCC

According to Ubeku (1983), a dispute that begins as a result of an individual grievance can develop into collective dispute. Individual grievances are over their rights and what they think they are entitled to as workmen. The study sought the views of the respondents on whether the university has grievance/complaint procedure or not. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Views of Respondents on Grievance/Complaint Procedure

Statement	Responses	Junior Staff Freq.(%)	TEWU Exec. Freq.(%)	Management Freq.(%)	Total Freq.(%)
Does the University have a grievance/ Complaint procedure?	Yes	79(25.9)	4(80.0)	5(100.0)	88(27.9)
	No	137(44.9)	1(20.0)	0(0.0)	138(43.8)
	I don’t know	89(29.2)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	89(28.3)
Total		305(100.0)	5(100.0)	5(100.0)	315(100.0)

From Table 3, 43.8% of the respondents stated that there is no grievance/complaint procedure in UCC while 28.3% did not know of any grievance/complaint procedure in the university. Only 27.9% of the respondents were aware of the grievance/complaint procedure in UCC. Those who were aware included all the management respondents and majority of the TEWU executive members. The reason may be that it is management and TEWU executives who are involved in the collective bargaining agreement process so they were aware of the content.

According to Curry (2004), managers of organisations should institute grievance procedures that allow employees to send their complaints upwards and also operate an open door policy that permits employees to ask questions. Since majority (72.1%) of the respondents did not know that there is grievance procedure in UCC, it is likely that some staff may not send their complaint to the appropriate places and may, therefore, end up not getting the needed attention. If employees feel embittered but do not know where to send their complaints, they may take unwarranted action out of ignorance and frustration and this could affect their performance and lower productivity. According to Ubeku (1983), individual or group of individuals' grievances that are not met can develop into industrial disputes and could stir up industrial action.

As noted by Odgers and Keeling (2000), if steps are taken to improve work-place policies and communication mechanisms through open-door complaint procedure and laid-down personnel policies and procedures, there is the likelihood that disputes would be minimised. The observation by Odgers and Keeling implies that certain negative actions could be curtailed if employees are aware of what they are supposed to do when they want issues to be addressed.

Article 36 of the Unified Conditions of Service for Unionised Staff of the Public Universities of Ghana (2008) spells out the grievance procedure in place. For 43.8% of the respondents to indicate that there is no grievance procedure and 28.3% also to state that they did not know of such procedure goes to confirm that workers are not briefed or informed about the conditions of service and other university policies from time to time. It could be inferred from the finding that due of lack of knowledge of the conditions of service, majority of the junior staff do not know their rights and responsibilities.

In a follow-up question, those who indicated that the university has grievance procedure also stated the benefits of the procedure. Some respondents (49.0%) indicated that the existence of grievance procedure encourages workers to have a voice at the work place, while others (44.0%) were of the view that the procedure serves as a mechanism to put across their complaints without fear of victimisation. To others, (7.0%) the procedure enables workers feel a sense of empowerment. This shows that those who are aware of the procedure for voicing out grievances use it to their advantage.

Mechanisms for Settling Labour-Management Disputes in UCC

There are a number of procedures for settling labour-management disputes. Research question 2 therefore sought to find out the views of the respondents on the mechanisms that are in place for settling labour-management disputes in UCC. Table 4 provides a summary of the responses.

Table 4: Views of Respondents on the Mechanisms for Settling Labour-Management Disputes in UCC

Statement	Responses	Junior Staff Freq.(%)	TEWU Exec. Freq.(%)	Management Freq.(%)	Total Freq.(%)
Which of the following dispute resolution mechanisms are used in UCC?	Arbitration	7(2.3)	2(40)	3(30.0)	12(3.8)
	Mediation	55(18.0)	1(20)	2(40.0)	58(18.4)
	Negotiation	137(44.9)	3(60.0)	5(100.0)	145(46.1)
	I don't know	96(31.6)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	96(30.5)

As depicted in Table 4, there are a number of mechanisms that are used for settling labour-management disputes in UCC. From the Table, 46.1% of the respondents indicated that disputes are settled through negotiation. Negotiation is the first provision made in the Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651) in terms of dispute resolution. This provision encourages internal arrangement for settling industrial disputes as agreed upon in the collective

agreements of the respective institutions. The finding implies that UCC management and the union mostly dialogue and negotiate to settle their disputes without resorting to external intervention. When disputes are quickly handled internally, it saves the institution a great deal of resources on man hours lost in terms of time spent and other materials if the dispute results in industrial action. It could also be inferred from the study that labour-management disputes in UCC are resolved amicably and promptly. The finding confirms the observation by Odgers and Keeling (2000) that some institutions are less likely to want a third party's help because if disputes arise, employers quickly meet with employees' representatives to resolve the problem without waiting for it to escalate.

The responses also showed that there were instances where disputes were resolved through external assistance. Others(18.5%) stated that disputes were resolved through mediation. This means that mediators are sometimes called upon to help settle disputes between labour and management in UCC. If a dispute is settled through mediation, the mediator does not impose a settlement but acts to counsel the parties, re-opens communication channels, clarifies offers to each of the parties and suggests strategies and tactics that will lead to a mutually acceptable settlement. In addition, some respondents (3.8%) also indicated that disputes were resolved through arbitration. If a dispute is settled through arbitration the parties involved in the dispute do not have a choice, the final decision is determined by the arbitrator. As stipulated in the Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651) and also opined by Donnelly et al. (1992), this level of dispute resolution is reached after negotiations and mediations have failed. As shown in the Table, as many as 31.6% of the junior staff respondents did not know how disputes are resolved in UCC. This seems to suggest that a lot of junior staff lack knowledge of how issues are handled between management and the union.

Summary and Conclusion

The study showed that issues concerning wages and salaries are the leading factors that account for dispute between the union and management in the University of Cape Coast. Thus, employees attach great importance to remuneration therefore the inability of management to meet this expectation raises tension from the labour front. However, according to the study, such issues are mostly resolved amicably through negotiation without external intervention. The findings also showed management's readiness to discuss labour issues amicably with the union leaders.

The study further revealed that majority of the junior staff did not have knowledge about the Conditions of Service which is supposed to be their reference material when they want issues to be addressed. The absence of awareness could result in employees losing some benefits out of ignorance or making unrealistic demands which they may think they are entitled to. Moreover, the junior staff were not aware of the grievance procedure in spite of its provision in the Unionised Conditions of Service for Public Universities. This, in a way suggests the reading culture or level of education of the junior staff since some of them lack the ability to read.

It was also found from the study that the union does more talking to the junior staff than management although the responsibility lies with management to make sure employees are informed about what they are supposed to know; be it rules, regulations, policies, conditions of service or any information which will be of benefit to the employees to enable them work effectively and also to dispel rumours.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings and conclusions of the study:

1. Causes of industrial dispute can be minimised if the main source is tackled. It is therefore recommended that issues concerning salaries and wages and other economic benefits to staff be addressed by management promptly to prevent the occurrence of industrial unrest.
2. The junior staff should be updated on policies, rules, regulations and the conditions of service as and when they are reviewed. This could be done during management-workers durbar/meeting and staff development programmes organised by the Training and Development Section. The executive of the

Teachers and Educational Workers Union can also use workers durbar to educate its rank-and-file on such issues.

3. Good employee relations, especially free flow of communication is one way of controlling potential industrial disputes and its consequent industrial actions and should therefore be practised by members of the university.
4. Industrial disputes are costly and damaging to institutions and employees alike and can lead to potentially heavy cost if they develop into industrial action. Ideally, an organisation's culture and procedures should seek to minimise and where possible, avoid any potential industrial disputes. However, it is not always possible to prevent them from arising but if they do occur, knowing how to handle and resolve them timely and amicably may prevent it from escalating and may substantially reduce the financial cost to productivity and the damage done to life and property.

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