

An Employer-Employee Relations Perspective on Industrial Harmony and Workplace Unhappiness

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Abstract –

The nature of industrial harmony, which includes industrial democracy and prevents job dissatisfaction, was examined in this essay. Industrial harmony is portrayed as a prerequisite for human resources' dedication to a productive workplace, and its absence or non-application fosters job dissatisfaction and may lead to industrial action in workplaces. When all parties are treated fairly in issues that affect everyone and have an impact on workers' overall performance as well as the organization's smooth growth and development—which in turn distorts management's goals and objectives—industrial harmony can be said to be practically operating between workers and employers/management. Not only can conflicts occur inside the framework of industrial relations, but they also come from parties functioning within the system having diametrically opposed interests. Through careful observation and in-depth content analysis, the paper has demonstrated that in

order to improve better understanding between parties in the workplace, distinct institutions should be established by qualified educators. These educators should reposition the outdated notion of mutual exclusivity, in which employers and management make all decisions when problems arise, to focus on mutually inclusiveness involving all parties contributing ideas to have an ideal work environment of "master-subordinate" as opposed to "master-servant" relationships. Considering the aforementioned, the research found that when workers are permitted to be active, their professions become an extension of who they are; as a result, they are creating, altering, and controlling their own work. They grow more dedicated to their profession and find more satisfaction in it as they get more engaged. What is more democratic and, thus, the cornerstone of peaceful interactions between the players in an industrial context that elevates the system above the aforementioned?

Keywords: Workplace harmony, democracy, employers, employees, relationships, viewpoint, and collective bargaining.

Introduction

In today's global world, industrial harmony is an essential part of all current economic systems. Its significance stems from the many purposes it fulfils. This means that a good industrial harmony or peaceful coexistence between workers (trade union) and management will, at the very least, demonstrate a mutually inclusive give-and-take relationship and will in no small way encourage high worker morale; consequently, the performance and productivity profile of

labour will be increasing. Good industrial harmony also guarantees stability in the areas of governance and promotes the growth of the industrial system. This is particularly true for industrial relations in the public sector, which will benefit private sector issues (David & John, 1992). Political stability, which essentially lays the groundwork for the growth of local industries, attracts foreign investments, and inevitably creates jobs for the populace, can typically result from

collaboration between employees and management in an environment of sound industrial understandings (Girigiri, 2002; Girigiri, 2007). The definition of harmony is "the state of peaceful existence; an agreement to be in harmony with our environment, where we live, the businessplace, where we work, and to live together in peace socially, economically, and politically." The way several notes are played or sung together to create a pleasant sound in music. The many sounds produced by the bass, treble, tenor, and soprano combine to create a harmonic sound that is referred to as music (Olufemi, n.d.). This is comparable to an industrial setup in which actors and all required component elements collaborate to get a superior outcome.

In politics or in industry, what concerns all should be brought to the open and be decided upon democratically and harmoniously in the best interest of all. The positive application of democratic principles in matters that concern all, i.e. showing fairness and equality to everyone in the industrial setting and the recognition of their right to take part in decision making, will effectively enhance the industrial atmospheres with less crises or total breakdown (Girigiri, 1999). Industrial harmony is key to organizations progress, growth and expansion. It is crucial for business and people who take decision to invest and those working in the organization will thus have their opinion reflect in the organization. Industrial harmony results when the differences between trade unions on one hand, management or employer on the other can be resolved in the work place without having to resort to total breakdown or closures of the organizations (David & John, 1992). Put it differently, harmony exist when at all times, parties in relationship in the industrial sphere seek to resolving matters with minimum level of crises bearing in mind the negative consequences on both sides, in case of complete lock-down. The foregoing are some of the essential ingredients for the socioeconomic and political developments which Third World Nations so badly need for

work organizations to thrive. Unfortunately, the state of Nigeria industrial relations lack this harmonious value and has not been palatable.

Industrial harmony can be defined as that atmosphere which when in place reduces industrial conflict, as it helps in the establishment of better communication between management and workers (Dabibi, n.d.); where decision making processes involve all interested parties, it will usher in improved creativity, enthusiasm and productivity including better service delivery, and job satisfaction and personal fulfillment will be the hallmarks of employers and workers. Industrial harmony which will certainly lay the foundation for industrial democracy, according to Anugwom (2007) is seen as a means whereby workers have a share in decision affecting the company where they earn a living and therefore have a share in the responsibility for making it successful.

Industrial harmony has to do with the creation of an atmosphere of peaceful and cordial relationship between the workers (Trade Unions) and the management cum government which, and as a matter of necessity is to ensure minimal suspicion in dealing with issues affecting the component parts. Industrial harmony, therefore, calls for a state of peaceful coexistence, where every part or component relevant in the industry must do its best in combination with the other parts to produce an overall pleasing result (Dabibi, (n.d.)). At this juncture, it is pertinent to look at democracy and how it is connected to bringing better industrial relations in work place (Okon, 2008).

Lincoln (1809–1865) described democracy as "government of the people for the people and by the people." The corollary encompasses freedom of expression and assembly, adult suffrage, and political opposition. Although direct democracy is implemented almost nowhere in the world, these are its tenets. Instead, we may discuss representative democracy. We refer to such societies as democratic, regardless of the extent to which these principles are upheld. A system of

industrial relations known as industrial democracy is present in the majority of those democratic republics (Clement, 2014; Ima, 2004). These countries have democratised all of their social institutions after democratising their political ones, which has led to the democratisation of their industrial relations. The participation of employees in decision-making (via procedures and institutions) that include the sharing of power and accountability in the workplace is known as industrial democracy. According to Osamwonyi and Ugiagbe (2013), industrial harmony refers to a state of good and cooperative working relationships between all parties involved in the industrial social setting, including the government, employers, workers (trade unions), and the environment. Furthermore, this encompasses four main areas of cooperation: communication flows, collective bargaining, employment policies, and responsibilities (Ladan, 2012). Therefore, an understanding of each other's motivations and purposes, as well as the capacity to freely and effectively communicate with one another while also accommodating differences within guiding principles to ensure the realisation of stated objectives and set goals of the organisations, are essential components of actors' involvement in the affairs of organisations (Jinyemiema, 2008). According to Izidor (2015), players in industrial interactions have different ideologies and goals. Therefore, for the system to work properly, these ideologies and ambitions must be sufficiently compatible and consistent to allow for a shared set of concepts that would restrict the players' conflict areas of interest and enable the boundary of their role.

Organization is a ground accommodating groups of individuals with different socio-cultural backgrounds and characteristics, and as such, achieving a social milieu of lack of biasness and grievances anchored on groups or individual's interest is quite far and a difficult task (Okon, 2008). Therefore, industrial harmony is never an absence or freedom from disagreement, but rather upholds the tenets that, there is an understanding between employers and employees that permits the system to achieve

set goals through a medium or avenue agreeable by parties in terms of conflicts/crisis (Izidor, 2015). In the words of Osabuohien & Ogunrinola (2007) a harmonious workplace is that which guarantees satisfaction of workers' and employers' aspirations through avenue of compromise which is essential for the enhancement of organizational productivity profile and growth. In recent times, industrial relations crisis in Nigeria has assumed unthinkable magnitude. The unceasing crises that have manifestly affected both sectors of public and private lives have posed untold hardship with consequent negative manifestations in the areas of decline in both economic growth and development, massive poverty, retrenchment of workers, etc. (Agba, Ushie & Agba, 2009). Contributing to this, on the pattern of relationship in the industrial relations circle in Nigeria has been conflictual in nature (Albert & Yahaya, 2013). This is expressed in the disruptive consequences of it, the significant work stoppages and loss of man hours.

According to Iheriohanma (2007), the nation's industrial environment has been plagued by industrial disputes. According to Osabuohien & Ogunrinola (2007), the lack of harmonious working relationships among actors in the workplace creates situations that are detrimental to organisational success and productivity. According to him, they include, among other things, poor productivity, high turnover, absenteeism, strikes, and work-to-rules. Regaining employees' satisfaction, commitment to duty, productivity, and harmonious working relationships within the organization—especially in the event of an accelerating industrial crisis—without resorting to endangering industrial peace is one of the challenges that employers face in situations like the ones mentioned above and more (Okon, 2008). Conflicts of interest have always existed in human social interactions, and it is unavoidably difficult to totally eradicate them in the workplace when people with diametrically opposed interests are working together to achieve objectives. According to Badom, Anele, and Badey (2018), the majority of government and

management policies conflict with worker interests, which often leads to industrial action. Furthermore, employers have developed many strategies to reduce the overt or covert aspects of their conflictual relationship with employees, which are based on real or perceived dishonesty in handling issues that affect everyone. In the meanwhile, in the context of Nigeria's workplace, these strategies have completely failed to slow down the pace of industrial dissatisfaction. The prevailing circumstances must be one of give and take, "master-subordinates" rather than "master-servants," in order for a healthy and free industrial culture to function where employers and employees may involve themselves freely to address doubts. Employees must get all associated perks and be seen as co-owners and the conveyor belt of the profit and development wheel. A peaceful work environment is both required and attainable since disagreements at work have always existed and are still essential to maintaining a positive working relationship. Parties should trust that any issue can be resolved for everyone's benefit.

At this juncture, the focus of the paper therefore is to; look into the issues that can bring about harmony at workplace amongst social actors in industrial sphere; examines the conflictual battle grounds that usually put employer and employees at dagger-drawn like attitudinal relationship at workplace; finally, it will explore the place of mutual bargaining in resolving industrial issues. The authors adopted expository content analysis derivable from wide consultations of relevant literature having bearing on the topic under discussion to buttress their points of view through presentation of the factual analysis to the common understanding of all. Also, the careful observations of the authors of the industrial settings and occurrences in a myriad of organizations and their former work organizations enhanced this factual presentation. Industrial Discontents And Causes Girigiri (2008) & Izidor (2015) stated that Nigerian workers desire security and permanency in their workplace as against casualisation and unusual redundancies that

are commonly seen and heard-off. They desire some good measure of love and dealings with fellow co-workers; they want to be seen, recognized and not only heard-off, want acceptance and being fully integrated in every aspect of work. These and more, can be achievable, if workers are properly informed and kept abreast of happenings in the organization. The above are obviously absent because of employers anti-policies against workers, therefore industrial unrests are common visitors to industrial setting. According to Alo (1999) & Nwokocha (2014), it is an incontrovertible fact that, when and where workers are denied participation in protest against contending issues as a result of dictatorial and authoritarian employer styles of leadership, the outcome on the part of employees will be intolerance, absenteeism, espionage and sabotaging to every effort that seems to subjecting them inhumanly in the work environment. In course of this hanging-in-the-balance scenario, productive capacity of the worker is been affected and thus undermine any progressive process in work organizations until situations normalizes.

Furthermore, all parties involved—including the government, employers, workers (including labour unions), and the environment—have a shared duty for fostering, preserving, and establishing industrial harmony at work (Onuegbu, 2014). This can only be accomplished via social conversation with the relevant parties. It's interesting to note, though, that Mayowa (2015) argues that it is not surprising at all that organisational policies in practice do not foster the spirit and tenet of mutual partnership anchored on consensus building. As a result, organisations continue to enforce unfriendly and dehumanising labour policies. As a result, this acts as a catalyst for distrust, creating a barrier to communication. As a result, tensions and a crisis are near, straining the connection between employers and employees. According to Albert & Yahaya (2013), organisations that are inadequate or lack a mechanism for balancing conflicting demands made by social partners are likely to experience conflict of interest tendencies and

likelihood that will eventually reach a breaking point, which could disrupt the organization's stability and productivity chain. It is sufficient to remark that when employers and workers relations policies undermine the organisational spirit of social justice, the tendency toward crisis circumstances is already set in motion.

Industrial harmony which pragmatically constitutes the preservation of employment can be achieved through the creation of a human work environment. On the other hand, dehumanizing workplace is simply the denial of humanness in working place to others. And this is facilitated by status, power and those being socially connected (Haslam, 2006). Creating humane organizational environment and culture that integrates and embrace new social approach to work by equalizing opportunities for self-development and growth in the work process, while also ensuring befitting quality of work invariably call for good business environment. However, where this sense of humanness has been lost or been beclouded by arrogant nature of employers, the moral exclusion of these necessary demands has a consequential negative effect on the morale and obligation of the employees in terms of putting in their effort for better performance and productivity (Girigiri, 1999; Nwokocha, 2014).

In modern organizations, industrial conflict is inevitable as it were from time immemorial, since the dominant aim of management it is to maximize profits (Makinde, 2013), while labour's main concern is to secure and maintain the highest level of wages with the best conditions of service for their workers. Alan (1970) stated that causes of conflict cannot be discovered simply by reference to the organization and what goes on within it. Managerial, employees' and collectivity of aspirations towards organizational norms mediate a wide diversity of structures, processes, values and norms outside the organization (Makinde, 2013). Managerial action upon the normative system may be determined by external economic forces such as price and wage movement, technological

change, market conditions or the industrial structure; by social forces such as rising public expectations of managerial performance, by membership of employers' association, by trade union membership or by political factors such as legislation and government policy. Collectivity aspirations can be shaped by those of wider collectivities externally related by events in the social and economic system generally and by changes in other organizations (Nwibere & Emecheta, 2009). Within the organization, the translation of these external stimuli into effective action upon the social organization, via the perceptions and aspirations of individuals or collectivities, is differently shaped by their location (Drummond, 2000). This is inherently tied to the social organization and access to power, individually or collectively applied. Thus aspirations constantly interact with the nature of the division of labour and the distribution of power produce patterns of conflict.

Arun (2007) stressed that conflict occurs at various levels between and among the various players such as the workers, employers/management and government. Some conflicts are inherent in the industrial structure. Conflicts of interest amongst the various groups are strong enough to cause prolonged work stoppages is ever present. The three main actors in an organization develop different orientations and perceptions of their interests (Girigiri, 2007). The pursuit of divergent objectives by each at the expense of others causes friction severe enough to lead to strikes/Lockouts. These groups, organized or unorganized, manifest their conflicts in various forms which may be overt, while some covert. Other factors which may cause conflict or discontent as Girigiri (1999) opined are wrangling within the union and the awareness by workers of their union officials of improper handling of union fund and also compromised while negotiating union matters with management. It may result in being the underlying factor in a striking situation especially when worker's complaints about the situation are never taken seriously by management (Haralambos & Healed, 1980).

Accordingly, the basic thought of Karl Marx in his dialectic is the proposition that, at any given point in time, historically; the economic i.e the substructure or the material conditions of the people; their productive capacities structure their social existence and consciousness of that historical epoch. Karl Marx exposition therefore stated thus:

Marx is here saying that the mode of production in material life of the people determines the general character of the social, political and cultural processes of life of the people. What this simply means is that, it is the social existence of the people that determines their consciousness and not vice-versa. Therefore, when workers are conscious of being exploited and oppressed by management and government through policies and legislations that seek to suppress them, they resist through the instrumentality of 'trade unions' which consequently may result into conflicting situations and the result may be strike actions, perhaps, closure of the plants.

Even though Nigeria is one of the world's top producers of petroleum products, a single event that had a particularly detrimental effect on the nation's industrial relations between labour and the government as well as the economy was the constant rise in petroleum product pump prices (Okon, 2008). It is impossible to overstate the strategic significance of these items' accessibility at reasonable costs for Nigeria's socioeconomic operations. This means that an increase in their costs will have a detrimental effect on the cost of other goods and transportation, which would eventually lower the population's quality of life. This is supported by Badom (2019), who discovered that an increase in the price of petroleum products due to their scarcity, which are corollaries of oil and gas workers' industrial actions, caused an increase in the price of commodities and an increase in fares. Therefore, it is not surprising that attempts to deregulate the petroleum industry's downstream sectors combined with the government's inclination to continuously raise the pump prices of petroleum products result in a dramatic

ongoing

Fashoyin, (2002) contends that Marxian analysis of conflict is attributable to an unending power struggle between workers and their employers over the control of several aspects of work. This results to inequality in the distributions of the proceed of the organization, job insecurity of the workers, and poor management control strategies. Marx therefore, contended that the main source of conflict or social change in organization or society is been promoted or prompted by economic influences and not their ideas, ideal or values which human beings hold. This presupposes that good industrial harmony is primarily based on economic (material) well-being of the workers. Looking at the above, perhaps, it seems very clearly that one of the constant industrial conflicts in Nigeria is due largely because of her workers poor economic (material) condition and dehumanizing nature of the working environment. As Damachi (1986) put it that the interest of social partners are not completely mutual. For instance, employer represents, and is mainly concerned with a property interest which in turn is directly related to the financial interest of a limited number of shareholders. The interest of the employees' organization or union is primarily that of workers such as their material, spiritual, social, and psychological needs (Otobo, 2000). The above points out that the employers including their managers on one side and employees on the polar side have diagonally opposing interests at all time, hence conflict situation is inevitable.

Measures To Reinforcing Industrial Harmony In Nigeria Industrial Relations

Psychologists engaged in research on participation have argued that participation, power, and responsibility on the job tend to satisfy basic ego needs. Having the power of participation, implies to workers that they are equal partners, collaborators in an organization rather than passive, coerced, and unwilling subordinates. Kreitner & Kinicki (2010) remarked that participation strengthens the belief, or creates it, that the workers are worthy of being consulted; that they are

intelligent and competent. When management make the frequently bitter remarks that ‘they do not pay you to think around here’, they are really saying that their opinions are not valued; that they are not regarded as competent collaborators, but merely as living automations, passive extensions of the machines they operate. Participation corrects this by gratifying the basic human needs for respect, appreciation, responsibility, and autonomy (Jaroslav, Reibel, & Blumberg, 1975).

In the light of the foregoing, that the participating workers are involved workers, for their jobs become an extension of themselves and by their decision, they are creating their work, modifying and regulating it. As they are more involved in their works, they become more committed to it, and being naturally derived more satisfaction from it. What is more democratic and by extension, the bedrock of harmonious relationship in industrial setting amongst actors that make the system more than the above? Okon (2008) asserts that, one greatest way of ensuring industrial democracy and harmonious relationship in the organization, is to create an institution within society that can challenge the prevailing structure, where management see themselves as super-masters and anticipate the new; where co-operation, interrelatedness and interdependency in all manner amongst partners will be observed. According to Alan (1970), people within such institutions must learn ways of thinking and acting that distance them from behaviors, not appropriate to presently existing system and train them in ways more appropriate to instill discipline in the society. These institutions must be that which encourage equality, democracy and cooperation in the system. These institutions will direct their efforts towards effective and efficient transformation of people’s (workers’) mind and management super attitudes cum government ideology including culture and the creation of means of achieving fairness and understanding at workplace (Jaroslav, Reibel, & Blumberg, 1975).

A type of democratic institutions or structure with good and sound educator having the mandate not only to subject presently existing quasi- capitalist Nigeria leaders to criticism, but also to offer a clearly articulated vision of a better society that will ensure industrial peaceful existence and to help create and generate from within workers, management and government the understanding, skills, capacities, and intelligence necessary for the task of creating a new socio-economic, cultural and political order. This can be possible when the new movement for change, identify, encourage and train a stratum of technical, scientific, and literary personnel from within the working class, management, and government will create counter order institutions in the midst of existing society that would train people for the new order (Edward, 1986). Industrial harmony only applies if organizations are owned by workers and managed as in the self-management system in transitional Socialist Yugoslavia. There, each plant is managed by a board of management elected by workers (Okon, 2008). This therefore suggests that, if workers are allowed to make some suggestions based on their work experiences about how production or sale may be improved, that does not give us industrial relations harmonious atmosphere. It is a mere suggestion and far from been decision in itself.

In conclusion, management/employers should understand and appreciate the fact that labour (workers) is not mere commodities or mere supply of labour force at the shareholder and management/government disposal. Essentially, labour is the real basis that underlies the production of goods and services. Through their work, the human personality and its sense of responsibility are able to be unfolded. Employers/management should therefore appreciate this and attribute its success to the trained and efficient labour force. Fundamentally, labour should be given the power or right of say in the affairs of the business and the organization, not only in the field of labour condition and labour environment, but in all aspects or spheres of the business administration and policy, and should effectively make useful input that

shows it's a desirable partner. As necessary component to ensuring industrial harmony, it behooves both employers and employees to create a working culture that gives credence to collaborativeness and team spirit. It is factual that when people of diverse background and experience and as well as different interests converge together at a workplace to attend to problems, share ideas, with a focus on creativity, rewards system, innovativeness and the satisfaction of members, the end result will be positive. This is because they brought to bear their self-worth and identity and thus avert the challenges of work-life-balance, therefore providing a desiring vantage position for organizations optimum progress, growth and development and as well as other social partners (Aishali, 2012). The creation of the scenario presented above, according to Izidor (2015) implies a situation whereby employees actively participate in achieving the set goals and objectives of organizations, thereby drastically reducing tensions at workplace. This is seen as harmony booster and should be encourage and adopted to achieve industrial peaceful co-existence; Organizations structured this way will develop the culture of industrial social order which is essential for organizational productivity

The establishment of an efficient communication channel that prevents the flow of information from being distorted by an autocratic boss master and causing discontent among the affected party or parties is another important pillar that is crucial to the establishment and promotion of industrial peace (Nwinyokpugi, 2014). In this instance, problems that would have led to conflict or a crisis would have been avoided before going too far if staff members were promptly and sufficiently informed about issues affecting everyone and had the chance to meet with those in charge of affairs to discuss areas of agreement (Miebaka, 2002). In support of the aforementioned, Iheriohanma (2008) highlights the need of reorganising the communication process so that all organisational cadres may experience the influence of worldwide interest in the

democratisation problem. According to Iheriohanma (2007), this means that the strict authoritarian management model of communication must be restructured in order to advance the application of strategy that would accommodate top-down and bottom-up synergy where workers are allowed unrestricted flow to employer in choices involving them. Izidor (2015) asserts that in order to achieve industrial harmony, industrial organisations must embrace the participative management concept in light of the globalisation problem in all spheres of human social life. According to Kreitner & Kinicki (2010), participatory management is a method that allows staff members to actively participate in goal-setting, decision-making, and problem-solving with social partners.

Work place harmony, which is the pivot for industrial peace is necessary in a future social order that is decent and humane, in the political movement that will help to bring it to reality. Indeed, a mutually reinforcing relationship may be relevant for not only is work place democracy an essential part of such future society and the movement to bring it to fruition, but it is only within this nurturing environment that the bright promise of workplace democracy and harmonious relationship may be realized (Nkiinebari, 2015). The end of alienating labour, creation of educated, engaged and empathetic citizenry, and the encouragement of a self-confident working people is pertinent to a harmonious and productive organization (Edward, 1986). Workplace harmony and industrial democracy can realize its bright expectations only in environments characterized by democracy, equality, fraternity etc and not where management and/or employers through government uses its resources or state apparatus as means of terrorizing workers even when they are making legitimate demands (Olufemi, n.d.).

Fundamentally, what will ensure sound principle and practice of industrial harmony is equality in organization and of society which according to Nkiinebari (2014) should be in a manner that ensure that the resources

produced by the society through its workforce are distributed to meet the common needs of its members. Exact mathematical equality is neither possible nor necessary; but all members of the society must share in the enjoyment of those goods and services produced by society which are requisite of a life of decency, fulfillment, and self respect. Recognizing that production is the outcome of the shared contribution of the skills, intelligence and labour of the workers; government laws and budgetary allocation, distribution of the fruits of production should take majoritarian form as well and not be hoarded in the hands of the few or take away by government harsh policies (Edward, 1986). Achieving workplace democracy and harmonious relationship at work among participants will involve democratizing organizational decision-making beyond the level of representative industrial democracy. Such shared decision-making system, will give workers' enormous rights in determining both employment contract and labour utilization rules at workplace (Aderemi, 2007). This will generate in the workers of the organization a great sense of responsibility and commitment at work. The principle of industry democracy and harmony imply that workers will no more see themselves as passive objects, but rather, as participants in the affairs of the organization (Augustine, 1999). "...Industrial democracy consists; in part, of the opposition of the trade unions to the employer, and in part, of the attempt of the employer to build his employees into a team working together towards a common purpose..." (ibid).

From this premise, he goes on to make a direct analogy from politics to industry. He stated, just as political democracy is based on the existence of an opposition for proper, smooth and functional government in power; so also, industrial democracy is contingent upon the existence of an opposition within the industry to the prevailing power of management or ownership. What constitutes an effective industrial opposition is a strong trade union organization. The trade union within the organization is to management what the opposition political part is to

government in power. Indeed, it is logical therefore, that if industrial democracy consists of no more than trade union opposition and a management which accepts this opposition, then certainly this type of industrial democracy and peaceful co-existence, will in no small measure enhance productivity and performance on the side of the workers and management that is responsive and workers who are friendly will thrive.

Mutual Bargaining As A Mechanism For Compromise

Collective bargaining is defined as all the negotiations and consultations that take place between the workers represented by their unions for determining all aspects of working conditions including wages, jobs security, welfare and production of work. The relative bargaining power possessed and exhibited by each, forces the other party to be aware of the implications of its actions and to think bilaterally (Clement, 2014). More specifically, collective bargaining is the procedure by which an employer or employers and a group of employees agree upon the conditions of work (Armstrong, 2005). Accordingly, Fashoyin, (1992) see collective bargaining as machinery for discussion and negotiation, whether formal or informal between employer(s) and workers representatives aimed at reaching mutual agreement or understanding on the general employment relationship between the employer(s) and workers. Therefore, the acknowledgement of this power carries with it the right to be listened to. In effect each party makes its decision bearing in mind the possible reactions of the other party. Collective bargaining establishes what is generally regarded as industrial jurisprudence in the workplace. The basis of collective bargaining is joint authorship of the work roles by the union and the management which comes out in the form of a collective agreement. The collective agreement specifies the rights and obligations of workers individually and management against the arbitrary treatment/regimentation of the union leadership. It is worthy of note that collective agreement has a built-in flexibility to provide for issues not

covered by the collective agreement (Peretomode & Peretomode, 2001). Another way the collective bargaining introduces industrial harmony in the workplace is that through their union made up of their elected representatives, the individual worker makes contributions to the union relations with the management. In effect, the point being made is that collective bargaining therefore provides the means by which workers influence the industrial relations policy of management through logical and informed ideas when dialoguing collectively (Clement, 2014). Collective bargaining has really helped the employers to gain insight into the problems and aspirations of the workers, while the workers on their own come to know more about the economic and technical problems of management (Peretomode & Peretomode, 2001). It is also wise to note that, through the time consuming and tortuous process of collective bargaining, the emotionally charged workers or their representatives (Trade union) and employers or their representatives have time to cool-off and soften their problems. Thus, this has paved way for industrial democracy and peaceful coexistence (Fashoyin, 1992).

According to Ubeku (1983), collective bargaining is based on the principle that workers have a right to contract with their employers as to ways and conditions of work and that the employer recognize that right. In effect, it serves as a system of wage and condition of service determination in which the employer shares administrative decision making responsibilities with the union. The collective bargaining process manifests the power relationship between unions and employers on issues directly affecting conditions of employment. It is also a means of limiting unilateral decisions and actions by employers and government. Strong, stable, and well focused and democratic unions expand the scope of collective bargaining and thereby strengthen industrial democracy and harmony (Otobo, 1988). Ron (2004) posit that collective bargaining is in fact a multifaceted institution which internationally has diverse meanings and functions. In addition to rule-

making, which reduces the degree of uncertainty confronting workers and management, it can also be a vehicle for resolving disputes, a power relationship, a form of joint industrial government and channel to addressing conflict. A central integrating mechanism viewed as medium that provides industrial harmony and peaceful industrial atmosphere at resolving conflicting matters at workplace between trade unions i.e. workers' representatives and management which represent employers' interests.

Girigiri (2008) remarked that collective bargaining is a process that replaces the individual worker's usually feeble attempt to gain improvements for himself, and is rather based upon the cumulative and pooled experience of many workers, thrashed out through their union, co-ordinate into a single programme, and backed by their collective strength; and it is bargaining; because at any one time the programme is adoptable to the practical situation, and because there is a constant process of give and take of experience and of views, and positions. The knowledge of both trade unions and management in collective bargaining issues being that of complementary, where 'each side yielding in and gaining at a point then the end result has the more practical strength of both point of views; richer and more pointed to the collective issues that informed the bargaining between parties (Yesufu, 1984). Again, collective bargaining presumes mutual consent and recognition by parties concerned through their representatives of each party interest. In the instance, a measure of autonomy and the right of such interests are certainly to be protected against trespassing each other's rights. The protection of interest assumes a capacity to do so, namely, an element of power, which is assumed to be fairly distributed, hence making possible a bargaining situation (Otobo, 1988). The above point to the fact that the matters were collectively discussed, analyzed and finally agreed upon and it will be binding on all parties. No individual workers can at any point be punished and/or on his/her own challenge management on issues covered in the bargaining except management acting

counter wise with a sinister motive undermine the collective but agreeable decision reached.

Conclusion

This essay addresses the connection between workers, employers, and management with an emphasis on fostering workplace harmony. It started with an introduction that outlined certain crucial components for the socioeconomic, political, and cultural advancements in industrial relations; however, Nigeria's industrial relations system lacks these components. In the context of this paper, certain measures that can promote good industrial harmony among the actors were clearly discussed for immediate, decision-making processes that should go beyond those of representatives to where workers have significant rights in determining both employment contracts and labour utilisation in the workplace. Additionally, the establishment of democratic institutions or structures with competent educators is tasked with not only criticising Nigeria's current quasi-capitalist leaders but also providing a well-defined vision of a better society in which workers, management, and the government will all understand themselves. A system in which the government and management see the opposition political parties as a watchdog on their policies and behaviours and recognise trade union opposition as a real leader for industrial best practices and development. Equal attention was paid to the reasons behind the performers' industrial unhappiness. Conflict is unavoidable since management and trade unions have diametrically opposed interests. Unresolved concerns may sometimes lead to conflict between employees, unions, and management. But the relationship between management and trade unions is the most noteworthy. The true significance of collective bargaining as a means of resolving conflicts in an amicable manner was not overlooked. It has made it easier for management and trade unions to understand each other's issues and make accommodations. Additionally, it lessens and replaces weak attempts by individual workers to acquire attention or advancements with strength for

the interests of all workers.

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