

## **PERFORMANCE AND E-COMMUNICATION OF CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN TRADE UNIONISM IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper takes a look at performance and e (effective) communication of sundry issues on wages, condition of service working outcomes, collective bargaining, union media relations, union financial base privatisation and commercialisation, public private partnership in health, union roles in political economy, challenges, strategies and policy option for medical and health workers union of Nigeria(MHWUN).*

### **Preamble**

Please note that content is one of the fundamental basis for all presentations to effective. Raw content needs the embellishment of the many and diverse visual aids, some of which are either analogue or digital. These diverse visual aids that can be used include:

- Flip chart.
- Slides.
- Overhead projectors.
- Audio
- Video
- Keynote
- White boards
- Interactive white boards
- Power point
- Prezi
- Magic Boards
- Etc.

### **Definition Of Terms**

Shaibu 2016 in defining the horizon of performance and e communication states that performance and e communication includes the following:

- Effective communication
- E or Digital communication
- E or compliant communication
- Communication with results
- Communication using the appropriate media/medium
- Communication by not using typewriter communication techniques to solve digital problems
- Communicating the right way using the right language(s) and format(s).
- Communication via KISS theory

- Communication without noise with the right voice.
- Communication via digital multimedia techniques
- Performance e communication is communication of the page to make it come live and real for the receivers audience listeners and viewers of radio, television and social media.

### **What Is A Trade Union?**

Cambridge Dictionary : A trade union is an organization that represents the people who work in a particular industry, protects their rights, and discusses their pay and working conditions with employers. Trade unions protect, defend and support the common interests of their members by acting as a mediator between workers and the organizations for whom they work.

Trade Unions perform or seek to perform many functions. The first set of functions involved working to improve the position of workers in relation to their employment. In order to improve the position of workers in relation to their employment (first set of functions), Trade

Unions seek to achieve the following goals:

- To achieve higher wages and better working conditions
- To raise the status of workers as a part of industry
- To protect workers against victimization and injustice.

The second set of functions performed by trade unions aims at rendering help to its members in times of need, and improving their efficiency as well as to foster a spirit of cooperation and promote friendly industrial relations and diffuse education and culture among their members. In order to achieve these aims, trade unions work to

1. To take up welfare measures for improving the morale of workers
2. To generate self confidence among workers
3. To encourage sincerity and discipline among workers
4. To provide opportunities for promotion and growth
5. To protect women workers against discrimination

Increasingly, trade unions have become involved in undertaking welfare activities and also providing variety of services to their members and sometimes to the wider community which they are a part of. Some of the welfare activities performed by Trade Unions include:

1. Education of members in all aspects of their working life including improving their civic life, awareness in the environment around them, enhancement of their knowledge particularly in regard to issues that concern them, their statutory and other rights and responsibilities, workers' participation in management.
2. Publication of periodicals, newsletters or magazines for establishing communication with their members, making the members aware of union policy and stand on certain principal issues and personnel matters

concerning members, such as births, deaths, marriages, promotion and achievements.

3. Political functions: These functions include proposing labour related laws to the government, helping the government in implementing legislation related to activities of the union.

Tactics employed by trade unions to achieve these ends include:

- Collective Bargaining
  - Strikes
  - Threats Of Strikes
  - Parading • Boycotts
  - Trade Unionism In Nigeria
- ◆ There exists a long history of Trade Unionism in Nigeria. Prior to the coming of the colonial masters, organizations of people engaged in craft or trade have existed in Nigeria; these organizations could be referred to as trade unions because they were organized to regulate trade practices, to offer mutual aid and to fix prices –wages- for their services; such organizations included organizations of hunters, blacksmiths, carvers and weavers .
- ◆ These organizations consisted of tradesmen and their children or other blood relatives -usually sons-, there were no employment contracts as known today as the children learned the trades and took over from their fathers .
- ◆ The functions of these organizations some of which still existed today in the villages, included: settling of disputes, regulation of relationship between tradesmen, fixing of prices and organizing the payment of tribute to the traditional rulers.

### **Organised Trade Unionism**

Organised trade unionism in Nigeria can however be said to have officially started on Monday 19 August 1912 while Nigeria was still under colonial rule. On this date, workers in the then civil service organised themselves into trade unions as was done in Sierra Leone (Egboh, 1968). One Mr Henry Libert – a Sierra Leonean summoned a meeting of about thirty-three indigenous workers, and by the fifth meeting on 15 November 1912 after advice was received from Sierra Leone, the aim of the union was decided and this was to promote the welfare and interests of the indigenous workers of the Nigerian Civil Service (Okonkwo, 1993). It was known then as the Civil Service British Workers Union but later changed to the Nigerian Civil Service Union shortly before independence.

Key dates In Trade Unionism In Nigeria

- The Railway Workers Union and Nigerian Union of teachers were formed in 1931.

- By 1975, under the military regime of General MurtalaMuhammed one thousand trade unions were registered in Nigeria
- In 1975, the government established a Commission of Enquiry to look into the past activities of the unions.

Administrators were appointed to manage the unions as the unions were polarised and ideologically divided therefore creating labour problems for the country (Ibid, 1980). The unions were restructured into 42 along industrial lines and a Labour centre was created.

The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) was created in 1978 and the 42 industrial unions became affiliates under this group. This was given a legal backing through the Trade Union Decree.

- In 1989, the trade union was restructured again with 29 industrial unions affiliated to NLC through the Trade Union (Amendment) Decree 22 of 1978.

### **Wages**

Oxford Dictionary: A fixed regular payment earned for work or services, typically paid on a daily or weekly basis.

### **Condition Of employment**

Investopedia: The conditions that an employer and employee agree upon for a job. Terms of employment include an employee's job responsibilities, work days, hours, breaks, dress code, vacation and sick days and pay. They also include benefits such as health insurance, life insurance and retirement plans. Employees whose skills are in higher demand will have an advantage when negotiating terms of employment.

### **Collective Bargaining**

Collective bargaining is the process in which working people, through their unions, negotiate contracts with their employers to determine their terms of employment, including pay, benefits, hours, leave, job health and safety policies, ways to balance work and family and more. Collective bargaining is a way to solve workplace problems.

### **Union-Media Relations**

In order for Trade Unions to achieve their goals, working relationships with the media are very important, especially in terms of influencing public (stakeholder) opinion, as well as instilling the confidence of the Unions members and the general public in the trade unions.

### **Privatisation**

Privatisation is the process of transferring ownership of a business, enterprise, agency, public service, or public property from the public sector (a government) to the private sector, either to a business that operates for profit or to a non-profit organization. It may also mean the government outsourcing of services or functions to private firms, for example, revenue collection, law enforcement, and prison management.

### **Commercialization**

Commercialization or commercialisation is the process or cycle of introducing a new product or production method into the market. The term often connotes especially the entrance into the mass market as opposed to earlier niche markets, but it also includes a move from the laboratory into even limited commerce.

## **BASIC ROLE OF PERFORMANCE AND (EFFECTIVE) COMMUNICATION**

Shaibu(2015) states categorically that for a fundamental/foundational grounding, the role of effective communication over time include the following:

- Effective communication for information.
- Effective communication for entertainment.
- Effective communication for cultural promotion.
- Effective communication for education.

In broad categorisation there are two types of communications:

- Internal communication
- External communication

Note that these two must go hand in hand to avoid:

- Miscommunications
- Communication distortions
- Communication conflicts
- Etc.

Note that all trade unions all over the world have their trade union Stakeholders and Publics. It is effective communication that makes it possible for these stakeholders and Publics to be carried along for everybody to be on the same page. For this to happen it can be through:

- Sign communication
- Facial communication e.g.. Smile, frown etc.
- Handshakes
- Discussion, chat, dialogue at round tables,etc.
- Memos, letters, Newspapers, Magazine, etc.
- Radio, TV and social media.

Note that even here there are diverse techniques of presentation via diverse format that must be complied with Laudable as all these are, they can never see the light of day without effective communication. But it should be noted that effective communication has processes and vital components. Let us just mention a few that includes the following:

1. **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION MESSAGE:** here the theory to follow is the theory KISS. KISS is to keep it short and simple. All that needs to be done here, is to keep the messages of the union short and simple. Here we should avoid tense mix up, malapropism, grammatical summersault, etc.

2. EFFECTIVE MESSAGE MEDIUM: Here the message messenger should be credible, believable and not a medium that does not “work the talk” or “do as I say”. It should be noted that the medium must be devoid of noise. The theory here is the theory of “the medium determines the message”. There are many questions here to answer:
  - Are the union officials credible?
  - Are they believable?
  - Are their mission justifiable?
  - Are their Vision clear?
  - Etc.
3. EFFECTIVE MESSAGE RECEIVER: Here, for the message to be effective received, the enabling environment for the message respectability must be created by the messenger knowing the audience/ listener/ viewer . An indept knowledge of the following is deeply required:
  - Cultural intelligence
  - Emotional intelligence
  - Executive intelligence

## **CONCLUSION**

Shaibus’ earlier work on effective communication in an Organisation at Administrative Staff College of Nigeria, TopoBadagry, which is equally relevant to this paper summarises that all messages to be communicated:

- Must be short and simple ... KISS theory.
- Must not be diminished by “yorubanglish, engligbo, hausanglish” or our diverse provincial murderings /killings of English
- Must not exhibit noise or distortion.
- Must highlight the voice in effective communication.
- Must be through credible medium/media.
- Must be comprehensible and clear.
- Must not be drowned by violence and/or unbridled demonstrations by the unions.
- Must promote dialogue and better understanding.
- Etc.

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