
**FACTORS AFFECTING INTENTION TO JOIN AND REMAIN IN THE TRADE
UNIONS BY SECURITY FIRMS' EMPLOYEES IN KENYA: G4S SECURITY
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Abstract

There seems to be widespread recognition of the rational base of trade unions in the literature on industrial relations throughout the twentieth century. However, in the recent years, union membership has drastically dwindled as a result of privatization of public enterprises and liberalization of the economy. For instance, the former telecommunication employees absorbed in the mobile telephone companies cannot be allowed by the new employers to continue with their membership in the Communications Workers Union (CWU). Other sectors are not spared either. Contrary to the belief of many unions here, the Kenya Local Government Workers Union (KLGWU) is the only organisation whose membership cuts across all grades without industrial disquiet and conflict. The study sought to establish factors affecting intention to join and remain in the trade unions by security firms' employees in Kenya with special reference to G4S Security Services Limited. The research design that was employed in this study is descriptive research design. A descriptive research is a process of collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects in the study. The target population of the study was the employees of security firms in Kenya. The selection of the sample population was done through stratified random sampling where a proportion of 10% was selected from each stratum: a sample population of 158 respondents was selected. Questionnaire was used to obtain important information about the population. The researcher used qualitative and quantitative techniques in analyzing the data. Descriptive analysis was employed; which includes mean, frequencies and percentages. The analyzed data was presented in frequency and percentage tables to enhance easier interpretation and understanding of the research findings. The study found that economic conditions faced by workers in G4S Security Services Ltd influences their intention to join and remain in the trade unions to a great extent, workers were not allowed by their employer to join trade unions if they wanted to do so, there was a high level of victimization for employees who intended or have joined trade unions and this influenced their intention to join the trade unions. The study also revealed that the various aspects of job rotation highly influence employee's intention to join and remain in trade unions; job rotation influences employees to resign from the trade unions. Employees of G4S were found to be familiar with the work and operations of trade unions and the level of familiarity with trade unions influences the decision to join trade unions to a great extent. Further, the study found that the indicators of the intention to join and remain the trade unions were member's loyalty, number of applications, member's resignation, union activism behavior and members' contribution.

Keywords: Trade unions, Intention to join trade union and Human resources management.

Introduction

Trade unions are associations of employees (there are also associations of employers - F.K.E) and their main objective is to represent the employees' interests to the employers. The right to form and join a trade union is a fundamental human right. A well-functioning and respected trade union movement is often a good indicator of democracy and standards of human rights. Besides playing a role in the fight for better working conditions, trade unions have had (and continue to have) a key role in the building of social movements and the developing of social changes (Nzuve, 2007). The role of trade unions has been very varied. In some countries, where fascist and communist regimes were in place, trade unions were overtaken or created by state authorities and the political elite and turned into a tool for their oppressive regimes. As a result of this historical reality, many people are skeptical of the role that trade unions can play, and only lately have the workers from these countries started to recognize. In Kenya however, there is COTU as the umbrella governing trade unions (Terry, 1995).

A Trade Union is an organization of workers who have joined together so as to try to improve their interests. The main object of Trade Unions is to regulate relations between employees and employers (Nzuve, 2007). Singh (1969:170) defines a Trade Union as “an association which has as its main object the regulation of relations between workers and their employers or between one group of workers and another group of workers or between employers and other employers”.

There seems to be widespread recognition of the rational base of trade unions in the literature on industrial relations throughout the twentieth century. All definitions of trade unions concur with the view that their main purpose is to improve and promote the living standards of their members (Allen, 1996, p. 49). Indeed trade unions are seen primarily as agents constantly striving to improve the conditions of work of their members through bargaining and negotiation. If or when constrained to pursue political action, they do so as “an adjunct to extend the scope or coverage of bargaining or to protect the right to organize and bargain” (Kelly, 1998, p. 52). This role of trade unionism is reinforced by the notion that affluence is not a divinely ordained privilege granted to a small elite but something that can be attained by a large segment of the population through social engineering of the market value of work. There is a cultural assumption that affluence is not a dream but a goal that can be achieved by means of productive work. This has bred an instrumental attitude towards work which has been transferred to trade unionism in the sense that workers expect their trade unions to use their bargaining powers to fulfill their aspirations (Goldthorpe *et al.*, 1968).

In Kenya the history of Trade Union goes back to the period when the labour party was predominantly influenced by the Trade Union Congress which is the Central Organization of Trade Unions in Britain. The British government decided as a matter of policy to promote Trade Unions in their colonies and consequently appointed British Union's labour officers to come and organize workers Trade unions. Kenya was one of the targeted colonies. This culminated the formation of Kenya Federation of Labour (an alternative to the banned K.A.U). This move was obviously unpopular with the colonial masters / employers, who in turn formed the Federation of Kenya Employers (F.K.E) in January 1959, as a counter to the Federation of Labour.

A trade union simply means an association of workers in a particular trade, industry or craft. In a strict legal sense, it means an association formed primarily for the purpose of regulating the relations between employers and employees or employees and employees or employers and employers. According to justice L.J Harison, a trade union is essentially an organization of workers whose function is to enable them to act together to make possible collective bargaining. However, under the trade unions Act, a trade union includes both employers and workers organizations. The Industrial Relations Act, 2007 is the principal law regulating Trade Unions conduct in Kenya, It defines a Trade Union in Section 2 as; an association of employees, whose principal purpose is to regulate relations between employees and employers including an employers' organization. Contrary to belief of many unions here in Kenya, the Kenya Local Government Workers Union (KLGWU) is the only organisation whose membership cuts across all grades without industrial disquiet and conflict (Machyo, 2003). For instance, Town Clerks are members of the union with limited participation in union activities. By virtue of their roles as Council chief executives, they are not eligible to contest union elections but their grievances in Industrial Courts are handled by the union.

Trade unions are established to protect the working life of workers. Currently they are facing various challenges and hence weakening of the unions. Some of the problems being faced by trade unions in Kenya are challenges by globalization, revolution in production technologies and new management styles. Splintering, changing mentality, mismanagement of funds, lack of innovation and visionary leadership are a big handicap. Most unions are grappling with the democratization of social and political arena besides government interference (Musandu, 2007). There is need for redefining the role of unions beyond the workplace needs, reaching out to segments currently excluded. Kenya, like most African countries, hates a strong labour movement with diverse membership. Consequently, trade unionists have in the years been persecuted by none other than one time partners in the struggle for self-determination. The punitive practice against agitation for better terms and decent wages persists to this date without the government' intervention. Unfortunately, the trade union movement ceased to be a post-independence partner but a sworn enemy of the government. Strikes have violently crashed; leaders arrested and detained without trial save for a new constitution that legalizes picketing and demonstrations. Oblivious of the role played by unions in the struggle for political independence, the beneficiaries of the sacrifices by unions chose to perpetuate colonial practice against the labour movement in independent Kenya. One such glaring practice was the retention of colonial labour laws in the statute books for nearly half a century (Machyo, 2003).

Stopping workers of certain cadres from joining unions is common under the close watch of the Ministry of Labour. Employers foreign and local – enjoy above the law status in their quest to suppress industrial dissent. Domestic and farm workers bear the greatest brunt of discrimination in the hands of brutal employers. Export Processing Zone business owners are notorious for sacking employees who demand to be employed on permanent terms and joining a trade union is also tabooed (Busienei, 2005). There are more than 1.5 million people in Kenya's workforce and approximately 550,000 are eligible to join trade unions. COTU membership would be higher if casual laborers were allowed in. Casuals (temporary employees) are legally prohibited from joining unions. The Kenyan government insists that there are about 170,000 casuals, which according to COTU the term casual has haunted the trade union movement for many years and is

a throwback to the colonial era when workers were classified as casual people, which has resulted into declining membership. According to COTU Kenyan labor movement could be strengthened if the casuals are allowed to unionize. COTU has been negotiating with the government to organize casual workers regardless of their salaries. COTU also wants all casual workers to become eligible for the benefits that permanent workers get: worker's compensation, housing and pensions. The COTU secretary-general recently flayed the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) for advocating that the government should institute more controls on wages. COTU also believes that the current minimum wage of \$37 per month is "shamefully inadequate" and needs to be reviewed immediately. COTU is pushing for an increase to at least \$110 per month.

Unionizing casuals is essential to safeguard the gains of all Kenyan workers. Low wages and limited benefits make casuals an attractive proposition for companies trying to cut costs. The exploding population will only exacerbate the situation as more and more workers enter a work market incapable of keeping pace with this growth. As the population growth continues to outpace the growth of jobs, employers will have increasing leverage to demand concessions from both workers and their unions. Kenya's labor movement must somehow address these issues if it is to continue to make progress on worker's rights.

Statement of the Problem

The influence of trade unions is evident in crucial economic indicators such as employment, levels of wages, standard of working conditions etc. Studies on the labor movement in India show that there was no organized labor force in the early stages of industrialization in India. However, unbearably long hours of work, low wages etc, made the workers use a weapon called strike. Declining employment elasticity implies that more output is attained with less employment. Unions can affect this employment elasticity by resisting technological change that increases the possibility of substituting between capital and labour and by limiting the availability of goods and services that compete with the output of unionized firms.

Locally, Musandu (2007) in his study found out that the causes of fragmentation of Trade Unions are; Poor management of the Trade Unions, poor leadership, lack of education, poor representation, leadership wrangles, , conflict of interests, misappropriation and lack of union funds, increase in awareness of rights, and unfair elections. K'obonyo (1981) studied the operations of Trade Unionism in Kenya; a study of the railways African Union. Machyo (2003) studied women's participation in Trade Union leadership in Kenya. Busienei (2005) added to the body of knowledge by his study of the moderating effects of Trade Union membership on employee perception of job security and fair treatment by management in the manufacturing industry in Kenya. Moraa (2006) surveyed the strategies used by Trade Unions in negotiating with employers in Nairobi.

Despite documented evidence of declining membership of trade unions by employees, there has been scanty of research to explain factors leading to declining membership, thus the need for research to determine factors affecting intention to joining and remain in the trade unions among firm's employees in Kenya. The security firms in the country employ a relatively large pool of workers in the unionsable category that provides a good basis for understanding reasons affecting their intention to join and remain in the trade unions.

Objectives of the Study

The study sought to establish factors affecting intention to join and remain in the trade unions by security firms' employees in Kenya with special reference to G4S Security Services Limited.

The study specifically sought:

- i. To establish how the economic conditions faced by workers in G4S Security Services Ltd influences their intention to join and remain in the trade unions.
- ii. To determine how the state of human relations practices in G4S Security Services Ltd influences the employees' intention to join and remain in the trade unions.
- iii. To assess how the Human Resource Management practices being carried out at G4S Security Services Ltd influences the employees' intention to join and remain in the trade unions
- iv. To examine how the literacy level of employees working with G4S Security Services Ltd influences their intention to join and remain in the trade unions.

Theories of Trade Unions

Social Custom Theory

Although the main role of unions is to bargain the wage with the employer, becoming a union member is not necessary in order to enjoy the right to be covered by the wage contract negotiated by the union. If one disregards the closed shop - an institution that has almost disappeared - union members who work in a given firm or sector are covered by the same collective contract as non-members. So, if workers get the same wage, independently of their union status, and some of them choose to pay a membership fee, what does the membership card buy? The basic answer delivered by the literature is that membership buys the worker a good social treatment in the community he lives in or, in other words, a good reputation (Booth, 1985, Booth and Chatterji, 1993, Naylor and Cripps, 1993, Corneo, 1997, Goerke, 1997). As there exists no formal obligation for the union to provide its members with social rewards, union membership gives rise to an implicit contract.

New Social Movement Theory and Trade Unions

New Social Movement theory emerged in the 1970s and 1980s in a period of decline of trade union membership and influence in advanced capitalist societies. Partly as a result of this decline many academic commentators and social theorists became dismayed at the prospects for the union movement and were influenced by the development of alternative 'New Left' projects such as the peace and environment movements in West Germany or the autonomous social centres in Italy. These (mostly) West European NSM theorists suggested that social change would be more likely to be promulgated by apparently single issue movements such as the ecology or women's' movement beyond workplace-based and class divisions. These NSM's differed from trade unions in their openness to new ideas of action and mobilisation, and their anti-bureaucratic ways of working.

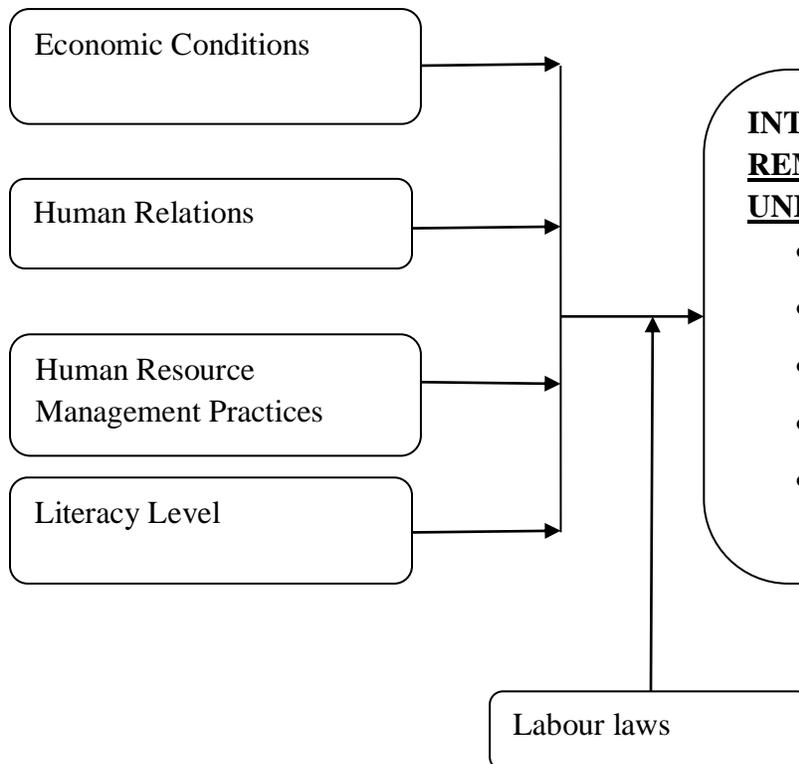
Social Impact Theory

Social influence studies in social psychology examine changes in judgments, opinions, and attitudes of an individual as a result of being exposed to the judgments, opinions, and attitudes of others (Moscovici *et al.*, 1969). In general, the theory states that majority opinions will factor more heavily into group decisions. Minority factions can have an influence on group outcomes; however, there are a number of process losses that can interfere with team's ability to recognize minority opinion as being important and valuable (Park and DeShon, 2010). Social impact theory states that a trainee has more influence over others in the group as the number of people who are trained increases, with each additional trainee having less impact on the group (Latané, 1981). As more group members receive the training, there will be a greater effect on a group, but the added value of training individuals will decrease as more members are trained. Collective efficacy represents a group's belief about their abilities. According to social impact theory, beliefs can be altered when a majority of a group has the ability to influence those beliefs. Therefore, it is likely that training a majority of the group's members ensures an increase in collective efficacy.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a research tool intended to assist a researcher to develop awareness and understanding of the situation under scrutiny and to communicate this.

Independent Variables



Intervening Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Trade unions are meant to argue better pay for its members in whichever sector in which they operate. Thus, it is conceptualized that trade unions in Kenya have positively influenced employee remuneration packages for their members. For the employees to perform better in their various capacities and to be able to handle the challenges they face in terms of their job content, training is very crucial. Thus, the trade unions generally negotiate for their members to attain adequate training to impact them with skills necessary to effectively perform their roles. It is therefore hypothesized that trade unions in Kenya have had a positive impact on training and development of employees (who are their members).

Employees' salaries strongly affect their intention to join and remain in the trade union as the union trade unions depends on member's contribution to finance their activities, employees with low income will find it hard to have their salaries deducted union contribution and this will influence their intention to join and remain in the trade union. COTU believes that the current minimum wage is inadequate and need to be reviewed immediately as this acts as an obstacle to employees who wants to join trade unions. Employees who feel they are overburdened by union contributions will tend to resign from the unions, an increase in salary would result to increase in the number of applications. Human Resources Management approaches and industrial relations can successfully coexist. Various research in the developed world reveals that HRM practices have been introduced by employers as union substitution strategies , union substitution policies tend to be concentrated in large firms that can afford specialized industrial relations personnel. Employers are increasingly adopting human resource management approaches, which includes strategy based on fear and intimidation seeking to create a perception that the union is 'bad' or 'source of trouble' and/or a union marginalization strategy based on communication through non-union channels.

The level of education of employees determine to a great extent their level of understanding the perceived benefits accrued from being members of trade unions, most employees with low education background seems not to understand the benefits they would receive from being members of trade unions and therefore this influences their intention to join and remain in trade unions. Employees with low level of education will perceive joining of union as activism and thus will fear to join trade union and even though they remain as members they won't be active members. Employees especially those in the manufacturing sector are faced with health hazards in their working places. In order to improve the health conditions, trade unions are usually at the forefront to ensure that such health concerns are addressed by the employers. It is therefore hypothesized that the trade unions in Kenya have had a positive influence on the improvement of health conditions for workers in organizations. There are number of factors that influence the intention to join and remain in the trade by security firms employees in Kenya, these includes; economic conditions, human relations, Human Resource Management practices and literacy level.

Research Methodology

The research design that is to be employed in this study is descriptive research design. The target population of the study comprised of the management, senior level and low level officers of G4S Security Services Limited in the country all estimated to be 1,573. The target was as follows:

Table 1: Target Population

Level	No in Position	Percentage
Top Management	27	1.7
Senior Officer	178	11.3
Low Officer Level	1368	87.0
Total	1573	100.0

The study sampled employees of G4S Security Services Security firm in Kenya. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select 158 staffs working with G4S Security Services Ltd at their Head Office, this represented 10% of the entire population of employees working with G4S Security Services Ltd, Gay recommends a 10% of the accessible population for descriptive studies (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003) but says the larger the sample the more reliable the data is. The sample was as follows:

Table 2: Sample Size

Level	Population Size	Sample Size (10% of the Population)
Top Management	27	3
Senior Officer	178	18
Low Officer Level	1368	137
Total	1573	158

Questionnaire was used to obtain important information about the population. The face to face interviews are preferred as they allowed the researcher to probe for more information from the respondent. The questionnaire contained questions which were closed ended, Likert and open ended questions. The researcher used qualitative and quantitative techniques in analyzing the data. Descriptive analysis was employed; which include; weighted mean frequencies and percentages. The organised data was interpreted on account of concurrence to objectives using assistance of computer packages especially Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft excel to communicate the research findings. Regression analysis was used to establish the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables. The regression model was as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \epsilon_i$$

Results and Discussion

From the study population target of 158 respondents, 128 respondents filled and returned their questionnaires, constituting 81% response rate. Data analysis was done through Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). Frequencies and percentages were used to display the results which were presented in tables, charts and graphs.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.898 ^a	.806	.801	.19758

Adjusted R² which is termed as the coefficient of determination tells us how intention to join and remain in trade unions varied with economic condition, human relations, human resource management practices and literacy level. According to the findings in table above, the value of adjusted R² is 0.801. This implies that, there was a variation of 80.1% of intention to join and remain in trade unions with economic condition, human relations, human resource management practices and literacy level at a confidence level of 95%. R is the correlation coefficient which shows that there was a strong correlation between the study variable as shown by the correlation coefficient of 0.898.

Table 4: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.232	6	0.372	3.131	.048 ^b
	Residual	39.809	121	0.329		
	Total	42.041	127			

From the ANOVA statics in table above, the processed data, which is the population parameters, had a significance level of 4.8% which shows that the data is ideal for making a conclusion on the population's parameter as the value of significance (p-value) is less than 5%.

Table 4.5: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.833	.172		4.847	.000
	Economic condition	.142	.082	.132	1.739	.084
	Human relation	.643	.082	.586	7.835	.000
	Human resource management practices	.232	.083	.246	2.806	.006
	Literacy level	.162	.063	.223	2.583	.011

From the finding in table the established regression equation was

$$Y = 0.833 + 0.142 X_1 + 0.643 X_2 + 0.232X_3 + 0.162 X_4$$

From the above regression model Economic Conditions, Human Relations, Human Resource Management Practices and Literacy Level to constant zero, intention to join and remain in trade unions would be at 0.833. It was established that a unit increase in economic condition would cause an increase in intention to join and remain in trade unions by a factor of 0.142, unit increase in human relation would lead to increase in intention to join and remain in trade unions by a factor of 0.643, also a unit increase in human resource management practices would cause and increase in intention to join and remain in trade unions by factors of 0.232, further unit increase in literacy level would cause an increase in intention to join and remain in trade unions by factors of 0.162.

Conclusion

The study set out to investigate and analyze factors affecting intention to join and remain in the trade unions by security firms employees' with special reference to G4S Security Services Limited in Nairobi. The study found that economic conditions faced by workers in G4S Security Services Ltd influences their intention to join and remain in the trade unions to great extent. The salary level influences the decision to join trade unions to a great extent. The study found that workers were not allowed by their employer to join trade unions if they wanted to do so. It was further established that there was a high level of victimization for employees who intend or have joined trade unions and this influenced their intention to join trade unions. The study also revealed that employee resignation from the trade unions as a result of harassment or victimization by the management is high.

With regard to job rotation, the study found that job rotation influences employees' intention to join and remain in the trade union. It was revealed that the various aspect of job rotation highly influences employees' intention to join and remain in trade unions. Further, the study found that job rotation influence employees to resign from the trade unions. This is an indication that the employees of G4S agreed that job rotation influence employees to resign from the trade unions. The study also found that the employees of G4S were familiar with the work and operations of trade unions and the level of familiarity with trade unions influences the decision to join to a great extent. The importance of trade union membership benefits were highlighted as follows; free legal protection , education and training, other benefits, better wages and working conditions , job protection ,fringe benefits, safety at work and a more secure retirement .

The study further revealed that the indicators of the intention to join and remain the trade unions were , member's loyalty indicate the intention to join and remain the trade unions by security firms' employees in Kenya, number of applications indicate the intention to join and remain the trade unions by security firms' employees in Kenya, member's resignation indicate the intention to join and remain the trade unions by security firms' employees in Kenya, union activism behaviour indicate the intention to join and remain in the trade unions by security firms' employees in Kenya, members' contribution indicate the intention to join and remain the trade unions by security firms' employees in Kenya.

Recommendations

The recommends that there is need for trade unions to encourage employees of security firms to join trade unions in Kenya through negotiation of wages, laying down favourable work rules, complaint handling, rules governing hiring, firing and promotion of workers, benefits, and workplace safety policies.

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