

Effectiveness of Public Sector Trade Unions: A Case of Public Service Association of Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This study sought to assess the effectiveness of the Public Service Association (PSA) in Zimbabwe, using Harare as the study area. The study employed a descriptive research design with a study sample of 323 respondents. Self-administered survey questionnaires were sent to 317 respondents and in-depth interviews with six key informants were held as data collection methods. The study revealed that the association membership declined by 54.54% from 2010 to the period under study. It was found out that the association has no active workplace workers representative structures as stated by 68.4% of the respondents. 88.3% of the respondents confirmed lack of effective information sharing between union officials and members in Public Service Association. Furthermore, findings show that the Association has no influence over decisions of the employer on issues affecting members such as cutting of wage bill in the civil service and retrenchments, thus failing to protect the interests of members. Serious concerns and expectations were raised by respondents, particularly lack of collective bargaining and a social contract. The results of this study led to the conclusion that the Public Service Association was ineffective and it is recommended that the organisation needed renewal right from the top leadership down to lower structures through a democratic process of free and fair elections as a way of saving the association from collapsing.

Index terms: Labour organisation, industrial relations, collective bargaining, decent work

I. INTRODUCTION

In Zimbabwe, there are fourteen registered public sector unions for civil servants, representing three sectors, namely, health, education and the rest of civil service. The economic challenges experienced from year 2007 to 2018 had a serious impact on private and public sector unions. Despite its liquidity challenges, the Zimbabwe Public Services Commission employs about 188070 civil servants out of its substantive establishment strength of around 280,000 civil servants who occupied various grades and occupations in the service some of which were still vacant since 2006 (Zimbabwe Salary Service Bureau, 2016). Of this number, only 31% belong to public sector unions, with the education sector having 25% majority membership, while the PSA representing rest of civil service having only 4% membership.

The Public Service Association (PSA) is a public sector trade union which represents the rest of the civil service outside the uniformed forces, health and education sectors in Zimbabwe. Although its objectives are to protect and promote the interests of its members, the performance of the association has been a subject of debate among its members and stakeholders for a long time. Some members felt that the association was not performing well while its membership remained low against a wide market share at its disposal. Therefore this research assessed the effectiveness of the Public Service Association in representing the concerns and interests of civil servants. The major objective was to find out what contributes to union effectiveness or decline.

II. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

The theoretical scope of this paper was guided by two theories, namely; the organizational effectiveness and the consumer choice theories. Within the consumer choice theory of union joining behaviour, Farber and Western (2002) argue that higher union effectiveness implies higher returns to membership net of cost. If a union is perceived as “effective” employees are more likely to think they have something tangible to gain from membership either in terms of better wages, better non-pecuniary terms of employment or better insurance against arbitrary employer actions. Thus an increase in union effectiveness will increase the individual’s propensity to purchase membership (or remain a member) by shifting the individual’s perceptions of the benefits relative to the costs. According to Edwards and Rizzo (2002), relative returns to membership are not the only factors determining employees’ union joining behaviour and union membership status, other factors include social background, parental influence, demographic characteristics like age, job characteristics and satisfaction with one’s job and working environment.

2.1 Effectiveness of unions in organizing and service delivery

This paper distinguishes and discusses two types of union effectiveness. Firstly, I discuss organizational effectiveness, a term used to describe those factors which give a union the capacity to represent its members by virtue of its ‘healthy’ state of organization (Bryson, 2003). The second type of effectiveness is the union’s ability to “deliver” for members in improving work and working conditions. Together, according to Bryson (2003), these two types of effectiveness signal a union that is effective in representing its membership. The paper considers the meaning of union effectiveness and identifies features of union structures

and behaviour that are correlated with employee perceptions of union effectiveness in delivering for members. Goldman (2002) argued that organizational effectiveness may feed through to improved structures, delivery of outcomes and success in delivering for employees and may encourage non-members to join, providing a sound basis for improved organizational effectiveness. This analysis points to a clear relationship of the two variables. After reviewing some evidence on union effectiveness, Bryson (2003) introduced seven dimensions of organizational effectiveness namely; (1) The union's ability to communicate and share information (2) Usefulness of the union as a source of information and advice (3) The union's openness and accountability to members (4) The union responsiveness to members' problems and complaints (5) How seriously management take the union (6) The union's understanding of the employer's business, and (7) The power of the union.

Bryson (2003) went on to assess unions' ability to deliver improvements in work and the working environment in seven areas as: (a) Getting pay increase (b) Offering protection against unfair treatment (c) Promotion of equal opportunities (d) Making work interesting and enjoyable (e) Working with management for improved performance (f) Increasing managerial responsiveness to employees, and (g) Making the workplace a better place to work.

In the context of trade unions, organizational effectiveness theory argues that, organizing is mobilizing workers and actively involving them in the union, while recruiting is the enrolling of workers into the union (TUC, 2001). Recruitment of membership should focus on all categories of workers regardless of status, sex, religion etc. The theory posits that it is important to give special attention to the involvement of women in trade unions (PSI Study Material, 1995). In organizing women, PSI argues that steps taken in recruiting both men and women are the same. The union's leaders must make sure that members are involved in union activities by organizing seminars, meetings and publishing. When it comes to organizing women, special care must be taken because women have different interest and needs. When women are well organized they can lead, communicate with and persuade others. They can acquire knowledge of trade union techniques and procedures and can lobby for changes in laws and bargain for equal participation and representation in all trade union programmes (TUC 2009). According to TUC, the most overlooked guiding document by many unions is the constitution, yet it is the cornerstone of order and discipline in any organisation.

2.2 Trade union constitution

A constitution is a written document that sets the basic rules and structure of an organization or society in order to carry out its functions smoothly and effectively. Trade union constitutions are regarded as the supreme law of the union. A trade union like any other organization must have a constitution that states its objectives and describes its principles, regulations and how it should run (TUC, 2001). The constitution must be for the interest of its members. It is therefore important that members of the union must know and understand their constitution. TUC (2001) argues that union structures are the functional set up that protect the union democracy and they differ from union to union.

2.3 Union Organisational Structure and Influence

Burchielli (2000) argues that the study of organizational effectiveness in trade unions, an underdeveloped field of academic inquiry, is important as it contributes to the understanding of organizational structure and effectiveness in trade unions. Burchielli, observes that many issues facing trade unions today can only be tackled by strengthening trade union organizational structure. In many cases unions need to look to their organization to ensure that all sections of membership are fully represented and involved.

Fashoyin (2009) argues that unions should consider a number of important areas, to tackle practical problems and consider union policies and experiences and look at the use of relevant legal rights. Unions should improve the way they organize, involve, represent and bargain for their members (ILO, 1997). Emphasis should be placed on practical strategies, and on learning from the experiences of different unions. Increasing skills and techniques to communicate effectively and getting the message over to the members and to the public is a requisite for union organizational capacity.

Barnes and Reid (1981) in their studies on governments and trade unions observed that since 1945 all governments have been concerned about the consequences of trade union power. They argue that governments have regarded the wage increases produced by collective bargaining as inhibiting their attempts to maintain full employment, stable prices and a satisfactory balance of payments and increase the rate of economic growth and generally manage the economy. They found out that when unions have increased industrial power and political influence, their membership increased and vice versa. They noted that in Britain several Acts were created which prohibited civil servants from belonging to unions in membership with Trade Union Congress (TUC) after it incited widespread strikes.

During that period of strife, Ramsay and MacDonald as cited in Barnes and Reid (1981) described the attitude of trade unions representatives as practically a declaration of war, saying: "if we yield now to the TUC we shall never be able to call our bodies or souls or intelligences our own". In support of this statement, Stanley Baldwin in Barnes and Reid, (1981) echoed that it was an attempt to take over power by a body that has not been elected. He said 'if it succeeded it will be the end of parliamentary democracy, which they have taken centuries to build, there can be no negotiations and it can only end in a complete surrender'. These statements reflect how powerful a trade union can be when it has the full support of its membership.

2.4 Membership Concerns and Expectations

2.4.1 Legislation constraints

Most governments allow their employees to form unions/associations yet they prohibit them from engaging in collective bargaining over one or more benefits such as pay, personnel rights, health insurance, or pension contributions, as well as preventing them from going on strike against the government (Edwards 2003, Freeland 1999 & Goldman, 2002). Public sector unions are usually prohibited from collective bargaining with respect to pay or their membership benefits and or rights on the grounds that their employer, the general public, is not represented in such collective bargaining agreements but rather by administrative officials who cannot fully represent nor bind the voter or tax payer to rules or procedures that may conflict with existing or subsequently executed laws and regulations (Nyanga & Chifamba, 2012).

This implies that the legislation might be in place but it may not be implemented. For example, the Public Service Act Chapter 16:04 in Zimbabwe does not give public sector employees outright power to bargain (Mawerera & Lee, 2000). The Zimbabwe Public Service Act does not recognize the right to engage in collective bargaining in the civil service; neither does it recognize the right to strike. This is a major concern in the public sector union membership as PSA is not accorded full rights as workers' organization (ZCTU, 2012). The public service legislation only recognizes consultations and the employer has the final say in decision making. Collective bargaining without the recognition of full right to strike is useless as this tilts the balance of power in favour of the employer. It also violates the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention of Freedom of Association, which embodies the right to strike and is inseparable from the convention on collective bargaining.

2.4.2 Absence of Social Contract:

In industrial relations, a social contract arrangement was described by Edwards (2003) as one in which both parties, government and trade union, agree to work together to their mutual advantage and to achieve a climate of more cooperative and therefore less adversarial industrial relations. A social contract agreement may include understanding from both sides; for example, government may offer job security linked to productivity and the union may agree to new forms of work organization that might require more flexibility on the party of employees. Five key values for social contract have been set down by Roscoe and Casner-Lotto (1998).

- Mutual trust and respect,
- A joint vision for the future and the means to achieve it,
- Continuous exchange of information,
- Recognition of the central role of collective bargaining, and
- Devolved decision making

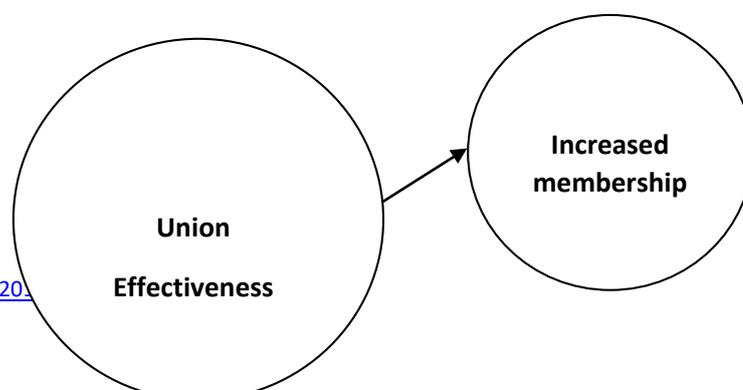
Although the list is not exhaustive, this is what is missing and what the PSA membership expects from the employer for quality service to prevail in the civil service.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study utilised a quantitative research design to explore membership perceptions and experience of PSA service delivery to its entire membership. Self-administered questionnaires and interviews were used as data collection methods. The questionnaire gathered data on PSA effectiveness in terms of organising and service delivery to its members. Interviews with union leadership in Harare were held to gather information about how they conduct union business across all membership divides given their strategic positions in the union structures. The study sample was 323 PSA members and officials based in Harare who were randomly selected in their different workplaces.

IV CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The effectiveness of a union is measured by its ability to organize and the deliverables that benefit its membership. Delivery effectiveness is dependent on organizing capacity. As shown in the diagram below, union effectiveness depends on organizational effectiveness and delivery effectiveness. Union effectiveness leads to increase in membership.



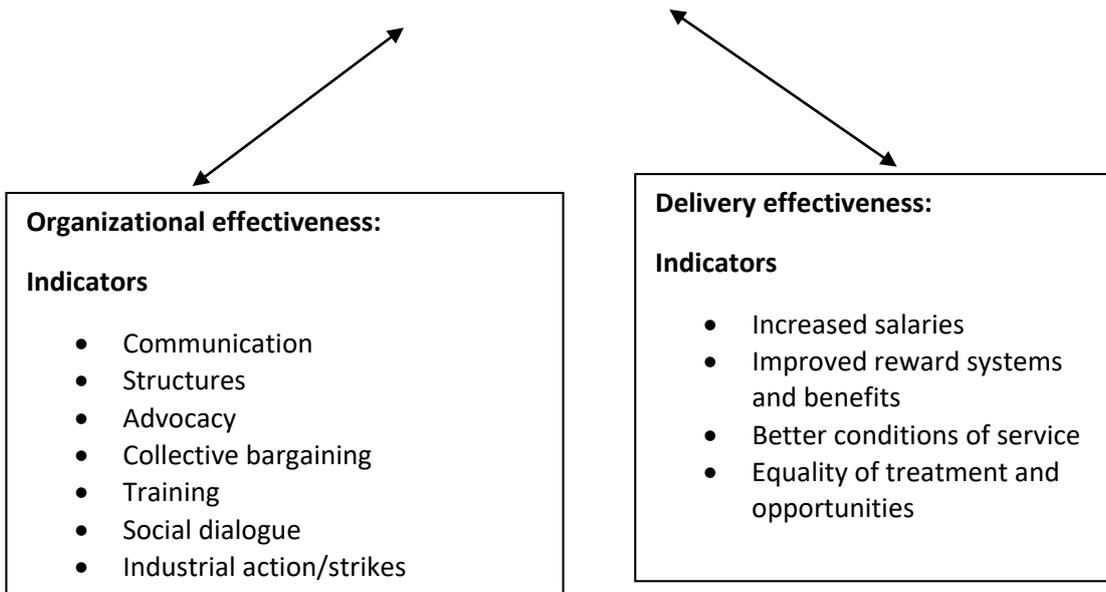


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

V. FINDINGS

5.1 Membership Trend in the Public Service Association

The investigation revealed that PSA membership was declining. Figure 2 below shows a declining membership trend over a five-year period, signalling future uncertainty of the PSA. Membership sharply declined from 8290 in 2012 to 3996 in 2014, gradually declining to 3768 in 2016.

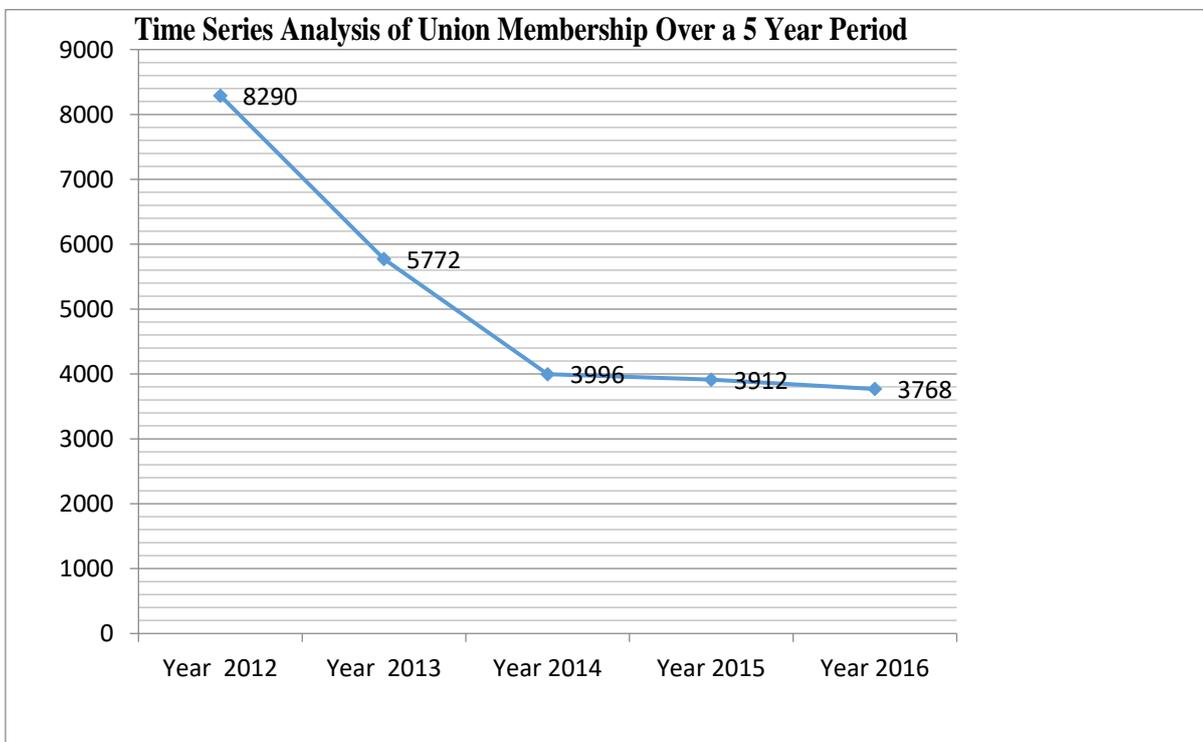


Figure 2: Trend Analysis of Declining PSA Membership

5.2 Length of Membership in PSA

According to the survey results, about 45% of the civil servants had been members of PSA for 35 years, 25% had been members for 20-30 years and, 20% joined between 10-19 years ago, while 10% had been members for the past 1-9 years.

Table 1: Number of years as PSA member

Length of membership	SEX		Total
	MALE	FEMALE	
0-5 YEARS	29	28	53
6-11 YEARS	20	38	58
12-17 YEARS	26	22	48
18-23 YEARS	34	31	65
24-29 YEARS	22	32	54
30-35 YEARS	29	10	39
Total	166	151	317

5.3 Benefits received from public service association

The Public Service Association has strived to lure civil servants by providing packages of service that include soft loans to its members. The survey showed that about 30.19% of civil servants who are members of Public Service Association received soft loans, 26.42% said they benefited through safeguarding their rights as an employee, while 13.21% said they received nothing.

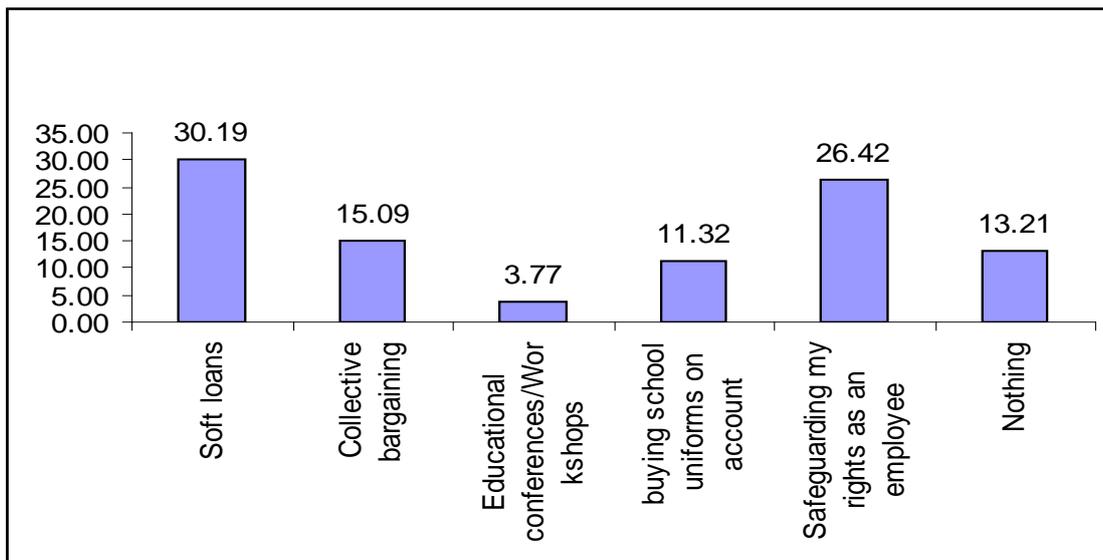


Figure 3: Civil

servants by benefits received from PSA

5.4 Intention to Remain a Member

The survey revealed that about 54.1% wanted to terminate PSA membership. Only about 45.9% said they would remain as members. PSA members made comments in the questionnaire that the PSA should introduce more schemes for its members in order to attract new recruits.

Table 2: Intention to remain members of public service association

Intention To Remain A Member		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	144	42.5
	No	170	50

	Total	317	92.5
Undecided		3	7.5
Total		317	100

5.4.1 Reasons for No Intention to Remain a Member

On why the civil servants wanted to resign from PSA membership, 42.9% indicated that they were not benefiting from the association. This was followed by 14.3 % who said that the organization had failed to represent workers’ interests.

Table 3: Reasons for not intending to remain a member of Public Service Association

Reason for not Intending to Remain A Member (n=317)	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Poor organizational culture	22	9.5	9.5	9.5
It is not safeguarding my rights, subscriptions too high	31	4.8	4.8	14.3
Lack of transparency	11	4.8	4.8	19.0
Retiring on pension	12	4.8	4.8	23.8
No longer interested	22	4.8	4.8	28.6
Not benefiting	109	42.9	42.9	71.4
Only joined to get a loan for driving lessons	11	4.8	4.8	76.2
Organization is manipulated by the government	15	4.8	4.8	81.0
Organization not representing workers interests	70	14.3	14.3	95.2
There is no benefit	14	4.8	4.8	100.0
Total	317	100.0	100.0	

5.5 Perceptions of members on PSA Effectiveness

Overall, the Public Service Association’s organizing effectiveness has been described as ineffective. The research established that 88.3% of respondents strongly disagreed that PSA shares information with its members, 68.4% strongly disagreed that PSA educates its members on labour rights and 66.5% indicated that it was difficult to contact PSA officials, 65% believed that the PSA leadership was incompetent, while 68.4% indicated there were no active and effective structures at workplaces. The research further revealed that 65.9% of respondents saw PSA as powerless to influence the employer’s decisions, while 88.3% indicated that PSA local meetings were not well attended, as indicated in the table below.

Table 4: Overall response on PSA Effectiveness(n=317)

Degree of agreement / disagreement		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	2	.60	.006	.006
	Agree	13	4.1	.041	.047

	Disagree	121	38.17	38.17	38.21
	Strongly disagree	177	55.83	55.83	100.0
	Total	313	98.73	100.0	
Missing		4	1.26		
Total		317	100.0		

Table 5: PSA Organizational Effectiveness

Effectiveness scales (n=317)	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
PSA share information with members	.025	.038	.031	.022	.883
PSA educate its members on labour rights	.031	.031	.094	.157	.684
There are difficulties in conducting PSA officials	.069	.056	.063	.142	.665
PSA has competent leadership	.066	.06	.094	.094	.650
PSA structures are active and effective at workplaces	.069	.056	.056	.132	.684
Powerfulness of PSA in influencing employer's decisions	.019	.038	.094	.189	.659
PSA Local meetings are well attended	.025	.037	.028	.025	.883

Key: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 6: Percentage distribution of respondents on local meetings attendance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	8	2.5	1.4	1.4
	Agree	12	3.7	29.6	31.0
	Disagree	8	2.5	35.2	66.2
	Strongly disagree	286	88.3	33.8	100.0
	Total	314	95.9	100.0	
Missing		3	4.1		
Total		317	100.0		

5.5.1 Delivery Effectiveness of Public Service Association:

On PSA delivery effectiveness, the survey revealed that 68.1% of the respondents strongly disagreed that the association was improving job security, health and safety and pay increase, while only 6.9% strongly agreed. On whether PSA was protecting and promoting the interests of its members against unfair treatment, 84.5% respondents strongly disagreed, while 65.6% strongly disagreed that PSA was effectively negotiating for better pay, benefits and better conditions of service, 63.4% strongly disagreed that the association improved reward systems, with 64.9% also strongly disagreeing that they were enjoying non-monetary benefits. On the improvement of decent work by PSA, 26.8% strongly agreed, 20.8% agreed, while 32.8% strongly disagreed and 12.6% disagreed, as indicated in Table 7.

Table 7: PSA Delivery effectiveness

Factor structure on PSA delivery effectiveness (n=317)	SA%	A%	U%	D%	SD%

PSA is improving job security, health & safety and pay increase	.069	.053	.066	.126	.681
PSA is protecting and promoting members' interests against unfair treatment	.037	.025	.031	.06	.845
PSA is effectively negotiating for better pay, benefits and conditions of service	.012	.044	.100	.186	.656
Improved reward systems by PSA	.069	.094	.063	.135	.634
Enjoying non-monetary benefits (housing, free motor vehicle imports) etc.	.069	.056	.100	.088	.649
Decent work has improved	.268	.208	.069	.126	.328

Key: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

5.6 Concerns of PSA members

The research revealed that PSA members had serious concerns, which they felt needed to be addressed. These, as shown in Table 4.17, were: (i) wages and salaries; (ii) conditions of service; (iii) salary increments; (iv) gender rights; (v) legal framework and collective bargaining; (vi) high subscriptions; (vii) power of negotiators; and (viii) PSA capacity to negotiate.

5.6.1 Wages and Salaries

63.1% strongly disagreed that their wages and salaries were satisfactory, 21.7% disagreed while only 1.8% strongly agreed that the salaries and wages were satisfactory and 4.1% agreed. This implies that the majority of PSA members were generally not happy with the level of remuneration they are getting from their employer and wished their union would do more in negotiating for better salaries and wages.

5.6.2 Conditions of Service

On fairness of conditions of service, 30.2% strongly agreed that the conditions of service are fair, 20.8% agreed while 23.9% disagreed and 14.5% strongly disagreed. This meant that the majority generally accept the conditions of service as somewhat fair with a room for improvement.

5.6.3 Salary Increments

Since the last 12 months there has not been a salary increment as indicated by the survey results on table 4.17; at least 55.2% strongly disagreed and 41.6% disagreed to ever receiving a salary increment in the last twelve months.

Table 8: Concerns of membership (n=317)

Concerns of membership (n=317)	SA%	A%	U%	D %	SD%
Wages / salaries are satisfactory or in line with your job	.018	.041	.091	.217	.631
Conditions of service are fair	.302	.208	.104	.239	.145
Member's salary increased in the last 12 months	.012	.018	0	.416	.552
Gender rights being respected	.347	.302	.037	.157	.154

There is adequate legal framework for effective collective bargaining in the civil service	0	0	.110	.236	.652
There is social contract and an independent Collective Bargaining Council in the civil service	.015	.050	.066	.356	.511
Subscriptions not too high	.085	.142	.012	.318	.441
Government negotiators have power to implement agreements	.06	.148	.104	.315	.372
PSA have capacity to engage in effective collective bargaining processes	.069	.321	.037	.277	.293

ender Rights

The survey indicated that gender rights were being respected as

34.7% strongly agreed, 30.2% agreed while only 1.54% strongly disagreed and 1.57% disagreed.

5.6.5 Legal framework and collective Bargaining

The inadequacy of collective bargaining legal framework, the lack of social contract and an independent collective bargaining council in the civil service were raised, 65.2% strongly disagreed that there was adequate legal framework for collective bargaining, while 51.1% strongly disagreed that there was social contract and an independent collective bargaining council and 36.5% disagreed.

5.6.6 Subscriptions too high

Out of all three hundred and seventeen respondents, 44.1% strongly disagreed, 31.8% disagreed that the subscriptions charged by PSA are not too high, 5% strongly agreed and 1.42% agreed that subscriptions were not too high, while 1.2% were undecided.

5.6.7 Power of Negotiators

37.2% strongly disagreed and 31.5 % disagreed that government negotiators have power to implement agreements arrived at negotiations.

5.6.8 PSA capacity to negotiate

Out of all respondents, 29.3% strongly disagreed, 27.7% disagreed, while 32.1% agreed that PSA has the capacity to engage in collective bargaining. Only 6.9% strongly agreed while 3.7% were undecided.

Interview Responses:

Six selected union officials were interviewed about the general performance of the Public Service Association and how members perceived its effectiveness. There was a general consensus amongst officials who noted that the PSA has not been performing well and that there was persistent membership decline. There were three key factors that were identified as major causes of PSA's ineffectiveness, namely, (a) lack of a social contract with the employer (government), (b) lack of independent collective bargaining structure and, (c) the need for labour law reform given that the Public Service Act, which governs the civil servants does not provide for collective bargaining but mere consultations and that it did not recognize the right to strike.

5.7 Discussion

5.7.1 Deliverables

On deliverables such as increase in salaries, improvement of benefits, and equality of treatment and opportunities the majority of the respondents strongly felt that there was need for improvement. They felt that PSA was not adequately delivering in these areas yet they are critical areas which can negatively impact on union effectiveness, if they are not adequately addressed. As such, these areas should not be ignored if the union is to enhance its effectiveness and attract more members. Bearing in mind that the civil service does not provide cash loans for emergencies or to meet financial stress, respondents expected the PSA to provide cash loans and other credit facilities like agricultural inputs, building materials, and residential stands for its members through negotiating with the corporate world on their behalf. Improvement in the area of deliverables could ultimately halt the protracted decline in membership by making the union more appealing to current and potential members.

5.7.2 Organizational Effectiveness

Aspects of organizational effectiveness outlined in the conceptual model for this study proved to be critical for the overall effectiveness of the union. These include communication, appropriate structures, advocacy, collective bargaining, training, <http://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.9.05.2019.p8974>

social dialogue and industrial action. The respondents predominantly felt that these were crucial for the effectiveness of the union. The major expectation of civil servants was effective representation of their interests by the Public Service Association. The general membership was of the opinion that the key business of PSA was to represent members effectively. PSA was not representing its membership effectively. This could account for the precipitous decline in membership which had afflicted the union over the past few years. To address the ominous challenge of dwindling membership, the union needs to institute measures to enhance its organizational effectiveness. The research participants predominantly indicated that PSA should prioritize training and workshops for capacity building. This clearly indicates that training and workshops are key in educating memberships. It also provides a platform for members to meet and exchange experiences and new ideas, thereby ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of the union.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The concerns and expectations of members exposed the association's weaknesses in service delivery which is key to union effectiveness. Unresolved concerns are as good as grievances that have not been attended to or virtually ignored. Once a response is delayed or not proffered, apathy creeps in, resulting in premature termination of membership and its decline.

Most of the concerns were bread and butter issues associated with the rationale for going to work and the conditions of near slavery and despondency were serious accurate indicators of union ineffectiveness. As the objectives of many unions at large are to protect and promote the interests of its members, (Burchielli, 2004), it appears PSA has missed on this one as evidenced by the respondents' wide concerns and expectations which pointed to the association's ineffectiveness in service delivery.

The objectives of this research have been met beyond expectations as most answers to the research questions are more useful and can help PSA to swim instead of sinking.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

An analysis of views from different respondents revealed that future viability of the Public Service Association will be better if they seek for a harmonized Labour Act, and the establishment of an independent Collective Bargaining Council in the Public Sector. Given the challenges, brought about by the economic hardship the country is facing, unity of purpose is the key to effective collective bargaining for decent work practices by the employer. Most of the trade union officials and the respondents gave varied and interesting recommendations for the future prosperity of the association. The following recommendations have been made:

7.9.1 Union Structures

The effectiveness of any organization lies with its structure. The PSA should restructure and establish structures at all levels in Districts and Provinces as well as workplaces. The leadership of these structures should be elected by the local membership and Annual General Meetings be held to renew the union leadership and review its strategic plan. The National leadership should also go for elections after all the lower structures have been put in place.

7.9.2 Collective Bargaining Council

There is an urgent need for an independent collective bargaining council (CBC) as provided for in the Zimbabwe Constitution. The CBC should be administered by an independent secretariat appointed and funded by the council. Both the workers union and the employer must be levied equally to finance the council. All resolutions made by the council must be binding on both parties and the council must have absolute power to execute agreements. At collective bargaining, issues of social contract and equality of treatment and opportunities are addressed and the outcome of the collective bargaining should translate to union effectiveness. It is therefore recommended that effort be made to push government to establish the Collective Bargaining Council as provided for in the constitution.

7.9.3 Merging of unions

It is important to note that the problems in the civil service need to be resolved by pooling resources together in order to benefit from an expanded skill base, more cash resources, utilize already good infrastructure developed by unions and ensure that viability of the trade unions remain achievable. This could be done through strategic alliance with other players in the trade unions industry and merging of unions so as to thwart competition. It is common knowledge that there is strength in unity and numbers; as such, it is recommended that unions may merge to form one strong union.

7.9.4 Politics of Patronage

Public Service Association must continue to be apolitical if it is to be effective and serve the interests of its members whose private affiliation to political parties is their secret which should be kept outside union business.

7.9.5 Union Representation

The findings of this research indicated that trade union representation is generally weak as evidenced by lack of effective structures, competences and unity of purpose by the union officials. It also appears that some union leaders are not elected on merit to match the quality of debates experienced in the negotiations process. It is therefore recommended that the secretariat of unions and its leadership be appointed/ elected on merit to meet the challenges associated with human resources issues and collective bargaining dictates.

7.9.6 Membership Management Schemes

The findings also revealed that Public Service Association is not providing enough service and benefits to its members despite high subscriptions charged to members. This has also resulted in massive membership termination. It is therefore recommended that there be intensive membership drive through advocacy, immediate response to membership needs, introduction of schemes that benefit members like soft loan facility, zero deposit purchase schemes, school fees, housing development schemes, training and educational schemes, income generating schemes and holiday travel schemes. Union leadership should enhance communication with their members by keeping them informed of any developments through emails, circulars, press statements, workshops and meetings. These can be funded by a revolving fund created from the members' subscriptions and contributions. There is also need for a downward review of subscriptions in line with low salaries being earned.

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