WORKERS PARTICIPATION IN TRADE UNION: A CASE STUDY OF AREWA TEXTILES WORKERS' UNION, KADUNA.

BY

IGBANA WANSUA AJIR

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
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CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled "Workers Participation in Trade Union: A Case Study of Arewa Textiles Workers' Union, Kaduna" by Igbana Wansua Ajir meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of M.Sc. (Sociology) of Ahmadu Bello University and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

Chairman, Supervisory Committee — Date: 4/1/93

Member, Supervisory Committee — Date: 4/1/93

Head of Department — Date: 4/1/93

Dean, Postgraduate School — Date: 4/1/93

DECLARATION

I, hereby declare that this is a product of my research work, and that it has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of any degree. All sources of information have been duly acknowledged by means of references.

Igbana Wansua Ajir

June, 1991

DEDICATION

To my beloved late brother, Mr. Jonathan Iorfa Wansua Ajir, who vowed at my childhood that my education could only be terminated on my own volition.

AND

To Mr. Calvin Wansua Ajir who ably took over this responsibility to make the vow fruitful.

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ABSTRACT

This study is a survey of workers participation in Arewa Textiles Workers' Union, Kaduna. The main problem examined is the factors that facilitate or frustrate participation in the trade union. The key independent variables examined include level of education, age of the workers, income, material status, years of service, working experience, and participation in urban ethnic associations; the main dependent variable is participation in the trade union.

The three theories examined are the marxist, liberal democratic and business approaches. The study adopted the liberal democratic theory in analysing the level of workers involvement in the trade union. The literature reviewed shows that workers' interest in the trade union is largely based on the business conception of the unions. This perception of trade union is common among workers in developing countries.

In the survey at Arewa Textiles Limited, a quota sample of 203 was drawn from a total of 2,439 workers to represent ethnic groups, departments, and status in the establishment. Four hypotheses namely; educational level and participation in the trade union, income and participation, length of service and participation, and participation in the ethnic association against

participation in the trade union were tested.

It was found that education had no relation with participation in the trade union. Income on the other hand, had moderate positive association with participation in the union, while length of service showed a moderate positive association with participation in the Trade union. But high participation in urban ethnic association showed low positive association with participation in the Trade Union.

Further multivariate tests of the interactive variables showed that ethnic participation bears strong influence on the bivariate relations between length of service, income and education, and participation in the trade union. Thus we conclude that the economic and psychological support these associations provide for the workers is lacking in the trade union.

Lack of support for and participation in the trade union activities further weakens the operation of the trade union. We therefore conclude from this finding that the workers have neither developed class consciousness nor democratic ethos to enhance their participation in the union, because their outlook remains economistic.

A possible solution to this conception lies in the expansion of the scope of the trade unions to cover most of the workers expectations and aspirations. This will serve to simulate their interest and commitment to the trade union.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
Title page		i
Certification		ii
Declaration		iii
Dedication		iv
Acknowledgements		v
Abstract		vii
Table of Contents		x
List of Tables		xiii
List of Abbreviations		xiv
CHAPTER ONE:		
1.1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.2	Participation in Trade Union	3
1.2.1	Leadership Oligarchy	7
1.2.2	Membership Apathy and Alienation	10
1.3	Statement of Research Problem	13
1.4	Some Assumptions and Hypotheses	19
1.4.1	Hypotheses	24
1.5	The Research Setting	25
1.5.1	Location, Establishment, and Ownership	25
1.5.2	Trade Unionism at Arewa Textiles Limited	26
1.5.3	Structure of the Trade Union	29
1.6	The Significance of the Study	32
1.7	Organisation of the thesis	33
1.8	Footnotes	35

Page

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL ORIENTATIONS AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE 37

2.1 Introduction 37

2.2 Marxist Theory 37

2.3 Liberal Democratic Theory 41

2.4 Review of Literature 48

2.5 Conclusion 70

2.6 Footnotes 75

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY 76

3.1 Introduction 76

3.2 Measurement of Variables 77

3.3 Field Work 85

3.4.1 Data Collection Techniques 86

3.4.2 Sampling Procedure 88

3.5 Techniques of Data Analyses 90

3.6 Field Experiences and Problems 91

3.7 Footnotes 92

CHAPTER FOUR: WORKERS CHARACTERISTICS INVOLVEMENT IN ETHNIC ASSOCIATIONS AND PARTICIPATION IN TRADE UNION 94

4.1 Introduction 94

4.2 Workers Socio-economic characteristics 94

4.3 Tests on Participation in the Union 105

4.3.1 The Greater the level of education the higher the level of participation in the union 105

4.3.2 The Longer the worker serves, the higher his level of participation in the union 114

4.3.3 The higher the income of the workers, the higher will be their level of participation in the union. 118

Page

4.3.4 The higher the level of participation in the urban ethnic association the higher the level of participation in the trade union. 123

4.4 Conclusion 132

4.5 Footnotes 136

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 137

5.1 Introduction 137

5.2 Summary 137

5.3 Conclusion 149

5.4 Recommendations 161

5.5 Footnotes 166

Bibliography 167

Appendix A: Interview schedule 172

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		Page
2.01	The three theories compared	72
4.01	Selected worker profile	102
4.02	The Relationship between education and participation in Trade Union	106
4.03	Relationship between marital status and participation in the union.	108
4.04	Relationship between number of dependents and participation in Trade Union.	109
4.05	Ownership of means of Transport and participation in Trade Union.	112
4.06	Relationship between state of origin and participation in Trade Union.	113
4.07	Relationship between length of service and participation in Trade Union.	115
4.08	Relationship between Age and participation in the trade union.	116
4.09	Relationship between Income and participation in the trade union.	119
4.10	Relationship between years of urban experience and participation in the union	122
4.11	Relationship between participation in urban ethnic association and participation in the trade union.	126
4.12	Union participation by independent and control variables (partial Gammas)	130

ABBREVIATIONS

A.T.L.	Arewa Textiles Limited
C.D.C.	Camerouns Development Corporation
C.S.E.R.	Centre for Social and Economic Research
C.W.C.	Central Working Committee
D.C.	Delegate Conference.
I.T.U.	International Typographical Union.
M.A.N.	Manufacturing Association of Nigeria.
N.C.M.U.	Nigerian Coal Miners Union.
N.E.C.	National Executive Council
N.L.C.	Nigerian Labour Congress
N.U.T.G.T.E.A.	National Union of Textiles, Garment and Tailoring Employers Association.
N.U.T.G.T.W.N.	National Union of Textile, Garment and Tailoring Workers of Nigeria.
S.A.P.	Structural Adjustment Programme
T.W.I.	Training Within Industry.
U.N.T.L.	United Nigerian Textiles Limited.
Z.C.	Zonal Council.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to examine the factors that enhance or frustrate workers participation in trade unions. In order to verify the presence of these factors, the study was conducted at Arewa Textiles Limited, Kaduna (A.T.L.). This is all in an attempt to provide a documentation of the thesis that, workers participation in trade union is a function of their individual characteristics, and their participation in ethnic associations.

Theoretical debates about participation in trade union centre on three main considerations; the business theory, liberal democratic theory, and the marxist theory. The business theory, a more economistic conception of the union, sees the union as championing the demand for workers welfare. It argues that workers participate in trade unions because of the role the union plays in promoting their welfare.

The second, which is more embracing than the first, considers involvement of membership in the activities of their union in a comprehensive manner. The Trade Unions are seen as a micro political organisation where democratic ideals are practised, and

members are allowed maximum feasible participation in union activities.

The third is the marxist theory. The central concern here is for bringing about a classless society and reducing alienation among the workers. Workers will therefore form their unions in order to reform the wage labour system, and through this fight for the abrogation of private ownership of the means of production. Workers participation, may therefore, derive from the experiences they have acquired under working conditions, or the knowledge they have gained in associating with their peers in other organisations.

This study adopts the liberal democratic position, and argues that workers' characteristic and objective positions determine largely how they associate with others in ethnic associations as well as participating in the trade union. This entails viewing participation as a phenomenon which inculcates into an individual, a sense of belonging, and non-participation as leading to alienation and apathy. The level of individual participation varies a great deal depending on the type of organisation, type of leadership, as well as individual socio-economic characteristics. In order to discuss effectively, we shall analyse what

participation entails before looking into the factors which enhance or inhibit membership participation in trade union activities.

1.2 Participation in Trade Union

A trade union is defined under the Nigerian law as:

> Any combination of workers or employers whether temporary or permanent, the purpose of which is to regulate the terms and conditions of employment.[1]

In law and in practice, the main objective of trade union is primarily economic interest with the central concern for protecting wage drift, welfare scheme, general conditions of service, and for organising strikes to fight the maintenance of achievements in those directions.

These interests serve to bring the workers together for encountering the employer or management, regarded as a common enemy. Apart from this goal, however, workers aspirations are different. The combination sharpen the desire to fight a problem an individual cannot solve by himself. Thus Lenin (1982: 38) observed that:

> The worker has at all costs to seek means of resisting the capitalist, in order to defend himself. And he finds such means in organisation. Helpless on his own the worker become a force when organised with his comrades, and is enabled to fight the capitalist and resist his onslaught.

The capitalist industrial system has therefore facilitated workers ability for unionisation which is expressed in what we generally see today. According to Goshen (1976: 41) it is due to workers experiences that:

> Most of the industrial workers have a set of interests derived from their experience in the capitalist industrial enterprises which can stimulate collective action.

Thus collective action is seen as the traditional role of union. This made Allen (1954: 15) to conclude that:

> The end of trade union activity is to protect and improve the general living standard of its members and not to provide workers with an exercise in self-government.

The position seems a rational conclusion, nevertheless there is no organisation that can effectively achieve its goals without the proper involvement of its membership to a certain degree. Individuals can easily transfer such achievements of the collectivity into their personal advancement and stifle the collective interests.

The only way through which members can realise the positive effects of their union is to participate in decision making and administration of the union itself. Pateman (1970: 27) noted the invaluable aspect of participation that:

> More important is the experience of participation in decision making itself, and the complex totality of results to which it is seen to lead, both for the individual and for the whole political system; this experience attaches the individual to his society and is instrumental in developing it into a true community.

When people internalise the sense of participation to this level, they are better able to get involved. Participation develops and fosters the very qualities necessary for it. This simply means that people learn to do things better by actually taking part in doing them. They may start with regards to households, wards, and union and later graduate to large political entities. This is best achieved by direct participation of the individual without mediation through representatives. Given that as an ideal, the closer a community comes to realising this, the greater the extent of citizen participation in government. When such an ideal participation is achieved, distinction between the government and the governed is drastically reduced (Arblaster 1982: 62).

Individual participation is greatly hampered by the large scale nature of organisation. Modern day types of organisation cover a great spatial distance, are complex and involve a large number of people. Their administration may be carried out through democratic representation and complicated machinery. The chosen few represent the majority in taking decisions on their behalf. But most of the time, the representatives may behave in such a way that those they are representing would not have done. Michels (1962:36-7) feels that this delegation further alienates the masses from control when he states that:

> A mass which delegates its sovereignty ... transfers its sovereignty to the hands of a few individuals, abdicates its sovereignty functions. For the will of the people is not transferable nor even the will of the single individual.

The delegates' interests are frequently at variance with those of the delegators and this made Michels (1968:365) to conclude pessimistically that:

> It is organisation which gives birth to the domination of the elected over the electors, of mandatories over the mandators, of delegates over the delegators, who says organisation says oligarchy.

The inherent problem of modern organisation is the inability of members to participate directly. Representation pressuposes granting of power to the delegates. The delegates usually become uncontrollable and unresponsive to those who delegated them. Since

they have almost severed ties with the delegators, they seek to retain power in their own interests, which are often inimical to those of the delegators. The delegates thus, form a stratum distinct from the masses with special interest of its own, which generally displaces the interest of the masses.[2]

The operation of organisation based on Weber's provisions therefore may lead to the promotion of leadership oligarchy on the one hand, and membership apathy on the other.

1.2.1 Leadership Oligarchy

Michels' pessimistic conclusion in the study of the German Social Democratic Party has maintained the central position in the discourse of oligarchy in organisations, including trade unions. Trade unions operate on a structure that allows a few elected individuals to preside over the day to day affairs of the union. As they progress in the union hierarchy, they acquire certain specialist skills, and with time, their authority can hardly be challenged. They often use the power of incumbency to hold to their posts by repeatedly winning a number of elections if the elections are held at all.

In most organisations, the constitutions set forth a machinery for translating membership interests and sentiments into organizational purpose and action. This is known to differ significantly from the actual practice in organisations due to leadership priorities. This small group of men have the capacity to absorb most threats from the members. They do this with the full knowledge that their office is surrounded by insecurity. But how this is done depends on the nature of organisations, personal security, and capacity to co-opt membership.

The large scale organisations develop a rational organisational structure which is hierarchically organised. The operators are specifically trained to cope with the administrative functions, as well as dealing with management. With this training, and the power to control information, their power become enlarged, at the expense of the membership (Lipset et al 1968:9-12). As their management power is enlarged at the expense of the membership, opposition is gradually reduced to an insignificant level, or diverted to other issues.

Closely related to this is the monopoly of the formal means of communications by the leadership. The issue of secrecy and control of information prevents members with opposing views from enjoying the coverage of issues directed against the union executives.

Monopoly of political skills is another important factor which perpetuates the power of the incumbents (Lipset et al 1968: 1-10). As the executive continue to be trained in the act of administration, without corresponding services to the rank and file, they acquire political skills which the rank and file neither have, nor the opportunity to get.[3] Because of this specialist skill, they inhibit all sorts of effective opposition.

Another important thing that the leadership cherishes and protects at all times is the security of its governing position. In line with this, Lipset et al (1968: 10) observed that democracy entails a permanent insecurity for those in governing positions, so that the more truly democratic the governing system, the greater the insecurity of the leaders. Awareness of this situation actually makes the leaders to act against known democratic principles in order to retain their positions (Michels 1968: 10). Some of these tactics include shouting on members for 'point of order' while speaking, blocking circulation of information, even the commonest ones, the keeping of union constitution for the use of the president and secretary only (Smock 1969: 64).

If the executives can conceal such common document from the rank and file, there is no limit to which they may go. Sometimes the executive behave like executive presidents of countries, for instance, instead of having regular elections they choose their executives. Smock (1969: 11) observed this at NCMU that:

> For several years the various presidents of the NCMU have violated the unions constitution by appointing the members of the executive council rather than letting representative council select them.

This and some other extreme actions of the leadership have the propensity of leading them to a class operating beyond the comprehension of the membership.

There are also vast resources and opportunities under the union leadership which is effectively utilised.

1.2.2 Membership Apathy and Alienation

The operation of oligarchy can breed apathy and outright alienation among the membership. Lack of interest among the membership in organisations allows the leadership to perpetuate oligarchical tendencies. A very salient position maintained by Lipset et al (1968: 11) is based on the technical superiority of the leadership. Their superior knowledge

creates a sense of inferiority among the members, and consequently, they regard administration of union as no business of theirs. They observed that:

> The typical union appears to its members as an administrative agency doing a specific technical job for them. Union leaders will often attempt to sustain their image to prevent "interference" with their conduct of their job. Consequently only a small minority finds the rewards for participation in union affairs great enough to sustain a high level of interest and activity.

Apart from lack of comprehension of the technical administrative requirements of leadership by the memberships, members have lost interest due to the inability of the unions to achieve certain material gains. Most of the workers' participation is predicated on what the union can achieve for them. Brewster (1984: 59) has succintly pointed out that:

> members judge the union on what it achieves in negotiations at the workplace. It is the union's ability to defend its members from arbitrary management decisions, and to advance and improve the terms or conditions on which they are employed.

Apathy may stem from non-performance of union executives because union achievements make members to identify with the union and participate in union affairs.

In line with the economistic consideration of the union is workers expectation from their contributions. Workers put pressure on union executives to perform and justify the dues they pay, and the executives are

constrained to pay back by performing. Workers are just satisfied to pay and get returns, so that what most of the workers want is a fair return for their dues not a chance to participate in and devote efforts to an organisation (Fossum 1982: 112). If there is continued non-achievement, then, there would be membership apathy.

Apathy can crop up among the members that are permanently marginalised in the scheme of affairs in organisations. These are mostly minorities, like religious groups, ethnic/race and political groups, due to their minority status are relegated to the background. But in order to maintain a stable entity, the views, interests and convictions of the minority has to be taken into account in the process of policy-making and decision-taking. Since this is always not considered in most circumstances, they become not only apathetic, but constitute an opposition. Alienation arises where an individual does not realise himself in any given tasks or does not have the sense of belonging in what he is doing. One is incapable of controlling the direction or space of events. When members are unable to control what goes on in the union, or even their delegates, such feeling of alienation creeps in.

In cases of membership becoming alienated from the system or apathetic, they can take certain decisions to move away from it. Arblaster (1987:73) contends that:

> In extreme circumstances a minority and especially a national minority finding itself in such a position may simply decide to secede and create a society and state in which it forms the majority.

In trade unions, this state of affairs leads to factionalism as well as formation of small and unviable tiny unions, which may not be able to achieve much in negotiations with management. This was the situation in Nigeria before 1978, where a multiplicity of unions existed due to state policy and factionalisation. Other issues related to apathy and alienation among the membership would be treated in relevant parts of this study because they constitute variables in which a more detailed and quantitative data has been collected. Next is the discussion of the research problem.

1.3 Statement of Research Problem

The problematic which this study seeks to define and analyse is related to workers participation in the trade union at the workplace. The problem centres on the operation of a Nigerian Trade Union with emphasis on the level to which its members contribute in administration and decision making in their individual capacities. The union is a very important forum for

the worker because of the numerous activities it conducts on his behalf, for most of his waking life. The workers have purposely created unions to protect their interest at the work place. They all expect that each of them have equal roles to play in the operation and functioning of the trade union nevertheless, membership participation differ in many respects.

This situation may be obtained due to a variety of individual, socio-economic characteristics, organisational structure of the trade union, and type of work performed. Consequent upon the nature, mentioned above, the membership develop alienating tendencies as some fail to realise themselves, or others just become apathetic. This development creates a conducive atmosphere for leadership oligarchy. Michels (1968) found this clearly in his study of the German Social Democratic Party.

In the union, there is a dilemma about membership, others join and contribute resources to achieve collective goals, others do not join without cost to them, and still achieve some goals. If other workers join unions to get benefits without cost, then it becomes a problem of finding why the workers behave differently. Why are some workers apathetic to union activities but not necessarily to the union goals?

As mentioned earlier in this section, workers recognise the importance of the unions, they have a conscious belief in their unions which are deliberately created to forestall exploitation by the capitalist owners of the means of production. This was a primary motive factor which culminated in the formation of these unions. Is it possible then to explain lack of interest by letting someone else to perform union work for them due to lack of education? How do we explain these? Lack of commitment to work and all it entails, inability to socialise, distrust in leadership, and other demanding responsibilities on the worker? It could also mean that the unions by their very nature, do not provide enough opportunities for realising psychological and economic demands which are adequately addressed by other associations.

Education is seen as a potent factor for participation in political processes, and unions. It means that people that have acquired higher education also have become sufficiently versed in issues to contribute more meaningfully in meetings and assume roles that require higher skills (Verba et al 1978, Almond 1963). It is also likely to have such people with lesser interests because the organisation may have no prospects for them. They can individually pursue

issues on the ground of such qualifications (Bates 1972).

Workers with lower level of education, and less experience in industrial and urban life place a substantial expectation on their leaders. This inferiority complex may have the capacity of urging those that have greater exposure and experience in union affairs to perpetuate their leadership over them. Those less endowed are satisfied to be paid up members without taking the trouble to bother about the administration of the union. This load shedding has given the leadership a leeway to run the union without regards to other members feelings, even when they would have wanted to play certain roles. In order to deny equally interested members the opportunity of participation, the leaders develop certain oligarchical tendencies. It is this situation that Michels (1968) concluded that organisations generally make the delegates, mandatories and elected to lord over the delegators, mandators, and electors.

If organisations have an inherent nature of encouraging leadership domination over the led, how then can the members influence or mitigate the powers of the leadership? Is the general improvement of

education among the workforce an important factor in participation?

Most African workers have their origin from peasant village backgrounds. They have all left these villages to the centres of employment in the urban centres precisely for the satisfaction of economic needs. The work situation presents them with new procedural norms like any other entrant to work situation. These are new and strange, but require some adjustment. These, coupled with the harsh realities of urban life, the worker seeks to get consolation from his 'home' people in the urban ethnic associations.

Urban ethnic associations play significant influence in workers life in the urban centres. These associations link the worker with his home base as well as satisfying his psychological and financial demands. Other than these important roles of enhancing workers struggle for survival in the urban centres, an unintended consequence of promoting political participation is generated. To what extent is the workers' involvement in the urban ethnic association correlated with participation in trade union?

Another dimension which is very crucial in the study of national labour organisations, but marginal in local or 'house unions' is the role of the state

and employers association. The state maintains a significant influence on wage-inflation and working conditions. This increased state pressure on the unions leads to centralisation and bureaucratisation (Martin 1968). In Nigeria, the state intervenes directly, passing decrees and effecting structural changes to union organisation. The state has been the highest employer of labour, and she plays very supportive role to capital in order to maintain the desired development. The state feels that the surest way to do this effectively is to control labour which is conceived to be standing on the path of development with its 'restive' activities. We do not intend to pursue this aspects in the study of this house union. The level of workers understanding of the managerial policies and state policies are hardly seperated. The state tend to project management or the employers associations policies in order to promote industrialization in the country. Quantitative analysis on state policies would yield very little results.

The questions this study intends to investigate therefore, border on the workers individual socio-economic characteristics that centre on level of education, workers commitment to work (this is related to how long a worker has served in the firm), the status of the worker, and finally we pursue the workers involvement in the urban ethnic associations. These are going to be evaluated against workers participation

in the trade union, with the aim of finding out aspects that promote or inhibit workers participation in the union. For further and detailed analyses, the study hypotheses derived from assumptions based on these positions are presented in the next section.

1.4 Some Assumptions and Hypotheses

The main interest of this study is to investigate workers participation in trade union. Participation is the main dependent variable which is determined by such individual socio-economic characteristics as age, income level of education, length of service, working experience, participation in urban ethnic associations. We have assumed certain likely relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

In respect of the age of the workers we expect that age would influence workers participation in a certain direction. We assumed that the older workers would have gathered a substantial experience both in their workplace, and outside, which is assumed to be very important in participation in organisations.

This, coupled with the respect which African society places on age, the older workers would be expected to take leading roles in organising the young and new employees in the trade union. The young ones one the other hand, are expected to look forward to the

older workers for direction.

Higher level of education on the other hand, exposes one to a greater degree of awareness on issues generally, and specifically to trade union activities. That level of understanding would lead one to participate more in various activities of the trade union, whereas workers with little educational attainment will be restricted in terms of exposure and trade union participation.

In formal bureaucratic organisations, education itself is an asset which entitles one to enter employment at a higher income level. One of the pre-requisite for employment in this factory is possession of primary school certificate. The advantage of a higher education would facilitate for the member the problem of meeting personal obligations more readily, as well as his finarcial obligations in the Trade Union. In contrast however, those workers with higher education may have more expectations which the unions may not be able to meet. They would turn to put the union aside in the pursuit of their various aspirations. If that is the case, they are likely to participate less in the trade union because of its limitation in promoting their cause. But the workers union comprise only the juniors with primary and secondary education. In view of this

fact, we favour the former position i.e. those with higher level of education participate more in Trade Union because the acquisition of higher education entailed some level of dedication and determination.

Without regard to length of service which constitutes a very important factor in the factory situation, we pooled so many other factors together and drew certain conclusions about its effect. First and foremost, we noted that workers are employed in this firm based on a few criteria: physical fitness, and the possession of primary school certificate. They depend solely on promotion to attain higher positions in the firm, the longer they work, the higher their income, as well as their growth in age. They accumulate work as well as union experiences, therefore, it is expected that the longer, they work in the firm, the higher their awareness and level of involvement in the trade union.

It can also be argued that workers who have served for longer years would be more protective of their benefits which they are already entitled to than, engage in 'risky' union activities. The risk is in the confrontation of the management which exposes union 'activists' to dismissals and termination of appointments.

Our expectation upholds the former position, thus we assume that those who have served longer would participate more than those who have lesser experience and lesser commitment to work situation.

Status of the worker defined in terms of skill is an important index determining his position in the work situation. The skilled workers are scarce and tend to be more individualistic in their bargains with management. We assumed that they would not use the union for achieving any gains in their employment. However, we found that workers in the junior category are generally trained on the job after employment, so that the income of the workers become a dterminant for placement on the grade. Workers with higher income are likely to participate higher in the union.

Most studies (Yesufu 1962; Roberts: 1964; Kilby 1969) set participation in ethnic association on par with participation in the Trade Union. We do not intend to view ethnic associations as being in conflict with trade union but rather as complementary. We reason that in the way a worker moves from the rural areas to the urban centre in search of employment, he would still maintain strong ties with his ethnic backgrounds. The trace of this backgrounds are found in the urban ethnic associations. These workers we assume would be members, pay their dues, attend meetings regularly, and occupy posts in the urban ethnic associations. He would do these ardently because the ethnic associations provide

the psychological support, security, and other friendly benefits which the trade unions cannot provide. Most of the workers will participate more in ethnic associations due to these reasons.

However, we argue that, if one has learnt to participate in a limited organisation, he would also transfer that knowledge to a larger organisation. This thinking accords with Mills (1963: 186) contention that:

> We do not learn to read or write, to ride or swim, by being merely told how to do it, but by doing it, so it is only by practicing popular government on a limited scale, that the people will ever learn how to exercise it on a large.4

We therefore, conclude that, those workers who participate actively in ethnic associations would also be active participants in trade union. The likely relationships between other independent variables and the dependent variable were not predicted. In this way the relationship with urban experience, marital status, number of dependents, ownership of a means of transport, and type of accommodation were not considered. We took this line of action also, because these variables were not among those initially intended for investigation. Along the foregoing, we decided to investigate the following hypotheses.

1.4.1 Hypotheses

In view of the assumptions examined, we have established a trend that, workers have some certain characteristics, or are committed to doing certain things. These factors may stimulate them to equally engage in the trade union activities. These commitments are related to workers determination to acquire more education, involved in the work activities, or associated with others in ethnic associations.

Thus, the following hypotheses are postulated to guide realisation of the objectives of this study:

1. The greater the level of education, the higher the level of participation in the Trade Union.
2. The longer a worker serves in the firm, the higher his level of participation in the trade union.
3. The higher the level of income, the higher the level of participation in the trade union.
4. The higher the level of participation in the urban ethnic associations, the higher the level of participation in the Trade Union.

The following section is the research setting where the hypotheses are tested.

1.5 The Research Setting

In this section we have discussed the basic information about the location of the factory, establishment, ownership, trade union organisation, and trade union structure.

1.5.1 Location, Establishment, and Ownership

Arewa Textiles Limited, Kaduna is situated at plot G Industrial Estate, Kakuri in Kaduna South. The factory premises occupies an estimated area of 45 acres within the estate. There are about eight other textile firms within walking distance. Arewa textiles is one of the four textile industries with full intergrated mills - spinning, weaving, printing, and finishing. These processes are undertaken within the same premises. The products of the company includes 'African prestige', 'superprints', 'super-deluxe' and baft.

This company is one of the first generation textile industries. Others include: Nigerian Textiles Mills (NTM) now a subsidiary of Kaduna Textiles Limited; United Nigerian Textiles, Limited (UNTL). Requests for the setting up of this firm were made by a Nigerian delegation led by the late Alhaji Ali Akilu to Japan in 1960.[5] The negotiations that followed this visit culminated into the establishment of the company in 1963, and production commenced 1 April, 1965.

The company is a joint venture between Overseas spinning Investment Company (OSIC) made up of Nine Japanese Spinners Interrational Finance Corporation and Co. Ltd., 33 Nominees and Company Ltd, and New Nigerian Development Company Ltd. The Company Board of Directors comprises five Nigerians and seven Japanese.[6]

1.5.2 Trade Unionism at Arewa Textiles Limited

Since the formation of the Company, African workers had their reasons to organise into a union to protect their interest against the predominantly foreign concern. An autonomous house union was formed in 1965. By the early 1970s it was affiliated to the National Union as a branch. But the National Union only entered into the branch affairs when called. The national union provided the source of strength to the branch union. It is this same structure that was reinforced in 1978 during the 'restructuring' of unions into industrial unions.

The initial workforce from which membership was drawn comprised 3,800 workers among the predominantly migrant workers from middle belt, and Southern part of Nigeria. As earlier mentioned, the need for a trade union was stimulated by the peculiar nature of the textile industries in the Nigerian economy. These

companies were encourated to carry out the state policy of import substitution industrialization, and permitted foreign establishment at full scale. The unions were aimed at checking the possible 'inhuman' treatment by the foreign owners of the firms. Some of the factors which made the work situation as such were the shift duties, including night operations, a large number of people working on intergrated line involving risky chemical, and machine operations.

During the formative stages, real pressures were mounted on the management to recognise the operation of a union. Like many firms at that time, the management was very suspicious of the Trade Union activities. During one of the meetings held to organise a union, the management called the police to disperse the workers. At a latter stage, the management realised the importance of union which could easily have been used to control the 'restive' workers, and therefore permitted the operation of a trade union under management pre-rogatives. Despite the recognition, the union faced initial problems of mobilising workers to join it. It was even more difficult convincing them to pay union dues regularly. By 1973 however, the union executive unilaterally imposed a check-off system to improve the finances of the union, and enable the union

to execute projects and training programmes. Most workers seemed not very enthusiastic and it was eventually cancelled.

Between 1976 and 1978, the State embarked upon the 'restructuring' of trade unions. This action led to the reorganisation of the hitherto over one thousand house unions into 42 industrial unions. The membership of these unions is based on all grades of workers in a particular industry and includes both skilled, unskilled, and semi-skilled workers. Managements were also compelled to recognise any union with 60 percent membership of the workers in the firm, an introduction of a compulsory check-off system, as well as mandatory membership. This new policy permitted the existence of workers union as well as senior staff associations. Non recognition of the union by management attracted a fine of ₦1,000.

This legal backing facilitated the operation of trade union in this factory. The workers union thus embraces all junior staff (operative III/clerk IV to overlooker I/clerk I). Since there had been a history of union organisation in this firm, the workers found it easier to take advantage of the position which the state has now placed on union activities. The union office is located strategically, and immediately after the main gate into the factory manned by full time

principal officers. This union is viewed as the best organised among the textile companies. Gains made here in relations to fringe benefits, bonus, bread allowance has already been translated into National policies and enforced via collective agreements and applied nationally.

1.5.3 Structure of the Trade Union

The administration of this union is organised in four tiers at the local level and linked up with the National Union of Textile Garment and Tailoring Workers of Nigeria (NUTGTWN). In the first tier is the principal officers comprising the Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer; the second tier is the six executive members assigned with responsibilities of publicity, assistant to the secretary, welfare. Next on the line of hierarchy are the shopstewards. There were 35 shopstewards drawn from different shopfloors and shifts. Their position is only recognised at the local level. This is just a convenient local arrangement made for the purpose of disseminating information to the workers in the various shopfloors. They convey relevant information to and from the workers. Since their position is not reflected in the union constitution, their operations are restricted to the understanding and expectations of the union executives. Finally, are the rank and file members whose contributions are made in the general meetings.

Complaints from the workers are channelled through the shopstewards to the executives however, issues involving dismissals, 'warnings' and suspension are brought directly to the principal officers by the individuals for prompt action. Information from the management is dessiminated through the executive, to the shopstewards. Important and pressing issues are presented directly by the executive to a general meeting called specifically for that purpose.

The relationship between the branch and the NUTGTWN is through a chain of structures created by the national union. These include; the zonal council (ZC), Central Working Committee (C.W.C) and the National Executive Council (N.E.C.).

The Zonal Council is formed in "an area of business operations having not less than two branches with membership not below 6,000".[7] A zonal council comprises all principal officers of all branch unions in that zone, with a chairman elected among them. On election the chairman automatically becomes a national Vice President.

Another level of link up with the branches is the central working committee. The C.W.C. comprises the national officers and the zonal chairman presided over by the President. The C.W.C. is vested with the

power to take disciplinary measures against any full time national officer, as well as dissolve or suspend any branch committee or zonal council found guilty of anti-union activities. In the event of suspension of a branch, a caretaker committee is appointed to take-over the administration of such union under the supervision of the General Secretary.

At the helm of the National union is the National Executive Council. The N.E.C. comprises the national officers (the president, Treasurer, Deputy Presidents, Vice Presidents, Deputy General Secretaires, and Assistant General Secretaries) zonal chairmen and two other representatives elected from within the council for the purpose of attending a particular N.E.C. session.[8] The General Secretary is appointed on a permanent basis. He may not have been engaged in the industry.

The social status and prestige of the National Secretariat is highly recognised. This gives the General Secretary the power to intervene authoritatively in local disputes, as well as confront individual officers that misuse their offices and mete out disciplinary actions.

Thus, the connection of all the branches to the national union through the various linkages strengthened by the recognised status of the Secretariat makes it very strong and highly centralised. Under the General Secretary is the whole textile industry in Nigeria which

is the third largest in Africa (M.A.N.)[9]. The total employment is over 100,000 employees (Auta, 1982).[10] However, this number continued to dwindle since the current economic recession set in 1981.

The distribution of the labour force varies between 350 to 8,000 per factory at full capacity. The textile factories are concentrated in Kaduna, Lagos, and Kano and a few others are found at various places in the country, with the National headquarters in Kaduna. It is one of the well organised unions in the country. With the restructuring of unions in 1978, NUTGTWN is legally affiliated to the Nigerian Labour Congress (N.L.C.). The significance of the study is discussed next.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

The study is significant for the following reasons:-

1. The results serve as a test of validity of views that have been expressed in the literature about workers and their union.
2. The study is an addition to existing literature on attempts to analyse workers participation in trade union, thereby seeking to reorganise trade unions for effective performance of their set objectives.

3. The study serves as source of information to the workers, of the NUTGTWN and other house unions for an improvement on their various unions.

4. The study provides information to the Nigerian politicians and state, for assessing the most important variables in political participation, and to determine which ones can be meaningfully adopted for the political stability in the country.

1.7 Organisation of Thesis

This study started with a discussion on participation in trade union and other background information including the statement of the problem, hypotheses and research setting in chapter one. The rest of the study is divided into four chapters. A review of literature on participation with particular emphasis on trade union, highlighting factors which have promoted or frustrated participation in the union as the main concern in chapter two. Chapter three outlines the methodology on which the study was conducted. This emphasises the importance of systematic approach to the data collection, data analyses and field work. Findings for the study utilising the methodology just outlined is reported in chapter four. This is followed by chapter five which deals with conclusion. Here

summary of findings are reported, conclusions drawn, and recommendations made.

FOOTNOTES

1. This definition is cited in R.B. Davison (1977) Industrial Relations Decrees Zaria, Ahmadu Bello University Press p. 11. This could have been derived from legal provision in the Trade Union Ordinance known as Ordinance No. 44 of 1938.

2. The theory of the "Law of small number" is a pre-occupation of Marx Weber and is analysed in P.Q. Hirst (1976) Social Evolution and Sociological Categories, London George Allen and Unwin Ltd. pp. 114-5.

3. This position is utilised in the politics of I.T.U. A fuller aanalyses is undertaken in Max Weber: "Politics as a vocation" in H. Gert, and C.W. Mills (eds), From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology New York, Oxford University Press 1946 pp 77-128.

4. Mills J.S. (1963) Essays on Politics and Culture Himmelfarb G. (ed), New York in Pateman C. (1970) Participation and Democratic Theory, New York Cambridge University Press p. 31.

5. Alhaji Ali Akilu was the Secretary to the Government and Head of the Civil Service of Northern Nigeria.

6. The shareholders in the company in 1986 comprises:

   (a) Overseas Spinning Investment Company Limited (OSIC) 44.9 percent.

   (b) New Nigerian Development Company Ltd., Kaduna 22.6 Percent.

   (c) International Finance Corporation and Co. Ltd 11.9 percent.

   (d) Thirty Three nominees and co. Ltd 1.7 percent.

   (e) Kuwaits Investment 1.5 percent.

   (f) Nigerian Employees 1.4 percent.

   (g) Other Nigerians 16 percent.

7. The constitution of the National Union of Textiles Garment and Tailoring Workers of Nigeria (NUTGTWN) Rule 9, section 9.

9. The Constitution of NUTGTWN Rule 8.

9. This is the position held by the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria.

10. Auta D, (1982) "A look at made in Nigeria Textile Goods" I and II New Nigerian, Kaduna 11/5/82 and 19/15/82.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 THEORETICAL ORIENTATION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The views that have been expressed based on the problems of participation in politics generally, and in trade union in particular are based on the notions expounded about leadership irresponsibility to the led, and membership apathy. Irresponsibility is used here to refer to the oligarchical tendencies which leaders develop as they take positions of governance. Apathy on the other hand, is seen as lack of interest among the members in the activities of organisations to which they belong. Three main theoretical approaches have been advanced to explain these two related phenomena namely: the marxist, the 'business', and the liberal democratic or participatory democratic theories. Each of these will be expounded in the following section.

2.2 The Marxist Theory

The Marxist theory views the formation of trade union as a reaction to the exploitation of labour by the owners of the means of production. The main determining factor about the classes in the society is seen as the individual relationship to the means of production. According to Lenin[1] "classes are large

group of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production".

Those who own the means of production are the rulers, while those who are estranged from it constitute the oppressed social class. Throughout human history, there has always been elements of this differentiation with different effects. The division is heightened by the need to overthrow the ruling class (Marx 1977: 39).

In order to fight a class war, a class has to develop some degree of its own identity and self consciousness by transforming from "a class in itself" to a "class for itself". This increases the consciousness which is necessary for uniting the class against other classes.

In a capitalist industrial production, the capitalist inadvertently facilitate the formation and development of this consciousness by concentrating many workers in a particular work place in urban centres. Marx (1955: 149) concludes that these large sclae industrial concentration bring workers together who were hitherto unknown to each other. The common factor was the struggle they all had against the capitalist owner. The unions are formed on the economic base to

fight political struggles which eventually leads to the overthrow of the capitalist system.

The formation of unions simultaneously creates the base for a class struggle, which is further concretised into a "class for itself." This class now stands in direct antagonism to the owners of the means of production as they protect various economic and political interests.

Within the class itself the position does not envisage factionalisation or oligarchical tendencies since every member of this class is concerned with the common enemy. Factionalism is inherently found in the capitalist system of social relations. The overall assumption is that with the full development of socialism and communism, oligarchy may be reduced while increased democratic practices prevail.

Bukharin[2] argued that there is a "stratum of leaders" who aspire to control the institutions almost permanently. This is because certain people have certain advantages over the others. There is bound to be the situation where leaders emerge to control these organisations because of such advantages. These advantages include, economic and technical conditions expressed in the cultural being and in educational conditions. These advantages are products of external factors from the socialist system.

The Socialist or communist society has no room for the development of external factors. There is overproduction of those who have the necessary education to lead in organisations, and other economic factors necessary to create incompetence would be reduced to the barest minimum.

In this way, members of the unions become equal in almost all respects as was the conditions in the early Athenian-city states. The prevalence of participation in democratic organisations was based upon meeting certain economic conditions. This was small peasant proprietors who are economically equal and independent.[3] In that setting people were economically equal with no one particularly holding any advantage over the other.

According to Lenin (1982: 469-0) the most important condition for the success of trade union activity is mass participation. He observes that:

> In all the trade union organisations, and their machinery, from bottom to up, there should be tested in practice over a period of many years, a system of responsible comrades. They must be able without a shadow of false idealisation to define the degree of their class consciousness and the the extent to which they are influenced by various prejudices and survivals of the past; and they must be able to win the boundless confidence of the masses by comradely attitude and concern for their needs.

Participation in the trade union enhances class consciousness among the working class. Lenin and other Marxists feel that it will make the worker identify with his own class for a better class struggle.

In the event of non development of such class consciousness, workers tend to look at the union as a business agent which fights for improved immediate material gain. Such perception of the trade union enables the more educated and skilled members to take over the running of affairs and leadership of the union. Nevertheless, in a situation of open participation, there would be an over production of the educated and skilled people in a large number to neutralize the leadership attempt to constitute an oligarchy. That type of mass education will result in the tendency to 'degeneration' (the excretion of the leading stratum) who are likely to derail the course of the unions' moving to oligarchical control by the few demagogues.

2.3 The Liberal Democratic Theory

The main concern of this theory borders on the problem of oligarchy. Michels (1962) to a large extent, and Weber[5] have argued that, there is a specific class

that is specifically endowed to lead in any organisation. They identify this as the 'ruling elite' and the bureaucratic staff, who have developed specialist skills to lead in organisations. But the ruling elite and bureaucratic staff however tend to advance their interests rather than those of the led.

There is great concern over democratic participation among the members of organisation. This school suggests various strategies for ensuring that unions are creat d for the benefit of all members. In order to realise the objective of the union, members must participate and know all that is happening in the unions. The ruling class dominates and creates all bottlenecks for other members to have the full knowledge to enable them participate fully.

In order to counteract oligarchy in organisations, Michels (1962: 369) has advanced the development of education as an important factor of levelling up leaders and the led. The members of organisations can then freely take part in the leadership as well as decision making, because democracy entails open participation. Berry (1970: 16) has provided this link more clearly:

> If democracy involves participation and influence in decision-making process, then the extent to which a society is democratic depends on the degree of citizen participation in associations which are not overtly political as well as explicitly political associations.

In order to guarantee the operation of the ideals of democracy stated by Berry, the principles of non-repression, and non-discrimination are adhered to (Guttman 1987: 45). The former prevents the state and any other group within from using relative advantage (power and resources) to restrict the expression of various view points. The second, extended from the former, prevents state or any other group within it from denying anyone the right in taking side and effecting changes on irrelevant grounds. These two principles, according to Durel (1989) serve to protect the ordinary citizens from the tyranny of others and permits them active participation in current and future deliberations.

The active participation of membership has been the expectations at all times. That is why various strategies are devised to approximate this ideal. These strategies include: the assembly of all members of the community in one place for taking decisions

rotation of leadership to ensure equality, and formalisations into written constitutions.

The assembly of members in one place is an aspect of direct democracy which is seen as an extreme case in the modern setting. Weber[5] pointed out conditions which enable this situation to be realised:

> The organisation must be local or otherwise limited in the number of members; the social positions of the members must not greatly differ from each other; the administrative functions must be relatively simple and stable; however, there must be a certain minimum development of training objectively determining ways and means.

That was quite ideal for the small city states of the ancient times but modern organisations are large and complex, although democratic practice pressuposes the existence of intermediate structures of independent groups and voluntary associations. Thus, democracy thrives where there are such structures that help to bridge the gap between the masses and the state.

We have almost returned to the 'primitive' practice of democracy in which Rousseau[6] had strongly advocated equality of members where "no man or group is master of another, all are equal and independent on each other and equally subject to the law".

2.4 The Bussiness Theory

The third school of thought supports the existing trends of economistic perception of unions. The central contention here is that trade unions are democratic in the sense that they represent the economic interests of the workers.

Allen (1954: 10-5), the chief proponent of this narrow economic approach, states that:

> It has been argued by some that a voluntary society must provide for membership participation and install the checks and brakes on authority in the manner undertaken by the state in order to achieve and maintain democracy. This contention is misleading, for a voluntary society is not a state within a state; nor does it operate on the same scale or undertake the same functions... There is not in a voluntary society "the organised force which is the distinctive mark of the state (and which) so alters the nature of the political problems as to make any analogy between democracy in politics and in non-political societies only misleading."
>
> It is contended here, however, that trade union organisation is not based on theoretical concepts prior to it, that is on some concept of democracy, but on the end it serves. In other words, the end of trade-union activity is to protect and improve the general living standards of its members and not to provide workers with an exercise in self-government.

The business theory assumes that unions can be very representative of their members interest even when they are apparently oligarchic. Once the membership interests are properly represented in the improvement of their welfare, the leaders are adjudged legitimate controllers of the affairs of their unions.

Union leaders that do not represent economic needs of the members adequately may lose their legitimacy, on the other hand dictatorial or oligarchic leaders that are responsive to the economic needs of members are democratic. Leaders will present a militant posture to retain followership among the rank and file, different unions may embark on unjustifiable strikes to make an impact on the members and reinforce their concern for the members welfare in order to maintain followership.

Lack of participation among the rank and file tends to reinforce both oligarchy and unrepresentativeness. It can lead to widening of salary and status gap between the members and the leaders.[7] The higher financial rewards for the leaders tend to make them disregard their sense of urgency to the demands of the rank and file, and their sense of identification. Democracy is predicated on the fact that no one group has a

basis of power and command over the total allegiance of the majority of the population.

Most trade unions in the developing countries have generally adopted the posture of economic or business trade unionism in their administration or in relation to the rank and file. The members on their own side, have accepted that, unions are meant to support their bids for higher wages and improvement of their economic interests at thework place. This tendency has been recognised in Nigeria since 1958 when the Federal Ministry of Labour observed that:

> The interest of the members in their trade unions remains largely intermittent, rising most whenever there are prospects of immediate material gain; otherwise real interests has been lacking. Monthly dues have been allowed to fall in arrears; attendance at union meetings has fallen off, and the machinery of union government has often been virtually surrendered into the hands of a few union officials.[8]

This attitude is generally attributed to lack of education, ignorance, and the conception of the union as a business agent for fighting the workers' cause. In whatever way, the members look at their organisations, lack of internal democracy reinforces the leaders behaviour and the membership perception of their unions. We shall examine the literature of some writings on American, British and African trade

unions in order to enable us analyse the data on Arewa Textiles workers union.

2.5 Review of Literature

Michels' (1962) pioneering study on the oligarchical tendencies of leaders in bureaucratic organisations, was predicated on the assumption that the party was a revolutionary one, and should exhibit puritanical attributes to permit general membership participation. Contrary to this assumption, the German Social Democratic Party was far away from the ideals of democracy. This disappointment made him to conclude that there are oligarchical tendencies in every kind of human organisation which thrives to attain definite ends.

The Trade Unions were particularly indicted with the prevalence of oligarchy. They are bureaucratic organisations staffed with technically competent men who become better educated and apparently separated in their lifestyles from their followers. The organisation become centralised and wide gulf develops between the leaders and the rank and file. They increasingly initiate and execute actions not known by the members of the union. In this way, Michels contended that trade unions are more guilty of oligarchy than other political organisations.

Michels (1962: 289) enumerated some of these behaviours where leaders of unions enter into regular treaties with the capitalists to exploit a consumer, or call an abrupt stop to a strike action because the employer has satisfied the leadership desire.

Michels (1968:283) consider such development as universal in his "Iorn law of oligarchy by stating that:

> By a universally applicable law every organisation of the collectivity brought into existence through the need for division of labour, creates for itself, as soon as it becomes consolidated its own interests. The existence of these special interests involve a necessary conflict with the interest of the collectivity.

The leadership is also armed with further training in bureaucratic and technical performance of specialist secretariat duties. This creates an artificial boundary of elite of the working class, a caste of cadets composed of persons who aspire to the command of the proletarian rank and file (Michels 1962: 13). It is this specialization or the pretention of this that leads to withdrawal of power from the masses and concentration in the hands of these specialists.

A closely related factor is the general notion of masses incompetence. Since the masses are considered

incompetent to rule themselves, they delegate authority to the leaders. Michels (1962: 36-7) points out the implication of this delegation by contending that:

> A mass which... transfers its sovereignty to the hands of a few individuals, abdicates its sovereignty functions. For the will of the people is not transferable nor even the will of the single individual.

But since this has become a permanent feature of all bureaucratic organisations, Michels (1968: 365) concluded that the leaders usually take advantage of their delegation to usurp the powers of the delegators and electors which betrays the mandate reposed in them. While the delegates use this power to further entrench themselves, the members remain passive spectators.

Michels' (1962:369) hope for redressing the leadership absolute control of power, is by mass education (this obviously means education in its widest sense) to diminish the gap between the leaders and the led, as well as increasing the capacity of the masses to exercise control, he states that:

> ... the poor are powerless and disarmed vis-a-vis their leaders. Their intellectual and cultural inferiority makes it impossible for them to see whether the leader is going, or to estimate in advance the significance of his actions. It is consequently, the great task of social education to raise the intellectual level of the masses, so that they may be enabled within the limits of what is possible to counteract the oligarchical tendencies of the working class movement.

The educational incompetence is a universl phenomenon which constitutes the most solid power of the leaders, so increased education will ultimately lead to the open administration of union governments.

The Webbs (1911: 11) writing about English trade unions, drew similar conclusions as Michels did later. Trade unions have the appropriate structure to operate democratically where every member can participate fully. Government by any other means can either lead to inefficiency and disintegration, or to the uncontrolled dominance of an expert bureaucracy. Centralisation and bureaucratisation, thus do not promote the practice of democracy in organisations.

Allen (1954) studied trade union administration in Britain. While appreciating the increasing sizes and complexity of organisations resulting in the need for efficiency through bureaucratic operations, he concluded that self-government had been sacrificed. Despite the acknowledgement, Allen (1954:15) feels that such a situation is expected because of the limited role trade unions are expected to play. He thus contended that the main objective of the trade unions is to protect and improve the general living standards of its members rather than providing workers with an exercise in self-government. The economistic position on trade union is simply projecting and

and encouraging an authoritarian solution to workers problems. As far as the leadership satisfy the traditional role of trade union, they have not deviated from the principles of democracy.

It is based on this assumption that Allen (1954: 206) measured democracy in unions using membership dissatisfaction and decline. He thus, stated that:

> Membership fluctuates frequently and substantially in trade unions in response to the kind of service they are expected to provide. Membership fluctuations, therefore represents fairly clearly the changes in the conditions of trade unionism.

Lipset's[9] study of the United Mine Workers of America substantiated Allens militant approach. He pointed how the prospects of the leadership that was declining was halted by the union leader, and his administration sustained when he used crises to draw support.

Mills[10] has observed that labour leaders in the United States who fail to deliver the goods are at risk. At the same time, he held an opinion that the union leaders act within and as part of the national power elite. The union leaders do not try to radically transform the social structure, but to achieve a more advantageous integration of their members into the existing framework. He therefore condludes that effective control of the leadership that tries to achieve members' interest would be

difficult because many of their actions are invisible to the membership. Therefore, since the activities of the leadership is mostly tailored towards personal advantages, the membership allegiance is based on ignorance rather than knowledge. The leadership power may be based on either the lack of interest or lack of knowledge.

The relationship between membership fluctuation and membership satisfaction can hardly be sustained due to certain circumstances. Mills argued that fluctuation may be caused by a number of other factors, such as the general level of employment, and the particular fortunes of the industries in which the union operates. Such fortunes or misfortunes can have substantial influence on the membership. There may be many other known strategies for controlling factionalism or fluctuations, but he suggested the establishment of a negotiating right to control dissatisfied members from contemplating alternative arrangements.

Interestingly, Martin (1968) has predicated democracy on the opposite side of Mills position. While members who are not satisfied in a union are being compelled to remain by established processes, factionalism is central in Martin's democratic ideal.

He has argued that:

> Union democracy exists when union executives are unable to prevent opposition faction from distributing propaganda and mobilising electoral support... The survival of faction limits the executive ability to disregard rank and file opinion by providing the potential means for it overthrow... faction is an indispensable sanction against leadership failure to respond to membership opinion.

However, Martin (1968) lists a range of empirical factors which determine effective opposition within a union. These include decentralised collective bargaining arrangements, extensive and constitutional power in the hands of lay members and an indirect electoral system, unions operating in the sphere of craft technology, well educated union members, and unions with a high level of membership participation.

Most of the literature examined so far have documented the operation of Michels 'Iron law of oligarchy' in various circumstances. The famous study done by Lipset, Trow and Coleman (1968) on International Typographical Union (I.T.U) in New York examined the structure of the union which, they claim was an exception to the law. Their attempt was initially directed towards putting aside what Michels seemed to have laid to rest about oligarchical tendencies in voluntary organisations.

Apparently, the structure of this union differed from the normal situation of other trade unions. The union had two parties, one of which perpetually serve as a check on the party in power, as well as generating alternative policies. The setting enables the rank and file to determine union policy since most of the decisions concerning finance and salary increases are determined by referendum, where more often than not, the proposals of leadership are defeated. Moreover, the decisions to hold these referendum are not initiated by the leadership alone, but also by the rank and file.

The conclusion drawn about these structures, and organisations gives an impression that the union is very democratic. This is coupled with the fact that, there are other exceptional factors which include the formation of occupational communities, as well as a variety of social clubs. From these organisations members, acquire the skill of participation in union politics. The clubs also provide an opportunity to encourage apathetic members to become more involved in the Trade Union.

Lipset (1968:9-12) have also identified three main factors that contribute to membership desire to

stay in office almost permanently. These include, the bureaucratic nature of organisations, personal security, and commitment of members. The bureaucratic operation of large scale organisations and unions increase the power of the leadership by further training, while at the same time decreasing that of the membership. The existence of power side by side with powerlessness, the leadership monopoly of communication, and political skills effectively inhibit effective opposition.

It is the monopoly of power and skills, and the leadership desire to maintain this, that prevents union leaders from promoting membership participation. On the other hand the membership have developed apathetic attitudes towards the union which operation is too technical and unrewarding to them. Lipset (1968: 11) contended that:

> The typical union appears to its members as an administrative agency doing a specific technical job for them. Union leaders will attempt to sustain this image to prevent interference with the conduct of their job. Consequently, only a small minority finds the rewards for participation in union affairs great enough to sustain a high level of interest and activity.

Some interest in any union activity no matter how minor they may be, can stimulate individual's interest in other activities. In situations where no interest

is shown even in meeting attendance, great doubts would be held on other aspects of participation. For instance union meetings provide a forum for generation of membership interest to a substantial level. Lipset et al (1968: 223) observed that:

> The union meeting provides, among its many functions for the union's political system, a link between the personal ambitions and the inclinations of individual men and the union institutions. Regular attendance at these meetings is almost invariably the first step on a career in union affairs. The meeting is the place where a potential leader's private motivations start to become relevant to union politics, not only for the role he plays there, voting and speaking, but also for the larger role of "union active" that he begins to acquire for himself, a role which begins to equip him for further involvement in the union's political system.

As lack of interest is predominant, even in the minor activities of the union, there is a possibility of increased apathy in other activities that demand for skills and more commitment. Lipset et al have concluded that despite the conducive atmosphere for democracy, and widespread participation in this union, leadership oligarchy, and membership apathy were prevalent. This study has further provided more empirical evidence to Michels' conclusions about oligarchy in trade unions. As the pessimism continued to be upheld in American and British Trade Unions, there are many other studies in the developing countries to which we have turned to examine the significance of those findings.

Roberts' (1964) study basically covered the tropical territories of the Commonwealth. The all-embracing study has shown that trade unions in these territories took their organisation styles from the developed industrial countries. They are equally influenced by a number of political factors like the early trade unions in Britain. However, some indigenous factors have affected the shape these unions have taken, these include: geographical barriers, poor communications, the political and social climate, the attitudes of employers, local patroitism, tribal associations and the supply of men capable of organising unions. The proliferation of large number of small unions is accounted for by this fact (Roberts 1964: 124).

The administration of the unions and membership participation is similar to the problems observed by Michels. However, there are some few peculiar problems in the developing countries. Roberts (1964: 124) found the leadership as an obstacle to the organisation of union, as well as democratic participation by the members. Individuals that form these organisations tend to run them as business organisations. The business organisations are used for advancing political aims of such individuals. Therefore, the main factor accounting for poor organisation is the financial

handling of the leaders of such unions. This endemic problem has resulted into corruption, and weak unions without democratic practices.

The formation of the union by individuals, some of who have virtually nothing to do in union is problematic. The leadership which is drawn from among outsiders, the ranks, and well educated professionals are judged on personal merits. Their charisma rather than ability to union organisation, drawing a following to them is the determing factor without due regard to the legal provisions of democratic principles. It is the lack of democratic ethos that encourage leaders to behave autocratically since there is little check on their exercise of authority.

Roberts (1964: 137) observed other peculiar problems about ethnicity and language as factors that enhance a following and acceptance of leadership quality. One gets elected due to numerical strength of his ethnic group and successful use of the local language, and English to communicate with the membership, and the latter with management. This type of leadership is worshipped as a coveted position.

Roberts concludes that, lack of democratic ethos has created problems of union administration in tropical

countries. The leadership functions are limited, because democratic tradition is not established. Membership participation is limited because of the existence of other organisations to take up the functions performed by the unions in established industrial countries.

Warmington's (1960) study of the Cameroun's Development Corporation (C.D.C.) workers union centred on the relationship between rank-and-file members and leaders of the union. He sought to know to what extent leaders are bound by mandate from the main body of members, and how far they are actively supported in their policies by the rank and file.

Warmington (1960:119) found that the workers conception of the union was basically economistic. He observed that:

> ... the worker is grateful for the existence of an organisation which purports to represent his views, and to put his complaints before management. If this organisation gets results, he is certainly willing to support it by the small payments demanded from time time, and follow the advice of its leaders (who are all 'book men') when it counsels patience in the face of apparent provocation or when much more rarely, it counsels strike action. These men are in contact with the Europeans and education makes them conversant with their ways, and able to talk to them in their own language.

This observation confirms Kilby's (1969) theoretical position, and Roberts' (1954) observation about workers in developing countries. The members' commitment to union is maintained only as far as they need its services but they do not care much about its administration which they assign to the educated. In their ignorance of the working of the trade unions, they compare it with ethnic association to which most of them belong and the operations of which they understand. Warmington (1960:122) concludes that the C.D.C. workers union has largely been in the hands of a fairly small group of senior, usually well educated employees of the plantations. The nominees receive passive support from the majority of the unskilled workers.

Kilby (1969) has found the same trend among Nigerian unions as Warmington did about Cameroun workers, thus a common pattern seems to be obtained in underdeveloped countries. Kilby (1969:295) points [illegible] attitude of leaders is that members give support to the union only when their economic interests are to be realised, but are unwilling to pay dues, and attend meetings. This situation allows the leaders the freedom to manage the unions according to their wishes.

What one expects from such leadership is maladministration, and a weak union due to their poor financial base. This situation in turn leads to degeneration of membership interest when the weak unions cannot win any concessions for them.

Yesufu (1962) studied the administration of, and membership participation in two trade unions, namely: African Timber and Plywood limited workers union Sapele, and Railways workers union Ebute Metta. From these studies, he drew many general conclusions from his observation of these Nigerian unions. His emphasis were based on the functions of 'tribal' associations being considered at par with trade unions.

Yesufu, (1962:15) while accepting that apathy in trade unions is a universal phenomenon attributed this to ignorance and illiteracy prevalent in the country. The twin malady have substantial effect on the trade unions. Ignorance about the activities of the trade union has contributed to the workers unwillingness to pay their dues if and when due. The effect to the union is that of not meeting its financial obligations to the members and other comparable function which the ethnic associations perform.

There is much more support to the ethnic association due to the perception that the trade unions are formed

primarily for fighting wages, and other general working conditions. Since these issues do not come up regularly, support tend to slacken until another crisis is generated which would lead to wage increase. The ethnic associations on the other hand, provide more regular services that compell members to pay regular subscriptions (Yesufu 1962:67).

The members of trade unions by so narrowly defining their interest to economic issues as to disregard the union when it is not needed, will lead to abandoning the union to a few demagogues. Yesufu (1962:74) contends that:

> The active interest and participation of the ordinary rank-and-file members are fundamental necessities to any democratic institution. Without such interest and participation the institution soon gets to be dominated by a few officials and fanatics who may weild the powers thus acquired for their own personal ends and purposes for which the organisation was not meant. Yet it is now common place that the rank and file member of Nigerian Trade unions is rarely interested in what the unions are doing.

The apathy is further explained by the nature of the workers' aspiration and the services rendered by the ethnic association. Most of the workers are migratory labourers, unskilled, illiterate, and do not understand the English language. The migrant labourer is also a 'target worker' who is more concerned with his wage to meet certain targeted items; the unskilled

worker is virtually not concerned with long term negotiation of conditions of employment; illiteracy makes him not to comprehend proceedings of meetings, and therefore neither show interest nor attend meetings.

Cohen (1974: 136) found that even in a university environment, education did not promote attendance at meetings. There was gross apathy as 61 out of 70 respondents were totally ignorant of the central union to which their union was affiliated.

Smock (1969:1) has found no such relationship between an outside environment and the internal participation in the union. His starting point was to relate the immediate environment with the organisation of the Nigerian Coal Miners Union (N.C.M.U), Enugu. The local community where most of the members were drawn from, had a general principle of democratic practices:

> Participation is on such a broad scale that most traditional meetings have no chairman or central direction, take no notes permit more than one person to speak at a time, have no agenda, and continue for long periods.

The people were used to this type of organisation but they have become greatly transformed, once they become members of the bureaucratic organisation. They do not only have leaders, but oligarchy, devoid of opposition as well as enhanced centralization.

The bureaucratic organisation creates situation where "fairly sophisticated leaders are leading illiterate workers who are totally confused by their industrial environment" (Smock 1969:8-9). Corollary to this is that, most of the union members stayed away from meetings because they were conducted in English which many of them could not even understand properly.

The leadership use these short-comings to execute some policies contrary to the union's legal provision. They usually appointed members of their executive council instead of letting the representative council select them (Smock 1969: 11). Other strategies exhibited, are the elaborate references to the constitution to stop members from violating it, while in practice only the President and Secretary kept copies each and control of information dessimination to their advantage.

Smock (1969: 70) found an intimate relationship between management and union officials. The rank and file risked disciplinary measures if they dared oppose the president. Most of them would decide to go along with others as Smock graphically stated:

> One member said privately that Bassey (President) and management were one. Another said that Bassey had a deal with the management whereby the management would terminate whomever Bassey asked them to.

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> One member said privately that Bassey (President) and management were one. Another said that Bassey had a deal with the management whereby the management would terminate whomever Bassey asked them to.

> Some said that no one dared stand election against Bassey for fear that the management would terminate him.... He said everyone fears to be in the minority, because then those in power will consider the person an enemy, since he opposed them.

The fear factor, is an added power to the executive, apart from the control they already have on the members.

Management in the alternative, usually gives equal support to an opposition group if it feels their interests can be best served. Smock (1969:129) observed this practice in the N.C.M.U, where management has given encouragement to a dissident faction because it felt that the existing leadership was too aggressive and uncooperative. When it is evident that management shows open support for other factions in the union, some members of the union vote against their wishes for fear of victimisation.

Management can affect membership participation in other ways too. In order to deal with particular individual, the management aided the structural changes in NCMU. As Smock (1969: 129) observed, the NCMU discovered its structural defect and therefore worked out a centralised arrangement to aid its collective bargaining strategy. This was to buttress the hitherto weak insignificant and fragmented base into a stronger and united front. The management realised

the implication, plunged in, enhanced the practice in order to allow them deal with particular individuals within the union.

The strong base of the leadership in the union is largely derived from the mass illiteracy of the members, coupled with the overwhelming power of the executives, aided by the management. This has concretised the oligarchy of the leadership in this union.

Goshen's (1976) investigation of the textile workers and their unions in Kaduna corroborated some of the findings already cited in Nigeria to certain degree. The study did not actually find the oligarchical tendencies of the leaders in the five unions covered in the study. The leaders were largely playing other social functions like settling disputes among the workers 'speaking for the workers', and solving other problems.

The objective of the study was not particularly directed towards looking at administration of the union, but members were found to be nominal in their relation to the union, where they pay dues, but they have very little knowledge of the operations of the unions. This was not due to education per se, because lack of it was not a hindrance to those who wanted to know more about the unions.

Factionalisation was rampant among the unions studied, although this is a function of the state policy which allowed freedom of association since the passing of the Trade Union Ordinance. It is also partly explained by the members who wanted positions of leadership. Ethnic dominance of union leadership is found to have been an issue of no significance, only that it brought one of the unions into conflict during election where one state was discovered to have taken most of the seats. One would have expected more of such cases since most of the unions were dominated by certain ethnic groups. In any case this factor has gained more importance since this study was made.

Abdulrahman (1976) in his study of a textile factory in Kaduna found that leadership in the factory was not a function of educational qualification, infact the less educated led the union. The union was weak in making any achievements for the workers. The membership had less commitment to the union. Thus, the members exhibited the economistic approach to their union. Workers supported the union when gains were made, but withdrew their support when the union failed to make appreciable gains.

Abdulrahman (1976: 75) has found participation in ethnic associations strongly inversely related to participation in the trade union. Although that finding portrays participation in trade union quite in opposition to other studies, we must acknowledge that the union did not encourage workers to commit themselves to its course to the same degree as the ethnic associations did. However, we intend to take this up in this study for further investigation.

Abdulrahman (1976) reviewed three theories of democracy and attempted to see their operation in the union studied. He found the business theory most applicable in this union because the members found the trade union too weak and unable to solve their problems. They therefore devoted all their energies in support of the urban ethnic associations that meant almost everything to them.

Andrae and Beckman (1987) in the examination of textile factories emphasised the factors of management intervention in union affairs. The leadership apparently maintainingg close relationship with the management created problem of allegiance which oscillated between workers and management.

> The dependence of management on unions is a major basis for union power. They mediate between aggrieved and potentially violent workers, on the one hand, and management on the other. Workers will not allow themselves to be talked into good behaviour by the union unless they think the union is on their side. Managements in turn will not bother to make concessions to the latter unless they believe that it can hold back the workers.

The dual responsibilities cast alot of doubts on their representation of the unions. The type of following depends largely on how they balance the situation of creditable representation and protection of their jobs.

2.6 Conclusion

The three approaches to participation in organisations differ significantly in many ways. Their common denominator is on the need for workers to have an organisation, but apart from this the aims are poles apart. The Marxist school view the unions as a potentially revolutionary pedestal for the workers to overthrow the capitalist system. The involvement of the members sharpen their class consciousness toward the achievement of a proletarian state. This is predicated on the fact that workers are alienated from the process and products of their labour, and the social relationship between one worker and another.

The factors that constitute inequality among the workers are external, and only found under capitalist production. Under socialism, members would be equal, and the union will become a rallying point, and an integral part of the political struggle.

The liberal democratic theory accepts the equal participation of members in organisations to which they belong. The theory does not envisage union as a revolutionary struggle for political power, rather participation creates conducive atmosphere for members to develop democratic ethos. The more they participate in a variety of organisations, the more they become able to participate in larger organisations like the trade unions.

Democratic ethos promotes participation, the more workers participate, the lesser the leadership control the unions to the advancement of their personal interests. Once members have identified with the union, their level of participation is raised to the general health of such unions.

The business school does not view unions on par with state and therefore cannot imagine the operation of democratic principles based on participation of the general membership in leadership and decision-making. The leaders are free to take any decisions,

once the economic interests of workers are satisfied. That position leaves alot of loopholes for the misuse of power by the incumbents, and leads to apathy which the liberal school addresses. It also leads to development of oligarchy and alienation of workers from their union which is primarily created to address such issues. See Table 2.01 where the three theories are compared on six categories.

TABLE 2.01: THE THREE THEORIES COMPARED

Indicators	Marxist	Liberal Democrats	Business
Goal of unions	To overthrow the capitalist system and install the proletarian state	To enable membership participation in the union and develop democratic ethos.	To enhance workers achievement of welfare and fringe benefits.
Nature of participation in union activities	To develop class consciousness among the workers	Mass participation in union activities with representation where necessary.	Support the leadership of the union to press for better fringe benefits and keep wages high.
Structure of the union	Flat structure and equality of members on economic and educational levels	Hierachical authority with input from the rank and file.	Hierachical structure with a leadership stratum that is recognised and respected by management.
Role of union leadership	To chart the course of heightening consciousness among the members	To present the views of the rank and file to the management.	Pursue workers interests which are mostly economic
Valued characteristics of workers	To be socialist because of the struggle against capitalist	Participation in the union to maintain the union as a forum for widening work interests.	Economistic in outlook because of the need to win and keep economic interes
Purpose of union	To sharpen workers class consciousness	To stabilise the conflictual relationship between workers and management	Provide forum for management and workers to discuss economic issues.

The literature about unions have primarily focused on oligarchy and membership apathy. We have found that different writers with different definitions have tended to conclude that participation is less among the members, whether they view the union as a business agent or a political forum. It has been explained to mean that leadership have failed the unions in stimulating membership participation in the manner of their administration of the unions, or members have helped the union leaders to develop such oligarchical tendencies.

Leadership in some circumstances purposely use certain advantages of their training on the operation of the bureaucratic organisation to cow the members into allowing them have such chances to advance their personal interest. But in the Third World, education and ignorance have played a significant part in promoting oligarchy. Comparison of the roles of the ethnic associations to trade unions further concretises the perception of members attitude to trade unions.

In view of all these observations, we have come to the conclusion that participation is the root of organisation. The more members of the organisation take part in decision-making and administration of the union, the greater their identity, the healthier is the achievement of union's stated objectives,

either in the wider or restricted sense.

2.7 FOOTNOTES

1. Lenin V.I. Collected Works vol. 29, p. 21 cited in B.M. Boguslavsky, A.B.C. of Dialectical and Historical Materialism Moscow Progress Publishers, 1978 p. 363.

2. Bukharin N. (1925) Historical Materialism cited in Lipset S.M., Trow M.A. and Coleman J.S. (1968) Union Democracy The Free Press, New York. p. 410.

3. The argument of Rousseau on the possibility of democratic participation is summarised in Pateman C. (1974) Participation and Democratic Theory London, Oxford University Press p. 22.

4. Bukharin N. op. cit p. 310-11.

5. Weber Max (1968) Economy and Society vol. III cited in P.Q. Hirst, Social Evolution and Sociological Categories p. 111.

6. Rousseau J.J. (1911) Emile Everyman ed. cited in Pateman op, cit p. 27.

7. Lipset, et al p. 410.

8. This observation was made by the Federal Ministry of Labour Annual Report 1958-9 para 77 cited in Kilby P. (1969) Industrialization in An Open Economy: Nigeria 1945-1966. London Cambridge University Press, p. 295.

9. Lipset S.M. in his introductory essay to Michels' Political Parties p. 29 cited in J.E.T. Eldridge (1976) Sociology and Industrial Life, Ikeja Thomas Nelson Ltd. p. 179.

10. C. Wright Mills "The Labour Leaders and the power Elite" in a Kornhauser, R. Dubin and A.M. Ross (eds.) Industrial Conflict, McGraw Hill, 1954 cited in J.E.T. Eldrige ibid p. 179.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The two methods of carrying out a single case study is either by particularising or generalising analysis. Particularising means description and explanation of a single case to provide information concerning the state and changes it continues to undergo. In this way, general laws are used to carry out the analysis of the particular case in order to make particular statements. Generalising analysis means the development of empirical generalisations of the single case for theory construction. This is carried out by utilising the particular case to inductively develop general statements.

This study adopts the generalising method by collecting data in a particular setting in order to make general statements of wider applications. Once the pattern of participation is established in this trade union, one may be free to make general statements regarding participation on any trade union. The exercise is carried out in a systematic manner through the definition of variables clearly demarcating their boundaries, the research hypotheses, methods of data collection, techniques of data analyses, and the field experience and problems.

3.2 Measurement of Variables

The study involves the examination of dependent and independent variables. The main dependent variable is participation in trade union. This is operationalised as membership in the union, payment of dues, attendance at union meetings, contribution to discussions during meetings, voting in elections, and contest for a post in the union.

This definition looks at participation outside the strict economic confines of the traditional role of trade union. The traditional roles of trade union is organising strikes, fighting for improved welfare of the members, and protecting jobs of the members. Here, it is an attempt to see trade unions where members have equal opportunity to participate in fashioning out ways of administration. This provides them with better ideas about the forum which fights for their financial benefit and amelioration of their working conditions.

The departure from the orthodox economic consideration is informed by the fact that, workers have already realised the importance of combination to fight their employers and management for improving collective welfare. It is no longer very important discussing the aims and constitution of their union

because once this tradition has been established, we think more of the sustenance of the system of trade union politics.

The worker is placed in the position that he understands the union goals and objectives. His involvement in the union activities is carried out by attending meetings, contributing to discussions on the floor in order to fashion out decisions, campaigning for himself or others, voting, and contesting for a post in the union.

All or some of these activities are expected of the workers when they secure employment in various organisations. But even when each member is not involved in some of these activities, his financial. contributions makes him to expect that these activities will be performed by other members for him. It is also true that not all members can perform the same kind of activities at the same time because modern organisations are complex and large, their administration are sometimes carried out through delegation of authority. Thus, the majority delegates a few to carry out day to day activities of the union for them. In view of the foregoing, we decided to adopt the following indices of participation:

1. Whether a worker is a member of the trade union.
2. Whether the worker pays his dues to the union.
3. Whether the worker regularly attends union meetings.
4. Whether a worker contributes to discussions on the floor of the house.
5. Whether a worker votes during elections.
6. Whether he helps in campaign activities.
7. Whether he contests for a post during elections.

We decided to delete the first two indices because the state has made union membership mandatory and payment of dues t rough the check-off system compulsory. The state action has left workers with no option unless one decides to contract out, which seemed almost uncontemplated by the workers.

From the above indices, a worker could be rated a low, medium, or high participant. The criterion for rating a worker low, medium or high was based on the score on the five indices listed above. The question on meeting attendance attracted three points for attending all the three meetings, two for two meetings, and one for one meeting. One point was assigned to each of the other variables, voting, contributing to discussions, involvement in campaign activities, and contesting for a post. A member could then score a maximum of seven points. Thus, workers who scored two or less were low, three and four medium, and five and above were high.

Many independent variables were considered in the study. They included sex, age of the worker, level of education, income, number of dependents, marital status, years of urban experience, length of service, work experience, and participation in urban ethnic associations.

Sex of the workers was considered, but we found that only males are employed on the shopfloor. Since the shopfloor was our area of interest, all the females employed in the company but engaged in other duties were not included in the study.

Concerning age of the workers, we expected to find them in many age categories, but the initial survey revealed that none of the workers was less than twenty years old, and few were more than forty years old. We therefore decided to limit the categories into those less than thirty years old, and those thirty and more. These are generally referred to as the young, and the old workers. In the first category were 54 percent and the latter had 46 percent of the workers.

Another variable is level of education of the workers. A number of levels (such as primary school, General Certificate of Education/Teachers College, Ordinary Diploma, Higher National Diploma, and

university) were considered but, these were found to be unnecessary after the interview schedules. We finally decided to categorise the workers with primary school certificate, and those with more than primary school certificate. Our decision was based on the fact that the company has consistently maintained a recruitment policy of a minimum of primary school certificate. Some of the workers have on their own acquired more qualification through private studies or evening classes. In this way, we found 81 percent of the workers had primary school certificate and 19 percent with more than primary school certificate.

On length of service among the workers, we found that some of the workers had taken up appointment since the company started production in 1965, while others were employed just before an embargo was placed on new employment in 1983. We had initially expected that workers would differ on the perception and involvement on issues in the factory depending on their length of service.

We therefore categorised them into three groups; those that have served for nine years and less, ten to nineteen years, and twenty years and above. The distribution showed 58 percent for those with ten to nineteen years of service and the remaining 12

percent for those with more than 20 years. The likely explanation for this phenomenon is that labour turnover was high before 1981, but within the last few years, it has stabilised due to lack of opportunities elsewhere. The workers' aspiration to set up a business of their own made them to withdraw their services and collect their gratuities but now these gratuities are not likely to provide them with sufficient capital for the purpose.

In terms of work experience, we expected that workers that had worked in other places would bring with them certain experiences that may affect their interests either to participate more or less. This experience may not necessarily constitute an important criterion for employment here unless one 'came from' another textile industry. This was defined as having previously worked elsewhere before taking up employment in this firm. We found 63 percent had no previous work experiences, while 37 percent had worked in government establishments or private firms.

Marital status of the workers was considered as a variable that may affect workers participation in the union. Most African worker's demonstrate a sign of being 'responsible' only when they are married after having worked for a number of years. We initially thought of all categories of marital status including

being single, married, divorced, seperated, and widowed, but narrowed these down to either being married or single. This line of reasoning was taken because we found that those workers that were not married were few, and a further seperation into those other categories would have made no meaning afterall, this other category were umarried at that time. We finally categorised the workers into those who were married, and those who were not. We found 93 percent in the first category and only seven percent in the latter.

Closely related to the variable just examined was the issue of dependants a worker maintains. We had the expectation that those workers who were married would have more dependants than those who were not. Living in a typical African extended family system, most of the workers whether married or not, had many dependants. We categorised these into those with five or less dependants (60 percent), those with between six and ten dependants (34 percent), and those with more than ten dependants (six percent).

Income constitutes an important index of a workers position in a firm. A worker's earning goes a long way in influencing decisions he takes, or whatever he does at work or outside the work place. It is an

important criterion for stratification of individuals in the work places. In this firm however, workers were employed on a minimum wage of ₦125 and they rose slowly through the wage levels based on good record and length of service more than any other criteria. In considering this situation, we categorised workers into three convenient levels: those who earned ₦150 and below, those between ₦151 and ₦200, and finally, those earning more than ₦200. The majority were those earning below ₦150 (67 percent), and middle cadre were 12 percent, while the higher category earning more than ₦200 were 21 percent.

The last variable we treated is workers participation in urban ethnic associations. Participation in urban ethnic association was defined almost in the same way as participation in the trade union, but with slightly different indices: The indices are as follows:

1. Whether a worker belonged to any ethnic association
2. Whether he paid his dues regularly to the association.
3. Whether he attended association meetings regularly as they were held.
4. Whether he was committed to the association by taking problems for solution.
5. Whether a worker has ever occupied a post in the ethnic association.

The information on these indices were scored and ranked as low, medium and high. All the indices apart from the indicator on meeting attendance attracted one for 'yes' and zero for 'no'; for meeting attendance however, attendance at all the three meetings examined carried three points. In the final analysis those who scored two or less were considered to be low, three and four as medium, and five and above as high.

The questions posed to elicit these information are presented as appendix A to this work.

3.3 Field Work

The research covered the period between January and December 1987. But the interview schedules were administered between August and October 1987. Pilot interviews were conducted with some management staff - the Personnel Manager, and General Affairs Manager in April 1987, and the union executives in June, 1987. Familiarisation visits were made to the Textile Worker House - the national headquarters of the National Union of Textile Garment and Tailoring Workers of Nigeria in July, 1987.

These preliminary interviews were undertaken to obtain detailed information concerning the following:

date of establishment, size and composition of the labour force, hiring policies and turnover, employees' benefits, shareholding, directors and officers, leadership turnover, relationship between the national secretariat and the branch union, production processes and products, and the observation of election into union executive. Union meetings were attended during the whole period of the research.

3.4 Data Collection Techniques

In order to obtain these information, three modes of data collection were utilised in the course of the research. They included non-participant observation, structured interview of the workers, and documentary sources of data.

For non-participant observation, the researcher took time to familiarise himself with the actual political life of the union. This was carried out by attending meetings of the workers union, and executive meetings. The executive meetings were held monthly during office hours, but the meetings could be called any other time to address emergency situations. General meetings were held when pressing issues arose. Sometimes, work was suspended in order to enable workers attend, otherwise meetings were called on Saturdays which is normally a work free day. During these times, care was

taken to observe the conduct of meetings, issues discussed, and how members contributed to on-going discussions.

Apart from observing the conduct of the meetings, a non-systematic observation was conducted during break time, and in the clinic where workers queue up to wait their turns for treatment. Their discussions and general comments on union politics provided the researcher with some information for this study.

The main data for this study was collected through structured interviews. The questionnaire were prepared and administered to each respondent through interview. These questions were intended to elicit information on the dependent and independent variables. They contained socio-economic characteristics, such as sex, age, marital status, state of origin, ethnic group, level of education, type of accommodation, ownership of means of transport, number of dependents, urban experience, years of service, and participation in urban ethnic associations. These were all meant to be tested against participation in the union, which is the main dependent variable.

The interviews were conducted in the union office during union working hours of between 8 am and 5 pm. The interview itself took between 25 and 30 minutes depending on the fluency in English and the readiness

of the respondents to give out information. The more straightforward questions were answered promptly, but opinion questions were avoided or answered 'I dont know' or just by shaking head implying no answer.

Non-structured interview was carried out by discussing with key informants among the principal union officials, ex-union presidents, National officers who were members of this branch union at the National secretariat and management staff.

The final method used in gathering data was through documentary materials. These were very scanty, although, the most important documents used were the company publications, annual reports and accounts, the union constitution, the collective agreement between the national union (NUTGTWN) and the employers association (NUTGEA). The minutes of meetings were hardly available, to check certain issues in the past.

3.4.1 Sampling Procedure

The main population of the study was all the workers at Arewa Textiles Limited, Kaduna. Our initial intention was to interview at least ten percent of the workers through a quota sampling. This could have meant about three hundred workers from the estimated three thousand workers. However, this idea was dropped due to the numerous problems encountered.

There was no sampling frame to choose readily from. The union had no register, and the initial expectation to draw a quota sample from spinning, weaving, printing and finishing departments was also shelved because the management did not approve of the researcher's request to go into the mills to interview workers in their various shopfloors. This would have enabled the selection of workers through a quota sampling. The management felt that allowing the researcher into the shopfloors would entail a loss of many man-hours on a venture not directly beneficial to the company.

In view of these problems the researcher sought and was granted the use of the 'union office' through the cooperation of the union executives. With this understanding, the researcher allocated certain number of respondents to each departments which the union executive helped to procure. The union executives with the assistance of the shopstewards called in the workers, one at a time from different departments. Through this method, a total of 203 workers were interviewed according to the various departments from the total population of 2,439 (August 1987) as follows:

Spinning	78
Weaving	85
Printing	21
Finishing	19
Total	203

3.5 Techniques of Data Analysis

The data collected from the interview schedule was bulky, and was therefore coded and transfered to the computer to enable easy handling of large number of observations. Most of this data is presented in quantitative form.

Since the key variables of the data are either ordinal or dichotomous, we decided to use Gamma in order to estimate correlations between dependent and independent variables using Davies 'rule of thumb'[1] as a guide for interpreting the data. Intervening variables are introduced appropriately to test their effects on the relationships. In other cases, percentages are used to make comparisons within cross tabulated tables. We have decided also to use gamma because of its dual purposes of giving strength and direction of the association.[2]

3.6 Field Experiences and Problems

Industries in Nigeria are generally difficult places to conduct a research of this nature. Most management of these firms refuse to give out information even of public nature. Records are normally not kept and management bluntly tells one 'we don't keep records for anybody here'. A researcher is held in suspicion either as a government or security agent in disguise.

It took about two weeks of persuasion before the management allowed this researcher even to interview the workers in the union office. The assistance of the union executive in calling out workers as requested for the interview sessions is highly appreciated. In the final analysis, the sample was a confirmation of other earlier findings on age, ethnic representation, educational level (Hinchcliffe: 1972; Verenyol: 1974; Goshen: 1976; Abdulrahman: 1976; Andrae and Beckman 1987).

It is clear from the fore-going that gathering of data for this study was difficult, however, these obstacles did not discourage the researcher, nor do they distort reliability and validity of the findings of this study.

Attention in the next chapter is on the analyses of data collected and test of hypotheses.

3.7 FOOTNOTES

1. Davies J. (1971) Elementary Survey Analysis New Jersey, Prentice Hall. p. 49.

   The value of Gamma
   +.70 or higher A very strong positive Association
   +.50-69 A substantial positive association
   +.30-49 A moderate positive association
   +.10-.29 A low positive association.
   +.01-.09 A negligible positive association
   .00 No Association
   -.01-.09 A negligible negative association
   -.10-.29 A low negative association.
   -.30-.49 A moderate negative association.
   -.50-.69 A substantial negative association.
   -.70 or lower a very strong negative association.

2. Gamma, among other measures of association gives strength and direction of association. For full discussion see J.F. Healey (1990) Statistics: A Tool for Social Research, California Wadsworth Publishing Company p. 299.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 WORKERS CHARACTERISTICS, INVOLVEMENT IN ETHNIC ASSOCIATION AND PARTICIPATION IN TRADE UNION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the analyses of data collected, and the findings of this study. It attempts to show the relationships between a number of independent variables and the main dependent variable, participation in trade union. The hypotheses tested are restated in turns at appropriate places for easy references. Based on these hypotheses findings for each of them is presented in relation to the expectations outlined in chapter one. The measurement of each of these variables is fully described in chapter three, although they could be restated at certain points to clarify the categorisation.

Before proceeding to the analyses of the quantitative data, we have presented a summary of the workers socio-economic and associated characteristics.

4.2 Workers' Socio-Economic Characteristics

The labour force that was growing steadily since the factory was commissioned in 1965 has reduced considerably. The initial labour force of 3,800 with 55 expatriates and 40 Nigerian senior staff rose

to 4,800 in 1976. By the time of this study (August 1987) the labour force had gone down to a total of 2,739 workers. This figure may continue dwindling since there is an embargo on employment, and a continuous loss of staff through dismissals, resignations and retirements daily. However, a typical worker profile is observed in this factory.

The examination of the worker profile showed that most of the workers (54 percent) are young, less than 30 years old while 46 percent are more than 30 years. This is an indication of African labour force which is consistently known to comprise young and energetic males employed primarily to perform unskilled and semi-skilled labour in the young emerging industries. These youngmen carry out different tasks on the shopfloor, while the few females if employed at all, are assigned to menial and administrative functions.

Regarding marital status, we found that an overwhelming majority of the respondents (93 percent) were married while only a few (7 percent) were either single, seperated or divorced. There was no particular correlation between age and marital status, because the workers, whether young or old were found to be married.

Irrespective of whether a worker was married or single, most of them bore certain respo..sibilities to dependents. Thus, we found that 60 percent had between one and five depdneants; 34 percent had six to ten; while six percent had more than ten dependants. While this can be seen as a typical case of extended African family system, this type of responsibilities are clearly too heavy for the meagre income of these workers in the urban centres. This is likely to affect their perception of issues and involvement in other associations and the union at the work place.

In terms of ownership of transport we discovered that a majority of the respondents (77 percent) had no transport of their own, and only 23 percent own bicycles, motorcycles or cars. This situation shows that most of the workers are struggling into hardly available public transport to work. The company has no transport facilities to convey workers to, and from work.

The workers accommodation is one area which was looked into. The company provides accommodation to only senior staff while the junior workers are left to cater for themselves, and 15 percent of salary is paid as rent subsidy. The amount is not enough to enable one secure a decent accommodation or own a house.

Majority of the workers therefore live in the crowded industrial areas of Nassarawa, Makera, Kakuri and Ungwan Television in rented apartments. As many as 94 percent live in rented apartments, while an insignificant number (6 percent) own houses of their own or live in their family houses. It is clear from the two categories of ownership that, these workers are predominantly people who do not own any sort of property in the place they work or elsewhere.

The sampled population is dominated by those with primary school certificate. We found that 81 percent of the sampled workers were holders of primary school certificate, and 19 percent had more than primary school certificate. Those workers that had more than primary school earned these qualifications while still working in the firm through evening classes or correspondence courses. This is thought to be an asset for a better job elsewhere. There is hardly any training programme in the company, unless a worker resigns or a staff member pursues a relevant course in textile technology, in which case, he may be allowed study leave with or without pay.

There is evidence that more workers will go for higher education. This is partly explained by earlier findings and the economic situation in the country.

Hinchcliffe (1973) found that only eight percent of the textile workers had more than primary education; Goshen (1976: 13), three years later found 11 percent with higher education. In the circumstances where workers have more access to higher education as provided in the state policy, we expect more to acquire it. The state expanded educational facilities by the establishment of Universal Primary Education (U.P.E) in 1976, and consequently, this was accompanied by the corresponding expansion of higher educational institutions. Alternatively, workers may need to acquire higher education as security in cases of loss of employment in this company.

Since the workers are employed with the basic minimum qualification of primary school education, they rise slowly through promotion over a number of years. Many of the workers (67 percent) earned ₦150 and less, while 12 percent earn ₦150 to ₦200, and 21 percent earn above ₦200. per month. Promotion to the stated categories, as already said above is slow, and based on length of service more than any other criterion.

Acquisition of technical know-how would have been an asset, and a short-cut to higher income, but only 11 percent of the workers acquired this knowledge

before joining the company. These are actually found in the higher income category. The majority (89 percent) acquire their knowledge on the job. The company imparts this knowledge to the workers on employment. They undergo basic training under the training within industry (TWI)[1] scheme in factory maintenance, industrial safety, machine handling and production processes.

Length of service therefore becomes a very important criterion on the workers participation in this factory. The sample revealed that 56 percent of the respondents had served for nine years and less; 32 percent for 10 to 19 years; and 12 percent for 20 years and above. It shows that most of the workers have few years service in this firm. It also means that labour turnover which was initially high had stabilised within the last few years. This is likely due to the lack of job opportunities elsewhere. Another very important factor is workers aspirations to set up a trade of their own. This made workers to withdraw their services and collect their gratuities to enable them realise their dreams once they had attained 20 years service in the company.

In terms of work experience, we found that most of the workers (63 percent) had no previous experience

while 37 percent had either worked in government establishments, or private firms. The experience gained in other organisations, may not be very relevant for employment here, and that may not normally be used for placing workers on any salary level. All newly employed are placed on probation for six months before confirmation. During this period, they are trained on various aspects of production.

The majority of the workers come from Benue State and other middle belt states like Kwara and Plateau. Others are from other Northern States of Kaduna, Gongola, Bauchi, and Borno. The rest originated from Ondo, Bendel and Cross Rivers States. The proportion of this labour force according to their states of origin indicates that, the workers in Kaduna industries are drawn principally among the migrants from the middle belt where there are no industrial establishments to absorb the teeming population in search of employment.

The various ethnic groups in these states mentioned were found among the work force. In the sample, 44 ethnic groups were covered, however, the number from most of these was very small (less than 10). The predominant groups were Idoma, Igala, Tiv from Benue State. These three groups alone constituted 59 percent. Other ethnic groups from the northern states form 34 percent, and the remaining seven percent was found from the Southern part of the country. This has

been the case about textile workers in Kaduna since 1970s where Idoma, Igala, and Tiv have continuously been the dominant ethnic groups (Hinchcliffe: 1973, Vereniyol 1974; Goshen: 1976).

Three factors explain this phenomenon: Kaduna is a colonial city that has grown as an administrative centre, the capital of the then Northern Nigeria. Its industrial base is characterised by large companies based on state and multinational capital. Apart from a petroleum refinery, a motor assembly plant and a brewery, there are eight textile firms.

The concentration of these labour-intensive industries in the centre of the country attracts migrant labour from the middle belt. Kano takes care of the northern axis, Lagos and Ibadan the western axis while Enugu and Port Harcourt cater for the Eastern states.

The first workers that had earlier migrated to the industries for employment were successful. They therefore encouraged their relations who had just completed primary school back home to join them. They were employed almost immediately they arrived in Kaduna where there were alot of job opportunities in the various industries. The fact that factory work is considered better than farm work at home made most of them to opt for these so called "white collar jobs".

Ahmadu Bello University

Workers' participation in urban ethnic associations is substantial. Participation in ethnic associations operationalised as being a member, attending meetings, payment of dues, occupation of a post, shows that 93 percent of the workers belonged to various ethnic associations. The insignificant seven percent were found to belong to some religious organisations. We were not interested in pursuing the religious issue because of a recent ugly religious crisis in the state.[2]

Their reasons for joining the ethnic associations bordered on two factors; the first was "to be close to my kinsmen". As many as 58 percent considered this their main reason for entry. Another 42 percent thought of the benefits they could derive from the associations. But 48 percent had actually taken their various financial problems to the associations when their wife, children, self or other relations were sick, and when they lost any of the above. The association extended certain aids which the union could normally not give.

The attendance at association's meetings was impressive, only eight percent had not attended any of the last three meetings, 92 percent attended two to three of those meetings. This being a clear indication of commitment, we further demanded to know their financial standing. This was impressive as well, 80 percent were up-to-date in payment of their dues, and only 20 percent had not completed their payments.

A high level of involvement in the association is the occupation of post. In the trade union this is restricted by constitutional provisions, and the number of membership involved, while in ethnic associations lesser restrictions are imposed. We discovered that 65 percent of the members had served their associations as executive members at one time or the other (see table 4.01).

TABLE 4.01

SELECTED WORKER PROFILE

Variables	Values	Absolute frequency	Percent
1. Age	20-29 years	112	55.2
	30 years & above	91	44.8
2. Marital status	Single	15	7.4
	Married	188	92.6
3. Educational level	Primary school	163	80.3
	Post Primary sch.	40	19.7
4. State of origin	Benue	122	60.1
	Other N/stares	65	32.0
	Southern States	16	7.9
5. Urban experience	0-9 years	91	44.8
	10-19 years	78	38.4
	20 years +	34	16.7

TABLE 4.01 CONT'D

Variables	Values	Absolute Frequency	Percent
6. Type of Accommodation	Own House	12	5.9
	Rented	191	94.1
7. Ownership of Transport	None	156	76.8
	Bicycle/motor cycle/car	47	23.2
8. Dependents	0-5	125	61.5
	6-10	66	32.5
	10 and above	12	5.9
9. Length of service	0-9 years	116	57.1
	10-19 years	63	31.0
	20 years and above	24	11.8
10. Income per month	₦125-₦150	135	66.5
	₦151-₦200	26	12.8
	₦200 and above	42	20.7
11. Membership in ethnic association	Yes	187	92.1
	No	16	7.9
12. Meeting Attendance in ethnic association	None	14	6.9
	One-two	68	33.5
	Three	121	59.6
13. Up-todate in payments	Yes	152	74.9
	No	39	19.2
	N.A.	12	5.9

TABLE 4.01 CONT'D

Variables	Values	Asbolute Frequency	Percent
14. Being an official	Yes	126	62.1
	No	61	30.0
	N/A	16	7.9
15. Decision to join association	Financial aid	113	55.7
	Close to kinsmen	77	37.9
	N.A.	13	6.4

From the workers' profile (Table 4.01) we can therefore conclude that, the typical textile workers in the factory are young men who are less than thirty years old, generally married with many dependants. They are migrants from the middle belt in search of job opportunities, who tend to depend totally on the factory jobs they get. Their greatest asset is primarily school certificate which is only high enough to earn them employment in industries. Once they take amy employment, they depend entirely on promotion to improve their earnings. But promotions are very slow, and dependent on many factors. They neither own property, nor are their earnings sufficient enough for a decent living. They work under insecure conditions,

and this stimulates a high level of participation in ethnic associations, which cater for most of the problems a trade union cannot normally provide. Thus participation in the urban ethnic associations is primarily concerned with economic and security interests.

4.3 Tests on Participation in Trade Union

The main concern of this section is to test the hypotheses already formulated in chapter one. These will be restated in turns during the analyses. Some of the variables that have interactive effect or help to explain the hypotheses being tested are also considered.

4.3.1 The Greater the Level of Education the Higher the level of Participation in the Trade Union

Levels of education have already been operationalised as primary school education, and post primary school certificate. The finding shows that there are 163 respondents with primary school certificate. Out of this number 30 (18.4%) were low participants, 49 (30.1%) were recorded as medium participants. Among the 40 with post primary school, 12 (30%) were low participants, 10 (25%) medium, and 18 (45%) high participants in trade union. The relationship is

not significant at 0.05. The gamma correlation shows no association (see table 4.02).

TABLE 4.02

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION IN TRADE UNION.

Level of Education	Level of Participation			
	Low	Medium	High	N
Primary school	30(18.4%)	49(30.1%)	84(51.5%)	163
Post Primary school	12(30%)	10(25%)	18(45%)	40
Total				203

X^2 = 2.64 DF = 2(Not sig. at 0.05)

Gamma level -0.17.

The findings show that our expectation and our reasoning in the hypothesis is falsified. Higher level of education is not directly correlated with participation in the trade union. This result also corroborates Abdulrahman's (1976:55) finding in another textile factory in Kaduna, United Nigerian Textiles Limited (U.N.T.L), but runs contrary to the discovery by Almond et al (1963: 317-8) in a seven-country study, where they concluded that persons with more education are more likely to be members of, and active ones of some organisations. Certain explanations can be advanced.

These workers that have fought to acquire higher education, are usually preoccupied with higher aspiration. These higher aspirations cannot be realised within the union structure. In the textile employment situation, workers are employed with a minimum of primary school certificate, the most important criterion for advancement is experience on the job rather than level of formal education. The very few workers who acquire other qualifications through hard work in private studies, or evening class intend to pursue (seek) alternative jobs, which demand higher qualifications.

In certain situations where such workers attain such aspirations, they tend to identify with management rather than with the rank and file workers and their unions. If they fail to attain such aspirations on the other hand, they become frustrated, disappointed and alienated from the entire work place and everything within it (Abdulrahman 1976: 56).

The position of workers with higher education and skills is unique. By their very nature, they are often likely to bargain individually than going through the union, because the demands of the union are not in a way to benefit them directly. Most of the struggles of the unions are always meant for all

categories of workers which may not be of any advantage to a particular class alone.

The next variable considered is marital status of the respondents. The two categories are single, including those who are divorced, seperated and widowed; and married. Fifteen respondents belong to the first category. Out of this nine (60%) had low participants, four (26.7%) medium, and two (13.3%) were high participants in the union. Of the 188 respondents who were married, the findings show that 33 (17.6%) were low participants, 55 (29.3%) were medium participants and 100 (53.2%) were of high participation category (see table 4.03).

TABLE 4.03

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MARITAL STATUS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE UNION

Marital Status	Level of Participation in the union			
	Low	Medium	High	N
Single	9(60%)	4(26.7%)	2(13.3%)	15
Married	33(17.6%)	55(29.3%)	100(53.2%)	188
Total				203

X^2 = 16.52 DF = 2 (Sig at 0.05)

Gamma level = 0.71

The statistics show that the relationship is significant at 0.05 level. The gamma level show a very strong positive association. Thus, demonstrating that those who are married were higher participants in the trade union, while those who were single were generally low participants in the union. Participation in the union is a function of marital status.

Another related variable that is of importance here is the number of dependants a worker catered for. Most of the workers had different number of dependants, we found that 125 had five or less dependants. Out of this 26 (20.8%) were low in participation, 45 (36%) had medium participation, and 54 (43.2%) were high participants. There were 78 respondents with more than five dependents. Among this were 16 (20.5%) who were low participants, 14 (17.9) in medium participation category, and 48 (61.5%) were found with high participation (see table 4.04).

TABLE 4.04

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NUMBER OF DEPENDANTS AND PARTICIPATIONS IN TRADE UNION

Number of Dependants	Level of Participation in Union			N
	Low	Medium	High	
0-5	26(20.8%)	45(36%)	54(43.2%)	125
6 and above	16(20.5%)	14(17.9%)	48(61.5%)	78
Total				203

X^2 = 8.60 DF = 2 (sig. at 0.05) Gamma level = 0.23

The statistics show that the relationship is significant at 0.05. But the gamma correlation shows a low positive association (gamma 0.23). What this indicates is that, while shouldering responsibility does not prevent one from participating in the union, it is not a strong factor in promoting union activities.

In another related situation, we have now discovered a low positive relationship between number of dependants and participation in the union. Both of these factors involve hign rinancial commitment. These types of responsibilities are known to make greater demands towards adequate working conditions, economic security and wages. If the union is able to help in achieving some of these demands, the worker will be very commitled to such a union, where there is no hope, he may be very apathetic.

How marital status is correlated with participation in the union corroborate findings by Milbrath (1977: 114), who found that the young unmarried citizens who are less integrated, are less concerned about political activities. Once married and settled down to a more stable responsibility, they are likely to give thought to other activities including politics.

This is substantiated by the fact that since economic recession set in, and chances of employment opportunities reduced to the very minimum, workers with such responsibilities of marital nature, tend to cling to their jobs which help to sustain their living. The union here fought retrenchment actively, so that when the need for such an action was contemplated, the management only cancelled the night shift, and absorbed all the workers on shift A to other existing shifts. This may account for this support, in opposition to what Abdulrahman (1976: 62) found in U.N.T.L. long before the recession period which started since 1981.

In connection with transportation, we found that an overwhelming number of workers have no means of transport of their own. These 156 respondents were spread into participating category. We found that 37 (23.7%) are low participants, 47(30.1%) are medium participants, and 72 (46.2%) are high participants in the union. Only 47 own one means of transport or the other (bicycle, motorcycle and car). Out of the 47 respondents in this category 5 (10.6%) were low participants, 12 (25.5) were medium participants, and 30 (63.8%) were high participants (see table 4.05).

TABLE 4.05

OWNERSHIP OF MEANS OF TRANSPORT AND PARTICIPATION IN TRADE UNION

Status on Transport	Level of Participation Low	Mediu..	High	N
None	37(23.7%)	47(30.1%)	72(46.2%)	156
Own	5(10.6%)	12(25.5%)	30(63.8%)	47
Total				203

$X^2 = 5.49$ DF = 2 (not sig. at 0.05)

Gamma level = 0.34.

From the table above, we can see that the relationship is not significant at 0.05. There is however a moderate positive association between ownership of transport and participation, though not as strong as to conclude about its effect on participation.

The next variable was state of origin. In considering this variable, we grouped many states into three categories depending on the number of respondents. These categories are Benue State, all other northern states, and southern states. The importance of ethnicity, and to a large extent statism in union politics makes us to assume that states that have higher number of workers would likely dominate the leadership of the union. Members of these states would have a high record of participation in the union. Consequently, we assume that workers from the

southern states that are in the minority would have low participation.

Our findings show that among 122 respondents from Benue State, 22 (18%) were low participants, the participation of 40 (32.8%) was in the medium category, while 60 (49.2%) were high participants. Among 65 respondents from other northern states 14 (21.5%) were low participants, 17 (26.5%) respondents showed medium participation, and 34 (52.3%) were high participants.

The 16 respondents from the Southern States were distributed as follows: six (37.5%) low, two (12.5%) high participants (see Table 4.06).

TABLE 4.06

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STATE OF ORIGIN AND PARTICIPATION IN TRADE UNION

State of Origin	Level of Participation in Union			
	Low	Medium	High	N
Sothern States	6(37.5%)	2(12.5%)	8(50%)	16
Other Northern states	14(21.5%)	17(26.2%)	34(52.3%)	65
Benue State	22(18%)	40(32.8%)	60(49.2%)	122
Total				203

$X^2 = 4.99$ DF = 4 (not sig. at 0.05)

Gamma level -0.03.

From the statistics above, we conclude that, state of origin is not a factor for participation in the union at A.T.L. In fact, the state as grouped, is not associated with participation in the union. The next hypothesis tested is related to commitment to work and participation in the union, and a test of other related variables.

4.3.2 The Longer the Worker Serves, the Higher His Level of Participation in the Trade Union

Some of the variables which are examined in relation to the test of this hypothesis include income, urban experience, and age of the respondents.

The hypothesis to be tested involved the relationship between years of service and union participation. Length of service in this factory is divided into three categories, those who have served for nine years and less, those for 10 to 19 years and those for 20 years and above. Majority of the respondents (116) had served for nine years and less. Out of this number 28 (24.1%) were low participants, 45 (38.8%) had medium participation, and 43 (37.1%) recorded high participation. There were 63 respondents who have served for 10 to 19 years; among these, 11 (17.5%) have low participation, 11 (17.5%) medium participation, and

41 (65.2%) were high participants in the union. There were only 24 respondents who have served for 20 years and more. Out of this 3 (12.5%) were medium participants and 18 (75%) belonged to high participation category (see Table 4.07).

TABLE 4.07

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LENGTH OF SERVICE AND PARTICIPATION IN TRADE UNION

Years of Service	Level of Participation Low	Medium	High	N
0-9 years	28(24.1%)	45(38.8%)	43(37.1%)	116
10-19 years	11(17.5%)	11(17.5%)	41(65.1%)	63
20 years +	3(12.5%)	3(12.5%)	18(75%)	24
Total				203

X^2 = 20.42 DF = 4 (sig. at 0.05)

Gamma level 0.42

From the figures above, we have seen that the relationship between length of service and participation in trade union is significant at 0.05 level. The gamma correlation shows a moderate positive association (0.42).

We had hypothesised that the longer a worker serves, the higher will be his participation in the union. This has been proved to be so to a certain extent. Before advancing some explanations we consider age, which has a close relation with years of service.

There are 112 respondents who are aged 20 to 30 years old. Out of this 24 (21.4%) were low participants, 41 (36.6%) were medium participants, and 47 (42%) were high participants. Ninety-one respondents were more than 30 years old, their participation rate showed that 18 (19.8%) were low participants, 18 (19.8%) were medium participants, and the majority of them 55 (60.4%) were high participants in the union (see Table 4.08).

TABLE 4.08

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AND PARTICIPATION IN THE TRADE UNION

Age in Years	Level of Participation			N
	Low	Medium	High	
20-30 years	24(21.4%)	41(36.6%)	47(42%)	112
30 Years +	18(19.8%)	18(19.8%)	55(60.4%)	91
Total				203

X^2 = 8.37 DF = 2 (sig. at o.05)

Gamma level = 0.24.

From the figures above, we have observed a low positive relationship between age and participation in the union.

We had earlier assumed that, workers become older in age as they serve longer in their various places of employment. We had anchored this on the fact that, people who seek employment are mostly those who have just completed their primary school education. As they continue to serve in the various organisations, they advance in age, work experience, and union participation. With this reasoning, we felt that leadership of the union will also comprise older workers. Although this is not a constitutional provision, most of the young workers seem to accept this situation. One respondent puts this most succintly when asked why he would not contest for a union post. "It is not yet our turn to vie for union posts, let's allow them, it is their chance. This likely means, those who have served longer or those older in age. It is also pertinent to state that age is respected in African society, and because of this reason, where several other members express intention for a certain action or opinion, the younger ones may withdraw, or keep quiet when the older members make contributions.

Bates[2] findings about African workers show that membership in union is a function of age, where older persons joined more frequently than youths because the older ones have worked longer in the industry. Our findings do not clearly corroborate the effect of age but participation shows a significant relationship with years of service.

Age is not a significant factor in participation in A.T.L. and thus, we turn more to a work related issue, income. There is a general assumption that since the criteria for promotion do not rest squarely on academic qualification, but long terms of service, we assumed that those workers that have served longer would likely be in the high income category, and therefore, high participants.

4.3.3 The Higher The Income of the Workers, The Higher will be Their Participation in the Union

Income of the workers was categorised as those earning less than ₦150, those ₦150 to ₦200, and those earning ₦200 and more. When this was tested with participation, we found that 135 respondents were in the low income category. Out of which 32 (23.7%) were among the medium participants, and 56 (41.5%) in the high participation category.

There were 26 respondents in the medium category, of which 7(26.9%) were low participants, 5 (19.29%) medium participants, and 14 (53.8%) were high in participation in the union.

Among the 42 respondents in the high income category, 3 (7.1%) were low participants, 7 (16.7%) were medium participants, and 32 (76.2%) were high participants (see Table 4.09).

TABLE 4.09

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INCOME AND PARTICIPATION IN THE TRADE UNION

Income category	Level of Participation in the Union			
	Low	Medium	High	N
₦150	32(23.7%)	47(34.8%)	56(41.5%)	135
₦150-₦200	7(26.9%)	5(19.2%)	14(53.8%)	26
₦200 +	3(7.1%)	7(16.7%)	32(76.2%)	42
Total				203

X^2 = 17.19 DF = 4 (sig. at 0.05)

Gamma level = 0.41

The statistical findings show that the relationship is significant at 0.05 level. The gamma correlation is a moderate positive association (0.41).

Income is known to be an important varaible in membership participation. Milbrath (1977: 97-8) found that workers with higher income are likely to participate more in organisations they belong thus, the results here tend to corroborate that earlier finding despite the fact that the income differences are very little among the workers.

Findings about income tends to show that both income and length of service have similar effects

on participation, since those who have served longer are likely to be those that have higher income . Those workers that have served for long tend to become settled in their chosen career, or have become resigned to their fate at a certain point in time. The fear of losing one's job in the face of economic crisis tends to encourage them to participate in the union as the only avenue for maintaining their jobs. Why there is no strong correlation between age and participation, is the effect of bureaucratic structures which do not permit movement on income based on age. Bureaucracies emphasise promotion based on merit, although this may be viewed differently by the workers and management. While workers feel that this should be based on length of service, and age, the management would normally prefer to base this on certificates, Performance at promotion examinations and even length of service. When the expected criteria are not followed, some may become apethetic to union activities. In these circumstances, some workers tend to support the union in the belief that it is an active avenue for opposing the management, while others become totally disenchanted with the union which they feel cannot help them to achieve their goals.

It is therefore relevant to conclude that those who have already 'invested' in many years of service, would prefer to chart the course of the union to a safer terrain in order to serve their interests much better.

The next, relationship we decided to test was whether general urban experience apart from the factory situation has any effect on participation. In this way, we tested urban experience and participation in the union. Urban experience is defined as the number of years one has spent in Kaduna. This is divided into three categories, these include, nine years and less, 10 to 19 years, 20 years and above. When cross tabulated with participation, we found that, out of 91 respondents in the first category, 21 (23.1%) were low participants, 37 (40.7%) were on medium participation category, whereas 33 (36.3%) were high participants.

Among the 78 respondents who have spent between 10 to 19 years in the urban centre, 18 (23.1%) were low participants, 16 (20.5%) on medium participation, and 44 were high participants. For the 34 respondents who have stayed for 20 years and more in the urban centre 3 (8.8%) were low participants, 6 (17.6%) had medium participation, and the rest, 25 (73.5%) were high participants in the union (see Table 4.10).

TABLE 4.10

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YEARS OF URBAN EXPERIENCE AND PARTICIPATION IN THE TRADE UNION

Years of urban Experience	Level of Participation in the Union Low	Medium	High	N
0-9 years	21(23.1%)	18(23.1%)	32(36.3%)	91
10.19 years	18(23.1%)	16(20.5%)	44(56.4%)	78
20 years and more	3(8.8%)	6(17.6%)	25(73.5%)	34
Total				203

X^2 = 18.28 DF = 4 (sig. at 0.05)

Gamma level = 0.05

The finding as shown in table 4.10 revealed that the relationship is significant at 0.05 level. The gamma level is moderate positive association.

The comparison of the gamma levels shows close relationship between years of urban experience (0.35) and length of service (0.42). We are able to deduce from these findings that, years of service and urban experience have almost the same effect on theworkers. The difference is exhibited by the actual contact with the work situation. For most of the workers, there is very little difference because their arrival in the uran centre is provoked by the 'invitation' of their 'brothers' in the town, it takes only a short period after arriving in the urban centre

to get employed. Their exposure to the urban centre alone is not as important as the years spent at work place in respect of participation in the union. We can conclude that although urban experience is an important factor in participation, actual number of years served in the work place is more important in participation in the union.

4.3.4 The Higher the Level of Participation in the Urban Ethnic Associations, the Higher the Level of Participation in the Trade Union

This fourth hypothesis is aimed at testing the relationship between participation in ethnic association and participation in the trade union. The assumption is that, those who participate more in ethnic association have learnt enough of politics to transfer this to the trade union.

When these variables were cross-tabulated, we found that 23 respondents were low participants in the ethnic associations. Of this number 12 (52.2%) were low participants in trade union, 5 (21.7%) were on medium participation category, and 6 (26.1%) were high participants in the trade union.

In the medium participation category in the ethnic association, 55 respondents were recorded. Of

this, 8 (14.5%) were low participants in the union, 18 (32.8%) were medium participants, and 29 (52.7%) high participants.

The majority of the respondents (125) were found in the high participation category in ethnic associations. Among them, 22 (17.6%) were low participants, 36 (28.8%) were in the medium participation category, and 67 (53.6%) were high participants in the union.

The relationship is significant at 0.05 level. The gamma level shows a low positive association (see Table 4.11).

TABLE 4.11

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTICIPATION IN URBAN ETHNIC ASSOCIATION AND PARTICIPATION IN THE TRADE UNION

Level of Participation in Urban Ethnic Association	Level of Participation in the Union			
	Low	Medium	High	N
Low	12(52.2%)	5(21.7%)	6(26.1%)	23
Medium	8(14.5%)	18(32.7%)	29(52.7%)	55
High	22(17.6%)	36(28.8%)	67(53.6%)	125
Total				203

X^2 = 16.30 DF = 4 (sig. at 0.05)

Gamma level = 0.22.

The statistical finding has shown that there is a correlation between participation in urban ethnic association and participation in the union, but this association (.22) is not strong at A.T.L. This situation likely means that some elements of participation in ethnic associations is being translated into participation in the union during this time as we have already observed a substantial participation in the ethnic association among the workers.

Abdulrahman (1976) found a reverse association, showing that, the more workers participate in ethnic associations, the lesser they participate in the trade union. He has shown that the unions were very weak and disorganised at the time of that study, The restructuring has strengthened the unions ability to fight few things, and this might account for the difference observed in this study. What is apparent however, is that members have a propensity for participating more in ethnic associations due to reasons which border on economic and social factors.

At the level of social factors, Smock (1969: 9) found that understanding of English language was the main determining factor for attending union meetings. workers who could not understand English tended to

stay away from union meetings precisely because they were conducted in English language. If they could not attend union meetings, they were likely to be more apathetic to other union callings that demanded more skills and precision. On the other hand, ethnic association meetings are held against the background of customs and tradition which the members comprehend more clearly.

There are other varieties of activities which urban ethnic associations provide for the worker as well as an identity, these include: financial aid during death of a relation, naming ceremonies, and marriages. Additionally the members of the ethnic associations intervene in matrimonial disputes with the aim of resolving them andsometimes, provide legal aid, and contribute towards the maintenance of unemployed. The worker expects that in the event of death, his ethnic group would convey his body, family and property home.

The union on the other hand remains bureaucratic organisation that is set up with the primary aim of pursuing issues relating to job security and welfare. Thus most of the members would prefer involvement in ethnic association activities than their union responsibilities. When we wanted to know which meeting members would attend between union and ethnic

associations if they took place at the same time, most expressed preference for 'our' association meetings.

The conclusion we can draw from these findings is that the perception of the ethnic association meetings as providing both psychological, and material interests to the members is, opposed to the union which is a bureaucratic organisation with limited scope of activities. This has affected the transfer of the experience from one to another in the manner we had assumed. We have so far presented the relationships based on the bivariate tables. In order to subject our findings again to further test, we introduced some variables which have some interactive effects on the bivariate relationships already discussed with a view to finding the strongest variables in the relationships.

Education, was found to bear no relationship to participation in the union. Some other variables that could have influenced the bivariate relationship although identified were no more tested for further results.

For length of service, we have the feeling that age, education, income, and participation in the ethnic association were some interactive variables which needed further tests. The two partial tables

(Table 4.12) indicate that there is great difference between the two age categories. Amongthe younger workers there is no association, but among the older workers, there is a moderate positive association. This shows that age seems to interact with length of service in influencing level of participation in union activities.

Education also seems to bear interactive effect on the bivariate relationship between length of service and participation in the union. The two partial gammas show a low positive relationship (.10) for those with primary school education, and substantial positive relationship for those with more than primary school (.63) (Table 4.12).

For ethnic participation, we see some effect on the relationship between length of service and participation in the union. Those who have served longer having more influence on participation in the ethnic association. The bivariate relationship between length of service, and participation in the trade union showed gamma value of .42. The partial tables show the gamma for those who are low as .25 and for those who are high as .30. The finding indicates that, although those respondents that have higher participation in ethnic

association are likely to participate more in the union, it is not strong enough to conclude that the effect of ethnic participation is greater than the length of service (see Table 4.12).

TABLE 4.12

UNION PARTICIPATION BY INDEPENDENT VARIABLES BY CONTROL VARIABLES (PARTIAL GAMMAS

Independent Variables	Control Variables	Low Union Participation	High Union Participation
Length of service	Age	.05	.48
Length of service	Education	.10	.63
Length of service	Income	.80	.29
Length of service	Participation in ethnic Association	.25	.30
Income	Age	.33	.39
Income	Length of service	.06	.27
Income	Participation in ethnic Association	.79	.17
Participation in ethnic Association	Age	.82	.38
Participation in ethnic Association	Education	.65	.71
Participation in either Association	Length of service	.69	.72
Participation in ethnic Association	Income	.83	.29

The importance of length of service, made us decide to test the effect of income on the relationship between length of service and participation in the union. Income has less interactive effect on the relationship.

Participation in ethnic association shows a more significant effect on the relationship between income and participation in the union. This outcome may be due to the low cell count in the low ethnic participation category. There is an observed 50 percent cells of less than five cell count. This might account for the high gamma obtained. Nevertheless, we have found that the relationship among the low participants in ethnic association show the partial gamma of .79, while those for the high participants show .17. These statistical findings show that participation in ethnic association affects the relationship between income and union participation. Those who are low participants in ethnic association, but with high income are likely to participate more in the union. Thus there seems to be some interaction between participation in ethnic association and income in influencing union participation.

From these multivariate tables used, and the introduction of interactive variables to assess their

effects on the bivariate relationships we draw certain conclusions. The strongest independent variable is participation in ethnic association. This is found to be consistent in influencing the relationship between the partial tables used for the tests. The next strong independent variable is income. This is rather due to the fact that income of the workers have very little discrimination. The length of service has little effect on most of the relationships tested. The least is education which has no effect on most of the tested relationships.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we have tested four main hypotheses, and many other variables which were sought to explain the findings on the hypotheses. These were grouped into variables based on socio-economic characteristics commitment to work, and participation in urban ethnic associations.

The findings show that contrary to conclusions reached about political participation and educational level, and our expectations, we found that education is not related to participation in the trade union at A.T.L.

Marital status of the workers showed a very strong positive correlation with participation in the trade union. This finding may be interpreted with caution, because of 33 percent cells with less than five cell count, however we are able to conclude that marital status is a significant factor for participation in this union.

The number of dependants a worker maintains showed a low positive relationship. Ownership of means of transport shows a moderate positive association with participation. We suspect that, this factor alone cannot account for this trend, because those who have transport of their own might have either worked for a longer period in the firm, or earn a nigher income. This was not further investigated because this was not intended intially to be considered at a more detailed level. We also found that state of origin of the workers was not a factor for participation in the trade union.

The second hypothesis tested was length of service and participation in the trade union. We found a positive moderate association. We tried to see this trend by testing urban experience. This was also found to have a moderate positive association. As people are exposed to urban setting, their awareness is enhanced, so that their involvement in political

activities become increased. The awareness generated by this exposure is not as high as the experiences the worker gains at the workplace, such was the reflection on participation in trade union.

Finally, we considered participation in urban ethnic associations. A number of studies have found high participation among workers in ethnic associations in the same manner as in this trade union. We have found that such a high level of participation in the ethnic associations, have not been adequately transfered to the trade union. Attempts to explain this show that these associations operate on parallel level with the union. While these associations take care of the direct needs of the worker, economic and pyschological demands, the trade unions remain bureaucratic with limited scope to the needs of the workers.

From these findings and further tests of interactive effects of certain variables we discovered that ethnic participation is the strongest independent variable whose effects seem to be felt in all relationships. Income is the second strong variable in influencing the relationships tested. Length of service has little effect, but education seems not

to be an important variable in influencing workers participation in their union in Arewa Textiles Workers Union.

The purpose of the next chapter is to summarise the findings, offering plausible reasons for such trends observed in this chapter, draw general conclusions, and make suggestions.

1. T.W.I. Training within Industry is an internal scheme organised by the management for newly employed staff. They are trained on factory maintenance, industrial safety, machine handling and production processes. The training only wide enough to enable a worker pick on the job.

2. In March 1987 a religious crisis had engulfed the state resulting in the burning of churches and mosque. The suspicision was still very rife during the time of this research, so we considered overlooking that safer.

3. Bates R.H. (1972) "Trade Union Membership in the Copper Mines of Zambia. A test of Some Hypotheses" in Economic Development and Cultural Change Vol. 20 No. 2.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, an attempt is made to recapitulate the problem of this study, discuss the major findings, and observations and draw conclusions on the basis of observed behaviour of the workers at Arewa Textiles Limited, Kaduna. We present the summary of the major findings of the tests on hypotheses in chapter four which are preceeded by discussions, conclusions and recommendations.

5.2 Summary

The first hypothesis tested is the level of education and participation in the trade union. Level of education was found to bear no relationship to participation in the trade union. The assumption that higher level of education would be correlated with higher level of participation in the union was falsified.

This finding runs a counter trend to the various literature examined on the effect of education on participation in unions and other organisations in other countries. In those literature, participation is found to be persistently related to education.

Smock (1969: 9) found education as an important factor that promotes attendance at union meetings; Michels (1968: 369) found education as a potent factor which counteracts the development of oligarchical tendencies of the leadership. According to Verba et al (1978: 53-5) education enhances membership involvement in skilled political activities; and Becker (1959: 22) observed that education promotes awarness on issues that ultimately encourage high contribution to decision-making processes.

The counter-trend observed at Arewa Textiles Limited can be explained in two respects: The company insists on pegging employment qualification among the shopfloor workers on primary school certificate. Despite this fact, some workers have taken various examinations to improve upon their educational qualifications. They acquired certificates through hardwork, reading during their leisure time, or evening classes. These certificates are not recognised by the management, and therefore not considered for promotions. If on one hand, those certificates are recognised, this category of workers would develop a propensity for aiming at supervisory or managerial positions. In the event of failure, they become frustrated, and alienated from union activities, because their belief of rectifying

this failure cannot be solved by the union. On the other hand, since skilled workers are scarce, the very nature or their scarcity makes them more individualistic in bargaining with management rather than going through the structure of the union.

In this firm, promotions depend on many criteria including length of service, good record, passing of promotion examinations, and sometimes age. Education, bureaucratic organisation is not given such prominence. Workers with higher qualifications tend to look outward rather than inward. Since participation is an internal activity, their outwardness relegate union activities as well.

Another result obtained showed that marital status is a very important factor in participation in the tradeunion. The findings show that those who are married tend to participate actively in the union. This is in contradistinction from Abdulrahman (1976: 79) who found that married life places too heavy demands on individual as to allow him time to participate in the union.

Our results corroborate Milbrath (1977: 114) findings that young unmarried citizens are less

integrated and therefore less concerned about political activities. Further to this observation we have reasons to believe that married life would encourage active participation in the union.

Most of the workers in A.T.L. whether young or old are married. Married life actually places heavy burden on workers most of whom earn less than ₦200. This income is quite unsatisfactory for the maintenance of the worker, his wives, children and other dependants. But economic recession which led to the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme (S.A.P) makes it very difficult for one to find other job opportunities with such low level of education of most of these workers. They tend to keep the jobs they have, rather than moving to unknown places, the married workers find it even more difficult to leave their jobs.

The fear of losing their jobs was allayed by the relentless effort of the union against outright retrenchment. This company has been stable during most of the period of S.A.P. The only time when retrenchment of workers was contemplated ended up in the cancellation of the night shift but all the workers in the shift were absorbed into the two existing

shifts. Their active participation may therefore, be related to their appreciation to the union that nas saved their jobs and their very existence.

Closely related to this variable is the number of dependants a worker nas. This variable was found to have a low positive association (0.23) with participation in the union. This seems to explain better the difficulty of the worker. Most of tne workers whether married or not have a number of dependants. The inability of tne union to satisfy what they consider as external responsibilities may explain their low level of participation.

Another variable tested was ownership of means of transport. We had thought that the difficulty of coming to work by public transport was enormous on the worker. The problem of attending union meetings outside work days may be eased by ownership of ones transport. The relationship was a negligible one. Most of the workers have no means of transport, they both struggle into available public transport to work daily. They become used to this struggle, so that this factor is not significant in any of their activities.

Ownership of transport means more than this because, it is only well-to-do workers that can

afford any means of transport. This was found mostly among the workers that have served longer. Discussion on this category will be carried out later in the chapter where the nypothesis on length of service and participation in the union is undertaken.

The next variable we dealt with was on state of origin and participation in the union. The distribution of workers in this factory showed a high percentage of workers from Benue State. Many other studies among the textiles show this trend (Hinchcliffe 1973, Verenyol: 1976, Goshen 1976). The other workers came from other northern states, and a few from Southern States. The association is a negligible positive one therefore, we can conclude that state of origin is not a very important factor in participation in the trade union. There is no difference in participation on wherever one comes from.

The second hypothesis tested is the relationship between length of service and participation in the trade union. A number of other variables are related to this test. We had assumed that the longer a worker serves, the higher would be his participation in the union. We have found that age, income and urban experience bear some relationships to years of service.

Length of service may correlate with income and urban experience because the workers came to urban centres after they have passed out from primary school, and took up employment almost immediatley. The length of stay in the urban centres is likely to correspond with their working period, age as well as simultaneous improvement in their income, even though, their educational level is not better.

We found that length of service is related to participation in the union. The association is a moderate positive one (0.42). Age which we consider as an important factor in union participation given the respect Africans place on it, was found to be a low positive association (0.24). Income is found to be a moderate positive relationship (0.41), and urban experience too is a moderate positive relationship. The explanation to these findings can be made in many ways:

The design of the textile company is not strictly based on a vertical structure, especially at the shopfloor level. Promotion to higher positions is based on the length of service and availability of vacancies. The limited vacancies which exist at all times make the union to vehemently resist the recruitment of professional and managerial category

of staff from outside, because they would block their chances of advancement.

Those who have served long in the firm may contribute highly in the union due to the following reasons:

1. This category of staff are long overdue for promotion to supervisory cadre.
2. They are more experienced in the affairs of the union. Even if they know that union work is risky, they have their retirement benefits to rely upon, given the negotiated position reached with NUTGTEA which makes entitlements by forced retirement attractive to long serving workers.[1] They can protect these interests better by involvement in the union rather than apathy.
3. The traditional consideration for age in African context plays an important role (In this setting long service may be substituted for old age). In most of the meetings of the urban ethnic associations, age is highly regarded for playing leadership role. In most of such meetings among the ethnic groups, decisions are only reached in consultations with those 'elders'.

Age is found to have a low positive correlation with participation in union. On the one hand, age

per se is not a significant factor in participation, but the long experience at the workplace, On the other hand, this corroborates the "fear factor" about old workers. Abdulrahman (1976: 60) considered this 'factor' very central when he concluded that:

> Generally, old workers have greater commitments, both personal and familial, and overtime, tend to become 'sedatory'; hence the fear of losing one's job in the face of labour imobility (resulting both from old age and lack of qualifications) and employment, and the possibility of losing one's pension claims and provident fund when associated with union activities may combine to cow the older workers and lead to resignation of faith, more so when the union has been seen to be very ineffectual with regard to ameliorating worker's conditions.

The conclusion from this observation is that, age by itself is not a very important criterion for determining participation, infact it inhibits it. The older one gets, the more he fears to participate in union affairs considered 'risky' vis-a-vis ones entitlements. We have already observed that workers who have served longer are likely to be older, but we have also discovered that age alone is not very important therefore, length of service becomes a primary determining factor.

Closely related to length of service is urban experience. As already observed, most of the workers do not have urban experience more than the time

tney have spent in the working places. They have no previous industrial experiences, naving been engaged in peasant farming from youth. Their first urban experience is their pre-arranged movement from the village to urban centres through a network of relations. They are employed almost immediately tney come to the urban centres. They, therefore, have an exclusive working place experience rather than urban experience generally.

The third hypothesis tested is based on the income of of the workers and participation in the union. By income we assumed that a worker's status is judged by the income category he belongs to rather than the traditional categorisation based on skilled and non-skilled. The workers in this factory are employed mostly without any technical know-how, they acquire this on the job. We therefore think that judging status on this categorisation may not give the desired effect.

Income of the workers gradually improves with length of service in most cases in this factory. We have discovered that income is a significant factor in workers participation as the relationship showed a moderate positive association (.41). This is obtained despite the fact that there is little differentiation in income among the workers, a general

pattern towards higher income and political involement is established.

Milbrath (1977: 97) found that people on low economic ladder are less tolerant but less prone to engaging in protest action, because they would consume their energy in eking out a living, rather than protesting. That implies that unions are primarily concerned with protest activities, so that workers on low income category would be apathetic toward union activities. On the other hand, those workers on higher income category are more settled to pay union dues, and other related union activities that may involve certain financial demands.

The last hypothesis considered was participation in urban ethnic associations and participation in the trade union. Membership in ethnic associations among the workers is overwhelming. They join these associations "to be close to my kinsmen" and to derive benefits from those associations. Workers involvement in the activities of such associations is usually very impressive and they are prompt in paying subscriptions. The reasons for this type of response is that the movement of the applicant from the village to the town is conducted through a network of relations who are already in the town. Once he arrives, a job is

secured through the same network of other kinsmen. The worker thus, maintains these ties for proper socialization in the urban centre for a 'new life.' According to Cohen (1974) "early socialization and contacts outside the workplace are more important in shaping attitudes and behaviour than work experiences."

Apart from the socialization function of the ethnic associations, they provide a variety of activities due to their structure, and roles they play, compared to trade unions. Yesufu[2] has fully documented these functions and their effects:

> The worker's tribal organisation, or 'improvement' union in the town provides benefits in desperate cases, financially assists those who want to get married, pays the burial expenses of a deceased parent, makes a present on the occasion of the birth of a new babe, honours the worker elevated to a chieftancy, and repatriates the destitute. Some tribal organisations award scholarships to the young educated worker or to the children of others...
>
> Thus the trade union is caught in a vicious circle: it is deprived of funds because the services which it ought to render are provided by non-industrial organisations supported by the workers, and it cannot provide rival services because it has not funds... In the tribal 'union' for example, the worker can speak and be spoken to in a language he understands well, against a background of customs and traditions which he comprehends. ... In the trade union meeting on the other hand, matters are often discussed against an industrial andeconomic background which the worker hardly understands.

have formed purposively to protect their interests at the workplace. Their emphases however, differ slightly. The first contends that workers participation in the unions prepare them for the struggle against the capitalist. By participating, they develop class consciousness which would enable them to overthrow the capitalist system. The second is concerned with the democratic behaviour of unions which allows free expression of majority view points, and how the rank and file members are involved in decision-making processes. The third questions the contentions of the first and second, and rather argues whetheror not unions should be democratic. These dimensions have been taken up by three different schools of thought, the Marxist, the Liberal democrats, and the Business schools.

The Marxist contend that workers find a rallying point in trade unionism where they combine to fight the capitalist onslaught. In fact, the capitalist facilitates the forum for his own destruction by concentrating the workers in the urban centres at the factories. The combination of workers into unions is the realisation of their class position in the capitalist system.

The more the contending issues the more a class consciousness is developed among the working class. The workers contend over issues of wages and the labour

system generally. The aim is the destruction of the capitalist system and institutionalisation of a proletarian state.

The liberal democratic school contend primarily that, in order to satisfy the conditions for the realisation of the goals of the union defined broadly or narrowly, membership participation on the broad based issues is necessary. Structures are to be created in such a way as to permit equality of membership and levelling with leadership. This school has found the prevalence of oligarchy in union organisation very dangerous to the health of such organisations.

The common trend that has given further impetus to such happenings borders on membership apathy. Apathy is found as a common phenomenon because the rank and file are ignorant of what they have not been permitted to know by the leadership, they lack the capacity to comprehend the intricacies of union businesses due to low level of education, and the existence side by side of other rival organisations offering what members lack in the trade unions.

The third approach, the business school is not strictly concerned with the broad-based participation of membership in trade union. The central concern lies in the performance of the traditional functions

of the unions by the leadership. Union democracy is judged according to what extent these are performed. Leadership thrives to promote welfare, keep wages constantly high, and organise strikes in case of failure to achieve those issues. Leadership that fails to achieve these, loses members, and that is an indicator of lack of democratic participation. Thus, democratic practices by the membership is a function of leadership performance of the assigned duties.

A very useful approach is found in the examination of the degree of control union members have on the major decision-making areas. Desire for democracy is located in the participation of union members in decisions that are open to them, and their satisfaction in relation to opportunities for, or actual participation in union decision making activities.

On another plane, we have discovered that workers in most developing countries do not view unionisation as resulting from their consciouenss as a class that is exploited by the capitalist. They do not think and act like a class unless in times of wage demand or in anticipation of increased benefits. In Nigeria, we find workers coming together only when the issues of wage increases are decided or about to be effected,

otherwise they generally remain apathetic to the unions.

This situation has found explanation in the liberal democratic school which profer some reasons for the combined factors against the opportunities members have for effective performance in the trade union. These are: predominant rate of illiteracy among the factory labour force, lack of democratic ethos, inability to understand the operations of democratic organisations, and the operation of rival ethnic organisations performing functions which trade union in developed countries rightly undertake.

The industrial labour force in Nigeria is relatively young, its incorporation into the modern sector started at the beginning of this century, and only accelerated after World War II. Labour force consisting of the peasants do not have much experience (in operation of industrial work, and trade unions), consequently, joining these unions, the workers place a great deal of faith in the leadership out of the fear that they are not well equipped to handle union affairs. The Nigerian factory labour force is the first generation with peasant roots, who have moved in search of employment to the urban centres. Their greatest asset is the primary school education they have acquired.

The low level of education meets the minimum requirements for factory labour only. Their exposure to urban experience is limited to the places of their employment. Their ignorance of the industrial society and urban setting makes them strengthen familial ties with their ethnic roots. Their judgement of the trade union depends largley on its achievements, in comparison with what obtains in the ethnic organisations, which they comprehend more, and which serve as the strongest socialising agent in the urban centres.

Part of the problem of trade union is lack of democratic ethos. The operation of the union among illiterate workers who devolve absolute confidence in the leadership due to their incapacity strengthened the continuation of oligarchical tendencies. At A.T.L. most of the union officials are those who have served for a long period of time. Most of them have either through their service in the union or long years of service been able to acquire some property . The demonstration of actually being in charge of affairs here, creates an impression that they are best suited to lead the union.

This kind of posture was planted when they led a protest march to the National Secretariat against the irresponsibility of the former union officials. On 16 April, 1986, the workers from A.T.L. took to the

streets protesting against their leadership. They trooped to the National Secretariat under the leadership of the present executive, and lodged a complaint of general neglect and divided loyalty. They called for the restoration of the rights to participation. The National Secretariat promptly dissolved the executive and appointed a caretaker committee until elections were held 24 January, 1987.

Most of the leaders of this 'coup'[3] consequently, appointed members of the caretaker committee, were all retained as the next officials of the union. The power of manipulation is accentuated by the added responsibility from the management. The principal officers preside over the distribution of forms for bicycle, motorcycle and furniture loans. They also sit on the committee for the approval of these loans. They use much of their discretion in distributing and recommending applicants. They also recommend employment, promotion and dismissal of staff. The principal officials are excused from the shopfloor to perform union duties on full time with regular pay from the company. These factors add to the prestige and power of union office.

In the alternative, the highly elated office of the union cow the rank and file into devolving responsibility to them because they believe that they would be able to do their biddings accordingly. This constitutes the facilitating conditions for oligarchy. Michels (1915:93) concludes that:

> The incompetence of the masses is almost universal throughout the domains of political life, and this constitutes the most solid foundation of the power of the leaders.

Apart from the universal application, we have found in this factory that the trust that membership have in the union officials is largely due to their ignorance of their environment.

The administration of the union is therefore, determined by the openness of the leadership to the rank and file, but this is directly related to membership interest in taking responsibilities. But most of the members are only happy that union performs their duties which they are paying for. The union should make fair returns on their payment by performing.

A very important factor which most writers agree upon, is the effect of urban ethnic associations. The majority of literature accept that ethnic associations play very significant part in workers'

life in the urban centres. They function as a socialising agent, psychological, and economic functions to the workers. We were of the assumption that, socialisation would help members to function at the union level.

The workers experience in the ethnic association shows low positive association with participation in the union. Three factors explain this trend: Ethnic associations constitute a very strong object of identification, and as we argued earlier, that they also provide psychological security. Most of these workers crave for an identity among their members. Members have benefitted from these associations in a variety of ways and in a number of times. It follows logically that a worker shows appreciation to the forum that prvodies both psychological and material brnefits.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, ethnic associations' have a wide spectrum of activities in a worker's life, from his household to outside life, and even after he is dead. The members of the association perform such functions to him in the atmosphere of tradition and customs. This is more appreciated than the formalised nature a bureaucratic organisation can provide.

The working place do not provide the conditions for the satisfaction of psychological nees. The unions make momentary gains, after which they may go into a long period of oblivion, until another opportunity arises. In this way of existence, the workers develop business approach to the trade unions because of their limitations.

The state has allocated limited responsibilities to trade unions. The effect of this is to divert worker's attention from utilising the union to attack capital, so that ethnic associations which are many and ineffective can take these up. Nnoli[4] observed that:

> O..ly much more limited functions especially those which the ethnic associations were unable to perform have been assigned to trade unions and, therefore, only a much more limited and secondary loyalty has been attracted to these working class institutions.

At Arewa Textiles Limited, the workers' union has no specific welfare functio..s, apart from compelling management to pay certain compensations to the workers who may have sustained injuries while at work, fighting for other welfare scheme, not under the direct jurisdiction of the national union (NUTGTWN). In this way, bread usually served during break time was converted to 50k per working day, bonus offer which was equivalent to three pieces of fabrics was converted into equivalent of the least paid worker (N125), introduction of long service award was inaugurated in 1987. These gains are

copied and translated into national policy via collective bargaining between NUTGTWN and NUTGTEA.

These and other combination of forces have made African workers to emphaise the instrumental conception of the trade union as a business agent. We have earlier noted Kilby's (1969) observation that workers intermittently demonstrate high participation when there is impending wage increase or other material gains.

To conclude this study, we want to place it in a specific perspective, and emphaise that the data were collected at the height of the effect of the economic crisis, when the structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was introduced into the economy, and that political participation in the union cannot be understood by restricting analysis to individual roles within the union or the traditional factors based on socio-economic variables. We have found the more direct involvement by state in union activities since 1976 when the 'restructuring' of union was embarked upon. The exercise saw the reorganisation of more than one thousand unions to 42 industrial unions, creation of new structure of union administration and all these were affiliated to one central union,

the Nigerian Labour Congress (N.L.C.). Educational provision and leadership in unions, and closer monitoring on a day-to-day basis of the unions by the state is fully undertaken.

The centralisation of union administration has enhanced the strength of the central unions, but has decreased the power of the branch unions. Unfortunately workers tend to redirect their discontent to the local unions, thereby resulting in apathy among the membership. It is partly due to this that workers turn to finding alternative sources of psychological and economic satisfaction in the face of insecurity in urban work. The ethnic associations provide a very suitable alternative for the workers to derive what they miss in the trade union membership. The conception of the union is likely to continue if the structure and functions of the trade unions remain as it is, contributing very little under the structural Adjustment Programme in the economy.

For the present purposes, workers' participation in the trade union is greatly influenced by the economic situation. Each worker's level of participation is influenced by his expectations and calculated gains he gets. This is best explained in the business theory since the worker has found

disillussionment in the weak union, largely irresponsible leadership, and limited trade union functions. In view of this we make a few recommendations based on our experiences in this study.

5.4 Recommendations

From the foregoing, what seems to be of primary concern in the study on workers participation in the trade union is their experiences at the workplace, the structure of the union and the functions of the trade union.

Textile workers, and most other factory workers come from peasant backgrounds to the urban centres primarily, to earn a living. The procedural norms at work place and urban life generally are strange to them. The bureaucratic organisation of work seems to permeate all aspects of life. Working with such constraints coupled with less education and ignorance of their new environment, they entrust the whole affairs of the unions of which they are members to the officials.

Their participation is very peripheral (involving such aspects like voting campaigning) that do not entail any skills. Their understanding is thus, very limited atimes to support people within their ethnic

group. In view of this we recommend a broad based education of the workers. The state, though expanded the training programme of the Department of Adult Education at the University of Ibadan, tne setting up of tne Institute of Labour Studies at Ilorin to cater for workers education, but these are not adequate. We found that the courses run are attended by the union officials who select themselves in turns to attend them until their tenure expired.

The expansion of educational facilities which was embarked upon by the state in 197o nas suffered substantial set back due to economic recession. This would have meant a rise in educational attainment of factory workers in tne country. The acquisition of higher education would mean higher participation. We have found that variable not significant, but the fact remains that, even those with higher qualifications nad acquired them while still working in the factory. They may have been more userul if they attained it before engagement in factory work.

The operation of the union is too centralised to enable wider participation by the membership. There is need for a decentralised authority and policy execution. The shopstewards play only peripheral role when delegated to dessiminate information to members or

their shops. They should be organised into a recognised unit of the union structure where reasonable power is delegated.

In this way, the branches would be made more viable than the way they are operated at present, partially discarding the powerful intervention of the national union in the internal affairs of the branches. The centralisation affects union in all respects. They operate one central constitution but the role of the shopstewards is not defined in the document. The shopstewards remain a local arrangement for passing various information from the executive to the members of their shopfloors. Their roles could be enlarged, to that of serving as a check on the executive.

The role of the ethnic association gradually expands due to the limited functions of the trade union. The ethnic associations play all embracing functions in a worker's life. These activities are more frequent, and most vital for integration of members to their respective associations than formalised trade union. This also proves that industrialization has not done much to change workers perception of wage labour with its insecurity in strange environment as was the case in the early part of colonization.

In view of the workers strong identity to their ethnic associations, they present a competition for loyalty with trade unions. We suggest a trade union with wider functions, supported by regular matching grant from the company. We are making this suggestion in view of the important role the trade union plays in the factory, much of which is stability rather than conflictual.

The methodological problems encountered in the study are time and scope. Most of what is covered span only two terms of executive committees. Data were collected immediately after a populist regime was voted to power from a dying 'inept' government. This might have affected responses in view of the achievements they made immediately they came to power. This has made us too to draw conclusions about the union based on Allen's[4] business conception of the union. This has also influenced workers' view and level of involvement in certain direction. This type of study therefore needs a longer period of time covering many terms of different executives, and at least three trade unions.

The role of the state has had substantial influence on workers participation in their local unions. The state has provided umbrella for capital

against labour. The state keeps labour in perpetual check by providing structure which she closely monitors. In view of the state role, we suggest a further investigation of the state role and workers participation in trade unions. This line of thinking should constitute further studies in this area.

5.5 FOOTNOTES

1. Article X Redundancy and servance pay entitles a worker who loses his appointment through no fault of his to 75 percent of his pay for the number of years he has served for workers who have worked for less than five years. If he has served for more than five years, he is entitled to 50 percent plus his gratuity.

2. Daily Times (Lagos) 14 April 1958 in Sklar Nigerian Political Parties p. 496 cited in P. Kilby. Industrialization in Open Economy London Cambridge University Press p. 296.

3. 'Coup d'etat'. The workers themselves refer to this incident as a coup d'etat because they were initiated to 'flush' out the executives. In 1982, Solwin Achile was 'overthrown' by Jeremiah Kaura, and in 1986 Yohanna Kura-Nox led the coup against Mr. Nathanial Abuh, who had been the branch chairman since 1978. He was entangled in the struggle for National Presidency with his Secretary, Mr. Robert Agu. Both of them were sacked in the onslaught.

4. Nnoli, O. "Ethnicity and working class in Africa, consciousness and praxis" UFAHAMU vol. 10, Nos 1 and 2 Fall and Winter (1980/91) cited in Zashia J.A. Ethnicity and Politics in theNigerian Middle Belt" unpublished Ph.D. thesis McMaster University, 1984 p. 149.

5. Allen V.L. (1954) Power in Trade Unions p. 54 has taken the other dimension to the debate. He judged workers participation based on the performance of the executives, rather than the practice in political organisations.

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ARTICLES

1. The constitution of the National Union of Textiles, Garment and Tailoring workers of of Nigeria (NUTGWN).

2. The Procedural Agreement made Between the Nigerian Textile, Garment and Tailoring Employers Association and The National Union of Textiles, Garment and Tailoring Workers of Nigeria.

APPENDIX 'A'

SHORTENED VERSION OF INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

SECTION I: SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES

1. Interview Number
2. Sex of Respondents
3. What is your age?
4. What is your marital status?
5. Whatis your state of origin?
6. What is your ethnic group (Tribe)?
7. What is your highest level of formal education?
8. How many dependents are you responsible for?
9. Which type of means of Transport do you own?
10. What type of accommodatio.. do you have?
11. What is your salary (monthly)?

SECTION II: WORK COMMITMENT

12. How long have you been living in Kaduna?
13. How did you acquire your technical know-how?
14. How long have you been working?
15. Where did you work before your present employment?
16. What is your occupation?
17. Compared with your colleagues in other factories, are you satisfied with your salary here?
18. Apart from your work here, what do you do to supplement your pay?

SECTION III: PARTICIPATION IN THE UNION

19. Are you a member of the union?
20. How many meetings have you attended among the last three held?
21. In your meetings, how are decisions taken?
22. Have you been contributing to discussions during meetings?
23. What factor would you say prevents you from contributing to discussions during meetings?
24. How often are your opinions considered when you offer them?
25. Are there any special reasons for this?
26. How is the union executive?
27. Did you vote during the last election held?
28. Did you help anybody during campaigns?
29. Which type of activity did you carry out for him.
30; Which post have you ever held in the union?
31. Have you ever contested for any post in the union?

SECTION IV: LEADER/RANK AND FILE RELATIONS

32. By your own assessment, what is the performance of the union Executive?
33. What is the reaction of the union Executive when faced with a known opposition from some members during meeting?

34. How often have you taken any of your problems to the union Executives?

35. When you approached union executive to help you with a problem, did you have to give some kola (bribe) to them before helping you with the problem?

36. How do you think your union contribution is being utilised?

37. What is your relationship with the workers (union Executives).

38. Which type of problem does the rank and file constitute for you in carrying out your duties?

SECTION V: PARTICIPATION IN URBAN ETHNIC ASSOCIATION

39. Are you a member of your ethnic (tribe) association?

40. Why did you decide to join the association?

41. How many meetings have you attended among the last three held?

42. Are you x up-to-date in the payment of the association dues?

43. How many times have you taken your problems to your association?

44. Have you ever been an official of your ethnic association?

45. What do you consider to be the major benefits you derive from your association?

SECTION VI: EVALUATION OF THE UNION

46. How has the restructuring of the unions affected the relationship between the workers and the union executives?

47. Who should be blamed for some of the problems the union has been facing?

48. Does your educational qualifications affect your aspiration to union executive post?

49. In what ways do you think the union has been usefyl to you?

50. What do you think the union should do for the workers?