

**Collective bargaining as a catalyst to industrial harmony in Nigeria's Public Service. South East Public Service in perspective.**

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<i>Abstract</i>	<i>Journal of Policy and Development Studies (JPDS)</i>
<p><i>One of the most important functions of organized labor in Nigeria is collective bargaining. Absence of it brings about industrial disharmony which affects performance. This study therefore focused on collective bargaining as a catalyst for industrial harmony in the public service in Nigeria with peculiar emphasis on South-East geopolitical zone. Two research questions and two hypotheses were raised to guide the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey method of investigation. Data obtained were analyzed using Mean index, mean, standard deviation and independent t-test. The analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 25. The result of the hypotheses test shows that; state governments poor response to public servants grievances fuelled industrial disharmony and that their non adherence to collective bargaining agreements disrupted industrial peace in South East public service between 2010-2022. Based on the findings of this study, the research recommended that; state governments of South East, Nigeria should through the relevant agencies maintain flow of communication with the Labour Unions, giving response to workers grievances, adhere to collective agreements and avoid communication gap. The implication is that if the recommendations of this study are implemented, there will be relative industrial harmony in the public service of South East states that will engender growth and development of the public service and the economy of the entire zone.</i></p>	<p><i>Vol. 15. Issue 2 (2024)</i> <i>ISSN(p) 1597-9385</i> <i>ISSN (e) 2814-1091</i> <i>Home page</i> <i><a href="https://www.ajol.info/index.php/jpds">https://www.ajol.info/index.php/jpds</a></i></p> <p><b>ARTICLE INFO:</b> <b>Keyword:</b> <i>Collective bargaining, Industrial harmony, public servants, Grievances.</i></p> <p><b>Article History</b> <b>Received:</b> <i>15<sup>th</sup> April, 2024</i> <b>Accepted:</b> <i>20<sup>th</sup> June, 2024</i></p> <p><b>DOI:</b> <i><a href="https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jpds.v15i2.19">https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jpds.v15i2.19</a></i></p>

## 1.Introduction

Collective bargaining has come to be recognized as one of the major column of industrial democracy. It tends to play a vital role in creating and sustaining industrial harmony through early recognition of emergent areas of conflict and thereby taking steps to remove them through dialogue and accord, but the machinery of collective bargaining is often maltreated through non-adherence to the basic principles that guides the practice of collective bargaining (Fasan, 2011). According to ILO (1998), collective bargaining is defined as negotiations about working conditions and terms of employment between an employer, group of employees or one or more employers' organization with a view to reaching an agreement. From the above, it can be gathered that collective bargaining is an instrument, is a mechanism, and a method. Collective bargaining which refers to the joint negotiation of terms of employment is also the life blood of trade union which constitutes joint agreement to deal with virtually all problems that might affect development of the organization. In essence, collective bargaining covers all arrangements in which employee do not negotiate individually but negotiates collectively through representatives.

Collective bargaining is central to any industrial relations system since it is a tool through which regulated flexibility is achieved (Godfrey, Theron & Visser, 2007). A number of studies show that where workers had their terms and conditions of employment determined through collective bargaining and where management supported unions, there was an improved industrial relations environment (Edwards, 2002). Adewole and Adebola (2010), assert that frequent eruption of industrial conflicts between employers and employees in general can be effectively managed through collective negotiation and consultation with the workers' representatives. By offering a framework for resolving labor-management conflicts without resorting to strikes and lockouts, collective bargaining has been shown to foster collaboration and mutual understanding between employees and management. As a result, successful collective bargaining will be the product of a fair and lawful procedure, which will also maintain industrial discipline and harmony (Gomez *etal.* 2003).

Bronwyn (2010) informs that the process of collective bargaining is bipartite in nature involving negotiations between employers and the employees, usually, without a third party's intervention. A trade union(s) may negotiate with a single employer typically representing a company's shareholders or with a federation of businesses to reach an industry-wide agreement (Carrell & Heavrin, 2012). The result of the negotiations is usually referred to as a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) or a Collective Employment Agreement (CEA) by the negotiating parties. Bronwyn (2010) writes that CB enables working people who are union members to negotiate with their employers to determine their terms of employment including; pay, work hours, leave, health and safety policies, ways to balance work and family and much more.

Industrial harmony is a vital component of every modern economic system in the contemporary global society. Its importance derives from a number of functions which it subserves (Girigiri and Badom, 2021). What this means is that a good industrial harmony or peaceful co-existence between workers (Trade Union) and management, at least will definitely showcase a give and take relationship that is mutually inclusive in nature and will in

no small measure encourage high workers morale; and by so doing, the performance and productivity profile of labour will be on the increase. Also, good industrial harmony fosters development of the industrial system and ensures stability in the spheres of governance. This is true, in particular, for public sector labor relations, which will benefit private sector issues (David & John, 1992). Cooperation between employees and management in an environment of good industrial understanding is typically conducive to political stability, which in turn fundamentally lays the groundwork for the growth of local industries, serves as an attraction for foreign investment, and invariably creates jobs for the populace (Girigiri, 2002; Girigiri, 2007). In that line, adherence to collective bargaining agreement brings about industrial harmony.

In the South East, public services have experienced frequent strike actions over the years. Some of these strike actions lasts between one week to three months resulting in the loss of Labour time and little or no level of productivity. Due to poor relationship between the State government and the Public Servants, the states have not been able to enjoy industrial harmony for a length of time. Most of the industrial conflicts that have occurred in these States have been linked to ineffective or breakdown of collective bargaining machineries. A lot of man working hours and revenue has been lost by these states due to incessant strike actions by the public servants. All government policies are implemented through the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA's), manned by public servants and any industrial unrest adversely affects the implementation of these policies. In spite of this, there are allegations by the Union Leaders from the Zone that, the state governments have not effectively employed the practice of collective bargaining as they always pay deaf ears to their grievances, avoid procedural agreement in negotiation and most times, refuse to implement collective agreement. This study therefore aims at investigating if government's poor response to public servants' grievances fuel agitations and if non-adherence to collective bargaining agreement by government disrupts industrial harmony.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

1. To what extent does the state governments' response to public servants grievances affect industrial harmony in South East, Nigeria?
2. To what extent does adherence to collective bargaining agreement by state governments affect industrial harmony in the state public services in South East, Nigeria?

## **1.3 Hypotheses**

1. Poor response to public servants grievances by state governments' fuel industrial disharmony in public service in South East, Nigeria.
2. Non adherence to collective bargaining agreement by state governments disrupts industrial harmony in the state public services in South East, Nigeria.

## **1.4 Theoretical Foundation**

Pluralist theory is adopted by this study to help elucidate the issue of collective bargaining agreement by the employer and the employee. According to the pluralist approach, which Fox (1966) is credited with developing, trade union operations can effectively represent those

interests by policing both management and market relations. This strategy emphasizes the inevitable and fundamental competition between employers and workers rather than the shared long-term goal of employers and employees for the survival of the organization, which is supported by the unitary strategy. Workers are more worried about their income and standards of living than companies are about their profit and investments. The typical conflict between employers and employees is brought on by these various types of interests. It highlights the role of management and labor unions as representatives and reaffirms the importance (and validity) of collective bargaining. Organizations within the management and within the unions are acknowledged as valid by pluralists. They think that rather than exerting control or making demands, management's main job is to organize, communicate, and convince (Kessler and Purcell 2003).

In pluralism, the organization is perceived as being made up of powerful and divergent sub-groups, each with its own legitimate loyalties and with their own set of objectives and leaders. In particular, the two predominant sub-groups in the pluralist perspective are the management and trade unions. Consequently, the role of management would lean less towards enforcing and controlling and more toward persuasion and co-ordination. Trade unions are deemed as legitimate representatives of employees; conflict is dealt by collective bargaining and is viewed not necessarily as a bad thing and, if managed, could in fact be channeled towards evolution and positive change (Giles 1989).

The employers want to maximize profit at the expenses of the employee and employee want to enjoy social benefits in form of increase in wages and conducive environment. Therefore, conflict is inevitable and the need for trade union to protect the interest of both parties. Also, there is dual authority/loyalty in this approach. Therefore, employees are loyal to the management as well as their labour leaders (Gennard & Judge, 2002). This perspective views society as being post capitalist. That is a relatively widespread distribution of authority and power within the society, a separation of ownership from management and a separation, acceptance and institutionalization of a political and industrial conflict. Salamon(2000) noted that this perspective assumes that the organization is composed of individuals who organize themselves into a variety of distinct sectional groups, each with its own interests, objectives and leadership. The organization is thus multi-structural and competitive in terms of leaderships, authority and loyalty within the groups. Consequently there is a complex of tension and competing claims, which is managed in the interest of maintaining a viable collaborative structure. Conflicts that often result represent total range of behaviours and attitudes that express opposition and divergent orientation. In a nutshell, there is recognition of divergent interests, trade unions and conflict is functional (Oginni&Faseyiku, 2012).

## **2, Conceptual Clarification**

### **Collective Bargaining**

Collective bargaining according to March and Evans who were cited in Ogunmolasuyi (2003), is a method or process of conducting negotiations about wages, working conditions, and other terms of employment between an employer or group of employers on the one hand and representatives of workers and their organization on the other, with a view to arriving at a collective agreement. Ogunmolasuyi(2003) emphasized that the welfare issue is important at the negotiating table. According to Scutton (1992), collective bargaining is

the process of management and trade unions, who are the representatives of the workforce, negotiating pay, working conditions, productivity, and other connected issues. The result is that after the employment contract, terms of employment are decided through negotiation, conflict resolution, and conciliation. Unless they are subsequently included into the employment contract, the resulting provisions are not legally binding. The essence of the collective bargaining process, according to Farnham and Pimlot (1995), is its representative's nature, power base, adaptability, and flexibility to specific conditions. Additionally, it is a way to guarantee that employees are involved in decision-making. Collective bargaining is predicated on the idea that employees have a right to take part in determining the conditions under which they are employed. In light of this collective bargaining represents the end of absolute management power in areas that employers once viewed as exclusively falling under their purview. Additionally, it ushers in democratic practices into the world of paid work, virtually all of which previously were structured along authoritarian lines. Additionally, collective bargaining has the advantage of settling disputes by discussion and consensus rather than through conflict and confrontation, according to Sriyan de Silva (2006). It varies from arbitration in that settlements reached through collective bargaining typically reflect the parties' own choices or compromises, unlike arbitration where the decision is made by a third party. Due to the fact that arbitration is frequently a win/lose situation, it may irritate one party, or even both.

## **Grievance**

Bohlander and White (2008) defines grievance as a clear statement by an employee of a work related problem, concern or complaint, including those involving: - The interpretation and application of people management policies including allocation of work, job design, performance management; - A workplace communication or interpersonal conflict; - An occupational health and safety issue; - An allegation of discrimination; or - A question, dispute or difficulty concerning the interpretation, application, or operation of an award/enterprise agreement or other agreement. Holley and Jennings (2008) in Ajayi(2018) defined grievance as dissatisfaction regarding an official act or omission by the employer that adversely affects an employee in the employment relationship, excluding unfair dismissal. Both definitions are wide and give employees the right to process virtually all objections, complaints, controversies, disputes and misunderstanding in the workplace (Bohlander, & White, 2008 in Ajayi, 2018).

In contrast the other definition refers to grievance as an employee concern over a perceived violation of the labour agreement that is submitted to the grievance procedure for eventual resolution (Holley & Jennings, 2008; Bohlander & White, 2008). This definition clearly prevents employees from presenting grievances on broader job related or personal concerns, and from presenting objections or imagined complaints. Employee work-related concerns and grievances which are not promptly and effectively resolved result in: - Lost productivity and lower quality work, products and customer services; -Distraction from corporate goals and loss of confidence and communication between employees, managers and supervisors; - Low morale and job satisfaction which can lead to industrial problems, increased absenteeism and increased staff turnover; and - Loss of reputation to the employee and loss of working time of everyone involved.

Aggrieved people are not provided with the kind of leadership that matches their needs; they are under or over supervised. Whereas over- supervised employees can get very stressed at the work place the under supervised ones may not be optimally utilized. There are also numerous other potential causes: lack of feedback, lack of recognition, lack of clear performances expectation, unfair standards, being shouted at or blamed, renegeing on commitments, being overworked or stressed out (Randolph & Blanchard, 2007). There are three types of grievances, individual, group and policy, according to Canada Employment and Immigration Union and the Western University Grievance Procedure (2010). They differ in their intent and in their processes.

**Individual Grievance:** This is a complaint brought forward by a single employee in which a decision made affects that specific employee. Such cases can deal with issues related to the collective agreement, discipline and human rights, as well as other matters affecting the employee concerned. For example, an employee who has been overlooked for promotion within an organisation may complain about this fact. The employee may feel that he/she has performed adequately and he is the most senior in the directorate, as per the rules. The onus will be on his immediate supervisor to present the facts.

**Group Grievance:** This is a complaint brought forward by more than one employee grieving in the same alleged violation with the same facts. Therefore, a group grievance involves the “effect of management action on two or more employees under same collective agreement or regulation. Grievances of this type are used in situations where a group of employees in the same department or agency face the same problem. The problem must relate to the interpretation or application of the collective agreement.

**Policy Grievance:** This is a dispute of general application or interpretation of any section or paragraph of the collective agreement or rule rather than the direct management action involving a particular employee. These types of grievances are normally, initiated at the final step of the procedure

### **Industrial Harmony**

Achieving a social environment free of prejudice and complaints based on groups' or individuals' interests is a very difficult and challenging endeavor since organizations provide a platform for groups of people with varied socio-cultural origins and traits (Okon, 2008). Industrial harmony therefore upholds the principles that there is an understanding between employers and employees that permits the system to achieve set goals through a medium or avenue agreeable to parties in terms of conflicts or crises. Industrial harmony is never the absence of disagreement or freedom from it (Izidor, 2015). A harmonious workplace, according to Osabuohien&Ogunrinola (2007), is one that ensures that both employees' and employers' expectations are met through a path of compromise, which is crucial for the improvement of organizational productivity profile and growth. Nigeria's industrial relations crisis has recently grown to unimaginable proportions. Numerous hardships have resulted from the ongoing problems that have clearly affected both public and private spheres of life, including a fall in economic development and growth, widespread poverty, layoffs of employees, etc (Agba, Ushie& Agba, 2009).

Conflictual relationships have been the norm in Nigeria's industrial relations circles, which has contributed to this (Albert & Yahaya, 2013). This is demonstrated by the disruptive effects, large work halts, and man-hour losses. Iheriohanma (2007) claims that the nation's industrial environment has been plagued by industrial conflicts. From the perspective of the absence of harmonious working relationships among actors at the workplace, Osabuohien&Ogunrinola (2007) regard it as creating circumstances that are detrimental to the success and productivity of the company. He cites, among other things, the issues of work unhappiness that reportedly led to absenteeism, strikes, high turnover, work-to-rules, and low productivity. How to restore workers' satisfaction, devotion to duty, increasing productivity, and harmonious working relationships within the organization, especially in the event of an accelerating industrial crisis without resorting to jeopardizing industrial peace, are the challenges that the employer faces in situations like those described above and more (Okon, 2008). Without further ado, it has been established that conflicts of interest have always existed in human society, and it is inherently impossible to entirely eradicate them in the workplace when individuals with diagonally opposed goals engage in goal-achieving activities. According to Badom, Anele, and Badey (2018), the majority of management and governmental policies are at odds with employees' interests and frequently lead to industrial action. Additionally, employers have developed several strategies to reduce either the overt or covert aspects of the adversarial relationship that exists between them and their workforce that is based on real or imagined dishonesty in handling issues that affect everyone. These methods, however, have not proven successful in slowing down the rate of industrial unrest in the setting of Nigeria's labor market. Notably, the dominant conditions must be those of give and take, "master subordinates" and not "master-servants" culture for a sound and free industrial culture to operate where employer and workers can engage themselves openly to discuss concerns. Workers must be treated as co-owners and as cogs in the wheel of growth and profit, and they must receive all benefits that come with that. From conflict at work has been since the beginning of time and is still essential to maintaining relationships, parties should have confidence that any disputes can be resolved in a way that benefits everyone. As a result, a harmonious workplace environment is both required and possible.

An arrangement on working relationships between employers and employees that is cordial and cooperative and serves both parties' interests is referred to as "industrial harmony" (Otobo, 2005; Osad& Osas, 2013). Industrial harmony, according to Puttapalli and Vuram (2012), is focused on the interaction between management and workers over the terms and circumstances of employment and the workplace. In effect, it is a situation where employees and management cooperate willingly in pursuit of the organisation's aims and objective.

### **Public Service**

Public service according to the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Section 272 is defined as "service of the Federation or a state in any capacity including service as staff of the National Assembly or a State Assembly, member or staff of judiciary or of any commission or authority established by the Nigerian Constitution 1979 or by the National or a State Assembly, staff of a statutory corporation or educational institutions established or financed principally by the government of the federation or a state, staff of a company or enterprise in which government or its agency owns a controlling share or interest, members or

officers of the Armed Forces of the Federation or the Nigerian Police Force, customs, immigration staff and staff of a local government.

Simply put, public service refers to the arm of government whose primary responsibility is the implementation of government policies and programmes in accordance with the established rules and procedures. It includes not just the civil service but also political appointees, Ministers, Commissioners, judicial officers, local government employees, as well as the Police Force, employees of public corporations, parastatals, banks and armed forces. The general term that embraces the officials of the civil service and other government departments and units is public servants. In this sense, civil service is a part of public service as a result public service is wide in scope than the civil service (Onyenwigwe, 2008).

### **Relevance of Collective Bargaining in Enhancing Industrial Harmony in Workplaces in Nigeria.**

In Nigeria, the practice of proactive collective bargaining to promote industrial harmony has not been successful, leading to a situation of intense discord, instability, and enduring industrial conflicts. A lack of comprehension of the fundamentals of negotiation has led to the majority of these issues (Fagade, 2013). According to Makinde (2013), the majority of organizations in Nigeria have gone through a number of crises as a result of a lack of awareness of the fundamentals of collective bargaining, particularly the communication of results. Chidi (2014) emphasizes the fact that alternative communication takes the shape of rumors, gossip, and falsehoods when the relevant organ fails to supply the necessary information. These, in turn, have the potential to cause social conflict and misinterpretations of social ties within the Organizations. Conflicts between groups may be a sign of insufficiently effective communication and constructive engagement according to Odiagbe (2012). On the other hand, when done well, communication improves the early identification of internal tension, acts as a conflict-prevention tool, and boosts worker productivity. Therefore, it is crucial that employers understand the potential for sharing the results of agreements reached through bargaining in order to enhance workplace harmony and employee success in our organizations. According to Ladan (2012) preserving harmonious relationships in organizations calls for fostering an atmosphere of friendliness and collaboration between bosses and employees. A win-win situation, as described by some organizational experts, is further promoted by this type of work environment. Puttapalli and Vuram (2012) claim that when management and staff relationships are based on respect for the terms and conditions of employment as well as the overall wellness of the workplace, organizational harmony develops.

### **3.Methodology**

Survey research method was used to gather data for the study because large sample were involved. The study obtained data from both quantitative and qualitative data. The study area was South East zone of Nigeria comprising of five states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. The population of the study was 903 public servants from the public services of the five states. However, 277 of them were selected as sample respondents using Taro Yamane statistical formula. The formula is given thus:



$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where:

N = Total Population Size

e = Error margin allowed

n = Total Sample Size

1 = Constant

Five percent (0.05) was chosen as error margin allowed.

Therefore N = 903 e = 0.05

$$n = \frac{903}{1 + 903(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{903}{1 + 903(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{903}{1 + 2.2575}$$

$$n = \frac{903}{3.2575}$$

$$n = 277.2064467$$

$$n = 277.$$

Therefore, the sample size for the study is **277**.

Questionnaire was used to elicit primary data from the respondents. The respondents were made up of labour leaders in public services of the five states of the South East Nigeria and some government officials. Distribution and collection of the copies of the questionnaire were done by the researcher. The study analyzed data using SPSS version 2.5 that is related to collective bargaining and industrial harmony in the state public services of South East, Nigeria from 2010 to 2022. The statistical tool of frequency, simple percentages and table was used in data presentation and analysis. The researcher in doing this assembled and tallied raw data gathered from the respondents, and their frequencies and percentages calculated. Frequencies and percentages were used to present the research questions that guided the study. In calculation, the researcher used arithmetic mean to calculate the average scores that reflected the results of all the scores in the data. The structured questionnaire was based on five scale which respondents were requested to indicate their preference among the following section; strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed(A), Undecided (U), Disagreed(D), Strongly Disagreed (SD). The study adopted the Decision Rule for hypotheses

testing. The data generated from the questionnaire were analyzed using t-test statistics. The formula for the simple t-test is shown below. In this formula,  $t$  is the  $t$  value,  $x_1$  and  $x_2$  are the means of the two groups being compared,  $s_2$  is the pooled standard error of the two groups, and  $n_1$  and  $n_2$  are the number of observations in each of the groups. The formula for determining the t-value and degrees of freedom for a paired t-test is:

$$T = \frac{\text{Mean 1} - \text{Mean 2}}{\frac{S(\text{diff})}{\sqrt{n}}}$$

Where: Mean 1 and Mean 2 are equal to the average values for each sample set, and (diff) is equal to the standard deviation of the differences between the matched data values. The sample size is  $n$ . (the number of paired differences) the degrees of freedom are  $n-1$ .

**Decision Rule:** Accept null hypothesis if the value of the t-statistic is greater than 0.05, otherwise reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

### 5. Presentation and Analysis of Data

This contained tables of mean and standard deviation of the collected data on research questions regarding the extent response to public servants grievances by state governments affect industrial harmony in South East Nigeria and the extent adherence to collective bargaining agreement by state governments affect industrial harmony in South East public service.

**Table 1: Respondent's response on the extent the state governments response to public servants grievance affect industrial harmony in South East Nigeria.**

	Grievance Handling	W	SA-----SD				$\Sigma FX$	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{Std.D}$	DECISION
			4	3	2	1				
1	State Governments has fully implemented the N30,000 minimum wage and the consequential adjustment to all public servants	F	12	20	80	143	255	1.6	.82	DISAGREE
		WF	48	60	160	143	411			
		(%)	4.7	7.8	31	56.5	100			
2	State Governments are up to date in the conduct and release of promotions of public servants	F	57	119	42	37	255	2.8	.96	ACCEPT
		WF	228	357	84	37	706			
		(%)	22.4	46.6	16.5	14.5	100			
3	State Governments are consistent in paying monthly salaries to public servants.	F	110	96	32	17	255	3.2	.89	ACCEPT
		WF	440	288	64	17	809			
		(%)	43	37.6	12.5	6.6	100			
4	Public servants are satisfied with their current salaries	F	5	10	80	160	255	1.5	.67	DISAGREE
		WF	20	30	160	160	370			
		(%)	2	4	31	63	100			

5	Public servants are motivated by their current grade level as their rightful position considering their years of service	F WF (%)	11 44 4.3	23 69 9.0	126 252 49.4	95 95 37.3	255 460 100	1.8	.77	DISAGREE
6	State Governments hold regular meetings with Union Leaders to address workers grievance.	F WF (%)	9 36 4	23 69 9	118 236 46	155 155 61	255 496 100	1.9	2.25	DISAGREE
	<b>Grand Total</b>							<b>2.1</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2024.**

The above data in table 1 revealed the distribution of respondents' responses on the extent the state governments response to public servants grievances affect industrial harmony in South East Nigeria. The result from item statement 1 showed that out of the 255 respondents, 12(4.7%) respondents strongly agreed that state governments have fully implemented the N30,000 minimum wage and the consequential adjustment for all public servants in South East, Nigeria, 20 (7.8%) agreed, 80(31%) disagreed while 143 (56.5%) strongly disagreed. It recorded a mean score of 1.6 and standard deviation of 0.82. Item statement 2 which was on state governments' prompt and regular conduct and release of promotions of public servants, 57 (22.4%) strongly agreed, 119 (46.6%) agreed, 42 (16.5%) disagreed while 37 (14.57%) strongly disagreed. Mean of the total responses was 2.8 and standard deviation of 0.96. Result from item statement 3 was indicative that 110 representing (43%) strongly agreed, 96 (37.6%) agreed, 32 (12.5%) disagreed while 17 (6.6%) strongly disagreed that state governments are consistent in paying monthly salaries to public servants. It has mean score of 3.2, standard deviation, 0.89. Views from item statement 4 showed that public servants are satisfied with their current salaries structure as 5(2%) strongly agreed, 10 (4%) agreed, 80 (31%) disagreed while 160(63%) strongly disagreed. Mean score of the responses was 1.5 and standard deviation of 0.67. Item statement 5 which delved on the issue that public servants are satisfied with their current grade level as their rightful position considering their years of service, a total number of 11 (4.3%) strongly agreed, 23 (9.0%) agreed, 126 (49.4%) disagreed while 95 (37.3%) strongly disagreed. Mean responses for item 5 was 1.8 while standard deviation was 0.77. On item statement 6, 9(4%) strongly agreed, 23(9%) agreed, 118(46%) disagreed and 155(61%) strongly disagreed and mean responses for item 6 was 1.8 and standard deviation 2.25. Thus, analysis of research question 1 showed grand mean of 2.1 and standard deviation, 6.3. From the analysis above, the answer to research question 1 is that state governments' poor response to public servants grievances has negative effects on industrial harmony in South East Nigeria.

### **Hypothesis One**

Poor response to public servants grievances by state governments' fuel industrial disharmony in South East, Nigeria.

### **Table 2: One-Sample Test**

Hypothesis	Test Value = 0					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
				Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
State governments response to public servants grievances has a negative effect on industrial harmony in the South East Nigeria.	0.935	11	0.11	1543.02000	12007.2096	15228.1304

*Source: SPSS Computation 2024*

From the test of hypothesis above using sample test t-statistics, based on the decision rule, accept null hypothesis if the value of the t-statistics is greater than 0.05, from the result; the value of the t-statistics (0.935) is above 0.05 hence we accept the null hypothesis and conclude that state governments poor response to public servants grievances fuels industrial disharmony has in South East Nigeria.

**Table 3: Respondent’s response on how adherence to collective bargaining agreement by state governments affects industrial harmony in the public service of South East, Nigeria.**

.	Collective agreement	W	SA-----SD				ΣF X	Std.D	—	DECISION
			4	3	2	1				
1	South East Governors were not adequately represented at the negotiation of the N30,000 minimum wage at the Federal level	F WF (%) 2.4	6 24 2.4	14 42 5.5	172 344 67.5	63 63 25	255 473 100	1.9	.62	DISAGREE
2	State Governments have implemented the N30,000 national minimum wage and the consequential adjustment.	F WF (%) 4	10 40 4	22 66 8.5	140 280 55	83 83 32.5	255 469 100	1.8	.74	DISAGREE
3	State Governments are consistent in implementing agreement reached with Unions on other workers demands.	F WF (%) 7	18 72 7	21 63 8	161 322 63	55 55 22	255 512 100	2.0	.76	DISAGREE
4	State Public Servants are not owed arrears of salaries and other allowances.	F WF (%) 2	5 20 2	10 30 4	80 160 31	160 160 63	255 370 100	1.5	.67	DISAGREE
5	Public Servants are promoted as and when due.	F WF (%) 1.6	4 16 1.6	10 30 4	146 292 57.2	95 95 37.3	255 433 100	1.7	.57	DISAGREE

6	State Governments of the South East have carried regular trainings for public servants	F WF (%)	22 88 8	65 196 26	120 240 48	48 48 18	255 572 100	2.2	.86	DISAGREE
<b>Grand Total</b>								<b>1.85</b>	<b>4.21</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2024**

The above data in table 3 revealed the distribution of respondents' responses on how adherence to collective bargaining agreement by state governments affects industrial harmony in public services of South East, Nigeria. The result from item statement 1 showed that out of the 255 respondents, 6(2.4%) respondents strongly agreed, 14(5.5%) agreed, 172(67.5%) disagreed and 63(25%) strongly disagreed that South East governors were not adequately represented at the negotiation of the N30,000 minimum wage at the Federal level. It recorded a mean of 1.9 and standard deviation of 0.62. Item statement 2 which was that, state governments in the South East have implemented the N30,000 national minimum wage and the consequential adjustment, 10(4%) strongly agreed, 22 (8.5%) agreed, 140 (55%) disagreed while 83 (32.5%) strongly disagreed. Mean of the total responses was 1.8 while standard deviation is 0.74. Result from item statement 3 was indicative that 18 representing (7%) strongly agreed, 21 (8%) agreed, 161 (63%) disagreed while 55 (22%) strongly disagreed that, South East State governments are consistent in implementing agreement reached with unions on other workers demands. It has mean score of 2.0 and standard deviation of 0.76. Views from item statement 4 showed that South East state public servants are owed arrears of salaries and other allowances, as 5(2%) strongly agreed, 10 (4%) agreed, 80 (31%) disagreed while 160(63%) strongly disagreed. Mean score of the responses was 1.5 and standard deviation was 0.67. Item statement 5 which delved on the issue that public servants are promoted as and when due, a total number of 4 (1.6%) strongly agreed, 10 (4%) agreed, 126 (49.4%) disagreed while 146 (57.2%) strongly disagreed. Mean responses for item 17 was 1.7 while standard deviation was 0.57. On item statement 6, 22(8.5) strongly agreed, 65(25.4%) agreed, 120(47%) disagreed and 48(18%) strongly disagreed that, state governments of the South East have carried regular trainings for public servants. Mean responses for item 6 was 2.1 and standard deviation was 0.86. Thus, analysis of research question 2 showed grand mean of 1.85 and standard deviation of 4.21. From the analysis above, the answer to research question 2 was that South East state governments did not adhere strictly to collective agreement from negotiations with unions.

**Hypothesis Two:**

Non-adherence to collective bargaining agreement by state governments disrupts industrial harmony in public services in South East Nigeria.

**Table 4: One-Sample Test**

Hypothesis	Test Value = 0					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
				Mean Difference	Lower	Upper

There is no positive relationship between non adherence to collective bargaining agreement and industrial harmony in the public service.	0.529	11	.001	11.68222	4.9085	12.4559
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**Source: SPSS Computation 2024**

From the test of hypothesis above using one sample test t-statistics, based on the decision made, accept null hypothesis if the value of the t-statistics is greater than 0.05, from the result, the value of the t-statistics (0.529) is greater than 0.05 hence we accept the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no positive significant relationship between non-adherence to collective bargaining agreement and industrial harmony in South East public service.

**6. Summary of Findings**

1. South East governments’ poor response to public servants grievances fuels industrial disharmony in South East public service.
2. South East governments’ non adherence to collective bargaining agreements brought about disruption in industrial harmony in the zones public service.

**Discussion of Findings**

State governments in Nigeria have always adopted the fire brigade approach in responding to requests by public service unions in South East, Nigeria. The result of our hypothesis one attests to that. The outcome agrees with Obiekwe and Ekeh (2019) who explains that the challenges being witnessed at workplace today arose from poor management of employees grievances, and it is what perfect organizations should avoid at all cost. Effective handling of employee grievance is a vital role of the personnel managers in organizations today. This finding is supported by Danku *et. al.*(2015) who holds that when grievance are left unhandled or improperly handled, they have profound influence on motivation, moral, management-labour relationship and negatively affect the productivity of the organization. This study also agrees with Cole (2016), who states that if grievances are handled with a proper concern and considerations, they will initiate positive changes in the organization, thereby enhancing organizational productivity and employee’s satisfaction. The result also is in the line with Juneja (2018) who remarked that in order to ensure workplace stability, management-workers cooperation, and industrial peace, effective handling procedure should be in place in the organization. This is because suppressed workers’ grievances are known to have given rise to absenteeism, strike action, truancy and different forms of industrial sabotage, low morals and reduction in employees’ commitment

Result of hypothesis two tested revealed that South-East state governments have not adhered to collective bargaining agreements reached with the unions in the state public services of the South East. Thus, the study found out that in the past twelve years, state government of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States have failed to implement agreements reached with labour unions, particularly, the Joint Public Service Negotiating Council (Trade Union side). Whereas agreement were recalled on the modalities for implementing the N30, 000 minimum wage and consequential adjustments for public servants from Grade Level 01- 17, Abia, Imo, Anambra and Ebonyi deviated from the agreement and implemented it for only public servants on Grade Level 01-06 to the disadvantage of those on Grade 07 to 17, while only Enugu State implemented the collective agreement. Thus, Amadi (2017) expressed worries that the basic requirements are that parties to agreement should have a sincere intention, be fair, open, and honest, regardless of the outcome of their interactions while opposite to these characteristics are negative and frustrating agenda as perfidy, deceit, sharp diplomacy, pretense, bad faith, rigidity and stubbornness. Where parties to agreement ignore the fundamentals of bargaining, there is bound to be breakdown of industrial relations, irrespective of the periods for which meetings and negotiations are slated. Where it has become impossible to act out positions already entered in agreements, the sincerity of a party or both parties to the agreement becomes questionable. This finding is in agreement with the views of Ushie and Ekpenyong (2019) that the foremost importance of a collective agreement is to serve as a guide for the relationship between an employer of labor and the body (union) of its employees and usually to solve some specific problems. Also, the wording of the Trade Disputes Legislation around the world over, it can be presumed that it is normally intended that every duly executed collective agreement thereto and without more should be or ought to be implemented. The implementation is usually carried out by the employer. The employer in this case is state governments through ministries, departments or agencies. The essence of implementation of an agreement of this nature is to afford the employees the benefit of reaping the fruits of effective representation of their trade unions pursuant to the collective agreement. Thus, a major principle under ILO law 58 as recommended by the Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA) is the principle of bargaining in good faith. This is a duty to be observed in the course of the collective bargaining before even reaching an Agreement. The CFA emphasizes the duty of parties to a collective bargaining to negotiate in good faith. In addition, it defines good faith as making efforts to reach an agreement, conducting genuine and constructive negotiation, avoiding unjustified delays, complying with the agreement concluded on and applying them in good faith. Moreover, the practical impact of lack of implementation cannot be overemphasized. In the South East states public service, especially in Abia, Ebonyi and Imo, non-implementation of collective bargaining has occasioned certain negative actions including protest, strike, and rallies and so on. Political will of the state government is therefore both the denominator and numerator for policy, decisions or agreements implementation especially in South East Nigeria where the government is the largest employer of labor.

## **Conclusion**

The principle of good faith in collective bargaining implies recognizing representative organizations, endeavoring to reach an agreement, engaging in genuine and constructive negotiations, avoiding unjustified delays in negotiation and mutually respecting the commitments entered into, taking into account the results of negotiations in good faith. It is

evident from the study that government comes to the negotiating table with their own position and to impose it on the Unions. Also finding indicated that state governments often times employ intimidation, threat and propaganda in order to suppress the demands of workers during negotiation. This implied that the process of collective bargaining in the state public service have not complied to acceptable international standard as instituted by the ILO and domesticated by Nigeria. Finally, the study would not conclude without stating that collective bargaining is one of the processes of industrial relations, collective bargaining performs a number of functions in work place. It could be seen as a way of industrial jurisprudence as well as a form of industrial democracy. It brings about industrial harmony at the workplace based on mutual agreement between employers of labour, union leaders and their members. It gives rise to better understanding which in turn facilitates the process of communication. It is a mechanism for resolving conflict at workplace between management and labour.

### **Recommendations**

The outcome of the research has shown that poor response to the grievances of workers by the state governments and non adherence to collective agreements has negatively affected industrial harmony in public services of South East, Nigeria. It is therefore, recommended that state governments of South East, Nigeria should through the relevant agencies maintain flow of communication with the Labour Unions, giving response to workers grievances, adhere to collective agreements and avoid communication gap.

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