HRD 2104: PRINCIPLES OF INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT

# TRADE UNIONS

BY:

* KIMANI OWEN MWANGI: SCT211-0591/2021
* CHIKOMBE CANON ALLAN: SCT211-0019/2020
* BRIAN NJOROGE IRUNGU: SCT211-0507/2021
* AMY NJERI WANDERI: SCT211-0010/2021
* KITAVI DUNCAN GITAU: SCT211-0031/2021
* PEARL ROWENA INDANA: SCT211-0678/2021

## INTRODUCTION

A trade union, also known as a labor union, is an organization formed by workers to protect and promote their collective interests in the workplace. The primary purpose of a trade union is to represent its members in negotiations with employers to secure better wages, working conditions, and benefits. By forming a collective voice, workers can advocate for their rights and address issues such as workplace safety, hours of work, and other employment-related matters.

Trade unions often engage in collective bargaining with employers to reach agreements on various aspects of employment, including salaries, benefits, and working conditions. They may also provide support to individual members in cases of disputes with employers, offering legal assistance and representation.

Additionally, trade unions may be involved in advocating for broader labor-related policies, social justice issues, and participating in political activities that impact workers' rights. The structure and activities of trade unions can vary depending on local laws, industries, and the specific needs and goals of the workers they represent.

EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE UNIONS IN KENYA.

Trade unions in Kenya have a rich history that dates back to the colonial era. The of trade unions in Kenya can be traced to the early 20th century when workers, particularly those in the agricultural sector and railway construction, began to organize to address their grievances related to poor working conditions, low wages, and discrimination.

One of the earliest trade unions in Kenya was the East African Trade Union Congress (EATUC), founded in the 1940s to represent workers across the East African region. However, it was the post-independence period in the 1960s that saw a significant expansion of trade union activity in Kenya.

During this time, the Kenyan government enacted legislation to regulate trade unions, culminating in the formation of the Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU) in 1965. COTU became the umbrella body representing various trade unions in the country and played a crucial role in advocating for workers' rights and improved working conditions.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, trade unions in Kenya became increasingly vocal in demanding better wages, job security, and social welfare benefits for workers. However, they often faced repression and intimidation from the government, especially during periods of political unrest.

The 1990s marked a significant turning point for trade unions in Kenya with the reintroduction of multi-party democracy. This era saw increased activism and mobilization by trade unions to push for political and economic reforms. The adoption of a new constitution in 2010 further strengthened workers' rights and provided a conducive environment for trade union activities.

Today, trade unions in Kenya continue to play a vital role in advocating for workers' rights, collective bargaining, and social justice. They have expanded their scope to address emerging issues such as informal sector labor rights, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. Despite facing challenges such as globalization, technological advancements, and changing labor market dynamics, trade unions remain essential actors in Kenya's socio-economic landscape.

Top of Form

## ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF A TRADE UNION

### Organization

The organization of a trade union refers to the way in which the union is structured and how its internal components are organized to achieve its goals. Here are the key elements of the organization of a trade union:

1. Constitution and Bylaws: Trade unions typically have a constitution and bylaws that outline the organization's purpose, membership criteria, leadership structure, election processes, and rules governing its operations.
2. Membership Categories: Some trade unions have different membership categories, such as full members, associate members, or different levels based on seniority or job roles. Each category may have specific rights and privileges within the union.
3. Leadership Structure: The leadership structure includes elected officials who guide the union and make decisions on behalf of the members. Common leadership positions include the president, secretary, treasurer, and other officers. The structure may also include committees responsible for specific functions, such as bargaining, organizing, or grievance handling.
4. Local Units or Branches: Trade unions often organize members into local units or branches based on geographical location or specific workplaces. Each local unit may have its own leadership, conduct regular meetings, and address issues relevant to its members.
5. Affiliation: Many trade unions are affiliated with larger regional, national, or international federations. Affiliation provides additional support, resources, and coordination for broader issues affecting the industry or sector.
6. General Meetings: General meetings serve as a forum for members to come together, discuss important matters, and participate in decision-making processes. These meetings may be held regularly, and members can vote on key issues.
7. Collective Bargaining and Negotiation Teams: Trade unions form committees or teams responsible for collective bargaining and negotiations with employers. These teams are crucial in advocating for the interests and demands of the union members during contract negotiations.
8. Membership Services: Trade unions may provide various services to their members, such as legal assistance, educational programs, and support for workplace grievances.
9. Communication Channels: Effective communication channels, both within the union and between the union and its members, are essential. This may include newsletters, websites, social media, and other means of keeping members informed.

The organization of a trade union is designed to facilitate democratic decision-making, representation of members' interests, and effective advocacy for better working conditions and benefits. The specific structure can vary based on the union's size, industry, and the preferences of its members.

### Structure

The structure of a trade union refers to the organized framework or arrangement that outlines the components, roles, and relationships within the union. It encompasses the hierarchical organization, leadership roles, and various entities that make up the union as a collective entity representing the interests of its members. The structure provides a systematic way of managing the union's affairs, making decisions, and facilitating communication between the leadership and the members.

The structure of a trade union can vary depending on factors such as the size of the union, the industry it represents, and local regulations. However, a typical trade union structure includes several key elements:

1. **General Body or Membership**: The general body consists of all union members. Members have the right to participate in decision-making processes, attend general meetings, and vote on important issues.
2. **Elected Officers**: The union's leadership is often composed of elected officers who are responsible for guiding the organization. Common officer positions include:
   1. **President:** The head of the union, responsible for overall leadership.
   2. **Secretary:** Manages administrative tasks, maintains records, and handles correspondence.
   3. Treasurer: Manages the union's finances, including collecting dues and budgeting.
   4. Vice President: Assists the president and may assume their duties in their absence.
3. **Membership Meetings:** Regular membership meetings provide a forum for members to discuss issues, make decisions, and participate in the democratic processes of the union. Important matters, such as contract negotiations or strategic decisions, are often discussed and voted upon during these meetings.
4. **Shop Stewards or Workplace Representatives**: Shop stewards or workplace representatives act as a liaison between the union leadership and members at the workplace. They address daily concerns, relay information, and may be involved in grievance procedures.
5. **Membership Meetings:** Regular membership meetings provide a forum for members to discuss issues, make decisions, and participate in the democratic processes of the union. Important matters, such as contract negotiations or strategic decisions, are often discussed and voted upon during these meetings.
6. **Delegates**: In larger unions or those affiliated with larger organizations, delegates may represent the union at higher levels of the organization, such as regional or national assemblies.
7. **Committees**: Various committees may be established to focus on specific functions or tasks. For example, a bargaining committee may handle negotiations with employers, while an organizing committee may focus on recruiting new members.
8. **Local Units or Branches:** Local units or branches may exist based on geographic location or specific workplaces. Each local unit may have its own elected leaders and structure, addressing issues relevant to its members.
9. **Affiliation:** Some trade unions are affiliated with larger organizations, such as national or international labor federations. Affiliation provides additional resources, support, and coordination on broader issues affecting the industry or sector.
10. **Constitution and Bylaws:** The union's constitution and bylaws outline its purpose, membership criteria, leadership structure, election processes, and rules governing its operations.

It's important to note that the specific structure of a trade union can vary, and the above elements are general components that may be adapted based on the union's unique circumstances and the preferences of its members.

## TYPES OF UNIONS AND AFFILIATIONS

Affiliation refers to the relationship between a local union or labor organization and a larger, often national or international, federation or umbrella organization. Many unions choose to affiliate with larger bodies to gain additional support, resources, and coordination on industry-wide or broader labor issues. Affiliation can provide a unified voice for the members and contribute to a collective approach in addressing common challenges.

### Types of unions

Trade unions can be classified into various types based on factors such as their objectives, composition, and the industries or sectors they represent. Here are some common types of unions:

1. **Craft Unions:** Also known as craft or trade-specific unions, these represent workers with similar skills or crafts, regardless of the industry. Examples include unions for plumbers, electricians, or carpenters.
2. **Industrial Unions:** Industrial unions organize workers across various skills within a particular industry or sector. They aim to represent all workers, from entry-level to highly skilled, within a specific industry.
3. **General Unions:** General unions, also called all-inclusive or industrial general unions, represent workers across different industries and occupations. They are not limited to a specific craft or trade.
4. **Public Sector Unions:** Public sector unions represent employees in government and public institutions. This includes unions for teachers, police officers, and government workers.
5. **Private Sector Unions:** Private sector unions organize workers in private businesses and industries. They negotiate with private employers on issues like wages, benefits, and working conditions.
6. **Service Unions:** Service unions represent workers in the service industry, including sectors like healthcare, hospitality, and retail.
7. **Transportation Unions:** These unions focus on workers in the transportation sector, including those in aviation, railways, and trucking.
8. **Agricultural Unions:** Agricultural unions represent workers involved in farming and related activities, advocating for the rights and conditions of agricultural workers.
9. **Company Unions:** Company unions are formed within a specific company and may be initiated or controlled by the employer. They are sometimes viewed with skepticism as they may not always fully represent the interests of the workers.

### Types of affiliations

There are different types of affiliations based on the nature and scope of the relationship. Here are some common types of affiliations:

1. **National Affiliation:** Local unions affiliate with a national labor federation. In the United States, for example, local unions may affiliate with national organizations like the AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations).
2. **International Affiliation:** Some unions choose to affiliate with international labor federations that operate across national borders. These affiliations allow for collaboration and coordination on global labor issues.
3. **Industry-Specific Affiliation:** Unions may choose to affiliate with a federation that focuses on a specific industry or sector. This allows for a more targeted approach to addressing industry-specific challenges and concerns.
4. **Regional Affiliation:** Unions may affiliate with regional labor bodies that bring together unions from a particular geographical area. Regional affiliations can facilitate coordination on issues that affect workers in a specific region.
5. **Trade Affiliation:** Trade unions, representing workers from a particular trade or craft, may affiliate with larger bodies that specialize in that trade. For example, unions in the construction industry might affiliate with a construction trades federation.
6. **General Workers' Affiliation:** Unions that represent workers across various industries and sectors may affiliate with a general workers' federation. These federations aim to address issues affecting workers across a wide range of occupations.
7. **Political Affiliation:** Some unions affiliate with political organizations or parties that align with their goals and values. This affiliation allows for coordinated political advocacy and support for candidates sympathetic to labor interests.
8. **Ideological Affiliation:** Unions may affiliate with organizations that share similar ideological or philosophical values. This type of affiliation is based on common beliefs and principles rather than industry or geography.
9. **Global Affiliation:** Unions may choose to affiliate with global labor organizations that work on international labor standards, human rights, and other global issues affecting workers.

The specific type of affiliation chosen by a union often depends on the union's goals, the industry it represents, and the nature of the challenges faced by its members. Affiliation provides unions with a platform to share resources, coordinate efforts, and present a unified front on matters affecting workers' rights and well-being.

## FUNCTIONS OF TRADE UNIONS IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Trade unions play several important functions in industrial relations, working to represent and protect the interests of their members in the workplace. Some key functions of trade unions in industrial relations include:

1. **Collective Bargaining:** One of the primary functions of trade unions is to engage in collective bargaining with employers on behalf of their members. This involves negotiating employment terms, such as wages, benefits, working hours, and conditions.
2. **Negotiating Employment Contracts:** Trade unions negotiate and help establish employment contracts and collective agreements that outline the terms and conditions of employment for their members. This includes provisions related to pay, benefits, job security, and workplace policies.
3. **Conflict Resolution:** Trade unions work to resolve disputes and conflicts between workers and employers. They may use various methods, including negotiations, mediation, and, in some cases, industrial action such as strikes or work stoppages.
4. **Training and Skill Development:** Trade unions may be involved in initiatives to enhance the skills and knowledge of their members. This can include negotiating training programs, supporting educational opportunities, and collaborating with employers on workforce development.
5. **Job Security:** Trade unions work to protect the job security of their members by negotiating provisions related to layoffs, downsizing, and outsourcing. They may also advocate for policies that safeguard employment in times of economic uncertainty.
6. **Social and Welfare Activities:** Some trade unions provide social and welfare services to their members. This can include organizing recreational activities, offering financial assistance during times of need, and providing support for members facing personal challenges.
7. **Collecting and Disseminating Information:** Trade unions gather and disseminate information to their members, keeping them informed about relevant workplace issues, changes in labor laws, and updates on negotiations and agreements.

These functions collectively contribute to the overall goal of trade unions, which is to secure fair and favorable working conditions for their members and promote a balanced and constructive relationship between labor and management in industrial relations.