

**Research Article**

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Management Inconsistencies in Instituting Disciplinary Measures: A Recipe for Industrial Actions

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Abstract

Organisations are experiencing uncountable challenges in their thrust for competitive excellence. This has made many corporations to embark on human capital development processes to facilitate extensive career development opportunities. Consistency of operations are the critical elements recorded by numerous management practitioners and researchers as determinants of corporations growth. This study assessed management inconsistent attitudes exhibited that precipitate unpleasant actions instituted by employees. In its drive towards constructive compilation of facts, this investigation extracted, reviewed, analysed and adopted relevant facts derived from secondary sources published by many schools of thought.

Adoption of relevant contributions disclosed research concerns, which facilitated the collection of primary data with the aid of questionnaires and focus group discussions. A representative sample size of 200 respondents and a sample frame that encompasses three corporate institutions are the considerable elements of this endeavour. This study analysed facts derived from survey with statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Facts presented indicated that, HRM policies are selectively implemented and rights of many employees are violated. They mentioned that most job classifications do not align with prescribed rules and regulations governing human capital management. Respondents disclosed that numerous promotions are not done in accordance with stipulated regulations; elements such as capacity building, task distribution, grievances reported, are preferentially dealt with, and such act of unpleasantness leads to organisations unrest. In addition, disciplinary hearings, constructive and summary dismissal matters are neither thoroughly investigated nor supported by credible evidences in a disciplinary hearing. Consequently, aforementioned unpleasant characteristics could serve as precursor for industrial actions. This study is noteworthy to management consultancies, corporations in Freetown; and serve as reference mechanisms for numerous related investigations.

Keywords: Management Inconsistencies; Disciplinary Measures; Industrial Actions

Introduction

Managing people would be much easier if everyone were the same, but they are, of course, different because of their ability, intelligence, personality, background and culture that is, the

environment in which they are raised. Good management is a scarce commodity. Despite years of evolution in management theory and the advents of countless management trends, many workers and managers have developed a distorted view of management and

its practice, with managers often not knowing the appropriate actions that facilitate effective personnel management [1-4]. The heart of managing organisations workforce reflect on a number of important management duties every manager needs to master, to successfully get the job done. These duties include hiring new employees, setting goals, coaching and mentoring, working with teams, managing virtual employees, and monitoring performance and execution [5-7]. An unavoidable magnitude of retaining employees indicates that, prescribed HRM regulations modify the attitudes of employees. Discipline was initially linked to learning; to be a disciple, but its connections are now closer to castigations and consequences [8-10]. To manage people effectively, it is necessary to consider the factors that affect their behaviours at work. This means understanding the significance of individual differences and the kinds of behaviour that feature in organizational life [11,12]. Disciplinary systems are designed to discourage problematic behaviours and address unpleasant issues discovered in organisations. The first-line supervisor usually conducts investigation into employee misconduct and recommend corrective measures or institute disciplinary action [13,11]. Managers do not deal with discipline only when they rebuke latecomers or threatening to dismiss saboteurs. As well as dealing with the unruly and reluctant, they develop the coordinated discipline of the working team, engendering that esprit de corps which makes the whole superior than its constituents. Discipline is, therefore, not only negative, producing punishment or prevention. It can also be a valuable mechanism for an individual who is subject to it, although the form of discipline depends not only on the individual employee but also on the task and the way it is organized [14,6].

Human beings share certain common features, such as physical and mental characteristics. These attributes, which link all the components together, produce common patterns of behaviour. At the same time, every individual is the product of a unique combination of genetic and environmental factors [15,16]. The ways in which we perceive and make judgments about people at work is explained by attribution theory, which concerns the assignment or causes of events. We make an attribution when we perceive and describe other people's actions and try to discover why they behave in the way they did [17,18]. Discipline is the regulation of human activity, which yields a measured performance. It signifies the steps involved in guiding individual to enhance remarkable performance through self-discipline in exhibiting employees' talents for sustained competitive advantage [19,20]. Tardiness, poor performance, being addicted to alcohol consumption, disobedience and constant absenteeism constitute disciplinary matters caused by problematic workers. Often, managers and employees see discipline occurrences differently. Whereas managers may see discipline as part of changing workers' behaviours, employees often see discipline as unfair because it can affect their jobs and careers [21,2,22]. Grievance redress machinery allows personnel to express their grievances without endangering their occupations. It encourages and facilitate the settlement of misunderstanding between management and labour. This mechanism builds the confidence among employees and allow them to express their discontents, enhancing their morale, satisfaction of being heard

[21,22]. Lengthy strikes requires a third-party involvement that can bring union and management together to facilitate amicable settlement. In reality, the grievance process represents continuous collective bargaining between management and labour [23,19]. Union leaders normally flood formal channels with grievances, serious and frivolous. They use the grievance process as a tool to try to gain back-door concessions that were not granted in the original labour agreement. Because of legal proceedings, managers must be abreast with procedures of implementing disciplinary measures appropriately [19,22]. Instituting corrective measures should focus on defaults and exhibition of unwanted deeds, not necessarily on the personality of an employee since the reason for discipline is to modify unwanted behaviour and enhance performance. Distributive and procedural justice suggests that a supervisor who encourages intolerable conduct creates way for other employees to repeat such attitude of that tolerance [19, 24,25].

Proper disciplinary procedures are important for several reasons (beyond the fact that it is the ethical thing to do). Disciplining employees is often unavoidable, but any such discipline must be rooted in the need to be fair. Most managers realize that treating employees fairly is an obvious reason that constitutes harmonious relationship, as the golden rule requires people to treat others, as they would like to be treated. There are also satisfactory reasons that warrant employees' fair treatment [26-28]. Because certain employee rights must be protected, employers may decide to have an oversight of the supervisor's decisions to discipline and require higher-level approval before corrective measure is taken. Therefore, introducing restrictive measures on managers with the aim of protecting employees' rights without unpleasantly distressing supervisors' certainty in implementing disciplinary systems is significant [29, 30,26]. When disciplinary procedures are fairly and tactfully followed without prejudice, it ease the tension of generating grievances, because resentment can nurture grudges, which stimulate further unpleasant action [31,32]. Numerous research houses have investigated issues of industrial actions and disciplinary measures separately and have produced quantum evidences about how disciplinary actions are instituted when rules are violated. However, connecting inconsistent actions exhibited by managers that result to industrial unrest are not exhaustively discussed. Nevertheless, careful perusal of pieces of literature have not descriptively elaborated on aforementioned; therefore, it is upon this concern that we decided to undertake this construct and bring out meaningful contribution on our facts-finding mission.

Companies, personnel and negotiating councils who take unguarded industrial action could experience certain penalties. It can lead to instituting actions as a result of problems caused for losses incurred during unhealthy industrial proceedings, which result to interruption of corporations operations [9,33,34]. High-involvement management (HIM) delivers positive benefits through different transmission mechanisms. At its core is the application of new measures to empower employees, enhance training, share information and provide incentives that enable and encourage employees to take 'ownership' of key production and supply decisions [35,36]. The gains in performance are attributed to

changes in employee conduct, yet sceptics point out that direct measures of such behavioural shifts are rarely presented, and the theoretical underpinning of the assumed relationship tends to be left unspecified [37,38]. Employee delinquency matters adjudicated by mediation are frequently won or lost not because of queries of culpability or innocence but because of management's consistent application of the principles involved in the case, management's compliance with the disciplinary procedures in the contract, and employee's work history [39,40]. Offences that constitute employee misconduct can be classified as fighting or instilling threats of attacks on colleague employees, unleashing invectives on other personnel and exhibiting certain behaviours contrary to principles governing operations of an institution [41,42]. Despite the modest trend during recent years for public employers to accept strike as a legitimate component of labour relations and collective bargaining, the great majority of nations and local administrations continue to prohibit strikes [43,37]. If strikes are prohibited, labour unions are at a distinct disadvantage in collective negotiations unless an alternative impasse resolution procedure is available. In virtually all government jurisdictions in which collective bargaining takes place, some form of impasse device provides balance of power between union and management [43,44]. Preceding content have expressly showcase elements constituting the fact finding process and laid the foundation upon which subsequent elements will thrive. However, further deliberation will focus on critical review and adoption of relevant pieces of literature, selection of suitable methods of data collection, presentation, analysis and discussion of results for constructive outlook of content relevance that proffer meaningful contribution towards policy formulation.

Literature Review

Management Functions and Managers Roles and Responsibilities

Managing institutions requires total control of their operations, which involves various functions that accomplish set objectives. Management determines numerous organizational activities that encompass the use of human, financial, material and information resources to enhance growth [45,46]. Management issues are essential to all institutions; they formulate plans to accomplish strategic objectives, structure a company, lead, encourage employees and establish control procedures, which guarantees effective implementation of plans and achievement of desired result [47,48]. Management is a widespread practice in all organized social and financial activities. It serves as a functioning dynamism in all multifaceted organizations working towards achieving specified objectives [49,50]. Management functions form the foundation from which every manager works. Even though these fundamental roles are adequate for addressing key institutions daily management obligations, they sometimes do not reflect the focus of the institution and its innovative corporation of executives and employees [51,52]. Managers use planning to select objectives, identify actions to achieve those objectives, delegate duties to specific persons or sections to implement activities, measure outcomes of employees performance and compare results achieved with objectives set. When discrepancies are identified in

implementation, initial plans are reviewed to prevent fissures in the future. Planning takes place at multiple levels of an organization and is an ingrained part of a manager's job [1,4, 53,48,5]. Careful planning is probably the most important management activity that give managers precise direction towards competitive excellence [54,14, 55].

Organizing categorises jobs and assign personnel required to perform various tasks. It segments reporting systems and establishes clear lines of authority, which ensures effective coordination of activities to pursue a common goal [11,56-58]. Leading establish fundamental principles of human capital management, which provide the basis for understanding motivation tools required to enhance outstanding performance [59,6,2,9]. Controlling emphasises effective monitoring for achieving organisations objectives and instituting corrective measures where growth is not felt. The basic control process includes setting standards for strict performance measures [5,10,3].

Managers organise tasks and personnel to avoid role interruptions and ensures that operations are led and controlled by competent staffs. Duties of management are centred on people and larger portion of a manager's time is dedicated to issues surrounding the workforce [7,8,1]. Managers who communicate and interact with colleagues necessitate harmonious working relationship and foster growth [4]. The effectiveness of these roles minimises conflict and address problems identified during implementation. Informational role shows that managers spend most of their time in face-to-face contact with others to obtain and share information [11, 16]. In essence, management gathers vital information through careful observation of activities in the environment by heeding the views of others in intimate discussions; process the content of such information and share it with colleagues within and clients outside the organisation. This creates a well-informed atmosphere for employees and customers about organizations operations [6,13,12,15]. In decisional role, managers search for improvement in their units in order to familiarise with varying conditions in the environment, resolve conflicts among subordinates or between managers and distribute resources to accomplish desired outcomes [11,14].

Elements and Significance of High Employee Engagement

Retention initiatives can help organizations to keep employees with the skills, knowledge, and experience required to fulfil long-term goals and reduce costs and disruption associated with high labour turnover and frequent recruitment. However, to maximize employee contribution, it is necessary to encourage them to remain and actively engage in effective task performance [2,17,19]. Engagement is closely related to job satisfaction; therefore individual employees can benefit from having motivating and valuable jobs. Organizations can improve performance benefits through highly skilled personnel who exhibit their creative acumen to foster growth [21,22]. Attitudinally, engagement is frequently associated with organizational commitment. However, a key distinction between the two concepts is that, knowledge in commitment ensues because of day-to-day activities; whereas

engagement is developed and sustained through work, particularly with the interaction of managers and co-workers [18-20]. Commitment is classified as normative, continuance and affective. Normative or moral commitment occurs where an individual feels he should be committed to the organization, regardless of whether or not he actually believe in its values [25,33]. Continuance commitment is when an individual chooses to remain with an organization as long as he consider that the benefits of doing so outweigh the costs of leaving. With affective commitment, individuals feel passionate connection to the corporation. This type of commitment is most directly associated with engagement and is the form of commitment most likely measured by employers [34,26,28]. Employee engagement is determined by assertions that it drives bottom-line results. A study into thirty-six organisations found positive correlations between employee engagement and customer satisfaction and allegiance, success, productivity, labour turnover and safety outcomes. Employee engagement serves as a major component of managing institutions talents. Employees that are highly engaged demonstrate optimism about their jobs, which prevent them from leaving [29-32].

Leadership as the first element of employee engagement makes employees anxious to interact with executives to forester harmonious working relationship. When a manager appreciate a subordinate for outstanding performance, such action stimulate that employee to do better in future task performance. The utmost predictions of employee commitment note that, committed employees will continue working in corporations where they experience healthy relationships with their managers [24,27,1]. Communication as the second element of engagement transmit information from one party to another in a situation wherein both parties perceive its identical meaning. Communication serves as a vital tool, which enhances healthy relationship amongst employees and between management and administrative personnel. In this regard, restraining employees from accessing vital information about enterprise operations engenders trust [40,35,39]. Culture, which is the third element, serves as the psychological vigour that aids complete engagement in accurate optimism and facilitate the achievement of anticipated result. Rewards and recognition motivate personnel to accomplish results, which act as the burning fuel for the success of any organization [41,36,37]. Professional and personal growth in engagement encompasses numerous challenges particularly when organisations do not give premium to career development. Numerous staff capacity building takes place on-the-job when innovative concepts are introduced to modify operations [42,38].

Commitment acquaints employees with their duties and organisations objectives. Engaged employees are abreast with wider spectrum of organisations operations, which enable them to provide solutions to job challenges [46,43]. Employee engagement manifests in positive attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment and recognition. It also demonstrates behaviours such as: low labour turnover and high citizenship behaviour. It indicates perceptions of reliance, impartiality and a constructive exchange within a psychological agreement where two-way promises and commitments are fulfilled [37,48,44,45]. The

significance of employee engagement to employers shows increase skills, competencies and initiatives towards work performance and enterprise development [47].

Employment Relationship and Employees Rights at Work

The term employment relationship describes the interconnections that exist between employers and employees in the workplace. These may be formal, e.g. contracts of service, procedural agreements, or they may be informal, which includes psychological contract that describe specified expectations and assumptions concerning existing business relationship [53,9,11]. The parties are managers, employees and employee representatives. However, such contracts incorporate the job, compensation, collective agreements and joint employee relations machinery, works councils and the like [48,57]. Cooperation enhances organisational growth. The contractual agreement between the offeror and offeree stipulates that, employee provide the necessary competencies in return for which the company delivers satisfactory rewards to enhance outstanding performance [52,56,4]. A positive employment relationship integrates trust and mutual consent that cultivate harmonious work relationship between employers and employees [5]. Protecting employees' rights is enshrine in employment statutes. As just a few examples: the National Labour Relations Act recognise the right of workers to engage in collective bargaining. The Fair Labour Standards Act gives employees the right to a minimum remuneration and overtime pay. The Occupational Safety and Health Act offers employees the opportunity to withdraw from unsafe working conditions [14,1,54,9].

Organisations should treat employees fairly as that reflects their reputation, growth and sustainability. It serves as a good practice for business since the process discloses vital information about employees' right at work. Fairness in the working environment produces and upholds wide-ranging information regarding employees' right [3,59,8]. While statutory rights emphasises fair treatment, employees specific rights varies to some extent depending on the work they are contracted to do and the agreement that bind parties to a contract. Workers' rights are acquired from a mixture of legislative and employment principles [10,2,6]. For contractual rights, when individuals become employees, they probably encounter both employment rights and responsibilities.

Employment law encompasses all privileges and responsibilities in the employment relationship [18,4] As a result of the complex nature and extensive diversity of circumstances in employment relationship, employment law includes lawful matters as discrimination, unlawful termination, salaries and taxation, and workplace security [7,13]. A significant fact about contractual privileges state that, employment contract offers extra rights and clearly establish that employment agreements cannot influentially limit employees' constitutional rights [11]. Statutory rights are the result of specific regulations or decrees approved by a state or local government. Various states and national regulations have granted employees definite rights at work, such as equal employment opportunity, collective bargaining, and health and safety. These regulations and their interpretations have also been the subjects

of a substantial number of court cases on employment issues [6,12,15,16].

Human Resource Management Policy

Human resource management policies and procedures constitute elements of effective people management that deal with issues consistent with organisational values and employees in relation to legal requirements enshrined in state legislation. HR policies are distinct from procedures [60-62]. A policy provides specific and general guidelines on operations concerning managing people and ensures the development and adoption of appropriate mechanisms. Procedures describe steps required to deal with strategic employment issues namely: redundancy, grievance, capability and discipline [63-65]. HR policies are presented to employees as statement of organisational values that applies to specific human resource management issues. The general human resource management policy comprises of subsets such as, disciplinary policy and diversity management policy [66-68].

Disciplinary policy explains employees' awareness about organisations expectations regarding behaviours, limitations, and consequences of infringement. The policy further states how disciplinary issues are handled in accordance with principles of natural justice [69-71]. Policy on diversity management acknowledges differences amongst employees and note that, managing such differences ensures effective and efficient performance of duties. The policy concentrates on recognition of differences amongst people and not exclusively on issues of discrimination [72-74]. Diversity harness employees' differences and facilitate a productive environment, where talents are fully utilised to achieve organisational goals. The new diversity management phenomenon goes beyond the consideration of equal opportunity management prescribed by legislation. However, diversity management is been recognised as a result-focused and strategic approach that looks at employees issues from a wider spectrum of employment relations [75,76].

Employee relations and collective bargaining

Employee relations is basically concern with managing and maintaining employment relationship, which encompasses rewards, practices of employment, terms and conditions of employment and issues arising from employment. It provide employees with opportunities for their voices to be heard and institute effective communication mechanisms to enhance harmonious working relationship [76-78]. Employee relations comprises of approaches and mechanisms adopted by employers to deal with personnel individually or collectively through their representative.

Employee relations include industrial relations, which concern the relationship between trade unions and management in collective agreements and dispute resolution [79-81]. Employee relations focus on commitment between the employer and the employee, which explains each party's responsibility to a contract [82-84]. Many employers desire committed employees with less compensation, whilst diligent employees are greatly concerned about rewards allocated to their duties [85,86]. High-level performing employees desire satisfactory working conditions,

security of employment, safe working environment and opportunity for career advancement [87,88].

Collective bargaining discusses agreement of mutual concern, which deals with terms and conditions of employment involving employers and unions on the nature of employment relationship. It provides the framework, which allows management and unions to express their views on work disruption and establish preventive mechanisms for industrial disorder [89-94]. As a joint regulating mechanism, collective bargaining deals with management regulation on conditions of employment. As a resolution mechanism, collective bargaining offset inequalities of individual bargaining power. It is also seen as a political relationship that shares industrial sovereignty over employees in a collective bargaining process, which involves management and union on power sharing [95-98].

Employee Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

Employee grievance is a dissatisfaction expressed by an employee regarding unfulfilled commitment made by an institution. Employees are expecting employers to provide them with safe working environment and a realistic job view with adequate compensation [90,79]. However, employers cause grievances when they fail to respond to promises made in an employment agreement. Employees' grievances may be justified by tangible evidence, or they may base their assertions on circumstantial evidence, which is difficult to substantiate [80,86,87]. When management notes grievances, they should address them promptly to prevent escalation. Neglecting such role definitely lower employee motivation and determination to perform exceptionally. In addition, if grievances are left unchecked, they could lead to disputes that cannot be easily addressed [71,76]. Corporations should institute grievance resolution mechanisms with competent personnel assign to manage such element judiciously, to prevent influx of unpleasant issues. Nevertheless, organisations should also develop a framework and define policies clearly. When sensitive matters are reported, appropriate policy reference should follow required action [92,78,85].

Handling employee grievance requires conscious thought that maintain peace within the workforce. Grievances may involve role conflict between two employees or within a team assign to specific task. Regardless of the cause, grievances should be addressed to prevent extension [88,73,81]. Numerous experts established that, conflict related grievances are minimised amongst highly educated employees. However, professionalism and high academic standards do not preclude causes of employee grievances and conflict [82,70]. Attitudes, criticising colleagues and using the wrong approach to deal with employment problems constitute grievances at work. To control grievance rate, employers should understand the sources from which grievances are generated and keep records of such findings for future grievance handling [95,74,89]. Grievances could be identified from the following elements: compensation and employee benefits, discrimination and work hours. Management practitioners have disclosed that compensation is inarguably one of the causes of grievances [65,75].

Requirements for promotion, systems for benefits allocation

and salary structures should be adequately clarified to employees to prevent assertions of being cheated. Employee grievances also arise in situations when they discover inequitable distribution of rewards, particularly when people with the same credentials and experience are rewarded differently [67,83,84]. This will prompt some employees to start asking questions about promotion and other engagement rewards that they have not benefited. Considering awareness on discrimination in the workplace, several reports keep flooding the human resource management department concerning grievances on discrimination; such issues might lead to lawsuit [60,69,76].

Exhibiting racism in a workplace creates unhealthy working atmosphere; perpetrators of such crimes should undergo severe punishment [98-100,63]. Work hours and favouritism frustrate employees, particularly when they are not assign with sufficient work hours. Employees demonstrate grievances and get frustrated when they notice that the corporate culture does not allow them access in to the system from home [61]. Complaints will keep flooding when employees are constantly rescheduled to work on shifts they are not comfortable with [93]. Other causes of employee grievances could be lack of adequate facilities, bullying, harassment etc; such elements triggers grievances at work. Nevertheless, when a department or section is clustered with many employees of equal authority, such classification could increase chances of conflict related grievances [64,94].

Disciplinary procedures describe satisfactory standards of performance set by organisations, which deals with attendance and behaviour essential for organisational operations. Establishing comprehensive disciplinary procedures is vital to deal with issues of deviation from organisations norms [66,97,91]. The primary purpose of disciplinary procedure is not only to institute discipline against employees but also to create awareness on implications of poor performance, attendance and conduct [68]. Employers must ensure the production of a fair disciplinary policy, which recognise the rights of employees. Instituting an action at the early stage of employee grievances could lead to improved standards of performance, attendance and behaviour [77,62]. The aim of informal engagements is to resolve issues of concern in an amicable manner. In situations where employees demonstrate poor performance or fall below the expected target set by organisations, formal disciplinary policy may be evoked and procedures followed [96,72].

When formal procedures are followed, allegations made against an employee should be documented and presented in a hearing, comprises of human resource management specialists and other authorities required to witness the hearing. Such hearing could lead to either dismissal or resolution of the matter [19]. Before an employee is dismissed, several efforts should be made to improve his performance through many stages of engagements in disciplinary procedures [3]. Dismissing an employee may occur in two ways; notified about concerns raised by management and provide opportunity to improve his attitude. Another form of dismissal is summary dismissal, which emanates from an act of gross misconduct [11, 35].

Summary dismissals are evoked in situations where employees commit crimes that are unbearable or that may jeopardise the integrity of the organisation. In this case, when disciplinary hearings are held, they should be conducted in relation to prescribed principles of fair justice; with careful consideration towards objective conclusion [21,14,29,19]. Allegations concerning gross misconduct requires thorough investigation and employees accused of such acts may be suspended, pending the outcome of the investigation. Organisations can institute alternative action if deem necessary and such actions could be demotion, suspension without pay, transfer or withholding of salary [26,33,41].

Industrial Action

Industrial action occurs when employees are displeased with authorities behaviours. Such action is demonstrated through strike, working to rule or slowdown, to protest against unsatisfactory working conditions such as low remuneration and to increase bargaining power with employer. Employees demonstrate such act to reduce productivity level in the workplace [26,19,5,8]. Industrial action is normally organised by trade unions in situations where employees are unfairly dismissed or their contracts terminated unjustly. Quite often, such acts are recipes for strike; however, the scope of such action(s) is much wider [45,4]. Industrial action takes place due to labour dispute or it may be because of people's desire for political or social change. The system of expressing grievance is seen as the appropriate method of communicating dissatisfaction about employees' safety and benefits [37,36].

Industrial action is caused by many factors, which includes wages, dearness allowance and bonus, working condition and working hours, defective leadership and denial of recognising trade union etc. Many strikes are organised in respect of wage increase in order to address price increase and cost of living situations [2, 43,31]. Employees' wages are most times not commensurate with increase in price of commodities and standard of living. However, such displeasure leads to dissatisfaction and probably affect their performance level [53,47]. Considering the history of industrial action, wage increase has always been the cause of such action. Employees emphasise the significance of dearness allowance to increase their cost of living and equate their wages with price increase. Bonus plays a pivotal role and it is one of the elements of industrial dispute [11,14,43]. In an investigation conducted about dispute resolution in corporations, workers from different works of life expressed concerns about profit sharing but employers refused to comply such and such act of negligence resulted to dispute between employers and employees.

Environmental conditions such as pure and sufficient water, heating and safety are deplorable in many organisations. Nevertheless, research has shown that allocation of working hours is not commensurate with compensation; therefore, it triggers labour dispute. Employees are expecting employers to recognise their representatives (trade union) in a collective bargaining situation to ensure amicable settlement of disagreements [29,48,52]. Employers attitude towards labour associations are most times not systematic because of their intentions to divide employees representatives and rule according to their desire. In addition, management is generally

not willing to discuss issues of employment with workers or their representatives [6,31,53]. Employers' representatives act upon management suggestions which limit their negotiation power with employees [30,26]. It was reported by numerous publications that ineffective organizational leadership ignores employees' concerns about unpleasant situations, however, ineffective labour leadership adversely affect its bargaining power.

Methodology

Research Design and Study Area

A research design is chosen from a framework of research methods for conducting research. The design permits the investigator to improve on suitable methods, since topics selected for investigation determines the type of research conducted and design of methods required for data collection [Zhao and Liu 2015 & Života et al 2017]. An effective research design creates minimum bias and increases trust in the accuracy of data collected. Suitable research design provides accurate and unbiased insights that leads to the success of the study [Gomes-Mejia et al 2012 & Wang et al (2014)]. Research design comprises of neutrality, reliability, validity and generalisation. Studies set up with presumptions on data collection and projections on results should be neutral, unbiased and contain clearly understood respondents' opinions that derive accurate answers from questions [Zeffane et al 2017 & Zwick 2015]. Regular conduct of a specific research enables a researcher to obtain similar results; however, the design of a research should indicate techniques of formulating questions that ensures the achievement of standard results (Vinesh 2014 & Vohra and Seethapathy 2014). A research design encompasses numerous measuring tools available for gauging results according to objectives. In this situation, questionnaires developed from this design is noted as a valid instrument of data collection [43,13]. The outcome of a research design should not be restricted to a sample; nevertheless, it should be representative of an entire population. Generalising a design provides an opportunity to obtain information from any part of the population with similar accuracy [11,52]. Researchers should be abreast with the different types of research design in order to select suitable ones for effective data collection and analysis, since the process involves either qualitative or quantitative, depending on the choice of the researcher [44,16,19]. This study was conducted in Freetown, encompassing three corporations with descriptive quantitative and correlational validity, which included gathering, classification and presentation of data.

Sampling of Respondents

Samples are selected from specific population as representative element since data are not collected from an entire population. This system is important particularly when an investigation focuses on data collection techniques such as observations, interviews and questionnaires. Data can be collected from two or more organisations, depending on the research circumstance and case studies used. Cases selected within a frame, using probability sampling can be clearly understood (Zafar 2015, Winerip 2013 & Yousefi et al 2016). This study used probability sampling as it is deemed suitable for the conduct of this investigation. This

indicate that, research questions are answered accurately to estimate the features of the population from sample drawn (Dineen and Williamson 2012 & Vomberg et al 2015). This shows that probability sampling is often linked to survey and experimental research. Statistician emphasised that, when a bigger sample is selected, it produces better result than a smaller sample size does. This therefore shows an assurance that the sample size selected and data collected represent the total population (Yıldız et al 2014 & Gupta and Upadhyay 2012). This study obtained a sample size of 200 personnel from three public establishments. The sampling technique selected is in consonance with the research questions and objectives of the study. The structure of a sample frame, sampling technique and sample size, influences a researcher's decision in a research process. Nevertheless, simple random sampling ensures evenly selection of a sample from a population being studied (Youngsang and Robert 2013, Colli and Colpan 2016 & Giangreco et al 2012). This study however employed simple random sampling which facilitated the selection of sample units from various institution

Research Instrument

The descriptive nature of this study facilitated the collection of primary data with the aid of questionnaires and focus group discussions. Obtaining certain information such as assertiveness and respondents opinion is done through administering questionnaires to respondents selected for a research. Primary data are obtained from the real place of incidence of occasion (Pelín et al 2015 & Shrivastava et al 2015). Nevertheless, this study distributed 300 questionnaires across three organisations examined. Considering the challenges encountered in the distribution or questionnaires, 200 filled questionnaires were retrieved, which classified respondents as 120 male with 60% and 80 female with 40%. Samples selected in this study accurately represented the entire population been studied. Key research elements examined, established inconsistent issues caused by management in the discharge of their duties (Getnet et al 2014, Obeidat et al. 2014, Venkatesan 2017, Selvarajan et al 2018 & Seyyed et al 2013). However, the different construct discussed in the literature review derived their elements from (Vimala et al 2015 & Muhammad et al 2019), employee grievance and disciplinary procedures emanated from (Pelín et al 2015, Xhavit et al 2018 & Conyon et al 2019) and Industrial action was obtained from the works of (Baumann and Bonner 2017, William 2002 & Singh et al 2018). Questionnaire was designed using the Linkert scale system, which shows the following steps 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree.

Data Analysis

Data collected from surveys leads to a computerised system of data entry, which facilitate statistical analysis. This process is done prior to and immediately following data entry, which check its quality and accuracy (Chittoor et al 2015 & Rinallo et al 2017). Initial data analysis are conducted to assess assumptions, which determine measures to gain descriptive data. Evidence gathered with urgency should be analytically interpreted in its entirety (Chari and Dixit 2015 Gaur et al 2014 Le et al 2014). Data gathered from this study

was analysed with a statistical instrument (SPSS), using descriptive statistics and correlational methods. Analysis and description of data disclosed respondents' opinion about inconsistent acts of management in various organisations and how disciplinary actions are instituted because of employees misconduct. The different elements such as engagement, grievance, disciplinary procedures and industrial action are positively correlated, which shows this study's distinctive significance.

Results

Table 1 above disclosed information regarding management functions of the different organisations where primary data was collected. Sample units disclosed different functions managers

perform that ensure smooth flow of organisational operations; however, respondents registered dissatisfaction about the ways responsibilities are delegated to employees. They mentioned that their organisations develop strategic, tactical and operational plans to facilitate effective implementation, delegate task according to job classification and introduce control measures. Respondents emphasised that disciplinary measures are not implemented in accordance with prescribed management regulations and such act prevent some employees from experiencing tough disciplinary procedures. Because of unsatisfactory management operations, respondents noted that such bias attitude have over the years caused instability in organisations.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on respondents perspectives about management functions and employee engagement.

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
ABLC	200	2	1	3	2.35	0.727	0.529	-0.646	0.122	-0.866	0.243
DCRL	200	2	1	3	2.25	0.767	0.589	-0.46	0.122	-1.168	0.243
QWEV	200	2	1	3	2.33	0.686	0.471	-0.521	0.122	-0.801	0.243
ZUST	200	2	1	3	2.4	0.736	0.541	-0.789	0.122	-0.747	0.243
NFLA	200	2	1	3	2.27	0.742	0.551	-0.491	0.122	-1.047	0.243
RSKD	200	2	1	3	2.23	0.759	0.576	-0.401	0.122	-1.167	0.243
JAJF	200	2	1	3	2.35	0.727	0.529	-0.646	0.122	-0.866	0.243
MUCC	200	2	1	3	2.42	0.629	0.395	-0.627	0.122	-0.563	0.243
HIOC	200	2	1	3	2.33	0.722	0.521	-0.578	0.122	-0.901	0.243
PFMA	200	2	1	3	2.18	0.772	0.596	-0.312	0.122	-1.261	0.243
Valid N	200										

The majority of respondents (70%) described their organisations as negligent towards policy implementation. Regarding communication, pleasant comments registered in the questionnaires stated that managers communicate effectively and ensure better understanding of messages transmitted to prevent misconception. Even though responsibilities are categorised as lines of authority, respondents noted infringement of task, which some supervisors condone, and these issues sometimes erupt into role conflict. Regarding engaging employees for satisfactory job performance and retention, respondents designated that organisations are selective in their engagement process and those

who feel demotivated quietly leave with short notice and do not submit tangible reasons for their departure. Engaging employees prevents numerous unpleasant issues exhibited by unwanted behaviours. Therefore, management ought to be committed to employee engagement to prevent unhealthy working relationship and industrial action. From respondents comments analysed, it shows that organisations have repeatedly experienced turnover because of negligence in handling disciplinary issues. Source: primary data obtained from corporate institutions (September 2022 – December 2022) (Table 2).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on human resource management policy and employee rights.

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
DFID	200	2	1	3	2.25	0.767	0.589	-0.46	0.122	-1.168	0.243
PMSK	200	2	1	3	2.27	0.742	0.551	-0.491	0.122	-1.047	0.243
DKCD	200	2	1	3	2.35	0.727	0.529	-0.646	0.122	-0.866	0.243
ADMI	200	2	1	3	2.4	0.664	0.441	-0.66	0.122	-0.621	0.243

UJCF	200	2	1	3	2.38	0.66	0.435	-0.583	0.122	-0.67	0.243
AGRO	200	2	1	3	2.3	0.715	0.511	-0.513	0.122	-0.922	0.243
FSBP	200	2	1	3	2.33	0.686	0.471	-0.521	0.122	-0.801	0.243
AUJA	200	2	1	3	2.38	0.66	0.435	-0.583	0.122	-0.67	0.243
HMAJ	200	2	1	3	2.27	0.708	0.501	-0.449	0.122	-0.926	0.243
CSMB	200	2	1	3	2.33	0.722	0.521	-0.578	0.122	-0.901	0.243
Valid N	200										

Dealing with employees is a very complex situation that requires organizations to be tactful to prevent hindrances of smooth operations. Employment agreement stipulates rights and responsibilities of employees, which corporate or charitable organisations should take into cognisance. Comprehensive assessment conducted in corporate institutions for the enhancement of this investigation disclosed that employees are restricted and deprived of several rights enshrined in the national laws. It is noted that, even though organisations are guided by human resource policies, which co-opts procedures and practices, evidences from respondents shows that workers are limited to certain privileges such as capacity building, satisfactory leave and other allowances. Table 2 above descriptively explain respondents concerns about unfair treatment in situations where management demonstrate bias attitude towards certain classes of employees. Primary data emphasised that promotions, increased salaries and other compensation schemes are not evenly distributed and such act nurture grudges and resentment, which, leads to unhealthy

work environment. Respondents mentioned that management actions towards the workforce is not consistent with human resource management policies and procedures. However, 80% views of participants highlighted hints on favouritism (some employees enjoy better facilities) whereas others are deprived of their basic rights. In addition, grievance redress procedures are not judiciously managed and that affect the achievement of most targets set by supervisors. Although privileges are categorised according to hierarchy, respondents indicated that, leave (maternity and paternity), training and staff development are selectively distributed. Primary data obtained from this objective disclosed that aforementioned acts of management precipitate interdepartmental conflict, which could erupt in to unpleasant actions that causes unrest for such organisations. Participants suggested in a group discussion that, unhealthy work environment could only enjoy peaceful coexistence if corporations respect employees' rights and provide necessary privileges. Source: primary data (September 2022 – December 2022) (Table 3).

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on employees grievance and management disciplinary procedures.

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
IN-TRA	200	2	1	3	2.35	0.655	0.429	-0.509	0.122	-0.7	0.243
DAMS	200	2	1	3	2.33	0.722	0.521	-0.578	0.122	-0.901	0.243
SMAD	200	2	1	3	2.38	0.66	0.435	-0.583	0.122	-0.67	0.243
CHDR	200	2	1	3	2.33	0.686	0.471	-0.521	0.122	-0.801	0.243
JSTW	200	2	1	3	2.38	0.66	0.435	-0.583	0.122	-0.67	0.243
GINC	200	2	1	3	2.38	0.66	0.435	-0.583	0.122	-0.67	0.243
HSAT	200	2	1	3	2.33	0.686	0.471	-0.521	0.122	-0.801	0.243
PAAT	200	2	1	3	2.27	0.742	0.551	-0.491	0.122	-1.047	0.243
TSIG	200	2	1	3	2.23	0.759	0.576	-0.401	0.122	-1.167	0.243
RPSA	200	2	1	3	2.33	0.686	0.471	-0.521	0.122	-0.801	0.243
Valid N	200										

Table 3 above descriptively explain dictates of grievance redress mechanisms. Responses of participants unravels quantum grievances expressed by employees in different organisations. Respondents noted that corporate organisations are saturated with numerous inconsistent behaviours exhibited in different situations of their operations. Regarding job grading, ranking and classification, sample unit explained that some classifications are

done justly, whilst others are ranked according to their relationship with senior authorities. Eighty percent (80%) of respondents registered that employee grievances are not given due consideration in disciplinary hearings. Grievances should be resolved to promote competitive spirit within the workforce; respondents emphatically stated that the growth of corporate institutions is stifled by unsatisfactory behaviours exhibited by employees because of

management's actions on grievance redress procedures. Results revealed that some employees are discriminated against because of their gender.

The glass ceiling has been in existence for decades; however, the concept was challenged by many schools of thought on its implication; though challenged, its elements still lingers in organisational activities. Respondents noted that unpleasant handling of grievances reported, causes turnovers and unintended resignations. One of the prevailing issues emphasised by respondents is that, certain classes of employees commit crimes and are pardon whereas management evoke punishment for other set of employees for the same issue. They added that such unpleasant attitude facilitate conflict that could spill over to unacceptable attitude. Most respondents stated that they do not see disciplinary procedure as witch-hunt rather, it modifies unwanted behaviours that jeopardises organisations image. Nevertheless,

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on industrial action and collective bargaining.

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
ANOL	200	2	1	3	2.3	0.715	0.511	-0.513	0.122	-0.922	0.243
COAS	200	2	1	3	2.35	0.692	0.479	-0.591	0.122	-0.776	0.243
MASB	200	2	1	3	2.35	0.692	0.479	-0.591	0.122	-0.776	0.243
DCBP	200	2	1	3	2.45	0.631	0.398	-0.712	0.122	-0.485	0.243
EBKS	200	2	1	3	2.38	0.66	0.435	-0.583	0.122	-0.67	0.243
CONA	200	2	1	3	2.35	0.692	0.479	-0.591	0.122	-0.776	0.243
MAYA	200	2	1	3	2.3	0.715	0.511	-0.513	0.122	-0.922	0.243
KITON	200	2	1	3	2.3	0.715	0.511	-0.513	0.122	-0.922	0.243
PEWU	200	2	1	3	2.33	0.686	0.471	-0.521	0.122	-0.801	0.243
LUNG	200	2	1	3	2.27	0.742	0.551	-0.491	0.122	-1.047	0.243
Valid N	200										

Table four above explained issues of corporations' activities on collective agreements. Industrial actions are unusual in many corporations in Sierra Leone; nevertheless, facts derived from this investigation disclosed numerous unsatisfactory issues arising from these institutions. It was made clear that threats of dismissal is one of the weapons organisations use to prevent employees from instituting industrial actions. The scope of this study shows that there are limited jobs and such notion restrict workers from expressing dissatisfaction in these corporations for fear of unexpected consequences. Respondents emphatically stated that, most times they register complaints about unfair treatment, unsafe working environment and management bias attitude towards employees career development opportunities.

Even though they are restricted from disrupting normal operations, respondents alternate action such as reporting grievances to their representatives do not solve their problems. In a focus group, discussion held with 70% respondents disclosed unhealthy working environment. Respondents indicated that

participants submitted that some issues treated summarily could be properly assessed; proffer necessary solution that prevent future reoccurrence.

Respondents mentioned that national labour laws make provision for verbal and written warning to minimise unacceptable behaviours. The outcome of disciplinary hearings sometimes lead to dismissal or other punishment stipulated in the human resources management policy. Result shows that because of inappropriate handling of grievances reported to management, many talents developed by corporations quit for better opportunities elsewhere. In consideration to aforementioned facts derived from survey, unstructured disciplinary procedure could serve as a precursor for unpleasant action. Source: primary data (September 2022 – December 2022) (Table 4).

though restricted from exhibiting unpleasant behaviours, issues could arise in the future that may lead to catastrophic situations. Information obtained from participants disclosed several concerns that triggers industrial actions; however, issues of bias attitude towards certain classes of employees repeatedly showed up which, participants noted that if care is not taken, the consequences would be enormous. Sample unit expressed dissatisfaction on their representatives about deceptive information on collective bargaining situations.

They mentioned that when they report sensitive matters, their representatives misinformed them about the outcome of such matters. In a collective bargaining situation, employees' representatives should seek the welfare of their members to maintain trust in their representation. Respondents noted that since conflict are not properly resolved to prevent reoccurrence and ensure peaceful coexistence, consequences could restrain corporations' progress. Source: primary data (September 2022 – December 2022) (Table 5).

Table 5: Correlations on employee engagement, management policy, disciplinary procedures and collective bargaining.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
ABLC	1.000											
DCRL	0.931	1.000										
QWEV	0.874	0.923	1.000									
DFID	0.95	0.976	0.906	1.000								
PMSK	0.915	0.978	0.941	0.956	1.000							
DKCD	0.95	0.976	0.906	1.000	0.956	1.000						
INTRA	0.947	0.93	0.874	0.948	0.915	0.948	1.000					
DAMS	0.929	0.867	0.836	0.876	0.861	0.876	0.917	1.000				
SMAD	0.936	0.954	0.924	0.931	0.978	0.931	0.938	0.884	1.000			
ANOL	0.931	1.000	0.923	0.976	0.978	0.976	0.93	0.867	0.954	1.000		
COAS	0.931	1.000	0.923	0.976	0.978	0.976	0.93	0.867	0.954	1.000	1.000	
DCBP	0.936	0.954	0.924	0.931	0.978	0.931	0.938	0.884	1.000	0.954	0.954	1.000

Table 5 above discussed the relationship between the different objectives and established the significance of each variable tested. Comprehensive discussion on the various constructs descriptively explain the relevance of each item analysed. This endeavour has brought to our notice, issues that trigger industrial actions and narratively expatiated on mechanisms preventing the disruption of corporations activities. In focus group discussions held at certain times in the collection of primary data, respondents disclosed that unhealthy working relationship created by managements inconsistent behaviours could be dealt with, if human resources management policies, labour statutes enshrined in the national laws and international labour instruments domesticated are effectively implemented; devoid of bias considerations within the workforce.

Respondents mentioned that if employees are not effectively engaged, actions precipitating uncondusive work atmosphere could turn in to catastrophic situations. Further comparative analysis made by respondents indicated that effective employee engagement instils commitment within the workforce and brings consciousness about sense of belonging. Implementing human capital management policies and acknowledging employee rights creates harmonious work relationship and facilitate exceptional performance. Respondents noted that rights are meant to be respected with gender parity rather than disparity. They emphasised that HR policies guide corporations workforce on behaviour, performance and other necessary elements that constitute human capital management process. Managing workers with a notion that they are the most precious resource, inspire them to make meaningful contributions that enhances competitive excellence.

Survey result shows respondents opinion about the relative importance of exceptional performance and compensation; nevertheless, they added that the latter convince employees to demonstrate loyalty and commitment. Further considerable expressions noted are disciplinary hearing held to address unwanted behaviours. Concerns raised are that reports of

misconduct should be investigated thoroughly and necessary steps taken to prevent reoccurrences.

As disciplinary mechanisms are instituted to correct unacceptable behaviours, authorities must ensure that no employee should be exempted from disciplinary prescriptions. However, displeasures of collective bargaining expressed in one of the objectives is reinforced in this segment that when management notice hints of intended industrial actions, it should engage employee representatives rather than waiting until things goes beyond control. For corporations to retain high-level performers, management must ensure that the workforce enjoys a pleasant atmosphere that benefit both parties. In consideration to the foregoing facts derived from survey, our analysis disclosed positive correlation between and amongst the different constructs examined. Sources: primary data (September 2022 –December 2022)

Conclusion and future research expansion

Fact-finding missions are result-oriented endeavours, which proffer solutions and meaningful contributions to existing intellectual capital and strategic policy implementation for effective and efficient management of corporations. Examining critical organisational issues encompasses numerous challenges which authorities deem expedient to carefully investigate, identify causes and design mechanisms that facilitate the smooth running of operations. Our experience in this investigation has reinforced our commitment in different engagements. This study examined authorities inconsistent behaviors exhibited in corporations that precipitate unpleasant employees actions of displeasures.

This research reviewed secondary sources published by experienced management practitioners and consultancy agencies. Facts derived from the review process were examined, analyzed and adopted as comparative substances which, disclosed gaps that prompted actions towards suitable methods selected. In addition, this investigation employed primary data collection with the aid of questionnaires and focus group discussions.

Respondents disclosed authorities attitudes which facilitate group and departmental conflicts. Survey results mentioned that human resources management policies are implemented preferentially and rights of most employees are not respected. Focus group discussions disclosed that employee grievances are not judiciously managed and many decisions taken at disciplinary hearings contravenes national labour statutes. Participants noted that even though frantic efforts are made by employees representative to bring sanity between corporations and their workers, biasness still lingers around institutional activities.

It was made abundantly clear that, ineffective discharge of management duties, none adherence to employees grievances, selective distribution of benefits and career development opportunities, suspensions without tangible evidences and inequitable distribution of facilities meant for the entire workforce; leads to unrest and disruption of corporations activities. In relation to the foregoing, this segment has achieved satisfactory outcome of the problem discussed. However, this study is beneficial to small, medium and large-scale institutions. It could also serve as references for similar research and consultancy management activities. This investigation was limited to Freetown municipality with a sample size of 200 respondents and a frame that constitute three corporations. Primary data was collected using questionnaires and focus group discussions. Nevertheless, future research could consider larger sample size and frame, modify methods or possibly discuss each element separately.

Acknowledgement

None.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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