

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NAMIBIA PUBLIC
WORKERS UNION (NAPWU) AS A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING UNIT FOR WORKERS
IN THE CIVIL SERVICE: A CASE STUDY OF THE NAMIBIAN BROADCASTING
CORPORATION (NBC)

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Abstract

Workers, individually, are too weak and not capable of having their demands met at their workplaces hence the need for a union to take advantage of the power that comes with unity and collectivism. This being the case, one recognizes as many would, the need of an effective collective bargaining unit. Namibia Public Workers Union (NAPWU) is one of the largest trade unions which recruits its members from the, public service and parastatals. Its effectiveness in representing its members is of major importance in order to avoid labor unrest which may lead to poor service delivery to the public.

Therefore this paper explores the effectiveness of NAPWU as a collective bargaining unit for its members who are employed at Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC). A mixed methods approach is used in the study where interviews and questionnaires are employed to obtain data from the respondents. Respondents were grouped as follows; employees at NBC who are members of NAPWU, NBC management and a shop steward. From these groups was then the data drawn.

The major findings reveal that the majority of NAPWU members believe that their union has little or no influence at all when it comes to the working conditions of its members. They feel not secured, as management could act as the deem right and encounters no resistance from the union and the widely held opinion by NAPWU members at NBC was that there is poor accountability of the union to its members to the extent that some members felt that their union was conniving with the management against them. Though the above mentioned problems exist, NAPWU through its shop stewards assisted its members in the area of legal aid by supporting them in cases of conflicts among employees, or other individual problems faced with their immediate supervisors.

The outcome of the research indicates that NAPWU should adopt “Servicing”, as well as “Organizing” models of union representation and to let these two complement each other. This will prevent a “them” and “us” relationship between the union and its members, which currently is prevailing there and affecting the collectivism approach.

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to my best friend and companion Rauch Hakodesh.

I love you

Declarations

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1. Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Orientation of the study

The acknowledgment that workers, individually, are too weak and not capable of having their demands met at their workplace leads them to joining trade unions since there is power in the union and collectivism of workers. According to Du Toit (1976, p. 3), “[a] trade union is a continuing permanent organisation created by the workers to protect themselves at their work, to improve the conditions of their work through collective bargaining process, to seek to better the condition of their lives, and to provide means of expression for the workers’ views on matters of society.” This is the working definition of a trade union for this thesis paper. Namibian trade unions service their members in several ways. In workplaces where they represent the majority of workers, unions negotiate for better wages, benefits and working conditions through processes of collective bargaining. Unions also provide their members with advice on work-related problems and sometimes even on personal issues. Unions also represent their members in disciplinary hearings and in cases of unfair labor practices and dismissals, which may include taking matters to court. In addition, some unions offer their members financial benefits such as funerals schemes or discounts at certain shops. The services rendered vary greatly between unions depending on their organisational and financial capabilities but the main purpose of trade unions is the same. This is to protect their members at their work.

This paper examines the extent to which the Namibia Public Workers Union (NAPWU) has been successful in fulfilling its mandate as workers’ representatives. The reason why the case study focuses on NAPWU is that this particular union represents employees in government organisations

and parastatals. These employees are instrumental to the achieving of the country's goals such as the vision 2030 and also they provide services to the Namibian public, hence important. This being the case, one can recognize that there is a need for these employees to have their grievances solved in order to avoid strikes and demotivation so that they can be more productive. This would have a positive outcome of peace and stability which attracts investments that is conducive employment creation. According to Jauch (2007, p. 5), the highest level of unionization in Namibia is found in the public sector (75-80%). According to Collin (2013), productivity increases when labour/management conflict are mutually resolved. This means that the settlement makes the workers more confident thereby making them put more effort toward attaining organizational productivity. She further suggests that to boost the workers morale towards organisational productivity the management must identify itself, with the employees' demands especially on improved conditions of services. Where this is addressed, it will go a long way in fostering understanding between management and the union members or employees as well as in minimizing the level of conflict between labour and management in the organization.

The researcher is inclined to agree with Pyman (n.d.) who mentioned that there is a dearth of literature on union effectiveness. Pyman (n.d.) further argued that though union effectiveness is critical in the resurgence of membership, it has received scant attention in the theoretical and empirical literature. Jauch, the main writer on trade unions in Namibia, only looked at trade unions in general and their history, this research focuses on NAPWU's effectiveness. He did not address the issue of effectiveness of trade unions and specifically of NAPWU in collective bargaining, his main thrust was how trade unions in Namibia influence the broader socio-economic domain. This paper, as the title suggests, only focuses on the effectiveness of NAPWU in collective bargaining. However, as one would notice in later chapters, effectiveness in

collective bargaining has factors that influence it hence the need to also address them for greater understanding. This research contributes to the body of knowledge by filling the knowledge gap outlined above.

Now looking at NAPWU, it recruits in the public sector – government departments, municipalities and parastatals. Membership details are entered into a computer database, and one staff member is solely responsible for registering members and updating the records. NAPWU officials estimated a signed-up membership of 35 000, with 24 065 paid-up members. This makes NAPWU the largest union among the NUNW affiliates and the largest in the country (Jauch, 1999, p. 26).

Here are the aims and objectives of NAPWU (NAPWU, 2014):

- “To organize workers and to improve their economic and social welfare and to fight for economic justice for all Namibian workers.
- To group them together according to the nature of work they are engaged in, assist them in forming work committees of their own under the auspices of NAPWU.
- To strive for the betterment of economic and social welfare of all Namibia workers, as well as for social and economic justice in general.
- To regulate relations and settle disputes between NAPWU members and their employers.
- To promote education, health and safety, sport and recreation of NAPWU members.
- To co-operate with other trade union to bring about socio-economic change in Namibia.
- To provide and promote projects, training courses and seminars for NAPWU members.

- To provide advice and legal assistance to NAPWU members.
- To encourage and promote a spirit of solidarity and unity among all workers.
- To oppose any discrimination in employment and to fight for the right of all workers to work at fair wages
- To advance the democratic rights of all workers.
- To make representation to government on labour and trade union legislation and other matters affecting workers.
- To promote international friendship, co-operation and solidarity with all workers of the world.”

These are all the objectives of NAPWU, including those which cannot be met through collective bargaining. This paper used these aims and objectives together with some parameters provided in the literature (Boxall and Haynes, 1997) to draw up the objectives for this paper. This helped in obtaining a balance between NAPWU’s aims and the generally accepted areas from which effectiveness can be measured.

Trade union effectiveness is important in that it addresses many of the problems encountered by the workers, and which may influence the broader society and economic domain. In addition, workers spent money on trade unions membership and subscriptions, so it is important to shade light on the subject of the trade unions effectiveness. Workers need to be motivated and trade unions can help by making the workers’ demands audible to their employers. In most cases the root cause of dissatisfaction amongst employees is caused by unmet demands, which may be met through the facilitation role of trade unions. Du Toit (1976) states that consensus of opinion

seems to be that a trade union often serves little other purpose than to promote industrial unrest. But since this was in 1976, more than 3 decades ago, opinion should be different. Though some employers might still feel the same, most employers recognize unions as legitimate representative organisations which they can do business with.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Recent media reports have highlighted discontent among NAPWU members over its role as a collective bargaining unit which has compelled some of them to form an informal workers' committee as a way of addressing members' grievances and caused some members to cancel their membership with the trade union (Smit, 2011 & Tjihenuna, 2014). There has also been an upsurge of disputes and labour unrest in Namibia (Smit, 2012). If NAPWU is operating in a way that dissatisfies its members, it may lead to a demotivated workforce, poor quality of services delivered to the public, increase in absenteeism and labor turnover, which would consequently be costly to the government. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to examine the effectiveness of NAPWU in representing the workers.

1.3. Objectives

The objective of this study is to explore the effectiveness of NAPWU as a collective bargaining unit for workers at NBC.

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- 2.3.1 consider the role of NAPWU in improving better pay and working conditions of its members
- 2.3.2 Evaluate whether NAPWU protects its members against arbitrary management actions.

2.3.3 Determine the relevancy of NAPWU in providing advice and legal assistance to its members.

2.3.4 Understand if NAPWU is accountable to its members.

1.4. Significance of the study

Although studies in the area of trade unions have been done before in Namibia, such as the ones by Jauch (1999, 2004 & 2007), so far no study has been done to look at the effectiveness of NAPWU specifically, therefore the study contributes to the existing literature.

1.5. Limitation of the study

The research used quantitative as well as qualitative methods by means of a case study. The problem with this is that the research is in the context of NBC which provides very little basis for scientific generalization. In other words data is probably unique to NBC and generally not predictive. The other limitation is that the researcher collected data from respondents based in Windhoek only of which they constitute about 80% of all NBC workers.

2. CHAPTER 2: Literature review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter will review theoretical and empirical literature for the purpose of bringing more understanding to effectiveness in Trade unions. Kalusopa, Otoo, Shindondola-Mote (2012) state that in most countries in Africa, trade union density remains low and union membership has been declining due to the rapid rate of informalisation and casualization of work. The research conducted by these researchers included Namibia. Researches such as these which outline factors that led or still leading to decline in membership in unions often do not include ineffectiveness as a contributing factor. The one above is referring to informalisation and casualization of work as the causes but Namibia's government is the biggest employer which nullifies the point. While it may be true that factors such as mentioned above are the causes of loss of members in unions, it is only logical to also consider the performance of unions because it also can be a contributing factor. The point is effectiveness is important and so is members' opinions of their unions' effectiveness. And it is not about numbers only, it is about the satisfaction of members. So if union effectiveness is not given the needed attention, then it is possible for it to cause numbers in unions to dwindle unnoticed.

Worldwide trade unions have traditionally been concerned with seeking the economic and social interests of not only their members but also workers and their families. Unions seek to improve wages and the conditions under which their members are employed and work. By doing this unions bring about fairness and social justice to a society and a world that is marked by obscene inequality and injustice. Unions in Africa have pursued these and other objectives through their

existence. Numerous studies have shown that in Africa as in the rest of the world trade union members tend to earn more in terms of wages compared to their counterparts with similar characteristics but who are not members of a union. Additionally, union members tend to enjoy more and better benefits than non-unionized workers (Kalusopa, Otoo and Shandindondola-Mote, 2012).

While this could be true to some extent, one wonders if it applies to the Namibian context, specifically to NAPWU. It seems as if NAPWU has had a problem with “free riders”. It is the notion that members of the union without the exclusive bargaining rights, derive free benefits from the negotiation process conducted by the unions with the exclusive bargaining rights. According to Kazonyati (2004) in 2004 the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW) and its affiliate unions (NAPWU included) proposed to introduce, through the New Labour Act/BILL 1/2004 a concept known as “agency shop” or closed shop agreement. Strictly construed the concept/terminology “agency shop” is of American coinage, but generally fall within the genre loosely referred to as “closed shop” agreements within the broader ambit of Collective Bargaining. The nature and import of a closed shop / agency shop agreement is to require non – union members to pay union fees to unions they don’t belong, but which unions may be having exclusive bargaining rights with the employer at any given point in time. By the look of things, it was not successful because of an overwhelming preponderance of authority against the incorporation of closed-shop agreement where there is clear and unequivocal statement in the constitution of guaranteed freedoms to associate. However other benefits such as legal support and advice can be enjoyed by members only without the free rider benefiting from it.

Meeting the needs of members has frequently been advocated as the primary purpose of a trade union (Pyman, n.d.). Their failure to meet the needs, therefore, means that a trade union is ineffective. Boxall and Haynes (1997, p. 571) state that “[w]hile there is debate over the extent to which union movements articulate working-class solidarity and enlarge class consciousness most research observes that the primary needs of workers centre around such fundamental concerns as better pay and conditions, increased influence over what they regard as relevant workplace decisions, and protection against arbitrary management action. Putting the point negatively, a union that understands worker needs, but can’t shift employer behaviour, is ineffective”. This paper uses the same parameters as a measure of effectiveness in NAPWU. For a trade union to be regarded as effective it should be able to continuously fulfil the above mentioned needs. These needs, if they are being met continually, are the foundation on which workers build their sense of security.

Furthermore, Boxall and Haynes (1997) warn that one should not make the mistake of assuming that jobs, and worker interests, are static. Notions of union effectiveness must increasingly recognize the problem of knowledge escalation. Workers, along with firms, may experience ‘Schumpeterian shocks’ (Barney 1991: 103; Schumpeter 1950 as cited by Boxall and Haynes 1997): dramatic changes in their environment which mean that their interest shifts from regulation of their traditional jobs to one of acquiring the knowledge and skills to undertake substantially new jobs. Unions, therefore, which pursue only short-term, job-protective responses to industrial restructuring and technological change may undermine the long-term interests of their members. However, focusing on the long term goals while not attending to the short-term ones has the same negative effect.

2.2. Union effectiveness

Bryson (2003) distinguished between two types of union effectiveness which are organizational effectiveness and the ability of a union to 'deliver services. He described organizational effectiveness as a term used to encapsulate those factors which give a union the capacity to represent its members by virtue of its 'healthy' state as an organization. And the second type of effectiveness is unions' ability to 'deliver' for employees in improving work and working conditions. Together, these two types of effectiveness signal a union that is effective in representing its membership. He further suggested that organisational effectiveness may feed through to improved delivery of outcomes and success in delivering for employees may encourage non-members to join, providing a sound basis for improved organisational effectiveness. As Bryson suggests, organizational effectiveness can negatively or positively affect the service delivered by a union. This being the case, there is a need for unions to be effective in both of those areas for them to be fully effective. To accurately measure the effectiveness of NAPWU, the study used dimensions from both types of effectiveness. Though the one that is visible to everyone is the ability to 'deliver', it is imperative that the union be in a "healthy" state. This is so because though members are primarily interested in the service that they get from NAPWU, they might not be satisfied with the internal operations, which in turn affect its effectiveness.

2.3. The need for collective bargaining

Most organisations world over face the problem of scarcity of resources. It is the role of the management of those organisations to decide on the best way of utilizing those limited resources to optimize the outcome. The management can choose to use the available funds, for example, to grant higher dividends to their shareholders or extend their premises but the issue is whether or not this would sit well with workers and their unions. Bendix (2010) states that, many South

African unions argue that profit margins of South African organisations are too high and that companies could afford to pay higher wages at the cost of a cut in profit and decrease dividends to shareholders. They also feel that there is too great a divide between the remuneration of the lowest paid employee and that of the top management. So the unions may decide to ask for a higher minimum wage and a freeze on management salaries. From this South African case one can see that though funds may be available, there often is a conflict as to how they should be spent. This conflict intensifies if workers are already not satisfied with their salaries. Conflict of interests have always existed in the work place that is why there is a need for collective bargaining so that the both parties can reach an agreement. “Traditionally employers have believed that they possess the right to exercise full control over employees and that decision-making on all matters of importance rest in the hand of the management. This assumption is increasingly being challenged by employees, unions and even government legislation. This takes both parties to the negotiating table” (Bendix, 2010, p. 254). And if a union is powerful enough, it can get the management to agree to its demands, hence satisfying its members.

The pluralist approach to employee relations supports the perception of the existence of conflict of goals and interests of employers and employees. According to Nel, Swanepol, Kirstin, Erusmus and Tsabadi (2006), the pluralist perspective views the employing organization as a coalition between individual and groups with diverse objectives, values and interests. The underlying assumption of this perspective is that individuals in an organization combine into a variety of distinct sectional groups, each with its own interest objectives and leadership (either formal or informal). The different groups in the organization are competitive in terms of leadership, authority and loyalty. This conflict puts the organization in a permanent state of dynamic tension. The differing roles of managerial employees and worker groups are the primary

source of competitive competition and conflict between management and labour unions. Management is responsible for the efficiency, productivity and profitability of the organization. The concerns of the individual worker are, however, wider than and include personal aspects such as higher pay, better working condition, job security and more meaningful work. The competitive conflict between management and labour is seen as rational and inevitable. It results from industrial and organizational factors rather than from individual, personal factors. The pluralist perspective also, however, recognizes the mutual dependence of the sectional groups. It is assumed that the conflict between management and labour unions is not so fundamental and unbridgeable that the parties will fail to reach compromises. The pluralist perspective therefore typically concentrates on how to regulate and institutionalize conflict in order to contain and control its impact on the parties and their relationships.

Though conflict is inevitable, unions and management can and usually do come to an agreement. The union's job is to ensure that it gets the employer to accept as much of its demands as it can. The outcome of the collective bargaining process feeds the perception of members on their trade union. That perception matters not only to the members, but also to the non-members. Their decision to join a union is based on the ability of the union to secure members' primary needs in the workplace through collective bargaining. Therefore unions ought to be aware of that.

2.4. The Servicing and Organising model of union representation

In the servicing model, workers are seen as consumers of such union services as advocacy in collective disputes and individual grievances, legal advice and a range of non-industrial benefits such as discounted insurance and travel. The union's elected and appointed officials are the providers of these services, and their performance is judged by members in a kind of arm's-

length, calculative manner. The unions is ‘them’, not ‘us’. A union whose culture is entirely based on servicing may find it difficult to be taken serious by employers. The lack of oneness may affect unions from operating to their maximum potential because union officials will be dealing with their members’ issues in more of a detached manner. This is not to suggest that approaching issues objectively is wrong but there should be no division between union members and appointed officials. In contrast, a union successfully built on organizing can more readily be described as a ‘living collectivity’. Hyman (1989) as cited by Boxall and Haynes (1997) state that: the membership understands itself as a union, not as a detached body of consumers. The union is ‘us’, not ‘them’. This kind of unionization is usually perceived as a threat to employers because it can challenge the control of management in the workplace and impose sanctions that undermine the viability of the firm.

2.5. Table 1. Comparison of the servicing and organizing model

Servicing model	Organizing model
1. Union leadership solves problems for members on basis of complaints or requests.	1. Stimulates and involves members in problem solving in group process or collective action.
2. Total reliance on grievance and negotiations process.	2. Not limited to the bargaining process.
3. Passive membership or limited to leadership requests for cooperation.	3. Commitment to education, communications from and participation in the union.

4. Reliance on specialists, experts and union staff.	4. Development and dependence on members' skills and abilities.
5. Secretive and closed communication	5. Information sharing and open channels. Communication channels.
6. Centralized and top heavy organizational structure.	6. Decentralized organizational structure.
7. Dependent on management, reactive.	7. Independent of management, proactive.
8. Makes distinctions between internal and external organizing activities.	8. Makes no distinction between internal and external organizing activities.

Source: Russo and Banks (1996: 4) cited by Simms and Holgate (2008).

The distinction drawn between these two models by some contemporary commentators, however, is too black-and-white. Boxall and Haynes (1997) argue that it is wrong to propose a simple dichotomy between servicing and organizing models because all unions maintain some member services which do not depend on continuous organizing. Given this reality, unions are faced with a range of options for organizing which complement their servicing activities. One way unions may complement servicing, for example, is through building a network of influential activists, members who are regularly invited to take part in negotiations and so on. A second possibility is associated with fostering strong segments or cells of workers. These members, in effect, constitute 'pockets of effectiveness'. Their propensity to act collectively on a regular basis gives the union a broader reputation for activism than it actually merits. A third form of organizing presupposes the presence of activists and/or cells but adds the propensity to mobilize the total membership around key issues, generating critical episodes of mass organization. One

notes that unions that exhibit ‘surges of participation’, when it counts, win greater respect from both employers and workers. A union with a track record of collective action at critical junctures creates, at the least, a useful element of uncertainty in the minds of employers. The questions on employers’ minds would be such as these: What are the consequences of not taking the union seriously? Will the union inflict damage on the firm’s current operations, its ability to plan future operations and its reputation in product and labour markets? The presence of business risks creates a strong incentive to treat the union seriously. On the worker side, the union demonstrates its preparedness to dispute with management when important interests are threatened, a test it must pass to retain its credibility with members. The key point, then, is that a simple contrast between servicing and organizing is unhelpful. To be sure, the union that relies exclusively on servicing, that has no network of activism and no record of mobilization, is always vulnerable to an employer who is prepared to call its bluff. This does not, however, demean the importance of successful provision of certain services to individual members, particularly those that counter arbitrary management actions (Terry 1994) as cited by Boxal and Haynes (1997). Nor does building an organizing ethos imply total readiness to respond on all issues. More realistically, it suggests a range of options from relatively weak kinds of selective activism to relatively strong forms of mass mobilization at critical junctures.

2.6. The nature of collective bargaining

Collective bargaining is defined as (a) the performance of mutual obligation of the employer and the representative of employees to meet at reasonable times and to confer in good faith in respect to wages, hours and other terms and condition of employment or (b) the negotiation of an agreement. It is obvious that conflict exist between employers and employees that is the reason why collective bargaining is needed (Nel, Swanepol, Kirstin and Tsabadi, 2006). Anthony, as

cited by Bendix (2010) stated that there are many circumstances in which one of the parties to the employment relationship becomes an obstacle to the achievement of the purpose of one of the others. Industrial relations are especially concerned with those circumstances in which different groups are set upon different courses in the pursuit of which one becomes an obstacle to the other. The procedure of industrial relations are, for the most part, concerned to protect the parties from inflicting an unacceptable degree of damage upon each other in a relationship which is often hostile. So the role of both parties is to acknowledge that there are conflicts present and resolve the issues through negotiations before they reach critical and damaging heights.

According to the unitarist perspective of employee relations, employees and employers share common goals and work together to attain those goals. This perspective ignores the practical reality that employees have their own goals while employers have their own goals too. The unitarist perspective goes on to propose an organization without employee representative (union) because there would be no conflict hence no need for a union. It is obvious that majority of management prefer this perspective because as mentioned in chapter one, most employers associate unions with labour unrest. Unitarist perspective would mean that the management dictate working conditions, which is desirable for management. This perspective may still be evident even when an organization is having employees who belong to a union, management would still want to dictate the terms of employment. Though unity is needed in organisations, unions may end up not representing their members well and agreeing with management on critical issues regarding members when it should not. The union might not notice it but by agreeing with management, it will be nullifying the purpose of its very existence. Since in reality, the unitarist perspective cannot be practiced, unions need to be strong in order to avoid dictation from management in the guise of unity.

According to Farnham and Pimlott (1988), Webbs described collective bargaining as an economic institution. On the other hand Flanders argued that collective bargaining is primarily a political rather than an economic process and that the value of a union to its members lies less in its economic achievements than in its capacity to protect their dignity. Yes, collective bargaining is not an economic institution only but it is also not primarily a political process either. Since both areas are covered in collective bargaining and since they are all important to workers, it is better to term it an economic and political process. This way, it can be clear to determine if a union is effective or not. If it prospers in one of the aspects and fail in another then it is not wholly effective as needed by workers. Pay (and all monetary benefits) and pride are both important to employees and when a union provides the two in many various ways then it can be seen as effective. The problem with differentiating the two is that one may see a union as effective because of providing the economic needs of workers while the other might find it not effective. There is a very thin line between the two though, because for instance some salaries may be degrading hence hurting employees' dignity or pride then in the end what started as an economic issue turns into a political one.

As the trade unions pursue effectiveness, they encounter problems that must be tackled in order to achieve the effectiveness needed. Khabo (2008), notes that although many countries have legislation and even Constitutions that commit to collective bargaining, the levels of implementation are quite varied and seem to be determined by the levels of economic and political development of the different countries. The success and/or failure of the bargaining process, it has emerged, has been dependent on the level of maturity and strength of the workers' and employers' organizations or their representatives. And there are some employers who fail to accept trade unions as legal entities with the right to bargain on behalf of their members. Where

the public service is concerned for most of the countries, the legislation has many gray areas that raise questions as to the governments' commitment and sincerity in extending bargaining and dispute settlement rights to public servants.

2.7. The scope of collective bargaining

The scope of collective bargaining varies from one bargaining relationship to another and from system to system. Bargaining arrangements commence with negotiations concerning the procedures to be adopted in regulating the relationship between bargaining partners. Thereafter, the main focus of the bargaining relationship will be economic. The parties agree that they will at regular intervals or when circumstances require, bargain on substantive issues such as wages and conditions of service. Unions may demand, say, the establishment of grievance, disciplinary, retrenchment procedure and any other issue on their agenda. Management, on its part, may also raise issues of its own. These may include matters such as productivity, training and salary and wage structures, worker commitment and even a possible decrease in wages in times of financial difficulty. Normally bargaining agreements are intended to cover any matter of mutual concern between employer and employee; yet sometimes employers and employees differ on the perception of matters of mutual concern.

Khabo (2008) is of the view that collective bargaining has a great potential for minimizing conflict, and redressing confrontational attitudes and acrimony inherently associated with the employment relationship, thereby promoting industrial peace and ultimately economic growth. On its own, it can serve as a mechanism for labour dispute resolution by setting out procedures for resolution of labour disputes in collective bargaining agreements. One of the virtues of

collective bargaining is that disputes are solved at source, a factor that does not leave the bitterness associated with such adversarial processes of dispute resolution as adjudication. The challenge to SADC countries both at a regional and at the national level is the creation of an environment that is conducive to the sustenance of collective bargaining and the promotion of effective labour dispute resolution machineries consistent with ILO instruments and other international laws. Article 5(f) of the Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154) urges Member States to put in place measures to ensure that bodies and procedures for the settlement of labour disputes contribute to the promotion of collective bargaining. As part of their commitment to the promotion of collective bargaining some jurisdictions have the right to collective bargaining entrenched in their Constitutions. He goes on to say that, “[i]n Namibia, collective bargaining was recognized as *‘the cornerstone of Namibia’s system of labour relations’* (Wiehahn Report 1989, p. 96).⁶ Collective bargaining has indeed played a major role in regulating minimum wages in Namibia. Despite the existence of the Wages Commission wages are primarily determined by collective bargaining. In addition, the power of the Minister of Labour to extend the operation of collective agreements to non-parties that existed in the Employment Act, 1992 is still retained in Section 69 of the Employment Act, 2004. In the view of this, one notes that the country has created a conducive environment for trade unions to operate.” This means that trade unions in Namibia, NAPWU included, are not victims of unhelpful political environment but they shape their own fate through their structures. This is why the main focus of this research is going to be on NAPWU’s internal processes and outcomes of its negotiations with NBC. From what is stated above, one notes that for members to obtain desirable pay and good working conditions in Namibia (at NBC in this case) their trade union

has to be effective and firm about the demands of its members in collective bargaining because there is a conducive environment already to operate in.

2.8. Namibian unions

The Namibian labor movement went through significant changes during the first decade of Namibia's independence. The NUNW and its affiliates, in particular, had to shift from political mobilization that dominated the unions' activities in the run-up to the independence elections in 1989, to a process of engagement with government and business under a new tripartite arrangement. In the absence of sufficient internal capacity to develop an alternative development framework that would benefit labor movement's working class constituency, trade unions accepted to play a more confined role within tripartite arrangements (Jauch, 2004). He also states that in order to become an engine for social change, trade unions will have to deepen their roots in Namibia's working class constituencies and become genuine workers voice on issues beyond the workplace. Secondly the labor movement will need to develop effective strategies for influencing policies, particularly in the economic arena which is dominated by the neo-liberal line of thought (where the role of the private sector is enhanced). For this to happen, one notes that the union would have first represented its members well enough to be able to tackle other issues which are a bit deep. What is being suggested by Jauch is much broader and can only be achieved if the union is are successful in handling the bread and butter issues of its members. It may sound trivial but to member it is of utmost importance. Jauch (2004) shows in percentages, how the Namibian population depended on their salaries. About half of all Namibian households (48%) relied on 'wages

and salaries' as their main source of income. In urban areas, this figure was as high as 76%. These figures indicate the critical importance that wages and salaries have for the survival of Namibian households. He further mentions that 60 % of households in the country (73% in urban areas) lack a secondary source of income.

Jauch (2004, p. 34) states that, "factors leading to the weakening of the labor movements as firstly union investments which exposed the lack of clarity around the concept of empowerment. To some extent unions fell prey to the ideology of individual empowerment instead of redefining the concept to serve Namibian workers as a social class. Empowerment within the nationalist project is essentially a process of creating a new black (petty) bourgeoisie- a concept fundamentally different from the notion of worker empowerment and worker control. Secondly, the erosion of accountability of union leaders towards their members was another factor. During the 1980s many Namibian unions were characterized by a high level of inner union democracy and accountability. Union leaders at various levels had to obtain mandates from their constituencies and had to report back regularly. This created sense of ownership over the unions among workers and ensured that elected leaders articulated the aspirations of their members. Sadly trade unions lost some of their vibrancy after independence. As workers felt that independence was won, union structures became dormant and leaders consulted their members sporadically. The lack of clear mandates greatly contributed to the socio-economic and ideological contradictions experienced by unions in the past few years. This also contributed to conflict of interests as the collective interests of workers were at times compromised for the personal ambitions of individual union leaders." From Jauch's findings, one notes that factors that led to the weakening of Namibian unions are mainly organizational factors which affects

unions' ability to deliver. The study by Jauch does not however cover the delivery of services of unions and consequences of failing to deliver.

The other challenge that Namibian unions face is that they are divided largely along political lines and are unable to move towards joint action even on issues where their positions are similar. Such rivalry further erodes labor's power at the work place as well as in the national arena where unions are unable to present joint positions (Jauch, 2004 & 1999).

Though the challenges above have been specifically in Namibia, unions faced and are still facing problems in many other countries. In South Africa (Lorgat, 2002), there are reports of corruption in a number of unions. These have been manifested by giving companies access to union members or its database and getting something in return. Some officials are reported to be corrupt and taking actions that enrich themselves.

Delgado and Jauch (2014, p. 6) state that "[t]he Namibian labour movement was ill prepared in both organisational and ideological terms, for the onslaught of neo-liberalism as expressed in the SWAPO government's economic policies. They were increasingly caught in a narrow 'economism' as expressed in defensive battles around 'bread and butter issues' without being able to address (or alter) the socio-economic structures, which perpetuated Namibia's high levels of income inequality. Jauch argues that Namibia's labour movement is in crisis today because trade unions do not represent Namibia's working class as a whole." While it is correct that the labour movement need to influence the socio-economic structures, it should not be done at the expense of not addressing the bread and butter issues. This narrow 'economism' referred to here is in reality very important because it addresses the immediate and primary needs of members which is the main reason why they join unions in the first place. Jauch's main thrust is mainly

about the socio-economic domain which fails to recognize the need for unions to address issues present at individual workplaces. Attending to these issues may be might also help unions gain power to influence the broader socio-economic domain.

These chapter looked and theoretical and empirical literature on the subject of union effectiveness. As one would note, this is an under researched field and this study contributes to the body of knowledge by filing this gap. In conclusion, effectiveness is needed for the sake of membership to unions and for the betterment of members' work lives. The primary purpose of the existence of unions and reason why members join unions is to have needs at workplaces met. This chapter has shown how empirical studies just solely focus on unions' need address 'bigger' issues. Which really is not adequate given that members prioritise their immediate needs and those members are the customers, going against customers destroys any business. In Namibia unions have a chance to thrive because the government has created a conducive environment for them to operate, unlike many other African countries. This leaves the onus on NAPWU and all other Namibian unions to work on satisfying their members.

3. Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology underpinning this study and how the research was carried out using questionnaires and an interview. Since this is a case study, the findings and recommendation apply to NAPWU only and are not meant to be generalized to other unions.

3.2. Research design

This research used the mixed methods approach; that is the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods. In order to critically examine the effectiveness of trade unions, an exploratory case study was conducted. Quantitative method provides a measure of the number of respondents who feel or think in a certain way according to closed ended questions in the questionnaire and interviews. Qualitative method on the other hand go deeper, exploring what respondents think or feel and importantly why. Both methods were used on all objectives. In order to meticulously articulate all aspects of the research problem, the topic was broken down into four objectives which are as follows:

- 3.2.1. Consider the role of NAPWU in improving better pay and working conditions of its members.
- 3.2.2. Evaluate whether NAPWU protects its members against arbitrary management actions.
- 3.2.3. Determine the role of NAPWU in providing advice and legal assistance to its members.
- 3.2.4. To understand if NAPWU is accountable to its members.

These four objectives were used to create questions that were relevant to the topic and its aim.

3.3. Population

The population of this study consisted of 304 paid up members of NAPWU at NBC, 3 shop stewards and 32 workers of NBC in managerial positions (NBC payroll records, 2014).

3.4. Sample

The sample of this study was constituted of 31 paid up members of NAPWU at NBC which is about 10 percent of the population, 3 managers a shop steward at NBC.

3.5. Types and sources of data collected

Primary data was collected for the sake of this study. This primary data was collected from one shop steward at NBC, 3 NBC managers and members of NAPWU at NBC.

3.6. Research instruments

The research relied on interviews and questionnaires. Questionnaires provided both quantitative and qualitative data while interviews provided qualitative data. The questionnaires comprised of three sections: the first one included biographical data, the second one had questions with different options in boxes for the researcher to tick the option that best described the respondents' feelings, then the last section was made out of open ended questions with spaces for the respondent to write in them. Interviews were semi-structured, where by the interviewer asked pre-set questions but when an issue of interest emerged during the interview, which did not form part of the prepared questions, then it was pursued for greater clarity

3.7. Procedure

The researcher to used probability sampling procedure. Stratified sampling was conducted. First, the respondents were placed into three groups of: paid up NAPWU members (NBC employees), shop stewards at NBC and NBC management. Then questionnaires were used on randomly selected paid up NAPWU members at NBC and while interviews were conducted on a selected shop stewards and NBC management. The researcher made use of a phone recorder while at the same time taking down the main points from the responses given by the respondent. This proved to be very helpful when the researcher was now analyzing the data using both the recorded data and the one written. Selecting just one shop steward out of 3 of them working at NBC was appropriate due to the sameness of their work. The shop steward was not only representing other shop stewards but also acted as the representative of the union meaning that his views were regarded as the views of NAPWU. The interviews conducted on management were very short. This was done in order to avoid ending up diverting from the topic of effectiveness of NAPWU. The topic itself suggests that the focus should be on NAPWU members at NBC. So the purpose of the interviews was to clarify a few things which were unclear.

3.8. Data analysis

Quantitative data was interpreted by classifying features, counting them then attempting to explain the results. The results provided a good picture of what was happening in the trade union. Interpretive analysis was conducted on qualitative data which included opinions of different subsets of respondents (NBC shop stewards versus NBC NAPWU members) in the union was done. Opinions of management of NBC were also analysed. Microsoft excel was used to process

data which was used to present data in form of graphs, tables and pie charts. The intention was to find out whether there is effectiveness or not in the trade union.

3.9. Research ethics

The researcher had to seek consent from the respondents first before conducting the research. The researcher complied with ethical guidelines by assuring the respondents that privacy and confidentiality was maintained. They were not required to provide their names in the questionnaires and in interviews. The researcher is open in disclosing methods and honest in presenting findings of this study.

In summary the research design used was found to be appropriate to obtain valid data from the respondents. Though 10 percent of the population is generally accepted as sufficient representation of the population, the researcher desired to interview more than 10 percent of NBC management but the unavailability of these respondents caused the researcher to settle for that 10 percent. Data collected from the available proved to be sufficient especially since the management who were interviewed said more or less the same thing.

4. Chapter 4: Data presentation and analysis of results

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the data and present the results. The data were collected and analysed in relation to the objectives highlighted in chapter 1 of this thesis. The data presented in this chapter was drawn from 31 respondents at NBC through the use of questionnaires and 4 respondents (1 shop steward and 3 NBC managers) through semi structured interviews. The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of NAPWU as a collective bargaining unit for employees at NBC.

The data in this chapter is presented in form of graphs, tables, charts and descriptive analysis. This chapter begins by displaying data collected through the section of closed ended questions of questionnaires.

4.2. Data collected from NAPWU members at NBC through questionnaires.

4.2.1. NAPWU membership at NBC.

Table 2

Number of employees/ staff complement	Male	Female	Total
Permanent	248	182	430
Contract	84	38	122
Total	332	220	552

Source: NBC Payroll records 2014

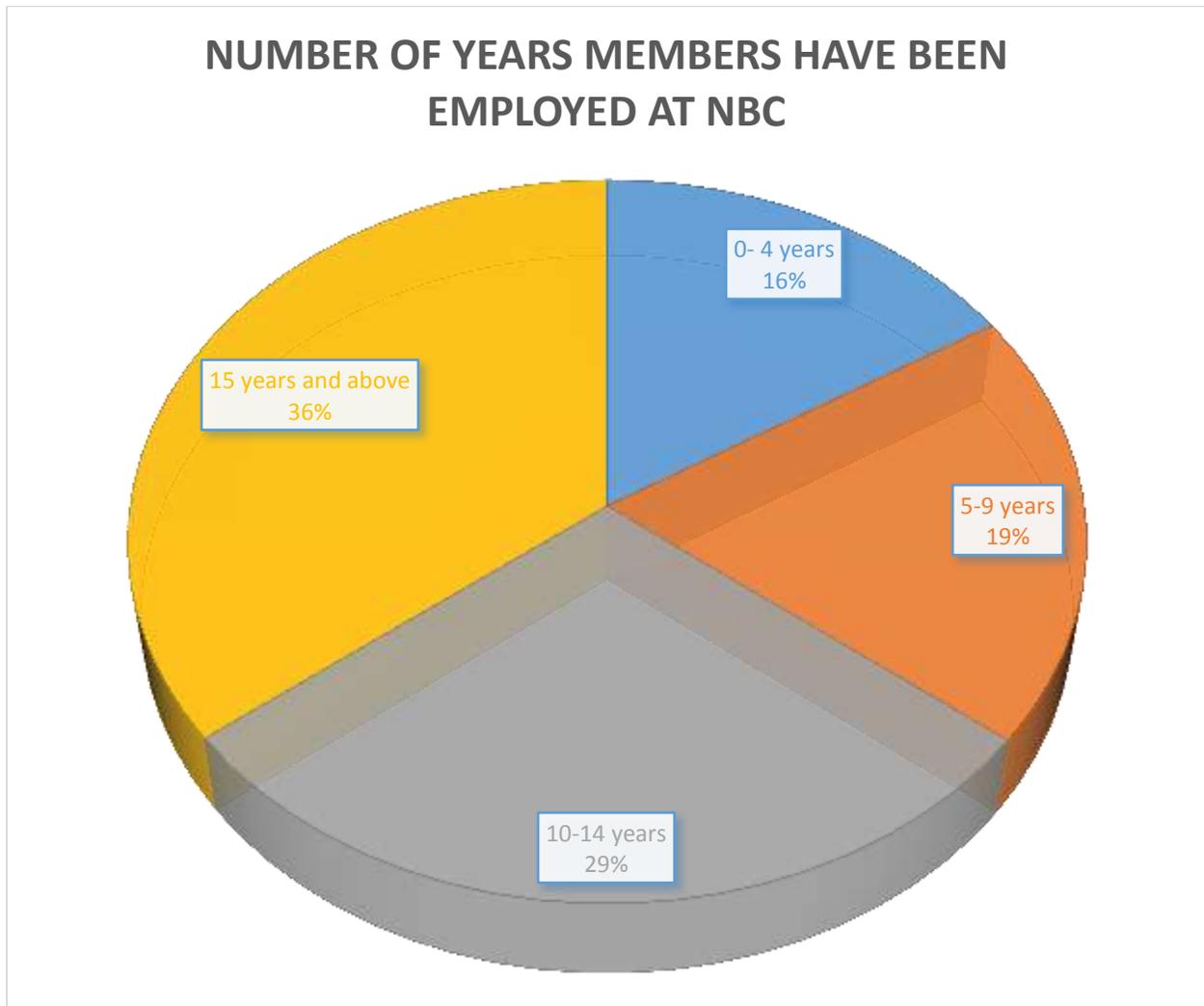
Table 3

Number of NAPWU's paid-up members at NBC	Male	Female	Total
Permanent	152	120	272
Contract	23	9	32
Total	175	129	304

Source: NBC payroll records 2014

4.2.2. Length of service at NBC.

Figure 1

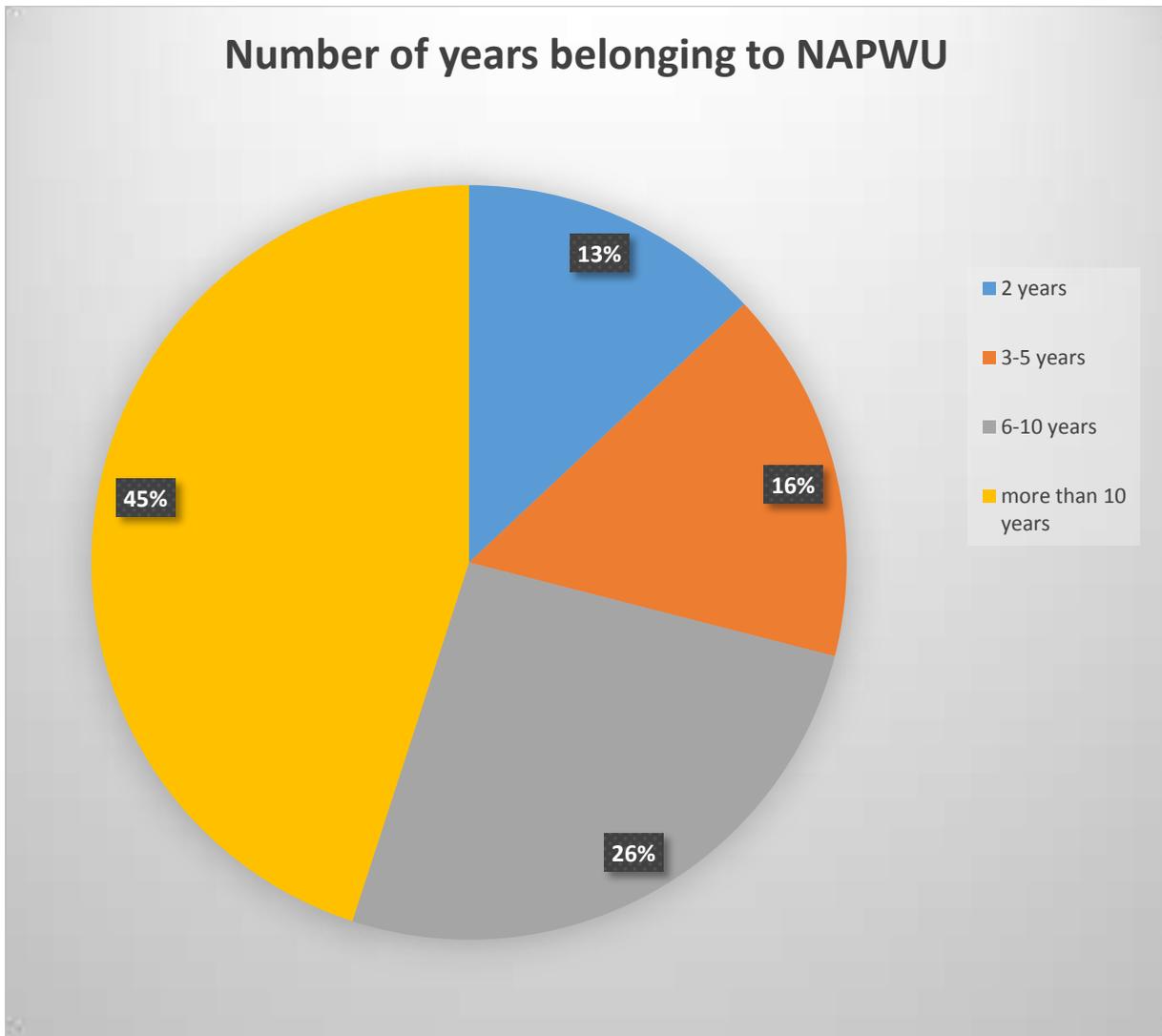


Source: Field Research (2014-2015)

The majority of members of NAPWU are those who have been employed at NBC for 15 years and above with 36%. From the presentation above it is clear that membership increases proportionately with the number of years that employees have been working for NBC. Those who have the least number of years working for NBC are they are the ones with a lowest percentage of membership. With the information provided, the researcher concludes that NAPWU has not been able to recruit a high number of new members.

4.2.3. Duration of membership at NAPWU.

Figure 2

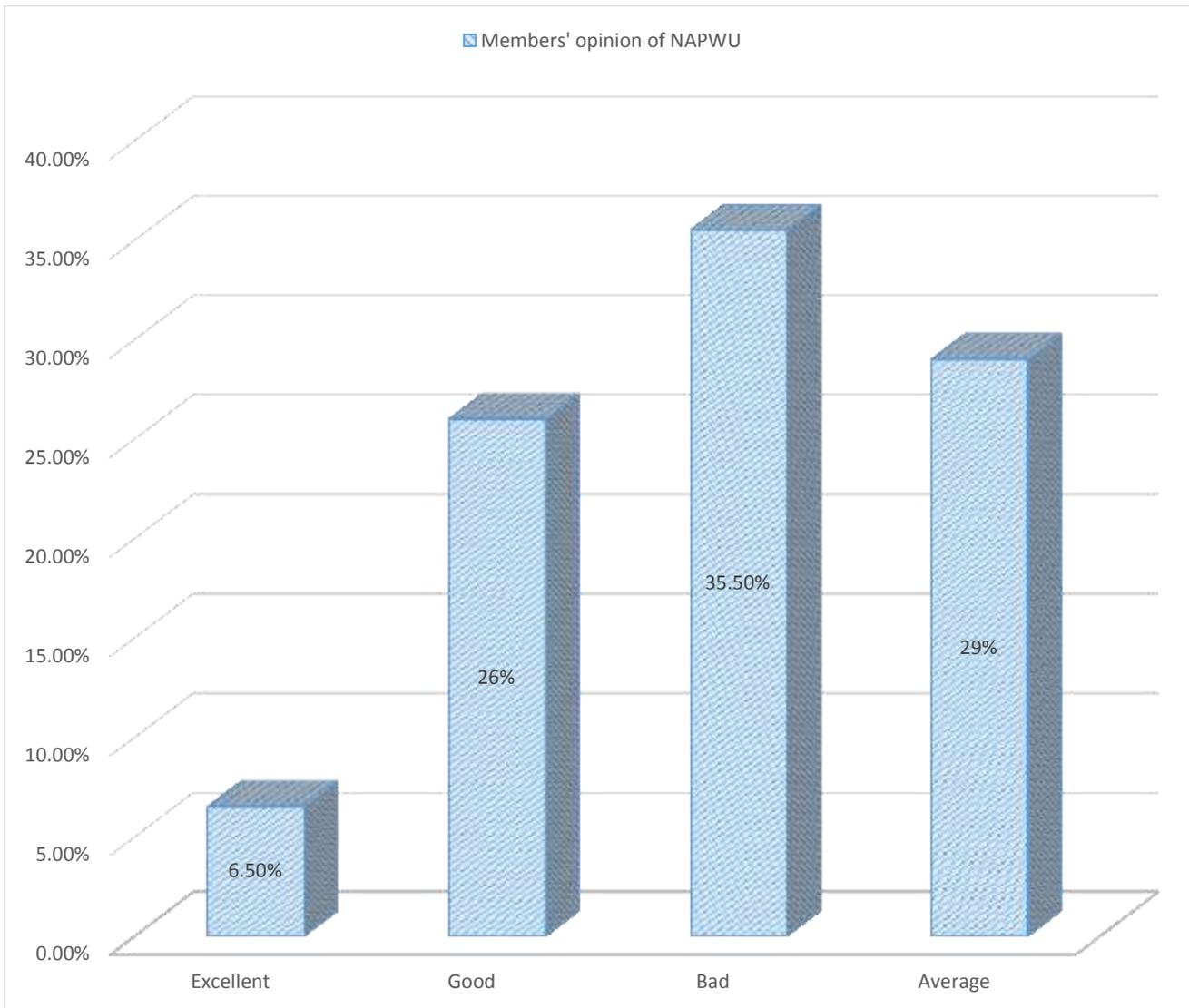


Source: Field Research (2014-2015)

The members who have been employed by NBC for more than 15 years (36%) are the same ones who indicated that they had been members of NAPWU for more than 10 years together with some members who have been employed by NBC for 10 to 14 year (45%). Similarly, members who joined and had been members of NAPWU for 2 years or less are the same one who have worked for NBC for 5 years or less.

4.2.4. Opinion of impact of the trade union.

Figure 3

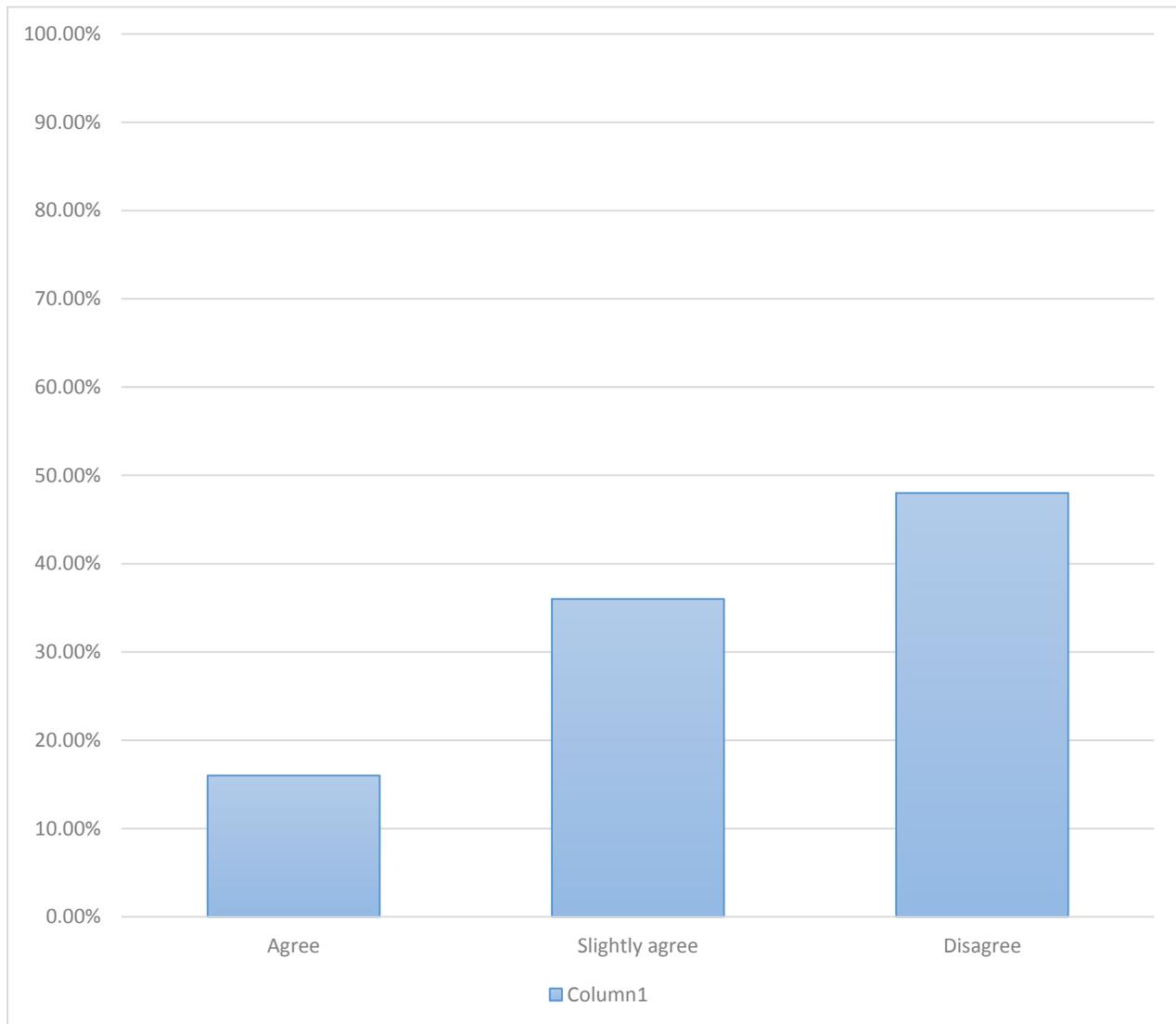


Source: field research (2014-2015)

Most NAPWU members at NBC find the work of their union generally bad (35.5%). However the percentages of those who feel that it is 'good' (26%) and those who feel that it is 'average' (29%) summed together makes 55%. This can be seen as a good thing for NAPWU since those who view NAPWU'S work as generally bad are less than those who said it good and average put together.

4.2.5. Opinion regarding the role of NAPWU in providing work security.

Figure 4

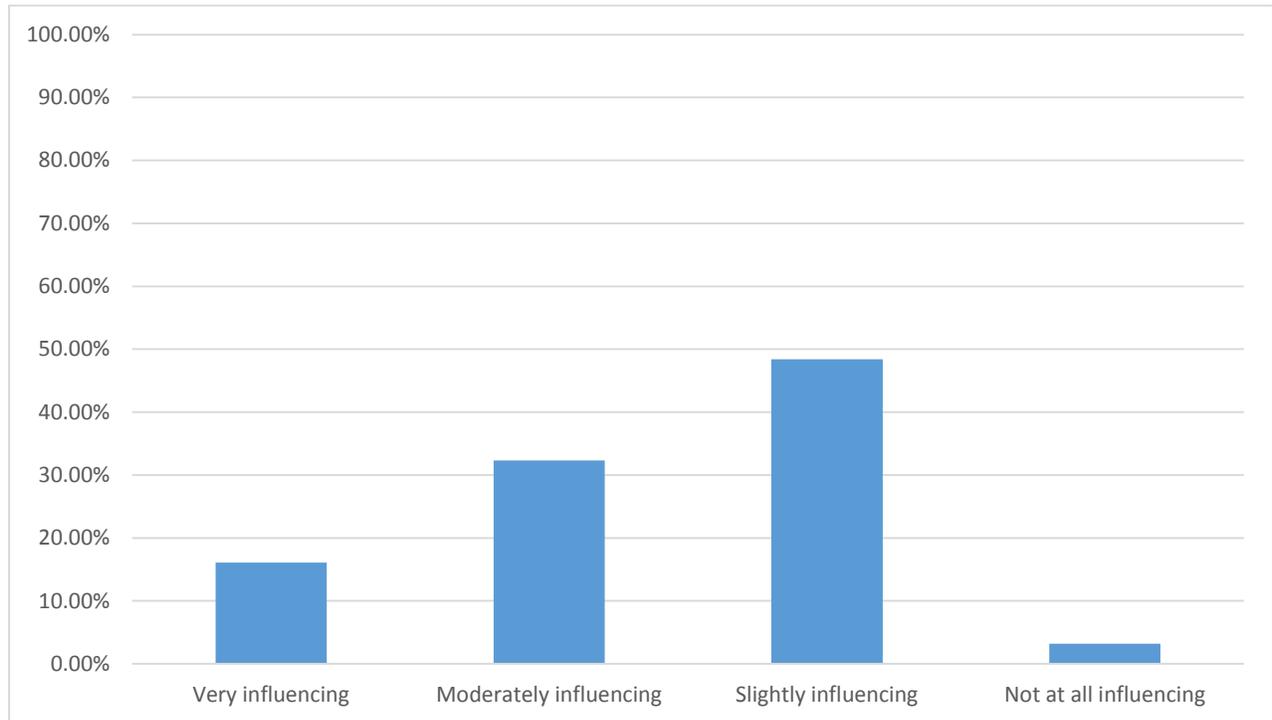


Source: Field Research (2014-2015)

The above illustration above shows that most members have no confidence in NAPWU. One can see that 48% (15 members) disagree to NAPWU bringing security their work life. To conclude, most NAPWU members at NBC feel unsecured though they belong to a trade union.

4.2.6. Opinion on level of influence NAPWU has on the improvement of working conditions.

Figure 5

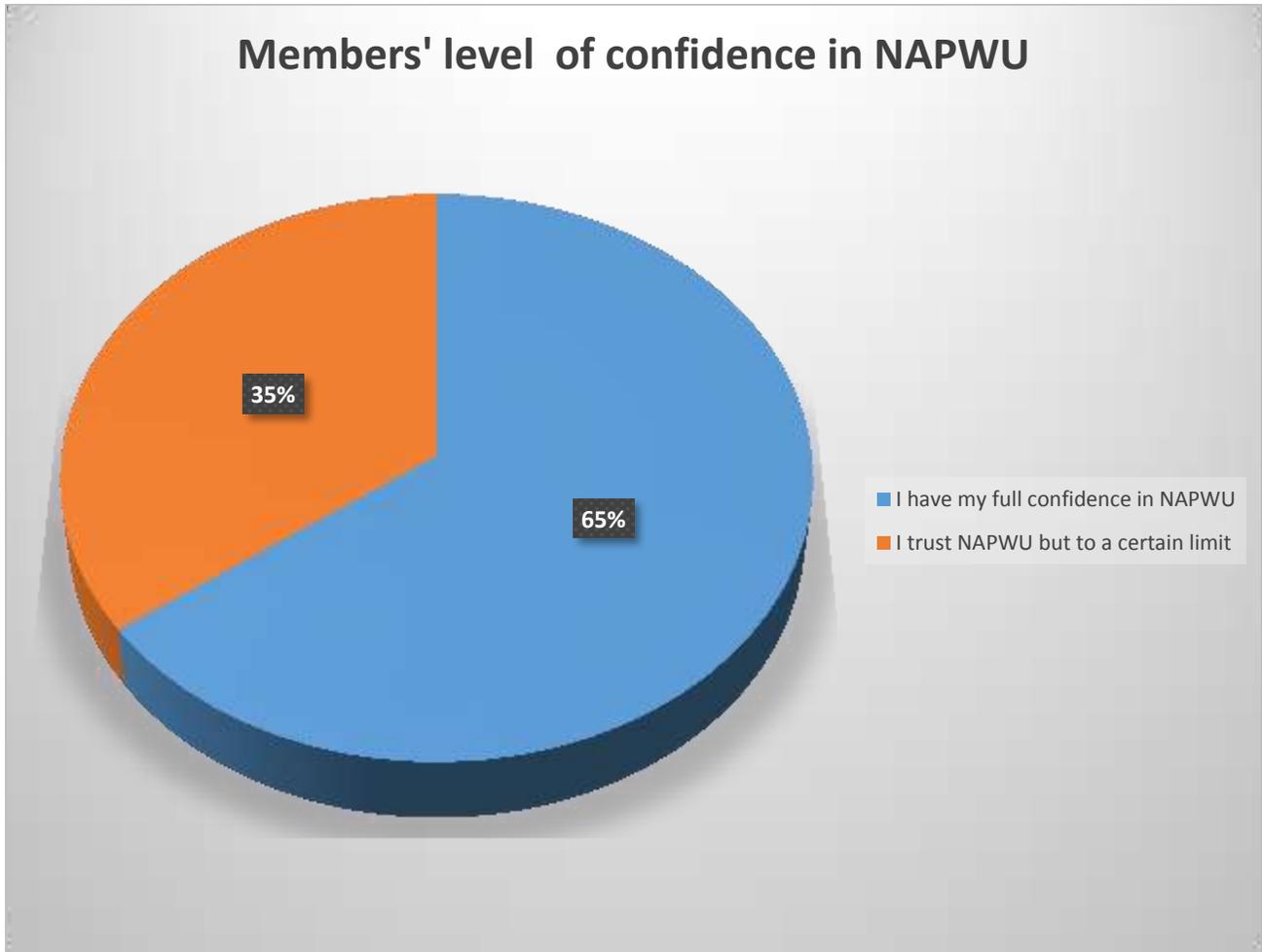


Source: Field Research (2014-2015)

Figure 2 depicts that the majority of members are of the opinion that NAPWU is slightly influencing (48.4%) on the improvement of its members' working conditions. Members' opinions seem to mainly range in the non-extreme options with 32.3% saying NAPWU moderately influencing and 48.4% saying its slightly influencing. This probably means that the number of situations where NAPWU was influencing and the ones in which it was not are almost equal. And when it has been slightly influencing it could mean that members appreciated the effort of NAPWU in trying though it failed to reach the desired level to satisfy them. That is why a good number of members in the preceding figure were compelled to "slightly agree" with the statement that NAPWU brings security to their work lives.

4.2.7. Members' level of confidence in NAPWU.

Figure 6

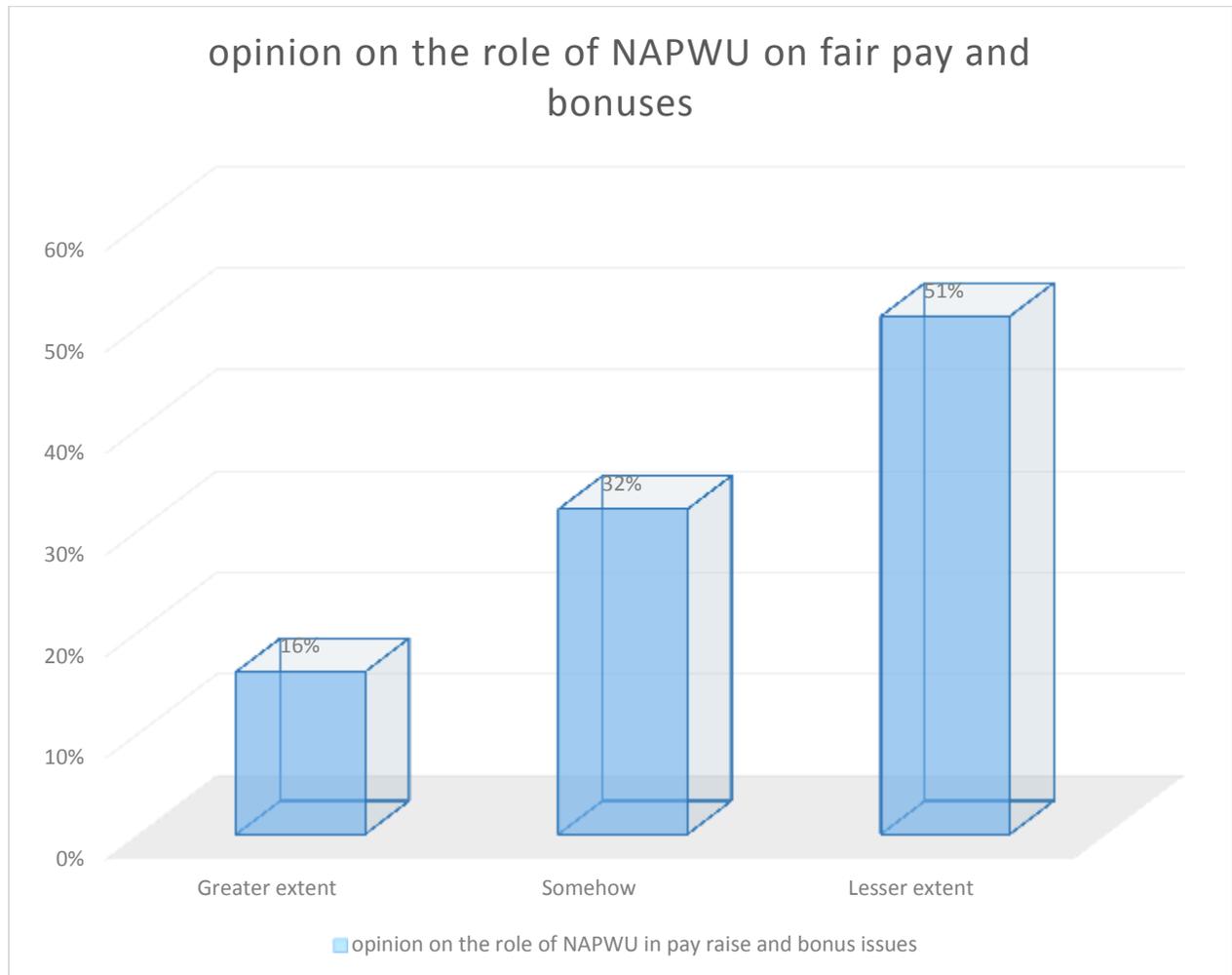


Source: Field Research (2014-2015)

In response to the level of confidence that they had in NAPWU as their representative, 65% (20) said that they trusted the union but to a certain limit. While 11 (35%) members have full confidence in NAPWU. All the respondents who disagreed to NAPWU bringing security to life said they trusted NAPWU but to a certain limit. Generally, NAPWU members have confidence in their union though it is limited.

4.2.8. Fair pay and bonuses

Figure 7

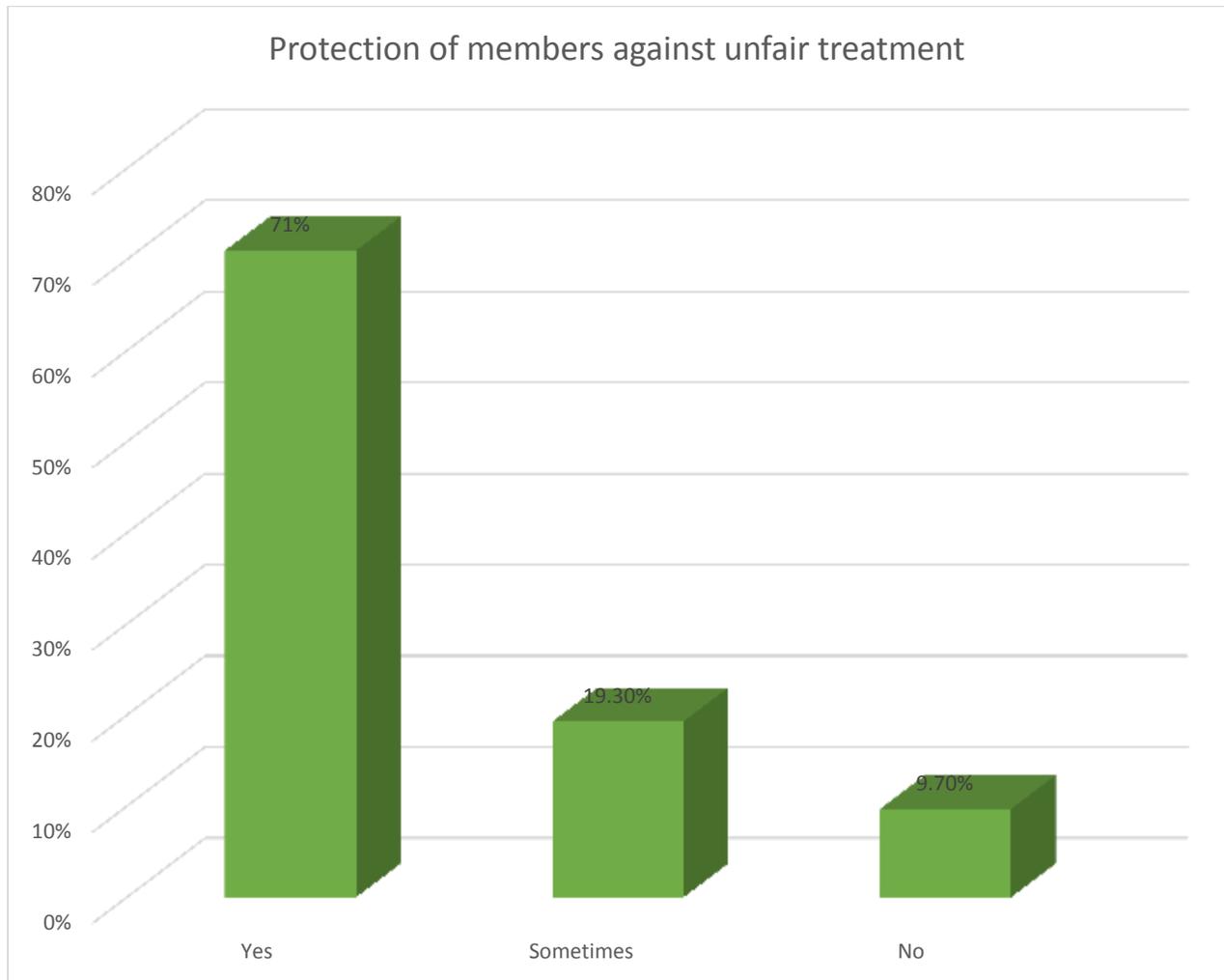


Source: Field Research (2014 & 2015)

Members indicated that NAPWU plays more of a passive role when it comes to fair pay and bonuses. 51% of the respondents said that their trade union played a role in this issue but only to a lesser extent while 32% said somehow and 16.1% chose 'greater extent' option. To conclude, members of NAPWU know that their trade union plays a role in fair pay and benefits but believe that it is not being firm enough to have its members needs met in this area.

4.2.9. Protection against unfair treatment.

Figure 8



Source: Field Research (2014 &2015)

Participants' responses to the question of protection against unfair treatment by the employer seemed to be almost the same with the pay and bonus issues. 71% of the participants indicated in their questionnaires that NAPWU does protect them against unfair treatment but not in all cases. It only protect them sometimes. It is not clear however, how NAPWU protects and sometimes does not. 19.3% said NAPWU protects them while 9.7% said its does not.

This part presents the data collected through open ended questions of the questionnaires

4.2.10. How NAPWU deals with members' problems and complaints.

According to the responses, NAPWU does takes notice of its members' complaints and problems. However, NAPWU seems to take up some problems of employees seriously than some because, as mentioned in this chapter, members say NAPWU addresses issues of unfair treatment such as sexual harassment. And some issues which matter the most to members, are left unaddressed. What frustrates members the most is the union representatives encourage them to bring all their problems and complaints forward but after receiving them they do little about them. In short members are less satisfied with the manner in which the union representatives deal their complaints and problems. Most of respondents who had said they trusted NAPWU but only to a certain limit, are the ones who indicated that though NAPWU addressed the problems, it was not to a satisfactory level, the picture being painted is that the union representatives are not giving these problems enough attention.

4.2.11. Three common issues raised during meetings with union representatives.

Main issues raised during meetings with union representatives are: pay raise and working conditions issues, legal advice and protection and communication issues. Members' priority is pay raise and working conditions issues given the cost of living in Windhoek, salary is their main concern. Legal advice is another issue of importance to members this is connected to the issue of communication where members are frequently complaining about how they need their union representative to inform and advise them on legal issues they might be facing. The issue of communication, though repeated by a number of respondents in other questions, was also about how they need to be kept abreast with what will be taking place during the bargaining process.

NAPWU representatives at NBC, in members' opinion, withhold some important information from its members which puts them in a disadvantaged position. The other issue is the frequency of the meetings between the members and NAPWU representatives, the union representatives meets with its members irregularly. Sometimes members have to request to meet with them because if they do not, the union representatives will not call for a meeting.

4.2.12. Openness and accountability of NAPWU to its members.

From the responses given by participants on the question of NAPWU's openness and accountability to its members the researcher concluded members feel that there is little. Most respondents referred to incidents that took place numerous times that displayed the lack of openness on the part of NAPWU. They claimed that they were "in the dark" on the issues that were discussed between the management and the union. On this same issue again respondents explained how the union would strike deals with the management without their consent and most of the time that would not be what NAPWU had agreed on with its members. One example was when NAPWU signed a 6 percent wage agreement without the knowledge and consent of its members. To conclude, members feel that because of NAPWU's lack of openness to them and accountability, it does not have their interest at heart which makes belonging to NAPWU more of a burden than a privilege.

4.2.13. The power of NAPWU.

Members of NAPWU at NBC believe that their trade union is not taken seriously enough by NBC, the reason being that NAPWU is affiliated to the government more than it is accountable to its members. Which means that whatever requests that employees place on their employer

through their union would be taken less seriously because of the relationship that exist between management and the union. Members are of the opinion that their trade union partner with the management against its own members. The union together with the government dictate the employment conditions without considering the mandate from employees. As an example, majority of the respondents referred to how NBC management signed an agreement with NAPWU on its demand knowing that it was invalid. The respondents reasoned that management of NBC only did that because it does not take NAPWU seriously enough.

4.2.14. Comparison between members and non-members of NAPWU.

In response to whether members considered themselves better in their work life than their non-members colleagues, they showed that they did not because when they joined the union they had their expectations high because of the objectives of their union which looked attractive. Those objectives are promises made to members but the union fails to fulfil most of them. Respondents mentioned the issue of “free riders” where by members of the union without the exclusive bargaining rights, derive free benefits from the negotiation process conducted by the unions with the exclusive bargaining rights. This is one of the reasons why they do not consider themselves better than non-members. Members feel that they are not better, in fact in some cases they are actually worse off because they have to pay the 1% subscription, which is why some members returned their membership cards and renounced their membership with NAPWU. This is however not to say that members do not need a representative, most of them actually indicated their desire and plans to join other trade unions which would bring satisfaction to them. Members feel that if NAPWU acts upon its promises made to members through its objectives, then they would be definitely better that their counterparts who are not members.

4.2.15. The reaction of NAPWU to the 2013 pay restructuring.

According to the responses given by participants, members feel that the union did not represent them well in the pay restructuring that was undertaken in 2013 by the government. The union was not there for those who were not satisfied with the outcome of the restructuring. The union deliberately failed to inform these members that they had the right to appeal. When they found out that they had the right, they tried to resolve the matter with their employer through NAPWU but nothing came to fruition. So members ended up registering their own case with the labour court. The members who were affected by this intend to complete the whole process without their union. To conclude, members of NAPWU at NBC slightly agree that it brings security to their lives because of the issues such as this one. At the same time the confidence level of members in their union is low because of the withholding of important information especially when in fact it is the duty of the union to provide information to its members. Members are set aback by the fact that NAPWU exists mainly to bargain for them in matters such as this yet it did not.

4.2.16. NAPWU on unfair treatment of its members.

On the issues that sometimes transpire at workplace to individual members such as being bullied or getting unfairly dismissed, participants indicated that most of them do not report to the shop stewards, they just suffer through it until the problem fades away. Those who do report however, said that the shop stewards were helpful. So NAPWU in fact assists its members on issues of unfair treatment that individual members take up to the shop stewards.

The majority of the respondents said when they have meetings with their union they raise issues of concern but the union would address only some them. In their own words, they said “NAPWU

only addresses small issues such as quarrels with our supervisors and colleagues”. They also said that the union takes time to address the issues until some of them are forgotten. So the researcher concluded that the union addresses issues of concern raised by its members but does not address the most important ones and generally does not address issues on time.

4.2.17. Members’ view of the union’s work in general.

Upon being asked if the service offered by NAPWU satisfied them, most respondents were responding negatively (no) but they would proceed to describe how NAPWU had been helpful in the past. This may have been the reason why again the majority said they said ‘yes’ to the question of whether they saw themselves with NAPWU, in 2 years to come. They also offered some further explanations. From that, the researcher concluded that members of NAPWU at NBC are willing to give it some chances though it had not been performing well recently, because it brought them some benefits and victory in numerous cases in the past. To some members however, NAPWU has now become more of a norm so they remain members for no specific reason. But others (mostly new members), seem to want to leave if “nothing good turns up soon”. Still others, though not satisfied, are interested in the non-work related benefits that NAPWU is providing for them so they will not leave.

4.3. Data collected through an interview on a NAPWU shop steward at NBC.

In response to the question of the satisfaction of members in the union's work of representation and collective bargaining in pay raise issues, the shop steward was positive that members were satisfied. According to him, the problem is that the members at times tend to jump into conclusions about what actually will be taking place, they do not like the idea of waiting for the representatives to update them. He admits that many were times when the union agreed on a lower rate than what the employees would have demanded. However, he argued that it was the nature of negotiations, both parties have to compromise. To conclude, union members and NAPWU representatives misunderstand each other. And the representatives of NAPWU fail to explain clearly to members how negotiations can take a totally different direction which could mean that NAPWU may fail to get its way.

NAPWU representatives at NBC believe that the union is taken serious and is very influential to the improvement of working conditions of its members. Over the years NAPWU has been successful in achieving some of what the members had demanded through negotiation, strikes and threatened strikes. This displays how members of NAPWU and officials of NAPWU hold different opinions because the same question was asked to members and they said the opposite of what the shop steward said. The problem here is that the union have a tendency to not to care about the perspective of members on the union which is an enormous mistake because the perspective is very important to the retaining of members.

On the issues of openness and accountability, the shop steward admitted to not updating the members about the proceedings of the negotiations with the NBC management. He, however, justified this behaviour by mentioning that they were not required to report every little development to their members. What is important, according to union representatives, is that

they will be negotiating and the ultimate outcome thereof will be made known to all members, in the right time. Again, the researcher concluded that there is huge misunderstanding between the members and union officials because the members feel strongly about the lack of accountability on the part of the representatives to the extent that some of them are considering to leave the union.

When asked about the pay restructuring, the shop steward responded by saying the union did not need to represent its members because the evaluation was fair and so was the outcome. From the shop steward's point of view, those who were graded low it was because they were not qualified and they needed to upgrade their qualifications. Upon mentioning the need for these members to improve their qualifications, the researcher asked if it was not the duty of the union to negotiate with the employers about the training and development of its members. His response was that it was but in some situations an individual has to take it upon him/herself to acquire the education otherwise the process of getting the employer to agree to the training and development could take long. The researcher concludes that, one of the parties is wrong and needs to be made to understand for unity's sake. Also, from the members' point of view (which is very important) the union failed dismally to support them.

When asked about the membership figures, whether they had increased or decreased over the past few years, the shop steward indicated that the membership had indeed decreased though he could not provide figures. He believed that this was not caused by problems of ineffectiveness in the union, rather it was a number of factors such as workers' perspective of unions world over. He said it was a global trend, but NAPWU is still in a good position in terms of the number of members. To conclude, though it may be true that the reduction in membership is a global trend,

the other contributing factor could be dissatisfied members. Data collected show that most members have doubts on the ability to deliver of their union.

On the subject of challenges during the process of negotiations, the shop steward said the major challenges included the lack of interest from the management at times and delays in reaching an agreement. He said though challenges are found occasionally, they do not affect the effectiveness of the union in a significant way. The union officials are satisfied with the way the negotiations process go and are content the deals and agreements that they strike with management so the assume members appreciate it.

The shop steward indicated that members of NAPWU are better compared to their colleagues who do not belong to the union. This is because there are benefits such as the members' benefit fund which is a death benefit for paid up members.

The union provide legal advice to its members and supports them on unfair treatments such as sexual harassment or being bullied.

Generally NAPWU officials think that the union is at a good place and is performing well though there is a room for improvement. The relationship between management of NBC and NAPWU representatives satisfies them and assumes that it makes the members at NBC to be glad that their union and management go along very well since it is advantageous to them.

4.4. Data collected from interviews with the NBC management

4.4.1. Frequency of meetings between NAPWU representatives and NBC management.

There are set dates each year for the two parties to meet but they can always adjust if an emergency arises. Most of the management indicated that if NAPWU has some demands to make and request for a meeting they are flexible to accommodate them in their busy schedule

4.4.2. In response to challenges faced by management with NAPWU, they mentioned the strikes that NAPWU set off that made the public suffer. They also mentioned that NAPWU seems to fail to control its members because though the management may reach some agreement with NAPWU representatives, they will find members going against their union representatives and mobilizing themselves.

4.4.3. When asked about the pay restructuring that the management undertook in 2013, they all said it was a managerial decision which was fair. They went on to add that even the NAPWU officials, upon finding out, were satisfied with it that is why they did not oppose it. However some members were not satisfied but the management insisted that NAPWU officials did not support them because they knew that they were being irrational. They further mentioned again that members of NAPWU at NBC seem not to respect their own union officials.

4.4.4. On the issue of the influence of NAPWU on the improvement of members' working conditions most managers said it is influencing. They also indicated that some of NAPWU's demands would not be met because of many other factors at work such as budget when it comes to pay issues and other priorities. However they appreciate that NAPWU officials are not 'stone headed', this is to say they actually understand.

4.4.5. Upon being asked if the management felt threatened by NAPWU, they indicated that they were not. This is because they have good relations with the NAPWU officials and these officials are rational which means that management does not fear that they union might jump at every dispute to mobilise its members for a strike. Instead they communicate through the right channels until an agreement is reached. They added that this makes their relationship a healthy one. And they mentioned that they respect NAPWU as a bargaining agent of its members at NBC.

5. Chapter 5: Discussions and conclusions and recommendations

5.1. Introduction

The purpose of the study was to explore the effectiveness of NAPWU as a collective bargaining unit for workers in the civil service employees: a case study of NBC.

As mentioned in chapter one, the researcher is inclined to agree with Pyman (n.d.), who stated that there is dearth in literature on union effectiveness because it proved to be so in the process of gathering information for this study. Empirical literature that is available focus on other issues. More specifically, the ones for Namibia focus on other issues such as Jauch (2004, 2007, and 2014) studies, which mainly looked at how all unions in Namibia can influence the socio-economic structures. He also covered the history of unions in Namibia and their status, before and after independence. Therefore this study fills the knowledge gap of union effectiveness, specifically of NAPWU.

The specific research objectives were: (1) to consider the role of NAPWU in improving better pay and working conditions of its members. (2) Evaluate whether NAPWU protects its members against arbitrary management actions. (3) Determine the relevancy of NAPWU in providing advice and legal assistance to its members. (4) Understand if NAPWU is accountable to its members.

5.2. Methods and procedures

The researcher used qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to collect data from randomly selected NAPWU members at NBC, NBC management and a shop steward there. Data collected from the participants displayed their feelings, knowledge and perspectives concerning the way NAPWU represents its members in different aspects of collective bargaining.

Stratified sampling was conducted. First, the researcher grouped the subjects at NBC into three groups, paid up NAPWU members (NBC employees), NBC management and shop stewards. Then questionnaires were used to collect data from randomly selected paid up NAPWU members at NBC while interviews were used on one of the shop stewards at NBC and purposefully selected managers at NBC.

The sample of this study was located in two different places, NBC T.V and NBC radio premises. Respondents from both premises were handed the questionnaires in person and the shop steward was also interviewed in person. The questionnaire had two sections with the first one having closed ended questions and the other one having open ended questions that were meant to encourage respondents to express their feelings, perspectives and knowledge on the subject more thoroughly. The interviews was semi-structured which allowed the researcher to pursue some issues of interest which did not part of the prepared questions. The interviews conducted on management were very short. This was done in order to avoid ending up diverting from the topic of effectiveness of NAPWU. The topic itself suggests that the focus should be on NAPWU members at NBC. So the purpose of the interviews was to clarify a few things which were unclear.

5.3. Summary and discussions of major findings from primary research and conclusions

Employees are instrumentalist in their decisions to join trade unions. The desire of non-members for membership, and members' satisfaction with representation by their union, are higher where the union is perceived as an effective organisation capable of delivering better terms and conditions for employees (Bryson 2004). "While there is debate over the extent to which union movements articulate working-class solidarity and enlarge class consciousness most research observes that the primary needs of workers centre around such fundamental concerns as better

pay and conditions, increased influence over what they regard as relevant workplace decisions, and protection against arbitrary management action. Putting the point negatively, a union that understands worker needs, but can't shift employer behaviour, is ineffective" (Boxall & Haynes, 1997, p. 571). This study used the same parameters as the ones outlined by Boxal and Haynes.

5.3.1. Objective 1: To consider the role of NAPWU in improving better pay and working conditions of its members.

NAPWU does not provide security to its members' work lives. The researcher noted that most of the respondents who said this were contract workers of NBC who probably may have been seeking to obtain permanent status for some time through the union but this was to no avail. NAPWU also plays a less active role in issues of pay raise and bonuses that is why members think that their union is slightly influencing on the improvement of the members' working conditions. This makes it less surprising that NAPWU is not taken seriously by the NBC management. If it was, it would have been able to have the demands of its members met, especially in this area of salaries. Jauch (2004) shows in percentages, how the Namibian population depended on their salaries. About half of all Namibian households (48%) relied on 'wages and salaries' as their main source of income. In urban areas, this figure was as high as 76%. These figures indicate the critical importance that wages and salaries have for the survival of Namibian households. Furthermore, 60 % of households in the country (73% in urban areas) lack a secondary source of income. And this is intensified by the cost of living in Namibia which is high, especially in Windhoek. According to Boxal and Haynes (1997), a test that every union must pass to retain its credibility with members is that of demonstrating its preparedness to dispute with management when important interests are threatened. In this area, one may

conclude as many would, that NAPWU is ineffective in improving pay and working conditions of its members at NBC which has made it lose its credibility in the eyes of its members.

5.3.2. Objective 2: To evaluate whether NAPWU protects its members against arbitrary management actions.

Again, in reference to what was mentioned above, it is difficult for a union that is not taken seriously to have much influence on the decisions taken by management. In fact the management in some instances may bypass the union and proceed to impose their decisions on workers. As the data reveals, NAPWU does not have enough power or does not exert enough power as it should to have the voice of the employees heard. This suggests that if, for example, management decides on taking some action that is not desirable to employees, their union will not be able to represent and protect them to their satisfaction. On the other hand union officials do face challenges with the management of NBC during negotiations but they are not that serious to cause a huge impact on the outcomes. Which means that the union officials do not, in many cases, find the actions of management wrong. This is directly related to the question of whether members of NAPWU members considered themselves to be better in their work lives compared to their counterparts who do not belong to NAPWU to which the majority responded negatively (no) and mentioned that it was the reason why some had cancelled their membership. This shows that the lack of action from NAPWU upon arbitrary actions of management is compelling and has already compelled some members to leave the union. The other question which brought out members' opinion on whether NAPWU protects its members from arbitrary action by management or not was the question pay restructuring which took place in 2013. Almost all the respondents mentioned that they were not satisfied with the process of evaluation and the restructuring of pay that followed after. Management took an action that was unfair in the sight

of some employees yet those who belong to NAPWU found no support or help from their union regarding this matter. However the union considered the whole process as fair hence no need to intervene. This being the case one can conclude that there is no oneness in the union which defeats the whole concept of collectivism. Normally unions and their members should speak one language. As already mentioned, management appreciate the understanding nature of NAPWU officials. This however is a problem, because these officials instead should sympathise with its members not management because at the end of the day, it is the opinion of union's members that matters more than the one of management. The researcher is not however suggesting that NAPWU representatives should be irrational.

5.3.3. Objective 3: To determine the role of NAPWU in providing advice and legal assistance to its members.

Evidence from data collected indicates that NAPWU through its shop stewards provides legal assistance to its members in cases of conflict among employees or any other individual problems faced with members such as sexual harassment and the like. The only problem is that the majority of the members do not take such grievances to the shop steward but those who do, they obtain the support and help needed all the way to the labour court if need be. However, the issue of pay restructuring was not consistent with the NAPWU behaviour in this area of legal assistance. As revealed in data presentation chapter, a great number of respondents were not pleased with the lack of support that they got from their own union. The union was not supportive to the extent that the members had to register their case with the labour court directly, when normally the procedure is that NAPWU should be the one to register the case for its members. This means that members might be doubting that NAPWU would help them in such issues when it seemed to have failed to help them in other ones. In conclusion, members are

confused with the inconsistency of the behavior of NAPWU which has made some members to not bother taking their grievances to the shop steward.

5.3.4. Objective 4: To understand if NAPWU is accountable to its members.

NAPWU does not meet with its members as frequent as it should and though there are set meeting times this has led to some members end up not being aware of meetings being held. The widely held opinion by respondents was that there is poor accountability of the union to its members to the extent that some members felt that their union was conniving with the management against them. NAPWU is not as open as it should to its members regarding the negotiations that take place during collective bargaining. Partnership between management and the union is important and is needed because it makes collective bargaining go more smoothly. However partnering against members is a problem. From members point of view that is what NAPWU is doing when it is supposed to represent its members. The lack of accountability supports Jauch (2007) who conducted a survey on all trade unions in Namibia and came to the conclusion that “[t]here is also an increasing lack of accountability within unions, which need to reintroduce the practice of mandates and report-backs to their members before taking major decisions. This applies to wage negotiations and policy interventions alike. Unions need to reverse the increasing trend towards becoming ‘leaders’ organisations’ and instead return to the practice of grassroots democracy and worker control.” However shop stewards argue the level of openness existing in the union is enough, which makes it a difficult situation to deal with where the other party does not see its faults. On the issues of accountability, Mohamed, Shamsudin and Johari (2010) pointed out that communication is not merely union official informing union members about what is going on between the union and management or giving advice pertaining members’ rights. It is more important that the union officials be open to members’ opinion on

how a union should operate and grievances and problems. In this area again NAPWU has not been accountable to its members as it should hence ineffective.

5.4. Recommendations

Firstly, NAPWU officials need to communicate with their members and get their perspective of things. This helps avoid conflicts with in the union. Throughout the study one notes that in most issues these two groups are holding different opinions of the same issues of which unions and their members are meant to be one. If there are issues that members do not understand it is best for the union to hold meetings or find any effective form of educating members so that they all get on the same page. It is better this way rather than ignoring them because the perspective of members (whether wrong or right) matters if the union wants to retain the number of its members and attract new members. Kalusopa, Otoo Shindondola-mote (2012, p. 3) suggest that, “trade unions in Africa need to re-orient their operations so that workers can see the true benefits of labour collectivism and solidarity. Trade unions should thus stimulate and rekindle that spirit of union organization so as to bring workers together, modernise and provide services and benefits that reflect changing needs and times.”

Secondly, though collaborating with other unions on broader issues is extremely important, NAPWU should not abandon its role of addressing primary issues that arise at NBC. Bryson, (2004) states that if the union is perceived as ‘effective’, employees are more likely to think they have something tangible to gain from membership, either in terms of better wages, better non-pecuniary terms of employment, or better insurance against arbitrary employer actions. Thus an increase in union effectiveness will increase the individual’s propensity to purchase membership (or remain a member) by shifting the individual’s perceptions of the benefits relative to the costs.

So policies that are oppressive to labour, for example, can be changed in the long run but in the short run still members expect some tangible benefits.

Thirdly, union officials on the NBC site should continuously try to find ways of improving the quality of the service they offer. According to Deming (n.d.) continuous improvement is a quality philosophy that assumes further improvements are always possible and that processes should be continuously re-evaluated and improvements implemented. It is the belief that an organization must constantly measure the effectiveness of its processes and strive to meet more difficult objectives to satisfy customers. Members of NAPWU at NBC are the 'customers' in this study. It is imperative to strive for continuous improvement given the dynamic environment that unions operate in.

Lastly and most importantly as mentioned in chapter three, is the concept of servicing model and organising model. In the servicing model, workers are seen as consumers of such union services as advocacy in collective disputes and individual grievances, legal advice and a range of non-industrial benefits such as discounted insurance and travel. The union's elected and appointed officials are the providers of these services, and their performance is judged by members in a kind of arm's-length, calculative manner. The unions is 'them', not 'us'. In contrast, a union successfully built on organizing can more readily be described as a 'living collectivity'. Hyman (1989) as cited by Boxall and Haynes (1997) state that: the membership understands itself as a union, not as a detached body of consumers. The union is 'us', not 'them'. Given this, it is better for NAPWU to adopt both models because separating or adopting one of them brings ineffectiveness. Throughout the data analysis and presentation of this study one notes that NAPWU seems to have adopted the servicing model knowingly or unknowingly. This Since

these two models complement each other, the attempt of NAPWU to treat its members as consumers only makes the very services it offers poor.

5.5. Need for further research

This study, as one would note, has just scratched the surface of a subject that has been given lesser attention than it really deserves. As the topic suggests, the study just explored the area of union effectiveness and the findings and arguments put forward in this study can and should serve as a foundation for further research. There are a lot of areas that this paper has not addressed and by reading it one can see that it prompts a number of questions which can be addressed by a more comprehensive, in-depth research.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Redemption, a final year Master of Public Administration student at the University of Namibia. I am conducting a research on the effectiveness of NAPWU as a collective bargaining unit for civil service workers with a special reference to Namibian broadcasting Corporation. Kindly answer the following questions. The information you provide will be treated with the strictest levels of confidentiality.

Section A: Biographical Data

Gender

1 male

female

2. Age

19-24 years	25-29 years	30-34 years	35-39 years	40-44 years	45-49 years	50+
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Section B

Please answer by checking your best option from the ones provided

3. For how long have you been working at NBC?

0-4 years	
5 -9 years	
10- 14 years	
15+ years	

4. For how long have you been a member of NAPWU?

2 years	
3- 5 years	
6- 10 years	
More than 10 years	

5. What is your opinion of the work of NAPWU in general?

Excellent	
Good	
Bad	
Average	

6. Do you think belonging to NAPWU brings security to work life?

Agree	
Slightly agree	
Disagree	

7. Does NAPWU have any influence on improving the working conditions of its members?

Very influencing	
Moderately influencing	
Slightly influencing	
Not at all influencing	

8. How is your level of confidence in NAPWU as your representative?

I have my full confidence in NAPWU	
I trust them but to a certain limit	

9. To what extent does NAPWU play a role in fair pay and bonuses?

To a greater extent	
Somehow	
Lesser extent	

10. Does NAPWU protect you against unfair treatment?

Yes	
Sometimes	
No	

Section C: Open ended questions (fill in the spaces with your answer)

11. How does NAPWU deal with your problems and complaints that you raise?

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.....

.....

.....

12. Can you name three common issues that you raise during your meetings with NAPWU representatives?.....

.....

.....

13. How is the openness and accountability of NAPWU to you?

.....

.....

.....

.....

14. Is NAPWU taken seriously by your employer (NBC)?

.....

.....

.....
.....

15. Do you consider yourself better in your work life than your colleagues who do not belong to NAPWU? Explain why you say YES or NO.....

.....
.....
.....

16. Do you feel that NAPWU represented you enough in the restructuring that was undertaken in 2013? Give reasons why you say YES or NO.....

.....
.....
.....

17. What role does NAPWU shop stewards play in issues of unfair treatment such as bullying?.....

.....
.....
.....

18. Are you satisfied with the work of NAPWU in general?

.....
.....
.....
.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NAPWU SHOP STEWARD AT NBC

1. In your opinion has NAPWU been representing its members well in pay raise and bonuses issues?
2. Do you think NAPWU is taken seriously by NBC?
3. Are you open and accountable to your members about your negotiations with the management?
4. Do you feel that you represented your dissatisfied members at NBC well on the pay restructuring outcome in 2013.explain how?
5. How has been your membership at NBC for past few years? Has it increased or decreased, can you provide figures if available?
6. What challenges do you face in collective bargaining process with the NBC management?
7. Would you say being a member of NAPWU is beneficial compared to not being a member? Can you explain why?
8. Are you actively involved in members' issues of unfair treatment such as bullying?
9. Would you say NAPWU is an effective collective bargaining unit for its members at NBC?