

**INFLUENCE OF LABOUR RELATIONS ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE
OF SELECTED PUBLIC SECTOR INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA**

by

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DECLARATION

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I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved mother, Ms. Kate Boemah, whose unwavering love, sacrifices, and encouragement have been my greatest source of strength.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ILO	International Labour Organisation
TUC	Trade Union Congress
FWSC	Fair Wages and Salaries Commission
PSWU	Public Services Workers' Union
GMWU	Ghana Mineworkers' Union
HSWU	Health Services Workers' Union
PUWU	Public Utility Workers' Union
GFL	Ghana Federation of Labour
LGWU	Local Government Workers' Union
GEA	Ghana Employers' Association
MELR	Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations
NLC	National Labour Commission
OHCS	Office of the Head of the Civil Service
UTAG	University Teachers Association of Ghana
GPS	Ghana Public Sector
COLA	Cost-of-Living Allowance
PSC	Public Service Commission
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RQ	Research Question
CBAs	Collective Bargaining Agreements
GoG	Government of Ghana
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
TU	Trade Unionism
CLOSA	GCivil and Local Government Staff Association of Ghana
GTUC	Ghana Trades Union Congress
COLA	Cost-of-Living Allowance

ABSTRACT

This study explores how labour relations, specifically collective bargaining, trade unionism, and dispute resolution, influence organisational performance in Ghana's public sector. Purposive sampling and a case study design were used in this qualitative study to collect data from 37 participants comprising of Ghanaian public sector employees (16), trade union representatives (10), and labour relations officials (11) across 15 public sector institutions. The researcher gathered data through interviews and conducted thematic and content analysis. The findings show differing opinions about how collective bargaining might improve performance in the public sector. While some participants stated that recent pay increases and agreements on health, safety, and employee rights demonstrate how collective bargaining has improved working conditions and employee morale, others pointed to leadership self-interest and limited motivational outcomes as obstacles to increased effectiveness. As a result, the influence of collective bargaining is regarded as moderate. The study also emphasises labour unionism's positive and negative aspects. Despite having secured benefits for their members, unions' impact on overall organisational performance is undermined by challenges including mandatory membership, restricted welfare support, and perceived self-serving activity. The study also reveals that although there are dispute resolution procedures in place, their efficacy is hampered by issues including lack of funding and restricted access to the National Labour Commission, which leads to a rise in strikes and a decline in morale. In conclusion, Ghana's labour relations framework has made some headway in enhancing the performance of the public sector, but there are still many obstacles to overcome. The study recommends addressing psycho-social needs in collective bargaining, improving logistical support, and using digital tools to improve labour relations. These actions could lead to a highly performing public sector in Ghana.

Key terms: Labour relations; Organisational performance; Trade union; Collective bargaining; Conflict resolution; Public sector; Work environment; Pluralist theory; Dunlop theory; Strategic choice mode.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The evolving nature of the public sector today, coupled with citizens' expectations of increased efficiency and performance from public servants, has stimulated governments to assess the contribution of public servants (Amoako-Asiedu, 2018; Toan, 2023; Kravariti, Tasoulis, Scullion & Alali, 2023; Cho, Choi & Choi, 2023). Public sector performance is often defined as the ability to produce the current level of public output with the minimal use of resources (Al-Ahbabi, Singh, Balasubramanian & Gaur, 2019; Kravariti et al., 2023; Bakhshi, Shukla, Singh & Nayak, 2024). However, organisational performance (OP) is best understood as a multidimensional concept that includes efficiency, effectiveness and stakeholder satisfaction, particularly in resource-constrained public institutions (Atobishi, Moh'd Abu Bakir & Nosratabadi, 2024; Lengari, Djani & Sayrani, 2023; Moge, 2023).

In line with modern "new public management" and performance governance paradigms, recent research emphasises that OP encompasses more than just efficiency; it also includes broader aspect of governance quality, innovation and citizen engagement (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017; Van Dooren, Bouckaert & Halligan, 2015). A number of different schools of thought have emerged as a result of the extensive debate surrounding the definition and measurement of performance in the public sector. One of the most prevalent viewpoints has been managerialist or New Public Management (NPM), which places a strong emphasis on effectiveness, economy, and quantifiable outcomes. Supporters of this school contend that in order to improve accountability and service delivery, public institutions should embrace private-sector management concepts, including performance indicators, targets, and outputs (Marandici, 2023). Critics argue that although this strategy has increased transparency and results-orientedness, it runs the risk of limiting complex public sector goals to specific, measurable criteria and may ignore wider social impacts (Ayee, 2023; Marandici, 2023). Notwithstanding the limitations, organisational performance plays a crucial role in upholding public confidence, satisfying citizens'

expectation for service, and guaranteeing that institutional mandates are carried out in the face of financial and economic challenges (Callahan, 2024). As a result, this study views organisational performance as a core concept, with a focus on public service delivery and productivity.

The public sectors of many economies are facing challenges associated with their rate of growth and performance. Even though the demand for public sector services is increasing, the financial constraints that most economies are currently facing, means that many public institutions must achieve these demands with fewer resources (Balasubramanian, Al-Ahbab & Sreejith, 2020; Callahan, 2024).

Additionally, public sector institutions generally have several and conflicting aims. This is due to the existence of various stakeholders, each with their interests. These stakeholders may demand different forms of performance information either to hold the institution accountable in terms of its output or to inform internal management (Sood, Seth & Grima, 2022). Whether public sector institutions are able to meet the demands for performance information mostly depends on the importance and the amount of pressure exerted by the stakeholders. Hence, power relationships and political bargaining processes tend to affect organisational performance outcomes (Blackman, 2021; Sood, Seth & Grima, 2022; Barbieri, Micacchi, Vidè & Valotti, 2023).

Globally, organisational performance trends emphasise the significance of human capital and labour relations as significant determinants of institutional outcomes (Keller, 2024; Pulignano, Carrieri, & Baccaro, 2018). Research from both emerging economies and OECD nations demonstrates that collaborative negotiating frameworks and participatory labour relations boost employee morale, lower conflict, and increase public sector productivity (Amossé et al., 2025; Ngubane, Mndebele & Ilesanmi, 2024). However, Ghanaian academics has paid little attention to how antagonistic labour relations, manifested as strikes, lockouts, and distrust between unions and management, disrupt OP, delay service delivery, and erode institutional stability (Parku & Lamptey, 2018; Kissi & Herzig, 2024).

More than ever, there is a need to explore ways to improve organisational performance in the public sector. Some of the aspects that public sector institutions need to address to improve organisational performance include institutional capacity, the involvement of stakeholders, tackling corruption and reforms, among many others (Marandici, 2023; Al-Kassem, 2021). Indeed, labour relations are a related concept to organisational performance: harmonious employer-employee interactions directly promote productivity, efficiency, and institutional resilience, whereas conflictual relations erode service quality and public trust (Armstrong, Goodman, & Hyman, 2023; Huang, Guo, Liu, Zhao, & Zhang, 2023). However, public sector organisations have not given much thought or attention to labour relations practices as a catalyst for improved performance.

Labour relations scholars are of the view that labour markets are imperfectly competitive and that there are inherent conflicts of interest in the bipartite relationship (Armstrong, Goodman & Hyman, 2023; Liu, 2023). Therefore, labour relations scholars and practitioners call for institutional interventions, such as collective bargaining arrangements and employee voice mechanisms, to develop the bipartite relationship and to protect the rights of workers (Xiong & Wang, 2018; Bieler & Nowak, 2022; Rubery, 2024).

Though the Ghanaian Labour Act 651 of Article 153 stipulates clearly obligations for parties to negotiate in good faith, this is often not the case in practice. The Ghanaian labour relations terrain is characterised by the major use of threats, which has become the tool that is utilised in interventions in both the bipartite and tripartite relationships to solve industrial disputes (Parku & Lamptey, 2018). These threats in the labour relations domain do not stimulate the creation of goodwill and trust that are needed to encourage industrial peace and economic growth in Ghana (Parku & Lamptey, 2018; Kissi & Herzig, 2024; Ayentimi & Burgess, 2023).

Several studies have established that human resource management practices, such as employee recruitment, placement, training and development, retention and labour relations, are linked to the constructs of organisational performance and productivity (Chinyamurindi, Kyogabiirwe, Kabagabe, Mafabi & Dywili, 2021; Arimie & Oronsaye, 2020; Kiiza & Basheka, 2018; Azungah, Michailova & Hutchings, 2018).

Consequently, a labour relation is seen as one of the most significant factors of production, which plays a pivotal role in the areas of productivity when it comes to organisational performance (Bashaer, Sanjay & Sherine, 2016; Armstrong, Goodman & Hyman, 2023; Huang, Guo, Liu, Zhao & Zhang, 2023).

According to (Amoako-Asiedu, 2016; Wyrod & Chang, 2023), labour relations is a multidisciplinary field that studies the relationship between employees and employers that stems directly or indirectly from union-employer relations. In a more restrictive manner, industrial relations pertain to the study and practice of collective bargaining, trade unionism and labour management relations. The dominant practices of labour relations in Ghana comprises of trade unionism, collective bargaining and conflict resolution; For the purpose of this study, trade unions are those which are legally recognised employee organisations that collectively safeguard and advance members' rights and interests via representation, negotiation, and advocacy, as defined by Ghana's Labour Act 2003 (Act 651). While conflict resolution refers to procedures like negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and adjudication through the National Labour Commission that are used to address disputes in the workplace, collective bargaining is the process of negotiating terms and conditions of employment between employers and employee representatives (typically trade unions) (Wyrod & Chang, 2023). These ideas are essential to the study's analysis of labour relations and how they affect Ghana's public sector organisations' performance. Even though scholars are paying more attention to labour relations, there aren't many studies that look at how elements of labour relations, like collective bargaining and trade unionism, affect how well an organisation does its job, especially in developing countries like Ghana (Chukwuyem, 2020; Morrison, 2023; LeCounte, 2024).

In recent times, studies have shown that there is a decline in productivity growth and sluggish macroeconomic performance. In the western world, especially the United States of America (USA), the focus has shifted to the system of industrial relations and various other strategies to improve performance. This also applies to some developing countries, such as South Africa, Kenya and Ghana (Van de Ven, 2015; Maree, 2016; Klerck, 2016; Balasubramanian et al., 2020; Yoganandham, 2023;

Ngubane, Mndebele & Ilesanmi, 2024). The phenomenon of low macroeconomic performance being linked to industrial relations is gradually leading to a new era of experimentation at the organisational level. Various worker participation programmes, new local collective bargaining agreements, conflict resolution training, and changes in other employment practices are being implemented. These programmes and other incentives have been designed to improve labour relations and are intended to enhance organisational performance in the public sector (Pulignano, Carrieri & Baccaro, 2018; Al Doghan & Zakariya, 2023; Brown & Cao, 2023).

In countries such as the USA, the United Kingdom (UK) and the Netherlands, the issue of industrial relations and workplace output has increasingly attracted government attention. This is mainly because studies have shown that these two factors have indirect and direct implications for the country's economy (Mareschal, 2017; Amossé et al., 2025; Keller, 2024). Some developing countries such as South Africa and Ghana share this sentiment. For example, quite recently, some aggrieved public sector workers in Ghana demonstrated against the 4% and 7% base pay increases proposed by the government for public sector workers for 2021 and 2022, respectively. The public sector workers in Ghana demanded a 25% pay increment. These concerns led some public sector institutions, such as universities and others, to embark on a series of strikes (Ambolley, 2021; GNA, 2021; Mozu, 2023). The president of Ghana acknowledged their role in shaping the economy and pleaded for the suspension of the industrial action. Similarly, a minister and some labour experts called for increased labour productivity and for salary increases for public sector workers to be linked to productivity (Zurek, 2021; Dapatem, 2021; Kissi & Herzig, 2024).

Until the 1990s, many African countries restricted the labour rights of public service workers. However, the rise of democracy in many of these countries led to amendments that provided labour rights to public service workers (Chelghoum, Takeda, Wilczek & Homberg, 2016; Adu, 2023). Similarly, labour relations in the public service in Ghana have undergone numerous changes in the past three decades, and finally, the return to a constitutional democracy has seen unions more intricately involved in the quest to represent worker and public interests (Appiah &

Abdulai, 2017; Bawole & Langnel, 2023). Labour institutions used the fourth republic's democratic institutions (parliament) and civil rights, such as protests and legal rights, to advance their policy interests. This propelled the government to capacitate the human capital in public sector institutions, thereby, improving economic performance in Ghana (Antwi & Bakokor, 2020; Ayee, 2023).

The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana guarantees workers' rights, while the Labour Act, 2003 (Act No. 651) seeks to give effect to the workers' rights as enshrined by the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. The Act seeks to safeguard the interests of labour and management, avoid industrial conflict by creating a harmonious relationship between employers and employees, raise productivity, promote the growth of industrial democracy, eliminate or minimise the number of strike actions, and enhance organisational performance, among others (Mozu, 2023; Jeffries, 2023). However, in recent times, the Ghanaian industrial relations environment has seen employers' resort to the use of threats of dismissal and lockouts (Nimoh, 2016; Nyan, 2017). Similarly, workers employ the use of threats, strikes and demonstrations in industrial disputes. None of these actions stimulate the conditions for industrial growth, peace and economic development in the public sector (Appiah & Abdulai, 2017; Koranteng, 2023; Anyogu, 2024).

The need for a favourable work environment and how best to enhance organisational performance have become paramount in the public sector, especially in Ghana. A close look at the situation suggests that labour and management relations are a crucial factor that may determine or influence the performance of public sector institutions (Laroche & Salesina, 2017; Sriadmitum, 2023; Abboh, Majid, Fareed & Abdussalaam, 2024).

Most of the literature reviewed focused on the organisational performance of the public sector in developed countries in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand (Kravariti et al., 2023). Studies in developing countries, particularly Ghana, have been relatively scarce. The review also showed that most studies on the Ghanaian public labour relations focused on areas such as compensation, legal compliance and the unfair treatment of staff (Tankebe & Akoensi, 2020; Marshall, 1976; Williams, Davies, Lamptey & Tetteh, 2017; Taylor, 2017; Ayentimi & Burgess,

2023). Despite the fact that the public service has been the pioneer of labour relations in many African countries, the available literature on labour relations often focuses on the private sector (Baffour & Abbey, 2023; Kumi, Yeboah & Kumi, 2020; Baah-Boateng, 2017; James & Nickson, 2016). Therefore, the study seeks to explore the role played by labour relations in enhancing organisational performance in the public sector of Ghana by establishing the statement of problem in (1.2).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In today's competitive business environment, labour relations is one of the pillars and crucial functions of human resource management, which accounts for effective employee and organisational performance (Bahuguna, Srivastava & Tiwari, 2023; Harsh & Prasad, 2021). The Ghanaian public sector has neglected the labour relations environment and has not given it the needed attention and priority. As a result, the labour relations atmosphere in the country is not up to par, which stimulates unnecessary labour disputes, resulting in low performance in the public sector (Amankwaah, 2023; Kissi & Herzig, 2024; Antwi & Bakokor, 2020).

The study defines performance as public service delivery and organisational productivity, with a particular emphasis on how both aspects are influenced by labour relations. Organisational performance in the public sector is measured by its ability to provide residents with efficient and effective services, preserve institutional stability, and achieve policy goals despite limited resources (Rasool et al., 2021; Mumtaz, Selvarajah & Meyer, 2024). Similarly, productivity is the degree to which public organisations use human capital and other resources to accomplish service delivery goals (Callahan, 2024). Based on the managerialist viewpoint, which prioritises effectiveness and quantifiable results, productivity is recognised as a crucial performance metric that shows how well resources are transformed into outcomes. Similarly, the emphasis on service delivery is consistent with both the public value and modern public governance views, which emphasize citizen-centered results and collaborative methods for achieving societal well-being (Mumtaz, Selvarajah & Meyer, 2024). As a result, this study views organisational performance as core concept, with

a focus on public service delivery and productivity, while noting that employee and job performance are also important drivers.

In many developing countries like Angola and Kenya, public service reforms take the form of unilateral decisions by the government, in which no consultations with the social partners are considered (Knox & Sharipova, 2023; Siddiquee, 2019; Basheka, 2017). This phenomenon defeats the purpose of a tripartite process, as well as impeding the development of joint consultation, collective bargaining and decision-making in the public sector (Kikasu & Pillay, 2024; Knox & Sharipova, 2023; Siddiquee, 2019; Basheka, 2017; Ohemeng & Ayee, 2016). Unfortunately, the situation can stimulate animosity between the social partners, as some of the partners may feel their rights have been infringed upon, and this tends to have a negative implication for public service delivery and organisational productivity (Rubery, 2024; Balassa, 2016).

The lack of involvement and participation by public servants in areas such as their conditions of service, pay and the privatisation of state institutions stimulates conflicts in the working environment. This leads to an infringement of employees' rights and stimulates industrial conflict at both political and economic levels; for example, stakeholders may embark on industrial strikes and also attempt to frustrate the implementation of government policies (Boahen & Gomes, 2023; Van Driel, 2019; Estrin & Pelletier, 2018). The ineffective management of these types of conflicts forms the basis for strikes and lockouts in the public sector (Etchemendy & Lodola, 2023). Consequently, this disrupts service delivery and hampers organisational productivity. Consequently, this affects the performance of public servants and the sector as a whole, due to the stoppage and interference of work (Etchemendy & Lodola, 2023; Heine & Kerk, 2017).

In recent years, Ghana has seen the privatisation of state enterprises and trade unions have been coerced to negotiate deals that are not in the best interest of their members (Ohemeng & Zaato, 2023). These occurrences have stimulated a form of demoralisation among civil servants. Consequently, trade unions in the public sector have embarked on a number of strikes (Ohemeng & Zaato, 2023; Samwel, 2018; Akomea-Frimpong & Olaniyan, 2019).

The recent reported cases of labour unrest in the country are a major cause of concern for all Ghanaians (Spren & Carter, 2024; Noll & Budniok, 2023; Adu-Amankwah & Tutu, 2019; Nimoh, 2016; Ambolley, 2021). In recent years, Ghana's public sector has seen a number of widely reported industrial actions that have significantly disrupted public service delivery and demonstrate the noticeable effect of labour relations policies on organisational performance (Ampofo et al., 2022). In late 2024, the Ghana Registered Nurses and Midwives Association (GRNMA) launched a state-wide strike over delays in the implementation of the 2024 Conditions of Service agreement, resulting in a dramatic reduction in patient access throughout public hospitals (Buabeng-Baidoo & Olivier, 2024). The education sector has been similarly affected, with the Senior Staff Association of Universities of Ghana (SSA-UoG) going on strike in September 2024 to protest poor working conditions, and multiple university staff unions (SSA-UoG, TUAAG, FUSSAG, TEWU-GH) going on strike in 2023 and 2024 to demand better service conditions, recognition, and cost-of-living adjustments (Addo, Segbenya & Ampofo, 2025). The frequency and magnitude of these disruptions highlight the fact that labour relations procedures have substantial practical ramifications for public sector productivity and stability, even though exact information on service delivery losses are not yet publicly available. Furthermore, there is currently a dearth of systematic, empirical academic research examining the ways in which these practices impact organisational performance across industries and institutions, which provides a strong rationale for this investigation.

The recent labour unrests are the result of past and succeeding governments failing to find permanent solutions to the demands related to enhancing the conditions of service for public servants, especially health sector workers and teachers. Consequently, teachers and health workers are migrating to other sectors of the economy, and some are leaving the country to seek better work conditions and “greener pastures” (Spren & Carter, 2024; OECD, 2018; Wolf & Mulder, 2018; NPC, 2017; Teye, Setrana & Acheampong, 2015). This practice usually leads to the loss of qualified and expert personnel in the public sector, which ultimately leads to the low performance of the public sector, resulting in financial and economic costs to the country (Tancred, Falkenbach, Raven & Caffrey, 2024; Parku & Lamptey, 2018).

While existing literature recognises the link between labour relations and organisational outcomes (Mulunda et al., 2018; Mareschal, 2017), most studies concentrate on specific factors such as union density, strike frequency, or employee satisfaction, rather than providing a comprehensive or integrated framework that connects how labour stability influences specific facets of organisational performance such as service delivery quality, workforce productivity, and institutional capacity in African governance contexts (Kissi & Herzig, 2024; Antwi & Bakokor, 2020). This study, therefore, scopes performance to these facets, examining how collective bargaining, trade unionism, and conflict resolution shape public service delivery and productivity within Ghana's public sector. Clarifying this concept addresses a critical gap in the study which is especially apparent in Ghana and other sub-Saharan settings where institutional performance is intertwined with broader sociopolitical factors, but empirical models remain fragmented and largely transplanted from Western industrial relations paradigms that fail to capture the complexities of African public sector realities (Kravariti et al., 2023; Cho et al., 2023). As a result, in governance systems with limited resources and changing democratic norms, policymakers and institutional leaders lack contextually grounded knowledge about how stable labour relations can improve operational efficiency and service quality.

Furthermore, despite the acknowledged significance of organisational performance in Ghana's public sector, the majority of studies to date have focused on governance, financial, and structural limitations, with little attention paid to how labour relations affect performance results (Higenyi, 2024; Tsou & Chen, 2023). In public institutions, labour disputes, inadequate union-management cooperation, and inefficient grievance procedures continue to exist, frequently resulting in service delivery disruptions and decreased productivity of organisations (Mulunda et al., 2018; Arimie and Oronsaye, 2020). However, empirical evidence linking these labour relations difficulties to performance outcomes in Ghana is limited. This gap in the literature limits the ability of policymakers and institutional leaders to embrace labour relations initiatives that could boost public sector performance. In order to fill these gaps, an in-depth examination of how labour relations influence organisational performance in

Ghana's public sector is necessary, as is the development of integrated models suited to African governance environments.

Since the enactment of the National Labour Commission (NLC) into law in Ghana in the year 2005, it has recorded issues and adverse situations that have been triggered by the tripartite and bipartite processes. Some of these disputes emanated from issues that had to do with collective bargaining, the privatisation of public enterprises, conflict resolution, and, in recent times, policies such as the Single Spine Pay Policy. These disputes tend to take a toll on the unity that exists within the labour relations atmosphere and adversely affect the bipartite relationship in the public sector (Spreen & Carter, 2024; Asafu-Adjaye, 2016). The spillover effect of these circumstances negatively affects employee performance, as well as the performance of state institutions. This illustrates how the social partners involved in labour relations often lack coordination and consultation, leading to discrepancies in public sector performance (Spreen & Carter, 2024; Mulunda, Were & Muturi, 2018).

The link between labour relations and organisational performance in the developed world has been relatively well documented (Joyce, Stuart & Forde, 2023; Mulunda, Were & Muturi, 2018; Mareschal, 2017). In the United Kingdom public sector, for instance, Joyce et al. (2023) discovered that strong collective bargaining frameworks and efficient employee voice mechanisms enhanced service delivery outcomes in educational and health institutions. According to Mareschal (2017), workplace partnership initiatives in United States, which are characterised by cooperation between management and unions, improved operational effectiveness and decreased labour disputes. Mulunda et al. (2018) found that organisations in Western Europe and Canada with robust labour relations climates saw improvements in employee morale, lower absenteeism, and quantifiable performance metrics like fewer service backlogs and quicker policy implementation. This situation is, however, not the same in the developing countries (Nyathi & Kekwaletswe, 2023; Ngui, 2016; Obeidat, 2017). The few studies that have examined labour relations and organisational performance have focused on the private sector and individual organisations (Jericho, Joyce, Macdonald, Peetz & Stanford, 2024; Jansson & Uba, 2023; James & Nickson, 2016). Therefore, Ngui (2016) has suggested that future

studies should concentrate on examining the ways in which unique employee relations strategies can be developed and successfully applied to give organisations a long-term competitive edge. Further research is needed to determine the influence of a happy, supportive, and family-oriented work environment on employee productivity and overall organisational performance.

The key constructs in this study comprise trade unionism, collective bargaining, conflict resolution and organisational performance, which form the basis of labour relations practice in the Ghanaian public sector. A proactive trade union engaging in effective collective bargaining and addressing conflicts within their jurisdiction stimulates industrial harmony and democracy in the employer-employee relationship, which could have an influence on the performance of organisations. Consequently, the study involved exploring the influence of collective bargaining on organisational performance. It also explored how trade unionism affects organisational performance, as well as the influence of conflict resolution on organisational performance. Hence, the aforementioned variables aid the study to comprehensive understanding of their roles in promoting a conducive labour relations environment as well as their influence on the performance of public sector organisations.

Additionally, the majority of African studies focus on the private sector or enterprise-level contexts (Jericho et al., 2024; James & Nickson, 2016). Previous research on labour relations and organisational performance (Nyathi & Kekwaletswe, 2024; Oseghale et al., 2023; Garneau et al., 2023; Adula et al., 2023; Garnero, 2021) has primarily used quantitative designs, which, while useful for measuring correlations, frequently overlook the contextual, experiential, and institutional complexities of labour relations in the public sector. This study fills this gap by using a qualitative multiple case study technique to offer detailed, context-specific insights into the mechanisms that link labour relations practices to organisational performance in Ghana's public sector.

In addressing the aforementioned gaps, the study offers both theoretical and practical contributions. It not only enhances global HRM and labour relations studies by establishing findings in an underexplored African context but also offers empirically grounded recommendations to improve public sector performance in

Ghana through more effective labour relations management. It is in light of this background that the study seeks to employ a qualitative approach to explore the influence of labour relations on employee and organisational performance in selected institutions within the Ghanaian public sector by formulating study objectives and questions, as stipulated in sections 1.3 and 1.4.

1.3 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This section presents the primary and secondary research objectives of the study.

1.3.1 Primary research objective

The primary objective of the study is to explore the influence of labour relations on the organisational performance of selected public sector institutions in Ghana.

1.3.2 Secondary research objectives

Secondary research objectives in support of the primary research objective have been formulated for the literature review and the empirical research, as listed below.

1.3.2.1 Secondary research objectives: Literature review

The following secondary research objectives have been formulated for the study in terms of the literature review:

- To examine the concepts of labour relations, collective bargaining, trade unionism, conflict resolution, and organisational performance.
- To examine the importance of a favourable work environment on enhancing the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana.
- To investigate the theoretical models underpinning the study.
- To determine the role played by labour relations in enhancing organisational performance in the public sector of Ghana.

1.3.2.2 Secondary research objectives: Empirical research

The following secondary research objectives have been formulated for the study in terms of the empirical research:

- To explore the influence of collective bargaining on the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana.
- To determine how trade unionism affects the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana.
- To examine the influence of conflict resolution on the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana.
- To explore the challenges faced by public sector labour relations in Ghana.
- To develop strategies to enhance the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana.

1.4 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.4.1 Primary research question

The primary research question of the study is what is the influence of labour relations on the organisational performance of selected public sector institutions in Ghana?

1.4.2 Secondary research questions

Secondary research questions in support of the primary research question have been formulated for the literature review and the empirical research, as listed below.

1.4.2.1 Secondary research questions: Literature review

- What are the concepts of labour relations, collective bargaining, trade unionism, conflict resolutions and organisational performance?
- What is the importance of a favourable work environment in enhancing the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana?
- What are the theoretical models underpinning the study?
- What role does labour relations play in enhancing organisational performance in the public sector of Ghana?

1.4.2.2 Secondary research questions: Empirical research

- How does collective bargaining influence the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana?
- How does trade unionism impact the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana?
- What is the role of conflict resolution in influencing organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana?
- What are the challenges faced by public sector labour relations in Ghana?
- What labour relations strategies can enhance the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study shed light on the dynamic relationship between labour relations and organisational performance in the context of the public sector in Ghana. The study holds paramount importance due to its theoretical, empirical, and practical contributions to understanding the influence of labour relations on organisational performance in selected public sector institutions in Ghana. The significance of the study in terms of the theoretical, empirical and practical contribution is presented below.

1.5.1 Theoretical

The study contributes to the existing theories in labour relations by examining and understanding the unique challenges and dynamics within the context of the public sector in Ghana. It explores how theoretical frameworks from labour relations apply or need adaptation to comprehend the complexities specific to public sector labour relations. Additionally, the study integrates three theoretical perspectives, namely pluralist theory, the Dunlop model and the strategic model that seek to expand previous studies that have based the Dunlop model almost exclusively to understand the relationship between labour relations and the performance of the public sector (Dobbins, Hughes & Dundon, 2021; Doellgast, Bidwell & Colvin, 2021). Moreover, the

labour relations theories employed in understanding the performance of organisations aid in identifying salient factors within labour relations that significantly influence organisational performance; this further explores new perspectives of public sector labour relations and strengthens the theoretical basis in the practice of labour relations and job performance in Ghana.

1.5.2 Empirical

The study contributes to the body of human resource management by providing new knowledge in the field of labour relations regarding the influence between Ghanaian public sector labour relations and the performance of public sector institutions. This was done by generating empirical evidence and collecting data from selected public sector institutions in Ghana. The analysis of the collected data offered valuable insights into the current state of labour relations and its impact on organisational performance, providing a factual basis for future decision-making. Similarly, the study contributed to a more profound understanding of the factors influencing employee motivation and engagement in the public sector. Additionally, in reference to the specificity of the public sector in Ghana, the study contributed contextually relevant findings that addressed the peculiar challenges and opportunities faced by public institutions in the country. These findings can serve as a reference for policymakers and practitioners in other African nations with similar settings. Also, the study formed the basis for other studies to explore the concept of public sector labour relations with regards to improved economic indicators in other jurisdictions.

1.5.3 Practical

The findings of the study served as inputs for organisational policy and strategy in the management of labour relations activities with the purpose of laying down principles and strategies to improve performance in the public sector. Additionally, the findings of the study formed the basis for further research in the area of labour relations and organisational performance. This came about as a result of the study's findings exposing relatively unexplored issues in the concept of labour relations that hadn't previously been linked to the performance of organisations. Therefore, more study can be focused on filling in these gaps, which will advance knowledge and possibly

result in labour relations and organisational performance management approaches that are more successful. In a similar vein, organisations may consider putting the study's conclusions into practice through policy. In the realm of academia, the results of the study could stimulate further research by scholars, culminating in the creation of novel ideas, models, or approaches within the discipline. This development advances the general knowledge and comprehension of public sector labour relations and organisational performance.

The study's insights empower public sector institutions to adopt effective labour relations practices, thereby enhancing organisational performance, service delivery, and overall effectiveness. Most of the sampled public sector institutions requested the findings of the study to be shared with them; hence, their knowledge about the findings forms the basis for the formulation of public sector labour relation policies. This, in turn, contributes to the socio-economic development of Ghana. Furthermore, comparative data from public sectors of Scandinavia and Asia highlights how labour peace, rooted in institutionalised discourse, improves citizen trust, productivity service delivery (Johnsen, 2025; Bach & Bordogna, 2013). These models serve as helpful benchmark for placing Ghana's public sector within larger global governancediscourses by demonstrating the importance of satble labour relations to organisational effectiveness. In addressing the influence of labour relations on employee well-being, the study advocates for employee-oriented policies, leading to increased job satisfaction, and improved staff retention within public sector institutions. The result improves public sector institutions in aligning their policies and practices to enhance productivity and to create strategies to foster a positive work environment and improve employee performance.

1.6 DELIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The study focused on labour relations and its influence on the performance of selected public sector institutions in Ghana. Moreover, the study looked into how trade unionism, collective bargaining and conflict resolution influence the performance of selected institutions. The study does not encompass other factors

that stimulate performance in the selected institutions outside issues of labour relations; this limitation is due to the quest to focus solely on the elements of labour relations that account for performance in selected Ghanaian public sector institutions. The research limited the study's participants to those from institutions involved in public sector labour relations and performance. The data for the study was collected from existing literature and interviews with participants. Furthermore, the results from the study were analysed using content and thematic analysis to generate new insights and in-depth perspectives, as well as to narrow the large amount of information from participants by sorting it into themes.

1.7 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

Research assumptions are the fundamental conditions or claims that are that are accepted as true without empirical evidence and that form the foundation for the planning, execution, and interpretation of a study (Pilcher & Cortazzi, 2024). Certain research assumptions drive this study's methodology and interpretation of findings. Research assumptions are crucial because they provide clarification on the circumstances that are assumed to be true for the study to be legitimate and credible. These include assumptions regarding participants of the study freely providing accurate and honest responses to questions and the appropriateness of qualitative methods in exploring the relationship between labour relations and organisational performance. Furthermore, the respondents had a full understanding of the questions asked and the use of interviews elicited reliable responses. The sample size employed for the study was a true representation of the whole population; this is because it comprised all stakeholders that contribute to public sector labour relations and performance in Ghana. The case study institutions for this study were chosen based on their significant position within Ghana's labour relations system. These organisations are specifically acknowledged as important players in the labour relations system by the Labour Act (Act 651, 2003), which is the main piece of legislation controlling labour relations in Ghana. Additionally, these institutions are empowered by the Republic of Ghana's 1992 Constitution to control and implement labour relations policies throughout the public sector. Consequently, it is both

contextually and legally justifiable to include them as case studies. The findings and recommendations of the study were helpful to the performance of the selected institutions. A detailed discussion of these assumptions and their implications for data collection and analysis is provided in chapter 4. Additionally, the literature on constructs mentioned in the assumptions was reviewed in chapter 2.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the introduction of the study as well as ascertaining the problem statement, objectives, questions and significance of the study. Subsequently, this section reviews the empirical literature in relation to the variables of the study. Consequently, a conceptual framework was established based on the theoretical and empirical review. Labour relations is a multidisciplinary field that studies various aspects and elements of the employment relationship. However, the study is focused on trade unionism, collective bargaining and conflict resolution as the main elements of labour relations; this is so because the three main elements symbolise the crux of labour relation practices in the public sector of Ghana. They also aligned to the purpose of the study, which seeks to explore the influence of collective bargaining on the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana; determine how trade unionism affects organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana; examine the influence of conflict resolution on the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana; explore the challenges faced by public sector labour relations in Ghana; and to develop labour relations strategies to enhance the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 Introduction

A conceptual framework is a portrayal of the way the study understands the variables that are involved in it and their relationships to one another. The aim of a conceptual framework is to clarify the presumed relationships between the concepts being studied and to express the concepts under study using relevant literature (Taherdoost, 2022; Xia, Pyun & Tak, 2024). The study of labour and its interconnected systems plays an imperative role in understanding organisational performance. Labour is not just a factor of production; it is also a dynamic component that interacts with the labour force, labour relations, and wider labour relations

systems in any economy. All of these variables work together to influence an organisation's productivity, efficiency and overall performance (Armstrong, Goodman & Hyman, 2023; Wyrod & Chang, 2023; Bean, 2021). This section introduces the key variables of this conceptual framework, exploring their roles in organisational performance.

2.2.2 Labour Relations

2.2.2.1 Introduction

Labour is an essential factor of production in the circular flow of economic activity, helping to meet human needs. Individuals provide labour to organisations in the factor market (Wright, 2023). Individuals contribute their time, talents, and labour, all of which are necessary for the creation of products and services. Individuals receive earnings or salaries from businesses in exchange for their labour. This revenue becomes essential for households to meet their basic needs and satisfy their desires by making purchases of products and services (Grancelli, 2023; Topilin & Vorobyova, 2023).

The resources needed to create products and services that meet human needs are referred to as factors of production. Land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship are some of the variables. While each of these production factors has a specific function, labour considered as a key player who is always changing, particularly within the factor market (Anderson, 2021; Cooke & Xiao, 2024). The human effort used to produce products and services is known as labour. Workers provide their labour to businesses in return for wages, making labour the primary agent in the factor market. The economy's ability to produce goods and services depends on this labour supply. Businesses require labour since it is necessary for production, which makes the labour market a crucial part of the factor market. Skilled workers boost productivity and effectiveness, assisting businesses in creating goods and services that satisfy human demands (Oginni, Olaniyan, Ajibola, Ajakaye & Abdulmaleek, 2022; Cheng, Wang & Taksa, 2021).

Furthermore, within the production cycle, human resource management (HRM) is essential in both the public and private sectors. It makes sure businesses have enough skilled, motivated employees to reach their output targets. Workforce

planning, hiring, training, performance management, and employee engagement are all handled by HRM (Dundon, Wilkinson & Ackers, 2023). HRM ensures policy compliance, fosters equity, and links talent with public service objectives in the public sector. HRM in the private sector prioritises competitiveness, innovation, and productivity (Ogunyomi & Bruning, 2016; Anwar & Abdullah, 2021).

Labour is essential to human resource management (HRM) since it is the labour that propels an organisation's success and productivity. In order to ensure that the staff is motivated and in line with company objectives, HRM's main responsibility is to manage and optimise labour through efficient hiring, training, performance management, and employee relations (Rubery, 2024; Azizi, Atlasi, Ziapour, Abbas & Naemi, 2021). Organisations may better manage labour relations to enhance performance, lower conflict, and create a more productive work environment by understanding the influence of labour on organisational performance.

2.2.2.2 Labour

Labour is the amount of physical, mental, and social effort used to produce goods and services in an economy. It supplies the expertise, manpower, and service needed to turn raw materials into finished products and services (Arfah, 2021; Stahel & Jackson, 2024). In both economic and human resource management (HRM) literature, the concept of labour and the workforce is central. Labour is viewed as an essential component of production from an economic standpoint, but human resource management (HRM) places a strong emphasis on the value of human capital (Bahuguna, Srivastava & Tiwari, 2023; Berman, Bowman, West & Van Wart, 2021). In addition to land and capital, labour is one of the three production elements that requires an individual's physical or mental effort to produce goods and services (Cooke & Xiao, 2024; Helgeson, 2023; Ključnikov, Popkova & Sergi, 2023). Labour is a larger notion in neo-classical economics since it includes any human actions that contribute value to goods or services (Neck, 2022). Along with capital, land, and entrepreneurship, labour is considered a production element by neo-classical economics. In providing both physical and mental effort, as well as the use of tools and equipment, labour adds to output. Neo-classical theory holds that the intersection of labour supply and demand in the market determines wages, which in turn affects employment levels and wage rates (Qamar, 2023; Neck, 2022).

Moreover, labour is viewed from the perspective of human resources as a component of human capital, which includes people's knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience. Organisations need this human capital because it gives them a competitive advantage and improves overall performance (Dundon, Wilkinson & Ackers, 2023). Finding and choosing the best candidates for open positions, as well as monitoring their performance through various mechanisms like goal-setting, performance reviews, and feedback, are the main objectives of human resource management (HRM) (Krzycki, Coff & Campbell, 2021; Gerhart & Feng, 2021; Dwikat, Arshad & Mohd Shariff, 2023).

In the realm of economics, labour is primarily viewed as a factor in production that is subject to market forces. Conversely, the human resource perspective views labour as an asset of great value that requires careful management, development, and investment in order to maximise organisational performance and employee well-being (Khan & Roy, 2023; Cooke & Xiao, 2024). It is noteworthy that the variable of labour in the study reflects the organisational dynamics that it seeks to understand, as well as an essential part of the connections under study. Labour represents the workforce and interacts with management and organisational structures. Moreover, by reviewing labour as a primary variable, the study is able to explore the particular aspects of labour relations that have an influence on organisational performance and operationalise what "labour relations" means.

2.2.2.3 Importance of labour in relation to basic needs and socio-economic development

Both personal and societal prosperity depend on labour. Through labour, people can sustain themselves and their families by earning money for needs like food, clothing, and housing (Denysiuk, Kushal & Pchelynska, 2024; Van Thanh & Tri, 2024). It also offers access to healthcare and education, which are essential for developing one's abilities, health, and socioeconomic standing. According to Ngoc and Tien (2023), public services such as healthcare and education are funded by taxes derived from labour income.

Labour is vital in empowering people to meet their basic needs, such as food, shelter, healthcare, and education. Workers who are productively employed receive salaries that cover their daily expenses and provide them access to necessities such as

products and services (Ogbari et al., 2024). In numerous developing nations, employment is the principal mechanism by which individuals can rise out of poverty, immediately increasing their living conditions and contributing to economic stability. Additionally, labour promotes social cohesiveness and lowers inequality by giving people a sense of stability and purpose (Rubery, 2024; Silalahi & Walsh, 2023).

Moreover, by fostering industrialisation, innovation, and economic growth, labour plays a critical role in advancing socioeconomic progress. A proficient and effective labour force enhances industry efficiency, elevates the country's output, and stimulates consumption (Denysiuk, Kushal & Pchelynska, 2024). As labour is mobilised across sectors like agriculture, industry, and services, economies are more diverse and robust. Furthermore, labour is essential to the development of human capital. In enhancing the quality of goods and services, a highly skilled labour force empowers countries to compete on a global scale and eventually boosts their competitiveness in global marketplaces (Michael & Samuel, 2020). Therefore, labour is about more than simply sustaining individual livelihoods; it's also about laying the groundwork for sustained economic growth.

Despite its importance, labour has significant obstacles in contributing to socio-economic development. Unemployment, underemployment, and inequality in work prospects are hurdles that prohibit many persons from fully participating in the labour market, which in turn limits economic progress (Van Thanh & Tri, 2024; Silalahi & Walsh, 2023). In summary, labour is essential to achieving both fundamental human requirements and advancing socioeconomic development.

2.2.2.4 Labour force

The labour force is the sum of the employed plus the unemployed (Edwards, Essien & Levinstein, 2022). The labour force consists of people who work for pay, whether they are self-employed, employers, or employees, as well as people who are actively looking for work. Psychology, social structures, cultures, and government actions must all be considered while doing an economic analysis of people's abilities, professions, and incomes (Jakab, 2024). Compared to market factors covered in economic theory, these forces frequently have a greater influence on labour dynamics (Jimenez et al., 2024; Francis-Devine & Powell, 2024). This is mostly because labour is not like other commodities. Unlike machinery, hiring labour is

required but insufficient to do the job. Since employment contracts are effectively open-ended, it is imperative to motivate employees to meet criteria. More competent and indispensable workers need special attention to institutional arrangements to maintain compliance and fairness, even though this might not be a problem for easily replaceable staff (Topilin & Vorobyova, 2023; Cheng, Wang & Taksa, 2021). The laws of supply and demand are essential to the operation of the labour market. Individuals contribute their labour in exchange for compensation, whereas businesses need labour to produce goods and render services. The wage rate and employment level are determined by the ratio of available labour to required labour. Because more productive workers provide more value to production, productivity, or the quantity of output per unit of labour, has a considerable impact on wages (Brinca, Duarte & Faria-e-Castro, 2021; Francis-Devine & Powell, 2024).

Within a given total population, a country's labour force is determined by two factors: the percentage of the population that is working age and the percentage of those who work for pay. The minimum school-leaving age and the current pensionable age are typically seen as defining the boundaries of working age (Rogerson, 2024). After reaching pensionable age, individuals who continue to work for profit must be compensated.

The calibre of the labour force is also influenced by a number of factors, including training and education. One way to think of education and training is as an investment, and one may estimate the rate of return they provide. In turn, the yield is computed using the assumption that the average earnings of those who stopped short of completing a certain educational program, in comparison to those who completed it, represent a valuation of the productivity boost that the program gives (Davidescu, Manta & Cojocaru, 2024). The shifts in the way labour is deployed in developing economies demonstrate the role that education and training play in economic development. A number of trends emerge by tracking labour force deployment over time, some of which involve adjustments to production techniques (Topilin & Vorobyova, 2023; Rogerson, 2024).

Exploring the concept of the labour force was essential to achieving the study's purpose by providing answers to the study's literature questions and serve as a basis for reviewing empirical information for the study. Similarly, reviewing the concept

labour force was necessary because labour relations and organisational performance are fundamentally influenced by the labour force. Employees make up the labour force, and they play a crucial role in labour relations and related activities including union interactions and dispute settlement. The nature and quality of labour relations will also have a bearing on the productivity of the labour force (Lee, 2024; Hafiz & Marinescu, 2023).

Gaining insight into the complex dynamics of labour in economies and organisations require considering both points of view. Therefore, the importance of the labour force in relation to fundamental requirements and socioeconomic growth is examined in section 2.2.2.5.

2.2.2.5 Importance of labour force in relation to basic needs and socio-economic development

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of labour and the workforce in relation to meeting fundamental requirements and advancing socioeconomically, which makes it crucial to comprehend the concept of labour force, which is discussed in section (2.2.2.4). The labour force propels productivity and economic growth. Increased output, efficiency, and economic development are all benefited by a trained and productive workforce (Jie, Khan, Alharthi, Zafar & Saeed, 2023). Infrastructure, education, and training expenditures raise labour productivity and promote economic expansion. Economic development is promoted by skilled people who are instrumental in technology advancements, process improvements, and the establishment of new firms (Berde & Kurbanova, 2023; Singh, Singh, Alam & Agrawal, 2022).

Moreover, labour represents a country's human capital, which includes the capabilities, knowledge, and skills of its labour force. In order to maintain national competitiveness and adapt to changes in the global market and technological advancements, it is imperative that investments be made in human capital through education, training, and lifelong learning (Pirnazarovna & Ismatjonovna, 2023). Effective labour markets, which are characterised by flexibility, mobility, and merit-based hiring, also increase a country's competitiveness by promoting efficiency and innovation and matching skills to job opportunities. Labour market policies that promote job creation, skill development, and workforce participation can increase a

country's competitiveness abroad (Ozgen, 2021; Wen, Okolo, Ugwuoke & Kolani, 2022; Naveed & Wang, 2023).

In addition, there are issues in the labour force where differences in compensation and labour exploitation restrict the benefits of employment for marginalised groups. Rapid technological and automation breakthroughs are raising worries about job displacement, which might leave some segments of the workforce behind (Alam, 2022; Jie et al., 2023). Nonetheless, these challenges offer chances for businesses and governments to make investments in training, skill enhancement, and flexible labour laws that equip people for the workforce of the future.

In conclusion, the ability to provide fundamental requirements, propel socioeconomic growth, and boost national competitiveness all depends on the labour force. Nations may leverage the potential of their labour force to construct wealthy and equitable communities through investments in human capital, the promotion of decent employment opportunities, and the encouragement of inclusive growth.

2.2.2.6 Labour relations

The sustainability of labour and the labour force in relation to socioeconomic growth, which has been reviewed in section (2.2.2.5), can only be achieved if there is better regulation and practice of labour relations. Labour relations is a concept that can be understood and studied using Dunlop's (1958) well-accepted framework. It is a multidisciplinary field comprised of three social partners, namely, the government, union and management. It also includes an environmental context, the mechanisms through which the social partners interact, the outcomes of the interaction and the implications for the social partners and society (Howell & Pringle, 2019; Brown & Cao, 2023). Similarly, labour relations is the system in which employers, workers and their representatives, and directly or indirectly, the government interact to set the ground rules for the governance of work relationships; that labour relations system incorporates both societal values and techniques, and both private and public interests are at stake in any labour relations system (Bean, 2021; Wyrod & Chang, 2023; Kissi & Herzig, 2024).

Labour relations as a concept in this study could be seen as the formal relationship and interactions that exist between employees, employers, government and their

representatives. As well as the relationship that covers aspects of industrial life such as trade unionism, collective bargaining, workers' participation in management, discipline and grievance handling, and industrial disputes in the public sector (Kissi & Herzig, 2024; Grancelli, 2023; Mansaray, 2022).

Moreover, labour relations is more than a static interpretation of a contract between an employee and an employer. It also encompasses all the connections between talents, abilities, values, and opportunities in the workplace (Grancelli, 2023). In the stance where enterprise owners are willing and able to be interested in the welfare and satisfaction of their workers, and the workers also reciprocate with better behaviour and produce a high level of performance at their jobs, then a conducive and harmonious labour relations atmosphere is stimulated. Similarly, labour relations comprise the social partners working collectively to achieve the goals of the organisation (Kissi & Herzig, 2024; Weiss, Schmidt & Hlava, 2020; Armstrong, Goodman & Hyman, 2023). Effective labour relations can play a vital role in enhancing organisational performance by promoting positive relationships between management and workers, which can stimulate improved communication, greater trust, and increased collaboration between management and employees, leading to better performance and productivity (Tshukudu, 2019). Consequently, the fostering of a positive culture and maintaining strong labour relations, organisations will be able to create a productive and engaged workforce, stable and conducive working environment that drives success and growth, which can further enhance organisational performance (Bulińska-Stangrecka & Bagieńska, 2021; Salman, Anwar, Ganie & Saleem, 2024).

Employers understand that in order to maintain motivated and dedicated employees in an organisation, they must provide them with more than just their remuneration needs; it also has to do with issues with regards to collective bargaining arrangements, trade unions and conflict resolution, which are all the elements that make up labour relations (Kurt, 2019; Alliu & Akinlabi, 2023). Several factors, such as labour unions and collective bargaining, the labour market, government policy, and how the economy is structured, are all crucial to the factors that stimulate workers to increase their performance at work (Weiss, Schmidt & Hlava, 2020). Numerous studies have found a positive relationship between labour relations and organisational performance, suggesting that organisations that prioritize the

development of effective labour relations may be more likely to achieve high levels of performance and to sustain that performance over time both in the private or public sector (Howell and Pringle, 2019; Fanisi, Agbakwuru & Onoja, 2023).

It is, however, imperative to acknowledge that labour relations is important in the proper construction and channelisation of distinct units that stimulate a conducive working environment through elements such as collective bargaining, trade union activities and effective conflict resolution (Mahmood, Akhtar, Talat, Shuai & Hyatt, 2019; Fanisi, Agbakwuru & Onoja, 2023).

2.2.2.7 The role of labour and labour relations

The aforementioned explanations and analysis of labour contributed to a deeper understanding of the concept of labour and formed the basis for which the study curved its definition of labour in relation to the jurisdiction of the study. Along with addressing the study's literature and empirical questions, the explanation of labour also serves as a basis for a review of relevant empirical studies on labour and labour relations in general.

Labour relations is one of the salient variables underpinning the study; hence, it was imperative to shed more light on it for better understanding. In addition, the exploration of the concept of labour relations aids the study to achieve its purpose by identifying and understanding components of labour relations and how some of the components, such as trade unionism, collective bargaining and dispute resolution, influence workplace performance.

Furthermore, the qualitative approach is suitable when it comes to exploring labour relations because it concentrates on appreciating the intricacies of human interactions and social dynamics. Labour relations encompass a variety of activities such as collective bargaining, unionism and management practices, all of which need a detailed knowledge that may be lacking in quantitative data. However, the qualitative approach assisted in exploring how the elements of labour relations influence organisational performance from the viewpoints of various social partners.

Also, by employing a case study design, the study concentrated on particular public sector organisations to comprehend the background and nuances of their labour relations practices. Labour relations are mostly context-specific, changing according

to the legislative landscape and managerial styles (Tshukudu, 2019). Therefore, employing case studies offered contextual information that highlighted procedures, difficulties, and achievements related to particular organisations, providing more in-depth understanding of the connection between labour relations and organisational performance. Purposive sampling was also an ideal choice for the study as it let the study select participants with firsthand knowledge and experience with labour relations in the public sector. This approach guarantees that the sample encompasses a range of viewpoints that are essential for comprehending how labour dynamics affect organisational performance.

Moreover, employing thematic and content analysis was highly well-suited to the study that focused on labour relations. In the context of labour relations, thematic analysis helped discover vital themes that directly had a bearing on organisational performance metrics. Similarly, content analysis helped analyse textual data from the transcripts to evaluate how labour relations are structured and operationalised within institutions in the public sector.

2.2.3 Labour Relations System

The previous sections (2.2.2.6 and 2.2.2.7) analysed the labour relations concept and its role in achieving the objectives of this study. This section, however, looks at the relationship between the labour relations system in relation to the performance of organisations. In general, labour relations systems have had a positive impact on the economic performance of most countries through three main relatable means (Moza, 2023; Kissi & Herzig, 2024; Hyman, 2018; Ogunyomi & Bruning, 2016). The first and foremost factor is the effectiveness of conflict management in relation to the union-management relationship; the second factor is the motivation and commitment of individual employees and teams; and the third factor is the policies and procedures that govern the allocation and use of human resources. These indicators explain the empirical relationships between labour relations performance, such as grievance rates and the labour-management climate, and economic performance, such as labour efficiency (Haidar, 2021; Mulunda et al., 2018; Asamani, 2015). The study spelt out more clearly the links expected between these indicators of enterprise labour relations and organisational effectiveness.

The amalgamation of the labour relations system and the performance of an organisation is a vital phenomenon to study because it helps in identifying the role labour plays and how valuable it is to an organisation. However, it is more important to understand how performance in such a context will be measured. For example, labour relations performance measures might include the number of grievances filed per worker, the number of disciplinary actions per worker, and actions that involve a suspension or more severe penalties (Renaud, 2023; Undy, Ellis, McCarthy & Halmos, 2022; Raju, 2015; Brhane & Zewdie, 2018). It also includes the number of demands presented by unions for tribunal negotiations, the number of days it takes to reach a settlement in local contract negotiations, and the number of authorised or unauthorised local strikes.

According to Hagenimana, Ngui and Mulili (2018) labour-management interactions are crucial in terms of organisational efficiency and have been the topic of a heated discussion for the past few decades, particularly in the United States. An organisation's success depends not only on the amount of profit that can be earned; it also depends on the degree to which industrial peace and harmony can be maintained within the business.

Countries such as the UK, Canada and Finland have conceptualised labour relations as a stimulant towards improving organisational performance; over the last three decades, labour relations have been seen as best practices in enhancing organisational performance (Van de Ven, 2015; Mozu, 2023). However, most of the findings of these studies (Obeidat, 2017; Shaheen, Fais Bin & Abdul, 2017; Chukwuyem, 2020; Visser, J. 2024) have reached no conclusion regarding which specific labour relation practices stimulate the performance of organisations. In addition, very little literature is available in that regard in terms of Ghana.

Therefore, this study looked at labour relations as a mix of collective bargaining, trade unionism and conflict resolution activities and its possible influence on organisational performance. In addition, the selection of the variables of the study, which includes collective bargaining, trade unionism and conflict resolution, ensured that the purpose of the study was achieved. Understanding the impact of labour relations on organisational performance is greatly aided by the choice of factors, which include collective bargaining, the existence of trade unions, and dispute

resolution techniques: The study evaluated how organised labour affects organisational dynamics by including trade union presence as a variable. On behalf of their members, trade unions frequently negotiate collective bargaining agreements that affect things like pay, benefits, and working conditions (Kahancová & Martišková, 2023). An examination of trade union presence and activity yielded insights into the relationship between labour representation and employee engagement, productivity, and overall success of the organisation. Comparably, a key component of labour relations is collective bargaining, in which unions and employers discuss the terms and conditions of employment (Bourguignon & Coron, 2023; Zwysen & Drahokoupil, 2024).

In incorporating collective bargaining as a variable, the research was able to investigate the ways in which the negotiating process affects labour costs, workplace flexibility, employee morale, and organisational outcomes, all of which have the potential to impact key performance indicators. In addition, it is critical to recognise that while conflict is a natural part of labour relations, how organisations handle and resolve disputes has a big impact on output (Grancelli, 2023; Mitchell, 2024). Thus, taking conflict resolution into account as a study variable aided in determining how effective conflict resolution is at resolving conflicts and upholding positive working relationships. Furthermore, knowledge of how conflict resolution techniques affect worker satisfaction, retention, and organisational cohesiveness offers important new perspectives on how these techniques influence organisational performance.

Additionally, the variables that were chosen fit the study's research methodology because the qualitative approach made it easier to conduct in-depth interviews and have meaningful conversations with important stakeholders about the impact of trade unions within organisations. Additionally, by using a qualitative methodology, the study was able to explore the subtleties of conflict resolution and collective bargaining and how these affect workers' performances in organizations. Similar to this, the study's use of a case study approach enabled it to investigate how collective bargaining, unionism, and dispute resolution interact in particular organizations and how that interaction affects those organisations' performance. The study was able to deliberately choose organisations based on their labour relations knowledge and practices thanks to the application of purposive sampling. Utilising purposeful sampling guaranteed the inclusion of relevant cases in order to investigate the variety

of tactics organisations use to handle labour relations problems. The study's literature and empirical questions were addressed and themes that correlated with the variables were found through the application of thematic analysis. Thus, the factors of collective bargaining, trade union presence, and dispute resolution were successfully incorporated into the study's research methodologies. Apart from collective bargaining, trade unionism, and dispute resolution, an important aspect that must be investigated to acquire a thorough grasp of the phenomenon under investigation is organisational performance, which was covered in section 2.2.4.

2.2.4 Organisational Performance

The previous section (section 2.2.3) emphasised labour relation systems; however, the study seeks to ascertain the influence of labour relations on organisational performance. Hence, it is imperative to understand the concept of organisational performance. Performance refers to achieving organisational goals more effectively and efficiently (Alliu & Akinlabi, 2023). It is a subjective concept, leading to extensive reflection and debate on its definition and measurement. Due to its subjective nature, there are various definitions attributed to organisational performance, garnering increased attention across different sectors (Palmié, Parida, Mader & Wincent, 2023; Alliu & Akinlabi, 2023; Audet, Bignon, Cartier, Le Digabel & Salomon, 2021). Organisations engage in diverse activities to meet their objectives, often using quantitative, repeatable processes to assess performance levels and inform management decisions. This indicates a close relationship between organisational objectives and performance. However, despite its significance, organisational performance remains a contentious concept with no consensus among researchers and theorists. The absence of a widely accepted operational definition leads to different interpretations, posing challenges in establishing standards (Marrucci, Daddi & Iraldo, 2023; Chowdhury et al., 2022). Nonetheless, organisational performance significantly influences company actions, driving ongoing research into accurate measurement methods, which has become a vital area of study for both businesses and academics (Tripathi & Kalia, 2024).

Consequently, arriving at a universally accepted definition of the concept presents several challenges, suggesting uncertainty in establishing standards (Marrucci, Daddi

& Iraldo, 2023). Moreover, organisational performance has always had a significant influence on the actions of companies. One of the concerns of this effect is the increase in the number and variety of means and methods to measure the performance accurately (Onoriode & Samuel, 2023; Alerasoul, Afeltra, Hakala, Minelli & Strozzi, 2022).

Employees are invaluable assets that represent the most significant resources within an organisation. The type and calibre of work carried out by employees directly impacts the productivity and effectiveness of an organisation. Globally successful organisations prioritise the well-being of their workforce, and many have adopted performance management initiatives to bolster their efforts in employee relations (Al-Kassem, 2021; Ammirato, Felicetti, Linzalone, Corvello & Kumar, 2023). Performance management is a strategic and comprehensive approach to sustaining success by enhancing employee operations and elevating the capabilities of both teams and individual contributors (Weiss & Hartle, 2023). While various factors can hinder optimal performance, the presence of effective labour relations serves as a protective factor, enabling a company to effectively navigate challenges and achieve its objectives.

People are often internally motivated, but when it comes to fostering employee relations, human resource managers within any organisation should consider what they can do to create a supportive environment where employees can thrive, ultimately leading to exceptional performance. Since the effectiveness of workers is closely tied to organisational success, companies that prioritise robust labour relations initiatives benefit from enhanced performance as their workforce is highly motivated to give their best efforts (Zeffane & Melhem, 2017; Gupta, Crilly & Greckhamer, 2020; Bella, 2023). Managing the relationship between employers and employees is critical for business success because a motivated and productive workforce results in increased employee satisfaction and greater profitability. The quality of relationships with employees in the workplace can either positively or negatively impact their morale and subsequent performance (Bella, 2023).

Improving labour relations can significantly impact organisational performance by fostering positive interactions between employers and employees. Organisations can cultivate a culture of cooperation and mutual regard, leading to heightened

productivity, creativity, and job satisfaction (Samwel, 2018; Nanda & Patra, 2023). Furthermore, effective labour relations can contribute to establishing a stable and supportive workplace environment and further enhancing organisational effectiveness. Numerous studies have explored the link between labour relations and organisational performance, consistently finding a positive correlation (Al-Kassem, 2021; Purnamasari, Kambaraa & Haryadi, 2023; Nyathi & Kekwaletswe, 2024).

2.2.4.1 Schools of thought on public sector performance

The concept of "performance" in the public sector has been interpreted in a variety of ways, resulting in numerous schools of thought in public administration and management literature. Different presumptions regarding the goals of public institutions, success criteria, and striking a balance between accountability, equity, and efficiency are reflected in these different points of view. While some academics take a managerialist stance, stressing productivity, outputs, and quantifiable outcomes, others make the case for a more comprehensive interpretation that takes into account social consequences, citizen satisfaction, and participatory governance. Particularly in developing nations like Ghana, these schools vary in how they formulate performance targets, suitable measurements, and their cross-context applicability.

The 1980s and 1990s saw the rise of the managerialist or New Public Management (NPM) viewpoint, which placed a strong emphasis on cost-cutting, efficiency, and market-oriented strategies. Underpinned by managerial autonomy and accountability, performance is measured by quantifiable outputs, productivity increases, and customer satisfaction indicators (Osborne, 2010). According to Hammerschmid et al., (2019) modern advancements expand NPM into digital governance by tying performance metrics to technology advancements in service delivery. Although useful in certain situations, detractors contend that it falls short in addressing democratic legitimacy and equity in the delivery of public services, especially in underdeveloped countries (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017).

Public value theory extends performance evaluation beyond efficiency to encompass the creation of social value, democratic accountability, and citizen participation (Moore, 1995). According to Bryson et al. (2014), trust, legitimacy, and co-production of services should be given priority in complex governance systems

where performance is fundamentally multifaceted, especially in societies with developing democratic institutions.

The Balanced Scorecard, developed by Keser Ozmantar and Gedikoglu, (2016), provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating performance by integrating perspectives on internal processes, learning, stakeholder outcomes, and finances. Although implementation necessitates strong institutional capacity, which is frequently absent in environments with limited resources, Northcott and Ma'amora Taulapapa (2012), emphasize its importance to public administration by accepting both quantitative and qualitative measurements. According to Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017), systems thinking views performance as a result of interrelated institutional, administrative, and policy structures. Enhancing public sector results calls for coordinated changes across various systems, especially in developing countries where service delivery is hampered by institutional fragmentation (Azfar et al., 2018).

2.2.4.2 Performance in the context of this study

In light of the aforementioned perspectives, this study takes a pragmatic, context-driven approach to performance, focused on public sector service delivery and productivity. In Ghana's governance setting, where institutional reforms must strike a balance between operational effectiveness and social legitimacy, the merger of managerialist and public value schools is crucial, notwithstanding their emphasis on efficiency and citizen-centered outcomes. The necessity of performance frameworks based on labour relations dynamics, resource limitations, and local governance realities is further highlighted by the systems and developmental perspectives. Therefore, this study operationalises performance in terms of Ghanaian public sector institutions' ability to improve productivity and deliver services efficiently while analysing the impact of labour relations. This provides a contextually relevant foundation for connecting labour stability to organisational effectiveness.

2.2.4.3 The role of organisational performance in the study

Organisations cannot continuously improve interdependent processes and systems without progressively fostering human relationships. Employment should be viewed as a reciprocal relationship in which incentives are provided by the management of

the organisation in exchange for improved performance (Sinnaiah, Adam & Mahadi, 2023). Organisations that want to promote good labour relations should adopt a holistic strategy to make sure that management and staff work together through the development of a strong organisational culture, compassionate and capable leadership, and a shared understanding of the goals of the company (Ting & Ahn, 2023; Purnamasari, Kambaraa & Haryadi, 2023; Nyathi & Kekwaletswe, 2024).

It is imperative to note that organisational performance ties directly to the purpose of the study, as it serves as a primary measure of how effectively labour relations practices complement and enable organisational success. Positive labour relations frequently result in improved organisational results; therefore, the study is able to determine whether labour relations practices are advantageous or negative by looking at organisational performance. While negative labour relations can lead to occurrences like strikes, which damage an organisation's effectiveness. As a comprehensive indicator, organisational performance connects many facets of labour relations to observable results that represent the organisation's overall competitiveness. Exploring the concept of organisational performance also helped in providing insights that answered the literature and empirical questions of the study.

Additionally, by obtaining rich, detailed data through in-depth interviews, the research methods used for the study, specifically the qualitative approach, aided in the exploration of organisational performance. In order to understand the wider picture in the Ghanaian setting, it was also possible to investigate the impact of labour relations on organisational performance inside certain institutions by using a case study design. To do this, a variety of organisations with varying labour relations backgrounds were chosen, and their performance outcomes were thoroughly examined. Key stakeholders, including managers, workers, union representatives, and organisational leaders, were interviewed in order to gather insightful insights on how labour dynamics affect performance outcomes and to pinpoint particular mechanisms that either enhance or diminish organisational effectiveness.

By using purposive sampling, the study was able to choose organisations based on their labour relations features and performance outcomes, ensuring diversity and representation in the sample. The study included key social partners in the Ghanaian public sector, including heads of labour institutions, union leaders, and Human

Resource (HR) managers. This was made possible through the use of purposeful sampling. These individuals were in a unique position to offer insights into how labour relations procedures, such as collective bargaining, unionism, and dispute resolution, influence the general effectiveness of public sector organisations. Their viewpoints were essential for comprehending how labour relations influence productivity and other performance indicators, both directly and indirectly.

Thematic analysis was also helpful in finding themes, patterns, and underlying elements in the qualitative data that were connected to organisational performance. Thematic analysis revealed recurrent themes that had a direct influence on public sector performance, such as the efficacy of union leadership and dispute resolution techniques. Conversely, content analysis was employed to analyse the transcripts obtained from the interviews in order to evaluate the formal articulation of labour relations strategies and their alignment with the performance objectives of the selected public sector organisations of the study.

2.3 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.3.1 Introduction

The previous sections (section 2.1 and 2.2) reviewed the dynamics of labour relations and organisational performance separately. However, this section emphasised establishing the role played by the aforementioned variables in promoting economic industrial harmony, as well as addressing the literature questions in Chapter One. With a focus on the public sector, labour relations has a significant impact on performance and the organisational environment in many different sectors. Fostering sustainable growth and productivity require an understanding of the complex dynamics between labour relations and organisational performance (Brown & Cao, 2023; Grancelli, 2023; LeCounte, 2024). This survey of the literature focuses on both international viewpoints and particular insights from Ghana as it examines and analyses important topics related to labour relations, conflict resolution, and organisational performance. The trade union movement in Ghana has changed as the nation's socioeconomic conditions have impacted workplace norms and labour relations. Gaining an understanding of Ghana's trade unions' historical background

and present trends helped clarify the mechanics of collective bargaining. In the public sector of the nation, organisational performance and dispute resolution are important. With an emphasis on the public sector and lessons from Ghana, this literature thoroughly investigated the intricate relationship between labour relations, dispute resolution, and organisational performance. The evaluated literature also addresses the study's research questions by finding gaps in the literature and combining existing information.

2.3.2 Labour Relations and Organisational Performance

A considerable number of studies have been conducted in relation to labour relations practices and their effect on organisational performance. These studies have been predominantly addressed by economists in the developed countries, such as the United States. Current studies indicate that this relationship varies across countries and that such variation can be associated with differences in imperative labour relations characteristics (Grancelli, 2023; Nanda & Patra, 2023; Doucouliagos, Freeman & Laroche, 2017; Jirjahn, 2016). Consequently, this section reviews some literature on labour relations with regards to organisational performance.

Recent studies conducted by Arimie and Oronsaye (2020) and Rubery (2024) focused on the relationship between effective employee relations and organisational productivity. The study employed secondary data from journals and other relevant literature. The findings of the study showed that the psychological needs of employees are vital for the morale of employees so that they are able to give their best in discharging their duties at the workplace. Ignoring that need negatively impacts employees' performance. The study recommends that managers should improve their employee relations by focusing on industrial democracy, which will create an enabling environment for employees to improve on their performance. Therefore, the study seeks to explore the influence of labour relations on the performance of organisations.

Similarly, Mulunda et al., (2018) conducted a quantitative study that sought to determine the effect of collective bargaining on employee performance in the energy sector in Nairobi. This study targeted both the management and unionised staff of all companies in the energy sector. The correlation coefficient results found that collective bargaining had a positive significant effect on employee performance, $r =$

0.547, $p = 0.000$. The study found that collective bargaining had a significant effect on employee performance (Jirjahn, 2023).

Zhu, Avolio, Koh and Bhatia (2013) also carried out a quantitative study on labour relations practices, specifically conflict management between employees from different firms in China. The study revealed a relationship between the conflict resolution practice used and organisational outcomes. Nonetheless, there was no significant relationship between gender, conflict resolution practice and the organisational outcome. The study recommends similar studies in other regions or countries and with the inclusion of more institutions, as well as secondary data. Consequently, the study seeks to include secondary data as part of its data sources and also to include more institutions while collecting data in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon.

Furthermore, Karimi and Nyawira (2019) conducted a study in Kiambu County, Kenya to determine the relationship between trade union campaigns and organisational performance in the health sector. The variables were investigated through the use of a descriptive research design. The survey focused on employees who work in trauma and emergency departments, nursing care, and clinical and diagnostic departments. The researchers employed a stratified random sampling procedure in order to pick a sample of 99 employees. The link between the independent and dependent variables was determined through the use of correlation and regression analytic techniques. According to the findings, respondents were unable to achieve a consensus on the use of collective bargaining agreements by labour unions to push for higher wages and greater workplace protections in negotiations. Working conditions are bad in the organisation; trade unions have a considerable effect on terms and conditions; and occupational health and safety initiatives have a negative impact on the organisation's productivity. The association between work pauses and organisational performance was found to be both favourable and statistically significant. A strike has a detrimental impact on the overall quality of the service being provided. Furthermore, it was determined that the organisation provided unfair compensation and did not meet the bare minimum in terms of facilities and safety regulations. In addition, the research found that the company did not have rules in place to cope with strike-related situations. The findings revealed that trade unions that represented workers in disciplinary hearings

and conflict resolution had a positive impact on the overall performance of the organisation in question. Conflicts arising from personal differences are resolved through the use of mediation (Marandici, 2023).

Additionally, a study was conducted in Nigeria, with the aim of investigating the impact of conflict resolution on organisational performance with a case study of the Abia State Broadcasting Corporation. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The researchers discovered that conflict management was shown to have a favourable and statistically significant link with organisational performance. When given the proper attention, the motivational packages implemented by the business have the ability to have a positive impact on the firm's employees and customers. So, the study found that when the organisation kept a reasonable level of conflict resolution in the workplace, it was better for the coordination and control of the activities of the organisation (Imene & Udjo-onovughakpo, 2023).

The findings of research conducted by Takupiwa and Shelfa (2019) demonstrated that collective bargaining is a crucial catalyst for addressing present and anticipated difficulties and conflicts inside businesses. Well-managed collective bargaining improves the employer's corporate image, fosters mutual trust, prevents and decreases strikes, and helps to maintain the balance of the firm by raising productivity and encouraging employee engagement. It has been discovered by Takupiwa and Shelfa (2019) and Hartman (2023) that collective bargaining promotes organisational and/or industrial democracy, as well as peace and harmony, and that this in turn aids in the resolution of conflicts between employers and employees.

Also, Oguwa (2011) explored how labour relations affect the overall performance of a business, using the Kenya Commercial Bank Kisumu Branch as a case study. The information gathered was analysed using SPSS version 12 and presented in tables to enable cross-comparisons in accordance with the study's goal of gathering information. According to the findings of the study, components of employee relations strategies, such as staffing and promotions, employee training and development, performance appraisal, job analysis and job description, and finally the employee reward system all have a significant impact on organisational performance. So, to improve the performance of the company, different strategies should be used to strengthen these parts of employee relations strategies (Alkandi et al., 2023).

Nanda and Patra (2023) examined the impact of organisational culture (OC) and labour relations (IR) on organisational performance (OP). Specifically, the study aims to investigate the relationship between organisational culture and organisational performance, as well as the relationship between labour relations and organisational performance. The sample consisted of 189 respondents from a population of 260 at Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP), resulting in a response rate of 72.7%. The authors used SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) to analyse the data, employing multiple regression analysis. The results showed a significant positive relationship between OC and OP, as well as a positive and significant relationship between IR and OP. The study recommends future longitudinal designs to measure theoretical constructs at different points in time to confirm the findings.

Furthermore, using cross-country firm-level data from twenty-three developing countries, Balsmeier (2017) identified a negative link between unionisation and the rate at which organisations invest in research and development. This connection is specifically noticeable when unions are safeguarded by solid collective bargaining laws, backing up the impression that effective unions “tax” the earnings on fruitful innovations. Bryson and Dale-Olsen (2020) also found that union bargaining is positively linked to product innovations in Norway and Britain. Similarly, local union bargaining is positively linked to innovation. Numerous studies have observed how and the extent to which unions impact organisational innovation in Chile (Cabaleiro & Gutiérrez, 2019; Cho, Lee, Lee & Sohn, 2017). They concluded that unions do not negatively impact product and process innovation and can inspire innovation in organisations.

The significance of the labour relations climate has been emphasised in numerous studies (Balsmeier, 2017; Takupiwa & Shelfa, 2019; Berg et al., 2023), where measures of the labour relations climate have been positively linked to both improved labour relations results and efficient economic performance. For instance, Addison et al. (2017) are of the view that effective labour relations practices lead to a reduction in strikes as well as promote independent representation in organisations. Likewise, Berg et al. (2023) made available evidence that the importance of labour relations when it comes to building trust between employers and employees plays a salient role in determining some peculiar indicators of economic performance. The study

was of the view that the major decline in the level of unemployment in the Netherlands is as a result of union activities. They also observe a strong positive correlation between the rate at which workers join unions and the level of trust in labour relations. This, however, contradicts the mutual impression that anything that reinforces workers' bargaining power, specifically the high rate at which workers affiliate themselves with unions, should be negatively perceived by workers and stimulate the level of distrust in relation to employees.

Laroche (2020) conducted a study that indicated that the impact of unions on the performance of organisations has been the subject of debate and controversy in the majority of the industrialised countries, predominantly in the United States and the United Kingdom. Empirical outcomes indicate that unionism is mostly affiliated with higher productivity; however, this relationship could differ with regards to the industries at stake and institutional contexts. Approximations of the causal mechanisms through which unions influence productivity give an in-depth appreciation of the effects of unions. The literature on this phenomenon identifies that part of this effect may work through the reduction of employee turnover and other mechanisms, which comprises technological and organisational innovations, which are vital stimuli of growth in productivity. On the contrary, current studies in relation to labour relations practices such as unionism and collective bargaining on the profitability of organisations support Blanchflower and Bryson's (2017) assertion that unionisation is affiliated with a decline in the profitability of organisations. Moreover, union activities, particularly collective bargaining, trade off some economic efficiency in exchange for greater justice in organisations.

Nevertheless, preceding studies also present contradicting views that some elements of labour relations, which consist of the political, ecological and technological environment, are seen as push factors towards the decrepit nature of organisational performance. This conclusion is due to the fact that some activities, such as trade union activities, resistance, adversarial labour relations and grievances, have been discovered to be highly costly to many organisations, as they would affect productivity and the organisation's performance (Remy, 2023; Klingner, 2016; Lu & Wang, 2017).

Studies published over the years have lately been reviewed by Doucouliagos, Freeman and Laroche (2017), whose meta-analyses provide the opportunity to ascertain the average impact of labour relations practices, such as unions, on the efficiency of organisations. The researchers established that the wide diversity of findings with regard to the influence of labour relations practices on the performance of organisations has not paved the way for a definitive position; specifically, the impact of unions on performance is dependent on the period under consideration, the industry with which the organisation operates, and the nature of the social climate that exists in each country, but also in each organisation. Moreover, the approaches to data collection, the numerous performance indicators used and the econometric treatments espoused are perplexing and clarify the non-existence of consensus on the impact of labour relations practices on workers' productivity and performance.

Most of the aforementioned literature was conducted in developed countries; a few of the studies were conducted in developing countries. The reviewed literature did not include more studies in developing countries rather than developed countries because of factors such as availability of data. Most of the studies conducted in developed countries benefit from robust data collection mechanisms, longitudinal studies, and comprehensive datasets. This availability of data facilitated rigorous empirical analysis and allowed the study to draw more definitive conclusions regarding the relationship between labour relations and organisational performance.

Consequently, the majority of the available studies on labour relations and organisational performance are from developed countries. However, it is essential to acknowledge the importance of including perspectives from developing countries to provide a more comprehensive understanding of labour relations dynamics globally; hence, some studies from these countries were reviewed. Furthermore, the majority of the studies reviewed employed a quantitative approach in investigating and exploring the phenomenon. This led to a research methodological lacuna in the literature. As a result, the study employed a qualitative approach to get in-depth appreciation of the phenomenon in the Ghanaian context. Additionally, within the human resource management scope, most researchers in developing countries have not explored the practice of labour relations as a branch of HR as compared to other disciplines in HR (Nyathi & Kekwaletswe, 2024; Garneau, Pérez-Lauzon & Lévesque, 2023; Garner, 2021). Hence, there is a lacuna in literature when it comes to studies

in labour relations and its influence on organisational performance in developing countries' public sectors, which the study seeks to address by exploring the influence of labour relations on the performance of public sector institutions in Ghana. Hence, section 2.4 explores the practice of public sector labour relations, specifically public sector unionism.

2.4 Public Sector Unionism

The preceding section (Section 2.3) examined relevant studies on labour relations and how they affect business performance. A few studies have, nevertheless, examined this phenomenon from the perspective of the public sector. Consequently, the practice of public sector labour relations, more especially, public sector unionism, was examined in this section.

Public sector labour relations mostly showcase peculiar features, not only in relation to the regulation of employment relations but also in terms of the focus on representation, both from the employees' and employer's sides (Simms, Holgate & Roper, 2019; Di Carlo, 2023). This is because under Article 2 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 87, employees, as well as employers have the right to establish organisations and to join them, subject only to the rules of the organisations concerned. The reason for effective public sector unionism has to do with the positive attitude that public employers typically have when it comes to the recognition of the role of trade unions (Madimutsa & Pretorius, 2017; Kester & Sidibé, 2019; Carter, 2022).

It is believed that the establishment of a trade union within a corporation will allow for the accommodation of employee goals, thus allowing for the ongoing development of their welfare and rights, which includes protecting the rights of employees, improving their welfare, improving working conditions and provisions through an agreement with the employer, negotiating compensation in the event of illness or personal problems, and representing employees in order for the company to take their opinions into consideration during the decision-making process (Prowse, Lopes & Fells, 2017; Turner, 2022; Remy, 2023). Unions play several roles, including protection for their members; improvement in working conditions; bargaining over working agreements

and compensation; complaints accommodation and mediation; improvement in employee welfare and communication; maintenance of solidarity among employees; maintenance of industrial relationships; and the development of a positive working relationship between employees and their employer (Zhavoronkov, 2015; Kahancová & Martišková, 2023).

In the public sector, participation costs are less, and the 'free riding' alternative is weaker, as individual advancements are difficult to achieve. In some cases, affiliation to trade unions comes with specific benefits in terms of a better capacity to protect individual interests, mainly through the pressure union representatives can exert on a politically sensitive employer (Carter, 2022; Finger & Hartney, 2021; Amoako-Gyampah, 2018). The boost in public sector unionism was stimulated by a number of factors consisting of the development of governments, private sector spillover effects, and social change (Wolfe & Schmitt, 2018). Although public sector unions have the right to challenge laws and regulations through political action, the issue is that they are not involved in the early stages of the policy planning process as co-equal partners (Van Roozendaal, 2020). Some scholars have linked and blamed the restricted role of public sector unions to a lack of consensus over the legal framework for regulating public sector collective bargaining. Furthermore, they have attributed the situation to political conservatism, which focuses on individualism and self-reliance over communitarianism and which is rooted in a system of stratification and rigid social barriers (Hogler, Hunt & Weiler, 2015; Okechukwu, 2016; Flynn, 2017; Adu-Amankwah & Tutu, 2019). Whatever the case may be, such an outcome forfeits the purpose of collective action in workplaces, as well as the tripartite process. This is an important issue to investigate, considering the fact that the intertwined evolution of the public services and public sector unions shaped the distinctive character of public sector industrial relations (Rehfeldt, 2018).

Public sector unionism is one of the salient factors that characterise public sector labour relations (Carter, 2022; Kahancová & Martišková, 2023). In order to ascertain the influence of labour relations on the performance of public sector institutions, it is important to understand the distinctive characteristics of public sector unionism and its impact on organisations. Hence, public sector unionism was considered a key variable in the objective of the study.

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the influence of public sector unionism on organisational performance, a qualitative design was employed in order to delve into the intricate details of public sector unionism and its influence on public sector institutions. In addition, a case study approach was adopted to enable an in-depth examination of a specific public sector organisation. Moreover, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of public sector employees from a diverse range of roles and departments to elicit diverse perspectives on the phenomenon. The alignment of the above-mentioned methodology with the variable, i.e., public sector unionism, helped the study to provide valuable insights into the complex relationship between public sector unionism and the performance of the Ghanaian public sector.

The aforementioned dynamics of public sector unionism indicate that effective public sector unionism can stimulate positive attitudes in public employees and influence employee and organisational performance. Especially in developing countries; consequently, the study focused on the practice of trade unionism in the Ghanaian public sector as discussed in section 2.5.

2.5 Trade Unionism in Ghana

As explained in Section 2.4, understanding of public sector unions in both developed and developing countries is essential to this study. However, the main focus is on developing nations, with Ghana serving as the focal point. Thus, Ghanaian trade union activities were analysed in this section. Trade unionism emerged in the Gold Coast, which is now known as Ghana, in the 1900s. At the initial stages, they were known as craft unions in urban centres and progressively they turned into industrial and national trade unions (Britwum, 2010; Taratko, 2023; Ayentimi & Burgess, 2023). However, before 1897, serfdom and slavery were common in the country. The formation of trade unions was illegal around the 1890s in most countries. There were severe penalties for attempting to organise unions. Notwithstanding the situation at hand, around 1931, it was realised that most individuals and interest groups went ahead and formed unions, regardless of attempts to stop them, and began to acquire political power (Otoo, Ulbrich & Asafu-Adjaye, 2013; Jeffries, 2023).

Consequently, the Trade Union Ordinance, 1941 (Cap 91), passed by the colonial government, allowed any five workers to form a trade union. Nonetheless, it did not grant the right to collective bargaining. Therefore, during this time, the working conditions and wages were solely determined by employers. Prior to the passing of the 1941 (Cap 91), there was no legal framework that allowed for the formation and registering of trade unions in the country. Hence, Cap 91 became the first enactment that allowed individuals to be able to form and register unions in the country. As welcoming as the Cap 91 was, it had its limitation, which was giving only junior staff the right to join trade unions. This limitation, however, was resolved by Section 45 of the Civil Service Interim Regulations of 1960, which eventually allowed both junior and senior staff to join trade unions. In Ghana, the Chief Labour Officer is in charge of registering trade union; this was stimulated by Cap 91. Currently, the Labour Act 651, which was passed in the year 2003, is the Act that governs labour relations issues, specifically trade unionism, in Ghana (Britwum, 2010; Asafu-Adjaye, 2021; Ayentimi & Burgess, 2023).

The evolvement of the trade union movement over the years has contributed to the introduction of the concept of trade union pluralism, where the system has moved from times when trade unions were not allowed to operate to the era where there is a free will to form or join unions without limitations on how many to be formed in an organisation (Parku & Lamptey, 2018; Gawu & Koblavie, 2024).

One of the fundamental human rights in Ghana is the freedom of association, which is provided for in the Labour Act 651, which was passed in the year 2003. Section 79 (1) of the Act points to the fact that any individual engaged in a legal activity that gets him or her revenue (worker) has the right to form or join any trade union they prefer, without being forced, to protect and promote the worker's interest, economically and socially. This section goes further to state that for workers to be able to form trade unions, there should be a form of consensus that should take place between the worker or trade union and their employers. Section 80 of the Act also talks about the formation of trade unions or employers' organisations; this section gives more details about the previous section. It stipulates that an enterprise or organisation having two or more individuals as workers of that organisation is permitted to form a trade union. In regard to employers, the section specifies that in situations where we have two or more workers involved in the same trade or industry and where each of the

employers has employed workers not less than fifteen, the employers are permitted to form or join trade unions. It is important to note that no limitation has been placed on the number of unions that can be formed in an organisation by law; hence, multiple unions are welcomed (Bonsu, Dui, Ruiwen, Asare & Prempeh, 2019; Ayentimi & Burgess, 2023; Darkwah & Danquah, 2023).

In Ghana, a trade union can only be registered and recognised by the chief labour officer. Additionally, a trade union can only participate in collective bargaining processes with either the government or a specific employer when the chief labour officer has awarded a collective bargaining certificate to the unions involved. As at May, 2024, there are 350 registered trade unions across the country, as indicated by a Labour department officer in Ghana (field data; May 2024). Consequently, union density of the formal sector is estimated at 68 percent vis-à-vis workers covered by collective agreements (Akenten, Ayertey, Odonkor & Andoh, 2019; Ayentimi & Burgess, 2023).

The goal of policy has been to increase employment in Ghana for a long time. However, the nation's 2015 National Work Policy indicates a renewed focus on the quality of work. Non-wage benefits like paid time off, paid sick leave, and maternity leave play a significant role in evaluating a job's quality. Even though the law guarantees these non-wage benefits very few people actually take advantage of them. Workers may not be aware of their rights or how to obtain these benefits, which might account for the poor adoption of statutory benefits. For instance, more than one quarter of Ghanaian workers claim that when they started a job, they were not provided a written or verbal contract (Darkwah & Danquah, 2023; Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2021). Moreover, employers who disregard these legal requirements almost never face consequences. Through contract negotiations, industrial action, and employee rights education, unions may be a valuable resource for workers seeking non-wage benefits. As at 2023, fewer than a third of employees are represented by unions at their workplaces (Ayentimi & Burgess, 2023). Based on this backdrop, the study aimed to investigate how unions protect their members' interests in fostering industrial harmony, which should improve worker performance in Ghana (Ayentimi & Burgess, 2023; Jahan, Kusi, Zisa & Quarcoo, 2023).

Furthermore, trade unionism has an underlining principle, which is based on the freedom of association. However, its application and interpretation to law differ from one jurisdiction to another (Jeffries, 2023). Hence, the review of trade unionism in the Ghanaian context was very important for the study. Similarly, considering the fact that the study was instituted in the Ghanaian context, highlighting the dynamics of unionism in Ghana aided in achieving the objectives of the study.

2.5.1 The Role of Trade Unionism in the Study

Considering trade unionism as a multifaceted and contextually grounded phenomenon, it is best understood through qualitative enquiries. Hence, the study adopted a qualitative approach with the aim of uncovering and facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between trade union activities and labour relations that ultimately influences organisational performance. Additionally, a case study design was employed because it complements the qualitative approach and aligns well with the study's focus on trade unionism as a variable. By selecting multiple public sector organisations as case study sites, the study explored the varying degrees of trade union influence and labour relations dynamics across different contexts, as well as an in-depth examination of the historical development of trade unions in Ghana, their specific goals and strategies, and the impact of these factors on labour relations and organisational performance. Interviews with key stakeholders, including trade union leaders, public sector managers, employees, and government officials, provided an essential dimension to the study because it allowed for a direct exploration of participants' perceptions and viewpoints regarding the role of trade unionism in shaping labour relations and its impact on organisational performance. Combining a qualitative approach, case study design, and interviews effectively aligned with the study's focus on trade unionism as a variable influencing labour relations and public sector organisational performance in Ghana. Additionally, it helped the study in obtaining nuanced and context-specific insights into the complex interactions between trade unions and public sector organisations, contributing to a better understanding of the dynamics at play in the Ghanaian context. Trade unionism in Ghana is characterised by several activities; the most

dominant among the activities of trade unions in Ghana has to do with collective bargaining, as discussed in section 2.6

2.6 Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining is a fundamental labour relation practice that unions engage in, in addition to the other discussions on trade union activities in Section 2.5. Therefore, in order to meet the study's objectives, this section explored collective bargaining. Collective bargaining has to do with the ability of an organisation to deal with and resolve internal conflicts between management and employees, which determines the length of the it's life cycle. Conflicts and disputes, whether manifested as open animosity or concealed propagation, are unavoidable (Nyanga & Sibanda, 2015; Bernstein, 2022). To maintain uninterrupted output, every company must attempt to keep these concerns under control. In light of the growing number of disagreements, most organisations have come up with a variety of ways to try to solve them, one of which is collective bargaining. Some employees group together and seek representation from a labour union in order to bargain over critical labour problems. Workers' cooperatives, or groupings of workers, frequently join forces to communicate and negotiate on their behalf with an employer's interests in mind. Workers who are coordinated and unified in their efforts can be more effective in negotiations than they would be if they were acting individually (Doellgast & Benassi, 2020; Johnston, 2022; Martins, 2021).

According to Mulunda et al., (2018), Williamson and Roles (2023), and Zwysen and Drahokoupil (2024), collective bargaining involves having a discussion and negotiating issues that are of mutual agreement to both employers and unions in relation to the employment relationship and terms and conditions of employment. Similarly, collective bargaining is the process of employers and labour unions coming to an agreement on issues that are important to both parties, such as the employment relationship and the terms and conditions of work, through negotiation and debate (Schnabel, 2020; Villanueva & Adamopoulou, 2022). Employee voice gives a chance for workers to bring attention to concerns at work with the goal of enhancing the overall functioning of the company (Doellgast and Benassi, 2020). As a result, it may be viewed as a technique for engaging employees on issues of

concern in order to enhance decision-making, particularly when it comes to issues that affect their jobs. According to the literature, companies may reap the benefits of employee voice when they create a climate in which workers feel comfortable sharing their thoughts while also assuring that they will not be penalised as a result of doing so (Wraas & Dahle, 2020).

It is not commonplace for employees and employers to differ on critical employment terms and conditions, resulting in conflict in the workplace or the threat of a strike (Cazes, Garnero & Martin, 2019). Employees who participate in collective bargaining enjoy better working conditions, higher incomes, and more comprehensive benefits packages than their counterparts who do not. Giving employees greater influence over crucial labour problems has been proven to boost the overall stability of organisations. As a result, workers also have a voice as a result of the process, and their issues are heard and acknowledged as a result. In the workplace, a good collective bargaining process may help to develop dignity and mutual respect among employees. (De Stefano & Taes, 2023; van Staden, 2024).

Wage increases and wage equality for union members and non-union workers in unionised occupations and public sectors are achieved through collective bargaining. Since the beginning of time, researchers have proven the link between being represented by a union and earning a greater income. It is referred to as the "union wage premium" because it quantifies the percentage difference between the pay of unionised workers and those of non-unionised individuals who have similar characteristics (Bivens et al., 2017; McNicholas, Rhinehart, Poydock, Shierholz & Perez, 2020). Several studies have shown that collective bargaining is an important method of conflict resolution in a variety of work settings. As Bello and Kinge (2014) pointed out, the absence of collective bargaining in organisations is one of the most significant reasons for strikes and other types of collective labour action, particularly in the public sector.

The public sector and collective bargaining system protect public workers from political favouritism and fickle actions by management (Ibsen, 2021). The dual protection provided by public service collective bargaining systems was criticised by public administration scholars as stimulating unnecessary conflict in public labour

relations because of attacks by authoritarian employers and repressive governments (Klingner, 2016; Bosch, Schulten & Weinkopf, 2021; Han, 2023).

Although the past decades of collective bargaining in the public sector have been quite productive, the future does not seem promising. This is due to governments imposing taxes on their citizens, layoffs of public sector workers, and the frequent privatisation of state institutions (Johnston and Land-Kazlauskas, 2018). One salient variance in private-sector and public-sector collective bargaining has to do with the fact that most public-sector organisations include management and supervisory personnel as part of their bargaining strategies. This can bring about a lot of pressure on state institutions when settling disputes (Moore, Onaran, Guschanski, Antunes & Symon, 2019; van Staden, 2024).

Often the conclusion is that the collective bargaining system is redundant (Luo & Yang, 2020; Pandey, 2023). Yet, public administration scholars have devoted little attention to systematically examining public sector unionism, their bargaining activities and their impact on conflict resolution (Mulunda et al., 2018; Bosch, Schulten & Weinkopf, 2021). Hence, the study seeks to explore public sector unionism, their collective bargaining practices, and how conflict resolution influences the performance of public sector institutions: In order to achieve this, the study explored the aforementioned concepts, which allowed the study to recognise practices that boost productivity and service delivery as well as provide data that form the basis for labour policies, particularly regarding public employment and union regulations. Achieving the aim of the study was important because public sector performance directly influences citizens' access to essential services. Improved resource management, a more motivated staff, and better service outcomes are the results of cooperative union-management dispute resolution. These insights may also be used by policymakers to draft legislation that strikes a balance between the interests of the government, unions, and employees in the public sector.

2.6.1 The Role of Collective Bargaining in the Study

Collective bargaining is one of the salient elements when it comes to the factors that characterise labour relations at workplaces all over the world. It is impossible to

understand the dynamics of labour relations without referring to collective bargaining practice due to the pivotal role it plays in shaping labour relations (Johnston, 2022). Hence, in order to ascertain the influence of labour relations on the performance of public sector institutions, the role of collective bargaining was embedded in the objectives of the study.

Since collective bargaining is closely related to the study's goal and has a significant impact on how labour and management interact in companies, reviewing the relevant literature was vital to the investigation. The whole culture of the company and the welfare of its employees are directly impacted by the collective bargaining process (De Stefano & Taes, 2023). The study reviewed collective bargaining processes and agreements in order to assess how the terms established through bargaining influence factors like employee satisfaction and commitment, all of which are critical determinants of organisational performance (Garnero, 2021; Kahancová & Martišková, 2023).

Collective bargaining also aids in reducing conflict and fostering peace within the workforce, as well as between labour and management. Thus, maintaining high levels of performance and productivity in organisations require effective dispute resolution. The productivity and efficiency of an organisation is greatly impacted by the terms and conditions that are negotiated through collective bargaining (Zwysen & Drahokoupil, 2024). The study gained insights into collective bargaining's impact on organisational performance by studying its implications on productivity and work quality, two important performance measures. Therefore, the study was able to comprehend how labour relations practices contribute to organisational success and propose strategies for improving performance through effective labour-management cooperation by studying the dynamics of collective bargaining and its outcomes.

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon, a qualitative research approach incorporating case study analysis and interviews was selected. The qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the variable collective bargaining as it explored the negotiation processes, agreements, and outcomes resulting from the interaction between management and labour unions and their impact on the performance of public sector organisations. In addition, the adoption of the case study design offered a valuable means of examining real-life scenarios in

their natural context by focusing on understanding the interactions between management and labour unions, the negotiation processes, and the outcomes of collective bargaining agreements.

Furthermore, by delving into specific cases, the study provides context-specific insights into how collective bargaining operates within each organisation, considering factors such as power dynamics, negotiation strategies, and the nature of demands made by labour unions in the Ghanaian public sector. This method helped to appreciate the bigger picture of the phenomenon and the generalisation of findings. In supplementing the case study approach, interviews were conducted with public sector workers, government officials, and management who were directly involved in the practice of collective bargaining. Through semi-structured interviews, participants were more expressive when sharing their perspectives and opinions on collective bargaining and their perceived impact on the success of public sector organisations. Similarly, firsthand accounts of how collective bargaining affects labour relations and organisational performance were obtained through interviews with significant social parties in the tripartite relationship who are engaged in collective bargaining processes.

The study utilised purposive sampling to select participants with firsthand knowledge of collective bargaining procedures within their organisations. This was crucial for understanding its impact on organisational performance. Participants included management representatives, labour unions, and employees. Thematic and content analysis was used to identify patterns, themes, and linkages in the data. This helped identify key elements, difficulties, and results related to collective bargaining procedures and their efficiency in organisations.

The research methodology aligned effectively with the variable of collective bargaining, as it allowed for the retrieval of comprehensive data on collective bargaining. In conclusion, the employing of a qualitative research approach that incorporates case study, purposive sampling, and interviews helped the study to achieve its objectives by providing better understanding of the influence of labour relations, particularly collective bargaining, on the performance of public sector organisations in Ghana. As established in the aforementioned submissions, collective bargaining is characterised by several activities, such as issues of conditions of

service and issues regarding wages and salaries of workers. However, the dominant element that is prevailing in collective bargaining has to do with the ability of organisations to deal with and resolve conflicts between management and employees. Hence, in the next section (Section 2.7), the focus was on conflict resolution and its importance in promoting effective labour relations.

2.7 Conflict Resolution

The dominant aspect highlighted in collective bargaining, as discussed in Section 2.6, pertains to an organisation's capacity to manage and resolve conflicts between management and employees. Hence, this section explored the concept of conflict resolution and its connection to achieving industrial harmony and subsequent organisational performance. Conflict is an unavoidable and a natural phenomenon in all spheres of life. Conflict stimulates from differences in outlook, opinions and values regarding several issues (Huang et al., 2023). The issues may comprise cultural, social, political or economic elements. Also, conflict can be at the individual, community, national or international level (Kurbonalieva & Adxamovna, 2021; Sinnaiah, Adam & Mahadi, 2023).

Conflict arises when individuals perceive the other party as impeding their efforts. Conflicts have arisen due to the employer's quest to maximise profit while the employee representatives seek to ensure continuous improvements in living conditions for their members. In the organisational context, conflict may also persist due to the failure of employers to honour agreed items on collective bargaining (Seward et al., 2019; Anene, 2022; Kapras, 2023).

The idea is not to be afraid of or avoid conflict, considering its unavoidable nature. Rather, learn how to resolve conflict in a constructive manner (Saundry, Fisher & Kinsey, 2021). Consequently, it is possible to describe conflict resolution as the informal or formal procedure that two or more parties employ in order to reach a peaceful conclusion to their disagreement (Smith & Fredricks-Lowman, 2020). Similarly, conflict resolution is the process of putting an end to a disagreement and reaching an agreement that everyone is satisfied with in order to enhance dialogues, increase understanding, and moderate emotional responses (Yang, Cropanzano, Daus & Martínez-Tur, 2020; Kapras, 2023).

The ability to identify and resolve conflict is a vital skill that is needed to increase the performance of employees and organisations as a whole. When a dispute is effectively resolved, there may be several advantages, including the achievement of individual and team objectives as well as the improvement of personal and professional relationships. This stimulates a high level of commitment by employees to improve productivity. The inability to resolve conflict properly may result in low commitment from workers, job possibilities being lost, and unhealthy relationships being formed (Ling, Seok & Maakip, 2019; Rhodes & Akram, 2023).

Conflict resolution has played a vital role in promoting industrial harmony and democracy in the public sector. The public sector has witnessed a series of conflicts among the social partners, which has resulted in industrial actions such as strikes and picketing. These activities have led to waste of man hours and subsequently impeded the performance of public sector workers (Behrens, Colvin, Dorigatti & Pekarek, 2020; Rhodes & Akram, 2023; Coccia, 2023).

Most public sector institutions employ several methods of resolving conflicts, which include joint consultation, conciliation, collective bargaining, mediation and arbitration. Most of these methods have been stipulated explicitly in the labour act documents of countries regarding the process of dispute settlement aside from the internal procedure. Joint consultation is one of the tools employed by the public sector in resolving conflict. It basically has to do with meetings or discussions between workers and business owners or employers regarding matters of joint concern that are not subject to negotiations with trade unions (Lahana et al., 2019; Oluwafemi & Kifordu, 2023). Additionally, mediation is a form of alternative dispute resolution used in resolving conflict. It usually employs a third party referred to as a mediator to assist parties involved in the dispute to negotiate their own settlement. On the other hand, arbitration is also an alternative dispute resolution where the dispute is referred to a third party known as arbitrators. The third party reviews the case and imposes a decision that is legally binding on both parties involved in the dispute (Saefudin, 2019; Phan & Coleman, 2023; Pablo, 2024).

Similarly, conciliation as an alternative dispute resolution involves a conciliator making suggestions for settlement terms as well as giving advice on the subject matter. Another common method employed by the public sector in resolving conflict

is collective bargaining. It has to do with a worker's right to engage with employers on terms of conditions and employment between an employer, a group or association of employers, and a representative of workers or trade unions (Rhodes & Akram, 2023). It also forms a vital component of the conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO Convention 98). All of these alternative dispute resolution methods aid in the promotion of industrial harmony at workplaces, which in turn stimulates the performance of public sector workers and institutions (Behrens, Colvin, Dorigatti & Pekarek, 2020; Ojo, 2023; Sauden & Chhetri, 2023). In Ghana, the National Labour Commission (NLC) is the legislative agency in charge of promoting and facilitating the resolution of labour disputes. The NLC, which was founded under the Labour Act 2003 (Act 651), represents the interests of the government, employers, and employees under the tripartite framework of labour relations. In Ghana, the institution mandated to resolve labour issues is the National Labour Commission.

2.7.1 The Role of the National Labour Commission (NLC) in Ghana's Labour Relations System

The National Labour Commission (NLC), an independent statutory agency created under the Labour Act 2003 (Act 651), is tasked with facilitating the settlement of labour disputes and guaranteeing adherence to Ghanaian labour rules. The NLC, along with the government and organised labour/employer associations, operates within the tripartite labour relations structure, with responsibilities that include investigating industrial disputes, providing mediation and arbitration services, and enforcing collective agreements (Owoo, Lambon-Quayefio, Dávalos & Manu, 2020). All employees are covered by the Act, with the exception of those in the armed forces, police, prisons, and security and intelligence agencies listed by the Security and Intelligence Agencies Act 1996 (Act 526). According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2016) and study by Kwarteng, Bawa and Koduah, (2024), the NLC has played a central role in dispute resolution, particularly in the public sector. However, research also points to persistent challenges, such as resource constraints, delays in case resolution, and difficulties enforcing rulings, factors that can exacerbate disputes and prolong service disruptions. This mixed record underscores the importance of examining the NLC's role within the broader context of labour

relations practices and their influence on organisational performance in Ghana's public sector.

2.7.2 The Role of Conflict Resolution in the Study

Due to the importance of conflict resolution in effective labour relations and the promotion of workplace performance, it was considered a key variable in the objectives of the study. Conflict resolution within labour relations has a direct impact on a number of organizational performance metrics, making it an important consideration when reaching the study's goal. Conflicts in labour relations can impede productivity, lower morale among staff members, and increase absenteeism or turnover (Rhodes & Akram, 2023). Organisations may sustain a productive and high-performing work environment by immediately and constructively resolving issues. Employee tension, resentment, and discontent brought on by unresolved issues can lower commitment and drive. On the other hand, workers who feel appreciated, listened to, and supported after conflicts are handled fairly have improved morale and increased involvement at work (Anene, 2022).

Impartial dispute resolution is valued in a culture that creates a supportive and respectful work atmosphere for employees. Relationships may be strengthened, trust can be developed, and group efforts to accomplish organisational objectives can be encouraged in such a culture, which will ultimately improve organisational performance (Nwafor, 2023; Sinnaiah, Adam & Mahadi, 2023; Muthumani & Kumar, 2023). The comprehension and examination of the correlation between conflict resolution methodologies and organisational efficacy have yielded significant insights into the ways in which labour relations impact the overall performance of an organisation.

The efficiency and efficacy of public sector institutions are significantly influenced by labour relations, which are frequently characterised by disagreements and conflicts between management and labour unions. A qualitative research approach was used to enable an in-depth study of conflict resolution strategies and their impact on the performance of public sector organisations in Ghana in order to thoroughly explore this dynamic. Rich and thorough insights into the mechanics of different conflict

resolution techniques, including collective bargaining, arbitration, mediation, and negotiation, as useful means of resolving labour conflicts and fostering good labour relations, were provided by the study.

The study also used a case study methodology, which enables a thorough examination of actual situations within the typical settings of Ghanaian public sector organisations. By identifying patterns, underlying factors, and distinctive aspects of conflict resolution within the Ghanaian public sector, the case study design allowed for a more nuanced assessment of the strategies' impact on organisational performance. It also made it easier to understand how the strategies were applied and modified in various organisational settings. In addition, interviews were undertaken with labour officials, directors, and public servants who work for the chosen public sector organisations and are active in labour relations and conflict resolution. Participants discussed their individualised opinions about conflict resolution techniques and how they affect organisational performance throughout the semi-structured interviews. The information obtained from the interviews gave rise to a thorough grasp of the difficulties encountered, the efficacy of various conflict resolution techniques, and the perceived influence on the general performance of Ghanaian public sector organisations. The investigation of the tactics used to resolve labour relations issues was made easier by the research techniques' alignment with the conflict resolution variable.

Furthermore, the study was able to unearth various findings regarding the relationship between conflict resolution and organisational performance based on a thematic and content analysis of qualitative data acquired through interviews. The research methodologies yielded useful insights into the larger dynamics of labour relations, dispute resolution, and organisational success, as well as the overall study objectives. These insights were valuable to the study's conclusions. In conclusion, the application of a qualitative research methodology that incorporated case study design, interviews, and thematic analysis helped the study to achieve its objective by gaining a deeper understanding of conflict resolution in labour relations and its influence on the performance of public sector organisations in Ghana.

Effective resolution of conflicts leads to improved performance within the organisation by creating a productive and happy work atmosphere. The type and frequency of

conflicts that occur at work can be influenced by organisational effectiveness. Conflicts may be caused by elements like ambiguous objectives, insufficient funding, or subpar leadership (Muthumani & Kumar, 2023). Proactive strategies and procedures are often in place in high-performing businesses to handle conflicts in a timely and efficient manner, preventing them from getting worse and having a detrimental influence on performance. Conversely, if disputes are mishandled or remain unresolved, the performance of the organisation may suffer, resulting in lower output, a higher rate of employee attrition, and a lower level of morale (Al, 2022; Oluwafemi & Kifordu, 2023; Mohamed, Mahamud & Bolatito, 2024). Thus, an essential basis for successful conflict resolution is organizational performance. A focus on organisational performance encourages stakeholders to give conflict resolution initiatives top priority as part of larger plans to accomplish strategic goals, fostering a positive workplace culture and assisting in the success of the organisation as a whole. Consequently, the next section (Section 2.8) relates to the analysis and discussion of organisational performance.

2.8 Organisational Performance in the Public Sector

Efficient resolution of conflicts contributes to improved organisational performance by creating a favourable work environment that promotes productivity. Therefore, the review of conflict resolution in section 2.7 has stimulated the conversation about organisational performance in the public sector. Organisational performance is seen as the actual results that a workplace puts out if compared and measured against the results that the workplace intends to achieve. In addition, the effectiveness of an organisation is also linked to the performance of employees (Bashaer, Sanjay & Sherine, 2016; Supramaniam & Singaravelloo, 2021). Public sector organisations are generally non-profit-making and have little potential for income generation. It is, however, imperative that the public sector be able to measure various aspects of their performance. The composition of the public sector is dependent on the dynamics of each country. Some of this dynamic includes the rate at which the state owns the most enterprises in the country, the size of the country, and whether the levels of the public sector are organised on federal, national and municipal bases (Siddiquee, 2019; Pozuelo, Slipowitz & Vuletin, 2016; Kravariti et al., 2023).

The field of public administration is usually built on the assumption that the way public management is organised has an impact on organisational performance. This is mainly due to the ambiguity of what is meant by the term “public performance”, as well as how it may be measured or quantified (Androniceanu & Androniceanu, 2017; Rosenbloom, Kravchuk & Clerkin, 2022). Consequently, the New Public Management (NPM) system in most countries focuses on measuring output and outcomes and seeks to base their new policies and management activities on this type of data, with the aim of making policy implementation more efficient and effective (Quinn & Warren, 2017; Lapuente & Van de Walle, 2020; Bhul, 2023). However, the need for measuring output, outcomes, and performance evaluation activities is still seen as a vital element in performance contracting with a view to improving government organisations’ performance (Amoako-Asiedu, 2018).

Traditionally, most literature on the performance of public sector organisations concentrated on the constraints caused by external factors (rule of law and private versus public ownership). Similarly, the focus of the literature was on internal organisational variables such as organisational culture, tasks, leadership and capacity building (Lapsley & Miller, 2019; Ohemeng, Amoako-Asiedu & Darko, 2018; Dewah & Mutula, 2016; Amoako-Asiedu & Obuobisa-Darko, 2017; Bhul, 2023).

However, less research has been conducted focusing on the internal use of management instruments, such as labour relation practices, in public organisations, and their impact on performance. Therefore, the study seeks to investigate labour relation practices and their influence on the performance of public sector organisations. This can be determined by focusing on how labour relations practices are being carried out in the public sector and how they are contributing to the performance of the sector.

Organisational performance is purposefully scoped to the operational reality of Ghanaian public sector organisations in this study, with a focus on two interconnected dimensions: productivity and service delivery. Given the importance of service delivery to government agency missions and the growing public demand for effectiveness, accountability, and openness, these characteristics are thought to be the most pertinent for evaluating how labour relations affect public sector outcomes. The ability of public institutions to increase productivity, generating more

and better results with the resources at their disposal, while providing services that adhere to quality, timeliness, and accessibility requirements is operationalised as organisational performance (Amoako-Asiedu & Obuobisa-Darko, 2017). This definition acknowledges that performance is inextricably linked to the relational and human elements that support it. Specifically, the effectiveness of service delivery procedures and the productivity of institutional operations are directly impacted by the quality of labour relations, which includes matters like employee motivation, management-employee collaboration, dispute resolution, and compliance with labour laws.

Furthermore, this conceptualisation is influenced by the realities of resource restrictions that plague many Ghanaian public sector organisations, such as budgetary constraints, staffing shortages, and infrastructural deficits. Additionally, it integrates developmental and systems approaches, which see public institutions as a component of a networked governance ecosystem where policy frameworks, institutional culture (Bhul, 2023), and labour relations interact to influence overall performance. The study intends to offer a comprehensive knowledge of how labour relations either support or obstruct Ghanaian public sector organisations' capacity to carry out their service mandates and realise productivity increases by concentrating on the interactions between these factors.

2.8.1 The Role of Organisational Performance in the Study

Labour relations, characterised by the interactions between management and labour unions, have a significant impact on the productivity, efficiency, and overall success of public sector organisations (Kravariti et al., 2023). The study used a qualitative research approach to better understand the concept of organisational performance in relation to labour relations. The approach made it easier to understand performance characteristics and participant perceptions of labour relations strategies that improve public sector institutions' performance in Ghana. Additionally, the study's qualitative methodology made it possible to gather in-depth information about how various elements, including collective bargaining agreements, communication routes, negotiating procedures, and conflict resolution techniques, affected organisational performance. Additionally, by using a case study design, the research was able to examine real-world situations and pinpoint both common and distinctive labour

relations characteristics that influenced the differences in organisational performance between various public sector entities in the Ghana. Interviews with labour leaders and public servants directly involved in labour relations and performance management within the chosen public sector organisations were done in addition to the case study design. Through these interviews, the study was able to comprehend the ways in which labour relations practices like conflict resolution and unionism affect several facets of organizational performance. The study's research approaches are in line with the variable "organisational performance," as they offer a thorough investigation of the impact of labour relations on a range of performance metrics in Ghanaian public sector organisations. In summary, the utilisation of a qualitative research methodology that integrated case study design and interviews enabled the study to effectively accomplish its goal of elucidating the complex correlation between worker relations and organisational performance in Ghanaian public sector organisations. The next section (Section 2.9) examines in detail the concept of labour relations and its role in the public sector.

2.9 Public Sector Labour Relations

2.9.1 Introduction

A thorough explanation of how organisational performance functions in public sector settings was given in the preceding section (Section 2.8). However, it's important to look at the specifics of labour relations in this context as well, given the goal of the study, which is to comprehend how labour relations affect organisational performance in the public sector. The intersection of government policies, employee interests, and social expectations is a crucial point of convergence for labour relations in the public sector (Gattegno, 2019). Gaining an understanding of the dynamics of labour relations in the public sector is essential to comprehending the complex equilibrium that governmental organisations must maintain between administrative goals and employee well-being. The concept of labour relations in the public sector is examined in this introduction, along with its dynamics and how they play a crucial role in determining how governmental bodies operate. Comprehending the complexities of labour relations in the public sector is crucial for policymakers, administrators, and stakeholders. Through an exploration of the dynamics, concepts, and roles present in

these connections, a more profound understanding of the role labour relations play in influencing the efficacy and performance of governmental bodies is revealed.

2.9.2 Dynamics of Public Sector Labour Relations

Over the years, labour relations has received lots of attention from researchers, academicians, and policy practitioners. It has been widely accepted that facts and debate regarding the nature of labour relations have been critical to the success of workplace performance (Wright & Kaine, 2015; Sahoo & Sahoo, 2018; Han, 2023). Labour relations in the public sector have received little attention when it comes to this area of research. The result is probably neither an oversight nor a lack of interest by researchers and social partners in the field of labour relations. Rather, one can attribute it to the fact that for many years there had been no recognition of the right to form trade unions in the public service in many countries around the world (Massae, Michael & Sanga, 2023; Brown & Cao, 2023).

The labour relations legislation governing the public sector in several countries is pertinent to individuals selected for a permanent position in the public service. Such individuals are shielded by particular conditions of service governing the public service (Dzanku & Tsikata, 2022). This difference, made on the basis of whether or not the position is permanent, fundamentally serves to differentiate between workers to whom the rules governing the public service are applicable from those protected by the general legislation applying to employees in general (Bulińska-Stangrecka & Bagieńska, 2021; Johnston, 2022). Nevertheless, in practice, the circumstances are more complex, as roles involving permanent and effective participation in the public service are occasionally executed by individual workers under fixed-term contracts. These are contracts that, regardless of their restricted period, are of an administrative nature and which are covered by public law rather than private law (Brown & Cao, 2023). The result is that the differentiation between personnel in the public service who are covered by the distinct rules respecting labour relations in the public service and those governed by the general legislation applicable to the private sector is fairly imprecise (Bélanger, Edwards & Haiven, 2020; Brown & Cao, 2023).

Furthermore, most countries, such as Canada and the United States of America, have workers engage in managerial and discrete positions, which are excluded from the scope of the legislation governing public sector labour relations. Moreover,

workers in positions that are discrete are not explicitly omitted; the institution concerned has decided that it would prefer workers who discharge duties that are confidential with regard to individuals who design and implement managerial policies in the area of labour relations to be omitted from bargaining units (Matthew, 2021; Johnston, 2022; Grancelli, 2023). The aforementioned dynamics of public sector labour relations indicate that descriptions of the scope of the distinct rules governing labour relations differ from one jurisdiction to another when it comes to the institutions, bodies, and services that recruit public officials.

2.9.3 The Role of Labour Relations in the Public Sector

In the early part of 1919, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) encompassed the principle of freedom of association as one of its aims in its constitution. The ILO held a conference that saw the majority of its members adopting the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (No. 87) (ILO, 2016). It documented the right to organise employees in the public and the private sectors; hence, the recognition of the right to organise employees in the public sector (Gattegno, 2019; Tapiola, 2024). However, it was agreed to include a clause that allows for governments to regulate the extent to which the provisions in the Convention would be applicable to members of the police and the armed forces. Such provisions were imperative because countries would not be in a position to rectify such provisions if applied to members of the armed forces and the police, as they are responsible for defending the law and maintaining public order; hence, an industrial action from such groups would be detrimental to the survival of a country (ILO, 2016; Thomas & Turnbull, 2021; Farazmand, 2023).

In relation to freedom of association and collective bargaining under Article 2 of Convention No. 87 of the ILO, it was indicated that all public sector workers and officials should be given the right to establish occupational organisations, regardless of whether they are indulged in the country's administration at the central, regional or local level (Tapiola, 2024; Sankaran, 2024). However, it was identified that the scope and definition of public servants vary from one jurisdiction to the other; some countries legislation draws distinctions as to the status and rights of the various categories of public sector workers. Nonetheless, it was agreed that regardless of the distinctions drawn with regards to public servants, all workers in this category should

be covered by the Convention (ILO, 2016; Gavin, Poorhosseinzadeh & Arrowsmith, 2022).

Similarly, the committee of experts of the ILO also noted instances of restrictions concerning the right of public sector workers to join trade unions and the activities of such government institutions. For instance, the free choice of public servants may be restricted when legislation prohibits them from forming varied trade unions. This is to say that government institutions accept employees to join unions from other sectors or forbid them from joining such associations (ILO, 2016; Sankaran, 2024). Provisions of this kind are mostly projected to prevent any form of political involvement by trade union members in the public sector or to dissuade them from taking strike actions. In a principle relating to instances in the public sector, it has been considered that as public servants exercising policy-making responsibilities may be prevented from joining trade unions that represent other workers, such boundaries should be strictly limited to this category of workers, and they should be entitled to establish their own organisations (ILO, 2016; Alhambra, Ter Haar & Kun, 2020; Atzeni, 2022).

Furthermore, collective bargaining in the public sector has distinct characteristics that are found in various degrees in most countries. As the right of public sector workers to collective bargaining has been established in the ILO instrument, Conventions Nos. 151 and 154, the concern raised in several countries regarding the possibility of integrating these provisions in the scope of public service has been settled to an extent, even though it is still acknowledged that its implementation may be adapted in view of the distinct characteristics of the sector. These rudiments were explicitly stipulated in a memorandum of the International Labour Office addressed to a government, following a request for clarification concerning the implementation of Convention No. 154 in the public sector (Galic & Raonic, 2024; Ibe & Maduka, 2024). The office stipulated that there is no side to the convention that infers that in an instance where collective bargaining ends in resolution of disputes of social partners, such resolution must have the status of a collective agreement. Although in several countries this is the customary result of collective bargaining in different jurisdictions of the public sector, when it comes to some countries collective bargaining in the public sector leads to resolutions that do not have the status of a collective agreement. For instance, countries that have their conditions of employment of public

sector workers governed by special laws or provisions, negotiations with a view to the amendment of these special laws or provisions do not essentially lead to legally binding agreements, so far as the account is taken in good faith of the outcomes of the negotiations at hand (ILO, 2016; Belecky, Parry Jones & Singh, 2021; Barry, Cingranelli & Clay, 2022).

In addition, the committee on freedom of association by the ILO continuously stresses the fact that prominent consideration should be accorded to collective bargaining as the route to conflict resolution arising from issues regarding the determination of terms and conditions of employment in the public sector. Priority should be given to collective bargaining as a means of determining the employment conditions of public sector workers rather than modifying legislation to confine wages in the public sector in a context of economic stabilisation (Sankaran, 2024). Consequently, it has been criticised that, notwithstanding the preceding calls to governments to desist from intervening in the process of collective bargaining, there has been a failure to give priority to collective bargaining as a route of negotiating a change in the employment conditions of public sector workers (Liukkunen, 2021; Chen, 2021; Emudainohwo, 2023).

Characteristically, public sector collective bargaining is mostly experienced at the national level. The predominant characteristics of public sector collective bargaining comprise dialogue, consultation, and co-determination. Because of the political context of the public service, collective bargaining is sensitive to government policy, and public service labour relations is often characterised by excessive external political control of resources and activities (Pulignano et al., 2018; Williamson & Roles, 2023).

There are several factors leading to the distinctiveness of public sector labour relations. For instance, the existence of both the civil service and collective bargaining systems gives dual protection for public employees against arbitrary and impulsive decisions by management and political retaliation by elected officials (Pulignano et al., 2018). Additionally, the labour relations practices aid public sector workers to preserve their constitutional rights in organisations (Rosenbloom & Chanin, 2016; Etchemendy & Lodola, 2023; Høgedahl, Ibsen & Ibsen, 2024).

There are several factors or economic indicators, such as technology, methodologies in meeting targets, and other performance metrics, that contribute to and sustain the public sector of every country. The major role of public authorities now is to ensure that the reorganisation of their services and structures is in line with the changing patterns in the world of work. The main purpose of the study was to find out whether labour relations can be seen as a major contributor to the improvement of public sectors. Consequently, labour relation was considered a key variable in the objective of the study in ascertaining their influence on the performance of public sector institutions.

2.9.4 The Role of Public Sector Labour Relation in the Study

Labour relations, which encompass the interactions and dynamics between management and labour unions, are crucial in shaping the performance of public sector institutions (Høgedahl, Ibsen & Ibsen, 2024). A qualitative research approach was used to collect detailed information about labour relations in order to meet the study's objective. This approach sheds light on a number of labour relations-related topics, including collective bargaining, trade unionism, negotiation procedures, and dispute resolution. This method made it possible to comprehend these factors' interactions and how they affect the public sector's overall performance in a comprehensive way.

A case study was also used, which allowed for a thorough understanding of actual labour relations situations in a few Ghanaian public sector organisations. Analysing numerous cases also contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the intricacies and dynamics of labour relations in the public sector and how they affect performance outcomes. Interviews with labour executives, directors, and public servants involved in labour relations within the chosen public sector organisations were done in addition to the case study design. In addition to capturing the viewpoints of social partners directly involved in labour relations, these interviews allowed participants to discuss their experiences with labour relations and how it affects organisational performance. Because the study methodologies chosen allowed for a thorough examination of the dynamics, interactions, and complexities of labour relations between management and labour unions inside public sector organisations, they effectively aligned with the variable of labour relations.

In conclusion, by identifying the variable of labour relations and its impact on the performance of public sector organisations in Ghana, the methods mentioned above assisted the study in achieving its goals. At this time, it can be concluded that a great deal of research has shown that people are an organisation's most valuable asset and that using them to obtain a competitive edge is strategically significant. However, the subject of discussion at this time is how labour relations policies affect how well public sector organisation's function. In an effort to comprehend the relationship between labour relations and organisational effectiveness in the public sector more fully. It is vital to ascertain the elements of the workplace environment and how they influence organisational performance as discussed in Section 2.10.

2.10 Workplace Environment on Organisational Performance

2.10.1 Introduction

The public sector labour relations constitute a crucial aspect in ascertaining the influence on organisational performance, as discussed in section 2.9, and are contingent upon the workplace atmosphere. Hence, this section analysed how the workplace environment influences organisational performance. The work environment has an important influence on employee productivity, engagement, and general well-being, which, in turn, shapes the performance of the organisation. The complex relationship between an organisation's success and its work environment is examined in this introduction, with particular attention paid to important elements including work-life balance, incentives, training and development, and the physical workspace. The work environment has a big impact on how well a business performs because it affects productivity, employee satisfaction, and engagement. Organisations may build a work environment that supports high performance, innovation, and employee well-being by concentrating on elements like the physical space, effective communication, rewards, training and development, and work-life balance.

2.10.2 Influence of Workplace Environment on Organisational Performance

According to Hafeez et al. (2019) and Tripathi and Kalia (2024), the workplace has a lasting bearing on the job performance of workers in any establishment. They are of

the view that in the whole world, habitually individuals dedicate fifty percent of their lives to the workplace environment, and their actions, mental abilities, and job performance are affected by the workplace environment. A conducive workplace plays a vital role in the enrichment of productivity and also stimulates employees' job satisfaction level (Rasool et al., 2021; Mumtaz, Selvarajah & Meyer, 2024).

Furthermore, a workplace environment can be said to be anything that exists in the immediate vicinity of employees while they are at work and that has an impact on how they perform their jobs. It is made up of both external and internal factors that might have an impact on a person's working spirit and, as a result, on their ability to perform well at work (Sugiarti, 2022; Novianti, Pambreni & Yancik, 2024). Additionally, the work environment could be segmented into three sub-elements, comprising a technical environment, a human environment and an organisational environment. The technical environment is made up of technical elements such as tools, equipment, and infrastructure. While the human environment is connected to the relationship among employees and their interactions, the organisational environment comprises the processes, practices, values, and working philosophy of an organisation (Mihretu & Gopal, 2021; Tripathi & Kalia, 2024).

Basuki and Khalid (2021) are of the view that an unhealthy and unsafe work environment, such as one with aggrieved workers, poor ventilation, lack of tools and materials to work with, lack of health and safety measures in place, and other problems, negatively affects the health and productivity of workers in both the private and public sectors. Employees in the public sector require a thorough understanding of present performance, challenges, and processes, as well as long-term objectives. Such openness is more typical in short-term pilot studies, since everyone's attention is focused on the outcome of the experiment. However, in public institutions, where managers tend to think in functional or bureaucratic silos, this is not always the case. Public-sector organisations must first determine which strategic moves will best support their overarching mission and then develop metrics to measure their progress towards that goal. This is imperative because most public sector institutions lose sight of the importance of workplace environmental factors as a stimulant for increased performance and focus more on other factors such as policy formulation and implementation (Jahmani et al., 2023; Novianti, Pambreni & Yancik, 2024).

A work environment that is not conducive injects risks into the workplace, making it dangerous for workers and reducing their ability to perform at their highest levels. This happens when employees do not have a good relationship with their superiors due to collective bargaining issues, unfair dispute resolution, lack of recognition of unions in the organisations, unavailability of resources for workers to work with, and also lack of safety measures. All of these workplace factors affect the morale of workers negatively and makes workers level of engagement and commitment decline. This is to say that, the physical, psychosocial and psychological aspects of the work environment influence the success of an organization (Tannady & Budi, 2023; Sunarsi, 2019; Pawirosumarto, Sarjana & Gunawan, 2017; Mumtaz, Selvarajah & Meyer, 2024). Some of the salient factors that constitute a favourable environmental workplace have been highlighted below.

2.10.2.1 Physical environment

The relationship between employee performance and the physical office environment is highly interconnected and holds significant importance. The workplace's physical setting profoundly affects employees' performance, satisfaction, social interactions, and overall well-being. The conditions in which employees work are crucial factors that impact their motivation and job contentment, subsequently influencing their productivity levels (Funminiyi, 2018; Aggarwal et al., 2023; Wijaya, 2024). Additionally, the physical environment of a workplace has a direct impact on how employees interact and carry out their tasks. The work environment's physical attributes directly influence human perception, delicately shaping interpersonal interactions and thereby affecting productivity. This is due to the workplace characteristics having direct implications for both productivity and satisfaction. An inappropriate workplace environment introduces risks that jeopardise safety and hinder employees' productivity (Li, Greenwood & Kassem, 2019; Putri & Hartono, 2023). Therefore, a work environment should enable employees to perform their tasks smoothly and without hindrance.

The physical aspects of a workplace directly affect employees' health and safety, comfort, concentration, job satisfaction, and morale. A suitable and supportive work environment enhances employees' physical and mental capacities for their daily tasks. Furthermore, an employee's engagement in their job is fostered by a

favourable physical work environment. A conducive physical workplace, characterised by comfort, flexibility, and aesthetics, encourages employee mobility, concentration, sensory and physical engagement with their roles, ultimately promoting employee engagement. Such an environment enhances employees' overall well-being, contributing to the development and maintenance of their work capacity (Wijaya, 2024). This connection is due to the work environment's impact on cognitive, emotional, and physical well-being. Hence, a well-designed, user-friendly physical work environment plays a central role in employee engagement and, consequently, organisational success (Prayudi & Komariyah, 2023; Wijaya, 2024).

Moreover, the workplace environment influences “ergonomics,” which refers to designing to suit the employee rather than forcing the employee's body to fit the job. It pertains to the physical and mental capabilities and limitations an employee faces while interacting with tools, equipment, work methods, tasks, and the workplace environment. Neglecting ergonomic issues lead to employees adapting their behaviours subconsciously to mitigate discomfort, which affects their performance and reduces productivity (Ivascu, Ardelean, Sarfraz & Trocan, 2021; Hasanain, 2024). Consequently, ergonomics-related issues contribute to increased work-related stress in employees. Work-related stress arises when job requirements do not align with employees' capabilities, resources, and needs. Such stress is often exacerbated by work design and the workplace environment. Ergonomics-related issues pertain to the body's responses to physical and physiological stress in the workplace (Norona, Louisse & Evangelista, 2020; Arthur, Mnasi & Omari, 2024; Gupta, 2024).

Numerous studies focusing on the physical work environment have indicated that workers express satisfaction with specific workspace features. These features, which significantly impact productivity and workspace performance, include lighting, ventilation rates, access to natural light, and the acoustic environment (Mihretu & Gopal, 2021; Shobe, 2018; Wijaya, 2024). Similarly, Luce (2012) examined the impact of the working environment on employee performance at Ayka Addis Textile and Investment Group PLC. The findings revealed a substantial relationship between the physical work environment and employee performance, while training had no correlation with employee performance.

Furthermore, factors like lighting and ergonomic furniture have been found to positively influence employee health (Colenberg, Jylhä & Arkesteijn, 2021; Arthur, Mnasi & Omari, 2024), thereby contributing to productivity. Light, for instance, deeply affects individuals' physical, physiological, and psychological health, thereby impacting their overall workplace performance. Office ambient features, including lighting, temperature, the presence of windows, and air movement, suggest that these elements of the physical environment shape employee attitudes, behaviours, satisfaction, performance, and productivity (Prasetya, Putra & Sultan, 2023; Prayudi & Komariyah, 2023).

2.10.2.2 Effective workplace communication

Enhancing the workplace environment is closely tied to effective communication practices. An organisation that fosters effective communication throughout its workforce is more likely to avoid procedural challenges and reduce instances of improper occurrences. Such an organisation cultivates higher morale and a more positive employee attitude towards their tasks (Kalogiannidis, 2020; Ibrahim, Saputra, Adam & Yunus, 2022). Effective inter-employee communication leads to increased productivity, as it curbs complaints and facilitates smoother workflow. This, in turn, minimises confusion by saving valuable time that would otherwise be spent on clarifications or disputes. Improved communication contributes to a more enjoyable workplace, reduces anxiety among colleagues, fosters a positive work approach, and ultimately elevates productivity (Musheke & Phiri, 2021).

Although communication may seem simple, research highlights its power to either construct or dismantle an organisation's foundation. Hence, a robust communication strategy is vital for business survival. Communication serves as a bridge between decision-makers and all staff members. When executed inadequately, communication has been known to spark interpersonal conflicts within organisations (Musheke & Phiri, 2021).

Establishing a firm communication foundation enables employers and employees to engage in open, direct, and continuous interactions, fostering cooperative and harmonious labour relationships. Effective communication fortifies organisational connections, minimising the likelihood of strikes and lockouts. Moreover, communication stands at the core of joint consultation and collective bargaining

processes (Child, 2022). In the context of labour relations, communication can occur either within or between organisations. Management and labour unions view communication's purpose differently. Management perceives information-sharing as a means to enhance employees' and their representatives' comprehension of organisational challenges and management's stance, thereby dispelling misconceptions (Mazzei, Butera & Quaratino, 2019; Child, 2022; Long, 2024).

Similarly, trade unions view information acquisition as a tool to bolster their position in collective bargaining. The concept of effective communication also reinforces the notion of employee voice, granting employees the right to express their concerns through negotiations, collective bargaining, and joint consultation efforts. These opportunities provide employees with a sense of security that motivates them to contribute their best effort toward achieving organisational objectives (Dundon & Wilkinson, 2021; Alang, Stanton & Rose, 2022). However, organisational aims and objectives can falter when communication falters. Gaps in communication have led to wastage and costly errors. Ineffective communication is a prime cause of confusion and inadequate planning in numerous organisations. This is because communication serves as an information source for managers in making decisions that impact organisational performance (Yusof & Rahmat, 2020).

Furthermore, a study by Musheke and Phiri (2021) examined the impact of effective communication on labour productivity in civil engineering projects within the Kampala Central division. The study assessed the correlation between effective communication and labour productivity, along with other variables such as work duration within a company, educational qualifications, and timely updates about work-related changes, workplace collaboration, and employee training. The findings highlighted the significance of seeking clarity in communication and timely information regarding work-related changes for meaningful labour productivity. To attain desired productivity levels, managers should ensure instructions' clarity and understanding, provide comprehensive training, foster workplace collaboration through incentives, and implement a well-structured communication plan for delivering timely updates about work-related changes (Kambara, Haryadi & Ramdansyah, 2023).

2.10.2.3 Rewards

Employee rewarding constitutes an essential human resource management practice that is deemed crucial for establishing business stability, ensuring successful performance, and attaining organisational goals (Shields, Rooney, Brown & Kaine, 2020). This underscores the imperative nature of reward management within today's business landscape. According to Sarwar and Abugre (2013), reward management encompasses the strategies, policies, and processes required to harness the value of human resources by contributing to organisational goals through the recognition and incentivisation of these endeavours. In the corporate context, the purpose of reward management is to cultivate a performance-orientated culture that aids in achieving business objectives (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020).

Rewards provided by organisations can be categorised into intrinsic and extrinsic forms. Intrinsic rewards, for instance, encompass non-financial elements such as personal accomplishment, growth, and development. These can arise from the completion of challenging tasks, assuming additional responsibilities, and achieving higher status or influence, as well as receiving verbal or symbolic recognition (Kalogiannidis, 2021; Manzoor, Wei & Asif, 2021; Saraswati, Mustafa & Farida, 2023). Conversely, rewards extended to employees can also be extrinsic, encompassing financial incentives like salaries, commissions, bonuses, fringe benefits, and stock options (Bolatito & Mohamoud, 2024).

Consequently, the establishment of an effective rewards and recognition programme becomes essential for enhancing staff morale, motivation, and long-term organisational benefits. Alterations to the reward system directly impact employee motivation; for instance, an improved reward system or scale positively influences employee motivation, fostering an environment conducive to their optimal performance (Qin, Xue, Chen & Zhang, 2020; de Haan et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the benefits that employees receive beyond their regular salary for fulfilling specific tasks or responsibilities are termed rewards. These rewards serve as pivotal motivators, elevating productivity levels and playing a role in employee retention (Qin, Xue, Chen & Zhang, 2020). Rewards can take various forms, including cash, verbal or written praise, recognition, or combinations thereof. Rewards align employees' interests with team objectives, often serving as catalysts

for improved performance, thereby contributing to the attainment of organisational goals. However, it is vital for companies to incorporate an effective performance evaluation mechanism when granting rewards to ensure fairness and quantify progress (Davila, Varvakis & North, 2019; Atmaja et al., 2022; de Haan et al., 2024).

Ngwa, Adeleke, Agbaeze, Ghasi, and Imhanrenialena (2019) investigated the impact of reward systems on employee performance within selected manufacturing firms in Cameroon's Litoral Region. Their study explored the influence of profit sharing on employee commitment, the effects of flat-rate systems on work values, and the impact of collective bargaining reward systems on employee cohesiveness. The findings highlighted that profit sharing positively influenced employee commitment, while flat-rate systems had a negative impact on work values, and collective bargaining reward systems positively affected employee cohesiveness. The study concluded a positive correlation between reward systems and employee performance (Elrayah & Semlali, 2023).

Furthermore, Wasiu and Adebajo (2014) delved into the relationship between reward systems and employee performance within selected public secondary schools in Lagos State. Their findings revealed significant associations between employee performance and factors such as a salary package, job allowances, and in-service training. Similarly, Siwale, Hapompwe, Kukano, and Silavwe (2020) investigated the influence of the reward system on organisational performance within Brentwood Suppliers Limited in Lusaka, Zambia. Their research aimed to explore the impact of reward systems on employee performance, assess the effectiveness of the existing system, and determine if a correlation existed between the reward system and increased employee performance. Employing descriptive statistics and correlation analysis, the findings indicated the ineffectiveness of the existing reward system at Brentwood suppliers, suggesting a need for revision, and established a relationship between reward systems and employee performance.

2.10.2.4 Training and development

Numerous investigations have indicated that appropriately training employees has a positive impact on their performance and augments their skills, knowledge, and capacity to execute their duties. Training and development encompass the process of instructing employees with the intention of enhancing their skills and bolstering

overall productivity. This approach typically involves systematic activities aimed at elevating the level of competence, proficiency, and knowledge essential for effective task execution within the organisation (Sugiarti, 2022; Rivaldo & Nabella, 2023; Febrian & Solihin, 2024). The impact of training and development extends to elevating employee satisfaction levels, particularly when it leads to improved competencies for task execution. Organisations that cultivate a training and development culture tend to bolster employees' sense of self-worth and confidence, as they perceive themselves as valuable assets being invested in (Esthi, 2022; Bilderback, 2024).

Moreover, organisations must construct their training programmes in a manner that optimally aligns with the skill enhancing needs of their employees. Companies proficient at this approach reap the most benefits from these programmes. As a result, employee training and development assume paramount importance for growth, motivation, and skill enhancement. Ineffectual training programmes can lead to detrimental outcomes and financial waste. Given the cost-intensive nature of training, organisations achieve their overarching goals most effectively by training employees in alignment with the specific skills targeted for enhancement, yielding optimal returns in the long term (Adula, Kant & Birbirs, 2023; Febrian & Solihin, 2024; Febrian, Panjaitan & Soehaditama, 2023).

In order to promote employees' flexibility and effectiveness in their roles and to foster a sense of organisational value, it is imperative for the management to visibly demonstrate commitment to addressing employees' training needs. New employees require comprehensive training not only to cultivate technical proficiencies but also to integrate them seamlessly into the organisation. In contemporary business dynamics, training holds the utmost significance as it bolsters the efficiency and effectiveness of both employees and the organisation (Mogea, 2023).

Similarly, a training design should be tailored to employees' needs. Organisations must discern training and development needs, select suitable techniques, devise implementation strategies, and subsequently evaluate outcomes. Organizations that adeptly formulate training designs tailored to employee and organisational requirements typically achieve favourable outcomes (Holloway, Arcus & Orsborn, 2018). Additionally, on-the-job training enriches employees' comprehension of their

roles, capitalising on practical experience's superiority over theoretical knowledge. On-the-job training minimizes costs and saves time. While imparting training to employees incurs expenses, the long-term benefits outweigh the initial investment (Febrian, Panjaitan & Soehaditama, 2023; Hendriati et al., 2024).

Adhering to the resource-based view (RBV) of a firm, organisations can attain competitive advantages by attracting and retaining competent human resources and identifying pertinent training opportunities to continually enhance their performance capabilities. This underlines the significance of training effectiveness, which hinges on the assimilation of job-related knowledge, skills, capabilities, competencies, and behaviours vital for superior performance, ultimately influencing organisational success (Mahmud, Saira Wahid & Arif, 2019; Hasan & Chowdhury, 2023; Serenko, Abubakar & Bontis, 2024).

2.10.2.5 Work-life balance

Within the realm of human resources management, the promotion of work-life balance is regarded as a pivotal high-performance HRM practice, progressively contributing to the augmentation of employee performance (Abdirahman, Najeemdeen, Abidemi & Ahmad, 2018; Irfan et al., 2023). Work-life balance, as defined by Isa and Indrayati (2023), encompasses satisfaction and perceptions of success in managing work and non-work responsibilities, minimising role conflicts, and fostering inter-role enrichment. In this context, the concept extends beyond prioritising work and personal roles to encompass its impact on employees' psychological, economic, and mental well-being.

Thevanes and Harikaran (2020) emphasise that organisations are strategically employing high-performance human relations strategies and action plans to heighten employee performance, where work-life balance stands out as a crucial tool. The contemporary business landscape underscores the growing concern for work-life balance among both employers and employees across various organisations. More recently, attention has shifted towards comprehending the influence of work on employees' family and personal lives, spurring extensive exploration into individuals' work-life experiences within the workplace.

Additionally, the adoption of effective work-life balance policies by organisations facilitates employee integration with the broader community while managing costs and workforce stability, culminating in enhanced productivity. As organizational structures evolve to accommodate employee needs and regulatory imperatives regarding gender equality, inclusivity, and family support, organizations channel resources towards innovative work-life balance initiatives (Irfan et al., 2023).

Significantly, research in the domain of work-life balance has predominantly focused on the impact of organizational policies designed to mitigate conflicts arising from employees' dual roles in work and personal lives. Management literature has consistently acknowledged the role played by organisations in alleviating tension between work responsibilities and personal commitments. The concerted effort to address this conflict aims to reduce grievances and enhance workplace harmony, thereby fostering improved employee performance (Uzochukwu, Iyke-Ofoedu & Obiora, 2023; Preena & Preena, 2021; Alharbi, 2023).

Various researchers contend that promoting of work-life balance through HRM practices can positively influence employees' work-related attitudes and behaviours. This, in turn, leads to favourable outcomes such as reduced turnover, decreased absenteeism, heightened work engagement, increased productivity, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment (Johari, Yean Tan & TjikZulkarmain, 2018; Alharbi, 2023). Such positive effects subsequently contribute to overall organisational performance. Thevanes and Harikaran (2020) assert that employee work-life balance yields mutually beneficial outcomes for both employers and employees. Furthermore, Basyah and Adam (2024) underline the consequences of neglecting employee work-life balance, highlighting its potential to undermine productivity and hinder job performance improvement.

Moreover, Thevanes and Harikaran (2020) identify work-life balance-promoting practices as sustainable HRM strategies that positively impact organisations' economic, social, and environmental performance. Notably, employees in their hometowns experience reduced work-life conflict compared to those with distant work sites. The ability to spend more time with family and fulfil family commitments fosters a contented and dedicated workforce, propelling organisations towards sustainable growth. Additionally, Irfan et al. (2023) emphasise that organisations that neglect to

support work-life balance will encounter difficulties in attracting and retaining skilled and motivated employees. Therefore, prioritising employee work-life balance emerges as a crucial aspect for cultivating a satisfied, committed, and retained workforce thus elevating organisational performance.

2.10.3 The Role of Workplace Environment in the Study

A favourable workplace environment is inherently embedded in a conducive labour relationship with social partners. Similarly, employees working at a workplace that has favourable working conditions will be motivated to increase their performance (Basyah & Adam 2024; Gupta, 2024). Hence, the study considered a favourable workplace environment as a key component of the objective of the study in order to ascertain the relationship between a favourable workplace environment and organisational performance in the Ghanaian public sector.

An environment that is conducive to work is essential for fostering employee happiness, job satisfaction, and overall performance within the organisation. A qualitative research approach was used in order to thoroughly investigate this relationship since it was helpful in determining the subtleties of workplace environments by exploring the experiences and perceptions of public sector personnel. Additionally, it revealed a better comprehension of the elements that go into creating a positive work environment, enabling the study to catch details that might not be revealed using quantitative methods. Furthermore, a case study approach was selected in order to provide a thorough and contextually rich knowledge of the ways in which labour relations affect workplace environments in Ghana's public sector. By concentrating on certain public sector organisations, it was possible to conduct a thorough analysis of their distinctive labour relations strategies that support a positive work environment.

Additionally, interviews were carried out, which were a vital source of information for examining the connection between labour relations, a positive work environment, and organisational performance. Participants were able to voice their opinions regarding labour relations and how these interactions affect their working environment because interviews were used as a data collection tool. The amalgamation of research methodologies enables a comprehensive examination of the relationship among labour relations, workplace milieu, and public sector organisation performance.

Therefore, the use of a qualitative approach, case study design, and interviews helped the study accomplish its goal by illuminating how labour relations affect the development of a positive workplace environment within public sector organisations and how these factors collectively affect the performance of public sector organisations in Ghana. The workplace environment experiences a number of challenges in relation to improving organisational performance, especially within the public sector, as discussed in Section 2.11.

2.11 Challenges of Public Sector Labour Relations

2.11.1 Introduction

The practice of labour relations in the public sector faces difficulties, just like any other profession or activity. Examining the difficulties associated with public sector labour relations is essential to developing a deeper understanding of the workplace environment elements in public sectors covered in Section 2.10. Public sector labour relations is a critical aspect of government operations that involve managing the relationship between public employees, their employers, and the government. These relationships pose unique challenges that distinguish them from the private sector, owing to the complexity of the public service environment and the diverse interests at play. Navigating the landscape of public sector labour relations is fraught with an innumerable number of challenges, stemming from both internal dynamics and external influences (Toan, 2023). This introduction provides a comprehensive overview of labour relations in the public sector, addressing issues such as trade union pluralism, sovereignty doctrine, labour relations infiltration into public administrations, and economic crises' impact on institutional structures. The labour relations landscape is dynamic and multifaceted, requiring proactive involvement, strategic planning, and fostering positive communication among stakeholders. Recognising and addressing these problems can help public sector organisations effectively meet societal demands and promote harmonious labour relations, ultimately benefiting both employees and the public sector (Kravariti, Tasoulis, Scullion & Alali, 2023).

2.11.2 Sovereignty doctrine

One of the key challenges for the public sector has to do with the sovereignty doctrine; this pertains to the state's rights. Sovereignty doctrine is the stimulator of several issues when it comes to government labour-management relations. According to this doctrine, only the state or government has the authority to set the terms and conditions of employment. Hence, the sovereignty doctrine does not encourage equal bargaining between labour and management, and this brings about several disagreements and industrial actions in the public sector (Mareschal, 2017; Panford, 2018; Baptista, Alves & Matos, 2020). In relation to the sovereignty doctrine, government workers are restricted in their quest to bargain collectively with their employer due to the fact that their remunerations do not come from profits but from taxes. In situations where government workers are given the opportunity to bargain collectively, it will come with tax upsurges, which would stimulate conflicts with organised pressure groups outside the government that pursue tax reduction as their principal objective. Unlike private sector organisations; they have choices they can adopt to increase labour costs, such as levitating prices, increasing efficiency, or plummeting profits (Panford, 2018; Rosenbloom, Kravchuk & Clerkin, 2022; Owusu-Afriyie, Baffour & Baah-Boateng, 2023). However, the government is restricted in meeting increased labour costs for public workers because, by so doing, it will require raising taxes.

Furthermore, the concept of sovereignty is fundamental to all philosophies of governments in all economies. Collective bargaining in the private sector is perceived by many as a system of counterbalancing power. That is to say, the power of private workers is increased to counterpoise that of their employers; however, it might be perceived as its formation in the public sector as an infringement on governmental power and the sovereignty of the state itself, considering the "supreme, absolute, and uncontrollable" sovereign in the role of governments. For instance, a strike of public workers represents nothing less than a mindset on their part to impede the actions of government until their demands are fulfilled (Ward, 2013; Poole, 2021).

Moreover, the concept of sovereignty as a bar to collective bargaining is not a notion weird to the public employer but is simply an anti-union activity that emerged when legislation about collective bargaining activities was antagonistic. Additionally, critics

of sovereignty perceived it as too vague and inaccessible a concept to have practical significance in the formulation of labour policy. The larger issue is how the government should use its power as an employer, not whether it is "supreme." In as much as the concept of sovereignty is able to identify the sources of ultimate authority, it does not seem to address that issue. (Bordogna & Pedersini, 2013; Cole, 2017; Howard, 2023).

In order to address the sovereignty doctrine challenges, the study aims to examine how the doctrine influences different areas of performance and determines the dynamics between government and labour. The study would draw attention to the fundamental disparity in the government's and labour's respective negotiating strength, paving the way for more research into the ways in which these influences labour relations and organisational effectiveness. The study also looks at the constraints placed on unions and whether or not these limitations result in labour conflicts and weakening of the bargaining procedures in order to determine how the sovereignty doctrine influences the ability of public sector unions to negotiate successfully.

Furthermore, the study also looks at whether the doctrine's restricted framework for bargaining encourages more antagonistic labour relations. By evaluating whether workers feel adequately represented in negotiations, the study explored the influence of the sovereignty doctrine on worker morale and motivation. This is due to the fact that a labour-management climate that is constrained by the sovereignty doctrine may hinder innovation and decrease collaboration, both of which have a detrimental effect on the performance of an organisation (Poole, 2021). The study includes recommendations for policy based on the findings, such as changes to allow for more equitable labour-management negotiations or the implementation of stronger frameworks for resolving conflicts, which can increase productivity in public institutions.

2.11.3 Trade union pluralism

The term pluralism in the scope of labour relations can exist either in the form of multiple parallel union structures in a unitarian structure where trade unions with different tendencies operate, cooperate and sort out their differences; all of these activities are carried out at the same workplace of a single national centre (Holthaus,

2019; Johnson et al., 2023). According to Parku and Lamprey (2018), union pluralism is the presence of two or more trade unions within a single workplace, enterprise, or industry. Similarly, union pluralism has to do with the presence of more than one trade union in an organisation or workplace. The focus of the practice is on the enterprise level, where an individual organisation has numerous trade unions operating within it. It is imperative to note that union pluralism is a practice that is not perceived as illegal due to its legal backing (Pérez Ahumada & Ocampo, 2023). Most countries, as well as the ILO, have enshrined in their labour laws the freedom of association, where workers and employers under Article 2 of the ILO Convention No. 87 have the right to establish organisations and to join them, subject only to the rules of the organisations concerned. This is also reinforced in the constitution of some developing countries, such as the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, which emphasises freedom of association in Article 21 (1) (e). It states that all persons have the “freedom of association, which shall include freedom to form or join trade unions or other associations, national or international, for the protection of their interest”. However, the major concern has to do with its role in promoting industrial peace, unity and harmony in workplaces where workers within the same class having multiple unions competing for one collective bargaining certificate. This practice has been criticised by unions as being the foremost cause of rivalry and division between unions, especially at the enterprise level (Ayentimi & Burgess, 2023).

At the enterprise level, the act of practicing collective bargaining in organisations that have a multiplicity of trade unions is usually left entirely to the autonomy of labour management (Kirton, 2017). This practice, however, might generate misunderstandings between labour and management during the bargaining channel unification. It also ends up damaging the uniformity of terms and conditions of employment due to overlapping bargaining and excessive competition and divisions among unions that practice the act of union pluralism (Thornthwaite & O'Neill, 2023).

Furthermore, the influx of many unions at the enterprise level, where employees are within the same class, has resulted in each of these unions trying to compete with each other for collective bargaining certificates, membership drive, and putting measures in place to get management to support and recognise their unions. In the bid for unions to influence management, unions often accept assistance from outside leaders and political parties and organise the union as dictated by influential persons

from outside, which is not a best practice in unionism (Thursfield & Grayley, 2016; Amankwaah, 2023). Consequently, the practice of trade union pluralism ends up dividing the workers on party lines rather than creating a peaceful atmosphere, which is the primary objective of trade unionism. The situation at hand is gradually weakening the public sector trade union movement and also gradually bringing inter-union rivalry and disunity among the employees (Kester & Sidibé, 2019; Leonardi & Pedersini, 2023).

Also, a decline in trade union density is another key challenge for the public sector union movement. Union density has to do with the proportion or number of employees belonging to a trade union (Ibsen, Toubøl, and Jensen, 2017). Trade union membership is declining at a very fast pace in many countries and has been a concern to the trade union movement. Various studies (Metten, 2021; Meyer, 2019; Kjellberg & Nergaard, 2022) have associated the ever-declining union density with the emergence of the concept of trade union pluralism at workplaces, as union pluralism is seen as stimulating union rivalry, interference by political parties in union issues, unhealthy competition among union members and executives, victimisation of union leaders or executives, and the delay in decision-making which is a result of complications of collective bargaining agreements in the organisations. These consequences of union pluralism have led to the lack of confidence in trade unions; workers prefer to be neutral than to join trade unions, which is seen as destroying the solidarity and development of the union movement (Peetz & Ollett, 2017; Hodder, Williams, Kelly & McCarthy, 2017; Addison, 2014; Leonardi & Pedersini, 2023). Hence, it is argued that the practice of union pluralism at the enterprise level in the public sector does not promote the solidarity and unity needed in the public sector trade union movement. Also, it encourages union rivalry, competition among unions, inter and intra-union conflicts, and posing difficulties in collective bargaining agreements in the public sector (Kjellberg & Nergaard, 2022).

In an effort to manage the issue of trade union pluralism, the study examined how trade union pluralism affects collective bargaining, given that various unions frequently fight for the right to represent employees in talks with management, potentially weakening their collective power (Parku & Lamptey, 2018; Ackers, 2021). The study seeks to determine if having several unions promotes healthy competition that benefits workers or, on the other hand, leads to conflict and strain that

jeopardises organisational harmony. Additionally, by connecting these elements to the overall performance of public sector organisations, the study seeks to understand how union pluralism influences workers' perceptions of representation and belonging, demonstrating that it may either increase or decrease workers' effectiveness (Leonardi & Pedersini, 2023; Zienkowski & De Cleen, 2021). Additionally, in order to highlight the significance of resolving union plurality in order to enhance public sector performance, the study also aims to evaluate the effects of union rivalry on productivity as a result of union pluralism (Murthy, Adaikalam & Raj, 2022; Taylor, 2022). Based on the findings, the study aims to propose policy recommendations to manage union pluralism by coming up with regulatory measures to improve collective bargaining procedures or support collaborative frameworks that minimise competition and promote unity across unions.

2.11.4 Penetration of labour relations into public administrations

Over the years, there has been an appreciable level of integration of labour relations indicators into the public administration of several economies, especially the developed ones. The democratic model of public administration of many countries has seen the incorporation of the right of public servants to organise trade unions and to strike. However, too often the nexus between public administration and employer-employee relationships and unionism is underexplored in public policy studies (Kersley et al., 2013; Farazmand, 2023).

The penetration of labour law into public administrations and various levels of “privatisation” of public sector employment has been identified by the ILO as one of the prevailing challenges facing public sector labour relations. The traditional model and characteristics of public servants, such as full-time employment, salary scales, administrative career and many more, have experienced substantial changes (Reichard & Schröter, 2021). A momentous number of workers in the public sector are either under contracts governed by the general rules of private sector labour law or otherwise excluded from the public statutory regime. In addition, the slowness of administrative and judicial procedures in cases of anti-union discrimination or interference in trade union matters in the public sector and the lack of sufficiently dissuasive sanctions are posing major challenges to public-sector labour relations (Madichie & Nyakang'o, 2016; Mansaray, 2022).

The portion of national budgets devoted to labour policy is most developing countries is not encouraging as opposed to developed ones, which have created a huge gap between developed and developing countries with regards to public sector labour relations. Consequently, there has been a lack of effectiveness and efficiency in the mandate of labour ministries and in their supposed mission to protect and regulate citizens to stimulate economic growth (Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015; Tampi, Nabella & Sari, 2022). Moreover, labour administration lacks institutional audits, where assessments take place to ascertain their contribution to nation building. As a result, major errors in labour policy may occur, further undermining the administration's capacity to manage labour matters as well as its reputation.

Similarly, there have been concerns about labour administrations not having access to essential material equipment and new technologies to improve their functions. The insufficient budget allocations from public administration for the purpose of labour administration result in a lack of essential material equipment such as communication means and transportation. It is critical to provide vehicles or to provide transport allowances to those categories of labour officers who work in the field, especially labour inspectors working for the labour ministries (Bermanet al., 2021). New technologies and equipment, while extremely useful, require certain conditions to be helpful, which have to do with training of the staff and continuous funding. However, insufficient allocation of funds by governments for the purpose of training and providing equipment has been a major source of challenge in public sector labour relations. Additionally, very often, there are unjustified bureaucratic obstacles within the public sector that slow the progress and outcomes of labour relations or available equipment that is not efficiently used and shared between services (La Hovary, 2015; Haricharan, 2023).

Furthermore, with regards to dispute resolution in the public sector, it seems almost necessary to state that existing conciliation and mediation procedures have proven inadequate to safeguard the public interest in dispute settlement. Such procedures reflect an inherent reluctance at all levels of government to intervene in the collective bargaining process. Indeed, conciliation and mediation machinery have been set up by governments for many years, but it is a considerable misnomer to describe such machinery as an effective government intervention (Lauren, Howard & John, 2017; Ghodoosi, 2020). Such machinery is provided merely to facilitate settlement, not to

influence the nature of the settlement towards some government policy. The mediation and conciliation procedures as they have developed in many countries do not involve those responsible for representing the public interest into the dispute. Their function is basically to find terms and conditions that the parties can agree to; the void in giving expression to the public interest is obvious (Goldberg, Sander, Rogers & Cole, 2020).

In some industries, particularly those characterised by a near-monopoly position of both labour and management, some recent agreements reflect an almost complete disregard for the public interest. A system of dispute settlement that places a high priority on agreement, with little judgement as to the fairness of an agreement in terms of its impact on other bargaining relationships or in terms of its impact on the growth of the economy, is bound to encounter great difficulty (Trachtman, 2018; Weisbrod, Handler & Komesar, 2023).

In order to tackle the problem of labour law penetration into public administrations, the study would examine how certain employees in the public sector could be subject to private labour laws or not get statutory protections, resulting in disparities in worker rights and collective bargaining power (Hafiz, 2020). The study also examines instances of discrimination or intervention against public sector unions, evaluating the contribution of inadequate sanctions and protracted judicial proceedings to the settlement of these conflicts (Beaumont, 2024b). "Privatisation" of public sector employment refers to the move towards contract-based employment models regulated by private labour regulations (Arnold, 2022), and the study would examine the effects of this change. The conventional dynamic between public sector unions and management may change as a result of this shift, posing new labour relations challenges. In order to determine how these legal complications lead to inefficiencies that impair the overall performance of public administrations, the study will also assess the effects of fragmented labour law regimes on productivity and service delivery in public institutions (Azfar et al., 2018). The study would provide recommendations for policy based on its results, emphasising the need for stronger anti-union discrimination laws, more lucid legal frameworks, and more effective dispute resolution processes. These suggestions could contribute to the development of a fairer and more effective working environment in the public sector.

2.11.5 Economic crises and institutional structures

Furthermore, another challenge has to do with the consecutive economic crises and procedures for decreasing institutional structures. These challenges have made trade union movements lose their potency in most countries. The challenges have also caused the collective bargaining capacity of public servants to become dormant. There have been major changes in the traditional characteristics of the public sector; for example, a number of workers in the public sector are contract staff and are sometimes omitted from the public statutory regime (Djuve & Knutsen, 2024; Madimutsa & Pretorius, 2021; Gattegno, 2019; Kearney & Mareschal, 2017; Yaro, Teye & Torvikey, 2018). This means that they are not able to be affiliated with a union because in most jurisdictions, you should be a permanent worker to join a union. Also, the shift of the collective bargaining process to the enterprise level, where the correlation of power is unfavourable for the employees, is promoted in order to facilitate management's control over the bargaining outcomes and consequently reduce the wage costs (Gattegno, 2019; Bender, 2023). Additionally, the economic crisis has led to institutional restructuring in relation to labour relations, such as the decentralisation of collective bargaining, the decrease of coverage rate by collective agreements, and the overhaul of legislation towards the flexibilization of labour (Campbell & Weststar, 2020).

Furthermore, due to the current economic hardship in most economies, potential union members are declining the offer to be affiliated with the union to safeguard their interests. Their refusal is as a result of the financial obligations that come up as a result of affiliating to union, such as the payment of dues by union members (Lissowska, 2017; Bender, 2023). The standard of living is high while salaries remain stagnant; therefore, the ability to incur extra costs by fulfilling their financial obligations to unions becomes a daunting task. Some public servants have retrieved their consent for the deduction of trade union membership dues from their salaries due to the prevailing hardship in most economies. Additionally, the prevailing economic crisis has led to a high level of unemployment, particularly in developing economies (Gourevitch et al., 2016; Quiggin & Henderson, 2023). This prevailing situation impedes the growth of unions' membership because organisations do not engage in hiring new employees, who are potential elements that boost union membership. Similarly, increasing unemployment and the expansion of flexible forms

of work led to the decline of trade unions' power and influence and enabled governments and employers to reinforce the decentralisation trend (Berkery, Morley, Tiernan, Purtill & Parry, 2017; Jacobi, 2023).

Additionally, the study would compare different approaches to managing labour relations during times of economic stress, drawing insights from countries that have successfully balanced fiscal constraints with maintaining positive labour relations (Bamber & Lansbury, 2024). Based on the findings, the study would offer policy recommendations to address the challenges posed by economic crises and shrinking institutional structures. These recommendations might include strategies for maintaining collective bargaining power and improving labour relations during times of economic crisis. Additionally, in order to gain knowledge from countries that have effectively combined budgetary restrictions with upholding strong labour relations, the study would examine various methods of managing labour relations during economic crises. The study would provide policy recommendations to solve the issues brought on by diminishing institutional structures and economic crises based on its results. These recommendations may include methods for preserving collective bargaining power and enhancing labour relations during economic downturns.

2.11.6 Public perceptions of labour unions activities

Historically, unions have provided significant services to workers at enterprise and national levels. Trade unions not only emphasise the human aspect of the labour commodity, but by imposing a check on the exercise of power, they also express and foster democratic values and culture. However, currently most countries have recorded substantial declines in union density (Chyz, Leung, Li & Rui, 2013; Quiggin & Henderson, 2023).

There has been substantial debate regarding the value of labour unions and their continuous contribution towards the growth and development of the economies of various jurisdictions. There is a consensus in literature with regards to efforts by politicians to blame public-sector unions for the insolvency of several countries. This assumption is argued based on the fact that public-sector unions are the foremost push factors responsible for imposing hefty government deficits by demanding and obtaining huge salaries and pensions through collective bargaining. These issues have led to dormant labour relations activities in the public sector (Brewer & Kellough,

2016; Kambasu, 2023). Falling union membership and density levels may reflect more negative public attitudes towards trade unions in both developed and developing countries, providing a less politically supportive institutional environment. In particular, the dominance of neoliberal ideology and policies in many countries for some time is likely to have created a cultural framework that inculcated negative perceptions of unions and their functions in the wider public. A neoliberal agenda advocates a restoration of the primacy of the market mechanism, which includes low social spending, low taxation, deregulation of financial and labour markets, and the privatisation of state companies (Barnett & Bagshaw, 2020; Peck, 2023).

A school of thought is of the view that nothing is more dangerous to public welfare than to admit that hired servants of the state can dictate to the government the hours, the wages, and the conditions under which they will carry on essential services vital to the welfare, safety, and security of the citizen. To admit as true that government employees are empowered to halt or check the functions of government unless their demands are satisfied is to transfer to them all legislative, executive, and judicial power. Nothing would be more ridiculous (Turner & D'Art, 2012; Mittiga, 2022).

Another common objection to collective bargaining with public-employee unions was that it would mean taking some of the decision-making authority over government functions away from the people's elected representatives and transferring it to union officials, with whom the public had vested no such authority (Howard, 2023). In this view, democracy would be compromised when elected officials began sharing with union leaders the power to determine government employees' wages, benefits, and working conditions. Public-sector unions thus distort the labour market, weaken public finances, and diminish the responsiveness of government and the quality of public services (Turner & D'Art, 2012; Kearney & Mareschal, 2017; Izumo, 2023).

In order to tackle the issue of public perceptions of labour union activities, the study would examine prominent themes in political statements and government policies that portray unions as causes of financial strain or inefficiencies in the public sector. This is because persistent portrayals of unions as the cause of excessive public spending can weaken their credibility and bargaining power (Mozu, 2023). Data from interviews or reviews of the literature would be used in the study to determine if the public sees unions as beneficial or detrimental contributors. It is essential to

comprehend how the general public views the contributions that unions make to the economy and to the effectiveness of public sector organisations. In order to improve public perceptions of labour unions and lessen their detrimental effects on labour relations and organisational performance, the study would make legislative recommendations. Such recommendations might involve union reform and improved public communication strategies.

2.11.7 The Role of the Challenges of Public Sector Labour Relations in the Study

Identifying and having a deeper understanding of the challenges of public sector labour relations aids in finding areas in labour relations that can be improved to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the public sector. Hence, exploring the challenges of public sector labour relations was embedded in the objectives of the study to capture the comprehensiveness of the phenomenon.

One of the objectives of the study was to delve into the challenges of public-sector labour relations in Ghana and investigate their influence on the performance of public sector organisations. In order to achieve this objective, a qualitative approach was employed to explore and provide valuable information regarding public sector labour relations challenges. As well as uncover the underlying reasons and drivers behind the challenges faced in public sector labour relations. Furthermore, a case study methodology was very pertinent to this research since it made it possible to determine realistic scenarios in their natural environments. The study examined the impact of labour relations concerns on organisational performance and offered a thorough analysis of these issues by concentrating on a particular public sector organisation in Ghana. By using interviews as a method of data collection, the study was able to obtain firsthand knowledge from public sector labour relations participants on the labour relations issues they face in their respective organisations. Additionally, the semi-structured interviews allow exploration of unforeseen or unexpected themes for the study's analysis and debates. The study methodologies utilised were in line with exploring the difficulties associated with labour relations in the public sector by guaranteeing that the viewpoints of different parties directly involved in labour relations were recorded. The results provided a balanced

knowledge of the difficulties by including the perspectives of both management and employees.

The public's perception of labour unions impacts their ability to represent employees' interests and negotiate with employers. Understanding these viewpoints is crucial for assessing labour relations' impact on organisational performance. Institutional frameworks and economic crises also impact labour relations; economic downturns can exacerbate disputes over pay, job losses, and working conditions. Institutional frameworks like labour laws and regulations also play a role in shaping labour relations and organisational performance.

Economic downturns can exacerbate labour management tensions, resulting in more conflict and worse performances inside the business. In order to manage labour relations effectively during hard economic times and foster organisational resilience, it is imperative to comprehend how institutional structures mediate these processes. The influence of labour unions and collective bargaining procedures on public sector organisations is reflected in the infiltration of labour relations into public administrations. Researching this issue is essential to comprehending the ways in which labour relations affect public administrations' organisational performance, including accountability, efficiency, and service delivery. Public trust, service quality, and governance can all be impacted by labour relations in public administrations (Mittiga, 2022). Conflicts between management and public sector unions can negatively impact organisational performance, service delivery, and daily operations. Understanding trade union pluralism is crucial for analysing labour relations dynamics and addressing concerns about representation, negotiating power, and dispute resolution. Pluralism within trade unions can exacerbate labour management interactions and decision-making processes, while divergent interests can erode organisational cohesiveness and collective bargaining effectiveness. The sovereignty doctrine is essential for understanding the legal framework governing labour relations and its impact on organisational performance. The sovereignty doctrine influences social partners' rights and responsibilities, impacting labour relations and organisational decision-making. Understanding the legal landscape is crucial for adhering to labour regulations, conflict resolution, and promoting organisational performance by fostering a supportive environment.

The aforementioned challenges of public sector labour relations constitute a crucial aspect of the study and their importance of labour relations on organisational performance. Understanding these challenges and their implications is also essential for ascertaining which strategies could be employed to either mitigate or totally eradicate the challenges in public sector organisations as discussed in Section 2.12.

2.12 Strategies to Enhance Organisation Performance of Public Sector

2.12.1 Introduction

The purpose of identifying the challenges of public sector labour relations in Section 2.11 is to ascertain strategies that can enhance organisational performance in the public sector; hence the review of this section. Enhancing organisational performance within the public sector is a perpetual endeavour driven by the imperative to deliver efficient and effective services to citizens while maximising resource utilisation and promoting transparency and accountability (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). An overview of the main strategies used to improve the performance of public sector organisations is given in this introduction. These strategies include personnel management, flexible bureaucracy, performance management, technological innovation and advancement, public leadership quality, internal control systems and accountability, and personnel management. Improving the performance of organisations in the public sector necessitates a multifaceted strategy that includes bureaucratic flexibility, people management, internal controls, leadership development, and technological innovation. Public sector organisations can improve service delivery, streamline operations, and ultimately fulfil their responsibility to serve the public interest by using these tactics.

2.12.2 Enhancement of Organisation Performance of Public Sector

In today's world, governments and the public sector are facing increasing pressures to perform at a higher level than ever before. Almost daily, headlines in the media worldwide are full of examples of the ineffectiveness of the public sector in various jurisdictions; notable among the prevailing issues are the mismanagement of public money or outright misuse, the lack of motivation and training with regard to civil servants, and the failure of government agencies to coordinate with each other

(Atobishi, Moh'd Abu Bakir & Nosratabadi, 2024). These issues have led to citizens being deprived of quality public services. In as much as these public sector challenges are often present even in the world's most developed countries, they are more prevalent in developing countries, and their impact impedes their development (Van Dooren, Bouckaert & Halligan, 2015; Berman, Bowman, West & Van Wart, 2021). In the past few decades, various attempts have been made to improve performance in the public sector. These improvement programmes have had mixed and sometimes even detrimental results. Consequently, there is an increasing demand for strategies that enable organisations to achieve sustainable high performance, especially in developing countries (Lapuente & Van de Walle, 2020; Atobishi, Moh'd Abu Bakir & Nosratabadi, 2024). Due to this, the study explores general strategies that enhance the performance of public sector organisations as a key component of the objectives of the study.

2.12.2.1 Internal control system and accountability

According to Abd Aziz et al., (2015) and Higenyi (2024), an internal control system and accountability in the public sector is a vital strategy that should be employed in order to stimulate the performance of the public sector. An effective internal control system will be of assistance to public sector institutions in avoiding the incidence of bad financing as well as aiding the institutions to work effectively and harmoniously while sleuthing errors and anomalies in their operation (Eton, Mwosi & Ogwel, 2022). In addition, the internal control system also plays a salient role in the internal auditing practices since the internal auditors might be considered as being experts in management control. Consequently, it becomes an integral component of a public sector institution's overall governance structure, which is intended to direct and control its actions by encouraging transparency, accountability, responsibility, and fairness to all stakeholders (Al Yami, Ajmal & Balasubramanian, 2022; Alam, 2022; Pernando, Hatta, Simamora & Putra, 2023).

Public sector accountability primarily pertains to the interaction between politicians, citizens, and public managers. This is critical as citizens possess an inherent right to access factual information. Such data aids in their deliberation and determination of the trajectory of their elected representatives (Aramide & Bashir, 2015; Kewo, 2017;

Overman, Schillemans & Grimmelikhuijsen, 2021; Schillemans et al., 2024). Within this framework, accountability becomes crucial in demonstrating a democratic approach to government oversight and control. It concurrently mitigates the risk of power consolidation while augmenting the learning potential and efficacy of public administration. Moreover, public sector accountability necessitates that governments are answerable to the public in justifying the origin and allocation of public resources (Eton, Murezi, Mwosi & Ogwel, 2018; Schillemans et al., 2024). This arises due to concerns about governmental inefficiency and subpar service delivery. As apprehensions about government spending mount, public demands for transparency increase, exerting pressure on prudent resource management. This, in turn, spurs heightened performance levels among public sector institutions (Alam, Said & Abd Aziz, 2019; Catalão, Cruz & Sarmiento, 2023).

Furthermore, a robust internal control system confers several benefits for an organisation. It deters and identifies unsound financial practices, facilitates effective and harmonious operations, and uncovers operational discrepancies (Bonsu, Appiah, Gyimah & Owusu-Afriyie, 2022). Organisations also acknowledge the significance of internal control systems and risk management as tools to safeguard overarching objectives and boost shareholder value (Handayani, Afiah & Yudianto, 2020). Additionally, internal control systems play a pivotal role in internal audit practices, with internal auditors often regarded as management control experts (Adeyemi & Olarewaju, 2019). According to Bowrin (2004), such systems are integral components of an organisation's governance structure. They steer and regulate activities by fostering transparency, accountability, responsibility, and equity for all stakeholders. Literature underscores the importance of stringent control mechanisms, governed by laws, regulations, and protocols, in promoting accountability in the public sector. An orderly and methodical internal control system is crucial, fostering stakeholder confidence. The implementation of a proficient corporate internal control system yields myriad advantages for an organisation. These encompass timely error detection and prevention, enabling dependable accounting information that resolves reporting errors. Additionally, it safeguards employees' interests by explicitly outlining their duties and shielding them against accusations of irregularities or misappropriations (Savitri, Andreas, Diyanto & Gumanti, 2020).

In the context of public sector organisations, the role of internal control is to buttress system establishment and encourage decision-makers' accountability (Handayani, Afiah & Yudianto, 2020; Napitupulu, 2023). However, the absence of a reliable system can jeopardise the organisation's efforts to cultivate public sector accountability. A higher reliance on control systems is consistently linked to elevated expectations for accountability improvement within the organisation (Priantono & Vidiyastutik, 2022). Given that internal control systems emphasise accountability, their implementation in the public sector becomes pivotal at every stage of enhancing accountability within these organisations.

2.12.2.2 Public leadership quality

Leadership plays a pivotal role in enhancing organisational performance by improving the effectiveness of teams within the organisation. According to Zeb et al., (2020), Demircioglu (2024), and Vivona (2024), strategic leadership within an organisation's administration leads to increased performance efficacy. Similarly, Ali et al., (2015) and Demircioglu (2024) suggest that transformational leaders have the potential to inspire subordinates to unlock their full potential and prioritise the organisation's collective goals over their individual ambitions.

Public service leaders are confronted with the responsibility to respond promptly to dynamic political agendas and unforeseeable societal changes in alignment with the expectations of elected officials, citizens, and stakeholders (Demircioglu, 2024). This task becomes more pressing in the face of rapid disruptions propelled by the digital transformation of society and the economy, including within the public sector itself. As citizens expect public services to harness digital advancements while safeguarding privacy and well-being, the demand for public service leaders capable of navigating an increasingly digital landscape grows (Zada et al., 2023; Haug, Dan & Mergel, 2024). Rising to this challenge necessitates leaders equipped with the requisite skills, mindsets, and tools to continually enhance performance within the context of a digitally driven government, economy, and society. In numerous OECD countries, support is provided to public sector leadership to cultivate relevant skills and recognise their pivotal role in achieving optimal public service performance (Zeb,

Rehman, Imran, Ali & Almansoori, 2020; Gerson, 2020; Soeardi, Ilhami & Achmad, 2023).

Similarly, OECD countries are increasingly recognising the foundational role of effective public management and leadership in addressing intricate governance challenges and fostering public sector innovation. These nations emphasise the role of public service leaders in cultivating a forward-thinking and innovative public sector that adopts a long-term perspective when shaping policies and services. The centrality of leadership in promoting public sector performance is underscored across various countries due to its proven impact on organisational efficiency, productivity, and integrity (Hayo & Neumeier, 2016; Kawabata & Camargo, 2023; Biggs, Johnston & Russell, 2024).

Research demonstrates that leadership quality significantly influences public sector performance, efficiency, and productivity. Notably, agencies led by career civil servants tend to fare better, as demonstrated in studies conducted in the United States (Jakobsen, Kjeldsen & Pallesen, 2023). Moreover, the quality of presidential appointees is consequential, with those from political operative backgrounds exhibiting lower performance. The appointment of public managers through meritocratic channels has been shown to positively affect public fund allocation and internal organisational management (Vuong, 2023; Fernández-Altamirano et al., 2023).

Effective leaders have the potential to enhance efficiency and productivity by fostering employee engagement, a metric often gauged through employee surveys. Engaged employees tend to perform better and exhibit higher levels of productivity and innovation. They demonstrate commitment to the organisation's mission and willingly exceed their basic job requirements to contribute to its success. Public leaders have a crucial role in shaping an organisation's ethical climate and instilling values that guide decision-making. Consequently, ethical leadership not only reduces corruption risks but also helps restore trust within the public sector (Ugaddan & Park, 2017; Ohemeng, Obuobisa Darko & Amoako-Asiedu, 2020; Jakobsen, Kjeldsen & Pallesen, 2023.).

Al-Ahbab, Singh, Gaur and Balasubramanian (2017) were of the view that leadership qualities influence and promote accountability in the public sector, which in turn increases the performance of the sector. Leaders who encourage moral values and provide clear visions and missions could entice their subordinates to share the good universal value, which promotes the accountability of the organisation. It is irrefutable that leadership is a critical element, particularly when dealing with issues in the public sector where leaders hold ethical and higher moral values that are more treasured by their subordinates than by the others who are indifferent (Haug, Dan & Mergel, 2024). The leader in the public sector is likely to have strong characteristics in leading such a big organisation with a larger fund to handle. Hence, a leader with charisma and capabilities is imperative to drive the organisation towards achieving its ultimate goal as a protector of the nation. This could promote accountability among the employees in the public sector in achieving the goal of serving the nation and working for social well-being (George, Walker & Monster, 2019; Kousina & Voudouris, 2023; Vivona, 2023). That is to say, better leadership contributes to a more efficient and productive public sector, improves services for citizens, and ultimately helps to rebuild trust in public institutions.

2.12.2.3 Technological advancement and innovation

Several studies have also associated factors such as innovation and technology with strategies that could stimulate the organisational performance of the public sector (Rajapathirana & Hui, 2018; Choi, Sung & Park, 2020; Tsou & Chen, 2023). Public sector innovations encompass the conception, formulation, and execution of practical ideas aimed at achieving public benefits. Within public-sector organisations, innovation serves to enhance comprehension of opportunities and challenges, leading to the generation of more valuable ideas through expansion and improved adoption. The innovation trajectory within these organisations is influenced by government policies, which play a pivotal role in resource allocation based on comparative advantages (Ju, Ferreira & Wang, 2020). Striking a balance between innovation policies that cater to conventional technology and those responsive to competition and enterprise development is essential in the public sector (Tsou & Chen, 2023).

Scholars and practitioners have displayed a growing interest in public sector innovation. This perspective acknowledges the potential of innovation to elevate the calibre of public services and amplify the capacity of governmental bodies to tackle societal issues (De Vries, Tummers & Bekkers, 2018; Cinar, Trott & Simms, 2019; Maqdliyan & Setiawan, 2023).

Technological innovation encompasses endeavours contributing to the exploration, development, and design of novel products, services, or methodologies, while also refining existing ones. The innovation process is inherently reliant on external circumstances, with the creation of new technologies stemming from interactions with customers, suppliers, competitors, and diverse public and private entities (Cinar, Trott & Simms, 2019; Cinar, Simms, Trott & Demircioglu, 2024). This elucidates the significance of clusters, competition, and other business connections in propelling technological development. Approaching innovation as a system, whether at a regional or national scale, facilitates comprehension and analysis of these interactions, influencing the inclination for innovation and the performance of innovative endeavours (Velsberg, Westergren & Jonsson, 2020).

Furthermore, technological competitiveness resulting from innovation nurtured by in-house R&D initiatives constitute a driving force for economic development. This perspective underscores the significance of innovation systems, both spatially and contextually, in elucidating the dynamics that steer innovation propensity and its impact (Janssen, Konopnicki, Snowdon & Ojo, 2017; Maqdliyan & Setiawan, 2023). Innovation do matter especially at the institutional level where through government-wide policy, creating systems and structures that shape institutional objectives, and program monitoring systems will motivate public service workers and increase their level of commitment and engagement to work. Technology, even though not a stand-alone panacea, if accompanied by innovative policies and procedures, will improve specific functional requirements of public servants' performance (Ljungholm, 2015; Elbashir, Sutton, Arnold & Collier, 2022; Virani & Van der Wal, 2023).

Work teams have traditionally been employed in public sector companies, and there exists a good association between teamwork and organisational performance in public sector organisations. It is recommended that human resource managers in public-sector organisations be encouraged to participate in ongoing training and

development programmes to assist them in developing innovative skills (Elbashir et al., 2022). Technology assumes a significant role in attaining policy objectives across diverse domains like education, employment, healthcare, and justice. Technological applications facilitate the wide distribution of various information types originating from public administration entities. These include pre-formulated documents, details concerning social support, employment exploration, options for credit card-based payments, driving licence updates, and tax settlement (Balabonien & Veerskien, 2015). By leveraging technology, a shift is enabled towards integrated service provision centred around the citizen rather than administrative procedures. As a result, service delivery experiences enhancement, operational costs within public administration are reduced, and overall efficiency, oversight, and efficacy witness improvement (Kelvin-Iloafu 2016; Chowdhury, Hussain & Mannan, 2023).

2.12.2.4 Personnel management

Public personnel management, also referred to as human resource management (HRM), is globally acknowledged as a fundamental component for proficient governance (Khan & Khan, 2018; Shadiyev, 2024; Seleznev et al., 2024). The evolution of merit-based public personnel administration, spanning from 1883 to 1937 in the United States, emerged amid mounting pressures for rational and transparent governance and heightened demands for efficient public service delivery to support an industrialising economy. This shift emerged from dissatisfaction with patronage-centred personnel systems (Astudillo-Rodas & Riccucci, 2021; Shadiyev, 2024).

Prioritising effective personnel management, which revolves around optimising the organisation's most valuable asset, its human resources, holds the key to enhancing public sector performance. Even amidst organisational restructuring, technological innovations, and systematic improvements, organisations remain inert without the creativity and intellect of their human contributors (Cho, Choi & Choi, 2023). It becomes imperative for organizations to foster an environment that motivates employees to excel, a point that holds great significance (Kravariti, Tasoulis, Scullion & Alali, 2023). Notably, multiple facets of human resource management, including policies, recruitment, employee rights, compensation, development, work

environment, and ethical considerations, stand as the driving forces behind public sector institutional performance (Seleznev et al., 2024).

Recruitment should draw from qualified individuals from diverse sources, aimed at building a workforce that mirrors various societal segments. Selection and advancement should hinge solely on relative ability, knowledge, and skills, established through fair and open competition to ensure equal opportunities for all. Employees, regardless of political affiliations, should be treated equitably across all aspects of personnel management (AlDhaheer, Hilmi, Abudaqa, Alzahmi & Ahmed, 2023; Wesemann, 2024; Levine & Viswanath, 2024). Equitable pay must be ensured for work of equal value, considering both national and local standards. Recognition and incentives should be provided for outstanding performance. High standards of integrity, conduct, and public concern must be upheld. Employees should be retained based on their performance adequacy, with corrective measures for subpar performance and separation for those who fail to meet standards. Effective education and training should be provided when such efforts enhance organisational and individual performance. This approach fosters employee motivation, enhancing productivity (Azizi et al., 2021; Toan, 2023; Setiyowati & Puspita, 2024).

A conducive work environment is one that inspires employees to commit and contribute optimally towards organisational objectives. The landscape of personnel management has experienced substantial transformation over recent decades. HR managers increasingly adopt a strategic approach, acknowledging the interplay between organisational and personnel management strategies. Strategic human resource management signifies this transition from prescriptive and reactive practices to proactive and executive approaches (Kravariti, Tasoulis, Scullion & Alali, 2023). Research by Laguna (2020) underscores the pivotal role of merit-based personnel management in boosting bureaucratic performance within developed countries. This underscores the importance of prioritising competency in selection, avoiding nepotism and cronyism, and consistently investing in personnel capacity development. Vrabcová and Urbancová (2022) further emphasise the significance of knowledge advancement for productivity growth in developed countries, reinforcing the importance of education in bolstering workforce effectiveness.

Moreover, merit-based personnel management activities, spanning recruitment, training, and development, coupled with sound human resource practices, stand as critical contributors to overall public sector performance. This perspective aligns with the assertion that the key to success lies in having the right people in the right roles, highlighting that effective personnel management serves as a catalyst for organisational performance (Laguna, 2020; Kravariti, Tasoulis, Scullion & Alali, 2023).

2.12.2.5 Flexible bureaucracy

Max Weber's bureaucratic model, often negatively perceived for its associations with inefficiency and sluggishness, is actually an encompassing model that applies across all organisational realms, be it public or private (Abraham, de Souza, Oliveira & Bueno, 2024). Contrary to the unfavourable view, bureaucracy prioritises process agility to enhance efficiency. This model, as an idealised form, achieves technical superiority by eliminating irrational elements through rational-legal authority (Saputra, Mahardika & Izharsyah, 2021; Tresiana, Duadji & Jayamuna, 2024).

In public administration, bureaucracy transcends mere administrative functions to become a cornerstone of state power and democratic governance. Its composition, operation, and interaction with elected leaders must be comprehended. The notion of organisational performance, when focused on public services, relates to outcomes derived from the organisation's strategies, objectives, and goals, all geared towards satisfying citizens and stakeholders (De Araújo, 2001; Adi, 2018; Dahlström & Lapuente, 2022). Hence, public service quality perception, as seen by recipients, appears closely tied to organisational commitment. Zooming out, the influence of bureaucratic public administration on state performance becomes apparent.

Some bureaucratic traits, such as merit-based civil servant recruitment and impartial exercise of governmental authority, are empirically connected to macro-level outcomes. Civil servant dedication proves pivotal for successful national policy implementation and overall bureaucratic excellence (Cochrane, 2018; Kanon, 2024). Bureaucracy's fundamental role lies in executing government policies, translating legislative frameworks into action. When restructuring organisations, a shift from traditional and bureaucratic procedures towards flexibility is needed. Additionally, managerial decision-making autonomy should replace rigid top-down directives for

contextual relevance and responsiveness (Makbere, 2019; Lengari, Djani & Sayrani, 2023).

Moreover, numerous studies have explored the impact of certain structural elements pivotal to Weber's original bureaucracy characterisation on economic growth. Their study involved developing countries and assessed variables like meritocratic recruitment and career development. Results indicated countries embracing bureaucratic traits experienced faster economic growth (Kanon, 2024). Notably, a bureaucracy featuring merit-based recruitment and predictable, rewarding careers correlated with higher growth rates. They highlighted that placing bureaucracy structures strategically at the administrative core could positively affect growth and public sector performance in developing countries (Kuswati, Kusmayadi & Hartati, 2023; Makbere, 2019).

However, it's important to note that performance assessment often relies on reports, indexes, or data generated by managers themselves or under their guidance. A critique of the bureaucratic model suggests its focus on processes, whereas attention should shift to outcomes. Over time, employees might prioritise documenting activities over taking effective actions, as highlighted by Siqueira's study (Schneider, 2021). This practice undermines individual performance evaluation, as well as sectoral and organisational efficiency and effectiveness. Maintaining the credibility of government-generated data is crucial for democratic governance and informed policymaking. Scrutinising reports ensures data integrity, maintaining accurate performance measurement and accountability (Dash & Padhi, 2020; Lengari, Djani & Sayrani, 2023).

2.12.2.6 Performance management

Amid rising expectations and limited resources in the public sector, performance management has gained prominence. There's a growing emphasis on scrutinising the value of performance management systems and their practical effectiveness in enhancing public servant and overall sector performance. Enhancing performance has become a central agenda in both developed and developing countries' public sectors (van der Kolk, 2022; Thusi, 2023; Bauwens, Audenaert & Decramer, 2024).

Performance management (PM) pertains to a management approach centred on goal setting and establishing measures to achieve those goals through a planning and control cycle. It encompasses mechanisms, tools, and activities aimed at measuring and assessing outcomes for continual performance improvement (Siram, Chikati Srinu & Tripathi, 2024). Additionally, PM supplies information to parliament about audited public agencies, ensuring their efficiency, effectiveness, and economical management of income, expenses, and resources, thereby driving performance improvement (Borgonovi, Anessi-Pessina & Bianchi, 2018; Roy, Bahuguna & Rawat, 2023).

In recent years, performance management practices have emerged as a significant strategy for a cohesive and continuous approach to public sector performance management in most economies. Rooted in principles of management by agreement rather than command, PM plays a pivotal role in a range of human resource management processes that collectively enhance public sector institutions' effectiveness, considering their developmental nature (Khaltar & Moon, 2020). As a strategy, PM establishes an environment where managers support subordinates rather than dictate to them. Its impact on outcomes is amplified when seen as transformational rather than purely evaluative (Grossi, Kallio, Sargiacomo & Skoog, 2020; Maley, Dabic & Moeller, 2021.).

Furthermore, achieving performance targets within the public sector is facilitated by high-performance work systems that consider factors influencing employee performance. This entails comprehensive recruitment, performance-linked incentive systems, and management development aligned with organisational goals (Borgonovi, Anessi-Pessina & Bianchi, 2018). Employee performance thrives with requisite skills, motivation, a conducive work environment encouraging employee voice, commitment, policies aligning with employee needs, managerial support for implementing HR practices, and effective change management (Pak & Chang, 2023; Ali et al., 2024).

Moreover, effective implementation is crucial for performance management systems to fulfil their purposes. Elements like performance assessment, which evaluates worker efficiency against predefined standards, and performance audit, which identifies disparities between planned and actual achievements using measurement

tools, are essential in influencing workplace performance (Tran Huy, 2025). Finally, a performance audit's significance in public sector institutions lies in enhancing accountability by evaluating actions and expenditures for efficiency and effective resource utilisation. Performance management garners interest from taxpayers, parliament members, stakeholders, and media, as it aids in comprehending project results and implementations. Collectively, these performance management activities hold potential to elevate public sector performance (Wang, Zhu, Mayson & Chen, 2019; Donkor & Zhou, 2020; Amalia, 2023).

2.12.3 The Role of Strategies to Enhance Organisation Performance of Public Sector in the Study

There have been calls for public sector workers to increase productivity in Ghana's public sector (Jahan et al., 2023; Donkor & Zhou, 2020; Obuobisa-Darko, 2020). These developments came amidst reports that there has been a decline in productivity in Ghana's public sector. Studies have shown that increased public sector productivity could be achieved through the establishment of a more flexible bureaucracy, an increase in compensation, regular monitoring and evaluation of the public sector's performance, and the appointment of personnel on the basis of merit (Ayee, 2019; Donkor, Dongmei & Sekyere, 2021). In conclusion, several strategies have been associated with the enhancement of performance in public sector institutions. However, it is imperative to note that amidst the aforementioned strategies and tactics that have been stipulated in literature to enhance public sector performance, only a handful of these strategies have inherently highlighted either in theory or practice labour relations as a strategy or tactic that can stimulate organisational performance in the public sector. This is to say that there is a lacuna in both literature and practice when it comes to labour relations being seen as a stimulus to enhance public sector performance. Consequently, the study seeks to ascertain the influence of labour relations on the performance of public sector institutions.

Furthermore, a qualitative approach was used to thoroughly examine the aforementioned relationship, and this method yielded rich and detailed insights regarding the intricacies and experiences that support successful labour relations and

organisational performance. In order to ensure that the findings were applicable to similar organizations and contextually relevant, a case study design was also chosen in order to better understand how particular industrial relations strategies are implemented and how they affect organizational performance in the Ghanaian public sector. In order to obtain first-hand perspectives from workers, union representatives, HR managers, and organisational leaders who were involved in forming and experiencing the effects of industrial relations strategies on organisational performance, interview methodology was also included. In addition, it facilitated comprehensive dialogues, allowing participants to expound on their encounters, obstacles encountered, and accomplishments realised with diverse labour relations approaches. In conclusion, the study provided important insights into the labour relations strategies that support organisational success in Ghana's public sector by utilizing the aforementioned research methods. The next section (Section 2.13) looks at the syntheses of conflict management, labour relations and performance management which were some of the dominant themes in the identification of strategies to improve organisational performance.

2.13 SYNTHESSES OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, LABOUR RELATIONS AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT.

The discussion in Section 2.12 explores the strategies required to improve organisational performance, encompassing key practices like conflict resolution, labour relations, and performance management. The purpose of this section is to incorporate these practices and discuss how they relate to the objectives of the study. Organisational dynamics, labour relations, and overall effectiveness are shown to interact in a complicated way when conflict management, labour relations, and performance management are combined. In labour relations settings where conflicting interests between management and employees frequently cause difficulties, conflict management techniques are essential. Effective conflict resolution necessitates a careful comprehension of the underlying problems and a dedication to resolving them via productive discussion, negotiation, and even mediation (Singh & Gupta, 2024). Proactive conflict management enables organisations to reduce disturbances, preserve peace in the workplace, and create a favourable atmosphere

for accomplishing performance goals (Imene & Udjo-onovughakpo, 2023; Huang et al., 2023; Bieler & Nowak, 2022).

Additionally, labour relations, which are defined as the interaction between management and labour unions, have a big impact on how well an organisation performs. Productivity can be raised by a positive labour-management relationship based on respect, trust, and cooperation. On the other hand, hostile labour relations can result in strikes, disruptions, and low morale, all of which have a detrimental effect on the operation of the organisation (Wyrod & Chang, 2023). In order to ensure that organisational goals and employee interests are aligned, effective labour relations strategies encourage employee involvement and the implementation of fair and transparent policies (Haidar, 2021; Mansaray, 2022).

Systems for performance management are also essential for coordinating team and individual goals with organisational objectives. These systems facilitate the monitoring of progress, identification of areas for improvement, and recognition and reward of high-performing personnel by organisations by offering explicit expectations, feedback methods, and performance measurements (Lewandowski & Cirella, 2023). However, the dynamics of labour relations and dispute resolution techniques can also have an impact on performance management. For example, labour relations strain and organisational effectiveness might be hampered by disagreements resulting from performance evaluations or reward schemes. Consequently, reducing these conflicts and fostering a more peaceful and effective work environment can be achieved by incorporating conflict management concepts into performance management procedures (Singh & Gupta, 2024).

Consequently, the integration of labour relations, performance management, and conflict management highlights how these factors are interdependent in the setting of organisations. Organisations can develop a collaborative culture, promote performance excellence, and achieve long-term success by resolving issues in a constructively, cultivating favourable labour relations, and matching performance management procedures with organisational objectives.

Figure 2.1 provides a visual representation of the syntheses of conflict management, labour relations, and performance management.

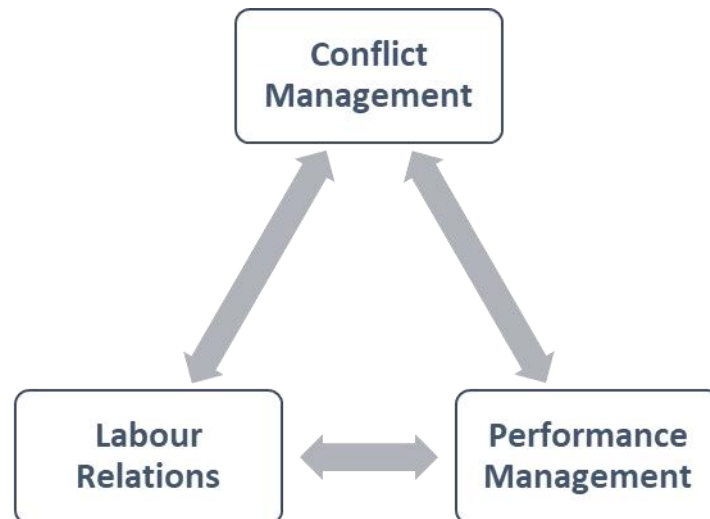


Figure 2.1 Syntheses of conflict management, labour relations and performance management.

Source: Author's construct (2024)

2.13.1 The Role of the Synthesis of Conflict Management, Labour Relations and Performance Management in the Study

The synthesis of conflict management, labour relations, and performance management is crucial for understanding the influence of labour relations on organisational performance, especially within the context of the study's purpose and chosen research methods. Examining the influence of labour relations on organisational performance is the objective of the study. Because labour interactions frequently involve disputes between social partners, conflict management is essential in this situation. Thus, performance may be evaluated overall by knowing how disputes are handled within the organisation. Furthermore, performance management is crucial since it assesses the extent to which workers are meeting organisational objectives. How well labour relations procedures are matched with organisational performance goals can be determined by examining the relationship between performance management and labour relations.

Qualitative approaches were also a good fit for investigating intricate topics like labour relations and organisational effectiveness. They made it possible to examine and comprehend the individuals' experiences in great detail. A thorough grasp of

actual circumstances within particular public sector organisations was made possible by the use of case study design. Additionally, in order to get data that answers the research questions, the study was able to purposefully sample people who work in performance management, labour relations, and dispute resolution within the chosen institutions.

Furthermore, by conducting interviews, the study was able to collect in-depth data, viewpoints, and narratives from individuals who were actively involved in performance management and labour relations procedures. Finding out about the subtleties of labour relations, dispute resolution techniques, and their effects on organisational performance was made easier with the use of thematic and content analysis. Finally, thematic analysis is useful for finding recurrent themes, patterns, and connections in qualitative data, like transcripts of interviews. It is possible to obtain valuable insights from textual material by methodically examining it using content analysis. Finding nuances in labour relations, conflict resolution techniques, and their effects on organisational performance are all made possible by these useful methods.

The jurisdiction within which the influence of labour relations on work performance is established plays a major role in comprehending this phenomenon. Hence, it's essential to grasp the relationship between labour relations and work performance in various countries, as outlined in Section 2.14.

2.14 ANALYSIS OF LABOUR RELATIONS AND WORK PERFORMANCE IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

2.14.1 Introduction

Building on the preceding discussion in section (Section 2.13), which delved into the integration of conflict resolution, labour relations, and performance management and their significance to the study, this section conducted a comparative analysis exploring the development of labour relations within workplaces across different countries. It also looks at the dynamics of labour relations practices, such as trade unionism, collective bargaining, and dispute resolution with particular emphasis on their impact on performance in different countries. The countries examined in this

analysis, Finland, the United Kingdom (UK) and Germany, are all characterised by strong labour market institutions, employer-employee relations, and effective regulatory mechanisms, although they vary as far as labour relations practice is concerned. Additionally, other countries such as Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa have seen the emergence of seemingly powerful labour relations system occur in each country, particularly in their public sectors.

2.14.2 Finland

2.14.2.1 *Introduction*

Unlike many developed countries, Finland values labour relations practices, especially collective bargaining. Its public service bargaining is highly centralised, more so than in the private sector. The right to freely organise and bargain collectively is guaranteed by the country's constitution and national legislation, which provide the channel through which all other laws, including labour laws, are promulgated. This is championed to encourage industrial harmony at workplaces in order to foster productivity and performance of workplaces (De Groen, Lenaerts, Bosc & Paquier, 2017).

2.14.2.2 *Finland's labour relations*

Finland's right to organise and engage in collective bargaining is ensured by two key legislation: the Collective Agreements Act 436/46 (1946) and the Mediation in Labour Disputes Act of 1962, amended in 1987. These laws serve as the foundation for Finland's labour relations practices, particularly collective bargaining. The Collective Agreement Act establishes binding agreements between employers and employees, and it was expanded in the 1970s to include public sector employees. The act also facilitates dispute resolution and maintains industrial peace. Additionally, specific legislations govern the public sector exclusively, such as the Local Authority Collective Agreement Act of 1970, amended in 1993, which strengthens the rights of workers' and employers' organisations to freely negotiate and conclude collective agreements (Bryson, Forth & Stokes, 2017; Kylä-Laaso & Koskinen Sandberg, 2020).

Finland employs a multi-level bargaining system that operates at the central, sectoral, and enterprise levels. Social partners conduct negotiations at each level, and Finland boasts a high level of collective bargaining coverage, one of the highest in Europe.

Central organisations mainly address issues like wages, working time, social policies, and training. Evaluating Finland's public sector labour relations concerning the productivity of public institutions, minimum terms of remuneration, sickness and maternity leave, annual leave, and working hours are determined at the national level. This connection between conditions of service and productivity aims to improve the performance of organisations, especially in the public sector (Kuziemski & Misuraca, 2020).

Negotiated collective agreements are typically based on tripartite wage policy agreements involving employees, employers, and the government. Each sector in Finland has its own collective agreement that applies nationwide. Collective bargaining agreements cover unionised employees, and they often incorporate performance indicators to ensure that union members meet agreed-upon targets and employers' goals. Since 1993, municipalities and inter-municipal authorities have had some jurisdiction in negotiating and concluding collective agreements at the local level. Enterprises can independently enter into local agreements with branches of unions to regulate employment terms at the workplace. Enterprise-level collective bargaining addresses issues like working hours and pay levels while considering the overall growth and development of the enterprise (Khoreva & Wechtler, 2018; Kjellberg, 2023).

A noteworthy aspect of Finland's labour relations system is that negotiated wages and benefits specified in collective agreements apply to all workers, whether they are unionised or not. Moreover, all enterprises within a sector are legally bound to adhere to the collective agreements that govern it. In contrast to many other countries, Finland does not negotiate a statutory minimum wage in a central general collective agreement framework. Instead, wage determination is based on minimum terms of employment as outlined in various collective agreements. These agreements typically set the minimum terms for all future contracts. Workers' and employers' organisations work together on issues like flexible working hours, productivity improvements, and staff remuneration schemes (Bergholm & Sippola, 2022).

All employees in Finland enjoy the right to strike, subject to rules and regulations. Employees can embark on industrial action only if certain conditions are duly satisfied. The decentralisation programme has enabled enterprise-level actors to have more

flexibility in enforcing the provisions of collective bargaining; this has stimulated the performance of organisations. Undoubtedly, decentralising collective bargaining is a significant trend in the labour relations system in Finland. It is important to note that the overwhelming majority of collective agreements in Finland are based on centrally negotiated income policy agreements. However, tripartite cooperation continues to remain an essential element in Finland's collective bargaining system (Doellgast, Lillie & Pulignano, 2018; Günther, 2021). The aforementioned disposition of Finland's labour relations has significantly improved the performance of workers and the organisation as a whole.

2.14.3 Germany

2.14.3.1 *Introduction*

Germany's reunification presented significant challenges for the country's labour relations system, especially in the public service sector. Government entities and public institutions faced the task of harmonising collective bargaining for wages, considering differences in competency and productivity levels. The labour relations system in Germany is primarily governed by the Constitution of Germany and the Collective Agreement Act of April 9, 1949. These statutes ensure the rights of both workers' and employers' organisations to freely form associations and engage in collective bargaining, with the Collective Agreement Act playing a crucial role in regulating labour relations activities and enhancing performance (Poole, 2013).

2.14.3.2 *Germany's labour relations*

The majority of public sector employees in Germany are members of trade unions. Only non-civil servant employees within various levels of administration possess the right to engage in collective bargaining, as stipulated by the Collective Agreement Act of 1949. Collective bargaining in the public service sector occurs at the central level, where all three levels of government (land, federal level, and commune) participate in negotiations, aiming to achieve uniform agreements for employees within specific sectors. These central-level collective agreements are often applied at the enterprise level as well (Bratton, Gold, Bratton & Steele, 2021).

Nevertheless, there is a growing push to decentralise labour relations practices, including collective bargaining in the public service sector. Many collective

agreements are designed to be flexible, aiming to strike a balance between job security and productivity. Typically, public service collective agreements have a minimum duration of one year, while framework agreements may vary in length. Framework agreements cover various aspects, such as working hours, annual leave, sick leave, and other employment conditions (Jäger, Noy & Schoefer, 2022).

In recent years, Germany has witnessed reforms in employer-employee relations, shifting remuneration from being based solely on seniority to performance and experience. Additionally, several bonus payments have been reduced or eliminated, and there has been an increase in working hours. Many organisations have introduced performance-based pay structures (Kochan, Lansbury & MacDuffie, 2018; Emmenegger, Graf & Strebel, 2020).

These labour relation strategies aimed at improving worker performance and organisational efficiency have, at times, led to industrial conflicts and strikes, especially among public service workers. In 2006, public service employees from 16 regional states engaged in one of the longest public sector strikes in history, lasting for 14 weeks. The strike was in response to concerns about changes in working hours and reductions or eliminations of end-of-year bonuses and holiday payments. Ultimately, the dispute was resolved in favour of the union (Johnston & Land-Kazlauskas, 2018).

In Germany, public service employees, excluding civil servants, have the right to strike to advocate for better wages and working conditions. Warning strikes are not uncommon, such as the large-scale warning strike in 2002 initiated by the public sector union to demand wage increases in line with inflation rates and productivity gains. In dispute resolution, German labour law does not mandate compulsory arbitration, leaving the parties involved with the responsibility of reaching an agreement during negotiations. However, efforts are made to resolve conflicts through arbitration to avoid industrial action (Baccaro & Howell, 2017; Jäger Noy & Schoefer, 2022).

The Germans over the years have acknowledged the importance of labour relations practices to the effective performance of workers and organisations in generally; hence, both social partners at workplaces employ labour relations practices, particularly collective bargaining and dispute resolution methods, as a means to

stimulate fairness and equity at the workplace. This tends to create industrial peace and harmony, leading to high commitment of workers and improved performance of workplaces (Bean, 2021; Di Carlo, 2020; Bratton, Gold, Bratton & Steele, 2021).

2.14.4 United Kingdom

2.14.4.1 *Introduction*

Civil servants are often known as employees of the central government, while public servants refer to employees of local administrations, public enterprises, and public institutions. Collective bargaining serves as a fundamental pillar of labour relations in both the U.K.'s public and private sectors. Interestingly, there is no substantial statutory regulation governing collective bargaining; instead, the parties involved engage in collective bargaining voluntarily (Waddington, 2020).

2.14.4.2 *United Kingdom's labour relations*

The Employment Relations Act of 1999 does, however, provide a clear definition for recognising and establishing bargaining units. The key actors involved in public sector labour relations, such as collective bargaining, are union and government representatives. Collective agreements in the public service cover various aspects, including wages, working hours, annual leave, and general conditions of work. These agreements also outline mechanisms and procedures for resolving disputes at all levels within the public service (Giovanis, 2018; Petrini & Wettergren, 2023).

In contrast to many developed countries, the U.K. lacks mechanisms to extend agreements to non-members. Collective agreements that are concluded exclusively cover the members of the workers' and employers' organisations that negotiated them. National-level negotiations often address traditional issues such as wages and employment conditions, and in some public sector enterprises, bargaining occurs at the enterprise level (Duggan, Sherman, Carbery & McDonnell, 2020).

Many government administrations have opposed national-level bargaining in the public sector, resulting in its decline in the majority of public sector enterprises. However, national bargaining remains significant, particularly among core public sector workers. While tripartite consultation on the minimum wage exists, there is no bargaining on the national minimum wage, nor is there tripartite concertation on wage

bargaining. The typical duration of collective bargaining agreements in the public service is one year (Pandey, 2023).

Legislation such as the Employment Rights Act protects employees from unfair dismissal, ensures redundancy payments, and covers areas like zero-hours contracts, Sunday working, and flexible working. Additionally, the Equality Act of 2010 safeguards employees from discrimination and enforces equal pay. The Equality Act covers various aspects, including age discrimination, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. These laws are crucial in fostering trust and safety in the workplace while preventing disputes and conflicts and thus contributing to positive employment relationships (Wilkinson, Dundon, Marchington & Ackers, 2004; Rigby & García Calavia, 2023).

With a growing emphasis on labour relations' impact on performance, organisations have implemented a balanced scorecard approach, extensively using organisational performance metrics to link labour relations practices through performance measurement frameworks. This includes evaluating grievances handled, measuring engagement efficiency, individual productivity, and return on investment at a micro level (Weghmann, 2023). The current state of labour relations in the UK has established a framework that governs what can and cannot be reasonably asked of an employee. These laws are crucial for protecting employees in the workplace, contributing to their safety and happiness at work. Labour relations play a critical role in job satisfaction for the workforce and their commitment to producing high-quality work, leading to enhanced performance in both public and private institutions in the UK (Colvin & Darbshire, 2013; Duggan, Sherman, Carbery & McDonnell, 2020; Rigby & García Calavia, 2023).

2.14.5 South Africa

2.14.5.1 Introduction

Following the end of apartheid, South Africa entered a new era of democracy, which led to significant transformations in labour relations. Swiftly after the abolition of Apartheid, the country prioritised the reform of its labour laws, showcasing the dedication of the new South Africa to uphold labour rights and social fairness. Over

the last twenty years, employment relations in South Africa have witnessed substantial modifications (Essex et al., 2023).

2.14.5.2 South Africa's labour relations

Labour relations in South Africa are underpinned by a strong constitutional and legislative foundation. Section 23 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, guarantees the right to fair labour practices, freedom of association, the right to strike, and participation in collective bargaining (Webster, 2022). This constitutional imperative is operationalised through key enabling statutes, most notably the Labour Relations Act (LRA) of 1995, which governs collective bargaining structures, regulates strikes and lockouts, establishes dispute resolution (Villanueva & Adamopoulou, 2022). The updated labour laws of South Africa now ensure the legal enforcement of collective bargaining agreements between employers and workers' organisations. Moreover, the new government administration placed great emphasis on promoting collective bargaining within the public service (Webster & Francis, 2019; Webster, 2022). Unlike many countries, South Africa's overall union density and collective bargaining coverage have been increasing during the 1980s and the 1990s, which was primarily the result of full trade union rights being extended to public sector employees. This was a remarkable achievement in an era when many countries around the world were facing declines in their key labour relations indicators (Webster, 2022).

In South Africa, the labour market operates under increased regulations, granting employers the freedom to establish and join employers' organisations and utilise lockouts for collective bargaining purposes. However, the protection of strike action is contingent on following specific dispute procedures. Negotiations for collective agreements occur either at the industry level, facilitated by industry bargaining councils, or at the enterprise level when a union holds substantial representation. To address unfair dismissal and wage disputes of mutual interest, the statutory Commission on Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration (CCMA) or Bargaining Councils play a crucial role, effectively managing and regulating conflicts. (Villanueva & Adamopoulou, 2022).

However, in the past five years, there has been a notable decline in labour relations practices, including a rapid decrease in trade union density in South Africa. The

number of trade union members fell from approximately four million in 2001 to around three million in 2006 (Essex et al., 2023). This decline can be attributed to stricter regulations concerning trade union registration and the increasing trend of casualisation within the workforce. During a significant event on 1 June 2007, public service employees across the country engaged in a nationwide strike that endured for four weeks, making it the largest recorded strike in post-apartheid South Africa (Bhorat, Naidoo & Yu, 2014). The strike had a considerable impact on sensitive areas within the public sector, such as prisons and healthcare institutions. Schools were forced to close, and essential public services, including healthcare, experienced disruptions. As a consequence, the performance of many public sector institutions was negatively affected (Visagie, Uys, Linde & Havenga, 2012). This shows the influence labour relations practices can have on the performance of organisations; hence it is a salient area of governance that requires much attention for the development of economies around the world.

Despite an enabling statutory framework and a strong tradition of collective bargaining and labour mediation dating back to the late 1970s, there is little evidence of workplace relations today living up to the stated purposes of the Labour Relations Act, which highlights the promotion of orderly collective bargaining, employee participation in decision-making in the workplace, and the effective resolution of labour disputes (Rosenbloom, 2014).

According to the World Competitiveness Report 2017-2018, published by the World Economic Forum, South Africa holds the unfortunate distinction of having the most unfavourable labour-employee relations worldwide, ranking 137 out of 137 countries. This concerning ranking is primarily attributed to the lack of trust in the relationship between social partners. The effectiveness of a country's labour market is directly linked to its GDP, long-term growth, overall prosperity, and competitiveness in the global arena. The unhealthy state of labour-employee relations in South Africa is expected to directly impact organisational performance, posing a significant threat to the country's ability to maintain a sustainable economy (Hammer and Avgar, 2017; van Staden, 2024). Given this critical situation in South Africa, there is a clear need for further research on the influence of labour relations on workplace performance.

2.14.6 Uganda

2.14.6.1 Introduction

Uganda's labour relations system consists of significant components, namely labour and wages. Prior to 1993, civil servants in Uganda were not permitted to form or join trade unions. However, the labour relations system underwent changes with the introduction of the Constitution of 1995 and Public Service Act No. 18 of 1969, which have governed public service labour relations since then. Various amendments to Uganda's labour laws after 1993 expanded the right to freedom of association for employees (Schminke & Fridell, 2021).

2.14.6.2 Uganda's labour relations

In the public service sector, collective bargaining and consultations serve as the primary negotiation instruments. Bipartite negotiations take place between public sector workers' organisations and the Ministry of Public Services. In 1993, public service unions, for the first time, actively participated in decisions concerning employment conditions, including job evaluation, public wage bill management, and overall annual salary adjustments (Webster, Ludwig, Masikane & Spooner, 2022).

Unlike many countries, Uganda's labour laws do not establish a nationwide minimum wage; wages are exclusively determined through collective bargaining. The bargaining structure in Uganda's public service is formal, involving high-profile government and union officials (Johnston & Land-Kazlauskas, 2018). Public service employees theoretically have the right to strike, and employers can lock them out. However, the procedures to make strikes or lockouts legal are lengthy. In disputes related to employment conditions, the Minister of Public Service has the unilateral authority to make an award (Schminke & Fridell, 2021; Wambas, 2023).

The current state of labour relations in Uganda has significantly impacted organisational performance, particularly in public sector institutions. The extended procedures for legalising strikes and lockouts have discouraged many associations and unions from initiating such actions. Consequently, workplace dissatisfaction has risen, leading to reduced commitment and motivation, ultimately affecting productivity levels (Byamugisha, 2018; Tom, 2023; Muasya & Walumbwa, 2023).

The aforementioned labour relations environment created in Uganda has also led several organisations in various sectors to refuse to effectively adhere to their tax obligations. This situation has led to a lack of development and growth of the Ugandan economy.

2.14.7 Ghana

2.14.7.1 Introduction

Labour relations in the Ghanaian public service have undergone significant transformations over the past thirty years, influenced by successive military regimes and the eventual return to democratic governance. Economic and structural reforms implemented in the 1980s, as part of the structural adjustment programme, led to substantial downsizing of the public sector workforce, fundamentally altering the dynamics of labour relations and their impact on the performance of Ghana's public sector. The public sector in Ghana encompasses various entities such as the national government, regional and district administrations, public enterprises, institutions, and healthcare facilities. Additionally, quasi-governmental bodies and government-sponsored programmes fall under this purview. Notably, the military, police, and fire service operate outside the scope of labour laws, denying their employees the rights to unionise, strike, or engage in collective bargaining.

2.14.7.2 Ghana' labour relations

Key stakeholders in Ghana's public service labour relations framework include the government and various workers' organisations representing public sector employees. Management of public enterprises and institutions serves as the primary representative of employers within the public sector. Bargaining in the public service typically involves negotiations between employers' and workers' organisations, often preceded by consultations and informal discussions to outline the bargaining framework (Kissi & Herzig, 2024).

The primary legislative framework governing industrial relations in Ghana is the Labour Act (Act 651, 2003). Other relevant laws include the Labour Regulations, 2007 (LI 1833), the Factories, Offices and Shops Act, 1970 (Act 328), the Social Security Law, 1991 (PNDC 247), the Pensions Act, 2007 (Act 766), and the Workmen's Compensation Act 1987 (PNDCL 187). Ghana has ratified fifty ILO

Conventions, including those addressing core labour rights such as the right to unionise, collective bargaining, equal treatment in employment, minimum age for employment, abolition of forced labour, and elimination of the worst forms of child labour (Dzanku & Tsikata, 2022).

Collective bargaining in Ghana's public service typically follows a bipartite structure involving representatives from both unions and employers. However, to ensure transparency, other social groups and independent government agencies may also participate in negotiations. While collective bargaining occurs at various levels within the public service, the determination of the national minimum wage remains centralized, serving as a benchmark for wage negotiations across all sectors. For state-owned enterprises (SOEs), bargaining typically occurs at the enterprise level (Amankwaah, 2023).

Employees working in the public sector retain the right to go on strike, while public sector employers possess the authority to initiate lockouts. Section 135 of the Labour Act of 2003 encourages parties to resolve disputes through the established procedures outlined in their Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) or employment contracts. If a dispute remains unresolved after following these procedures for seven days, it is then referred to the National Labour Commission (NLC) for facilitation. This body serves both the private and public sectors and has been the primary mediator of industrial disputes in Ghana since 2003. The establishment of the NLC aimed to ensure independent handling of labour relations matters, reducing undue influence from the government and political entities and promoting fair and harmonious labour relations (Owoo, Lambon-Quayefio, Dávalos & Manu, 2020).

The centralised negotiation of the minimum wage persists at the national level in Ghana, with a tripartite process involving government representatives, employers' organisations, and workers' organisations. The determination of the national minimum wage holds significant importance, serving as a benchmark for all other wage negotiations. Bargaining over wages and salaries in the public sector is exclusively bipartite, involving representatives from employers and labour unions. The scope of public service bargaining has broadened to encompass various issues, including promotion, job classification, and public policy concerns (Ayentimi & Burgess, 2023).

which have resulted in new conduct patterns. In these relationships, elected officials frequently play a pivotal role that is greatly impacted by politics and can occasionally negatively impact public services (Rosenbloom, Kravchuk & Clerkin, 2022; Azfar et al., 2018).

Numerous nations have enacted public sector reforms since 1990, which have presented hitherto unseen difficulties for workers and management. These reforms frequently result in labour relations failures on the part of the government, which negatively impact the performance of economies (Keller, 2024). Certain reform initiatives, like union-public sector collaboration and consultation, have run counter to the core principles of labour relations. Public sector workers are categorised as unionised or non-unionised in some countries. Civil servants, particularly unionised workers, benefit from collective bargaining agreements without actively participating. The outcomes of these discussions often affect non-unionised workers' working conditions, leading to public sector unions providing collective benefits (Waddington, 2020; Ayentimi & Burgess, 2023).

The study analysed labour relations and worker performance across nations due to cultural, political, economic, and legal differences. It provided insights into factors affecting labour relations and organisational success. Comparing these aspects across national borders helped identify successful tactics and best practices that enhance organisational performance (Kjellberg, 2023).

Policymakers, practitioners, and organisational leaders can benefit from evidence-based insights gleaned from comparative studies of labour relations and job performance that guide policy creation. In addition, create procedures and policies that support good labour-management interactions and improve the efficiency of the organisation. In offering a variety of viewpoints, contextual insights, and rich qualitative data, the review of labour relations and work performance in other nations enhances qualitative research techniques like the study's case study design, purposive sampling, and thematic analysis. Through the use of this methodology, the study was able to examine the intricacies of labour relations and organisational performance in a global setting, leading to a better comprehension of the dynamics at work and influencing evidence-based practice and decision-making.

The analysis confirms previous findings on labour relations and workplace performance across national borders. However, the study's focus on a few countries in various areas only reveals a decline in public sector composition and operation. The majority of the studies examined were from developed nations, as there is a lack of information on labour relations and public sector performance in developing nations. Therefore, there is a gap in the literature regarding labour relations in the public sector in emerging nations. Numerous repercussions from these events have an immediate effect on labour relations. Thus, there is a need for this study, which aims to investigate how labour relations affect public sector performance in emerging nations, particularly Ghana.

2.16 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summary, the study delved into labour relations, focusing on the public sector in Ghana, and its impact on organisational functioning. It highlighted the intricate relationships between employers, employees, and labour unions, as well as the importance of understanding trade and public sector unionism in Ghana. Collective bargaining, a key component of labour relations, was also discussed. By analysing collective bargaining procedures and results, organisations can gain a better understanding of how labour relations affect organisational performance. The study explores conflict resolution in labour relations and its impact on organisational performance. It highlights challenges facing public sector labour relations, such as accountability, resource limitations, and governance. However, there are ways to improve performance. The study also integrates labour relations, performance management, and conflict management. It examines labour relations and work performance in various nations, providing insights into different labour relations management philosophies and their impact on organisational performance.

2.17 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, organisations across nations are embracing labour relations, which are now ingrained in their laws. However, labour relations face challenges in workplace productivity. Developed countries often have higher rates of collective bargaining coverage in the public sector compared to the private sector. These nations have

modified their labour relations policies to maintain or improve union densities in the public sector. Various labour relations strategies are being implemented to address these challenges. Collective bargaining continues to be the most important labour relations tactic for promoting productivity at work. Even though union density has declined in several developed nations, it is still significantly high. Significant developments have been witnessed in the field of industrial disputes during the past ten years in several of the region's countries, with mandatory conciliation and arbitration acting as a last alternative for resolving conflicts. In general, the impact of labour relations on job performance is positive.

Developing nations, like Africa, are experiencing a decline in trade union membership and collective bargaining coverage, leading to public distrust in conflict resolution processes. Despite this, labour laws in these countries have strengthened labour rights, especially for public service employees. Employees are now more involved in policy decisions, and labour relations institutions have been strengthened. Less-developed nations are increasingly using labour relations techniques to boost productivity, with employers taking a more flexible stance. The challenge lies in striking a balance between employee interests and company commitments for increased productivity, competitiveness, and corporate effectiveness. (Horwitz & Ronnie, 2021). In order to gain a better understanding of public sector labour relations and its impact on organisational performance, it is crucial to consider the theoretical perspectives that underpin these concepts, as discussed in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Building on the previous chapter's (Chapter Two) literary insights regarding the study's variables, this chapter's theoretical review explores the underlying theories that provide a framework for comprehending the phenomena that have been observed. This chapter discusses the use of theories and models like pluralist theory, the Dunlop model, and the strategic model to understand public sector labour relations and institutional performance. The study aims to examine the influence of trade unionism, collective bargaining, and dispute resolution on organisational performance. Pluralist theory emphasises balance and coexistence among social partners; the Dunlop model emphasises cooperation; and the strategic model focuses on strategic decision-making between labour relations actors. Understanding these theories helps analyse how these factors influence organisational performance in various ways.

The Dunlop model and strategic model were used to explore strategic decisions made by unions and management in influencing performance indicators. The chosen theories guided the selection of research methods and data collection strategies, with qualitative methods like interviews being used to capture diverse perspectives on public sector labour relations performance. The study's findings are interpreted and discussed using selected theories, such as pluralist theory, the Dunlop Model, and the Strategic Choice Model. The pluralist theory connects the findings to pluralist principles, while the Dunlop Model aligns the findings with stakeholder roles and their impact on organisational performance. The Strategic Choice Model focuses on how trade unions and management's strategic decisions relate to organisational performance variations. The study integrated various theories into each phase, creating a coherent framework that informed its direction, methodology, and interpretation of findings, ultimately enhancing the study's understanding of trade unionism, collective bargaining, and dispute resolution's impact on organisational performance. Below is the graphical representation of the theoretical framework of the study.

Figure 3.1 presents a graphical illustration of the theoretical framework of the study.

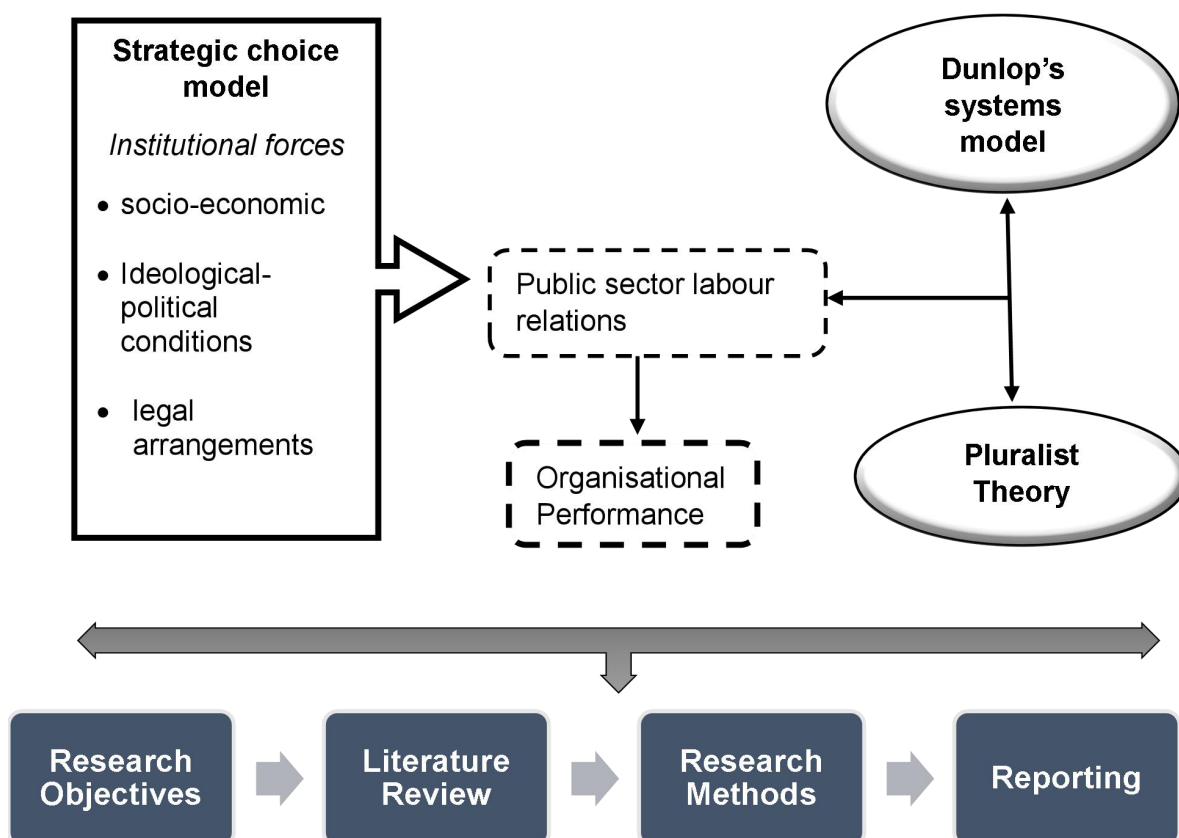


Figure 3.1 Theoretical framework of the study

Source: Author's construct (2023)

The theoretical framework describes the relationships between the various theories of labour relations and how they affect the functioning of public sector organisations. The pluralist approach asserts that institutional frameworks through collective bargaining should resolve the unavoidable labour-management conflict. The interactions between the social partners, environmental contexts and the laws regulating labour relations are all highlighted in Dunlop's Systems Model. On the other hand, the strategic choice model places more emphasis on how management and unions shape labour relations through their decision-making processes, including how they react to external factors like changes in law or the economy. All of these

ideas provided the basis for establishing the objectives of the study, reviewing the literature, choosing research methodologies and reporting the data of the study. Pluralist theory is highly pertinent to the study, as it offers a basis for understanding the conflict inherent in public sector labour relations. Dunlop's model highlights and explains how external factors, such as law changes or economic downturns, affect how unions and public sector management interact and how these dynamics affect public institutions' performance. Furthermore, the strategic choice model plays a key role in the study as it concentrates on the choices management and unions make regarding how to deal with labour-related issues. This approach sheds light on how unions and public sector leaders negotiate challenges and how their decisions influence organisational outcomes.

3.2 PLURALIST THEORY

3.2.1 Introduction

The pluralist labour relations paradigm analyses work and the employment relationship from a theoretical perspective rooted in the inherent conflict of interest between the interaction of workers and management in imperfect labour markets (Budd, Gomez & Meltz 2004; Poole, 2021). Similarly, the pluralistic perspective argues that power dynamics in the interaction between employees and business leaders are not driven by a single source. Instead, the perspective acknowledges the presence of multiple power sources such as legitimate power, expert power, reward power, resource power and coercive power (Heery, 2024). Within this framework, labour unions often play a central role, aiming to establish a power balance between management and the workforce. This perspective recognises that conflicts are bound to arise but views them as essential drivers of innovation and corporate advancement. Moreover, collective bargaining is utilised to strike a balance between employees' desires and management's recommendations (Dobbins, Hughes & Dundon, 2021; Webster, 2022; Johnson et al., 2023). Consequently, the pluralist theory of labour relations aligns with the objectives of the study, explored influence of trade unionism, collective bargaining and dispute resolution on the performance of organisations. The theory also aligned with the way literature was reviewed as well as the research methods, as it helped in identifying concepts that were reviewed to provide answers

to the literature and empirical questions of the study. Similarly, the theory informed the choice of the methodologies by choosing methods that could help to get in-depth information and understanding of the theory.

Pluralist theory is defined as an alliance of individuals and groups with divergent objectives and interests in an organisation (Wright, 2023). Pluralism, which gained traction in the 1940s, asserts that collective bargaining serves as a form of self-governance wherein both management and labour jointly establish workplace regulations. This concept, introduced by economist John R. Commons in the United States, views society as composed of various interest groups competing for their objectives. Commons highlighted the dynamics of conflict and compromise among these groups in labour, product, and monetary markets, laying the groundwork for pluralism in industrial relations, often termed a "partnership agreement." (Kaufman, Barry, Wilkinson & Gomez, 2021). Increased industrial conflicts in England spurred the evolution of pluralist theory in the mid-1960s and early 1970s. Subsequent pluralist theories, particularly those from British scholars like Flanders and Fox, emphasised the inevitability of industrial conflict and the need to manage it through mechanisms like collective bargaining, conciliation, and arbitration (Ham, 2022; Crouch, 2022; Rees, 2024).

Pluralist theory incorporates several key principles, including mutuality, acknowledging shared interests; plurality, recognising differences; trust and respect for the intentions of the opposing party; consensus-seeking for agreement; and engagement, promoting involvement, all within the framework of social justice and working-class mobilisation. Additionally, the conceptualisation of pluralist theory aimed to address autocratic decision-making in labour matters and promote employee participation in organisational settings, addressing a historical denial of employee rights by business owners (Howell, 2021; Dobbins & Dundon, 2024).

Understanding the interplay between labour and management inside an organisation was made easier by the pluralist theory, which made it pertinent to researching how labour relations affect organisational performance. Pluralism, which recognised the existence of various interest groups and the certainty of labour disputes, highlighted the significance of procedures like collective bargaining and arbitration in resolving these disputes and encouraging collaboration between employers and workers

(Dobbins, Hughes & Dundon, 2021). The pluralist theory dictated the choice of research methods in the context of determining the impact of labour relations on organisational performance. There is mutual reinforcement between the pluralist perspective and these qualitative approaches. While qualitative research methodologies contribute to a fuller and more thorough understanding of how labour relations affect organisational performance, pluralist theory offers a framework for comprehending the complexity and conflict inherent in labour relations.

The underlying assumption of the pluralist theory is that there are two divergent groups made up of employees and employers in an organisation with diverse objectives, values and interests (Heery, 2016; Heery, 2024). Hence, the inevitable potential for conflict, however, it also tends to emphasise how it can be contained by the development of processes, especially collective bargaining arrangements (Chand, 2017; Wright, 2023).

The study relies heavily on the pluralist ideology rather than other ideologies such as unitarist, Marxist, Margerison, and Gandhian ideologies, as well as competing paradigms. In contrast to the other ideologies, pluralism recognises the existence of multiple interests inside organisations, including those of management, labour, and other stakeholders, which is why it was chosen for the study. This realisation is crucial for comprehending the intricate dynamics of labour relations since it made it possible for the study to examine the ways in which various groups cooperate and bargain to accomplish their goals. Conversely, the other ideologies, especially unitarist ideology, might minimise the presence of competing interests, which would restrict their capacity to clarify the intricacies of labour relations and respond to the research objectives of the study.

Furthermore, pluralism highlights the significance of processes like collective bargaining, resolving disputes, and encouraging collaboration between employers and employees (Dobbins, Hughes & Dundon, 2021), all of which are consistent with the variable that the study aims to investigate. However, Margerison's ideology places more emphasis on individual performance and managerial control, perhaps ignoring the collective components of labour relations, whereas Marxist ideology places more importance on class struggle and revolutionary change than cooperation. Pluralism, as opposed to other theories such as unitarist, Marxist, Margerison's

theories, and Gandhian ideologies, is a good theoretical approach for comprehending the intricacies of labour relations within contemporary organisations because of the previously described qualities.

3.2.2 Pluralism

The pluralist ideology varies from other ideologies in that the basis of pluralists begins from a set of assumptions and values that organisational conflict is inevitable. The perception of this school of thought is that organisations are complex social constructions, comprising groups with divergent interests (Ackers, 2021; Heery, 2024). From this frame of reference, it is also assumed that different sources of authority will emerge from organisations, and that will stimulate the potential for conflict by social partners over the operationalisation of the organisation as well as the allocation of resources and rewards (Czarzasty, 2020; Dobbins, Hughes & Dundon, 2021; Ham, 2022). Organisations with the pluralist's ideology tend to perceive conflict as necessary for a healthy relationship between the social partners in organisations, as it stimulates both employers and workers to bring their grievances to bear. Similarly, this ideology argued that the potential for conflict, provides a spur to managers to explore innovative and fair approaches towards the resolution of conflict often through collective bargaining, in order to produce the best results and promote industrial harmony (Heery, 2024; Dobbins & Dundon, 2024). The pluralists acknowledge the presence of competing springs of authority in organisations, most notably in the form of trade unions, and the vital role they play by allowing organisations to resolve labour relations issues on a collective basis (Ramirez & Böhm, 2021). Subsequently, the pluralist ideology is argued to not only offer organisations the most competent means for enforcing employment rules and curtailing the level of conflict in organisations, but also to stimulate fair and equitable results by enabling workers counterbalance the power of management when negotiating workplace contracts (Jackson, 2024). It is in light of these ideologies that pluralists largely admit to the legitimate right of workers to bargain collectively and trade unions to act in this capacity on their behalf (Kochan, 2019; Ham, 2022). The employment relationship affiliated with a pluralistic environment is perceived as a bargaining concern that stimulates salient questions concerning the allocation of

resources and the rules governing the bipartite relationships that exist between the social partners (Crouch, 2022).

Pluralists argue that the interests of employees often clash with those of the organisation due to ongoing tensions related to labour costs and taxation levels. They view trade unions as valuable because they serve as mediators, addressing and regulating emerging conflicts between workers and employers. Additionally, unions are seen as defenders of employees' rights and are considered legitimate representatives of their interests (Kaufman, Barry, Wilkinson, Lomas & Gomez, 2021; Jackson, 2024).

Similarly, this perspective on conflict sharply contrasts with that of unitarists, who believe that conflicts are isolated, not inherent, and can be avoided. Pluralists, on the other hand, assert that conflict is inherent in employer-employee relationships. They base this belief on their recognition of the diverse nature of employees and various groups within an organisation (Dobbins & Dundon, 2024; Bamber & Lansbury, 2024). While unitarists aim to unify the entire organisation as a single team, pluralists acknowledge the existence of different factions within the organisation and understand that disagreements and differing interests can arise. Pluralists propose resolving these conflicts by encouraging employees and groups to address their differences and collaborate for the benefit of the company (Van Buren, Greenwood, Donaghey & Reinecke, 2021; Singh & Gupta, 2024).

Moreover, pluralists emphasize managing conflict rather than denying its existence or giving up on resolving it, as unitarists and Marxists might. They view conflict as potentially constructive, as it can signal necessary organizational changes and highlight differences that require resolution. The nature of pluralist theory being employed by the study falls within the scope of the classic pluralism (Singh & Gupta, 2024; Adamantia & Fragouli, 2024).

3.2.3 Classic Pluralism

In classic pluralism, there is an emphasis on the macro-context of industrial relations. Its first core proposition is that the industrial relations' system plays a vital role in the broad stage of economic development. Secondly, that change is driven from the economic base, with new forms of production and associated changes in the

structure of markets calling forth institutional responses in the realm of industrial relations (Bamber & Lansbury, 2024; Rees, 2024). These prepositions are often seen in the contemporary pluralist argument. It is therefore common to associate the context of industrial relations in relation to economic development. Similarly, a lot of emphasis has been placed on economic causation, with changes in industrial relations being driven by flexible systems of production, globalisation and competitive markets (Dobbins, Hughes & Dundon, 2021; Ackers, 2021; Poole, 2021).

This set of assumptions has led to a number of middle-range theoretical claims about the relationship between economic development and industrial relations. One of these claims is linked to the concern of pluralist scholars making a case for trade unionism and collective bargaining as the major industrial relations elements that can ensure that many countries' economies will reach their full potential (Heery, 2016; Heery, 2024). For instance, Czarzasty (2020) promoted the idea of introducing systems like shop committees in organisations to foster positive labour relations and productivity. Current research on effective workplace practices underscores the significance of fair treatment in sustaining efficiency at work. Dobbins, Hughes & Dundon, (2021) suggest that in order to maximise actual efficiency, it's necessary to provide humane considerations such as fairness, a say in decisions, job security, and meaningful tasks for human employees, as opposed to treating them as lifeless resources. Similarly, Ramirez & Böhm, (2021) argue that a business focused solely on immediate profit gains without recognising the human aspect in production factors is likely to trigger negative consequences that hinder long-term efficiency goals and the general performance of an organisation.

In other words, beyond just a moral standpoint, equity and having a voice also carry practical importance because their absence leads to significant industrial discord in a pluralistic work environment. In labour relations characterised by multiple stakeholders, existing imperfect markets, and the presence of human elements (beyond purely economic aspects), equity and voice become essential to establish a sense of fairness among workers, which stimulates high performance. This is crucial for workers to willingly accept the terms of modern employment relationships. This dynamic applies throughout various levels of employment connections and even extends to the overall economy (Heery, 2016; Dundon, Wilkinson & Ackers, 2023).

In the neo-classical economics perspective, these regulations on work are seen as limitations on the employment arrangement that result from unions' monopoly power and negatively impact productivity and profits (Drakopoulos, 2023). Conversely, in the industrial relations viewpoint, work regulations, seniority rights, and grievance arbitration are perceived as mechanisms that balance conflicting interests by introducing fairness into the workplace while mostly preserving management's authority. Early institutionalists didn't necessarily reject the analytical value of neo-classical economics but criticised its inadequate treatment of the employment relationship and its narrowness when applied to public policy (Yonay 1998; Kaufman, 2018; Riva & Rizza, 2021). Conversely, Marxist analyses emphasised the significance of embedded power dynamics, while the human resource management approach adds to the understanding of organisational performance. By incorporating elements of markets, conflict, and human agents from other perspectives, the pluralist labour relations paradigm offers a unique theoretical framework for comprehending the employment relationship by connecting efficiency, equity, and voice, which are absent in competing paradigms such as Marxist and unitarist paradigms. (Kaufman, Barry, Wilkinson & Gomez, 2021; Atzeni, 2022).

Dating back to the late nineteenth century the pluralist perspective regards labour unions and collective bargaining as fundamental tools in balancing the diverse objectives within the employment relationship (bipartite and tripartite relationships). Pluralist industrial relations scholars take a broader approach to examining the impacts of new forms of unionism not only on organisational performance but also on workers and society (Dow-Gregory, 1997; Singh & Gupta, 2024). This perspective also has the potential to contribute significantly to understanding how both individual and organisational performance can be enhanced through practices like unionism, collective bargaining, and dispute resolution, as it values the interests of both labour and management (Blanchflower & Bryson, 2017).

The pluralist paradigm places a central emphasis on real-world empirical analysis, but it's important to note that it goes beyond mere institutional description. Thorough analysis of actual institutions and practices is necessary because employment relationship outcomes are not solely determined by rational economic agents in perfectly competitive markets (Manning, 2003). Contemporary industrial relations scholarship necessitates real-world analysis because it continues to operate under

the belief that informed adjustments can improve the functioning of an overall satisfactory system (Budd, Gomez & Meltz, 2004; Wright, 2023).

One can contest the accuracy of the underlying assumptions of the pluralist theory, but it's not possible to entirely disregard the pluralist paradigm as merely theoretical or completely based on norms. Even prominent industrial relations scholars commonly refer to these assumptions as the foundational principles of industrial relations (Kochan, Mckersie & Cappelli, 1984; Kochan, 2019). The sole focus on a normative label should be revised; these assumptions represent beliefs about the functioning of the employment relationship just as much as they do about how it ought to function; they aren't inherently more normative than the neo-classical economics assumptions about rational economic agents and competitive markets (Diesendorf et al., 2024).

The pluralist industrial relations model stands as much as a theory of the employment relationship as the neo-classical economics model does; although it cannot be as easily transformed into mathematical models with solvable maximisation problems, it does generate propositions about behaviour, outcomes, and the connections among various factors that can be established (Kochan, 2019; Budd, 2020; Van Buren III, 2022; Bamber & Lansbury, 2024). This informed the study's motive for employing a qualitative design as well as the interpretivist approach to understand and explore the objectives of the study.

3.2.4 The Role of the Pluralist Theory in the Study

The pluralist theory of labour relations aligns with the objectives of the study, exploring influence of trade unionism, collective bargaining and dispute resolution on the performance of organisations. The theory also aligned with the way literature was reviewed as well as the research methods.

Figure 3.2 presents a graphical illustration of the importance of the Pluralist theory to the study

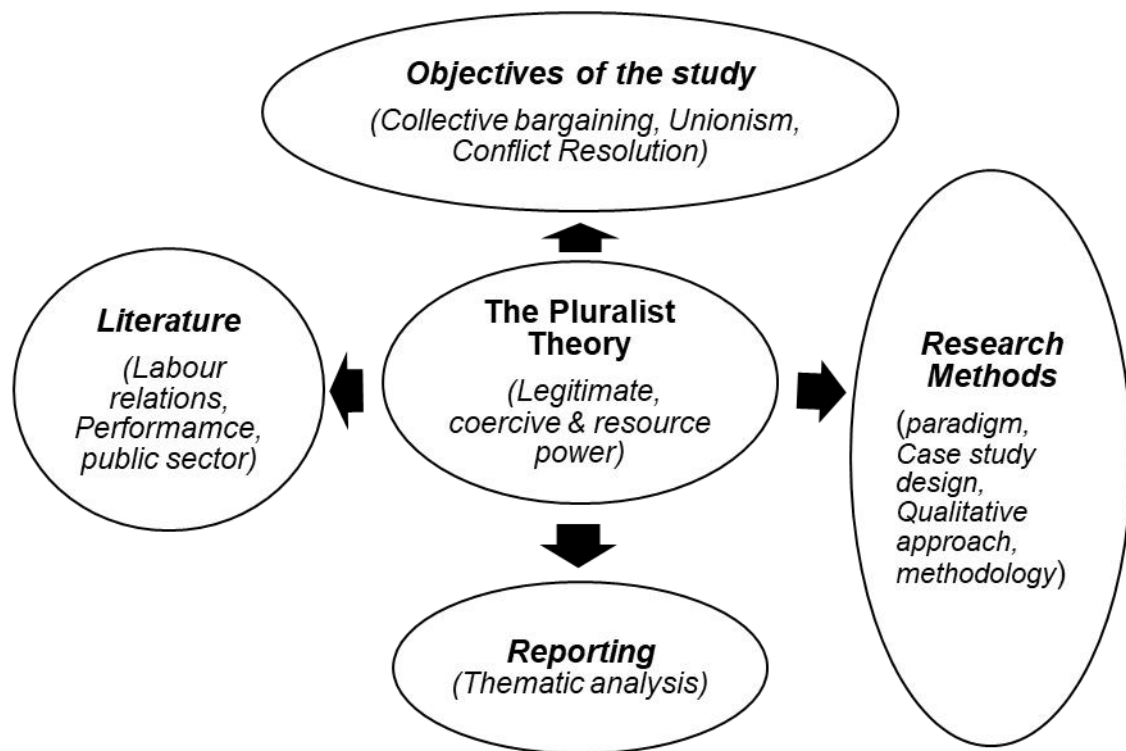


Figure 3.2 Role of the Pluralist theory in the Study

Source: Author's construct (2023)

The pluralist theory complements the qualitative research approach used in the study by highlighting the existence of different stakeholders, divergent interests, and the necessity of compromise and negotiation. Understanding the complexity of human behaviour and relationships is the main goal of qualitative research, which is in line with the complex character of industrial relations. The study was able to investigate

the opinions of different parties involved in the employment relationship by using qualitative approaches like interviews. This method made it possible to thoroughly examine their opinions, past encounters, and the dynamics of relationships at the workplace. Similarly, an interpretivist approach is particularly useful for the study since the pluralist theory considers the various points of view and the power dynamics inside organisations. This is due to the fact that it aided in examining the motivations behind the activities of various stakeholders while considering their distinct viewpoints, beliefs, and interpretations, as well as in capturing the subjective nature of labour relations.

Furthermore, the pluralist theory guided the logical development and appreciation of the many yet related sections of the literature during the literature review process. Furthermore, during the study's reporting phase, the pluralist theory aided in the debate and comprehension of the quotations, narratives, and themes that exemplified the complexity of the pluralist viewpoint. Moreover, the pluralist theory is highly pertinent to accomplishing the objective of the study. The pluralist view acknowledges that several groups, including employees, management, and occasionally trade unions, comprise organisations with conflicting interests. Pluralist theory acknowledges the diverse viewpoints and goals held by these organisations when examining labour relations. This perspective is important to consider when examining how varying interests and points of view affect how well an organisation performs. According to the theory, recognising and considering these many interests can result in more impartial and efficient decision-making processes, which in turn impact the performance of an organisation. The encouragement of compromise, collaboration, and negotiation amongst social partners is an essential principle of pluralist thought. Through an analysis of how these negotiations transpire and influence choices, the research was able to uncover insights into the ways in which labour relations policies benefit or impede organisational success.

Additionally, the study was able to investigate how efficient conflict resolution techniques support the preservation of a peaceful workplace and its effects on organisational performance by looking at labour relations through the prism of pluralist theory. Dunlop's system model incorporates the pluralist perspective, according to which the social partners in labour relations have an impact on the environment in addition to competing interests within the company or in national

industrial systems (Rehfeldt, 2018). Thus, the pluralistic perspective brings up the idea of social partner conflict and the necessity of trade unions in the national labour relations system. Therefore, the pluralist theory is an essential theory that helps the study comprehend the phenomena of labour relations in the public sector, its impact on economic development, the underlying causes of conflict in the labour relations environment, and the significance of conflict resolution in the operation of public sector institutions.

Dunlop's system theory, which asserts that the industrial relations system is a part of the economic system and that the political system runs parallel to it, is the most recognised theory based on a pluralist frame of reference. Consequently, it is essential to consider Dunlop's system theory to comprehend how public sector institutions work in relation to labour-industrial relationships, as Section 3.3 reviews.

3.3 DUNLOP'S (1958) SYSTEMS MODEL

3.3.1 Introduction

One element of Dunlop's system model is the pluralist perspective discussed in Section 3.2, according to which conflicting interests within businesses or national industrial systems, as well as labour relations stakeholders, have an impact on the environment (Uddin, Moniruzzaman & Alam, 2022). In order to improve comprehension of public sector institutions' labour relations performance, this section examines Dunlop's system model. Dunlop (1958) established the systems model of industrial relations as a tool for workplaces to evaluate the effect of industrial relations in organisations. According to Dunlop's Systems Model of industrial relations, there are three categories, namely, inputs, transformation and output (Khan, 2022).

Furthermore, Dunlop's model serves as a framework for analysing labour relations within national economies and argues that the industrial relations system acts as a subset of the broader society primarily focused on resolving economic conflicts. This model comprised four essential components: key participants, surrounding contexts, a set of employment regulations resulting from interactions among these participants, and a unifying ideology. The participants were categorised as employers and their

affiliated organisations; employees, along with any representative worker bodies like labour unions; and the government in conjunction with public agencies (Chawla, Singh & Singh, 2020; Tulachan & Rai, 2021; Frege & Kelly, 2020).

The pivotal contextual factors influencing the conduct of labour relations included technological advances, market dynamics, budgetary limitations, and the distribution of power within the broader society. Within these parameters, the involved parties crafted rules governing employment through independent decisions, collaborative regulation, or tripartite actions that involved the state (Williams, 2024; Khan, 2022). However, it's worth noting that this model has faced criticism for overemphasising the stability and self-contained nature of the labour relations sphere and its limited ability to analyse social and industrial conflicts comprehensively.

Figure 3.3 below, graphically illustrates Dunlop's systems model.

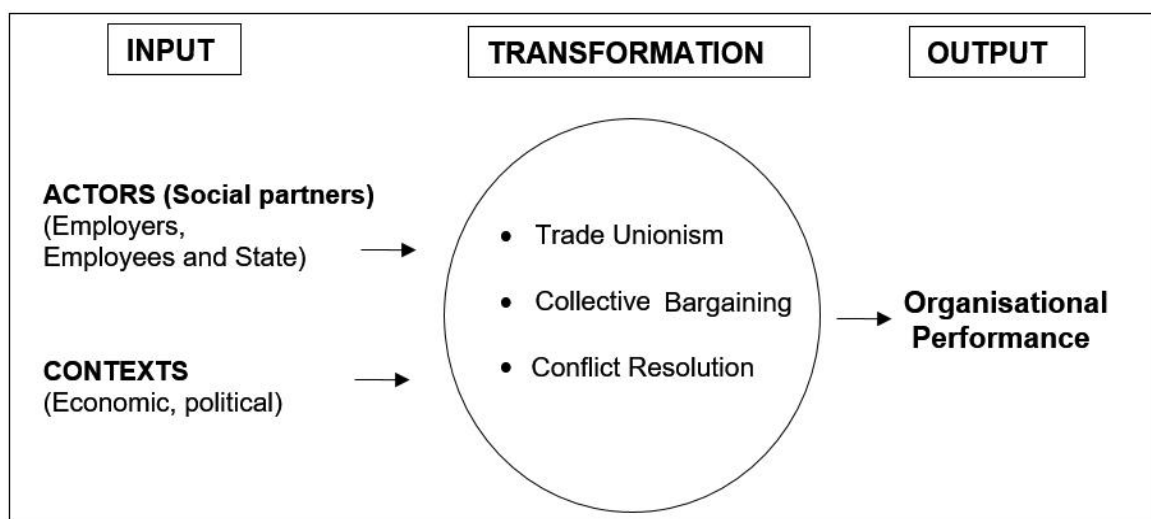


Figure 3.3 Dunlop's (1958) Systems Model

Source: Adapted from Rath, Singh and Das, (2017)

As seen in Figure 3.3, the input is made up of firstly, the actors consisting of employers and their associations, the employees and their unions, and the governments, and secondly, contextual factors such as political, economic and technological factors. Dunlop's model identified employers, employees and the state as the main actors in contemporary industrial relations and stated that it was impossible for any of these institutions to act in an autonomous manner; rather, their actions are influenced, to some extent, by their economic and political contexts.

Additionally, Dunlop's model is of the view that the effectiveness and efficiency of the performance of organisations is influenced by the interaction, systems and dynamics between the social partners of labour relations (Doellgast, Bidwell & Colvin, 2021; Connolly, 2023; Mabaso, Lesabe & Govender, 2024).

The Dunlop Systems theory in labour relations focus on the structure and evolution of relationships among the three key players: labour, management, and government. It also aims to address labour-management issues by reaching agreements based on a shared understanding of facts that impact or are influenced by these three parties (Khan, 2022). Dunlop's conceptual framework offers two notable advantages. Firstly, it places the rules and norms of industrial relations at the core of the analysis, unlike earlier approaches that considered industrial conflict or collective bargaining as the primary aspects of industrial relations. Secondly, it identifies the fundamental elements that make up each industrial relations system. The labour relations system is considered both a process and a product, where it operates as a rule-guided process that generates, as its outcome, additional rules that govern the behaviour of the involved actors and are managed by labour relations systems (Frege & Kelly, 2020; Rasmussen, Lamm & Molineaux, 2022; Voos, 2024).

Within a specific context, individuals establish regulations that apply to both the workplace and the broader work community. These regulations encompass various aspects, including those governing agreements among the participants within an industrial relations system. This intricate framework of regulations comprises processes for formulating rules, the actual content of these rules, and processes for determining how they should be applied in specific situations (Bidnur, Kalse & Priyadarshini, 2023). The central focus within an industrial relations system revolves around the creation and management of these regulations. Consequently, the development and oversight of these regulations represent the primary emphasis and outcome of the labour relations system.

The individuals responsible for shaping this intricate network of regulations interact with one another within the context of the entire industrial relations system. These regulations can be broadly categorised into three groups: Regulations overseeing compensation in all its variations; expectations and standards for worker duties and performance, which encompass rules for addressing instances of failing to meet

these standards; regulations that define the rights and responsibilities of workers (Voos, 2024). These rules undergo modifications in response to changes in the circumstances and the relative positions of the individuals involved. The individuals who establish these regulations may include workers and their unions, constituting one category; employers, managers, and their associations, making up a second category; and government entities, comprising civil servants concerned with the administration of labour-related matters, in the third category (Conway, Monks, Alfes & Bailey, 2016; Connolly, 2023).

In relation to the environment, the actors interact and negotiate using their economic or political power in the process of determining the rules that make up the output of the industrial relations' system (Chawla, Singh & Singh, 2020). The Dunlop model gives great prominence to external or environmental forces as major considerations in analysing management and labour relationships. In other words, the key actors possess a common ideology that defines and brings stability to the employment relationship (Brandt & Lehr, 2018; Doellgast, Bidwell & Colvin, 2021).

3.3.2 Dunlop's Ideology

Dunlop's model expressed the role of ideology; this is in relation to the mutual sentiments that the social partners in the labour relations system have that establish substantive rules and enforcement of procedural rules. One of the key mechanisms adopted by social partners in the labour relations system to implement substantive and procedural rules in organisations is collective bargaining (Voos, 2024; Hu et al., 2024). The concept of rules in labour relations as propounded by Dunlop has more to do with 'rules' rather than 'complex rules. Rules in organisations can be complex when it comes to substantive and procedural applications. Different modes and sources of rules can be found in the workplace, which comprise an employee handbook, rules of collective bargaining and rules that are derivable from new modes of job designs and organisational structure (Doellgast, Bidwell & Colvin, 2021; Frege & Kelly, 2020; Voos, 2024). Dunlop's theory highlights a significant aspect, which is the significance it places on external factors in the context of industrial relations. These external factors, as identified by Dunlop, encompass government, management, and labour, all underpinned by a shared ideology that defines their roles. This emphasis on external influences has been increasingly recognised in

today's workforce, where it is well-established that these factors have a notable impact on organisational performance (Tulachan & Rai, 2021).

Dunlop proposed a multi-level perspective on industrial relations systems, consisting of national, industrial, and enterprise levels. Within this framework, the primary focus of this study is the national level, which establishes the tripartite relationship among employers, workers' associations, and the state. It is crucial to empirically identify the various outcomes resulting from the interactions among these entities, rather than prescribing them through fiat (Brandi & Lehr, 2018; Khan, 2022; Hilgert, 2024).

Furthermore, employment-related issues, such as skill and ability levels, the frequency and duration of labour disputes, job satisfaction, and employee effort exertion are of considerable significance. Additionally, the institutions and processes governing job regulation can significantly impact broader aspects of society, including economic growth rates and the performance of various institutions. While these issues are not exclusive to industrial relations, they hold substantial interest for scholars in the field due to their interconnectedness with the functioning of the industrial relations system (Frege & Kelly, 2020; Hilgert, 2024).

Dunlop originally proposed a systematic relationship between the evolution of labour relations systems and economic performance. He argued that certain parameters used in economic theory are influenced by industrial relations variables, which are considered exogenous within the economic system (Voos, 2024). Conversely, some economic parameters are regarded as exogenous within the industrial relations framework (Hu et al., 2024). Dunlop's hypothesis articulates a circular relationship process in which factors such as wages and working hours, autonomously determined by the industrial relations system, simultaneously impact and are influenced by economic variables such as economic growth and employment performance. The consistency between these factors determines the level of equilibrium and stability in the economic and social framework (Doellgast, Bidwell & Colvin, 2021; Bidnur, Kalse & Priyadarshini, 2023; Hu et al., 2024).

3.3.3 Review of Dunlop Theory

Dunlop's theorising has received several critiques due to its inadequacies; a number of studies criticised Dunlop's model for considering the labour relations system to be

an analytical subsystem of an industrial society on the same logical plane as an economic system (Voos, 2024; Rogowski, 2020; Frege & Kelly, 2020). This, according to critics, goes contrary to Parsonian's view which perceives labour relations as a subset of the economic system. These criticisms are worth noting because Dunlop built on Parsonian social system analysis while developing his theory. Furthermore, criticism of Dunlop's work had to do with the basis of applicability or inapplicability of Dunlop's labour relations system (Voos, 2024).

According to critics, Dunlop's work is seen as problematic because the theory did not present a unifying framework sought for the field of labour relations, and hence it did not have as pervasive an impact as was hoped (Ikonne & Wokoma, 2024; Papadopoulos & Lyddon, 2020; Rogowski, 2020). Additionally, it was argued that the most critical position against Dunlop's theory is that it is only a taxonomy, which has resulted in descriptive rather than exploratory research. Arguing further, they posited that while the labour relations system identified a number of components of the system, which include context, actors, rules and ideology, not much was established in relation to the linkages between these components (Liu, 2023; Townsend, McDermott, Cafferkey & Dundon, 2019).

There is also the falsification test by Jary and Jary (2005). They defined falsification as the empirical disproof or refutation of a scientific hypothesis or proposed law. They were of the view that what makes a theory scientific is that its predictions are precise and confirmed by tests and that they should have gone through a vigorous process to test theories and establish their objectivity (Haralambos, Holborn & Heald, 2008). The concern is, has Dunlop's labour relations system gone through and passed the falsification test? However, the salient point established here is that regardless of the critiques of the theory or the argument as to whether or not the theory is scientific, the theory is seen as an aid to learning, which has triggered intellectual enquiries into the nature and dynamics of labour relations. Furthermore, it is imperative to add that the faintness and inadequacies of Dunlop's labour relations system have been catered for by neo-Dunlopian scholars who have endeavoured to modify Dunlop's model to suit realities that Dunlop did not predict.

3.3.4 The Role of Dunlop's Theory in the Study

Notwithstanding the criticisms and problems of Dunlop's model, it has been highly influential in shaping discourse and theorising in the field of labour relations. Not only did he popularise the system idea, but he also put at the centre of the labour relations system the three social partners: employers and their collective representation, workers and their collective representation and the state and its various subsidiary agencies (Oginni et al., 2022; Hu, Rahman, Nguyenthi & Li, 2024).

Figure 3.4, graphical illustration of the Role of Dunlop's theory to the study

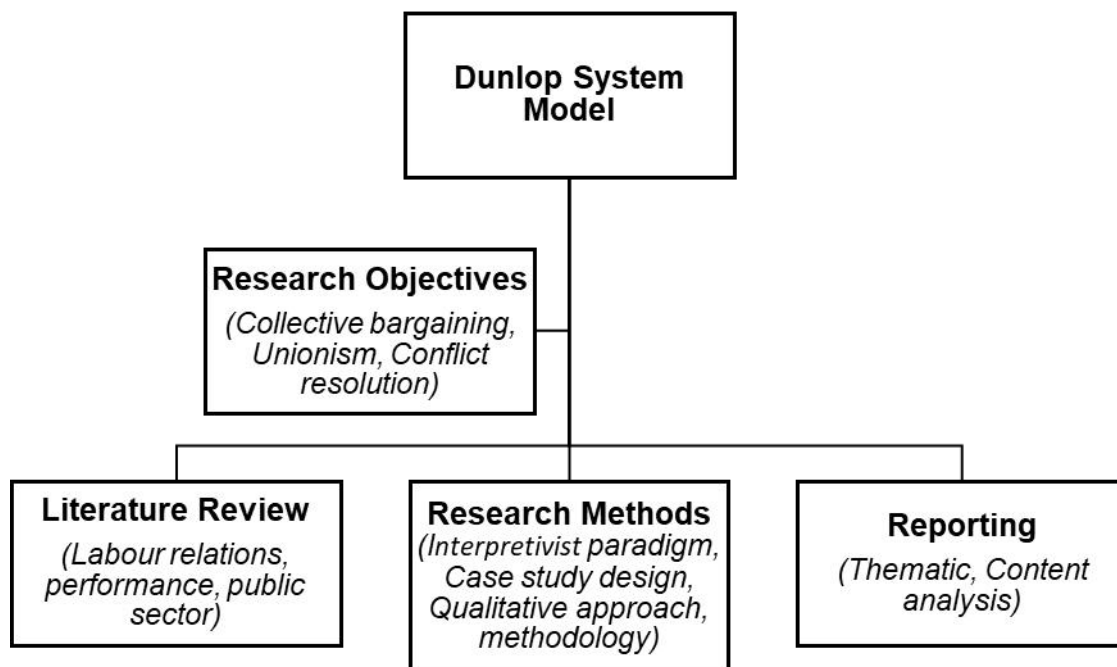


Figure 3.4 Role of Dunlop's theory in the study

Source: Authors construct (2023)

The Dunlop's systems model emphasises the significance of comprehending the subjective experiences and interpretations of individuals inside the industrial relations system, which is consistent with the interpretivist paradigm. Using the interpretivist paradigm makes it easier to decipher the meaning behind the actions and choices made by different social partners. It also helps to comprehend Dunlop's conception of the industrial relations system, which is composed of labour unions, employer organisations, and government agencies within a framework defined by product markets, technology, labour markets, and power distribution. In this particular context,

the interpretivist paradigm offers a comprehensive understanding of how social partners interact, negotiate, and exercise power to establish the rules that constitute the outcomes of the industrial relations system, as well as how these interpretations impact the performance of the organisation.

Moreover, Dunlop's systems model acknowledges that labour relations entail intricate human relationships, in addition to simple economic transactions. In order to better explore these intricacies, a qualitative research approach that was informed by the interpretivist paradigm was adopted. The study then used techniques like content analysis, thematic analysis, and interviews to investigate the organisational context of labour relations and its impact on public sector organisations' performances. The qualitative method made it possible to thoroughly examine and comprehend the interactions between the external system and its social partners in labour relations.

Furthermore, while reviewing the literature for the study, some academic publications were influenced by Dunlop's systems model framework, addressing various facets of industrial relations and the interactions between industrial relation systems. Analysing research on topics like power dynamics, communication, conflict resolution, and the function of different social actors like unions, management, and employees within the system, is also made easier by the system theory. The review of the literature also includes studies that employ an interpretivist viewpoint to understand the social and cultural aspects of labour relations. The study's reporting phase involved the presentation of findings in a way that, according to Dunlop's model, reflected the systemic aspect of labour relations. Quotes, stories, and other qualitative data were used to highlight the complex nature of labour relations inside the company. The interpretivist lens was used to examine the ways in which both individual and group behaviours impact the operation of the industrial relations system and, in turn, the performance of the organisation. The paper also highlights how cultural norms and outside influences, among other contextual factors, affect the dynamics of labour relations. The study utilised an interpretivist paradigm, a literature review, Dunlop's systems model, qualitative research methodology, and study reporting to understand the intricate interactions within the industrial relations system, examining how these factors affect organizational effectiveness and capture actual labour relations experiences.

The research utilises Dunlop's systems model of industrial relations, which considers the interaction of various actors within an organisation. This model acknowledges that labour relations is part of a broader system that includes management, unions, employees, and external factors. Examining these elements within this framework leads to a deeper understanding of the impact of labour relations on organisational performance. The model also highlights how changes in one area can affect the entire business. The study on labour relations' influence was crucial as it allowed for an examination of how changes in labour relations affect organisational performance metrics like employee morale and productivity. It also highlighted the importance of discussions among social partners, allowing for the examination of the effectiveness of relationships, communication channels, and dispute resolution techniques in supporting or undermining organisational performance. Dunlop's systems concept is flexible and applicable in a range of sectors and organisational settings. The model offers a versatile framework for analysing labour relations in various settings, including manufacturing facilities, service-oriented businesses, and government agencies. This flexibility made sure that the study's conclusions held true in a variety of organizational contexts, most notably the public sector.

In summary, there are differences between the pluralist theory and Dunlop's system theory of industrial relations when it comes to labour relations within organisations. Dunlop's theory adopts a larger viewpoint by considering the wider institutional and environmental elements that influence labour relations; whereas the pluralist theory concentrates more on the dynamics between management and labour within organisations (Frege & Kelly, 2020). But they are complementary to one another. While Dunlop's theory offers a methodical framework for comprehending how these internal dynamics interact with external elements to build the entire labour relations system, pluralist theory offers insights into the internal dynamics of labour relations within organisations (Poole, 2021). As a result, the integration of the two theories enabled the study to concentrate on unique dynamics within organisations while simultaneously analysing labour relations in a larger framework. Comparably, it helped examine labour relations in a larger institutional and environmental framework, producing more reliable results and useful consequences for the research. Dunlop's Systems Model of labour relations provided a robust and comprehensive framework for examining the influence of labour relations on organisational performance in the

public sector. Its holistic perspective, focus on social partner interactions, and adaptability to various contexts made it particularly relevant for conducting a thorough analysis of the study. Furthermore, the strategic choice model, which is reviewed in section 3.4, makes it easier to see labour relations through a lens of organisational strategies and ideological-political contexts that improve the performance of public sector institutions.

3.4 STRATEGIC CHOICE MODEL

3.4.1 Introduction

The review of Dunlop's model in Section 3.3 gave rise to the Strategic Choice Model in understanding the strategic behavioural pattern of decision-making by social partners in relation to labour relations and the performance of institutions. Kochan, Mckersie and Cappelli (1984) developed the Strategic Choice Model within labour relations theory to fill the gap referred to as 'determinist bias' in the dominant paradigm of industrial relations in Dunlop's model. Dunlop's approach to labour relations in 1958 emphasised the influence of economic, political, technological and ideological subsystems. Hence, labour relations outcomes seemed like they were only externally driven. The strategic choice models of industrial relations make the point that institutional forces, consisting of socio-economic and ideological-political conditions and legal arrangements, can also go a long way towards having an effect on the strategic choices that are made (Kohler, 2018; Lipsky, Avgar & Lamare, 2020; Dobbins & Dundon, 2024).

Moreover, the emergence of the strategic choice model coincided with a period of rapid change in industrial relations within developed nations. This shift was particularly significant because the prevailing theories of that era had been formulated during relatively stable periods in developed countries like the United States (Dobbins & Dundon, 2024). As a result, these existing theories were limited in their ability to explain behaviour when the fundamental aspects of the system were undergoing transformation. For instance, consider Dunlop's widely accepted systems model from the 1960s and 1970s. It exhibited certain discrepancies. To begin with, the model failed to anticipate the subsequent decline in union membership because it

assumed that labour unions would perpetually play a consistent role in employment relationships. Additionally, conventional models presumed the existence of a consensus ideology, yet they couldn't clarify whether managerial values, strategies, and behaviour in industrial relations had undergone any changes (Boxall & Purcell, 2022; Beaumont, 2024a).

Furthermore, traditional labour relations models portray management as simply responding to union demands, pressures, and initiatives. However, there were numerous instances of managerial initiatives and shifts that influenced the transformation of industrial relations in the United States, and these were originating from within the management itself (Avgar & Lamare, 2020). Consequently, the introduction of the concept of strategic choice injected a more dynamic element into industrial relations theory. It sought to illustrate that labour relations practices and outcomes were shaped by interactions among environmental forces, union leaders, workers, and policymakers in the realm of public policy decisions (Kelly, 2012).

Moreover, traditional views no longer place as much importance on collective bargaining, and as a result, the conditions for creating mutually agreed-upon rules have disappeared. This change is evident in the attempts of many business leaders to exclude or even remove union representatives (known as union avoidance policies) (Beaumont, 2024a). Additionally, the frequently observed proactive stance of management requires a reconsideration of strategic choices. The authors argue for greater independence in making strategic decisions, not only for management but also for trade unions and the government. Strategic decisions are those that affect an actor's position and ability to act in relation to other actors in the realm of industrial relations (Kochan & Kimball, 2019; Bamber & Lansbury, 2024; Rudman & Ellem, 2024). The strategic choice model commences by examining the pertinent external factors that impact employment dynamics. When alterations occur in the external environment, they compel employers to adapt their competitive business strategies. During this process of adaptation, the available choices are scrutinised and restricted to align with the deeply held values, convictions, and philosophies of influential decision-makers (Kohler, 2018; Rudman & Ellem, 2024).

The scholars, Poole, Lansbury and Wailes (2018) used the analysis of Kochan, Mckersie and Cappelli, (1984) to make a comparative analysis of the development of

an industrial democracy. However, the study seeks to adopt their model slightly, considering the interest of this study in exploring the influence between industrial relations and public sector reforms which lead to the performance of public sector institutions, by focusing on the nature of strategic decisions made by actors in the industrial relations system, and how that influences the performance of institutions.

3.4.2 Approach to Strategic Choice

The approach to strategic choice in labour relations is further defined by two conditions. Firstly, the actors can only take strategic decisions where they have discretion over their decisions. This has to do with the situation where the constraints in the environment do not override the ability of the actors to select alternative courses of action. This scenario is usually the case for unions whose aims reflect those of a changing membership, as well as management confronting specific business decisions (Bamber & Lansbury, 2024; Rudman & Ellem, 2024). Discretion still exists in situations where objectives are stable and clear because alternative strategies might be available that have to be chosen to achieve those objectives. Secondly, with regards to the set of decisions where the parties have discretion, strategic decisions are those that alter the party's relationship with other actors in the industrial relations system (Harney, 2016; Klerck, 2018; McLaughlin & Wright, 2018; Bamber & Lansbury, 2024).

The Strategic Choice Model has four major variables, which include economic, technological and ideological-political conditions, as well as the legal framework, as illustrated in Figure 3.5 below.

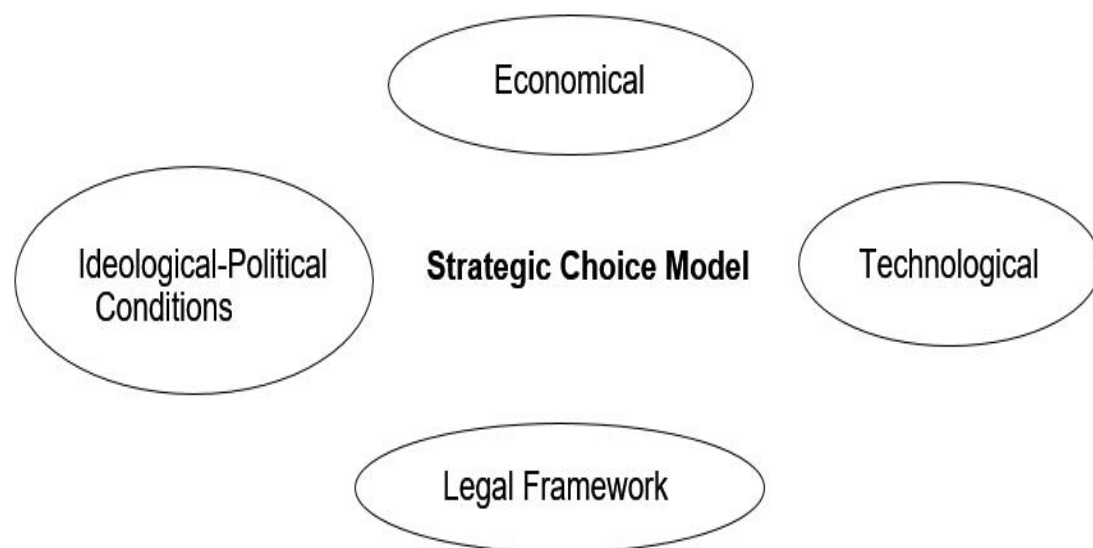


Figure 3.5 Variables in the Strategic Choice Model

Source: Author's construct (2021)

These conditions, however, have an impact on the strategic choices made by key actors with respect to organisational performance and industrial relations. The interplay between these factors will produce results in making decisions in relation to workplace performance and industrial relations. Consequently, the Strategic Choice Model aids the study to understand how the influence of economic and ideological-political conditions in relation to strategic decisions in the public sector affects the performance of public institutions (Beaumont, 2024b).

The strategic choice model acknowledges that choices are influenced by historical and institutional contexts. The range of available options is partly constrained by past organisational decisions and the current distribution of power within the company, as well as its relationships with unions, government agencies, and other external organisations. As a result, industrial relations processes and outcomes are shaped by an ongoing interplay between environmental pressures and organisational responses (Fox, 2024). The significance of either the environment or the responses of the parties involved can fluctuate over time. Therefore, changes in labour or product markets do not have isolated or deterministic effects. Instead, the decisions and discretion exercised by labour, management, and government influence the direction and structure of industrial relations systems. Furthermore, historical factors

play a crucial role in determining the feasible strategic adaptations (McLaughlin & Wright, 2018; Strinati, 2024).

Strategic choice model describes their broader perspective on the institutional framework of labour relations as follows: It divides the activities of management, labour, and government organisations into three levels. The first level involves strategic decision-making, the second deals with collective bargaining or personnel policy-making, and the third operates at the workplace level, impacting individual workers, supervisors, and union representatives on a day-to-day basis. In this framework, the middle level encompasses the most traditional aspects of labour relations, focusing on collective bargaining, personnel policy development, and the formulation and administration of key public policies governing labour-management relations (Crozier & Friedberg, 2017; Fox, 2024; Jackson, 2024).

The dominance of traditional business unionism in the American labour movement may give the impression that few significant strategic decisions or ideologically driven choices are made at the top level. However, decisions regarding investments, site locations, sourcing decisions, and organisational structures profoundly affect industrial relations at lower levels and are therefore vital to the analysis of industrial relations (Bamber & Lansbury, 2024). Strategic choices relevant to the bottom level pertain to work organisation worker rights, individual or group management and motivation, and the workplace environment. This three-tier framework helps identify a critical aspect that existing industrial relations systems theory does not explicitly address: the apparent inconsistencies and internal contradictions in strategies and practices across different levels of industrial relations within firms (Horner, Jayawarna, Giordano & Jones, 2019; Bamber & Lansbury, 2024; Joyce, Stuart & Forde, 2023).

First, this framework acknowledges the interconnections among activities at different levels of the system and provides insights into the origins of internal contradictions or inconsistencies among these levels. Second, it considers how various strategic decisions impact the different actors within the system. The three-tier framework encourages the examination of the roles that labour, management, and governments play in each other's domains and activities. Shifts in business strategies are influenced by the current state of industrial relations and, in turn, impact future industrial relations outcomes at all three levels within the company (Klerck, 2018;

Berg et al., 2023). These interactions can take various forms. Changes in the competitive landscape may evolve gradually in response to shifting consumer demand or the emergence of low-cost competition. Alternatively, they may occur suddenly due to competitive shocks. Heightened competitive pressures compel firms to make decisions with far-reaching consequences (Dai & Si, 2018; Joyce, Stuart & Forde, 2023).

First and foremost, the firm must reevaluate its commitment to its current business line and decide whether to compete in the changed environment or withdraw and reallocate its capital resources. Second, if the firm opts to remain active in the market, adjustments to its competitive strategy may be necessary. Third, the strategic choices made by firms staying in the market require them to restructure their capital to seize new profit opportunities. Finally, changes in business strategies and related production decisions impact the relevance of existing organisational structures, particularly the extent of vertical integration (Berg et al., 2023; Horner, Jayawarna, Giordano & Jones, 2019).

While acknowledging that external factors play a significant role in shaping strategic decisions within labour relations, their impact on public services can be influenced in two ways. First, it can be influenced by specific financial systems, governance structures, and the parties involved in the employment relationships within sectors like healthcare, civil service, and local government. Second, it can be influenced by various contingent factors, such as political affiliations, the services offered, geographical location, cultural context, historical background, and financial stability, which differentiate organisations operating within the same public services sector (Harney, 2016; Malik, 2022; Beaumont, 2024b).

It is evident that, despite the considerable attention given to different types of choices, the presence of constraints is a constant backdrop. Two categories of constraints on employment relations choices need to be emphasised: external factors and decisions made at higher organisational levels regarding purpose and structure. The latter suggests that while the patterns of employment relations may vary among organisations, these variations may be less a result of genuine choices and more of mechanistic outcomes stemming from decisions made at higher levels that limit the range and nature of employment relations options. In such scenarios, discretion may

exist in upstream decisions but not in downstream employment relations choices. The model implies that only decisions made beyond these external and internal constraints can be considered as genuine exercises of choice (Kessler, Purcell & Coyle Shapiro, 2000; Bocken & Ritala, 2022; Poole, 2021).

The influence of these constraints and the remaining degree of choice should be empirically established. Additionally, it's essential to determine to what extent the balance between constraint and choice is influenced by specific systems and contingencies that differ across various parts of the public services sector. To build an empirical foundation, the study examined labour relations developments in several public service organisations.

3.4.3 The Role of the Strategic Choice Model in the Study

Figure 3.6 below, graphical illustration of the role of the Strategic Choice Model to the study



Figure 3.6 Role of the Strategic Choice Model in the study

Source: Author's construct (2023)

The Strategic Choice model inherently influenced the objectives of the study that aim to explore the interplay between labour relations and organisational performance within the framework of the Strategic Choice theory, specifically ascertaining how strategic choices made by organisations in labour relations impact their overall performance. Moreover, the decision to choose an interpretivist paradigm was influenced by the study's introduction of the Strategic Choice model. This was made possible by the interpretivist paradigm's improved comprehension of institutional dynamics, which include legal frameworks, socioeconomic and ideological-political environments, and how these influence workplace strategy decisions and their effects on output.

Similar to this, the study was able to highlight the subjectivity of human experiences and the significance of comprehending the strategic choice viewpoints and meanings ascribed by the social partners by adopting the fundamental ideas of the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist paradigm offered a thorough understanding of the

decisions made by social partners and how those decisions affect the operation of the organisation. Additionally, because the objective of the study is to gain a thorough understanding of the strategic decisions made by social partners and their impact on workplace performance, the interpretivist paradigm inspired the choice of a qualitative research approach that best matches the study. In particular, qualitative techniques like theme analysis and interviews were well-suited for delving into the social partners' decision-making processes and personal experiences.

Moreover, the strategic choice model provided insights into a few academic works examined in the literature review by pointing out inconsistencies, gaps, or areas in which the model hasn't been applied enough in earlier research. Analysing research that examined the range of alternatives limited in part by previous organisational decisions, the current power dynamics inside organisations, and their interactions with government agencies, labour unions, and other external organisations is also made easier by the model. In order to establish a connection between the study's findings and the fundamental ideas of the strategic choice model, the analysis and reporting phase of the study examined the ways in which labour relations and organisational performance is influenced by strategic choices, organisational decisions, and the roles of key decision-makers. The study was also guided and outlined by the interpretivist paradigm, and its theoretical perspective was set by the strategic choice theory.

The Strategic Choice Model of industrial relations was crucial for enabling the study to accomplish its objective. The approach heavily emphasises the decision-making process within organisations, specifically in the context of labour relations. Studying how labour relations affect organisational performance requires understanding of the choices made by different stakeholders, such as management and labour representatives. This model offered a framework for examining the factors that affect these decisions, how they are made, and how performance is ultimately affected by them. Furthermore, acknowledged by the Strategic Choice Model are the non-economic and economic aspects that influence labour relations. The study explores the impacts of social dynamics, workplace culture, and employee morale on an organisation's performance, along with economic variables. It also considers the external environment, including legal and regulatory aspects, when making labour relations decisions. The Strategic Choice Model simplifies understanding how labour

relations methods are shaped by external factors. The model's adaptability allows it to be applied to various industries and organisational environments, making it relevant to various research projects on labour relations and performance in businesses. Therefore, it was chosen to apply the approach in the Ghanaian public sector. In summary, the Strategic Choice Model of Industrial Relations offers an effective framework for analysing how labour relations strategies and actions affect organisational performance. Its emphasis on decision-making, evaluation of options, integration of non-economic and economic aspects, and conformity to organisational strategy rendered it a pertinent instrument for researching the intricate connection between labour relations and performance criteria. The integration of the selected theories; pluralist, Dunlop and strategic models, as discussed in Section 3.5 shows how different these theories are and, at the same time, how they complement each other in achieving the purpose of the study.

3.5 INTEGRATION OF PLURAL, DUNLOP AND STRATEGIC MODELS

The previously discussed theories, which were covered in Sections 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4, aided in the comprehension of the intricacies of labour relations in the public sector and how they relate to performance. The integration of the selected theories; pluralist, Dunlop, and strategic models, as covered in this section then shows how unique and complementary they are to achieving the goals of the study.

Figure 3.7 below graphically illustrates the integration of Plural, Dunlop and Strategic choice models.

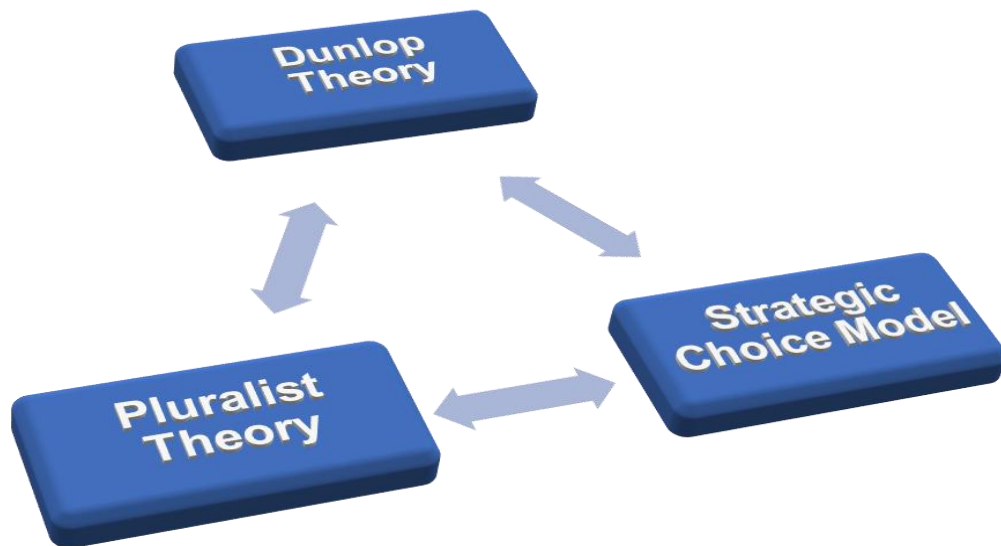


Figure 3.7 The integration of Plural, Dunlop and Strategic choice models

Source: Author's construct (2023)

According to the pluralist theory, labour relations is the dynamic interplay of several groups, including management, unions, and employees within an organisation (Heery, 2024). It highlights how different interests and power structures exist within an organisation. It views disagreements as natural but controllable by means of collective bargaining and negotiation. This theory sheds light on how the interests and viewpoints of various social partners' influence labour relations. Recognising a variety of interests promotes cooperation and aids in understanding conflict resolution, both of which improve organisational performance (Ham, 2022; Wright, 2023; Dundon, Wilkinson & Ackers, 2023).

Dunlop's Systems Theory views labour relations as a subsystem of the larger social and economic systems. It considers how laws, rules, and institutions shape labour relations (Khan, 2022; Voos, 2024). It provides a structural viewpoint, emphasising the impact of outside variables on labour relations, including laws, policies, and economic situations (da Costa & Horn, 2021). Dunlop's theory contributed to the understanding of how macro-level issues affect labour relations and, in turn, organisational performance by bringing the external environment into the study.

Moreover, the Strategic Choice Model highlights the strategic choices that management and labour representatives make to influence the results of labour relations. According to Lipsky, Avgar and Lamare (2020), labour relations are the outcome of intentional decisions made by parties based on their strategic objectives. The strategic choice model places more emphasis on the decision-making and strategic behaviour of the parties involved than pluralist theory, which concentrates on negotiation process and conflict resolution. It draws attention to how organisational objectives, strategy, and power shape labour relations. The Strategic Choice Model assists in determining the strategic steps that labour and management might take to enhance performance (Bamber & Lansbury, 2024; Joyce, Stuart & Forde, 2023).

In summary, though each of the aforementioned theories provides a distinct viewpoint on labour relations, they are complementary to one another since they shed light on various facets of the phenomenon. The strategic choice model places an emphasis on decision-making processes; Dunlop's theory considers outside influences, and pluralist theory emphasises the dynamics of internal stakeholder interactions. Combining these viewpoints allowed for a thorough understanding of how labour relations influence organisational performance by considering the interactions between internal and external variables, the dynamics of social partners, and strategic choices. Furthermore, the theory of pluralism, Dunlop's systems model, and the strategic choice model presented a structured prism through which the research literature, methodologies, and reporting in the study were organised and selected.

The selection and evaluation of the literature, which addressed every aspect of labour relations, was guided by all three theories. Dunlop's model makes sure that

literature on external factors and systems was taken into consideration; the strategic choice model highlights literature relating to decision-making processes in labour-management relations that affect the performance of organisations; and pluralist theory directed focus towards literature on unionism, conflict, and resolution. Furthermore, qualitative research approaches that reflect the complexity of conflict from the perspective of the social partners were called for by pluralist theory. Dunlop's approach encourages the use of research techniques that capture the interactions between different actors and the larger environmental context, such as qualitative case studies and interviews. The strategic choice theory also stimulated methods like thematic analysis, case studies, and interviews that reveal patterns of decision-making. The concepts and themes found in each theory guided the thematic presentation of the study's findings while confirming and refuting certain findings to aid in an in-depth understanding of the phenomena. In addition, the concepts and influence of the variables of the study were covered in Section 3.6, which was assembled with aid from the review of the literature and theories used in the study.

3.6 STUDY CONSTRUCTS

3.6.1 Introduction

Based on the theories reviewed in Section 3.5 as well as the research objective and the literature review, the following linkages between the study constructs and descriptions were presented for the study. The constructs include: collective bargaining, trade unionism, and conflict resolution. The study seeks to explore the influence of labour relations (collective bargaining, trade unionism, and conflict resolution) on organisational performance in the public sector of Ghana.

Figure 3.8 below graphically illustrates the conceptual influence between the constructs in the study.

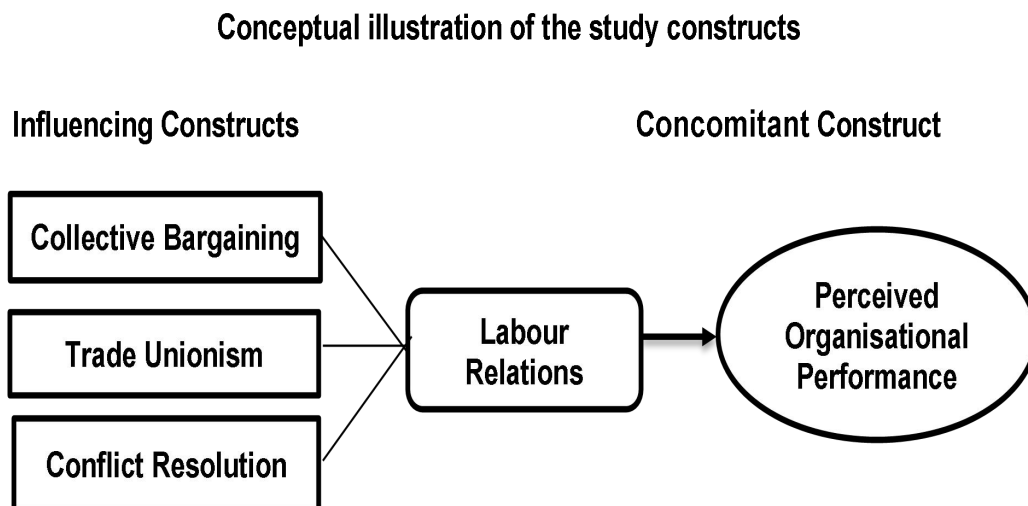


Figure 3.8 Study Constructs

Source: Author's construct (2022)

Following from the reviewed literature, as well as the objectives of the study, the following conceptual descriptions serve as points of departure for the discussion in this study.

3.6.2 Collective Bargaining

The process involves the establishment by negotiation and discussion of an agreement on matters of mutual concern to employers and unions, covering the employment relationship and terms and conditions of employment (Schnabel, 2020). It is one of the key elements that define the labour relations system. The positive

impact of collective bargaining on wages, as well as its adverse bearing on the profits of organisations, is largely recognised among economists (Doellgast & Benassi, 2020; Williamson & Roles, 2023). However, there is uncertainty regarding whether collective bargaining influences the performance and efficiency of firms (Laroche, 2020). Hence, the proposed study seeks to explore the influence of labour relations, specifically collective bargaining on the performance of public sector institutions.

3.6.3 Trade Unionism

A trade union is an organisation of workers that is formed to promote, protect and improve, through collective action, the social, economic, and political interests of its members. Trade unionism plays a pivotal role in relation to a conducive labour relation system (Carter, 2022). Research shows that unionised institutions are more productive than non-unionised organisations because trade unions safeguard the interests of their members. This increases their level of commitment, which in turn increases performance (Antwi & Bakokor, 2020; Webster, 2022). However, the literature lacks evidence to confirm this in the context of public sector institutions. Therefore, the proposed study seeks to explore the influence of labour relations, specifically trade unionism on the performance of public sector institutions.

3.6.4 Conflict Resolution

Conflicts are pervasive across various levels of society, involving individuals, groups, and even nations, with roots stretching far back in history. They often arise from disputes over interests, needs, ideology, values, beliefs, identities, actions, and inactions, as well as differing viewpoints of opposing parties, leading to strife, violence, sharp disagreements, battles, and more (Liddle, 2023). Conceptually, conflict resolution, as used interchangeably with dispute resolution, involves methods and processes that are used to facilitate the peaceful ending of a conflict and retribution. Conflict resolution is a communication process for changing the negative emotional states in a conflict to emotional states that allow the participants to work out a solution to the conflict (Yero & Musa, 2023). Resolving conflict brings about industrial harmony and restores peace in the workplace (Roche, 2023). Consequently, the proposed study seeks to ascertain the influence of conflict resolution on the performance of public sector institutions.

3.6.5 Organisational Performance

This refers to the actual results that a workplace puts out as compared and measured against the results that the workplace intends to achieve. In addition, the effectiveness of an organisation is also linked to the performance of employees (Garavan et al., 2021). Several factors have been identified as stimulants to organisational performance, such as effective leadership, training, and technology (Nguyen et al., 2023; Irfan, Khurshid, Khurshid & Khokhar, 2023). However, not much literature has linked organisational performance with labour relations. Hence, the proposed study seeks to explore the influence of labour relations on the performance of public sector institutions. Therefore, the description of the construct 'perceived organisational performance'.

3.6.6 Review of the Linkages and Descriptions of Study Constructs

The study focused on trade unionism, collective bargaining, and conflict resolution in the context of Ghanaian public sector labour relations. This was due to the fact that most of the elements that stimulate and characterise the employer-employee relationship in most public sector institutions were issues of industrial actions and negotiations, which are championed by trade unions (Anyogu, 2024). Trade unions can guarantee fair treatment, lessen workplace inequality, and preserve a balanced power dynamic between employers and employees. A more motivated staff may result from this, which may improve organisational performance. However, excessively militant union actions or frequent disagreements between management and the union can cause disruptions and strained relations between employers and employees, which can eventually negatively impact the performance of the company (Ayentimi & Burgess, 2023; Bender, 2023). Furthermore, the research and data collected on the subject showed that collective bargaining is the primary method of negotiation in the public sector. When workers feel their needs are met and their views are heard, effective collective bargaining can result in improved job satisfaction, productivity, and stable industrial relations. Conversely, an adversarial negotiation process that yields unfavourable terms for one party or causes tensions may result in strikes or work stoppages, which would have a detrimental effect on organisational performance (Bernstein, 2022; Jirjahn, 2023).

One of the most important factors in fostering industrial peace and harmony is conflict resolution. Good conflict resolution can keep disagreements from getting worse and preserve a productive workplace. By resolving problems before they have an impact on production, it can also save time and resources. The performance of a company as a whole may suffer from unresolved disputes, simmering animosity, and a poisonous work environment brought on by ineffective conflict resolution (Bieler & Nowak, 2022; Mohamed, Mahamud & Bolatito, 2024).

The relationship among trade unionism, collective bargaining, and conflict resolution is essential in determining the culture and effectiveness of an organisation. A happy workplace and enhanced organisational performance can result from a cooperative and cordial relationship between unions and management, bolstered by efficient dispute resolution procedures. On the other hand, a toxic work culture can result from antagonistic interactions, poor bargaining outcomes, or inadequate dispute resolution. This can lower productivity, increase employee turnover, and negatively impact organisational performance. Therefore, in order to provide a healthy work environment and meet their performance objectives, organisations must carefully manage these characteristics.

3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter explores a thorough analysis of conceptual frameworks and theoretical models that are essential to comprehending the dynamics of labour relations within organisations. The study commences with an examination of pluralism theory, which highlights the necessity of constructively handling conflicts between varied interests within organisations. Pluralistic theory provides a perspective to examine the intricate interaction between social partners' interests and power dynamics. The chapter presents the Dunlop system model, which focuses on the structural elements of labour relations, such as actors, rules, and processes, after discussing pluralism theory. This model emphasises the influence of external factors on internal dynamics and offers a framework for comprehending the larger socioeconomic environment in which organisations function. The strategic choice model was then looked at, which highlighted how strategic actions and decision-making processes shape organisational results. The chapter offers a conceptual framework that includes

important variables, including collective bargaining, unionism, dispute resolution, and organisational performance, in addition to a theoretical synthesis. These variables provide an organised method for examining the dynamics of labour relations and organisational success by acting as centres of empirical enquiry and theoretical improvement.

3.8 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter has clarified the complex structure of labour relations by using the strategic choice model, Dunlop's systems model, and pluralist theory as lenses. Pluralism emphasises the complexity of labour relations by acknowledging the various players and interests present in the workplace. In order to achieve harmony within organisations, Pluralist Theory emphasises the significance of negotiation, compromise, and conflict resolution by acknowledging the existence of multiple stakeholders, including employers, employees, and trade unions. In envisioning labour relations as a dynamic system made up of numerous interrelated components, Dunlop's Systems Model expands on our understanding. By highlighting the significance of institutions, actors, and the surrounding environment, Dunlop sheds light on the complex factors that underpin labour relations. His political position emphasises how important institutional structures and power relationships are in determining how labour relations turn out.

Furthermore, the Strategic Choice Model provides insightful information about how both employers and people make strategic decisions. Crucially, the analytical framework is enhanced and provided a more thorough understanding of labour relations phenomena through the integration of pluralist, Dunlop, and strategic choice models. Through the integration of these varied theoretical perspectives, academics and professionals can cultivate a more comprehensive comprehension of the processes operating within labour markets and organisations. Moreover, the conceptual framework which includes trade unionism, collective bargaining, dispute resolution, and organisational performance forms the basis of labour relations research. The methodology described in Chapter Four detailed the approach that was used to empirically investigate and validate the theoretical constructs addressed, building on the theoretical framework created in this section. The study attempted to

bridge theory and practice by providing insights into the relevance and real-world applicability of the theoretical frameworks examined through a methodologically sound approach.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous two chapters (Chapter Two and Three) analysed the literature review as well as the theoretical framework for the study, respectively. Additionally, they form the basis for the study's methodology, as it serves as the bridge between the theoretical and conceptual foundations established in the literature review section and the practical execution of the study. The gaps identified in the reviewed literature informed the objectives of the study and guided the choice of research methods adopted for the study. In addition to the literature review, the selection of appropriate research methods and specific data collection and analysis techniques was informed by the theoretical review. This current chapter focuses on the paradigm, design and other methodological aspects in conducting the study. These include the research paradigm, design of the study, research approach, target population, sample and sampling techniques. Finally, the section identified and explained the sources of data, the data analysis techniques and their alignment to the literature and the theories underpinning the study to ensure the study is methodologically robust and capable of addressing the research questions.

4.1.1 The graphical illustration of the research methods

Figure 4.1, graphical illustration of the research methods of the study

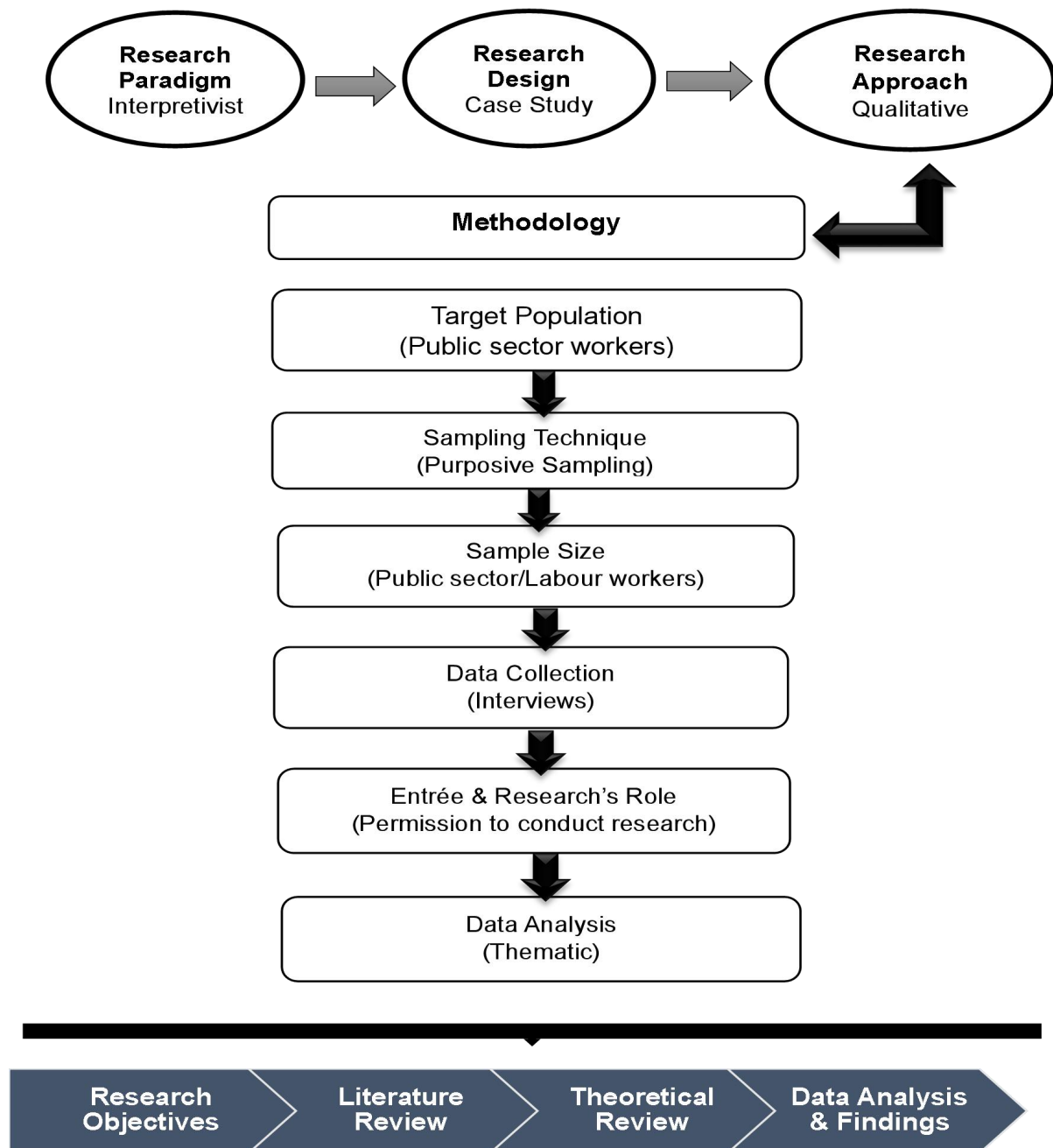


Figure 4.1 Research methods of the study

Source: Author's construct (2021)

The above figure (4.1) is graphical illustration of the research methods used in the study. It explains the methodological process by looking at the research paradigm and how it informs the use of case study and qualitative approach as research design and research approach respectively. It also shows the target population, sample technique, sample size, data collection instrument, entrée and research's role, as well as the data analysis technique employed in the study. The figure also indicates the link between the methodology and the other aspects of the study such as the study objectives, literature review, theoretical review and data analysis.

4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

4.2.1 Introduction

Babbie (2020) explains a research paradigm as a set of beliefs, values and techniques that form the fundamental philosophical assumptions that define what valid research is and the appropriate methods that can be applied in research. Similarly, paradigms encompass a collection of theories, assumptions, and concepts that shape an individual's perspective and their manner of interacting with people. It serves as the perspective through which a researcher perceives the world and evaluates the methodological elements of their research to determine the suitable approaches for gathering and analysing data (Bogna, Raineri & Dell, 2020; Ugwu, Ekere & Onoh, 2021). Paradigms are better understood by explaining them in relation to research philosophy through their ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology.

Ontology: has to do with the general assumptions created to perceive the real nature of society in order to understand the real nature of society. The concept of ontology explores the essence of truths and knowledge, looking at what the researcher considers to be true (Achu & Ejeh, 2022; Patel & Debnath, 2024). Ontology focuses on the nature of reality and its characteristics, particularly in qualitative research, where the acceptance of numerous realities is prevalent. In using various sources of data, including direct quotes and a range of viewpoints,

qualitative researchers seek to capture these varied realities while studying humans (Grass, 2024).

This study is grounded in an interpretivist ontology; In the context of labour relations and organisational performance in Ghana's public sector, it is acknowledged that there is no single objective reality, but rather multiple realities that arise from the various views of trade unions, public servants, and labour officials. In order to handle these multiple realities, the study design placed a strong emphasis on participants lived experiences as a means of creating meaning, which enabled them to express how labour relations influence organisational performance. As a result, the interviews were semi-structured to allow participants to freely share their personal experiences while also allowing the researcher to delve deeper into topics relevant to the environment. Instead of imposing preset categories, the iterative coding approach used for thematic and content analysis allowed emergent themes to represent participants' socially constructed understandings. Inductive refinement was used to make sure the codes reflected the variety of perspectives held by labour officials, public servants, and trade unions.

Epistemology: is a great approach to investigate nature in the real world since it works with broad guidelines and presumptions (Achu & Ejeh, 2022; Kamal, 2019). In qualitative research, epistemological presumptions involve investigators trying to comprehend participants' perspectives as thoroughly as possible and compiling subjective data derived from individual encounters. This method places a strong emphasis on gaining knowledge through firsthand experiences, which becomes increasingly in-depth the longer researchers work in the field or interact with participants (Dahal, 2023; Sabnis & Newman, 2023).

This study is built on an interpretivist epistemology, which holds that knowledge is co-constructed through social interaction, subjective interpretation, and contextualisation. Subjectivity was viewed as an essential component of comprehending participants socially created reality rather than as a constraint. Interviewees' accounts were analysed in light of their institutional, sociopolitical, and cultural backgrounds, acknowledging that their positions and life experiences influenced how they perceived labour relations and organisational performance. Throughout the data analysis process, reflexive journaling was employed to keep

decision-making transparent and critically assess how the researcher's personal experiences and viewpoints might affect interpretation. In the view of qualitative epistemology, the researcher was recognised as a crucial tool in the process of gathering and analysing data.

Deeper insights into labour relations and organisational performance were co-constructed thanks to the researcher's active participation in the interviews, which included sympathetic listening, probing questions, and follow-up clarifications. The study acknowledges that labour relations and organisational performance are enmeshed in distinct socio-political, cultural, and institutional realities by expressly placing its findings within the specific context of Ghana's public sector. As a result, rather than focusing on statistical generalisation, the insights produced are contextually rich and intended for theoretical and practical transferability. That is providing a conceptual framework that can inform similar contexts in sub-Saharan Africa where comparable institutional dynamics exist.

Axiology: Philosophy's study of axiology looks at values and how important they are to people and society as a whole. Practical philosophy views it as a component that facilitates the study of values and the comprehension of ethics. The axiological premise in qualitative research recognises the intrinsically value-laden character of the field. In order to acknowledge and report on the subjective influences inherent in their study, researchers disclose their values and biases as well as the value-laden nature of the data acquired (Dazzo, 2023; Richards, 2022; Klakegg & Tvedt, 2024).

The study recognises the inevitability of the researcher's values influencing decisions at every stage of the research process, from methodological and topic selection to data collecting, analysis, and interpretation. It was crucial to critically examine how the researcher's and participants' values influenced the investigation because the study focused on labour relations and organisational performance in Ghana's public sector, a field that is naturally value-laden and politically sensitive. The researcher's professional and academic dedication to comprehending how workplace dynamics and governance frameworks affect organisational outcomes in public institutions led to their interest in studying labor relations. The formulation of study questions that gave priority to worker well-being, organisational effectiveness, and industrial harmony was impacted by this underlying value orientation. During

the interviews, the researcher deliberately took an empathic and non-adversarial position, acknowledging that researcher's values could impact the kind of questioning and the perception of responses. The interview design purposefully included open-ended questions because it acknowledged that participants' views of labor relations and organisational performance are strongly influenced by their values. Value-laden remarks, such as how fairness in negotiations, faith in leadership, or perceptions of organisational fairness influenced their opinions of performance, were extracted via probes. Value-driven statements were specifically classified for thematic analysis, guaranteeing that these were regarded as analytical categories that reflected the normative aspects of labour relations.

Methodological: The methodological assumptions show how sampling choices, context-specific boundaries, iterative procedures, and reasoning techniques were methodically controlled and justified to guarantee credibility and rigor. To capture both emergent insights and systematic verification, the study integrated deductive reasoning (content analysis) and inductive reasoning (thematic analysis). Without imposing preconceived categories, themes were extracted directly from the data using inductive reasoning in thematic analysis. As a result, the findings were naturally shaped by the participant narratives. Regarding deductive reasoning in content analysis, a coding framework used to methodically investigate particular topics was guided by pre-existing notions from the literature on labour relations and organizational performance. This method verified whether documented notions appeared in the Ghanaian environment and guaranteed congruence between empirical data and theoretical constructs. Furthermore, the public sector in Ghana is the subject of this research's case study design, which acknowledges it as a limited system influenced by many institutional, socio-political, and economic realities. The objective is theoretical and analytical transferability, even while results are not statistically generalisable to other situations. Iterative interviews were done, with early observations guiding follow-up inquiries to delve deeper into emergent themes. The evolution of themes and coding was recursive as opposed to linear. By refining the categories through the back-and-forth between data and interpretation, the analysis was able to capture both breadth and depth.

Additionally, purposive sampling was used to target important stakeholders, such as trade unions, public servants, and labour officials, whose positions offered first-hand

knowledge of labour relations and organisational performance, ensuring the sample's adequacy. According to the inclusion criteria, participants were considered if they were public servants affected by labour relations and held positions directly related to them. To ensure relevance and depth, those who were not involved in public sector labour relations were omitted based on the exclusion criteria. Until topic saturation was reached when no new themes or insights surfaced from follow-up interviews, data collecting continued. Recurring patterns stabilized across participant groups, indicating saturation and adequate representation of viewpoints.

In conclusion, the *ontological* standpoint, which acknowledges that reality is formed through individual viewpoints rather than being objectively fixed, influenced the study's approach to data gathering, analysis, and interpretation. The data-collecting tool (interviews) was modified by the epistemological position, enabling the study to explore participant viewpoints, interpretations, and meanings given to their experiences. Additionally, by taking the axiology viewpoint, the study publicly acknowledged its values and prejudices and tried to be transparent and reflexive at all stages of the research process, including the gathering, analysis, and interpretation of data.

Furthermore, the interviewing method was informed by the epistemological perspective of comprehending subjective knowledge and the ontological assumption of many realities. Additionally, the study maintained transparency in its interactions with participants by being conscious of own attitudes and biases. The study aims to unearth a variety of views and interpretations, and the application of thematic analysis is in line with the ontological recognition of many realities. It also demonstrated the epistemological focus on comprehending personal experiences and knowledge. Additionally, the case study design was in line with the epistemological emphasis on comprehending subjective experiences as well as the ontological awareness of context-dependent realities. In order to ensure that the research methodology is suitable for obtaining the rich, contextualised data required for interpretation, the study considered the researcher's personal views and biases when choosing and creating the case study in connection to the axiology perspective. The ontological presumption of numerous realities and the epistemological position of subjective knowledge form the foundation of the qualitative approach. The study was

prompted by the axiology attitude to acknowledge the impact of the researcher's personal values and prejudices during the entire research procedure.

Similarly, research philosophy has to do with a method that is applied to allow a researcher to stimulate ideas into knowledge when it comes to research works. Research philosophy comprises notable paradigms, which include positivist, interpretivist, and pragmatic (Shrestha & Sharma, 2024). The variations between these paradigms are that positivists hold the view that an independent, objective reality exists, unaffected by our personal perceptions. They argue that this reality can be comprehended through systematic and rigorous scientific methodologies (Pretorius, 2024). In contrast, the interpretivist paradigm is grounded in a relativist ontology, which means it rejects the notion of a single, objective reality. Instead, it suggests that reality should be investigated through the lens of human interactions between researchers and participants, recognising the subjective nature of individual experiences. While pragmatism as a research philosophy aims to bridge the gap between positivism and interpretivism, it prioritises the practical implications of knowledge and encourages researchers to embrace adaptable, problem-solving approaches (Park, Konge & Artino, 2020; Saliya, 2023; Bergmann, 2023; Shrestha & Sharma, 2024).

4.2.1 The Importance of Research Paradigms

Research paradigms function as the foundation and structure for any research project. Once developed, they facilitate the creation of an appropriate study plan. A study's philosophical foundations determine what knowledge is sought for, how it is attained, and how the information is combined to create the desired understanding (Pretorius, 2024). Research paradigms clarify a study by outlining a precise course of investigation, which improves the calibre of the study's techniques and analyses (Bogna, Raineri & Dell, 2020; Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Researchers can understand how their perspective impacts the results by comprehending the basic research paradigm and its impact on the study (Ugwu, Ekere & Onoh, 2021).

Furthermore, the utilisation of a research paradigm is essential in research as it provides a framework for understanding and investigating various occurrences. It guides researchers' approach to knowledge development and helps them perceive the essence of reality. Depending on one's assumptions about reality and power

relations, this framework helps one make well-informed decisions on study design and methods (Radhakrishna, 2021; Shrestha & Sharma, 2024). Different paradigms provide different perspectives and approaches, such as positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. Adopting a research paradigm can help a study become more credible and useful. However, researchers need to be aware of the constraints imposed by the paradigm they have selected and consider the real-world implications of their research and conclusions (Kumatongo & Muzata, 2021; Das & Devi, 2023).

4.2.2 Interpretative Paradigm

The study adopted the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist approach argues that the social world is too complex to be theorised by laws according to scientific methods (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). Hence, there are multiple realities subject to human understanding, and there is subjective meaning to social phenomena.

The central objective of the interpretivist paradigm is to gain insight into the subjective realm of human experiences (Kumatongo & Muzata, 2021). This approach strives to delve into the perspective of the individuals under investigation and aims to comprehend and interpret their thoughts or the meanings they assign to their circumstances. The focus is on grasping the viewpoint of the subjects being observed, rather than that of the observer. The emphasis lies in understanding the unique perspectives of individuals and how they interpret the world around them. Consequently, a fundamental premise of the interpretivist paradigm is the notion that reality is socially constructed, which is why it is sometimes referred to as the constructivist paradigm (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022; Sprake & Palmer, 2022; Friedman, 2023). In this paradigm, theory doesn't precede research but follows it, drawing from the data generated by the research process. Therefore, when adhering to this paradigm, data is collected and analysed in a manner consistent with grounded theory (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Ugwu, Ekere & Onoh, 2021; Turin, Raihan & Chowdhury, 2024).

The interpretivist paradigm operates on the assumptions of a subjectivist epistemology, relativist ontology, and a naturalist methodology (Turin, Raihan & Chowdhury, 2024). A subjectivist epistemology implies that the researcher assigns meaning to their data through their own cognitive processing, informed by their

interactions with participants. The belief in relativist ontology suggests that the situation being studied possesses multiple realities, which can be explored and reconstructed through interactions between the researcher and the research subjects, as well as among the research participants (Nickerson, 2022; Sprake & Palmer, 2022; Jayasuriya, 2023). Employing a naturalist methodology, the study utilises data gathered from sources such as interviews, discourses, text messages, and reflective sessions, often taking on the role of a participant observer.

The interpretivist paradigm was employed for the study because it aids in getting a better understanding of the influence that labour relations have on the performance of public sector institutions and assists the study to gain more insight from different perspectives. Additionally, adopting this paradigm acknowledges that different individuals or groups may have different interpretations of the performance of public sector labour relations and these differences are worth exploring to appreciate the contextual dynamics. Moreover, the choice of the interpretivist paradigm aligns with the study's methodologies, such as case studies, interviews, qualitative design, and thematic analysis.

4.2.2.1 The role of interpretative paradigm in the study

Figure 4.2 is a pictorial illustration of the interpretivist paradigm.

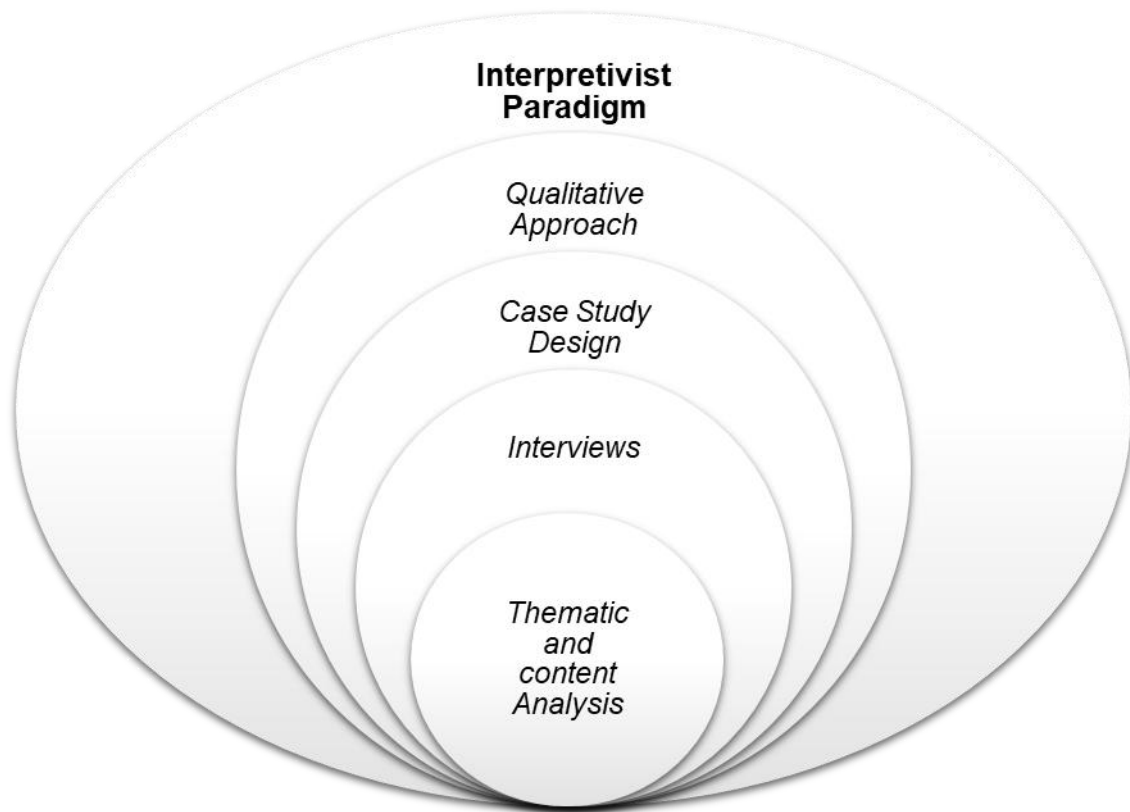


Figure 4.2 Role of interpretivist paradigm in the study

Source: Author's construct (2023)

The decision to adopt a case study approach was influenced by the interpretivist paradigm, which highlights how crucial it is to comprehend the social and cultural environment in which the concept of labour relations in the public sector is placed. Furthermore, give thorough, in-depth explanations of the case that is being investigated while also paying great attention to the particular circumstances. Furthermore, the interpretivist paradigm emphasises the necessity of using interviews as a tool for gathering data in order to obtain detailed information. Consequently, the study incorporated interviews that allowed participants to freely express their ideas, emotions, and opinions. Furthermore, the interpretivist paradigm frequently aligns with qualitative investigations to investigate participants' subjective experiences and viewpoints instead of attempting to extrapolate results to a larger community (Nickerson, 2022; Turin, Raihan & Chowdhury, 2024).

Thematic analysis is an interpretivist paradigm that emphasises finding and analysing the meanings and themes that arise from the data. It is related to the emphasis on

creating meaning. According to Antwi and Hamza (2015), interpretive thematic analysis considers the larger context of data collection and interpretation. This context allowed the study to better comprehend and contextualise the emerging themes and realise that meanings are embedded in certain social and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the objective of your study is intimately related to the interpretivist paradigm. The purpose of the study is to determine how collective bargaining, trade unionism, and conflict resolution affect organisational performance. Understanding the varying subjective viewpoints and experiences of people working for organisations such as managers, union representatives, and employees, is a strong fit for interpretivism. According to Nickerson (2022), interpretive research also highlights the significance of the context in which events occur. As such, it made it easier for the study to look at how procedures related to trade unionism, collective bargaining, and conflict resolution are developed in Ghana's public sector. Interviews and other qualitative data-gathering techniques are frequently used in interpretive research. Therefore, conducting interviews aided in capturing the complex viewpoints and narratives of social partners engaged in collective bargaining, trade unionism, and conflict resolution in the public sector.

Lastly, interpretivism recognises the possibility of several interpretations and points of view inside an organisation. As a result, assist the research in examining the many viewpoints held by workers, managers, and union representatives. This is important because it acknowledges that various stakeholders may have different perspectives on how collective bargaining, trade unionism, and conflict resolution affect organisational performance. Essentially, the interpretivist paradigm provides a thorough grasp of the subjective experiences, contextual elements, and meaning-making processes connected to labour relations and organisational performance in the public sector, which is in line with the research aims. Additionally, the interpretivist research paradigm formed the basis for the selection of the research design discussed in Section 4.3.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

4.3.1 Introduction

In line with the interpretivist research paradigm discussed in the preceding section (Section 4.2), it guided the rationale behind choosing the research design for the study. A study's research design is essential because it establishes the framework for the methodical investigation of the phenomenon (Huntington-Klein, 2021; Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2024). It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of research design since it not only affected the validity and reliability of the results but also moulded the overall rigor and credibility of the study's conclusions. The definition and significance of research design were covered in detail, with an emphasis on how it affects the course and results of the study. Furthermore, the case study method's foundations were examined, emphasising its special advantages and study-specific uses. In order to lay the groundwork for a deeper comprehension of the implications and uses of research design and the case study technique in the study, the investigation seeks to present a thorough overview of these concepts. As a result, the case study approach used assisted in investigating how labour relations affect organisational performance in the public sector of Ghana.

4.3.2 Definition and Importance of Research Design

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) define the term “research design” as the general plan of how the research questions are answered. Similarly, Babbie (2020) notes that research design addresses the planning of scientific study in that it provides a blueprint of how the researcher intends to conduct the study to answer the overall research questions. Research design is important because it outlines the procedures that must be followed in order to accomplish the goals of the study and how to carry them out (Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2024). In outlining expected results and the analytical method needed to translate data into research conclusions, it offers crucial planning assistance for the research endeavour (Salter, 2023). It provides clarity and aids in maintaining concentration by listing the actions required to accomplish research goals, which prevents the study from getting off course. Additionally, it facilitates the processes of computation and interpretation, which helps to produce recommendations and solutions (Chali, Eshete & Debela, 2022; Rainforth et al., 2024; Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2024).

Research reproducibility is another benefit of a well-designed study design. When a study is well-documented and articulated, it makes it possible for other researchers to repeat the study and confirm its findings, adding to the body of scientific knowledge and boosting the credibility of the research (Wisenthige, 2023; Salter, 2023). A coherent research design harmonises all of its elements; the research objectives, conceptual framework, and data analysis strategy are all in line with the data-gathering method, theoretical framework, and research aims. For most studies conducted under the interpretivist paradigm, researchers have a wide choice of research designs, which include narrative enquiry design, case study design, ethnographic and grounded theory design (Huntington-Klein, 2021; Weyant, 2022; Rainforth et al., 2024). Consequently, the interpretivist paradigm informed the decision to adopt a case study design for the study.

4.3.3 The Role of the Case Study Design in the Study

This study employed a case study design, aligning with the previously mentioned research paradigm. A case study method, as opposed to a thorough comparative investigation or survey, entails an in-depth analysis of a specific research subject. The purpose of this study approach is to ascertain whether a specific theory or model fundamentally accounts for real-world events (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Kekeya, 2021; Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2024). Comparably, a case study is a qualitative method mostly used to explore a particular topic or entity in greater detail. Its goal is to answer questions about which the researcher has little or no control over the thing being observed. Using this approach can help you understand the composition and underlying causes of a given decision (Hayes, 2022).

Despite having several organisations, the Ghanaian public sector is viewed as a single, defined case in this study. This is due to the fact that all constituent organisations function within the same legal and regulatory framework, primarily the 1992 Ghanaian Constitution and the Labour Act (Act 651, 2003), and are governed by the same labour relations procedures, such as trade union rules, collective bargaining structures, and dispute resolution procedures. Additionally, as mandated by central government regulations, public sector organisations share broad governance frameworks, financial arrangements, and performance accountability systems. These shared characteristics establish a coherent system

within which labour relations work uniformly, justifying the study of the public sector as a single analytically cohesive case for examining the influence of labour relations on organisational performance.

Case studies delve deeply into how causal mechanisms operate within particular, isolated cases. These analyses focus on a single case, examining a multitude of intervening factors and, by using an inductive method, closely monitoring any unexpected aspects of the functioning of a particular causal mechanism. They also contribute to determining the conditions under which the aforementioned causal mechanism is activated in a given example (Chen, Su & Lee, 2022; Grenier, 2023; Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2024). The aforementioned characteristics of a case study design corresponded with the research objective, which was to investigate the phenomenon of labour relations in the public sector and determine the impact of variables like collective bargaining, trade unionism, and dispute resolution on the performance of the public sector in Ghana. Furthermore, the nature of a case study design that encourages a thorough investigation from several angles of the intricacy and singularity of researching a context-specific, specific project, policy, phenomenon, institution, programme, or system (Cole, 2024) is in line with the research plan of the study, which aims to investigate various angles of labour relations in the public sector and how it affects the operation of public sector institutions in Ghana.

The case study design was the best strategy given the interpretive stance taken in this study and the primary objectives of the research question. This choice was made due to its ability to provide an organised method for collecting data, analysing information, and presenting conclusions, allowing for a thorough investigation of a particular problem or setting. The interpretative paradigm emphasises the significance of context in comprehending phenomena in the context of study design (Hayes, 2022; Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2024). This highlights the necessity of using a case study design in order to provide rich contextual data that is pertinent to the research topics. Furthermore, according to Welch, Paavilainen-Mäntymäki, Piekari and Plakoyiannaki (2022), case study designs within the interpretative paradigm matched with the gathering of rich qualitative data that can assist in revealing the case's relevance. The use of a case study design helps the research better capture the intricacy of labour relations in Ghana's public sector and investigate a number of

angles, such as the interplay of different circumstances and the social partners' subjective experiences.

Furthermore, by actively interacting with participants' perspectives, narratives, and interpretations of events and situations, the interpretative paradigm aspect conforms to the philosophies of case study design (Asmal, Lamp & Tan, 2022; Miller, Porter & Barbagallo, 2023). Generally, the interpretative paradigm's guiding principles of conceptuality, subjectivity awareness, qualitative richness, and the quest for thorough knowledge of human experiences were all met by the choice of case study design. As a result, the case study's selection gave the study specific, context-dependent experience and provided insights into the distinct views and worries Ghanaian public sector employees had regarding public sector labour relations, helping to address the study's goals. Moreover, case studies are frequently employed in the creation or improvement of theoretical frameworks. In looking at how a theoretical framework appears in actual situations; they offer a chance to anchor theories in empirical facts. This strategy is in line with the study's objective of developing theories. A case study design is also a good fit for qualitative research techniques. It makes it possible to use techniques like observations, interviews, and document analysis to gather rich, comprehensive, and context-specific qualitative data (Welch et al., 2022; Cole, 2024; Miller, Porter & Barbagallo, 2023). A case study design is an ideal choice for the research's approach because of the qualitative component that is integrated into the design. Below is a pictorial illustration of the role of the case study design in the study.

Figure 4.3 is a pictorial illustration of the Role of the Case Study design in the study.

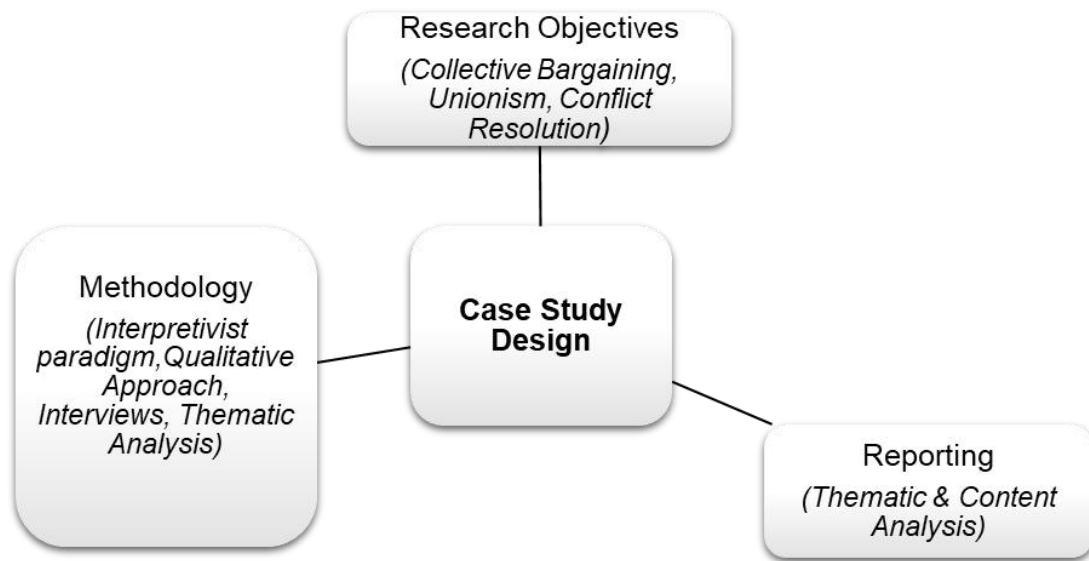


Figure 4.3 Role of case study design in the study

Source: Author's construct (2023)

4.3.3.1 Managing criticisms of case study design

The use of case study design provides a comprehensive and holistic perspective of complex social entities, encompassing multiple variables. Case studies enable in-depth comprehension of a phenomenon through the collection of opinions from multiple individuals and the identification of novel phenomena through interaction with participants (Yin, 2017; Grenier, 2023). However, case study design has faced criticism regarding its lack of representativeness and inability to yield statistically generalizable results. Additionally, the richness and complexity of the collected data often leave room for various interpretations and the potential for "researcher bias," as well as concerns about the validity and reliability of case studies (Bennett & Braumoeller, 2022; Bestley & McNeil, 2022; Khoa, Hung & Hejsalem-Brahmi, 2023; Jamshidi et al., 2023). Furthermore, case studies tend to exhibit a bias towards verification, meaning a tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions. Scepticism and reservations about verification in scientific enquiry is common, but the perceived shortcoming of case studies is their apparent inclination to allow for more subjective and arbitrary judgement on the part of the researcher compared to

quantitative research methods, as argued by (Bestley & McNeil, 2022; Chu et al., 2022; Tight, 2022).

Regarding the criticisms concerning the lack of representation and generalisation in the context of case studies, Yin (2017) suggests that case studies can facilitate analytical generalisations. This involves using a pre-established theory as a framework to compare the empirical findings of the specific case being studied. Such generalisations enhance the explanatory capacity of a case study (Alam, 2021). Similarly, Lucas, Galleli and Hamza (2022) contend that case studies can be generalised by examining multiple actors in multiple settings, which contributes to broader generalisability. Yin (2017) also argues for analytical generalisations in case studies, where researchers aim to extend specific results to more comprehensive theoretical propositions (Takahashi & Araujo, 2020).

Furthermore, concerns regarding the validity and reliability of case studies were addressed through the concept of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness, encompassing both validity and reliability, is a crucial aspect of the case study approach, ensuring that the findings derived from the case study are credible, confirmable, transferable, and dependable (Lucas, Galleli & Hamza, 2022). According to Kamble (2022) a case study can achieve a distinct form of precision referred to as "disciplined subjectivity." The principle of verifiability in a case study is upheld by providing a comprehensive account of the entire research process, particularly the analysis phase, which involves shaping concepts and identifying regularities and patterns of behaviour, interaction, and experience.

Consequently, in order to enhance the credibility of the study, the aforementioned flaws of case studies were managed by using the selected theories underpinning the study as a basis to compare the empirical results of the case under study. Similarly, multiple participants from different institutions in the Ghanaian public sector provided information that was used in enhancing the generalisation of the results. The study also emphasised the trustworthiness of the study by exploring the elements of credibility, reliability, confirmability, transferability, and dependability of the findings.

4.4

RESEARCH APPROACH

4.4.1 Introduction

Building upon the interpretivist research paradigm discussed in the preceding section (Section 4.2) and the case study design detailed earlier in Section 4.3, these sections influence the selection of the research approach employed for the study. The choice of the research approach has an important bearing on the scope, depth, and insights discovered during a study. This component of the study examined the fundamental concepts of the qualitative approach, such as the importance of the researcher's role in the research process and its centrality to the approach. Additionally, the suitability of data generation in qualitative research was examined through interviews. To determine its suitability for the study, qualitative analytical techniques like content and theme analysis were investigated. Although the qualitative approach has its advantages, it is not impervious to criticism. Therefore, in order to address common concerns about subjectivity, lack of generalizability, and potential bias in data interpretation, the section examined a few of these issues. This section also looks at ways of addressing critiques of the qualitative approach, like using triangulation to increase the accuracy and reliability of the study's conclusions. This section also highlights the crucial role of qualitative research in shaping the study's conclusions. Finally, the study examined the importance of the qualitative approach by understanding how it fit into other study components, such as objectives, methodology, literature review, and reporting. There are various methods available for conducting research, such as mixed-method, quantitative, and qualitative approaches. However, the study used a qualitative approach.

4.4.2 Qualitative Approach

Research approaches may include the quantitative approach, which has to do with numbers and statistics, or the qualitative approach, which is concerned with in-depth information and insights about nature and experiences, or the mixed method approach, which includes both quantitative and qualitative (Mehrad & Zangeneh, 2019; Taherdoost, 2022; Pilcher & Cortazzi, 2024). The interpretivist paradigm employed for the study informed the decision to adopt a qualitative approach for the study. The interpretive paradigm focuses on comprehending the world through the subjective experiences of individuals. It employs methodologies focused on deriving

meaning, such as conducting interviews that depend on the personal connection between the researcher and the subject (Kumatongo & Muzata, 2021; Salter, 2023). Given that the qualitative approach is inherently rooted in the ideologies of the interpretive paradigm, it was better suited to capture the intricate nature of behaviours, which constitutes a primary objective of the study. Qualitative research tends to focus on the interpretation of phenomena in natural settings or tries to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Turner et al., 2021; Zhu, Oberman & Aletta, 2024). Conversely, a quantitative approach to a study does not take into consideration the interaction effects that are present in a social setting (Babbie, 2020). Therefore, a study that aims to explore variables in a social setting must choose a qualitative approach.

4.4.2.1 Researcher's role in qualitative research

In qualitative research, the researcher assumes a central role as the primary tool for collecting and analysing data. The researcher actively immerses themselves in the situation, striving to comprehend the various interpretations of the subject matter (Fife & Gossner, 2024). In any given context, multiple realities emerge, shaped not only by the researcher but also by the participants themselves. Qualitative studies aim to investigate real-world situations in their natural progression, devoid of predetermined restrictions or constraints that might dictate the study's direction or outcomes (Babbie, 2020; Creswell & Báez, 2020; Zhu, Oberman & Aletta, 2024).

Moreover, qualitative research is characterised by its phenomenological enquiry approach, emphasising a naturalistic method that seeks to grasp phenomena within specific contextual settings (Fischer & Guzel, 2023). Consequently, qualitative research places significant value on case studies. In contrast, quantitative researchers tend to prioritise aspects such as large sample sizes, the manipulation of variables, and the execution of true experiments or quasi-experiments (Denny & Weckesser, 2022). This contrast informs the rationale behind adopting a case study design as a complementary element in the study.

4.4.2.2 Generating data in qualitative research

Purposive sampling, which selects participants based on specific characteristics, is the predominant strategy in qualitative studies for data generation (Robinson, 2024).

This approach places less emphasis on drawing broad conclusions that apply to an entire population and instead focuses on intentionally choosing participants for their potential to provide rich and enlightening information sources (Ison, Richards, Hemphill & Templin, 2022; Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). Denny and Weckesser (2022) highlighted that purposive sampling aims to identify cases with abundant information that can be thoroughly examined. Therefore, purposive sampling served as the foundational method for participant selection in this study.

Similarly, the primary methods for generating data in qualitative research include interviews and observations. Qualitative research encompasses a range of investigative methodologies, including ethnography, naturalistic approaches, and anthropological field participation. These methodologies all underscore the importance of observing participants in their natural settings (Zhu, Oberman & Aletta, 2024; Taherdoost, 2022). Interviews and observations are considered the most effective means of achieving this goal. In qualitative studies, data generation primarily revolves around conducting interviews. Likewise, Ruslin et al. (2022) emphasised that the interview strategy is an integral component of qualitative research. Through interviews, researchers aim to create a comprehensive account of events, processes, occurrences, operations, and underlying philosophies occurring within natural settings (Goyes & Sandberg, 2024). These insights are crucial for making informed situational decisions in qualitative studies (Fischer & Guzel, 2023). Given the study's qualitative nature, interviews emerged as the most suitable data collection tool for acquiring in-depth information from the participants.

4.4.2.3 Qualitative data analysis

When it comes to qualitative data analysis, it typically follows a general inductive approach. This approach means that explicit theories are not imposed on the data in an attempt to test a specific hypothesis. Instead, the data are allowed to naturally reveal insights by giving rise to conceptual categories and descriptive themes. These themes are usually embedded within the data (Bingham, 2023; Salmona & Kaczynski, 2024). Qualitative data analysis involves working with the data, organising it, breaking it down into manageable units, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is of meaningful, what can be learned, and ultimately deciding how to convey the interpretation to others (Mezmir, 2020; Reyes, Bogumil & Welch, 2024;

Salmona & Kaczynski, 2024). As Kalpokaite and Radivojevic (2019) points out, qualitative analysis calls for a degree of creativity because it involves the challenge of categorising raw data into logical and meaningful groupings, examining them comprehensively, and finding effective ways to communicate the interpretation to others. Given the qualitative nature of the study, adopting thematic and content analysis to identify patterns and themes that elucidate human behaviours was an appropriate approach (Brailas, Tragou & Papachristopoulos, 2023). Qualitative study reports are characterised by the inclusion of the "voice" of participants through quotations that illustrate the described themes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Fona, 2024). Therefore, in reporting the study's findings, quotations were utilised to convey the results.

Numerous scholars, including (Mezmir, 2020; Ruslin et al., 2022; Denny & Weckesser, 2022; Fischer & Guzel, 2023) contend that the most effective way to investigate human learning is through the utilisation of qualitative data. When selecting a research methodology, Lester, Cho and Lochmiller (2020) advise that it is appropriate to choose the paradigm that aligns best with the assumptions relevant to the phenomenon under investigation. Furthermore, it is widely acknowledged that qualitative researchers prioritise the examination of processes rather than solely focusing on outcomes (Reyes, Bogumil & Welch, 2024). When an understanding of an event is contingent upon personal interactions and the perceptions of those involved, as well as the delineation of the processes characterising the event, qualitative approaches prove more suitable than quantitative designs for gaining the insights necessary to comprehend participants' roles in the event and their perceptions of the experience (Fischer & Guzel, 2023; Khoa, Hung & Hejsalem-Brahmi, 2023).

The study primarily focuses on understanding participants' diverse perspectives, interpretations of events and processes, and the researcher's comprehension of these aspects. Given the nature of the objectives of the study that seek to explore the influence of labour relations activities, including trade unionism, collective bargaining, and dispute resolution, on the performance of public sector institutions in Ghana, a qualitative approach is better equipped to account for the intricacies of the social partners behaviours and elucidate the interconnected facets of interactions among the social partners in relation to the performance of the Ghanaian public sector.

Some of the merits of adopting a qualitative approach are that the process of data collection and analysis is flexible enough to adjust as new ideas or patterns emerge, and the collection of data happens in real-world contexts or in naturalistic ways. Also, the open-ended responses from the participants can stimulate researchers to discover novel problems or opportunities that they wouldn't have thought of otherwise (Oranga & Matere, 2023; Akyıldız & Ahmed, 2021).

Nevertheless, it is imperative to note that in a world where numbers talk and individuals use the term “hard” science, a failure to test hypothesis coupled with a rejection of natural science methods certainly leaves qualitative research open to criticism (Sileyew, 2019). Qualitative research has been criticised as being subjective; therefore, there is a risk and probability that it may end up repeating cultural prejudices (Rahman, Tuckerman, Vorley & Gherhes, 2021; Jayaratne, 2024; Mwita, 2022).

4.4.2.4 Criticisms of qualitative approach

One of the primary criticisms of the qualitative approach pertains to ensuring its trustworthiness, a term commonly used to encompass both validity and reliability in qualitative studies (Cole, 2024). Validity relates to how effectively your data and methods accurately represent the reality and significance of the phenomenon you are investigating, while reliability concerns the degree of consistency and replicability in your data and methods (Inayat et al., 2024). Qualitative data can be susceptible to various factors that could potentially undermine its trustworthiness. These factors include researcher bias, subjective interpretation, contextual variations, or limitations in generalisability (Turale, 2020; Allan, 2020; Mwita, 2022).

Another criticism of employing qualitative data revolves around addressing ethical concerns that may arise when collecting, analysing, and reporting sensitive or personal information obtained from human participants. Qualitative data often involves direct or indirect interactions with individuals who may disclose their opinions, experiences, emotions, or identities (Moravcsik, 2020; Riazi, Rezvani & Ghanbar, 2023). Consequently, the study bears the responsibility of safeguarding their confidentiality, anonymity, consent, privacy, and dignity while taking measures to prevent any potential harm or distress stemming from your research. Another critique of the qualitative approach relates to the challenge of rigorously and objectively

evaluating the data due to the inherently subjective nature of the process (Cole, 2023; Lim, 2024; Inayat et al., 2024).

4.4.2.5 Managing criticisms of qualitative approach

To address the aforementioned criticisms associated with the utilisation of the qualitative approach, this study incorporated the concept of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness serves as a means for researchers to convince both themselves and their readers of the worthiness of their research findings (Stahl & King, 2020; Shufutinsky, 2020; Riazi, Rezvani & Ghanbar, 2023). The study demonstrated trustworthiness by introducing specific criteria, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was ensured through data triangulation, which involved collecting and comparing data from diverse groups of participants to gain multiple perspectives on the research problem. This approach verified the consistency of gathered information and confirmed data convergence. Transferability, which relates to the potential for generalisation, was achieved by employing a pre-established theory as a framework to compare empirical findings from the specific case under examination. Dependability was demonstrated by ensuring that the research process was methodical, traceable, and meticulously documented, allowing for potential audits if necessary. Confirmability was established by clearly delineating the processes through which the study's conclusions and interpretations were reached. The process included justifying the choices made regarding theory, methodology, and analysis throughout the entirety of the study.

Furthermore, in addressing ethical concerns, the study adhered to the ethical guidelines and standards set by the University of South Africa. Informed consent was obtained from participants, and their identities were protected through the use of pseudonyms. Moreover, to enhance the rigor and objectivity of data evaluation and minimise subjectivity, the study employed member checking which involved presenting the research findings to participants to ensure that the data accurately reflected their experiences. Additionally, the study indicated how the gathered data contributed to existing knowledge and practices in the field of labour relations and identified areas for further research.

4.4.2.6 The role of qualitative research in the study

Figure 4.4 is a pictorial illustration of the role of qualitative research to the study.

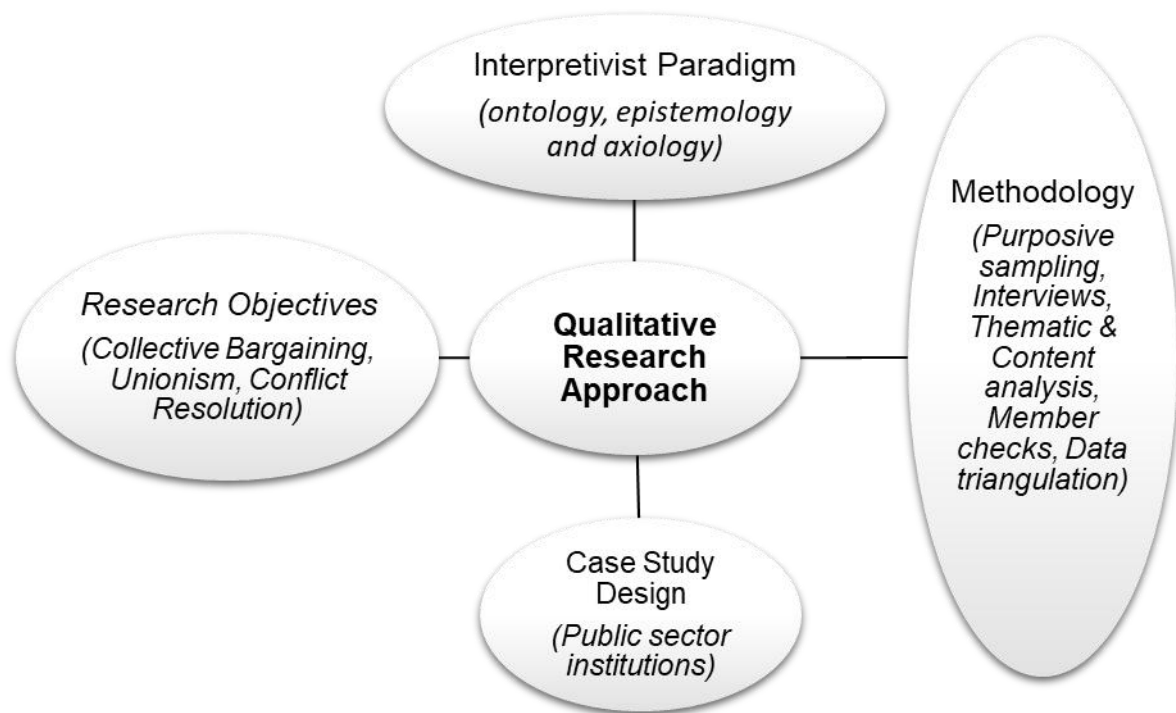


Figure 4.4 Role of qualitative research approach in the study

Source: Author's construct (2023)

A comprehensive review of a subject can be achieved through qualitative research. According to Rahman, Tuckerman, Vorley and Gherhes (2021), it captures the subtleties, complexity, and contextual elements that quantitative research could overlook. This method was ideal for the study since it improved knowledge of the complex dynamics of collective bargaining, trade unionism, and dispute resolution as well as how these labour relations issues affect the functioning of the chosen public sector organisations. Similarly, because of its particular context analysis, the qualitative technique proved excellent in offering a thorough insight into the labour relations in Ghana's public sector.

The qualitative method of interviewing allows the study to directly collect data from key stakeholders, including management, union representatives, employees, and other pertinent parties. This method made it possible to include a variety of viewpoints, providing a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how

labour relations affect Ghana's public sector institutions' performance. Most importantly, the qualitative approach allowed for the discovery of previously unanticipated results and provided previously unconsidered insights into the relationships between labour relations activities and organisational performance. Furthermore, the qualitative method made it possible to employ a variety of data sources, which enhanced the triangulation of the study's inferences' credibility. Overall, as previously mentioned, the study's research objectives were successfully matched with the qualitative research approach, which allowed the study to offer thorough and insightful responses to the research questions as well as appropriate methodology to the study as discussed in Section 4.5.

4.5 METHODOLOGY

4.5.1 Introduction

In accordance with the interpretivist research paradigm previously addressed, and expanding on the case study design and qualitative approach described in sections 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 prior to it, this methodology section offers a thorough explanation of the techniques used to explore and understand the nuances of the study. In order to comprehend the broader context in which the study is conducted, this section emphasises the situational context. In order to ascertain the study's findings' application and practicality in a broader context, the target population was also specified. Following the delineation of the target population, the study established the suitable sample size and sampling methodology to accurately capture the population's diversity and representativeness. Furthermore, the data sources were chosen in order to offer the empirical support required to answer the study objectives. These sources comprised secondary data drawn from previously published literature as well as primary data gathered through interviews. In order to make sense of the gathered data, discover patterns and insights, and reach relevant conclusions, data analysis methodologies were finally described. Among these methods were qualitative techniques like content and theme analysis. The study offers a greater knowledge of the methodological choices and considerations involved in carrying out the study.

4.5.2 Situational Context

The particular conditions or environment in which an event or experience takes place are referred to as the situational context. It includes elements that shape the understanding of the event, such as social, cultural, and physical aspects. This environment, which includes elements like the setting, people involved, timing, cultural norms, and expectations, has a significant impact on people's reactions, behaviours, and decisions (Graci, 2023; Clarke, 2021; Agarwal, 2022). Gaining an appreciation of the relationship between the study's jurisdiction, its findings, and its generalisation requires an understanding of the situational context.

4.5.2.1 Research context – Ghana

Ghana is a West African country with a population of approximately 34.45 million people in 2024. The population is predominantly young, with a significant proportion under the age of 30, which has implications for workforce dynamics and social services. Ghana's GDP is largely derived from the mining, manufacturing, services, and agriculture sectors. People regarded it as one of Africa's developing economies (Butame, 2019; Sampene, Li, Oteng Agyeman & Brenya, 2023). With government organisations in charge of public administration, infrastructure development, healthcare, and education, the public sector is vital to Ghana's economy (Tiika et al., 2024). There are sixteen administrative regions in Ghana. Ghana's capital, Accra, is home to several government agencies, organisations, and commercial establishments. The study was undertaken in Accra since it hosts the headquarters of all public sector institutions, the important regulatory organisations for labour relations, the national offices of major trade unions, and the institutions that manage public sector performance. Accra serves as the country's political and economic centre (Abdulai, 2024). Natural resources found in abundance in Ghana include gold, cocoa, oil, and lumber. These resources are vital to the economy of the nation. These resources' geographic distribution affects revenue collection and public sector strategies (Ayee, 2019; Appiah, Onifade & Gyamfi, 2022). Government resource allocation may have an effect on labour relations across the nation. If certain areas believe they are not getting a fair share of public resources, disputes may occur.

4.5.2.2 Socio-economic context

Ghana has a clear rural-urban split, with urban areas witnessing greater levels of public service delivery and economic development. Labour relations in urban and rural areas differ from one another. Public sector workers in urban areas frequently have more access to resources, data, and union representation. Workers in the public sector in rural areas encounter particular difficulties with regard to communication with government officials, transportation, and service accessibility (Ayentimi & Burgess, 2023). The fiscal management of Ghana has also had to deal with issues like debt building and budget deficits. The sustainability of the public sector and the provision of services are affected by these challenges. The public sector depends on grants, taxes, and customs fees to generate revenue (Abdulai, 2020). Crucial elements of labour relations also include salary negotiations and benefit packages for public sector workers. In order to decide on pay raises and other perks, the government has periodically negotiated with labour unions. The nation's budget is typically significantly impacted by these agreements (Michael & Samuel, 2020; Mozu, 2023). In Ghana, the public sector is a significant employer, providing job opportunities for many citizens. High unemployment rates continue to be a problem, particularly for young people. As a result, the government is working to create jobs through a number of projects and programmes (Nkansah-Dwamena, 2022). Consequently, a sizable section of the labour force is employed by Ghana's public sector. Workers in the public sector include civil servants, educators, medical professionals, and staff members of different government departments. The public sector employs more people than any other employer in the nation, with the government being the largest employer overall (Ohemeng, Obuobisa Darko & Amoako-Asiedu, 2020; Sampene et al., 2023).

4.5.2.3 Labour security

In comparison to the private sector, the public sector often provides longer work tenure and more job security. Employment security, layoffs, and terminations are governed by labour laws and regulations, which also give public sector workers significant protections (Mikhaeil & Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2024; Bettoni & Santos, 2024). In Ghana, the existence of unions is essential for defending the rights of workers in the public sector. The Ghana Trades Union Congress (TUC) and other sector-specific

unions, like the Ghana Medical Association (GMA) and the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) are a few of the well-known public sector labour organisations in Ghana. In the public sector of Ghana, labour disputes, strikes, and industrial actions are not unusual (Ayentimi & Burgess, 2023; Damachi, 2023; Buabeng-Baidoo & Olivier, 2024). Government operations and public services may be affected by these acts. Conflicts frequently centre on things like unpaid wages, unfavourable working conditions, and the application of labour laws. (TUC, 2012; McQuinn, 2022).

Furthermore, labour relations vary among Ghana's regions due to occasionally disparate policies and practices from regional governments and agencies. Because of the concentration of government institutions, Accra, the capital city, frequently acts as the focal point for labour talks and disputes (Ayentimi & Burgess, 2023). Moreover, disparities in infrastructure between areas and districts typically have an impact on public sector workers' working conditions. Geographical differences in access to public amenities such as healthcare and education might impact labour union goals and demands (Bernards, 2019; Amankwaah, 2023). Overall, the socio-economic and geographical analysis of labour relations within the Ghanaian public sector highlights the importance of labour unions in representing the interests of public sector workers. In the same vein, effective labour relations are essential to maintaining a stable and productive public sector in Ghana while addressing the needs and concerns of its diverse labour force.

Figure 4.5 is a pictorial illustration of the Public Sector Employees by Region in Ghana.

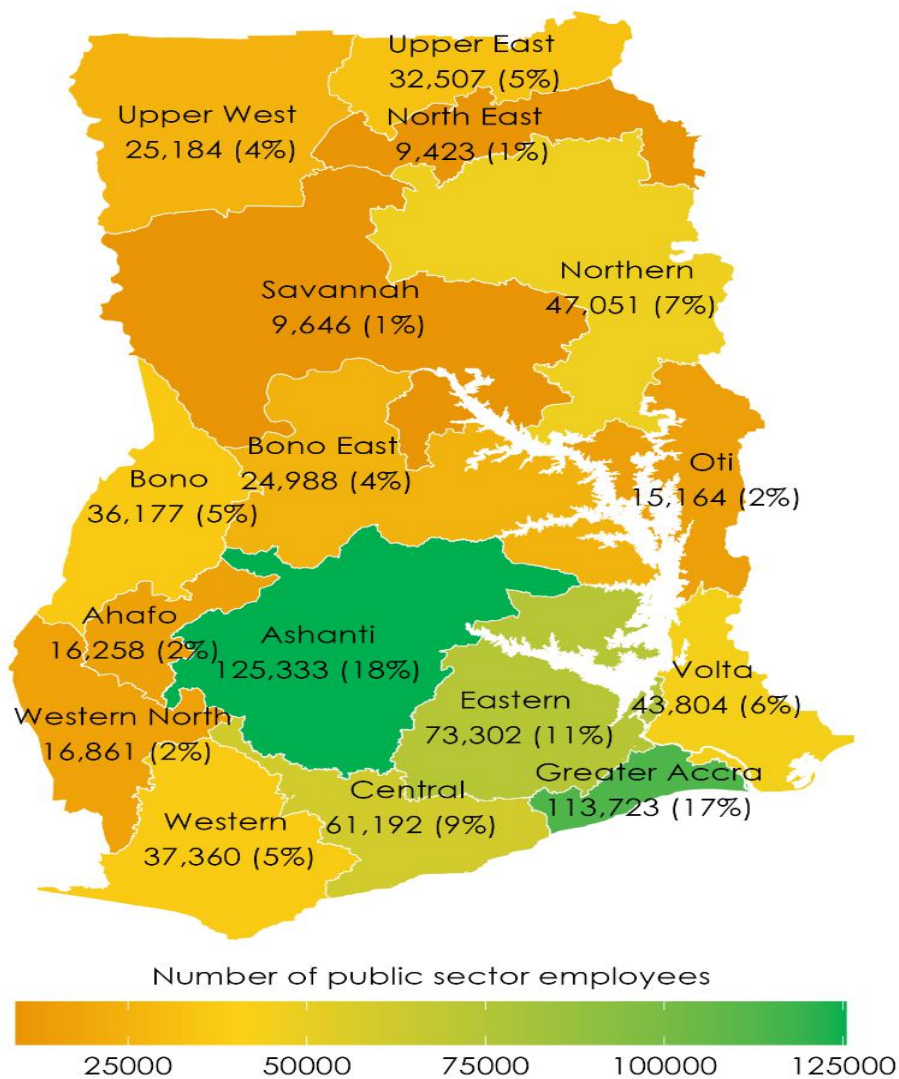


Figure 4.5 Number of public sector employees

Source: Ghana statistical service (2021)

The Government of Ghana employs about 688,001 persons, with over one-third (34.8%) of the employees in the Ashanti (18.2%) and Greater Accra (16.5%) regions. The North East (1.4%) and Savannah regions (1.4%) hold only 2.8 percent of the total number of public sector employees (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021).

4.5.3 Target Population

The population of a study is defined as the full set of cases from which the sample is taken (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019; Sukmawati, Salmia & Sudarmin, 2023). The target population of the study consists of selected public sector institutions in Ghana that are responsible for labour relations and performance issues. The Government of Ghana employs about 688,001 persons, with over one-third (34.8%) of the employees in the Ashanti (18.2%) and Greater Accra (16.5%) regions. The North East (1.4%) and Savannah regions (1.4%) hold only 2.8 percent of the total number of public sector employees (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). They comprise the Ghana Trade Union Congress (TUC), Ghana Employers' Association (GEA), Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations (MELR), Ghana Labour Department, National Labour Commission (NLC), Fair Wages and Salaries Commission, the Public Service Commission of Ghana, Ghana Federation of Labour and Office of the Head of the Civil Service (OHCS) (Yidaan & Boateng, 2023). The target population is therefore 688,001, limited to these public servants in these public institutions because they are the institutions that are in charge of labour relations issues in the Ghanaian public sector, as well as the institutions that coordinate performance appraisal activities.

The main law governing labour relations in Ghana is the Labour Act (Act 651, 2003), which recognises the aforementioned institutions as actors in the labour relations system in Ghana (Mozu, 2023; Gyesei, 2024). Moreover, the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana also mandates the aforementioned institutions with the powers to regulate labour relations in Ghana. Given the nature of the objectives of the study to explore issues pertaining to the Ghanaian public sector labour relations, it was appropriate to consider the aforementioned institutions in order to get insight into the prevailing question raised by the study. Furthermore, public sector performance systems are deliberately designed by governments to improve the conduct of government business through the effective and efficient delivery of services (Ohemeng, Obuobisa Darko & Amoako-Asiedu, 2020; Thusi & Selepe, 2023; Nor, 2023). In Ghana, this is the function of the Public Services Commission (PSC), the human resources division of government responsible for providing the framework for the institutionalisation of the performance management system in the public services. Considering the objective of the study, which is to ascertain the influence of labour

relations on the performance of the Ghanaian public sector, it was imperative to consider the institution in charge of public sector performance and human resource management. Such an approach enabled the study to derive divergent perspectives and information regarding the Ghanaian public sector labour relations and the performance of the public institutions that aid the study in achieving its objectives.

4.5.4 Sampling Techniques

4.5.4.1 Introduction

A sampling technique is a procedure for selecting samples from a population to become the foundation of studying a population and addressing a research problem (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019; Pandey & Pandey, 2021; Rahman, 2023). There are two basic methods of sampling, namely, probability and non-probability sampling. The probability sampling technique uses randomisation and takes steps to ensure all members of a population have a chance of being selected. Probability sampling has several variations, which include random sampling, stratified sampling, systematic sampling, and cluster random sampling (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Tutz, 2023; Kalton, 2023; Stratton, 2023). In contrast, the non-probability sampling method does not rely on the use of randomisation techniques to select members; rather, it has to do with studies where randomisation is not possible in order to obtain a representative sample. Its variations include convenience sampling, purposive sampling, modal instance sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling (Babbie, 2020; Stratton, 2023).

4.5.4.2 Non-probability sampling technique

The study employed a non-probability sampling technique due to its qualitative nature. In non-probability sampling, certain individuals from a population have a higher chance of being chosen, though this likelihood is unknown (Kalton, 2023). Convenience, voluntary response, purposive, snowball, and quota sampling are examples of common techniques. These methods are frequently used in exploratory and qualitative research, when the objective is not so much to test theories on a larger population but to better understand particular or understudied individuals (Stratton, 2023). The benefit of non-probability sampling is that it can target particular demographic groups and is typically less expensive to execute. According to Rahman

(2023), Burakauskaitė and Čiginas (2023) and Adeoye (2023), the accessible delivery alternatives for these approaches are more responsible for the savings than the sample method itself. The study employed purposive sampling among various non-probability sampling methods. The purposive sampling technique aids in determining the target sample size, as well as the sampling instruments that were used to collect data for the study.

4.5.4.3 Purposive sampling and reasons for selection

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where the researcher selects a sample based on their knowledge and professional judgement. Also, this sampling method is usually used when a limited number of individuals possess the trait of interest (Rahman, 2023; Obilor, 2023; Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). One major merit of purposive sampling is that it is easy to make generalisations regarding the sample. Nonetheless, the challenge with purposive sampling is that it is sometimes open to selection or research bias (Ames, Glenton & Lewin, 2019; Bae, Park & Jeon, 2022; Van Haute, 2021). However, in order to minimise this challenge, the study selected institutions that have been mandated by law to control issues regarding the Ghanaian public sector labour relations and the performance of public sector institutions, which in turn provided credible data for the study. Purposive sampling is employed in a study due to its ability to enable researchers to focus on particular characteristics of the population that are relevant to the purpose of a study (Hazari, 2024). Thus, the study focused on participants who have knowledge about issues regarding labour relations in the public sector and who best enable the study to answer the research questions.

4.5.4.4 The role of purposive sampling in the study

Figure 4.6 graphical illustration of purposive sampling and its link to the study.

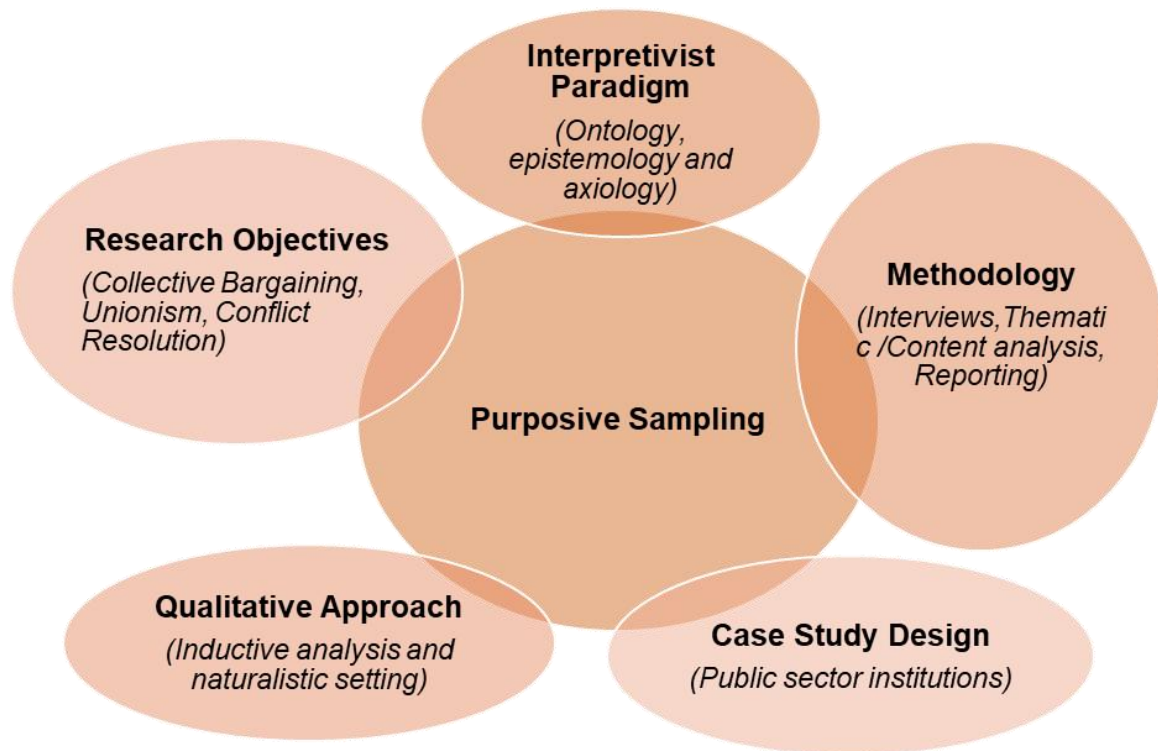


Figure 4.6 Role of purposive sampling in the study

Source: Author's construct (2023)

The deliberate selection of particular individuals was made possible by purposive sampling. The deliberate selection made it possible for the study to focus on Ghanaian public sector institutions and employees who have firsthand knowledge of or involvement in collective bargaining, trade unions, and dispute resolution procedures, as well as how these elements affect the public sector's overall performance. These participants were chosen with purpose in order to give the study meaningful and insightful data that addressed the research questions and met the study's objectives. The study's interpretivism paradigm was further supported by the purposive sampling method, which made it possible to choose participants who could offer rich, context-specific information and unique perspectives on labour relations in the public sector—two essential components of interpretive enquiry.

Furthermore, a case study design is frequently employed in qualitative research to investigate a particular phenomenon in the context of real-world occurrences. Purposive sampling complements case study research because it allows for the selection of cases that are most relevant to the research questions (Tarnoki & Puentes, 2019; Hazari, 2024; Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). In order to obtain in-depth information, public sector organisations with experience in labour relations were chosen with the aid of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was in line with the qualitative nature of the study, which seeks to reveal meanings, beliefs, and perspectives, as it made it easier to select participants based on their suitability for the study's goals and their capacity to shed light on the phenomenon under investigation.

Additionally, since interviews served as the main method of data collection for the study, purposive sampling was especially helpful in identifying and reaching out to participants who had firsthand knowledge or experiences regarding trade unionism, collective bargaining, conflict resolution, and the performance of the Ghanaian public sector. In addition, the study included thematic and content analysis to find patterns, themes, and significant content in the qualitative data gathered through interviews. In order to ensure that the data collected is rich in pertinent information and more suitable for theme and content analysis, purposive sampling was used, which contributed to the process. Last but not least, the study's reporting brought to life the opinions and voices of the participants who were specifically chosen, showing how their experiences connected to the ways in which collective bargaining, trade unionism, and dispute resolution affect the efficiency of Ghana's public sector.

4.5.5 Sample Size

A sample is a small proportion of the population selected for a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Rahman, 2023). Sample sizes are typically smaller in qualitative research because increasing the amount of data collected doesn't necessarily yield more meaningful information as the study progresses. This is because just one instance of a specific piece of data or code is sufficient to incorporate it into the analysis framework (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022; Sukmawati, Salmia & Sudarmin, 2023). However, it's essential to acknowledge that excessively small sample sizes cannot adequately support claims of valid conclusions, while overly large

sample sizes hinder the in-depth, naturalistic, and inductive analysis that characterises qualitative research (Boddy, 2016; Sebele-Mpofu, 2021). Determining the appropriate sample size in qualitative research ultimately relies on judgement and experience in evaluating the quality of the gathered information in relation to its intended applications, the chosen research method, and the purposeful sampling approach employed (Ahmed, 2024). If sample size limitations arise, they may be more a result of the choice of methodological technique rather than the number of respondents involved (Mthuli, Ruffin & Singh, 2022; Aguboshim, 2021).

Furthermore, according to Marshall, Cardon, Poddar and Fontenot (2013), qualitative researchers should consider a sample size between 25 and 35, and they urge that it should not exceed 40. This limitation is due to issues of saturation, and it will be easy to question whether the researcher had been able to dedicate ample attention to analysing and reporting in-depth rich content with such a large dataset (Rahman, 2023; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022; Rahimi, 2024). Consequently, the organisations indicated in Table 4.1 was selected for the research study due to their knowledge and participation in the performance of public sector labour relations in Ghana. Subsequently, they were purposively selected and letters were written to the heads of these institutions to seek permission for interviews. It is imperative to note that the 'selected public service institutions' were not identified because the head of the institutions preferred to be anonymous.

Table 4.1 Sample Size Breakdown

Institutions	Population	Participants	Actual Participants
Public Service Commission	5 Commissioners	4 participants	4
Ghana Trade Union Congress (GTUC)	17 Affiliated Unions	8 participants	8
National Labour Commission (NLC)	5 Commissioners	3 participants	3
Ghana Federation of Labour	3 Executives	2 participants	2
Office of the Head of the Civil Service (OHCS)	7 Directorates	3 participants	3
Fair Wages and Salaries Commission	5 Directorates	2 participants	2
Labour Department	Chief Labour officer + 5 Labour officials	3 participants	3
Ghana Employers' Association	5 Executives	2 participants	2
Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations	4 Officials	3 participants	3
Selected Public Service institutions	6 Institutions	10 participants	7
Total		40	37

Source: Author's compilation (2022)

It is imperative to note that in reference to table 1, three of the 40 participants who were expected to participate in the study were unable to do so because they were unable to commit to the interview time. Therefore, 37 participants in total were employed for the study.

4.5.6 Data Collection Procedures

4.5.6.1 Introduction

Data collection is the process of gathering information on variables of interest in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions and evaluate outcomes (Saarijärvi & Bratt, 2021). There are several techniques, such as interviews, participant questionnaires and observations used in data collection (Busetto, Wick & Gumbinger, 2020). However, an interview was adopted for the study: an interview is a process of data collection that involves exchanging information between one or more parties through a series of questions and answers (Knott, Rao, Summers & Teeger, 2022). Indeed, interviewing is expected to broaden the scope of understanding investigated phenomena, as it is a more naturalistic and less structured data collection tool (Kakilla, 2021; Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). In addition, there are several forms of interviews; however, the study employed both face-to-face and telephonic interviews.

4.5.6.2 Face-to-face interview

A face-to-face interview, also known as an in-person interview, is a data collection method where there is a direct interaction between the interviewer and the respondent, in accordance with a structured, unstructured or semi-structured interview guide (Saarijärvi & Bratt, 2021; Knott, Rao, Summers & Teeger, 2022). In relation to the face-to-face interview, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Semi-structured interviews are characterised by a set of essential questions that serve as a foundation for discussion topics. However, they also offer room for the interviewer or interviewee to deviate from the script when delving deeper into a particular idea or response (Kakilla, 2021; Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). This interview style is predominantly employed in qualitative research, as it furnishes participants with a framework for their conversation, which is often appreciated in qualitative enquiries. The adaptable nature of this approach, especially when contrasted with structured interviews, permits the identification and elaboration of information that holds significance for participants but may not have been initially considered relevant by the researcher (Mashuri et al., 2022; Belina, 2023; Nair, 2023).

Also, with regards to the face-to-face interview, the study considered the body language, facial expressions, and other non-verbal social signals of participants in order to gain deeper insight into the objectives of the study by probing for informative responses. It is imperative to note that the Covid-19 protocols were duly observed. The face-to-face interview was selected for the study because it aids in getting in-depth information regarding public sector industrial relations from participants, which would address the research objectives.

Telephonic interview is an alternative data collection method for the study, where participants were interviewed via a telephone call or a Zoom meeting which is a software program for conducting video calls (Allen et al., 2024; Coffey & Elliott, 2024). The telephonic or Zoom interview was employed for the study because the Covid-19 pandemic has stimulated the need to explore alternative data collection methods, since there is the likelihood of some participants not being comfortable with face-to-face interviews. Hence, there was a switch to telephonic or Zoom interviews when necessary.

4.5.6.3 The relevance of interviews to the study

Interviews were used rather than surveys because it allows the researcher to ask further questions that are triggered during the conversation to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, and this is not encouraged with surveys (Nair, 2023; Allen et al., 2024). Furthermore, considering the qualitative nature of the study that seeks to have a thorough exploration of the influence of labour relations on the performance of public sector institutions in Ghana and a deeper understanding of participants' perspectives and experiences on the phenomena, interviews were the appropriate data collection method to provide the study with a 'deeper' understanding of the phenomena. This was because the interviews enabled the study to gather rich, detailed, and in-depth information directly from the participants. The utilisation of semi-structured interviews helped the researchers to adapt the questions based on the responses received, allowing for a more organic and responsive data collection process. Similarly, the interview method enabled the study to seek clarification and ask follow-up questions that helped to fully comprehend participants' responses and probe deeper into areas of interest, potentially uncovering hidden or unexpected insights and enhancing the credibility of the data collected. This could not have been

possible if the study had employed other data collection instruments like a questionnaire.

4.5.6.4 Procedure for developing interview instrument for the study

An interview guide was designed for the study, based on the research objectives and was structured into three sections. To ensure alignment with the study objectives, the interview instrument was developed through a series of critical milestones in the process. At first, the interview guide's structure was determined by carefully defining the research objectives. The five sections of the interview guide each corresponded to a different study objective. Questions about collective bargaining and organisational performance were covered in the first section; trade unionism and organisational performance were covered in the second; conflict resolution and its effect on organisational performance were covered in the third; the challenges associated with labour relations in Ghana's public sector were covered in the fourth; and strategies for enhancing public sector performance through effective labour relations were covered in the final section. For each section, specific, open-ended questions were created to promote in-depth answers. The interview guide was then refined through a review and revision process. Before the interview guide was finalised and used in the study, a pre-test was carried out to find any problems and make the required revisions.

During the pre-testing of the interview guide (Appendix A), the study selected a small group of individuals who shared similar characteristics with the study's target population; these were public servants who possessed knowledge and participated in labour relations activities in Ghana's public sector. These participants were interviewed by the researcher using the guide. The guide aided in evaluating the questions' efficacy, relevancy, and clarity. After the interview, the researcher solicited input from participants on their comprehension of the questions, the interview's flow, and any challenges they encountered. Before starting the main study, feedback was examined and the interview guide was modified as needed to improve its efficacy and clarity.

4.5.6.5 The role of interviews in the study

Figure 4.7 graphical illustration of the role of Interviews in the study.

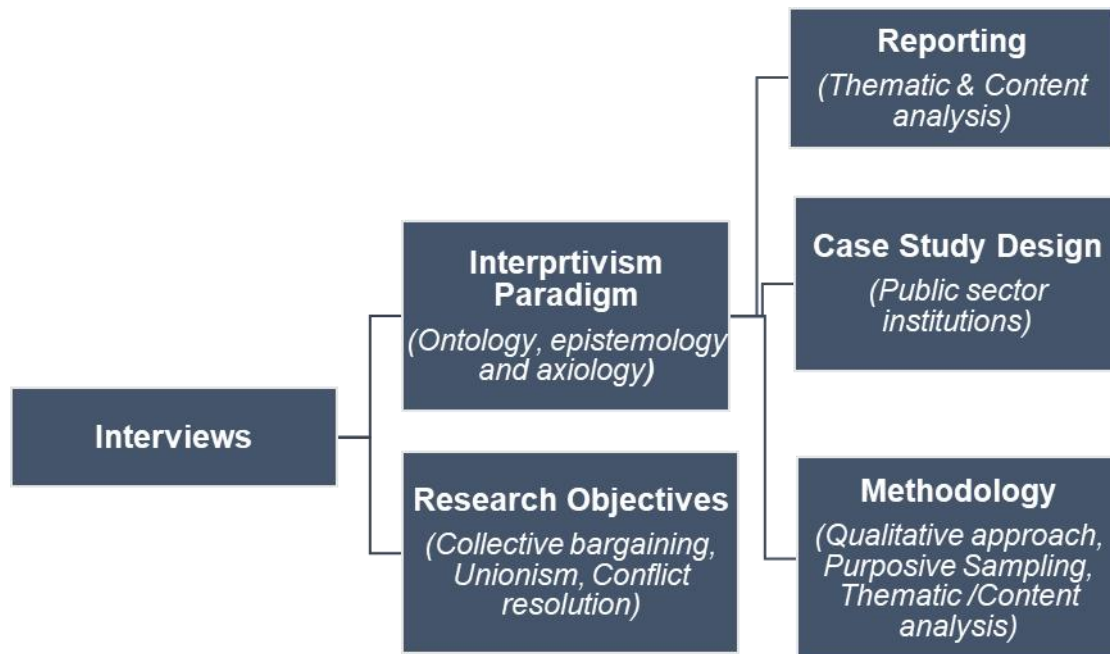


Figure 4.7 Role of Interviews in the Study

Source: Author's construct (2023)

A thorough exploration of the subject matter was made possible by using interviews as a data collection tool in this study. Through active engagement with social partners, including managers, union representatives, the government, and public servants, a more nuanced understanding of their perspectives on the ways in which trade unionism, collective bargaining, and dispute resolution affect public performance in Ghana can be obtained. Additionally, interviews offered a range of perspectives and firsthand accounts on labour relations in Ghana's public sector, which aided in the study's exploration of variables and presented a thorough picture of the phenomena. Having the chance to ask follow-up questions during interviews helped to clarify the connections between performance, collective bargaining, unionism, and dispute resolution.

Additionally, the interviews gave the study the chance to examine how differences in bargaining, dispute resolution, and unionisation practices affect performance by

allowing participants from various public sector organisations. This prompted a comparative analysis of the data acquired from various institutions in order to identify reliable themes that support the goals of the research.

The goal of the interpretivism research paradigm is to comprehend people's individual subjective meanings and interpretations. This paradigm was enhanced by interviews, which enabled the study to examine participants' viewpoints, experiences, and interpretations of public sector labour relations practice and its impact on performance. Furthermore, examining the richness and depth of qualitative data is emphasised by using interviews as a qualitative research approach. Interviews were therefore a suitable data collection strategy that complemented the study to produce detailed and contextually rich data, especially considering the qualitative nature of the study. In terms of case studies, it also entails a thorough analysis of a particular instance or cases. Interviews are a useful tool for gathering data in a case study design because they offer a comprehensive manner of examining and comprehending the details of the selected case.

The institutions that were chosen to collect data for the study subsequently yielded detailed information about organisational performance and labour relations in the context of the Ghanaian public sector. These findings assisted in resolving contextual challenges related to the study's aims as well. Interviews also produce written or audiovisual data that can be subjected to thematic analysis. The study then found recurring themes, patterns, and content in the transcripts of the interviews, which made thematic and content analysis an ideal fit for comprehending the information gathered from the study's interviews. Interviews gave the study comprehensive, in-depth descriptions of participant experiences, viewpoints, and narratives for the reporting section of the study. The study enhanced the depth and credibility of the study report by using direct quotes from participants to emphasise important themes while describing the findings. Furthermore, the study's reports were organised around recognised themes with the use of thematic analysis, which is frequently applied to interview data. This approach made it simpler for the narrative to follow a logical order.

4.5.7 Entrée and Establishing Researcher's Roles

One of the most salient concerns related to conducting a qualitative research study lies in gaining access to organisations for information. Therefore, a letter of introduction was requested from the university to be given to the selected institutions to enable easy entry and to establish credibility and legitimacy when making the first approach. Subsequently, permission was granted by the UNISA HRM Ethics Review Committee for clearance. Additionally, an informed consent agreement, which entails the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation, was given to participants to read and sign in order to obtain their consent to participate in the research. Subsequently, permission was granted by all the institutions selected to partake in the study. Furthermore, the researcher welcomed any ideas and suggestions from participants, particularly with regard to data collection methods and the sampling of individuals within their institutions. The researcher adhered to any conditions that are not detrimental to the study in order to make the institutions feel part of the study and feel the need to make the study a success.

Trainor and Bundon (2021) emphasised that a qualitative researcher cannot detach themselves from their research in order to escape subjectivity. Consequently, the researcher made a conscious effort to ensure that personal experiences and perspectives did not impact the study's quality. The researcher did his utmost best to be professional and confidential when handling the collected information so that participants could feel at ease when information was provided regarding the study, which helped to establish trustworthiness in the research process. Similarly, as stated by Dey (2003), "The danger lies not in having assumptions but in not being aware of them." Hence, in the role as an interviewer interacting with the participants, the researcher was guarded against the influence of personal experiences and preconceived ideas that might affect the interpretation of the participants' answers and lead to bias. This led to the gathering of data that was a true reflection of the participant's experience and stimulated the credibility of the findings of the study.

In outlining the researcher's roles and establishing trust with the participants, they are able to provide accurate and valuable information. The 'Entrée' phase-built rapport with participants. This rapport-building process led to more open and honest

communication with the participants. It also led to the participants feeling comfortable to share their experiences and insights, which was critical for understanding the influence of labour relations on the performance of the Ghanaian public sector. This, in turn, contributed to providing valuable, credible and insightful information that helped achieve the study's purpose.

4.5.8 Data Analysis

4.5.8.1 Introduction

Data analysis is a systematic process that comprises categorising, comparing, synthesising and interpreting to provide explanations for a single phenomenon of interest (Bingham, 2023). Qualitative data can take many forms, including text, voice, images, and video, and it does not have numerical values or a predetermined format (Salmona & Kaczynski, 2024). In order to ascertain the fundamental significance of qualitative data, it must be gathered, arranged, and analysed. In order to shed light on the causes and mechanisms underlying people's experiences and emotions, this procedure explores the narratives included within sources such as observational notes, open-ended survey responses, and interviews (Bingham, 2023; Cheung & Tai, 2023). In contrast to quantitative data, qualitative data frequently presents fresh perspectives and unearths surprising discoveries (Lim, 2024). There are many methods for analysing qualitative data, each with its own unique applications, benefits, and drawbacks. These methods include interpretive phenomenological analysis, content analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, thematic analysis, and grounded theory (Nasri, 2023; Mezmir, 2020; Lester, Cho & Lochmiller, 2020; Salmona & Kaczynski, 2024). However, for the purpose of the study, the methods of analysis employed were thematic and content analysis.

Figure 4.8 presents a graphical illustration of the data analysis plan of the study.

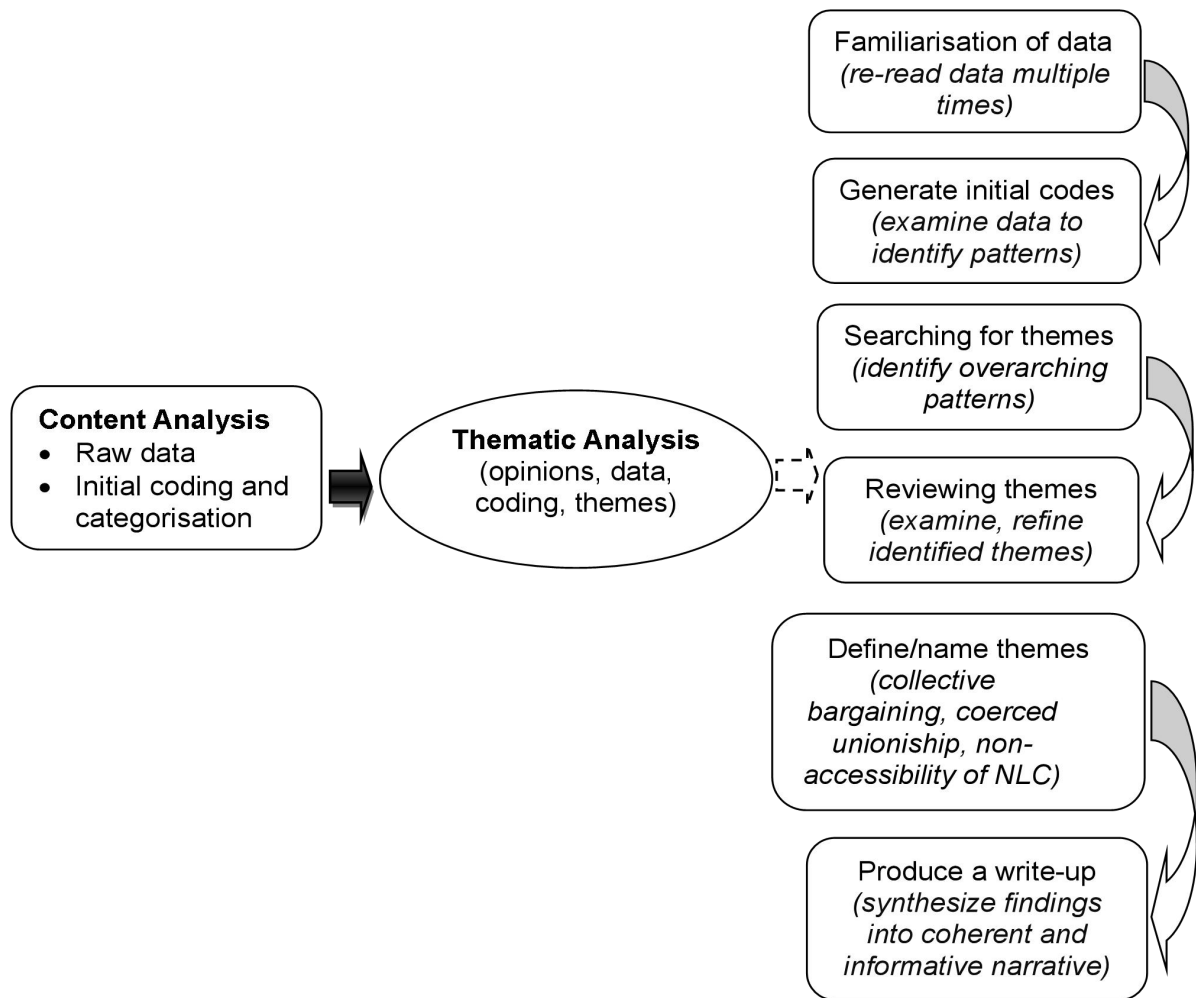


Figure 4.8 Data analysis plan

Source: Author's construct (2021)

The elements of the data analysis plan are discussed below.

4.5.8.2 Thematic analysis

4.5.8.2.1 Description and justification of thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a common form of analysis used in qualitative research. It focuses on indicating, examining and recording patterns and themes within the information gathered (Lochmiller, 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2024). In contemporary qualitative research, the most widely used method for analysing textual data is

thematic analysis. Its accessibility to novice qualitative researchers and its capacity to produce comprehensible results that successfully interpret otherwise complex data may be the reasons for its popularity (Saunders et al., 2023; Naeem, Ozuem, Howell & Ranfagni, 2023).

In the process of thematic analysis, the researcher familiarised himself with the data and transcribed the audio recordings of the interviews, after which the initial codes were generated. Furthermore, diagramming was used in the search for themes in the gathered data from the participants to make sense of the theme connections and then the identified themes were reviewed as a way of testing referential adequacy by going back to the raw data. In addition, the themes identified based on the gathered data from the participants were defined and named. Lastly, a report was produced by describing the process of coding and analysis in detail, as well as contextualising the analysis in relation to the existing literature.

Given the qualitative nature and the purpose of the study, which intends to explore the influence of labour relations on organisational performance by eliciting participants' perspectives, viewpoints, knowledge, and experiences on this subject, thematic analysis proved to be a suitable choice for the study due to its capability to facilitate a thorough comprehension of the phenomenon based on the participants' viewpoints, opinions, knowledge, and experiences. This approach unveiled concealed meanings and a range of different viewpoints, illuminating the intricacies of the subject under study (Özden, 2024). Moreover, thematic analysis was well-suited for the research since it enabled a deeper exploration of participants' motivations, emotions, and viewpoints. It also examined various recurring themes aligned with the research objectives, thereby offering a comprehensive insight into the phenomenon.

Furthermore, thematic analysis allows researchers to delve deeply into qualitative data, uncovering patterns, themes, and nuances within the dataset (Saunders et al., 2023). Hence, considering the qualitative data gathered, the adaptation of the thematic analysis helped analyse and interpret the richness of the interview, which led to a comprehensive understanding of the study. Additionally, thematic analysis is usually used to develop or refine theoretical frameworks (Qaissi, 2024). Therefore, the selection of thematic analysis in identifying and analysing themes contributed to generating new insights into the existing labour relations theories employed for the

study. Thematic analysis encourages researchers to consider the holistic context of the data. It involves exploring not only what participants say but also how they say it and the broader context in which it is situated (Wæraas, 2022; Naeem, Ozuem, Howell & Ranfagni, 2023). This holistic approach provided the study with a more profound understanding of the research topic. Overall, thematic analysis was a justifiable choice for the study due to its capacity for rich interpretation and ability to uncover and analyse themes and patterns in the interview data to achieve the objectives of the study. Conversely, thematic analysis has been criticised for oftentimes overlooking minor themes or less recurring patterns, leading to the oversight of crucial insights (Braun & Clarke, 2023). Hence, the study paid particular attention to both the major and minor themes and reviewed how they contribute to its understanding.

4.5.8.3 Content analysis

Content analysis is the procedure for categorising verbal or behavioural data for the purpose of classifying and summarising the information gathered. Content analysis can be used to quantify the number of times certain words, phrases, and concepts occur while coding (Vears & Gillam, 2022; Vespestad & Clancy, 2021). Additionally, content analysis, a method used in qualitative research, allows for the analysis and understanding of various types of material, such as transcripts from interviews, posts on social media, or photo sequences. It functions essentially as your tool for transforming raw data into insightful knowledge (Tunison, 2023). Content analysis is more than just reading or observing; it involves arranging variations, identifying recurring themes that could otherwise be overlooked, and condensing essential components (Humble & Mozelius, 2022; Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2023).

4.5.8.3.1 Description and justification of content analysis

Content analysis was employed by the study to make initial qualitative inferences with regards to analysing the meaning and semantic relationship of words and concepts while coding and finding themes. Content analysis encourages researchers to consider the context in which the content is produced. It goes beyond simple counting or coding and often involves interpreting the content in its broader context, providing a richer understanding of the material (Tunison, 2023; Aacharya, 2022). Content analysis allows for a relatively objective examination of data. It relies on

explicit coding and categorisation procedures, reducing the potential for researcher bias and subjectivity (Humble & Mozelius, 2022). Content analysis is particularly useful when dealing with large datasets, such as a vast number of documents or interview transcripts (Vears & Gillam, 2022). Considering the large number of interview transcripts retrieved from the study, utilising content analysis enabled the study to manage and analyse extensive amounts of transcripts efficiently.

Also, content analysis allows researchers to identify patterns, trends, and recurring themes within data (Jamil, Bokhari & Ahmad, 2024). In complementing the thematic analysis, employing content analysis was well-suited for the study because it helped in uncovering hidden or emerging themes, adding depth to the study. Overall, content analysis was an appropriate choice for the study due to its structured and objective approach, suitability for large datasets and ability to identify patterns and trends that provided in-depth and valuable information that helped to achieve the objectives of the study. The major unanticipated challenge of the content analysis had to do with the researcher, as the impact of the researcher's biases on the analysis process and results could be a major hindrance to the credibility of the study. Therefore, the codes and emerging themes were reviewed constantly, and any divergence of opinions relevant to the coding and searching of themes was reviewed as well.

4.5.8.4 Data analysis approach

In the process of using the thematic and content analysis technique, there was the option to either use the inductive or deductive approach in extracting and organising the information gotten from the interviews. In relation to the inductive approach, themes that are identified are strongly linked to the data because the assumptions are data-driven (Proudfoot, 2023; Cheng et al., 2024), and they are used when qualitative research is a major design of the enquiry; the inductive approach usually focuses on exploring new phenomena or looking at previously researched phenomena from a different perspective (Mohamad, Yan, Aziz & Norhisham, 2022; DeJonckheere et al., 2024). The inductive approach, sometimes referred to as inductive reasoning, starts with observations and develops theories at the end of the research process based on these facts. It is important to note that while formulating research questions and objectives, using an inductive method does not imply discounting theories (Piloto, 2024). Although it doesn't prevent researchers from

using pre-existing theory to formulate the research questions under investigation, this approach aims to extract meanings from gathered data in order to uncover patterns and relationships for theory construction (Vears & Gillam, 2022; Dawadi, 2021; Bingham & Witkowsky, 2021). Inductive reasoning starts with in-depth observations of the outside world and works its way up to more expansive conceptions and generalisations. An inductive approach usually begins with a subject, and as the study progresses, the researcher builds empirical generalisations and initial relationships (Robinson, 2022).

On the other hand, the deductive approach is theory-driven, which means using pre-existing theories or frameworks to guide data analysis, essentially applying a "top-down" method (Young, Varpio, Uijtdehaage & Paradis, 2020; Fife & Gossner, 2024). However, considering the nature of the study being conducted, both the inductive and deductive approach was adopted for the study, where the themes were linked to the pre-existing theoretical assumptions and the research questions to explain the phenomenon.

In line with the qualitative, interpretivist approach of this study, thematic content analysis was used as a mixed-mode qualitative data analysis method to explore the influence of labour relations on organisational performance in Ghana's public sector. Thematic content analysis combines deductive content analysis and inductive thematic analysis, allowing researchers to verify established theoretical constructs while also identifying new patterns based on participants' actual experiences. Atlas.ti, a popular Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), was utilised to apply this analytical approach. It allowed for flexible, iterative, and systematic interaction with the qualitative data.

Inductive thematic analysis was utilised to uncover fresh insights from the data without imposing prior assumptions. Meaning units and expressions were extracted straight from participant narratives using open code (Mohamad et al., 2022). After that, these early codes were categorised and abstracted into more general themes that represented how stakeholders interpreted performance dynamics and labour relations. A pre-established coding framework that was drawn from the literature on labour relations and organisational performance was also used to code the data as part of the deductive content analysis process (Fife & Gossner, 2024). The

visualisation tools provided by Atlas.ti were especially helpful for charting the connections between themes. Transcribed interviews were submitted as primary documents using Atlas.ti, and initial coding was completed. During several coding cycles, codes were sorted into families or categories, and these groups were then abstracted into themes.

Combining deductive and inductive thinking enabled the discovery of new context-specific insights as well as the refinement of pre-existing concepts. Thematic content analysis has drawbacks despite its advantages: Inductive coding carries the risk of researcher bias, especially when it comes to theme abstraction, and code segmentation may cause meaning to become fragmented. Reflective journaling and memoing were utilised to examine new interpretations in order to solve these possible difficulties. Thematic conclusions were validated through peer debriefing with supervisors. Additionally, anchoring codes in lengthy quote excerpts and preserving narrative integrity within Atlas.ti helped to preserve contextual linkage.

4.5.8.5 Data management

After the interviews were conducted, the audio recordings were transcribed and reread in order to enable the researcher to get familiar with the data. At this point, the researcher started coding the data; this process was done by subdividing the transcribed data and subsequently putting it into categories by labelling relevant phrases or sentences that had to do with activities, concepts, differences in opinions, and taking note of issues that had been raised repeatedly by the participants. The researcher proceeded to search for themes in the coded items, i.e., the similar views raised by participants were grouped together, the different ones were made to stand alone and irrelevant information was discarded. Examining the codes and the data collected enabled the researcher to identify significant patterns and collate data relevant to the various themes in order to review the viability of the themes.

After the themes had been identified, the researcher went ahead to review the themes. The review was done by matching the themes against the dataset to determine whether it answered the research questions and gave a true reflection of the data. Furthermore, the researcher refined the themes by splitting the ones with different underlying patterns, combining the ones with similar patterns and discarded the irrelevant ones. At this point, the researcher developed a detailed analysis of the

various themes and decided on an informative name for them. The researcher then started with the write-up, by putting together the analytical narrative and also contextualised the analysis in relation to the existing literature and related theories.

4.5.8.6 Data triangulation

A triangulation method was adopted in the study to affirm the credibility of the data collected and to evaluate the findings, as well as control biases and establish valid prepositions. Triangulation involves the usage of various methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon (Michels & Robson, 2020). It is also known as a qualitative research strategy to ascertain the trustworthiness of the study through the convergence of information from different sources (Natow, 2020; Farquhar, Michels & Robson, 2020; Meydan & Akkaş, 2024). Triangulation could be in several forms, such as theory triangulation, method triangulation and data triangulation (Arias Valencia, 2022). Subsequently, the study employed the data source triangulation technique, which involves gathering information from various sources, such as individuals, groups and communities, to obtain diverse viewpoints and validate data (Morgan, 2024). Similarly, data triangulation entails multiple interviews being conducted with different participants or with the same participants at different times to validate the findings and explore a specific research question or phenomenon (Botteldooren, De Coensel, Aletta & Kang, 2023). Consequently, the study conducted interviews with a range of participants, including public sector employees, directors, commissioners, labour officials, union members, and their executives, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

The reason for employing data source triangulation in the study was to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the findings through the convergence of evidence. This, in turn, enhanced the credibility of the results by utilising multiple data sources to investigate the same phenomenon. This approach also contributes to a more complete dataset by offering various perspectives on the same phenomenon, reducing the risk of bias or oversimplification (Morgan, 2024). Furthermore, data source triangulation helps identify discrepancies and inconsistencies in data by comparing and contrasting findings from multiple sources, ultimately pinpointing

areas of uncertainty or ambiguity and guiding further investigation (Ghalilib, 2022; Megheirkouni & Moir, 2023).

In the process of employing data source triangulation, the research objectives and questions played a pivotal role in shaping the interview guide which can be found in (Appendix A) and forming the basis for the interview questions. During the interview phase of the study, participants were posed with similar questions pertaining to core aspects of the research objectives, in addition to specific queries tailored to their unique circumstances. The study then compared and contrasted the findings derived from transcribed interviews with these diverse participants, aiming to uncover both commonalities and disparities to validate the results and pinpoint any inconsistencies or biases within the data. Following this, the findings obtained from these diverse participants were synthesised by recognising recurring patterns across the data and drawing conclusions based on these findings. Furthermore, the use of data source triangulation highlighted discrepancies and inconsistencies within the data. This rigorous process reduced the subjectivity of the findings and yielded objective results, enhancing the credibility of the research and providing dependable answers to the research questions.

4.5.8.7 The role of thematic and content analysis in the study

Figure 4.9 graphical illustration of the importance of thematic and content analysis to the study.

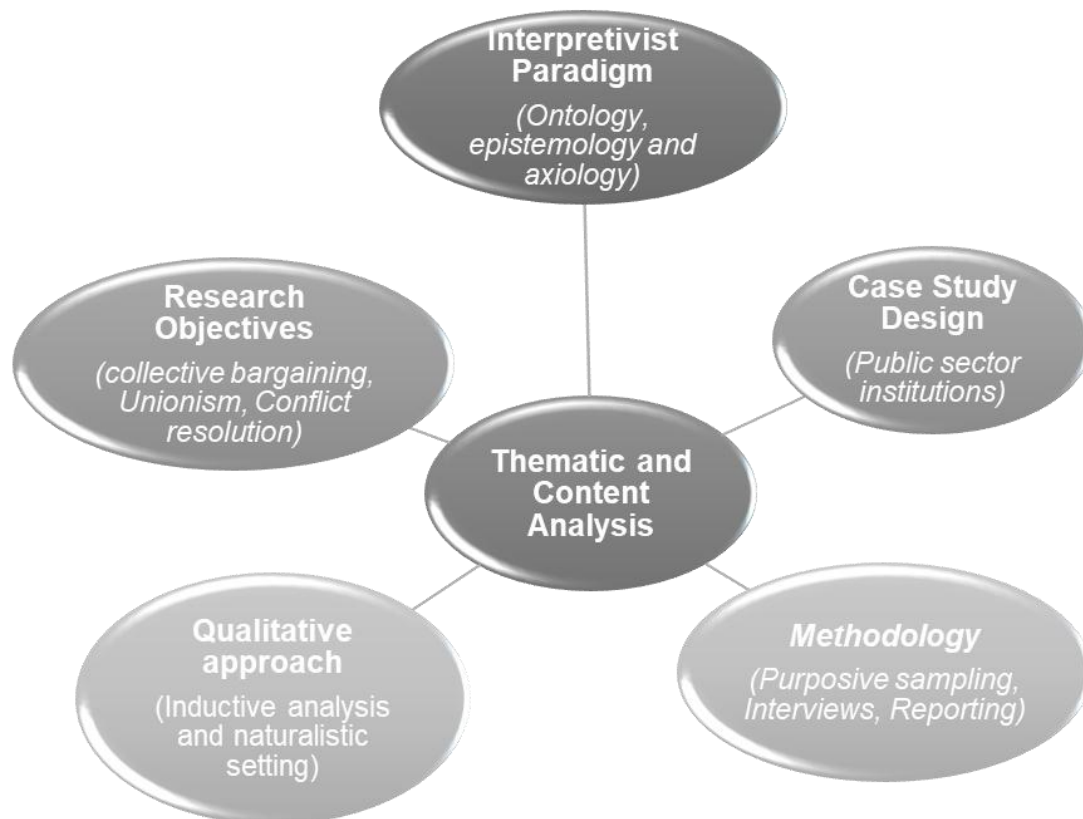


Figure 4.9 Role of thematic and content analysis in the study

Source: Author's construct (2023)

The study was able to find recurrent themes about labour relations concerns, including collective bargaining, union issues, and dispute resolution difficulties, thanks to the application of thematic analysis. In a similar vein, the use of content analysis aids the research in classifying and analysing particular labour relations-related content from the interviews. Furthermore, by offering an organised and methodical approach to analysing and interpreting the interview transcripts, both thematic and content analysis aided in achieving the goals of the study. As a result, the research was able to make deductions, spot patterns in trade unionism, collective

bargaining, and conflict resolution, and explore and comprehend the subtleties of labour-related issues and their effects on organisational performance.

Understanding social phenomena from the perspectives of the individuals involved is emphasised by the interpretivist paradigm, which also acknowledges subjectivity, context, and multiple interpretations. The use of theme and content analysis, which is an essential aspect of interpretivism, was therefore consistent with the interpretivist paradigm since it aims to reveal the meanings, interpretations, and experiences of the participants.

In addition, thematic and content analysis are qualitative research techniques that involve the exploration of themes in order to comprehend the phenomenon being studied (Humble & Mozelius, 2022). Thus, given the qualitative characteristics of the study, thematic and content analysis were suitable analytical techniques because they could yield comprehensive details and capture the complexities of labour relations in the public sector and their impact on organisational performance. In-depth exploration of a particular case is another aspect of a case study that provides a thorough grasp of a given phenomenon. As a result, the study was able to identify patterns, themes, and important insights within the context of the case, which is the Ghanaian public sector, by using thematic and content analysis to analyse interview data collected from participants of a specific case study made up of Ghanaian public sector workers.

Furthermore, because both thematic and content analysis concentrate on gathering rich, qualitative data, they complemented interviews as the study's primary data collection method. Direct communication with the participants and in-depth questioning were made possible through interviews. Open-ended questions were used in the study when conducting interviews, which frequently urged participants to freely share their ideas and experiences; the results gave useful raw data for later content and theme analysis. Thematic and content analysis additionally offered organised method for gathering, evaluating, and summarising the data. The study's findings were reported, and themes, patterns, and important content categories that came out of the interviews were highlighted. These techniques aided in presenting a coherent and significant story that addresses concerns pertaining to the research questions and supports the objectives of the study. The study utilised interviews and

thematic and content analysis to gather detailed information, facilitating the collection of contextually embedded data in line with the interpretivist paradigm. This approach made the case study more manageable and aligned with the qualitative methodology. The results were relevant and cohesive, improving the reporting of findings and ultimately providing a comprehensive understanding of labour relations procedures and their impact on Ghana's public sector efficiency. The next section (4.6) assesses the trustworthiness of the study.

4.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS

4.6.1 Introduction

Following the discussion of the study's methodology in Section 4.5, it is critical to determine the credibility of the data produced by the methodological procedures by establishing trustworthiness. As a result, the four main components of trustworthiness in qualitative research —credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability—were outlined in this section. By considering these factors, the study was able to improve the integrity, validity, and rigor of the qualitative enquiries, which increased trust in the validity and importance of the study's conclusions.

4.6.2 Trustworthiness

The aim of every research study is to be recognised as legitimate by practitioners, researchers and policymakers. One vital way to persuade stakeholders that research is worth their attention is through trustworthiness. According to Haq, Rasheed, Rashid and Akhter (2023), trustworthiness is a fundamental aspect of qualitative research and refers to the standards used to assess the study's rigor, credibility, and validity. In qualitative research, contextual understanding, richness, and depth of the phenomenon being studied are just as important as statistical accuracy. Therefore, establishing the reliability and credibility of the research findings depends critically on ensuring trustworthiness (Adler, 2022; Riazi, Rezvani & Ghanbar, 2023). This can be done by introducing the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study, as discussed below.

4.6.2.1 Credibility

Perhaps the most essential component of trustworthiness in qualitative research is credibility. It has to do with how well the results capture the viewpoints, experiences, and reality of the participants. Several strategies are used to establish credibility, including extended fieldwork, participant validation, and the triangulation of data sources and methodologies. In using these techniques, researchers can increase the validity of the study outcomes and strengthen the credibility of their interpretations and conclusions (Haq, Rasheed, Rashid & Akhter, 2023; Lemon & Hayes, 2020; Pratt, Sonenshein & Feldman, 2022). Consequently, the credibility of the study was established by employing a data source triangulation technique, which involved gathering information from various participants of the study to obtain diverse viewpoints and validate data. When every participant who has been addressing the issue from a different perspective arrives at a similar outcome, credibility is most likely to have been established. In addition, referential adequacy was used by examining primary findings and interpretations to the raw data. A detailed description of the triangulation process is demonstrated in the methodology, Section 4.5.8.6 (Data triangulation), and the interview guide used in retrieving data from the participants can be found in Appendix A.

4.6.2.2 Dependability

Dependability is the ability of the research process and results to remain stable and consistent throughout time, among several researchers, and in different contexts. It includes a study's repeatability and reliability as well as its capacity to withstand biases and temporary influences without significantly affecting the results. Maintaining precise and open documentation of the study protocols, data-gathering techniques, and analytical decisions is essential to establishing dependability. In order to improve a study's dependability, researchers can further use methods including audit trails, peer debriefing, and member checking (Stahl & King, 2020; Hayre, 2021). Hence, to achieve dependability, the study ensured the research process was logical and well documented. The study followed a well-structured design that detailed the phases from data collection to analysis in order for it to be logical and adequately documented. Prior to the commencement of the study, a detailed proposal and methodology, including the procedures for selecting

participants, interviewing, and data analysis, were developed to have a logical presentation of the study. Additionally, in order to ensure consistency, the same set of questions was asked of each participant during the data-gathering process.

4.6.2.3 Transferability

Transferability has to do with the rate at which the findings of the study can be applicable or be transferred beyond the bounds of the study. Likewise, transferability describes how far a qualitative study's findings can be used or extrapolated to different contexts or settings. In contrast to quantitative research, which typically focuses on generalizability, qualitative enquiry places greater emphasis on the depth of understanding within a particular context (Adler, 2022). Transferability, on the other hand, is still a critical factor to consider since it indicates how applicable and relevant the research findings are outside of the specific study setting. Researchers can improve transferability by giving readers detailed descriptions of the research's context, participants, and procedures. This will help to determine whether the findings could be applied to their contexts (Nazar et al., 2022; Stalmeijer, Brown & O'Brien, 2024). Subsequently, the study established transferability by giving a detailed description of the context, the assumptions, and the population that is central to the study. The study included a thorough explanation of the study context, outlining the setting, parameters, and conditions in which the study was carried out, in order to guarantee transferability. For instance, the study was carried out in Ghana, a country with a distinct rural-urban divide, where public service delivery and economic growth are higher in urban regions, and a significant portion of the labor force is engaged by the public sector.

Additionally, there are differences in labour relations throughout Ghana's regions as a result of occasionally inconsistent laws and practices implemented by regional authorities. Moreover, the study made explicit the assumptions that guided the study. For instance, the study assumed that participants understood the fundamentals of labour relations as they are practiced in the public sector. Furthermore, an in-depth description of the population, sample, and selection process for the participants was provided. For instance, the study's target population was a subset of Ghanaian public sector organisations in charge of labour relations and performance-related matters. In

utilising these tactics, the study made sure to include adequate contextual data so that other researchers could evaluate how applicable the results were to their contexts. In addition, to establish why, based on population and the context of the study, its findings can be generalised. A detailed description of the context and population can be found in the methodological sections (4.5.2 Situational context and 4.5.3 Target population).

4.6.2.4 Confirmability

Confirmability has to do with establishing that the researcher's interpretations and findings have been obtained from the data. Furthermore, confirmability describes how impartial and objective the research findings are, demonstrating how free they are from the researcher's biases and preconceptions (Enworo, 2023). It entails creating an unambiguous audit trail that records the steps made in the analytical process and decision-making process during the study. Maintaining transparency and reflexivity can help researchers avoid bias and make sure that interpretations and conclusions are based on the data, not on theories or personal preferences (Ritter et al., 2023; Awan, Yahya & Arif, 2023). In order to establish confirmability of the study, there was an 'audit trail' in relation to detailed descriptions of the data collection, data analysis and interpretation processes, which can be found in the methodological sections (4.5.6 Data Collection Procedures: 4.5.8 Data Analysis and 6.2 Summary of Findings).

Additionally, the rationale behind the selection and merging of themes and the choice of data collection technique were explicitly spelt out in Section 4.5.8.2 (thematic analysis) and Section 4.5.6.2 (face-to-face interview), respectively. Also, the study established that raw data is a true reflection of the interpretation of the findings. This was achieved by using extensive quotes from the interviews that highlight important themes and demonstrate how the study's findings are derived directly from the participants' words. In a similar vein, when discussing a theme, quotes were selected from the interview transcripts that helped shape the final themes. This illustrated the direct relationship between the data and the study's interpretation. The study also referred to how its findings were informed by the raw data, explicitly articulating how each theme links to the study's research questions and objectives as

indicated in Appendix B. Lastly, triangulation was used to reduce the effect of bias in the study as well as establish ethical consideration as discussed in Section 4.7.

4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.7.1 Introduction

Drawing on the importance of trustworthiness highlighted in the preceding section (Section 4.6), this section delves into the ethical considerations integral to ensuring the integrity and reliability of the study. Ethical consideration formed a vital part of this study because it aids in the prevention of fabrication or falsification of data and therefore promotes the pursuit of knowledge and truth, which is the primary goal of the study (Thompson, Stringfellow, Maclean & Nazzal, 2021). The study was conducted in adherence with the University of South Africa's ethical guidelines. In this regard, the following ethical considerations serve as a point of departure.

4.7.2 *Ethical clearance*

The researcher requested and received an approved ethical clearance from the Ethics Review Committee of the University of South Africa (Appendix D).

4.7.3 *Autonomy*

The researcher ensured the recognition of the participants' rights, as well as the right to be informed about the study and also to decide as autonomous participants whether to participate in the study or withdraw at any time of the research. The information gathered was treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity (Appendix F).

4.7.4 *Non-maleficence*

The researcher ensured that the participants experienced no harm or risk as a result of their participation. The study observed all Covid-19 protocols throughout the execution of the research (Appendix G).

4.7.5 Fidelity

The researcher made sure to build trust among the participants by providing all relevant information to the participants to enable them to make an informed decision about taking part in the study (Appendix E).

4.7.6 Justice, rights and dignity

The researcher avoided the exploitation and abuse of participants involved in the study. Additionally, the study considered the voices of the minority and disadvantaged groups, as well as protecting those who are most vulnerable, such as the elderly and the disabled (Appendix E).

4.7.7 Authenticity

Due care was taken to avoid plagiarism, and a conscious effort was made to keep the originality of the collected data and avoid generalisations that would affect the results (Appendix H).

4.7.8 Ethics in analysing and reporting

Objectivity in the discussions and analyses throughout the research was assured. A careful acknowledgement of all studies of other authors used in any part of the study is assured. The study avoided inappropriate use of terminology without precise definitions, as well as avoided reporting conclusions that are not supported by data. Additionally, the limitation and the delimitation of the study were discussed in Section 4.8.

4.8 LIMITATION AND DELIMITATION

Following the discussion on ethical considerations in the preceding section (Section 4.7), this section addresses the limitations and delimitations inherent in the study. Most literature is based on the impact of labour relations on private sector organisations or comparisons between public and private sectors in the western world, leading to difficulty in getting enough literature in the African context. However, it has been identified as gap which gives an opportunity to contribute in that context.

The use of face-to-face interviews to obtain data in this Covid-19 pandemic era was challenging. Hence, telephone or Zoom interviews were used as alternatives.

Furthermore, the study's capacity to collect thorough data is hampered by a lack of resources, which could lead to insufficient data collection, which could compromise the accuracy and depth of the findings. Therefore, the study narrowed its scope but ensured more comprehensive data collection within those constraints by focusing on specific institutions where resources were more easily accessible. Furthermore, many public sector entities' lack of cooperation made it difficult to reach the full target population. This could lead to sampling bias if certain groups within the population were over or underrepresented in the study. Therefore, in order to assure more manageable data collection and analysis, the study concentrated on a specified subset of the target population, such as government ministries or agencies. The depth of data analysis may be limited by the lack of sophisticated analytical tools. As a result, the relationship between labour relations and organisational performance may only be briefly examined, missing potentially significant subtleties. Therefore, the study concentrated on using interviews as a qualitative analysis approach because they required less specialised knowledge and offered rich, contextual insights into the research subject. Lastly, the study made clear that the context of its findings limited its applicability and concentrated on offering practical insights, suggestions, and generalisations appropriate for the Ghanaian public sector context.

4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summary, this chapter discusses the interpretative paradigm, focusing on understanding participants' individualised meanings within their social environment in relation to labour relations and organisational effectiveness in the public sector. It examines the case study design, its significance, limitations, and handling. The study provides a comprehensive examination of the relationship between labour relations and organisational performance in actual workplace settings, using a qualitative research approach, determining its significance. The study explores the relationship between labour relations and organisational success in Ghana's public sector. It critiques the qualitative method and discusses its approach. The context of Ghana's socio-economic and political environment is explained, providing a background for

examining labour relations and organisational performance. The target population is identified, and the study uses purposive sampling and face-to-face interviews for data collection. The study's sample size is explained, and the methodology is explained. The study provides valuable insights into the complex interactions between labour relations and organisational success. This chapter also shows how content and theme analysis were used to analyse the data. In addition, the integrity and reliability of the study were guaranteed by addressing the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the findings, demonstrating the study's trustworthiness. Finally, the study's limitations and delimitations were emphasised, along with ethical problems.

4.10 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the interpretative paradigm used in this chapter acknowledges the need for comprehend people's subjective meanings and interpretations within the intricate sociocultural framework of labour relations and organisational performance in Ghana's public sector. The case study approach has been crucial in offering a comprehensive investigation of these phenomena, enabling a close look at actual situations and the interactions between different elements. The study has tried to address concerns about low generalizability, notwithstanding criticisms, by providing thorough contextual descriptions and finding transferable lessons that can guide practice and policy in similar environments. The study uses a qualitative approach to understand labour relations and organisational performance in Ghana by capturing diverse viewpoints and experiences. The methodological rigor, transparency, and reflexivity of the research enhance its credibility and trustworthiness. The socio-economic and political environment of Ghana provides a rich backdrop for analysis, with key players in the public sector as the target group. This ensures a diverse range of viewpoints and relevance to the study issue. Purposive sampling was also used to balance the need for depth and diversity of viewpoints by choosing participants based on their ability to offer insightful contributions to the study. Notwithstanding practical limitations, the sample size has been adequate to attain saturation and depth in the data collection process. Moreover, the methods used for gathering data, especially in-person interviews, have made it easier to extract

insightful and in-depth stories from participants, which has added to a thorough grasp of the study's subject. In order to methodically analyse the data and find patterns, themes, and meanings that are inherent in the qualitative data, thematic and content analysis methodologies have been used. Finally, ethical concerns have been of the utmost importance throughout the study, according to UNISA's principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for the autonomy and dignity of participants. Notwithstanding these advantages, it is crucial to recognise the study's limits and delimitations, such as its lack of resources, its contextual specificity, and its methodological flaws, all of which may have an impact on the study's reach and applicability.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter (Chapter Four) provided detailed discussions, review and presentations on the research methods. This included the use of a case study design, a qualitative approach, purposive sampling techniques, in-depth interviews, and thematic analysis. These methods were chosen with care to guarantee a thorough, in-depth comprehension of the study topic by capturing participant viewpoints and experiences. The current chapter builds on that methodological framework by exploring the data-derived findings and providing interpretations and discussions that link these findings to the larger body of literature and research questions. The analysis of how the gathered data reflects important themes, patterns, and insights that answer the study's objectives is made possible by this shift from methodology to findings.

The focus of this chapter is to analyse and examine the field data or information in light of literature and the objectives of the study. Data analysis is a systematic process of selecting, categorising, comparing, synthesising and interpreting data gathered to provide explanations for a single phenomenon of interest. Among others, one of the salient purposes of data analysis is to express the data gathered in a way that it is rationally digestible (Salmona & Kaczynski, 2024; Okoye & Hosseini, 2024; Khoa, Hung & Hejsalem-Brahmi, 2023). The researcher collected data from public sector institutions that actively engage in the management of labour relations in Ghana via an interview guide (Appendix A). Interviews were conducted among union members and executives, workers and directors of selected public sector institutions, and labour officials. Upon completion of the interviews, the information collected in the form of audio recordings was transcribed and coded; relevant words, phrases, and sentences were labelled. The labels included concepts, opinions, differences, and processes that were relevant to the study. Categories or themes were created by bringing similar codes together. The categories or themes identified were labelled, and the connection or relationship between them was established in relation to their relevance to the study by employing thematic and content analysis.

5.2 DEMOGRAPHY

Demographic analysis of the respondents has to do with the methodical study of people and the characteristics of populations of a study (Goodfellow, 2023). The characteristics of the participants, especially the element of gender, were an interesting observation made by the researcher while collecting data, hence the reportage of the demographic characteristics of the participants in the study added some form of reliability and originality to the study. Moreover, the aim was to gain insight into the population trends and to better understand the needs of the population; to provide data that can be used to help shape public policy and economic development. There are several aspects to the demographic characteristics of the participants; however, the study focused on the gender component of the participants. A total number of 40 participants were proposed to participate in the study; however, 3 participants were unable to grant the interview due to unavailability of time. Hence, in total, 37 participants were employed for the study. In relation to the 37 participants of the study, 24 of the participants were males and 13 of them were females, as indicated in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Gender Characteristics of Participants

Gender	Numbers	Percentage %
Male	24	64.86%
Female	13	35.14%
Total	37	100

Source: Author's compilation (2023)

From the table above, the results indicate that 64.86% of the participants were males, while females made up 35.14%. This suggests that the majority of the participants in the forefront of labour relations activities in the Ghanaian public sector are males, which reflects concerns regarding gender bias. This buttress Asan, Metin and Özdemir's (2023) assertion that more men are involved in labour relations activities,

specifically unionism, as compared to women. Furthermore, the above results also support the findings of the Asan, Metin and Özdemir (2023) and Ullah, Dhar and Khatun (2024) studies, which stipulate that there is a high rate of under-representation of women when it comes to labour relations practices. It is imperative to note that there is the participation of women in labour relations activities; however, due to the high rate of under-representation, they form only a minority within their profession. The issue of gender inequality in institutions is a complex phenomenon that is prominent in HR practices such as policies, decision-making, and labour relations (Santos & Hilal, 2018; Grzelec, 2024). Labour relations is a salient segment of public life and is based on the idea of cordial labour relationships and access to employment as principal human rights. Guaranteeing these rights is perceived as vital because they influence the realisation of other human rights (Rubery, 2024). In essence, a conducive and fair employer-employee relationship in a jurisdiction in which an individual works, whether male or female, is imperative to the overall performance of the workers in such an organisation, but if contrary, the productivity of the workers can be easily jeopardised and negatively affect the performance of the organisation (Aktepe, 2020; Owunna et al., 2024).

It is important to recognise that the Government of Ghana (GoG) has made efforts to promote the status of women through legal reforms and other initiatives. For instance, the proposed Affirmative Action Bill aims to ensure equal representation of women and men in governance and public offices, mandating all sectors to allocate a certain percentage of jobs to women (Appiah, 2015). However, the bill has yet to be debated in Parliament and was not passed before the presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for December 2020. Additionally, in the year 2016, the Trade Union Congress in Ghana celebrated International Women's Day under the theme 50:50 by 2024, that is, they committed themselves to look at their achievements so far and how they can work towards achieving equality and 50:50 representations in the trade union structures, decision-making, and at all levels in the union (Apusigah, Tsikata & Mukhopadhyay, 2011). Despite the aforementioned attempts to address the issue of gender equality in labour relations in Ghana, the findings of the study show low participation and representation of women in labour relations practices.

In general, the demographic characteristics of the participants showed that the practice of public sector labour relations in Ghana has most of its participants been

males. The concern here is whether the high rate of under-representation of females is as a result of lack of opportunities given to females to participate in public sector labour relations or if it is as a result of the unwillingness of females to participate in public sector labour relations activities (Aktepe, 2020; Purcell, 2023; Beaumont, 2024b; Nyianle, 2024). Also, whether this phenomenon has an adverse effect on the performance of the Ghanaian public sector.

5.3 RQ 1: HOW DOES COLLECTIVE BARGAINING INFLUENCE ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN GHANA?

Findings in Research Question (RQ) 1 that explored collective bargaining’s influence on organisational performance in the Ghanaian public sector consist of two themes: Perception of Collective Bargaining in Determining Organisational Performance in GPS and scope of collective bargaining (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Collective Bargaining and Organisational Performance in GPS

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Perception of Collective Bargaining in Determining Organisational Performance in GPS	• Positive perceptions • Negative perceptions
Positive perceptions	• Contributes to motivation • Foster integrity and work ethics • Improves working conditions • Contributes to salary increase • Process-oriented & collective agreement
Negative perceptions	• CB as informed by leaders' selfish intentions • Economic inadequacies of Collective Bargaining outcomes • Valence (the value of the collective bargaining outcomes is not enough to motivate workers)
Scope of collective bargaining	• Salary negotiation • Employee rights • Occupational health & safety • compensation • Working conditions & environment • CB agreement & law support

Source: Author's compilation (2024)

NOTE: Ghanaian public sector = GPS

5.3.1 Perception of Collective Bargaining in Determining Organisational Performance In GPS

Opinions from study participants describing how collective bargaining determines the level of performance of employees in the Ghanaian public sector consist of both positive and negative perceptions, as presented in Figure 5.1.

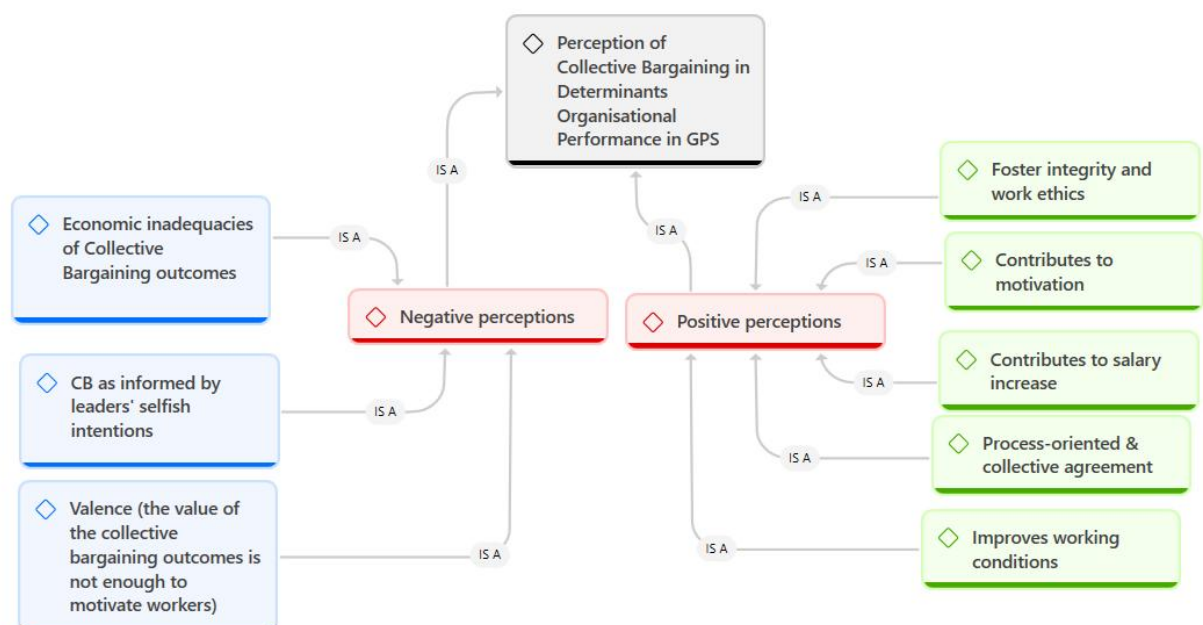


Figure 5.1 Perception of Collective Bargaining in Determining Organisational Performance in GPS

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

5.3.2 Positive Perceptions

Collective bargaining in the Ghanaian public sector was broadly perceived as a positive force, stimulating fair labour practices and improving working conditions. The participants were of the view that this collaborative process allows workers and management to negotiate terms of employment, fostering a sense of partnership and mutual respect. Consequently, it improves working conditions, fosters integrity and

work ethics, and contributes to a more motivated and productive workforce (Ibsen, 2021; Wraas & Dahle, 2020; Schnabel, 2020). Positive perceptions that emerged from the data were categorised into contributes to motivation, fosters integrity and work ethics, improves working conditions, contributes to salary increase, and process-oriented and collective agreement.

5.3.2.1 Contributes to motivation

Engaging in collective bargaining is essential for developing a motivated and effective staff. It gives government employees the authority to directly bargain with the government for their pay, benefits, and working conditions (Bernstein, 2022). Collective bargaining actions typically encourage justice and openness, which boosts employee morale and job satisfaction. When employees feel valued for their participation in collective bargaining activities like negotiations and are paid properly, their level of dedication and productivity naturally increases (Girigiri & Badom, 2021; De Stefano & Taes, 2023). A highly engaged and productive staff is greatly aided by the cooperative negotiating that collective bargaining provides (Lu & Wang, 2017). The participants stressed how being a part of a union that succeeds in its discussions on behalf of its members gives one a sense of motivation and belonging.

A labour department officer said:

Once the employee feels that he's part of an association, that belongingness alone motivates that person because it comes with its own merits.

Most of the union executives highlighted the symbiotic relationship between the union and the employer. They suggest that unions are not solely focused on extracting benefits for their members but also recognise the importance of organisational performance for both parties.

A union executive said:

If you are a union, you are not just looking at the packages; you are also ensuring that the employer benefits, because without the employer, there wouldn't be a union. You don't have members. Are you getting me? So, if performance is low, what will motivate the employer to give you more?

The implication of the finding is that when employees feel connected to their union and understand its role in fostering a productive work environment, they are more likely to be motivated to contribute positively to organisational performance. This goes to buttress the assertion by De Stefano and Taes (2023) that the outcomes of the negotiations conducted by unions during collective bargaining directly impact the well-being of employees and the overall organisational climate, therefore motivating workers to improve their performance.

Additionally, the employers' associations give collective bargaining a reasonably high rating for its contribution to increased performance, demonstrating a favourable opinion of its effects. They stress how collective bargaining can make the process more transparent and clearer, especially when it comes to elements like performance-based compensation. This openness aids in coordinating worker activities with organisational objectives (Zharfpeykan & Akroyd, 2022; Thusi, 2023). The necessity of clear communication and alignment between organisational objectives and individual employee goals is highlighted by the inclusion of performance management systems and key performance indicators. A representative of Employers Association said:

On a scale of 1-10, I will rate it 7, as collective bargaining is contributing to improved performance in the public sector, being that most often than not in the bargaining process, the key factors that determine the conclusion of the process are often made available to the parties in the process. So, a typical example is if during a bargaining process the employer clearly indicates that remuneration is going to be based on performance, certainly employees in the subsequent time period will be motivated to want to give in their all for that to happen so that in their key performance indicator or in their performance management system they will score high to get higher remuneration.

The findings suggest that when public servants understand how their performance directly influences their remuneration and advancement opportunities as stimulated by collective bargaining, they are likely to be more motivated to excel in their roles.

Zwysen and Drahokoupil (2024) buttress the claim that the terms and conditions established through collective bargaining have significant implications for organisational productivity and efficiency. Similarly, according to De Stefano and Taes (2023), employees who participate in collective bargaining enjoy better working conditions, higher incomes, and more comprehensive benefits packages than their counterparts who do not. Giving employees greater influence over crucial labour problems has been proven to boost the overall stability of organisations (Cooke & Xiao, 2024). This goes to show that collective bargaining significantly contributes to the motivation of public sector workers by empowering them with a voice in critical labour issues, which enhances their overall job satisfaction and engagement. When employees participate in collective bargaining, they gain greater influence over their working conditions, incomes, and benefits, which leads to improved job security and well-being (Helgeson, 2023). This recognition of their concerns fosters a sense of fairness and respect, boosting morale and commitment (Zwysen & Drahokoupil, 2024). As a result, motivated workers are more likely to perform better, leading to increased productivity and stability within the public sector. Ultimately, collective bargaining not only strengthens the workforce but also enhances the performance and efficiency of the sector.

5.3.2.2 Foster integrity and work ethics

Ethics and integrity are of great concern to people all around the world, particularly in light of their potential to promote harmonious working relationships (Garnero, 2021). This is especially important when it comes to public sector service delivery in both developed and developing democracies, like Ghana. The decisions people make about how to interact and collaborate with others in their workplace and surroundings, especially their coworkers, are a part of public sector ethics. Collective bargaining agreements set norms of practice, such as laws, rules, and regulations, that direct moral behaviour in the public sector (Bernstein, 2022). These rules are intended to uphold fairness and dignity in the workplace as well as in the community. Actions are guided by moral standards that are provided by ethics, especially public ethics and integrity. They also set guidelines to reward moral behaviour and hold people accountable for dishonest deeds. In order to uphold honesty and productive work ethics in the workplace, many of these moral practices are ingrained in collective

bargaining agreements among social partners in organisations (Kvalnes, 2019; Zahari, Said & Arshad, 2021). This supports the claim made by De Stefano and Taes (2023) that an effective collective bargaining process may contribute to the growth of employee dignity and respect, which in turn may promote integrity and work ethics in public institutions. A work environment that promotes integrity and work ethics is likely to increase performance due to adherence to rules and regulations at the workplace.

A Labour Department official said:

Increment of whatever work ethics you are bargaining for... So, it has helped because the union will ensure that its members, you know, work in accordance with what the law stipulates or whatever they have agreed upon. And if you go into the collective bargaining agreements, you realise that they have certain clauses. They have the do's and don'ts. Are you getting it? So, if one should do otherwise, it will go against the person. And you being aware that you are part of a body and the body is going in a direction, you will not deviate from that direction. So collective bargaining has contributed to high performance.

According to the participants, collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) are essential for promoting ethics and integrity in the public sector. The CBAs clearly outline the laws and guidelines that employees are required to follow. Establishing expectations for appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in the workplace is made easier by this clarity. Workers have a clear understanding of the standards they must follow, which reduces uncertainty and encourages a compliance and accountability culture (Seno, Hashim, Taha & Abdul Hamid, 2022). The value of integrity in day-to-day activities is reinforced by this code of conduct (Perlman, Reddick & Demir, 2023). Furthermore, the participants stated that their CBAs, which bind all the social partners involved, ensure that public employees have the freedom to negotiate with the government.

This assertion supports the provisions included in the Ghanaian Labour Act, Act 651, sections 107 and 106. By doing this, it is made sure that employees have a say in the terms and conditions of their jobs. Because collective bargaining procedures have made it possible for decision-making processes to be inclusive and equitable,

workers now feel more a sense of justice and equity, which in turn encourages moral behaviour and integrity. Trade unions can negotiate improved terms and conditions of work for their members through collective bargaining. Employees are more inclined to uphold high standards of integrity and work ethics when they feel appreciated and treated properly.

A GTUC official said:

So, when we are able to agree on terms, it gives some morale to the worker; you're also having duties and expectations from the worker also. So, the fact that the union is not allowing the worker to do anything is in the agreement that when you steal and you are late to work continuously, you can be dismissed. So, it makes you, okay, I don't follow duty, right, on agreements. So, it also makes me, okay, work harder. But I can also fight for what he deserves. Because if you are at fault, the agreement itself will fight you. So at least, with the existence of the agreement, it helps the workers to also work harder. So, we agree that, what is it called, collective bargaining is bringing some good results. Sure, it is bringing some good results. That is a good performance.

A union member said:

I think collective bargaining has really helped us the workers in the public sector. When there are misunderstandings between the unions and government, when they meet to bargain, they try to solve the problem during that time, and there is no tension between the workers and government, so we are in a good mood to work. Also, the collective bargaining agreements spell out punishment for parties who do not comply with the terms, so it promotes work ethics because nobody wants to be in trouble, so we try to do what is right.

According to the data acquired, the collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) of public employees have dispute resolution mechanisms that guarantee a just resolution of any problems that may arise between employees and the government.

This assertion supports the clause included in Section 153 of the Ghanaian Labour Act. By easing tensions and fostering a positive work atmosphere, this helps to maintain a harmonious workplace. In the public sector, fair conflict resolution procedures increase honesty and trust. Additionally, the study showed that a positive work environment is produced by a strong employer-employee connection, which is nurtured through collective bargaining. Maintaining a great relationship with employees is crucial for productivity as it guarantees their motivation and engagement at work (Chukwuyem, 2020; Sypniewska, Baran & Kłos, 2023). Furthermore, the public servants' CBAs specify the penalties for breaking the terms of the contract. This clause encourages employers and employees to abide by the provisions of the agreement by acting as a deterrent. The awareness that unethical behaviour or conduct violations have consequences serves as a reminder of how crucial it is to preserve integrity and work ethics. Studies have shown that collective bargaining addresses ethical concerns in addition to legal ones. In order to promote an ethical and honest culture within their organisation, social partners must adhere to certain principles, norms, and standards that direct their behaviour and decision-making. (Garnero, 2021; Kahancová & Martišková, 2023).

5.3.2.3 Improves working conditions

The basic objective of collective bargaining is to arrive at an agreement between the management and the employees determining mutually beneficial working conditions of employment (Wraas & Dahle, 2020). Thus, working conditions are greatly improved by collective bargaining. According to the participants, collective bargaining improved a variety of aspects of their working conditions, including grievance procedures and salary. Fair pay and benefits negotiations are one of the main results of collective bargaining. Public employees can bargain for increased income, health benefits, retirement programmes, and other financial incentives. This enhances workers' financial security while also guaranteeing that they feel appreciated and adequately compensated for their labour (Bivens et al., 2017; McNicholas et al., 2020).

Similarly, occupational health and safety standards are frequently included in CBAs. This provides a forum for discussing matters including safe working conditions, the availability of equipment needed for safety, routine health examinations, and steps to

avoid workplace dangers. Collective bargaining guarantees that workers are not exposed to unsafe working conditions (Schnabel, 2020). This is especially crucial in fields where there is a high danger of accidents and health problems. Trade unions have been able to negotiate for better work-life balance, where they enjoy paid time off, flexible work schedules, maternity and paternity leave, and reasonable working hours from employers who would otherwise wish to deny workers such rights, thanks to the successful practice of collective bargaining.

A union member indicated:

In fact, the unions have tried for us. During bargaining periods with the government, they are able to get the government to increase our pay, even though it is not enough, but at least its better. Recently through collective bargaining, the unions were able to convince the government to increase our base pay to 30%. They try to make sure the employer provides protective clothing and make sure we are not cheated when it comes to calculating our leaves. So, the collective bargain has really helped our working conditions.

Trade unions and the Ghanaian government were negotiating at the time of the study to raise the base wage of public employees. The successful discussions resulted in a base wage increase of thirty percent for Ghanaian public sector employees. According to 70% of the responses, there is a great deal of anticipation and excitement about how the negotiation process will turn out, and that will lead to an improvement in public sector employees' performance (Di Carlo, 2023). This supports the industrial democracy theory of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, which views unions as avenues for workers to exercise their right to self-determination in terms of negotiating for improved working conditions, legally binding labour contracts, and equal compensation. Employee representatives use collective bargaining to address these concerns (Devinatz, 2012; Johnston, 2022).

A public sector worker commented:

Due to collective bargaining agreements, I was able to receive severance pay, which my previous employer was hesitant in

releasing when we were laid off. It was stated in the agreement that if I am not paid the severance pay, I can take legal action against the firm. The bargaining process makes us workers feel part of decision-making because our unions are there to represent us. That really motivates us to comply with decisions made and be more effective at our jobs.

Collective bargaining agreements frequently contain provisions shielding workers from arbitrary dismissals and layoffs. These contracts may provide precise guidelines for layoffs, mandate a legitimate reason for termination, and offer impacted employees assistance like severance money or retraining opportunities (Johnston & Land-Kazlauskas, 2018). This stability in the workplace is fostered by job security, which also lowers turnover rates. Additionally, the act of negotiating gives workers a voice in how labour processes are organised. Employees that have this kind of knowledge of the ins and outs of their employment tend to work in more productive and efficient ways (Wraas & Dahle, 2020). Employee participation in decision-making encourages them to put improvements that increase productivity into practice. Employees have a stronger sense of ownership and dedication to their work when they participate in union-sponsored negotiations (Lyon, Hemphill & Jacobsen, 2024). This enhanced involvement raises motivation and morale, which creates a more upbeat and dynamic work environment.

A union executive stated:

Workers will always say they want more, but there are a lot of things that have been put in place by employer that are to be looked at to improve performance apart from conditions of service, the work delivery. For example, there is a clock in and clock out, performance appraisal between you and your immediate supervisor, and also the civil service, for example has what we call awards to award the best workers; just that there is hardship in the country, for instance, in the country the traffic situation is bad, which leads to workers being late to work; therefore. issues like that also affect man hours, which

affects productivity. But the impact of collective bargaining is appreciable.

The participants stated that their working conditions had improved as a result of collective bargaining agreements. It was also mentioned that because of the nation's current economic crisis and suffering, some public employees may not see the benefits of collective bargaining outcomes for their working conditions. Nonetheless, in contrast to the opinions of certain participants, employees who engage in collective bargaining are perceived by Kahancová and Martišková (2023) to have superior working conditions, higher wages, and more extensive benefit packages compared to their non-participating counterparts. It is established that giving workers more say over important labour issues increases an organisation's overall stability. Furthermore, it is crucial to remember that, despite the numerous aspects of working conditions that come up during negotiations, such as problems with training and development, concerns about occupational health and safety, and a lack of resources for employees to use, wages and salaries are the main topics of discussion during collective bargaining and are of great interest to public sector employees (Doellgast & Benassi, 2020).

5.3.2.4 Contributes to salary increase

In Ghana, collective bargaining is a potent tool for resolving worker concerns, especially when it comes to wage and salary talks for Ghanaian public sector employees. Wage and pay talks are frequently the main topic of discussion in collective bargaining, even if it encompasses a wide variety of topics, such as training and development, occupational health, and resource availability (Bivens et al., 2017; McNicholas et al., 2020). This demonstrates the basic significance of providing workers with just recompense. The focus on wages reflects how salaries directly affect workers' livelihoods and general well-being. Ensuring financial stability for employees, upholding living standards, and satisfying basic requirements all depend on paying fair salaries (Flambonita & Budiono, 2019). Salary concerns are the top priority for Ghanaian public sector employees, according to the data collected from the participants. This prioritisation demonstrates that one element of their employment circumstances that cannot be negotiated is their cash pay. The fact that workers are willing to go on strike over pay disagreements shows how important

salaries are to them both personally and professionally (Samwel, 2018; Ohemeng & Zaato, 2023). The majority of the strikes that Ghanaian public sector employees have participated in over the years are a result of not receiving enough money.

An Employers' Association official stated:

There are a lot of issues that prevail in the public sector; however, workers focus is mainly on issues that have to do with their salaries. Due to that, the employers are quick to resolve or meet workers halfway when it comes to salary issues during collective bargaining.

A union member said:

There is no problem that money cannot solve, so for us, the government can delay other things but not our cash. It is our salaries that we use to pay taxes, pay our children's school fees, and take care of our families, so if you do not increase our salaries from time to time, we will have challenges in this hard economy.

Workers have a lot of negotiating power since they are prepared to fight for their pay and maybe go on strike. Organisations are more inclined to give in to reasonable pay requests because they are aware that protracted wage disputes can cause serious disruptions. With this leverage, workers can ensure that their collective bargaining efforts result in substantial wage increases that recognise their vital contributions to the company (McNicholas et al., 2020). Participant responses suggest that wage increases obtained through collective bargaining have significant ramifications for the economy and society. Increased salaries boost local economies, increase the spending power of labourers, and support economic expansion overall.

An Employers' Association official stated:

In the public sector what is more effective is the salary side of issues, the financial ... for instance, last year, like this, they were enjoying cost of living allowance (COLA) of 15% ... the government made sure to pay; otherwise, the public servants would make noise, but normally with some other benefits that

are highlighted in their agreement, even if they're not really given, they themselves (public servants) understand and appreciate the challenges in the system ... but in the private sector, trust me, you dare not ... so, the effectiveness varies.

When a collective bargaining agreement results in pay increases, employees are happier in their positions and are more motivated. On the other hand, a failure to raise employee pay might cause unhappiness, which can result in strikes and lower productivity. McNicholas et al., (2020) affirm the aforementioned findings by indicating that wage increases and wage equality for union members and non-union workers in unionised occupations and public sectors are achieved through collective bargaining. Since the beginning of time, researchers have proven the link between being represented by a union and earning a greater income, which is referred to as the "union wage premium" (Bivens et al., 2017). The notion that collective bargaining results in salary rises is supported by pluralist theory since it formalises agreements between labour and management and gives workers a voice to balance the power of employers. Unions are able to effectively advocate for fair compensation and increased salaries through collective agreements, something that would be more difficult for individual employees to accomplish (Singh & Gupta, 2024). Dunlop's argument, however, draws attention to the limitations on salary increases brought about by external factors such as constrained government expenditures (Tulachan & Rai, 2021). For instance, despite union efforts, wage caps in the public sector may result from budgetary restraint. The notion that greater wages are invariably the outcome of collective bargaining may be contradicted by this systemic restriction.

5.3.2.5 Process-oriented and collective agreement

One of the themes highlighted in the retrieved data illustrates how collective bargaining fosters structured negotiation processes and comprehensive agreements that benefit both employees and employers. In Ghana's public sector, collective bargaining entails a methodical and planned negotiation procedure. All social partners are guaranteed to engage in conversation inside a predetermined framework thanks to this method. The existence of guidelines and policies guiding these talks guarantees that negotiations are fruitful and concentrated on the most important topics while also assisting in maintaining order. This claim supports the

guidelines provided by the Ghanaian Labour Act, 651, sections 107 and 97(3), which outline the procedures to be followed during negotiations. According to the data gathered, a wide range of factors are taken into consideration during the negotiation process, ensuring that agreements are comprehensive and holistic and address not only financial compensation but also other important factors that have an impact on employees' productivity and well-being (Hafiz, 2020; Jackson & Fransman, 2018).

Furthermore, collective bargaining's process-oriented approach results in the creation of legally binding agreements. Due to their legal enforceability, these agreements guarantee that both parties abide by the obligations agreed upon. Because the negotiated terms are legally binding, workers can be assured that they will be carried out, which increases their trust in both the employer and the process. The Ghanaian Labour Act 651, 2003, has provisions to ensure that the law is obeyed and that the agreement reached is binding on all parties.

A Labour Department official indicated:

The negotiation process follows a specific process to arrive at an agreement that is deemed fair to the parties involved. So, people think the agreement is just a mere formality with no implementation. That is not the case. The agreements are implemented; it's just that sometimes it might take something. In the collective agreement, punishment for preaching is indicated, so that makes all parties comply.

According to some participants, all parties sign the agreement instrument, committing them to its contents. Both parties ensure that the agreements' punitive measures are carried out because they are also specified in them. According to the data collected, some public employees believe that the agreements reached during the collective bargaining process are merely formalities that will never come to pass (Jenkins & Sherman, 2022). Some schools of thought believe that collective bargaining is organised so that after both sides have agreed and signed the CBA, it is binding on both parties, which is contrary to what some participants perceive to be the case. Since punitive actions are served to any party who preached the agreement, it implicitly coerces parties to be committed to its implementation. Moreover, every jurisdiction has legal processes that are required to be fulfilled to indulge in

bargaining with employers or government, where the outcome of the bargaining process is agreed upon by all parties involved. Therefore, the process of collective bargaining cannot be perceived as a mere formality (Bosch, Schulten & Weinkopf, 2021; Johnston, 2022; Zwysen & Drahokoupil, 2024). Moreover, the structured and inclusive nature of collective bargaining leads to the development of sustainable agreements. These agreements are designed to be fair, realistic, and achievable, considering the interests of both parties. Sustainable agreements contribute to long-term stability and satisfaction in the workplace, as they are more likely to be honoured and less likely to be contested. Furthermore, the aforementioned theme is reinforced by Dunlop's theory, which highlights how the industrial relations system is process-oriented and constrained by predetermined guidelines.

Dunlop's concept, which argues that labour relations are guided by precise policies and guidelines that mould negotiations and make the bargaining process predictable and structured, depends on this structured approach (Khan, 2022). The theme emphasises how collective bargaining in Ghana's public sector results in comprehensive agreements that are advantageous to employers and employees alike. This is consistent with Dunlop's idea, which posits that industrial relations are not exclusively antagonistic but rather pursue mutually beneficial outcomes, supporting Dunlop's theory that the system's objective is to resolve disputes in a way that strikes a balance between the interests of all parties (Frege & Kelly, 2020). The process's structure makes sure that the requirements of both parties are considered, producing fair and equitable results that are consistent with Dunlop's model's idea of long-term stability.

5.3.3 Negative Perspectives

Collective bargaining in the Ghanaian public sector was generally viewed positively by the participants, who acknowledge its benefits and importance. However, the study also reveals some negative perceptions among the participants. While collective bargaining is seen as a valuable tool for negotiating fair wages and working conditions, some participants raised concerns regarding its effectiveness and potential downsides.

5.3.3.1 Collective bargaining as informed by leaders' selfish intentions

The integrity and efficacy of the collective bargaining process are seriously questioned by the assertion that leaders' self-serving goals impact the process. Although the main goal of collective bargaining is to help employees by securing fair pay and working conditions, union leaders' personal interests may undermine the process' efficacy (Biasi, 2018; Hafiz, 2020). The ability of union leaders to effectively negotiate favourable outcomes for their members is compromised when they place a higher priority on being in the "good books" with the government or employers. This tendency is frequently caused by a desire to keep good ties with individuals in positions of authority, which results in a lack of passion and dedication needed to get the best bargains for their members (Macey, 2021). The idea that union leaders are "in bed with the government" makes matters worse by implying that they may have political aspirations that they feel can be furthered by keeping good connections with the government. Because of this possible conflict of interest, union leaders compromise the well-being of their members by refraining from taking any steps during discussions that would irritate government authorities (Parku & Lamptey, 2018).

A Labour Ministry official lamented:

... It has not. leader of the organised labour, they don't think about the workers themselves. I'll give you an example. Last year, for instance, look at the situation, the economy. And you went into negotiation; you had around 5% or 3%. So, if they somehow stick out their open mouth, they're taking something. That's why they had to go on that amount, that figure. So, the negotiation happens, but then the results don't really motivate the workers to put in their best.

Furthermore, the government's ability to sway union officials with gifts, cash, and high-ranking promises fosters an environment in which leaders prioritise their own interests over the welfare of their members as a whole. When contrasted with the financial hardships of their members, the lavish lives and fancy cars of many union leaders expose the glaring gap between them and the people they are supposed to represent (Parku & Lamptey, 2018). This predicament not only erodes union

members' faith in their leaders but also reduces the effectiveness of collective bargaining as a whole, which lowers member morale and impairs productivity at work. Macneil, Bray and Spiess (2020) buttress the claim that governments and political actors have sought to influence unions to mitigate their power and ensure compliance with broader economic and political agendas. This influence is often exerted through various means, including financial incentives, career advancements, and other personal benefits, creating a conflict of interest for union leaders.

Similarly, a study by Bosch, Schulten and Weinkopf (2021), which holds that although unions are designed to advocate for workers, the leadership frequently functions under pressures that can distort their objectives, is supported by the concern that union officials may prioritise their personal interests above those of the workers. Whereas some leaders want to achieve political influence or personal financial gain by maintaining cordial connections with employers or government officials. Such actions may result in negotiations that are compromised and have less favourable results for the workers, which would defeat the goal of collective bargaining (Anstey & Ngcukaitobi, 2011). In the Ghanaian public sector, union leaders may come under pressure to support the government's economic plans, even if doing so means that employees' benefits would be cut or their wages will stagnate. Because they are motivated more by political expediency than by a sincere commitment to worker advocacy, agreements resulting from the leaders' self-serving goals may not be ideal for workers.

A union member stated:

We don't trust those union executives; they only go to meetings and do not come out with good results that will make our lives better. But they are moving around, driving big cars and using our dues to enrich themselves. So, you see, most public sector workers do not kill themselves to get work then and it is affecting the performance of the sector.

Trust is seriously undermined when it is thought that union officials are motivated more by self-interest than by a sincere desire to better the lives of their members. According to Mann, Warsitzka, Hüffmeier and Trötschel (2024), effective labour negotiations depend on trust, and the union's ability to negotiate as a group is

weakened when employees believe that its leaders are acting just in their self-interest. The union's bargaining power is decreased as a result of this diminished trust, and internal divides are also created, making it more challenging to maintain solidarity during negotiations. The strength and cohesion of the workforce are essential for collective bargaining to be effective, and leaders' self-interest may undermine this unity and result in less favourable outcomes for workers (Macneil, Bray & Spiess, 2020; Bosch, Schulten & Weinkopf, 2021). The performance of the public sector is negatively impacted by this approach, which tends to lower member participation and engagement in union activities.

5.3.3.2 Economic inadequacies of collective bargaining outcomes

One of the major themes that stemmed from the participants responses had to do with the issue around the economic inadequacies of collective bargaining outcomes, particularly in the context of a recent 30% increment in the base pay of public service workers in Ghana. Despite the seemingly substantial increase, the outcome has failed to motivate public servants to enhance their performance, pointing to deeper underlying economic challenges.

A public servant lamented:

Recently, there have been negotiations that have resulted in a 30% increment in the base pay of public service workers. This outcome has still not motivated public servants to increase performance. This is because the question what is the amount of the already existing base pay is, and so a 30% increase on that base pay will not be appreciated if the base pay is not much or enough. 30% is on what? If 30% on a \$1000 is your take-home, convert it into cedis. That's a whole lot of money. But 30% on maybe 600 Ghana cedis, maybe a thousand cedis. So, 30% of 300 Ghana cedis. So, it comes to 1,300 Ghana cedis. And you look at the economic situation in the country; everything is expensive, 30% is inadequate. You see the situation. I have a genuine complaint that the income that is coming is not good enough, the salaries that are coming are not good enough. So, you have to find ways and means to

balance the equation at the end of the month. The government is pretending to be paying, and employees are pretending to be working.

It is crucial to remember that a percentage-based pay raise's efficacy depends on the starting base pay. Even a 30% rise on a low base wage will not compensate for the cost of living, leaving the employee with an inadequate salary. For example, adding 30% to a base pay of 600 Ghana cedis only makes the wage rise to 780 Ghana cedis, which is not enough considering the high cost of living in the current economic climate. A 30% rise in a larger base wage, like \$1000, on the other hand, corresponds to a more substantial increment of \$300, making a total of \$1300, which might have greater significance in some situations. Therefore, the initial base pay's adequacy significantly influences whether the percentage increase is perceived as sufficient (Idris et al., 2020; Apriyanti, Sudiarditha & Saptono, 2021).

Similarly, the true worth of pay increases is heavily influenced by the state of the economy. In an environment where living expenses are rising quickly, even significant percentage-based pay increases could not result in better financial security for employees (Gourevitch et al., 2016). Any pay increase may feel insufficient due to inflation, growing prices for necessities, and other financial strains that reduce the purchasing power of earnings. A study by Hasannejsad, Moradi and Eskandari (2023) supports the aforementioned claim by highlighting the need for wage laws to adjust based on the real value of labour to enable wage upsurges to genuinely benefit employees in the context of growing inflation. This is evident in the dissatisfaction expressed by the Ghanaian public service workers, who, despite receiving a 30% pay raise, still struggle to meet their basic needs due to the prevailing economic hardships.

A union member stated:

... So, the collective bargaining outcomes do not encourage increased performance. The government is pretending to be paying, and employees are pretending to be working.

The phrase "government is pretending to be paying, and employees are pretending to be working" captures this sentiment, suggesting a mutual pretence that undermines the genuine effectiveness and productivity of the Ghanaian public sector.

Public servants get unmotivated when their pay is inadequate for their standard of living (Quiggin & Henderson, 2023). Employees are less motivated to perform well when they believe their pay does not adequately compensate them for the time and money needed to maintain a respectable quality of life. The aforementioned theme is consistent with Kravchenko and Ahafonova's (2024) assertion that nominal salary increases obtained by workers through collective bargaining may be negated by increased living expenses in an inflationary economy. Despite seemingly higher pay on paper, workers may find their income stagnates or even declines when it comes to purchasing necessities. Government financial constraints in the public sector make it more difficult for collective bargaining to provide workers with financially satisfactory results. According to Kravchenko and Ahafonova (2024), the issue at hand is not entirely the fault of governments. They are of the view that salary negotiations for public sector employees are frequently difficult since governments are constrained by strict budgetary constraints, particularly in times of economic recession. Because of the government's limited ability to raise pay in pace with inflation or rising living expenses, wage increases obtained through collective bargaining are frequently symbolic rather than significant. This aligns with Dunlop's perspective that the industrial relations system is unable to escape the influence of economic forces. In accordance with Dunlop's theory, salary negotiations are impacted by external economic factors like inflation and government budgetary initiatives (Frege & Kelly, 2020; Voos, 2024). Because workers operate within a larger economic framework that is outside the authority of both the union and the employer, even when they successfully negotiate nominal wage increases, these gains may not be adequate to better their financial status. The government frequently plays a dual role in public sector negotiating as both an employer and a policymaker, establishing fiscal policies that have a bearing on wage-setting. Dunlop's theory emphasises how these players interact and how policy choices affect the results of collective bargaining (Doellgast, Bidwell & Colvin, 2021). Governments may implement salary freezes or budget cuts during economic downturns in order to control deficits, which limits public sector unions' capacity to achieve real wage rises.

5.3.3.3 Valence

This theme has to do with the value of the collective bargaining outcomes not being enough to motivate workers. A significant element that emerged was the importance attributed to the collective bargaining agreement (Garnero, 2021). Eighty percent of those surveyed agreed that trade unions engage in negotiations to protect their social and economic interests. Their discontent, meanwhile, stemmed from their dissatisfaction with the collective bargaining process's result.

A public servant commented:

In reality the 30% increase is nothing, because when you look at the economic situation currently in the country, imagine within a year utility bills have increased 16% in terms of charges. When you go out to buy something, you pay taxes on that, while your salary has already been taxed. Inflation is as high as 52% and your base pay is increased 30%, it does not add value to your salary.

The responses demonstrate that the public sector has mechanisms in place to support both negotiating efforts that advance labour relations in the public sector and trade collective bargaining (Han, 2023). The challenge is in how happy the public servants are with the process' results, as this can encourage them to boost organisational performance. In Ghana, public sector employees' base wage has increased by 30% as of now. Trade unions supported this action, and their members have expressed gratitude for it. It would seem that this rise would act as a stimulant to raise employees' motivation for their task and, as a result, improve output. That isn't the case, though. Employees of the government have bemoaned the increase's insignificance in light of various considerations, including the nation's present standard of living, the rate of inflation, and rising gasoline and transportation expenses (Lissowska, 2017; Bender, 2023).

This issue raised by the participants is supported by Nikulina and Wynstra (2022) study, which is of the view that the expected value of outcomes should be equivalent to effort and should be seen as a satisfying need in order to serve as a motivational indicator. Consequently, employees are not encouraged to work harder at doing their jobs, even if their pay has increased. As a result, the majority of participants believed

that the public sector's performance has not been positively impacted by the results of trade union activities like collective bargaining (Al Ahbabi, Singh, Balasubramanian & Gaur, 2019).

5.3.4 Scope of Collective Bargaining Process

Figure 5.2 graphically illustrates the scope of the collective bargaining process.

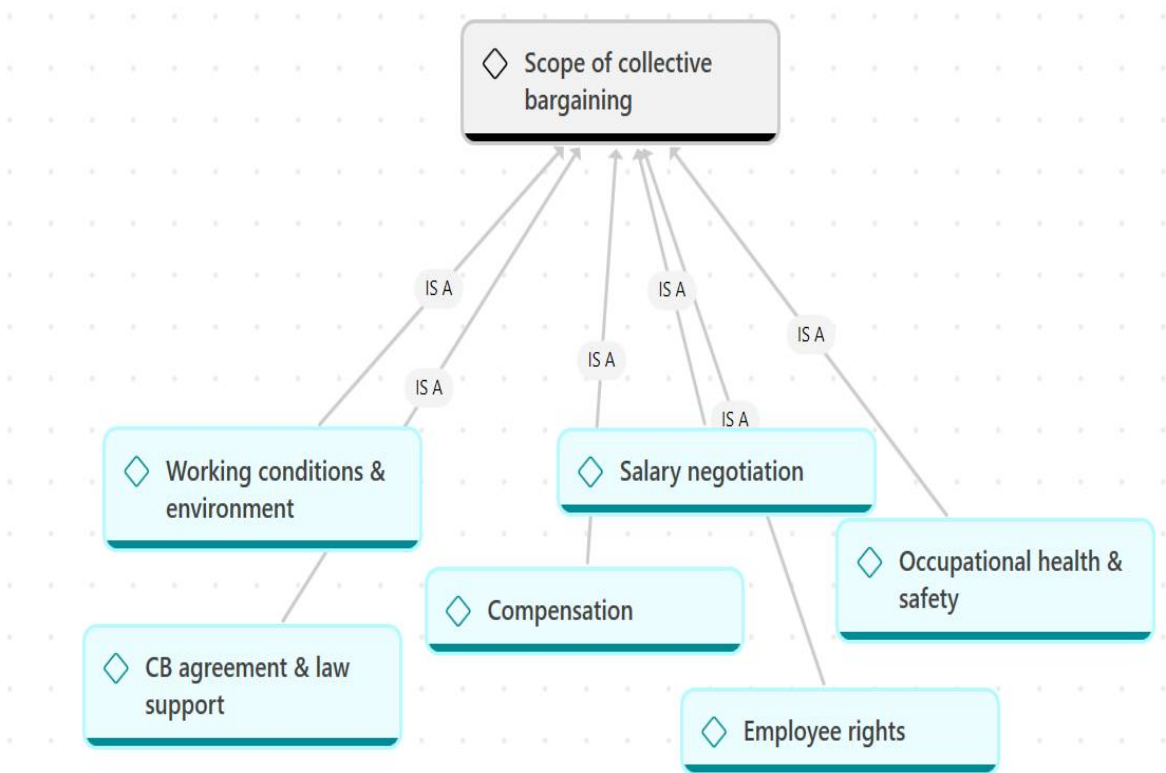


Figure 5.2 Scope of collective bargaining

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

5.3.4.1 Salary negotiation

The scope of the collective bargaining process is often perceived to be narrowly focused on salary negotiations, primarily due to the immediate and tangible benefits that salary increments provide to workers (Cunningham & James, 2020). It is unsurprising given that pay and salary-related problems are major concerns in collective bargaining because they directly affect employees' financial security. The information gathered suggests that the basic demand for financial security is the reason why pay discussions are given such importance (Litwin & Shay, 2022). Like other employees, Ghanaian public servants look for pay that would allow them to maintain their standard of living, take care of their fundamental necessities, and feel secure in their financial situation. It makes sense that income and wage concerns would take centre stage in collective bargaining discussions given the quick and direct impact that salary increases have on their day-to-day lives. The quest for higher salaries and better allowances is driven by the need to cope with the rising cost of living in the country.

A Labour Department officer stated:

Mostly, in fact, that is what they go in for, salary negotiation. You know, everybody is looking for cash. Every employee is looking for something that can sustain him....

Furthermore, the emphasis on pay and wage-related matters reflects the larger economic environment in which public employees work (Lissowska, 2017). Wages in the public and commercial sectors may not keep up in many nations, creating the impression that remuneration is insufficient. Because of this discrepancy, public employees prioritise salary discussions during collective bargaining procedures in an effort to close the pay gap and obtain more equitable compensation (Bender, 2023). Public employees' attention is now focused on compensation and wage difficulties as a result of Ghana's present economic crisis.

A Labour Ministry official said:

... that's the major issue. Salary, that's where workers are concerned.

However, the collective bargaining process's restricted focus on wage talks may be constrictive. While pay is an important factor, a comprehensive strategy for collective bargaining would take these bigger picture factors into account to guarantee all-encompassing improvements in the workplace. The participant's concern supports the findings of Bhuller, Moene, Mogstad and Vestad (2022), who examined the broader field of labour relations and collective bargaining and stated that, despite being comprehensive in theory, wage-related discussions frequently take precedence in practice due to their direct impact on employees' well-being. This means that, while other factors like working conditions and job security are important, wages frequently take precedence due to their abrupt influence on workers' standard of living (Fanfani, 2023).

Moreover, the notion of salary negotiation as the primary focus of collective bargaining stems from the fact that wage increases provide workers with immediate and tangible benefits. This supports the claim made by Zwysen and Drahokoupil (2024) that, when weighed against other perks like healthcare, pensions, or workplace safety enhancements, salaries are the most obvious and immediate kind of incentive that employees receive. Salary negotiations are a significant focus in collective bargaining as they directly benefit workers and improve their living standards. Workers prioritise compensation over other matters due to its immediate financial gain, unlike long-term benefits. The participants' responses reflect this reality. This is not to say that other concerns are unimportant; rather, pay is frequently the top priority for employees, particularly during difficult economic times when rising living costs and inflation have a direct impact on their ability to maintain a stable standard of living, as is the case in Ghana's public sector (Kravchenko & Ahafonova 2024).

Despite the fact that salary negotiations frequently dominate collective bargaining, literature also shows that wages should not be the only consideration in labour relations; other crucial factors include benefits, job security, and working conditions. According to Kahancová and Martišková (2023), in order to fully address the variety of worker issues, collective bargaining requires a more comprehensive strategy. Expanding the range of issues discussed during negotiations beyond pay increases allows unions to achieve comprehensive agreements that guarantee better working

conditions, long-term job security, and health and safety measures in addition to higher compensation.

5.3.4.2 Employee rights

A key component of guaranteeing fair and equitable treatment in organisations is the inclusion of employee rights as a topic in collective bargaining (Hayter & Visser, 2021). Due to their direct impact on workers' financial security, compensation concerns frequently take centre stage in collective bargaining discussions; however, the emphasis on employee rights draws attention to the larger picture and significance of these agreements. A variety of rights and protections are included in employee rights, all of which are necessary to uphold justice, safety, and dignity in the workplace (Eneh, Bakare, Adeniyi & Akpuokwe, 2024). The freedom from discrimination, equitable treatment, secure working conditions, and the ability to take collective action are only a few of these rights. Section (10) of the Ghanaian Labour Act 651, 2003, which explains these rights, provides a core legal framework that can be integrated into collective bargaining agreements. Unions are essential in confronting and settling cases involving violations of employee rights. The formalisation of employee rights in collective bargaining agreements guarantees that workers have a systematic way to seek redress and offers a transparent and enforceable dispute resolution process (Bogg & Ford, 2022).

The fact that unions actively participate in collective bargaining to protect employee rights highlights how crucial these discussions are to advancing workplace justice. For example, the union may step in to defend the rights of an employee who is the victim of discrimination or unjust treatment, using the collective bargaining agreement as leverage. This procedure upholds the more general idea of treating all employees fairly in addition to assisting in the resolution of specific grievances (Eneh et al., 2024).

A Labour Department official stated:

Maybe employees' rights are being infringed on, so they look into it; they stabilise those things. So basically, that is what goes into their collective bargaining. I was saying mostly because I know, aside from wages and salary, there are other

issues that are of interest to employees. The majority is wages, but aside from that, there are a few things that will infringe on the rights of the employee. That is what the goal is...

The emphasis placed on employee rights during collective bargaining also draws attention to how these discussions contribute to improving workplace well-being in general. The performance of public sector employees is enhanced by a more positive and supportive work environment, which is facilitated by the protection of employee rights. This conclusion supports research by Eneh et al., (2024), which states that worker rights are considered during collective bargaining, which leads to democratic and participative organisations. Additionally, it ensures that the interests of the labour force are upheld and fosters an unbiased workplace. Similarly, Han (2023) supports this view, noting that the fundamental basis of fair treatment in work interactions is labour rights, which shield employees from prejudice, wrongful termination, and workplace exploitation. These rights cover procedural rights like the right to due process and grievance procedures in the event of a dispute, in addition to fundamental protections like the right to fair compensation, acceptable working hours, and non-discriminatory treatment. Maintaining workplace justice depends on upholding these rights because they give workers a way to complain about unjust treatment and make claims for what they are entitled to.

5.3.4.3 Occupational health and safety

In every institution, occupational health and safety (OHS) is a critical concern for both employers and employees. It should come as no surprise that it is an essential component of collective bargaining, especially in the Ghanaian public sector. In order to prevent harm, injury, or death, employers are required by section 10 of the Ghanaian Labour Act 651 to create a safe and comfortable working environment. This legislative framework ensures that OHS standards are actively maintained and enforced by providing the necessary basis for these rules to be included in collective bargaining agreements. The significance of a safe working environment as a basic employee right is highlighted by the inclusion of OHS in collective bargaining agreements (Muller & Raphael, 2023). This emphasis is especially important for the public sector, since a variety of health and safety issues can arise from different and frequently challenging working situations. Trade unions are essential in using

collective bargaining to address and resolve situations where workers believe their workplace is dangerous and believe their bosses are not taking any steps to reduce the dangers. Trade unions use negotiations to force the adoption of essential safety protocols, sufficient training programmes, and appropriate tools to safeguard employees (Min et al., 2019; Vandaele, 2018).

It is impossible to overstate the impact that a safe and healthy work environment has on employees' morale and productivity. Employee motivation and overall job satisfaction both rise when they feel safe and protected at work. More productivity is encouraged by this good work atmosphere (Morgan, Emu, Amadi, Okon & Njama, 2021). Maintaining an efficient and motivated staff in Ghana's public sector, where the nature of work can be especially demanding, depends on securing OHS through collective bargaining.

A union executive indicated:

The safety of workers is very important because it is the only way they can also work comfortably and increase performance. However, in most cases in the public sector, the government does not prioritise these issues. So, when our members give complaints on such issues, we try to resolve them through collective bargaining negotiations with the government. It is crazy we have to negotiate on such issues that the government should know are very important for increased productivity in the public sector.

The study's participants reported that occupational health and safety (OHS) concerns continue to exist in the industry and emphasised the correlation between enhanced performance and a favourable and healthy work environment. This opinion supports the claim made by Andersson and Lerouge (2024) that employers may establish a work environment where employees can concentrate on their responsibilities without worrying about becoming hurt or ill. This can be done by addressing safety concerns and making sure that there are no risks present. In addition to improving individual performance, this emphasis on safety raises the general efficacy and efficiency of public sector services. Claxton, Hosie and Sharma (2022) argue that organisation health and safety (OHS) in the organisations are not just moral obligations but legal

ones, intended to guard employees from harm. Unsafe working circumstances can result in mishaps, injuries, and even fatalities, which can seriously injure employees' bodies and minds. Because of this, OHS becomes a crucial concern in the working relationship and is inevitably given top priority by employees in negotiations regarding collective bargaining. OHS is one of the main issues in labour negotiations, along with pay and benefits. This is due to the fact that health and safety regulations have a direct bearing on the long-term health and quality of life of employees, making them essential to their welfare (Min et al., 2019). Through collective bargaining, workers have a formal forum to promote enhanced health and safety policies, such as enhanced risk assessment processes, training initiatives, and safety equipment (Bernstein, 2022). Furthermore, the inclusion of OHS emphasises the multidimensional approach required to meet the entire spectrum of employee demands and rights, even if income and wage concerns are frequently the most apparent components of collective bargaining. This all-encompassing viewpoint guarantees that collective bargaining considers workers' physical and mental health in addition to economic issues.

5.3.4.4 Compensation

Salaries are only one aspect of compensation when it comes to collective bargaining; there are many other components as well (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). Although monetary compensation plays a major role in collective bargaining, other types of compensation, such as transfer allowances, opportunities for advancement, recognition, and certain benefits related to a particular job, are also significant and fall under the purview of collective bargaining (McNicholas et al., 2020).

A director from the Labour Ministry stated:

... But aside from that, depending on where you are working, you may say, okay, for us, maybe those within the teacher unions, we have specific demands, maybe promotional, go to the UTAC, University Teachers Association of Ghana, they have an advisory role that they play, they have research allowances, book allowances that they take. Those are specific things that they want to demand. So, it is not only about wages and salaries. Sometimes the other conditions of service.

A labour official indicated:

If you take Ghana Medical Association and then the nurses, they have people that must go to rural areas. So, if you are in the civil service, your job is limited to the capital town or maybe within the national office. But here are people that must go to the interior, and they want to be given rural or maybe out-of-town allowances, so those demands are specific conditions of it that they want to pursue. It's not so much about salary related, but so much of maybe where they are working, so it's not always about wages and salaries, but sometimes about maybe other.

Employees in a variety of professional fields have particular needs and terms of employment that go beyond simple pay raises (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). Members of the University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG), for example, frequently bargain for research and book allowances because they understand how important these resources are to their professional and academic progress. Teachers may also look for perks associated with promotions that recognise their professional growth and commitment to teaching.

Furthermore, there are particular requirements about their working surroundings that the Ghana Medical Association (GMA) and nurses, for instance, must meet. Health professionals who work in remote or rural areas frequently need extra pay, such as out-of-town or rural allowances, to cover the extra expenses and special difficulties that come with operating in less accessible areas. This type of payment guarantees equity and fairness in the experts' income while also acknowledging the extra efforts and sacrifices they have to make (Izumo, 2023). The fact that remuneration falls under the purview of collective bargaining in Ghana's public sector suggests that it is acknowledged that elements other than salary have an impact on performance and job satisfaction. Studies have demonstrated the value of all-inclusive compensation packages that go beyond simple monetary compensation. These packages should include benefits such as job-related incentives, transfer allowances, and promotions in order to meet the wide range of needs of employees. Benefits like these are

essential for employees' health and happiness at work (Budd, 2018; Armstrong & Taylor, 2023).

5.3.4.5 Working conditions and environment

The working environment and circumstances are included in the collective bargaining scope. Within the framework of collective bargaining, the study's participants identified important issues pertaining to working conditions and the environment in Ghana's public sector. Like in many other industries, the number of hours employees must work in the public sector can have a direct effect on their output and sense of fulfilment at work (Moore et al., 2019). It is imperative that this issue be discussed during collective bargaining to guarantee that workers don't take on too much work and maintain a good work-life balance.

A union member said:

...it's about hours of work, so anything about the terms of condition of the worker, which means about the monetary gains that the worker receives, comes on the table for discussion. Managing to come up with their issues. Most of the time, this has been the income, the lack of money, or disciplinary issues.

Furthermore, given that workers frequently struggle with inadequate pay, the study shows that financial remuneration is a major worry for them. To draw and keep qualified workers in the public sector, fair and competitive pay must be guaranteed (Wray, Dantas, Fullwiler, Tcherneva & Kelton, 2018). A favourable work environment was one of the other components of working conditions, and that was the responsibility of the government. This involves ensuring that the physical and mental environments in which employees operate are secure and conducive to their health. In spite of this, the participants said that institutions frequently overlook the value of a positive work environment in favour of concentrating primarily on compensation problems during talks. Employees in the public sector become displeased and less productive as a result of this neglect. Giovannone (2023) concurs with the issue under discussion by stating that dialogue and negotiation in operative collective bargaining must include all aspects of working conditions, such as the workplace. By

ensuring that workers' needs are satisfied, this inclusive approach promotes a more wholesome and effective work environment (Schnabel, 2020).

A Labour Ministry official stated:

It's your duty to let the employee work in a conducive environment. But when it comes to negotiation, the organisations don't pay particular attention to that. They always look at the salary basis. That's another problem we have to tackle. It's a challenge as I look at it.

The abovementioned theme was supported by Schnabel (2020) assertion that since better working conditions have an immediate influence on employees' physical and mental health, they should be a top priority for both unions and employees. Through the official process of collective bargaining, employees can bargain for improved working circumstances, such as equitable workload distribution, safety precautions, and access to resources required for their professions. Establishing a safe and effective work environment requires careful consideration of physical aspects of the workspace, such as ergonomics, ventilation, and lighting. Inadequate physical workspaces might result in accidents and decreased productivity (Hamidi, Mansor, Hashim, Muhammad & Wan Azib, 2020). Unions assist in reducing hazards in the workplace by negotiating improvements in these areas; in the end, this benefits both employers and employees by lowering the number of accidents and associated expenses.

5.3.4.6 CB agreement and law support

The labour officials emphasised that collective bargaining is a legally supported procedure and not just a formality in the Ghanaian public sector. Collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) are necessary to guarantee that the interests of workers are represented, particularly those who work in low-wage or remote positions. It may be difficult for these workers to get their concerns heard in the absence of collective bargaining (Martins, 2021). The legal foundation of CBAs guarantees that an agreement must be carried out after it is signed, giving employees an extra degree of security and certainty. The information obtained from the respondents supports Budd's (2018) study, which found that collective bargaining agreements

serve as a foundation for accountability by guaranteeing that businesses and governments uphold established standards. This responsibility is an essential part of healthy labour relations since it helps to uphold equitable labour practices and safeguards employees' rights. Studies have additionally highlighted the function of labour laws in upholding collective bargaining agreements. In providing the necessary legal support to guarantee that agreements are followed, these laws make employers and governments responsible for keeping their word (Doellgast & Benassi, 2020; Fanfani, 2023).

A director of Labour Ministry commented:

The government is also an employer. It also wants to find a way of minimising cost and maybe maximising the use of tax and then revenues. So, there's no way the government will just sit and say, I want to be pushing money to you to enhance or improve upon. You can just see the determination of the base pay. It has taken almost about four months. The government will not want to just increase your salary for you because you are a worker. This sometimes delays the implementation of agreements.

Another director of Labour Ministry stated:

That's why sometimes people go to the National Labour Commission and say that we have agreed with the government on these things, and the government is supposed to implement these conditions. If it's not being implemented, then the Labour Commission will direct the government to ensure that whatever is in that document must be implemented. So collective bargaining in the public sector is not just a mere formality; it has a big aspect of it that is backed by law. So, there are laws that make sure that collective bargaining agreements are implemented.

Furthermore, the importance of the National Labour Commission (NLC) in the legal enforcement of CBAs cannot be overstated. The NLC steps in to guarantee compliance when the government neglects to carry out the terms that were agreed upon. This legal system is essential for keeping the government responsible. It guarantees that CBAs have actual, enforceable power rather than just being symbolic (Michael & Samuel, 2020; Kwarteng, Bawa & Koduah, 2024). For example, the Ghana Medical Association encountered a scenario wherein, following the conclusion of negotiations, the implementation took longer than expected. is mentioned in light of the fact that CBAs frequently contain clauses that are examined and maybe renegotiated on an annual basis. When these clauses were broken, the NLC intervened to resolve disputes and guarantee that they were carried out. The effective negotiation and implementation of collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) are contingent upon the involvement of legal enforcement mechanisms like the National Labour Commission and collective action.

5.3.5 Summary of presentation of RQ1

Figure 5.3 graphically illustrates the summary representation of research question 1 and its themes.

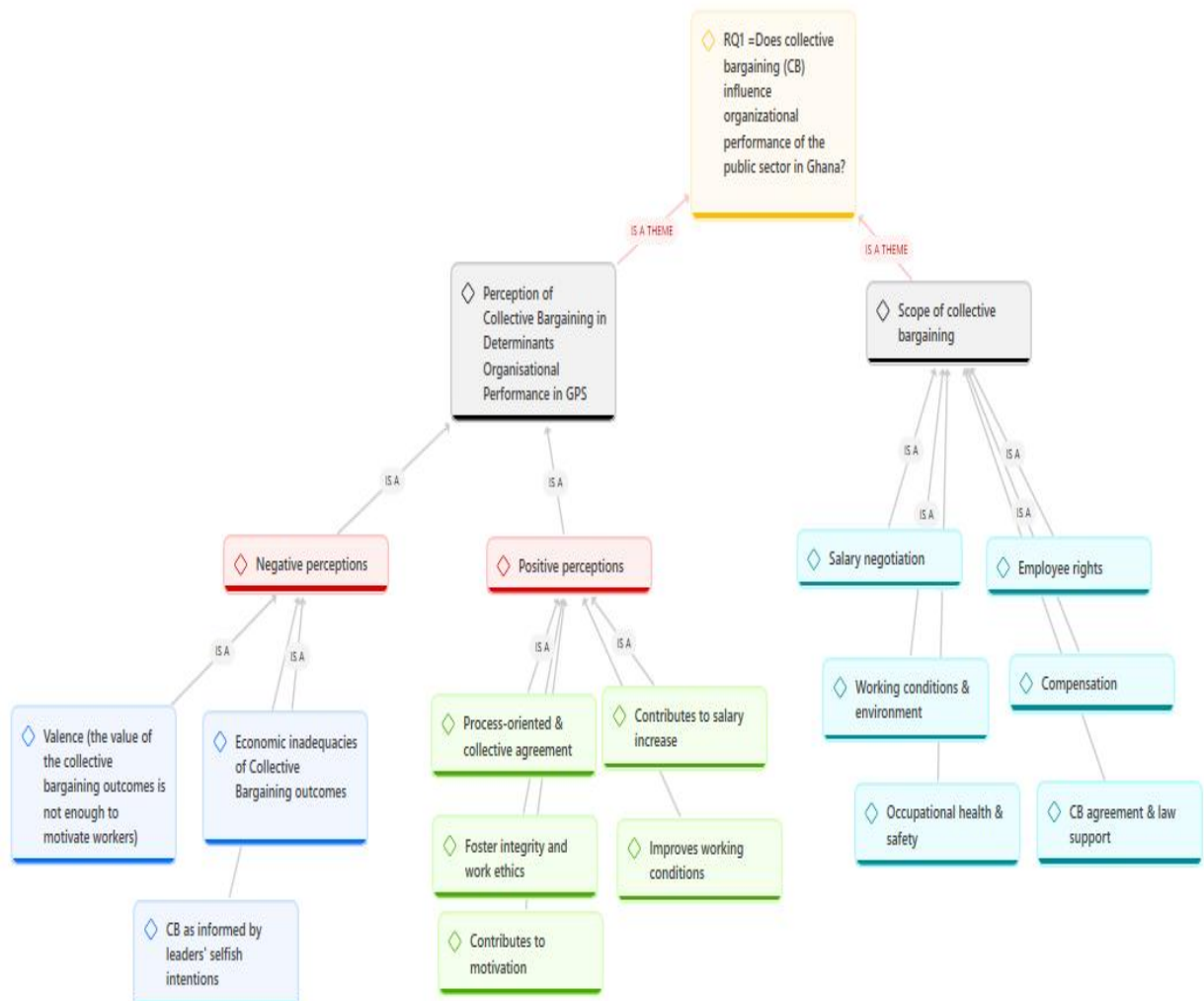


Figure 5.3 Summary representation of RQ 1 and its themes

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

According to Figure 5.3, collective bargaining has a positive impact on worker motivation, integrity, work ethics, and working conditions in Ghana, as well as a negative impact due to concerns about selfish leadership, inadequate economic outcomes, and insufficient motivational value. Overall, the results support the pluralism theory perspective, which states that disputes are inevitable but sees them

as crucial catalysts for innovation and business growth. In addition, collective bargaining is used to balance the interests of the workforce with those of management (Webster, 2022; Johnson et al., 2023). Collective bargaining enables workers in Ghana's public sector to bargain for better working conditions, scarce resources, and low wages, all of which have a positive impact on employee morale. This is in line with the pluralist viewpoint, which contends that employees are more likely to be motivated and devoted to their work when they feel heard and have a platform to voice their concerns (Heery, 2016; Hughes & Dundon, 2021). Ghanaian public sector workers that engage in collective bargaining are able to obtain more pay, better working conditions, and more transparent workplace policies. Employees are more motivated to perform better and uphold strict professional standards as a result of increased job satisfaction. Collective bargaining results in real improvements that boost employee morale and productivity in Ghana's public sector, where working conditions are frequently tough. The study's results also corroborate the claims made by the classic pluralism model, which emphasises the macro-context of labour relations and holds that the system of industrial relations is essential to the overall stage of economic development (Heery, 2024). Second, new production methods and related modifications to market structure are what propel change from the economic basis and require institutional solutions in the field of industrial relations. As a result, it is typical to link the industrial relations background to economic development (Dobbins, Hughes & Dundon, 2021; Ackers, 2021).

In a similar vein, Dunlop's model holds that the economic and political contexts of the social partners in labour relations have an impact on their actions. As a result, the interaction, external systems, and dynamics between these partners have an impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of an organisation's performance (Doellgast, Bidwell & Colvin, 2021; Connolly, 2023; Mabaso, Lesabe & Govender, 2024). Dunlop's theory argues that by establishing a rule-based framework that stabilises labour relations, collective bargaining improves worker motivation, work ethics, and working conditions (Connolly, 2023). Collective bargaining creates formal rules and agreements that define expectations for both employees and management in the Ghanaian public sector, where the government serves as both an employer and a policymaker. These rules and agreements are all in line with the tenets of Dunlop's theory. These regulations cover pay, working hours, safety measures, and

disciplinary actions. By improving working conditions and creating a more stable work environment, these regulations also improve the performance of Ghanaian public sector institutions.

Moreover, the use of the Strategic Choice Model in making decisions regarding employees concerns during collective bargaining tends to influence the performance of organisations. By putting worker safety, fair pay, and better infrastructure at the top of the negotiation list, management is able to enhance the mental as well as physical aspects of the workplace, which increases output and job satisfaction (Harney, 2016; Klerck, 2018). Workers who perceive that their requests are recognised and addressed are more likely to be dedicated and motivated, as improved motivation results in better public sector performance (Al Ahbabi et al., 2019), predominantly in a sector like Ghana's, where the effectiveness and productivity of government services directly influence the population. The next section deals with the findings about the impact of trade unionism on organisational performance in the public sector.

5.4 RQ 2: HOW DOES TRADE UNIONISM IMPACT ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN GHANA?

Table 5.3 provides the summary of the findings relating to RQ 2. This is followed by detailed discussions.

Table 5.3 Trade Union and Organisational Performance in GPS

Theme	Sub-themes
Practices of trade unions that affect organisational performance	• Self-centredness practice • Failure to safeguard health matters • Coerced union membership • Poor welfare support
Impact of trade unionism (TU) in organisational performance in GPS	• Positive TU impact outcomes • Negative TU impact outcome
Positive TU Impact Outcomes	• Trade union activities seen as helpful to employee well-being • Trade union as a last resort for change • Trade union activities seen as step-in-right-direction

Theme	Sub-themes
Negative TU impact outcomes	• TU as a Positive change for workers and the organisation • High mistrust of TU representativeness • Poor management-worker relationship
Unions negotiations with the government to address employee grievances in GPS	• Support structure framework • Union failure-informed negotiations
Support structure framework	• Firmed representativeness • Development of welfare schemes • Financial assistance • Collective bargaining power
Union failure-informed negotiations	• Systemic-based • Union-membership-based
Systemic- based	• Inadequate of government to fully meet union demands • Institutional bureaucracy and implementation delay
Union-membership-based	• Declining union density • Exclusion of cost-of-living allowance (COLA) in salary increase agreement • Mistrust • Strike action during negotiations.
Perception of trade union on organisational performance (OP)	• Positive perception of trade unionism on OP • Negative perception of trade unionism on OP
Positive perception of trade unionism on OP	• Systemic social partners • Union advocacy
Negative perception of trade unionism on OP	• Weak in monitoring employees • Lack productivity assessment • Inadequate matter resolution • Selfish agenda

Source: Author's compilation (2024)

NOTE: Ghanaian public sector = GPS

5.4.1 Practices of Trade Unions that Affect Organisational Performance

Figure 5.4 graphically illustrates the practices of trade unions that affect organizational performance.

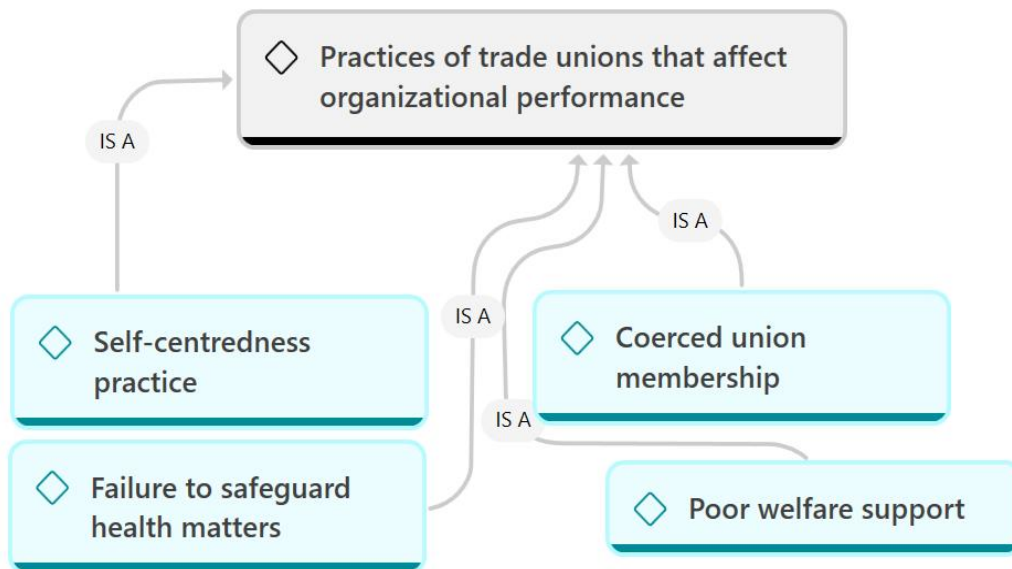


Figure 5.4 Practices of trade unions that affect organisational performance

Source: *Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti*

5.4.1.1 Self-centredness practice

Trade unions exist in the workplace to safeguard the social, legal, and economic interests of their members (Jeffries, 2023). Nonetheless, the participants' answers suggest that the trade unions are engaging in self-serving behaviours that are impairing the public sector's performance. The claim that "our needs are insatiable" reflects workers' never-ending demands for improved working conditions and advancements, which unions are unable to provide. According to this claim, many people could choose not to join unions if given the option because they believe they don't adequately meet their requirements (Parku & Lamptey, 2018). This suggests that there may be a gulf between the union's leadership and members. Employees are more aware of their rights and the advantages that unions provide than they were in the past, and they are also more critical of these things. As a result of this growing

awareness, union efficacy is being evaluated more critically and with greater expectations (Carter, 2022).

It is implied that trade unions frequently put their own financial security ahead of the real well-being of their members. Their primary concern is maintaining a friendly rapport with the government in order to obtain benefits like financial aid, favourable employment offers for their family members and children, and jobs in public institutions (Hogler, Hunt & Weiler, 2015). As a result, unions now take a lax stance in negotiations and place restrictions on what their members might demand. It was also mentioned that unions do not use the dues paid by their members to protect their welfare and interests; instead, they are portrayed as leading opulent lifestyles. In a similar vein, the suggestion that union dues rise in tandem with pay increases raises the possibility that unions are more interested in boosting their bottom line than in really bettering working conditions. Employees become more resentful and disappointed with unions as a result of this perception (Dark, 2018).

A union member commented:

Meanwhile, the money that comes to you - you can generate a lot of revenues from it. To the extent that when I, the dues contributor, am going on retirement, I can get something aside from what my employer will give me. So, people are being enlightened now; people are discerning. They are seeing that it is not only about salary; it's about welfare too. What am I gaining apart from what you are giving me? So, if a worker is going for a loan, the worker cannot get what he or she wants. It's not something interesting. So, what are the unions doing? So, if I see that the union is not benefiting me directly, aside from salaries negotiations, nothing more, their interest will diminish; this demoralises us workers to increase performance.

Members' motivation and output decline when unions neglect to attend to their whole range of requirements. Employee disengagement and productivity are likely to increase when union members perceive a lack of assistance in areas like welfare and financial security (Kochan & Kimball, 2019). Within public sector unions, there is an underlying need for increased openness and responsibility. Workers want to see a

clear connection between the benefits they receive and the payments they make (dues). McAlevey and Lawlor (2023) cite Michels' Iron Law of Oligarchy, which holds that organisations including trade unions tend to put their leaders' interests and stability ahead of that of their members. According to this hypothesis, union leaders frequently prioritise maintaining their position of authority and wealth, which can cause the union's priorities to diverge from those of its members. Due to large part to their desire to stay out of trouble with the government or their employers, the unions take a quiet stance during discussions. As a result, union members receive worse results and less aggressive bargaining strategies.

The aforementioned theme is further supported by Carter (2022), who point out that union officials may become more concerned with acquiring funding and preserving organisational stability than with resolving worker problems, especially in politically delicate situations. The need for the unions to maintain their financial stability, which may require government assistance or subsidies, is frequently the cause of this behaviour. This phenomenon is especially relevant in public sectors, where unions may depend on government subsidies or favourable regulations to stay in business. This is consistent with the ideology of the Strategic Choice Model posited by Kochan, Mckersie and Cappelli (1984) which argues that union leaders make strategic choices that occasionally put the institution's long-term viability ahead of the immediate interests of their members (Kohler, 2018; Lipsky, Avgar & Lamare, 2020). Union leadership may compromise on demands that might otherwise benefit workers, like wage increases or improved working conditions, if they believe that keeping a friendly relationship with the government is necessary for organisational security.

5.4.1.2 Failure to safeguard health matters

The failure of trade unions in the public sector to prioritise occupational health and safety (OHS) has significant negative implications for the performance of public sector workers. Because health issues are not given enough attention, there are significant safety dangers in many public sector organisations (Mapuvire, Chilunjika & Mutasa, 2022). Common issues that jeopardise workers' health and safety include hanging wires, malfunctioning electric circuits, and inadequate protective gear and apparel. Workers operate in a physically and psychologically taxing workplace as a result of these hazardous conditions, which also cause accidents, injuries, and long-

term health problems (Mclvor, 2020). The problem is made worse by the lack of health insurance, which exposes employees to financial hardship in the event that they sustain illnesses or injuries at work. Moreover, a sense of insecurity among workers raises stress levels and decreases job satisfaction (Underhill, 2022). Their capacity to function well in the public sector is directly impacted by these unfavourable feelings.

A union member indicated:

There is no health insurance coverage for us. You go to some workplaces; their electric circuits are faulty and hanging wires. All of these are hazards that make workers prone to accidents. Some employers do not provide protective clothing and equipment to their members, so their operations can cause harm to their health. All of these issues persist, but the unions do not focus on them.

It is noteworthy that employees who experience diseases or accidents related to their jobs are more likely to take sick days, which further lowers the productivity of the workforce (Underhill, 2022). As a result, these problems add up to a significant decline in the Ghanaian public sector's overall performance. When it comes to ensuring the health and safety of employees in the public sector, trade unions are essential. On the other hand, studies on the historical significance of trade unions and their increasing interest in OHS in the present day challenge the notion that they overlook OHS (Mclvor, 2020). This suggests that there is a school of thought that is of the view that in contemporary labour practices, unions are prioritising OHS. It is crucial to note that the studies using this sample are conducted in developed countries. As a result, the jurisdiction is crucial to the affirmation of the previous claim.

The participants' assertion that public sector trade unions have not given OHS top priority is very concerning. Workers are exposed to serious safety risks when unions fail to address health and safety issues in collective bargaining or advocacy efforts. In addition to potentially increasing workplace accidents, injuries, and long-term health issues, this failure undermines the union's position as a guardian of worker welfare. This claim is supported by Mittiga (2022), who argue that if OHS is not given enough attention, it not only puts employees in danger but also results in poor work

performance, absenteeism, and high turnover, all of which reduce the general efficacy of public sector organisations. According to Kambasu (2023), the public sector is particularly vulnerable to these consequences since the provision of necessary services primarily depends on a staff that is competent and healthy. As a result, union inaction on OHS has significant effects on both individual employees and the effectiveness of public service delivery (Mapuvire, Chilunjika & Mutasa, 2022). Many of the services provided by the public sector, like healthcare, firefighting, and transportation, are physically demanding, dangerous, or high-pressure. Unions have a special duty to promote strict OHS regulations in these industries since employees are frequently exposed to significant hazards.

5.4.1.3 Coerced union membership

Coerced union membership in the Ghanaian public sector, where workers are automatically enrolled in unions without explicit consent, raises significant concerns about individual rights and the overall effectiveness of union representation. Article 21 of the 1992 Ghanaian Constitution provides everyone the freedom to create or join any union of their choice. This freedom is upheld by the Labour Act, which emphasises that discrimination or coercion should not be used as a justification for union membership. According to Section 79 (1) of the Labour Act, each employee is entitled to establish or join the trade union of their choosing in order to advance and safeguard their social and economic interests. This means that no one should be forced into joining or forming a union; instead, it should be voluntary (Cho, Chung & Lee, 2019; Damachi, 2023). The participants pointed out that this approach is not typical in Ghana.

A union member said:

The moment you are employed, you are not asked if you want to join a particular union or not; they start deducting dues from your salary as a union member, which I think is not fair at all.

A labour official also stated:

The labour Act stipulates that no worker should be forced to join a trade union. However, some of these public sector unions indulge in this practice. This is making some public

servants dissatisfied with these activities, and it is affecting their performance in a negative light.

Union leaders have less motivation to be responsible and attentive to their members when membership in the union is automatic and there is no rivalry within unions. It is crucial to remember that forcing employees to join a union might have a negative impact on their morale. Workers who feel forced to enlist in a union against their will may grow disenchanted and disengaged. Their total performance suffers as a result of their lack of voluntary participation, which makes them feel helpless and demotivated (Parku & Lamptey, 2018; Ahlquist & Downey, 2023). A single union's dominance in the workplace was linked by a few participants to the practice of forcing union membership. Due to the monopoly, there is a stagnant union culture where upholding the status quo takes precedence over aggressively promoting the rights of employees and bettering their working circumstances.

The participants' concern validates the assertion made by Ahlquist and Downey (2023) that the majority of organisations require their employees to be members of a specific union, despite legal provisions against coercion. There are others who contend that mandatory membership guarantees sufficient resources for unions to adequately represent labourers. Conversely, some highlight the significance of individual liberties and associational freedom, contending that forced participation violates personal preference. The ongoing debate over individual vs. collective rights reflects larger societal ideals (Turner, 2022).

5.4.1.4 Poor welfare support

Public sector unions are generally thought to be solely concerned with wage negotiations, frequently ignoring more general welfare concerns that are vital to the overall health and happiness of their members. According to Engler and Voigt (2023), welfare support includes a variety of services and benefits such as health insurance, retirement benefits, mental health support, and help juggling work and personal obligations. Workers are left to handle their difficulties without enough assistance when unions neglect to address these issues, which lowers job satisfaction.

The morale of employees is directly influenced by inadequate welfare support. Employees lose faith and confidence in their unions when they believe that these

organisations do not prioritise their welfare (Underhill, 2022). Employees are less likely to be engaged and productive if they do not receive the help they need to manage their health, financial security, and work-life balance. Low morale as a result seeps throughout public sector organisations, impacting the sector's overall performance (Jackson & Fransman, 2018). Ghana's public sector institutions' productivity and efficiency have decreased due to the lack of robust welfare support structures inside the unions. Workers are less likely to be completely engaged in their work if they are distracted by unresolved personal or professional concerns.

A union member said:

So, some of these things regarding our welfare systems, end-of-year packages, social events, seminars, and some of the out-of-the box practices that can be put in place to keep the members together and motivated to improve on their performance are not done by the unions.

According to Smith and Thompson (2021), unions should devote more funds to welfare services in order to guarantee the wellbeing of their members, as this will increase membership satisfaction and retention. On the contrary, Mozu, (2023) argue that workers' rights and collective bargaining should take precedence over welfare programs, which are viewed as supplemental, in light of the limited financial resources available. This proves that budgetary restrictions and economic downturns have a big impact on unions' capacity to support welfare. Unions may be compelled to reduce their charity initiatives in order to concentrate on their main missions during lean economic times.

Inadequate welfare support is particularly harmful in the public sector because workers frequently deal with demands associated with providing services. In addition to collective bargaining for pay, Massae, Michael and Sanga (2023) claim that public sector workers frequently depend on their unions for benefits like healthcare and retirement plans, which are critical for long-term job stability and happiness. Lack of these resources fosters an atmosphere where workers feel underappreciated and unprotected, which lowers morale and reduces productivity. Employees in the public sector sometimes deal with particular stressors, such as political demands, financial limitations, and bureaucratic inefficiencies, which might make them feel even more

frustrated when welfare assistance is insufficient (Eton, Mwosi & Ogwel, 2022). Employee motivation and disengagement may impact service delivery and organisational performance if unions are seen as not addressing these issues by obtaining the required benefits and protections.

5.4.2 Impact of Trade Unionism (TU) on the Organisational Performance In GPS

Figure 5.5 graphically illustrates the impact of trade unionism (TU) in organisational performance in GPS.

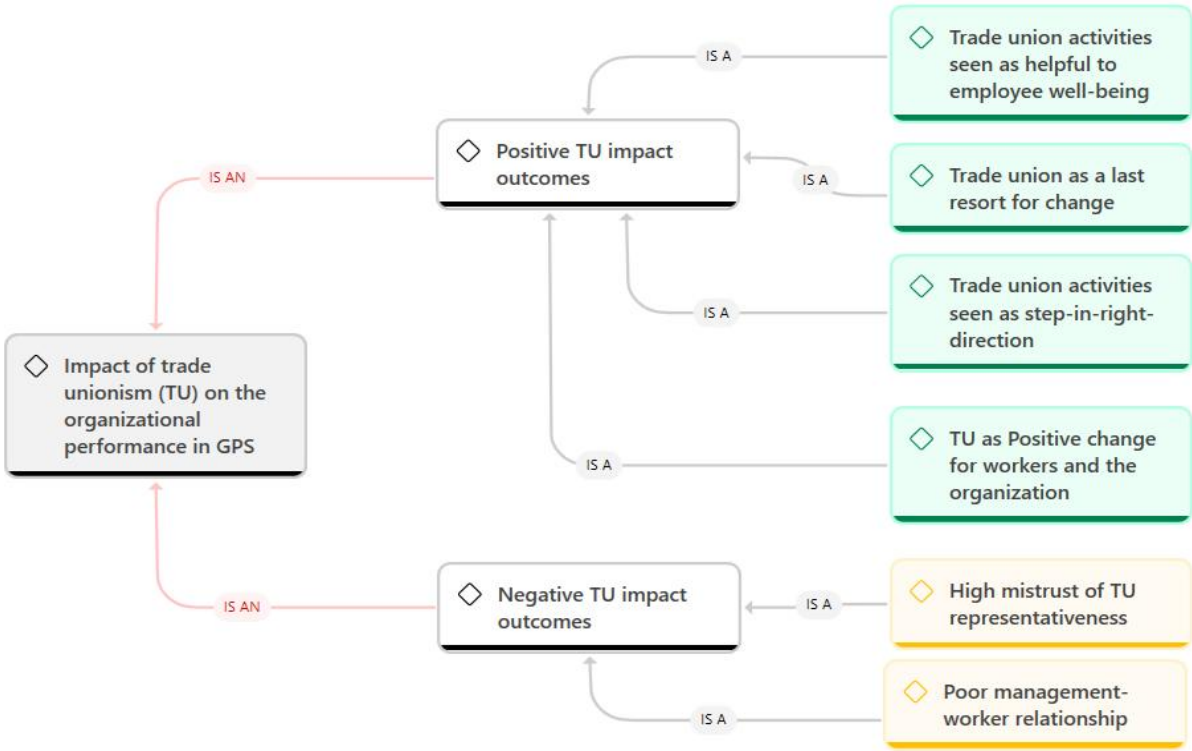


Figure 5.5 Impact of trade unionism (TU) in organisational performance in GPS

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

5.4.2.1 Positive TU impact outcomes

Trade unionism (TU), which is an organised group of workers created to defend and uphold workers' rights and interests, is very important in the workplace (Simms, Holgate & Roper, 2019). Trade unions have a remarkably positive effect on organisational performance, according to the study's data. The study participants identified several themes that characterise this relationship, such as the perception of

trade union activities as beneficial to employee well-being, the trade union as a last resort for change, the trade union as a positive step in the right direction, the trade union as a positive force for change for both the organisation and its employees, and the overall effectiveness of the organisation.

5.4.2.2 Negative TU impact outcome

Organising groups of workers to protect their members' rights and interests is what makes up a trade union. It has long been a divisive topic in conversations about how well workplace's function (Parku & Lamptey, 2018). The information collected from the participants shows that although trade unions are well-known for supporting workers' rights, they sometimes provide difficulties for businesses. Trade unionism has a detrimental effect on organisational performance in a number of ways, including higher operating expenses, less flexibility, and possible conflicts. These problems have exacerbated the low management-worker connection and the considerable mistrust of TU representativeness.

5.4.3 Positive Impact Outcomes

5.4.3.1 Trade union activities seen as helpful to employee wellbeing

Trade unions play a crucial role in helping to negotiate equitable pay and benefits for employees, which increases employee satisfaction. Fair compensation is crucial to employees' well-being since it has a direct impact on their level of financial security and quality of life (Carter, 2022; Finger & Hartney, 2021). When employees believe their compensation system is fair, their motivation and job satisfaction both rise, which enhances performance and productivity.

A union member commented:

I must say, I can't imagine how we will survive without the unions: they are not perfect, but they try their best for us. They mostly go on strike to negotiate for better salaries and working conditions for us. If not for the unions, how will we send our message across about the challenges we are facing? We don't even know how to do it. Recently one of our directors was laid

off because he said something against the government. it was said that it was an unfair termination of contract. These unions followed the case and made sure he was reinstated.

Participants also said that unions' attention to workplace safety and availability of equipment reduces the likelihood of accidents and health problems. In addition to keeping employees safe, better working conditions help foster a more productive and laid-back atmosphere. Putting safety and well-being first boosts employee morale and improves organisational performance (Morgan et al., 2021). Additionally, unions give employees a forum to air their complaints, which helps them feel respected and heard at work. Contracts that shield public sector employees against arbitrary terminations and layoffs, give unions a sense of stability and security, and advance worker welfare are also negotiated (Amoako-Gyampah, 2018). Because unions give their employees protection, they become more devoted to the company and more loyal, which improves performance in the public sector.

A labour official stated:

The activities of the unions are helping a lot. In terms of performance. Because if the union just goes and tells their members that, oh, tomorrow go on strike. Based on what? In fact, the activities of the unions are not disrupting anything; they are rather helping the well-being of the workers.

Members of the unions stated that they thought union activities were beneficial rather than detrimental to organisational performance in the Ghanaian public sector. The labour department officer actually called the current system of labour interactions with pertinent authorities "dialoguing," claiming that it involves due procedure and multilateral choices. Labour officials also stated that they believed that in the absence of trade union measures, companies would have mistreated employees. They saw union operations as beneficial to employees' concerns. They have evidence that the Ghanaian government only pays attention to labour concerns when workers go on strike.

A labour official said:

... So, if without a trade union, employers will have taken workers anyhow. Because when I act, and you can also attest to the fact that in this country, if you want something, until you go on strike, the government will not listen to you.

The participants' responses generally indicate that trade union activities are essential to enhancing employee well-being, which in turn enhances the effectiveness of Ghana's public sector institutions. These participant replies confirm Johnson et al. (2021) claim that unions play a vital role in supporting employees' mental health by offering counselling services, stress management training, and assistance for a better work-life balance (Lewis & Cooper, 2020).

The aforementioned theme is further supported by the pluralist theory, indicating that trade union actions are essentially beneficial to workers' well-being. According to pluralist theory, unions are essential for defending the rights of employees, especially when it comes to promoting increased pay, better working conditions, and other social benefits (Budd, Gomez & Meltz 2004; Poole, 2021). Unions serve as a check on employer power in workplaces with power disparities, guaranteeing that workers' interests and rights are met (Lewis & Cooper, 2020). This support for workers, especially through collective bargaining, improves satisfaction among workers. This, however, is in contradiction to the Strategic Choice Model ideology, which acknowledges that management may take an adversarial stance, considering unions as a danger to organisational control or financial stability (Kochan & Kimball, 2019). Union activities may not result in appreciable gains in employee well-being when public sector management opposes union demands, possibly to keep decision-making flexibility or avoid increased salary expenses. Keep in mind that sometimes management opposition might reduce the efficacy of unions' attempts to promote worker welfare. Union initiatives may not provide obvious benefits for workers if officials in Ghana's public sector put operational efficiency or budget cuts ahead of worker well-being. This would go against the notion that union activities invariably enhance well-being.

5.4.3.2 Trade union as a last resort for change

Trade unions frequently serve as an essential vehicle for change, particularly in situations when management techniques and governmental policies fall short of

resolving the core issues that affect employees (Kester & Sidibé, 2019; Carter, 2022). The study's participants assert that this is the situation in Ghana's public sector labour relations settings. In Ghana's public sector, unions raise awareness of problems that the government frequently ignores or fails to effectively solve. Press conferences and the involvement of organisations like the National Labour Commission (NLC), which is required by law to settle labour disputes in Ghana, are typically used to accomplish this. Serious labour issues like inadequate transportation for public employees, unequal pay, and hazardous working conditions are brought to light by the unions. This compels the government to recognise and resolve these issues, resulting in structural adjustments that raise worker productivity and improve working conditions (Zhavoronkov, 2015; Kahancová & Martišková, 2023).

A union executive stated:

The government pretends to be paying workers but does not encourage them to work. They issue notices and press conferences and involve the National Labour Commission. They criticize the NLC's pro-employer attitude. To increase productivity, the government should address labour issues, such as lack of public transport and perks for parliamentarians. They hold the government accountable and inform workers about the implications of unions forming a forum for strikes. Change depends on unions engaging in industrial action, such as strikes.

Similar to this, unions act as a watchdog by making the government answerable for its deeds and legal commitments. Encouraging greater productivity indicators and criticising the NLC for being pro-employer guarantees that workers' demands and rights are met. This ensures that employees receive the justice and respect they are due, which in turn promotes a more driven and effective public sector (Carter, 2022). Trade unions frequently view industrial actions, including strikes, as a last choice to enact the required reforms in Ghana's public sector. In recent years, there have been a lot of union-led strikes in Ghana's public sector. These are serious activities, and unions usually give fair warning and explain how a strike could affect the performance of the industry. This strategic approach makes sure that strikes are

utilised to effectively put pressure on the government to act on workers' complaints. By using industrial action strategically, unions have been able to accomplish their goals, which have indirectly improved working conditions and increased public sector productivity. Fair treatment in the public sector is something that trade unions support (Offem, Anashie & Aniah, 2018; Paglayan, 2019). A significant worry expressed by study participants was the reason why lawmakers receive big benefits but other public sector employees do not. In the public sector, this advocacy for justice helps address inequalities and advance equity.

A union executive commented:

Before strikes, employers should be given sufficient notice and understand the implications of unions forming a forum. Employers should not want to affect sector performance. Unions discussed neutrality allowance, which the government deemed too much. Public servants should be neutral, as they are close to the government and should not be motivated to forgo this benefit.

The union members placed emphasis on the necessity for public servants to be motivated and to be recognised for the sacrifices they make. For example, the discussion about neutrality allowances for Ghanaian public sector employees shows how unions bargain for pay, considering the particular difficulties experienced by public employees. The public servants were encouraged to be more dedicated to their work by the unions' successful introduction of neutrality allowances. The study's participants accepted that no pressure group, religious organisation, or activist could possibly assist the public sector in achieving the accomplishments listed above by the unions. Therefore, the trade unions are really the last option for improving the lives of public employees. These participant responses bolster the argument made by Nitsche-Whitfield, (2023) that unions have effectively organised in the face of workplace emergencies like mass layoffs or hazardous working conditions, demonstrating their role as an essential but last-resort tool for enacting meaningful reforms in labour laws and practices. Similarly, Thomas and Williams (2022) support the assertion by indicating that trade unions serve as the collective voice of workers, particularly in situations where traditional management strategies disregard their

demands for respectable pay, job security, and suitable working conditions. In order to resolve employee complaints that are otherwise disregarded or not sufficiently handled, unions act as a "last resort" to press for improvements through collective bargaining, strikes, or talks when government measures fail (Wright, 2019; Quan, 2022). Unions are frequently the impetus behind noticeable improvements in working conditions in Ghana, where resource limitations and bureaucratic inefficiencies impede advancements. They guarantee that public servants' problems are taken seriously and that their opinions are heard.

5.4.3.3 Trade union activities seen as step-in-right-direction

Trade union activities in Ghana's public sector, particularly those viewed as proactive measures to advocate for workers' rights, are seen as a step in the right direction by the participants of the study. These activities have a significant positive influence on the performance of public sector institutions (Paglayan, 2019).

A Labour Department official stated:

From the regulatory perspective, I would say no, trade union activities are not destructive to performance. What we are doing is a step in the right direction. Because you see, from the regulatory point of view, sometimes, by the law, if you are at a negotiation table, the law is that you cannot embark on a strike. But we have unions embarking on strikes whilst they are at the negotiation table, which is very wrong. You can declare a deadlock, and then a body will take the matter up, the Labour Act that we are operating with. But this is not the case with some of the strikes that happen in our dispensation; the unions are being proactive.

Trade union operations are intended to ensure adherence to labour laws and standards from a regulatory standpoint. Ghana's Labour Act 651, 2003, lays out guidelines for talks and industrial actions, including when to declare a standstill before going on strike. Even if certain unions might not always follow these guidelines to the letter, their proactive approach to pushing for improved working conditions is viewed as an essential step towards reform. In actively raising awareness of worker

concerns, this lobbying helps public institutions better handle these challenges (Offem, Anashie & Aniah, 2018). This supports the claim made by Trif, Paolucci, Kahancová and Koukiadaki (2023) that unions have been effective in securing improved pay, benefits, and job security all of which are critical to the stability of workers' economies. These successes are regarded as essential milestones toward guaranteeing workers' financial stability.

A union member commented:

So, I think just yesterday we had news of a 30% increment in the base salary of public sector workers. Now we credit that to industrial relations practices by the unions. The constant strikes have yielded results. It looks like that is the only language the government understands.

The fact that trade union activity, especially strikes, forces public institutions to give employees' concerns significant consideration is one of its benefits (McGann, Blomkamp & Lewis, 2018). The frequency of strikes in Ghana's public sector has resulted in notable enhancements in the way public institutions handle their employees. Better working conditions and more accommodating management practices are the outcome of union pressure and increased awareness, even if not all demands are satisfied (Buabeng-Baidoo & Olivier, 2024). Consequently, this fosters a more favourable work atmosphere, elevating the spirits and output of employees in the public sector.

The union members and their executives acknowledged that although labour regulations stipulate that strikes cannot take place while negotiations are still in progress, unions often feel compelled to act immediately to resolve pressing issues. Even though it is sometimes viewed as contentious, this proactive strategy is frequently required to bring about rapid improvements. The capacity of unions to strike a balance between industrial action and negotiation guarantees that workers' concerns are taken seriously and that their grievances are promptly resolved (Moza, 2023). Strikes can be disruptive in the short term, but they usually result in long-term improvements that are advantageous to employers and workers alike (Kahancová & Martišková, 2023). As a result, the study's participants indicated that unions' proactive approach to the welfare of their members and their ongoing activities are

positive steps that will eventually improve the performance of the public sector overall, as well as that of public employees.

5.4.3.4 TU as positive change to workers and the organisation

Education is one important strategy that unions employ to have a positive impact on their membership. Many employees do not have a complete understanding of their contractual obligations, job rights, or benefits. In teaching workers on their contracts, perks, and workplace policies, trade unions close this knowledge gap. Workers in the public sector will be better informed and more involved as a result of this awareness, which enables them to understand their rights and obligations. An engaged and well-informed public servant directly improves the performance of the public sector (Rosenbloom, Kravchuk & Clerkin, 2022).

A union member stated:

Because recently we had some 30% increase in the base fee, and I think it was due to the negotiation of some of the trade unions that it happened. So, if they were really in bed, then they wouldn't have been able to fight for this 30% even though it was small. We saw how the process started and how they fought. So, the activities of unions are not destructive; they rather bring positive change to workers and the organisation as a whole.

The study's participants indicated that trade unions' defence of improved working conditions and safety precautions for public employees motivates them to perform better, which boosts the effectiveness of public sector organisations. In a similar vein, the recent 30% rise in Ghana's public sector employees' base salary is a prime example of how union activity benefits public employees. This accomplishment dispels the myth that unions are only disruptive forces and demonstrates their capacity to effect significant change for the betterment of organisations and workers alike (Joyce, Stuart & Forde, 2023). Furthermore, the study shows that unions help to foster trust and reduce tensions in the public sector regarding the bipartite and tripartite relationships by attending to employee grievances and bargaining on behalf

of public servants (Madimutsa & Pretorius, 2017). As a result, a calm workplace encourages improved performance from public sector organisations.

A director of the Labour Ministry commented:

When it comes to negotiations, most workers, once they're employed, some of them don't read their contract of employment, and some don't even know the benefit that is entitled to them. It is sometimes difficult for employers to even give their employees manuals of work and even their human resource manuals for them to know what is required of them. So, the union teaches them these things.

Another director of the Labour Ministry indicated:

And if the worker is motivated and is happy or is in a good condition, and whatever he needs is prepared for, it enhances productivity. And that is the benefit of the employer. But if the worker is not being paid the proper remuneration, if he is not being given safety, and if his health is not being properly taken care of, that means that the employer is denying the well-being of the employee, which he should be more concerned about because it is the health and the well-being of the employee that will translate into working with all kinds of enthusiasm or increased productivity for the organisation.

Participants' responses support the idea that trade union activity is not harmful but rather one of several elements that work together to improve public sector performance (Simms, Holgate & Roper, 2019). The labour director underlined the necessity of upholding workers' rights. This is the case due to a director's confirmation that the majority of employees in public service in Ghana find it challenging to have conversations with their employers about matters that directly impact them because their bosses simply intimidate them. According to the director, when employees have decent working circumstances and have their needs fulfilled, they are motivated and happy, and this benefits the company as a whole by increasing production. This supports the assertion made by Smith and Thompson (2024) that democratic and inclusive workplace cultures result from workers having a

say in decision-making processes through unions. Employee engagement and morale are raised as a result of this empowerment. Conversely, an unsatisfied employee who is not receiving the appropriate compensation or benefits, such as safety and health, means that the employers are being denied. Such a state corresponds to a worker's bad health, diminished motivation at work, or lower productivity (Baqi & Indradewa, 2021; Sharma & Jaiswal, 2018).

5.4.4 Negative TU Impact Outcomes

5.4.4.1 High mistrust of trade union representativeness

The high level of mistrust in trade union representativeness amidst union members in the Ghanaian public sector is a significant issue leading to low performance in this sector. The union members stated that they feel betrayed and disappointed when they believe their leaders are not truly fighting for their interests. It is a common misconception that union leaders are ineffective at negotiating on behalf of their members because of their political appointments (Dark, 2018), which is thought to have put them more in line with government interests. This supports Carew's (2022) claim that mistrust can increase in areas where unions are perceived as politically biased or overly associated with particular political parties. The friendly relationship between union members and their leaders is weakened by this lack of trust, rendering group activities futile (Tshukudu, 2019).

A union member stated:

I am affiliated with one of the public sector unions. The union leaders always go to the negotiation table, but they do not get us satisfying outcomes in relation to the level of hardship in the country. They are not able to tell the truth to the face of the government and hold them accountable because they are looking for favours from the government. We don't have any trust in the leadership of the unions.

Members of the unions express dissatisfaction with the results of the negotiations because they believe they fall short of meeting their needs. Public employees become even less motivated when union members believe that just 20% of their

complaints are resolved. This is because it feeds into the perception that their leaders are not dedicated to defending their rights.

Another union member indicated:

As union members, just about 20 percent of our grievances are attended to by the public sector unions. The union leaders do not account to us for what they use our dues for; however, you see these union leaders driving big cars and living a lavish lifestyle while members are suffering. But we don't have a choice; we join them because whether you join or not, their negotiation outcomes are binding on all public sector workers.

The participants further stated that mistrust is increased by the obvious differences in living standards between union officials and the conditions of the union members they represent. When union executives are shown living extravagant lifestyles and driving fancy cars while members face financial troubles, it gives the impression that corruption and misappropriation of union dues are rampant (Parku & Lamptey, 2018). Members become less trusting of the public sector unions as a result of this perceived exploitation, which also damages the reputation of the union leaders. According to Tinuoye, Adamade and Ogharanduku (2022), there is a perception of a gap between the union leadership and its rank-and-file members, which is a major cause of mistrust.

The absence of transparency and accountability in the usage of union dues is a significant topic that has been brought to light by the participants of the study. Union members feel taken advantage of when union officials don't keep them informed about how funds are being allocated. Lack of transparency breeds mistrust and disengagement among union members. Transparency is essential to fostering trust. Members become less inclined to support union operations when they do not perceive a return on their dues (Kelly, 2012; Kochan & Kimball, 2019). Union membership is still required for all employees in the public sector, regardless of their level of faith in the leadership. Since there is no other representation for public servants in Ghana, the culture of mandatory membership in the public sector has bred anger among them, which has contributed to the underwhelming performance of the sector.

5.4.4.2 Poor management-worker relationship

One significant element causing poor performance in Ghana's public sector is the detrimental effect of unions on the interaction between management and employees. According to the study's participants, union bosses are occasionally viewed as impolite and disrespectful when negotiating. Union representatives and management had disagreements and difficulties as a result of this combative stance. The Ghanaian public sector unions' aggressive negotiating style undercuts the possibility of cooperative problem-solving and respect for one another. When there is animosity and disdain during negotiations, it is difficult to come to a mutually beneficial agreement. The combative interaction further strains the relationship between management and employees by creating a poisonous work environment. The participants' complaints support Collins' (2023) assertion that union executives' forceful negotiation strategies may be interpreted as impolite or disrespectful. They contend that, although being forceful is important, showing contempt too far can harm relationships and results. In contrast, McNamara (2021) believes that in order to achieve the best results for union members, forceful, aggressive tactics and uncompromising attitudes are required, as they are the only means of persuading the government or businesses to take the appropriate action. Collins (2023) emphasised, however, that excessively combative behaviour might backfire and cause communication failures as well as impede negotiations.

A director of a public institution indicated:

... some of the union executives can be very rude and disrespectful during negotiations for their members. Their disposition towards the negotiation process leads to conflicts and confrontations with management, creating an adversarial relationship.

In addition, there have been multiple strikes in Ghana's public sector recently, which has seriously disrupted regular company operations. Strikes result in lost man-hours, monetary losses, and delays in the provision of crucial public services. The public's confidence in the industry's capacity to deliver dependable and consistent services is damaged by these disruptions (Irimu, 2018). Frequent strikes can point to deeper problems in the relationship between management and employees that are not being

resolved by discussion and compromise. Union activity has thus been viewed as detrimental to the public sector's performance (Beaumont, 2024b).

A labour official stated:

These strikes have led to the disruption of normal business operations in the public sector, leading to the wasting of man hours and financial losses to the public sector institutions. Some of the unions incite their members against the government.

Furthermore, public sector organisations may suffer serious operational and financial setbacks as a result of strikes and other types of industrial action. The price of cancelled operations, postponed projects, and making up for lost production adds up fast. Budgets in the public sector, which are already tight, are strained by financial losses, which leaves less money available for investments in infrastructure, staff training, and other necessities (Visser, 2019). Strike-related operational disruptions result in long-term inefficiencies and decreased performance in the public sector. The study participants also indicated that certain union operations include encouraging members against the government, which exacerbates tensions and creates a polarised workplace. Although unions are essential in promoting workers' rights, encouraging animosity towards the government increases hostility and resistance. Effective governance and public sector performance are further hampered by this propensity, which undercuts attempts to create a positive and cooperative relationship between government, unions, and public personnel (Beaumont, 2024b).

5.4.5 Unions Negotiations with Government to Address Employee Grievances in GPS

When asked whether trade unions were successful in negotiating with the government in addressing employee grievances within the public sector of Ghana, participants opinions were grouped into the themes: *support structure framework* and *union failure-informed negotiations*.

Figure 5.6 graphically illustrates unions negotiations with government to address employee grievances in GPS.

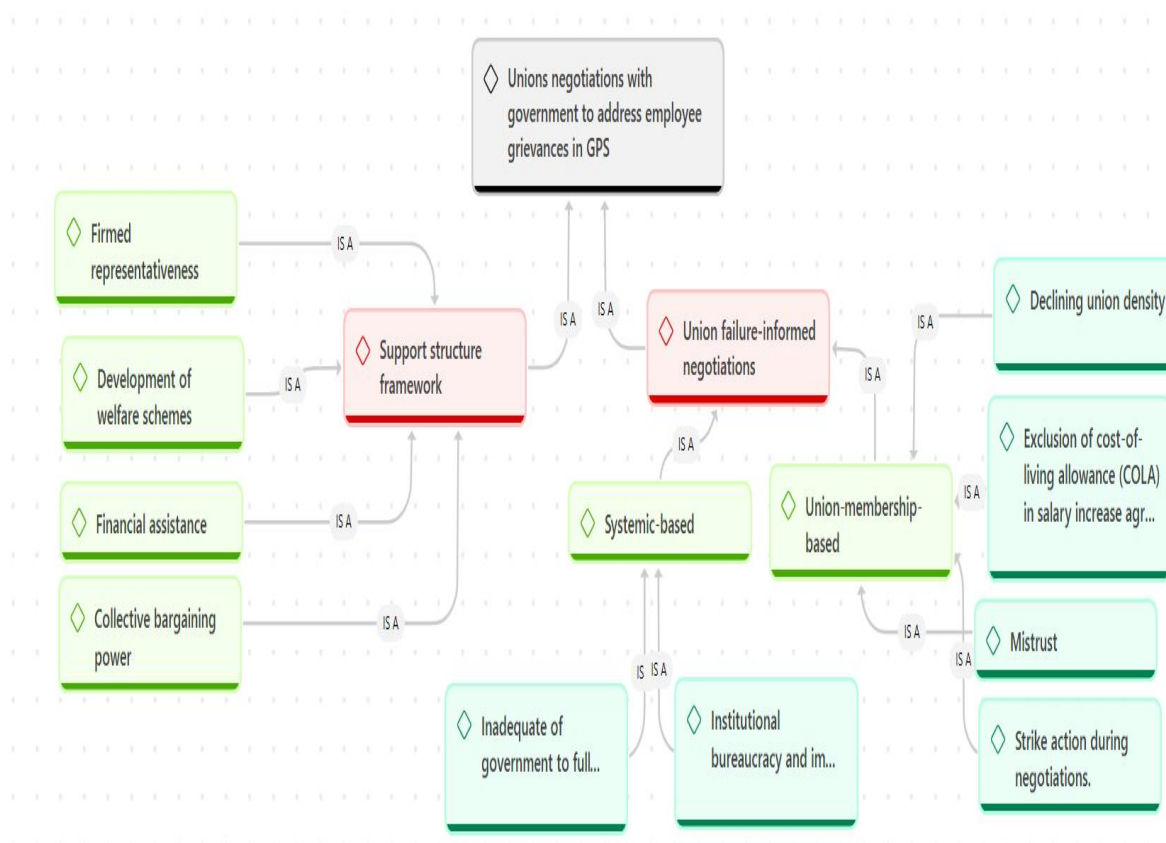


Figure 5.6 Unions negotiations with government to address employee grievances in GPS

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

5.4.6 Support Structure Framework

5.4.6.1 Firmed representativeness

Firmed representativeness within trade unions is a key support structure for effectively negotiating with the government to address workers grievances in Ghana's public sector. When unions are firmly represented at the national level, their involvement in the collective bargaining process is improved, resulting in more successful negotiations (Doellgast & Benassi, 2020).

A union executive commented:

As CLOSAG, which is one of the major unions in the public sector, by law we are represented on the governing council, so we have representation on the two councils, local government and civil service, where they take decisions on employment, promotion, firing, disciplinary issues ... So, our voice is heard there, and we raise issues as to how to improve the public service.

According to the participant's responses, unions' advocacy capabilities and influence are greatly increased when they have strong national representation. One example of this is the Civil and Local Government Staff Association of Ghana (CLOSAG), one of the largest unions in the public sector, which has members on governing councils. Unions are able to voice problems and offer answers when they are given a seat at the table where important decisions pertaining to hiring, promotions, firing, and disciplinary matters are made (Strine, Kovvali & Williams, 2021). By ensuring that public sector employees' opinions are heard and considered during the decision-making process, policies and practices are improved to better represent their needs and interests (Johnston & Land-Kazlauskas, 2018). Similar to this, firmed union participation in Ghana's public sector has allowed them to actively participate in talks from a position of strength, obtaining improved pay, benefits, and working conditions for its members. The participant's comments support Schnabel's (2020) claim that unions that are seen as inclusive and representative by their members are more

likely to win their trust and encourage active engagement, both of which are essential to the unions' ability to negotiate strongholds.

Furthermore, the presence of strong union representation in public sector negotiations helps shape policies that improve the efficacy and efficiency of public sector operations. Better public service delivery results from public servants carrying out their tasks efficiently when they believe their rights are upheld (Tattersall, 2020). Furthermore, a number of union executives and labour officials stated that increased accountability and openness in Ghana's public sector have resulted from the unions' membership in governing councils. The union representatives on governing councils assist them in keeping an eye on and reporting on the execution of policies and decisions, verifying that they adhere to established norms and pledges. This supports the idea that representativeness-based internal union cohesion is essential to effective collective bargaining (Hyman & Gumbrell-McCormick, 2020). Additionally, the unions can promote equitable treatment and better working conditions by participating in councils that oversee matters related to employment and disciplinary actions. Prioritizing the rights and wellbeing of public sector employees leads to a happier and more effective staff.

5.4.6.2 Development of welfare schemes

The support structure framework that stimulates effective negotiation with the government to address employee grievances within Ghana's public sector encompasses the development of welfare schemes by the unions.

A union executive said:

The union supports the governing council to come up with the award schemes. As a union, we do our own excellence awards to award public service workers alongside the employer's awards. CLOSAG also has the national awards; the Labour Act is such that if you are not active, you will lose out on many benefits. We organise workshops for our members, especially our regional and district executives. The trade unions play a key role in promoting the performance of the public sector.

According to the participants, reward programmes created by CLOSAG and a few unions are quite effective in identifying and inspiring public sector employees. Aid workers who receive recognition from their union feel valued and appreciated, which boosts their motivation and improves the functioning of Ghana's public sector. Furthermore, the unions host workshops that are crucial for enhancing the competencies of their members, namely district and regional executives. Numerous facets of labour legislation, negotiation techniques, and leadership development are covered in these sessions. Skilled union representatives are more equipped to engage in meaningful conversations with the government, effectively communicate worker complaints, and offer workable solutions to enhance the welfare of public employees through fruitful negotiations (Tattersall, 2020; Rosenbloom, Kravchuk & Clerkin, 2022).

Additionally, union executives said that charity programmes like providence funds were established to give union members financial security. These monies assist employees in making long-term plans and overcoming financial obstacles. The union leadership encourages members to contribute to and save from these accounts, which help public sector employees become more stable and financially literate. Employees with financial stability are less stressed and anxious, which enables them to focus more intently on their work and produce better results (Hyman & Gumbrell-McCormick, 2020). The union executives' comments are consistent with the results of Dundon, Wilkinson and Ackers (2023), which state that comprehensive welfare policies are positively correlated with higher worker happiness and productivity. Union welfare programmes have, in fact, inspired a high level of dedication from its members.

Another union executive commented:

We acknowledge that the government cannot do everything for workers because it has other priorities; hence, we develop welfare schemes for workers who are our members, and we encourage our members to put aside some money as providence funds. This makes the government take us seriously during negotiations.

It is significant to note that the unions accepted that the government cannot fully fulfil all employee requirements due to conflicting goals. Unions thus support their members further and assist the government in addition to themselves by offering welfare programmes. This proactive strategy ensures that workers in the public sector receive comprehensive assistance beyond what the government can provide. The capacity of unions to cover these voids proves their worth and potency, strengthening their bargaining power against the government (Madimutsa & Pretorius, 2017). The use of welfare programmes by contemporary unions as a calculated tactic to preserve and expand their membership base in the face of a shifting labour market is also highlighted (Colfer & Prosser, 2022). Furthermore, when unions act to enhance the welfare of their members, they gain credibility. During discussions, the unions' credibility is crucial because it demonstrates to the government that they take their responsibility to represent the interests of their members seriously.

5.4.6.3 Financial assistance

Financial assistance is seen as a support structure framework for successfully negotiating with the government in addressing workers grievances in Ghana's public sector. The information acquired from the study participants showed that the mother unions lend money to their members at reasonable interest rates, especially to help public employees who work in expensive places like Ghana's capital, Accra. These loans help employees handle money problems that government initiatives like salary advances don't fully solve. This claim supports a study by Petach and Wyant (2023) that demonstrated the significance of the impact of grants and loans offered by the union on members' long-term welfare and financial stability. By offering such support, unions like CLOSAG help employees attain financial security and take care of their immediate needs without being caught in high-interest debt traps. Stability in one's finances lowers stress and enables employees to perform better (Tattersall, 2020).

A union executive commented:

...there are also CLOSAG loans that are given to our members with an affordable interest rate in the public sector. Particularly those in Accra, the capital city, have pressing issues; the government has something they call a salary advance. It is not the same as car loans. All these things that will make life easy

for the worker are not there, so we help the workers by allowing them to take loans with minimal interest to help them. We also have a CLOSAG fund where workers can also make partial withdrawals in cases of emergency. We have a welfare shop that has items that the members can purchase at an affordable price.

Moreover, a few mother unions offer an emergency fund from which public employees may withdraw a portion of their earnings in difficult circumstances. Employees who have access to emergency money are more financially resilient and are better equipped to handle both personal and professional crises (Dzigbede, Gehl & Willoughby, 2020). As a result, financial concerns are less likely to divert employees, allowing them to concentrate on boosting productivity. A typical instance of how unions provide financial support is when they establish welfare stores, as done by CLOSAG, where they provide basic necessities to members at reasonable costs. By offering goods at a cheaper cost than market prices, this programme contributes to overall financial well-being by lessening the financial strain on workers. Welfare shops' success in reducing employees' financial stress enhances the union's bargaining position by demonstrating its capacity to offer members meaningful and effective help (Tattersall, 2020). Government initiatives like auto loans and salary advances frequently have narrow scopes and fall short of meeting the wide range of financial needs that public sector employees have. Some of these unions have demonstrated through their proactive approach that they can effectively support government efforts in order to make sure that workers receive the support they need to handle their financial issues (Azfar et al., 2018; Tattersall, 2020). Governments are also made aware by the aforementioned methods that unions are not their opponents, but rather that they want to work together to protect workers' social and economic interests, which will boost the economy as a whole.

5.4.6.4 Collective bargaining power

One of the major themes identified in relation to the support structure for effectively negotiating with the government to address workers grievances within Ghana's public sector was the collective bargaining power of the unions.

A labour official noted:

Quite recently, we heard that there's been a 30% increment in the base pay of public sector workers. In hindsight, it sounded like a good thing. We're all excited. And of course, what it meant was that there's been some collective bargaining processes that have gone on prior to that agreement. Now, so one would say, okay, collective bargaining has helped for the government to agree on a 30% increment.

Participants emphasised that collective bargaining necessitates the cooperation of several unions under the direction of powerful figures like the General Secretary of the Ghana Trades Union Congress (GTUC). Important union leaders' participation, such as the GTUC General Secretary, gives the negotiating process greater credibility and authority and increases the likelihood that the government will take the unions' demands seriously. This coordinated effort shows how strong and united public sector employees are as a group. A recent 30% increase in the base wage of Ghanaian public sector employees is evidence of the effectiveness of collective bargaining. This statement supports the argument put forth by Bivens et al. (2017) and McNicholas et al. (2020) that substantial increases in worker wage and benefit outcomes are empirically linked to powerful union bargaining strength. The success of the collective bargaining process and power in obtaining higher compensation is demonstrated by the recent 30% rise in the base salary of public sector employees.

A public servant stated:

Currently, unions are negotiating on the base pay of public servants, as yesterday we heard that the government was willing to increase 30% of the base pay. This collective bargaining process is mostly led by the General Secretary of the GTUC, with other unions supporting them with the negotiations. This gives us confidence that the structures are working, and that motivates us to work harder.

Moreover, the confidence of public sector employees is bolstered by the accomplishments of collective bargaining initiatives, such as the most recent wage raise. Employees' faith in the efficacy of these support systems is strengthened when

they observe that their unions are able to successfully negotiate large pay increases (Johnston, 2022). Collective bargaining's observable results, including pay rises in the public sector, offer concrete evidence that the system is effective and raise productivity even further (Ibsen, 2021). Additionally, collective bargaining guarantees that public sector employees' opinions are addressed during the most important stages of negotiations. The collective bargaining process is further strengthened when workers believe that their issues are being considered and addressed by the union leadership (Wraas & Dahle, 2020). In a similar vein, the collective bargaining process encourages responsibility and openness in negotiations. Public employees are more inclined to support and take part in union activities when they believe that their unions are working for their best interests. This increases the negotiating power of the unions (Jeffries, 2023).

5.4.7 Union Failure-Informed Negotiations

Union failure-informed negotiating with the government consists of systemic-based and union-membership-based approaches to address employee grievances in the public sector of Ghana.

5.4.7.1 Systemic-Based

Systemic-based union failure-informed negotiations consist of inadequate government to fully meet union demands and institutional bureaucracy and implementation delay.

5.4.7.2 Inadequate of government to fully meet the demand of union

The failure of the government to fully meet union demands during negotiations leads to the stimulation of the perception of union ineffectiveness in addressing workers grievances within Ghana's public sector.

A labour official stated:

Let me state that unions are mostly not successful in their negotiations with government. This is because the government does not meet the demands of the unions fully in most cases; they usually give outcomes that are more

beneficial to the government rather than the public servants. But there have been cases where the government has also underpaid. It happens, so it's left for the union to go back and contest it.

Another labour official commented:

For example, recently in the public sector, before they even had the 30% increment in the base pay of workers, there was a Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA) of 15% that was given to workers, and everybody enjoyed it until this 30% came and they removed the COLA, which was a negotiation agreement that most public sector workers were not happy with.

One of the biggest obstacles' unions encounter when negotiating with the government is that their requests are only partially met. Unions work hard to get all-encompassing changes for their members, but the results are sometimes not up to par (Van Roozendaal, 2020; Chan, 2019). For instance, the government of Ghana agreed to increase public sector employees' basic pay by thirty percent, but this rise came with the elimination of a previously agreed-upon fifteen percent Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA). Such compromises damage the union membership's perception of the negotiated reforms' worth and have a negative impact on the public sector's motivation, hence, overall performance.

The government has often demonstrated that it will prioritise negotiating results that serve its interests over meeting the requirements of public employees. This system produces agreements that do not sufficiently enhance workers' pay or working conditions (Koduah et al., 2019). For instance, although the 30% base salary increase may appear significant, the elimination of COLA indicates a lack of sincere concern for enhancing employees' total financial well-being. The legitimacy of the bargaining process and the faith that workers have in their unions and the government are both impacted by this action. This is consistent with research showing how public trust and worker participation in democracy are negatively impacted over time by inadequate government (Dundon & Wilkinson, 2024). Furthermore, the performance and morale of Ghanaian public sector employees have suffered as a result of the government's unwillingness to completely comply

with union demands. Demotivation develops when union members believe their complaints are not being sufficiently handled. Engagement and productivity suffer when people believe that the government is not sincerely interested in bettering their circumstances (Leonardi & Pedersini, 2023).

A union executive lamented:

... Now yes, there are times when government signs a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with their public servants, or their supposed union, so that government may falter in its implementation. I will not run away from it. However, most often the implementation of such outcomes is not fully the demand of the union; therefore, union members are not satisfied, and that affects their morale to increase their performance in the public sector.

The signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between the government and unions is meant to formalise agreements and guarantee their implementation, which is another grievance expressed by union members and labour officials. However, there are times when the government falls short of carrying out these agreements completely. The negotiation process loses even more credibility as a result of this inconsistency. The idea that negotiations are fruitless and that the government is unaccountable for its promises is strengthened when the provisions of the agreement are not fully fulfilled. In contrast to the discourse previously mentioned regarding the insufficiency of government in meeting union demands, a study by Lopez-Andreu (2023) provides a rationale by stating that fiscal severity policies and economic pressures restrict governments' ability to meet union demands, especially when it comes to public sector unions. This demonstrates how governments' capacity to completely satisfy union demands can be influenced by the economic standing of a certain area.

Furthermore, the aforementioned theme is supported by Dunlop's theory, which acknowledges that the government's capacity to fully satisfy union demands is

constrained by external variables like fiscal policies, economic limits, and government budgets (Doellgast, Bidwell & Colvin, 2021; Bidnur, Kalse & Priyadarshini, 2023). Financial constraints or wider economic factors may limit the government's ability to implement wage hikes, benefits, or better working conditions that unions seek in Ghana's public sector. Dunlop's theory also recognises the complexity and interdependence of labour relations (Frege & Kelly, 2020), which means that governments and unions must follow a system of regulations influenced by these broader factors. Therefore, failure to meet union requests is a product of the system's inherent limits rather than a reflection of poor union performance.

5.4.7.3 Institutional bureaucracy and implementation delay

The data gathered for the study indicates that institutional bureaucracy and implementation delay both directly or indirectly affect the success of union negotiations with the government in attending to workers complaints within Ghana's public sector. Complex processes and voluminous paperwork are associated with institutional bureaucracy, particularly when financial agreements are involved (Bersch & Fukuyama, 2023). The government representatives underlined that agreements must be implemented with great diligence, which invariably causes delays. These processes ensure that financial decisions are well thought out, but they can cause a delay in the execution of agreed agreements. Farida, Suriaatmadja and Sunday (2024) provide evidence to bolster the claim that the intricacies of governmental processes negatively impact the timely implementation of labour agreements. Union members and public employees in general sometimes become frustrated by this delay because they anticipate that negotiated agreements will be implemented on time, which lowers morale and causes disappointment (Adi, 2018).

A director of a public sector institution commented:

... of course, some unions go on the media space to say that the government has signed some agreements that have not been implemented ... Usually when it comes to implementation, there is a lot of paperwork and bureaucratic processes involved; this is about money, so a lot of diligence will have to be taken into consideration, hence the delay in implementation...

A union executive stated:

...dealing with them on such cases, it becomes a little bit difficult. You understand? Because it could happen that at the time we were doing the negotiation, you were the MD for that particular government institution. By the time of its implementation, another person has come. Yes, a document has been signed, but it will have to take some time.

Union executives emphasised that one of the factors contributing to the difficulties in implementing agreements is shifts in leadership within government agencies. Some newly appointed leaders fail to set priorities or even remember what was previously agreed upon. Due to the possibility that new leaders would require time to comprehend and digest these agreements, the absence of consistency caused significant delays (Mergel, 2021). Union members become less confident in the negotiation process as a result of these delays since they believe their complaints are not being properly resolved. Furthermore, there are instances in which the implementation of MOUs and other agreements takes years. Public sector employees have a sense of unpredictability and irritation as a result of these protracted times, which further impairs their performance and dedication to their jobs (Makbere, 2019).

Furthermore, given the difficult economic circumstances of the Ghanaian government, it is simple for them to place other financial obligations ahead of the execution of union agreements. There are times when delays result from this economic situation. This assertion is supported by Rigby and García Calavia's (2023) evidence, which shows that the implementation of labour agreements is frequently hampered by resource limitations within government institutions. Even if the government and unions have little control over these interactions, they nonetheless contribute to the impression that unions are unable to adequately handle workers' complaints. Unions frequently use public advocacy and "noise" to encourage the government to expedite implementation in reaction to these delays. Continued public lobbying can strain union-government relations and increase the difficulty of upcoming negotiations. Without this pressure, unions could find it difficult to guarantee that agreements are kept on schedule (Shostak, 2019). It is significant to remember that the cumulative

effect of bureaucratic delays causes a significant drop in employee morale, which in turn impacts the general efficacy and efficiency of public sector organisations.

Moreover, Dunlop's theory confirms the above theme by highlighting the ways in which broader contextual elements, such as political, economic, and legal forces, influence the industrial relations system. Decision-making in public sector companies is frequently delayed and bureaucratic due to these external factors (Khan, 2022). According to Dunlop's view, the intricate web of policies and procedures that regulate public organisations is the root cause of the delays in putting agreements into effect in the setting of institutional bureaucracy in the public sector (Brandi & Lehr, 2018). For instance, even if employers and unions reach a consensus on improved pay or working conditions, the actual implementation of these agreements may be delayed if they need to be approved by several government agencies or budgeting committees. Each of these factors influences the effectiveness with which unions negotiate.

5.4.8 Union Membership-Based

Union-membership-based Union failure-informed negotiations consist of *declining union density, exclusion of cost-of-living allowance (COLA) in salary increase agreement, mistrust and strike action during negotiations*.

5.4.8.1 Declining union density

One of the key issues that intensified union failure in effectively engaging with the government to address workers grievances was declining union density inside the Ghanaian public sector. Research has shown that there is a connection between the density of unions and their negotiating power, as fewer members hinder their capacity to engage in productive negotiations (Stansbury & Summers, 2020; Schaller, 2023).

The collective voice of workers becomes fractured and weaker as union density decreases, making it more challenging for unions to engage in productive negotiations with the government (Barth, Bryson & Dale-Olsen, 2020). If unions lose representation and, consequently, negotiating power, it becomes more difficult to uphold the rules of engagement set forth through collective bargaining (Doellgast, Bidwell & Colvin, 2021). Declining union density reduces the union's capacity to exert

pressure on the government to resolve workers' complaints in Ghana's public sector, where the government is a major employer.

A labour official commented:

... Government does not meet the demands of the unions fully in most cases; this has also led to a decline in union density because public servants have lost confidence in their unions.

There is a growing perception among public servants that trade unions are inadequate in fulfilling their demands. This impression stems from unions' consistent inability to win significant concessions from the government in negotiations (Van Roozendaal, 2020). Because they believe the unions are ineffectual, workers remove their membership, which causes the union density to decline.

A union member said:

As human beings, we are entitled to be suspicious because you can't go to negotiations and want to come back with nothing.... the decline in union density is connected with the perception that unions are in bed with employers or government. because people are discerning. They are not seeing what they are benefiting directly from the unions. All we see is salary negotiations. But the unions must go beyond that level.

According to the participants, employees are becoming less interested in joining unions since they do not see any immediate benefits from being involved, even if they are still required to pay dues. While wage negotiations are an obvious result of union activity, public employees anticipate more extensive assistance than just monetary benefits. Disengagement results from the belief that unions are just concerned with income increases and don't address more important problems like job security, working environment, and professional growth. Workers lose interest in joining unions when they don't feel that unions are providing a more comprehensive approach to their welfare (Barth, Bryson & Dale-Olsen, 2020).

According to the participants, declining union density is also stimulated by the notion that unions are "in bed" with the government or employers. When the results of union discussions seem to favour the government over the workers, suspicions grow. Credibility and trust are weakened by the suspicion that trade union officials are receiving bribes or other benefits from the government. Employees lose faith in the union's intentions and efficacy, which lowers involvement and membership (Beaumont, 2024a). Reduced union membership reduces the organisation's ability to bargain collectively, which makes successful negotiations with the government more challenging. This supports Schnabel's (2020) claim that the difficulties in coordinating a dispersed workforce negatively impact collective bargaining efforts. Less union representation means fewer voices speaking up for the rights and welfare of workers, which puts less pressure on the government to make significant reforms in the public sector.

Contrary to the aforementioned assertion, the Strategic Choice Model is of the view that unions can respond to decreasing density by modifying their strategies. To make up for declining membership, unions may decide to concentrate on strengthening internal organisation, forming partnerships with other social organisations, or using novel strategies like legal challenges or public campaigns (Lipsky, Avgar & Lamare, 2020). Even with reduced density, unions may still be able to influence government policy and negotiate better results if they strategically adapt to these outside forces (Luo & Yang, 2020). Consequently, the Strategic Choice Model provides a mechanism for unions to continue to be effective in spite of dwindling membership as long as they implement creative and flexible tactics.

5.4.8.2 Exclusion of Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA) in Salary Increase Agreement

The Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA), which was given to Ghanaian public sector workers, was an essential part of their pay because it was tax-exempt and increased their disposable income. The financial benefits for workers were greatly reduced when the government substituted COLA with a tax-exempt 30% rise in basic pay. Public servants pointed out that the tax on the 30% increase reduces net income, which reduces their purchasing power in comparison to when they were receiving COLA. Employees' capacity to handle growing living expenses, like electricity bills

and transportation costs, which frequently rise in direct proportion to pay increases, is impacted by this decline in net income (Gourevitch et al., 2016; Quiggin & Henderson, 2023).

A public server said:

We would have preferred the negotiation done on the cost-of-living allowance (COLA) that was given to us before the 30% increase in the base pay. The COLA is without tax, but this 30% is with tax, so when they take out the tax, then what happens? Not much is left.

Another public servant lamented:

When salaries are increased by 30%, then utility bills and transport fares are increased by 30% and more... So in the end, it's like robbing Peter to pay Paul. I think this union thing that we are doing, their negotiations are not favouring workers. How can you go and negotiate for 30% and take COLA out? And then you think you've done workers a favour. The unions were bargaining for 60% initially, and then you go, they take COLA away, and they accept it, and you think workers should be happy with that negotiation outcome.

Public sector employees are generally unhappy with the choice to replace COLA with a taxable base salary rise. This result is seen by public servants as a sign that union negotiations failed to protect their interests. Unions had originally negotiated for a 60% raise, but the agreement ultimately included the elimination of COLA in addition to a smaller increase. This outcome has been viewed as a crucial compromise that falls short of meeting the financial requirements of public employees (Lissowska, 2017). A lack of trust in union leadership and their negotiating tactics is partly caused by the belief that unions are unable to negotiate successfully and win significant reforms. Public employees often voice their annoyance at compensation increases that are frequently negated by increases in living costs (Gattegno, 2019; Bender, 2023). The financial respite that is meant to be experienced by workers is negated when increases in transportation and utility costs correspond with pay increases. This is referred to as "robbing Peter to pay Paul" by the participants, highlighting the

absurdity of the wage hikes in light of Ghana's present financial circumstances. Employee morale suffers as a result of unhappiness with the results of union negotiations, particularly the removal of COLA, which renders public sector services ineffective.

5.4.8.3 Mistrust

The majority of participants identified union mistrust as a major factor influencing union failure-informed negotiations in Ghana's public sector. One of the main causes of this mistrust-based culture is the idea that union operations are opaque and unaccountable (Stefański & Żywolewska, 2024). Employees typically don't see timely and clear communication regarding the contents of agreements and their implementation status when union leaders engage with the government. Union leaders' sincerity and efficacy are called into question due to their lack of transparency (Cho, Chung & Lee, 2019). Workers lose trust when they perceive that important issues impacting their livelihoods are not disclosed to them.

A public servant stated:

Our unions go to negotiate with the government for better conditions of services, with which they come up with agreements. We do not see it reflected or see the actual implementation of the agreement. We do not trust these union leaders.

Furthermore, when negotiated agreements fail to produce discernible improvements in their working conditions, public sector workers express discontent. Employees anticipate observable results from their union representation, such increased pay, better working conditions, and extensive benefits. When these demands are not fulfilled, union leadership becomes more distrusted (Godard & Frege, 2013). Furthermore, union members claim that their executives are living extravagant lifestyles and not disclosing how their dues are utilised. As a result, they feel that their executives are misusing their dues to support their extravagant lifestyles, which erodes trust. The responses from the public servants support the claim made by Simms (2024) that mistrust and a weakening of union solidarity are caused by a perceived gap between union leadership and members.

When union leaders repeatedly fall short of their promises, the unions' confidence gradually erodes. This reduces the collective bargaining strength of unions by making it difficult for them to mobilise support and actively involve members in union activities. Likewise, employees who perceive their unions as unreliable are less likely to be inspired to work hard, which lowers productivity in the public sector (Van Roozendaal, 2020; Windham, 2017). It is also crucial to remember that union representatives are less able to push for significant reforms or hold the government responsible for carrying out agreements if they do not have the backing of their members.

5.4.8.4 Strike action during negotiations

Strike action during negotiations presents significant challenges in the context of union-government interactions aimed at addressing worker grievances within Ghana's public sector.

A labour official stated:

*...when we negotiate while the group is on strike ...
According to the Labour Act there should be no negotiation
while you are on strike because it might look as if you have a
gun on the employer to give you this, and so before you get
to the negotiation table, you must call off the strike, the
employer must make sure the worker has called off the strike,
and the worker must oblige before we sit to negotiate.*

Negotiations are prohibited when workers are on strike, according to Ghana's Labour Act. This clause aims to ensure that discussions take place in a neutral, fair atmosphere free from excessive pressure. When labour unions bargain while on strike, it can put the employer in a difficult situation where they feel pressured to give in. The negotiation process may be compromised by this "gun to the head" strategy, which could result in agreements that are not well-thought-out or long-lasting (Gourevitch, 2018). Additionally, there is a great deal of strain and pressure placed on the union and the company when negotiations take place during a strike. The media's heightened public awareness of strikes makes it more imperative for the government to find a swift solution in order to restore public order and service

provision. This high-stress atmosphere resulted in snap decisions that put short-term tranquillity ahead of comprehensive, long-term answers (Givan & Lang, 2020). Such choices can result in ineffective strategies rather than long-term remedies because they don't adequately address the fundamental problems.

Public trust in the government and the unions can be damaged by public sector strikes, especially those that receive extensive media coverage (Hosking, 2019). The public may believe that the government is either too susceptible to union pressure or too weak to properly manage its workers. Similarly, unions could be perceived as confrontational and disruptive, particularly if the public is seriously inconvenienced or harmed by the strikes (Zienkowski & De Cleen, 2021). The legitimacy and credibility of unions may be weakened by this negative perception, which would complicate negotiations in the future. Furthermore, there are moral and legal issues with the practice of bargaining while there is a strike. It violates the Ghana's Labour Act's requirements, weakening the legislative framework intended to maintain fair and orderly negotiations. It is unethical because it unfairly forces both sides to make compromises that might not be optimal for long-term stability and justice. Moreover, according to Amankwaah (2023), strikes show worker discontent and union solidarity, but they can also make negotiations more difficult by hardening the government's position, which results in protracted conflict rather than fruitful discussion. Strikes prolong resolutions and aggravate the conflict between unions and the government in Ghana's public sector, where political and financial factors frequently influence labour negotiations.

5.4.9 Perception of Trade Union on Organisational Performance

The data on how participants perceive trade unionism with regards to its influence on organisational performance (OP) in the public sector of Ghana consist of a positive perception of trade unionism on OP and a negative perception of trade unionism on OP.

Figure 5.7 graphically illustrates the perception of trade unions on organisational performance.

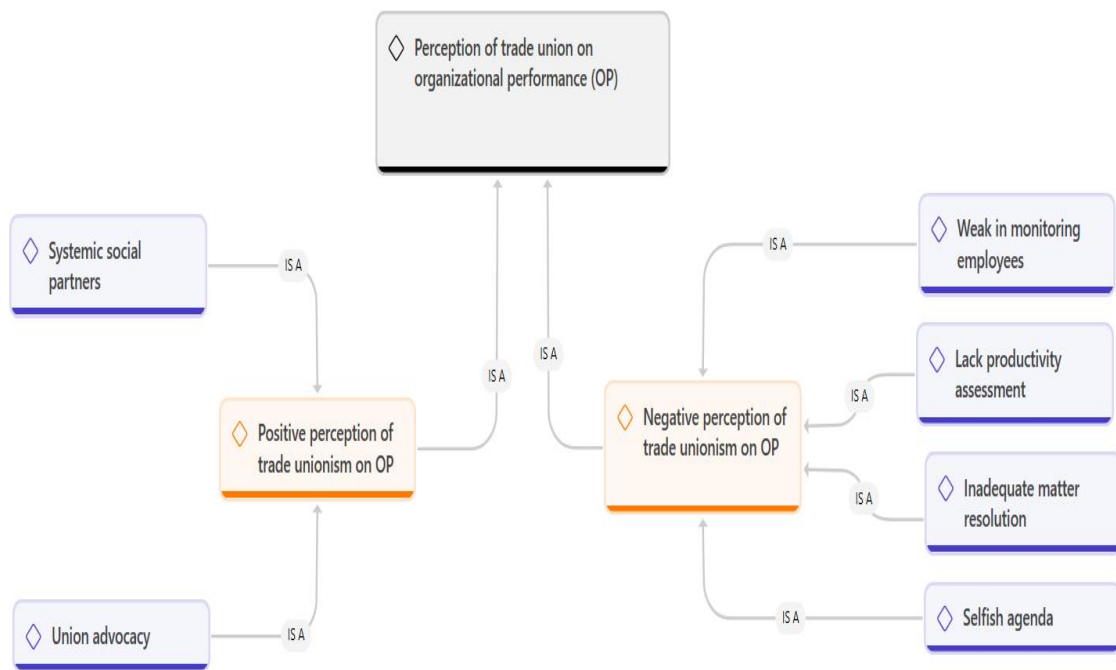


Figure 5.7 Perception of trade union on organisational performance (OP)

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

5.4.10 Positive Perception of Trade Unionism on Organisation Performance

This consist of *systemic social partners* and *union advocacy*

5.4.10.1 Systemic social partners

Trade unions play an important part as systemic social partners in the Ghanaian public sector, supporting meaningfully labour relations and the overall performance of the sector.

A public servant stated:

Yes, if you look at the entirety of the sector, without trade unions, many of the reforms that we see wouldn't have been in place. Trade unions are social partners in the Ghanaian public sector labour relations space, where they form part of the tripartite relationship that governs labour issues in Ghana.

A director from the Labour Ministry commented:

Over the years, unions have been government partners in terms of ensuring decent jobs for workers. That's why even the ILO ensures that the government continues to support trade unions where it is possible for them to speak for the vulnerable and for people that are unable to speak; they're voiceless. Let me put it that way. So, it depends. If you see them as a partner, as a social partner, then of course, you benefit from the things that are supposed to come out of them.

As a component of the tripartite relationship between the government, employers, and unions, they play a crucial role in Ghana's labour relations structure. This collaboration is essential to resolving labour disputes and ensuring the protection of workers' rights and interests. Unions work with the government as social partners to develop laws and policies that promote ethical labour practices (Visser, 2019). International organisations such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which emphasises the significance of state support for trade unions to amplify the voices of marginalised and disadvantaged workers, endorse this collaboration (Mundlak, 2020).

The study's participants revealed that unions, which are important social partners in Ghana's labour movement, have played a significant role in implementing various changes in the public sector. Important concerns like labour rights, worker safety, and fair pay in the public sector are frequently addressed by these measures. Due to the existence of unions, workers' interests are considered during the policy-making process, resulting in more effective and balanced reforms (Traianou, 2023). Many of these reforms may not have occurred, and the public sector may not have been as attentive to the demands of its workers, without the influence of trade unions.

Furthermore, trade unions act as a voice for marginalised and vulnerable workers who could otherwise go unnoticed in the labour relations arena, serving as a social partner of Ghanaian labour relations environments that represent workers' interests. The foundation of a democratic and inclusive workplace where all employees feel appreciated and encouraged is laid by this campaign (Tattersall, 2020). Additionally, it aids in ending discrimination and exploitation, fostering a public sector that is more

equitable and just. Thus, making a positive impact on the public sector's effectiveness and efficiency (Undy, 2022; Beaumont, 2024b). When trade unions are viewed as societal partners, labour relations can be approached more cooperatively. Positive interactions between the government and employers and an appreciation of unions result in win-win situations.

5.4.10.2 Union advocacy

The advocacy function, in which unions bargain with the government for improved working conditions, is a crucial component of trade union activities. According to public servants, workers are more likely to be motivated and dedicated to their work when they receive fair compensation that accounts for their labour and cost of living. There is a sense of security and gratitude among public employees when they see that their unions are successfully negotiating for their rights and perks (Paglayan, 2019; Tattersall, 2020).

The study's participants' statement that they are "happy to be punctual to work" emphasises how union advocacy directly affects employee behaviour. Positive work habits, such as punctuality and regular attendance, are more common among public servants when they perceive that their demands are being met and their working conditions are getting better (Jumady & Lilla, 2021). Maintaining the seamless operation of public sector services and making sure that the requirements of the public are adequately fulfilled depend on this commitment. Furthermore, supporting unions has an impact on employees' psychological and emotional health in addition to their physical circumstances (Vo-Thanh et al., 2022). According to the participants, having a good mental attitude enhances creativity, problem-solving skills, and general work effectiveness. The public sector performs at a high level in part because of this favourable environment.

Union activism has a cascading effect on the economy in addition to improving employee satisfaction on an individual basis. A workforce in the public sector that is efficient and driven can help multiple sectors of the economy by providing services more successfully. Furthermore, the enhanced purchasing power of public sector employees can boost economic activity when they enjoy higher pay and job stability (Nitsche-Whitfield, 2023). Consequently, by encouraging a more robust public sector, union lobbying indirectly promotes economic growth. Furthermore, strikes and other

industrial actions that could lower public sector performance are avoided because of the advocacy role played by unions (Bernier & Henry, 2022). The participant responses were used to derive the previously specified input on union advocacy in relation to promoting positive performance within the Ghanaian public sector, as seen in the quote below.

A public servant commented:

The unions obviously help to boost the performance of the public servants. They advocate and negotiate with the government to get good salaries and better working conditions for workers. This makes us happy to be punctual to work and also be in high spirits to work efficiently to help the economy grow.

The concept of union advocacy discussed supports a study by Van Hooren, Ledoux, Apitzsch and Eleveld (2021) that offers empirical proof of the beneficial effects of union advocacy on working conditions, highlighting the significance of persistent advocacy efforts. Additionally, studies show that worker advocacy enhances union representation and gives workers the ability to actively engage in decision-making (Johnston & Land-Kazlauskas, 2018). Indeed, union activism has been a blessing for Ghanaian public sector employees. This also goes to buttress the Strategic Choice Model's tenets, which view union advocacy as an essential element of labour relations, especially when it comes to interaction between the government and unions (Boxall & Purcell, 2022). The Strategic Choice Model states that depending on how the government approaches negotiations, unions must strategically choose how to represent their members. For instance, unions may decide to adopt a more cooperative advocacy approach that emphasises long-term enhancements to working conditions when the government is receptive to collaboration (Kessler, Purcell & Coyle Shapiro, 2000). On the other hand, unions may take a more adversarial approach if the government is uncooperative, applying pressure through public campaigns or strikes. Nonetheless, the Strategic Choice Model also implies that if unions' tactics don't fit the larger political or economic landscape, their advocacy work may be compromised (Kochan & Kimball, 2019). Unions risk alienating the government and decreasing their chances of obtaining significant

improvements in working conditions if they take an unduly confrontational stance during economic downturns. According to the Strategic Choice Model, even though advocacy is crucial, unionists' strategic choices in reaction to external factors determine how effective they go about their advocacy (Boxall & Purcell, 2022).

5.4.11 Negative Perception of Trade Unionism on Organisation Performance

Participants opinions consist of *weak monitoring of employees, lack productivity assessment, inadequate matter resolution and selfish agenda.*

5.4.11.1 Weak in monitoring employees

The perceived weakness in monitoring worker performance by unions was highlighted by majority of the participants of the study as an important factor contributing to reduced performance in the Ghanaian public sector.

A labour official stated:

To me, if I will be specific, I will be objective. We have not seen the executives of CLOSAC, which is a major union in the public sector, moving around seeing whether their members are really working. Because to make sure that the trade union contributes much is to also monitor and see how your workers are doing, not only to be attacking the employer for an increment of salary.

While trade unions typically concentrate their efforts on promoting improved pay and working conditions, they frequently overlook the need of keeping an eye on employee performance (Kochan & Kimball, 2019). According to labour officials and public servants, the majority of public sector unions are thought to be ineffective in their efforts to guarantee that their members are successfully carrying out their job duties. The union's defense of workers' rights and the real productivity and accountability of the workforce are at odds as a result of this neglect. In the public sector, maintaining accountability and productivity depends on efficient worker performance monitoring (Holzer, 2019). Inaction on the part of union officials to actively monitor and ensure that members are carrying out their responsibilities is likely to breed complacency and lower job standards. While fighting for their members' rights, unions should also

stress the value of accountability and strong performance, striking a balance that upholds both employee rights and organizational objectives (Keune & Pedaci, 2020).

The participants' critique points to a perceived imbalance in union activity, stating that unions prioritise challenging the government for compensation increases while ignoring performance monitoring. The credibility and efficacy of the unions are weakened by this biased campaigning. The unions' bargaining position is weakened by this impression, which also lessens their total influence (Schnabel, 2020). Unions are unable to identify areas where public employees could require more assistance, education, or resources in order to increase the productivity of the industry since they are unable to keep an eye on performance in the public sector.

A public servant commented:

... I will say no. Trade union activities have not contributed to the performance of the public sector. We have not seen the executives of these unions moving around to actually monitor if their members are actually working.

Some union leaders held the opinion that it is not the duty of the unions to oversee employee performance, which is in contrast to the majority of participants' responses. It has been noted that the Public Service Commission and institutional heads bear the task of evaluating public servants' performance. Therefore, it would be regrettable if someone blamed unions for these duties. Remy (2023) asserts that the primary duty of unions is to protect the social and economic rights of their members and that they shouldn't stray from this by taking on additional duties like performance reviews. This claim runs counter to studies (Flynn, 2017; Adu-Amankwah & Tutu, 2019) that have criticised public sector unions for their inability to reach an agreement over the legal framework governing collective bargaining in the public sector and public servant performance.

Similarly, the ideologies of Dunlop's and Pluralist theory go contrary to the notion that unions ought to be in charge of keeping an eye on worker performance. According to these theories, unions are largely in charge of making sure that labour laws and agreements such as those pertaining to pay, working conditions, and job security are enforced (Singh & Gupta, 2024; Rogowski, 2020). However, employers or management, not unions, have historically been in charge of performance

management. Under this approach, management is usually in charge of keeping an eye on employee performance since they establish productivity goals and assess staff performance. Theoretically, unions support equitable treatment but are not supposed to impose performance standards. Therefore, a misperception of unions' fundamental function within the industrial relations system may be the cause of the belief that they are weak in monitoring performance.

5.4.11.2 Lack productivity assessment

The participants highlighted that one of the things impeding efforts to improve sector performance generally is the lack of productivity assessment by unions in the Ghanaian public sector. The study's participants also emphasised how unions are primarily concerned with wage negotiations and strikes. Due to this restriction, the unions are ignoring a crucial component of labour relations: ensuring that employees are productive and positively impacting the objectives of the company (Barth, Bryson & Dale-Olsen, 2020).

A labour official said:

Unions are often absent from public institutions, focusing on strike or meeting calls. They lack performance assessment components and show no concern for public institutions' performance. This leaves the government struggling to generate revenue to pay workers. Unions only know their members are working, implying they do not contribute to the public sector's performance.

Furthermore, while it is the employer's responsibility to improve performance, union productivity assessments will promote a high standard of efficiency and accountability in public institutions (Holzer, 2019). Employees run the risk of growing comfortable when unions abstain from performance reviews because they know their work is not being closely examined. The claim is bolstered by the findings of Ramos et al. (2021), who identified the customary practice of unions not including productivity indicators in their mandates and the possible consequences of ignoring productivity evaluations, especially in the public sector. In the public sector, this lack of accountability results in inefficiencies and decreased production.

A director a public institution commented:

We don't have many circumstances where unions have told their members to work harder considering the contribution from employers.

Moreover, the belief that unions have no impact on public sector performance arises from their seeming indifference to productivity. Unions lose credibility and effectiveness when it is believed that they only address wage-related problems. Unions may be seen by employers and employees in the public sector as disconnected from the day-to-day operations of their organisations (Crain & Matheny, 2018).

Furthermore, unions lack the information required to present well-informed and persuasive arguments during negotiations in the absence of performance assessments. This is in line with a study by Izumo (2023) that described how performance-based incentives can increase productivity and the role that unions play in negotiating these rewards for employees who meet certain performance standards based on the data they have about their members' performance. Performance statistics can show where improvements are needed and demonstrate productivity levels (Wang, Zhu, Mayson & Chen, 2019). Advocating for resources, training, and other supports that can improve employee performance is made easier with the help of this information. The public sector suffers from a number of negative effects when productivity evaluation is absent, including wasteful resource utilisation and a lack of accountability that results in subpar service delivery and inferior overall performance. Poorly performing public sector organizations find it difficult to raise the funds required to maintain public services and fairly compensate employees (Donkor & Zhou, 2020; Borgonovi, Anessi-Pessina & Bianchi, 2018).

The above assertion contradicts the ideologies of the pluralist theory that the purpose of unions is to guarantee that employees are treated properly and that their complaints are taken care of, not to enforce performance or productivity standards. Unions are not in charge of evaluating productivity or enforcing workplace efficiency; instead, their concentration is on improving working conditions, pay, and job security (Kaufman et al., 2021). According to this perspective, management and unions have different roles: unions make sure that performance reviews are handled equitably,

while management evaluates productivity (Van Buren III, 2022). The pluralist perspective contends that management is ultimately in charge of upholding productivity standards, and the idea that unions are incapable of effectively observing productivity runs counter to their fundamental role (Kochan, 2019). As workers' advocates, unions make sure that performance-related concerns don't result in arbitrary terminations or harsh disciplinary measures. Instead of actively participating in the evaluation process, unions intervene to contest arbitrary or prejudiced performance reviews. According to pluralist theory, it is therefore improper to expect unions to handle productivity evaluation, as this is a responsibility of management (Singh & Gupta, 2024).

5.4.11.3 Inadequate matter resolution

Trade unions have an obligation to handle and settle employee complaints and disputes before they get out of hand. Workplace disruption results from little disputes turning into major confrontations that unions are unable to effectively handle (Rhodes & Akram, 2023). The incapacity to settle disputes within the union points to issues with communication tactics, mediation abilities, and union leadership. Sustaining a harmonious workplace and avoiding interruptions that lower productivity depends on effective conflict resolution.

A union member stated:

The trade unions are not able to resolve in-house conflict, then it escalates to industrial actions such as strikes. These strikes led to a stoppage of work, which led to a waste of man hours. All of these lead to low productivity in the public sector.

According to the data obtained for the study, unresolved internal conflicts frequently lead to labour actions, like strikes. When all other avenues of conflict resolution have been exhausted, including negotiations, strikes are usually the last option (Coccia, 2023). But a recurring reliance on strikes raises concerns about how well unions are handling early-stage disputes. Work stoppage brought on by strikes seriously disrupts public sector services (Russo et al., 2019). This interruption affects the entire performance of public sector institutions by wasting man-hours and delaying

important projects and services. In a similar vein, work disruptions result in unfinished projects, missing deadlines, and subpar public services (Rhodes & Akram, 2023). Furthermore, regular industrial actions like strikes have resulted from the unions' incapacity to settle conflicts in Ghana's public sector. The public's confidence in the government and unions has been damaged by these disruptions. The public's trust in the public sector's capacity to operate efficiently is undermined when there are frequent disruptions to vital services. This breakdown of confidence may raise public discontent and put pressure on the administration to come up with new ideas, which might reduce the influence of unions in future (Hosking, 2019) negotiations.

5.4.11.4 Selfish agenda

The responses provided by the participants show how unions and base pay increases for public employees are connected, raising questions about whether unions stand to gain financially from these raises. According to the participants, the fact that union dues are determined using base pay rather than allowances is the main reason unions are advocating for increased base pay. The study's participants believe that unions have a selfish motive to keep negotiating wage hikes since as base pay increases, so do the dues they collect. The idea that unions might not always act in the best interests of workers is reflected in this criticism, which raises issues about their fairness (Liu, 2011; Visser, 2019).

This gives the impression that union leaders care more about boosting their personal interest than they do about actually enhancing the working conditions and general well-being of their membership (Ackers, 2015). A selfish agenda is suggested when unions place an undue emphasis on base salary increases, which results in a limited strategy that ignores other important facets of workers' well-being, such as allowances and professional development.

A Labour Official stated:

Recently there has been a 30% increase in the base pay of public servants. The unions are going to take their dues plus that 30% increment, and because of that, they are always interested in negotiating the base pay increment; that is where they take their dues from. Because they don't take

their dues based on their allowance, it's on the base. So, once the base pay increases, it's also good for the unions, which is very selfish on their part. So, this is the essence of where we find ourselves. We always blame politicians, but the union leaders are more than politicians; they do things for their selfish agenda. These selfish agendas of the unions demoralise the public servants from increasing performance.

A union member commented:

We feel for the past few years the way negotiations are going, it is not bringing direct benefit to us as members; rather, it is benefiting the selfish interest of the union leaders.

Employees in the public sector are starting to question the sincerity of their leaders' motives. This mistrust stems from a lack of participation and backing for union initiatives. The majority of union members' concerns support Peace's (2023) assertion that trade union leaders have extensive decision-making authority. Without limits on this authority, the union's leadership prioritises their own interests over those of the rank and file. As a result, there is a high level of union density and a lack of trust in the unions. Employees are less likely to actively participate in union activities or support union-led measures when they believe their leaders are not truly representing their best interests (Barth, Bryson & Dale-Olsen, 2020). This reduces the unions' collective bargaining strength. Moreover, the belief that union officials have self-serving motives demoralises public employees. Employees that lack motivation are less likely to be engaged and productive, which has a detrimental impact on the performance of the public sector as a whole (Peace, 2023).

5.4.12 Summary of presentation on RQ 2

Figure 5.8 graphically illustrates the summary representation of RQ 2 and its themes.

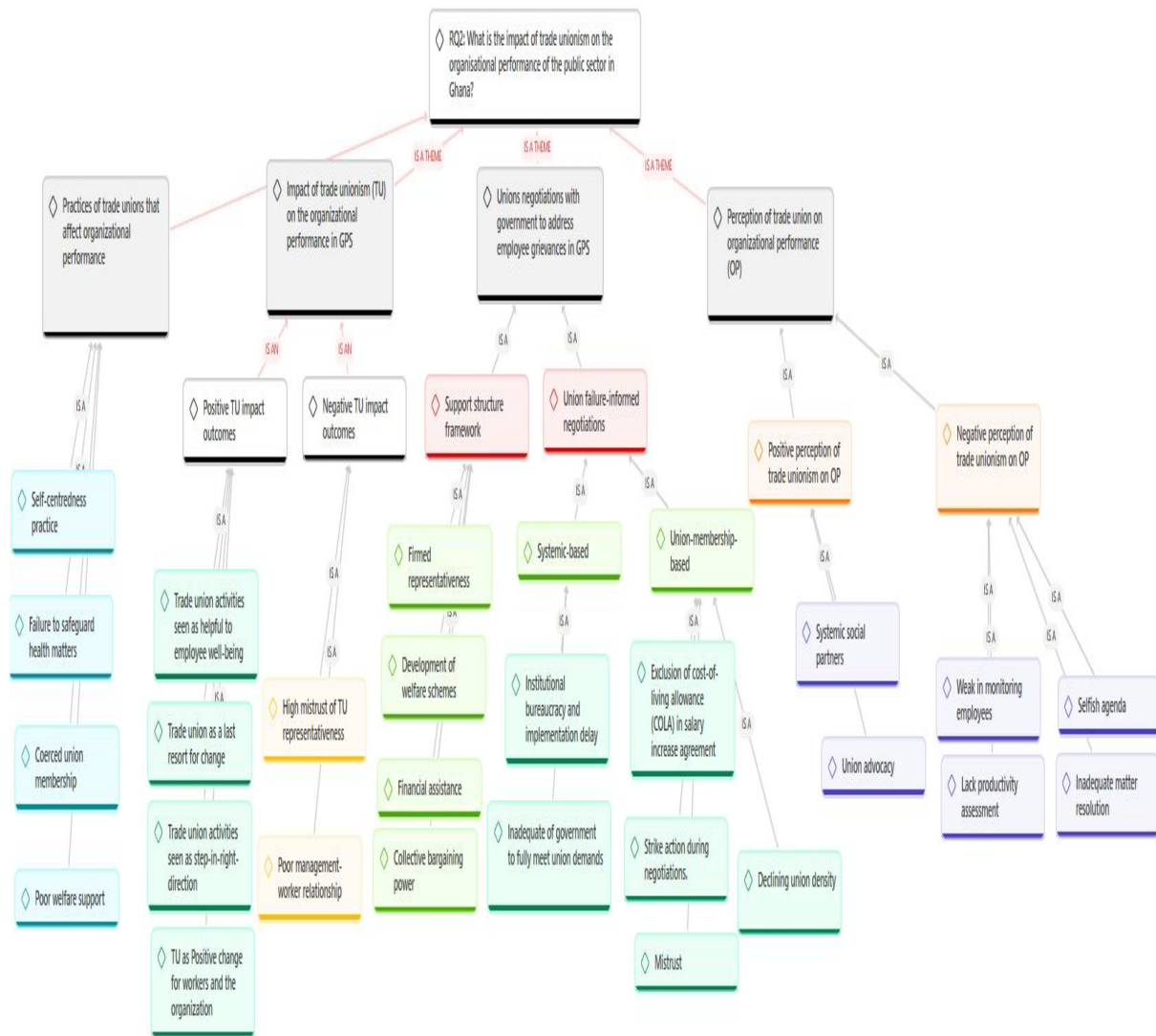


Figure 5.8 Summary representation of RQ 2 and its themes

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

As the above diagram shows, unions are criticised for their coercive membership policies, inadequate welfare support, and self-centred tactics, even though they are also recognised as agents of positive change, improving employee well-being, and negotiating welfare programmes. Despite these challenges, unions are acknowledged as powerful allies and social partners; nonetheless, institutional and governmental constraints restrict their efficacy. The results corroborate the pluralist theory's claim that unions are essential to an organisation because they protect members' legal, social, and economic interests (Heery, 2024; Singh & Gupta, 2024).

The results further support the claim that the organizations and procedures controlling employment regulation have a substantial influence on more general facets of society, such as rates of economic growth and the effectiveness of different institutions. Despite not being unique to the field of industrial relations, these concerns are of great interest to researchers in the field because of their connection to the operation of the industrial relations system (Frege & Kelly, 2020; Doellgast, Bidwell & Colvin, 2021). The results also corroborate the Strategic Choice Model's assertion that the interplay between workers, union leaders, the environment, and policymakers affected labour relations practices and outcomes when it came to making public policy decisions (Kelly, 2012). Section 5.5 below focused on the findings relating to conflict resolution and its influence on organisational performance in the public sector.

5.5 RQ3: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN INFLUENCING ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN GHANA?

Research question 3 asked whether conflict resolution influences the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana. The findings yielded three themes, namely, the influence of conflict resolution on organisational performance in GPS, the causes of conflicts between employees and employers in the public sector of Ghana, and the challenges that hinders the success of conflict resolutions in GPS, as indicated in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Conflict Resolution Influence and Organisational Performance in GPS

THEME	SUB-THEME
Influence of conflict resolution to organisational performance in GPS	• Bottom-up conflict resolution • Internal workplace mechanism conflict resolution • National Labour Commission conflict resolution • The labour court intervention • Role of the labour commission, through mediation, arbitration, and commissioners • Employer representation and legal advice
Causes of conflicts between employees and employers in the public sector of Ghana	• Perceived low salaries and delayed allowances • Improper contract definitions and unfair conditions of service • Inadequate communication • Dispute settlement disagreement • Undemocratic appointment of leaders • Perceived personal organisational growth denial
Challenges that hinder the success of conflict resolutions in GPS	• Finances • Poor communication and information sharing • Education • Improper record-keeping and documentation • Limited resources • Poor labour policy implementation • Non-accessibility of NLC offices to citizens

Source: Author's compilation (2024)

NOTE: Ghanaian public sector = GPS

5.5.1 Influence of Conflict Resolution to Organisational Performance in GPS

Findings consist of bottom-up conflict resolution, internal workplace mechanism conflict resolution, national Labour Commission conflict resolution, the labour court

intervention, role of the labour commission, through mediation, arbitration, commissioners, and employer representation and legal advice.

Figure 5.9 graphically illustrates the influence of conflict resolution to organisational performance in GPS.

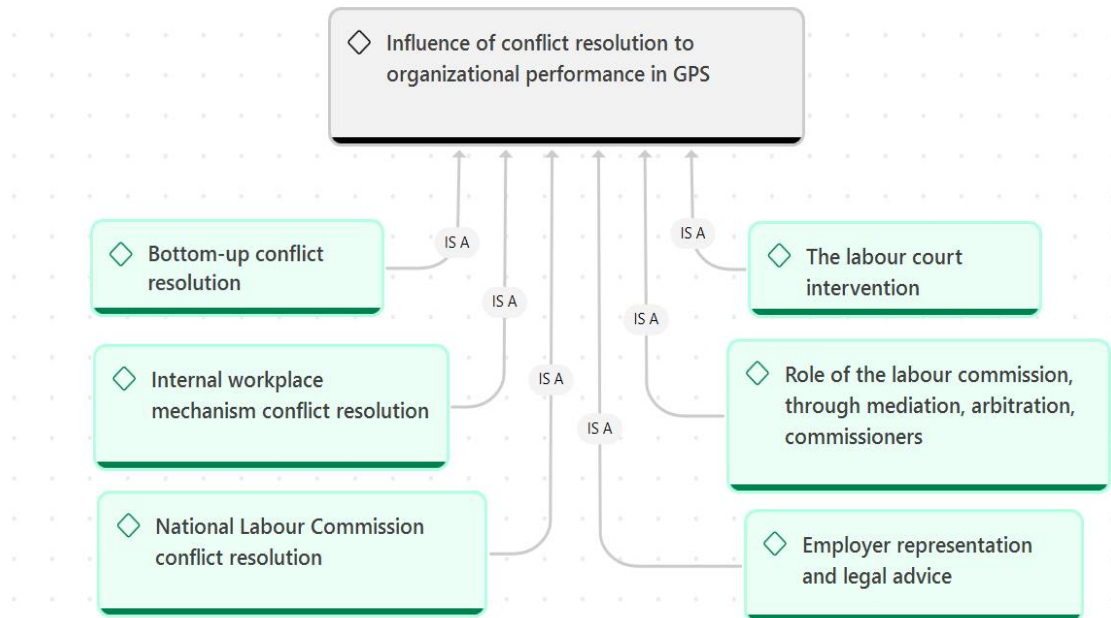


Figure 5.9 Influence of conflict resolution to organisational performance in GPS

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

5.5.1.1 Bottom-up conflict resolution

The bottom-up approach entails resolving disputes at multiple levels, beginning at the plant level and moving up to department heads and, if required, the HR department. In ensuring that issues are handled quickly and skillfully, this practice prevents them from getting worse. Additionally, it keeps little disagreements from turning into significant disruptions that could harm the public sector's performance.

A union executive commented:

... From the top floor, between the local, at the plant level, between the junior representative, the worker and

management. It is there, okay? When it goes beyond that level, at the plant level, you have a department. Departmental level, if there's any conflict at that level, because we don't want it to impact productivity, let's address it at that level. If the departmental head cannot address it, what he does is he will refer the matter, the union will refer the matter to the HR department, okay, the HR department will invite the union executives, one or two, and the worker in court, okay, maybe the worker or a group of workers, for the issue to be addressed at that level, at the HR, the local union executive level. At certain times, the issues can be addressed there, depending on the nature of the issue. At certain times, you go beyond it. But you know, the law advises that we should negotiate a good thing and try as much as possible to resolve the problem at the enterprise level.

When several stakeholders are involved in the bottom-up approach, including junior representatives, department heads, HR departments, and union executives, more complete solutions are found to address issues. It is through this approach that public servants feel included in the decision-making process (Reed et al., 2018). According to the participants, local conflict resolution avoids disruptions that may negatively impact output. When conflicts are resolved promptly, employees may continue working without being interrupted for extended periods of time, which keeps productivity consistent (Raines, 2019). The performance of the public sector depends on this stability since it ensures that services are provided effectively and efficiently. Additionally, employees who feel their complaints are heard and handled positively tend to have higher morale in a business that has strong dispute resolution procedures (Seward et al., 2019).

Moreover, unresolved complaints that have grown more serious over time can lead to labour actions like strikes. In using bottom-up conflict resolution to stop these escalations, you can protect operational continuity and minimise the negative effects of strikes, such as lost man-hours and a reduction in public confidence in government services and the productive public sector (Rhodes & Akram, 2023).

Likewise, trust between workers, unions, and the government is increased through bottom-up conflict resolution. This trust fosters a flexible work environment where employees are excited to work together to solve problems; this kind of setting is favourable to good performance (Imperial, 2021; Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2016; Phan & Coleman, 2023). The bottom-up approach to conflict resolution is in line with the Ghanaian Labour Act 651, 2003, which promotes enterprise-level conflict resolution in order to create a high-performing public sector.

5.5.1.2 Internal workplace mechanism conflict resolution

The majority of institutions in the public sector have set up formalised internal dispute resolution procedures. These systems include a defined process that requires that conflicts be brought to the attention of direct supervisors first. If the issue is not resolved, union representatives may become involved, and the dispute may move to higher management positions like the HR division (Lahana et al., 2019). HR departments are able to resolve disputes effectively because they have the requisite expertise and an impartial perspective.

A public servant said:

In our institution, there are internal mechanism, and procedures we use in solving disputes. The issues need to be reported to your immediate supervisor. The parties involved in the dispute are called to resolve the matter by either the HR or top-level management.

A union executive commented:

If the departmental head cannot address it, what he does is he will refer the matter, the union will refer the matter to the HR department, okay, the HR department will invite the union executives, one or two, and the worker in court, okay, maybe the worker or a group of workers, for the issue to be addressed at that level, at the HR, the local union executive level. At certain times, the issues can be addressed there, depending on the nature of the issue.

Through defending the rights of their members, unions are essential to the process of resolving disputes. Union representatives are frequently involved in the dispute resolution process to guarantee the protection of workers' rights (Singer, 2018).

The participants noted that public sector institutions had reduced the need to escalate problems to external entities like the National Labour Commission (NLC) by effectively utilising internal channels. Internal dispute resolution spares time and money that would otherwise be used in drawn-out external mediation procedures (Smith & Fredricks-Lowman, 2020). It boosts productivity and preserves a positive work environment in the public sector by enabling employees and management to concentrate on their principal duties. The participants' responses support the claims made by (Rhodes & Akram, 2023; Saundry, Fisher & Kinsey, 2021). that state that when conflicts are settled swiftly and fairly through the use of internal mechanisms developed by public institutions, employees spend less time handling conflicts and experience less stress associated with unresolved issues. Similarly, this multi-layered approach is in line with best practices for labour relations conflict resolution, where internal processes try to resolve grievances before resorting to more aggressive or external interventions (Behrens et al., 2020). Organisations with structured conflict resolution procedures foster harmony in the workplace by providing employees with clear channels for resolving their complaints. This method is not without problems, though, as employees may become frustrated and experience long-term dissatisfaction due to delays or bureaucratic inefficiencies in these systems (Weinstein-Tull, 2018). Such a defined system provides a clear way to settle disagreements in the Ghanaian public sector, but how well each level: supervisor, union, and management, handles the complaints determines how effective it is. Conflict-free workplaces allow employees to concentrate on their work without interruptions, which boosts productivity.

5.5.1.3 National Labour Commission conflict resolution

The National Labour Commission (NLC) is an independent body mandated by the government of Ghana to handle labour disputes. When internal workplace mechanisms fail to resolve conflicts, the NLC provides an external and impartial platform for addressing these issues (Kwarteng, Bawa & Koduah, 2024). This independence is vital for ensuring that disputes are resolved fairly and objectively,

free from internal biases and power dynamics that may exist within the public institutions.

A Labour Official commented:

In situations where the dispute still persists after the internal workplace mechanism does not resolve the conflict, the matter is taken to the National Labour Commission (NLC) to resolve. Most often the conflicts are about dissatisfaction with conditions of service or issues of salaries that workers think the government is not treating them fairly. However, with the help of trade unions, when these conflicts are resolved, it makes us the workers, happy, and that motivates us to be more committed to our jobs and increase the performance of the public sector.

According to the study participants, when issues reach the NLC, they usually indicate significant discontent with terms of employment, like pay or unjust treatment by the government. The NLC assists in making sure that employee complaints receive thorough attention. The fact that the NLC arbitrates disputes highlights how crucial it is to have conflict resolution procedures in place that permit more serious matters to be addressed by a higher authority (Michael & Samuel, 2020). In addition, the NLC's function as an impartial mediator guarantees that conflicts are settled in accordance with legal requirements and impartial norms. When an unbiased organisation like the NLC gets involved, employees are more likely to believe that their complaints are handled fairly (Tetteh, 2019).

The NLC's conflict resolution process, particularly when it comes to pay and terms of service, makes sure that employees feel valued and fairly compensated, which raises their commitment and performance in the public sector. Through prompt and efficient resolutions, the NLC's interventions aid in the prevention of industrial action, such as strikes. In contrast, a study by Parku and Lamptey (2018) suggested that Ghana's NLC is not as independent as one may anticipate. This is because they are viewed as government institutions and, as such, are subject to government influence when it comes to resolving disputes involving the government and public employees. The participants' comments also revealed this inconsistency. Nevertheless, the NLC

assists in enforcing fair labour practices throughout Ghana's public sector by maintaining legal standards for dispute resolution. In addition to preventing future conflicts and fostering a positive work environment that stimulates high performance, worker rights and ethical standards in public institutions are safeguarded by this compliance (Kwarteng, Bawa & Koduah, 2024). In certain instances, the NLC refers issues to labour courts for resolution.

5.5.1.4 The labour court intervention

Workers in Ghana's public sector have indicated that they have the option to submit their complaints to the Labour Court if internal processes and the NLC are unable to settle conflicts in a way that meets their needs. In accordance with current labour legislation and established legal precedents, conflicts may be brought before the court as a formal legal channel (Tetteh, 2019). The purpose of having this legal option available is to give public employees a conclusive, credible forum on which to pursue justice.

A union executive stated:

After a certain time, the individual has to decide that, oh, I'll go to the law court to contest my matter. Yeah, it does happen. Instead of going to the Labour Commission, people say, No, I don't want the permission. I want to go to the labour court for my issue to be addressed. So, the procedure is there; the interventions are there for conflicts between the individual worker or group of workers and the company with the union.

The Labour Court has the authority to fairly and accurately interpret labour legislation in its capacity as a judicial body. This guarantees that management and employees are subject to the same legal requirements (Achu, 2018). In contrast to alternative dispute resolution processes, Labour Court rulings are legally binding. Participants said that employers are more inclined to abide by labour rules and use fair bargaining techniques when they are aware that unresolved conflicts may end up in court. This compliance contributes to the avoidance of conflicts in the first place, and the public sector performs better in such an atmosphere (Sauden & Chhetri, 2023).

Furthermore, the participants reported that it instills in them a sense of justice in their place of employment, which is crucial for the smooth operation of the public sector, knowing that there is an impartial and trustworthy procedure for handling their complaints. The interventions made by the Labour Court reinforce the rule of law in the public sector. It lessens the possibility that labour-related decisions may be made arbitrarily. A robust legal system facilitates an efficient public sector that provides services (Ramanujam & Farrington, 2023; Azzahra, 2023). The labour court is an essential third-party intervention tool that provides Ghanaian public sector employees with a formal and lawful channel for seeking remedy. Because it gives workers the assurance that unresolved conflicts will be handled impartially, such legal recourse is crucial for maintaining fairness in labour relations.

Furthermore, the presence of labour courts encourages businesses to resolve conflicts with greater efficiency early on to prevent legal issues, which could result in better performance as management becomes more receptive to worker concerns (Achu, 2018). Thus, labour court intervention serves as a safety net in Ghana's public sector, fostering improved organisational practices and increasing worker confidence in the system, both of which improve performance and stability at work. Moreover, the aforementioned assertion aligns with the ideologies of the Dunlop theory that indicate that clear rules and guidelines for resolving disputes are essential to efficient industrial relations systems, and the labour court plays a vital role in these systems by offering a legal means of resolving unsettled disputes (Doellgast, Bidwell & Colvin, 2021). The labour court upholds the legal guidelines and protections put in place by the system, ensuring equity and balance among the social partners, when simpler methods of conflict resolution fail (Rogowski, 2020). In Ghana's public sector, this fosters long-term industrial peace and stability by bolstering labour relations stability by giving workers trust that their complaints would be handled fairly. Consequently, Dunlop's theory supports the function of the labour court's intervention by establishing it as an essential component of the larger industrial relations framework, guaranteeing that disagreements are resolved within the parameters of regulations that regulate labour-management relations (Williams, 2024).

5.5.1.5 Role of the labour commission, through mediation, arbitration, commissioners

There are alternative dispute resolutions when it comes to the resolution of conflict. The NLC uses mediation as a crucial instrument to settle disagreements amicably. Through mediation, parties in disagreement are brought together to negotiate about their problems with the assistance of a neutral mediator. This procedure encourages candid dialogue and understanding between parties, which results in voluntary and agreeable resolutions (Pablo, 2024). In order to minimise lowering conflict, mediation contributes to the development of a positive work atmosphere that lessens disturbances that may lower public sector output.

An NLC official commented:

When it goes beyond the enterprise level, it is also there when you go to the labour commission, either through mediation, arbitration, or you meet the commissioners for the issue to be addressed. So, all these avenues have been created for the conflict to be minimised. Because, you know, it's about productivity.

Another NLC official stated:

As social industrialisation partners, productivity is key. It's very key because you have a target. We don't allow some of these things to derail your target. We must quickly find a way to address the problem so that you can go back to your job floor and do your work. So, the company can make money, pay workers, and pay their incentives. So that, especially with those of us who apply the Bargaining Certificate, the procedure has been well spelt out, okay? At the workplace, and to the National Labour Commission.

The NLC officials clarified that arbitration is the organisation's fallback option in cases where mediation is unable to settle a dispute. A neutral arbitrator hears all sides of the dispute in arbitration before rendering a legally binding ruling (Silbey & Merry, 2018). In order to provide a final resolution to disagreements, this procedure makes

sure that issues don't recur and continue to impede productivity. Nevertheless, because arbitrators' rulings are usually final, critics like Oluwafemi and Kifordu (2023) argue that arbitration may restrict employees' ability to appeal. Therefore, choosing arbitrators who understand labour law and are mindful of potential power disparities between employers and employees is crucial. In addition, the participation of NLC commissioners gives the dispute resolution procedure an additional degree of authority and skill. Commissioners of the NLC offer invaluable insights and counsel because of their vast expertise and understanding of labour legislation and labour relations (Gyapong, 2020). Commissioners contribute to the integrity of the conflict resolution procedure as well, which strengthens confidence in the NLC's capacity to resolve conflicts amicably. The aforementioned alternative dispute resolution techniques, according to (Ojo, 2023; Sauden & Chhetri, 2023), support the development of workplace industrial harmony, which in turn boosts the performance of public sector employees and institutions. The primary objective of the NLC is to reduce disputes in order to preserve productivity by providing a variety of conflict resolution options, including mediation, arbitration, and commissioner participation. The prompt and efficient resolution of disputes is another guarantee provided by the NLC. In taking a proactive stance, disputes are avoided before they can interfere with work, keeping employees' attention on their duties.

5.5.1.6 Employer representation and legal advice

According to the study's participants, the Ghana Employers Association (GEA) and legal counsel are crucial in improving the public sector's performance by mediating disputes in an agreeable manner.

A GEA official stated:

...It is one of our key roles as an association; we are not only interested in the employer. To say, even if the employer is wrong, we won't call the employer out. Our role is to ensure that what the law stipulates is adhered to, but because we are representing employers, we advise backstage as to what should be taken and what should not be taken. So, in a typical conflict resolution situation, you tell and explain everything to us, what gave rise to that dispute, and then we

give our members expert advice as to where you fell short and what could be done to make sure the dispute comes to an end or is completely eradicated. Another role of Ghana Employers Association (GEA) is to represent our members who have issues at the NLC so we can intervene just like a lawyer; we can serve as a legal representation to the employer at the NLC.

Ensuring that employers follow labour laws and regulations is one of the GEA's main missions. The association assists employers in understanding their legal responsibilities and rights by offering legal guidance (Aryee, 2003). In order to prevent legal problems resulting from non-compliance, this guidance is essential. Ensuring companies adhere to legal requirements safeguards employees' rights and fosters a conflict-free work environment, both of which are essential for sustaining high performance (Ayentimi & Burgess, 2023). Furthermore, GEA representatives mandated that in the event of a conflict, the organisation provide professional guidance on the appropriate course of action, identifying potential areas of the employer's failure and outlining potential solutions. This lessens the likelihood that disputes will worsen to the point where they impair public sector operations.

Legal advice by GEA official as reflected below:

... especially with those of us who apply the Bargaining Certificate, the procedure has been well spelt out, okay? At the workplace and to the National Labour Commission, if you are not satisfied, you can go to the law court. Where can you be heard up at? Well, the Court of Appeal. It's your right to do it. So that issue, I think, is well spelt out.

The study also shows that the GEA acts as a lawyer for its members at the NLC, representing them and promoting just resolutions while simultaneously defending employers' interests. This buttresses the ideology of the pluralist theory that indicates that the recognition of power disparities between various groups in the workplace is a fundamental component of pluralist theory (Ramirez & Böhm, 2021). Without adequate channels for raising issues, workers and their unions may feel excluded, which could cause conflict. In providing a forum for workers to voice their issues in an

organized manner, employers who participate in mediation and conflict resolution assist in balancing these power imbalances. In addition, the pluralist perspective suggests that employers should consider dispute as a positive chance to work out mutually agreeable solutions rather than as something that is always bad (Kaufman et al., 2021; Van Buren et al., 2021). Employers can assist in lowering the adversarial nature of conflicts by participating in mediation. Ensuring that conflicts are settled in compliance with the law and navigating the complicated legal terrain of labour relations depend on this representation. As with unions or employees, employers have the option to take the issue all the way to court to seek redress if they are unhappy with the NLC's conflict resolution process. The above-indicated theme supports the schools of thought that believe that in order to facilitate a harmonious labour relations atmosphere, employer representation is just as vital as worker representation (Schneider, 2023; Nwafor, 2023).

5.5.2 Causes of Conflicts Between Employees and Employers in the Public Sector of Ghana

The findings consist of *perceived low salaries and delayed allowances, improper contract definitions and unfair condition of service, inadequate communication, dispute settlement disagreement, undemocratic appointment of leaders, and perceived personal organizational growth denial.*

Figure 5.10 graphically illustrates the causes of conflicts between employees and employers in the public sector of Ghana.

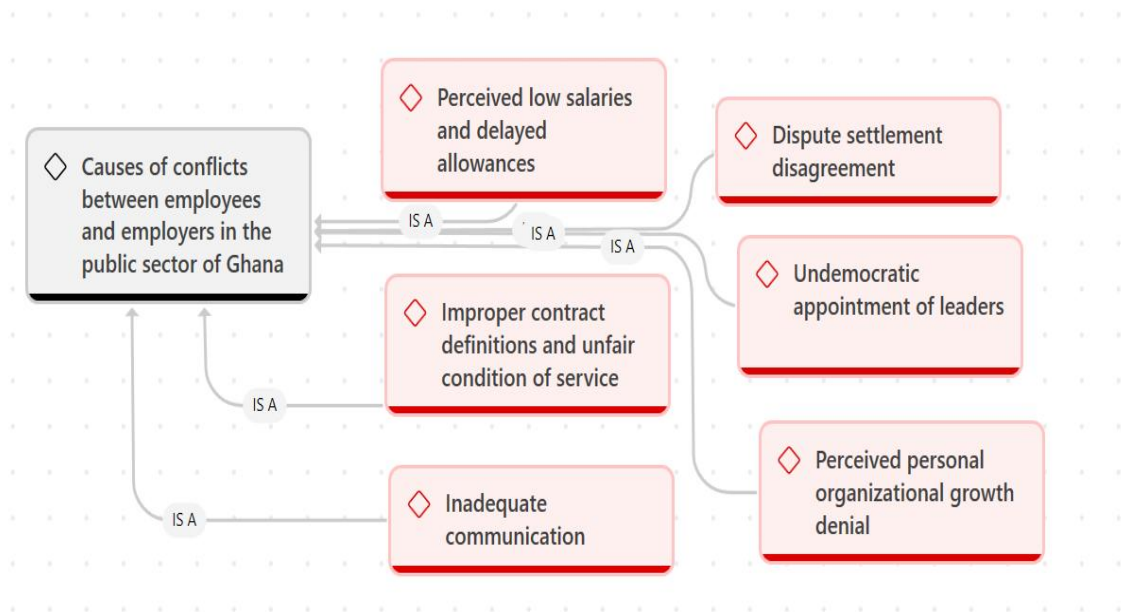


Figure 5.10 Causes of conflicts between employees and employers in the public sector of Ghana

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

5.5.2.1 Perceived low salaries and delayed allowances

Ghanaian public sector employees' top worry was found to be low salaries. The study's participants stressed that their pay is insufficient to cover their essential expenses, which causes them to feel stressed and unhappy. Employee motivation and dedication to their work are affected when they believe their pay does not adequately compensate for their contributions and efforts, which generally results in a marked decline in the standard of public services provided (Serhan, Achy & Nicolas, 2018; Al-Tkhayneh, Kot & Shestak, 2019). Furthermore, study participants reported

that the financial burden on Ghanaian public personnel is exacerbated by delayed allowances. As a crucial part of total remuneration, allowances are meant to cover specific costs like housing, healthcare, and transportation (Zaeni, Arfah & Semmaila, 2022). Public employees have increased financial strain when these payments are delayed, which fuels tensions between the social partners in labour relations.

A public servant indicated:

Our salaries are low, and we want an increase in salary, as well as the delay in releasing allowances that is frustrating us. It brings a lot of misunderstanding between the government and the workers, so we are demotivated.

An NLC official seconded:

The majority of the issues that cause conflict in the public sector has to do with the perception that their salaries are lower, and therefore they want an increase in salary. Also, when the government are delaying with their allowances.

As a result, the foundation of conflict in the Ghanaian public sector is the amalgamation of low pay and delayed benefits. These disputes break the peace at work and create a poisonous environment where complaints are common. Conflicts like these lower employee morale, which makes public employees disengage and lowers the sector's overall output. This confirms a study conducted by the International Labour Organisation that indicates that inadequate pay has a direct impact on workers' livelihoods, which raises the rate of poverty and social inequality (Canton, 2021). Similar to this, a study by Barrett et al. (2024) identifies multiple instances where political movements and large-scale rallies calling for structural changes have been sparked by salary delays. Sometimes these demonstrations turn into more significant societal disputes that upend the stability of the country. The combined impact of these problems tends to damage public sector organisations' reputations. Inadequate pay erodes employees' sense of fairness and worth, which lowers job satisfaction and increases conflict. Employees in the public sector become frustrated and give rise to conflicts when they believe the salary they receive does not adequately compensate them for the work they do or the expense of living (Al-Tkhayneh, Kot & Shestak, 2019). When employees in the private sector are paid

more for comparable work, this view is made worse and calls for pay equity or adjustments arise (Dan, 2015). Low pay has been a persistent problem in Ghana's public sector, leading to strikes and other industrial actions as workers demand just compensation. Employees feel that their trust has been betrayed when allowances are delayed, which causes them to become resentful and urge industrial action to demand accountability. When workers experience rising living expenses without the promised financial support, they feel even more betrayed, which leads to strikes or other forms of collective action (Joyce, Stuart & Forde, 2023).

5.5.2.2 Improper contract definitions and unfair condition of service

Conflicts in the Ghanaian public sector are largely caused by improper contract definitions and unfair conditions of employment. Significant misunderstandings and disputes result from contracts that lack precise definitions and terminology.

An NLC official commented:

Well, I will pretend to work; you pretend to pay me. So, if I say fetch water for me, I will fetch the water. If it spills, I will not pay you because my mandate was just to fetch. The spilling is not part of my job description. So sometimes there is a unilateral variation of contracts salary.

When job descriptions and responsibilities are unclear, employees often struggle to complete their work (Taufik, 2014). For example, as the participant story implies, an employee directed to retrieve water might not be held accountable for any spills since it is not part of their assigned responsibilities. Uncertain contracts lead to a mindset of accomplishing the bare minimum, which undermines performance as a whole (Brunet & César, 2021). The study's participants also identified the practice of some leaders of public sector institutions unilaterally changing contract terms without getting worker permission. Conflicts at work arise when employees believe that their contract terms, especially those pertaining to pay and working conditions, are changed without their consent.

A public servant stated:

... the major reasons for most of the conflicts in our various institutions are unfair working conditions.

In addition, the study's participants indicated that one of the main causes of conflict in Ghana's public sector organisations is unfair working conditions. The primary causes of public sector conflicts between the government and public servants are cited by public servants as being poor work environments, like spoilt air conditioning and fans, and a lack of required equipment, including laptops, printers, and even A4 sheet paper to work with in their offices. The theme mentioned above is further supported by Arnow-Richman and Verkerke (2023), who point out that unclear or poorly specified employment contracts are the root cause of misunderstandings about job responsibilities, expectations, and pay. Because of this ambiguity, there are often conflicts between employers and employees because the latter may feel misled or taken advantage of. Public employees' morale is impacted by the previously listed practices. According to a National Labour Commission representative, this leads to a "pretend to work" mentality, which produces substandard performance throughout the industry. Ambiguity can result in serious conflicts in the public sector, where contracts frequently contain clauses pertaining to job security, benefits, and promotions (Arnow-Richman & Verkerke, 2023). This is particularly true when employees believe the government has not fulfilled its end of the bargain. In addition to lowering employee morale, unfair working circumstances cause long-term productivity problems since they cause employees to get disengaged from their jobs and lose motivation to give their best work (Kim, 2018). As a result, workers may demand better pay and working conditions, which could lead to a cycle of decreasing performance and rising conflict.

5.5.2.3 Inadequate communication

Officials from the National Labour Commission (NLC) point out that a prevalent grievance among union members and public sector workers is the heads of public institutions' failure to communicate with them about the terms of their collective bargaining agreements. Conflicts arise when leaders of public institutions fail to explain these words to their staff, leaving them ignorant of their responsibilities and rights (Rosenbloom, Kravchuk & Clerkin, 2022).

Conflicts arise when public servants feel important information is being misrepresented or not delivered well. Persistent disagreements can often result in a toxic workplace, which lowers performance in the public sector (Saefudin, 2019).

Additionally, when workers are unaware of their rights, responsibilities, and benefits, they become disconnected from the company and less motivated to work hard, which lowers productivity and generally lowers the calibre of their output. The public sector's overall performance is adversely affected by this. This claim is supported by a study (Ndraha, 2023) that discovered a communication breakdown amongst regional leaders, deputy heads, and civil officials leads to conflict and has a detrimental effect on the provision of public services. This tension has the potential to sabotage collaboration, impede information exchange, and impair the efficacy of government policies and initiatives. Employees feel excluded from significant decisions or uninformed about changes that affect their responsibilities when communication channels are poor or imprecise, which can cause annoyance and conflict (Hitlin & Shutava, 2022).

Failing to communicate in a timely and clear manner can lead to serious dissatisfaction among employees in the public sector, where decision-making procedures can be drawn out and bureaucratic. Communication breakdowns frequently hinder the prompt settlement of complaints, allowing minor disagreements to linger and escalate into larger conflicts. Lack of clear communication can make tensions worse in the public sector, where bureaucratic inefficiencies frequently cause delays in resolving employee problems (Curcuruto & Griffin, 2023). Communication breakdowns between government representatives, public sector employees, and unions have frequently resulted in misconceptions about matters like pay raises, benefits, and working conditions in Ghana's public sector, which has paved the way for labour disputes. The preceding discourse regarding insufficient communication within the Ghanaian public sector as a catalyst for labour disputes was influenced by the answers provided by the study participants, including the response found below.

An NLC official commented:

...so, union members and public servants will come to the NLC to complain about their employers not communicating some provisions in their collective bargaining agreement to them. We will sit down with them and realise that yes, the provisions are there, but it was not properly communicated to

them by their employers, and also, workers do not take time to thoroughly go through their collective agreements before signing; hence, they are not in the know of the content. This brings about conflict between workers and employers in the Ghanaian public sector.

5.5.2.4 Dispute settlement disagreement

The underappreciation and ignorance of the dispute resolution procedures in public sector organisations is a major cause of problems in Ghana's public sector. The internal procedures that have been developed are often unknown to public servants. Due to their ignorance, employees handle conflicts improperly and don't follow the right procedures. These misinterpretations lead to confrontations and drawn-out arguments (Anene, 2022; Kapras, 2023).

An NLC official commented:

Some conflicts are due to the lack of appreciation of the dispute settlement processes in the organisation, every organisation has to have its internal conflict resolution process in their collective agreement. From the manager, you go to the next in command, and then maybe you appeal to the manager and then to the board. Some of them will disregard the process, and some are biased in the process, and it becomes a conflict. And then, you know, it is sometimes perceived as political manipulation.

The NLC leaders' proposal, which stipulates that all public institutions have to have a formalised internal dispute resolution procedure included in their collective bargaining agreements, was accepted by the heads of Ghana's public sector organisations. This procedure entails escalating the problem through successive tiers of management, starting with direct supervisors and ending with higher authority such as the board. More conflicts arise when these procedures are not followed correctly (Avruch, 2022). Furthermore, the public servants stated that their belief that government intervention results in unfair decision-making throughout the conflict resolution process erodes

their faith in the system. Perceived bias is typically influenced by actions like favouritism during the dispute resolution process, a lack of openness, or uneven policy implementation. Public servants tend to become demoralized as a result, and they become less committed to attaining institutional goals. The participants' responses align with a study by Pillay (2020) that found that the likelihood of a conflict escalating is much increased when there is a perception of bias in dispute resolution procedures. The resolution mechanism loses credibility when social partners in a dispute believe that one side is being favoured over the other. This might result in more arguments and animosity.

A public servant said:

Now that we are getting into the election year, there are rumours that some of the outcomes of dispute resolutions are influenced by the government, so that their political party will not be unpopular.

It's important to note that the participants also mentioned political manipulation as a significant contributing element to conflict in public sector organisations when it comes to disagreements on conflict resolution. Public servants perceive situations in which political interests and the government affect dispute resolution procedures as unfair and biased. As a result, employees believe their complaints are not appropriately handled and lose motivation. Public employees' unfavourable emotional states have an impact on their willingness to carry out their jobs well and overall productivity (Ciobanu, Androniceanu & Lazaroiu, 2019).

5.5.2.5 Undemocratic appointment of leaders

Study participants identified one of the elements that incite conflict as the undemocratic appointment of leaders in Ghana's public sector. Institutions in the public sector lose credibility when leaders are chosen solely on the basis of their political affiliations rather than qualifications or established practices (Brierley, 2021). Public employees feel that their organisation is being used for political purposes rather than serving the public interest when leaders are appointed based more on their political connections than on their qualifications or suitability for the position (Mounk, 2018). This creates a perception of bias and favouritism.

An NLC official commented:

Appointment, political appointees, because when you look at the law, it is the right of the employer to appoint. However, we just had an instance when, I think, education, Ghana education, and somebody was appointed and then many unions are going on strike you see, because the right process was not used, so there is this problem, issues about conflicts about the appointees of the head of institutions a party will come and then the CEO has to go and then other factions will be there, they would have worked with that person and they have perceived that the person is good and all of a sudden another political party comes to power and appoint another leader without following due process, somebody that, you know, people don't like change and therefore they will also rise against that person bring conflicts and it makes the workers not cooperate with the new leader leading reduced performance.

According to the participants, organisational stability is disrupted by the nomination of new leaders with every shift in political power. Conflicts in public institutions arise from inconsistent policies and strategic direction brought about by frequent changes in leadership or government (Waeger & Weber, 2019). Employees who have grown accustomed to a certain leader's vision and style find it difficult to adjust to a new one, particularly if the change is sudden and seen as politically driven. Effective long-term project and plan implementation is hampered by this interruption (Tan, Mahula & Cromptoets, 2022).

Additionally, the new leader is likely to encounter resistance from public employees and their unions, particularly if the appointment process deviates from established procedures or ignores the preferences of the current staff. Strikes and other industrial actions are the outcome of such activities. Effective collaboration is impeded by the hostile work climate that arises from the dispute between public workers and new leaders (Story, Lotta & Tavares, 2023; Haricharan, 2023). Political interference in leadership selections damages leaders' credibility in the eyes of

employees by reorienting the emphasis from advancing political agendas to serving workers' interests. The performance of the public sector can be severely harmed by undemocratic leader appointments because the ensuing disputes and inefficiencies lead to a reduction in organisational efficacy. Undemocratically selected leaders may not have the authority and legitimacy necessary to run major public sector organisations, which lowers staff morale and performance (Fatile, 2013). Similarly, undemocratic appointments substantially impact the public sector's overall performance. If leaders are not selected on the basis of merit, they could not have the knowledge and expertise needed to run the company well, which could lead to poor management techniques and a reduction in the standard of public sector services.

5.5.2.6 Perceived personal organisational growth denial

Employees in the public sector reported that they are not given the opportunity to grow and improve in their careers. The participants stated that they are denied study leave to develop themselves, while new recruits who have advanced degrees are given promotions due to their qualifications. Certain public sector organisations decline to allow their employees to take time off for personal growth or study. Growth denial is a behaviour that makes people feel underappreciated in public settings (Napitupulu et al., 2017).

An NLC official commented:

Public servants perceive that they are not given opportunities to grow in the organisation. They have been stifled in the organisation. There are instances where a new recruit comes in with a master's degree or professional certificate, and that person has been put in the best position; they get angry because they have been denied the opportunity to upgrade their qualifications in order to also rise through the ranks to attain a higher position. So, at the end of the day, they will not help whoever is the new recruit to work. All of these bring major conflicts with the Ghanaian public sector, hence affecting performance.

Another NLC official stated:

Some perceive that some want to go on training, and they perceive that these opportunities have been given to somebody else instead of them; there will be conflict. In the public sector, these are some of the causes.

The belief that one is being suppressed at work has a detrimental effect on employee morale. Employees lose interest in and dedication to their work when they believe that prospects for growth do not adequately compensate for their hard effort. Denying opportunities for growth frequently results in conflict in the workplace (Laing, 2021; Rahayu, Rasid & Tannady, 2019). Employees who don't feel appreciated may hold grudges against new hires or those who get the opportunities they want. This animosity creates a hostile work atmosphere that inhibits collaboration and teamwork. Workers can stop being as eager to help and encourage their peers. These claims align with a study by Wang et al. (2024) that highlights the importance of career growth possibilities for job satisfaction. Conflicts at work can arise when employees feel they are being denied opportunities for advancement without good reason.

Conflicts that originate from growth denial have a direct impact on how well the public sector performs. Conflicting workers divert their attention from their main duties, which lowers productivity. Furthermore, the hostile atmosphere that these disputes foster lowers employee morale generally, making the workforce less competent to provide high-quality public services (Napitupulu et al., 2017). Denying these chances also hinders the ability of public sector institutions to develop a qualified and competent workforce, which further impairs the sector's performance in addition to stifling individual growth.

5.5.3 Challenges that Hinder the Success of Conflict Resolutions in The Ghanaian Public Sector.

The main challenges in the opinions of participants that hinder the success of conflict resolutions in the Ghanaian public sector consist of *finances, poor communication and information sharing, education, improper record-keeping and documentation, limited resources, poor labour policy implementation, and non-accessibility of NLC offices to citizens.*

Figure 5.11 graphically illustrates the challenges that hinder the success of conflict resolutions in GPS.

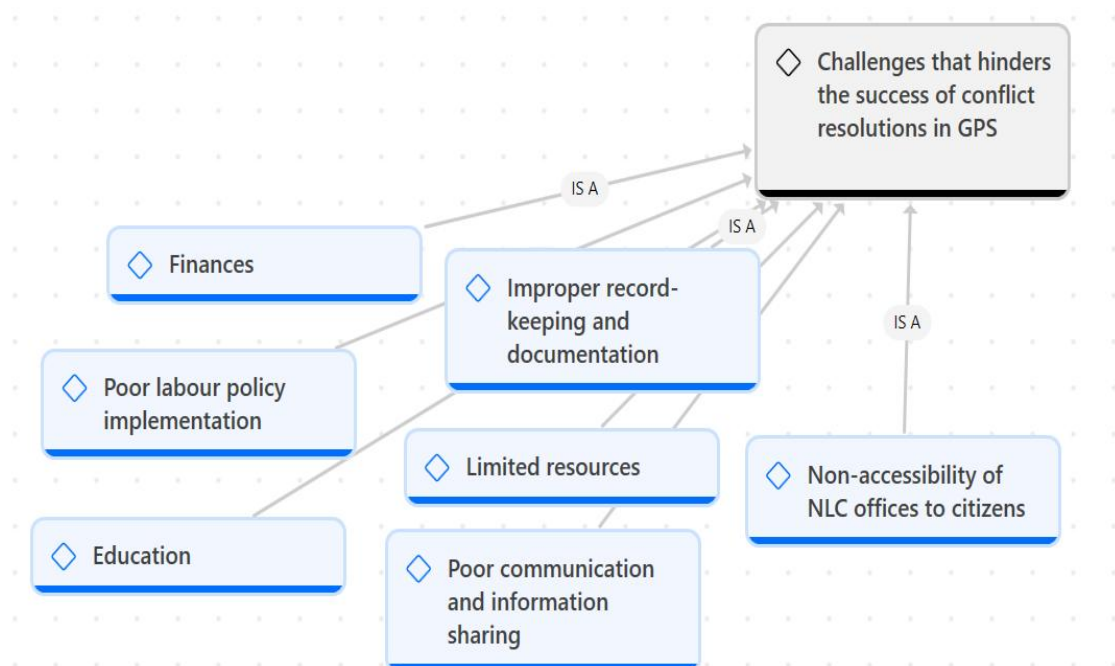


Figure 5.11 Challenges that hinders the success of conflict resolutions in GPS

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

5.5.3.1 Finances

Financial constraints have been recognised as one of the main challenges to the National Labour Commission's (NLC) and other public sector organisations' efficient operation in Ghana. The NLC is the organisation tasked with resolving labour disputes in Ghana.

An NLC official said:

For the Labour Commission, the main challenges we face have to do with finances. The local government institution is financed by the government. If our photocopying machine is not working, which is now not working, and the government will pay, money has not come. Now I have to make photocopies, I'm thinking about it. It is a challenge.

Due to a lack of funds, the NLC has many operational difficulties. When crucial office equipment, such as photocopying machines, breaks down and cannot be replaced or repaired because of a lack of cash, basic office tasks, like creating photocopies, are hampered. Due to these operational inefficiencies, conflicts take longer to process and resolve, which irritates employers and public servants alike and leads to longer-lasting conflicts and higher levels of stress inside public sector organisations (Lapiente & Van de Walle, 2020; Rosenbloom, Kravchuk & Clerkin, 2022).

Another NLC official commented:

The issue of availability of the Commission to the citizens is a major challenge. I have to tell you the truth. It is a challenge. Because for now, we have only four offices in the whole country. This is also due to the challenge of the Commission not having enough finances to open other offices in various regions in the country. But with the little resources that we have, we are doing our best. It makes it difficult for the commission to resolve conflicts due to a lack of finances to even pay mediators and arbitrators.

Moreover, the NLC's restricted nationwide reach, resulting from its mere four locations, severely curtails its accessibility for both public workers and the general

public. A shortage of funding makes it impossible to open more offices in other areas, which makes it challenging for many employees to use the Commission's services. These issues confirm (Saundry, Fisher & Kinsey, 2021; Rhodes & Akram, 2023) the claim that underfunded conflict resolution bodies are less able to mediate successfully since they do not have the resources needed to support prompt and effective procedures. Organisations that receive adequate funding for dispute resolution are better able to make investments in knowledgeable mediators, modern technology, and efficient administrative procedures, all of which help to resolve conflicts more quickly and effectively (Barua, 2020). On the other hand, insufficient funding prevents groups like the NLC from maintaining the infrastructure required to facilitate effective mediation procedures, which causes delays that impair the success of dispute resolution as a whole (Saundry, Fisher & Kinsey, 2021). Furthermore, the NLC's budgetary limitations affect its capacity to fairly compensate arbitrators and mediators. These experts are essential to the fair and effective resolution of conflicts. Unfortunately, the Commission finds it difficult to recruit and retain qualified arbitrators and mediators in the absence of adequate funding to pay them, which leads to poorly handled or unsolved disputes. Similarly, low worker morale and subpar public sector performance are directly impacted when disputes cannot be settled quickly and amicably because of budgetary limitations (Saundry, Fisher & Kinsey, 2021).

5.5.3.2 Poor communication and information sharing

Communication is the foundation of any conflict resolution procedure. Parties can voice complaints, comprehend one another's viewpoints, and strive towards shared solutions through open communication (Folger, Poole & Stutman, 2021). Informing members about collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) is a crucial responsibility of trade union leadership. Nonetheless, the employees of the government stated that they become perplexed when there is imprecise communication. Similarly, union members often believe their issues are not being sufficiently addressed if they are unaware of the specifics of an agreement or the manner in which a particular conflict has been settled. During the collective bargaining process, management's part in conflict settlement entails releasing pertinent information (Lahana et al., 2019). Effective dispute resolution is hampered when leaders of public institutions conceal

facts or neglect to reveal all relevant material. It is crucial to remember that disclosing little information leads to mistrust and suspicion, which makes finding appropriate solutions challenging (Oluwafemi & Kifordu, 2023). This aligns with the school of thought that is of the view that effective communication is the only way to achieve shared understanding, which is necessary for "problem-solving" techniques that are at the heart of conflict resolution. In fostering presumptions, misunderstandings, and animosity, poor, unclear, or incomplete communication impedes the process of resolving conflicts (Servaes, 2022). Conflict resolution becomes more difficult when important information is kept separate or is not shared with the appropriate parties. This problem is mirrored in the principled negotiating paradigm, which emphasises that open communication and complete information exchange are necessary to arrive to a consensus (Malik et al., 2021).

A worker's incentive to work is increased through effective communication and information sharing. Employees are more inclined to believe that their problems are being treated seriously when they feel informed and participate in the resolution process. On the other hand, employees who don't trust the resolution process are less likely to be inspired and involved in their work, which has a detrimental effect on output (Salvation, 2019; Malik et al., 2021). The aforementioned discourse was inferred from study participants' comments, like the one below.

A public servant commented:

I think the way union leaders communicate the collective bargaining agreements to their members makes it hard for them to understand if a particular dispute has been resolved. Some heads of the public institutions do not disclose all relevant information during collective bargaining; they do not share in-formation to help resolve conflicts effectively.

5.5.3.3 Education

One of the main challenges to conflict resolution in Ghanaian public sector institutions is the lack of education about conflict resolution techniques. Any institution that deals with conflicts must adhere to specific protocols meant to settle

disagreements in an equitable manner (Sauden & Chhetri, 2023). Usually, these processes entail moving through several management tiers or specialised organisations like the Labour Commission. But when employees lack legal knowledge, they miss important deadlines and do not appreciate the right resolution procedures (Wallensteen, 2018), which leads to unsolved problems and drawn-out conflicts.

An NLC official commented:

People do not also appreciate the procedures, the settlement procedures. And when I say they don't appreciate it, it's not just the Labour Commission, but in their various institutions. Because, as I indicated earlier, the procedure is that from here you go to the next. From the floor, instead of going to the next floor, you want to go to the fourth floor.

Furthermore, as highlighted by the study's participants, public servants frequently try to bypass the formal chain of command in order to bring matters directly to higher authorities in relation to resolving conflict. In addition to undermining the legal structure, this strategy overburdens higher authorities with problems that could have been handled at lower levels. The reason behind these actions by public servants is their lack of knowledge about the necessary procedures. This assertion is corroborated by Collins (2023), who claims that people are more likely to allow conflicts to worsen when they are unaware of appropriate conflict resolution techniques. As a result, unresolved tensions eventually cause little difficulties to escalate into major ones.

A labour official commented:

.... the procedures that have been established, people fail to go through the procedure, Yeah, people come and it's like you have to school the person. Yeah, people come and it's like you have to school the person. They don't understand their own issues. It is usually because they are not well educated by the public institutions.

Moreover, training employees in dispute resolution techniques is typically the responsibility of the NLC and specific institutions. But according to the information collected from participants, a lot of people visit the Labour Commission without really knowing what their problems are or what to do next. Because of this lack of education on labour issues, the NLC has to take time out to educate them about the procedures used to settle disputes in their organisations. The aforementioned issues outlined go to buttress Coccia (2023) assertion that stakeholders are less likely to employ mediation, negotiation, or arbitration strategies successfully when they are ignorant about them, which can result in the escalation of disputes or the failure to come to a mutually agreeable conclusion. In the public sector, like Ghana, where labour relations are complicated and include many parties, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of these procedures to guarantee that conflicts are settled quickly and equitably (Coccia, 2023). Lack of negotiation skills training may cause parties to take a confrontational stance, which makes compromise more difficult. In giving managers the skills they need to handle complaints before they become more serious conflicts, conflict resolution training can greatly enhance workplace dynamics (Rhodes & Akram, 2023). Similarly, inexperienced mediators may find it difficult to steer discussions or maintain objectivity, which would further impede the effectiveness of the dispute resolution procedure.

5.5.3.4 Improper record keeping and documentation

The participants of the study cited improper record keeping and inadequate documentation as challenges to conflict resolution in the Ghanaian public sector. Accurate and timely documentation of complaints, agreements, and the actions performed during the resolution process is essential to effective conflict resolution.

An NLC director commented:

When public servants come with their complaints, sometimes it's challenging to help resolve the conflicts because they do not have documents indicating evidence of a particular issue. On the part of the public institutions, they don't put things in proper records of the accumulated conflicts presented to the commission and so when they come, it becomes a challenge.

You have to decipher exactly what they are talking about because it is not black and white.

Precise and comprehensive documentation is essential to successful dispute resolution (Palmer, Mavroidis & Meagher, 2022). Therefore, it becomes difficult for the authorities or the NLC to investigate and resolve complaints made by public employees without the necessary paperwork. Lack of proof makes it harder to support claims, which leads to ongoing arguments and unresolved conflicts. In a similar vein, authorities want verifiable proof in order to render fair judgements and make educated decisions. It can be difficult to establish the facts and choose the best course of action in situations when the documents containing the details of a complaint are not easily accessible; conflicts are often made worse by biased resolutions that follow from this (Bonache, Gonzalez-Mendez & Krahé, 2019). This is consistent with Rosenbloom, Kravchuk and Clerkin (2022) claim that having adequate documentation makes it possible for managers or mediators to review the case's facts and agreements, which ensures that conflicts are resolved quickly and efficiently. Incomplete or absent documentation might cause misunderstandings regarding the dispute's status and force parties to reestablish fundamental facts, which slows down the resolution process (Carneiro, Novais & Neves, 2014). All parties to a conflict must have access to the same information and be aware of the actions being taken to address the matter, which can only be achieved through precise documentation. Because different parties may interpret what has been discussed or agreed upon differently, improperly managed records could trigger confusion among stakeholders.

Additionally, the process of resolving conflicts is significantly hampered by institutions' poor record-keeping standards. It is challenging to follow the background and context of disputes when documents are not kept up to date or are not complete (Rosenbloom, Kravchuk & Clerkin, 2022). The institution's conflict resolution procedures become less credible as a result of this inefficiency, which also makes the process more difficult to resolve. Inadequate documentation and record-keeping practices also lead to administrative inefficiencies (Palmer, Mavroidis & Meagher, 2022). Authorities and mediators have to invest a lot of time and money in piecing together the facts of a case by interpreting fragmented material. The resolution

process is slowed down by this extra weight, which causes delays and aggravates all parties.

5.5.3.5 Limited resources

Any successful activity must have resources available, and conflict resolution is no different. The majority of public institution leaders stated that one of the biggest challenges to resolving conflicts is a lack of suitable meeting spaces, such as mini-conference rooms. These kinds of areas are essential for setting up focused, private discussions that are required to settle disagreements. Conflicts cannot be resolved effectively due to the lack of these resources (Omisore & Abiodun, 2014).

A director of a public institution commented:

Most of the public institutions have not been provided with conference rooms to have meetings to resolve conflicts or trained experts like mediators to help make internal conflict resolution effective.

The participants also identified one of the main challenges to successful conflict resolution as being the lack of qualified specialists, such as arbitrators and mediators. These experts have the knowledge and expertise required to handle challenging situations and encourage amicable resolutions. For disputes to be fairly settled and a calm work atmosphere to arise, the presence of qualified arbitrators and mediators is essential (Melenko, 2020).

An NLC official stated:

As I speak to you, I have complaints that have been brought to me to process, but the photocopy machines are not working, so how do I get work done...

Conflict resolution attempts are further complicated by restricted access to necessary technology resources, such as computers, printers, and photocopiers. These resources are essential for keeping correct records, recording disagreements, and promoting communication. This conforms to Oluwafemi and Kifordu (2023) assertion that organisations' capacity to maintain the technology, equipment, and staff that are essential for effectively handling conflicts is hampered by financial limitations.

Effective dispute management requires administrative personnel and mediators with the necessary training. Due to budgetary or financial constraints, many public sector organisations experience a shortage of trained individuals (Anessi-Pessina et al. 2020), which causes delays as fewer employees are available to manage an increasing volume of cases. As a result, there is a backlog of unsolved conflicts.

For example, the National Labour Commission's (NLC) insufficient administrative resources cause delays in the handling and settlement of complaints. Lack of resources causes conflicts to not be resolved properly, which has a detrimental impact on worker productivity. This claim is backed by the school of thought that believes resource constraints frequently result in protracted conflicts at work. Unresolved disagreements cause distractions and impair employees' ability to concentrate on their tasks since there is insufficient time, manpower, or financial resources to handle them quickly (John-Eke & Akintokunbo, 2020).

5.5.3.6 Poor labour policy implementation

It is admirable that Ghanaian public sector institutions have included labour laws in their programmes. On the other hand, putting these policies into practice is the biggest challenge. When conflict resolution procedures are not properly implemented, labour concerns can arise (Rahim, 2023). This discrepancy between policy and practice encourages situations in which conflicts are not resolved by the application of established norms.

A labour official commented:

I must recommend the government sector...It's just that they have problems with how to implement the policies. Everything is good on paper, you know, but when the labour issues come up, they are not able to apply the provisions, especially the ones related to dispute resolution.

An NLC official stated:

There is a bit of perceived political influence and favouritism towards officials who are aligned to the incumbent government that prevents the implementation of labour policies to be fairly applied when it comes to conflict

resolution. So, providing grievance procedures in the collective agreement is a challenge.

Furthermore, the study's participants' responses revealed that perceived political influence and favouritism within Ghana's public sector institutions is one of the primary challenges to the effective execution of policies. Conflict resolution processes lose credibility and efficacy when labour laws are not implemented equally because of political allegiances or biases. This point buttresses Ikeije and Islam (2020) claim that conflicts over pay, working conditions, and job security may arise when labour policies are not consistently applied, giving workers the impression that their rights are not being upheld. No matter how well thought out they are, labour policies are useless if they are not implemented promptly. Employees become unhappy when regulations pertaining to pay raises, promotions, or workplace safety are not implemented on time because they may believe that their issues are not being taken seriously or given priority (Asaari, Desa & Subramaniam, 2019). Political factors regularly affect Ghanaian public sector labour relations, and political pressure or changing priorities cause labour policies to be ignored or delayed in their implementation.

Collective bargaining agreements may specify specific grievance procedures, but, if these processes are not followed consistently, their efficacy is undermined. A build-up of unsolved issues results from the unfair and opaque implementation of grievance procedures; this in turn tends to foster an environment of resentful employees, which is conducive to improving performance (Ikeije & Islam, 2020; Coccia, 2023). Moreover, ineffective policy execution creates space for operational and administrative inefficiencies. Conflict resolution processes become ad hoc when labour laws are not consistently applied, wasting time and money when conflicts go unresolved or are not sufficiently resolved.

5.5.3.7 Non-accessibility of NLC offices to citizens

Many public employees find it difficult to access NLC offices because of their geographical spread, especially those who work in remote areas. The capital city of Ghana, Accra, is home to most of the labour offices, making it extremely difficult for employees from northern regions to obtain these services. Public servants who might

already be struggling financially find it time-consuming and expensive to travel long distances to get to NLC offices.

An NLC official commented:

... the National Labour Commission official, it's not too accessible in terms of proximity for the citizens. For instance, you have a worker who is at the North and has an issue that has to be solved by the commission. Because the branches are not available in the North, they will have to travel long distances to come to the capital city Accra to get their grievances solved. This situation is costly to public workers.

According to Ikeije and Islam (2020) rural workers have a tough time accessing labour offices when they are only found in major cities or urban areas. Many employees are deterred from complaining or seeking help by the time and expense of driving to a far-off labour office, which causes unresolved issues to aggravate. Lack of access to labour offices makes rural workers feel even more neglected and excluded, as they may believe that the system is set up to better favour metropolitan or well-connected workers than those in outlying areas (Lackey, Freshwater & Rupasingh, 2002; Li, Westlund & Liu, 2019). This is a significant challenge in Ghana since many rural workers do not have the time or money to travel long distances to urban labour offices, so denying them access to their rights. This implies that public employees must pay high expenses while travelling great distances to visit NLC headquarters. These expenses consist of travel, lodging, and missed work-days. Many employees are discouraged from pursuing a settlement for their issues because of the cost burden of utilising NLC services (Parku & Lamptey, 2018). Consequently, disputes go unresolved. Furthermore, the incapacity to effectively settle disputes as a result of NLC offices' unavailability to workers creates employee discontent, which lowers productivity in the public sector.

5.5.4 Summary of presentation for RQ3

Figure 5.12 graphically illustrates the summary representation of research question 3 and its themes.

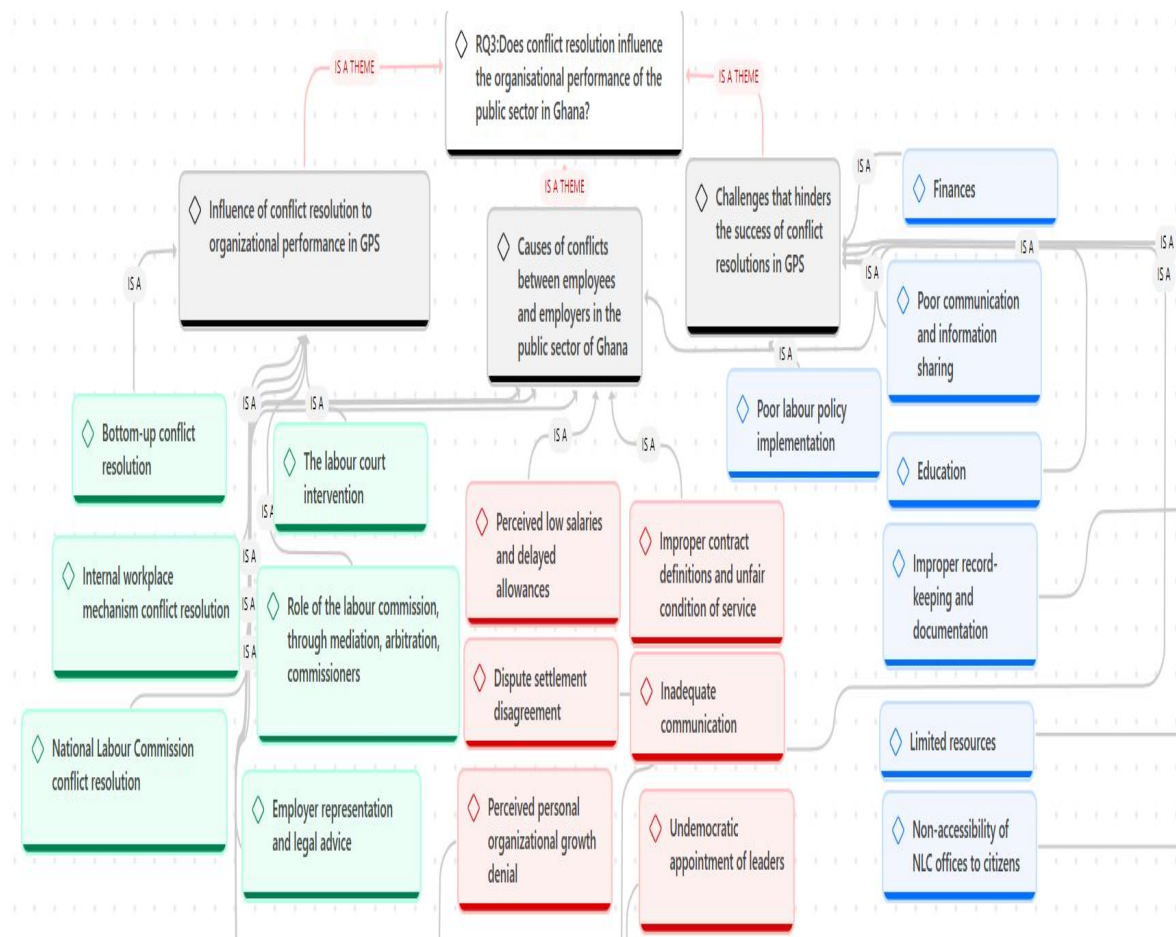


Figure 5.12 Summary representation of RQ 3 and its themes

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

According to Figure 5.12, internal controls, mediation, labour court involvement, bottom-up approaches, and internal controls are some of the strategies used in Ghanaian public sector conflict resolution. Despite these initiatives, effective dispute resolution and organisational performance is hampered by budgetary limitations, inadequate labour policy execution, poor information interchange, and resource scarcity. The results support the Dunlop theory, which asserts that a system of regulations and procedures meant to promote dispute settlement should include tactics like internal controls, mediation, and labour court participation. These tactics establish official avenues for resolving conflicts in accordance with labour relations regulations (Frege & Kelly, 2020). Dunlop's theory, however, also recognise how external factors, such as financial restrictions, poor policy implementation, and resource scarcity, affect the system's efficacy (Doellgast, Bidwell & Colvin, 2021). Effective conflict resolution in Ghana's public sector might be hampered by a lack of funding and resources, which can also hinder the full application of mediation, internal controls, and other tactics. Dunlop's theory then emphasises that the effectiveness of these conflict resolution techniques depends on the quantity and quality of institutional resources, including financing and policies. The system cannot successfully enforce the rules when resources are limited (Bidnur, Kalse & Priyadarshini, 2023), as they are in Ghana, which causes delays, subpar results, and a rise in unsolved issues. The emphasis on various conflict resolution techniques in Ghana's public sector is also consistent with the pluralist belief that organisations gain from a variety of processes that act as a mediator between disparate interests.

Although pluralist theory encourages the use of formal processes, it might not adequately take into consideration the real-world difficulties that result from badly executed structures (Dobbins, Hughes & Dundon, 2021). According to the pluralist theory, formal conflict resolution techniques are enough to balance interests; yet, in reality, these mechanisms are unable to do so due to poor policy implementation and resource constraints (Czarzasty, 2020). This causes a gap between the theoretical principles of pluralist theory and the actual conditions of Ghana's public sector, where labour court intervention and internal controls are unable to produce fair results in the absence of the required funding and support (Ackers, 2021; Poole,

2021). The findings on the challenges in public labour relations are discussed in the next section (Section 5.6).

5.6 RQ 4: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FACED BY PUBLIC SECTOR LABOUR RELATIONS IN GHANA

Research Question 4 examined the challenges faced by public sector labour relations in Ghana and findings are presented in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Challenges of Public Sector Labour Relations in GPS

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Challenges facing trade unions, conflict resolution and collective bargaining in GPS	• Dated labour legislation. • Constraint budget • Poor staff development • Logistic and resource challenges • Unclear national labour commission and government relationship • Institutional Bureaucracy • Expert manpower shortage • Ineffectiveness of federations • Decline in union membership
Challenges affecting effective organisational performance in GPS	• Health insecurity • Inadequate training opportunities • Unfair appraisals • Poor maintenance of resources • Non-comprehensive labour law

Source: Author’s compilation (2024)

NOTE: Ghanaian public sector = GPS

5.6.1 Challenges Facing Trade Unions, Conflict Resolution and Collective Bargaining in PGS

Participants descriptions of critical challenges associated with trade unions, conflict resolution and collective bargaining in GPS consist of dated labour legislation, constraint budget, poor staff development, Logistics and resource challenges, unclear national labour commission and government relationship, institutional bureaucracy, expert manpower shortage, ineffectiveness of federations, and decline in union membership.

Figure 5.13 graphically illustrates the challenges facing trade unions, conflict resolution and collective bargaining in GPS.

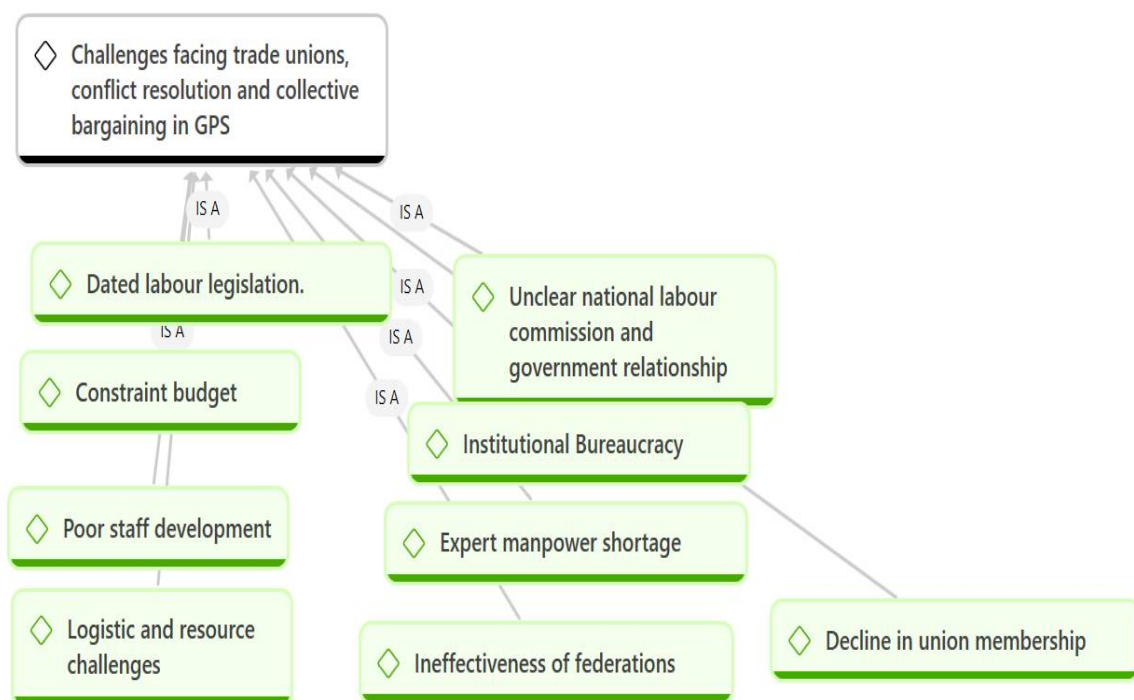


Figure 5.13 Challenges facing trade unions, conflict resolution and collective bargaining in PGS

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

5.6.1.1 Outdated labour legislation

Ghana's labour laws, including the Labour Act, are frequently criticised for being too narrowly focused. Employees in the public sector have noted that the Act falls short

in addressing the intricacies of contemporary work relationships. The legislatively supplied theoretical framework and the actual reality that public servants experience are not aligned (Gavrielides, 2020).

A public sector worker commented:

The Labour Act that governs industrial relations is not comprehensive... So, we need to once in a while review our acts, because the theory and the reality are different.

Another public sector worker lamented:

.... but with the Labour Act, there are certain things that need to be changed in there. Maternity leave is for even those who are pregnant if you give birth, they give us three months. Is it enough? It comes with its complications, like I say. So, when we come it's like we see the men; we are not on the same level. Because what we are going through, they are not going through.

The study's participants reported that the Labour Act's maternity leave rules are one of the specific areas where it falls short. The law only provides three months of maternity leave at the moment, which many employees in the public sector feel is insufficient. The health and well-being of new mothers are not sufficiently supported by this short leave period, nor does it take into consideration the mental and physical difficulties that come with childbirth and the early stages of motherhood (Van Niel et al., 2020). Men and women in public service may be treated differently as a result of insufficient maternity leave policies, since women may feel under pressure to resume work before they are ready. Women's performance in the public sector is generally impacted by this circumstance (Del Rey, Kyriacou & Silva, 2021; Zhang & Rodrigue, 2023).

Outdated labour laws reduce trade unions' ability and reach in defending workers' rights, which reduces their power and efficacy. According to Quiggin and Henderson (2023) labour laws need to change as workplaces do in order for unions to effectively

represent their members. However, trade unions frequently function under a legislative framework in Ghana's public sector that does not adequately take into consideration contemporary concerns like performance economy positions, technology advancements, or the growing complexity of worker-employer relationships. The relevance and impact of unions in a modern setting are diminished by outdated laws that limit their capacity to negotiate on important issues like flexible work schedules or changing workplace safety regulations (Visser, 2024). In order for collective bargaining to be successful, labour laws must provide a fair framework that supports the negotiating strengths of both management and unions (Kambasu, 2023). However, Ghana's outdated labour laws may limit the range of topics that can be discussed, restrict the right of unions to be represented, or impose unduly complicated procedures that hinder discussions. Moreover, Ghana's capacity to offer a competitive and equitable work environment is further restricted by outdated labour laws that make it more difficult for the nation to comply with international labour standards and best practices.

5.6.1.2 Constraint budget

Budgetary constraints frequently result in a lack of financial resources for labour relations efforts, including programmes for employee welfare, development, and training (Beaumont, 2024a). Leaders frequently put other areas ahead of labour relations when money is short, underfunding important areas. A staff that feels underappreciated and unsupported as a result of this lack of investments experiences a decline in morale (Foy et al., 2019).

A public sector worker commented:

I would say it's a financial issue. Because when the public sector budget is approved, it stipulates this is what you intend to do in the year, you won't get it in full. So, when it happens like that, leaders will divert their money to areas that they think is okay, so they will leave in that aspect of labour relations. So, if the government or I would say the finance ministries are able to release their approved budget to the ministries or departments, all of the agencies involved can do whatever they want to do.

The study participant reported that leaders of public sector institutions typically reallocate funds to areas they deem more vital when public sector budgets are authorised but not completely distributed. A lot of the time, these resource reallocations miss out on crucial labour relations initiatives like collective bargaining and workplace upgrades. Initiatives meant to improve public employees' contentment are consequently given less priority (Pecino et al., 2019). Furthermore, the financial limitations create difficulties for the workforce since employees in the public sector believe there is a lack of commitment to their professional and well-being, which lowers performance. Furthermore, according to Di Carlo (2023), disregarding labour relations can create a disconnect between management and public servants, further straining bipartite relationships in the public sector.

Furthermore, due to budgetary constraints, public sector unions in Ghana are less equipped to carry out in-depth research, consult specialists, or offer their members full representation. Similarly, due to this financial constraint, unions are less able to mobilize employees or engage in productive negotiations, which makes it more difficult for them to win good outcomes in labour disputes (Ferrando & Ruggieri, 2018). Budgetary restrictions also have an impact on unions' capacity to provide training for union representatives and employees, which is essential for comprehending intricate labour laws, collective bargaining tactics, and dispute resolution methods (Webster, 2022). The NLC's financial constraints cause delays in dispute settlement since there aren't enough staff members to manage a large caseload, and a lack of funding may make it more difficult to do essential administrative duties. Workers are more inclined to look for alternate ways to express their concerns when they lose faith in institutional processes because of resource constraints (Tanny & Al-Hossienie, 2019). This causes labour relations to become unstable and sparks additional conflict. In Ghana's public sector, where financial limitations make it difficult for institutions to adequately address workers' demands, labour unrest frequently results when workers choose industrial action such as strikes and protests as a means of voicing their discontent.

5.6.1.3 Poor staff development

The likelihood of increased productivity in Ghana is weakened by unions and public sector institutions' disregard for staff development. The public servants underlined

how trade unions frequently do not give negotiations for capacity-building programmes top priority (Wang et al., 2020). The sector's performance is impacted because public employees lack the abilities and information required to carry out their jobs well due to a lack of emphasis on professional development. Employees find it difficult to meet the demands of their roles in the absence of possibilities for continuous training and development, especially in a changing workplace (Mikołajczyk, 2022; Warren & Gibson, 2023). Employee performance suffers and motivation wanes as a result of this skills gap since they feel unprepared to handle their tasks.

A public servant stated:

the unions do not pay much attention or negotiate on issues like capacity building ...for workers to work with, considering the fact that these things help to increase productivity.

A labour official indicated:

I believe that there should be much knowledge sharing, for example, because we are transferred from different places. We are hired by the head of civil service, and we are distributed to all the department agencies or even the ministries. So sometimes you don't have a class that is especially responsible for labour and employment issues, but we learn along the line. So, as you are learning along the line, there must be continuous building of capacity and knowledge sharing to develop policies.

The labour officials and public workers emphasised the value of ongoing knowledge exchange and capacity building, particularly in light of Ghana's regular rotations and transfers within the public sector. The frequent transitions between departments, agencies, or ministries that public servants experience interfere with their ability to learn and adjust (O'Connell et al., 2019). Regardless of their posting, public officials are expected to be prepared for their responsibilities through ongoing professional development. Furthermore, because public sector employees in charge of labour

and employment matters typically receive little formal training, such as in dispute resolution and negotiation skills, they are not equipped with updated skills on the job, which can result in discrepancies and knowledge gaps (Parku & Lamptey, 2018). The way policies are implemented, and their quality may be impacted by this circumstance.

5.6.1.4 Logistic and resources challenges

Issues with logistics and resources pose serious challenges to Ghana's public sector labour relations' efficient operation. The productivity of public sector employees is severely hampered by the lack of essential supplies like paper and office materials (Androniceanu, 2021; Ayoko, Peter & Jegede, 2023). According to public sector employees, unions don't concentrate on bargaining for the organisations tasked with managing labour relations, let alone for logistics. As a result, employees of labour relations agencies struggle to carry out their responsibilities in an efficient manner.

A public servant said:

the unions do not pay much attention or negotiate on issues like ...non-availability of resources for workers to work with, considering the fact that these things help to increase productivity.

Furthermore, unions are essential in promoting the interests and well-being of workers in the public sector. However, as employees in the public sector have observed, unions frequently neglect to give negotiations priority when it comes to the provision of necessary resources and logistics (Bernstein, 2022). Employees who have to pay for work-related expenses out of pocket, for example, feel abandoned. Performance is further impacted by this circumstance, which breeds anger and frustration within the public institutions in Ghana.

A labour official commented:

There's a whole lot of things that we can do. We can't print them. Logistics is a major issue. So, you need a paper, so you can't even get a common paper to print. They have released the whole of last year, the department. Do you know how much they gave us? 40,000. It's not only here; it is

the department. We have 74 district offices. So, if there is an issue, they report to me. I have to go out there. I have to go with my own money and pay it myself. That's a real challenge.

According to the participants, ordinary administrative operations are disrupted when basic printing supplies are unavailable, which causes delays in report preparation, communication, and recordkeeping. This supports the claim made by De Francesco and Guaschino (2020) that financial and logistical constraints make it more difficult for public institutions to meet worker needs and provide sufficient resources. As a result, there are insufficient supplies, which lead to unhappiness and labour problems.

Furthermore, the submission from a labour official indicates that operational capacities are severely restricted by limited funds. The severe financial circumstances are demonstrated by the fact that a department in charge of 74 district offices is only given 40,000 Ghana cedis. Due to insufficient funding, employees are forced to do official tasks with personal cash, which is unsustainable and demoralising. These budgetary constraints make it more difficult for departments to tour fields, support district offices, and react to situations quickly, all of which prevents them from fostering positive labour relations (Haipeter et al., 2021; Beaumont, 2024a). Moreover, trade unions' operating capability is restricted by logistical issues and resource constraints, which hinders their ability to successfully advocate for the rights of their members. Union officials may lose their visibility and impact if they are unable to routinely meet with employees or keep an eye on working conditions due to a lack of logistical support (Joyce, Stuart & Forde, 2023). Union participation and mobilisation efforts are weakened by logistical constraints, which consequently affect their effectiveness and negotiating power (Anderson, 2021). These difficulties frequently lead to a decline in trust among union members in Ghana's public sector, since they may believe that their union is unable to successfully speak on their behalf.

5.6.1.5 Unclear national labour commission and government relationship

In Ghana, public sector labour relations are significantly influenced by the relationship between the government and the National Labour Commission (NLC). Because they believe the government has influence over the Commission's decisions, public servants lack faith in the National Labour Commission. Public sector employees

question the fairness and impartiality of the NLC's rulings because they believe the commission is skewed in favour of the government (Gyapong, 2020). The Commission's ability to settle labour disputes effectively is negatively impacted by this breakdown of trust. Because the majority of public sector employees think that the NLC constantly supports the government, they are hesitant to file complaints for fear that their problems won't be handled properly (Parku & Lamptey, 2018).

Moreover, the efficient use of labour relations in the public sector is hampered by the National Labour Commission's apparent bias (Kwarteng, Bawa & Koduah, 2024). For an organisation tasked with mediating and resolving disputes to be legitimate and effective, it must be regarded as impartial. Workers' perceptions of the NLC's lack of independence lead to conflicts between the social partners in tripartite and bipartite relationships, which in turn prompts industrial actions like strikes and other kinds of protest as a way for the workers to express their concerns. These activities impair public services, squander manpower, cost the state money, and have a detrimental effect on how well public sector organisations operate overall (Ohemeng, Obuobisa Darko & Amoako-Asiedu, 2020). The aforementioned challenge was inferred from study participants' responses, like the one below.

A public sector worker commented:

we do not have confidence in the National Labour Commission, which is the institution mandated to resolve conflict between workers and employers as well as the government. The Commission seems to be influenced by the government: hence their verdict on issues seems to mostly favour the government.

5.6.1.6 Institutional bureaucracy

The bureaucratic challenges encountered when navigating labour organisations for matters like collective bargaining and dispute resolution have a negative impact on employees' morale and productivity (Suzuki & Hur, 2020). Employees who have to navigate convoluted bureaucratic processes in order to get their concerns resolved may experience frustration and demoralisation. They become less committed to their

roles and perform worse overall as a result of this frustration (Peeters & Campos, 2023).

A labour official indicated:

...like, you send an invitation to invite an employer. Either for unfair practice or wrongful dismissal or whatever form. You send a letter, that person will not come. The worker would have to come far away and sit down here two, three hours. You have to send an e-mail. You are requested for information. We initiate the report and it is sent to the ministry for maybe further input or the forwarding to our mission in Geneva for submission to ILO. You write, as we speak, I even have some time working on it, you write to other ministries or departments, unions and employers associations for information, they will not mind you. And that information, I cannot sit down here, or as a department, I cannot sit down here and write it. Because more than one of them, is a department of ministry to authorise.

The aforementioned claim supports the claim made by Mutiarin, Nurmandi and Moner (2023) that bureaucratic red tape regularly impedes employees' capacity to complete duties effectively, which results in job discontent. In the public sector, collective bargaining is frequently an overly complicated process that causes delays and inefficiencies. According to labour officials, there are extensive and intricate procedures involved in inviting employers to engage in negotiations or resolve grievances. Workers may have to wait for hours after making long trips only to discover that the required parties are not ready or present (Wang, 2022).

Besides, one of the biggest challenges to conflict resolution in the public sector is its bureaucratic nature. Dispute resolution is slowed down when departments and units refuse to collaborate with one another or answer information requests slowly. This inefficiency aggravates disputes and makes it more difficult to put ideas into action on time (Schub, 2022). For example, as indicated by the labour officials, information requests are frequently denied or delayed by different ministries and departments. It

is impossible to prepare and submit reports to international organisations like the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on time due to this lack of responsiveness. This issue supports the Dunlop theory viewpoint, which holds that the industrial relations system should balance interests within a stable framework. However, too much bureaucracy upsets this equilibrium, demoralising workers who believe their voices are not heard and taken into consideration but are instead silenced by red tape (Chawla, Singh & Singh, 2020; Khan, 2022). The entire goal of the labour system, which is to promote fruitful negotiations and prompt conflict settlement, is effectively undermined when bureaucratic barriers hold down the process or cause misunderstanding. According to Dunlop's theory, regulations and processes are important, but they shouldn't get in the way of effective labour relations. If they do, the system isn't working as intended, which eventually lowers productivity and causes discontent at work (Tulachan & Rai, 2021).

5.6.1.7 Expert manpower shortage

The lack of a specialised group of labour experts in the public sector greatly impedes the creation and execution of policies (Yusuf et al., 2024). The Ghanaian labour sector lacks people who are specifically trained and hired to manage labour-related issues, in contrast to other specialised industries like finance or trade, where there are dedicated cadres of experts. This gap causes errors and inefficiencies in the creation and application of policies.

A director at MELR commented:

It's possible that somebody may stay here but have acquired some level of knowledge and suddenly the person is removed or transferred. But that is a public service policy, which is difficult to change. But here, we don't really have administrators, programmers, and then maybe IT, finance, and those ones. So, we don't have a class that is trained purely for labour-related issues.

The Ministry of Employment and Industrial Relations (MELR) director observed that institutional memory and continuity are disrupted when staff members with labour-related skills are frequently moved or removed. Because of this instability, it takes a

lot of effort and is ineffective to retrain recently assigned personnel. A thorough understanding of labour laws, conflict resolution, social protection, and employment rights is necessary for the establishment and implementation of successful labour policies (De Stefano & Aloisi, 2019; Landau, 2024). The MELR finds it difficult to uphold the coherence and calibre of its policies in the absence of a specialised and steady workforce. The National Labour Commission, the National Pensioners' Authority, the Labour Department, and the Department of Factory Inspectors make up the MELR's technical branch as well. MELR is in charge of all of these establishments, and while they require personnel with knowledge of labour matters, this is untrue.

A labour official indicated:

... because somebody may be trained, he may have learned, but because it's a special area, not everybody understands labour-related issues. So, the person who comes, he must be taken through the rudiments of what labour is, the basis of labour, conflict management, social protection, social dialogue, employment, rights, the labour act, and other policies. So, it's a huge challenge. It's a policy issue.

An in-depth knowledge of the Labour Act and related regulations is necessary, for example, handling labour disputes and negotiating collective bargaining agreements. When employees with inadequate training in these fields are given such duties, production suffers and labour institutions like the Department of Factory Inspectors and the National Labour Commission lose trust. The director's concerns are validated by Mota Romero et al. (2022), who point out that inexperienced or poorly trained employees may find it difficult to fulfil the responsibilities of their jobs, which could result in inefficiencies and subpar service delivery. The ability of a union to effectively handle the legal and financial facets of labour negotiations and grievance procedures rests on having qualified representation. Trade unions may also be less able to interpret labour laws, evaluate economic data that is pertinent to bargaining, or use complex negotiating strategies in the absence of labour experts (Landau, 2024).

Additionally, because they are knowledgeable about the nuances of labour regulations, have mediation or arbitration experience, and can find workable solutions to complicated problems, labour relations experts are crucial for handling conflicts. When it comes to providing conflict resolution organisations with advice on legal precedents, best practices, and technical aspects of labour conflicts, labour specialists are essential. Similar to this, successful collective bargaining necessitates expert negotiators who can evaluate labour market data, comprehend economic effects, and apply negotiation techniques to arrive at win-win agreements (Bayley, 2024; McAlevey & Lawlor, 2023).

5.6.1.8 Ineffectiveness of federations

A large number of union executives and members expressed discontent with the way their affiliate union federations handle them. Study participants expressed dissatisfaction at having to pay large dues to these federations without receiving any noticeable benefits. Another important issue that was brought up was management's tardiness in responding to complaints. This is a result of management's preference to work directly with traditional unions after local unions affiliate with them. Thus, local unions are forced to wait if the traditional unions cause delays in the process (Parku & Lamptey, 2018).

Traditional unions represent local unions in negotiations with management as part of the affiliation requirements. A local union must write a request letter to the traditional union in order to associate, and the terms must be agreed upon by both sides (Damachi, 2023). Some respondents expressed suspicions that certain conventional union officials were swayed by partisan politics, pointing to their increased engagement when a specific political party is in power and their inaction when it is not. Some federations are reluctant to resist unfavourable policies because of this, like those pertaining to minimum wages and service conditions. A notable change has resulted from the federations' inaction and inefficiency in carrying out their responsibilities to their members. The mother unions' membership is declining as a result of members departing more often to form their own internal unions (Parku & Lamptey, 2018). The aforementioned concern raised by most union executives was deduced from their responses, such as the below comment.

A union executive said:

We have some challenges with our mother union and we are now trying to form our own union. We want to break away from the ICU and GTPCW. We are in the process of getting our certificates but have yet to add a few documents to make us a full union. When it comes to MAY DAY, there are some benefits that have to come from our mother union which we don't get. We use our own in-house generated fund to support the May Day in a way of getting a t-shirt and a get-together after the match organised by the workers. For some years now, these things have not been coming from our mother union, but we pay money to them every month, so the money is just there and they are using it just for their administrative work but we the individuals, don't benefit.

5.6.1.9 Decline of union membership

The difficulties and tensions surrounding trade union pluralism are a major factor contributing to the decline in union membership in Ghana's public sector. The existence of many unions within an organisation is known as trade union pluralism, and it can happen on different levels (Engler & Voigt, 2023). At the enterprise level, though, it becomes more worrying because the Labour Act only permits one union to have a collective bargaining certificate. Unions that represent workers in the same class highly value this certification since it gives the union the exclusive right to negotiate on behalf of its members (Owusu-Afriyie, Twumasi Baffour & Baah-Boateng, 2023).

A union executive commented:

The unions that represent the same class of workers can only have one collective bargaining certificate. In acquiring this certificate, the unions involved create a toxic atmosphere in the organisation, making it unattractive for the unions to want to join the unions.

Another union executive indicated:

Because of the tension and hostility that exist in the organisation among the union members and executives, some of the employees decide not to join any union at all. The reason they give is that they are not ready for all the drama that the union activities bring.

Competition for collective bargaining certificates has resulted in disputes between unions, which has strained relations within the group, harmed cohesion and efficacy, and discouraged workers from participating in union activities. Public sector employees are becoming less likely to join unions due to the competitive and conflict-ridden character of union pluralism (Ayentimi & Burgess, 2023); many choose to stay out of unions to avoid the drama and disputes. The trade union pluralism-induced decline in union membership has wider ramifications for labour relations in Ghana's public sector. Ringqvist (2021) contends that a weaker union presence results in a workforce that is less powerful and organised, which limits the capacity of public employees to collectively defend their rights. Additionally, the tensions and hostility brought up by union pluralism can produce a poisonous workplace, which lowers output even more.

The decrease in union membership has a direct effect on the collective bargaining power of unions. A union's ability to negotiate is largely determined by the number of workers it represents; a smaller membership base reduces the union's bargaining strength with employers (Toan, 2023). In Ghana's public sector, where unions are crucial in promoting better working conditions, declining union membership reduces their collective voice and their ability to get favourable outcomes for workers. Declining membership impairs unions' capacity to mediate disputes in Ghana's public sector, where they are crucial for resolving complaints about pay, promotions, and working conditions (Jeffries, 2023). Less union representation reduces the union's power and bargaining power with management, which might result in long-lasting conflicts. It is difficult for unions to organise collective action or get support for projects that address workplace issues when employees are estranged from their organisations. In addition to reducing unions' bargaining power, this disunity makes it more difficult for them to properly represent and defend the interests of all workers, which further reduces their relevance and attraction to prospective members (Osborne-Lampkin et al., 2018; Schnabel, 2020).

5.6.2 Challenges Affecting Effective Organisational Performance in GPS

Participants description of critical challenges with effective organisational performance in the public sector of Ghana consist of: *Health insecurity, Inadequate training opportunities, Power dynamics and inequality, Poor maintenance of resources, non-comprehensive labour law.*

Figure 5.14 graphically illustrates the challenges affecting effective organisational performance in GPS.

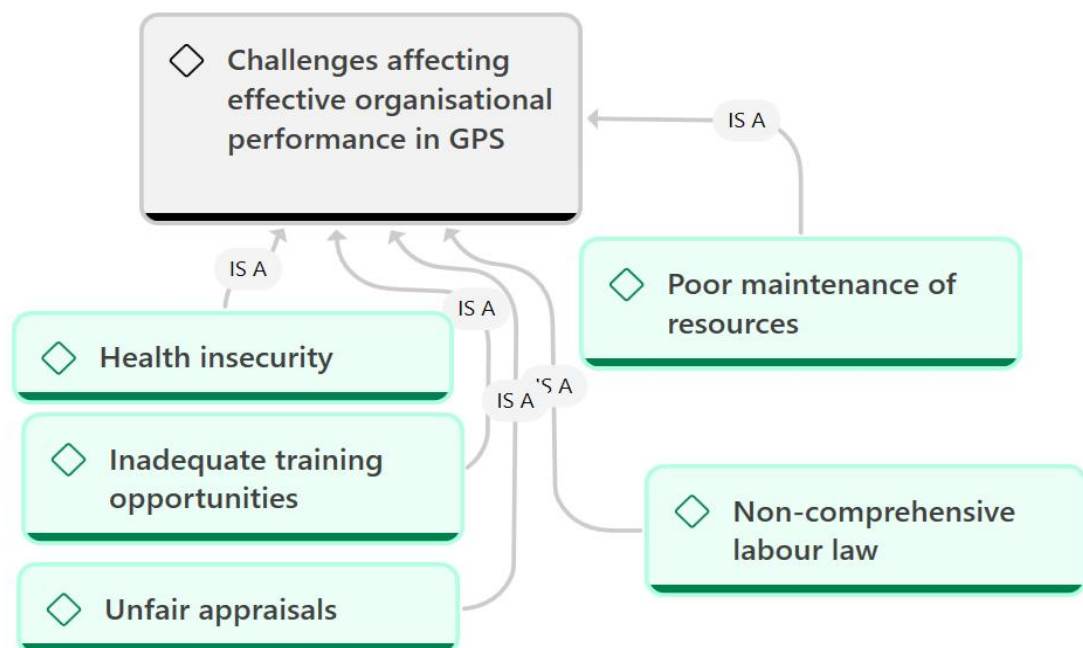


Figure 5.14 Challenges affecting effective organisational performance in GPS

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

5.6.2.1 Health insecurity

Health insecurity is a significant issue for Ghanaian public sector employees, with a lack of tailored hospitals and health insurance plans. Public sector workers in Ghana do not have access to free or subsidised healthcare, unlike private sector workers who can benefit from extensive health insurance packages (Adongo, Azumah & Nachinaab, 2021). This results in public sector employees paying for their own medical care, which can be costly.

A PSC worker indicated:

There are no hospitals that, as a public servant, you can go and get treated for free or have a special health insurance card that can cater for medical bills. All of these amenities are things that can motivate public servants to increase their performance.

Public sector employees' performance and morale are greatly impacted by health insecurity (Tzenios, 2019). Public employees who feel underappreciated and unsupported by the government may get demotivated upon learning that there are no specialised healthcare facilities or insurance programmes. The fact that (WHO, 2022) shows a direct correlation between worker productivity and access to high-quality healthcare has highlighted this predicament. Workers in the public sector who lack access to comprehensive insurance plans or specialised healthcare facilities frequently experience delays in receiving medical care, which contributes to a rise in absenteeism and decreased productivity (Sood, Seth & Grima, 2022). Additionally, the worry that one will have to pay a large medical bill can be stressful and distracting, which lowers the attention and effectiveness of public servants in their work, which in turn lowers employee morale and performance.

5.6.2.2 Inadequate training opportunities

Governments and labour unions often prioritise increased wages over ongoing education and career advancement for public employees. While salary increases improve quality of life, they are not the only determinant of performance. Equal importance lies in training opportunities (Keltu, 2024).

A public servant stated:

Politicians and unions only focus on negotiating for pay increases without paying attention to other areas of the job that can increase performance, like training.

Furthermore, public employees' performance is directly impacted by the absence of sufficient training opportunities. Employees in the public sector find it difficult to stay up to date with technological breakthroughs, new laws, or changes in their industries if they don't have access to regular training. The quality of public services has generally declined as a result of this knowledge and skill mismatch (Adely et al., 2021).

Moreover, training programmes are necessary to provide a workforce with the skills needed to meet the demands of contemporary governance. Institutions in the public sector that lack this kind of training may find it difficult to respond to new issues, manage resources effectively, and execute policies (Muzam, 2023). This claim supports research from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) that said that public sector employees' competencies directly correlate with the quality of public services. Public trust and contentment with government institutions are undermined by inadequate training, which impairs public servants' ability to provide high-quality services (Haricharan, 2023). Furthermore, expert union representatives are crucial to defending workers' rights because they contribute to their understanding of labour law, negotiating techniques, and dispute resolution methods. Union leaders may also find it difficult to stay current on labour laws, legislative changes, and economic trends that affect negotiations if they are not trained (Nissim & Simon, 2021). Mediation, negotiation, and effective communication are just a few of the specific abilities needed for conflict resolution that can only be acquired with regular training. Union representatives and mediators who receive conflict resolution training are more equipped to recognise and address the

underlying causes of disagreements, control their emotions during negotiation, and promote cooperative solutions. This finding is inline with von Feigenblatt (2021).

5.6.2.3 Unfair appraisals

One of the main activities that lower employee morale in order to boost performance is the assessment of workers unfairly. Employees may get demotivated and lose faith in the appraisal system if they believe that their performance reviews are determined more by their personal connections with managers than by their actual job performance (Zwiech, 2021).

A PSC worker commented:

This is to say that when it comes to evaluating performance, some superiors rate you based on the relationship you have with them and not necessarily on your performance. However, we have stated it clearly in the appraisal form that it shouldn't be based on sentiment.

The study's participants expressed the opinion that the public sector's performance has declined because they feel that evaluations are not carried out fairly, which deters them from giving their all at work. This is a significant challenge as the majority of important organisational procedures, including possibilities for training, promotion, and career advancement, depend on assessment data. Therefore, information obtained through appraisals will be deceptive if the results do not accurately reflect the effort of the workers (Dangol, 2021). Personal ties tend to sway appraisals, which means that less competent employees progress because of their connections with superiors, while deserving employees get overlooked for advancements. Favouritism and nepotism are seen as determining career advancement in this poisonous work environment created by this behaviour (Micacchi, Vide, Giacomelli & Barbieri, 2024).

Employee morale is greatly impacted by unfair assessments since they instill a sense of unfairness and deter workers from giving their best work. This backs up Weiss and Hartle's (2023) assertion that perceptions of fairness have a direct impact on employee motivation, especially when it comes to performance reviews that affect promotions, pay raises, and other benefits. Perceptions of bias in performance reviews demotivate employees who believe their contributions are neglected or

undervalued in an environment where fair assessment procedures may already be constrained by bureaucratic inefficiencies (Dangol, 2021). This lack of dedication may result in slower reaction times, reduced productivity, and worse service quality in Ghana, all of which have an impact on the public sector's capacity to serve the requirements of the populace.

5.6.2.4 Poor maintenance of resources

One of the main issues that survey participants mentioned as having an impact on their performance was the absence of maintenance of equipment and dependable internet access. The use of malfunctioning equipment or resources by public sector employees to do their jobs leads to annoyance and discontent, which impairs their performance (Xiang & Chin, 2021). In addition, the absence of basic resources makes it difficult for employees in the public sector to accomplish their jobs efficiently, which wastes man hours and has a detrimental impact on the performance of the public sector as a whole. Furthermore, there is a loss of potential productivity when employees are unable to use their time effectively because of malfunctioning technology or erratic internet connections. In addition to impairing individual performance, this inefficiency interferes with public sector organisations' workflows and production (Nodirovna, Ugli & Abduazizovich, 2022; Tampi, Nabella & Sari, 2022).

A public servant indicated:

My case, for instance, these machines on my table are faulty, they don't work. But they expect me to come into work every single day, just come and sit behind my desk, a waste of human resources. The internet is not working, we have to use our personal data, and you get up and go home at the end of the day without being productive. It reduces the performance of the public sector.

According to the study's participants, public services like permits, licences, and registrations are often processed slowly in public institutions where employees battle with malfunctioning technology and erratic internet access. The public may become

irritated with these delays and develop a poor opinion of the competence and dependability of the public sector.

This assertion is supported by Özçobanlar's (2023) study, which shows that inadequate resource maintenance impairs public institutions' capacity to provide services effectively and efficiently. The quality of public services is also impacted by poor resource maintenance because well-maintained infrastructure and equipment are necessary to provide regular and dependable services. According to Kravariti et al. (2023), public sector organisations are required to maintain high standards of service delivery, and the public's experience and satisfaction are negatively impacted when resources are disregarded. In Ghana, poor maintenance of resources, including office buildings, medical equipment, and public transportation, causes disruptions and irregularities in service, which has a detrimental impact on the public's opinion of the effectiveness and accountability of the government.

This supports Supramaniam and Singaravelloo's (2021) claim that employee productivity depends on properly maintained resources since they facilitate efficient workflow and minimise downtime brought on by technological problems. Employee productivity is hampered by inadequate resource upkeep, which causes service delivery delays and a general decline in organisational output in the Ghanaian public sector.

5.6.2.5 Non-comprehensive labour law

Act (651), Ghana's labour law, that was introduced in 2003, is perceived by the participants as lacking comprehensiveness and poses significant obstacles for the public sector. These challenges affect not just the implementation of fair labour standards but also the overall operation of public institutions.

A labour official stated:

..... then another angle is that for something to be considered as a crime, there might be a law prescribing that a crime. That is why certain things we do here are not considered a crime because the law does not prescribe it as so, even though it's a bad thing affecting performance. You see, if there is a law here and the law makes no sanctions

and I breach it, what will you do to me? You won't do me anything. So based on that, some of the employers capitalise on the loopholes in the labour law and at times you invite them, and they will not even come.

The study's participants believed that the existing labour law's lack of sufficient severe punishments was one of its primary challenges. For instance, the labour law in Ghana defines what illegal wage deductions and unfair terminations are; nonetheless, it does not specify severe consequences for breaking the law. The efficacy of the laws has been weakened by the lack of deterrent measures, which have resulted in public employees and government officials breaking the law and facing little or no punishment (Mensah et al., 2023).

Employees exploit loopholes in labour law to avoid responsibility for unfair labour practices. Without robust enforcement systems, companies avoid taking responsibility. This undermines the rule of law and erodes workers' faith in the legal system. Employers disregard labour authorities' advice and involve lawyers to delay or avoid compliance (Diamantis, 2022). The involvement of lawyers further complicates matters, highlighting the need for comprehensive legislative protections and robust enforcement systems. Due to the absence of accountability, employers are able to put their own interests ahead of the well-being of their employees, leading to unresolved disputes and decreased performance among public servants. Trebilcock (2023) asserts that vague labour rules encourage ambiguity and inconsistent employment policy implementation. Additionally, the absence of well-defined legal frameworks can make it difficult to settle disagreements and grievances, which can strain ties between employers and employees.

A labour official commented:

...because we can ratify that convention. Most of the conventions there, provisions are not there, so we find it difficult to ratify them. And by ratification, you need to have a domestic law that backs that particular type of implementation.

Furthermore, the ratification of international labour treaties and the enforcement of labour legislation are made more difficult by its shortcomings. Ghana's capacity to

enforce comprehensive labour standards is limited by its inability to ratify conventions under the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as a result of inadequacies in domestic legislation (Kwarteng, Bawa & Koduah, 2024). The nation's reputation abroad and its dedication to enhancing working conditions are both impacted by this disparity.

5.6.3 Summary of presentation of RQ4

Figure 5.15 graphically illustrates the summary representation of research question 4 and its themes

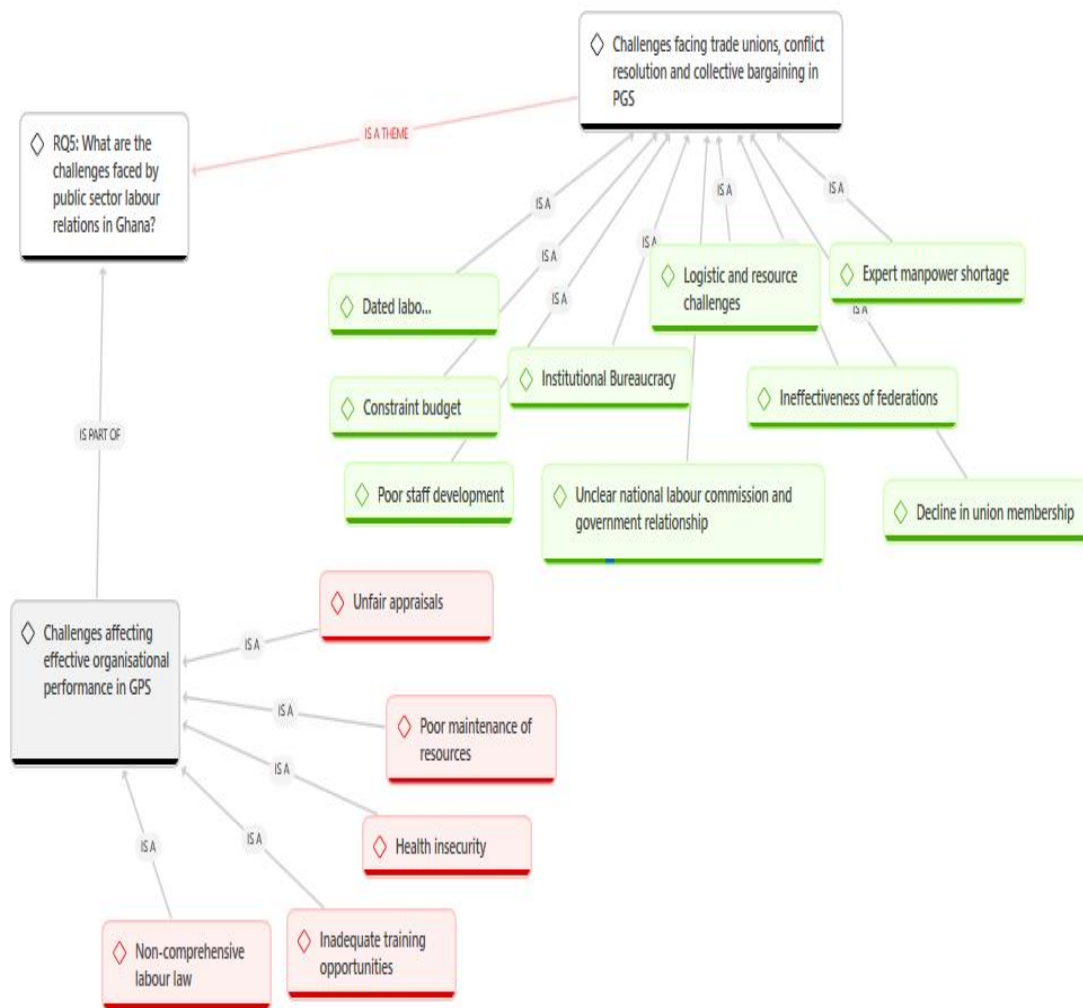


Figure 5.15 Summary representation of RQ 4 and its themes

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

According to figure 5.15, labour relations in Ghana's public sector encounter a number of difficulties, such as out-of-date labour legislation, financial constraints, poor staff development, and logistical hurdles for labour organisations. A complex and challenging environment for sustaining effective labour relations is created by institutional bureaucracy, unclear roles between the National Labour Commission and the government, a shortage of skilled staff, and declining trade union membership all of which further impede the effectiveness of conflict resolution. The study's conclusions lend credence to the philosophy that the challenges with labour relations in the public sector are related to successive economic downturns (Bamber & Lansbury, 2024; Kaufmann, Mehrez & Gurgur, 2019) and steps taken to reduce

institutional frameworks. In the majority of developing countries, it has caused trade union movements to become less powerful. Additionally, it has resulted in the dormancy of public employees' collective bargaining power (Madimutsa & Pretorius, 2021; Bender, 2023).

Additionally, in order to give management more control over the outcomes of the negotiation process and thereby lower wage costs, the collective bargaining process is being moved to the enterprise level, where the employees' power correlation is unfavourable (Bender, 2023). The results substantiate the claim that prospective union members are turning down the opportunity to join a union in order to protect their interests because of the current economic difficulties that most economies are experiencing. Their resistance stems from the financial responsibilities that joining a union entail, such as dues payments by members (Lissowska, 2017; Bender, 2023). The difficulties with labour relations in Ghana's public sector are heightened by all of these problems.

In terms of the research purpose, the next findings relate to the study's investigation into labour relations strategies, which could enhance the performance of the public sector organisations.

5.7 RQ 5: WHICH LABOUR RELATIONS STRATEGIES CAN ENHANCE THE ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN GHANA

Research QUESTION 5 explored strategies that can enhance the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana: findings revealed four themes: Challenges affecting effective organisational performance in GPS: Key contributors to effective and efficient worker performance in GPS, Strategies for organisational

performance in GPS and effective recommendation for organisational performance in GPS as indicated in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Strategies that Enhances Organisational Performance In GPS

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Key contributors to effective and efficient worker performance in GPS	• Regular performance evaluation • Accountability • Staff development and support • Proper supervision and monitoring
Strategies for organisational performance in GPS	• Subsidise housing and transportation • Capacity building • Reduce corruption • Active disciplinary procedures • Establish a conducive work environment
Effective recommendation for organisational performance in GPS	• Inclusion of psycho-social needs in collective bargaining • Invest in research and training programmes • Operate a digitisation system • Provide logistics and support resources • Proper monitoring and evaluation • Motivation • Review labour law

Source: Author's compilation (2024)

NOTE: Ghanaian public sector = GPS

5.7.1 Key Contributors Towards Effective and Efficient Worker Performance in the Public Sector of Ghana.

Findings consist of regular performance evaluation, accountability, staff development and support, and proper supervision and monitoring. Figure 5.16 graphically illustrates the key contributors to effective and efficient worker performance in GPS.

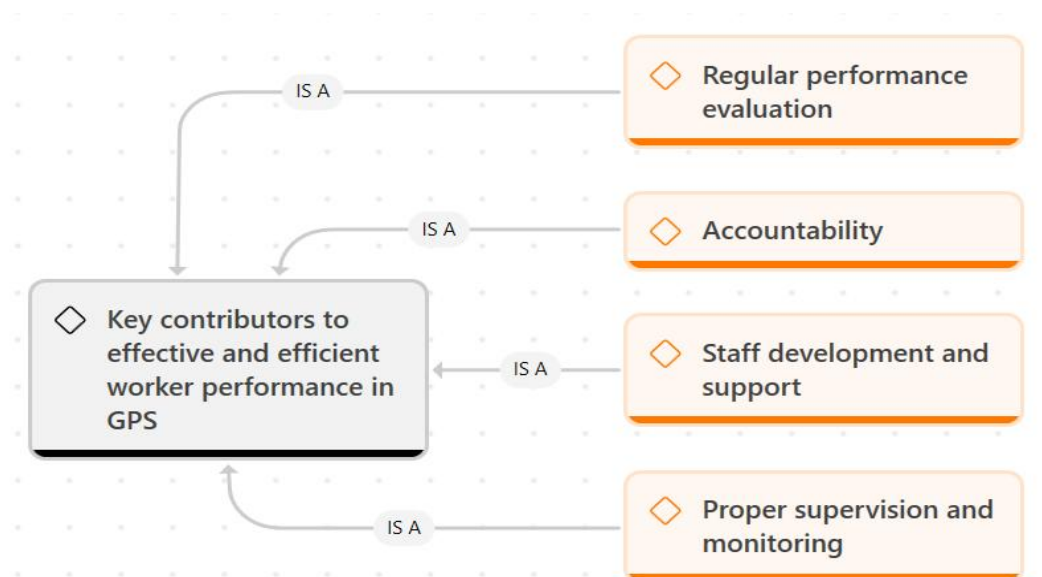


Figure 5.16 Key contributors to effective and efficient worker performance in GPS

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

5.7.1.1 Regular performance evaluation

The Ghanaian public sector uses a systematic approach to conduct mid-year and annual performance evaluations, ensuring employees remain committed to the organisation's objectives. The Public Service Commission (PSC) monitors the overall performance of the public sector in Ghana, alongside internal systems for organisations to assess performance. This ensures that employees remain aligned with the organisation's objectives throughout the year (Ohemeng, 2021).

A PSC Official commented:

We have an appraiser form. We have the target for the year. And then at the end of, I think it is done twice. We have a, after every six months, there's an appraiser. So, there's a mid-year appraisal and then the annual appraisal at the end of the year, so like at the beginning of the year, there are targets that are agreed on. Mid-year, they are being assessed mid-year and then annually and so forth at the end of the year.

The participants stated that goals are decided upon by employees and their managers at the beginning of the year. Establishing goals is essential because it makes sure that employees know what is expected of them and how their job fits into the larger goals of the public sector. The mid-year evaluation ensures public employees have the necessary resources and support to achieve their goals, while the annual appraisal provides a comprehensive assessment of performance throughout the year, aiding in identifying areas for improvement and making decisions on incentives, promotions, and professional growth in the public sector. This claim aligns with the findings of Mthuli (2024), which show that performance reviews provide helpful criticism that directs professional growth. It further stipulates that regular evaluations identify the areas in which employees thrive and those in which they need to grow, enabling focused training and development initiatives that enhance their proficiencies. This finding is in line with Weiss and Hartle (2023) statement that regular performance reviews help employees understand how their contributions fit with company objectives, which is crucial for increasing accountability and productivity.

Regular feedback gives workers a clear grasp of performance expectations and helps them stay focused on their goals. Accountability is also promoted by performance reviews, which make workers more conscious of the expectations placed on them. Employees are more inclined to accept accountability for their work and try to get better when they receive regular evaluations (Camphuijsen, 2021). This sense of accountability is crucial in Ghana's public sector because it promotes a dedication to providing exceptional public service and aids in the reduction of inefficiencies that could otherwise affect the quality of services. Performance reviews are also essential for identifying skill gaps because they point out particular competencies that workers must acquire in order to perform better. A growth-oriented culture is fostered via skill-improvement-focused evaluations, which encourage staff members to take an active role in their professional development (Atmaja et al., 2022).

5.7.1.2 Accountability

Accountability is emphasised in Ghana's public sector to improve employee performance. Establishing clear goals at the outset of the year allows institutions to match expected performance with their mandate and strategic objectives. This

outlines tangible outcomes for government employees as well as institutions, establishing responsibility (Camphuijsen, 2021).

A FWSC official stated:

....so individual institutions set their target, do their review, and draw their appraisals at the end of the year, they are supposed to send their results to the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission (FWSC). We may even have to strike an average score of the organisation and then we take the results and scrutinise them, and to make sure the results are objective and not subjective, e.g., the targets you set, are they consistent with your mandate as an institution and how consistent were you in checking to make sure that target is met? Once we are satisfied with a particular review, we write to the government to say ..we come up with a comprehensive report

In Ghana, public institutions carry out appraisals at the end of the year to assess performance in relation to the predetermined goals. The Fair Wages and Salaries Commission (FWSC) receives the results of these evaluations after that. This procedure entails calculating the organisation's average score and closely examining the outcomes to guarantee consistency and impartiality (Tachie & Potakey, 2020). The FWSC establishes an accountability framework in which public institutions must defend their accomplishments and flaws.

This is in contrast to a report by the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC), which shows that despite the existence of frameworks and policies meant to promote accountability, there are significant gaps in enforcement and compliance. Corrupt practices, a lack of transparency, and bureaucratic inertia frequently undermine these efforts, producing negligible gains in the performance of the public sector (Anku-Tsede, Arthur & Amankwah, 2023). Acheampong et al. (2023) claim that political meddling seriously impairs public sector accountability in Ghana. Political personalities frequently exert pressure on public personnel, which can result in biased decision-making and the defence of corrupt activities. This impairs public

institutions' general functioning and calls into question the efficacy of the accountability systems in place.

The aforementioned discussion accurately reflected the responses provided by the study's participants. It is imperative to note that in order to manage performance in the public sector, the FWSC collaborates closely with the Public Service Commission (PSC). These commissions ensure that accountability is promoted, and performance management is coordinated within the public sector in Ghana. Public employees are more likely to be accountable for their work when they are aware that it will be reviewed, which enhances performance management's overall efficacy in Ghana's public sector.

5.7.1.3 Staff development and support

The public sector in Ghana's performance is enhanced by personnel development and assistance. This fosters continuous growth opportunities, enabling employees to acquire new skills and enhance their existing ones. This also helps employees succeed in their careers, benefiting both the company and the public sector environment. (Purwanto, 2023; Laing, 2021).

A public sector worker commented:

We have the ability to develop staff. Then we have points like, I am able to develop others, like someone needs, able to provide guidance and support to staff for their development. Another point is commitment to one's own personal development and training.

The public sector uses a variety of support system techniques to encourage excellent performance, which the participants emphasised. Providing frequent performance reviews, providing mentorship and coaching to public employees, and ensuring that they have access to training programmes are just a few examples. Additionally, because employees require skills to carry out their jobs well, the provision of staff development and support results in a more productive workforce (Purwanto, 2023). Investing money into training and skill-building initiatives for staff members improves their competencies and makes it possible for them to carry out their jobs well.

Employees in the public sector acquire the technical know-how and abilities required to handle challenging situations and deliver high-quality services when they receive training relevant to their positions (Mukul, Taneja, Özen & Bansal, 2024). Development programmes give employees in Ghana's public sector the tools they need to function effectively in spite of resource constraints, which eventually increases organisational efficiency. Similar to this, career development initiatives in Ghana's public sector that emphasise skill development, leadership training, and internal promotions aid in keeping talented workers by providing them with chances to advance in their positions, which lowers the expense and disruption of high turnover rates (Ohemeng & Akonnor, 2023). It is imperative to note that the majority of study participants indicated that while the aforementioned theme does help the Ghanaian public sector function better, it is only observed and applied on a small scale; as a result, the sector needs to improve.

5.7.1.4 Proper supervision and monitoring

Public sector workers are coerced to increase performance when they are under proper supervision and monitoring. Employees who are aware that their work is being observed and assessed are more inclined to uphold high performance standards. Furthermore, supervision plays a crucial role in ensuring that employees fulfil their responsibilities and that work is done efficiently (Klijn, de Boer & Eshuis, 2022; Kaufmann, Mehrez & Gurgur, 2019).

A public servant said:

.... Then they sit down with your supervisor like, Mark, okay, when it comes to, let's say, the ability to plan, organise, and manage workloads, then they will rate you. Is it one out of five? Is it two out of the five? Or is it five? So, our supervisors make sure you have performed your duty; otherwise, they will not appraise you high for promotions and rewards.

Furthermore, effective supervision and monitoring foster a sense of purpose and direction in public servants and help their performance to coincide with the goals of the public sector (Kaufmann, Mehrez & Gurgur, 2019). The primary issues the public sector faces with supervision and monitoring, according to the participants, are

supervisors' lack of evaluation-related training and the inconsistent application of evaluation criteria during supervision and monitoring. This supports the claim made by Curcuruto and Griffin (2023) that efficient monitoring and supervision procedures in businesses encourage employee input and act as a guide for achieving organisational objectives. Effective supervision discourages actions that could jeopardise the quality of public services. Consistent monitoring promotes openness and helps increase public trust in the government's capacity to serve citizens fairly and responsibly in Ghana, where public sector workers are held to high standards. In empowering supervisors to swiftly address performance issues and uphold high standards across the workforce, proper supervision guarantees consistency and quality in service delivery (Klijn, de Boer & Eshuis, 2022). Organisations can standardise service delivery through supervision and monitoring, which guarantees that all staff members follow set procedures and policies. Regular monitoring enables supervisors to spot and fix deviations from expected standards, sustaining quality in situations where public pleasure depends on consistency.

Moreover, effective monitoring discourages actions like punctuality and protocol noncompliance that could impair the organisation's operations. When workers are aware that they are being watched, they are more inclined to follow workplace rules because it emphasises how important it is to follow company policies. According to Maynard-Moody and Musheno (2022) and Curcuruto and Griffin (2023), regular staff attendance is crucial to the efficiency of the public sector, whereas effective supervision lowers absenteeism and promotes a disciplined culture, both of which are necessary to preserve service quality and dependability.

5.7.2 Strategies for Organisational Performance in the Public Sector of Ghana

Consist of subsidise housing and transportation, capacity building, reduce corruption, active disciplinary procedures, and establish a conducive work environment. Figure 5.17 graphically illustrates the strategies for organisational performance in GPS.

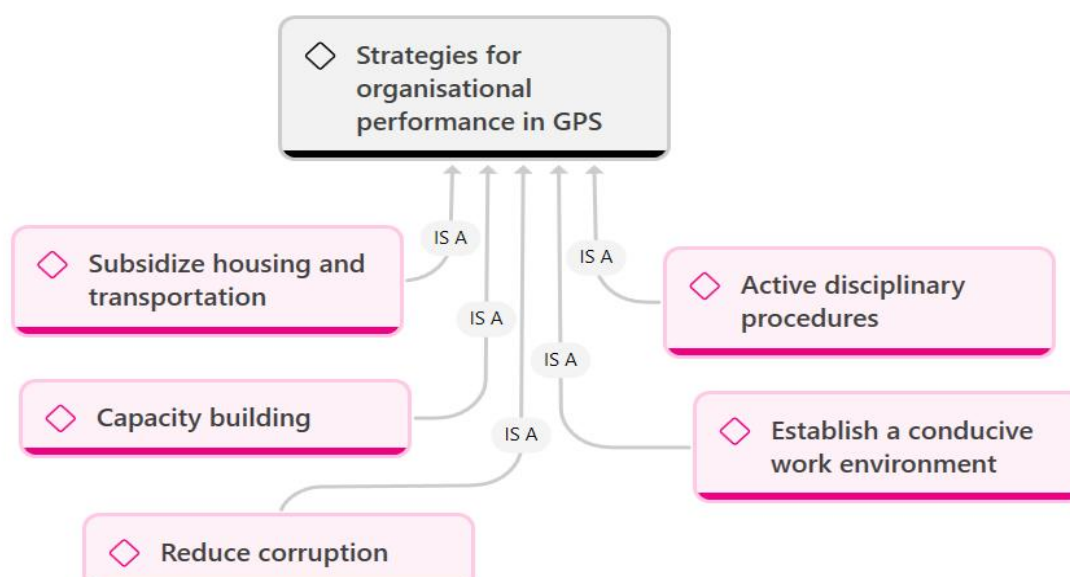


Figure 5.17 Strategies for organisational performance in GPS

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

5.7.2.1 Subsidise housing and transportation

The employees in the public sector highlighted how receiving subsidised housing and transportation may improve their lives. Government-built apartments or other forms of subsidised housing would enable public employees to reside closer to their places of employment. As a result, employees will be able to work longer hours without feeling pressured by a long drive home. In a similar vein, relieving public employees of the burden of high housing costs will increase their disposable income and promote better financial stability (Ganapati & Reddick, 2018). This reduces financial strain on employees and promotes effective performance in the public sector.

A public sector work commented:

the government could have put up buildings flat at subsidized accommodation for public servants. I will stay there, I will be able to do one hour jogging or 30 minutes and walk to work early. I can stay in the office for longer hours to work to increase productivity without being in a rush to get home. Hence, if salaries are not increased at least other working condition will make up for it.

A public sector work stated:

the government could have put up transport arrangement for public servants, considering the high cost of living in the country.

Subsidised transportation options, according to the participants, may also help public sector employees with their transportation needs and the high cost of living. An inexpensive mode of transportation would guarantee that employees could travel to their places of employment without experiencing the financial strain and anxiety that come with using pricey and frequently unreliable public transportation (Chan & Adabre, 2019). In a nation like Ghana where transportation expenses might account for a sizeable percentage of an individual's income, this support would be very beneficial. Furthermore, public employees are more likely to be punctual when they receive subsidized transportation, which lowers the incidence of tardiness and absenteeism (Ganapati & Reddick, 2018). Because of this strategy, employees have more time and energy to increase the public sector's productivity. According to Bohnenberger (2020), employees are more likely to be effective and productive in their jobs when their fundamental requirements are satisfied, which improves the delivery of public services. As a result, workers who have access to affordable housing and reliable transportation are more productive (Reyes, 2023).

5.7.2.2 Capacity building

Capacity building involves offering inclusive training programmes that aim to improve employees' abilities and proficiencies (Davis & D'Lima, 2020). The ever-changing demands on public services require that public personnel possess current knowledge

and skills. Employees in the public sector can provide better services by participating in training programmes that cover a wide range of topics, including customer service, policy implementation, and more (Rosenbloom, Kravchuk & Clerkin, 2022).

A public servant stated:

Training and developing our skills and those of our leaders is good for improving performance in the public sector; the public servants need to be trained to be competent.

Furthermore, through enhancing the capacity of heads of public sector organisations, the government is assured a consistent supply of capable leaders capable of propelling organisational objectives and putting into practice efficient policies. For public sector organisations to be stable and continuous, leadership development is essential (Rosenbloom, Kravchuk & Clerkin, 2022). The public sector works in a dynamic environment where societal requirements, technological advancements, and policies are constantly changing. Consequently, capacity building fosters adaptation in public employees, enabling them to handle these changes with effectiveness (Chetty & Moodley, 2022). Thus, funding capacity building is essential to creating a competent, driven, and effective public sector workforce that can successfully meet Ghanaians' requirements.

Public sector training programmes equip staff members with the specialised knowledge and abilities required to handle intricate social and administrative issues. Targeted capacity-building initiatives enhance job-specific abilities in Ghana's public sector, where employees frequently operate in resource-constrained contexts. This allows workers to provide services more effectively in spite of these constraints (Honadle, 2018). Additionally, growing capacity involves more than just improving human abilities; it also entails fortifying institutional frameworks, which is crucial for long-term gains in public sector performance. Strong institutional frameworks that facilitate strategic planning, effective resource allocation, and open governance are necessary for the delivery of public services (Azfar et al., 2018). Enhancing institutional processes through capacity building aids public sector organisations in Ghana in creating procedures and systems that promote accountability and efficiency. Because learning new skills and moving up in their positions gives workers a sense of fulfilment and purpose, investing in staff development also increases motivation

(Bilderback, 2024). Workers are more likely to be engaged and perform better in their roles if they have access to chances for capacitybuilding.

5.7.2.3 Reduce corruption

Corruption in the public sector, including procurement fraud, nepotism, embezzlement, and bribery, diverts public resources from their intended uses, leading to inefficiencies and decreased service delivery (Mkandawire & Mwalabu, 2024). Study participants found that money intended for public services or infrastructure development projects often ends up in the pockets of dishonest officials, resulting in inadequate projects and unfulfilled public requirements that negatively impacting public institutions' legitimacy and performance. Consequently, there needs to be less corruption in Ghana's governmental sector. When corruption is thought to be pervasive, public confidence in government institutions declines, making it more challenging for these organisations to properly serve their constituents (Magakwe, 2024). The participants recommended that the greatest ways to lessen corruption would be to put strong anti-corruption rules into place and provide clear guidelines for financial management and procurement.

Reducing corruption can also help the public regain faith in government agencies. People are more inclined to support government projects and take part in civic activities when they perceive that the government is dedicated to battling corruption and making efficient use of public resources (Agu, Nkwo & Eneiga, 2024). The public sector in Ghana will perform better overall as a result of growing public trust and engagement, which fosters a more favourable environment for public sector operations. The topic indicated above is reinforced by the study conducted by Azzahra, Savandha and Olubisi (2024), which shows that effective risk management and corporate governance are essential in preventing corruption and abuse of power, particularly in the public sector. Their study emphasised that transparency and accountability must be prioritised in order to reduce corruption in the public sector since they discourage unethical activity and promote moral conduct. By making government actions visible to the public, transparency in decision-making and operations increases public trust and reduces potential for corruption (Magakwe, 2024). In Ghana, the public sector's adoption of transparent financial management, procurement, and decision-making procedures makes it harder for corrupt activities

to go unnoticed, which eventually results in a more effective use of resources. However, there is still more room for improvement in these areas. In order to identify and stop corruption in the public sector, robust internal controls and monitoring procedures are necessary. Internal controls, such as checks and balances, fraud detection systems, and performance audits, make it harder for people to act dishonestly without being caught (Catalão, Cruz & Sarmento, 2023). By putting strong internal controls in place, money is spent responsibly, cutting waste and increasing operational effectiveness.

The discussion of corruption that was previously discussed resulted from responses provided by study participants, like the one that is provided below.

A public sector worker commented:

One vital thing that we have to look at to improve the performance of the public sector is to reduce corruption in the public sector. The corruption in the public sector is crazy, and this is reducing the performance of the public institutions.

5.7.2.4 Active disciplinary procedures

Participants in the study highlighted active disciplinary proceedings as one of the measures that improved performance in Ghana's public sector. Union leaders assert that performing assessments and appraisals, which involve detecting and resolving subpar performance, is the responsibility of heads of public institutions. Appropriate disciplinary measures, like written questions, verbal warnings, and fines, are applied to employees who don't perform up to expectations (Meyer-Sahling & Mikkelsen, 2022). For example, employees in the public sector are not permitted to take time off without authorisation. If they do, such misbehaviour is dealt with by disciplinary actions. This promotes discipline and order, which leads to excellent performance.

A public servant stated:

There are punishments dished out to us when we break rules or indulge in unacceptable practices in the sector. This has made all of us abide by laws.

A union executive commented:

The rules and regulations of the civil service Act found it necessary that there should be a disciplinary procedure in the civil service. First and foremost, your conduct is very important, so when your employer or boss sees that your conduct is not too good, there is a procedure that has to call you to order, when you repeat, there has to be a verbal warning. The verbal warning was recorded and put on paper. Then the next serious one they will write to you, that query is very important, if you're not careful ... when it becomes worse, they constitute a disciplinary committee either for major or minor offences, and they spell out the penalty for the offence. If the situation is bad, then we plead on behalf of the worker so that it will not be too harsh.

In addition, the union leaders in the public sector stressed that there is a proper procedure in place to deal with instances where an employee's behaviour falls below expectations. A disciplinary committee is established, and it assesses the seriousness of the transgression and suggests suitable sanctions. On behalf of their members, the unions fight for less severe sanctions and opportunities for employees to change their behaviour. This assertion is in line with a study by Hakim (2021) that claims that the implementation of disciplinary procedures for non-compliance guarantees that public employees fulfil the necessary performance standards, resulting in the delivery of public services that are more effective and efficient. As a result, putting in place active disciplinary procedures helps public institutions develop a culture of excellence and enhances the overall performance of Ghana's public sector.

5.7.2.5 Establish conducive work environment

Creating favourable work environment is a key strategy for improving the public sector's performance in Ghana. In Ghana, the Labour Act (651) provides the

fundamental framework for establishing a favourable workplace. Employee engagement and productivity are directly impacted by a supportive and comfortable work environment since motivated individuals are more likely to perform successfully (Dullah, Limgiani & Suwardi, 2023). Because workers are more inclined to put effort into their work when they feel appreciated and safe, workplaces that cater to their physical and emotional needs also have better levels of employee engagement. Giving workers access to resources, safe working conditions, and suitable office space allows them to concentrate on their duties, which boosts output (Kravariti et al., 2023).

A labour official stated:

The labour act itself is a social law. And in a better context, we see it's an industrial law that actually made provision for the working conditions in addition by talking in terms of termination and then what also amounts to unfair termination and then also talk about when you are paying salary things that you need to deduct from my salary outside those ones may amount to illegality. So, also make provision for how a contract of employment should be crafted under the first shadow of the act, which is there. So, in every employer, consider that when you are drafting an engagement letter or an employment letter to an employee, all of this provision in the labour act makes sure both employer and employees work in a conducive work environment.

Labour officials have emphasised that the purpose of the Labour Act (651) is to provide equitable and fair working conditions for Ghanaian workers. It covers a number of employment-related topics, such as contract drafting, wage deductions, and termination. The Labour Act guarantees that employers follow the law and ethical standards and helps protect employee rights by providing clear guidelines for these important areas (Appiah & Klu, 2024). For instance, the Act defines unfair termination and offers procedures for resolving such disputes. Employees benefit from this legal protection, which lowers worry and promotes stability in the workplace. Employee engagement and productivity are higher when they feel that their rights are upheld

(Gawu & Koblavie, 2024). Moreover, making sure that employment contracts are detailed and unambiguous is crucial to creating a positive work environment. A foundation for drafting employment contracts is provided by the labour laws, which guarantee that all relevant terms and conditions are included. This clarity promotes a positive working relationship by avoiding miscommunications and conflicts between employers and employees (Koc & Gurgun, 2022).

5.7.3 Recommendations for Effective Organisational Performance in the Ghanaian Public Sector (GPS)

The recommendations for effective and efficient organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana include the inclusion of psycho-social needs in collective bargaining, investing in research and training programmes, creating employers' associations, operating a digitisation system, providing logistics and support resources, proper monitoring and evaluation, and motivation and review labour law. Figure 5.18 graphically illustrates the effective recommendation for organisational performance in GPS.

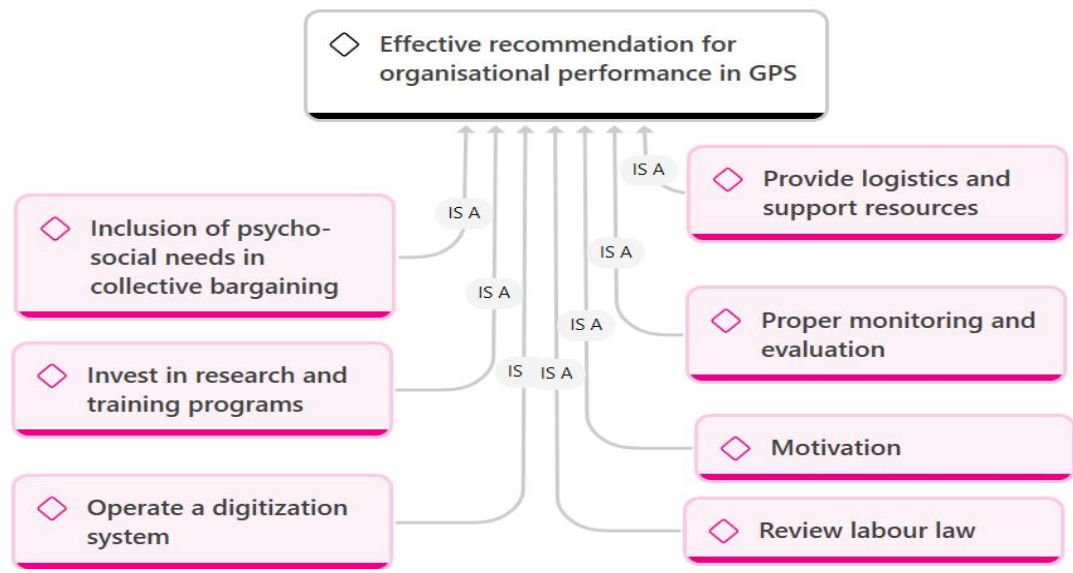


Figure 5.18 Recommendation for effective organisational performance in GPS

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

5.7.3.1 Inclusion of psycho-social needs in collective bargaining

A worker's work-life balance, mental health, emotional well-being, and social support are all aspects of their psychosocial needs. According to Srinivasan et al. (2023), these elements are essential for creating a positive work atmosphere where employees can flourish. Employees are more likely to feel appreciated and supported when psycho-social assistance is included in collective bargaining agreements; this leads to increased job satisfaction and decreased stress (Sharma & Sharma, 2021). For example, mental health support services like counselling and stress management programmes have a big impact on employees' capacity to handle challenges in their jobs. In attending to these demands, it becomes easier to avoid mental health problems and exhaustion, two typical challenges to productivity.

A public sector worker:

the government increased 30% base pay; my landlord increased 50% rent. I give you 30% and I have to add an additional 20%. So, what's the benefit of the 30% increment in the base pay for public sector workers... So, I think that collective bargaining by unions should look at other issues that affect workers such as psychological aspects etc. All of that is needed to be able to work effectively.

The employees in the public sector stated that pay increases might not be enough to boost productivity and well-being on their own. They gave the example of a 30% rise in base pay that was immediately offset by a 50% increase in utilities and accommodation, which causes significant stress for employees. This circumstance emphasises the necessity of addressing more comprehensive aspects of workers' well-being than just monetary pay. When employees' mental health and growing living expenses undermine their financial gains, their quality of life improves very little or not at all (Sharma & Sharma, 2021). This insight necessitates a more comprehensive strategy in collective bargaining that takes psycho-social needs into account. This finding supports the assertion made by Srinivasan et al. (2023) that employee well-being and mental health are significantly impacted when psycho-social needs are addressed in collective bargaining. Employees are less stressed

and more likely to perform well at their jobs when their psychological needs are recognised and met.

Including mental health assistance in collective bargaining agreements guarantees that workers have access to resources and counselling, assisting them in managing stress and maintaining their mental health in settings where they frequently encounter heavy workloads and resource limits. Similarly, by showcasing the organisation's dedication to providing employees with comprehensive support, incorporating psychosocial requirements into collective bargaining also boosts job satisfaction and morale (Chakrabarti et al., 2018). As a result, including psycho-social requirements into collective bargaining is an essential tactic for enhancing organisational effectiveness in the public sector in Ghana.

5.7.3.2 Invest in research and training programs

Study participants noted that evidence-based policies and practices depend on funding ministries' research divisions, like the Labour Department and the National Labour Commission. Research indicates opportunities for improvement and offers insightful information on how effective current policies are (Jabbar & Childs, 2022). The aforementioned public institutions typically provide data-driven suggestions to guide government policies and initiatives when they carry out evidence-based research. Additionally, research helps comprehend the underlying problems affecting labour relations and the effectiveness of public sector organisations (Bohren et al., 2015).

A public service commission official commented:

I mean, I'm very particular when it comes to staff training. I think it helps you to build a career. It gives you the needed skills. And then it keeps you updated. You learn the modern techniques. So basically, capacity building. It also helps us to be well equipped to improve the performance of the public sector.

The public service commission emphasises the importance of human resource development in enhancing the capabilities of the public sector. Training programmes help public employees advance their careers by equipping them with the necessary

skills and knowledge. These programmes also keep employees updated on contemporary methods, enabling them to adapt to changes and new challenges, resulting in a dynamic and productive workforce (Knies et al., 2024).

A director of MELR commented:

I think the government must also invest in the research divisions in the ministry, for example, the Labour Department and the National Labour Commission, for them to conduct more knowledge-based or evidence-based research and then to inform the government on some of the things that can be done to improve industrial relations.

The Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations (MELR) director emphasised the importance of providing new hires with appropriate orientation and specialised training. Owing to the intricate nature of the ministry's work, which entails managing human resources, labour unions, and employers, public employees need to be adequately equipped. When the government makes training and research investments, the Ghanaian public sector can develop a skilled, driven, and creative staff that can provide citizens with high-quality services. This is consistent with Tannady and Budi's (2023) assertion that training gives workers the technical know-how and understanding they need to carry out their jobs well, which boosts output and service quality. Training programmes that emphasise modern approaches, technologies, and best practices guarantee that staff members are prepared to manage a variety of public service duties, leading to a workforce that is more capable and flexible (Laing, 2021). Additionally, by giving workers real-world information that empowers them to handle problems on their own, skill development programmes cut down on inefficiencies (Knies et al., 2024). Since employees in the public sector frequently deal with intricate administrative duties, skill development through training programmes improves job efficiency and, eventually, increases organisational effectiveness.

5.7.3.3 Operate a digitisation system

Efficient data collection, storage, and management are made possible by digitisation, and this is essential for making well-informed decisions (Vrana & Singh, 2021). The

government supports the Ghana Labour Market Information System, which attempts to standardise data, reports, and surveys about labour and employment-related topics. The public sector can guarantee that data is collected consistently and accurately while cutting down on errors and redundancies by digitising these operations (Popa et al., 2024).

A MELR official commented:

And I think it is time to digitise more of the things that are also being done. The government is supporting the Ghana labour market information system, which is being put in place to ensure that all the surveys, all the reports and all the data are being collected and harmonised to inform government decisions on employment and labour-related issues.

A portion of the Ghanaian public sector's processes should be digitalized, which will lower the possibility of human error and provide employees more time to work on more important projects. Furthermore, digital data management solutions make extensive datasets easily accessible, which helps policymakers analyse patterns and make more informed decisions (Sharma, Shingatgeri & Pal, 2021).

Public service delivery can be greatly enhanced by digitisation by making it easier to access and utilise. Digital platforms facilitate online service access for citizens, hence decreasing the necessity of in-person visits to government offices. Both citizens and workers in the public sector can save time and resources thanks to this convenience (Di Giulio & Vecchi, 2023). By enabling citizens to pay taxes, apply for licences, and access public information online, for example, the introduction of e-government services has improved service delivery in Ghanaian public sector organisations by cutting down on bureaucratic red tape.

In addition, because the public sector is dynamic, institutions must be flexible and responsive to shifting demands. The ability to update and change systems in response to new possibilities and difficulties is made possible by digitisation (Wesche & Handke, 2024). For instance, a lot of public sector organisations quickly moved to digital platforms in order to continue providing services and maintaining communication during the COVID-19 pandemic. Modernising and continuously improving the Ghanaian public sector require the implementation and upkeep of

strong digital systems. According to Tsou and Chen (2023), digital technologies substitute automated, speedier processes for manual workflows, freeing up staff members to concentrate on higher-level work that improves organisational results. Digitisation will speed up procedures and lessen administrative burdens in Ghana's public sector, which frequently has limited resources. This will lead to speedier service delivery and increased productivity overall. Additionally, by eliminating the need for physical storage, printing, and document processing, digitalisation reduces operating expenses (Cinar, Simms, Trott & Demircioglu, 2024). Over time, digital solutions result in significant savings by reducing the time and material expenses associated with document management. Savings from digitisation can improve organisational performance and the government of Ghana's capacity to serve its citizens by freeing up resources that could be used for additional essential services.

5.7.3.4 Provide logistics and support resources

The productivity of workers in the public sector is directly impacted by their access to crucial logistics and resources. Public servants cannot carry out their duties effectively without the required tools and equipment, which causes delays and lower output (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). The study participants reported that essential office items, including computers, printers, and internet connectivity, were missing from their workspaces. Because of this regrettable circumstance, public employees find it difficult to finish their task.

A director of MELR indicated:

And the other one is about logistics that are needed to ensure, especially the institution under this ministry, the Labour Department, the National Labour Commission, the Department of Public Service Commission and Fair Wages and Salaries Commission is also under this ministry. They should be provided with the needed logistics. Because it enhances productivity. If somebody comes to an office and he doesn't have what it takes to work with, for almost three to six months, then effective work cannot be done.

Consequently, sufficient logistics are provided to guarantee that public employees have the necessary resources to carry out their duties efficiently (Boonchunone et al., 2024), which raises productivity and improves the general performance of Ghana's public sector organisations. Furthermore, organisations like the Public Service Commission, the National Labour Commission, and the Labour Department can enhance service delivery and streamline their operations when given the proper resources. Participants expressed concern that logistics assistance does not cover maintenance and repairs for existing equipment, such as computers, printers, and photocopiers, which have sustained damage over time. Frequent maintenance is crucial for machinery efficiency and preventing malfunctions (Yazdi, 2024). In order to meet Ghanaian demands and achieve their goals, public sector institutions must prioritise the supply of logistics and support resources. This supports the findings of Kravariti et al., (2023) who found that workers are more productive and able to concentrate on their primary responsibilities rather than overcoming logistical obstacles when they have the resources they need to carry out their jobs.

In Ghana's public sector, where workers frequently operate in settings with limited resources, giving them the right office supplies and equipment can help them do their jobs more effectively, which will increase departmental production. Additionally, logistical support optimises workflow by cutting down on time spent on administrative duties or resolving resource-related issues (Boonchunone et al., 2024). Effective logistics systems reduce delays and bottlenecks, freeing up staff members to concentrate on accomplishing company objectives (Adeniran et al., 2024). Better logistical assistance in the Ghanaian public sector would result in more responsiveness and quicker service delivery, increasing the public institutions' ability to quickly and efficiently address the demands of citizens.

5.7.3.5 Proper monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and assessment help to foster accountability by making sure that employees of the government follow set guidelines and performance metrics. Frequent evaluations of public employees' work assist in determining what aspects of their performance are meeting standards and what still needs to be improved (Vuong & Nguyen, 2022).

A director of MELR suggested:

....and then there should be proper monitoring evaluation of the activities or work of the staff, because of course, human beings are those that are working. And human beings need constant reminders of what is required of them. The target that I said, team performance, the KPIs, and all those ones. You must make sure that the HR, the sector HR, and the ministry's personnel are also functioning as is expected.

The Ministry of Employment and Industrial Relations' Directors stated that precise measures of employee effectiveness can be obtained by public sector institutions through the use of explicit performance metrics, such as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Additionally, it assures excellent service delivery and efficient use of resources. Moreover, public servants' evaluations aid in identifying high performers and giving them chances for growth and advancement (Kravariti et al., 2023). On the other hand, public sector institutions can conduct targeted interventions, like training programmes or mentorship, to address skill gaps and improve overall workforce competency. Monitoring and evaluation can also identify areas where public servants may be having difficulty (Marzuki, Laksmono & Subroto, 2020; Sauermann, 2023).

Public sector organisations use monitoring and assessment to make informed decisions about resource distribution, policy execution, and strategic planning. This helps them serve the public interest and fulfil their mission (Latupeirissa et al., 2024). Strong monitoring and evaluation procedures ensure that employees are prepared to meet organisational objectives and meet the demands of Ghanaians, ensuring they are well-equipped to serve the public interest.

5.7.3.6 Motivation

Enhancing the performance of public officials in Ghana's public sector is contingent upon their motivation. In addition to recognising individual accomplishments, recognising the top achievers in each institution sets a benchmark for excellence that other institutions strive to meet (Ki, 2021). With a culture of healthy competition and a boost to morale, this honour inspires public sector workers to go above and beyond expectations and positively impact organisational goals (Ritz, Vandenabeele & Vogel, 2021). Study participants reported that annual performance awards or worker of the

month programmes can be used to recognise exceptional work and inspire others to improve performance.

A labour official commented:

People must be motivated to give it their best, like awarding best performers in each institution and providing allowances such as transportation allowances, considering the constant increment in transport fares in Ghana. People must be given reasons why they should perform the way they are performing. So, I think we all have a role to play.

Offering monetary benefits, such as transportation allowances, is essential given Ghana's growing cost of living. Workers' disposable income is greatly impacted by the ongoing rise in transportation costs, which can cause stress and lower job satisfaction (Balarabe, Haruna & Maiyaki, 2024). Therefore, the institutions might lessen some of this financial load and generate engaged public employees by providing transportation allowances. A positive work environment is crucial for motivation, as it enhances it more than financial rewards (Basalamah, 2021). Opportunities for career development, regular feedback, and clear promotion paths can significantly boost motivation. Training programmes and professional advancements demonstrate the industry's commitment and enthusiasm for employee development. A study by Shahzad, Khan, Iqbal and Shabbir (2023) demonstrates that a motivated workforce stimulates a highly productive workforce. As a result, funding employee motivation benefits public sector organisations' long-term efficacy and efficiency in addition to individual employees. Employees that are motivated are more likely to do work quickly and well, which is a major factor in productivity. Employees in the public sector who are motivated by a sense of obligation and dedication to serving the public are more likely to provide citizens with high-quality services (Lin, Liu & Li, 2024). Employee motivation in the Ghanaian public sector would improve citizen satisfaction and public trust in government agencies by fostering positive experiences.

5.7.3.7 Review labour law

Ghana's climate of harmonious labour relations has been greatly aided by the passage of the Labour Act, Act 651, in 2003. The majority of labour officials stated that, in spite of the Act's benefits, a thorough review is necessary to meet shifting labour market dynamics and new workplace concerns in Ghana's public sector (Kwarteng, Bawa & Koduah, 2024; Coleman & Mpedi, 2023). The social, technological, and economic environments have changed dramatically since its founding in 2003.

A union executive stated:

Yes, I think the labour Act has helped to create a conducive industrial relations atmosphere to promote the performance of the public sector. This is about the most progressive Act we have seen in Ghana. There is the need for a review; it's been in existence since 2003. The most outstanding thing about the Act is its recognition of the two social partners labour and management, that both need each other; hence they should respect each other.

Ghana's labour relations have been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak (Foli & Ohemeng, 2022). The public sector faces challenges since the current labour laws were not intended to account for these developments. During the pandemic, the move towards online business operations and remote employment brought attention to the necessity for flexible labour policies (Aloisi & De Stefano, 2022). The definition and enforcement of labour rights need to be reevaluated in light of the expansion of traditional workplaces to homes and virtual locations. Given that current labour laws do not sufficiently address the rights and obligations of public sector employees who work remotely, the sector faces difficulties as a result of this transformation (Al-Habaibeh et al., 2021).

A director at MELR commented:

COVID came and everybody must now do online trading, online purchase, online labour work...Now, it is not captured in our labour law, but it has come to stay and we must work with it.

The study's participants lamented the lack of standards for labour laws that handle matters like compensation for using personal resources for work-related tasks, overtime for remote workers, and salary adjustments for hybrid work arrangements. There are many difficulties facing the Ghanaian public sector as a result of this circumstance. Eneh et al. (2024) assert that a convergence of factors, such as technological innovation, sociocultural shifts, and legislative reforms, has led to a paradigm shift in the global workforce. Given the significance of this evolving landscape, it is imperative that legal frameworks in different jurisdictions align with these factors. Therefore, it is imperative that the labour laws be reviewed in order to make sure that the Ghanaian public sector continues to successfully serve the demands of its citizens and remains adaptable to new challenges.

5.7.4 Summary of presentation of RQ5

Figure 5.19 graphically illustrates summary representation of research question 5 and its themes.

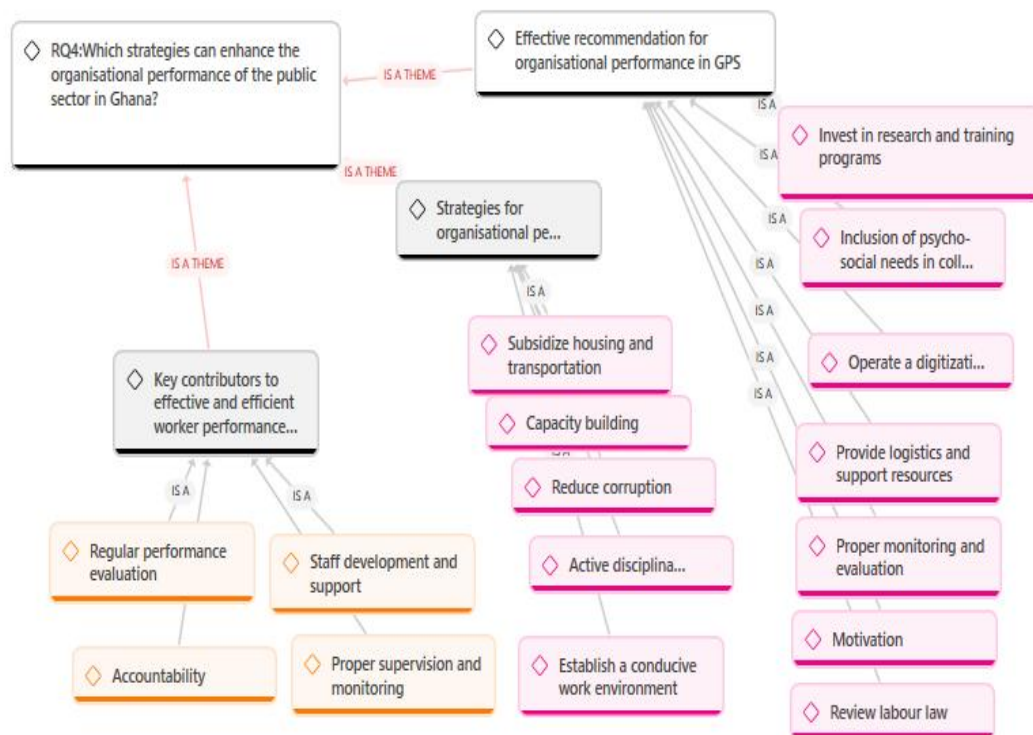


Figure 5.19 Summary representation of RQ 5 and its themes

Source: Created by the researcher in Atlas. Ti

According to Figure 5.19, biased assessments, poor training, and a lack of resources are some of the challenges Ghana's public sector faces when trying to improve organisational performance. Regular performance reviews, accountability, staff development, and appropriate supervision are important improvement techniques. To improve performance in the Ghanaian public sector, other measures including housing subsidies, lowering corruption, implementing active disciplinary procedures, and attending to psycho-social requirements in collective bargaining are also highlighted as critical. One of the key topics that surfaced was the development of plans to improve the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana. The majority of these strategies focused on internal controls, technology, and the economy. The participants offered only a few labour relations tactics. This demonstrates that public servants do not view labour relations as a key tactic for enhancing the effectiveness of the public sector. This may be attributed to public

servants' ignorance of the ways in which good labour relations can enhance the operation of public institutions.

The study's results pertaining to strategies for enhancing organisational performance in the Ghanaian public sector support the assertion that public sector accountability is essential since citizens have a fundamental right to accurate information. In this context, accountability plays a critical role in illustrating a democratic method of governmental supervision and management. In addition to increasing public administration's capacity for learning and effectiveness, it also reduces the danger of power consolidation (Aramide & Bashir, 2015; Kewo, 2017; Overman, Schillemans & Grimmelikhuijsen, 2021).

The assertion that technology and innovation can improve public services and increase the ability of governmental entities to address social issues is supported by the recommendation made about the use of technology in the public sector (De Vries, Tummers & Bekkers, 2018; Cinar, Trott & Simms, 2019; Maqdliyan & Setiawan, 2023). Numerous studies have also linked innovations and technological advancements to tactics that may improve the public sector's organisational performance (Rajapathirana & Hui, 2018; Choi, Sung & Park, 2020; Tsou & Chen, 2023). Furthermore, the assertion that performance management methods have evolved as a significant strategy for a unified and continuous approach to public sector performance management in most economies supports the practice of regular performance reviews in Ghana's public sector as a means of improving performance. Performance management, which has its roots in the ideas of management by agreement rather than command, is essential to several HRM procedures that, when combined, improve the efficacy of public sector organisations, especially in light of their developmental characteristics (Khaltar & Moon, 2020).

5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Collective bargaining and trade unionism impact Ghanaian public sector performance, promoting worker motivation, integrity, and improved working conditions. However, negative perceptions include leaders' selfish intentions, inadequate economic outcomes, and insufficient motivational value. Furthermore,

trade unionism negatively impacts organisational performance, leading to poor welfare support, coercive union membership, health disregard, and self-centered practices, while positively enhancing employee well-being and encouraging constructive change. Also, the GPS employs conflict resolution strategies like bottom-up, internal controls, labour court engagement, and mediation, but their effectiveness is hindered by financial constraints, inadequate communication, illiteracy, incorrect record-keeping, resource scarcity, and inaccessibility to the public. Additionally, labour relations challenges in GPS include outdated labour laws, budgetary restrictions, inadequate staff development, logistical and resource obstacles, and a lack of experienced specialists. Trade unions' collective bargaining power is further weakened by federations' ineffectiveness and a fall in membership, making it difficult to negotiate on behalf of employees and fight for their rights. Finally, to improve organisational performance, regular performance reviews, accountability, staff development, supervision, monitoring, and strategies like incorporating psycho-social needs in collective bargaining, funding research and training initiatives, running a digitisation system, providing logistics and support resources, and motivation are essential.

5.9 CONCLUSION

The study examined the impact of labour relations on Ghana's public sector performance, focusing on collective bargaining, trade unionism, and dispute resolution. Results showed that although collective bargaining has improved, its impact on institutional effectiveness is not fully recognised due to low perceived worth and economic difficulties. Therefore, collective bargaining's influence on Ghana's public sector performance is moderate. The study also reveals the complex relationship between trade union activity and Ghana's public sector performance. While benefits like improved employee well-being and change incentives contribute to improved performance, negative effects like low welfare assistance, compulsory union membership, disregard for logistics and health, self-centered behaviour, and high levels of mistrust in trade union representation significantly impact the sector's performance.

Trade unions prioritise wage negotiations over worker rights, capacity building, and occupational health, causing insufficiencies in staff supervision, productivity assessment, and conflict settlement that negatively impacting Ghana's public sector performance. Furthermore, the study reveals that Ghana's public sector labour relations have been negatively impacted by outdated labour laws, limited support from labour organisations and dispute resolution bodies, institutional bureaucracy, and a lack of knowledgeable employees, leading to a decline in trade unionism and collective bargaining. Finally, the study found that Ghana's public sector has a below-average impact on organisational performance in terms of labour relations. However, formal structures, effective labour policy implementation, frequent performance reviews, staff development, psycho-social needs integration, digitisation strategies, and logistics support can improve performance.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a detailed summary of the study. It covers the background information, the review of literature, the methodology of the study and the presentation and analysis of data. In addition, the conclusions drawn from the study are stated in this chapter. The chapter closes with recommendations for further studies and policy implications.

6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

6.2.1 Introduction

Table 6.1 summarises the major themes that were generated in the process of coding the data gathered from the participants. Similarly, the table also indicates objectives and subsequent themes that provide answers to the research questions of the study.

Table 6.1 Summary of Findings

OBJECTIVES	THEMES
Collective bargaining and organisational performance in GPS	• Perception of Collective Bargaining in Determining Organisational Performance in GPS (Positive perceptions/Negative perceptions). • Scope of collective bargaining.
Trade Unionism on the Organisational Performance of the Public Sector	• Practices of trade unions that affect organisational performance. • Impact of trade unionism (TU) in organisational performance in GPS (Positive TU Impact Outcomes/Negative TU Impact Outcomes). • Unions negotiations with government to address employee grievances in GPS.

	• Support structure framework • Union failure-informed negotiations • Systemic- based • Union-membership-based • Perception of trade union on organisational performance (OP) (Positive/Negative).
Conflict Resolution Influence and Organisational Performance In GPS	• Influence of conflict resolution to organisational performance in GPS. • Causes of conflicts between employees and employers in the public sector of Ghana. • Challenges that hinder the success of conflict resolutions in GPS.
Challenges Faced by Public Sector Labour Relations in Ghana	• Challenges facing trade unions, conflict resolution and collective bargaining in PGS.
Strategies to enhance Organizational Performance in GPS	• Challenges affecting effective organisational performance in GPS. • Key contributors to effective and efficient worker performance in GPS • Strategies for organisational performance in GPS. • Effective recommendation for organisational performance in GPS.

Source: Author's compilation (2024)

NOTE: Ghanaian public sector = GPS

6.2.2 Collective Bargaining and Organisational Performance in GPS

The data gathered regarding the influence of collective bargaining on organisational performance in Ghana's public sector (GPS) reveals a mixture of positive and negative perceptions. On the positive note, collective bargaining is thought to be a major factor in worker motivation, promoting integrity and strong work ethics, enhancing working conditions, resulting in salary increases, and being process-oriented with well-functioning collective agreements. These findings have been

confirmed by Beaumont (2024a) and Bernstein (2022). On the other hand, some unfavourable perceptions include the notion that collective bargaining is often driven by leaders' selfish intentions, the economic outcomes are inadequate, and the perceived value (valence) of the outcomes is insufficient to truly motivate workers. These findings are supported by Doellgast and Benassi (2020) as well as Jenkins and Sherman (2022). The scope of collective bargaining in the GPS allows for extensive collective bargaining, including wage negotiation, employee rights, occupational health and safety, compensation, working conditions and environment, and the support of collective bargaining agreements by law. The study's main conclusion is that there are more significant advantages to collective bargaining than drawbacks. Accordingly, even though collective bargaining may have certain drawbacks, the benefits are substantial enough to have a positive overall impact on institutional performance in the Ghanaian public sector.

The aforementioned finding is consistent with Dunlop's theory, which maintains that stable industrial relations systems lead to productive workplace policies and favourable results (Frege & Kelly, 2020). This model includes collective bargaining as a regulatory process that establishes mutually agreed-upon regulations between management and employees. The report claims that these negotiated regulations have improved institutional performance in Ghana's public sector. This confirms Dunlop's claim that favourable results are supported by a stable, rule-based system (Bidnur, Kalse & Priyadarshini, 2023).

According to the findings, Dunlop's focus on organised rule-making through group participation can result in a stable and effective atmosphere that improves institutional performance (Doellgast, Bidwell & Colvin, 2021; Connolly, 2023). Moreover, according to the findings, which are consistent with pluralist theory, the process of collective bargaining permits conflicting viewpoints to coexist in a way that eventually serves the interests of the social partners. This perspective holds that the advantages of collective bargaining contribute to a well-balanced workplace, which improves institutional performance (Hughes & Dundon, 2021). Pluralist theory interprets the favourable result as evidence that collective bargaining successfully manages the inherent conflicts of interest. This bolsters the pluralist theory that organisations gain when management and labour negotiate to balance conflicting

interests instead of making decisions unilaterally, with collective bargaining improving performance (Kochan, 2019).

6.2.3 Trade Unionism on the Organisational Performance of the Public Sector

Several important practices and their effects are highlighted by the data collected on the impact of trade unionism on organisational performance in the Ghanaian public sector (GPS). Poor welfare support, coercive union membership, disregard for health issues, and self-centred practices are only a few of the trade union practices that have a detrimental impact on organisational performance. Positive effects do exist despite these challenges, such as the perception that union activities enhance employee well-being, serve as a last resort for change, are a positive step in the right direction, and encourage constructive change for both the firm and its employees. Negative effects are also mentioned, such as low management-worker relations and a high mistrust of trade union representativeness (Zienkowski & De Cleen, 2021).

Additionally, in order to resolve employee concerns in the GPS, unions negotiate with the government under a support structure framework that is defined by solid representativeness, the creation of welfare programmes, financial aid, and collective bargaining power. However, fundamental problems, including institutional bureaucracy, delays in implementation, and the government's incapacity to completely satisfy union demands, impede efficacy. Kochan and Kimball (2019) studies supported these findings. Issues related to union membership included dwindling union density, compensation agreements that do not incorporate the cost-of-living allowance (COLA), mistrust, and strike activities during negotiations. Positive perceptions include trade unions serving as powerful champions and systemic social partners. Negative opinions highlight inadequacies in staff oversight, a deficiency in productivity evaluation, insufficient dispute resolution, and the pursuit of selfish agendas.

Regarding whether trade unionism improves organisational performance, there were differing opinions. The evidence suggests that different institutions have diverse experiences, which made reaching a clear consensus difficult. It draws attention to how complicated trade unionism's function is, as its effects might vary based on certain institutional contexts, management philosophies, and the type of union-management relations. Nevertheless, following a comprehensive review of the

responses given by the participants, the study concluded that trade unionism had little beneficial impact on performance and that union activity really causes challenges for the Ghanaian public sector rather than advancements.

The study's findings, which suggest that trade unionism in Ghana's public sector causes more disruption than productivity, contradict the pluralist theory. The findings suggest that union actions may intensify conflict without producing a positive result, rather than promoting a healthy balance of interests that could enhance performance. Although pluralist theory acknowledges that conflict is inevitable, it contends that union activity ought to result in a stable balance between the interests of management and employees (Ackers, 2021). This balance may not be reached if trade unionism does not improve performance, which raises the possibility that conflict is not being handled effectively in Ghana's public sector. The pluralist belief that unions naturally promote stability and productivity in the workplace (Heery, 2016; Heery, 2024) is called into question by this dearth of effective dispute settlement.

Furthermore, the study's findings challenge Dunlop's theory by suggesting that Ghanaian public sector unions don't work together to improve performance under this framework. It seems that union activity causes disturbances rather than solid, effective workplace regulations. Such behaviour can indicate that the social partners are not aligned and that the coordinated environment required for successful outcomes is lacking, as per Dunlop's theory (Connolly, 2023). The absence of positive impacts suggests a breakdown in the systemic harmony that is anticipated in a healthy industrial relations system, according to Dunlop's model (Chawla, Singh & Singh, 2020). This implies that collaboration and effectiveness between unions and management may be lacking in Ghana's public sector, which would hinder their ability to create a stable and productive environment.

6.2.4 Conflict Resolution Influence and Organisational Performance in GPS

Moreover, data on how conflict resolution affects organisational performance in the Ghanaian public sector (GPS) shows the efficacy of several strategies. Bottom-up strategies, internal workplace controls, labour court engagement, National Labour Commission interventions, and mediation and arbitration all play important roles in

conflict resolution. They also provide employer representation and legal guidance. In the Ghanaian public sector, the main reasons for conflict between employers and employees are: unfair conditions of service and incorrect contract definitions; undemocratic leadership appointments; insufficient communication; and the perception of being denied personal organisational growth. Nonetheless, a number of challenges prevent the GPS's efforts at conflict resolution from being successful. Financial limitations, inadequate information exchange and communication, illiteracy, incorrect record-keeping and paperwork, resource scarcity, subpar labour policy execution, and the National Labour Commission offices' inaccessibility to the general public are some of these difficulties. The effectiveness of conflict resolution and, in turn, organisational success in the GPS are influenced by these aspects taken together. Overall, the findings indicate that the National Labour Commission, established under Section 135 of the Labour Act 2003 (Act 651) to facilitate and settle industrial disputes, as well as adjudicate labour disputes and promote a conducive industrial environment for employment sustainability and growths is seen as not being proactive and effective at discharging its duties due to a lack of resources (Gyapong, 2020; Frimpong et al., 2021). Also, the public sector institutions have not been hands-on with their conflict resolution strategies. This situation has led to less a positive impact of conflict resolution on the performance of public sector institutions in Ghana.

The Dunlop theory's premise that all social partners in this case, the government through the NLC, labour, and management, must cooperate to preserve a stable and productive environment (Mabaso, Lesabe & Govender, 2024) is contradicted by the NLC's perceived inefficiency and lack of resources. Since the NLC is a government organisation that facilitates labour-management ties, its inefficiency undermines the coordinated structure that Dunlop's theory calls for. Furthermore, the notion of an integrated, rule-based environment (Rasmussen, Lamm & Molineaux, 2022) is challenged by Ghana's public sector's passive attitude to conflict resolution. According to Dunlop's principle, the inefficiency of the NLC would indicate a systemic failure since it is unable to effectively enforce regulations and resolve conflicts. Missed chances to enhance institutional performance and unsolved disputes result from the social partners' lack of unity (Khan, 2022). The discovery exposes a misalignment in the industrial relations system, contradicting Dunlop's claim that a

well-functioning, well-funded system can foster favourable results (Doellgast, Bidwell & Colvin, 2021).

Furthermore, the findings contradict the pluralist theory's conflict resolution philosophies; the absence of proactive conflict resolution suggests that the institutions and the NLC are not providing the frameworks required for productive conflict management. Conflicts may go unsolved in the absence of efficient dispute resolution, which could have a disruptive effect and hinder institutional performance (Kaufman et al., 2021). The pluralist theory assumes that conflict can improve workplace peace and productivity if it is handled by suitable agencies and procedures (Singh & Gupta, 2024). However, this organised balance is not provided by the ineffectual NLC or the inert public sector organisations which contradicts the theory's assertion that a firm conflict resolution process will result in an institutional balance that is both stable and productive.

6.2.5 Challenges Faced by Public Sector Labour Relations in Ghana

The information available on the challenges facing labour relations in Ghana's public sector points to a number of important problems that have an impact on collective bargaining, trade unions, and conflict resolution. Outdated labour laws that don't consider the modern labour market's intricacies and needs are one of the main problems in the Ghanaian public sector. Additionally, public sector organisations' capacity to successfully support and carry out labour-related programmes is hampered by budgetary restrictions. The issue is worsened by inadequate staff development, as workers are not equipped with the knowledge and abilities needed to handle labour relations in a productive manner. Labour organisations and conflict resolution bodies in Ghana have logistical and resource challenges that impede their operating efficiency in the public sector, such as limited facilities and tools. Attempts to resolve conflicts are made more difficult by the National Labour Commission's and the government's frequently hazy relationship, which leaves room for misunderstandings about roles and expectations. The execution of labour laws and decision-making procedures is slowed down by institutional bureaucracy (Frimpong et al., 2021). The findings from this study attested to this statement. Additionally, there is a lack of experienced specialists to effectively manage labour relations difficulties due to a scarcity of expert staff in the labour institutions in Ghana. Trade

unions' collective bargaining power is further weakened by federations' ineffectiveness. The power and representativeness of the Ghanaian public sector trade unions are also weakened by a fall in membership, which makes it more difficult to successfully negotiate on behalf of employees and fight for their rights. The findings indicate that social partners' unwillingness to give labour relations strategies a top priority is impeding the efficient functioning of Ghana's public sector. Employers, unions, and the government are losing out on important chances to boost stability, morale, and organisational alignment by ignoring labour relations. Unresolved conflicts, lower productivity, and issues that impact the public sector as a whole result from this lack of prioritising.

The finding runs contrary to the Strategic Choice Model, since Ghanaian public sector actors are not strategically choosing to put labour relations first. The absence of proactive dispute resolution and morale-boosting strategies suggests that the social partners are missing important chances to deal with the issues impeding organisational productivity and stability (Kohler, 2018; Kochan & Kimball, 2019). According to the Strategic Choice Model, the actors' capacity to adjust and react to organisational demands determine how well labour relations work out. In this case, the social partners' unwillingness to prioritise labour relations shows that they are not making wise strategic decisions (Crozier & Friedberg, 2017; Horner et al., 2019), which results in conflicts going unsolved and performance being hindered. The model's assumptions about proactive conflict resolution and strategic adaptation are directly at odds with this failure to address labour relations demands as a strategy.

Moreover, the aforementioned findings imply that the three actors in Ghana's public sector are not successfully coordinating, which runs contrary to Dunlop's Systems theory. Their disregard for labour relations priorities points to a disarray in the alignment of the system (Rasmussen, Lamm & Molineaux, 2022), which results in instability and inefficiency. The system's cohesiveness is weakened by the participants' lack of interest in putting labour relations first rather than working together to develop organised, performance-enhancing workplace regulations. The lack of a cohesive focus on labour relations indicates a failure to maintain the cooperative structure that Dunlop's theory anticipates. This misalignment undermines performance, morale, and stability, demonstrating that the "system" cannot work properly without shared commitment to labour relations (Connolly, 2023; Mabaso,

Lesabe & Govender, 2024). This demonstrates how social partners in Ghana's public sector must cooperate more in order to promote organisational objectives and preserve a positive work atmosphere.

6.2.6 Strategies to Enhance Organisational Performance in GPS

Data on strategies enhancing organisational performance in Ghana's public sector (GPS) reveals a number of obstacles and important potential remedies. Some of the challenges that hinder successful performance in Ghana's public sector include unfair assessments, insufficient training opportunities, inadequate resource maintenance, insecure health, and a lack of comprehensive labour legislation. Regular performance reviews, accountability, staff development and assistance as well as appropriate supervision and monitoring are important factors that contribute to effective and efficient worker performance in the GPS. Subsidising housing and transportation costs, increasing organisational capacity, decreasing corruption, enacting active disciplinary procedures, and creating a positive work environment are some strategies for improving organisational performance. The incorporation of psycho-social needs in collective bargaining, funding research and training initiatives, running a digitization system, offering logistics and support resources, appropriate monitoring and evaluation, motivation, and other effective suggestions for enhancing organisational performance are highlighted. According to the aforementioned findings, there aren't many labours relations-related strategies among those meant to improve performance in Ghana's public sector. The result suggests that Ghanaian public sector institutions might not completely appreciate the importance of labour relations in promoting the performance of public servants and the sector as a whole. Similarly, findings show that public sector policies undervalue labour relations, which may indicate that these institutions do not view labour relations as a performance driver. This misunderstanding can be the result of a lack of knowledge about the beneficial effects of labour relations on worker engagement, morale, and productivity (Mulunda et al., 2018; Arimie & Oronsaye, 2020; Rubery, 2024). Furthermore, the findings reveal a perception among union officials and certain public employees that the heads of public sector institutions alone should bear accountability for the institutions' performance, not the unions. This viewpoint has several ramifications for how well

public sector organisations perform and how labour relations work. The idea that management alone is responsible for institutional performance betrays a limited comprehension of organisational roles (Ackers, 2021). Union leaders and some employees may unintentionally restrict the scope of union operations by isolating union responsibility from institutional performance, which lowers their capacity to positively influence performance results.

The above conventional assumption concurs with findings, arguing that unions are more crucial as advocates of workers' rights than as enhancers of institutional performance. According to historical literature, unions are primarily concerned with negotiating employee benefits, safe working conditions, and fair compensation (Turner, 2022; Remy, 2023). In this context, unions may contend that management is ultimately responsible for the success of the institution, and they have no direct control over organisational performance. However, recent literature contradicts this conclusion, arguing that unions can be extremely valuable in creating a cooperative, effective workplace, which in turn improves performance (Laroche, 2020). According to studies, unions can help organisations achieve their objectives by fostering work satisfaction, employee involvement, and management-employee communication (Kahancová & Martišková, 2023; Di Carlo, 2023). Contrary to the belief that unions should avoid accountability for performance, a study by Finger and Hartney (2021) discovered that productivity and morale tended to increase in businesses when unions were actively involved in collaborative performance-enhancing activities. In a similar vein, Kahancová and Martišková's (2023) study on public sector institutions revealed that unions' involvement in organisational strategy discussions enhanced institutional resilience and employee satisfaction, refuting the notion that unions should neglect responsibility for performance.

6.3 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE FINDINGS

6.3.1 Introduction

The report below summarises the findings of the secondary research objectives: a literature review.

6.3.2 The concepts of labour relations, collective bargaining, trade unionism, conflict resolution, and organisational performance.

Labour relations is a multidisciplinary field that studies the formal ties and exchanges between employees, employers, the government, and representatives. Dunlop's (1958) framework, which highlights the responsibilities of the three main social partners in an environment that influences their interactions, is still a fundamental paradigm for comprehending labour relations (Howell & Pringle, 2019; Brown & Cao, 2023). The norms governing work interactions are established by employers, employees, and their representatives in the labour relations system, either directly or through government mediation (Bean, 2021; Wyrod & Chang, 2023; Kissi & Herzig, 2024). Labour relations are dynamic exchanges that extend beyond static contractual responsibilities, embracing the connections between talents, abilities, values, and opportunities at work. Employees frequently respond with better conduct and higher performance levels when business owners invest in their welfare and satisfaction. (Kissi & Herzig, 2024; Weiss, Schmidt & Hlava, 2020; Armstrong, Goodman & Hyman, 2023). Effective labour relations require trade union participation, collective bargaining agreements, and conflict resolution procedures (Kurt, 2019; Alliu & Akinlabi, 2023).

Collective bargaining is a fundamental labour relations activity in which unions work to address internal problems between management and workers. Collective bargaining is an essential tool for resolving conflicts and disputes, whether they are openly voiced or covertly spread (Nyanga & Sibanda, 2015; Bernstein, 2022). Giving employees, who are frequently represented by labour unions, a forum to discuss important employment matters with employers is one of the main purposes of collective bargaining (Doellgast & Benassi, 2020; Johnston, 2022; Martins, 2021). Collective bargaining also increases employee voice by allowing workers to express issues and participate in decision-making processes that influence their jobs

(Doellgast & Benassi, 2020; Wraas & Dahle, 2020). Strikes and other labour actions are frequently the result of a lack of collective bargaining, especially in the public sector (Bello & Kinge, 2014). Although collective bargaining systems have been criticised for inciting unnecessary disputes, they shield employees in the public sector from political favouritism and capricious management decisions (Ibsen, 2021; Klingner, 2016; Bosch, Schulten & Weinkopf, 2021; Han, 2023).

Trade unions are critical for promoting the development and protection of employee welfare and rights within firms. Trade unions advocate for employee rights by negotiating improved working conditions, securing compensation in the event of illness or personal issues, and ensuring that employees' perspectives are taken into account in corporate decision-making processes (Prowse, Lopes & Fells, 2017; Turner, 2022; Remy, 2023). According to Zhavoronkov (2015) and Kahancová and Martišková (2023), unions promote unity among workers, foster solid industrial ties, and foster productive working relationships between employers and employees. Unionism in the public sector has been influenced by factors such as government development, private sector spillover effects, and social change (Wolfe & Schmitt 2018). Although public sector unions are entitled to use political action to oppose laws and regulations, they frequently encounter difficulties since they are not included as co-equal participants in the early stages of policy making (Van Roozendaal, 2020; Carter, 2022; Kahancová & Martišková, 2023).

Conflicts usually arise in the workplace because employee representatives want to improve living conditions for their members, while the company wants to increase profit. Another major source of conflict is when employers disregard collective bargaining agreements (Seward et al., 2019; Anene, 2022; Kapras, 2023). Conflict, given its unavoidable nature, should be resolved constructively rather than feared or avoided (Saundry, Fisher & Kinsey, 2021). Parties use formal or informal conflict resolution techniques to settle disputes amicably (Smith & Fredricks-Lowman, 2020). Conflict resolution benefits individuals, teams, relationships, and production, while unresolved disputes can lead to poor employee dedication, missed career opportunities, and unfavourable partnerships (Ling, Seok & Maakip, 2019; Rhodes & Akram, 2023). Conflict resolution has helped foster democracy and industrial harmony in the public sector. However, unresolved disputes have resulted in picketing and strikes, which have hampered worker performance and lost man-hours (Behrens,

Colvin, Dorigatti & Pekarek, 2020; Rhodes and Akram, 2023). Public sector organisations use a range of conflict resolution techniques, such as arbitration, mediation, collective bargaining, conciliation, and joint consultation (Lahana et al., 2019; Oluwafemi & Kifordu, 2023).

Organisational performance continues to have a significant impact on how businesses operate and develop their strategies. Businesses are constantly looking for efficient ways to precisely monitor and improve performance (Onoriode & Samuel, 2023; Alerasoul et al., 2022). The workforce is one of the main factors influencing an organisation's performance. Employees are invaluable assets whose calibre of work has a direct bearing on an organisation's efficacy and efficiency. Successful companies throughout the world place a high priority on employee well-being and have implemented performance management programmes to improve operational results and foster better employee relations (Al-Kassem, 2021; Ammirato et al., 2023). Positive relationships at work boost staff satisfaction and morale, enhancing the productivity and profitability of the organization (Bella, 2023). Conversely, unfavourable relationships might lower morale and reduce output (Bashaer, Sanjay & Sherine, 2016; Supramaniam & Singaravelloo, 2021). In the public sector, where organisations are typically non-profit with limited income-generating potential, measuring performance remains imperative.

6.3.3 The importance of a favourable work environment on enhancing the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana.

The literature review constantly highlights how the workplace affects both organisational productivity and personnel performance. The physical environment was one of the rising issues; researchers concur that workers' job satisfaction, social interactions, and productivity are all greatly impacted by the physical environment in which they operate (Putri & Hartono, 2023). While favourable surroundings encourage greater performance levels, unfavourable situations reduce productivity (Funmini, 2018; Aggarwal et al., 2023). Furthermore, it was determined that a culture of effective communication in the workplace lowers procedural challenges, decreases complaints, and facilitates more efficient workflows, all of which increase productivity (Kalogiannidis, 2020; Ibrahim et al., 2022; Musheke & Phiri, 2021).

Additionally, employees' abilities, competence, and job satisfaction are increased through organized and suitable training activities, which also boost organisational performance (Esthi, 2022). Furthermore, maintaining work-life balance is becoming more widely acknowledged as a strategic mechanism for improving employee satisfaction and engagement, which in turn improves productivity (Irfan et al., 2023).

There is a general consensus that a positive working environment directly contributes to improved organisational outcomes (Sugiarti, 2022). According to Mihretu and Gopal (2021), improving employee engagement and performance in both public and private sector contexts requires positive physical environments, encouraging interpersonal interactions, and continuous growth initiatives. While certain scholars stress the significance of the workplace as a major productivity driver, others contend that public sector policymaking and implementation ought to take precedence over environmental considerations (Jahmani et al., 2023). Some scholars question whether short-term efforts to enhance the workplace result in sustained gains in organizational performance or merely offer short-term advantages (Tannady & Budi, 2023; Sunarsi, 2019; Pawirosumarto, Sarjana & Gunawan, 2017).

According to the literature review, there isn't much research that explicitly addresses the cultural and socioeconomic background of Ghana in connection to workplace elements and public sector performance. Likewise, there is a dearth of thorough research in the literature on how contemporary technological developments in workplace infrastructure could improve organisational performance even more (Basuki & Khalid, 2021). Furthermore, little is known about the potential effects of eco-friendly and sustainable work environments on employee happiness and productivity in Ghana's public sector (Prayudi & Komariyah, 2023).

The findings offer an insightful foundation for exploring how labour relations affect organisational performance in the public sector of Ghana. The work environment is intrinsically tied to labour relations, which has a direct impact on engagement, morale, and communication among employees. In public institutions, a positive working environment that encourages increased productivity and innovation can be established through cooperative collective bargaining, effective dispute resolution, and union recognition. Gaining insights into these mechanisms can help Ghana's public sector develop measures to improve labour relations and increase efficiency.

6.3.4 The theoretical models underpinning the study

The theoretical models underpinning the study cut across three theoretical models: the pluralist theory, the Dunlop theory, and the strategic choice model. Pluralist theory emphasises the coexistence of multiple groups inside an organisation, each with distinct goals. To handle the inevitable disputes between the social partners in a bipartite relationship, it emphasises the value of collective bargaining, conciliation, and arbitration (Kochan, 2019; Van Buren et al., 2021; Singh & Gupta, 2024). The primary focus of the Dunlop theory is the resolution of economic conflicts within the industrial relations system, which is a subsystem of society. Dunlop's paradigm highlights the interrelationship between wages, working hours, and overall economic performance by introducing a systemic relationship between labour relations variables and economic determinants (Chawla, Singh & Singh, 2020; Tulachan & Rai, 2021; Frege & Kelly, 2020). Lastly, the Strategic Choice Model offers a more dynamic perspective on labour relations by highlighting strategic choices made by policymakers, unions, and management in reaction to changes in the external environment (Kohler, 2018; Lipsky, Avgar & Lamare, 2020).

The review of the aforementioned theories showed that scholars concur that structured methods like collective bargaining are necessary to handle conflict, which is an intrinsic part of industrial relations (Poole, Lansbury, & Wailes, 2001; Singh & Gupta, 2024). Additionally, the two-way interaction between economic variables and industrial relations systems is highlighted by both the Dunlop and Strategic Choice models. According to McLaughlin and Wright (2018), the Strategic Choice Model is widely accepted by researchers because it emphasises the proactive role that unions and management play in adjusting to changing situations.

Some scholars believe that pluralism idealises collective bargaining as a dispute resolution instrument, ignoring the complexity of modern labour relations (Dundon, Wilkinson & Ackers, 2023). Moreover, critics argue that Dunlop's model lacks a unifying framework and fails to appropriately account for the dynamic nature of labour relations, which lessens its usefulness in the field (Papadopoulos & Lyddon, 2020; Rogowski, 2020). Additionally, there is debate regarding the suitability of the Strategic Choice Model in situations when managerial prerogatives predominate and union power decreases (Kessler, Purcell, & Coyle Shapiro, 2000).

Reviewing the theories supporting the study revealed conflicting opinions. While neo-classical economists consider work rules as productivity restraints, industrial relations scholars see them as strategies for balancing competing interests (Drakopoulos, 2023). Furthermore, researchers have questioned Dunlop's assumption that labour unions play a steady role in modern industrial relations (Rogowski, 2020; Papadopoulos & Lyddon, 2020).

The study discovered that there is little research specifically addressing the application of these theories in Ghanaian public sector contexts. Additionally, there is a lack of research on how technological advancements affect organisational effectiveness and labour relations. There is still much to learn about these theories' long-term feasibility and adaptability in changing socioeconomic contexts.

These theoretical models' insights offered a solid framework for exploring how labour relations influence organisational performance in Ghana's public sector. The pluralist approach shed light on the value of group negotiation and dispute settlement procedures in creating a peaceful work environment. The Dunlop theory also emphasised the importance of considering the larger socioeconomic background when examining labour relations and how they influence the functioning of organisations. Last but not least, the Strategic Choice Model highlights how management, unions, and legislators can influence labour relations outcomes and improve public sector performance through strategic decision-making. Through the integration of the aforementioned theoretical approaches, the study was able to conduct a thorough analysis of the intricate dynamics of labour relations and how they influence the performance of Ghana's public sector institutions.

6.3.5 The role played by labour relations in enhancing organisational performance in the public sector of Ghana

The study explored the effects of labour relations, with particular attention to collective bargaining, trade unionism, and conflict resolution, on the performance of Ghanaian public sector institutions. The findings show an intricate relationship between positive effects and persistent challenges. The participants had different perspectives on the effectiveness of collective bargaining in the public sector. The

study found that collective bargaining has helped to improve working conditions, as indicated by a recent 30% base salary rise for Ghana's public servants and agreements on employee rights. However, some participants feel that the outcomes of collective bargaining often don't have enough value to motivate employees, in part because of leaders' alleged self-interest and Ghana's larger economic challenges. Its total impact on organisational performance is therefore moderate.

The performance of Ghana's public sector has been impacted by trade unions in both positive and negative ways. Public sector unions have boosted progress within institutions, enhanced employee well-being, and served as change agents. However, it is believed that unions are unduly focused on wage negotiations at the expense of more general employee issues, including rights enforcement, capacity building, and occupational health. Their contribution to the effectiveness of Ghanaian public sector institutions is further hampered by high levels of mistrust, self-centred behaviour, and compulsory union participation.

The establishment of the National Labour Commission (NLC) and the development of internal conflict resolution procedures demonstrate Ghana's commitment to sustaining harmonious labour relations by resolving labour disputes. However, challenges like restricted access to NLC offices, budgetary limitations, a lack of resources, poor communication, and insufficient policy execution have resulted in ongoing industrial actions like strikes, which have a detrimental impact on Ghanaian public servants' morale and productivity.

Consequently, the main problems jeopardising labour relations that are both directly and indirectly impacting the performance of Ghana's public sector institutions include regulations that are insufficient for the contemporary workplace and that impede productive labour relations. Insufficient resources result in a diminished ability to execute and maintain labour activities. Additionally, there is the problem of bureaucracy, wherein institutional inefficiencies impede the enforcement of labour laws and decision-making. Last but not least is the problem of declining union membership, which reduces the representation and bargaining power of unions. In conclusion, even though Ghana's public sector has labour relations mechanisms in place, their influence on organisational performance is still below average. The

effectiveness of the sector can be greatly increased by fortifying these relationships through updated legislation, more efficient use of resources, and inclusive strategies.

6.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The study proposes a collaborative accountability model in which management and unions share responsibility for performance outcomes, questioning the rigid role separation expected by classic pluralist theory: where trade unions are of the view that performance of workers should be the sole responsibility of management and not unions. This expands the theory's explanatory capacity in public sector contexts.

Similarly, the paper situates the Strategic Choice Model in the Ghanaian public sector while offering evidence from a global perspective. It provides a comparative viewpoint to the generally Western-centric implementations of the Strategic Choice Model by demonstrating how institutional, socioeconomic, and political factors in Ghana influence managerial discretion and strategic choices in labour relations.

The study adds to the body of literature by bringing attention to overlooked topics in labour relations studies, like the potential of digitalisation, the role of bureaucracy, and the psychosocial needs of workers. In addition to providing a policy blueprint to modernise labour relations, strengthen institutions, and boost public sector performance in Ghana, the study advocates performance-based collective bargaining.

6.5 CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to investigate how labour relations might improve organisational performance in Ghana's public sector. With the public sector changing rapidly, citizens are expecting more from public servants in terms of efficiency and performance, and they perceive that these factors are linked to labour relations, particularly in developing nations. The study's main goal was to concentrate on labour relations practices like collective bargaining, trade unionism, and dispute resolution and how they affected public sector institutions' performance in Ghana.

The study's conclusions show that participants had a wide range of perspectives about how collective bargaining affected organisational performance in the public

sector in Ghana. Some participants have a positive perspective on collective bargaining and believe that it has improved public sector workers' overall working conditions over time (Kahancová & Martišková, 2023). This viewpoint is supported by the recent base salary rise of thirty percent and the execution of collective agreements pertaining to health and safety, employee rights, and working conditions, all of which have helped to improve public sector employees' morale. Conversely, some participants feel that collective bargaining has not been successful enough (Luo & Yang, 2020), pointing out as major problems the perception of leaders' self-interest and the low value of the results to inspire employees. The advantages of collective bargaining procedures have been evaluated differently as a result of these considerations. The study concludes that while labour relations in Ghana's public sector have significantly improved, especially in the area of collective bargaining, their influence on the effectiveness of public sector institutions has not yet been fully recognised. This is explained by the low perceived worth of the results of collective bargaining as well as Ghana's overall economic difficulties. Consequently, the influence of collective bargaining on the organisational performance of the Ghanaian public sector can be considered moderate at best.

The study's conclusions demonstrate the intricate interaction between trade union activity's beneficial and detrimental effects on organisational performance in Ghana's public sector. Even though beneficial outcomes like improving employee well-being, acting as a last resort for change, and encouraging positive advancement for both employees and institutions have made a substantial contribution to improvements in public sector performance, they are outweighed by more negative effects. The performance of the sector has been more significantly impacted by factors such as low welfare assistance, compulsory union membership, disregard for logistical and health issues, self-centred behaviour, and high levels of mistrust in trade union representation, according to the participants. The study concludes that while trade unions are successful at defending the rights of their members (Leonardi & Pedersini, 2023), they frequently overlook other important aspects that could raise employee morale and productivity in favour of wage negotiations. Unions usually neglect important areas like workers' rights enforcement, capacity building, occupational health and safety, and provision of vital supplies and equipment. These are crucial tasks that have the potential to greatly increase public employees' performance

(Zharfpeykan & Akroyd, 2022). Furthermore, many trade unions believe that public institution leaders should be the only ones in charge of performance management, which leaves room for insufficiencies in staff supervision, productivity assessment, and conflict settlement. These elements, along with the pursuit of self-serving goals, have led to trade unionism's detrimental impact on organisational performance in Ghana's public sector outweighing its beneficial effects.

According to the findings, Ghana's government has worked hard to promote positive labour relations in the public sector, especially by mediating disputes between social partners. The National Labour Commission (NLC), which is entrusted with settling industrial disputes for workers in the public and commercial sectors, and labour tribunals are examples of this dedication. Furthermore, leaders of public institutions make sure that their collective bargaining agreements have internal dispute resolution procedures. Employer associations are involved in dispute resolution procedures with unions in order to uphold equity. Nevertheless, a number of challenges have made it more difficult for conflict resolution programmes in Ghana's public sector to succeed, despite their admirable efforts. Among the major obstacles are the restricted availability of NLC offices to the general public, financial issues, resource shortages, inadequate labour policy implementation; and poor communication and information exchange. Due to these challenges, there has been a rise in industrial actions such as strikes, which have harmed public sector employees' morale, interrupted operations, and resulted in man-hour losses. As a result of these challenges, the public sector's overall performance has suffered. As a result, it is determined that there is substantial opportunity for improvement in the moderate impact of conflict resolution on organisational performance in the Ghanaian public sector.

The study found that trade unionism, collective bargaining, and dispute resolution have all suffered as a result of several serious issues undermining public sector labour relations in Ghana. The existence of outdated labour laws that do not adequately handle the intricacies and needs of the contemporary labour market is one of the main problems. This outdated legal system is insufficient for the modern workplace and does not offer the required foundation for productive labour relations. Labour organisations and dispute resolution bodies confront additional difficulties as a result of public sector organisations' limited ability to adopt and support labour-

related initiatives due to budgetary restrictions. These organisations' operational efficiency is also hampered by resource and logistical constraints, which makes it challenging to resolve labour concerns successfully. The application of labour rules and decision-making procedures is further slowed down by institutional bureaucracy, which results in inefficiencies and delays. In addition, a lack of knowledgeable employees has left a gap in the experience of professionals who can handle labour relations problems competently. Federations' inefficiency reduces trade unions' ability to fight for workers' rights by undermining their collective bargaining strength. This deterioration is exacerbated by a fall in union membership, which lessens the power and representativeness of trade unions and increases the difficulty of successfully negotiating on behalf of workers (Underhill, 2022). Collectively, these difficulties have had a negative impact on Ghana's public sector labour practices. Consequently, there is now much less chance that trade unionism, collective bargaining, and conflict resolution will improve the performance of the public sector. According to the study's findings, resolving these issues is essential to strengthening labour relations and increasing the public sector's general effectiveness in Ghana.

The study concludes that Ghana's public sector has below-average labour relations influence on organisational performance. Given that Ghana, a developing nation, has developed labour relations mechanisms inside its public sector, this finding is very alarming. The study does show, though, that putting these frameworks in place alone will not raise public servant performance. The presence of formal structures is just one of several aspects that affect how well labour relations can improve organisational performance. Effective labour policy implementation, frequent performance reviews, and thorough staff development and support are crucial components of this equation. In the Ghanaian public sector, these components are essential for promoting effective and efficient worker performance. Furthermore, the study emphasises how critical it is to integrate psycho-social needs into collective bargaining, use digitisation strategies, and offer sufficient logistics and support. In Ghana, these steps have the potential to greatly improve public institution's performance when paired with strong labour relations frameworks. Therefore, a comprehensive strategy that goes beyond conventional labour relations frameworks is necessary to produce appreciable gains in organisational performance in the Ghanaian public sector.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study's conclusions have brought to light a number of crucial issues that affect how well labour relations and organisational performance function in Ghana's public sector. The establishment of frameworks and institutions to support labour relations has advanced significantly, but there are still many obstacles in the way of realising the full potential advantages of these efforts. The report offers a number of recommendations in this section to address the problems that were found, with an emphasis on doable fixes, legislative changes, and areas that need more investigation. These recommendations are meant to serve as a roadmap for those involved, such as researchers, trade unions, public sector managers, and politicians, in putting strategies into practice that will enhance organisational performance and strengthen labour relations in Ghana's public sector.

6.6.1 Recommendation for Practice

The findings of the study show that unions frequently ignore important factors that are critical to promoting excellent employee morale and productivity, such as logistical support, occupational health and safety, and professional development, while concentrating mostly on public servants' remunerations and salaries. Consequently, Ghanaian trade unions must extend their purview beyond wage negotiations to encompass concerns like worker health and safety, capacity building, and the provision of supplies and equipment. Unions can improve overall employee morale and organisational effectiveness in the public sector by tackling these issues.

Additionally, the government of Ghana should prioritise the establishment of branches of the National Labour Commission offices in all regions in Ghana. This will bridge the accessibility gap between the rural and the urban areas when it comes to resolving labour dispute responsibilities by the government.

Furthermore, collective bargaining in Ghana's public sector ought to cover a broader variety of employee demands, such as career development, psychosocial assistance, and work-life balance, in addition to compensation negotiations. This strategy can support the development of a more inspiring and all-encompassing work environment in public organisations.

Unions as well as heads of public sector institutions need funding for professional development and experts to address health and safety and capacity-building initiatives. They should establish specialised committees within the first three months of each operative year to oversee long-term programmes for employee assistance, capacity building, and logistical improvements.

Encouraging accountability and openness in union operations is crucial to restoring confidence and lessening the unfavourable opinions, such as embezzlement of union dues attached to trade unions in Ghana. Member and workforce confidence can be restored by open communication and consistent reporting on union activities and results. Similarly, unions should adopt more inclusive and open policies and provide services beyond wage bargaining in order to counteract the fall in trade union membership.

The findings of the study demonstrate that digitisation may improve labour relations in the public sector by facilitating communication, resource tracking, and conflict resolution procedures. The efficiency of labour relations is currently hampered by logistical and communication issues that could be resolved by digital solutions. To facilitate effective dispute settlements, increase resource accessibility, and expedite communication, labour officials should promote the use of digital tools and platforms. Ghanaian public sector organisations ought to think about digitising important labour relations tasks in order to boost openness, cut down on administrative hold-ups, and enable data-driven decision-making. The government can provide software solutions for data management, resource tracking, and conflict resolution through a human resource information system (HRIS) to carry out this recommendation.

6.6.2 Implementation of Recommendations

Ghanaian trade unions need to take a more comprehensive strategy to worker advocacy in order to implement the recommendations. Prioritising health and safety requirements necessitate the formation of strategic alliances with stakeholders, such as governmental organisations and occupational health specialists. Additionally, in order to guarantee that public employees gain skills pertinent to their changing jobs, unions should set up frameworks for ongoing professional development and capacity building. Additionally, in order to tackle the issue of National Labour Commission

(NLC) offices being inaccessible, the Ghanaian government has to think about creating additional regional offices and mobile units, particularly in isolated regions. Such an initiative would guarantee equitable access to dispute resolution services for all citizens. In a similar vein, sufficient financial and logistical resources ought to be assigned to the NLC and other dispute resolution organisations to guarantee their efficient operation. This entails providing the tools, personnel, and instruction required to resolve conflicts effectively.

Furthermore, to implement the recommendation of collective bargaining in Ghana's public sector covering a broader variety of employee demands, Ghanaian trade unions need to push for a more thorough framework for collective bargaining that takes into account the various requirements of their members. This entails bargaining for chances for professional advancement, setting up networks of support for psychological health, and advocating for laws that improve work-life balance. To institutionalise these changes, cooperation with government organisations and human resource specialists will be crucial.

Also, in dealing with the recommendation of unions as well as heads of public sector institutions, need funding for professional development and experts to address health and safety and capacity-building initiatives; public sector unions can seek government assistance with regards to application of labour laws and collaborate with international organisations to learn best practices when it comes in increasing industrial democracy and harmony, with the intention of stimulating increased performance.

In tackling the recommendation regarding encouraging accountability and openness in union operations, it will be necessary for unions to establish effective channels of communication in order to inform members on union spending, activities, and results. In addition, prepare and disseminate frequent financial reports that are available to members, evaluate programme results, improve transparency efforts, and keep informing members of the advantages of new policies. Unions should emphasise the long-term benefits of transparency and accountability for union reputation and membership growth, as well as regular training sessions on ethical financial practice, as resistance from within the union leadership or membership may impede efforts to adopt new accountability and reporting practices.

Furthermore, in order to meet the recommendation regarding the Ghanaian public sector organisations considering digitising important labour relations practices, the government must allocate funds for software creation, acquisition, or customisation. The labour institutions should be responsible for managing daily digital processes, monitoring resource usage, facilitating digital conflict resolution through new platforms, and also creating and delivering staff training that emphasises skill development for efficient digital communication and data management. Digital literacy may be a challenge for some public sector workers, and internet connection may be limited in some areas. Therefore, the government should make sure that systems are easy to use and provide digital literacy training to all people engaged. Consider offline features that synchronize while online for locations with poor internet connectivity.

6.6.3 Recommendation for Policy

The findings of the study show that a large number of trade unions believe that institutional leaders alone are in charge of public sector performance, which restricts the unions' ability to enhance performance. This idea limits the potential contributions that unions can make to the general well-being and productivity of public institutions. Consequently, policymakers ought to consider including performance-based measures in collective bargaining agreements. This could make it easier to connect the results of negotiations with enhanced organisational performance, which would be more beneficial to Ghanaian public sector institutions as well as public servants. Policies should also be established to formalise frequent performance reviews that are connected to the objectives of the public institutions and the advancement of its employees. Such measures would make it more likely that trade unions and public sector leaders in Ghana would share accountability for performance management.

To help with policy creation and guarantee legal compliance, experts in labour law and performance management will be required. The Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations and policymakers will need to take the lead in developing policies, making sure that performance-based measures uphold employee rights and adhere to labour regulations. Establish formal guidelines requiring performance evaluations that are connected to organisational objectives and incorporate them into CBAs. Unions might perceive performance-based agreements as a threat to their advocacy

function. Therefore, union representatives should be included in the development and assessment of performance criteria to ensure they align with the rights and welfare of employees.

Among the important findings of the study is that Ghana needs to update its labour laws to consider the changing nature of the labour market and workforce. The existing legislative framework erodes productive labour relations and is unable to meet the needs of contemporary public sector workers. Therefore, revision of outdated labour laws to reflect the intricacies and demands of Ghana's contemporary labour market ought to be a top priority for policymakers.

Furthermore, it is imperative to expedite the execution of labour laws and decision-making protocols by rationalising bureaucratic procedures in Ghanaian public sector institutions. Simplifying these procedures will help prevent industrial actions that could impair the performance of Ghana's public sector by making it easier to enforce labour laws and promptly handle labour relations concerns. Opposition from stakeholders or legislators who might be wary of making significant changes to established laws could be a big obstacle. Therefore, the government must launch an awareness campaign emphasising the necessity of modernisation as well as the advantages of new legislation for economic resilience, flexibility, and productivity.

The study's findings indicate that the efficacy of dispute resolution procedures in Ghana's public sector is hampered by bureaucratic procedures, a lack of resources, and restricted public access to the NLC. These challenges result in the frequent strikes happening in Ghana's public sector currently, which affect public sector performance and employee morale. Therefore, the Ghanaian government should establish decentralised and resource-supported conflict resolution frameworks to increase the accessibility of dispute settlement services and institutions for public servants. Efficiency would be increased and industrial disturbances would be reduced if the National Labour Commission (NLC) and other pertinent organisations streamlined and simplified their dispute resolution procedures.

Furthermore, Ghana's government ought to enact laws mandating that managers at all levels of the public sector undergo regular training in conflict resolution. In order to lessen the burden on the NLC, managers should be equipped with the mediation, negotiation, and communication skills necessary to settle conflicts at the workplace. The aforementioned recommendation's scope and pace of implementation may be

restricted by financial restrictions. The government can, however, begin with a gradual rollout that targets high-need areas and look for collaborations with global labour groups to obtain more grants or money. Furthermore, some NLC offices or areas might not have the infrastructure necessary to implement digital case management systems. Therefore, to guarantee that regional offices are familiar with the digital platform and get continuous technical assistance, provide them with the required technology resources and initial training.

6.6.4 Implementation of Recommendations

In order to put the recommendation regarding policymakers considering including performance-based measures in collective bargaining agreements into practice, the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations and other labour institutions in Ghana must include performance-based metrics in collective bargaining agreements, establishing a clear connection between the results of negotiations and organisational performance. This requirement calls for defining precise standards for assessing performance and establishing quantifiable goals that complement institutional objectives. Regular performance reviews should also be required by official policies to promote a continuous improvement culture. Trade unions and heads of the public sector can work together to increase productivity and foster the professional development of public servants by sharing accountability for performance management.

Also, in order to actualise the recommendation regarding policymakers developing policies, making sure that performance-based measures uphold employee rights and adhere to labour regulations, the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations needs to be in the forefront and task heads of public sector institutions in Ghana to develop policies that protect employee rights and incorporate performance-based measures. To guarantee adherence to legal requirements and industry best practices, cooperation with specialists in labour law and performance management is crucial.

In addressing the recommendations regarding the revision of outdated labour laws, the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, together with the government of Ghana, should form a tripartite committee of labour economists, legal professionals, and members from the public sector and trade unions to review the Labour Act to find any gaps or areas that need modification. Stakeholder engagements must be given

top priority to address challenges that are emerging in the public sector, such as flexible working arrangements. Furthermore, a gradual legislative reform approach backed by public awareness initiatives will make it easier for public sector institutions to adopt and comply.

Furthermore, the Ghanaian government should set up regional conflict resolution centres with the required tools and skilled staff to make sure public servants can more easily access dispute resolution services in order to actually implement the recommendation regarding the Ghanaian government establishing decentralised and resource-supported conflict resolution frameworks to increase the accessibility of dispute settlement services. The National Labour Commission (NLC) should oversee these centres' operations while retaining decentralised authority to resolve conflicts quickly. Efficiency will be further increased by streamlining and digitising dispute settlement procedures. Reducing bureaucratic delays and industrial disruptions would also need ongoing training on improved procedures for NLC employees and stakeholders.

Lastly, in order to put the recommendation regarding Ghana's government need to enact laws mandating that managers at all levels of the public sector undergo regular training in conflict resolution into practice, the government should start a training programme in stages, beginning with high-priority, conflict-prone public sector units. Mediation, negotiation, and communication techniques specific to resolving conflicts at work should be the main topics of training. Working together with global labour unions can help you get money and technological know-how. At the same time, funding for case management digital infrastructure should be started with test projects in a few regional NLC offices before expanding. Regional offices will be able to successfully implement and administer digital platforms for effective dispute resolution with ongoing technical support and training.

6.6.5 Recommendation for Theory

The findings of the study highlight the significance of shared accountability in labour relations, especially between managers in the public sector and union leaders, with regard to organisational performance. Pluralist theory often assumes that the social partners involved in industrial interactions have distinct roles. The public sector in

Ghana serves as an example of how strict role separation can impair organisational performance. Therefore, incorporating a collaborative accountability model in which management and unions share responsibility for organisational performance could reinforce the pluralist theory. In addressing situations when management and labour must collaborate closely to meet performance goals, this development would increase the theory's capacity for explanation. This model emphasises that labour relations are about shared goals that can promote a more productive workforce, not merely about settling conflicts.

According to Dunlop's Theory, three primary actors (government, management, and labour) have an impact on industrial relations systems within a technological and environmental framework. Nonetheless, this study reveals that logistical difficulties, financial restraints, and resource shortages have a big influence on labour relations dynamics in Ghana's public sector. Consequently, the role of environmental constraints, in particular, "resource constraints" that influence each actor's capacity within the industrial relations system could be added to Dunlop's theory. By adding this element, the theory would better represent the realities of public sectors in underdeveloped countries, where the efficacy of labour relations frameworks is constrained by a lack of resources. This change would improve the theory's suitability for situations when labour relations results are significantly influenced by outside variables, such as economic constraints and infrastructure restrictions.

The Strategic Choice Model asserts that the strategic direction of labour relations is influenced by the active decisions made by management and labour regarding their relationship. Nonetheless, the study findings show that in Ghana's public sector, management and union objectives frequently conflict and are influenced by larger socioeconomic variables, like insufficient welfare support and frequent policy changes. The impact of socioeconomic limitations and conflicting labour and management goals could be incorporated into the Strategic Choice Model. Modifying the theory to consider these inequities would make it more applicable in situations where socioeconomic circumstances might limit union tactics. This would result in a more sophisticated comprehension of how strategic decisions affect labour relations.

The findings indicate that by offering effective, easily available platforms for information sharing and dispute resolution, digitisation might greatly enhance communication and conflict resolution in labour relations. The Strategic Choice Model can incorporate technologically enhanced modern labour relations approaches through digital transformation. This change would increase the model's relevance in modern contexts where digital platforms are becoming more and more crucial in resolving labour disputes and facilitating resource accessibility. The public sector in underdeveloped countries would be particularly impacted by this integration, as technology could assist in removing logistical and physical obstacles in labour relations.

6.6.6 Implementation of Recommendations

In order for the pluralist theory to be improved in relation to shared responsibility regarding performance, managers of the public sector and union leaders must establish organised frameworks for collaboration in order to promote shared accountability in labour relations. Joint performance monitoring committees, jointly created organisational goals, and frequent discussions aimed at bringing both sides' objectives into alignment might help achieve this. Moreover, the pluralist theory's concept of strict roles for the social partners should be broadened to include performance indicators.

In addition, researchers and labour practitioners should carry out empirical studies that examine the effects of resource restrictions on industrial relations in public sector environments in order to actually implement the recommendations regarding including resource constraint elements in Dunlop's Theory. The results can be utilised to create labour relations strategies that are resource-efficient, like faster dispute resolution procedures and creative cooperation tools that lessen logistical difficulties. The application of Dunlop's Theory to resource-constrained situations will also be improved by integrating these insights into training initiatives and policy frameworks, which will give stakeholders practical advice.

Also, in implementing the recommendation regarding broadening the scope of the Strategic Choice Model, scholars and labour professionals should look into how socioeconomic constraints affect labour relations strategy. Performing case studies on public sector organisations can yield important information on how unions and

management resolve conflicts within these limitations. In spite of socioeconomic challenges, labour practitioners can use collaborative decision-making platforms to align goals, and researchers can provide frameworks that support adaptive strategies. The Strategic Choice Model's applicability to labour relations in dynamic, resource-constrained situations will be further increased by exchanging best practices through workshops and policy briefs.

In tackling the recommendation regarding the Strategic Choice Model, including the element of digitisation, researchers and labour practitioners should investigate and deploy digital tools, including online grievance management systems, virtual bargaining platforms, and data-sharing dashboards. While labour practitioners can employ user-friendly tools to expedite management and union interactions, researchers can evaluate how well these digital solutions improve decision-making and dispute resolution.

6.6.7 Recommendation for Further Research

The study presents a range of viewpoints regarding the effectiveness of collective bargaining in Ghana's public sector, including both arguments for and against it. Consequently, further research ought to investigate the effects of collective bargaining encompassing a broader spectrum of employee benefits beyond remuneration, including career advancement, wellness and health initiatives, and psychological assistance. Such studies can help to clarify how comprehensive collective agreements affect the functioning of organisations.

The study's findings highlight how crucial it is to attend to workers' psychosocial needs during labour relations in order to boost productivity and morale. Therefore, with an emphasis on public sector organisations, more studies may examine how psychosocial requirements affect labour relations outcomes. Research could look at how interpersonal relationships, job satisfaction, and mental health support influence an organisation's overall success. Research in this field may be especially helpful in underdeveloped nations, where resource limitations sometimes cause psycho-social demands to be disregarded.

The study emphasises how labour relations issues in Ghana's public sector are aggravated by bureaucratic inefficiencies, such as sluggish decision-making and

strict regulations. Despite being a crucial component determining labour relations outcomes, the impact of bureaucracy in such situations is rarely discussed in labour relations literature. As a result, more research might examine the ways in which bureaucracy impacts labour relations and investigate methods for expediting the application of labour laws in bureaucratic institutions.

According to the study, digitisation may enhance labour relations dispute resolution and information exchange. The potential of digital technologies to improve administrative efficiency in labour practices has not been thoroughly examined in the literature on labour relations in public sectors. Future research could therefore look at how digital platforms and tools can help with labour relations procedures, particularly in environments with fewer physical resources and developing countries. The usefulness of digital platforms for collective bargaining, dispute settlement, and performance monitoring in public sector labour relations could be the subject of future research.

The performance issues in Ghana's public sector might not be adequately addressed by standard labour relations strategies, according to the study's findings. There isn't much research on labour relations strategies that are especially suited to the particular difficulties faced by developing countries. Future studies could therefore examine labour relations frameworks created especially for developing nations, considering the particular political, social, and economic aspects of these environments. Comparative studies using a combination of research methods conducted in various developing countries may shed light on best practices and demonstrate how labour relations theories and strategies may be tailored to a range of socioeconomic contexts.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE

TOPIC: INFLUENCE OF LABOUR RELATIONS ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED PUBLIC SECTOR INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA

1 The influence of collective bargaining on the organisational performance

- 1.1 Explain the process of collective bargaining in the Ghanaian public sector.
- 1.2 In your opinion describe how collective bargaining affects performance of employees in the Ghanaian public sector.
- 1.3 Do you think performance of employees in the Ghanaian public sector are affected during collective bargaining process and why?
- 1.4 What are the scope and coverage areas of a collective bargaining process in the public sector of Ghana?
- 1.5 In your opinion, is collective bargaining in the Ghanaian public sector a mere formality, or its outcomes or agreements are actually implemented to the latter?

2 Trade unionism and its effects on organisational performance

- 2.1 Explain the role of trade unions in fostering a good relationship between employees and government in the Ghanaian public sector?
- 2.2 In your opinion what are some of the practices by trade unions which affect organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana?
- 2.3 What is your opinion on union activities seen as disruptive to organisational performance in the Ghanaian public sector?
- 2.4 Are unions successful in negotiating with government to address employee grievances in the public sector of Ghana? Motivate your answer.
- 2.5 Do you consider trade unionism as positive influence on organisational performance in the public sector of Ghana and why?

3 Influence of conflict resolution on organisational performance

- 3.1 Describe the process of conflict resolution in your institution (any specific ways)?
- 3.2 Describe how conflict resolution promote organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana?
- 3.3 What are the causes of conflicts between employees and employers in the public sector of Ghana?
- 3.4 Are there specific structures to manage conflict resolutions in the public sector of Ghana?
- 3.5 In your opinion describe the independence of these structures from government in managing conflict resolutions.
- 3.6 Provide the main challenges in your opinion which hinders the success of conflict resolutions in the Ghanaian public sector.

4 Challenges faced by public sector labour relations

- 4.1 The current labour legislations are not conducive to sound labour relations in the public sector of Ghana, what is your opinion on this assertion, provide reasons for your answer.
- 4.2 What are the challenges you face when it comes to issues of trade unions, conflict resolution and collective bargaining in the public sector in Ghana?
- 4.3 Do you believe that the Ghanaian public sector supports employee relations practices and initiatives in their operations? If yes, what are some of the practices and initiatives? If No, why?

5 Strategies to enhance organisational performance

- 5.1 Explain the main contributions towards effective and efficient labour relations on the performance of the public sector of Ghana.
- 5.2 Describe the main challenges with effective labour relations on organisational performance in the public sector of Ghana.
- 5.3 In your opinion, does labour relations promote the achievement of organisational objectives in the public sector of Ghana? Give details to justify your response.
- 5.4 Which strategies can enhance labour relations and hence improve the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana?
- 5.5 Outline your recommendations for effective and efficient organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana?
- 5.6 How do you ensure a conducive work environment and cordial relationship between employees and management in your institution?

APPENDIX B: CODEBOOK

CODES AND THEMES

INFLUENCE OF LABOUR RELATIONS ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED PUBLIC SECTOR INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA

RQ1 =Does collective bargaining (CB) influence organizational performance of the public sector in Ghana?

NOTE: **Ghanaian public sector = GPS**

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Perception of Collective Bargaining in Determinants Organisational Performance in GPS	• Positive perceptions • Negative perceptions
Positive perceptions	• Contributes to motivation • Foster integrity and work ethics • Improves working conditions • Contributes to salary increase • Process-oriented & collective agreement
Negative perceptions	• CB as informed by leaders' selfish intentions • Economic inadequacies of Collective Bargaining outcomes • Valence (the value of the collective bargaining outcomes is not enough to motivate workers) • Collective bargaining as a mere formality
SCOPE OF CB	• Salary negotiation • Employee rights • Worker's protection • compensation • Working conditions & environment • CB agreement is binded by law NB// Amidst the various elements that can be negotiated on during collective

	bargaining such as (training & development issues, occupational health & safety issues, non-availability of resources for workers to work with, etc.); The predominant issues negotiated on during collective bargaining in GPS is Wage & salaries negotiation.

RQ2 = What is the impact of trade unionism on the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana?

Theme	Sub-themes
Practices of trade unions that affect organizational performance	• Self-centredness practice • Practice of automatic union membership /coerced membership /compulsory membership • Poor welfare support
Impact of trade unionism (TU) on the organizational performance of the public sector in Ghana	• Positive TU impact outcomes • Negative TU impact outcome
Positive TU Impact Outcomes	• Trade union activities seen as helpful to employee wellbeing • Trade union as a last resource for change • Trade union activities seen as step-in-right-direction • TU as Positive change for workers and the organization
Negative TU impact outcomes	• High mistrust of TU representativeness • Contributes to poor management-worker relationship

Unions negotiations with government to address employee grievances in the public sector of Ghana	• Firm support structure framework • Union failure-informed negotiations:
Firm support structure framework	• Firmed representativeness • Development of welfare schemes • Financial assistance • Collective bargaining power
Union failure-informed negotiations:	• Systemic/government based • Union-membership-based
Systemic/government based	• Inadequate of government to fully meet the demands of the union • Institutional bureaucracy and implementation delay
Union-membership-based	• Declining union density • Exclusion of cost-of-living allowance (COLA) in salary increase agreement • Uncertainty: lack of trust/miscommunication • Strike action during negotiations
Perception of trade union on organizational performance (OP)	• Positive perception of trade unionism on OP • Negative perception of trade unionism on OP
Positive perception of trade unionism on OP	• Systemic social partners • Union advocacy
Negative perception of trade unionism on OP	• Weak in monitoring employees • Lack productivity assessment • Inadequate matter resolution • Selfish agenda

RQ3= Does conflict resolution influence the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana?

THEME	SUB-THEME
Influence of conflict resolution to organizational performance in the Public Sector in Ghana	• Bottom-up conflict resolution • Internal workplace mechanism conflict resolution • National Labour Commission conflict resolution • The labour court intervention • Role of the labour commission, through mediation, arbitration, commissioners • Legal procedures • Employer representation and legal advice
Causes of conflicts between employees and employers in the public sector of Ghana	• Perceived low salaries and delayed allowances • Improper contract definitions and unfair condition of service • Inadequate communication • Dispute settlement disagreement • Undemocratic appointment of leaders • Perceived personal organizational growth denial
Challenges that hinders the success of conflict resolutions in the Ghanaian public sector.	• Finances • Poor communication and information sharing • Education • Improper record-keeping and documentation • Limited resources • Poor labour policy implementation • Non-accessibility of NLC offices to citizens

RQ4= What are the challenges faced by public sector labour relations in Ghana?

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
challenges FACING trade unions, conflict resolution and collective bargaining in the public sector in Ghana	• Dated labour legislation. • Poor staff development • Logistic and resource challenges • Unclear national labour commission and government relationship • Institutional Bureaucracy • Expert manpower shortage • Job insecurity • Under-resourced institutions

RQ5= Which strategies can enhance the organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana?

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Challenges affecting effective organisational performance in the public sector of Ghana	• Health insecurity • Inadequate training opportunities • Power dynamics and inequality • Poor maintenance of resources • Non-comprehensive labour law
Key contributors to effective and efficient worker performance in PS in Ghana	• Regular performance evaluation • Accountability • Staff development and support • Proper supervision and monitoring
Strategies FOR organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana	• Subsidize housing and transportation • Capacity building • Reduce corruption • Active disciplinary procedures • Establish a conducive work environment
Effective recommendation for organisational performance of the public sector in Ghana?	• Inclusion of psycho-social needs in collective bargaining • Invest in research and training programs • Create employers' associations

	• Operate a digitization system • Provide logistics and support resources • Proper monitoring and evaluation • Motivation • Review labour law

APPENDIX C (I): LETTERS OF PERMISSION/CONSENT



FAIR WAGES AND SALARIES COMMISSION

Digital Address: GL-030-9459
P.O. Box MB 263, Ministries, Accra-Ghana
Kindly quote this number and date on all correspondence
My Ref. No.: FWSU ADM-27/VOL-1/38
Year Ref No:

4TH APRIL, 2022

MR. KENNETH PARKU
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Sir,

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT
FAIR WAGES AND SALARIES COMMISSION**

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 22nd February 2022, on the above subject.

We appreciate the choice of the Commission as one of the institutions for this research work, and are happy to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of labour relations in Ghana.

Following your preliminary meeting on 14th March, 2022 with our Ag. Research/Public Affairs, we are ready to assist as much as we can. Kindly let us know when you will be ready to commence the study.

We would be grateful to have a copy of the findings of your research work when completed.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

BENJAMIN ARTHUR (ING.)
AG. CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Cc: The Chief Director, MELR
Ag. Director, Research/Public Affairs

CHIEF EXECUTIVE
FAIR WAGES AND SALARIES
COMMISSION
ACCRA

APPENDIX C (II): LETTERS OF PERMISSION/CONSENT

In case of reply the number
and the date of this
letter should be quoted

Our Ref. No: 243/ST/13/03-14/4
Yours Ref. No



REPUBLIC OF
GHANA

LABOUR DEPARTMENT
P. O. BOX MB 55
ACCRA

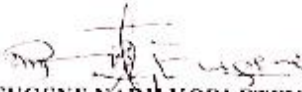
DATE: 29 April, 2022

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR RELATIONS

We acknowledge receipt of letter number BA.406/479/01^c of 10th March, 2022 on the above subject.

We wish to indicate that Mr. Kenneth Parku would be granted the support he needs to enable him conduct his research on the topic *"Influence of Labour Relations on Organizational Performance of Public Sector Institutions in Ghana"*

Mr. Parku, by this letter, is assured of our willingness to assist him conduct the research successfully.


EUGENE NARII KORIEY
CHIEF LABOUR OFFICER

HON. MINISTER
MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND
LABOUR RELATIONS, ACCRA

cc: Mr. Kenneth Parku
kennethparku@gmail.com
0208359592

Location: Opposite Accra Sports Stadium Main Entrance on the Finance Drive Street
Tel: 0303941685/0303941686 Email: chieflabour@yahoo.com info@labourdepartment.gov.gh

Scanned with CamScanner

APPENDIX C(III): LETTERS OF PERMISSION/CONSENT



MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR RELATIONS

P.O. Box MB 84, Ministries - Accra
Digital Address: GA-110-0168

Provisional registration number: 10108/2002

Registration number: GA-110-0168

Registration date: 10/10/2002

Registration type: 10108/2002

Registration date: 10/10/2002

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR RELATIONS

I forward herewith the attached Letter received from Mr. Kenneth Parku, a PhD student with the Department of Human Resource Management of the University of South Africa.

2. Mr. Parku has requested for permission to conduct a research on the topic *"Influence of Labour Relations on Organizational Performance of Public Sector Institutions in Ghana"*.

3. We would be grateful for any support extended to him to enable him complete his academic research successfully.

4. Many thanks for your cooperation.

KIZITO BHALANS
CHIEF DIRECTOR
for: MINISTER

THE CHIEF LABOUR OFFICER
LABOUR DEPARTMENT
ACCRA

THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
THE NATIONAL LABOUR COMMISSION
ACCRA

THE AG. CHIEF EXECUTIVE
FAIR WAGES AND SALARIES COMMISSION
ACCRA

cc: Hon. Minister, MELR

The Director, PPMF, MELR

Mr. Kenneth Parku
Email: kennethparku@gmail.com
Tel: 0200359192

Tel: 020 4405 572/591/512/513/514/515/516/517/518/519/520
Fax: 020 4405 572/591/512/513/514/515/516/517/518/519/520
Web: www.melr.gov.gh

APPENDIX C (IV): LETTERS OF PERMISSION/CONSENT



REPUBLIC OF GHANA



NATIONAL LABOUR COMMISSION

Private Mail Bag
Ministries, Accra-Ghana

Tel: 233-21 238737 / 238345

Fax: 233-21 238738

Our Ref: NLC/GH/V.21/2000/29W

Your Ref: _____

Date: 7TH APRIL, 2022

MR. KENNETH PARKU
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
PRELLER STREET, MUCKLENEUK
RIDGE CITY OF TSHWANE
P. O. BOX 392
UNISA 0003
SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Kenneth

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE NATIONAL
LABOUR COMMISSION**

We acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 18th February, 2022 in respect of the above-mentioned subject.

The National Labour Commission grants you permission to conduct your research at the Commission.

Yours faithfully

DR. BERNICE A. WELBECK
DIRECTOR, ADMIN/HR
for: EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

ed

Location: Ghana Olympic Committee Building (5th Floor) Adjacent Ridge Hospital

APPENDIX C (V): LETTERS OF PERMISSION/CONSENT

*In case of reply the
number and date of this
letter should be quoted*

My Ref. No: **ABS37/1066/br**

Your Ref. No:

www.psc.gov.gh

GPS ADDRESS: GA 144 4112



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

The Office of the
PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION
P. O. Box GP 1618
Accra

28th
..... March, 2022

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION

Please, refer to your letter dated 18th February, 2022 on the above mentioned-subject.

2. The Commission has carefully reviewed your request and wishes to inform you that permission is granted for you (Kenneth Parku) to conduct your study as requested.

3. You are advised to contact Mr. Victor Way Kuvodu Ag. Deputy Secretary in charge of Research, Monitoring and Evaluation. You may contact Mr. Kuvodu on 0244792028 or victor.kuvodu@psc.gov.gh or Kiway71@gmail.com.

4. We trust that you will receive the necessary support for your study and you will share the report with the Commission.

5. Thank you.


ING. (MRS) MABEL AMOAKO-ATTA
SECRETARY

Kenneth Parku

University of South Africa

Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane

P.O. Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa

Cc: File

APPENDIX C (VI): LETTERS OF PERMISSION/CONSENT



Trades Union Congress (Ghana)

Headquarters Secretariat, Hall of Trade Unions
P. O. Box 701, Accra - Ghana
Website: www.ghanatuc.org - Email: info@ghanatuc.org
Tel: 0302-662568 / 669675 / 666803 / 667161 / 669649
Fax: 233-302-667161 / 660618

Kenneth Parku,
University of South Africa

26th April, 2022

Dear Kenneth,

RE: Request for permission to conduct research at Ghana Trades Union Congress.

We would like to inform you that your request to conduct research at the Trades Union Congress in relation to your study entitled *Influence of Labour Relations on Organizational Performance of Selected Public Sector institutions in Ghana* has been granted.

Kindly contact Kwabena Nyarko Otoo (PhD), the Director of the Labour Research and Policy Institute of the TUC through +233503395263/gtotoshark@yahoo.com to provide you with the necessary assistance you need.

We wish you the best in your research work.

Yours faithfully,

For: TRADES UNION CONGRESS (GHANA)

DR. YAW BAAH
SECRETARY GENERAL

APPENDIX D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



UNISA HRM ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 06 September 2022

Dear Mr Kenneth Eyrarn Parku

Decision: Approved

NHREC Registration #: (if applicable)

ERC Reference #: 2022_HRM_010

Name: Mr Kenneth Eyrarn Parku

Student #: 66244269

Researcher(s): Name: Mr Kenneth Eyrarn Parku
E-mail address, telephone # 66244269@mylife.unisa.ac.za,
+233 208359592

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof Thomas Edwin Buabeng Assan
E-mail address, telephone # yooobua@gmail.com, 082 200 7883

Co-supervisor(s): Name: Dr Elias Mochabo Moerane
E-mail address, telephone # moeraem@unisa.ac.za, 012 429 2197

Working title of research:

Influence of labour relations on organisational performance of selected public sector institutions in Ghana

Qualification: PhD

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA HRM Ethics Review Committee for the above-mentioned research.

The low-risk application was reviewed by a Sub-committee of URERC on 20 July 2022 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The ethics application was approved on 6 September 2022.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions:



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Pretorius Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Fax: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

APPENDIX E: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Ethics clearance reference number:

Research permission reference number (if applicable):

15TH February, 2022

Title: Influence of Labour Relations on Organisational Performance of Selected Public Sector Institutions in Ghana

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Kenneth Eyrarn Parku and I am conducting a research with Thomas Buabeng Assan, a professor in the Department of Human Resource Management towards a PhD at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled "*Influence of Labour Relations on Organisational Performance of Selected Public Sector Institutions in Ghana*".

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The primary objective of the proposed study is to explore the influence of labour relations on the organisational performance of selected public sector institutions in Ghana.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You have been chosen as a participant of the research due to your knowledge and participation in issues regarding the performance of public sector labour relations in Ghana. The head of your institution recommended you as a potential participant that can give salient input to the research topic.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves the collection of data via a *semi-structured interview*. The participant will be asked a series of questions, where the responses will be recorded. The time for the interview will span between 30 minutes to an hour. The questions to be answered by the participants is strictly limited to issues regarding the research topic.



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CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Your participation in this study will mean you will be contributing to the findings that will serve as inputs for organisational policy and strategy in the management of labour relations activities for the purpose of laying down principles and strategies to improve performance in the Ghanaian public sector.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there is the likelihood you might not be comfortable with face-to-face interviews to prevent you from being exposed to an infected person. Additionally, you will have to make time off your work schedules to participate in the interviews. Hence, if you are not comfortable with face-to-face interviews, you have the opportunity to opt for Microsoft Teams meeting or telephonic interviews. Additionally, the interview will be conducted at a time which is deemed convenient and appropriate to you and within the stipulated time schedule.

All Covid-19 protocols such as social distancing, wearing of a nose mask, washing of hands will be duly observed. Evidence/Proof of Covid vaccination will be provided if necessary.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

You have the right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research. Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.



HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a minimum period of five years in an electronic file for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

There is no reward, payment or incentives for participating in this research.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Kenneth Parku on +233208359592 / +233554766874 or kennethparku@gmail.com. The findings are accessible within 5 years.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact +233208359592 / +233554766874 or kennethparku@gmail.com.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact the supervisor via yogobua@gmail.com or +27822007883. Contact the research ethics chairperson of the Unisa Research Ethics Review Committee (URERC), the name of the research ethics chairperson and contact details here, including email, internal phone number and fax number> if you have any ethical concerns.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.



Kenneth Parku



APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT FORM



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname..... (please print)

Participant Signature.....Date.....

Researcher's Name & Surname.....(please print)

Researcher's signature.....Date.....



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APPENDIX G: COVID-19 PROTOCOL DOCUMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS



Covid-19 Protocol Document for Participants

Dear Prospective participant,

The research titled "*Influence of Labour Relations on Organisational Performance of Selected Public Sector Institutions in Ghana*" will be conducted by collecting data through interviews. In the course of collecting data for the study, the researcher seeks to comply with all covid-19 protocols in accordance to the University of South Africa covid-19 guidelines as well as that of the participating institutions in order to ensure the safety of the researcher and participant(s);

The researcher will be screened before any human participant contact and show a covid test result if required. The researcher will also make sure to wear a nose mask as well as advise the participants to do the same. The researcher will keep a physical distance of 2 meters as well as sanitize hands with alcohol-based sanitizer or wash with soap and water for at least 40 seconds before commencing the interview.

The data collecting process will avoid the exchange of paper between participants and the researcher, if necessary, then disposable gloves will be used in handling of hard copies of documents.

The safety of the participants is of utmost priority to the researcher, hence, strict adherence to the covid-19 protocols will be assured.



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APPENDIX H: PLAGIARISM REPORT

Similarity Report	
PAPER NAME	AUTHOR
66244269 Final dissertation.docx	KENNETH EYRAM PARKU
WORD COUNT	CHARACTER COUNT
165176 Words	986325 Characters
PAGE COUNT	FILE SIZE
547 Pages	4.4MB
SUBMISSION DATE	REPORT DATE
Apr 28, 2025 1:58 PM PDT	Apr 28, 2025 2:04 PM PDT
● 87% Overall Similarity The combined total of all matches, including overlapping sources, for each database. • 9% Internet database • 14% Publications database • Crossref database • Crossref Posted Content database • 82% Submitted Works database	
● Excluded from Similarity Report • Manually excluded sources	

APPENDIX I: EDITOR'S REPORT



**SWS Academic
Editing Services**

Third Ridge, Cape Coast,
Central Region, Ghana
+233 54 068 1648 | +233 20 153 6635
editing@swsgh.com
www.editing.swsgh.com

Reference No: PHD2025003

April 2, 2025

To Whom It May Concern
University of South Africa

Certificate of Editing

We confirm that the PhD thesis with the title **"Influence of Labour Relations on Organisational Performance of Selected Public Sector Institutions in Ghana"** by **Kenneth Eyram Parku (66244269)** has been edited by SWS Academic Editing Services. The editing process addressed the following issues:

- proofreading for mechanical errors such as spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
- copy-editing that includes commenting on, but not correcting, the structure, organisation, and logical flow of content; basic formatting (headings, page numbers); and eliminating unnecessary repetition.
- checking citation style (CEMS Harvard Referencing Style was used) is correct, punctuating as needed, and flagging missing or incorrect references.
- commenting on suspected plagiarism and missing sources.
- returning the document with track changes for the author to accept.

The editing process was completed on **April 2, 2025**.

Edited by **Kenneth Kitson (Editor-in-Chief)**,
Associate Member of the Professional Editors' Guild (South Africa –
Membership Number: **KIT001**) and the European Association of Science
Editors (United Kingdom – EASE Membership Number: **6596**)