



**PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF TRADE UNIONS IN ADDRESSING  
EMPLOYEES' GRIEVANCES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN  
SWAZILAND**

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## DECLARATION

I, **Ceb'sile Dlamini**, declare that

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- My supervisor Ms Rowena Bernard, for her guidance, support, encouragement and professional advice;
- To my mother, my children, Thule-du and Luyanda, who allowed me to dedicate my time to the project when I was, in fact supposed to spend quality time with them;
- The Swaziland Ministry of Public Service and Information for granting me permission to conduct the study;
- To every participant of the survey.

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is devoted to my late father, Mr Hobart Dlamini, who unfortunately did not survive long enough to see his daughter graduate with masters.

## **ABSTRACT**

The study examined the perceived effectiveness of trade unions in addressing employees' grievances within the public sector in Swaziland. The study explored employees' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of trade unions in the four ministries by focusing on the viewpoints of the trade union officials, shop stewards and employees within the public sector. The sample was selected by using the stratified random sampling technique. Data was collected from the participants using semi-structured questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire was administered to 211 public servants randomly selected from the ministries and semi-interviews were conducted with 3 trade union office bearers and 7 shop stewards or union representatives. Quantitative data was examined using descriptive and inferential statistics and the qualitative information was analysed using the thematic text analysis.

The study discovered that employees' perceptions were fairly positive regarding the effectiveness of trade unions in grievance handling. Evidently, instrumental orientation is the most popular reason for joining trade unions amongst employees. Within the political or ideological orientation employees revealed the presence of managerial hostility and attitude towards trade union membership. Employees perceived that the employer has great control over the grievance and disciplinary processes and policies. Employers abuse their power and are manipulative, thus taking unilateral decisions in some instances. The findings revealed that trade union representatives lacked resources, knowledge, competencies and skills for handling employees' grievances. However, employees maintained that belonging to a trade union is beneficial, irrespective of the poor standard of their shop stewards' knowledge on the grievance and disciplinary procedures. The study suggests that trade unions should consider the importance of managerial support of their roles; extensive training programmes for union representatives and awareness campaigns to sensitise employees regarding the functions of trade unions.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBA	: Collective Bargaining Agreement
CMAC	: Conciliation, Mediation, Arbitration Commission
CSC	: Civil Service Commission
ILO	: International Labour Organisation
IRALE	: International Research Academy for Labour and Education
IMF	: International Monetary Fund
ITUC	: International Trade Union Confederation
IR	: Industrial Relations
IRA	: Industrial Relations Act, 2000
JNF	: Joint Negotiation Forum
KMO-MSA	: Kaiser Meyer Olkin-Measure of Sampling Adequacy
NPSAWU	: National Public Service and Allied Workers Union
PSA	: Public Sector Associations
SABC	: South African Broadcasting Corporation
SFL	: Swaziland Federation of Labour
SFTU	: Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions
SPSS	: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SNAGAP	: Swaziland National Association of Government Accounts Personnel
SNAT	: Swaziland National Association of Teachers
SWADNU	: Swaziland Democratic Nurses Union
TUCOSWA	: Trade Union Confederation of Swaziland

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Currently, trade unions' power and efficiency to safeguard and promote members' interests has decreased. Trade unions encountered different challenges emanating from declining membership and power. Trade unions of Swaziland have to deal with the question of how their effectiveness can be achieved and enriched. Thus, the subject of union effectiveness has become more tenacious and prominent in the workplace. The effects of the declining union density and power has affected the employees' living standards. Employees' living standards have fallen and the cost of living adjustment is stagnant. Employees are continually subjected to unfair labour practices brought about by the increasingly deregulated labour, capital and commodity markets. Scant attention has been paid to trade union effectiveness in Swaziland, yet it is a vital component of membership retention and recruitment.

Various studies have been carried out on trade unions in Swaziland. However, these studies focused on the importance, function and role of trade unions. Other scholars concentrated on the effect of trade unions on the socio-economic status of Swaziland, the violations of trade unions' rights, the relationship between the employer and public sector associations, along with the views of employees about Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration Commission (CMAC), having been examined extensively. There is only a minimal amount of research done on the perceptions of employees regarding the effectiveness of trade unions in grievance management, yet it is a critical component of membership resurgence.

When the industrial action of 2012 involving members of the public sector associations (PSA's) in Swaziland took place, the government as an employer threatened to institute disciplinary measures against the striking employees. The government spokesperson announced that all employees who continued partaking in the industrial action "would be subjected to disciplinary action or dismissal should they fail to report on duty" (SABC, 2012, Global Nonviolent Action Database, 2012). He stated that the "no work, no pay rule" would be implemented (SABC, 2012, Global Nonviolent Action Database, 2012). This announcement provoked an uproar from the public sector employees. At that point in time, the union's demands were not met or agreed upon. This kind of threat indicated the conflicting and adversary relationship between the government and employees within the public sector. Henceforward, an effective grievance

system should have been established. The industrial action of 2012 in the public service emphasised that the working relations between the employer and employee remained tense. At the time of writing, public sector employees expressed their dissatisfaction and frustration by strike action regarding their current living standards, cost of living adjustment, salary increments, working terms and conditions.

The proposed study will examine the perceived effectiveness of trade unions in grievance administration in the Swaziland public service. The research will focus on the impact of organisational effectiveness, bargaining or delivery effectiveness and industrial relations climate on the effectiveness of trade unions, the grievance system and the challenges faced by trade unions in dealing with the employer when handling grievances. According to Grogan (2010) a grievance procedure forms part of the provisions of a collective agreement. They further state that it has generally been considered as an organisational mechanism for managing disputes emanating from the employer/employee relationship (Bryson and Forth, 2017). The grievance procedure forms part of the role played by trade unions within an organisation. The application of grievance procedures has become entrenched in the trade union/management relationship. Employees evaluate trade unions' effectiveness based on the outcomes, procedures and resources. Hence, the study explores civil servants' perceptions on the effectiveness and efficiency of trade unions in handling employees' grievances in the Swaziland public sector.

## **1.2 Background of the study**

The call by development agencies for developing countries to downsize public service workforce, privatisation and commercialisation of public enterprises exposed the public sector to a brand, market-driven reform, which gave birth to challenges for public servant unions. The government's responses to the above call, "the corresponding policy and the strategic initiatives taken by government and the transitional character of employment relations reflecting the influence of the transformational trends pose a challenge for trade unions in the public sector" (Bryson and Forth, 2017:11). "Public service restructuring, growth in flexibility, changes in workplace practices and an increase in job insecurity have a huge impact on unions' effectiveness" (Standing 1999, cited in Gordon 2015:330). The use of individualised human resource strategies and the violation of the trade unions' right "to recruit, organise, collectively bargain and take industrial action led to a significant decline in union membership" (Uys and

Holtzhausen, 2016:1148). The above seemed to escalate the degree of uncertainty, confusion and fear among employees within the public sector.

Kgaphola (2017:47) asserted that “effective recruitment, organising new members, retaining existing members are critical to the strength, survival and overall effectiveness of the trade unions”. The trade unions’ members lost trust in their trade union officials/ representatives. They claimed that trade union representatives failed to meet their expectations regarding grievance and disciplinary hearings. Henceforth, public servant unions needed to overhaul their strategies in order to curb the trust deficit experienced by their membership (Kgaphola, 2017). Therefore, attention focussed on the union’s ability to represent and produce satisfactory outcomes for its members by maintaining a proper status of the institution (Bryson, 2003). Trade unions were expected to provide effective and high-quality services to their members. Subsequently, this upheld their future relevance and sustainability as they recruited and retained members (Kgaphola, 2017).

### **1.3 Problem statement**

Trade unions in Swaziland were on the defensive, having suffered a decline in membership, public status and ineffectiveness in addressing employees’ grievances. The ineffectiveness and the significant decline in union membership was due to the public sector restructuring, the growing trend in outsourcing and the violation of the public sector unions’ organisational rights (IRALE, 2013). Regardless of the use of various internal mechanisms and the promulgation of the Industrial Relations Act, 2000 forcing the government as the employer to identify unions, the decline in membership has nevertheless continued in recent years (Lee and Mas, 2012). The downfall in trade union membership could be explicable in terms of the market-driven reform, which necessitated institutional mergers, privatisation and commercialisation policies.

Another causative factor is the government’s adoption of the neo-liberal, anti-union policies and anti-union human resources management strategies. These factors constricted the bargaining power of public sector unions, and as a result the legitimacy of the unions was compromised. As such trade unions were not recognised as legitimate institutions within the public sector. The trade unions’ capacity to bargain with the employer over workplace matters decreased and the current impact with the government is very poor (Lee and Mas, 2012; Bryson and Forth, 2017). Despite the role they played in improving employees’ terms and conditions, trade unions continued to receive little support from government and other employers (Eden,

2017). The trade unions' responses to the challenges caused by the fluctuating nature of work and employee relations determined their level of effectiveness within the organisation.

Hence, the identified problem relates to the perceived effectiveness of trade unions in addressing employees' grievances in the Swaziland public sector. In order to achieve the goal of effectiveness, trade unions utilise trade union representatives. Trade union representatives are nominated by the workers who are members of the trade union, established within the public sector. The trade union representative became the liaison person between the employer, the union national/regional executive and the workers. "The trade union representative is responsible for, amongst other things, the recruitment of trade union members within the organisation, assisting and representing members in grievance and disciplinary procedures, keeping members and union officials informed, consulting and negotiating with management, overseeing the employer's implementation of the relevant legislation, and participating in workplace forums" (Middleton; 2017:1). However, there were a number of issues surrounding grievance handling practices within the public sector. Trade union representatives may not have had a high level of competency in handling the grievances. Trade union representatives may also not have had the ability to juggle the above-mentioned trade union responsibilities and the employers' job.

According to Finnemore (2009) cited in Middleton (2017:3) "the effective performance of a trade union representative in respect of specific tasks like recruiting new members, representing members in disciplinary hearings, providing effective assistance to members in grievance procedures, consulting and negotiating with management, and participating in workplace forums contributes towards the effectiveness of the trade union". Thus, robust and competent trade union representatives are required to execute the aforementioned tasks. Robust and competent shop stewards led to the high effectiveness of trade unions and satisfied union members (Middleton, 2017). On another note, trade unions may not have been taken seriously by the employer, as some employers were perceived to have been hostile and less accommodating of trade unions. Therefore, the study examines employees' perceptions on the effectiveness of trade unions in grievance handling within the public sector of Swaziland.

#### **1.4 Aim of the study**

The overarching aim of this research is to establish the perceived effectiveness of trade unions in addressing employees' grievances within the Swaziland public sector. The study will

examine the understanding of how trade unions function, together with the approach employed by the union, when representing its members during grievance and disciplinary procedures. Specifically, the study will explore the challenges encountered by trade union officials when dealing with the employer during the grievance and disciplinary procedures.

## **1.5 Research objectives**

- 1.5.1 To examine the perceptions of civil servants on the effectiveness of trade unions in addressing employees' grievances within the public service.
- 1.5.2 To explore the challenges faced by trade unions when handling employees' grievances.
- 1.5.3 To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the trade unions in the management of grievances.
- 1.5.4 To assess the views of civil servants regarding the role of trade unions in the promotion and protection of their working conditions.

## **1.6 Research questions**

This study seeks to address the following research questions:

- 1.6.1 What are the perceptions of civil servants on the effectiveness of trade unions in addressing employee grievances within the public sector?
- 1.6.2 What are the challenges faced by trade unions when handling employee grievances?
- 1.6.3 What are the strengths and weaknesses of trade unions regarding the management of grievances?
- 1.6.4 How do civil servants view the role of trade unions in the promotion and protection of their working conditions?

## **1.7 Significance and contribution of the study**

The loss of trust and confidence in trade unions is of great concern in the Swaziland public sector. Undertaking this research will help trade unions' executive to comprehend union members' expectations and satisfaction regarding the role of trade union representatives in the grievance and disciplinary processes. The undertaken research focuses on the concept of union effectiveness. The study will provide a sound theoretical basis of the concept of union effectiveness. As a result, the research will bring a great wealth of information which will improve the available knowledge regarding union effectiveness. The drive for this research is to create new ideas and principles regarding the subject of union effectiveness, thus contributing more conceptual ideas to the field of industrial/employment relations. The study

will highlight significant trends that trade unions need to be cognisant of in the management of grievances and their organisations. Besides contributing to the wealth of information, the results will help trade unions seek to assess and address their members' perceptions of their effectiveness in addressing employees' grievances in the public sector. This will assist trade unions to advance their approach and strategies when addressing employees' grievances.

Of interest to the researcher is that, as a civil servant, she has observed the level of uncertainty, ambiguity and fear among civil servants. Some civil servants display fear of joining trade unions, whilst union members express their discontent and mistrust in their trade unions. The generated findings of the study will be utilised as a source of information for trade unions. The practical knowledge obtained from this research is intended to equip and empower trade unions established within the public sector. Well-equipped trade unions will be able to deal with hindrances to their unrelenting existence and relevance. The implications for this is that trade unions will be capacitated regarding the satisfaction of their members' expectations, thereby enhancing their membership retention and recruitment strategies. Trade unions will be in a position to improve their members' commitment and participation. The research will work as a reference point for policy-makers and academics. It will also create the basis for future research in this field.

## **1.8 Limitations**

Swaziland is amongst the less developed countries; hence there is limited amount of research conducted in the field of industrial relations. The country lacks resources and technical capacity in the area of conducting research. Also, the type of policies and legal frameworks that exist in the country may limit the researchers' ability to conduct research. Having said that, the issue of the role of public servant unions in grievance management in the civil service is under-researched. Therefore, the literature review particularly on trade unionism in the Swaziland public service is very limited. There are very few empirical studies on the subject of trade unionism within the public sector. On another note, Swaziland is a monarchy with very little having been written about trade unionism within the Swaziland public sector and the industrial relations climate is adversarial. Trade unions are not fully appreciated by the government causing people to refrain from participating in a study focussed on trade unions. Therefore, this study could not benefit from some of the employees' experiences under the prevailing, political environment in Swaziland. The focus on the public sector unions is a limitation on its own. The

data and experiences of workers in private organisations have assisted in drawing a comparative analysis.

## **1.9 Structure of the dissertation**

### **Chapter One: Introduction**

The chapter exposes the problem, sets out the aim of the study, and provides a background of the study, research questions and objectives and the importance of the study.

### **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This chapter provides a description of the different studies that have been carried out regarding the effectiveness of trade unions when handling employees' grievances and the theoretical background of the study. It begins by reviewing the studies conducted regarding the effectiveness of trade unions in a general context, and research studies which examined the impact of trade unions regarding grievance management within the public service.

### **Chapter Three: Trade Unionism in Swaziland**

This chapter focuses on the genesis, development and historical path of trade unions in Swaziland. This chapter provides an account of the socio-political history of trade unions and the environment within which they were organised. Constraints faced by trade unions because of the harsh economic environment and global threats to unionisation within the Swaziland context will be discussed. The chapter will also provide information on public sector unionisation.

### **Chapter Four: Research Methodology**

This chapter describes the research methodology and procedure employed in this study. It will provide the source of information and instruments used to collect data. Lastly, it outlines the statistical techniques used for interpreting the collected data of the study.

### **Chapter Five: Presentation of Results**

This chapter will provide a presentation, analysis and discussion of the results of the research.

### **Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations**

This chapter concludes the study with suggestions for future research and recommendations for public sector unions.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a comprehensive review and description of the effectiveness of trade unions in addressing employees' grievances in the public service. The chapter is comprised of six parts: part one provides the theoretical framework for the study; part two provides an overview of the studies carried out regarding the effectiveness of trade unions in handling employees' grievances; the third part reviews general studies regarding the employee grievance procedure; the fourth part provides a context of employee grievances procedure; the fifth part explores the role played by trade unions in handling employees' grievances; and the sixth part reviews the management of grievances in the Swaziland public sector.

#### **2.2 Theoretical framework for the study**

The research on trade union effectiveness is guided by the 'Goal-System' framework of trade union effectiveness. "This framework rests on the assumption that an organisation is governed by a rational set of decision-makers who set goals and develop strategies for their achievement" (Gall and Fiorito, 2016:196). Hence union effectiveness is defined on "the basis of goal attainment, in relation to the aspects of the contract of employment" (Pyman, Holland, Teicher, and Cooper, 2010:466). This theory is relevant because it sets out a comprehensive framework of penultimate goal criteria for evaluating union effectiveness. "The theory deploys the concept of the coalition' to seek to understand how the trade unions prevails and thus set the goals" (Gall and Fiorito, 2016:198). It also focuses on identifiable measures and goals by recognising the relationship between the processes of achieving the set goals. Intrinsically, the theory is deemed appropriate for the organising process because the "desire of non-members for membership, and members' satisfaction with union representation, are higher where the trade union is perceived as an effective organisation capable of delivering better terms and conditions for employees" (Bryson and Forth, 2017:7; Mohammed, 2010:89).

According to Bryson (2003:5) "there are two types of union effectiveness namely; union organisational effectiveness and union bargaining or unions' delivery effectiveness". Union organisational effectiveness is defined as "a term that captures those factors which give a union the capacity to represent its members by virtue of its 'healthy' state as an organisation whereas unions' delivery effectiveness is defined as the union's ability to 'deliver' for employees with

regards to the terms and conditions of employment” (Bryson, 2003:5). According to Bryson (2003:5) “the combination of these types indicate a union that is effective in representing its members”.

Bryson (2003) and Mohammed (2010) identifies seven dimensions of union organisational effectiveness. These include: “unions’ ability to communicate and share information, usefulness of unions as a source of information and advice, unions’ openness and accountability to members, union responsiveness to members’ problems and complaints, how seriously management have to take the union, union understanding of the employer’s business and the power of the union” (Bryson, 2003:6).

Bryson’s theory of union effectiveness further “assess unions’ ability to ‘deliver’ improvements in work and the working environment in seven domains namely: obtaining wage increment, offering protection against ill-treatment, promotion of equality, making work interesting and enjoyable, working with management for improved performance, increasing managerial responsiveness to employees and making the workplace a more conducive place to work” (Bryson, 2003:6).

Colquitt, Greenberg and Scott (2005) contributed to this framework by identifying the industrial relations (IR) climate as the moderator of the relationship between union organisational capacity, union bargaining capacity and union effectiveness. “Effectiveness perceptions are not formed in a vacuum but within a specific organisational environment, it is expected that industrial climate will act as a moderator, affecting the relationship between organisational capacity, bargaining capacity and union effectiveness” (Kougiannou *et al.*, 2015:465).

Fuller and Hester (1998:174) cited in Kougiannou *et al.*, ( 2015:465) argue that “ the type of industrial relations climate (cooperative or adversarial) unions face in the workplace affect union members’ perceptions”. The IR climate is a crucial factor which influences employees’ perceptions about the effectiveness of trade unions (Pyman, *et al.*, 2010). In considering the IR climate, the researcher discusses the contextual factors and the perceived state of employee-management relationships in the workplace. The IR climate portrays the behaviour of employees within an organisation and also describes the relationships amongst workers, management and trade unions. Muhammad, Shen, Xiao (2018:117) suggest that “in a hostile

climate, the different goals of union and management place incompatible behavioural demands on employees”. As a result, workers are coerced to choose between the goals of the two parties (Muhammad, *et al.*, 2018).

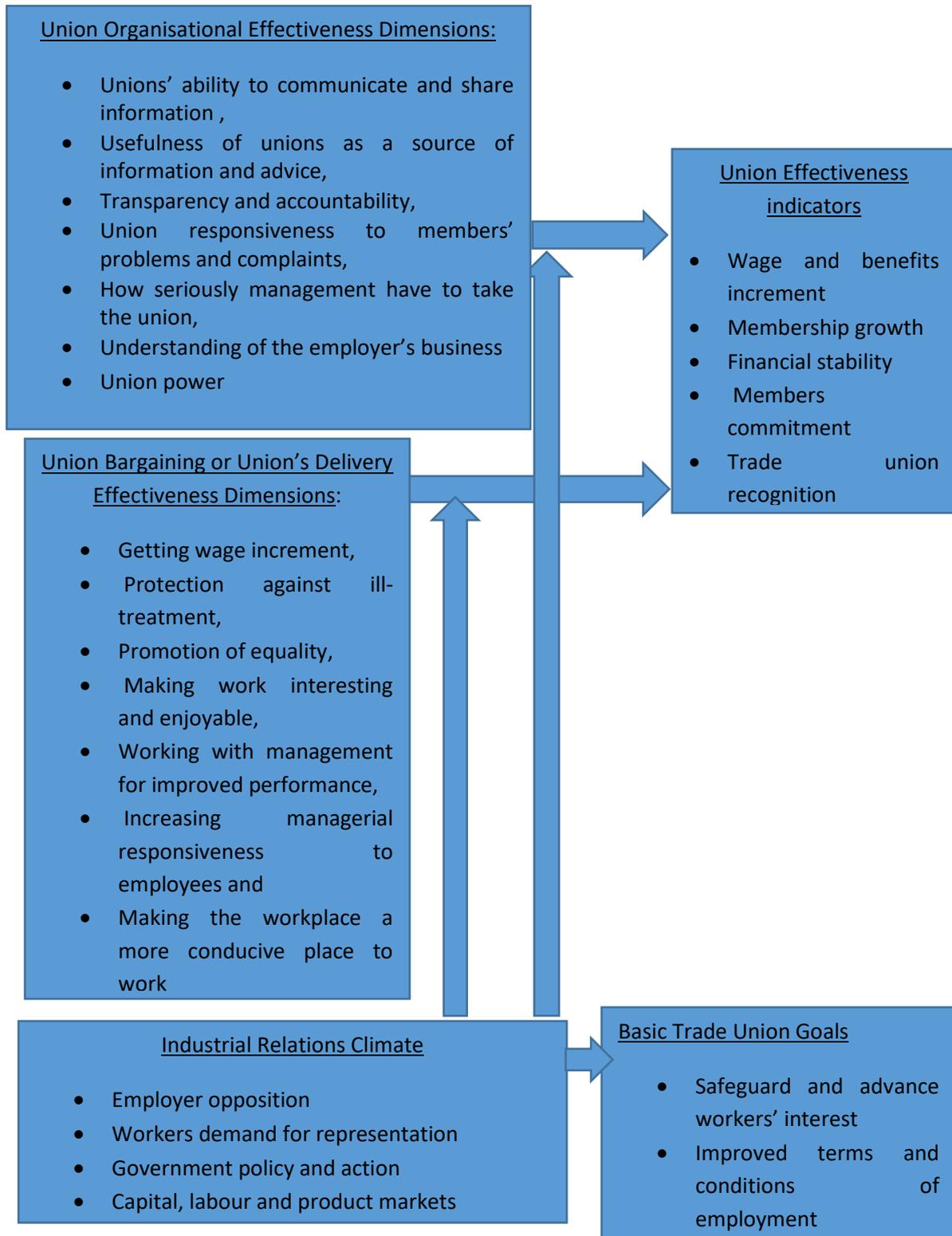
Several authors made useful contributions to the framework, however Gall and Fiorito (2016) contend that they were incomplete. Gall and Fiorito used a “Goal System” framework in criticising past research. Gall and Fiorito (2016:196) “argue that this framework concerning national union effectiveness remains the most developed to date because it sets out a comprehensive framework of core penultimate goal criteria for evaluating union effectiveness”. The theory underpins employees’ perceptions regarding the effectiveness of trade unions dealing with employees’ grievances. “Employees are instrumentalists in their decisions to join or judge trade unions” (Bryson, 2003:5). Employees are said to weigh or evaluate the benefits of joining a union and consider its effectiveness in light of their demands. “Employee perceptions of union effectiveness will also be affected by individual work experiences and the quality of the processes used to handle grievances arising from the employment relationship” (Muhammad, *et al.*, 2018:118). Literature on union instrumentality indicates that perceived union effectiveness is one of the strongest determinants of the workers’ decision to subscribe to a trade union (Hodder, *et al.*, 2017). According to Gall and Fiorito (2016) a trade union’s effectiveness is founded upon various aspects which, when put together, are viewed as the process.

To accurately measure the effectiveness of trade unions regarding grievance management, the study uses components from both kinds of effectiveness. However, the one kind of effectiveness understood by union members is the union’s ability to “deliver” satisfactory results. It is therefore essential that trade unions equip themselves with the appropriate mechanisms to be able to deliver to their members, whilst maintaining a healthy status of the union. The motive behind this is to attract and retain more union members. Union members measure union effectiveness by the services they receive from trade unions. It is worth noting that union members may be satisfied with the delivery outcomes, but they may not be content with the internal operations of the union, thus trade unions need to strike a balance between the two.

Figure 2.1 below represents a diagram of the “goal-system” framework of union effectiveness. The diagram suggests that union organisational effectiveness and union bargaining

effectiveness influences union effectiveness. The industrial relations climate is the moderator for the relationship amongst the three constructs.

**Figure 2. 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study**



*Source: Bryson (2003:6) and Gall and Fiorito (2016:202)*

### **2.3 Definition of a trade union**

Bendix (2010:656) defines a trade union as: “an organisation whose membership consists of employees, which seeks to organise and represent their interest both in the workplace and society, and in particular, seeks to regulate their employment relationship through the direct process of collective bargaining with management”. The trade union acts as an advocate for the workers in the collective bargaining process. Singh and Chawla (2014:44) cited in Kgaphola (2017:73) point that “unions as organisations are worthy of note, as they are characterised by fascinating paradoxical properties: involuntary and voluntary membership; oligarchy and democracy; and movement and bureaucracy at the same time”. Furthermore, trade unions are officially organised associations of employees who perceive involvement in decision-making as the rightful measure for accomplishing their objectives.

Nel, *et al.*, (2016:107) state that “trade unions represent the interest of their members through the collective bargaining process. They also stand in and advocate for members interest in grievances and disciplinary hearings”. Registered and well-recognised trade unions have the authority to challenge managerial prerogatives within the workplace. Through their organisational rights, trade unions have the authority to confine the supply of labour to the employer via protest actions, picketing and industrial action (Bryson and Forth, 2011).

The major function of a trade union is to protect, maintain and improve the terms and conditions of employment through effective wage negotiation. Trade unions serve this function by providing highly standardised services which bring complete satisfaction to its members. According to Venter (2003) cited in Kgaphola (2017:40) “trade unions ultimately exist to protect both the work and non-work related interests of the members, whether these be economic, political or environmental”. Thus, according to Gall and Fiorito, (2016:194) trade union effectiveness is evaluated based on the delivery outcomes, resources and processes used in their successes.

There has been a considerable amount of research on trade unions. Though, most of the researchers paid little attention to the effectiveness of trade unions in grievance management and the key processes that make them more effective or less effective. According to Bryson and Forth (2011:11) “an effective trade union is one that is capable of achieving its goals in serving its membership through collective bargaining, workplace representation and arguably through political influence whilst retaining its organisational strength”. Hyman (1997) cited in

Kougiannou *et al.*, (2015:459) postulated that for trade unions to organise freely and effectively, they must have statutory recognition, efficacy, legitimacy and autonomy, this will enhance workers' perceptions on the effectiveness of unions in the workplace.

Gall and Fiorito (2016:192) “made four major propositions about union effectiveness that are to varying degrees definitional”. These include: “internal union democracy which is vital to union effectiveness; internal functional efficiency which is positively related to effectiveness and external influence; unions must maintain a substantial focus on work-related concerns to be effective and membership density is positively related to union effectiveness” Gall and Fiorito, 2016:192-193). Although there is tremendous writings on trade unions, there is no appropriate theoretical standard for assessing their effectiveness; what establishes their efficacy; what the important trade unions' outcomes are; and the factors which influence those outcomes. However, according to Gall and Fiorito (2016) the above propositions define union effectiveness to some extent.

## **2.4 Trade unions effectiveness**

Gall and Fiorito (2016) and, Balaneasa and Maneloscu (2009) postulated that for trade unions to be effective, they must have good industrial relations climate, statutory recognition, goals and mechanisms of attaining these goals, internal union democracy and internal functional efficiency. Australian research indicates that enriched working terms and conditions, union density, union leadership style, union voice and industrial democracy supplement union effectiveness (Pyman *et al.*, 2010).

According to Clark (2009:5–8) cited in Gall and Fiorito, (2016:194) defining union effectiveness as a concept is very difficult. However, he attempted to describe it in terms of: “(1) ability to organise new members; (2) collective bargaining outcomes; and (3) impact on society, quickly adding ‘the extent of democracy in a union’ as ‘an additional consideration that some believe is a measure of union effectiveness’”. Union effectiveness is further defined in terms of the unions' ability to adopt and employ effective strategies which will propel them into achieving their set goals (Gall and Fiorito, 2016:194).

Trade union effectiveness cannot only be defined in terms of workplace related issues. Trade unions are also regarded as political and socio-economic representatives (Gall and Fiorito, 2016:192). Henceforth, Kgaphola (2017:28) defines union effectiveness as “members’

perceptions of a union's performance in bargaining for extrinsic benefits (economic), intrinsic benefit (non-economic), and being responsive to its members". According to Tarumaraja, *et al.*, (2015) most previous studies measured union effectiveness in terms of functions performed by the trade union. "Examples of direct services provided by trade unions includes offering better wages, providing adequate workplace facilities, providing proper employment, addressing employees' grievances, protecting members from unfair dismissals and improve member participation in decision making stage in the organisation" (Tarumaraja, *et al.*, 2015:35).

Bryson (2003) cited in Chidzambwa (2015:10) "distinguished between two types of trade union effectiveness which are organisational effectiveness and bargaining or the ability of a union to deliver services". He described "organisational effectiveness as a term used to capture those factors which give a union the capacity to represent its members by virtue of its healthy state as an organisation" (Bryson, 2003:5). "The second type of effectiveness is unions' ability to deliver or organise for improved working terms and conditions of the workers" (Bryson, 2003:5). Tarumaraja *et al.*, (2015) found that union effectiveness is significantly affected by union organisation.

Pyman *et al.*, (2010) assert that union organisation comprised of two elements: environmental and organisational influences. "Environmental influences included the degree of latent demand for union services, the degree of employer opposition to unions and employment growth. Organisational influences included resources, bureaucracy, democratic structures, innovation and representational specialisation" (Pyman *et al.*, 2010:468). Both kinds of union effectiveness indicate a trade union which is successful and efficient in the representation of employees during grievance and disciplinary hearings (Mzangwa, 2012). Bryson (2003:7) postulates that "organisational effectiveness can negatively or positively affect the service delivered by a trade union". Therefore, trade unions need to improve their efficiency in all aspects to be functional and efficient. To accurately measure the effectiveness of trade unions regarding grievance management, the study used components from both kinds of effectiveness. Although the one kind of effectiveness, clearly understood by union members, is the union's ability to "deliver" satisfactory results. It is therefore essential that trade unions equip themselves with appropriate mechanisms for them to be able to deliver to their members, whilst maintaining a healthy status. The motive behind this is to attract and retain more union members. Union members measure union effectiveness by the services they receive from their

unions. It is worth noting that union members may be satisfied with the delivery outcomes, but they may not be content with the internal operations of the union, thus trade unions need to strike a balance between these two aspects.

Bryson and Forth (2017:8) found that there is an important correlation “between unions’ organisational effectiveness and employee perceptions of whether they are effective in achieving fair pay, promoting equal opportunities, protecting workers, making work interesting and enjoyable, and working with management to increase quality and productivity”. Pyman *et al.*, (2010) and Bryson and Forth (2017) suggest that organisational effectiveness influences the delivery of outcomes and successes which may in turn affect non-members’ decisions to join a trade union, thus improving union effectiveness in the workplace.

However, according to Colquitt, *et al.*, (2005) contextual variables such as the industrial relations climate and union power, can moderate the perceptions of trade unions’ effectiveness. The IR climate is defined in terms of the degree to which relations between management and employees is characterised with mutual trust, respect and cooperation (Pyman, *et al.*, 2010). Kougiannou, *et al.*, (2015:465) argue that “effectiveness perceptions are not formed in a vacuum but within a specific environment”. They assert that the IR climate is expected to influence the relationship between union organisational capacity, union bargaining capacity and union effectiveness.

Addison and Teixeira (2009) point out that there is a tremendous amount of research on the effect of the labour relations climate on the effectiveness of trade unions within the workplace. Snape and Redman (2012) state that the IR climate influences union commitment. “The IR climate in the workplace may be cooperative or adversarial and this may have implications for the operation of trade unions” (Snape and Redman, 2012:13). A cooperative industrial environment may possibly be linked to union members feeling comfortable to be a union member and appreciating the fundamental role of trade unions within the workplace. Comparatively, an adversarial industrial climate may perhaps be associated with union members feeling that trade unions are ineffective, therefore they choose to withdraw their membership or don’t consider joining trade unions (Kougiannou *et al.*, 2015).

Burchielli (2004) asserts that union effectiveness is based on three dimensions of measurement namely; the union’s administration, representation and ideology. However, according to Gall

and Fiorito (2016:196) “the components are not distinct as they should be and lacked adequate internal specification for they pertained overwhelmingly to themes rather than criteria or goals.” In Africa, employees’ associations assumed the role of a socio-economic change agent, protecting and enhancing the interests of its members through collective bargaining (Uys and Holtzhausen, 2016). “Workers’ perceptions of union effectiveness were traditionally enhanced by the unions’ role in administering active labour market policies and channelling benefits, such as skill upgrading, employment services, unemployment insurance and effective grievance procedure” (Moeti-Lysson and Ongori, 2011:59).

Evidence from the literature review suggests that union effectiveness can be measured using different types of constructs. Carillon and Sutton (1982) cited in Tarumaraja *et al.*, (2015) proposed five measurements of union effectiveness namely; economic consultancy, working environment, protection of members, members participation and communication. Fiorito, *et al.*, (1993) established six measurements for trade union effectiveness namely; organisation, services to members, consultancy for members, political and legal, as well as the advancement of the interest of all employees. Similarly, Pyman and Hanley (2002:5) state “that union effectiveness manifest in six dimensions; improved terms and conditions of employment, membership growth, internal democracy, organisational stability; activism and social movement”. However according to Gall and Fiorito (2016), Pyman and Hanley (2002) had not put forward a contextual framework for measuring and evaluating union effectiveness. Gall and Fiorito (2016) contend that the dimensions are large and ill-defined components.

According to Kougiannou, *et al.*, (2015) trade unions’ effectiveness may be viewed from different levels regarding the involvement in the decision-making process, internal union democracy and representativeness. According to Bryson (2003:5) “employees are instrumentalists in their decision to join trade unions”. “The desire of joining a trade union and members’ satisfaction with representation by their union, are higher where the union is perceived as an effective organisation capable of delivering better terms and conditions for employees” (Bryson and Freeman, 2013:5). If the trade union is perceived to be efficient, workers may perhaps believe that union membership is beneficial and rewarding. This could be indicated by salary increments, improved work conditions, protection against ill-treatment and representation in grievance and disciplinary proceedings (Bryson and Freeman, 2013:6). Therefore, perceived high trade union effectiveness will influence individuals to join a union.

## **2.5 Industrial relations climate in Swaziland public sector**

According to Ganesan (2016:94) “IR climate describes how employees, employers and the union with the support of the state coordinate with each other within the workplace”. Hammer *et al.*, (1991) as cited in Kougiannou *et al.*, (2015:464) defines the IR climate in “terms of the degree to which relations between management and employees are seen by workers as mutually trusting, respectful and cooperative”. The IR climate is a crucial factor which influences employees’ perceptions about the effectiveness of trade unions (Snape and Redman, 2012:12). The IR climate depicts the behaviour of employees in the workplace and the relationships amongst employees, management and trade unions. According to Bryson and Freeman (2013:7) “employee perceptions of union effectiveness is influenced by individual work experiences and the quality of the processes used to handle grievances arising from the employment relationship”.

According to Kougiannou, *et al.*, (2015: 464) “the IR climate in a workplace may be more or less cooperative or adversarial, and this is likely to have implications on the operation of trade unions”. A cooperative IR climate is related where employees feel content to be a union member and appreciate the role played by a trade union within the organisation. “In contrast, an adversarial IR climate is associated with workers perceiving that trade unions are ineffective, therefore they would decide to withdraw their membership or prefer not to join trade unions” (Kougiannou, *et al.*, 2015:464). According to Deery, *et al.*, (1999:538) other factors which influence the IR climate are union instrumentality and external job opportunities, personal characteristics such as age, tenure, education and gender.

In the Swaziland context, the IR climate plays a vital role in determining the quality of work life and union commitment. The IR climate is influenced by government legislation and regulations. Dastmalchian, *et al.*, (1991) as cited in Snape and Redman (2012:11) view the “IR climate as an outcome of the organisational context and structure, human resource policies, and wider industrial relations context, with climate mediating the relationship between these and IR outcomes”. Gordon and Ladd (1990:61) cited in Deery, *et al.*, (1999) state that trade unions and management are craftsmen of the employment relationship and the tone of contract negotiations. Hence, an effective grievance resolution depends on the parties’ commitment to adopt a joint problem-solving approach.

In Swaziland, the public service is covered by the same provisions as the broader workforce of the country. Trade unions are protected by the Constitution of Swaziland, which enshrines the employees' right to establish and subscribe to trade unions, and for unions to collectively bargain and strike. As with all other workers, the employer-employee relationship is governed by the Industrial Relations Act (IRA) of 2000 and the Employment Act of 1980. In addition, the public service workers' conditions of employment are governed by the government's general orders. However, the current system of governance, coupled with globalisation influences, trespasses the organisational rights of trade unions. Trade unions are somewhat denied the right to freely organise within the workplace. Thus, trade unions are unable to play their respective roles accordingly within the public sector. In some instances, government policies have generally not favoured trade unionisation within the public sector. The Constitution entrenches the right of government workers to bargain collectively with the employer, partially. The Constitution and the IRA make provisions for Civil Service Commission (CSC), Joint Negotiation Forum (JNF) and Work councils.

The CSC was formed with the intention of augmenting the productivity and efficiency of the Swaziland public service as the machinery for development. The mandatory functions of the CSC include recruitment, appointment, promotions, secondments, contract appointments, confirmations, training and development, discipline, transfers and termination of services or employment of civil servants (Ministry of Public Service and Information, 2011).

However, public sector associations (PSA's) and employees are not content with the operations of the CSC. The PSA's alleged that the CSC tends to follow their own set of rules which are sometimes contradictory to the IRA provisions when dealing with employees' grievances. Therefore, employees' common perception is that their employment rights have been undermined, hence they lose trust in the system. Employees claim that management abuses its authority by constraining the subjects of collective bargaining and making unilateral decisions regarding labour processes. In light of such, the labour movement is forced to display an adversarial attitude towards the settlement of disputes within the public sector.

The government has introduced and amended the legislative framework within labour relations. However, the question remains regarding the extent to which the legislative framework within the country adequately address the enormous labour relations anomalies of dictatorship and autocratic rule. In the country, the government and trade unions remain, as at the time of

writing, in hostile relationship regarding the cost of living adjustment, the need to reform the Industrial Relations Act in a way which makes public policy more protective of workers' rights to assemble, form independent organisations and free of hindrances in the exercising of their rights as employees.

## **2.6 Definition of a grievance**

According to Brand, *et al.*, (2015:300) “a grievance may be defined as a partly formalised expression any feeling of discontent, unfairness or injustice which an employee may have in respect of his work conditions, against his manager or supervisor, including a fellow worker and which is brought to the attention of management”. Grogan (2014:300) defines a grievance as “an allegation by a party to a collective agreement of a violation of the agreement”. Grievances in the public sector are founded on the nature of employer-employee relationships and the working terms and conditions (Ramya and Shenbaham, 2014). Swanepoel, *et al.*, (2014:784) proclaim that “grievances are a form of an industrial conflict that can be disruptive to workplace relationships and productivity”. Cooke and Saini (2015:622) state that “if grievances are left unaddressed or unsatisfactorily resolved may lead to disruptive employee behaviour that is harmful to productivity and employee well-being in the organisation”.

The term ‘grievance’ may be used in two distinct settings (Cooke and Saini, 2015:623). In the first setting, a grievance reflects dissatisfactory experiences which may affect the employees’ behaviour and the productivity of an organisation (Cooke and Saini, 2015:624). In the second setting, “a grievance refers to a formal complaint by an employee reflecting his/her perceptions of injustice pertaining to the terms and working conditions, policies and practices within the workplace” (Cooke and Saini, 2015:624). Melchades (2013) cited in Asewe (2016) states that a grievance deals directly with employees and all concerns they have in their working environment. Therefore, an effective grievance process forms a critical part for fostering productive employee relations and managing the workplace productivity. Asewe (2016) asserts that grievances are inevitable in any organisation and hence the availability of a grievance procedure is vital.

Grogan (2010:302) postulates that “grievances may be grouped in two categories; a grievance of right and a grievance of interest”. A grievance of right occurs when employees are dissatisfied with something related to the employment relationship or the employer fails to provide them with what is due to them as per the legislation, collective agreements, conditions

of service, employment contract, and recognised employment practices. “A grievance of interest occurs when employees have no entitlement to a particular claim in law against the employer but feels that they are entitled to it or has been unfairly treated” (Grogan, 2010:302).

## **2.7 Context of a grievance procedure**

The availability of a grievance procedure and its proper execution cannot be detached from the fact that conflicts/disputes are inevitable in the employer-employee relationship (Goel, *et al.*, 2014; Arie, 2015). “A grievance procedure is a process specified in the collective agreement for the resolution of disputes arising during the life of the agreement” (Grogan, 2014:314). Proper execution of the grievance procedures reduces conflict by providing proper means or steps of grievance settlement (Nurse and Devonish, 2007). According to Mante-Meija (1991) cited in Goel, *et al.*, (2014) a grievance procedure allows employees to file their dissatisfactions. Cooke and Saini, (2015:622) propose two types of grievance procedures, namely compulsory procedure and voluntary procedure. Compulsory procedures refers to “those imposed by the state through regulations and voluntary procedures refers to those agreed by parties concerned, including for example those agreed between the employers and trade unions and those adopted by the organisation with or without consultations” (Cooke and Saini, 2015:622).

According to Doyle (1999) there are four primary roles of a grievance procedure. Firstly, a grievance procedure undertakes a compliance role by ensuring that the employer and trade unions observe and respect the provisions of the collective agreement. Secondly, it functions as a judicial and adjudicative agent for industrial organisations by setting out and interpreting the rules enshrined in the collective agreement. The grievance procedure functions as a dispute resolution machine for conflicts arising during the term of the collective contract. Thirdly, “it plays an administrative role by applying the rules of the contract and offering guidance in the administration of the collective agreement” (Doyle, 1999:2). Trade unions and management are viewed as experts of the grievance procedure, thus they are expected to examine and diagnose employees’ disputes, whilst ensuring that the grievance settlement is attained timeously. Lastly, a grievance procedure functions as a medium for ‘fractional bargaining’ where employees’ deliberate concerns which could not be addressed at the joint negotiation table (Doyle, 1999).

Nurse and Devonish (2007) state that one of the basic principles within the workplace is the establishment of procedures to govern the employment relationship. “A grievance procedure is

intended to provide the employee with an opportunity to voice his/her concerns within the workplace without any fear of victimisation” (Arie, 2015:29). According to Nel, *et al.*, (2005) cited in Arie (2015) a grievance procedure is a dynamic process of preventing and settling grievances. Effective handling of grievances can restore and maintain a healthy climate in the organisation, thereby enhancing labour peace and creating a proper environment for obtaining organisational goals. It is therefore, important that the grievance procedure complies with fair labour practice, and it should be built on profound processes which will lead to satisfactory outcomes (Bryson and Forth, 2017).

According to Melchades (2013:8) “the grievance procedure differs according to organisations and trade unions. The proper execution is influenced by the trade union strength and the management attitude”. Nonetheless, these differences have significant inferences for the processes and outcomes of the grievance procedure. It is fundamental to consider the fact that, in most jurisdictions, procedures differ according to the work settings and the type of services provided. Disputes arising from general public service are handled differently than disputes stemming from an essential services department, thus the grievance procedures are not the same for all organisations (Wood, Saundry and Latrielle, 2014). The present study deals mainly with the former.

Grievance procedures exist within most public service systems, essentially as an internal public service mechanism for resolving individual disputes and grievances. “A grievance procedure provides steps for presenting and settling workplace disputes” (Swanepoel, *et al.*, 2014:783). According to Arie (2015:11) “the aim of a grievance procedure is to promote consistency, transparency and fairness in the handling of grievances in the workplace”. According to Swanepoel, *et al.*, (2014:784) “the procedure typically defines the type of grievance it covers, the stages through which the parties proceed in attempting to resolve matters, individuals responsible at each stage, the documentation required, and the time limits by which the grievance must be presented and dealt with at each stage”. Every organisation follows a different set of steps, which are almost similar, to resolve the grievance among their employees. The procedure differs according to work settings and the type of service provided by that organisation.

The sound management of grievances therefore requires commitment from the employers and employees to make sure that grievances are handled effectively. Grogan (2010:310) asserts that

“a grievance procedure aims to promote fairness and procedural justice in dealing with employee grievances”. The benefits of an effective and fair grievance procedure includes low employee turn-over, employees’ retention and improved organisational performance and productivity (Swanepoel, *et al.*, 2014). The practice of a fair grievance procedure reduces conflict by providing a rapid resolution of disputes which is procedurally fair and consistent (Arie, 2015).

Mzangwa (2012: 4) asserts that “a grievance procedure should be one of the preconditions for a collective agreement”. The grievance procedure should be considered as the first official instrument for the resolution of grievances emanating from employer-employee relations (Mzangwa, 2012). The collective agreement between civil servants’ unions and the employer comprise regulations, set as guidelines, for controlling the various steps of the grievance procedure (Bryson and Forth, 2017). The procedure may be implemented in both public and private institutions, although the process differs according to the work settings and the type of services provided by the organisation. Wood *et al.*, (2014) states that where the right to establish, subscribe to a trade union and participate in collective bargaining is not appreciated, the grievance procedure is the *de facto* dispute resolution machine available to employees.

While these benefits ensue, in some degree, to both the employee and the employer, grievance procedures in the workplace are normally established at the request of a trade union (Clark, *et al.*, 2001). Clark *et al.*, (2001) emphasise that the availability of a grievance mechanism provides special benefits for union members and union representatives. They assert that representing union members within the grievance hearing reflects the direct services provided by trade unions. Trade union representatives get an opportunity to display their skills and competencies during the grievance and disciplinary hearing, whilst represented members get an opportunity to see trade unions ‘in action’ (Clark, *et al.*, 2001).

An appropriate grievance administration is fundamental within the workplace. Proper administration of grievances influences employees’ perceptions regarding justice, union effectiveness in representation, and union loyalty (Swanepoel, *et al.*, 2014: 784). “Grievance systems and grievance management should possess certain characteristics and demonstrate the use of certain principles to ensure their effectiveness” (Nurse and Devonish, 2007:92). According to Swanepoel, *et al.*, (2014) an effective grievance procedure serves as an internal mechanism which enables the organisation to reduce the use of external arbitrators such as

industrial courts. Proper implementation of the grievance process improves employer-employee relations.

Literature indicates that the existence and proper execution of a clear grievance procedure in an organisation is vital (Public Service Commission, 2011). According to Ukpere and Knight (2014:592) “the effectiveness of a grievance procedure depends to a large extent, on the reasons and circumstances for its implementation”. According to Ukpere and Knight (2014:593) “effective grievance handling practice should include registration of grievances, evaluation of grievances, use of past practices in addressing raised grievances, effective communication, and identifying systemic problems in a grievance process”.

According to Budd and Colvin (2008:461) there are two dimensions used for measuring and evaluating the grievance procedure. The proposed dimensions are speed and satisfaction. The dimension of speed assesses the time taken to resolve grievances and the stage at which grievances are resolved. The satisfaction dimension examines the parties’ perception of the outcomes of the grievance procedure (Budd and Colvin, 2008:461). Budd and Colvin (2008) argue that the speed of a grievance procedure does not reflect the effectiveness of the process.

In similar vein, Clark and Gallager (1988) cited in Budd and Colvin (2008:461) “found that the speed of a resolution is not related to satisfaction with and attitude towards grievance procedure”. According to Budd and Colvin (2008:461) satisfaction with the outcomes of the procedure is influenced by various factors including unions’ organisational strength, union commitment and employer commitment. Thus Budd and Colvin (2008:461) contend that an effective grievance procedure cannot be evaluated based upon its operations only. He proclaims that there are other measures that can be used. Successively, Lewin (1999:154) pronounces that “there is lack of consensus among researchers about what exactly constitutes grievance procedure effectiveness”.

Budd and Colvin (2008:461) assert that “the metrics for evaluating and comparing grievance procedure are efficiency, equity and voice”. Budd and Colvin (2008:463) define these metrics in the context of a grievance procedure. They describe an efficient grievance procedure as a process that runs at low cost and is not time-consuming. An equitable procedure in this context is a process which is fair and unbiased. The results of a just system align with the judgement of a judicious person which is neutral and does not favour either side of the parties and his or

her decisions are based upon objective evidence. “Equity requires that outcomes provide remedies when rights are violated” (Budd and Colvin, 2008:463).

The voice criteria of grievance procedure explores the degree of workers’ participation within the proceedings of the grievance and disciplinary hearings. This dimension encourages grievance and disciplinary hearing, employee participation and union representation (Budd and Colvin, 2008:463). “Voice also include the extent to which employees participate in the construction of the grievance procedure and into specific resolutions” (Budd and Colvin, 2008:463).

## **2.8 Role of trade unions in handling employees’ grievances**

The role played by trade unions in handling employee grievances is complex. According to Uys and Holtzhausen (2016:1138) “the role of trade unions has changed significantly over the past 30 years and this may be associated with globalisation”. Adverse economic challenges emanating from the recent economic reforms, privatisation and down-sizing of public sector organisations and the anti-union strategies used by the employer have caused a drastic decline within trade union density and the scope of collective bargaining has significantly changed the role of trade unions (Uys and Holtzhausen, 2016:1139).

According to Cooke and Saini (2015:620) “the role of union representatives in grievance handling was often studied implicitly as part of standard structural procedures”. Previous studies on grievance management paid much attention on unionised organisations (Cooke and Saini, 2015:620). Past studies pointed to the importance of the trade unions’ presence when dealing with employee grievances. Saundry, *et al.*, (2011) state that the availability of a strong union, and its ability to constrain managerial prerogatives is vital for an organisation. The presence of a trade union safeguards fairness and organisational justice.

A grievance manifests in a relationship between two key actors (employee and employer). Therefore, fairness has to be observed within formal and informal grievance procedures. The role played by trade unions encompasses this aspect (Saundry, *et al.*, 2011). Saundry and Antcliff (2006) cited in Mzangwa (2012:47) states that “the introduction of legally handling of grievance procedures in the workplace strengthens and secures regulatory practice within the organisation”. Trade union officials are given the statutory right to assist their members within

many organisations and this code is deemed fit for managing grievances within the organisation.

Milward, *et al.*, (1992) as quoted in Saundry, *et al.*, (2011:197) found that “dismissal rates were higher in organisations in which unions were not recognised”, while Knight and Latrielle (2000) discovered that “union density moderated the grievance and disciplinary outcomes”. This illustrates the significant role performed by trade unions in maintaining peace within the workplace. According to Saundry, *et al.*, (2011:197) “the explanation to this is that unions are able to restrain managerial prerogatives and punitive modes of dealing with individual and collective grievances.” Trade union representatives safeguard workers against unfairness and ensure proper implementation of rules and procedures thus decreasing the employer’s use of sanctions (Saundry, *et al.*, 2011).

Nurse and Devonish (2006) cited in Mzangwa (2012:47) state that “a grievance procedure, in the absence of a union representative, may reveal some weaknesses, allowing management to be both a judge and plaintiff”. Mzangwa (2012) argues that in the absence of union representatives, employees with grievances are likely to assume an adversarial position. Thus, an effective organisation should embrace the existence of a union and its representatives within the workplace (Mzangwa, 2012). Furthermore, Saundry, *et al.*, (2008:101) states that “trade unions do not only accept the need for a grievance procedure but they also play a role in promoting self-discipline by warning members about the consequences of future conduct and they can be reluctant to represent members guilty of serious misconduct.” The effect and quality of trade union representation is largely dependent upon the characteristics of the employer-employee relationship (Saundry, *et al.*, 2011).

Several studies attest to the progressive role played by trade unions regarding grievance management. Saundry, *et al.*, (2011:197) discovered that “autonomy from management and greater dispute resolution skills and expertise allowed union representatives to play a more constructive role than non-union representatives in disciplinary proceedings”. In the workplace where trade unions were granted full recognition, managers embraced the role of trade unions within the grievance and disciplinary hearings. They proclaimed that union representatives ensured that grievance and disciplinary hearings were conducted in a procedurally fair and efficient manner (Saundry, *et al.*, 2011).

## **2.9 Management of grievances in the Swaziland public service**

Grievances are a form of an industrial conflict inevitable in the workplace. Henceforth, the Swaziland public service has to establish an effective grievance procedure which is procedurally fair to both employees and the employer. Hence, PSA's are currently struggling to improve the fairness and effectiveness of grievance and disciplinary procedures within the Swaziland public sector. The establishment of an effective and equitable grievance procedure has been at the heart of government employment policy. "A stream of legislation has emerged from the government's determination to strengthen processes of dispute resolution and contain the growth of employment tribunal applications" (Antcliff, 2009:17). The Constitution of Swaziland, Industrial Relations Act (IRA) of 2000, Employment Act of 1980 and the Government General Orders and their successive modifications regulate the grievance and disciplinary procedures.

Employees' disputes and grievances arising in the workplace are dealt with as they occur. Management deals with the disputes on an 'ad hoc' and informal basis. Employees are permitted to refer their issues to institutions like the CMAC and the industrial court, whenever they are dissatisfied with the outcomes of the internal grievance procedure. They may also use these institutions when their statutory rights have been violated. The Swaziland industrial relations system permits the use of a formal grievance procedure and a third party intervention. Mediation, conciliation and arbitration are prominent processes of the industrial relations system within the country. The process of collective bargaining forms part of this system and it focuses on reaching a collective agreement which is legally binding on both parties until the end of the term of the agreement. The collective agreement specifies a grievance procedure and disciplinary action to be followed when dealing with grievances regarding the application and interpretation of that contract (Clark, 2009). "The specified procedure comprises of sequential steps at which different levels of management and trade union leadership convene to discuss issues arising in the workplace" (Swanepoel, *et al.*, 2014:784). Normally, this occurs via the JNF which comprises government representatives and trade union leadership. In the case of a deadlock, each party presents their case to the arbitrator who then issues a certificate of a deadlock, thus allowing the parties to refer the matter to the industrial court (Swanepoel, *et al.*, 2014).

Section 62 of the IRA, launches the CMAC. "It was established as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism, with its primary mandate being to provide for the speedy, cost-

effective, efficient and accessible resolution of disputes in the labour market” (Gumede, 2013:15). CMAC is considered to be an important feature of the dispute resolution system within Swaziland. The CMAC authorises the establishment of a council which may be eligible to resolve different kinds of disputes within the public service through conciliation and arbitration (Mzangwa, 2012). The establishment of a statutory council follows an application from either the representative union or the employers’ organisation (Mzangwa, 2012). Godfrey, *et al.*, (2010) cited in Mzangwa (2012:43) state that if a “member of a union has a dispute against the employer, the union representative is allowed to accompany their member to declare their dispute to CMAC with the aim to get the matter resolved”.

However, employees are encouraged to first utilise the internal mechanisms before referring their grievances externally. The grievance may not be referred to the CMAC or any bargaining council, unless the internal processes have been exhausted, and proof exists that a deadlock has been reached between the two parties, as well as proof that the grievance has been registered. It is also imperative that parties report the deadlock to the CSC for recommendation. Previous studies reveal that grievance procedures within the public service is inefficient and its inefficiency is compounded by non-compliance from some parties. The grievance trends also highlight issues which lead to dissatisfaction of employees within the public sector.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

A grievance procedure is an effective tool used for resolving matters raised by workers, with the aim of promoting procedural justice, particularly in a unionised organisation. The issues of concern should arise within the workplace. Handling grievances in an efficient and effective manner can improve the employer-employee relationship, as well as organisational productivity.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **TRADE UNIONISM IN SWAZILAND**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the genesis, development and historical path of trade unionism within Swaziland. This chapter summarises the socio-political history of trade unions and the environment within which trade unions are organised. Constraints faced by trade unions, because of the prevailing economic restructuring, globalisation and its consequences for unionisation within the Swaziland environment, will be discussed. The chapter also provides information on public sector unionisation.

#### **3.2 History of trade unions in Swaziland**

In Swaziland, trade unions are still fighting for employers' full recognition. Their wish is to be recognised as the legitimate voice of employees. In pursuance of their struggle, trade unions wish to change the stigma attached to them. Trade unions contend that unions should not be stigmatised on the basis of political participation, as some employers perceive them to be, in a bid for national political power (ITUC, 2009). Even though employee consciousness had grown considerably by the beginning of the 1960's, trade union activity lagged behind. Since 1942 the Trade Unions and Trade Disputes Proclamation provided for the registration of Trade Unions within Swaziland. Kunene (1992:399) as cited in Dlamini (2007:349) observed that, "rather than as a genuine measure for the promotion of trade unions, this legislation was introduced as a condition for receiving aid from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund and therefore it did not safeguard the interests of workers". The proclamation was amended in 1963. Under the 1963 proclamation "strikes and lockouts were not permitted until three weeks had lapsed after the dispute in question has been reported to the Labour Commissioner" (Dlamini, 2017:57). In essence, the promulgation of the legislation in 1942 reflected changes taking place within British colonial policy (Dlamini, 2007).

"From 1962 until 1980, trade unions were restricted in practice, if not by legislation, and from 1973 when the late King, Sobhuza II, suspended the Westminster type of constitution, all forms of public gathering and association were prohibited by the Crown, unless permitted by the Commissioner of Police" (Dlamini, 2017:340). "Political parties and its activities were banned; this was still the situation in 1992" (Fox, 1993:39). Dlamini (2007: 347) states that the strikes

which plagued Swaziland in 1962 and 1963 owed their birth to the new forms of labour organisation, which had developed in the post-war period.

A new constitution was enacted in 2005 and this became law in Swaziland. The new Constitution continued to protect the monarchy, whilst blocking other political actors wishing to fight for a democratic Swaziland. Nonetheless, the country's quest for a full democracy was strongly reliant on trade union movement (Maree, 2012:18). In pursuance of its aim, the government passed laws which trespassed the right to freedom of association and expression. These laws included the "Sedition and Subversive Activities Act, 1938, which repealed the Public Order Act of 1963, the State of Emergency dating back to 1973, which suspended statutory freedom and banned opposition political parties and the Suppression of Terrorism Act, 2008, which was amended in 2010" (Dlamini, 2017:240; Vandome, *et al.*, 2013). The former was used to target trade union leadership. The new act resulted in the alienation of many employees.

April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1973, became a revolutionary phase for trade unions within Swaziland. "On that day, King Sobhuza II seized all administrative, legislative and judicial powers, denying the people of Swaziland the right to freely associate, to assemble, to organise, or to speak out" (Dlamini, 2017:341). This created a setback for the labour movement within Swaziland, as trade unions lost ideological support from the people. People began to view trade unions as political institutions which were formed to dethrone the monarchy. "Ruling by the decree, the Swazi monarchy introduced a series of repressive laws over the next two decades aimed at maintaining political domination" (Salmond, 1997:19). Leaders of the trade unions were detained without concrete reasons and gatherings of more than four people were banned within the country (Maree, 2012; Dlamini, 2013).

The Decree removed trade union operations and introduced Works Councils (Gumede, 2013). Trade union leadership, even today, is still grappling with changing the mind-set of the Swazis who believe "that resistance to an undemocratic government is a betrayal of the cultural identity" (Salmond, 1997:20). Trade unions are still regarded as political entities which are formed to disturb peace within the country. Hence, people are afraid to join trade unions. Despite the ban of political parties and the allegations levelled against them, trade unions continued to hold a fundamental position in the fight for freedom and social equality within Swaziland. The Conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) offered maximum

protection of employees' rights, particularly those related to freedom of association and assembly.

Through the ILO protection and support, civil servant unions continued to educate the public and employees about their democratic and employment rights. As a result, people began to change their mind-set and started to embrace change within the workplace. "National strikes in 1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997 were perhaps the most dramatic manifestation of these changes" (Salmond, 1997). "A two-day strike called by the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU) in 1994 led to the establishment of a tripartite forum, comprised of government, workers, and business representatives, to address the '27 Popular Demands' of the general strike and to seek to improve the working conditions of the Swazi people"(Salmond, 1997, Fox, 1993; Maree, 2012 & Gumede, 2013). "The 27 demands included improvements in minimum wages, affirmative action policies, an end to racial and gender discrimination, the right to strike and to organise without state intimidation, the unbanning of political parties, and the freedom to assemble, to associate, and to speak without the fear of reprisal" (Salmond, 1997:25; Maree, 2012:17). The government's attempt to address the workers' demands remained futile. As a result, "employees embarked on another general strike in March of 1995, which cost the Swazi economy over 100 million rand in lost production and damaged property" (Salmond, 1997:18).

Even today the Swaziland labour movement history is characterised by ideological opposition, apparent in the fight for democracy, freedom of association, injustices, inequalities and unfair labour practices, with the intention of getting improved working terms and conditions, recognition of trade unions and employees' rights to freedom of association (ITUC, 2013). Bitter struggles have been waged within the country, resulting in trade union leadership being subjected to unlawful detention, in a bid to proclaim their organisational rights (Solidarity Centre, 2006). The ITUC revealed that Swaziland has a remarkable history of violating trade unions' rights: union leaders continue to face harassment and harsh legal environments; trade union leaders are subjected to illegal detention and house arrest (Maree, 2012; LO/FTF Council, 2013). "The Suppression of Terrorism Act was renewed in 2010" (Maree, 2012:14), and the act resulted in the alienation of workers. It specified severe penalties for participation in political activities, in addition to restricting trade union activity. Consequently, the Swaziland trade union movement became quiet and easy to control, thus forfeiting their plea to make changes within the country's democracy (Maree, 2012; LO/FTF Council, 2013).

According to Wood *et al.*, (2013) it is the government in any country, which designs a formal structure to the country's principles via legislations. In the context of Swaziland, the power to approve and enforce these values is vested in the King. Consequently, the "application of these values determines the structure within which societal systems operate" Wood *et al.*, (2013: 23). The country, through its high authorities, initially determined the features of the labour relations system. As such the system comprised of characteristics and rules which complimented the monarchical and hierarchical structures (Fox, 1993:17). The argument here, is that every piece of legislation, passed or endorsed by government, only becomes effective when the power elites permit. The present study examined how these values promoted or undermined the efficacious resolution of grievances within the public sector, while observing the administration of grievances within the prevalent industrial relations system (Wood *et al.*, 2013).

"In Swaziland, the industrial relations system embodied the (Swazi) non-traditional values of post-colonial Western style industrialised countries instead of democratic socialism" (Fox, 1993:37). This was revealed in the ILO's report on the right to freedom of association within Swaziland (ILO, 2010). The suspension of the bill of rights and the ban of political parties had a tremendous impact upon employees' mind-set or rather perceptions regarding trade unions (Dlamini, 2017). The aim of the removal of the bill was "to mute all those with differing political views, not only in the expression of those views, but also in terms of association with others in the collective pursuit of political and governance objectives" (Dlamini, 2017:50). The repressive laws which accompanied the ruling decree created fear amongst employees within the country (Dlamini, 2017).

### **3.3 Trade unions in Swaziland**

The subject of labour unions has received little or no attention from scholars within the country. This could be attributed to the fact that trade unionism in Swaziland, is something which is somehow undervalued, more especially within the civil service. The government as the employer uses autocratic styles of leadership within the public sector. Tensions between the contrasting interests of employers and public sector unions became evident in Swaziland during the year 2012 and even to date.

"The actual mandate of trade unions is to *inter alia*, protect, maintain and improve the working conditions of their members. They fulfil this mandate by ensuring that they offer services that

meet, if not exceed members' satisfaction levels" (Kgaphola, 2017:40). According to Venter (2003) cited in Kgaphola (2017:41) "public sector associations or trade unions are mandated to protect both the work related and non-work related interests of their members". Trade unions are membership organisations, which largely depend on membership levels and are governed by their members. Trade unions have to maximise their membership by becoming the best service provider to their members (Kgaphola, 2017).

Trade unions' rights are enshrined in the Constitution of Swaziland. These include the right to establish and join trade unions, and for trade unions to collectively bargain and strike. However, trade union membership is stagnant within the country. Currently there is one federation called the Trade Union Confederation of Swaziland (TUCOSWA). "This is a newly established federation that merges Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions and Swaziland Federation of Labour (SFL), as well as the Swaziland National Association of Teachers (SNAT). It represents around 34,904 members and is an affiliate of International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)" (ITUC, 2013). "TUCOSWA was formed in March 2012, a month later government de-registered TUCOSWA, declaring it illegal" (ITUC, 2013:8). The government defended itself by stating that the labour laws do not allow the merger, but it transpired at a later stage that this was not the only reason for the de-registration. TUCOSWA was reproved for its involvement within political activities (Gumede, 2013). It could therefore not be recognised as a federation, hence it was not permitted to engage in collective bargaining, or be part of the joint negotiation forum. This decision has been challenged by the trade union movement.

Trade unions are not fully recognised and appreciated within some public sectors, which continues to threaten their density, recruitment and retention strategies. A number of public sector departments such as the Defence Force, Police and Correctional Services are impermeable to trade unions. Furthermore, the ever-changing and harsh economic environment has had an adverse bearing upon the credibility of public servant unions (Mzangwa, 2012). Previous research on the performance of public sector associations in Swaziland revealed that trade unions are no longer as effective as before. The findings further indicate that trade unions within private institutions have a robust union density and have a higher performance when compared to those within the public sector.

### **3.4 Trade unions in the Swaziland public sector**

The level of union recognition and union density are determinants of the nature of employment relationships and the effectiveness of trade unions. However, in Swaziland “there has been a loss of ideological support for trade unions” (Dlamini, 2007:30). The loss of this support created fear and doubt amongst public employees. Trade unions are perceived as political entities which are there to disturb peace within the country. Trade unions in the country were demonised and dismissed as a foreign concept. Hence, employees are sceptical about joining public sector trade associations.

Akin to the experience of trade unions within private institutions, civil servants before the 1960’s were not permitted to form or join trade unions. According to the Catchpole Commission report cited in Fox (1993), there were no trade unions in Swaziland. The government substituted trade unions with the *iNdvuna* system. This was an African Consultative committee formed by the King. The committee comprised of appointees by the King. The committee assumed the role of trade unions within the public service. Simelane (1981) cited in Dlamini (2007) observed that although *iNdvuna* assumed the role of trade unions, they fell short of representing the employees’ interests within the public sector. The system not only proved ineffective regarding the improvement of working conditions, but it was viewed by most employees as collaborators of various capitalism concerns (Dlamini, 2007).

The Swaziland public sector became unionised after 1980. “It was only in the early 1990’s that the government engaged with emerging unions and staff associations that had begun to transform themselves into trade unions” (Dlamini, 2007:33).

Swaziland public sector unions have approximately 55 000 members and represent at least 80% of the public sector workforce and therefore remain influential (Fashoyin, 2008). However, the public sector unions’ reputation, effectiveness, competence and efficiency is currently at stake. Even though trade unions are recognised in the Constitution, their union density continues to be stagnant, as some of the public sector departments are impermeable to trade unionism. The economic global trends and the introduction of multi-national companies have an adverse impact on the credibility of labour organisations (Mzangwa, 2012). Previous research on public unionisation within the Swaziland public sector indicated that trade unions are no longer

effective as they were previously. Hence, some workers are apolitical and reluctant to join trade unions.

The public service associations report that there are difficulties at the negotiation table of the Joint Negotiation Forum (JNF). The issue pertains to the impartiality and independence of government representatives. The public sector associations argue that government representatives are not independent as required, because they always look to the cabinet for decisions on most issues (Gumede, 2013). Furthermore, the chairperson, who is supposed to be independent, is a government appointee, and the secretary to the JNF is appointed by government and is therefore not neutral. This then undermines the degree of employee participation and good faith bargaining (IRALE, 2013). In some instances, the government approaches the bargaining process with a closed mind, which consequently results in imposing a decision. This is proof of the lack of willingness to negotiate in good faith. “In principle, a collective agreement is negotiated by the JNF and the text is then registered with the industrial court” (IRALE, 2013:14).

According to Gumede (2013) the Constitution makes provision for the CSC “to investigate grievances of employees in the public service and furthermore to recommend appropriate remedies”. However, according to Arie (2015:22) “there is an inconsistency when implementing these procedures, as the CSC tends to follow their own set of rules with regard to the relevant procedures to be followed when handling grievances”. It is also clear that the CSC is not part of government departments. Its role is an oversight and it should not be involved in the initial stages of resolving a grievance between the employer and the employee. Instead, it would be better referred to as a dispute resolution institution. Due to this, employees’ rights have been undermined and employees have seemingly lost trust in the system (Arie, 2015).

Trade unionism and collective bargaining within the Swaziland civil service remains in turmoil. There is not yet a shared understanding between government and trade unions, or indeed within either camp, regarding the future direction for collective bargaining in Swaziland (Dlamini, 2017). Key questions include: at what level should collective bargaining occur; what issues are appropriate on a particular table (or indeed subject to bargaining at all); whether bargaining should be occupational or functionally delineated; whether bargaining should aim at producing frameworks or detailed implementation strategies; and what division of power should be enforced between the CSC and the public service trade unions.

Government have introduced and amended the legislative framework in labour relations. However, the question remains as to the extent to which the legislative framework adequately addresses the enormous labour relations anomalies brought about by the dictatorship and autocratic rule.

### **3.5 Laws that shaped the Swaziland industrial relations**

According to Fox (1993:14) “the Employment Act became effective in November 1981 and the Industrial Relations Act in July 1982”. Swaziland’s labour relations system is currently being governed by four major legislations; The Constitution of Swaziland, 2005, Employment Act, 1980, Wages Act No.16 of 1964 and the Industrial Relations Act, 2000 were established with the purpose of controlling and regulating the activities of labour organisations within the country. “Labour laws in Swaziland which form a triad for industrial relations seem to be more favourable to employers to some extent than trade unions or employees, repressing employee participation in workplace agreements” (Wood *et al.*,2013:17).

This section presents the legislative and regulatory framework for the management of grievances within the public service. The handling of grievances within the workplace forms an integral part of the collective agreement prevalent in any organisation. The Constitution, Employment Act, and the IRA, require public and private institutions to ensure fair labour practices within the workplace. Furthermore, Government General Orders provide extra clarity on the nature of the employer-employee relationship within the public service. All the above-mentioned statutes regulate the application of the labour laws within the Swaziland public sector. In the public service, the management of employees’ grievances is guided by a number of legislative frameworks, regulations and bargaining council agreements (Ministry of Public Service and Information, 2013).

Section 32 (2) of the Constitution provides everyone with a right to collective bargaining and representation. According to section 32(4) of the Constitution, Parliament should pass laws to safeguard employees from unfair labour practices. The IRA, steered by the Constitution, is regarded as the supreme law within the industrial relations system (Mzangwa, 2012). “It promotes industrial peace while achieving social justice, worker protection and worker participation” (Mzangwa, 2012:40). Section 109 of IRA, publishes the Code of Good Practice on Dispute Resolution. The code seeks “to promote respect as well as uphold the common law

and statutory rights of both the employer and the employee in the workplace or the institution” (Public Service Commission, 2011).

The Employment Act, 1980 consolidates laws relating to labour, enshrining new provisions, intended to improve the terms and conditions of employees in Swaziland. Mainly, the Act covers the body of law known as individual labour law. “It establishes the Labour Commissioner, labour inspectorate and the Labour Advisory Board”. “The Employment Act of 1980 was repealed and replaced by the Employment Act of 2001 in order to harmonise employment law and the Industrial Relations Act” (Ministry of Public Service and Information, 2011).

The Government General Orders are applicable to all government employees who are appointed by the CSC. These orders are the commands of the King and authority for their interpretation is vested in him. The IRA covers every employee within the country, except for employees working in the defence force and the intelligence unit. Contrary, the Government General Orders provide “additional clarity on the nature of employment relationship in the public service only” (Gumede, 2013:11). “The conditions of service for government officers, instructions for the conduct of public business and other miscellaneous matters are embodied in the Government General Orders” (Ministry of Public Service and Information, 2011).

Mzangwa (2012:45) asserts that in order to “contextualise the practice of employment relations with direct reference to handling grievance and disciplinary procedures, a clear grasp of the context of labour legislation is required”. Mzangwa (2012:85) “indicate that the approach to grievance and disciplinary actions taken in the workplace is constituted through compliance to the legislation”. Swaziland employers and employees are expected to abide to the statutory processes. This section provided a synopsis of employment relations and labour laws in Swaziland.

### **3.6 Challenges faced by trade unions**

Notwithstanding the important functions which trade unions perform as ‘employee representatives’, they also face enormous challenges, including dwindling union membership; trust deficit; loss of member support and commitment and the government’s use of anti-union organisations (Mzangwa, 2012). “The decrease in trade union membership can be explained partly in terms of the on-going economic restructuring with entailed large-scale privatisation

policies and mergers” (Avdagic, 2003:58). Mwale (2014:80) points out that “these occurrences are of deep concern for trade unions and their leadership, as membership forms the constituency of a union and membership involvement is a test of union’s strength and its capacity to bargain with the management”.

Grogan (2010) states that “the primary function of a trade union is to promote and protect the interest of its members; improve working and living conditions and to represent workers' interests”. However, trade unions are unable to attain the set objectives because of both internal and external challenges. “Trade unions like any other organisation that provides services, are faced with challenges of membership decline due to perceived poor services or lack thereof, and are therefore required to devise remedial measure to mitigate the membership decline.” (Kgaphola, 2017:47). Trade union density is crucial because it strengthens the bargaining power and overall union effectiveness (Ganesan, Anantharaman and Ismail, 2015).

Trade unions are one of the craftsmen of the Swaziland labour relations system. Hence, an examination of the challenges which affect their operation is deemed important. Moreover, it is worth noting that these challenges have repercussions on the union organisational strength and efficiency. The number of trade unions in Swaziland is not increasing and the unions’ population has not increased over the past years. Another challenge arises from the lack of membership participation in union activities. Gall and Fiorito (2012) quoted in Ganesan (2016:93) postulate that “unions tend to be more effective and productive when they have greater participation from members”. In the Swaziland context, there is indeed pressure on civil service unions to focus on maximising their membership, as they are confronted with enormous challenges of a government/employer-controlled industrial relations system.

Trade unions encounter sustained government and management hostility. This is reflected in the design of the legislation, as some legislations constrain effective trade union organisations within the workplace. Many employers adopt human resource management policies which exclude union representation. Other employers avoid trade unions by outsourcing their services and by using contractual labour. Extensive programmes of privatisation have crippled the power of trade unions (Solidarity Centre, 2006). “The intensification of global competition is also forcing the Swaziland government to adopt tough monetary measures, reduce public expenditure and privatise utilities and public enterprises” (IRALE, 2013:10). Thus, this has caused a decline regarding the bargaining power of public service unions, hence the legitimacy

of public sector unions could not be recognised in the midst of global threats to their existence (Solidarity Centre, 2006). The combined effects of stabilisation and liberation led to static wages, while public service reforms and privatisation imperilled job security and led to a high rate of unemployment. The restrictive monetary policies adopted by the government constricted bargaining over wages (Dlamini, 2007).

Previous research indicates that declining union density and membership is a global issue, and as a consequence Swaziland trade unions are also affected (Ganesan, 2016). This poses enormous challenges to trade unions' sustainability within the labour relations system. The dramatic decline is attributed to two direct causes in Swaziland. The first direct cause is the unions' failure to attain recognition agreements in departments currently without a union, and the second cause arises from the unions' failure to attract and retain members within the workplace, where it has attained statutory recognition.

“The underlying factors to the stagnant union membership are conventionally held to be: macro economy fluctuations, the composition of the workforce, employer opposition, the labour legislations and institutional framework laid by the government, the industrial relations policies pursued by the management, the political, legal and social climate to industrial relations and the unions' recruitment strategies, image, appeal and leadership to greater extent” (Gall and Fiorito, 2016:199). Trade unions are currently faced with the challenge of designing policies, which will be of interest to all public sector employees and which will cover civil servants employed in different contractual forms.

In Swaziland, the industrial relations system is heavily controlled by the government, where government as an employer delays union recognition without concrete reasons. Government as the employer has historically been viewed as less accommodating of trade unions. The intensity of government hostility is said to be greater in Swaziland (Fox, 1993). “Government demoralise trade unions and perceive them as chaotic and irresponsible organisations whose major aim is to disrupt peace, order and good governance” (ITUC, 2013:4). The government of Swaziland accuses the trade unions of having a political agenda in support of multi-political parties, while trade unions accuse government of destroying the labour movement by taking all possible initiatives to suppress their legitimate actions (Solidarity Centre, 2006).

This government's perception has led to a number of cases of gross violation of labour rights. Political interference and intimidation is the key feature of Swaziland's industrial relations system. Hence, this directly influences the employees' decision to join trade unions. Dlamini (2013:48) states that "the trade union movement however, has also encountered challenges including competition among political parties to influence the direction and decisions of workers". "This has contributed to a level of division among trade unions as they attempt to strike a balance between their role and independence as workers' organisations; their broader pursuit of social justice and democratic governance in the country's highly charged political environment" (Dlamini, 2013:55).

Union organisation is another challenge for trade unions. According to Eden (2017:5) "union organising is the ability of the union to attract and retain members". According to (Standing 1999, cited in Gordon 2015:330) "industrial restructuring, growth in flexibility, changes in workplace practices and an increase in job insecurity have a huge effect on unions' ability to organise workers". Webster (2015:34) proclaims that, "globalisation is a constraint that erodes the regulatory framework of labour and undermines the standard employment relationship – the very aspects which shaped the nature of labour relations during the latter half of the twentieth century".

Mzangwa (2012:63) states "that other challenges are apparent when union representatives are confronted by legal experts on labour matters". According to a study conducted by Mzangwa (2012) the trade unions representatives' standard of knowledge is considered to be a hindrance to the representation of the union members' interests. According to Saundry *et al.*, (2008) experience, training and legal knowledge are pre-requisites for effective representation. Mzangwa (2012:70) states that "some unions' representatives seem to lack experience and knowledge on labour issues and dispute matters related to grievance and disciplinary conduct in the workplace". Trade unions in some instances focus more on industrial action and due process, rather than resolving the disputes. If a strike has always yielded favourable results, then they are reluctant to implement or review grievance handling practices.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

The principal aim of this chapter is to give an account of the history of trade unionism in Swaziland. The under-pinning assumption is that trade unions contributed tremendously to the current socio-political and economic stance of the country.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The purposes of this chapter are to: describe the research methodology, explain the sampling technique and the procedures used in designing the data collection instruments, offer a description of the statistical processes employed in the data analysis, and discuss the limitations and problems encountered during the study.

#### **4.2 Research methodology**

In this study the researcher used the mixed methods research design. “Mixed methods research is an approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative forms” (Creswell, 2014:4). It involves the simultaneous collection of qualitative and quantitative data in one phase (Edmonds and Kennedy, 2013:149). Creswell, *et al.*, (2011:205) assert that “it is more than simply collecting and analysing both kinds of data, it also involves the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of the study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research”. The use of qualitative and quantitative methods concurrently will provide the researcher with a broader understanding of the research problem. The mixed method approach was implemented in order to explore participants’ perspective and their reasoning behind their views. The use of this approach will allow the researcher to compare and integrate findings in order to provide a broader understanding of the research problem.

For the sake of this study, the concurrent mixed methods were used. The reason for employing concurrent mixed methods was to allow the researcher to gather two types of data concurrently. The basic premise for this method is that the integration allows a more complete and synergistic use of data. The concurrent collection of data is useful for understanding the contradictions between qualitative and quantitative findings. Furthermore, the two types of data can provide validation for each other whilst creating a solid foundation for drawing conclusions about the phenomenon of study. “In addition, by using two different methods in this fashion, the researcher was able to gain perspectives from the different types of data or different levels within the study” (Creswell, *et al.*, 2011:234). The mixed method allows the researcher to ensure that the research findings reflects the participants’ experiences. The quantitative method was used to gather information regarding the civil servants’ views on the effectiveness of trade unions, most especially regarding grievance management and the degree of willingness to join

a trade union. The qualitative method was used to explore the challenges and contextual factors influencing union effectiveness and trade union leadership, when dealing with management, during grievance and disciplinary procedures.

“Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that allows one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes” ( Sekaran and Bougie, 2016:126). The quantitative information was gathered via questionnaires and the qualitative data was captured via interviews.

The qualitative and quantitative data were collected, not within the same measures, but at the same time. Data from civil servants was collected through self-administered questionnaires and trade unions’ office bearers were interviewed. Although interviews were laborious they afforded the researcher a chance to gather qualitative data in a way which contained the benefit of providing an overall framework. The interviews allowed participants to voice their opinions freely.

### **4.3 Research design**

The research strategy employed in the present research is a case study and will be underpinned by exploratory and descriptive approaches. The researcher chose this design because the study focused on the case of Swaziland. Rule and John (2011:4) describe a case study research as “a systematic and in-depth investigation of a particular instance in its context in order to generate knowledge”.

According to this definition, a case study involves conducting a systematic and in-depth investigation of a particular instance in its natural settings in order to produce knowledge. Therefore, a case study is about the objectives and subjects of the study. But the objectives and subjects of the study must be set within the limits of the dissertation. Yin (2009:18) describes a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”.

This is a comprehensive study of trade union effectiveness regarding addressing employees’ grievances in the Swaziland public sector. This research seeks to obtain civil servants’ opinions

about union effectiveness regarding addressing employees' grievances in the Swaziland public sector. The features of a case study approach perfectly complement the aim of the study. The research questions are relevant to both exploratory and descriptive case study, as the scholar seeks to examine and describe the perceived effectiveness of trade unions regarding addressing employees' grievances intensively.

Given the nature of this study, a comprehensive examination of union effectiveness within the public sector and the views of the different stakeholders will be assessed. The underlying philosophy of this research is based on an interpretative understanding of the environment. Thus, a case study is suitable for this research. The case study approach employed was based on its suitability for exploring, explaining, understanding and describing the research problem (Farquhar, 2012:38-39). This approach allowed the researcher to examine union effectiveness in-depth in its natural setting. Another reason for employing a case study approach was based on its flexibility. "A case study is flexible in terms of what it studies and can use a variety of methods" (Rule and John, 2011:7). It can combine both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods, depending on what is appropriate for the study. As mentioned above, the researcher used a mixed methods research design. Therefore, a case study approach was compatible with research methodology.

## **4.4 Sampling procedure**

### **4.4.1 Target population**

Creswell, *et al.*, (2011:233) describes "a target population as a group of individuals (or a group of organisations) with some common characteristics that the researcher can identify and study". The targeted population of the study is the public sector of Swaziland which has 55 000 employees and four trade unions. The 55 000 employees are employed within twenty ministries, which are overseen by the Ministry of Public Service and Information. The Ministry determines the conditions of service for all civil servants. The study is not intended to explore all the ministries. Instead, the study focuses on three ministries/departments which provide basic service delivery to the people. The selection of these ministries was founded on the following criteria: the availability of fully recognised and active civil service unions, the accessibility and suitability of the study sites, natural settings and the scholar's acquaintance with the ministries. These ministries include the Ministry of Education, Health, and Social Welfare. The total population for these ministries is 16 612. In addition, the study will include union leaders, general secretaries and shop stewards (trade union representatives), on the basis

that they have a mandate and are regarded as an impeccable source of information about the issues of workers within the civil service.

The four unions are Swaziland Democratic Nurses Union (SWADNU), National Public Service and Allied Workers Union (NAPSAWU), Swaziland National Association of Teachers (SNAT) and Swaziland National Association of Government Accounts Personnel (SNAGAP). These unions possess large populations of membership and are the most active unions within the public service. Hence participants of this study constituted members from these unions, as well as non-members.

#### **4.4.2 Sampling strategies**

Sekaran and Bougie (2010: 263) define “a sample as a subset of the population to be studied”. Kothari (2004) defines “a sample design a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population. It refers to the technique or the procedure the researcher would adopt in selecting items for the sample”. After a thorough examination of the sample, “the researcher should be able to draw conclusions that are generalisable to the population of interest” (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010: 264). The identified ministries contain different profiles of employees. Stratified random sampling was employed to sample the civil servants from the three ministries within the public sector. “Stratified random sampling is a type of probability sampling where the population is divided into homogenous and non-overlapping subgroups or strata and a simple random sample is drawn within each strata” (Bernard, 2013:132). Bernard, (2013:135) proclaims that “stratified random sampling is a method for obtaining a greater degree of representativeness by decreasing the probable sampling error”.

Therefore, the findings of the current research can be generalised according to the broader public sector. Each ministry was regarded as a strata and had its own rank and file, therefore had an equal number of employees from the different ranks of each strata, which made the sample less representative of the population. Thus, the researcher used non-proportional stratified random sampling, because the proportions of sample within each strata did not reflect the proportions within the sampling frame. The identified strata were the Ministry of Education, Health, and Social Welfare. A sample of the civil servants was drawn from each stratum using simple random sampling. The sample was drawn from union officials, administration staff, support and maintenance staff, nurses, teachers and social welfare officers.

### 4.4.3 Sample size

Roscoe (1975) cited in Sekaran and Bougie (2010) states that as a rule of thumb a minimum sample size of 30 and less than 500 is acceptable for statistical analysis. Determination of the sample size can be very difficult, because there are a lot of factors which require consideration (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010:268). The sample size depends on the population. Sekaran and Bougie (2010) suggest that a sample size for a given population of 16 612 is approximately 375 participants. In the present study the total population of the selected ministries was 16 612 employees spread across the three ministries within the 4 regions of the country. Given the wide geographical area of the Swaziland public sector and the spread of the employees, it was difficult to access all of them. As a result the researcher chose a representative sample of the population that was practicable. For the purpose of this study, a practical and manageable sample size of 375 respondents was considered suitable for the study.

### 4.4.4 Response rate

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010) a response rate is a mathematical aspect that is calculated by the researcher and it is used as a tool to ascertain the degree of success in obtaining completed questionnaires from the sample. “The rate is calculated by dividing the number of usable responses by the total sample minus unusable responses” (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010:264). Participation in this study was voluntary. A total of 375 semi-structured questionnaires, enclosed with the motivation for the research and confidentiality undertakings, were sent to the volunteering participants. The questionnaires were circulated amongst three ministries. A total of 211 completed questionnaires were gathered from the participants and a total of ten (10) interviews were conducted among the trade union officials. Table 4.1 in the next section below indicates the composition of the sample.

$$\text{Response rate} = \frac{\text{Number of usable responses (221)}}{\text{Total sample (375)} - \text{Unusable responses (0)}} \times 100 = 58.9\%$$

*Source: Field Data, 2018 and Sekaran and Bougie (2010)*

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010) a response rate of 30 % is suitable for most research purposes. Therefore, the response rate of 58.9 % for the present study was acceptable.

#### 4.4.5 Characteristics of the sample

The sample was made up of males and females who were employed in the different ministries. The sample included middle-level managers, senior employees, public sector union office bearers, support and maintenance staff, administration staff, and lower-level employees. The lower-level employees included teachers, nurses, and social welfare officers. Most of the employees were degree/diploma graduates and were permanently employed within the ministries. A comprehensive description of the sample is provided in the next chapter. Table 4.1 below demonstrates the characteristics of the sample.

**Table 4. 1 Characteristics of the participants (N=221)**

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Female	108	48.9	48.9
	Male	113	51.1	51.1
	<b>Total</b>	221	100	100
Age	21-29	24	10.9	10.9
	30-39	92	41.6	52.5
	40-49	90	40.7	93.2
	50-59	15	6.8	100
	<b>Total</b>	221	100	
Qualification	Primary school	2	0.9	0.9
	Secondary school	14	6.3	7.2
	Degree/Diploma	157	71.0	78.3
	Postgraduate	38	17.2	95.5
	Other	10	4.5	100
	<b>Total</b>	221	100	
Ministry	Education	69	31.2	31.2
	Health	66	29.9	61.1
	Social Welfare	63	28.1	89.6
	Other	23	10.4	100
	<b>Total</b>	221	100	
Type of contract	Permanent	166	75.1	75.1
	Fixed term	4	1.8	76.9

	Temporary	7	3.2	80.1
	Probation	44	19.9	100
	<b>Total</b>	221	100	
Job tenure (years)	Less than a year	10	4.5	4.5
	1 to 2	42	19.0	23.5
	2 to 5	37	16.7	40.3
	5 to 10	44	19.9	60.2
	10 or more	87	39.4	99.5
	<b>Total</b>	221	100	

Source: Field Data, 2018

## 4.5 Research instruments

### 4.5.1 Questionnaire

“A questionnaire is a pre-formulated written set of questions to which respondents record their responses, usually rather closely defined alternatives” (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010:197). Hence, a semi-structured questionnaire was employed in the present study. The general objective of the researcher was to collect data which would provide a perfect picture of the dimensions under examination. One hundred and twenty-five (125) questionnaires were distributed in each Ministry. The questionnaires were self-administered. This technique allowed the scholar to elucidate the rationale of the study, provide clarification sought by respondents and collect the questionnaires immediately after they were completed. (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010).

### 4.5.2 Questionnaire design

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010) a well-constructed questionnaire should follow three principles. The first principle ensures proper formulation of the questions. The second principle looks at the categorisation of the variables, scaling and coding after receipt of responses. The third principle considers the overall presentation of the questionnaire. The afore-mentioned principles are fundamental to the design of the questionnaire, because they can decrease bias in the study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010:198). The development of the questionnaire was guided by the theoretical background of the study and the research questions. The development of this questionnaire was founded on the recurring themes which emerged when reviewing the literature.

Thus, the literature review played a critical role during the formulation of this questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed solely for this study and it has also been tested for its validity and reliability. The dependent variable of the study is union effectiveness and the independent variable is union organisation (union organisational effectiveness and union bargaining or delivery effectiveness dimensions). The items used to measure both variables have been adapted from Bryson (2003). The researcher used two measures of union effectiveness: union organisational effectiveness and union bargaining or delivery effectiveness. Each of these has different sets of dimensions (see Figure 2.1).

**Section A** of the questionnaire focused on the demographic and socio-graphic information of the participants such as gender, age, education level, job title, type of employment and the number of years employed by the Ministry.

**Section B** of the questionnaire explored union membership. The aim of this section was to draw employees' experiences of union membership and their views on the work of trade unions within the workplace.

**Section C** of the questionnaire examined employees' perception on union effectiveness regarding grievance handling within the public sector of Swaziland. A five point Likert scale ranging from 5 = strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree, was used on the 14 dimensions proposed by Bryson (2003) to measure union effectiveness (see Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2). This section also focused on the employees' perceptions about the role of trade unions.

#### **4.5.3 Administration of the questionnaire**

The questionnaires were distributed to 125 randomly selected employees within each ministry. Each day was dedicated to a ministry. The questionnaires were distributed in the morning and collected in the afternoon. The letter from the Director of the Ministry of Public Service, permitting the researcher to conduct the study, and a consent form for the participants, was attached to the questionnaire. The researcher clarified in a statement attached to the questionnaire that participating in the study was voluntary and that confidentiality would be guaranteed.

#### **4.5.4 Semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were the second instrument used in the study. The interviews began with questions regarding union membership, position/title in the union structure and

educational qualifications. The interviews explored the union officials/representatives' performance, their experiences and challenges they faced when handling employees' grievances. Questions about union effectiveness regarding addressing employees' grievances were posed. The researcher mapped interview and research questions into the interview guide matrix. The mapping of the interview guide matrix ensured that all research questions were covered by the interview guide. The researcher constructed interview questions and identified gaps that may be present. The researcher filled the gaps by adding relevant questions into the interview guide based on the objectives of the study. Data from trade union office bearers was collected using semi-structured interviews from 3 public sector trade union office-bearers and 7 shop stewards, randomly selected from each public sector trade union. The researcher used an interview guide which comprised two sections. Section A of the guide elicited the demographic and socio-graphic information of the interviewee and Section B consisted of questions about unions' experiences regarding grievance and disciplinary procedures within the public service sector in Swaziland.

#### **4.5.4.1 Administration of the interviews**

The researcher conducted face to face interviews. The researcher visited the trade unions' offices which were located outside the workplace. The researcher requested contact details of members of the trade union leadership from their administrative officers. The researcher contacted the members to set up appointments. The interviewees were met individually to allow them to express their viewpoint, in private, without a framework imposed by the researcher. The researcher used an interview guide to ensure that interviews were focused and provided a chance for the respondents to voice their opinions, clarify their personal perspectives and expand on answers. The interviews were not restricted to questions posed by the interviewer; open-ended questions were used in order to permit the respondents to explore other issues related to the research questions. Therefore, this technique was appropriate for the study, because it provided an opportunity for an in-depth discussion of the issues around grievance handling within the public sector. The researcher made use of a digital recorder. This was done to ensure that the researcher did not lose important data. The techniques ensured that analysis of data was based on an accurate and accessible record. Besides digital recording of the interview discussion with the interviewees, notes were taken to back-up the digital recording. Respondents were given the freedom to use their mother tongue when responding to the

questions. In cases, where the interviewees responded in Siswati, the transcript was translated into English.

#### **4.6 Triangulation**

The use of semi-structured interviews and questionnaires provided an opportunity to relate to the different perspectives connected to the research objectives: employees' perspective on the effectiveness of trade unions regarding addressing employees' grievances in the Swaziland public sector and the challenges faced by public servant unions when handling employees' grievances. Of utmost importance here, were the views of employees on union effectiveness regarding addressing employees' grievances and the public sectors unions' views regarding the grievance procedure.

However, the employment of semi-structured interviews and questionnaires as data collection methods introduced the concept of triangulation, in particular methodological triangulation. "Triangulation is a technique that is often associated with reliability and validity in qualitative research" (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010:385). Methodological triangulation occurs when two or more methods have been used to collect data (Honorene, 2017). For the sake of this study, the triangulation process was conducted in the data collection phase. The researcher used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews concurrently as data collection techniques. The questionnaires were distributed to civil servants and semi-structured interviews were conducted with union representatives. The idea behind triangulation was to increase confidence regarding the results and to see whether the employment of different techniques led to similar results. The triangulation allowed the researcher to use the strength of each method to overcome the deficiencies of the other (Honorene, 2017).

#### **4.7 Analysis of data**

The qualitative and quantitative data were analysed and presented separately. The researcher conducted separate analyses of the qualitative and quantitative data in parallel. The researcher sought to describe and compare the perspectives of the employees and trade union representatives on the effectiveness of trade unions in the workplace. For this study merging of the data occurred after the statistical analysis of the numerical data and qualitative analysis of the textual data, specifically at the conclusion stage (Fetters, Curry and Creswell, 2013). The integration of qualitative and quantitative data at the interpretation and reporting level occurs through three approaches: (1) integrating through narrative; (2) integrating through data

transformation; and (3) integrating through joint displays (Fetters, *et al.*, 2013). For this study, emerging occurred at the conclusion stage through weaving narrative (Fetters, *et al.*, 2013).

According to Creswell, *et al.*, (2011:215) “interpretation and data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organising the data (i.e. text data as in transcripts) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes and finally interpreting and representing the data in figures, tables or discussion”. The ten recorded interviews were transcribed, read through text and identified core themes. Thematic text analysis was used in this study. The researcher looked at the occurrence or co-occurrence of themes within the responses. Figure 4.1 below demonstrates the thematic analysis process undertaken in this study. For example, union recognition, lack of resources and infrastructure and implementation of labour legislation, challenges faced by union officials and representatives and management of grievances were prominent themes that determined the effectiveness of trade unions in the workplace. The quantitative data informed the development of the components of the study and the questionnaire items were mapped to the corresponding component from the qualitative findings.

Two hundred and eleven (211) questionnaires were completed and returned. The completed questionnaires were inspected to determine their acceptability. The data was entered into a spreadsheet using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS 23). Graphs and tables were generated using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Inferential statistics utilised in this study included Pearson’s Correlation. Data entry and processing was done under the guidance of a qualified statistician. The mixed method approach used by the researcher generated two sets of findings.

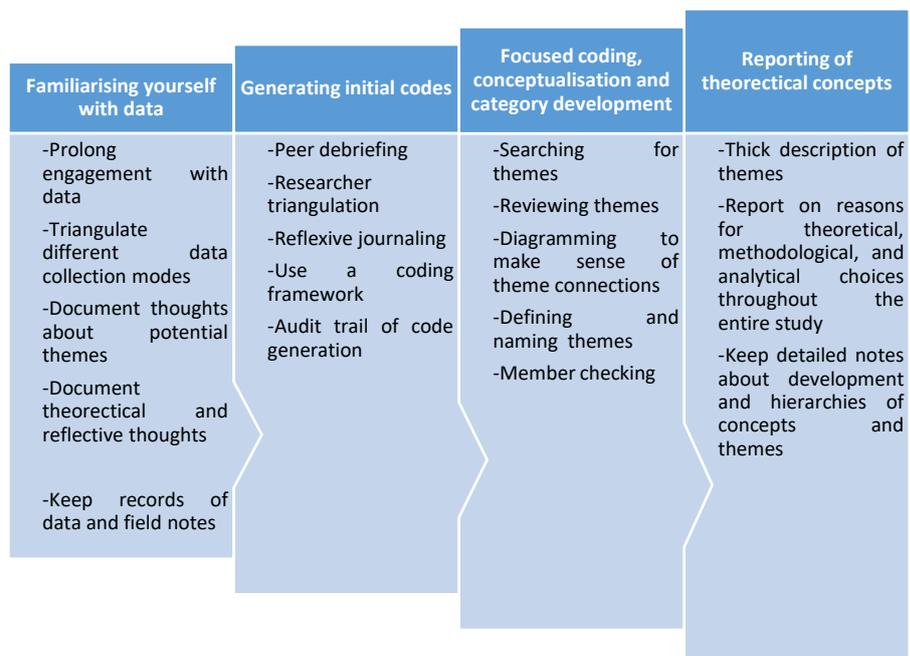
The researcher integrated the findings of the study through a contiguous narrative approach. A contiguous approach to integration involves the presentation of results within a single report, but the qualitative and quantitative findings are reported in different sections (Fetters *et al.*, 2013). However, the integration of data raised a question of coherence of the qualitative and quantitative findings. The coherence of the data is referred to as the “fit” of data integration (Fetters *et al.*, (2013). The assessment of fit of integration leads to three possible outcomes which are confirmation, expansion and discordance. Confirmation occurs when the findings from both types of data confirm the results of the other. Expansion occurs when the findings from the two sources of data diverge and expand insights of the phenomenon of study. Discordance occurs if the qualitative and quantitative findings are inconsistent, incongruous,

contradict, conflict, or disagree with each other (Fetters, *et al.*, (2013). The qualitative and quantitative findings of the study were synthesized through weaving narrative in the conclusion. The qualitative findings primarily confirmed the quantitative findings. Key aspects of union effectiveness included organisational effectiveness, bargaining or delivery effectiveness and industrial relations climate.

### 4.8 Trustworthiness for the qualitative data

Qualitative research is a valued paradigm of inquiry and the complexity that surrounds qualitative data requires rigorous methods to generate useful results. Trustworthiness is one way researchers can persuade themselves and readers that their findings are worth of attention (Nowell, *et al.*, (2017). According to Gunawan (2015) and Nowell *et al.*, (2017) trustworthiness can be divided into credibility which addresses the “fit” between respondents’ views and the researcher’s representation of them; dependability which relates more to reliability; transferability which refers to the generalizability of inquiry; and confirmability which is concerned with establishing that the researcher’s interpretations and findings are clearly derived from the data, requiring the researcher to demonstrate how conclusions and interpretations have been reached. In order to meet the above trustworthiness criteria, the researcher used thematic analysis. Figure 4.1 below demonstrate how the researcher addressed the trustworthiness during each phase of the thematic analysis.

**Figure 4.1 Establishing Trustworthiness during each phase of thematic analysis**



Source: Nowell *et al.*, (2017)

#### **4.9 Validity and reliability of the study**

Validity in qualitative research refers “to the extent to which the research results accurately represent the collected data and can be generalised or transferred to other contexts or settings” (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010:238). Therefore, to safeguard the validity and reliability of the data and findings, the researcher used two validation strategies. One of the strategies was to provide a comprehensive description of the participants or setting under study (Creswell, *et al.*, 2011). “Through the provision of a comprehensive description of the research problem and its context, the researcher allows her findings and conclusions to gain a level of transferability which the reader may determine” (Creswell, *et al.*, 2011:232). Transferability is an alternative to generalisation or external validity of the study (Rule and John, 2011: 105).

The other strategy “involved taking analyses, interpretations and conclusions back to the participants so that they can judge the accuracy and credibility of the account” (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010:216). “In quantitative research validity refers to a test of how well an instrument that is developed measures the particular concept it is supposed to measure” (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006:156). The quantitative research reliability of a measure, however, is established by testing for consistency. “Consistency indicates how well the items measuring a concept hang together as a set” (Hair, *et al.*, 2014:100).

In the undertaken study the researcher adapted two measures of union effectiveness which were originally created (Bryson, 2003). The measures were union organisational effectiveness and union bargaining/delivery effectiveness. Each measure had seven (7) positively phrased union effectiveness items. The researcher decided to use these measures because they had been validated by Bryson (2003) and used by Mohammed, *et al.*, (2010) and Tarumaraja, *et al.*, (2015) in their studies. Irrespective of the strong validity and reliability of the instrument, the investigator decided to re-assess the validity and reliability of the tool, because the study was implemented in a new setting.

Cronbach alpha will be calculated to measure internal consistency reliability (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). The Cronbach alpha “measures the inter-item consistency reliability of the items. It tests the consistency of respondents’ answers to all items, which ensures the internal consistency of the items used to measure each variable” (Hair, *et al.*, 2014:102).

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010:218), “if Cronbach’s Alpha is closer to 1, the reliability of the measures is higher”. Hee (2014:18) “suggested that the generally agreed upon lower limit for Cronbach’s Alpha is 0.7. Therefore, the cut-off point for measuring reliability in the present study will be 0.7” (Hee, 2014:20). The Cronbach was computed using the SPSS. This was done to measure the internal consistencies regarding factors within the questionnaire. Again factor analysis was conducted to ensure that the items measured the correct concept and the items which measured the same construct were grouped under the one factor. Table 4.2 below shows the commonly accepted values of Cronbach alpha and its interpretations.

**Table 4. 2 Cronbach alpha test**

Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	Internal Consistency
$\alpha \leq 0.6$	Poor
$\alpha \leq 0.7$	Acceptable
$\alpha \geq 0.8$ $\alpha \geq 0.9$	Good
$\alpha \geq 0.9$ $\alpha \geq 1.00$	Excellent

*Adapted from: Sekaran and Bougie, 2010*

Table 4.3 below indicates the results of a Cronbach Alpha test. This test was used to test the internal consistency of the items used to measure the variables. The reliability coefficient is  $\alpha = .970$  for all 24 items. This indicates that the items of the questionnaire had a fairly high and excellent internal consistency. Therefore, the reliability coefficient ( $\alpha = .970$ ) for the employees’ perception of union effectiveness regarding grievance handling is significantly high. This could be taken as confirmation of the reliability of the instrument.

**Table 4. 3 Reliability statistics**

Cronbach’s Alpha	Cronbach’s Alpha Based on Standardised Items	N of Items
.970	.971	24

*Source: Field Data, 2018*

Table 4.4 below presents the item-total statistics analysis of the items within the questionnaire. The correlation of item 14 is 0.575, while other items range between 0.666 and 0.840. In the present study, deleting item 14 would increase the Cronbach alpha score to  $\alpha = 0.971$ . Therefore this item was eliminated in order to make the questionnaire more reliable.

**Table 4. 4 Item-total statistics analysis**

<b>Item-Total Statistics</b>					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
PUEffGHO1	96.74	660.922	.786	.796	.969
PUEffGHO2	96.81	659.552	.764	.786	.969
PUEffGHO3	97.12	657.541	.737	.709	.969
PUEffGHO4	97.56	664.899	.680	.722	.970
PUEffGHB5	97.58	663.039	.687	.777	.970
PUEffGHB6	97.65	663.998	.688	.740	.970
PUEffGHO7	97.78	655.665	.670	.641	.970
PUEffGHO8	97.01	651.675	.793	.758	.969
PUEffGHO9	97.46	658.852	.666	.651	.970
PUEffGHO10	97.03	652.018	.808	.728	.969
PUEffGHO11	97.16	653.167	.837	.793	.969
PUEffGHB12	97.06	654.680	.794	.742	.969
PUEffGHB13	97.34	658.799	.695	.629	.970
PUEffGHO14	96.66	670.703	.575	.502	.971
PUEffGH15	97.48	654.040	.717	.685	.970
PUEffGH16	97.22	654.146	.776	.744	.969
PUEffGH17	97.63	653.650	.772	.766	.969
PUEffGH18	97.40	650.271	.793	.791	.969
PUEffGHB19	96.71	657.344	.774	.810	.969
PUEffGHB20	96.78	656.038	.783	.807	.969
PUEffGHB21	96.96	653.209	.804	.782	.969
PUEffGHB22	97.03	650.516	.795	.779	.969
PUEffGHB23	96.91	649.916	.840	.835	.968
PUEffGHB24	96.90	654.381	.769	.775	.969

*Source: Field Data, 2018*

#### **4.9.1 Factor analysis**

Factor analysis is a method used for identifying and grouping dimensions which measure the same as the variable. “Factor analysis transforms the correlations among a set of observed variables into smaller number of underlying factors, which contain all the essential information about the linear interrelationships among the original test scores” (Hair, *et al.*, 2015:87; Sekaran and Bougie, 2010:316). Factor analysis ensured that the items measured the correct concept and the variables, which measured the same construct, were grouped under the one factor (Cavana, *et al.*, 2001). The researcher used principal component factor analysis, which is a statistical method for determining the correlations among the variables dataset. “This type of analysis provides a factor structure (a grouping of variables based on strong correlations)” (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010:219). “Particularly, the principal component factor analysis provides a direct insight into the interrelationships between the variables and empirical support for addressing conceptual issues relating to the underlying structure of the data” (Hair, *et al.*, 2015: 87). In the present study, there are 14 dimensions of union effectiveness with a total of 24 items.

#### 4.9.1.1 Sampling adequacy

Sampling adequacy measures the degree to which a set of variables under consideration comprises an adequate sample from the domain of interest. “The Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) test is the measure of sampling adequacy, which varies between 0 and 1” (Kaiser, 1997). The index may be used as the basis of a decision rule for determining whether a given sample correlation matrix is suited for factor analysis. “The values closer to 1 are better and the value of 0.6 is suggested minimum” (Kaiser, 1977). “KMO values less than 0.6 indicate the sampling is not adequate and that remedial action should be taken”. Kaiser (1977) proposed the following interpretation of KMO-Measures of Sample Adequacy (MSA) values,

**Table 4. 5 Interpretation of KMO-MSA**

KMO-MSA Value	Degree of Common Variance
0.9 - 1	Marvellous
0.8 - 0.89	Meritorious
0.7 - 0.79	Middling
0.60- 0.69	Mediocre
0.50 – 0.59	Miserable
0.0 - 0.49	Unacceptable

*Source: Kaiser, 1977*

#### 4.9.1.2 Sphericity

Sphericity determines the appropriateness and strength of the inter-correlations amongst the variables/components (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). The Bartlett’s test of sphericity was used to measure the strength and appropriateness of the inter-relationships among the variables (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). This test indicated the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The Bartlett’s test uses a *p-value* less than 0.0001. A value less than 0.001 indicates that there is an important correlation amongst the components, which, in turn determines that the information is appropriate for factor analysis.

**Table 4. 6 KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.948
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4922.123
	df	276
	Sig.	.000

*Source: Field Data, 2018*

In the current research the KMO-MSA was 0.948 as indicated in Table 4.6 above. The degree of common variance among the 24 items was 'Marvellous', therefore the suitability of the data set was appropriate for factor analysis. The findings of the Bartlett test of sphericity was highly significant, its associated probability was  $p < 0.001$ . According to the findings of the KMO-MSA and the Bartlett test, which revealed that the data set was suitable for factor analysis, and the chi-square result (4922.123) indicated a highly significant correlation amongst the items.

#### **4.10 Limitations and potential problems of the study**

A case study is not immune to criticism and there are limitations to this research. The first limitation emanated from the question of the generalisation of the findings. Critics of the case study approach argue that the findings cannot be generalized, because a case study is a study of a singular approach. The failure to get responses from everyone selected in the sample was one of the limitations. Some civil servants were not in their offices due to elections which were taking place in the country. A large number of public servants were deployed to work in the Elections and Boundaries Committee. Therefore, the failure to collect responses from selected participants was a potential source of bias in the study. Other constraints of the study arose from public officials' fear of a negative impact on their reputation and jobs, and those with this attitude, withheld important information. Bureaucracy is assumed to be the cause of fears and suspicions displayed among participants, thus putting a limit on the targeted number of 100 identified participants.

Given the nature of the public service structure, the researcher had to follow formal lines of communication. The researcher was instructed to seek permission from the Principal Secretary of each ministry before distributing the questionnaires to the employees. Because of the political sensitivity and confidentiality of issues, the researcher was compelled to define the purpose of the research and why, in particular the ministry of the public service, was being targeted. Similar concerns were also raised when introducing the research study to the respondents. Some of the participants even hesitated to participate in the research, stating that their main concern was that the findings of the study would be published and possibly expose them negatively. The hesitation from the participants' side indicated unreliable results.

It took 30 minutes to go through a six-page questionnaire with most of those who participated in the study. The main concern was either the questions were irrelevant to line function, or the

indicated options from which to choose were too related, which resulted in the failure to understand the meaning of the questions. Thus, much of the research time was dedicated to building the confidence of the participants for the collection of empirical data. The researcher had to share some information, explain certain concepts and provide the background of the study. The most convincing approach in these instances was the reassurance that once the research was completed and the dissertation marked, a published version would be kept by the university and would remain the university property.

#### **4.11 Ethical issues**

The research findings were not the only aspect of research that required quality. Ethical relationships and practices were essential elements of the quality of research. Undertaking the research in an acceptable and ethical manner enhanced the credibility of the study, thus confirming its reliability (Rule and John, 2011: 111).

To meet the ethical requirements permission was sought from the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Public Service of Swaziland to conduct a survey within the organisation. The researcher then applied for ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu Natal's Research Committee before embarking on the study.

#### **4.12 Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the research methodology, explain the sampling technique, explicate the process used in constructing the data collection instruments and give an account of the statistical processes employed in the study. The last section provides a discussion of the limitations of the study. The next chapter provides presentation and analysis of the results.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings obtained using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics include frequencies and percentages. Reliability analysis and data reduction will be computed by factor analysis. The Pearson Correlation was applied to assess two different relationships: the correlation between union organisational effectiveness, the industrial relations climate and union bargaining/delivery effectiveness.

#### **5.2 Factor analysis**

“A factor analysis is a dimension-reduction tool that can be used to reduce a large set of variables to a smaller set that still contains most of the information in the large set” (Hair, *et al.*, 2015:89). The researcher used the principal component analysis (PCA). The PCA is a method used to extract the components in the factor analysis. “The PCA transforms a number of possibly correlated factors into a smaller number of uncorrelated variables called principal components” (Hair, *et al.*, 2015:89). “The first principal component accounts for as much as of the variability in the data as possible, and each succeeding component accounts for as much of the remaining variability as possible” (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016:318). In the current study, there are 3 constructs of union effectiveness: union establishing effectiveness, union bargaining/delivery effectiveness and industrial relations climate.

The three constructs make up a total of 24 items that are believed to be related to each other. In order to verify if the variables measured the right construct, factor analysis was conducted and variables which measured the same component were grouped under the same component. The results for the principal component analysis for union effectiveness is presented in Table 5.1 below. For factor loading, the researcher used the varimax rotation method to select the related items under one component (Cavana, *et al.*, 2001). A varimax rotation is a method used at one level of factor analysis as a way of clarifying the relationship among the variables (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). As illustrated in Table 5.1 the varimax rotation method of 24 items produced 3 components which accounted for 70.7 % of the total variance explained by the 24 items. This simply means that the three components explain 70.7 % of the variability in the original 24 items. Therefore, the researcher will use these components in order to reduce the complexity of data. “A factor loading of 0.3 was used as suggested by Kinnear and Gray

(2004) which means that the correlation coefficient between the items and factor are greater than 0.3” (Mohamed, *et al.*, 2010). Component 1 is named union bargaining/delivery effectiveness, Component 2 refers to industrial relations climate and Component 3 relates to union organisational effectiveness. The total variance explained of each component is 60.0 %, 6.3 % and 4.4 % as shown in table 5.1 below.

**Table 5. 1 Varimax rotated component matrix of trade union effectiveness**

<b>Item and Factor Description</b>	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Factor 3</b>
Union leaders/officials have the necessary competencies and skills to handle employees’ grievances.	.660		
Civil servants trust trade union representatives to effectively handle grievances raised.	.604		
Grievances raised are resolved timeously.	.579		
Trade unions represent its members satisfactorily during grievance and disciplinary hearings.	.673		
Protect employees against ill-treatment.	.726		
Union represents its members during grievance and disciplinary hearings.	.755		
Unions promote equality at work.	.696		
Unions monitor the employer’s compliance with labour legislations.	.729		
Unions improve and protect employees’ working conditions.	.719		
Belonging to a union is advantageous.	.718		
Trade unions are taken seriously by management.		.770	
Trade unions and management collaborate to improve working conditions.		.819	
Trade unions and management have mutual respect.		.793	
Trade unions have strong bargaining power.		.574	
Trade unions are a useful source of information and advice.		.480	
Trade unions understand the employer’s business.		.566	
Trade unions take notice of members’ issues and complaints.			.682

Trade unions are responsive to members' complaints and grievances.			.686
Trade unions have members' interests at heart.			.656
Trade unions are able to communicate and share information with their members.			.611
Trade unions are accountable and transparent to their members.			.566
Trade unions make a difference to working terms and conditions.			.648
Trade unions increase managerial responsiveness to employees.			.547
Trade unions should concentrate more on workplace related issues and less on politics.			.706
<b>Variance (100 %)</b>	60.035	6.292	4.393
<b>Cumulative variance</b>	60.035	66.326	70.720
<b>Kaiser Mayer Olkin (KMO)</b>	.948		

*Source: Field data, 2018*

### 5.2.1 Component 1: Union bargaining/delivery effectiveness

As depicted in Table 5.2 below, the KMO-MSA was .922, which is above the recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser, 1977). This means that the degree of variance amongst the items of bargaining/delivery effectiveness is marvelous, and as a result, the data is suitable for factor analysis. The Bartlett test of sphericity ( $X^2 (45df) = 2058.703; p < .0001$ ) indicates that there were patterned relationships between the dimensions of bargaining/delivery effectiveness. Thus, the factor analysis is applicable.

**Table 5. 2 KMO and Bartlett's test for bargaining/delivery effectiveness**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.922
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1282.639
	df	28
	Sig.	.000

### 5.2.2 Component 2: Industrial relations climate

Table 5.3 below indicates the KMO-MSA value of .844, which is above the recommended convention of 0.6, indicating the appropriateness of the information for factor analysis. The Bartlett test of sphericity ( $X^2$  (15df) = 832.041;  $p < .0001$ ) indicates that there were patterned relationships between the items of industrial relations climate. The factor analysis was thus appropriate.

**Table 5.3 KMO and Bartlett's Test for industrial relations climate**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.844
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	832.041
	df	15
	Sig.	.000

### 5.2.3 Component 3: Union organisational effectiveness

Table 5.4 below shows that the KMO-MSA is .922, which is greater than the recommended threshold of 0.6, indicating the appropriateness of data for factor analysis. The Bartlett test of sphericity ( $X^2$  (28df) = 1282.639;  $p < .0001$ ) indicates that there were patterned relationships between the items of union organisational effectiveness. The factor analysis was thus appropriate.

**Table 5.4 KMO and Bartlett's Test for union organisational effectiveness**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.922
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1282.639
	df	28
	Sig.	.000

## 5.3 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics focus on graphical and numerical techniques, which are employed to summarise and process the data. Descriptive statistics present raw data in a meaningful way (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). In this part of the study, the quantitative information was gathered by self-administered questionnaires. The information is presented in graphs, followed by a brief explanation and discussion of the results. The questionnaire had three sections. These sections will be discussed in the order they appeared in the questionnaire.

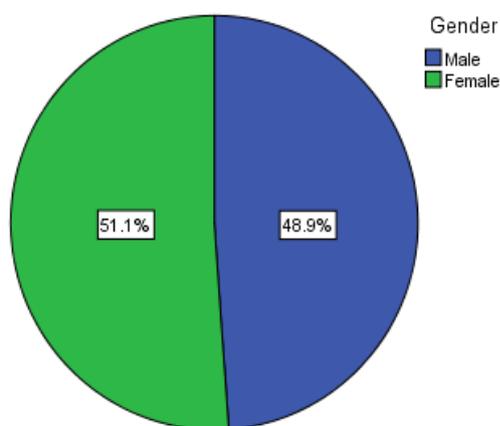
### 5.3.1 Section A of questionnaire: Demographic results and discussion

The first part of the questionnaire contained questions which sought to draw information concerning the biographic and socio-economic characteristics of the participants (Questions 1 to 8 of Annexure A). The characteristics were delineated into personal factors and job-related factors. Personal factors included age, gender, education and job-related factors included job title, department, type of contract and the number of years of service.

#### 5.3.1.1 Gender

The findings of the research indicated that a large population of the participants, 51.1% were females with 48.9% of the participants being males. There were therefore more female respondents than male respondents in the sample. The gender disparity was relatively small. This could be attributed to the ministries chosen for the study. There were more women in the cadre of nurses, social welfare officers and teachers. The collated data was deemed important for evaluating employees' perceptions on union effectiveness regarding grievance management. Furthermore, this aspect of the study was fundamental in examining whether gender was a determinant of the perceptions on union effectiveness. The results are in line with the Swaziland Labour Force Survey 2010/11, which state that there are more females than males in Swaziland. The labour force survey 2010/11 indicated that 578 569 population aged 15 and above, 312 615 are females, while 265 954 are males (Ministry of Labour and Social Security, 2011).

**Figure 5. 1 Gender**

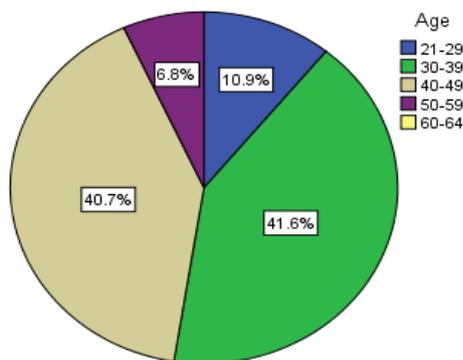


*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### 5.3.1.2 Age

The age distribution was examined with the purpose of confirming or debunking the view “that young employees are not attracted or interested in trade unionism” (Mzangwa, 2012:78). The younger generation in Swaziland did not appear to be interested in trade unionism. The figure below indicates that 41.6 % of the participants belonged to the age group of 30-39 and 40.7 % were found to be in the age group of 40-49. Figure 5.2 below indicates that all ages were represented, although a majority of the participants belonged to the age group of 30-39 years, followed by the age group of 40-49 years. The findings indicated that the public sector workforce is dominated by generation X “(those who were born between 1962 and 1981) and generation Y (those who were born between 1982 and 2000)” (Muhammad, 2018:118).

**Figure 5. 2 Age**

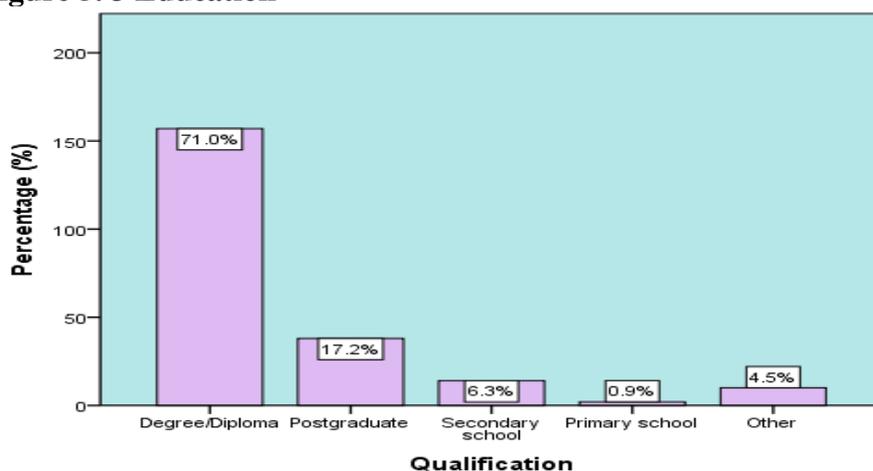


*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### 5.3.1.3 Level of education

Participants were asked to indicate their highest educational qualification amongst the four categories. The question sought to establish whether qualifications influenced the employees’ decision to join a trade union. A total of 71% of the participants were degree/diploma holders, 17.2% were postgraduates, 6.3% had secondary education, and 4.5% had certificates and 0.9% possessed primary education. The results indicate that a large majority of the public sector employees are highly educated.

**Figure 5. 3 Education**



*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### 5.3.1.4 Job title

The respondents were asked to mark the position they held within the public service. The study found that the majority of the participants were teachers (26.2%), followed by social welfare officers (21.7%), and nurses (19%). The respondents constituted drivers (5.4%), accountants (4.1%), human resource officers and clerk officers (1.4 %) from the different ministries. Other participants were health specialists (3.61%), hospital support staff (3.6%), regional officers (2.3%), immigration officers (2.3%) and assistant registrars (1.4%). Then again, the research found that an insignificant number of the respondents were assistant commissioners, health and school inspectors, and secretaries as presented in Table 5.5 below.

**Table 5. 5 Job title**

Job title	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Teachers	58	26.2
Nurses	42	19
Social Welfare Officers	48	21.7
Hospital Support Staff	8	3.6
Drivers	12	5.4
Health Specialists	8	3.6
Health Inspectors	2	0.9
School Inspectors	2	0.9
Immigration Officers	5	2.26
Regional Officers	5	2.26
Accountants	9	4.1

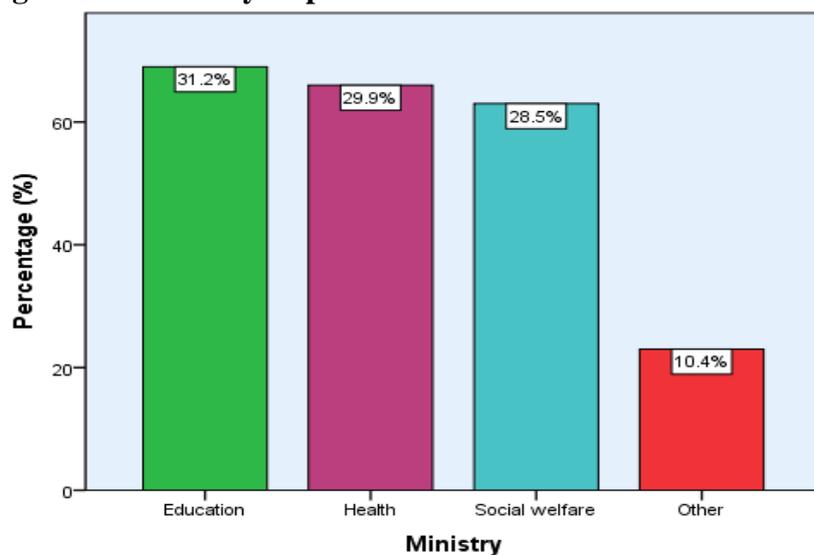
Assistant Registrar	3	1.4
Assistant Commissioner	1	0.5
HR Officers	2	0.9
Children's Coordination Officer	1	0.5
Gender Analyst	1	0.5
Quality/Data Analyst	2	0.9
Messenger/Cleaner	2	0.9
Secretary/Typist	2	0.9
Regional Planning Officers	2	0.9
Storeman	2	0.9
Vert Officer	1	0.5
Clerk Officers	3	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### 5.3.1.5 Ministry/Department

Figure 5.4 below indicates that the highest percentage, 31.2%, of the participants came from the Ministry of Education, 29.9% worked for the Ministry of Health, with 29% of the participants coming from the Department of Social Welfare, while 10.4% were from other ministries not indicated on the suggested list.

**Figure 5. 4 Ministry/Department**

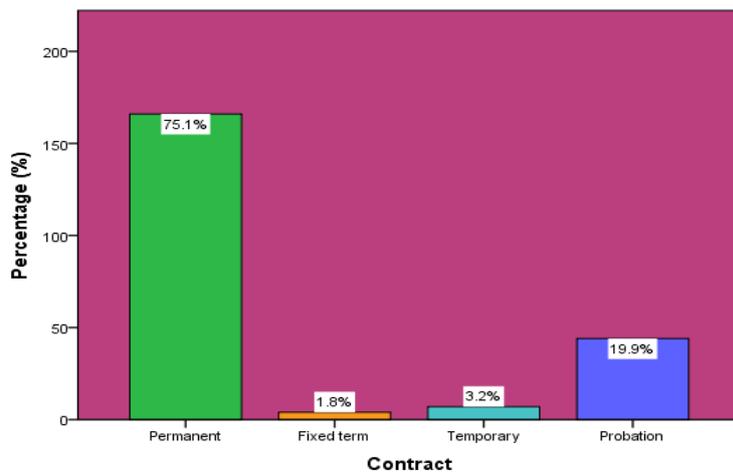


*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### 5.3.1.6 Type of contract

The participants were requested to indicate the type of employment contract they had with the employer. The results depicted in Figure 5.5 below indicate 75.1% of the respondents were permanently employed within the ministries, 19.9% were on probation, 3.2% were temporary employees and 1.8% were employed on a fixed-term basis.

**Figure 5. 5 Type of contract**

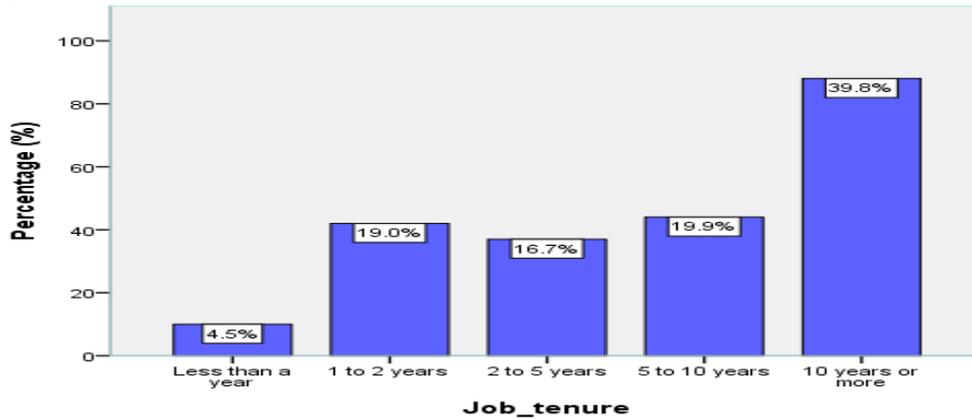


*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### 5.3.1.7 Job tenure

In the present study, “tenure is the length of time (measured in years) that employees have been with their current employer” (Mzangwa, 2012:78). The aim was to ascertain the relationship between job tenure and union membership. Figure 5.6 below indicates that approximately 40% of the participants had 10 or more years’ service within the public sector. This is followed by 19.9% of the respondents who had 5 to 10 years’ service within the sector. The third highest percentage 19% were those that had worked for 1 to 2 years, 16.7% had 2 to 5 years’ service and the lowest score of 4.5% represented respondents who had less than a year’s service. The majority of the participants had more than 5 years’ service within the public sector. This was good for the study, because they were well-informed about their organisations.

**Figure 5. 6 Job tenure**



*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### **5.3.1.8 Interpretation of data for Section A**

“Employees are instrumental in their decision to seek union representation when they perceive the union to be effective and able to deliver the desired outcomes” (Bryson, 2003:5). The interest in union representation is dependent on the individual’s characteristics such as age, gender, education and tenure (Deery, *et al.*, 1999). The findings of the undertaken study widely express the view that personal characteristics had an influence on employees’ perceptions of union effectiveness. Dissimilarities amongst female and male, between young and old, highly educated and less educated were deemed important for evaluating the perceptions of union effectiveness regarding grievance management.

The findings revealed that there were more female employees than male employees within the Swaziland public sector. The gender disparity is relatively small, because government have made an effort to ensure equality within the public sector through different mechanisms. The government has adopted gender equality policies.

Alivin and Sverke (2000) cited in Muhammad (2018) discovered that different generations express differing relationships regarding trade unionism. According to Muhammad (2018:115) “generation X share the principles and mission of their unions while the younger generation Y expresses more instrumental union attitudes”. This means that age explicates the difference in employees’ attitudes towards trade unions and their activities. Furaker and Berglund (2003) cited in Muhammad (2018:116) state that the “younger generation is less interested in unionism because they tend to be more individualistically oriented than older generation employees”. With regards to the flexibility of jobs and the negative attitude towards collectivism, the younger generation find it worthless to join or utilise trade union services (Muhammad, 2018).

According to Deery, *et al.*, (1999) employees with longer tenure often enjoy the benefits of the seniority system within the organisation. They may be more positively disposed towards the benefits of trade unionism within the organisation and consequently believe that trade unions play a critical part in the settlement of employees' grievances. Other employees decide to stay in the organisation for a long time, because of the fact that there is job security within the public sector.

The relatively high percentage of degree/diploma holders could be interpreted in two ways. The first explanation is that the government of Swaziland have increased the number of higher institutions within the country and also provide scholarships for its citizens. The second explanation is related to the number of private universities operating in Swaziland. These include the University of South Africa and Management College of South Africa. These institutions provide part-time and open distance learning to their learners. Also, the University of Swaziland have included in their programme, evening lectures and distance learning. Consequently, this has unlocked more opportunities for civil servants to further their studies.

#### **5.4 Section B: Effectiveness of union representation**

This section provides an analysis of Questions 1 to 8 of section B of the questionnaire (Annexure A).

**Objective 3: To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the trade unions regarding the management of grievances.**

##### **5.4.1 Availability of trade union in the workplace**

Participants were asked to indicate if there was a trade union bargaining in their workplace. A total of 94.5% affirmed that there were trade unions present in the workplace, while 5.5% responded negatively.

**Figure 5. 7 Availability of trade union in the workplace**

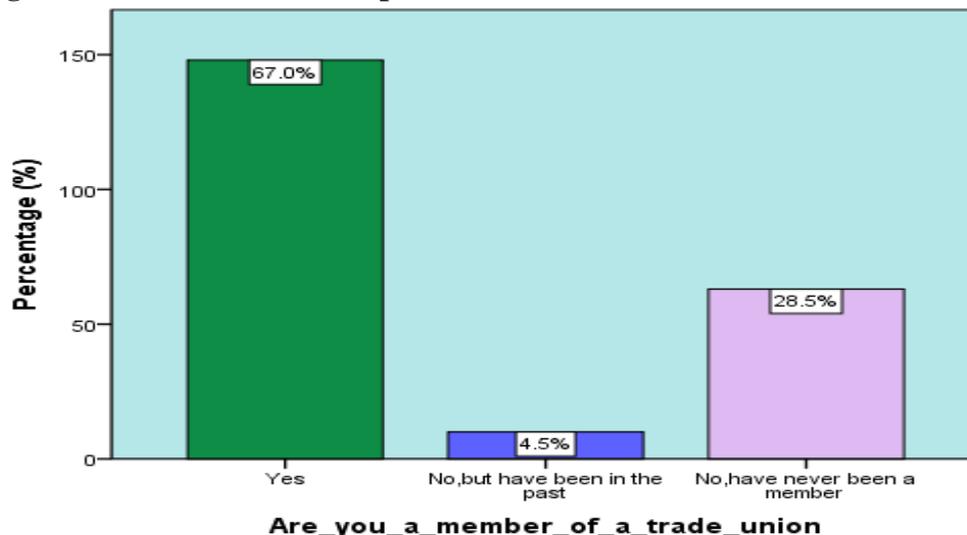


*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### **5.4.2 Union membership**

Participants were asked to indicate if they were members of trade unions. “Union membership is a vital element in assessing the strength and status of a trade union” (Ganesan, 2016:38). Figure 5.8 below depicts that 67% of the respondents were trade union members, 28.5% reported that they had never been members of a trade union, and 4.5% indicated that they had been members in the past.

**Figure 5. 8 Union membership**

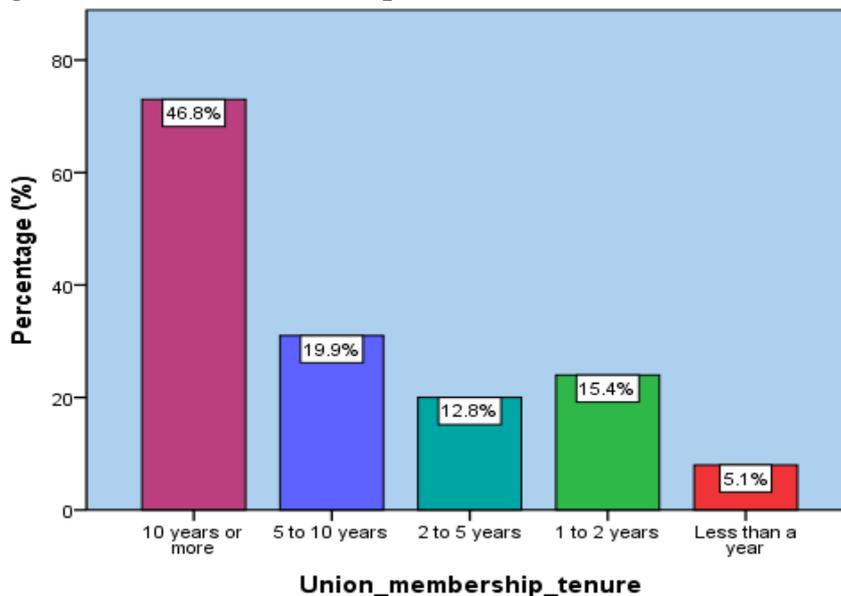


*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### 5.4.3 Length of union membership

Members of the union were asked to indicate their tenure of membership. Figure 5.9 below indicates that the highest percentage 46.8% of participants had been members of a union for more than 10 years, 19.9% had been union members for 5 to 10 years, 15.4% had been with the union for 1 to 2 years, whilst 12.8% had been union members for 2 to 5 years and 5.1% were those who had recently joined a union. The participants who had been union members for more than 10 years were the same respondents, who indicated that they had served in the public sector for more than 10 years. Similarly, participants who had been union members for 2 to 5 years were the same employees who had been in the public sector for 5 years or less.

**Figure 5.9 Union membership tenure**



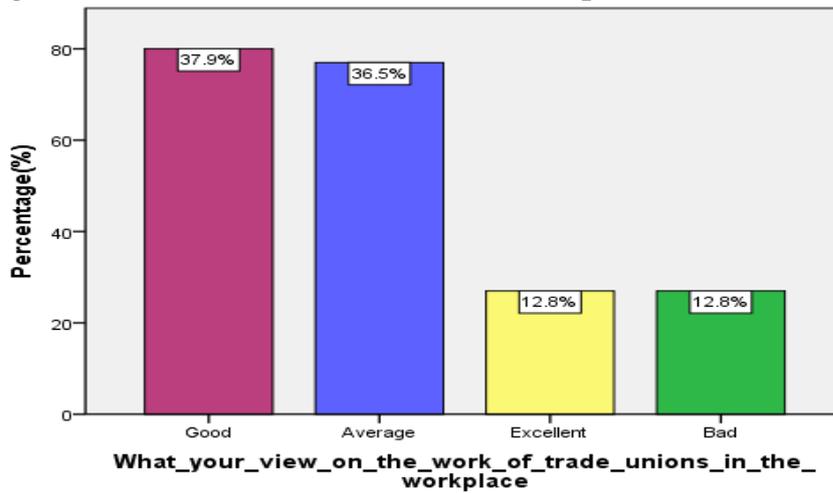
*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### 5.4.4 Union effectiveness in the workplace

The respondents were asked to express their view on the work of trade unions within the workplace. According to Bryson and Freeman (2013:4) “where employees have the opportunity to experience unions’ first-hand experience”, their perception of the union’s work is generally positive. Figure 5.10 below indicates that 37.9% of the participants found trade unions to be good in their work, 36.5% found the work of trade unions to be average, whilst 12.8% thought that they were excellent and another 12.8% of the respondents found the trade unions’ work to be bad. Off the 80 (37.9%) respondents who found the work of trade unions to be good, the majority of the participants were males (58.8%) and 41.3% were females.

Oppositely, regarding those participants who thought that the work of trade unions was on an average level, the largest percentage (62.3%) were females and the least percentage (37.7%) were males. Within those who said they were excellent 27 (12.8%), the largest percentage (59.3%) came from the males and the least percentage (40.7%) came from the females.

**Figure 5. 10 Union effectiveness in the workplace**

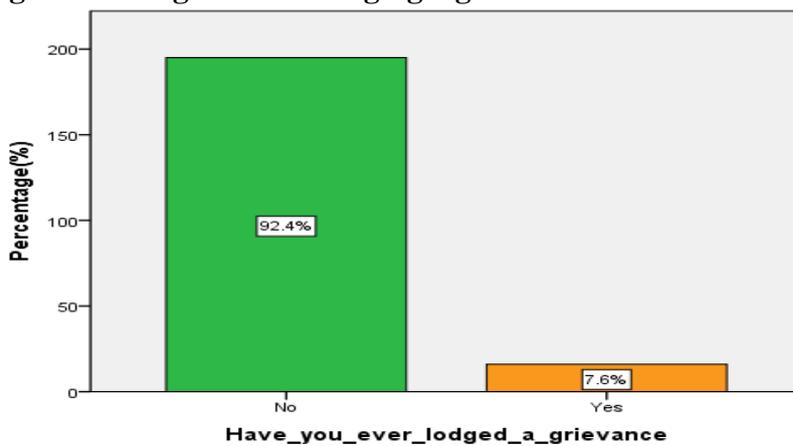


*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### 5.4.5 Lodging of a grievance

In relation to Figure 5.11 below 92.4% of the respondents reported that they had never lodged a grievance within the workplace, while 7.6% of the respondents indicated that they had lodged a grievance.

**Figure 5. 11 Lodging a grievance**

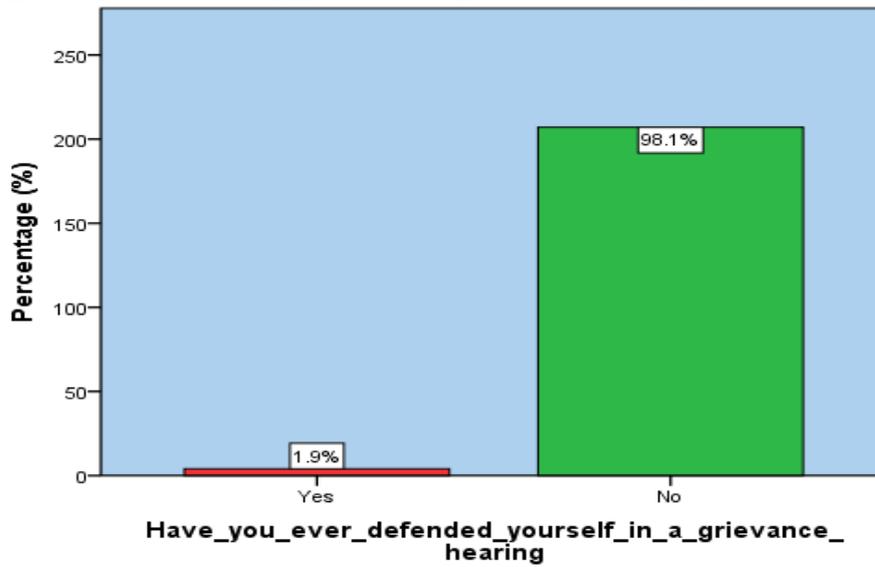


*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### 5.4.6 Self-defence in grievance hearing

Participants were prompted to indicate if they had defended themselves in grievance or disciplinary hearings. Figure 5.12 below depicts that 98.1% had not defended themselves in a disciplinary or grievance hearing, whilst 1.9% of the participants indicated that they had had to defend themselves.

**Figure 5. 12 Defending yourself in grievance hearing**



*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### 5.4.7 Union representation

The participants were asked to show their preferences in terms of representation in individual matters. The question consisted of 5 different types of grievances and representatives. According to the results in Figure 5.13 below, a substantial majority (79%) of the participants revealed that they preferred to be represented by trade unions in matters concerning salary increment, 8% preferred to represent themselves, 7.6% turned to line managers and 5.2% preferred to be represented by a non-union employee representative.

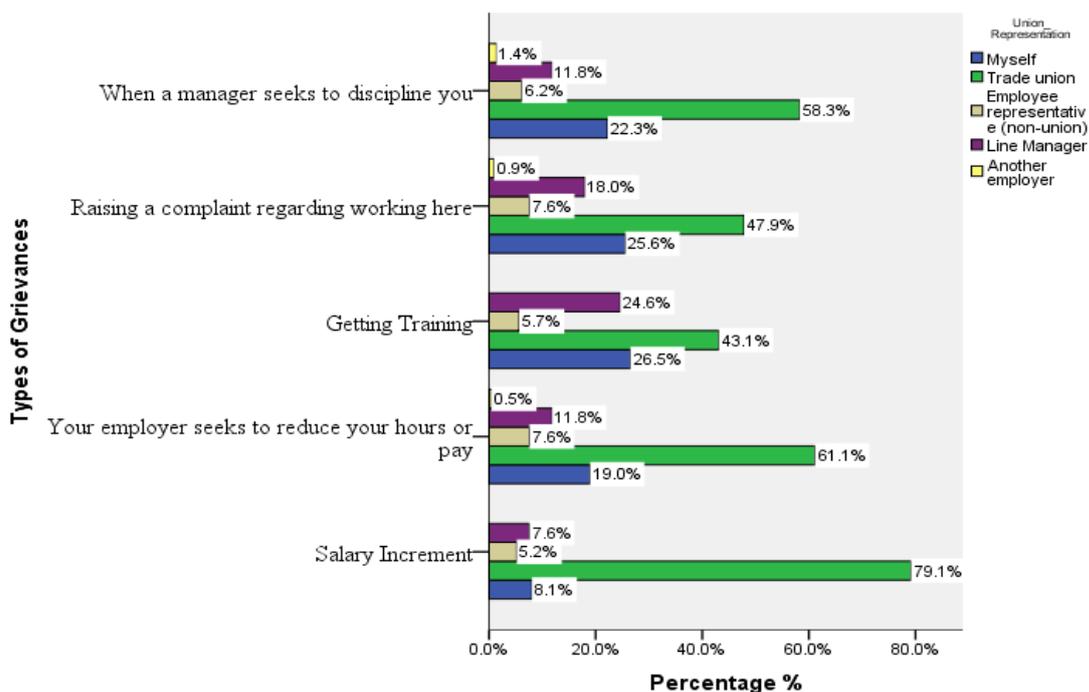
On the issue of attending training, 43% indicated that they turned to unions for assistance, 27% of the employees organised training for themselves, 24% stated that line managers represented them in matters concerning training, whilst an insignificant 6% indicated that they preferred to be represented by non-union employee representatives.

With regards to raising a complaint, 48% of the participants indicated that they turned to trade unions for representation, 26% represented themselves, 8% preferred to be represented by non-union employee representatives and 18% preferred line managers.

In terms of the employer seeking to reduce hours or pay, majority (61%) indicated that they turned to unions for representation, 19% represented themselves, 12% turned to line managers for assistance and 8% preferred to be represented by non-union employee representatives.

More than half (58%) of the respondents stated that they turned to the trade union for representation when a manager wanted to discipline them, 22% preferred to represent themselves, whilst 12% turned to line managers for representation and 6% preferred non-union employee representatives.

**Figure 5. 13 Union representation**



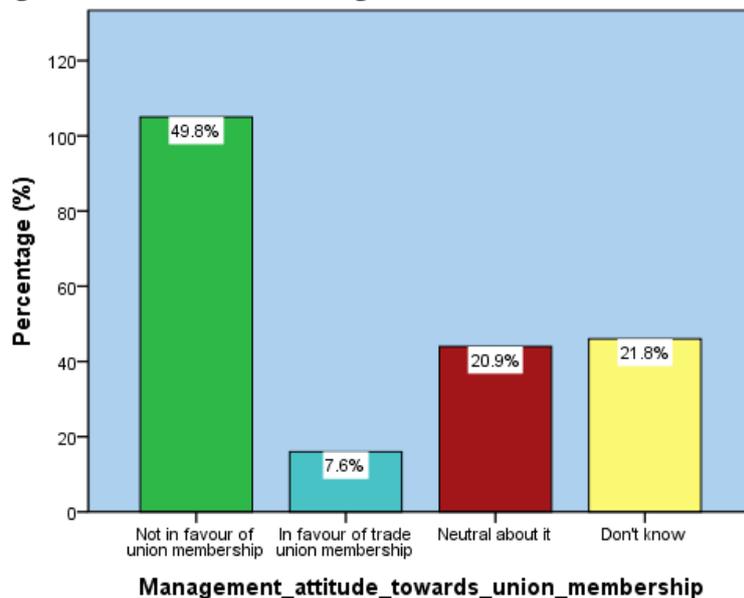
*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### 5.4.8 General management attitude towards union membership

According to Babbitt and Brown (2018) and Ganesan (2016) managerial context plays a significant role regarding the employees’ decision to join trade unions. Thus, employees were asked to rate management’s attitude towards union membership. Figure 5.14 below reveals

the employers' attitude towards trade union membership as perceived by public sector employees. Only 49.8% of the participants agreed that management do not approve of trade union membership. Within this 49.8%, 32.2% were males and 17.5% were females. A small percentage 7.6% of the participants perceived management to be in favour of union membership, while 20.9% felt that management was neutral about it. Approximately 22% of the participants revealed that they did not know anything about management's attitude towards union membership.

**Figure 5. 14 General management attitude towards union membership**



*Source: Field Data, 2018*

#### **5.4.9 Interpretation of data for Section B:**

According to Bryson and Freeman (2013:5) the desire of employees for union representation and satisfaction with union representation is “higher where the union is perceived as an effective organisation capable of delivering improved terms and conditions”. The interest in union representation depends on the availability of a trade union and the environment of the workplace. On-site union representatives influence the levels of job quality (Hoque, *et al.*, 2017). According to Hoque, *et al.*, (2017) the availability of trade unions within the workplace allows employees to voice their work matters via informal communication channels or collective bargaining processes, which assists in bringing work matters to the attention of management with a sense of urgency, causing them to respond by addressing the problems at hand. “Such collective voice effects may be intensified where trade unions are available, given

the role they play in seeking the views of their members, listening and taking notice of their members' concerns and bringing them to the management's attention" (Hoque, *et al.*, 2017:29). The availability of trade union representatives within the workplace raises employees' perceptions of union responsiveness.

The overall results of this section indicate that the majority of the employees were interested in union representation. This is supported by the results depicted in Figure 5.13 above where the overall results indicate that the majority of the employees preferred to be represented by trade unions regarding various types of grievances. Another significant result supporting this fact is shown in Figure 5.12 where employees within the public sector indicated that they have never defended themselves in grievance hearings, hence a lot of them seek union assistance.

Conversely, the results of the present research reveal that employees within the Swaziland public sector do not file or lodge grievances. Previous research by Klass, *et al.* (2012) reveal that the decision to lodge a grievance is determined by personal and organisational characteristics, union leadership style, managerial context, loyalty to the employer and the perceived effectiveness of the grievance system. In the Swaziland context, these results could be attributed to numerous reasons including the organisation's failure to establish an effective grievance procedure, the employees' lack of knowledge and understanding of the grievance procedure and how to access the grievance system. Even when the grievance procedure exists, it may not be used because it is perceived to be ineffective and not trusted by employees. The lack of an effective grievance procedure has a significant impact on trade union effectiveness.

According to Babbitt and Brown (2018) managerial context influences the employees' decision to file a grievance. The findings of the present research reveal that the public sector executive does not support trade union membership. This means that management is less accommodating regarding trade unions and its members. This finding is in line with a previous study by Genasan (2016) who found that employer hostility has an impact on trade union membership. He asserts that employers' attitudes towards trade union membership influences employees' decisions to join trade unions.

The way in which employees are represented in grievance and disciplinary hearings has an impact on union effectiveness. Employees judge union officials based on the rate and types of cases won. "Whenever they see their colleague being dismissed, they perceive trade union representatives as having failed to defend their co-employee" (Shop steward 3:24/08/18). Thus,

a poor record of settled grievances affect the employees' perceptions on union effectiveness regarding grievance handling.

## **5.5 Section C of questionnaire: Perception on the effectiveness regarding grievance handling by unions**

**Objective 1: To examine the perceptions of civil servants on the effectiveness of trade unions regarding addressing employees' grievances within the public service.**

Bryson (2003) distinguishes two forms of union effectiveness. First, union organisational effectiveness which comprises of "those factors which give a union the capacity to represent its members by virtue of its 'healthy' state as an organisation" (Bryson, 2003:6). "The second type of union effectiveness is the union's ability to deliver for employees by improving terms and conditions of employment" (Bryson, 2003:5). Both kinds of union effectiveness present a trade union which is efficient in representing its membership. However, these types of effectiveness are moderated by the industrial relations climate. Section C of the questionnaire examined employees' perceptions of union effectiveness regarding grievance handling within the public sector of Swaziland. It covers questions 1 to 25 of this section. A five point Likert scale ranging from 5 = strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree, was used on the 14 dimensions proposed by Bryson (2003) to measure union effectiveness (see Figure 2.1 in chapter 2). The 24 items were grouped into three broad components for proper organisation and tabulation of data. The components are:

- union organisational effectiveness (8 items)
- union bargaining/delivery effectiveness (10 items) and
- Industrial relations climate (6 items).

For appropriate reporting, the findings for 'strongly agree and agree' were fused into one group as well as those for 'strongly disagree and disagree'. Therefore the responses will be presented according to three groups: agree, neutral and disagree.

### **5.5.1 Union organisational effectiveness**

This section presents responses to the variables of union organisational effectiveness, as perceived by public sector employees.

**Question 1:** Around 63% of the participants agreed that unions are aware of members' issues and complaints, 23% were neutral, 7% disagreed and others reported that they did not know.

**Question 2:** 61% of the participants thought that unions were responsive to members' complaints and grievances, while 24% of the respondents remained neutral. Approximately 8% of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement, and the remaining 7% of the participants reported that they did not know anything about union activities.

**Question 3:** According to the findings in Figure 5.15 below, 51.6% of the participants agreed that unions have the members' interests at heart, 28% of the respondents remained neutral, whilst 8.1% disagreed with the statement.

**Question 4:** According to the findings, approximately 55% of the respondents thought that the union was good at communicating and sharing information with its members. Approximately 24% of the participants provided a neutral response, whilst 17% of the respondents disagreed with the statement and 4% did not know.

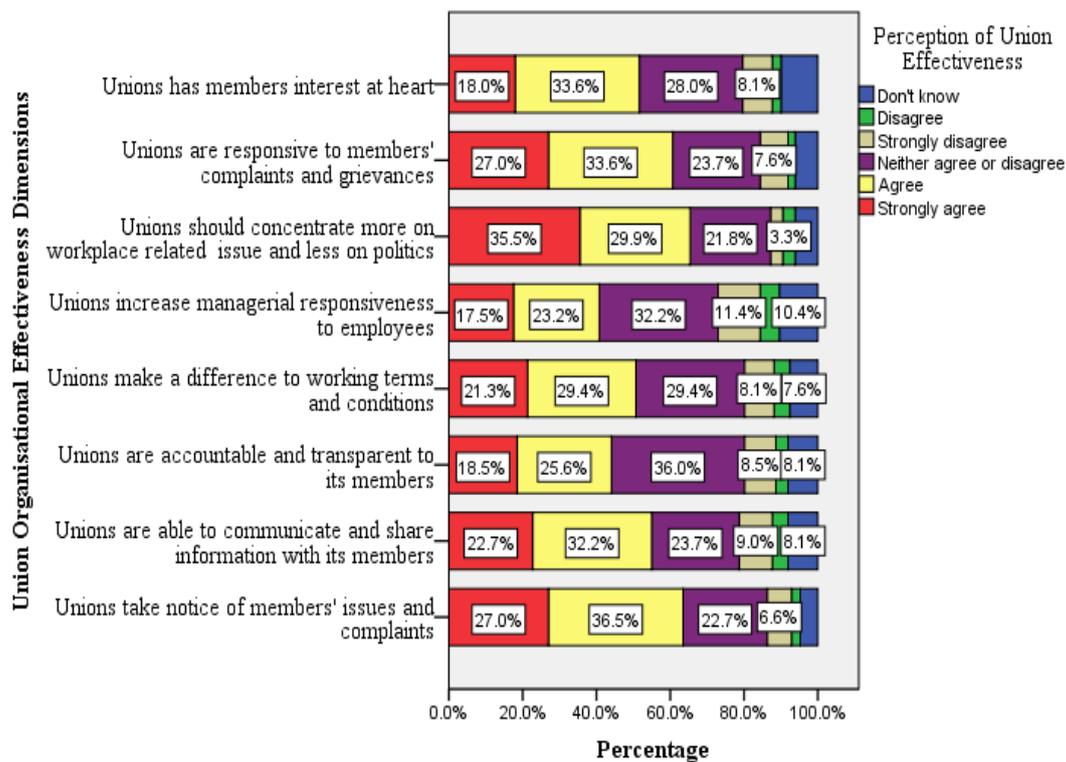
**Question 5:** Approximately 44% of the employees thought that the union's accountability and transparency was good, another 36% of the respondents were neutral, 12% of the respondents disagreed with the statement and the remaining 8% did not know.

**Question 6:** 51% of the respondents believed that the union did make a difference to working terms and conditions, 29% of the participants remained neutral, 16% of the respondents disagreed and an insignificant 4% reported that they did not know.

**Question 7:** "Another sign of an effective union is its ability to improve employees' working conditions by encouraging employers to be more responsive to the needs of employees" (Bryson, 2003:5). Participants were asked to rate union effectiveness in increasing managerial responsiveness. Approximately 41% of the participants indicated that unions were able to increase managerial responsiveness, while 32% of the respondents neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement. 10.4% responded by stating that they did not know and 17% of the participants disagreed with the statement.

**Question 8:** Trade unions are perceived by public sector employees to pay more attention to politics instead of workplace-related issues. Thus, the participants in the current study were asked if unions should focus on workplace-related matters and less on politics. In response, 66% of the participants agreed that unions should concentrate on workplace-related issues and less on politics, whilst 22% remained neutral, and an insignificant 12% of the respondents disagreed with the statement.

**Figure 5. 15 Dimensions of union organisational effectiveness**



*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### 5.5.2 Industrial relations climate

**Question 9:** A majority of 33.6% of the respondents remained neutral, 30.4% thought unions were taken seriously by management, 8% responded by stating that they did not know, while 28% of the participants disagreed with the statement.

**Question 10:** 30% of the employees thought that unions and management worked together to improve working conditions, whilst 35% remained neutral. Another 27% of the participants disagreed with the statement, stating that the union’s ability to work with management was very poor and 9% of the employees indicated that they did not know.

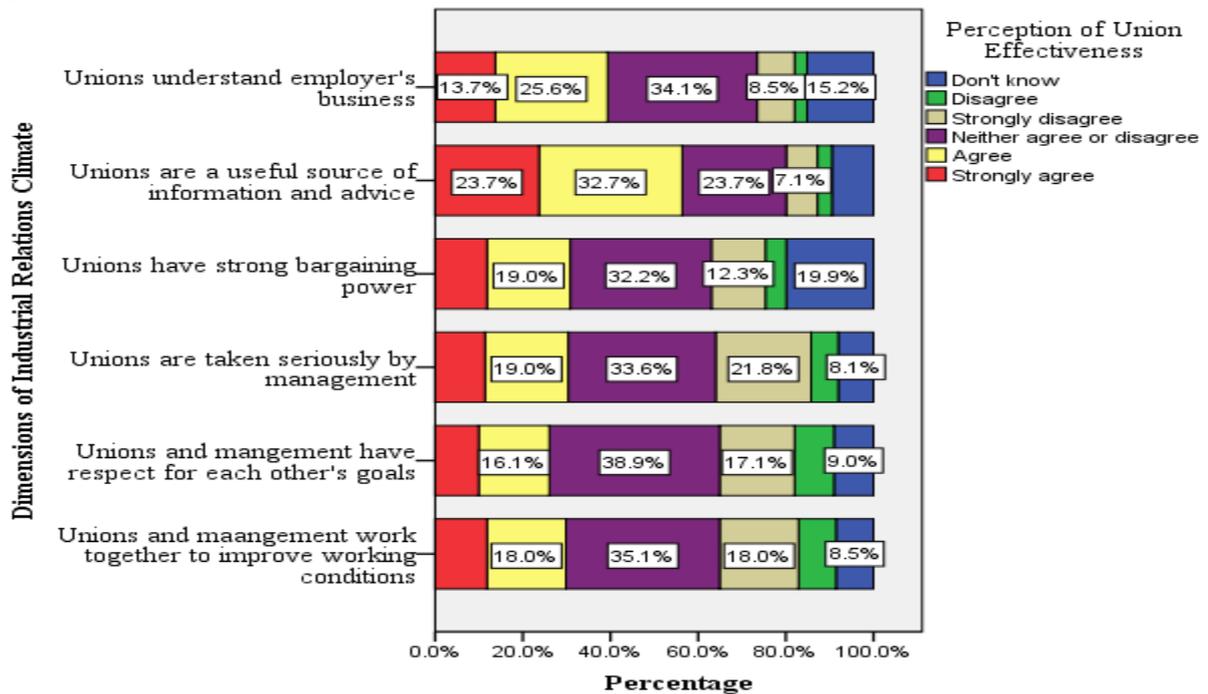
**Question 11:** 39 % of the respondents remained neutral, 26% agreed that trade unions and management had mutual respect, whereas 26% disagreed with the statement and 9% of the employees stated that they did not know.

**Question 12:** According to Bryson and Freeman (2013:6) “unions’ power in the workplace comes, in large part, from their recognition and bargaining power, stemming from their ability to disturb the supply of labour in pursuance of their members’ interest”. Participants were asked to rate the union’s power within the workplace. 31% of the respondents thought that unions had a strong influence within the workplace, 20% said they did not know, 32% of the participants remained neutral and 17% disagreed with the statement.

**Question 13:** 57% of the participants regarded the union as an important source of information and advice, 24% remained neutral, an insignificant 7% reported that they did not know and 12% of the respondents disagreed with the statement.

**Question 14:** Figure 5.17 below indicates that 39.3% of the respondents believed that trade unions understood the employers’ business, while 34.1% remained neutral, 15.1% of the respondents declared that they did not know, whereas 11.4% of the participants felt that unions did not understand the employers’ business. According to Bryson and Freeman (2013:5), “the belief in the unions’ understanding goes along with exposure to union activities, whether as a member or through contact with union representatives”.

**Figure 5. 16 Dimensions of industrial relations climate**



Source: Field Data, 2018

### 5.5.3 Union bargaining/delivery effectiveness

This section analyses the variables of union bargaining/delivery effectiveness as perceived by civil servants. This section covers questions 15 to 25 of Section C of the questionnaire.

**Question 15:** 42% of the employees perceived that union officials/representatives had the required competencies and skills to handle employees’ grievances. On the other hand, 27% neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, 14% revealed that they were unclear and 17% of the employees disagreed with the statement.

**Question 16:** The majority 33% of civil servants perceived that grievances raised were resolved timeously, 31% remained neutral while 25% of the participants disagreed, whereas 11% declared that they were unclear about the grievance procedure.

**Question 17:** The majority 49% of employees trusted trade union representatives when it came to representation, 27% remained neutral, 16% disagreed with the statement, and 8% reported that they did not know.

**Question 18:** The trade union's ability to represent its members satisfactorily is a prominent feature of an effective trade union. 43% of the participants felt that the union represented them satisfactorily during grievance and disciplinary hearings, 28% remained neutral, 12% stated that they did not know whether they were represented satisfactorily, while 17% of the respondents disagreed with the statement.

**Question 19:** Unfair treatment is a major issue within the workplace. Participants were of the opinion that unions protected them against unfair treatment. A staggering 68% of the respondents indicated that unions protected them against ill-treatment within the workplace, 19% remained neutral, 7% disagreed and 6% reported that they did not know.

**Question 20:** The majority of the employees 67% agreed that trade unions represented them during grievance and disciplinary hearings, 19% remained neutral, while 7% disagreed with the statement and another 7% reported that they did not know.

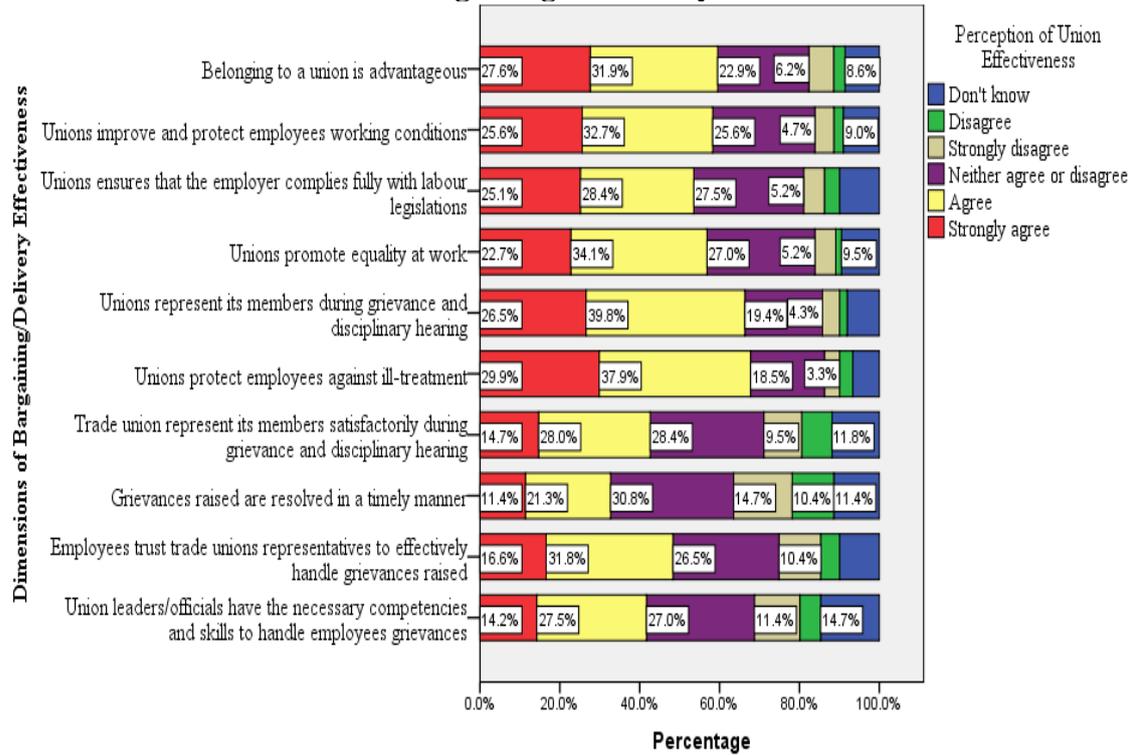
**Question 21:** 57% of the respondents perceived that unions promoted equality at the workplace, a further 27% remained neutral. An insignificant 10% of the participants responded by saying that they did not know, while 6% of the participants disagreed with the statement.

**Question 22:** Figure 5.16 below depicts that 53% of the participants believed that trade unions monitored the employer's compliance with labour legislation, whereas 28% remained neutral, 10% disagreed with the statement and the last 9% revealed that they did not know.

**Question 23:** A majority of the participants 60% thought that unions improved and protected employees' working conditions, 27% of the respondents remained neutral and 9% revealed that they had no idea about the role of the trade union. An insignificant 4% disagreed with the statement.

**Question 24:** Approximately 60% of the participants thought that belonging to a union was advantageous, 23% were neutral, an insignificant 9% reported that they did not know and 8% of the participants disagreed with the statement.

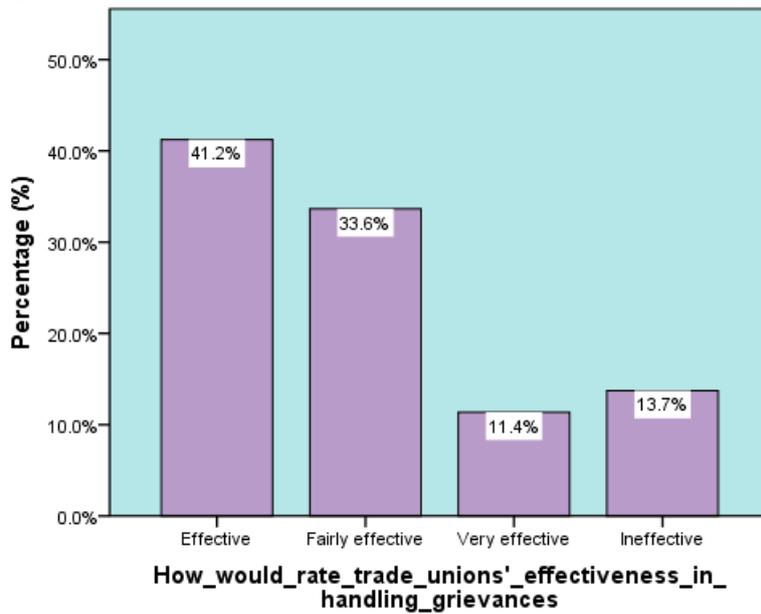
**Figure 5. 17 Dimensions of union bargaining or delivery effectiveness**



*Source: Field Data, 2018*

**Question 25:** The participants were required to rate their trade unions’ effectiveness regarding handling employees’ grievances. Figure 5.18 below illustrates that 41.2% of the participants found unions to be effective, 33.6% rated unions as fairly effective. Approximately % of the respondents indicated that unions were very effective, while 13.7% found them to be ineffective regarding handling employees’ grievances.

**Figure 5. 18 Overall union effectiveness in handling employees' grievances**



*Source: Field Data, 2018*

#### **5.5.4 Interpretation of data for Section C:**

The dimensions of trade union effectiveness differed according to each public sector trade union and across the different sectors or departments. Employees were able to evaluate the different dimensions, public servants rated their trade union based on the issue addressed in the research question. The results indicated higher ratings for unions' responsiveness to members' complaints and grievances; trade unions' role in politics; taking notice of members' complaints and the union's ability to communicate and share information. There were lower ratings for the union's ability to increase managerial responsiveness to employees and unions' accountability and transparency.

The employees' perceptions were relatively positive about union effectiveness regarding grievance management and this could explain the employees' desire for union membership and representation. The findings revealed that employees in the Swaziland public sector viewed their trade unions favourably and perhaps this increased their confidence in the trade unions' ability to improve and protect their working conditions. Conceivably, these were sentiments regarding the effectiveness of trade unions when resolving employees' grievances.

According to Deery, *et al.*, (1999:401) "employee perceptions of the industrial relations climate is affected by individual work experiences and the quality of the system used to solve problems

in the employer-employee relationship". The industrial relations climate is the moderator between union organisational effectiveness and union bargaining/delivery effectiveness. The employees examined the state of the employer-employee relationship to see if it had an impact on union effectiveness regarding grievance management. The findings suggest lower ratings of the dimensions of the industrial relations climate. The results could be attributed to the rigidities in the Swaziland public sector, coupled with employers' opposition and hostility which pose challenges to the trade unions' organisational rights within the public sector. The findings are broadly aligned with Bryson and Freeman (2013) who asserts that perceptions of union effectiveness differ according to the nature of the union and employer's response to it. Employees' perception of the industrial relations climate is influenced by the power of union, wage negotiations, and management's attitude towards union membership. Therefore, employees' perception of the labour relations environment is strongly associated with union effectiveness.

The findings for employees' perception of the dimensions of union bargaining/delivery effectiveness were fairly positive with the exception of the unions' ability to represent them satisfactorily; employees' grievances settled timeously and the union leader's competencies and skills. Employees' perceptions were somewhat negative regarding the trade union representing them satisfactorily. Some employees thought that employees' grievances were not resolved timeously and that union representatives lacked competencies and skills regarding representing them in grievance and disciplinary hearings.

Furthermore, the majority of the participants believed that belonging to a union was advantageous, irrespective of the trade union representatives' lack of competencies and skills. It can be concluded from this finding that, employees experienced a sense of belonging by constantly remaining in contact with trade union representatives, regardless of how imperfect they were. A sense that trade unions are appreciated by employees was detected. Alongside, employees viewed trade unions as bodies which offer assistance beyond grievance and disciplinary matters. Thus, being a member of a trade union is highly beneficial and advantageous.

## **5.6 Perceived role of trade unions:**

### **Objective 4: To assess the views of civil servants regarding the role of trade unions in the promotion and protection of their working conditions**

This section is covered by questions 18 to 24 of section C of the questionnaire. Employees were required to respond to the statement regarding the different roles played by trade unions. Employees tend to develop a set of assumptions which provide an implicit standard within which they expect their trade unions to function. The developed set of assumptions is founded on their work experiences and aspirations. Figure 5.19 below depicts the results of the perceptions of employees regarding the role of trade unions. The findings reveal that 68% of the respondents believed that unions safeguarded them against unfair treatment, while 19% remained neutral, 4% disagreed and 9% reported that they did not know.

The majority of the respondents (67%) stated that unions represented them during disciplinary and grievance hearings, 19% remained neutral and 4% reported that they did not know. Another role of the trade unions is to promote equality within the workplace, 57% of the employees thought that the promotion of equal opportunities for male and female took precedence, while 27% remained neutral, 11% reported that they did not know and 5% of the participants disagreed with the statement. The literature suggests that trade unions should contribute towards effective implementation of the labour legislation, ensuring that employers abide with the stipulated laws. In the present study, 53% of the participants agreed that unions ensured that employers complied with the labour legislations, 28% remained neutral, 1% reported that they did not know and 5% disagreed with the statement.

Trade unions have traditionally been regarded as an important player in the improvement and protection of employees' conditions. From the results of the study, 59% of the respondents believed that civil servant unions play a fundamental role in the improvement and protection of the employees' working conditions, 26% remained neutral, 5% disagreed with the statement and the remaining 10% reported that they did not know. Trade unions provide exclusive protection to employees, however previous research indicates that there is an ominous drift within union density. Employees do not seem to be interested in trade unionism, however in the present study, 60% of the respondents stated that belonging to a union was advantageous,

23% remained neutral, 11% reported that they did not know, and 6% disagreed with the statement.

**Figure 5. 19 Perceived role of trade unions**



Source: Field Data, 2018

### 5.6.1 Interpretation of data:

The role played by trade union representatives influence employees’ perception of union effectiveness regarding grievance handling. The overall result of the present study indicates that trade union representatives play a fundamental role in the protection and improvement of employees’ terms and conditions. The current study outcomes are consistent with past research by Saundry, *et al.*, (2011) which pointed to the importance of trade union presence when determining grievance and disciplinary outcomes. Milward *et al.*, (1992) discovered that dismissal rates were higher in organisations where trade unions were not recognised. Knight and Latrielle (2000:536) found “that union density significantly moderated grievance and disciplinary outcomes”. This finding could be explained in terms of the trade unions’ ability to constrict managerial prerogatives and punitive modes of discipline. Subsequently, trade unions

safeguard workers against unfair labour practice and provide means by which rules and regulations for the procedure are acknowledged by the employees and the employer.

It was also confirmed that trade union representatives do not only represent employees in grievance and disciplinary proceedings, but their role goes beyond that of employee representation. Public sector associations play a prominent role in the promotion of self-discipline amongst their members. Trade unions advise members on the consequences of misconduct within the workplace.

## **5.7 Analysis of interviews:**

### **Objective 2: To explore the challenges faced by trade unions when handling employees' grievances**

This section provides an account of the union officials' experiences of the grievance and disciplinary procedures. Challenges encountered by union officials and their representatives will be discussed as well. This section covers questions on section B of the interview schedule. Interviews were conducted with 3 union officials and 7 shop stewards from the different public sector trade unions. The researcher conducted a thematic text analysis and the following 4 important themes emerged:

- Union recognition, lack of resources and infrastructure;
- Implementation of labour legislation;
- Challenges faced by union officials and representatives and
- Management of grievances.

#### **5.7.1 Union recognition, lack of resources and infrastructure**

According to Mzangwa (2012:65) "the public sector comprise of three hierarchical levels of management. These are top level management, which is the executive body, middle level management and lower level management". The upper level management is the primary source of authority managing goals, setting objectives and policies of the organisation. Middle level management consists of departmental/ministry directors who report to the executive body regarding the functioning of the different ministries/departments. The middle manager implements the plans of the organisation in accordance with the policies and directives of the executive body. "Lastly, the lower level management is concerned with the direction and

controlling functions of management” (Mzangwa, 2012:65). Trade union officials engage with the executive body, but more often with middle management.

According to union officials, the employer complies with the labour statutes: the IRA of 2000 and the Employment Act of 1980. The recognition agreement furnishes public sector associations with the right to operate within the workplace. The union official indicates that the recognition agreement is endorsed by the employer. The agreement between union and employer confers authority to trade unions to freely exercise the employees’ right within the organisation.

However, union official 1 revealed that:

*“At times the government as the primary employer delays union recognition without solid reasons, the government uses suppression strategies to create the atmosphere of fear among employees. Whenever public servants embark on industrial action, union leaders are detained and tortured by the police under the auspices of the Suppression and Terrorism Act. In fact our employer is hostile and less accommodative to trade unions” (Union Official 1: 24/08/18).*

Shop steward 5 stated: *“Yeah we are recognised, though at times when it suits them, they bypass us but yes we are recognised” (Shop steward 5:10/08/18).*

The union officials indicated that they are unable to execute their functions as per the demand of their members due to lack of infrastructure. Union official 2 stated:

*“Trade unions do not have structures within the workplace, whenever we want to hold meetings with the employees we have to beg with the management to borrow us a venue, without an office in the workplace we find it difficult to be constantly in contact with the members on a daily basis. If the trade unions had its own office within the organisation we would be in the best position to serve the interests of our members” (Union Official 2:28/08/18).*

### **5.7.2 Implementation of legislation**

The employer-employee relationship is guided by policies that are created by them. Even though it is not mandatory for the employer to consult employees regarding the formulation of policies, but for the sake of a harmonious industrial relations climate, employers may involve employees. Employees will not be defiant of policy changes if they are included during the consultation process. Union officials and representatives are particularly concerned about the appropriate implementation of organisational policies. Shop steward 1 indicated:

*“Yeah we do have the grievance procedure, we have the standard procedure that is used by the government, but however majority of the employees are not well oriented with the policies, some they know, some they don’t know” (Shop steward 1:10/08/18).*

Union officials 2 and 3 further responded that:

*“The employer has good policies, but those policies are kept in the management’s cabinet and nobody has access to them. Hence, the management lack knowledge and understanding of the policies, I doubt if they know a single clause of the policy, management seem not to use the policy when dealing with employees’ grievances” (Union Official 3:31/08/18).*

*“At the unit level, there are no grievance and disciplinary procedure policies, am sure you have been around the facility, have you seen a grievance and disciplinary procedure on the bulletin boards? Employees are deprived of that information, thus employees lack knowledge on the grievance procedure; as to how they should lodge a complaint, when and what are the steps and avenues to follow. All I can say is that matters are not handled properly in the public sector” (Union Official 2: 28/08/18).*

According to the perceptions of union officials, managers and supervisors are not knowledgeable regarding the policies of the grievance procedure, and as a result they fail to interpret these policies. Ultimately, they do not follow the correct protocol, when implementing these policies, which becomes a challenge for trade union representatives and employees.

According to Mzangwa (2012:71) “it is the duty of the management to ensure that managers and supervisors understand the policies and follow appropriate channels in implementing them”. The institution can empower middle and lower-level managers with knowledge of the policies through extensive training programmes, thereby paving a way for the role-players to follow the right protocol regarding policy implementation.

### **5.7.3 Challenges faced by union officials and representatives**

The Swaziland labour movement is in a quandary and it can be contended that trade unions within the public sector encounter various problems arising from the changing labour market structure and the neoliberal policies. *“The government’s interventions remain ubiquitous, managerial control in the public sector continues to dominate and the union’s organisational rights are constrained despite the provisions in the Industrial Relations Act, 2000. Thus, this has a significant impact on the union strategies and organisational activities” (Union Official 3:31/08/18).*

However, the present study focused on the challenges faced by union officials/representatives during grievance and disciplinary proceedings. The literature emphasises that constructive grievance handling depends on the union representatives' and management's capability, knowledge and experience of the grievance procedure. According to the union representatives, shop stewards had insufficient knowledge and training. According to Shop steward 2:

*“That’s the problem, shop stewards are not provided with training, let alone resources, ever since I was appointed as a shop steward, I have not received any basic training that included representation on the grievance and disciplinary, as a result I have not represented any employees in the grievance and disciplinary hearing, I am not fit for that” (Shop steward 2:06/09/18).*

According to Gordon and Ladd (1990) cited in Deery, Erwin and Iverson (1999:534) “unions and management officials are instrumental in establishing the tone of contract negotiations and the willingness to use a joint problem solving approach to grievance resolutions”. However, that is not the case with the Swaziland public sector, as shop stewards revealed that managers of the sector do not believe in consulting or rather union participation. Managers are said to use their authority to constrict the subjects of bargaining, whilst extending unilateral control over the processes. The shop stewards' argument is that management at all times opposes public sector associations. Thus, management's unitarist approach is alleged to be a stumbling block for union representatives.

Shop steward 3 stated:

*“Managers do not consult and yet some of them are not well conversant with the grievance procedure, they can't even interpret a single clause of the internal procedure, they end up doing things in their own way, thus making irrational and unfair decisions. At times, employees get off scot-free even if they are guilty because the manager lacked knowledge on the procedure” (Shop steward 3:14/09/18).*

Another challenge concerns good faith bargaining. The union official contends that there is no transparency in the manner in which the bargaining and grievance processes are handled. The union representatives preferred the use of a neutral person to chair the joint negotiations process rather than a person appointed by the employer. Shop steward 4 explained that:

*“The set-up of the joint negotiation is not level, because when we negotiate issues like the cost of living adjustment, there are two parties which are the public sector associations and the government negotiation team, it's not level because in most cases the chairperson is the secretary to the Cabinet, obvious he or she stands for the employer, thus the issue of impartiality is compromised, the government*

*negotiation team do as it pleases, they come to the bargaining table whenever it suits them” (Shop steward 4:14/09/18).*

Based on the union official’s view, management is less accommodative to trade unions, thus negotiating in good faith is compromised between the employer and the trade unions. Management is viewed as being manipulative and abusing power.

#### **5.7.4 Management of grievances within the public sector**

Employees’ disputes and grievances arising in the workplace are handled as they occur. Management deal with the disputes on an ‘ad hoc’ and informal basis. Employees are permitted to refer their issues to institutions like the CMAC and the industrial court, whenever they are dissatisfied with the outcomes of the internal grievance procedure. They may also use these institutions when their statutory rights have been violated. The Swaziland industrial relations system permits the use of a formal grievance procedure and the use of a third party intervention. The mediation, conciliation and arbitration are prominent processes of the labour relations system within the country. The process of collective bargaining forms part of this system and it focuses on reaching a collective agreement which is legally binding on both parties until the end of term of the agreement. The collective agreement specifies a grievance procedure and disciplinary action to be taken when dealing with grievances over the implementation and interpretation of that contract (Clark, 2009). The specified procedure comprises sequential steps at which different levels of management and trade union leadership convene to discuss issues arising within the workplace. Normally, this occurs via the Joint Negotiation Forum (JNF) which comprises government representatives and trade union leadership. In the case of a deadlock, each party presents their case to the arbitrator who then issues a certificate of a deadlock, thus allowing the parties to report the matter to the industrial court. The union officials and shop stewards indicated that there were no grievance procedures in place. Hence the internal processes are not followed accordingly.

According to shop steward 1: *“If the employees at any given time are not satisfied with the process or the management not being able to resolve the grievance to the satisfaction of the employee, the matter is referred to a recognised forum such as CMAC or bargaining council to look into the matter from unfair labour practise to resolve the grievance. However, employees are encouraged to first utilise the internal mechanisms before referring their grievances externally. The grievance may not be referred to the CMAC or any bargaining council unless the internal processes have been exhausted and proof exist*

*that a deadlock have been reached between the two parties as well as a proof that the grievance have been registered” (Shop steward 1:28/08/18).*

The maximum period that should elapse between the issue of grievance and initiation of any action by management is 7 days. However, according to the shop steward 1 civil servants experience unnecessary delays in grievance settlement: *“Procedurally, the resolution process is not supposed to exceed 7days, but it does at times, normally it takes 14 days or even longer” (Shop steward 1:28/08/18).*

The shop stewards assert that the delay in grievance settlement is a form of the abuse of power by the supervisors and managers within the public sector. Ponak, *et al.* (1996) cited in Goel, *et al.* (2014:140) postulates that “the delay in grievance settlement is detrimental to employees, the arbitration process and union-management relationship”. Based on the shop stewards’ view, there is no proper implementation and enforcement of the grievance procedure within the public sector. Hence, grievances are not resolved in a timely manner.

## **5.8 Inferential statistics of the study**

Inferential statistics were computed on the components of the study to allow the investigator to examine the acceptability of the hypotheses of the study. The main components are union organisational effectiveness, union delivery/bargaining effectiveness and industrial relations climate. Each component has a set of dimensions

### **5.8.1 Relationships amongst the variables of union effectiveness**

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation as suggested by Sekaran and Bougie (2010), was used to explore the relationship between the components of union effectiveness. The researcher used inter-correlation to determine the presence of a relationship and the strength within the variables of each component. The Pearson’s  $r$  was used to determine the strength of the correlation where Pearson’s  $r$  values ranges from -1 to +1. To interpret the strength and direction of the relationship provided by the Pearson’s  $r$ , Sekaran and Bougie (2010) recommended the following conventions:

**Table 5. 6 Conventions for Pearson's r**

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Pearson's <i>r</i></b>
Weak	$\leq .30$
Moderate	$.03 < r < .70$
Strong	$\geq .70$

*Source: Sekaran and Bougie, 2010*

### **Hypothesis 1**

There is a positive and significant relationship between union bargaining/delivery effectiveness and union organisational effectiveness.

### **Hypothesis 2**

Industrial relations climate moderates the relationship between union bargaining/delivery effectiveness and union organisational effectiveness.

### **Hypothesis 3**

There is a positive and strong inter-correlation between dimensions of industrial relations.

### **Hypothesis 4**

There is a positive and strong inter-correlation between union bargaining/delivery effectiveness variables.

### **Hypothesis 5**

There is a positive and strong inter-relationship between the dimensions of union organisational effectiveness.

## **5.8.2 Relationship between union organisational effectiveness variables**

The findings depicted in Table 5.7 below indicate that there is strong inter-correlation between the union's organisational effectiveness sub-dimensions, where all the relationships were significant at 0.00 level (2-tailed). The findings reveal that there is a strong and positive relationship between the union's ability to address members' issues and the union's responsiveness to members' complaints and grievances ( $r = .806$ ), unions have members' interests at heart ( $r = .763$ ). Again, there is a strong relationship between the union's ability to communicate and share information, the union's accountability and transparency ( $r = .782$ ) and

making a difference regarding working terms and conditions ( $r = .729$ ). Consequently, there is a strong correlation between making a difference regarding working terms and conditions and the union's ability to communicate and share information ( $r = .729$ ) and the union's accountability and transparency ( $r = .764$ ). There is a strong relationship between the union's ability to increase managerial responsiveness and the union's accountability and transparency ( $r = .708$ ) and making a difference regarding working terms and conditions ( $r = .694$ ). The findings indicate that there is a moderate relationship between the union's role in politics and the other variables ( $r > 0.3 < 0.7$ ).

**Table 5. 7 Inter-correlation among union organisational effectiveness variables**

Inter-Correlations among Union Organisational Effectiveness dimensions

	PUEffGH O1	PUEffGH O2	PUEffGH O3	PUEffGH O10	PUEffGH O11	PUEffGH O12	PUEffGH O13	PUEffGH O14
Unions take notice of members' issues and complaints (PUEffGH O1)	1	.806**	.763**	.676**	.672**	.649**	.537**	.533**
Unions are responsive to members' complaints and grievances (PUEffGH O2)	.806**	1	.737**	.652**	.634**	.651**	.542**	.516**
Has members' interest at heart (PUEffGH O3)	.763**	.737**	1	.635**	.662**	.608**	.541**	.472**
Unions are able to communicate and share information (PUEffGH O10)	.676**	.652**	.635**	1	.782**	.729**	.618**	.524**
Unions are accountable and transparent to members (PUEffGH O11)	.672**	.634**	.662**	.782**	1	.764**	.708**	.508**
Make a difference to working terms and conditions (PUEffGH O12)	.649**	.651**	.608**	.729**	.764**	1	.694**	.585**
Increase managerial responsiveness to employees (PUEffGH O13)	.537**	.542**	.541**	.618**	.708**	.694**	1	.470**
Unions should concentrate on workplace related issues and less on politics (PUEffGH O14)	.533**	.516**	.472**	.524**	.508**	.585**	.470**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### 5.8.3 Interpretation of data

Trade union organisational effectiveness influences the delivery outcomes, which are in turn evaluated by workers, as shown by the inter-correlation analysis recognising positive correlations between the items of union effectiveness and factors, such as increasing managerial responsiveness, being accountable and transparent, the union's ability to communicate and share information and so on. The inter-correlations of union organisational effectiveness sub-dimensions yielded positive significant values (sig (2-tailed) = 0.00;  $r \geq 1$ ). Therefore, based on the results, it has been concluded that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between the sub-dimensions. This means that the union's ability to organise increases with the union's bargaining power and management support. The results are in line with previous research by Tarumaraja, *et al.*, (2015) who confirmed that union organisation has a remarkable and positive impact on union effectiveness. The findings suggest

that public sector unions should arrange activities that can improve union organisation, such as communication within the union, responsiveness to members' complaints and grievances, increasing managerial responsiveness, being accountable and transparent to union members. These efforts will not only contribute towards improving union effectiveness, but will instil employers' positive attitude towards trade unions within the workplace.

#### **5.8.4 Relationship between union bargaining/delivery effectiveness variables**

The findings in Table 5.8 below reveal that there is a strong and positive inter-correlation among union bargaining/delivery effectiveness variables, where all the correlations are significant at 0.00 level. The findings reveal that there is a positive relationship between union leaders/officials competencies and skills and time taken to resolve a grievance ( $r=.723$ ) and the union's ability to represent its members during grievance and disciplinary hearings ( $r=.705$ ). Another relationship emerged between the union's ability to protect employees against unfair treatment; union representation in grievance hearings ( $r =.848$ ) and the union's ability to improve and protect employees working conditions ( $r =.772$ ). The union's ability to promote equality relates to employers' adherence to labour legislation ( $r =.824$ ) and employers' ability to safeguard employees working conditions ( $r =.808$ ). Consequently, employers' adherence to labour legislation correlates strongly with the union's ability to promote equality within the workplace ( $r= .824$ ) and the union's ability to improve and protect employees working conditions ( $r =.792$ ). The union's ability to improve and protect employees working terms and conditions has a strong relationship with the perception of belonging to a trade union ( $r=.813$ ).

**Table 5. 8 Inter-Correlation among union bargaining/delivery effectiveness variables**

Inter-Correlation among Union Bargaining/Delivery Effectiveness Variables

	PUEffG HB15	PUEffGH B16	PUEffG HB17	PUEff GHB18	PUEffG HB19	PUEff GHB20	PUEff GHB21	PUEffG HB22	PUEff GHB23	PUEff GHB24
Union leaders/officials have competencies and skills to handle grievances (PUEffGHB15)	1	.703**	.723**	.705**	.535**	.599**	.626**	.632**	.610**	.511**
Civil servants trust trade representatives (PUEffGHB16)	.703**	1	.676**	.739**	.639**	.601**	.621**	.629**	.614**	.597**
Grievances raised are resolved in a timely manner (PUEffGHB17)	.723**	.676**	1	.811**	.509**	.570**	.606**	.623**	.650**	.591**
Trade unions represent its members satisfactorily (PUEffGHB18)	.705**	.739**	.811**	1	.633**	.666**	.601**	.628**	.669**	.623**
Unions Protect employees against ill-treatment (PUEffGHB19)	.535**	.639**	.509**	.633**	1	.848**	.743**	.713**	.772**	.744**
Unions represent its members during grievance and disciplinary hearing (PUEffGHB20)	.599**	.601**	.570**	.666**	.848**	1	.724**	.736**	.755**	.754**
Unions promote equality at work (PUEffGHB21)	.626**	.621**	.606**	.601**	.743**	.724**	1	.824**	.808**	.698**
Unions ensures that the employer complies with legislation (PUEffGHB22)	.632**	.629**	.623**	.628**	.713**	.736**	.824**	1	.792**	.740**
Unions improve and protect employees' working conditions (PUEffGHB23)	.610**	.614**	.650**	.669**	.772**	.755**	.808**	.792**	1	.813**
Belonging to a union is advantageous (PUEffGHB24)	.511**	.597**	.591**	.623**	.744**	.754**	.698**	.740**	.813**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### 5.8.5 Interpretation of data

According to Mohamed (2010:90) “union bargaining/delivery effectiveness is defined as the ability to deliver for employees with regards to improving terms and conditions of employment”. The items of the bargaining/delivering were entered separately for correlation analysis. The inter-correlation analysis yielded a number of positive relationships. The results indicate that there is a statistically positive correlation between the union officials’ competencies and skills to handle grievances, and the time taken to resolve a grievance and the union’s ability to represent its members during grievance and disciplinary hearings. The results suggest that union officials/representatives competencies influence the speed of settlement and outcomes of the grievance procedure.

However, Bryson (2003) indicates that employees’ perceptions on union effectiveness must not depend on competency in one particular area. Rather, union representatives must be efficient in a number of aspects such as protecting employees against ill-treatment, promotion of equality and representing employees during grievance and disciplinary hearings, just to name a few. Another positive correlation emerged between union effectiveness in promoting equal opportunities and union recognition, perhaps because formal bargaining rights are a means by which the union can focus the employer’s attention on equal opportunity issues.

Employees' perception on the union's ability to represent them during grievance and disciplinary hearing is positively associated with union recognition. However, Bryson and Forth (2017) asserts that union recognition is pointless if there are no union representatives within the workplace. The availability and use of shop stewards is important. "The effectiveness of trade union is greater where union representatives are elected and accessible to union members" (Bryson and Forth, 2017:7).

### 5.8.6 Relationship between industrial relations climate variables

The findings in Table 5.9 below indicate that there is a positive inter-correlation among the items of industrial relations climate and all relationships were significant at 0.00 level (2-tailed). It is evident that there is a strong and positive relationship between the union's importance to management and the union's ability to work with management for improved performance ( $r = .78$ ), and the parties' ability to respect each other's goals ( $r = .729$ ). Consequently, the union's ability to work with management for improved performance correlates strongly with the parties' support for each other's goals ( $r = .815$ ). The trade union's bargaining power correlates strongly with the union's understanding and knowledge of the employer's business ( $r = .708$ ). Furthermore, there is a moderate relationship between the benefits of the union as a source of information and advice and union power ( $r = .648$ ).

**Table 5. 9 Inter-correlation among industrial relations climate variables**

Inter-Correlations among Industrial Relations Climate Variables

	PUEffGHO4	PUEffGHB5	PUEffGHB6	PUEffGHO7	PUEffGHO8	PUEffGHO9
Unions are taken serious by management (PUEffGHO4)	1	.780**	.729**	.507**	.525**	.504**
Unions and management work together to improve working conditions(PUEffGHB5)	.780**	1	.815**	.502**	.569**	.456**
Unions and management have respect for each other's goals (PUEffGHB6)	.729**	.815**	1	.514**	.518**	.488**
Unions have strong bargaining power (PUEffGHO7)	.507**	.502**	.514**	1	.648**	.708**
Unions are a useful source of information and advice (PUEffGHO8)	.525**	.569**	.518**	.648**	1	.644**
Unions understand employers business (PUEffGHO9)	.504**	.456**	.488**	.708**	.644**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Source: Field Data, 2018*

### 5.8.7 Interpretation of data

The industrial relations climate is the moderator between union organisational effectiveness, union bargaining/delivery effectiveness and union effectiveness. The findings suggest that there is a positive inter-relationship between the dimensions of the industrial relations climate.

The findings yielded three strong and positive correlations; the relationship between the union's understanding and knowledge of the employer's business and the union's bargaining power; the relationship between the union's importance to management and the union's ability to work with management for improved performance; the union's ability to work with management for improved performance and the parties' support for each other's goals. In interpreting the results, the positive association between the sub-dimensions may reflect a tendency for employees to feel content about working together with their management to improve working conditions and valuing the effective role a trade union can play within the workplace. Thus, where the association is negative or adversarial, employees may perceive the trade union as ineffective and choose to side with management.

Again, the findings indicated that there is a moderate relationship between the benefits of the union as a source of information and advice and union power. Employees perceive trade unions as a useful source of information and advice, when unions possess sufficient bargaining power within the workplace. The union's understanding of the employer's business correlates negatively with management's attitude towards trade union membership. The results indicate that the more favourable management is toward trade unions, the union will strive to understand and promote the employer's business. The findings widely express the view that, once employees have established positive perceptions about the employer-employee relationship, they are more likely to participate in union activities and processes, which indicate a joint decision-making process between the employer and employees.

The literature emphasises the importance of an employer-employee relationship which is characterised by mutual respect and trust. According to Bryson and Freeman (2013:7) "employees' perceptions of industrial relations climate will be best where unions have sufficient strength to represent their voice to management". Employer's respect for union's goals has a significant impact in improving union effectiveness. Thus, genuine co-operation between management and employees, something that is often lacking within the organisation, is vital for improving union effectiveness. Another recurring theme from the analysis was that the employer's support for unions is related with increased union responsiveness to its members' complaints, perhaps because the employer offers the facilities and time required by shop stewards in order to function effectively. The findings are broadly in line with those of the researchers such as Deery, *et al.*, (1999:538) who found "that a positive union-management

relationship is associated with higher levels of union and work commitment”. Furthermore, the findings align with the availability of robust and effective unionism within the workplace.

## **5.9 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the findings of the study of the experiential exploration undertaken to examine the employees’ perception regarding trade union effectiveness when handling employees’ grievances within the public sector. The findings and trends yielded by using the different statistical processes were analysed and reported. It is evident that the perceptions of union effectiveness are affected by numerous factors. The next chapter will provide the summary of results, conclusion, and limitations of the study, recommendations and suggestions for future studies.

## **CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Overview of the study**

This chapter includes a conclusion of the major findings as related to the literature on union effectiveness. It will include a discussion on how the findings of the study relate to the theoretical framework of trade union effectiveness. This chapter ends with an account of the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research. The study carries discussion and future research possibilities to assist in answering the following research questions:

- 6.1.1 What are the perceptions of civil servants on the effectiveness of trade unions in addressing employee grievances within the public sector?
- 6.1.2 What are the constraints faced by trade unions in the handling of employees' grievances?
- 6.1.3 What are the strengths and weaknesses of trade unions in the management of grievances?
- 6.1.4 How do civil servants view the role of trade unions in the promotion and protection of their working conditions?

To achieve the objectives mentioned above and to answer the research questions, the study was organised in six chapters.

**Chapter one** provided an overview and background information about the study. It introduced and clarified the problem to be studied. The guiding research questions were developed from the research problem. The overarching aim and objectives of the study, as well as the significance of the study, were discussed.

**Chapter two** provided a theoretical framework of union effectiveness. The components of union effectiveness were defined. The conceptual framework supporting union effectiveness was discussed. The relationship between the grievance procedure and union effectiveness was provided. The rationale for union effectiveness and the industrial relations climate was discussed as the moderator of union effectiveness. Lastly, the context of a grievance procedure and the role played by trade unions regarding the grievance and disciplinary processes were discussed.

**Chapter three** provided the genesis, development and historical path of trade unionism in Swaziland. This chapter described the socio-political history of trade unions in Swaziland and the environment within which they operate. Constraints faced by trade unions, because of the prevailing economic restructuring, globalisation and its consequences for unionisation within the Swaziland context, were highlighted. It also provided information on public sector unionisation.

**Chapter four** provided a description of the research methodology and design, statistical processes and data collection instruments employed within the study.

**Chapter five** focused on data presentation and statistical analyses of the findings.

**Chapter six** provided the summary of the major findings, conclusion, limitations, and recommendations for trade unions and suggestions for future research.

## **6.2 Major findings of the study**

The present research examined trade unions' effectiveness when dealing with employees' grievances within the Swaziland public sector. Trade union effectiveness is multi-dimensional and comprised of three components; namely, union organisational effectiveness, union bargaining/delivery effectiveness and industrial relations climate. These dimensions reflect various factors of trade union effectiveness, typically expressed as union strategies. Some factors relate to the internal activities of the union, some speak of the union's ability to deliver for members regarding terms and conditions of employment, and the components examines the environment, as well as the employer-employee relationship. All these factors of union effectiveness are positively related.

### **6.2.1 Findings based on the questionnaire completed by public sector employees**

The findings of the present study indicate that the majority of the employees rated their trade unions as effective, even though there were those who indicated that they did not know. Trade unions were found to be responsive to members' complaints and grievances and were able to increase managerial responsiveness to employees. Employees in the study indicated a high propensity for union representation, because trade unions protected them against unfair practices. A large number of employees believed that belonging to a trade union was beneficial,

regardless of the low level of their shop stewards' knowledge on the grievance and disciplinary procedures. Employees valued the need for strong union representation, because they believe that trade unions represent their interests through collective bargaining to improve their employment terms and conditions. Conversely, the results revealed that trade unions represent its members satisfactorily during the grievance and disciplinary proceedings. Again, the findings indicated that trade unions promote equality within the workplace, whilst ensuring that management complies with labour legislation.

However, employees indicated that grievances were not resolved timeously. The findings also revealed that union officials/representatives lacked knowledge and skills when handling employees' grievances. Furthermore, trade unions were regarded by employees as an important source of information and advice. But, the trade union's power was perceived to be weak and that trade unions were not taken seriously by management within the workplace. Lastly, the majority of employees disagreed regarding the fact that trade unions and management respect each other's goals, and that they work collaboratively with trade unions to advance employees' working terms and conditions.

### **6.2.2 Findings based on the interviews with union officials/representatives**

The findings indicated that the employer complies partially with the country's labour legislation; trade unions are recognised even though their recognition is often delayed. Nevertheless, there is an existing union recognition agreement; public sector associations are allowed to exercise their organisational rights within the workplace, even though they sometimes encounter challenges due to management hostility. The employer-employee relationship is not cooperative. The findings reveal that management is unfair towards trade unions in the execution of grievance and disciplinary processes. Lack of good faith bargaining and the practice of consultation is perceived by union officials to be a huge challenge.

The union officials stated that the employer does have policies, which address the grievance and disciplinary procedure as defined in labour legislation. However, these policies are not properly implemented and employees are also unaware of the policies.

The findings reveal that trade union representatives are not able to fully engage within their role, because they lack resources, knowledge and training. The shop stewards revealed that

there was a lack of communication, or rather information-sharing between trade union representatives and trade union executive.

### **6.2.3 Conclusion**

The study has identified different components of trade union effectiveness from the perspective of the public sector employees. Employees were able to discriminate across the different components, with public service workers evaluating their trade unions distinctively, as per the matter addressed in the research question. Employees' perceptions were fairly positive about the effectiveness of trade unions regarding grievance handling. Evidently, instrumental orientation is the most popular reason for joining trade unions. Within the political or ideological orientation, employees revealed the presence of managerial hostility and attitude towards trade union membership. Employees perceived that the employer has great control over the grievance and disciplinary processes and policies. Employers abuse their power and are manipulative, thus making unilateral decisions in some instances.

The general perception is that employers are less accommodative to trade unions within the public sector, which greatly influences the employees' perception of union effectiveness. As a result not all employees agree that trade unions are effective regarding grievance handling. Since not all employees agree that trade unions are effective in grievance and disciplinary handling, it is vital to address their concerns; otherwise it could lead to the erosion of union density.

Within the workplace, trade union representatives are an important point of contact for employees. However, the study discovered that public sector workers lacked information about trade unions and its on-site trade union representatives; this could perhaps not only show a general lack of interest towards trade unions or collective representation, but the union's failure to market itself within the workplace, a possible problem in union organising. On another note, the results revealed that trade union representatives lacked resources, knowledge, competencies and skills when handling employees' grievances. However, employees maintained that belonging to a trade union is beneficial, irrespective of their shop stewards' poor knowledge regarding grievance and disciplinary procedures. Key aspects of union effectiveness included organisational and delivery effectiveness and industrial relations climate. Lack of union recognition, resources, infrastructure and proper implementation of labour legislation and managerial hostility were apparent in the qualitative findings and these are statistically

associated with union effectiveness in the workplace. The synthesis of the both qualitative and quantitative findings of the study indicated a proper “fit” of integration. The qualitative results primarily confirmed the quantitative findings. Thus, effective trade unions were not distinguished by specific practices, but instead by organisational environments that could foster their effectiveness in addressing employees’ grievances in the public sector in Swaziland.

### **6.3 Implications for trade unions**

This section is aimed at identifying the inferences for civil service unions based on the results of the study. Trade unions could do a lot to improve on how ordinary employees and their members perceive their effectiveness in grievance management. Trade union representatives, together with union officials, should focus on marketing their trade unions and their influence within the workplace. It offers opportunities for shop stewards to convince non-union members within the public sector about the need and benefits of belonging to a trade union.

The trade union movement can occur within the public sector, but only if individual employees support it. Public sector associations need to be aware of the needs of public servants. To some extent, non-union members believe that unions can safeguard their working terms and conditions, however, this may not translate into membership, without further organising efforts from trade union representatives and union officials. Fear of victimisation and impact on career progression, amongst others, may have been possible reasons for not joining trade unions within the public sector. The issue of ‘free riders’ may be another reason and this could be an area for further research.

For trade unions to be efficient within the workplace, they should consider the impact of managerial support. Managerial support for the trade union’s role within the workplace is vital, because trade unions cannot deliver good quality employment relations alone. Trade unions need to ensure that the industrial relations climate is cooperative. A cooperative environment requires that trade unions engage constructively with management and *vice versa*. Trade unions and employers should be eager to take a cooperative approach to the resolution of grievances, thus enhancing the perceptions on the effectiveness of trade unions regarding grievance handling.

Public sector associations should be cognisant of the importance of organisational support to trade union representatives. By guarding the quality of the relationship between shop stewards,

union officials and the quality of information, with which trade union representatives are provided, can influence the effectiveness of trade unions regarding grievance management. Trade union representatives are expected to have impeccable knowledge of the relevant labour legislation in order to be able to assist their members timeously and efficiently.

Trade unions are faced with the challenge of increasing their properties on the ground, which means that trade union officials and representatives should be provided with on-site offices in order to best serve the interests of the employees. The efficacy of trade unions is enhanced where shop stewards are elected and accessible to workers (Bryson, 2003).

#### **6.4 Limitations of the study**

This study has to be considered in light of its limitations. Firstly, the sample of the study was drawn from four ministries, thus the power of generalisation might be limited. Therefore, future studies may collect the data from all government ministries in order to maximise the statistical power of the study. Secondly, the research design and methodology used was unable to eliminate the biases caused by the simultaneous data collection. Since the data was collected from employees via a questionnaire, cognitive bias or social desirability bias may exist.

Other limitations of the present research was that data, on the perceptions of union effectiveness in handling employees' grievances within the Swaziland public sector was collected from the employees' side only, despite the fact that this information has a bearing on the managers within the ministries. The current study did not involve the management of the public sector (directors, departmental managers and supervisors) side to examine and compare the different perceptions from that of management versus employees.

As highlighted earlier on, public sector management is less accommodative to trade unions, management could have refused to participate in the study to avoid conflict of interests or dressing-down their employer.

Another limitation relates to the trade unions' use of information and communication technology. Public sector associations have been slow to change insofar as the use of technology is concerned. The researcher encountered difficulties when trying to get information on the trade unions from the internet. Only one public sector association such as SNAT had their own updated website.

## **6.5 Suggestions for future research**

Future research can employ a longitudinal design using different phases to collect data in order to eliminate bias. Multiple studies of the relationship between union effectiveness regarding grievance management and job satisfaction, productivity, union commitment, knowledge sharing and employee performance within the public sector will be essential to corroborate the present results. The research was conducted within the public sector and covered public sector associations only. In consideration of the composition of trade unions operating in the country representing employees from government parastatals and the private sector; it would be more beneficial to carry out a similar study, in order to cover all the trade unions in the country, although it would be time-consuming and costly. Further research could be conducted to engage employees' perception of the members of different trade unions within the private sector, to further validate the results obtained in the present study.

## **6.6 Recommendations**

The case study was conducted in the Ministry of Education, Health and Social Welfare. However, the researcher believes that some practical implications drawn from this study should be considered, not only for public sector associations, but also in private sectors in the country. Based on the findings of the study conducted among public servants working in the ministries which provide basic service delivery, the following recommendations can be proposed:

- The trade unions should consider the importance of training trade union representatives and its members. Through extensive training, trade union representatives as well as employees, will familiarise themselves with the organisation's policies and procedures. Their understanding of the grievance procedures and policies will be enhanced and it would be easier for them to lodge and process grievances accordingly.
- Trade union representatives/shop stewards within the public sector should attend induction workshops facilitated by the National Executive Committee. This will promote shop stewards' understanding of their role, as well as the processes and operations of the bargaining council. Such workshops and training will advance the knowledge and skills of trade union representatives required for handling grievance and disciplinary proceedings, as this forms the most important part of the labour process.
- Trade unions should perform a skills audit on the shop stewards focussing on the skills necessary for their role. This could assist the trade unions to identify the knowledge gaps and training opportunities that could be made available for shop stewards and

union officials. Trade unions should invest heavily in up-skilling their shop stewards. Having well-trained trade union representatives can produce resolutions which are efficient and satisfactory, thus enhancing employees' perception of trade union's effectiveness regarding grievance management.

- The new generation of employees are increasingly aligned with technology, thus trade unions need to utilise information and communication technology (ICT) to streamline and recruit members. Otherwise, union density within the public sector will remain stagnant. Public sector trade unions should consider using the ICT in order to advance their communication and recruitment strategies. Having updated websites will also enhance their international links, thus providing avenues for both international unionists and scholars to research trade unionism in Swaziland.
- Trade unions should build their own infrastructure within the workplace. This could enhance the trade union's ability to recruit and reach more of their members.

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## Appendix A



UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT, IT AND GOVERNANCE

### Master of Commerce Research Project

**Researcher:** Ceb'sile Dlamini 7605 9587 or (063 285 1553)

**Supervisor:** Ms Rowena Bernard (+27 31260 1534)

Dear Respondent,

I, **Ceb'sile Dlamini (205524601)**, a Master of Commerce (Industrial Relations) student, at the School of Management, IT and Governance of the University of KwaZulu Natal, invites you to participate in a research project entitled **'Perceived effectiveness of trade unions in addressing employees' grievances in the public sector in Swaziland'**. The aim of this study is to establish the effectiveness of trade unions in addressing employee grievances in the public sector in Swaziland.

Through your participation I hope to understand the role played by trade unions in addressing employees' grievances in the public service. The results of the survey are intended to contribute to the existing knowledge, and will help trade unions that wish to evaluate and address their members' perceptions of their effectiveness in addressing employees' grievances in the public sector. This will help trade unions to improve their approach and strategies of addressing employees' grievances. The empirical knowledge to be generated in this study will further equip and empower trade unions to confront challenges that threaten their continued existence and relevance, and also to ensure that they are better positioned to meet their members' expectations, thereby retaining old and gaining new members.

Your participation in the study is voluntary and by participating, you are granting the researcher permission to use your responses. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in the study. Your anonymity will be maintained by the researcher and the School of Management, I.T. & Governance and your responses will not be used for any purposes outside of this study.

All data, both electronic and hard copy, will be securely stored during the study and archived for 5 years. After this time, all data will be destroyed.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in the study, please contact me or my research supervisor at the numbers listed above.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number: **HSS/0379/018M**).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at the number listed above or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

**Mrs Mariette Snyman**  
Humanities and Social Science Ethics (HSSREC) Research Office,  
Govan Mbeki Building, Westville Campus, Private Bag X54001, DURBAN 4000  
Tel: 031 260 8350 [Snymanm@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Snymanm@ukzn.ac.za)  
**Researcher:** Ceb'sile Dlamini (00268 7605 9587)  
**Supervisor:** Ms Rowena Bernard (0027 31 260 1534)

The survey should take you about 30 minutes to complete. I hope you will take the time to complete this survey.

Sincerely

Researcher's 's signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B**

**INFORMED CONSENT**

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE SURVEY....** 

## Appendix C

### QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

#### Instructions:

This section refers to your background. It covers both personal and professional details questions. Kindly choose the one that is the most appropriate for you.

**1. Are you male or female?**

Male	Female

**2. How old are you?**

21-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-64

**3. Which, if any, of the following academic, vocational or professional qualifications have you obtained?**

Primary school	Secondary school	Degree/Diploma	Postgraduate	Other(Please specify)

**4. What is the full title of your main job? e.g. Primary School Teacher,**

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Do you supervise any other employees? A supervisor, foreman or line manager is responsible for overseeing the work of other employees on a day-to-day basis.**

Yes	No

**6. In which sector/ department are you currently working?**

Education	Health	Social Welfare	Other (Please specify)

**7. Which of the phrases below best describes your job here?**

Permanent	Fixed term	Temporary	Probation

**8. How long have you been working at this workplace?**

Less than 1 year	1 to 2 years	2 to 5 years	5 to 10 years	10years or more

**SECTION B:  
UNION MEMBERSHIP**

**1. Is there a trade union or staff association at your workplace?**

Yes	No

**2. Are you a member of a trade union?**

Yes	No, but have been in the past	No, have never been a member

**3. For how long have you been a member of a trade union?**

Less than 1 year	1 to 2 years	2 to 5 years	5 to 10 years	10 years or more

**4. What is your view on the work of trade unions in your workplace?**

Excellent	Good	Average	Bad

**5. Have you ever lodged a grievance?**

Yes	No

**If yes, please provide a brief description.**

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**6. Have you ever defended yourself in a grievance hearing?**

Yes	No

**If yes, please provide details of the incident.**

**7. Who in your opinion would best represent you in dealing with your employer about the following?**

	Myself	Trade union	Employee representative (non-union)	Line Managers	Another Employer
Salary increments.					
Your employer seeks to reduce your hours or pay.					
Getting training.					
Raising a complaint regarding working here.					
A manager seeks to discipline you.					

**8. How would you describe general management attitude towards trade union membership among employees?**

**Management is ...**

In favour of trade union membership	Not in favour of trade union	Neutral about it	Don't know

**SECTION C:**  
**PERCEPTION ON THE UNION'S EFFECTIVENESS IN GRIEVANCE**  
**HANDLING**

Indicate the extent to which you disagree/agree to the following statements.

Five Point Likert Scale					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't know
[ ]6	[ ]5	[ ]4	[ ]3	[ ]2	[ ]1

*Tick one box in each row*

**Union Organisational Effectiveness**

**Trade unions/staff associations...**

- |   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. Take notice of members' issues and complaints.                           | [ ]6 | [ ]5 | [ ]4 | [ ]3 | [ ]2 | [ ]1 |
| 2. Unions are responsive to members' complaints and grievances.             | [ ]6 | [ ]5 | [ ]4 | [ ]3 | [ ]2 | [ ]1 |
| 3. Has members' interest at heart   | [ ]6 | [ ]5 | [ ]4 | [ ]3 | [ ]2 | [ ]1 |
| 4. Are able to communicate and share information with its members.          | [ ]6 | [ ]5 | [ ]4 | [ ]3 | [ ]2 | [ ]1 |
| 5. Are accountable and transparent to its members.                          | [ ]6 | [ ]5 | [ ]4 | [ ]3 | [ ]2 | [ ]1 |
| 6. Makes a difference to working terms and conditions.                      | [ ]6 | [ ]5 | [ ]4 | [ ]3 | [ ]2 | [ ]1 |
| 7. Increase managerial responsiveness to employees.                         | [ ]6 | [ ]5 | [ ]4 | [ ]3 | [ ]2 | [ ]1 |
| 8. Should concentrate more on workplace related issues and less on politics | [ ]6 | [ ]5 | [ ]4 | [ ]3 | [ ]2 | [ ]1 |

**Industrial Relations Climate**

**Trade unions/staff associations....**

- |   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 9. Are taken seriously by management.                           | [ ]6 | [ ]5 | [ ]4 | [ ]3 | [ ]2 | [ ]1 |
| 10. And management work together to improve working conditions. | [ ]6 | [ ]5 | [ ]4 | [ ]3 | [ ]2 | [ ]1 |
| 11. And management have respect for each other's goals.         | [ ]6 | [ ]5 | [ ]4 | [ ]3 | [ ]2 | [ ]1 |
| 12. Have strong bargaining power                                | [ ]6 | [ ]5 | [ ]4 | [ ]3 | [ ]2 | [ ]1 |
| 13. Are a useful source of information and advice               | [ ]6 | [ ]5 | [ ]4 | [ ]3 | [ ]2 | [ ]1 |
| 14. Understand the employer's business                          | [ ]6 | [ ]5 | [ ]4 | [ ]3 | [ ]2 | [ ]1 |

**Union Bargaining/ Delivery Effectiveness**

- |   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 15. Union Leaders/officials have the necessary competencies and skills to handle employees grievances | [ ]6 | [ ]5 | [ ]4 | [ ]3 | [ ]2 | [ ]1 |
| 16. Grievances raised are resolved in a timely manner   | [ ]6 | [ ]5 | [ ]4 | [ ]3 | [ ]2 | [ ]1 |

17. Civil servants trust trade unions representatives to effectively handle grievances raised [ ]6 [ ]5 [ ]4 [ ]3 [ ]2 [ ]1

**Trade Unions....**

18. Represent its members satisfactorily during grievance and disciplinary hearing. [ ]6 [ ]5 [ ]4 [ ]3 [ ]2 [ ]1

19. Protect employees against ill-treatment. [ ]6 [ ]5 [ ]4 [ ]3 [ ]2 [ ]1

20. Represent its members during grievance and disciplinary hearing [ ]6 [ ]5 [ ]4 [ ]3 [ ]2 [ ]1

21. Promote equality at work [ ]6 [ ]5 [ ]4 [ ]3 [ ]2 [ ]1

22. Ensures that the employer complies fully with labour legislations. [ ]6 [ ]5 [ ]4 [ ]3 [ ]2 [ ]1

23. Improve and protect employees' working conditions [ ]6 [ ]5 [ ]4 [ ]3 [ ]2 [ ]1

24. Belonging to a union is advantageous [ ]6 [ ]5 [ ]4 [ ]3 [ ]2 [ ]1

**25. How would you rate your union's effectiveness in resolving or handling employees' grievances?**

Ineffective	Fairly effective	Effective	Very effective

THANK YOU FOR YOUR VALUABLE TIME AND PARTICIPATION IN THE SURVEY ... 😊

## Appendix D

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR UNION OFFICIALS

#### **SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. What is your position in the union?
2. To which trade union do you belong to?
3. How long have you been a member of a union at this organisation?
4. What is the highest educational qualification you have received?

#### **SECTION B: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE AND DISCIPLINARY HEARING**

5. Is the trade union recognised by the employer where it operates?
6. What is your view on trade union effectiveness in addressing employees' grievances in the workplace?
7. What challenges do union *members* experience during grievance procedure and disciplinary hearing?
8. What challenges do union *representatives* face in dealing with management during grievance procedures and disciplinary hearings?
9. What are the constraints faced by trade unions in the handling of employees' grievances?
10. What are the strengths and weaknesses of trade unions in the management of grievances?
11. What is your view on the role of trade unions in the promotion and protection of the employees working conditions?

## Appendix E



30 May 2018

Ms Ceob'ile Dlamini (205524601)  
School of Management, IT & Governance  
Westville Campus

Dear Ms Dlamini,

Protocol reference number: **HSS/0979/018M**

Project Title: Perceived effectiveness of trade unions in addressing employees' grievances in the public sector in Swaziland

### Approval Notification – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 08 May 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol (i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods) must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

PP Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Ms Rowena Bernard  
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Isabel Martins  
Cc School Administrator: Ms Angela Pearce

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee  
Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)

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Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)



Faculty of Commerce: Ekurhuleni Howa College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

## Appendix F

**SWAZILAND**



**GOVERNMENT**

Telephone: (09268) 2404 3521/5  
Fax: (09268) 2404 5379  
(09268) 2404 4161

Ministry of Public Service  
P. O. Box 170  
Mbabane H100  
Swaziland

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AS PART OF RESEARCH DISSERTATION  
REQUIREMENT- CEB'SILE DLAMINI

This letter serves to confirm that Ceb'sile Dlamini (205524601) has been granted permission to conduct research at the following ministries:

Ministry of Health -MoH

Ministry of Education- MoET

DPM's Office- Social Welfare

Ceb'sile's research is focused on 'Perceived effectiveness of Trade unions in addressing employees' grievances in the public sector in Swaziland' and will be expected to collect data from the above mentioned Ministries from the period of May-August 2018. The Ministry has granted her permission based on your assurance that the data collected will be used solely for academic purposes as part of full filling her academic requirements for an M.COM Degree which she is currently pursuing at the University of Kwazulu- Natal. I refer you to the letter dated 18 April 2018.

Grateful for your assistance in this regard

Yours Sincerely

**Acting Director –Management Services Division**

**Ministry of Public Service**

