

THE INDIVIDUAL AND COMBINED INFLUENCE OF THE LACK OF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND COMMUNICATION ON LABOUR UNREST

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Abstract

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Labour unrest is often the outcome of an interplay or combination of factors that employees are unhappy about. Whilst issues relating to the lack of collective bargaining, communication and employee benefits prove to be reasons for causing labour unrest, the question is whether, and if so, how do they come together to increase the occurrence of labour unrest. Hence, this study explores the relationships between collective bargaining, communication, employee benefits and labour unrest, respectively. It is advocated that a lack of employee benefits, collective bargaining and communication has the potential to lead to labour unrest. The research is conducted at the informal settlement in Durban, South Africa, where most of the construction employees who worked at the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) reside. A sample of fifty from fifty-eight construction employees was drawn using cluster sampling. The researcher used quantitative research methods and data was collected using a self-developed questionnaire and analysed using inferential statistics. The research revealed that all sub-dimensions of the lack of employee benefits, collective bargaining and communication have the potential to influence labour unrest individually and in varying degrees. In this regard, a significant relationship was only found between poor availability of health and wellness programmes (employee benefits) and poor bargaining councils (collective bargaining). In addition, a significant but inverse relationship was found between poor medical care (employee benefits) and poor communication. Recommendations, based on the results of the study, are presented.

Keywords: Labour Unrest, Employee Benefits, Collective Bargaining, Communication, Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)

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1. INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the individual and combined influences of the lack of employee benefits, collective bargaining and communication on the potential for labour unrest. The political agendas that arise in employment relationships also influence labour unrest. However, authors concur that labour unrest consists of workplace violence (Johnson, 2016; Mathekga, 2016; Turner, Clack, & Roberts, 2017); as a result, labour unrest and workplace violence cannot be studied in separation. Hence, organisations are still looking for ways in which labour unrest can be minimised. Within the context of the South African workplace, it is accepted that labour unrests are a reality in organisations causing negative effects. Employment relationships are about interactions between the parties (employers, employees and the State) who must take one another into consideration. A typical example is that of construction employees who have experienced labour unrest during their course of employment. The relationship between the factors influencing labour unrest (the lack of collective bargaining, communication and employee benefits) is closely examined in this study. The targeted population are the employees who reside at the Quarry Road West Informal Settlement (QRWIS).

The researchers focus on the construction industry by considering the Umgeni Road Interchange Construction Site (URICS), where the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) was introduced: "The EPWP was introduced to create temporary employment to unemployed South African youth" (Chance, 2018, p. 75). The URICS is a by-product of the EPWP (Frankson, 2015). For the purposes of this study, informal settlements are explained as locations where people occupied land and put up informal structures for residence intentions, with no proper division of land and, with structures that are poorly arranged with no proper roads, and insufficient services such as water and sanitation (Kamalipour, 2017).

As a part of the EPWP, the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL) provided temporary employment to South African youth. The development of EPWP has contributed to labour unrest in the public sector due to the lack of employee benefits, poor communication and poor collective bargaining between employers and employees. This research is conducted to explore the extent to which the lack of employee benefits, collective bargaining and communication combine to influence labour unrest in the construction industry where temporary employment is offered. Hence, the problem statement is:

RQ1: To what extent does the lack of employee benefits, collective bargaining and communication combine to influence labour unrest in the construction industry where temporary employment is offered?

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature. Section 3 analyses the methodology that has been planned and adopted to assess the individual and combined influence of the lack of employee benefits, collective bargaining and communication on labour unrest. Section 4 presents the results of the study. Section 5 discusses the findings and Section 6 concludes the paper.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The public sector is faced with labour unrest, which are a threat to peace. Labour unrest is still an infectious disease that spreads rapidly to other sectors of the economy (Kennedy, 2018). The labour unrest in the public sector often occurs because employers want to increase their profits using insufficient resources. However, there is a perception that the public sector suffers more employment disputes than the private sector (Bendix & Bendix, 2017). "The labour disputes in the public sector increased because the sector itself has experienced growth in the previous years" (Ebisui, Cooney, & Fenwick, 2016, p. 95). The increasing number of labour unrests in the present society may be linked to the fact that there exist poorer employer-employee relationships, which makes it difficult for employers and employees to communicate or to bargain collectively on matters of mutual interest. However, at common law, labour unrest could mean the breach of the employment contract by the employees, giving employers the right to terminate the contract of employment altogether. The Labour Relations Act (LRA) No. 66 of 1995 gives employees the right to strike but this right is limited as "all types of labour unrest are directed towards the employer to make them comply with the demands of the employees" (Rikwe, 2018, p. 63).

The present labour unrest is influenced by the political motives that arise in the employment relationships (Dhai, Etheredge, Vorster, & Veriava, 2011). The majority of trade unions are established for political intentions and labour unrests occur in order to politically influence the other party. At most times, employees have increased hopes regarding their involvement in particular employment, and when these hopes are not achieved, labour unrests occur (Bendix & Bendix, 2017) to support the demand relating to matters of mutual interest between employers and employees. Construction employees have real grievances concerning economic, social and psychological issues. "The main complaint is often about insufficient monetary benefits" (Power & Gwanyanya, 2017, p. 36). The duty of trade unions has been to put pressure on the demands of employees for, amongst others, increased salaries, longer rest breaks and less working hours. Employees are concerned about the benefits which they get from their employer and are not as worried about the production of the organisation (Mathekga, 2016).

Labour unrest by construction employees is a period when the entire workforce of the organisation cease to perform their contractual duties with an effort to make their employer accept their demands (Tenza, 2020). Researchers concur that labour unrest consists of workplace violence; therefore, it is evident that labour unrest and workplace violence have a significant relationship. According to Turner et al. (2017), when employees are granted permission by the labour courts to take part in the peaceful strikes, conducive conditions of violence are created. However, in human history, people have used violence individually or as a collective to influence other people. Employees have used physical violence to control and influence their employers to accept their demands. Employers have used non-physical or psychological violence which is mostly referred to as soft violence to

dominate or influence the employees and to deny them of their rights (Johnson, 2016). Labour unrest in the workplace do not occur peacefully, but are accompanied by violence through which employees compel their employers to heed to their demands (Mathekga, 2016).

Strikes are essential to the method of collective bargaining (Webster, 2017). Collective bargaining assists employers and employees to reach a consensus on matters of mutual interest and decreases strikes. Section 23 of the South African Constitution fully protects the right to strike. Unprotected strikes impose negative effects on employment relationships (Webster, 2017). One of the requirements that ensure that labour unrest comply with the provisions of the LRA 66 of 1995 is whether prior notice has been issued (Bhorat, Yu, Khan, & Thornton, 2017). Therefore, the question of who must issue notice must clearly be defined. Section 23 of the LRA 66 of 1995 does not prohibit strikes and protest actions that are a threat to peace; these strikes are banned elsewhere in the LRA 66 of 1995 (Bhorat et al., 2017).

The main objective of employment legislation is to promote harmonious employment relationships through collective bargaining, communication and providing employee benefits. "Collective bargaining in South Africa is the process of negotiation concerning the conditions and terms of employment between employers and the group of employees" (Webster, 2017, p. 98). The South African history of labour unrest and inequality has led to the need for employers and employees in the employment relationship to bargain collectively concerning the conditions of employment (Mathekga, 2016). Section 23(1) of the South African Constitution encourages employers and employees in the employment relationship to agree on any terms and conditions of employment through collective bargaining and effective communication (Turner et al., 2017).

Jeske (2018) defines employee benefits as optional non-wage compensation provided to employees in addition to their normal wages or salaries. Employees are remunerated hourly counting the hours they have worked or they can be remunerated a fixed salary for the duties they have performed despite counting the number of hours they have tendered service (Bendix & Bendix, 2017). Employers use one of the two forms when remunerating employees. However, organisations evaluate the salary on a yearly basis. The Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 regulates employee benefits. Every organisation should grant its employees at least one benefit and the majority of organisations provide numerous benefits to their employees (Turner et al., 2017). Under collective agreement, all employees in the organisation are entitled to be remunerated and be granted benefits which they are entitled to receive and when they are due as long as they tender service and carry out the activities expected of them (Jaworski, Ravichandran, Karpinski, & Singh, 2018). Employee benefits can be either in monetary values or in-kind (Jaworski et al., 2018). According to Jeske (2018), employers are not allowed to deduct an employee's remuneration, unless the employer deducts in respect of specified employee's debt or unless the deductions are allowed by law, court order or by collective agreement. Employee benefits have a great

influence on the performance of employees (Budd, 2017).

Takupiwa and Shelfa (2019) define collective bargaining as a process of meeting, convincing, presenting demands, haggling, of various cases and threatening until consensus is reached between employers and employees. The outcomes are determined by the political and legal environment upon which collective bargaining occurs. However, a failure to effectively bargain collectively between employers and employees constitute unfair labour practice under the South African labour law (Hijzen & Martins, 2020). According to Okharedia (2019), collective bargaining is conducted in order to address the incompatible interests, which affect the employment relationship in the workplace. Employees have to be involved during collective bargaining when the conflicting issues are resolved. Employees play a role in the processes of production in the workplace and productive relationships must be maintained (Ebrahim, 2020). The right to engage in collective bargaining with every employer, employer's organisation and trade union is stipulated in Section 23(5) of the Constitution. This means that both parties have a duty to take part in collective bargaining processes (Takupiwa & Shelfa, 2019). Collective bargaining is a significant process of communication and it reveals the challenges that are related to communication. Collective bargaining is known and understood as a negotiation process aimed at a sustainable economic position and promotes the employer-employee relationship. The perception of collective bargaining as a method of controlling conflict is currently the most dominant approach.

The right to bargain collectively in South Africa is controlled by two principal ways, namely, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995. Section 65 of the LRA 66 of 1995 does not explain collective bargaining but encourages collective agreements that emerge as a result of collective bargaining. The LRA 66 of 1995 indicates how trade unions should interact in collective bargaining and what rules and procedures must be utilised in order to effectively bargain collectively. The duty to bargain in good faith is not contained in the current LRA 66 of 1995 but provides the right to freedom of association and organisational rights that assist trade unions to establish a bargaining relationship. The LRA 66 of 1995 provides that refusal to bargain collectively may lead to strikes or lockout. Employers and employees cannot be forced by the Courts to bargain collectively although employees can use strikes to compel employers to bargain with them.

"Communication between employers and employees is important to produce harmonious employment relationships" (Carré, Horn, & Bonner, 2020, p. 43). Effective communication depends on whether the message communicated is analysed by the receiver in the same content that the sender intended. Effective communication plays a vital role in reducing the possibility of conflict, strikes and for the survival of the entire organisation. Communication must be adequately monitored, especially in an environment where there is a diversity of cultures. However, labour relations are complex in nature and involve interactions between various stakeholders, namely, employers, employees and the State (Novitz, 2017). It is, therefore,

a tripartite employment relationship. Parties in the employment relationship are encouraged to communicate effectively and address labour relations issues in a sound and fair manner. Communication as a process requires one party to consider another while pursuing the desired results. The Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) enhances effective communication between the State, employers and employees. This channel maintains the authority structure and is a formal channel for communication (Bendix & Bendix, 2017). Communication is regarded by the International Labour Organisation as significant and this authority recommends that employers and employees consult one another when establishing communication networks in the workplace in order to ensure effective communication and harmonious employment relationships (Igbinoba, Osibanjo, & Salau, 2016). A number of factors can hinder the effectiveness of the communicated message. The factors may include stereotyping, the halo effect, perceptual defence, selective perception, projection and semantics.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology has been designed to undertake a quantitative, cross-sectional study to assess whether and how the issues relating to the lack of employee benefits, collective bargaining and communication interact to influence labour unrest at an EPWP, that is, a construction site in KwaZulu-Natal, Durban (South Africa).

The population comprised of 58 construction employees residing in an informal settlement near the construction site from which a sample of 50 construction employees was drawn using cluster sampling. The composition of the sample may be described in terms of job category, age, gender, marital status and level of formal education of construction employees. The majority of respondents who worked at the construction site are construction employees (52%), male (56%), have never been married (56%), are between the ages 30–39 years (50%) and have matriculated (62%).

Data was collected using a self-developed questionnaire consisting of sections relating to the objectives of this study. Section 1 related to

the biographical information of respondents (job category, age, gender, marital status, level of education and number of dependents) and was measured using a nominal scale. Section 2 comprised of 7 items which were phrased to assess employees' perceptions of their employee benefits. Section 3 consisted of 6 items that tapped into employees' views on the degree of collective bargaining in their employment process. Section 4 included 4 items that were designed to tap into employees' perceptions of the nature of communication in their jobs during the time of employment. The items in Sections 2, 3 and 4 were constructed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), agree (4) to strongly agree (5). In-house pre-testing was adopted to assess the suitability of the research instrument at face value and to confirm content validity. Pilot testing was also undertaken by administering the questionnaire to eight construction employees using the same protocols as would be used in the final administration. A pilot study was conducted with questionnaires already translated into *isiZulu* due to the illiteracy level of some respondents who lacked fluency in the English language. Each questionnaire had a consent form attached to it outlining the nature and purpose of the entire project and that participation in the study was voluntary with no monetary benefits. The feedback from the pilot testing confirmed that the questionnaire was understood and appropriate in terms of construction, wording and relevance.

The questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher with the assistance of a local chief who knew the construction employees who worked at the construction site and, therefore, allowed opportunity for building rapport and clarification.

Descriptive and inferential statistics (correlations) were used to analyse the quantitative data.

4. RESULTS

The influence of aspects of the lack of employee benefits, collective bargaining and communication were assessed using descriptive statistics (Table 1).

Table 1. The influence of the lack of issues of employee benefits, collective bargaining and communication on labour unrest

<i>Lack of employee benefit issues</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Lack of collective bargaining issues</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Lack of communication issues</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
Lack of employee benefits (overall)	3.87	0.757	Poor collective bargaining (overall)	4.22	0.532	Lack of communication (overall)	3.69	1.172
Poor remuneration	4.64	0.485	Poor negotiation processes	4.44	0.501	Poor listening skills	3.04	1.029
Poor medical care	2.78	1.093	Lack of a conflict control tool	4.14	0.535	Lack of trust between the parties	4.52	0.544
Pension contribution	3.00	0.833	Poor bargaining councils	3.52	0.839	Lack of understanding of the language	2.58	0.785
Poor availability of health and wellness programmes	3.74	0.723	Lack of a communication process	4.26	0.443	Poor communication	4.60	0.606
Poor retirement benefits	4.58	0.609	The failure to reach a consensus between the parties	4.80	0.404			
Lack of disability insurance	4.10	0.735	The failure to bargain collectively between the parties	4.18	0.388			
Lack of overtime remuneration	4.24	0.822						

From Table 1 it is evident that the lack of collective bargaining (Mean = 4.22) has the greatest potential to lead to labour unrest amongst the URICS workers and great unhappiness is caused by the failure to reach a consensus between the parties (Mean = 4.80) followed by poor negotiation processes (Mean = 4.44). The second factor likely to lead to labour unrest amongst these employees is the lack of employee benefits (Mean = 3.87) with key influences being poor remuneration (Mean = 4.64), followed by lack of retirement benefits (Mean = 4.58) and the lack of overtime remuneration (Mean = 4.24). The third factor likely to lead to labour unrest is the lack of proper communication (Mean = 3.69) with the emphasis being placed on

poor communication (Mean = 4.60) and the lack of trust between the parties (Mean = 4.52).

Inferential statistics were used to test the hypotheses of the study. Whilst it is evident that issues of the lack of employee benefits, collective bargaining and communication have the potential to lead to labour unrest individually, the question that remains is whether these aspects combine to enhance the potential for labour unrest.

H1: The sub-dimensions of employee benefits significantly intercorrelate with the sub-dimensions of collective bargaining to enhance the potential for labour unrest respectively amongst the URICS construction workers (Table 2).

Table 2. Intercorrelations: Dimensions of employee benefits and collective bargaining (n = 50)

Sub-dimensions of employee benefits	r/p	Sub-dimensions of collective bargaining					
		Poor negotiation processes	Lack of a conflict control tool	Poor bargaining councils	Lack of a communication process	The failure to reach consensus employers and employees	The failure to bargain collectively between the parties
Poor remuneration directly influenced labour unrest at the URICS	r p	-0.091 0.531	0.198 0.167	-0.032 0.825	-0.220 0.124	-0.062 0.666	0.243 0.089
Poor medical care directly influenced labour unrest at the construction site	r p	0.031 0.829	-0.016 0.912	-0.051 0.726	0.078 0.589	-0.009 0.949	-0.049 0.735
Lack of pension contributions directly influenced labour unrest at the site	r p	0.000 1.000	0.000 1.000	0.263 0.065	0.166 0.250	-0.182 0.206	0.000 1.000
Poor availability of health and wellness programmes directly influenced labour unrest at the URICS	r p	-0.128 0.374	0.096 0.507	0.497 0.000*	0.152 0.293	-0.112 0.440	-0.048 0.741
Poor retirement benefits for the employees at the URICS directly influenced labour unrest	r p	0.150 0.300	-0.129 0.372	0.157 0.278	0.035 0.810	0.066 0.647	-0.105 0.467
Lack of disability insurance for the construction employees directly influenced labour unrests at the URICS	r p	0.044 0.760	0.067 0.642	-0.251 0.078	-0.144 -0.318	0.000 1.000	-0.064 0.657
Lack of overtime remuneration for the employees at the construction site directly influenced labour unrest during the course of employment	r p	-0.113 0.435	-0.171 0.236	-0.037 0.800	0.105 0.467	0.209 0.145	-0.074 0.609

Note: * $p < 0.01$.

From Table 2 it is evident that there is a significant relationship between the lack of one employee benefit aspect, namely, poor availability of health and wellness programmes and one aspect of collective bargaining, namely, poor bargaining councils at the 1% level of significance. The relationship is moderate in strength ($r = 0.497$). No other significant relationships were noted.

Hence, *H1* may only be partially accepted, that is, in terms of poor availability of health and wellness programmes and poor bargaining councils.

H2: The sub-dimensions of employee benefits significantly intercorrelate with the sub-dimensions of communication to enhance the potential for labour unrest respectively amongst the URICS construction workers, respectively (Table 3).

Table 3. Intercorrelations: Dimensions of employee benefits and communication (n = 50)

Sub-dimensions of employee benefits	r/p	Sub-dimensions of communication			
		Poor listening skills	Lack of trust between the parties	Lack of understanding of the language	Poor communication between the parties
Poor remuneration directly influenced labour unrest at the URICS	r p	0.029 0.839	-0.050 0.733	0.077 0.594	-0.014 0.924
Poor medical care directly influenced labour unrest at the construction site	r p	-0.046 0.749	0.128 0.377	-0.062 0.667	-0.320 0.023*
Lack of pension contributions directly influenced labour unrest at the site	r p	0.000 1.000	0.000 1.000	-0.062 0.667	0.081 0.577
Poor availability of health and wellness programmes directly influenced labour unrest at the URICS	r p	-0.068 0.639	0.039 0.786	0.055 0.702	-0.149 0.302
Poor retirement benefits for the employees at the URICS directly influenced labour unrest	r p	0.092 0.523	-0.190 0.187	0.093 0.520	-0.133 0.358
Lack of disability insurance for the construction employees directly influenced labour unrest at the URICS	r p	-0.059 0.682	0.082 0.573	0.039 0.789	-0.183 0.203
Lack of overtime remuneration for the employees at the construction site directly influenced labour unrest during the course of employment	r p	0.037 0.800	-0.194 0.178	-0.094 0.518	0.156 0.280

Note: * $p < 0.05$.

Table 3 indicates that there is a significant but inverse relationship between the lack of one employee benefit sub-dimension, namely, poor medical care and one sub-dimension of communication, namely, poor communication between the parties at the 5% level of significance. The relationship is less than moderate in strength ($r = 0.320$). No other significant relationships were noted. Therefore, $H2$ may only be

partially accepted, that is, in terms of poor medical care and poor communication between the parties.

$H3$: The sub-dimensions of collective bargaining significantly intercorrelate with the sub-dimensions of communication to enhance the potential for labour unrest respectively amongst the URICS construction workers (Table 4).

Table 4. Intercorrelations: Dimensions of collective bargaining and communication (n = 50)

Dimensions of collective bargaining	r/p	Dimensions of communication			
		Poor listening skills	Lack of trust between the parties	Lack of understanding of the language	Poor communication between the parties
Poor negotiation processes directly influenced labour unrest at the URICS	r p	-0.114 0.431	0.117 0.419	0.012 0.932	-0.081 0.578
Lack of a conflict control tool directly influenced labour unrest at the URICS	r p	0.027 0.854	0.166 0.250	-0.052 0.722	-0.138 0.337
Poor bargaining councils directly influenced labour unrest at the URICS	r p	0.046 0.749	0.200 0.163	0.091 0.532	0.016 0.912
Lack of a communication process directly influenced labour unrest at the construction site	r p	-0.158 0.275	0.020 0.889	0.027 0.852	0.015 0.917
The failure to reach consensus between employers and employees led to labour unrest	r p	0.020 0.892	0.019 0.898	-0.013 0.929	0.250 0.080
The failure to bargain collectively between the parties led to conflict and this conflict led to labour unrest	r p	-0.121 0.404	-0.163 0.259	-0.015 0.919	-0.121 0.401

From Table 4 it is evident that there are no significant relationships between the sub-dimensions of collective bargaining and the sub-dimensions of communication, respectively. Hence, $H3$ may not be accepted.

5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The sub-dimensions of employee benefits, collective bargaining and communication have been evaluated to assess their individual and combined potential to bring about labour unrest amongst the construction workers (URICS).

The results reflect that there is a significant and moderate relationship between the lack of one employee benefit sub-dimension, namely, poor availability of health and wellness programmes and one aspect of collective bargaining, namely, poor bargaining councils. The implication is that both of

these sub-dimensions, namely, poor availability of health and wellness programmes and poor bargaining councils have the individual and combined potential to influence labour unrest at the URICS. No other significant relationships were noted thereby implying that the remaining issues relating to the lack of employee benefits and the lack of collective bargaining only have the potential to impact labour unrest individually. Turner et al. (2017) note that bargaining councils are trusted and used by employers and employees because it enables them to discuss the health and wellness programmes of employees in the workplace. The research conducted by Johnson (2016) also found that with effective bargaining councils, employers experience lesser labour unrest as both parties negotiate in order to come up with a concrete solution. The health and wellness programmes are negotiated accordingly through the bargaining

councils. Therefore, employee morale is increased and employees enjoy their work more in the organisation. Effective bargaining councils ensure that parties are able to reach an agreement on matters concerning health and wellness programmes of employees and other employee benefits, thus minimising the extent of labour unrest.

According to Eldredge et al. (2016), here is a possibility that poor availability of health and wellness programmes can present uncondusive working conditions which threaten the capacity of employees and affect their health conditions. However, sufficient guides to regulate health and wellness programmes are imperative to enhance the health and wellness of construction employees. The employees' involvement in collective bargaining can lift and augment an employee's sense of control and therefore, increase an employee's well-being and health. Construction employees' commitment is important in endorsing employees and for the fitness of the entire organisation. Through effective bargaining councils within the organisation, the well-being of construction employees is carefully augmented.

In order for the organisation to succeed in regulating a diverse workforce, stronger bargaining councils must be developed within the organisation to strengthen the health and wellness programmes in the organisation. Webster (2017) maintains that employees are most likely to stay in organisations with efficient bargaining councils and those become productive because they are able to negotiate in accordance with the health and wellness programmes and the terms and conditions of service on their behalf. Employees who are employed in organisations with poor health and wellness programmes are not productive and bargaining councils can negotiate harmonious employment conditions. Effective bargaining councils not only reduce labour unrest but also retain talented employees in the organisation and effectively improve the health and wellness programmes in the organisation (Turner et al., 2017). Collective bargaining helps employees to maintain employee benefits in order to minimise labour unrest, produce harmonious employment relationships and be more focused on their jobs. Furthermore, collective bargaining and communication assists employees in achieving and sustaining their organisational goals.

The study revealed that there is a significant but inverse and less than a moderate relationship between the lack of one employee benefit aspect, namely, poor medical care and one sub-dimension of communication, namely, poor communication between the parties. The implication is that both of these sub-dimensions, namely, poor medical care and poor communication between the parties have the individual and combined potential to influence labour unrest at the URICS. The inverse relationship also implies that when employees become aware of poor medical care, organisations respond and over-communicate as an "after-fact" to appease the situation, making excuses and justifying the medical care. Hence, whilst communication may be enhanced, the quality and purpose of the communication is questioned as being dubious. Such communication can destroy relations between the employer and employees even more and damage trust. No other significant relationships were noted thereby implying that the issues relating to the lack

of employee benefits and the lack of communication have the potential to impact their own labour unrest. Similarly, Carré et al. (2020) found that poor communication does not imply poor medical care because the medical care of employees is not dependent on communication but is dependent on the employers' authority to grant such medical care. However, Mothibi, Jama, and Adefuye (2019) found that medical care in the workplace is achieved through communication, but poor communication between the parties causes poor medical care. Undoubtedly, communication is key to employment relationships. Communication is trusted and used by both parties in the employment relationship because it allows them to negotiate the medical care and medical conditions of employees in the workplace. Communication assists employers to control a diverse workforce and deal with key issues raised by the employees. Employees are likely to stay in organisations where their matters of concern are dealt with through dialogue and communication (Novitz, 2017).

The study found that there are no significant relationships between the sub-dimensions of collective bargaining and communication. The implication is that both of these dimensions and their sub-dimensions have the potential to impact individually on labour unrest but do not necessarily combine to result in labour unrest at the URICS. However, Bhorat et al. (2017) found that communication is an important aspect of collective bargaining because negotiation through collective bargaining cannot be possible if there is no communication between the parties and imply that there is a significant relationship between the two factors.

Recommendations are made based on the relationships between the factors that, either individually or combined, influence labour unrest in order to produce conducive employment relations at the workplace working towards attaining organisational goals.

6. CONCLUSION

The study found a significant relationship between poor availability of health and wellness programmes (employee benefits) and poor bargaining councils. Employers and employees must respect and value the operation of bargaining councils in the organisation because it enables them to effectively discuss the health and wellness programmes of employees in the workplace. The results of the study suggest that collective bargaining must take place in issues relating to poor availability and quality of health and wellness programmes. Effective bargaining councils also lessen labour unrest as both parties negotiate the terms and conditions of employment in order to reach mutual understanding and create harmonious employment conditions. In addition to making bargaining councils effective, employers can arrange short sessions where labour law experts are invited to talk about the importance of bargaining councils and the role they play in settling labour disputes. In most organisations, bargaining councils are not taken seriously and as a result, they are deemed poor.

The study found a significant but inverse relationship between poor medical care (employee benefits) and poor communication. Employers and

employees must communicate because communication is key in the workplace and perceived medical care is achieved through effective communication between employers and employees. However, the results clearly indicate that the communication must be trustworthy and not take place as an “afterthought” to pacify a situation when employees become aware and alarmed by the poor medical care. If communication is based on justifying poor medical care, it will not be effective but rather will intensify the lack of trust. The operational motto should be that effective communication will bring about enhanced medical care. Perhaps with their payslips, some tips of effective health care can be attached or informal meetings can be held once a month to share ideas and listen to their concerns of employees and find solutions. In addition, construction supervisors and chiefs can inculcate the culture of green areas where at least once a day all employees come together informally to share ideas, problems, work techniques and views, even if this simply means sharing issues of sadness or happiness, for example, the passing of a pet or the birth of a child.

The study found no significant relationship between the sub-dimensions of collective bargaining and communication. Perhaps, the sub-dimensions of the lack of collective bargaining and communication do not combine to impact labour unrest because collective bargaining and communication as a whole are believed to be indispensable. Hence, employers and employees must consider that there is a strong relationship between collective bargaining and communication because collective bargaining cannot be possible without effective communication. Employers and employees must consider the significance of collective bargaining and communication in settling disputes between them. In addition, listening skills and trust are important in the process of communication and collective bargaining because they provide effective working relationships among employers and employees and assist in speeding up the process of collective bargaining and communication. Listening and trust enable one to acquire facts in order to make decisions that benefit the organisation. Listening can also reduce conflict because conflict arises when one feels misunderstood.

The study used a sample of 50 respondents who were drawn from a population of 58 construction employees who worked at the construction site. However, for the purposes of more accurate generalisability of the findings and consistency, larger sample size can be used inclusive of other public works projects for future research. The respondents who participated in this study were only restricted to construction employees who have worked at the URICS. However, future research should survey construction employees residing in other informal settlements in order to obtain a wider perspective of the issues leading to labour unrest. Future research should also be conducted on other factors influencing labour unrest in the construction industry beyond employee benefits, collective bargaining and communication. The researcher believes there are other numerous factors that influence labour unrest besides employee benefits, collective bargaining and communication that are researchable. These may include hygiene and motivation factors.

As stated above, the study was conducted at Quarry Road West Informal Settlement (QRWIS), and to a certain extent, some employees who resided at this informal settlement showed a high degree of reluctance in supplying the information. The majority of the participants were not afraid to respond openly to items for fear that the information will be released to their management or other interested parties and that this may affect their future employment with the contractor.

Time constraints as the research was undertaken under the tight schedule; restricted access to the secondary data which relates to employee benefits, communication, collective bargaining and labour unrest; securing time to interact with the *Indunas* (tribal councillor/Headman) and *Amakhosi* (tribal leader/Chief) of the informal settlements to get access to collect data from the residents. Financial shortages, as the study involved large sums of financial expenses as is the case with every study worthy of its value. Financial expenses included: travelling expenses to collect data, printing and salaries for research assistants/data analysts.

Only one data collection method, that is, using questionnaires was adopted. Due to the nature of the study, a more probing qualitative methodology could prove to be beneficial. It is, therefore, recommended that a future study adopts a mixed-method approach using qualitative and quantitative techniques that will draw on the benefits of both and enable effective triangulation of findings.

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is adopted in South Africa in an attempt to reduce youth unemployment. Future studies should assess the occurrence of youth unemployment globally as well as the strategies adopted in these contexts to overcome this grave economic threat.

The research revealed that all sub-dimensions of the lack of employee benefits, collective bargaining and communication have the potential to influence labour unrest individually and in varying degrees. Furthermore, a significant relationship was only found between poor availability of health and wellness programmes (employee benefits) and poor bargaining councils (collective bargaining), thereby implying that these sub-dimensions can collectively enhance the potential for labour unrest. In addition, a significant but inverse relationship was found between poor medical care (employee benefits) and poor communication thereby implying that when poor medical care exists and the employer over communicates to justify the poor medical care, the potential for labour unrest is enhanced. Employers and employees should therefore consider the lack of employee benefits, collective bargaining and communication as significant issues influencing labour unrest at the URICS and the potential for some combined influences which can snowball into labour unrest. Furthermore, sufficient employee benefits could result in a workforce that is motivated with lower staff turnover and absenteeism. Therefore, positive employer-employee relations, proper collective bargaining and effective communication are amongst other things that are crucial for success within the organisation. Recommendations based on the results of the study are presented, which when adopted have the potential to reduce the occurrence of labour unrest. Of significance, it is essential that co-workers support each other in order to promote positive employment relationships.

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