

HURDLES OF SETTING UP TRADE UNIONS

The Case of Private Higher Educational Institutions

A Thesis Submitted To The School Of Graduate Studies Of Addis
Ababa University In Partial Fulfillment To The Requirements For
The Degree Of Master In Business Administration In Management
Department

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July 2007

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

*Hurdles of Setting up Trade Unions: a Case of Selected Private Higher
Educational Institutions*

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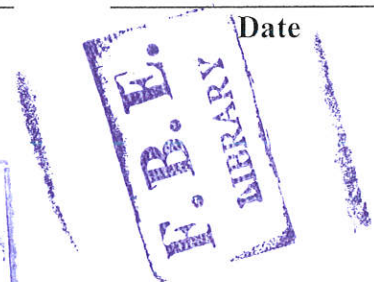
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AKNOWLEDEMENT

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my advisor Dr. Shweta Pande, Assistant professor, for her consistent and valuable additions to my work. Had it not been for her, I wouldn't have been able to come up with this work maintaining the features that it has now.

Secondly, I am indebted to the respondents, responsible institutional officials and staff members of The Ethiopian Confederation of Trade Unions [CETU] for their utmost cooperation in due course of the project work.

Thirdly, I really acknowledge Addis Ababa University for backing me up with some financing for getting the task done. Had it not been for the support, the project might not have moved into a practical essence.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank all who have expressed their concern for getting the project done in spite of the problems encountered in the midst of my undertaking. Furthermore, I feel grateful to Ato Mohammed and my secretary for their priceless contribution in this work.

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List of acronyms

CETU: Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions

ETA: Ethiopian Teachers Association

ILO: International Labour Organization

PHEI: Private Higher Educational Institutions

Abstract

The research is aimed at determining and prioritizing factors obstructing the establishment and consolidation of Labour unions in private higher educational institutions in Ethiopia. The study has attempted to figure out the influence of some factors on the desire of employees to institutionalize themselves and defend their rights. The objective of the study was to come up with vivid interpretations as to the very factors limiting the development of unionization in the stated institutions and their respective degree of implications.

The study, initially, undergone through different scientific methods to detect the general situations that there are in the private higher educational institutions with regard to their human resource configurations and management practices. After wards, the study expanded its horizon in to making speculations on those management and labour related factors which are holding back the formation of unions in organizational context. The research was expected to bring about outcomes listing out the major variables throwing set backs in the employees' union formation efforts.

The investigation has made use of both primary and secondary sources of data. Specifically questionnaires distributed to randomly selected employees and unscheduled interviews conducted with responsible personnel in the institutions have comprised the majority of the task. To supplement the finding, the researcher, has made use of secondary data sources and items.

The difficulties that were faced during the study include lack of the necessary literature to be reviewed especially with regard to in the specified sector of industry, and the absence of cooperation from some institutional officials upon conducting interviews and requesting for company record materials. Further more, the time provided for the study has, unquestionably, posed some limitation for bringing exhaustive lists of factors into view.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Over the last five decades, trade unions in Ethiopia have evolved and experienced so many ups and downs. Owing to the relentless efforts of workers, currently there are plenty of trade unions, a considerable number of workers federations and a confederation. At the national level, the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions [CETU] claims to represent about 300,000 workers organized in 431 basic unions and 9 federations. The law [labour proclamation 377/2003, ch2 Art.124] requires the management to meet and confer with elected union representatives when making decisions which affect pay, hours of employment, or working conditions. When unionized employees are dissatisfied with pay or other job related factors, the company faces a possibility of a strike or other form of collective action designed to pressure the firm to respond to employees' concerns. Managers, to this end, need to understand the basics of labor relations and labor law to handle day-to-day labor management relations effectively.

The presence of a union mounts the pressure on the management for a watchful and prudent policies and human resource practices. Human resource specialists in labor relations can help managers develop tactics and strategies to work constructively with the union and its representatives in areas such as negotiating the terms of a

new labor contract, interpreting a labor contract, or responding to an employee grievance.

A union is basically an organization that represents employees' interests to management on issues such as wages, working hours and working conditions. Employees participate in administering the union and support its activities with union dues and fees meant for financing its activities and services. The law [proclamation 377/2003, article III] protects employees' rights to join and participate in unions. It also requires employers to bargain and confer with the union over certain employment issues that affect employees' welfare.

Employee unions are brought into existence, usually, with a thought of securing a better bargaining stands. Many studies in the area disclosed that employees opt for establishing unions when they feel threatened, insecure, and generally dissatisfied with certain aspects of the job. Workers consider establishment of unions, as ensuring higher wages and better benefits, as a means of being heard by management and securing uniform treatment, and lastly they see unionization as a solution to their problems. Higher educational institutions are established with specific objectives of training and producing qualified human capital required for economic development, conducting research undertakings purposeful of indicating problem areas and disseminating results to

the best interest of stakeholders. Since 1998 G.C., more than 18 Private Higher Educational Institutions (PHEIs) are sharing the contribution made to the sector by public higher learning institutions in producing educated manpower. According to some studies conducted in the sector, instructors in these institutions usually complain about so many aspects of the job and the management. Managerial practices observed in these institutions are more of job-centered and seldom consider human aspects of the job. This being the case, workers in these organizations hardly attempted to set up unions.

Here
TV

Some issues,
How many?
Who are
they?



STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is quite apparent that business companies combine capital, land, entrepreneurial and human resources in order to perform their activities and consequently bring about the product to their customers. Among the above-mentioned resources, human resource stands out to be the most crucial one as it determines how other resources are to be utilized. Setting up systems where by organizational resources can be managed appropriately is vital for success. Companies organize units, via these systems, so as to manage their capitals, land use, entrepreneurial ventures and human resources. Human Resources Management is usually observed as being one of the difficult tasks to be undertaken by company management. This case is intensified in a competitive business environment where employees are gaining a better bargaining position

Workers do have certain rights that must be honored by employers with no preconditions. Usually, employers specify the do's and the don'ts together with the rights and responsibilities of each worker. But some companies try to take best advantages of some situations by going against the will, and basically the rights of the workers. It is an almost usual tendency that employees are unfairly treated and were made to individually confront with organizations unquestionably denying them a bargaining power. To avert such

conditions for too many employees within different organizations are setting up labor unions and registering themselves in the National Labor Union Federations.

Higher Educational Institutions are engaged in the activity of offering educational services to their customers. In these institutions, the workers (i.e. instructors and lecturers) are in a continuous touch with customers (i.e. students) and this call for a more concerned and delicate management as it may otherwise result in an unfavorable repercussion. However, the existing scenario and the actual trend are not as they should have been. Employees, by far, could be regarded as not being treated as they ought to and in almost all of the instants they were not able to claim their rights and act in unions for securing a better bargaining stands.

why so?

To this end, the research was focused on identifying those major factors which deterred employees from achieving higher bargaining stands by setting up officially accepted unions and consequently undertook a speculative scrutiny on the identified factors with the intent of offering appropriate resolutions.

- Are ~~they~~ there any legal hurdles?
- Is there any awareness among employees?

delicate or delicate?

THE RATIONALE



It is quite natural that the main aim of most business enterprises is obtaining the maximum profit by successfully satisfying their customers and thereby enhancing their brand acceptance which ultimately grants unleashing and uninterrupted long term success.

Private higher educational institutions are, these days, in a neck-to-neck competition. Being subjected to limited number of customers, the pace to win competition is gaining a boost in momentum. The most important resource that these institutions are using is human resource and specifically the teachers that they have. It is bone certain that customers will make an institution their specific choice if they feel convinced that the value that they are expecting to be provided by an institution is superior to any other institution. Apart from other elements, the quality of education maintains the highest weight when customers make their own value analysis. The quality of education in turn is heavily dependent up on the qualification and motivation of the teachers. Motivation undoubtedly plays a vital role in delivering the required service. Employees feel de-motivated when and where they feel the gap between their expectation and what is actually there in for them. At too many instances, teachers at these institutions do not feel secured and motivated which as a result

seriously weaken the act developing belongingness to the institutions. Therefore, the main reason behind undertaking this study is to clearly illicit the managerial and employee centered problems hindering the efforts made by employees to safeguard their rights and as a result bring about motivated employees which are willing to stretch their potentials so as to perform to their best.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The research aimed at obtaining a result which is supported with evidential facts about the major elements acting as set backs for the unionization interests and efforts and make prioritizations so as to shade light on the most important ones. The researcher for this purpose considered randomly selected private higher educational institutions. In these institutions the workers are normally categorized as academic and non-academic staffs. It is obvious that the characteristics and interests of academic staff members are very different from that of the non-academic ones. The researcher, with this context, has considered only academic staff members. Further more, with the thought of securing convenience, the researcher was limited only in to observing private higher educational institutes located in and around Addis Ababa. Apart from these the research is merely descriptive in a sense that it is limited to listing out the

factors laying setbacks in unionization efforts and verifying their level of influences using ranks as a parameter.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is as clear as crystal that almost every research activity will be faced with certain elements which bring about drawback on the effectiveness of the study.

With respect to this study, certain limitations which have had some sort of influence over the preparation of a well-organized and fully dependable material were identified in advance. These limitations were:-

1. Lack of necessary literature to be reviewed with reference to the specific industry under consideration.
2. The unwillingness of some institutional officials to offer the desired information for the study.
3. The shortage of time required for undertaking a full fletched study where by exhaustive listing of variables would have been made possible.
4. The lack of sufficient budget for undertaking the research in the appropriate manner.
5. The lack of access to certain records, which were attributed to many causes.

OBJECTIVES

General Objectives

The research study has a general objective of identifying the major and relevant factors discouraging activities of setting up labor unions in private higher educational institutions.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives that the research targets to achieve are;

1. To identify factors discouraging the formation of trade unions.
2. To prioritize the factors on the basis their degree of influence.
3. To obtain first hand information on the feelings that employees have towards the management and towards establishment of unions within the specified scope.
4. To come up with some propositions as to curbing the problems to the best interest of both the employers and employees.

METHODOLOGY

A. The Data

The study made a modest attempt to identify the elements deterring the establishment of labor unions in private higher educational institutions. The Researcher has viewed the data from two angles. With regard to the type of data needed, the study particularly rummaged around for different personal, organizational and environmental factors standing against unionization efforts. The research has, directly or indirectly, accessed the above-mentioned data by using data sources such as;

- Questionnaires distributed to randomly selected sample instructors and lecturers.
- Interviews conducted on responsible institutional officials
- Organizational secondary data items ,and
- Other relevant literatures

B. Method of data collection

As to the method of data collection, both primary and secondary data items were used. Primary data sources like questionnaires filled in by teachers in selected institutions and interviews made with responsible officials constituted the undertakings. On the other hand secondary data items were collected from published and

unpublished materials related to the issue. The combined use of these, undeniably, provided outcomes that are of a higher degree of reliability. Furthermore institutional records were also observed.

C. The sampling method

The method to be applied in identifying the sample elements is of utmost importance for arriving at sound and reliable findings. Concerning the sampling design for the questionnaires, the researcher first applied cluster-sampling mechanism for deciding the three private higher educational institutions to be included in the study. Then from each of these institutions, 20 randomly selected teachers were made to fill the questionnaires. The total sample size for this study was sixty. 60

D. Method of data analysis

The research made a kind of inquiry into identifying independent variables that are considered to pose influences on the dependent variable, which is 'setting up unions'. Having collected the relevant data for the research, it was compiled, organized, cross-referenced, processed and interpreted carefully so as to minimize non-sampling errors. The data processing was made to identify descriptive and inferential statistics tools which supplemented the interpretation activity. In due course of the processing, tables, pie-charts, bar graphs, frequency polygons were used to allow for a decent understanding of the collected data. On the top of these, certain

with whom

statistical applications like sampling distributions and confidence interval estimations were employed for the interpretation phase.

Organization of the study

The project paper contains four chapters. The first chapter contains the introduction which is followed by the statement of the problem, the rationale, scope of the study, limitations of the study, and the methodology. Chapter two discusses the literature review where different researches and their findings are highlighted. In chapter three, Results and discussion are presented. The fourth chapter covers conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is vividly understood that organizations maintain clear sets of objectives to be accomplished in due courses of their operations. Most companies set out survival, profitability or growth while undertaking activities and associated efforts. To this end they procure human resource so as to get things done and their by secure pre-established and pre-defined destinies. Handling and dealing with human resources activities, by far, take the lion share of organizational management. As human resource is a very vital resource that can enable a firm to make use of other organizational resources, it is an utmost importance to establish human resource management tools, procedures, policies and guidelines with a watchful thought.

As per the Indian Institute of Personnel Management, personnel management alternatively termed labor management or staff management represents the task of dealing with human relationships within an organization. Academically the three aspects are the welfare aspects concerned with working conditions and amenities such as canteens, crèches, housing, personal problems of workers, schools and recreation, the second aspect deals with recruitment and placement of employees, remuneration, promotion,

incentives, productivity etc., while the third aspect is all about industrial relation which is concerned with trade negotiation, settlement of industrial disputes, joint consultation and collective bargaining. The concern area of this study is the aforementioned third aspect of personnel management.

Trade unions are usually established with a primary objective of promoting and protecting the interests of its members. One thing which needs to be remembered is that a trade union, besides fighting for the rights of workers, must also see to it that they are discharging their responsibilities towards assigned work. A study made by Mulugeta [2004] on the roles of trade unions, clearly made an assertion that the labor union in a case company positively contributed to the accomplishment of objectives by enhancing the creation of harmonious work environment.

In spite of the fact that many studies and practical experiences verified the importance of labor unions in expediting company's efforts towards goals and objective accomplishment, most managers and company officials still maintain a negative attitude towards unionization efforts and extend their efforts even to the extent of resisting their establishment.

The functions of a trade union are very comprehensive. Its functions are generally classified into those which are militant or protective and those which are fraternal, ministrant or positive. Under the former group of functions, a trade union is primarily concerned with obtaining better conditions of work and of employment for its members through such militant activities as strikes and boycotts which are generally resorted to when efforts at collective bargaining fail to bear results. The latter function relate to the provisions of such benefits as sickness and accident payments. A trade union also offers financial support to its members during strikes and lockouts and during periods of temporary unemployment.

Efforts of labor associations, if not outwardly, are influenced by the government. The Ethiopian government dreads the presence of well organized labor unions, federations and confederations for fear that it may discourage foreign investors, and as a result it has appeared a bit restricted in ratifying firm proclamations favoring the working class. However, marked changes with such regard have been witnessed due to pressures from labor unions and federations internally and the International Labor Organization (ILO) externally.

The constitution of Ethiopia contains a full chapter (chapter 3) on fundamental rights and freedoms. The fundamental rights have been grouped under the heading, "Human Rights" and "Democratic

Rights". The constitution guarantees rights and freedoms of equal protection under the law, freedom of speech and expression, freedom of assembly and association. General freedom of association is laid down in the constitution (Article 31, "For any cause or purpose"), and specified in article 42, "Rights of Labor", which reads: "Factory and Service Sector Employees, Peasants, Agricultural Workers, other Rural Workers, Government Employees Below a Certain Level of Responsibility and the nature of whose employment so requires, shall have the right to form associations for the purpose of improving their economic and employment conditions. This right shall include the right to form trade union and other associations to negotiate with their employers and other organizations affecting their interests".

On the top of this, a consistent criticism and pressure from the International Labor Organization (ILO) experts, facilitated the adoption of labor proclamations one after the other. The labor proclamation No. 42/1993 has served its purpose for a decade in spite of uninterrupted opposition and critique from ILO experts. In 2004, a new proclamation No. 377/2003 has been made effective. This proclamation asserts the right of workers, without distinction whatsoever, to form organizations to organize their activities without interference from the public authorities and not to be deceived by administrative authority (Article III (1), (2) and (7)). In addition to

this, it has clearly stated the minimum requirements of membership for setting up trade unions to be 10.

Apart from unions under the umbrella of CETU, there are different organizations that are not recognized as unions under Article 3 (2) of the labour proclamation. The wide range of exclusion gave rise to uncertainties and problems. In particular, difficulties arise because of the insufficiently clear definition of some of the categories, such as managerial employees or because of the rationale for excluding some categories, such as teachers.

The situation of the Ethiopian teachers association (ETA) has been a cause of deep concern for some time. An important step towards resuming a normal situation has been the release of Dr.Woldesemayat, president of ETA, following a decision of the Supreme Court in May 2002 after he had been arrested in 1996 and sentenced in 1999 to a prison term of 15 years. However in March 2003, the ILO's committee on freedom of association reiterated its concern on this matter and requested the government to amend its legislation so that teachers, like other workers, have the right to form organizations of their own choosing and to negotiate collectively, and to keep it informed of development in this respect, including the current status legislative reforms regards trade union pluralism and the labour rights of civil servants. In its latest communication for the 2004 report of the committee of experts on

the application of conventions and recommendations the Ethiopian government specified that teachers are free to form associations to promote their occupational interest and that those working in government institutions are governed by the civil servant law, while those working in private undertakings are governed by the labour law.

Too many studies made into formation of trade unions addressed that having one industry wide labor union is of a considerable importance as it strengthens its influence and avoids the case of inter-rivalry of trade unions. According to Sarkar[2000], "One Industry should have Recognition to one Union only so that Workers' Problem will have quite and Satisfactory Solution". The Ethiopian government with this regard made it clear that industrial unions setting up their respective federations are to be included under a national confederation, namely, Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU).

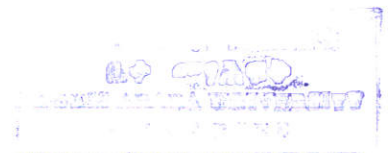
There are 9 industrial labor federation classifications as:

1. Farming, forestry, hunting and fishing national industrial union
2. Mining and quarries national industrial union
3. National manufacturing industrial union
4. Electric, gas and water national industrial union

5. Construction national industrial union
6. Whole sale and retail national industrial union
7. Transport and communication national industrial union
8. Finance, bank and insurance national industrial union
9. Public services national industrial union

A study made by the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions [CETU](2005: 123) indicated that the farming industry stands first in the number of registered individual labor unions and in the rate of registration. It is followed by the manufacturing and public service industries.

Private higher educational institutions are included in the last industrial category which is 'Public Service Industries'. A cross-sectional study conducted by CETU [2005:212] indicated a 0.25% average increase in membership. However, almost none of it is contributed by the education sub-sector and specifically the private higher educational category. This may be attributed to many reasons. However the general and outwardly observable aspect is the fact that the private higher educational sector is in its early stage of development. Nevertheless, the concern of the research is to identify the specific other reasons which stood on the way of employees unionization attempts.



A study made by Jain and Agarwal [pp.1341, 2002], on Indian trade unions movement identified several difficulties and obstacles to the development of labor unions and ascertained the case that most obstacles take their root from the labor itself. They put forward the following enumerations. For the purpose of easy observation, the factors are sub-divided into:

A. Difficulties from worker's side:

- Illiteracy of workers
- Migratory nature of labor
- Lack of unity and awareness
- Lack of inside leadership
- Small size of trade unions
- Multiplicity of trade unions
- Inter-rivalry of trade unions

B. Difficulties on the part of trade-union:

- Uneven growth of trade-unions
- Weak financial resources
- Instability among trade unions
- Narrow outlook
- Irregularities in the working of trade unions
- Lack of efficient workers and delicate trade union leaders

C. Opposition by employers

D. Government policy

The idea of setting up trade unions, usually, emerges from the prevailing circumstances that the workers are made to be exposed to. A study undertaken by Solomon (2005) convincingly demonstrated the positive relationship between the degree of insecurity and the tendency of workers to set up labor unions. Workers, when feeling threatened, look for some company so that they will defend their rights full heartedly. In addition to the felling of insecurity, so many other factors force workers to join themselves and form trade unions. Upon joining labor unions members are, usually, required to make periodic contributions for funding the union. As a result, they expect some objectives to be satisfied. First workers want to prevent management from taking any unilateral action which may be irrational; prejudicial to their vital interest like transfer, promotion by favoritism, layoffs, punishment etc. secondly, union membership is thought as offering secure means of protection from economic dangers beyond their control such as accident, death, illness, unemployment, old age etc. Most importantly workers want a strong front for communicating their feelings, options, reactions, grievances etc. and secure effective voice in decision making process on those matters which affect their interest directly.

Despite the aforementioned benefits and purposes, most workers in some industries rarely give a closer thought into it. Employees in most private higher institutions are not, by any means, exceptions to this. In most tendencies, the workers were exposed to conditions which threaten their welfare. Nevertheless, not enough efforts have already been observed into setting up unions. This leads into a firm conclusion that there are factors keeping workers away or hindering the activities of unionization efforts. It is, thus, the main concern and orientation point of this study to pin point these factors with the maximum possible degree of clarity.

Plenty lots of factors can be attributable to the under development of labor associations in companies specifically and in industries generally. Illiteracy of workers is one of the factors predominantly observed specifically in manufacturing industry which is characterized by having their considerable human resource portion made up of illiterate or semi-literate workers. It is apparent that such workers, as they have limited education, are not that enlightened and usually do not value unionization. On the top of this, they consider their fate as though it is attached to the current organization and feel like they can not get employed in another company. To this end, they try to show the management their

obedience at the expense of almost anything. Formal education will help individuals have an enlightened and broad outlook.

Another factor is the migratory nature of workers which can be reasoned for many other factors. In almost all conditions, it is an utmost importance to have a stable labor force and environment so as to set up trade unions. It is when employees get to know each other and have common areas of concern that their unionization efforts flourish. A supporting argument was advanced by Sarkar (2000: 213) who stressed the labor tenure stability as having an implication on the communication of workers which ultimately limits the possibility of organized efforts. Private Higher Educational Institutions are usually characterized by a relatively higher labor turnover rate. A study made by Kinetibeb (2006) on one private higher education institution indicated a comparatively higher rate of labor turnover that was 15% per annum. More over, the industry is very much characterized by a frequent introduction of new staff members. Separation rate is also equivalently high.

Lack of unity and awareness is one among the common factors impeding the development of unions. In most cases, when employees lose common grounds and common areas of concerns, creation of the urge towards organizing workers is very difficult. Some organizations and their top managements apply the "Divide-

and-Rule' kind of system where they expose different groups of workers to different treatments and circumstances.

This kind of act by the management destructs the possibility of organized efforts. This practice has long been, and still is, a mechanism to disintegrate a possible common feeling and consequently develop a sprit of mistrust among different working groups. Sometimes workers, even though maintaining similar areas of concerns, do not perceive the attitude and belief that unions defend their rights and enables them to have a strong foothold. In line with this most workers, due to lack of awareness, think that setting up unions would rather negatively influence them as it invites a direct and face-to-face confrontations with the employer. To this end most of the workers, usually, get into a feeling of reluctance to get themselves organized.

Another important factor is the lack of inside leadership. There is an argument that leaders are rather born, not created. In subordination with this, leadership requires so many personal and psychological traits. These traits coupled with a strong commitment bring about a real leader. The presence of a leader makes workers behavior consistent, efforts co-operative and moral high. As a matter of fact, every group, may it be small or big, requires a strong leader to guide, inspire and direct its members towards the attainment of a

particular objective. Jain and Agarwal (pp. 1297, 2002) have very aptly remarked that, 'The will to do is facilitated by leadership and lukewarm desires for achievements are transferred into a burning passion for successful accomplishment by the skillful use of leadership'. Without leadership, a group disintegrates, destroys its team spirit and fritters away its energy. Hence, the absence of this crucial element makes the act of unionization a bit out of reach.

Another aspect that matters to a considerable extent is the size of employees. (i.e. the number of employees). There have been some outright arguments about the relationship between size and group formation. Some argue that the smaller the size the higher the tendency for individuals to get attached to one another and have a spirit of unity. However, some argue to the contrary and supplement supporting reasons by emphasizing on the increased possibility of having enlightened leaders. Letting these arguments aside, size matters in a sense that the functioning of the union requires involvement of individuals and contribution of fund to run its operations, which is hardly attainable in small size workers environment.

Weak financial resources, usually, stands in the way of setting up trade unions. This appears to be emphasized more in organizations

where workers are offered low salaries and allowances. Financial issues present convincing reasons for making decisions on some proposed ideas. Despite the fact that workers maintain a strong enthusiasm for setting up unions, they barely make any move at a condition where they feel that it disturbs their states quo. Virtually all trade unions require financial resources to be collected from members in a form of membership fee and periodic contribution. This collected finance is to be used for running its activities and for handling some contingencies. The size of the contributions, and how regularly that they are made, determines the strength of the union and the longevity of the association.

Perhaps the strongest and fierce opposition emerge from the side of the employers. Too many employers, for one reason or another, maintain a stand where they perform anti-labor union activities. These is observed by many as a misconception for the presence of labor unions does a lot goods to organizations in creating some senses of friendships, cooperation and fostering harmonious environment that ultimately boost productivity and efficiency. studies [Tafesse, 2004) undertaken recently indicated that management applies negative treatment that grows even into firing so as to discourage any movement that may potentially turnout establishing unions. However, this study was a kind of case study

which seriously delimited its scope to considering one company only. More over, as it hadn't taken management viewpoints it is considered as just being a mere reflection of the workers.

Diversity of the work force in customs, culture, race, background and areas of specialization unquestionably poses some limitations in the relationships that they form. Closer ties and relationships are usually prerequisite to the establishment of unions friendly links give birth to organized efforts. It is something as clear as crystal that getting along individuals with marked deviations in concerns and traits is a very difficult task. Generally, the reality on the ground is that such people can easily disagree than they reach into agreement and share common ideas.

In addition the things mentioned above, the very nature of the job determines the possibility and requirement of setting up trade unions. To a noticeably large extent Sarkar (pp. 137, 2000) demonstrated that in organization which emphasizes on having only the job done and follow a laissez-faire kind of leadership, workers secure a less tendency to create informal groups which are spring boards for trade union formations. In most of the private higher educational institutions, workers, especially the teachers, stay in the compound for a very limited time and consequently, they hardly form informal work groups.

Apart from the above mentioned factors, others like the existence of inter-rivalry in and among labor unions, the narrower outlook that is maintained by both members and leaders, and the aspect of having a geographically separated place of working, which undoubtedly brings about a bridge in communication may have some effects in hindering the creation of organizing of such a kind.

By and large, as labor unions are formed with the intent of improving the workers bargaining power and contributing to an enhanced labor welfare practices, it usually flourishes in working environments and institutions which are characterized by autocratic management and/or traditional styles of administration which considers workers as insensible. On the other hand, the feeling that workers have about the states quo determines the possibility for a move into being organized. In other words, it is very unlikely for there to be any thought of setting up one if the workers feel satisfied with the way things are in the organization and the way they are treated by the management. The preliminary observation made by the researched indicated that the conditions in the selected private higher institutions are not that much satisfying rather the vast majority of the workers maintain the idea that things have to be improved in various areas of concern. Consequently, the study, relying up on this fact, will try to make an intervention so as to point

out the factors influencing the setting up of unions within the specified scope of coverage and handover recommended solutions to minimize their influence.

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The establishment of labor unions was proved to be a mutual benefit for the organization as well as the workers. However, at so many tendencies, organizations were observed resisting the establishment of trade unions. The problems in and around effecting organized efforts can not only be attributed to organizations and their management but also it emerges from the workers themselves. Problems like lack of interest and commitment, lack of unity, absence of stability of tenure may be some among the many.

The establishment of trade unions requires some sense of dissatisfaction in a certain aspect of the job as a prerequisite. If companies and their management engage themselves in some activities of maintaining the welfare of workers, establishment of labor associations may sound as though it is not worthy an undertaking. Thus organizations must maintain an acceptable level of labor compensation and improved working conditions for the workforce, as well as the mobilization of other corporate resources' productivity in an atmosphere of relative industrial peace, and tied to the quality of labor relations in organization.

The actual fact on the ground, when it comes to private higher educational institutions, is that employers do not usually appear to be really concerned about the feelings and requirements of the labor

force. The availability of par-time workers in the market has contributed a lot for employers to have a better bargaining stand than the regular employees. At times, employers are observed creating nuisance to the extent of threatening workers and making them feel unsecured. To this end, mostly workers in these institutions restrict themselves from initiating organizing efforts. The research was undertaken with the intention of identifying and prioritizing factors that hinder the establishment of trade unions in these institutions.

The study adopted an approach, which initially identified some factors through preliminary observations and secondary data source items. Together with these the study used questionnaire, distributed to randomly selected instructors in the institutions, unscheduled interview and institutional records. After the use of these additional tools, the researcher has been able to come up with some more additional factors which have, seriously, limited the creation and development of labor unions.

According to the gathered information, from the questionnaire, 44 males and 13 females gave their responses. The researcher used cluster sampling method for the thought that situations and working conditions are more or less similar in the institutions.



The research, to this end, has identified the following lists of factors.

These are;

- i. Small size of employees (small number of employees)
- ii. Opposition from the employers
- iii. Migratory nature of workers
- iv. Nature of the job
- v. Diversity in customs, culture and race and background
- vi. Lack of inside leadership
- vii. Lack of interest and commitment
- viii. Weak financial strength
- ix. Geographical separation of workers

The researcher, herewith, made a modest attempt into closely observing those factors which were found to be of a paramount implication towards setting up trade unions in the case institutions.

I. Opposition from the Employers

Opposition from the employers has been identified as being one of the factors discouraging unionization efforts. It is overt that workers who held administrative position, usually, tie themselves closely to the organization and take the sides of the management in any effort that safeguard the interest of the management. According to the study, about 28% of the respondents maintain administrative post while the remaining 72% is respondents were ordinary workers. Concerning the management responsiveness towards the major

concerns of workers, the study made it clear that the majority (60%) feels that the management does not take the concerns of workers in to consideration. This, unquestionably, brings about a strong desire for an organized effort. On the top of this, about 60% of the respondents remarked that their management adopted, and still is pursuing a very poor style of management. The style of management observed in the case of private higher educational institutions is too far from being modern. In most tendencies, the management follows the “rule of thumb” kind of management.

The majority of the respondents [70%], while asked about the effort that they had made so far concerning unionization, expressed that no matter how enthusiastic and eager that they feel they are seldom encouraged for the vast majority of the workers fear the challenges that the management will most possibly pose.

Furthermore, the respondents were made to rank ‘the opposition from the employer’ among other eleven possible factors. According to the ranks made [Fig.1] about 26% of the respondents ranked it first as hindering the establishment of trade unions.

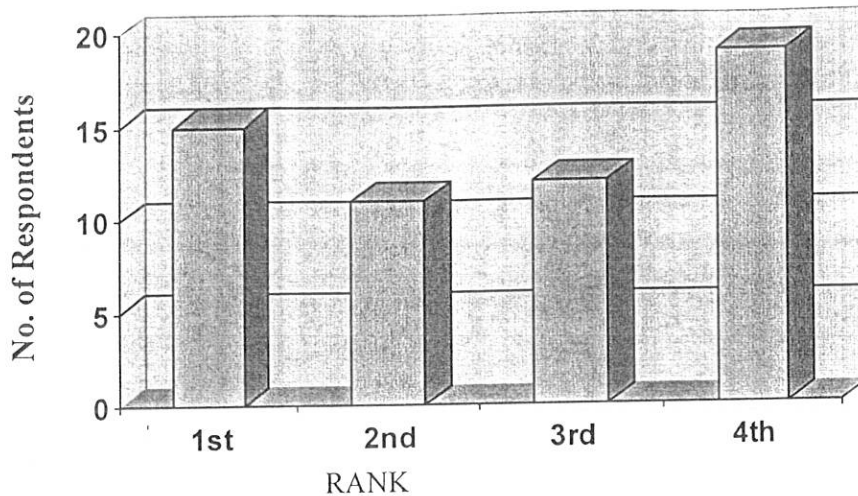


Figure-1: A graph showing the rank together with corresponding numbers of respondents for 'opposition from employers'

By using the sample ranking information, the average rank was found to be

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Sample mean rating} &= \frac{(f_1 \times 1) + (f_2 \times 2) + (f_3 \times 3) + (f_4 \times 4)}{f_1 + f_2 + f_3 + f_4} \\
 &= \frac{(15 \times 1) + (11 \times 2) + (12 \times 3) + (19 \times 4)}{15 + 11 + 12 + 19} \\
 &= \frac{149}{57} \\
 &= 2.614 \\
 &\sim 2.6
 \end{aligned}$$

Thus according to the sample data, the opposition from employers maintains a 2.6 sample average ranking by the respondents. This result underscores the above factor as having a sample average of higher rank* which in turn signifies the fact that it is taken by workers as impeding the possibility of forming trade unions. The researcher, furthermore, computed the confidence interval estimate of the population average ranking with the 95% confidence level as under;

[* the most important factor ranked 1]

$$\text{Sample Average Ranking} \pm Z \frac{\alpha}{z} , S_{\bar{x}}$$

Where, $S_{\bar{x}}$ = the sample standard deviation in ranking

$$\alpha = \text{significance level} = 1-95\% = \underline{0.05}$$

$$S_{\bar{x}} = 1.196 = \sqrt{\frac{\sum f_i(x_i - \bar{x})^2}{\sum f_i}}$$

Where ;

f_i = frequency

x = each rank

\bar{x} = Average rank

$$Z_{\frac{0.05}{2}} = Z_{0.025} = 1.96$$

Thus the confidence interval ranking is;

$$2.6 \pm 1.96 \times 1.196$$

$$\approx 2.6 \pm 2.34416$$

$$\approx 2.6 - 2.34 \leq \text{population average ranking} \leq 2.6 + 2.34$$

$$\approx 0.26 \leq \text{population average ranking} \leq 4.94$$

The above estimate indicates that at a 95% confidence level the population average ranking will range between 0.26 and 4.94. This clearly indicates that this factor is one among the major factors forwarded by workers as destructing their efforts to organize. The standard deviation of 1.2 indicates that there is no that much significant variation in the responses given concerning this factor. Here one thing to be emphasized is that some employer's discriminate based on trade union membership and perform an activity called **union busting** to prevent union membership among their staff. Furthermore, at so many occasions, management in

private higher educational institutions was observed applying severe disciplinary measure on workers who have started some moves in to persuading others about the idea of forming unions.

II. Lack of Interest and Commitment by Workers

For one reason or another, Instructors in the institutions appeared to have less interest towards bringing themselves in to unison. Some efforts observed failed due to lack of commitment. As per the study result, about 25% of the respondents feel that it is to no, particular, avail to set up unions. Instead, they consider such movements as making their organizational life worse off. Concerning the remaining 75% respondents who firmly believe in unionization for betterment of workers welfare, there seem to be no clear move into converting what they believe in ideal terms into real essence of practice.

The attitude that the respondents have, about their personal expectation of how long they will stay in their current institutions, is clearly indicative of and may serve as a reason for the lack of interest in an activity that undoubtedly should extends to long term.

Proposed years	No. of Respondents	% age of Respondents
Below 1 Year	-	0%
Between 1 and 2 Years	9	16%
For More than 2 years	28	44%
Have no idea	20	35%
TOTAL	57	100%

Table-1: A table showing respondents propositions to the number of years that they wish to stay in their current institution

Concerning the rank that this factor was given in comparison with other factors was as 16 individuals ranked it 1st, 13 ranked it 2nd, 21 ranked it 3rd and 7 Individuals ranked it 4th. Consequently, the average Rank is as

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Sample Average} &= \frac{(16 \times 1) + (13 \times 2) + (21 \times 3) + (7 \times 4)}{57} \\ &= \frac{16 + 26 + 63 + 28}{57} = 133/57 = 2.3 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the lack of interest and commitment, from the side of workers, maintain a sample average rank of 2.3 which is a better ranking than the previous factor. The population estimate of the average rank for this factor is determined as;

Sample Average $\pm Z_{\frac{\alpha}{2}} \times S_{\bar{x}}$, where, once again, a confidence level of 95% is selected to be applied.

$$S_{\bar{x}} = \sqrt{\frac{\sum f_i (x_i - \bar{x})^2}{\sum f_i}} = \underline{1.015}$$

$$Z_{\frac{0.05}{2}} = Z_{0.025} = 1.96$$

Thus, the confidence interval estimate for the population average rank is;

$$\text{Sample Average Ranking} \pm Z_{\frac{\alpha}{2}} \times S_{\bar{x}}$$

$$\Rightarrow 2.3 \pm 1.015 \times 1.96$$

$$\Rightarrow 2.3 \pm 1.9894$$

$$\Rightarrow 0.31 \leq \text{population average rank} \leq 4.3$$

According to the above result one can state with the 95% confidence level that the population of teachers in private higher educational institutions ranks this factor in the range of 0.31 and 4.3. This indicates, clearly, that the majority of workers in these institutions consider the lack of interest and commitment as a main reason for not having organized.

III. Migratory Nature of Workers [High Labour Turn over Rate]

The private higher educational sector is characterized by highly migratory nature of workers. Much of the jobs in almost all these institutions are being done by par-timers. Records indicated that most full time employees in these institutions have rarely stayed more than 3 years in their organizations. The work force in these institutions is characterized by frequent introduction of new staff members. It is, therefore, clear that such working environment do not pave ways and foster the development of organized efforts. Studies indicated repeatedly about the high labor turnover that the sector is subjected to. Secondary data sources manifested that the case institutions maintain a grand average turn over rate of 12%. Higher labor turnover rate contributes to the absence of stable

working environment that fosters relationship formation which set out conditions for a further unionization efforts. The excerpt from the study, as depicted below, shows this tendency.

Rank	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th
Number of Respondents	9	10	8	7	9	3	11

Table-2: A table showing the ranks corresponding to ‘migratory nature of workers’ as a factor deterring unionization efforts.

This factor maintains a sample average rank of;

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Sample average =} & \frac{(1 \times 9) + (10 \times 2) + (8 \times 3) + (7 \times 4) + (9 \times 5) + (3 \times 6) + (11 \times 7)}{57} \\
 \text{Ranking} & \\
 & = \frac{9 + 20 + 24 + 28 + 45 + 18 + 77}{57} \\
 & = 3.9
 \end{aligned}$$

As can be understood from the sample mean result it can be concluded that this factor has a roughly average influence over the effecting of unionization.

Iv. Lack of Unity and Awareness

Another decisive factor is the fact that employees do not maintain the required level of awareness about the benefits of being in unions. Equally important is the fact that they have little know-how about the procedures needed to set up trade unions. According to the study, 56% of the respondents admitted that they have a poor or very poor level of awareness about the legal and constitutional

provisions concerning trade unions. It is, but, only 18% of them who have responded confirming that they have sufficient level of awareness about the provisions. [Table-3]

Level of Awareness	No. of Respondents	% age
Very Good	3	5%
Good	7	12%
Satisfactory	15	27%
Poor	23	40%
Very Poor	9	16%
TOTAL	57	10%

Table-3: A table showing the number and percentage of workers with regard to their awareness of the legal and constitutional provisions.

In addition to the low level of awareness, lack of unity among workers has been raised as contributing to the absence of initiations towards efforts of organization. Workers in these institutions lack unity due to many reasons. Organizational discrimination in treatments and remuneration is one among the many reasons to be raised with this regard.

Concerning respondents' ranking designed for prioritizing the factors, lack of unity and awareness was ranked 1st by 7 Individuals, 2nd by 9 Individuals, 3rd by 7b Individuals, 4th by 18 individuals, 5th

by 8 Individuals and 6th by 8 individuals resulting in an average ranking of 3.61 as is shown under.

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Sample Average Rank} &= \frac{(1 \times 7) + (2 \times 9) + (3 \times 7) + (4 \times 18) + (5 \times 8) + (6 \times 8)}{57} \\ &= \frac{7 + 18 + 21 + 72 + 40 + 48}{57} \\ &= \underline{\underline{3.61}}\end{aligned}$$

The result indicates that this factor has a more than average rating which implies that it limits the efforts of unionization to a large degree of extent.

Apart from the above discussed factors, the respondents as well as secondary data items acknowledged the impacts of diversity in customs, cultures, race and back grounds as having a certain implication. The study made a point that workers in these institutions do have marked diversity in the above mentioned parameters which has resulted in defining their behaviors and patterns of relationships. Concerning the racial diversity, the study confirmed that 28% of the respondent as being Amhara, 25% Tigre, 32% Oromo and 5% Gurage. This clearly shows that there is a marked social variation which sets its implication on the issue. Moreover, other aspects like their educational field of specialization, educational status and rank, unquestionably, set their mark on the case.

Nature of the job also defines the extent to which workers feel the urge towards setting up unions. Most of the instructors asserted that they have very busy schedules and had hardly any time for other activities and responsibilities. On the top of this, majority of them show up in the compound for a very limited hour of a day. As a result they have a less tendency for creating social ties that may have a good potential for growth in to unions.

Lack of inside leadership, which has close relations with the interest and commitment, the small size of employees and the geographical separation of workers at different branches were found to have contributed a lot in discouraging the establishment of trade unions. Here under will be the listing of some of these factors together with their average ranks and confidence estimates about population average ranks.

No.	Factors	Sample Average Rank	Confidence interval Estimate of population average rank
1	Lack of Interest and commitment	2.3	[0.31 4.3]
2	Opposition by Employers	2.6	[0.26 4.94]
3	Lack of Unity and Awareness	3.6	[0.2 8]
4	Migratory Nature of workers	3.9	[0.4 6.76]
5	Nature of the job	4.04	[0.8 7.21]
6	Diversity in cultures, custom, race and back ground	5.05	[1.01 9.09]
7	Absence of inside leadership	7	[2.48 10.12]
8	Small Size of Employees	7.9	[3.1 10.89]

Table-4: A Table showing the list of factors together with their average ranks.

Significant

As can be observed in the above table the sample average ranking shows the rating of the respondents according to the degrees of influences (from the most influencing to the least influencing). Therefore, the first three factors, as they maintain higher ranks, stood out being the most imposing factors. Whereas, the confidence interval estimate column shows the interval estimates of population ratings. These give a clear insight into the overall conditions that there is in the population of workers in the case organizations. According to these estimates, once again, the first three factors secured their positions indicating that they will also given priority rankings by the population if a census had been undertaken. To explain the interval estimate ratings, for instance, 'Lack of interest and commitment' maintained a an interval rank of [0.31 4.3] indicating that at the 95%confidence level it can be stated that the minimum possible average ranking that this factor will have having undertaken census is 4, whereas, it may have a maximum ranking of 0.31 indicating the case that it is a virtually critical factor.

By and large, the study has successfully attained its objective of identifying and making prioritization of the most acknowledge imposing factors that lay influences on the possibility of unionization and has made rankings of the relevant factors so as to give a clear picture into the case.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

CONCLUSION

It is essential to reiterate the importance of higher education as a social good even when it has to be provided through private means. Assuring quality of education has already taken various forms of expressions. However, little thought and consideration has been given to the actual providers of the service with regard to enhancing the quality of education for the good of the public. It has been repeatedly remarked that motivation serve as an important tool in boosting the performance of the teachers. This in turn, benefits the customers in particular and the economy at large.

The management in private higher educational institutions, usually, appears to overlook the importance of considering the teachers as contributing to the lion share their earnings. Instead, they are observed having a serious misconception of acting customer oriented at the expense of the teachers. The study made it clear that teachers in the sample private higher educational institutions do have plenty to complain about. However, even having sound and appropriate complaints to be presented to the management, they rarely present



the cases and actively confront the management for fear of creating unnecessary collision.

The study, to this end, has taken a root from these tendencies and has made enquiries into the reasons keeping the workers away from forming union which might have guaranteed them a strong bargaining stand. The study has undergone through different scientific methods and has been able to identify imposing and relevant factors limiting the establishment of trade unions in the case of private higher educational institutions.

Consequently, the study, through the reflection of the workers, identified factors like; lack of interest and commitment, opposition by employers, lack of unity and awareness, migratory nature of workers, nature of the job, diversity in cultures, custom, race and background, absence of internal leadership and the relatively small size of employees as setting drawbacks in unionization efforts.

RECOMMENDATION

The Researcher Believes that curbing the impacts of the factors identified requires cooperation and coordination among various stake holders. Stake holders like the trade unions confederation, the relevant trade unions federation, the national teachers association, the employers, and mainly the workers need to device means through which they can minimize the implications of the factors to the best interest of the constituents.

To tackle the factors which are taking roots from the workers' side general education and exposures are recommended. The interest and commitment of workers will be furthered through well intended and organized orientations about the legal and constitutional provisions which, in the mean time, highlight the benefits to be gained from unionized efforts. Furthermore, a change in the individualized attitude of workers should be effected and workers should feel unionized and should be made to confront the management in any unfair practices and in safeguarding their rights. These roles must be played by other organized unions and specifically the national unions confederation [CETU].

Another aspect of the solution is encouraging the social ties of employees. Social interactions undoubtedly foster unity and minimize the gap created by diversities in different aspects.

The attitude of employers' opposing the formation of trade unions should be changed. They should, rather, think labor as co-operative so they should be educated as such. By this, workers will co-operate with them and with both co-operation organizational objectives will, best, be fulfilled.

Furthermore steps should be taken to promote leadership from among the members of the working class in order to enable them to assume a responsible role in trade union activity. It should also be ensured that, when such leaders are developed, they are not victimized by their employers.

Concerning the legal provisions, inducement of penalties should be put into practice to curb a management's policy of victimization and similar unfair labor practices which prevent the emergence of internal leadership.

The media public should play constructive roles in facilitating the creation of awareness to the legal and constitutional provisions and they should be engaged in the activity of exposing some mal-practices so that they will get discouraged.

By and large, as mentioned above, it is the responsibility of various stake holders to limit the influence of the identified factors and concerted efforts are of utmost importance in giving appropriate resolutions to the identified problems.

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Appendix

QUESTIONNAIRE

To be filled by Academic Staff Members in Private Higher
Educational Institutions

Private Higher Educational Institutions (PHEIs) play prominent roles in enhancing the growth of the education sector. However, the quality of service has long been, and still is, far from being satisfactory. This can be reasoned by many interrelated factors. One of the grand reasons is the fact that workers are way from being motivated to the desired level of extent. It is apparent that trade unions provide enhance their welfare as well as motivation. The work force represents vital aspect of the process of delivering the service. With the exception of some weak efforts, there has not been any coordinated effort of organizing with a potential of growing into unions. Some of the efforts made, with this respect, failed to hit their target for one reason or another formation of trade unions in these institutions. The information that you provide will be of significant importance for undertaking the research entitled **“Hurdles Against Setting up Trade Unions: the case of selected private higher education institutions’**.

The study is conducted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for Master’s Degree in Business Administration (MBA). The data you provide will be used for academic purpose and is kept strictly confidential. Moreover, as the data is required for academic purpose, you are encouraged to freely express your views and concerns.

1. Sex

Male

Female

2. What is your racial category?

Amhara

Tigray

Other

Oromo

Gurage

3. Current education status

Doctorate degree Masters Degree

Degree

Other

4. Current institution that you are working

Unity University College

Africa Beza College

St. Mary's University College

5. If the answer for question No. 4 is academic staff what specific job title do you currently have

Assistant Graduate

Assistant Lecturer I

Assistant Lecturer II

Lecturer

other

6. Do you currently hold any administrative position

Yes

No

7. If 'Yes' specify your position _____

8. What is your salary range?

- Less than 1,500 birr 1501 – 2500 birr
 5,500 – 3,000 birr More than 3,000 birr

9. For how many years have you worked in this institution?

- Less than a year
 Between 1 to 2 years
 More than 2 years up to 3 years
 More than 3 years up to 5 years
 More than 5 years

Use the following abbreviations as a tool while responding to the following conditions.

V.P. = Very poor

S = Satisfactory

V.G. = Very Good

P = Poor

G = Good

		V.P.	P	S	G	V.G.
12	How do you see the compensation package in satisfying internal equity					
13	How do you rate the compensation package as compared to other organizations?					
14	How do you rate the management responsiveness to your concerns?					
15	How do you see the style of management					

16. Do you think setting up labour unions set workers in a better position?

- Yes No

24. For how many more years do you personally propose to stay in this institution?

- Below 1 year >1 to ≤ 2 years
 For more than 2 years

25. Are you currently involved in any informal group?

- Yes No

26. Have you ever raised the idea of forming organized efforts?

- Yes No

27. If, Yes, to what extent have you gone? _____

28. If, NO, why? _____

29. How do you rate your knowledge about setting up and running labour unions?

- Very Good Satisfactory
 Good Poor Very Poor

30. How do you see your potential and interest for being a leader?

- Very Good Satisfactory
 Good Poor Very Poor

Here, under, are 11 factors limiting the formation and development of labour unions in other different industries. Rank these factors on the basis of their influence on the formation of

labour union in your organization. Please start from 1 as the most influencing factor and 11 as the least influencing factor.

		Rank
I	Illiteracy of workers	
II	Migratory nature of workers (High Labour Turnover)	
III	Lack of unity and awareness	
IV	Lack of inside leadership	
V	Small size of employees	
VI	Weak financial resources due to low compensation	
VII	Opposition by employers	
VIII	Lack of interest and commitment by workers	
IX	Diversity in customs, culture, race and background	
X	Geographical separation of workers at different branches	
XI	The nature of the job	

*Hurdles of Setting up Trade Unions: a Case of Selected Private Higher
Educational Institutions in Ethiopia*

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Declared by

Ato Yamlaksira Shewangizaw Getachew
Student



Signature

July 28, 2007
Date

ID No GSR/1411/98

Confirmation by Advisor

DR. Shweta Pande, Assistant Professor
Advisor



Signature

July 28, 2007
Date