



**Practices and Challenges of Employee Relations, in Yekatit Paper
Converting PLC**

**A Thesis Submitted to Addis Ababa University School of Commerce
for the Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Masters of
Arts in Human Resource Management**

By:

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**The Practices and Challenges of Employee Relations, The Case of
Yekatit Paper Converting PLC**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of
Masters of Arts Degree in Human Resource Management**

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Declaration

I, Daniel Mathewos Hemacha, Registration Number, GSD/1519/08 the graduate student of Addis Ababa University School of Commerce, Human Resource Management, hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work that had not been done by others for their award of MA Degree in Human Resource Management.

Declared By:

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Endorsement

This is to certify that this thesis has been prepared by Daniel Mathewos on “The Practice and Challenges of Employee Relations, the Case of Yekatit Paper Converting PLC, submitted to Addis Ababa University School of Commerce in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Human Resource Management complies with the regulation of the University and meets the accepted standard with regard to its originality and quality.

Signed By Examining Committee:

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Definition of Key Terms:

- **Employment Relations:** *Refers to the relationship between employees and employer that exists in unionized and Non-Unionized organizational settings.*
- **Labor Relations:** *The relationship between employees and management*
- **Industrial Relations:** *The relationship between management and trade union representatives to bargain collective agreement.*
- **Trade Union:** *Labor Union members that are represented by employees. This also refers to employee's organization or association in unionized organization that does not include management members.*
- **Labor:** *Refers to employees or the workforce in certain industry.*
- **Collective Bargaining:** *Refers to bilateral negotiations of management and trade union to deal about terms and conditions of employment relationship, employee rights and duties including benefits and compensation of workers.*
- **Collective Agreement:** *Refers to the legally binding document that is produced through collective bargaining of trade union representatives and management. It is like employee hand book.*
- **Good Faith Bargaining:** *Bargaining situation between trade union and management that is negotiating in reasonably, legally and ethically acceptable manner and justification.*

- **Dispute:** *Refers to disagreement between labor and management regarding terms and conditions of employment related matters.*
- **Strike:** *Withdrawal of labor or work stoppage of employees calming certain job related requests from the side of the company.*
- **Picketing:** *One of the activities of labor during strike with the objective of informing labor disputes to the people or society.*
- **Impasse:** *Collective bargaining situation that occurs when the bargaining parties are not able to move further toward settlement of their negotiation points.*
- **Mediation:** *Refers to intervention of neutral third party involved in order to help the bargaining parties to agree.*
- **Arbitration:** *The most definitive type of third party intervention to settle disputes. It has a power to determine dispute issues.*
- **Labor Law:** *The Ethiopian Labor Proclamation Number 377/2003 governing the employment relations in unionized organizational setting.*
- **Dismissal:** *Termination of employment contract by the initiation of employer without giving prior notice (firing) for some good cause.*
- **Unfair Labor Practice:** *The practice or activities of labor that is not accepted by the respective labor law labor standard.*

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Abstract

The objectives of the study was to assess the practices and the related challenges faced between the management of Yekatit Paper Converting PLC and employees as well as the trade union who protects the interests of workers on the issues of employment relations.

The study used was qualitative research approach. Relevant data for the study are gathered from primary and secondary sources. The major primary data collection tools were the focus group discussion, semi structured interviews. Ethnographic data analysis method is employed in the study transcribing what has been said by the participants.

Findings of the study show that, disputes always are emanated from malpractice of Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No, 377/2003 and their collective agreement document in Yekatit Paper Converting PLC. As understood by the research findings that employment contracts are terminated in some instances unlawfully. The degree of involvement and participation of the trade union in management activities of employee relations is found to be low. Findings related to the problems of collective bargaining process include: impasses and deadlocks on the bilateral negotiations of collective bargaining matters, the absence of practicing give and take bargaining principles that could help both parties to achieve win-win collective bargaining strategy. There is the absence of good faith bargaining especially from the side of trade union representatives. Employee voice hearing has no consideration on the side of management and no such arrangements are practiced in Yekatit PLC to hear and air the grievances of the employees.

Based on the findings of the study the researcher has made major recommendations on the points that improve the employment relations include: to make lawfully terminations of employment relations lawfully, collective bargaining process need to be in good faith so that both parties can practice give and take collective bargaining strategy. Trade union involvement and participation is recommended in the study on the issues of employee relations.

Key Words:*Employee, Employer, Management, Employee Relations, Employment Relations, Employment Contract, Trade Union, Trade Union Representatives, Collective Agreement.*

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Employment relations is the study of the regulation of the employment relationship between employer and employee, both collectively and individually, and the determination of substantive and procedural issues at industrial, organizational and workplace levels (Rose, 2008).

According to Kaufman(2010), industrial relations viewed as the process of rulemaking for the workplace (Dunlop, 1958), job regulation (Flanders, 1965), social regulation of production(Cox, 1971), the employment relationship as structured antagonism(Edwards, 2005), social regulation of market process forces(Hyman, 1995), process of Capitalist production and accumulation and the derived political and social class relations (Caire,1996), as cited in Kaufman, 2010), conflict of interests and pluralist forms of workplace governance(Kochan,1998), class mobilization and social justice(Kelly, 1998), the advancement of efficiency, equity and voice in the employment relationship(Budd, 2004), collective representation and social dialogue(European Industrial Observatory, 2002).

According to Bain and Clegg (1974), a traditional approach to employment and industrial relations has been to regard it as the study of the rules governing employment, and the ways in which the rules are changed, interpreted and administered.

Employee relations are concerned with generally managing the employment relations with particular reference to terms and conditions of employment, issues arising from employment, providing employees with a voice and communicating with employers. Employees are dealt with either directly or through collective agreements where trade unions are recognized, Michael Armstrong, (2009).

Employee relations cover a wider spectrum of the employment relationship than industrial relations, which are essentially about what goes on between management and trade union

representatives and management officials. This wider definition recognizes the move away from collectivism towards individualism in the ways in which employees relate to their employers.

In the context of Ethiopia, employment relations can be viewed as the entire field of relations between workers and employers, The Ethiopian Labor Proclamation (No, 377/2003, Art 6.)

Besides, we can see that in the context of Ethiopia employment relations can also be seen as both collectivist view as well as individualistic approach. Regarding individualist employment relations approach, the individual written employment contract as well as unwritten psychosocial contract can govern the employment relations between the employer and employee, Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No (377/2003, Art 4 to 10).

The other view of employment relations in the Ethiopian context is, the collectivist approach of employment relations. Article 113 of the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No 377/2003 clearly provides that collective employment relations refers to the formation or organization of trade unions that represent employees association, so that to deal with their employer on the general terms and conditions of employment relations. Such dealings include collective bargaining and bilateral negotiations of both the management team as well as the trade union.

Both parties during collective bargaining process represent their members, try to keep and maintain the interests of their respective members. The collective employment relations is also provided in FDRE Constitution Art 42(3) that provides formation of trade unions and regulation of the collective bargaining process.

The term employee relationsencompasses that of industrial relations, which are about relationships between management and trade unions involving collective agreements, collective bargaining, dispute resolution and dealing with issues concerning the employment and working environment. Employee relations refer to relations that exist in both unionized and nonunionized workplaces. Employers hope to manage employee relations successfully with each respective individual as a means to raise morale and productivity. Each employee relation is a concept that is being preferred over the older industrial relations because of the realization that there is much more at the work place than industrial relations could look.

In general, employee relations can be considered to be a study of relations between employees as well as employer and employees so as to find ways of resolving conflicts and to help in

improving productivity of the organization by increasing motivation and morale of workers. Therefore, new employment relations go beyond the collective bargaining level to include non-union organizations where dialogue might be between employers and their employees. The International journal of sciences focuses on employee relations 2014 vol. 18, No 2, PP 117-123.

1.2. Background of the Organization

When it comes to the Company background under study, Yekatit Paper Converting PLC was established in the year 1958 by the ownership of Foreign Investors of Armenian during the Regime of Majesty Haile Silassie I of Ethiopia.

Formerly the naming of the company by the owners was different. However, due to the emergence of Dergue in the year 1974, the ownership of the Company, had been transferred to the Ethiopian government in the year 1975 month of Ethiopian Yekatit(February). Hence the naming of the company under study, “Yekatit Paper Converting” has been taken from the month of Ethiopian Yekatit(February) of the year 1975. The Company was managed under the Ethiopian Public Enterprises Supervising Agency from the year 1975to the year 2011 until its privatization. Then the Company was acquired and became PLC since 2012 and owned by one of local investors of Ethiopia.

According to one of the key informants in the company, Yekatit Paper Converting PLC is one of the largest Paper manufacturing organizations in Ethiopia and its major products include: different A4 size papers, materials packing boxes, tissue papers, labels,exercise books, text books, note books, copier papers and printing services in different colors and designs. Currently the company administers total of 700 employees in its different cost centers and locations.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Different scholars of management and human relations discipline wrote different concepts and theories related to employment relations, industrial relations, as well as labor relations. John Dunlop former Secretary of labor and leading industrial relations scholar suggested in his book of “Industrial Relations System” (1958) that successful industrial relations system consists of three elements: The first one is an environmental context (technology, market pressure and legal framework especially as it affects bargaining power). The second point is regarding participants,

including employees and their unions, management and the government. The last one is a web of rules (rule of the game) that describes the process by which labor and management interact and resolve disagreements such as steps followed in setting contract grievances. Therefore, for the industrial relations system to operate properly, the three participants must to some degree have a common ideology and must accept the roles of other participants.

To the contrary, in some degree labor management conflict and disagreement is inevitable although the interests of the two parties overlap, they also diverge in key aspects such as how to divide economic profits.

Therefore, according to Dunlop, and other US Scholars of the like minds an effective industrial or employee relations as a new concept does not eliminate conflicts. Rather it provides institutions resolve conflicts in a way that minimizes its costs to managements, employees and society. The collective bargaining system therefore is one such institution as related mechanisms such as mediation, arbitration and participation in decision making.

Early 1900s the industrial workers' bargaining power was smaller than that of employers who were likely to have more financial resources and the ability to easily replace workers. Effective institutions for workers representation (like labor union) were therefore seen as a way to make bargaining power equal. Labor Unions (Trade Unions) mainly benefit to the society through institutionalization of industrial conflicts which is therefore resolved in the least costly way. Thus, although disagreements between management and labor union continue, it is better to resolve disputes through discussions (collective bargaining) than by battling in the streets. The battles will be in the corridors instead of the streets and memos will flow instead of the blood, Raymond A.Noë et al (2008, PP 607-620).

In this sense, collective bargaining not only has the potential to reduce economic loss caused by strikes but, also contribute to social stability. For this reason, industrial relations and employee relations scholars have viewed labor unions as an essential component of organizational setting. (Raymond A. NOE et al (2008, PP 607- 620), Ohio State University, Human Resource Management, gaining a competitive advantage)

When it comes to the organization under study, Yekatit Paper Converting PLC there is a practice of unionization and employment and labor relations issues that are the major concerns of the

study. The company management and the trade union (labor union) representatives face a number of problems during their collective bargaining process as the researcher gathered information from the key informant groups.

The major area of the problems and concerns in the study include: issues of collective bargaining between management and trade union representatives, there is frequently disagreement on the bargaining process and failure to bargain in *Good Faith*. Impasses are sometimes encountered by both bargaining parties. Hence, the researcher understands that there is overlapping interests between both parties (management and labor union representatives) involved in collective bargaining and bilateral negotiations.

The Trade union representatives in bargaining process only try to maintain and keep the interest of their members rather than bargain in good faith for common benefits. Likewise, the management members do the same in their sides.

Generally, as the researcher has got firsthand information from the trade union leaders and other labor union key informants that major problems include: absence of employee voice hearing, no trade union recognition and involvement in employee relation matters. Besides, as the key informants mentioned that the process of collective bargaining in Yekatit has its own challenges between both bargaining parties, the management and trade union. Impasses, deadlocks, absence of good faith bargaining, absence of give and take bargaining strategy in collective bargaining process are also considered as problems of the study. Lack of effective dispute resolution mechanisms, unlawful terminations of the contract of employment relations are major problems of the study. Therefore, the researcher gathered that there is no effective implementation of collective agreement and the Labor proclamation, laws of the land regarding employee relations.

1.4. The Research Questions

Having in mind with the above major problems of the company under study, the research's thesis mainly address and try to answer the following research questions:

- What are challenges of employee relations policies and practices in Yekatit Paper Converting PLC?

- Is there the practice of recognition, participation and involvement of Trade Union representatives in decision making of employee relations issues?
- How is the practice of handling disputes and regulating employment relations?
- What are the major challenges related to collective bargaining and implementation of collective agreement document in Yekatit PLC?
- How is the practice of employee voice hearing and communications that exist in Yekatit PLC?

1.5. Objectives of the Study

The general objectives of the research is, to analyze the constraints and problems related to employment relations, the implementation of bilateral negotiations and collective bargaining process which is the major way of employee-management relations. The research will also try to examine the current policies, procedures, respective labor laws and collective agreement document to evaluate the current practice of employee-employer relationships in a gives company.

Specifically, the objective of this research paper mainly focuses on the following points:

- To assessthe challenges of employee relations policies and practices of employee relations in Yekatit Paper Converting PLC.
- To evaluate the recognition, participation, and involvement of trade union representatives in decision making of employee relations issues.
- To investigate the practice of disputes handling mechanisms and regulating employment relations matters.
- To assess the major challenges related to collective bargaining process in Yekatit
- To evaluate the extent in which and the practice of employee voice hearing and communications exist in Yekatit PLC.

1.6. Significance of the Study

Systematic studies and researches in human resource management in general and Employee Relations in particular enable the organization's manpower to create conducive working environment so that it helps to increase productivity of the company. Peaceful Industrial environment is critically important for every organizations involved in any activity, manufacturing, service or other sort organizational settings. It also helps management, labor union representatives to think ahead for their common goals and significantly plays big role for their survival and achieving competitive advantage. It also helps to see their past and present strength and weaknesses, learn from their mistakes and capitalize on their strengths on how to bargain and negotiate on their common future benefit of employee and employer. Findings of researches and studies are means to device flexible, up-to-date and help to create smooth and conducive working environment for both the employer and employees.

The Study has the following basic significances:

- It serves for academic purpose and will be used to refer in the future as literature for potential researchers.
- This study will also help to add knowledge on the existing literatures on the execution of issues related to employment relations, labor relations and how to create peaceful industrial relations and bargain collectively in good faith for common goals of both parties involved. To help those responsible to identify the strength and weakness & take corrective actions to enhance the practice of smooth employment relations and good bargaining environment in Yekatit Paper Converting Company.
- The finding will also provide basic information on the key challenges or gaps affecting the effectiveness of the employment relations, good faith bargaining environment and malpractices of employee rights and duties as well as provide the possible solutions for alleviating the major challenges or hindrances of the smooth relations of employee and employer. It may serve as a base for further and detailed study on the practice of employment and labor relations related matters.

1.7. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study will be to conduct assessment on: the Management-labor relations, the practices and implementation of labor laws, collective agreements, dealing with labor rights and duties in Yekatit Converging PLC and how the trade union representatives and management team practice the collective bargaining process and how to negotiate and bargain in good faith.

The geographical scope of the company under study (Yekatit Paper Converting PLC is located in Addis Ababa Gergji Mebrat Hail area).

The methodological scope of this thesis is qualitative research approach. This paper assesses and evaluates the practice and challenges of employee relations and the implementations of termination of employment contract in the company under study. Internal HR policies, procedures and systems related to employment and labor relations are investigated in order to recommend sound practice of employees and labor relations. All the related concepts with employment relations are included in the study. The Ethiopian Labor Proclamation is reviewed

The focus of this study is to see through critically examining the recent trends and practices of concepts related to the employment relations, industrial relations and labor relations. Practical matters and legal frameworks in Ethiopia are reflected in the study aligning the study issues with the current Labor Law provisions (The Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No 377/2003). The major points here are limited to collective bargaining procedure, dispute resolution mechanisms, how lawful terminations are practiced while implementing collective agreement document.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

Because of the wide scope of the study, major limitation was time shortage. The researcher has very limited time to timely finalize all the required steps of the thesis. The researcher's job responsibility, family issues and social commitments were also other limitations of the study that challenged the researcher to finalize the thesis as per the schedule.

Some key informants were also very skeptical when they provide information related to this study. When somebody approaches them for research, they relate with their job security and don't feel to provide information about what they are asked. They tend to give out what he/she perceives the researcher would like to hear and not what actually is on the mind. Therefore, such

limitations were some of problems that the researcher faced in the process of conducting the thesis.

1.9. Organization of the Study

The Study is organized in five Chapters:

- Chapter one deals with the introductory part which includes: Background of the study including the background of the organization under study, objectives of the study, the statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study.
- Chapter two is devoted to mention the related literature review on the historical background and on the practices of employment relations in Ethiopian context, employment relations, and industrial relations including its challenges in similar sourced documents, books and international Journals on the same area are included and discussed.
- Chapter three deals about an overview of the research methodology used to investigate the research problem. The chapter covers the research design, source of data, sampling techniques used, data collection tools and procedure as well as methods of data analysis.
- Chapter four on the other hand is concerned with presenting the findings and analysis of Employment relations, practices and challenges revealed in Yekatit Paper Converting PLC.
- The last Chapter, Chapter five is the conclusion and recommendation part of the study. The findings and recommendations regarding employment relations and Collective Bargaining issues are presented as recommendation and conclusion in this final Chapter.
- References and Annexes are also included on the last page of the study. Finally, data collection instruments which are used in the study are attached with the study document.
- At the front page of this paper on the preamble part, name of advisor, internal and external examiners, and endorsement is included. Acknowledgement and abstract are also part of this paper at front pages.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

2.1. Introduction:

This chapter is concerned with reassessing the existing literature in the area of employment relations and the concepts which are related with it like industrial relations, labor relations and the like. Employment relation is wide concept covers all the relationships that exist between the employer and employees, be it collectivism or individual relations.

Hence, this section of the paper will focus on the areas of employment relations with regards to unionization, collective bargaining and reassess how both employees and employers create sound and conducive working environment.

2.2. Employee Relations

2.2.1. Employee relations defined

For Michael Armstrong (2009) employee relations and employment relations are words to be used interchangeably. He pointed out the definition of employee relations as employee or employment relations are concerned with generally managing the employment relationship with particular reference to terms and conditions of employment issues arising from employment, providing employees with a voice and communicating with employees, M. Armstrong (2009). According to his view on employee relations, employees are dealt with either directly or through collective agreements where trade unions are recognized.

Employee relations cover a wide spectrum of the employment relationship than industrial relations, which are essentially about what goes on between management and trade union representatives and officials. This wider definition recognizes the move away from collectivism towards individualism in the ways in which employee relate to their employers, M. Armstrong (2009).

The concept of the employment relationship can be viewed as being a central element of a body of academic and practitioner writing in the field of employee relations, Mike Millmore et al (2007).

According to other writers, of employment relations, in the 1970s and 1980s important writers such as Clegg (1979) and Bain (1993), the term used was industrial relations. However, recently, the term employee relations used, Gennard and Judge, (2002) and Rose (2001). Industrial relations is believed by the authors that industrial relations is associated with the decline smokestack industries and blue – collar workers and the accompanying emphasis upon collective bargaining between employers and unions, Lewis et al (2009a).

On the other hand, employee relations ‘ suggests that a wider canvas is being covered with equal importance being attached to nonunion employment arrangements and white-collar jobs, Mike Millmore, et al (2007).

From the above points of view, we can understand that employee relations is a wider and broader concept that encompasses both industrial relations, the older view which is concerned with only unionization concept and the new employee relations that suggests the importance of both industrial and employee relations.

In the context of Ethiopia, employment relations can be viewed as the entire field of relations between workers and employers, The Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No, 377/2003, Art 6.

Besides, we can see that in the context of Ethiopia employment relations can also be seen as both collectivist view as well as individualistic approach. Regarding individualist employment relations approach, the individual written employment contract as well as unwritten psychosocial contract can govern the employment relations between the employer and employee, Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No (377/2003, Art 4 to 10).

The other view of employment relations in the Ethiopian context is, the collectivist approach of employment relations. Article 113 of the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No 377/2003 clearly provides that collective employment relations refers to the formation or organization of trade unions that represent employees association, so that to deal with their employer on the general terms and conditions of employment relations. Such dealings include collective bargaining and bilateral negotiations of both the management team as well as the trade union.

Both parties during collective bargaining process represent their members, try to keep and maintain the interests of their respective members. The collective employment relations is also provided in FDRE Constitution Art 42(3) that provides formation of trade unions and regulation of the collective bargaining process.

Employee relations refer to relations that exist in both unionization and unionized work places. Each employee relations is a concept that is being preferred over the older industrial relations could look or cover. In general, employee relations can be considered organizations where dialogue might be between employers and their employees. International Journal of Science Focus on Employee Relations Basic and Applied Research (2014 Volume 18, No 2 PP 117-124).

2.2.2 Employee Relations and Contracts

Employee organization relationships is an overarching term to describe the relationship between the employee and the organization (Shore and Colleagues, 2004 P. 292) including both micro concepts such as psychological contract and perceived organizational support and macro concepts such as the employment relationships.

Employee

Sage handbook of human resource management Adrian Wilkinson, Tom Redman et al (2008) pointed out employees, seek to define who exactly is “an employee” as employment relationships change and the definition of employee can vary from law to law.

An ongoing controversy, for example is whether temporary and contingent employees are legally considered as employees. However, it is sufficient to define an employee as anyone who sells their labor. On the other hand, the book defines employers as; an employer is buyer of labor. As it is core, an employer is comprised of the owner of a private, for profit organization, or those who control a nonprofit or public sector organization.

Employers are typically modeled as maximizing profits (Manning 2003, Watcher, 2004) or optimizing an analogous objective function for nonprofit and governmental employers.

According to the Ethiopian context, The Labor Proclamation No 377/2003 Article 3 a word employee is interchangeably used as a worker. Hence, a worker means a person who has an employment relationship with an employer according to the Article 4 of the Proclamation above.

In general, employee relations can be considered to be the study of relations between the employer and employees so as to find ways of resolving conflicts and to help in improving productivity of the organization by increasing motivation and moral of the workers.

Contracts

According to the Ethiopian labor proclamation No 377/2003 article 4/1 a contract of employment shall be deemed and formed where a person agrees directly or indirectly to perform work for and under the authority of an employer for a definite period or piece of work in return for wage.

In the same Proclamation under Article 10 Contract of Employment may conclude for a definite period or for piece work in the case of:

- a. The performance of specified piece work for which the employee is employed.
- b. The replacement of a worker who is temporarily absent due to leave or sickness or other cases.
- c. The performance of work in the event of abnormal pressure of work.
- d. The performance of urgent work to prevent damage to life or property, to repair defects or breakdown in works, materials, buildings or plant of the undertaking.
- e. An irregular work which relates to permanent part of the work of an employment but performed on an irregular interval.
- f. Seasonal works which relate to the permanent part of the works of an employer but performed only for a specified period of the year but which are regularly repeated in the course of the years.
- g. An occasional work which does not form part of the permanent activity of the employer but which is done intermittently.
- h. The temporary placement of a worker who has suddenly and permanently vacated from a post having contract of an indefinite period.
- i. The temporary placement of a worker to fill a vacant position in the period between the study of the organizational and its implementation.

A contract of employment under sub Article 1 (h) and (i) of this Article shall not exceed 45 consecutive days shall be done only once.

Contracts, according to Sage's handbook of HRM Adrian Wilkinson et al (2009) are the terms; conditions and expectations under which an employee sells his or her labor to an employer are captured in a contract.

2.2.3 Basic of employee Relations

According to Armstrong hand book of human resource management employee relations are basically about the paywork bargain, the agreement made between employers and employees where by the former undertakes pay for the work done by latter Michael Armstrong (2009 PP. 878).

Fundamentally, many employers simply want employees who will do what they are told without costing too much. They want engagement and commitment. In contrast, employees want a say how much they are rewarded, their terms and conditions of employment and the way in which their work is organized. They want good working conditions, security of employment, a healthy and safe working environment and the scope to rise and resolve grievances. Conflicts of interest can arise between employers and employees on these issues and these conflicts are resolved by the various employee relations process.

Employee- employer relations issues is one of important concept which is included in legal aspect of human resource management.

According to the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No 377/2003 at the preamble page it proclaims that "it is essential to ensure that worker – employer relations are governed by the basic principles of rights and obligations with a view to enabling workers and employers to maintain industrial peace and work in the spirit of harmony and cooperation towards the all rounded development of the country".

2.2.4 Parties to employment Relations

As Farnham (2000) puts it employee relations dealt with the interaction amongst the parties to the employment relationships. These consist of three groups: employers and employee, the parties who act on their behalf (trade unions and employer associations) and the third-party role played by the State Agencies.

In the case of Ethiopia, according to the Labor Proclamation No, 377/2003 Art 113/1 it is given that workers and employers shall have the right to establish and trade unions as well as employers' associations respectively.

Besides, employment relations in the context of Ethiopia can be viewed as collectivist as well as individualistic approach. Individualistic employment approach is simply understood by the way of both parties conclude employment contract so that such written employment contract regulates the relationship between the employee in one hand and the employer on the other hand.

In contrast, the collective employment relations refer to formation of trade union and so that collective bargaining and bilateral negotiations processed between both parties represent the employees and employer. Such rights of free labor association and collective bargaining of both parties is provided in Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution, Art.42 (1) and (3).

Therefore, in the above Article, there exist two parties: the employee representatives that are elected by the whole employees and the employer group which legally represent the management of the given organization.

Furthermore, there is also the third party is government that regulates the relationships between employer and employee in all the employment issues including collective bargaining and dispute resolution. According to the Ethiopia Labor Proclamation No 377/2003 Articles 138, 142 and 147 the government plays significant role in employee – employer relations, for example, issues like arbitration, mediation and conciliation. The Labor Relation Board (composed of employee, employer and government) also plays role of arbitration for collective issues of labor and management relationships.

Courts also represent the judiciary part of government and play the role in ensuring justice, fairness and balance both employee and employer in order to bring about industrial peace and better working environment.

2.2.5. Elements of Employee Relations

Michael Armstrong in his book 11th Edition Handbook of Human Resource Management (2009) listed out several factors that constitute elements of employee relations. These include:

- The formal and informal employment policies and practices of the organization.
- The development, negotiations and application of formal systems, rules and procedures for collective bargaining, handling disputes and regulating employment.
- The bargaining structures, recognition and collective agreement and practices that have evolved to enable the formal system to operate.
- Policies and practices for employee voice communications.
- The informal as well as the formal process that take place in the shape of continuous interactions between managers and team leaders or supervisor on the one hand and employee representatives and individuals on the other hand. These may happen within the framework of formal agreement but are often governed by custom and practice and the climate of relationships that are has been built up over the years.
- The philosophies and policies of the major players in the industrial relations scene: the government of the day, management and the trade unions.
- A number of parties, each with different roles. These consist of the state, management, employer's organizations, the trade unions, individual mangers, and supervisor, HR managers and employee representatives or shop stewards and employees.
- The legal framework.

2.2.6 Models of Employee relations

John W.Budd Devasheesh Bhave (2008) specifies there are four modelsof the employment relations: *the Egoist, Unitarist, Pluralist and Critical Employment Relationships*.

2.2.6.1The Egoist Employment Relationship

The egoist relationship focuses on rational agents pursuing individual self interest in economic markets and is most closely associated with mainstream neo classical economic thought (Boyer

and Smith 2001), labor is seen as commodity no different from other productive resources except in its tendency to shirk and therefore in its need to be monitored or motivated with economic incentives.

Under this assumption the egoist relationship is one which employees and employers engage in voluntary, mutually- beneficial transaction to buy and sell unit of productive labor based on what market will bear.

2.2.6.2 The Unitarist Employment Relationships

The second model of the employment relationships tends to see employees as psychological rather than economic beings and is most associated with scholars in industrial/ organizational psychology and human resource management (Coyle- Shore, Taylor and Tetrick 2004).

The Unitarist employment relationships, therefore, is seen as long term partnership between employees and employers with common interests. Profitability and other organizational goals go hand in hand with fulfilling work, fair treatment and the satisfaction of employees and other intrinsic desires. This model of the employment is therefore the foundation for contemporary human resource management and its focus on creating policies that simultaneously benefit employee and employers (Pfeffer, 1998, Ulrich and Brock bank, 2005). It is important to note that the Unitarist employment relationship assumes away issues of power and conflict scholars in this tradition certainly recognize that the diverse forms conflict are an organizational reality (De Dreu and Gelfand, 2008), but this literature frequently focuses on conflict between employees and the presence of such conflict in a particular organization is largely perceived as an opportunity for improved human resource management practices to reduce conflict.

2.2.6.3 The Pluralist Employment Relationship

The Pluralist Model of the Employment Relationship rejects the egoist perspective that employees are simply commodities (Kayfaman, 2005) rather employees are seen as complex economic and psychological agents that, as human beings, are entitled to key rights such as equity and voice (Budd, 2014). The perspective also rejects the unitary view and instead believes that there is a plurality of interests in the employment relationships (Clegg, 1975, Fox 1974). Today, pluralist academic views of the employment relationship are most likely found in

industrial relations (Bud. Gomez, and Meltz, 2004, Kaufman, 2004) and institutionalist labor economics (Champlin and Knoedler, 2004)

2.2.6.4. The Critical Employment Relationship

The Fourth and final model of the employment relationship is labeled the critical employment relationship, and most closely associated with radical, heterodox and feminist scholarship in economics, sociology, and industrial relations (Bowel and Gintis, 1990, Kelly, 1998, Thompson and Newsome, 2004). This model shares the labor- as- more than commodity and labor-markets as imperfectly competitive assumptions of the Unitarist and pluralist models. But, this perspective emphasizes the sociopolitical embodiments of the employment relationships, and the resulting broad based conflicts.

2.3 Employee Relations Strategy

2.3.1 Developing Employee Communications

Good Employee relations involve providing fair and consistent treatment to all employees so that they will be committed to the organization companies with good employee relations are likely to have an HR Strategy that places a high value on employees are stakeholders in the business. Luis R. Gomez – Mejia et al (2001), 3rd edition, Managing Human Resources.

Employees who are treated as stakeholders, have certain right within organization and can expect to be treated with dignity and respect. To foster good employee relations, managers must listen to and understand what employees are saying and experiencing, keep them informed about what management plan to do with the business, and tell them how those plans may affect their job. They should also give employees freedom to air grievance about management decisions. There may be good reasons for not changing the decisions, but management should at least listen to grievances. Therefore, effective employee relations require cooperation between managers and employee relations representatives.

According to Luis R.Gomez (2001) employee relations policy provide channel to resolve employee related problems, before the problems become more serious. Many companies have found that the key to good employee relation program is a communication channel that gives employee access to important information and an opportunity to express their ideas and feelings.

Luis R. Gomez Mejia in his book pointed out there is two forms of information are sent and received in communication: facts and feelings. Facts are pieces of information that can be objectively measured or described. Examples are the cost of computer, the daily defect rate in manufacturing plant, and the size of the deductible payment in the company sponsored health insurance policy.

Feelings are employees' emotional responses to the decision made or action taken by managers or other employees. Managers who implement decision must able to anticipate or respond to the feeling of employees who are affected by those decisions. If they cannot the plan may fail.

Organizations need to design communication channels that allow employees to communicate facts and feelings. In many cases, these channels must provide for face-to-face communication because many feelings are conveyed non verbally employees cannot write on a piece of paper or record on a computer database their complex emotional reactions to a decision that they fear will cost them their jobs.

2.3.2. Employee Handbook

Employee handbook is probably the most important source of information that HR department can provide. It sets the tone for the company's overall employee relations philosophy, informing both employees and supervisors about company employment policies and procedures and about company employment and about communicating employees' right and responsibilities. Luis R. Gomez, Mejia et al (2001).

In the context of Ethiopia, Employee hand book could be understood as collective agreement document that is produced through the process of collective bargaining and bilateral negotiation of both management and trade union representatives. The collective agreement document in Yekatit PLC could be the same as the employee hand book that can serve as reference book for employees. It is also said to be a collective contract document which is legally concluded between the two bargaining parties, the management and trade union representatives of the company.

The handbook lets employees know that they can expect consistent and uniform treatment on issues that the effect their job or status in the company. It also tells supervisors how to evaluate, reward and discipline their employees.

According to Gomez, employee hand book contain information issues such as employee benefits, performance evaluation, dress codes, employment of family members, smoking, probationary employment periods, drug testing procedures, family leave policies, sexual harassment, discipline procedure and safety rules. Handbook needs to be updated annually to reflect the current legal environment and to remain consistent with the company's overall employee relations philosophy.

2.3.3. Other ways of employee communications.

Gomez (2001) pointed out other relevant communication mechanism includes: memo, financial statements, newsletters and bulletin boards. Audiovisual communications are also other important way employee communication the result of new technology help to disseminate information that goes beyond the printed world. Visual images and audio information are powerful communication tools.

Teleconferencing is also one way of communications that uses audio and video equipment to allow people to participate in meeting even when they are a great distance away from the conference location or one another. Voice mail also is the form electronic communication that allows the sender to leave a detailed voice message for receiver.

2.4 Psychological Contract and the Employment Relationship

2.4.1. The Psychological Contract Defined.

The Psychological Contract underpins the employment relation. This part defines the psychological contract, explains its significance. The concept of psychological contract is commonly traced back to the early work Argyris (1957) and to Social Exchange Theory (Blau 1964).

Psychological contract as defined by Guest et al (1996), the Psychological Contract is concerned with assumptions, expectations, promises and mutual obligations. It creates attitudes and emotions which form and govern behavior.

A psychological contract is implicit. It is also dynamic. It develops overtime as experience accumulates; employment condition changes and employees reevaluate their expectation.

Psychological contact is a way of interpreting the state of the employment relationship. It may provide some indications of the answers to the two fundamental employment relationship that individual pose.

What can I reasonably expect from the organization? And what should I reasonably be expected to contribute in return? But it is unlikely that the psychological contract and therefore the employment relationship will never be fully understood by either part.

The Psychological contract is individual beliefs, shaped by the organization, regarding terms of the exchange between individuals and their organization. (Rousseau,1995). Hence, it is perceptions of both parties to the employment relationship, organization and individual, of the reciprocal promises and obligations implied in the relationship.

A balanced Psychological contract is necessary for a continuing, harmonious relationship between the employee and the organization. For example, employee might promise to show loyalty to the organization whereas the organization might promises to create opportunity for training development. Employee might promise to work extra hours where required, whereas the organization might promise opportunities for promotion and salary increment.

In this competitive era Psychological Contract provides an opportunity to fundamental knowledge about organization-employee and employee-employer relationship (Agarwal-Bhargava, 2008). Concept of Psychological contract arises from Social Exchange Theory. Social exchange theory focuses on the mutual obligations between worker and supervisor and also on the importance of employee's motivation and the role of motivated employee in the achievement of organizational goals (Aselage and Eisenberger, 2003).

2.4.2. Model of Psychological Contract

A model of the Psychological Contract as formulated by Guest et al(1996), suggests that the core of the contract can be measured in terms of fairness of treatment, trust and the extent to which the explicit deal or contract is perceived to be delivered. The full model is illustrated in figure below.

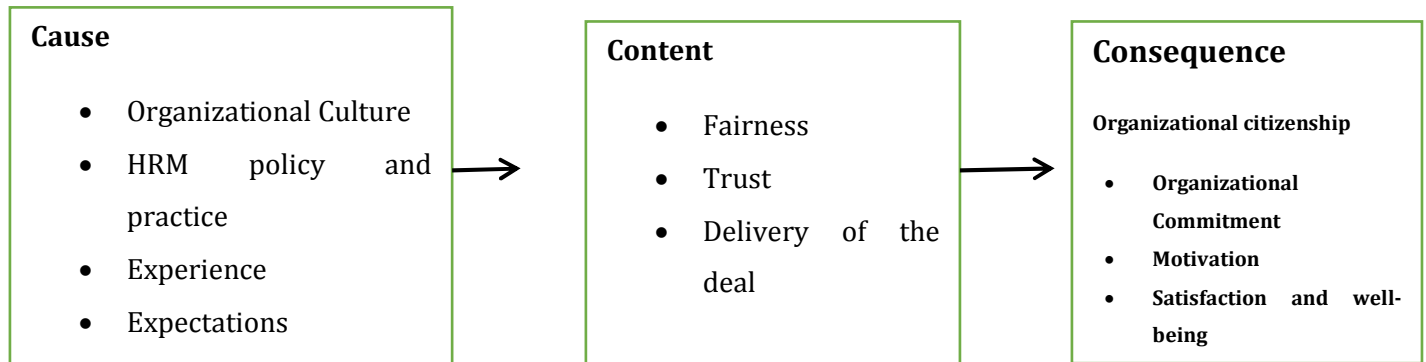


Figure 1 Model of psychological contract

Source: *Handbook of Human Resource Management, Michael Armstrong, (2009)*.

According to Michael Armstrong (2009) handbook of human resource management 11th edition, the (2004) work place employee relations survey (Published in 2005) surveyed 21,624 employees in work places employing more than 10 people about their level of job satisfaction. The results are shown below in Figure/ Table 2

Table 1 Study conducted on Job Satisfaction and Psychological Contract (WPER 2004)

	Very Satisfied %	Satisfied %	Neither %	Dissatisfied %	Very Dissatisfied %
Sense of Achievement	18	52	19	8	3
Scope for Using initiative	20	52	19	8	3
Influence over job	12	15	28	11	3
Training	11	40	26	16	7
Pay	4	31	26	28	13
Job security	13	50	22	11	5
Work itself	17	55	19	7	3
Involvement in decision making	8	30	39	17	6

Source: *Handbook of Human Resource Management, Michael Armstrong, (2004)*.

According To Guest (1996) Psychological Contract is different from employment contract is depicted in the Table3 below.

Table 2 Employment contract and psychological contract

Employment Contract	Psychological Contracts
Written	Unwritten
Explicit	Implicit
Legally binding	No legal status
Does not tell us much about what people actually do at work	Tells us most things about what people actually do at work
May exert on a small influence on behavior	Exerts a large influence on behavior, feelings and attitudes

Source: Armstrong (2009), Handbook of Human Resource Management 11th Edition

The significance of Psychological Contract Sims (1994) a balanced Psychological contract is necessary for continuing, harmonious relationship between the employee and the organization. However, the violation of the Psychological Contract can signal to the participants that the parties no longer shared (or never shared) a common set of values or goals.

The research conducted by Guest and Conway (2002) led to the conclusion that:

The management of Psychological Contract is a core task of management and acknowledged as such by many senior HR and employment relations managers, and shows that it has a positive association with a range of outcomes within the employment relationship and a useful way of conceptualizing that relationship

2.5.Employee Voice

2.5.1 Meaning of Employee Voice

As defined by Box and Purcell (2003),Employee voice is the term increasingly used to cover a whole variety of processes and structures which enable, and sometimes employer, employees, directly and in directly to contribute to decision making in the firm.

Employee voice can be seen as the ability of employees to influence the actions of the employer (Millward et al 1992). Dundon et al (2004) suggested the following meaning of direct and union employee voice.

- Expression of individual dissatisfaction raised with line manager or through grievance procedure.
- Expression of collective dissatisfaction raised by trade unions through collective bargaining or industrial action.
- Contribution to management decision making through upward problem solving suggestion schemes and attitude survey.
- Demonstration of mutuality through partnership agreements, joint consultative committees and work council.

2.5.2 The Elements of Employee Voice

- Participation, which is about employees playing a greater part in the decision making process by being given the opportunity to influence management decision and to contribute to the improvement of organizational performance. As William and Adam Smith (2006), explain, the term participation refers to arrangement that gives workers some influence over organizational and work place decision.
- Involvement, which is the process through which management allows employees to discuss with them issues that affect them. Williams and Adam Smith (2006) suggest that this term is most usefully applied to management initiatives that are designed to further the flow of communication at work as a means of enhancing the organizational commitment of employees.

According to Michael Armstrong (2009) hand book of Human Resource Management upward problem solving can be seen as; upward communication, attitude surveys, suggestion schemes and project teams.

2.5.3 The Framework for employee voice

The framework for employee voice has been modeled by Marchington et al (2001), as

Shown in figure 4 below:

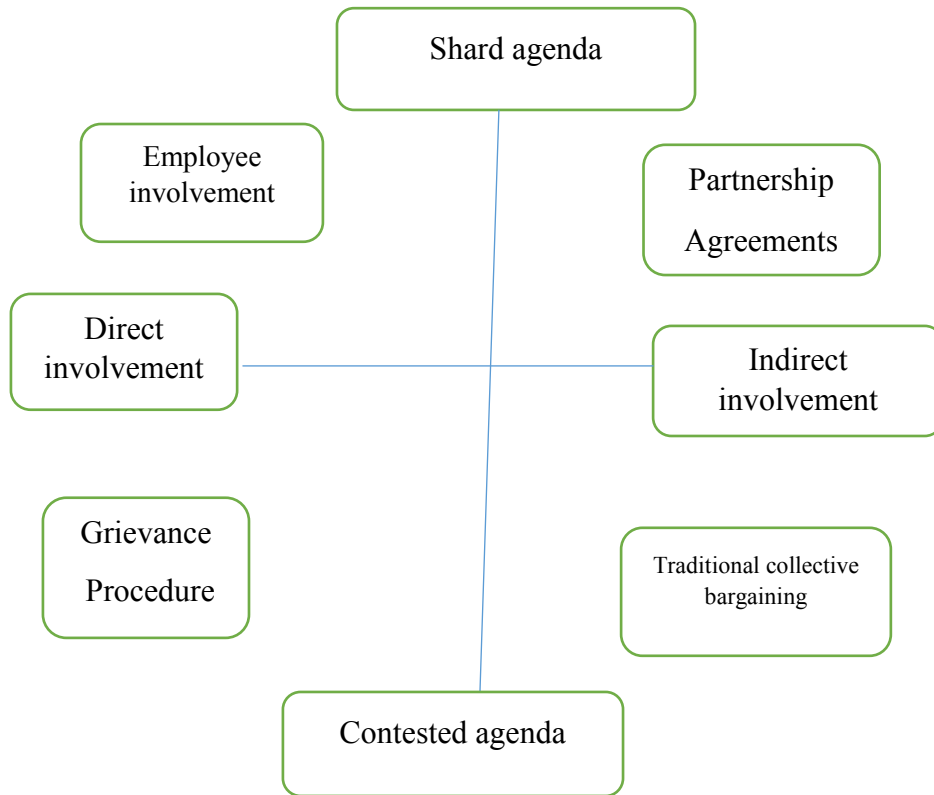


Figure 2 the framework of employee voice

Source: Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management practice: Michael Armstrong (2009)

2.6 Employee Relations Climate.

The employee relations climate of the organization represents the perceptions of management, employees and their representatives about the ways in which employee relations are conducted and how the various parties (managers, employees and trade unions) behave when dealing with one another, Armstrong (2009).

Armstrong (2009), specifies that employee relations climate may be created by the management style adopted by management that includes: management and employees trust each other, how management treats employees fairly and with consideration, management is open about its actions and intentions, employee relations policies and procedures are transparent, harmonious relationships are generally maintained or by contrary the behavior of trade unions or employee representatives are cooperative, hostile, or militant.

2.7 Unionization and Collective Bargaining

Unionization is the effort by employees and outside agencies (unions or associations) to act as a single unit when dealing with management over issues relating to their work. Susan Jackson et al (2000), managing human resource, a partnership perspective.

The core of union management relations is collective bargaining. Collective bargaining generally includes two types of interaction the first is the negotiation of work conditions that when written up as the collective agreement (the contract) becomes the basis for employee- employer relationships on the job. The second includes activities related to interpreting and enhancing the collective agreement (Contract administration) and resolving any conflict arising from it.

For employers, the existence of or possibility of a union can significantly influence an employer's ability to manage its vital human resource. Unions can help employees get what they want for example, high wages and job security from their employers. For management, unionization may result in less flexibility in hiring new workers, making job assignments, and introducing new working methods. Such as automation, a loss of control, inefficient work practices and inflexible job structure. However, it also may result in greater workforce cooperation with programs such as total quality management.

2.7.1 The Unionization Process

Why do employees choose to join labor unions?

In the simplest of terms, the answer is really straightforward; they believe that, they are somehow better off as a result of joining a union. More specifically, employees are more likely to unionize when they are dissatisfied with some aspect of their jobs, they believe that a union can help make this aspect of the job better, and they are not philosophically opposed to unions or to collective action.

But the real answer is much more complex. In the early days of labor unions, people choose to join them because their working conditions were so unpleasant in many cases. In the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, in their quest to earn ever greater profits, some business owners treated their workers with no respect. They often forced their employees to work long hours, and minimum wage laws and safety standards did not exist. As a result, many employees worked

twelve, fifteen or eighteen hours a day and sometimes were forced to work seven days a week. Angelo S. DeNisi (2008), Human Resource Management.

2.7.2 Union Recognition

An employer fully recognizes a union for the purpose of collective bargaining when pay and conditions of employment are jointly agreed between management and trade unions. Partial recognition takes place when employers restrict trade unions to representing their members on issues arising from employment. Full recognition therefore confers negotiating (and representational) rights on unions.

Partial recognition only gives unions representational rights. Unions can be de recognized, although as noted by Blanden et al (2006) this happening less frequently.

2.7.3 Good Faith Bargaining

Once a union is certified the various labor relations statutes require both the union and management to bargain in good faith. This means that both sides are required to make a reasonable effort to negotiate a collective agreement. The failure of either party to do so can lead to unfair labor practice charges, Schlwind et al (2005), *Human resource management strategic approach*.

Meaning that both an employer and employee bargaining representative negotiate in good faith, the parties agree to send negotiators who can bargain and make decisions rather than people who do not have the authority to commit either group to a decision.

Meetings between the parties cannot be scheduled at absurdly inconvenient hours. Some give-take decisions also must occur. After discussions are made in good faith, neither can renege agreement. Robert L. Mathis (1994), Human Resource management seventh edition.

According R. Wayne Monday (1996), Human Resource management 7th edition, good faith bargaining is the cornerstone of effective Labor – management relationships. It means that both parties communicate and negotiate, that they match proposal with counter proposal, and that both make every reasonable effort to arrive at an agreement. It does not mean that one party compels another to agree to a proposal. Nor does it require that either party make any specific concessions (although as practical matter, some may be necessary).

When is bargaining not in good faith? According Gary Dessler and BuijuVarkkey (2010), a violation of the requirement for good faith bargaining may include the following:

- Surface bargaining: going through the motions of bargaining without any real intention of completing a formal agreement.
- Inadequate concessions: Unwilling to compromise, even though no one is required to make a concession.
- Dilatory tactics: the law requires that the parties meet and confer a reasonable time intervals. Obviously, refusal to meet with the union does not satisfy the positive duty on the employer.
- Imposing Conditions: attempts to impose conditions that are so onerous or unreasonable as to indicate bad faith.
- Making unilateral changes in conditions: this is a strong indication that the employer is not bargaining with the required intent of reaching an agreement.
- Bypassing Representative: The duty of management to bargain in good faith improves, at a minimum, recognition that the union representative is the one with whom the employer must deal in conducting negotiation.
- Committing unfair labor practices during negotiations: such practices may reflect poorly upon the good faith of the guilty party.
- Withholding information: an employer must supply the union with information upon request to enable it to understand and intelligently discuss the issues raised in bargaining.
- Ignoring bargaining items: refusal to bargain on a mandatory item (one must bargain over these) or insistence on a permissive item (one may bargain over these).

Good faith bargaining is mandatory and obligation for both parties involved in collective bargaining. The Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No 377/2003 Article 130/4 provides that; each party shall have duty to bargain in good faith.

2.7.4 Collective Bargaining Arrangements

Collective bargaining involves employers and unions reaching agreement on terms and conditions of employment and the way in which employment issues such as disputes, grievances and disciplinary matters should be resolved.

Bargaining arrangements result in collective agreement, which are formal agreements between management and trade unions dealing with terms and conditions of employment or other aspects of the relationship between the two parties. They may be substantive agreements dealing with terms and conditions of employment, or they may be procedural agreements dealing with the procedures for collective bargaining. Those are sometimes called framework agreements because they provide a structure for the bargaining process.

Collective bargaining involves the following main features:

- Parties – at least two sides
- An agreed procedure where by the parties relate to each other and the negotiation of framework agreements and consultation.
- Outcomes - a collective agreement
- The existence of sanctions designed to change the attitude or position of the other party.

2.7.5 The Collective Bargaining Process

According to Angelos S.DeNisis (2008), Collective bargaining can be thought of as an ongoing process that includes both the drafting and the administration of a labor agreement. It includes the following major steps to be followed during collective bargaining.

Preparation for Collective Bargaining

Preparing for collective bargaining – Management can take several actions to prepare for collective bargaining. For example, the firm can look closely at its own financial health to work out a realistic picture of what it can and cannot offer in terms of wages and salaries for its employees. Management can also conduct a comparative analysis to see what kinds of labor contracts and agreements exist in similar companies and research what this particular labor union has been requesting and settling for in the past.

The union can and should undertake several actions to be effectively prepared for collective bargaining. Like management, the unions can also determine what kinds of labor agreements have been reached in other parts of the country and determine what kinds of contracts other divisions of the company or other businesses owned by the same corporation have negotiated recently.

Setting parameters for collective Bargaining

Another part of preparing for collective bargaining is prior agreement about the parameters of the bargaining session. In general, two categories of items may be dealt with during labor contract negotiations. One set of items, as defined by law, consists of mandatory items.

Mandatory items include wages, working hours and benefits. If either party expresses a desire to negotiate over one or more of these items, the other party has to agree. Almost any other aspect of the employment relationship is also subject to negotiation, provided both sides agree. These items are called permissive items.

2.7.6 Negotiating Labor Agreements

After appropriate preparation by both parties, the negotiation process itself begins. Of course, barriers may also arise during this phase and bargaining impasses may result in strikes or other actions.

The Negotiation Process

A useful framework for understanding the negotiating process refers to the bargaining zone. DeNisi(2008) has identified in negotiation process the bargaining zone which is illustrated in the figure below and detail explanation is mentioned hereunder.

For organization the bargaining zone and its three intermediate points include the employer's maximum limit, the employer's expectation and the employer's desired result on items being negotiated. For example, the organization might have a zero increase in wages and benefits as a desired result (also known as management's target point).

But it also recognizes that this desired result is unlikely and so what it expects is to have and provide a modest increase in wages and benefits totaling perhaps 4 to 5%. But if preparations are done thoroughly, managers also know the maximum amount they are willing to pay, which might be as high as 7 to 8%(manager's resistance point) in this example management would rather suffer though a strike than pay more than an 8% pay increase.

On the other side of the table, the labor union also defines a bargaining zone for itself that includes three points. These three points include the unions minimum acceptable limit on what it

will take from management (the union resistance point the settlement level below which the union will strike), its own expectations about what management is likely to agree to, and the most it can reasonably expect to get from management (the union target point). For instance, the labor union might feel that it has to provide a minimum increase of 2 to 3 percent in wages and benefits to its members. They expect a settlement of around 5 percent but would like to get 9 to 10 percent.

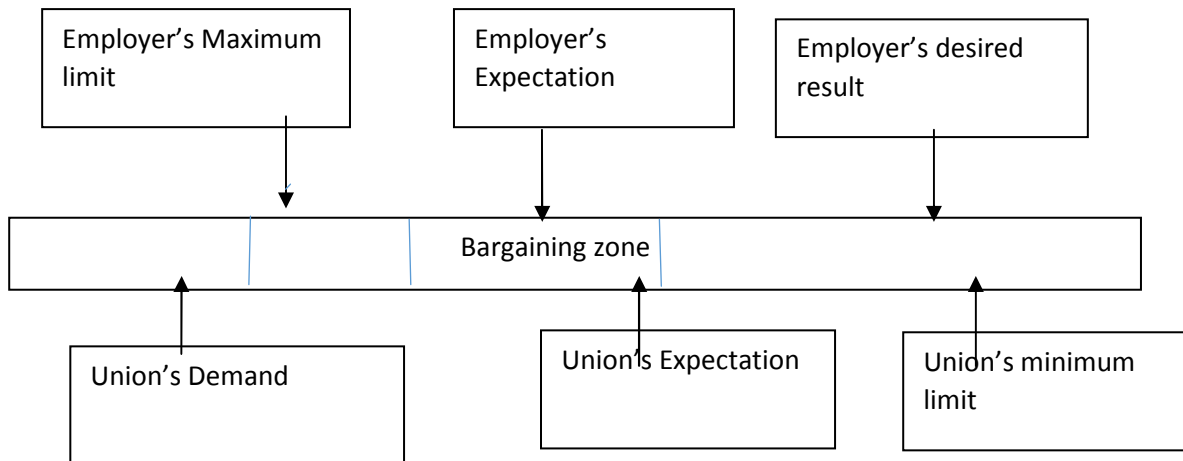


Figure 3 the collective bargaining zone

Source: DeNisi/ Griffin Human Resource Management 3rd edition.

Collective bargaining protects workers from abuse of economic power and limits at the same time the power of the employers. In some countries collective bargaining is important for modeling social security in addition to improving working conditions.

Collective bargaining plays a positive role in fostering investment in human resources, productivity improvements and innovation, International Journal of Labor Research (2009 Vol. 1 Issue 2).

According to the above Journal of labor research there exist challenges related to labor relations and collective bargaining in multinational enterprises around Europe and other countries. Leading forces of the internationalization of the economy are multinational enterprises.

Multinational enterprises decide on places of production, investment and work places. In the name of profit maximization they often produce where wages and taxes are low and where labor laws tend to be weak.

Collective bargaining is challenged by dramatic increase of precarious work, including disguised, ambiguous and triangular employment relationship where sometimes legal loopholes are used to avoid recognized employment relationships (ILO Recommendation No 198, Employment Relationships)

2.7.7 The Collective Bargaining Issues

It is important in designing a strategic negotiation approach that management and the negotiation team understands the type of issues that can be negotiated as well as those prohibited William P. Anthony et al (1999), Human Resource Management Strategic approach 3rd edition P.P 633. The authors identified three types of negotiating issues.

1. **Mandatory issues** – must be negotiated by law. They include such items as wages, hours, benefits and other terms and conditions of employment. These have the most direct impact on workers day to day functioning. Refusal to bargain on these issues can result in charges of unfair labor practices. These issues are mandatory for both sides not only the employer.
2. **Permissive issues** – may be discussed only if both parties agree to do so. Permissive issues often include items that are of mutual interest, including a company's pricing policy the pensions and benefits of retired workers. Neither the union nor the employer can refuse to sign a contract based on failure to reach agreement on a permissive issues.
3. **Prohibited or illegal issues** – are strictly forbidden by law. They cannot be Subject to negotiation even if both parties want to negotiate them. Included are, closed shop agreements, and discrimination against protected class of individuals.

According to Schwind et al (2005) a collective bargaining process has three overlapping phases. Preparation for negotiation is the first and often the most critical stage. The success of the second stage, face to face negotiations largely depends on how well each side has prepared the skill of management and union negotiators, and the bargaining power of each side.

The third phase involves the follow up activities of contract administration. An organization may establish an industrial relations department or create a labor relations specialist position within the human resource department to administer the collective agreement and coordinate contract negotiations.

2.7.8 Impasses in Bargaining

If the parties cannot agree on one or more mandatory issues, they have reached an impasse in bargaining. A party that insists on bargaining over a permissive topic to the point of impasse engages in an unfair labor practice. If the impasse persists because the parties have taken rigid positions, a strike may result. Before a strike is called either party may ask a mediator to help resolve the impasse. Mediators are trained in conflict resolution techniques and are sometimes able to improve communication so that the impasse is resolved. LUIS R. Gomez et al (2001), *Managing Human Resource* 3rd edition.

2.7.9 Collective Bargaining Outcomes

According to Michael Armstrong (2009) *handbook of human resource management* 11th edition PP-915, the formal outcomes of collective bargaining are substantive agreements, procedural agreements, single union deals, new style agreements, partnership agreements and employee relations procedures.

Substantive Collective Agreements

Substantive collective agreements are the outcomes of collective bargaining. They set out agreed terms and conditions of employment covering pay and working hours and other aspects such as holidays, overtime regulations, flexibility arrangements and allowances. They are not legally enforceable. A substantive agreement may detail the operational rules for a payment by results scheme, which could include arrangements for timing or re-timing and for payments during waiting time or on new work that has not been timed. Substantive agreements can also deal with the achievement of single status or harmonization.

Procedural Collective Agreements

Procedural agreements set out the methods to be used and the procedures or rules to be followed in the processes of collective bargaining and the settlement of individual disputes. Their purpose is to regulate the behavior of the parties to the agreement but, they are not legally enforceable and degree to which they are followed depends on the goodwill of both parties and the balance of power between them. Procedural and substantive agreements are seldom broken and if so, never

lightly, the basic assumption of collective bargaining is that both parties will honor agreements that have been made freely between them.

A typical procedure agreement contains the following:

- A preamble defining the objectives of the agreement.
- A statement that the union is recognized as representative body with negotiating rights.
- A statement of the general principles, which may include a commitment to use the procedure (a no-strike clause) and/or a status quo clause that restricts the ability of management to introduce changes outside negotiated or customary practice.
- A statement of the facilities granted to unions, including the rights of shop stewards and the right to hold meetings.
- Provisions for joint negotiating committee
- a grievance or dispute procedures
- Provisions for terminating the agreement

2.7.10 Contract Administration

The last phase of collective bargaining in labor relations is contract administration, which involves application and enforcement of the labor contract in the workplace LUIS R.Gomez (2001). Disputes occasionally arise between labor and management over such issues as who should be promoted or whether an employee has abused sick leave privileges.

Dispute Handling and Grievance Procedure

Grievance procedure is, the steps taken to resolve such disputes which are spelled out in the labor contract. Grievance procedure is a systematic step by step procedure designed to settle disputes regarding the interpretation of labor contract.

Step in Grievance Procedure:

Most union grievance procedures have three or four steps leading up to arbitration, the final step.

Figure 6 illustrates a four step union grievance procedure. Usually a time limit is set for resolution of the grievance at each step.

Last steps in the procedure require more time than earlier steps, and the degree of formality increases with each step.

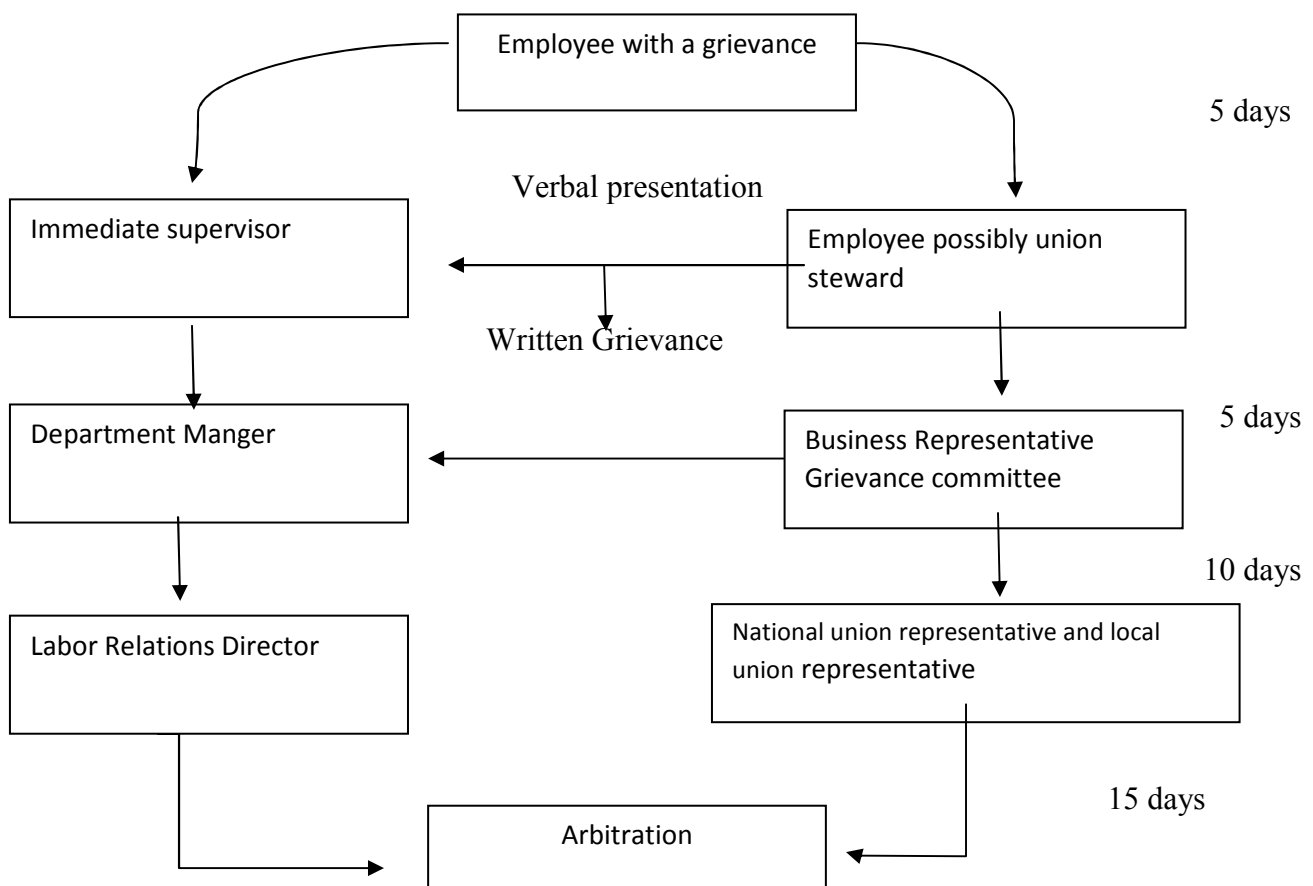


Figure 4 Union Grievance Procedure

Source; Taken from LUIS R.Gomez (2001) *Managing Human Resources 3rd edition* PP 541.

Brief Description on Conceptual Framework of Employee Relations

The researcher has adopted the conceptual framework of employee relations and brief explanation has been given below in figure 5. It includes major concepts related to *employee relations, parties to employment relations: employer and employee* that play significant role in the relationship. *Employee relations strategy* is the means to achieve conducive working environment so that the management can have the opportunity to *hear their voice* and in turn it is the way *to air their grievances* related to their rights.

Employment contract is viewed as the binding chain of *both employee and employer* to regulate their legal relationship through written and formally concluded employment contract. It is also the major manifestation of *individual employee relations and the company*. The other form and manifestation of tacit employment relations is the concept of *Psychological Contract* which is not written and even unspoken, not legally binding employment relations between the two parties. It simply constitutes the belief, opinion, assumptions and expectations of the two parties' *employer and employees*. However, it highly affects the employment relations of both parties.

Unionization on the other hand is, the concept related to *collective aspect of employment relations* that the *management and trade union representatives* bargain and negotiate on the issues of their terms and conditions arising from their employment relations. Both parties bargain and negotiate to maintain the interests of their respective members. *Collective bargaining* should always be negotiated in *good faith* to avoid or minimize *impasses and deadlocks* to achieve the production of *collective agreement* document. The *collective agreement* document can be used as a tool for realizing *collective employment relationship, contract administration* and management of peaceful employment relations. It is also considered as *collective contract between the management and the trade union representatives*.

The Conceptual Framework of the Study

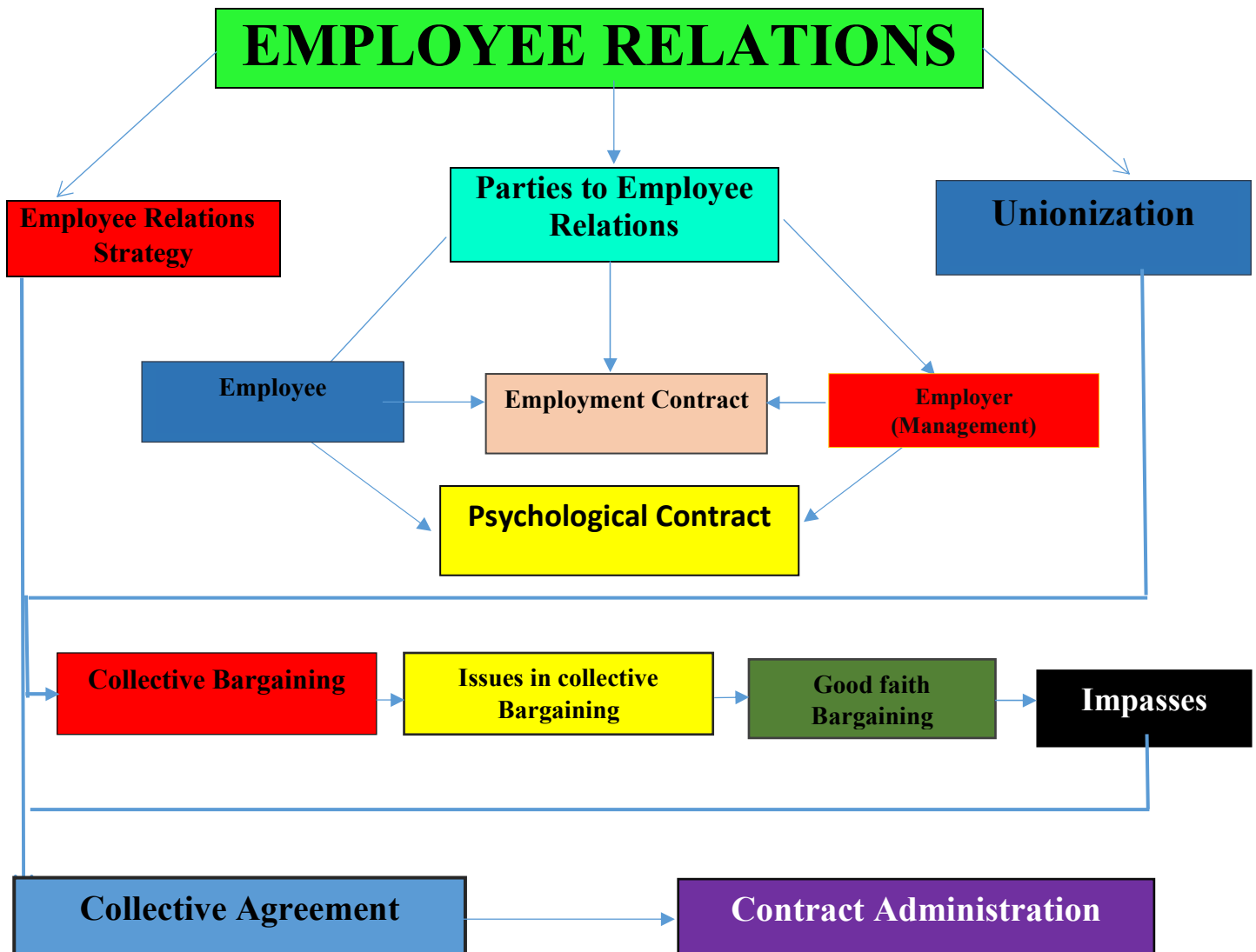


Figure 5: The Conceptual Framework Adopted by the Researcher

Source; the conceptual framework adopted by the researcher

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

3.1 The Research Design

In order to address the research questions and also achieve the research objective, the researcher has used to select in advance suitable research design. A research design employed was descriptive qualitative method that involves narrative words in order to explain the events based on data collected through Focus Group Discussions and interview method.

In fact, a research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blue print for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Kothari 2004).

The study design provides basic framework for the collection and analysis of data to generate reliable findings. As stated by Claire, et al (2002) a research design is an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the purpose with economy in procedure.

According to Kothari (2004:8), descriptive research includes Focus Group Discussions, and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds. The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. In a very real sense, description is fundamental to all research. And hence, to better see how there is effective implementation of employment relations practices and policies within the context of Yekatit Paper Converting PLC.

3.2 The Research Approach

There are generally three types of research approaches/methodologies identified by Creswell (2003). Quantitative data is about numbers in general terms. They are all such data that are usually quantified to help answer research questions and meet pre-specified objectives (Lewis et al, 2007) These claim post positivism knowledges with experimental strategies of enquiry. Quantitative analysis uses methods such as, cost and effect thinking, measurement and observation as well as test of theories. Proponents of this approach claim that it is a great example of deductive logic of natural science. This is because it allows for comparison which is

done through objectively determined validity and reliability. However, since by this approach variables may only be measured by specific point in time, one may not achieve an in-depth analysis of for example psychological factors.

Qualitative data is about words so to speak in general terms. These include all nonnumeric data that are not quantified or quantifiable and can be a product of all research strategies. This type of analysis claims constructivism of set of knowledge and mainly uses ethnographic and narrative strategies of enquiry. Qualitative analysis uses methods including, field observation, open ended interview and focus group discussions. The main advantage of such approaches is that there is a greater degree of wholeness and richness of data collected since it focuses on natural occurrences within natural settings. This makes it a powerful tool to study the process (Creswell (2003)

Mixed approach to a research incorporates elements of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. It claims the knowledge of pragmatic assumptions for its rigor and validity. In essence, it uses both qualitative and quantitative strategies and methods of enquiry.

Since the above-mentioned research approaches are employed separately or mixed, the researcher is more interested to conduct his study using qualitative research approach. The major reason to select this approach has been justified by the researcher hereunder.

If in-depth and holistic understanding is requested for a given issue, qualitative approach is more useful (Hancock and Algozzine, 2006). If this is the case, under case study the approach happens to be qualitative rather than quantitative (Kothar, 2004). Because, as it is well known, this approach enables to understand the phenomena in-depth. Therefore, in this case, the argument of Kitchin and Tate (2000), which indicates the case studies are qualitative in nature, is true.

For Straus and Cabin (1998), qualitative methodology is typical research approach that enables to produce findings not arrived at by statistical procedure or other means of quantification. In other words, it is a way by which researchers generate raw qualitative data and manufacture it in non-numerical manifestation. It is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning to individuals or group ascribe to social or human problems, Creswell, (2009).

3.3 Data Sources

For the purpose of achieving the stated objectives, both primary and secondary data sources are used.

3.3.1 Primary Data Sources

The source of the primary data in the study process has been examined through deep and structured interview with management group and some selected employee group. Focus Group interview has also been conducted from purposely selected employees. The size of employees are Six (6) those who were participated in responding structured interview prepared for collecting relevant data during the study through focus group discussion.

3.3.2 Secondary Data Sources

Since the study focuses on employee-employer relations, it is critically important and necessary to review the collective agreement document that is used to manage all issues related with employment relations between the management and the trade union of Yekatit. Therefore, collective agreement document has also been used to analyze and get insight how the current HR policy and practice works in the issues related to employee relations.

3.4 Data Collection Tools and Procedures

Data collection tools involve minimum to moderate structured interviews with open-ended questions that will be provided for management team as well as purposely selected focus group discussion members from among employees and structured interview will be administered. In addition, data collection may also include the observation of physical work environment, examination of records, reports, photographs, and other documents.

3.4.1 Data Collection Tools

3.4.1.1 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussion is a technique where a researcher assembles a group of individuals to a specific topic, aiming to draw from the complex personal experience, beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of the participants through a moderated interaction, (Cornwall, and Jewkes, 1995, Hayward et al 2004).

The technique emerged as a qualitative data collection approach and a bridging strategy for scientific research and knowledge (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995). Focus group discussion is perceived to be a cost effective and promising alternative in participatory research (Morgan, 1996) offering a platform differing paradigms or worldviews (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

According to Richard Krueger (2002), focus group interview has the following major characteristics:

- **Participants:** carefully selected 5 to 10 people per group, 6 to 8 are preferred, similar type of people.
- **Environment:** should be comfortable, circle seating and tape recorded.
- **Moderator:** Should be skillful in group discussions, uses predetermined questions and establishes permissive environment.
- **Analysis and Reporting:** Should be appropriate.

In focus group discussion participants are typically selected to participate in qualitative research based on transparent criteria, such as their knowledge, life experience, particular characteristics or role in a group (Khan & Manderson, 1992).

According to Khan & Manderson,(1992), the typical size of a group discussion is 6 to 12 participants. Focus group discussion can be executed in three stages: planning, conducting interviews, and analysis of the data (Morgan, 1988).

Based on the above different writers, the researcher has conducted his study in Yekati Paper Converting PLC employing focus group discussion interview to collect appropriate data in the following manner.

- Planned and arranged comfortable venue in the company office and seat for participants who are involved.
- Has arranged assistant data collector who has helped in playing significant role as assistant moderator in note taking during the data collection process.
- Developed predetermined and structured interview questions presented to participants.
- Has approached the participants' friendly, in welcoming manner and establishing permissive conditions to conduct focus group interview.

- Materials were ready and employed during focus group discussion like, Camera, note training pads and other equipment.
- The researcher has conducted focus group interview with carefully and purposefully selected 6 to 12 study participants who have homogeneous background, exposure, and life experience. Two mini groups have been established as group one and two that each group consist of 6(Six) participants in focus group discussion.
- The researcher plays the role of moderator with the help of assistant moderator.

During the process of focus group discussion, the researcher mainly employed note taking as a tool to collect appropriate data and recorded what has been said by the participants.

The researcher as moderator at the beginning of conducting focus group interview has made smooth introduction in welcoming manner and presented overview of the topic, put ground rulers and has forwarded question to the group.

Besides, the researcher has also employed the technique of participants observation in order to control the participants during the focus group discussion.

3.4.1.2 Interview

According to Smithson (2000), interviews involve a one to one qualitative and in-depth discussion where the researcher adopts the role of an investigator. This implies that the researcher asks questions, controls the dynamics of the discussion or engages in dialogue with specific individuals. In this respect the researcher has developed semi structured interview that could be used as starting point to conduct in depth interview with management group. The target group that were intervened are six (5) management team who have provided realistic response regarding employment relations of Yekatit PLC.

3.5 The Sample Design

Regarding the use of sampling technique in qualitative descriptive study approach purposive sampling technique is appropriate. To this effect, Focus Group Discussion, in deep interview with purposely selected management team has been conducted. The range of purposive sample taken was 6 to 12 employees who have been participated in focus group discussion in two mini groups.

Besides, five (5) management members have been interviewed primarily semi structured interview.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Since the researcher's primary objectives is to elicit relevant and reliable information from the study participants, due care has been taken during the study process. The researcher has submitted letter of cooperation from the University to Yekatit PLC and promised the responders that he will not mention their names in the paper and never disclose to the third party the data collected and information gathered from the participants during and after the study is completed.

Therefore, during the study, the researcher has approached the participants in friendly manner to make them self-motivated and voluntary in order to achieve the objectives of the study effectively in a way that to get reliable data. In order to assure study participants to trust on the researcher and provide reliable data, one copy of written and signed non-disclosure agreement document has been provided for participants.

Generally, the researcher has taken due care and has tried to maintain ethical standards not to compromise such ethical issues in the study process

3.7 Data Analysis

Focus group discussion usually yields both qualitative and observational data where analysis can be demanding, (Onwuegbuize, 2008). Morgan (1988) recommends the use of content and ethnographic analytic technique to analyze data from a focus group discussion since it affords the researcher an opportunity to obtain both qualitative and quantitative information.

Hence, ethnographic analysis is strictly qualitative which is the researcher interested to employ. It involves drawing primary on direct quotes from the group discussion. Consequently, the process is not systematic and but that relies on the researcher's ability to label the materials in to themes, disclosure or illustrative quotations while maintaining the integrity and accounting for the context of the focus group.

While analyzing focus group data, the researcher has considered the actual words by the participants and ascribes the meaning of those words. A variety of words and phrases have been used and the researcher has determined the degree of similarity between those responses.

Regarding internal consistency, when there is a shift in opinion by the participants, the researcher has tried to trace back the flow of the conversation to determine clues that might explain the change. Related to responses of participants, with specific and based on experiences the researcher has given more weight than responses that are vague and impersonal.

In the case of interview, the researcher has conducted in depth one to one conversation with five managers of the company. The detail analysis is presented using ethnographic approach in next chapter of the paper.

Given the centrality of the analysis in qualitative research in general, a kind of stock taking of the various approaches to qualitative data analysis and the challenges it faces seems necessary. Data analysis is concerned with and represents the diversification of way of communication and documentation of individual and social experience.

Therefore, qualitative data analysis is the classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit dimensions and structures of meaning can refer to subjective or social meanings (Flick et al 2013).

Unlike quantitative analysis which is statistics driven and largely independent of the researcher, qualitative analysis is heavily dependent on the researcher's analytical and integrative skills and personal knowledge of the context from where the data will be collected (Saunders, 2007). The qualitative data to be gathered through focus group discussion and in-depth interview is recorded, note has been taken, transcribed and interpreted in a meaningful manner.

Generally, the data analysis is descriptive qualitative, narrative and ethnographic approach that are used to present findings conclusions, and recommendations.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Validity is usually defined as the best available approximation to the truth or falsity of a given inference, proposition or conclusion. Validity concerns are, soundness, legitimacy, and relevance of a research theory and its investigation (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). Validity does not carry the same connotation in the qualitative research as it does in quantitative research (Creswell, 2009). However; it does not mean that validity is unimportant factor in qualitative research approach. Instead, it is a vital means which any qualitative research should be concerned while conducting study to assure quality.

On the other hand, reliability refers to consistency of findings. Therefore, in this study, the result quality has been achieved on the basis of suggestions given by Creswell. Hence, to bring quality on the results on the study the researcher has attempted to avoid biases and mistakes during on the results interpretation and transcription of participants' responses. Due attention has been given to code the statements of replies by the participants.

In qualitative research approach the quality may also be affected by ethical issues and subjectivity of judgments of the researcher and interpretations. To minimize such subjectivity, the researcher made due care in putting directly the words of respondents and what has been said in focus group discussion. Some explanations taken from the interview of management team is directly quoted in this paper.

Eventhough, it would be difficult to generalize the results based on the explanations given by participants in focus group discussion and interviews, the researcher believes that they can tell something about the existing phenomena on the issues of employee-management relations on the study conducted.

Chapter 4

Analysis, Interpretation and Presentation

Introduction

The process of data analysis must begin immediately after the group session ends. Anderson (1990) has given some useful guidelines for data analysis. He is in favor of looking at first for big ideas and making list of them, considering words and contexts of their use, trying to examine the strength of the reactions, feelings, and striking balance between detail and conciseness.

Focus group discussion usually yields both qualitative and observational data where analysis can be demanding. According to Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007, 2008), qualitative analysis techniques that can be used to analyze focus group data include grounded theory analysis (Charmaz, 2006, Glaser, 1978, 1992; Glaser and Strauss, 1997, Strauss 1987), and discourse analysis (Potter and Wetherell 1987). Morgan (1988) recommends the use of content and ethnographic analytic technique to analyses data from focus group discussion.

Based on the existing literature, the researcher of this study is interested to conduct his analysis using ethnographic analytical method and narrative technique. Because ethnographic analysis is significantly helpful to collect possible data directly from respondents and presents what has been said by the participants and puts their own words in quotation. Hence, ethnographic analysis is strictly qualitative, drawing primarily on direct quotes from the group discussion.

According to Krippendorff (2012), ethnographic analysis does permit a detailed interpretative account of the everyday social processes of communication, talk and action occurring within the focus group which can be useful in some instances.

In this regard the researcher has conducted his study in Yekatit Paper Converting PLC employing as a tool for data collection focus group discussion, semi structured interview for management group and presented some behaviors and events observed by the respondents during data collection process. In all situations, the responses taken from the participants own words are immediately noted and mentioned under quotation and italicized.

4.1 Analysis

4.1.1 Ethnographic Analysis of Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion has been conducted in Yekatit PLC with purposively selected twelve participants who are working in two different locations of Yekatit PLC. Since it is not manageable to make focus group discussion within all the participants at once, two mini groups have been established and organized by the researcher. The two groups, group one and two have been participated in group discussion conducted on the issues of employee relations with topic of the same content that the researcher developed in advance semi structured interview for group discussion.

Yekatit Paper Converting PLC has three branches in Addis Ababa among the researcher selected purposively two branches where there are 85% employees working.

One is located at East Part of Addis Ababa around Gerji Mebrat Hail area, its head office and factory, where employees have been working. Here the researcher purposely selected six participants of focus group discussion that represent group one. They are working in different departments among which 60% of participants are from production department and the rest 40% respondents of focus group discussion are from technical and office area. The picture of group one participants in focus group discussion is captured during the study and presented hereunder.



Figure 6 Captured Picture of Focus Group Discussion One, Yekatit PLC

Source; Captured Picture of Focus Group Discussion One, Yekatit PLC

The second branch of Yekatit PLC is located at South part of Addis Ababa near to Kality Busstation. This branch of Yekatit PLC administers 300 employees where group two of focus group discussion participants were selected using purposive sampling technique. The researcher has played actively the moderator role during data collection process of focus group discussion. He also has assigned assistant moderator who is skillful in data collection and note taking during the study process.

The sizes of participantsinvolved in focus group discussion group two were 6(Six).As usual, the picture of the participants of group two focus group discussion has been captured during study process and presented below.

While the researcher conducts discussion with group, the assistant moderator takes notes and makesrecords of what has been said.



Figure 7: Captured Picture of Focus Group Discussion Two, Yekatit PLC

Source: Captured Picture of Focus Group Discussion Two, Yekatit PLC

For identification purpose, group one participants are coded as A, B, C, D, E and F

Table 3 Respondents’ Demographic Data Collected from Group One Participants

S/N	Participants in FGD	Sex	Age	Level of Education	Service year	Position of Participants of FGD
1	A	Male	65	12+1	30	Printing Supervisor
2	B	Male	44	12+3	4	Printing Section Head
3	C	Male	26	BSc	1	Labeling Unit Head
4	D	Male	25	BSc	1	Printing and Finishing Head
5	E	Female	31	10+2	7	Office Secretary
6	F	Male	26	BSc	3	Duplication Section Head

Source: Data collected by the researcher in Yekatit Paper Converting PLC

Details of Focus Group Discussion Analysis

Group One.

While focus group discussion started with group one participants, the researcher first introduced himself and the assistance moderator’s name and the roles played by both researcher as a moderator and his assistance moderator.

During the introduction session, the researcher has also explained the objectives of the study for participants of focus group discussion in Yekatit PLC including other important points that need to be addressed by the researcher during the study. The researcher has also raised the issue of ethical matters, confidentiality and the issues of nondisclosure of information and data collected from the participants. The researcher has promised all the participants involved in focus group discussion not to disclose what has been said during the discussion. An agreement paper signed by the researcher has been presented to the participants in the group discussion in order to assure the response validity and reliability of the study.

Responses and Analysis of Participants of Group One

The first question raised by the researcher to group one participants was:

What are major challenges faced by the company on the issues of employee relations between employee representatives and management group in Yekatit PLC?

The response as the group participant coded by letter “A” said that: *“there are problems of implementation on the rights of employee with regard to annual leave management, health and safety equipment delayed supply and unfair treatment of employees. The management*

discriminates temporary employees on the implementation of collective agreement that they have no rights of having salary increment and other benefits applicable for permanent workers. Therefore, these issues are some of the challenges that I observed in the organization”

The next question raised by the researcher to the participants of group one participants was:

What are challenges related to collective bargaining process and bilateral negotiations between the company management and the trade union representatives of Yekatit PLC?

The Participant coded by letter “B” answered for the question was: *“however the trade union of the company is trying to maintain the interest of its members, but it is highly influenced by the power of the company management during the collective bargaining and negotiation process. Since the company is private, sometimes the negotiation process is affected by impasses and give and take principles does not apply between the two bargaining parties. Differences in the collective bargaining issues like salary increment, bonus and other terms and conditions of employment are negotiated taking very longer time due to the impasses and disagreements between the two bargaining parties, the trade union and the management group.”*

The third question raised by the researcher was:

To what extent is the involvement and recognition of trade union and their level of participation in decision making of employee relations matters?

One of the participants coded by letter “C” response reads as: *“the level of involvement and trade union recognition by the management is significantly negligible and that it is almost none. Most of decisions are made by the management group and even the collective agreement document signed between trade union and management is not in favor of the employees rather it is almost all designed by the influence of the management, so that is it difficult to exercise the rights of employees in collective agreement document and the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation 377/2003.”*

Question four of the study raised during focus group discussion was:

How do you evaluate the implementation of collective agreement document and other HR policy provisions in providing employee protective equipment and other mandated benefits of employees?

As the group discussion participant coded by the letter “D”, *“the company does not avail personal protective equipment, and other employee benefits in line with collective agreement. The company does not avail such materials on time and as per collective agreement. Every year the*

equipment is provided to workers by the management with the great complaints of employees and the trade union.

Question five forwarded for group two participants was about the mechanisms used in dispute resolution and ways of handling the disputes between the management the employees.

What mechanisms are used to handle work related disputes and what are the effects of such challenges on the productivity of the company?

Participant coded by “C” has mentioned that: *“I know that disputes are resolved in Yekatit PLC by the way of collective negotiations of trade union and management group. In some instances however, the disputes are resolved amicably through involvement of third party mediation and conciliation of the two involved in disputes. The effects of disputes on the company, the trade union and individual employee are wastage of time, resources and reduce productivity and employee morale to perform their expected jobs.”*

Question Six raised by the researcher was about employee voice hearing and airing grievances.

How employees air their grievances and to what extent is employee voice heard and considered by the management in Yekatit PLC?

Briefly the response by the participant coded by Letter “F” was: *the management of the company does not arrange meeting, no arrangements of awareness creations and collective discussions practiced and no such culture and event organization in the company that would motivate employees and air their grievances in work place. The company only looks for its business and profit maximization activity.”*

Question Seven is about the practice of employee separations in Yekatit and it reads as:

How do you evaluate the practice and implementation of employee separations and employment contract terminations by Yekatit PLC?

As the response of participant coded by the letter “A” “the termination of employment contract is practiced in some cases unlawfully, illegally and there is the practice of violating Labor Proclamation No 377/2003 and the collective agreement document. Specially, with regard to employees who are working in temporary and fixed term definite period. Hence, the practice of terminations is somehow against the labor law of the country.”

The Eighth question raised by the researcher was about trust between the company management and the trade union.

To what extent is the trust between the trade union representatives and management group of the company?

The participant coded by Letter “D” answered that: *“the degree of trust between management and trade union is almost none and they don’t trust each other and then the employee relations is affected due to lack of their trust on their day to day communications.”*

Question nine is about general opinion of implementation of HR policy and Land laws.

What is your general opinion about the implementation of the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No 377/2003 and the collective agreement document signed between the management and the trade union in Yekatit Paper Converting PLC?

The participant “E” response was somewhat different from other group discussion participants in that her reply was: *the company always provides all the benefits in line with Labor Proclamation 377/2003 and the collective agreement document. Safety equipment is provided as required by the employees with better quality and quantity. But, due to some formalities on the purchasing process to be fulfilled; however there is delayed supply in protective materials by the management.”* She answered.

The last question for group one participants involved in group discussion was to mention any other difficulty of employment relations that limits smooth communication of management and employee representatives.

What are any other difficulties of employment relations that hinder smooth communication of management and employee representatives?

The participant’s opinion on this point was not different from the previous responses provided by the group members. They pointed out that the general practice and implementation of the collective agreement document is not properly handled by management. Participant “C” has mentioned that: *“there is absence of fair and equitable salary distribution, the absence of employee relations strategy designed by management, the employee voice hearing arrangement is not practiced and management has no time and interest to hear the feelings, thoughts, opinions and grievances aired by the employees. Regarding the issues of collective bargaining, there is the absence of good faith bargaining practice because of lack of give and take bargaining situations in collective bargaining process and contract administration in Yekatit Paper Converting PLC.”*

Focus Group Discussion Analysis

Group Two

The researcher has conducted focus group discussion with group two participants raising the same research questions and issues to be addressed in the study process. As usual there are 6(Six) study participants of focus group discussion who are selected using purposive random sampling technique. They have homogenous level of understand about their company and their personal life and their experience for their jobs. However, they are from different work departments: production, technical and logistics and distribution departments.

The participants of study began to conduct the discussion with the researcher at the second branch of Yekatit Paper Converting PLC Kality area. The total time spent on group discussion was two hours that in-depth interview has been conducted to finalize the overall process of group discussion with six participants. The researcher as moderator and the assistant moderator who has supported the researcher, have both played their respective roles in the overall study process to effectively finalize the research paper on a given time schedule.

As usual the researcher has introduced himself, his assistant moderator explaining why he is here and the purpose of the study in Yekatit Paper Converting PLC Kality branch. He also promised to the participants to maintain the confidentiality of data collected and information gathered during the study process. He submitted them agreement document of non-discourse of information to any other third party.

He has assured them to keep and maintain ethical standards and confidentiality of his research conducted in the company. After the introduction step of the study process with group two the researcher has requested the participants to provide some data related to their personal and demographic information.

Their demographic information is coded in the table below to identify what they have been said during the group discussion session.

The coding and identification is done as A2, B2, C2, D2, E2 and F2 that can help to identify group two from group one participants during the study process.

Table

Table 4 Respondents’ Demographic Data Collected from Group Two Participants

S/n	Participants in FGD	Sex	Age	Level of Education	Service Year	Position of Participants in FGD
1	A2	Male	26	BSc	3 Years	Production Supervisor
2	B2	Male	34	10+2	2 Years	Packer
3	C2	Male	54	10 th	34 Years	Packer
4	D2	Male	27	BSc	2 Years	Assistance Supervisor
5	E2	Female	36	10 th	3 Years	Female gate inspector
6	F2	Female	32	12 th	4 Years	Production Assistance

Source: Data Collected by the researcher in Yekatit Paper Converting PLC

For identification purpose group two participants are coded as: A2, B2, C2, D2, E2, and F2.

Details of Focus Group Discussion Analysis Group Two: The first question raised to group two participants of FGD was:

What are major challenges faced by the company on the issues of employee relations between employee representatives and management group in Yekatit PLC?

As the Participant coded by “A2” response: *“there are challenges on the process of collective bargaining and implementation of collective agreement issues like hours of work, disagreements and disputes faced on the employee rights and benefit packages to be provided by the management. Dispute between the management and employee representatives is often exhibited and hinders smooth employee relations, wastes company time of work that the employees need to be involved.”*

The Second question raised by the researcher to the participants of group two was: **What are challenges related to collective bargaining process and negotiations between the company management and the trade union representatives of Yekatit PLC?**

Regarding the challenges of collective bargaining process the participant coded on “B2” response was almost the same as the first participant. He mentioned the following challenges like challenges related to collective bargaining and negotiations pertaining to some unfair labor and unlawful management practices. He said that: *“I have experienced in most cases impasses are often seen in collective bargaining process. Negotiations are not fruitful because of problems of*

lack of give and take bargaining strategy and disagreements are exhibited in some instances due to their unwilling to bargain in good faith. Due to the delayed collective bargaining process, the employee rights and benefits are not implemented at the right time and as per the provision of the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No 377/2003”

The third question raised by the researcher to group two was: **To what extent is the involvement and recognition of trade union and their level of participation in decision making of employee relations matters?**

The level of involvement, recognition and participation on the issues of employee relations is low as per the group participant coded by “C2”. He has mentioned that: *“trade union of the company is not recognized, involved and participated in any occasions and decisions of employee relation matters. Most issues like employee promotion, termination, transfer and separations of employees are decided by management without any involvement of labor union representatives. However, there is committee establishments are provided in the collective agreement document of the company.”*

On question four, the researcher raised to focus group discussion participants was:

How do you evaluate the implementation of collective agreement document and other HR policy provisions in providing employee protective equipment and other mandated benefits of employees?

As study participant coded by “D2”, implementation of collective agreement document and the labor proclamation are not practiced legally and in line with the provisions of the proclamation. He has mentioned that: *workers are not treated fairly and equitably. In some cases terminations are practiced unlawfully and illegally. Workers discrimination is exhibited on the implementation of the labor law, employment terminations, involvement and participation issues.”*

Question five raised by the researcher was about employee voice hearing and airing grievances. **How employees air their grievances and to what extent is employee voice considered by the management in Yekatit PLC?**

Participant “C2” has mentioned that: *“as to my knowledge employee voice hearing and employee relations strategy is not practiced in our company. Meeting with employees is not called by the management even once in a year to share ideas about the status of the company and workers have no opportunity, time and condition to air their grievances about their rights and benefits.”*

Question Six forwarded for group two participants was about the mechanisms used in dispute resolution and ways handling the disagreements between the management the employees.

What mechanisms are used to handle work related disputes and what are the effects of such challenges on the productivity of the company?

The group participant coded by letter “E2” mentioned that: *“disputes are normal in our company. It is frequently exhibited in the company that employees come up with work related disputes. The major manifestations are disputes faced by the company because of management unfair treatment of employees on the matters like terminations of employment contract, disciplinary actions taken by the management because of breaching of code of conduct by employees. Such disputes are handled by the internal norm of the company through bilateral negotiations and discussions of both management and the trade union. Apart from internal bilateral negotiations, disputes are handling by the way of mediation and conciliation of some external parties including both disputing parties. If the challenges become more serious, they are referred further to external parties that are experienced in arbitration to resolve the dispute between management and employees. Collective employment disputes are handled by the Labor relations board that its composition is from government, employers’ associations and employees’ associations. If the disputes are not manageable and resolved by arbitration and mediation of third party, the issue will be presented to regular courts and they have final jurisdictions on disputes.*

Currently the company has work related disputes and court cases that happened due to employment contract ruminations of four temporary workers. The effects are time wastage, resource wastage and psychological impact on the employees and the company.”

The Seventh question raised by the researcher for group two participants was, about trust between the company management and the trade union.

To what extent is the trust between the trade union representatives and management group of the company?

Participant “F2” noted that the level of trust between management and trade union representatives is relatively low and there is idea mismatch and differences of interests between both trade union and the management. He said that: *“as I know that the level of trust between our company management and the trade union representatives is low and they experience that one*

does not rely on the other party idea. Hence due to their low-level trust each other, union leaders and management team face challenges in employee relations matters. Hence, the level of acceptance by management team in employee relations issue is very low.”

Eighth question forwarded to group discussion participants in group two was focused on the general opinion of participants to evaluate the effective implementation of the Labor Law and the HR policy and practice.

What is your general opinion about the implementation of the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No 377/2003 and the collective agreement document signed between the management and the trade union in Yekatit Paper Converting PLC?

As participant “B2” said: *“I know that the collective agreement document negotiated by both management and the trade union, it is more sided to management which employee benefits and rights are not included exhaustively and it is not in line with the Ethiopia Labor Proclamation No 377/2003. As I currently experience in some cases even they are included in the collective agreement document the practical implementation of the rights of employees’ is not exercised in a way that employees are satisfied and not in line with the laws of land. For this unlawful termination of the temporary employees is a good example.”*

The last issue discussed by focus group with the group two participants is to conduct any additional discussions and difficulties with regard to employee relations.

Finally, they addressed and give more emphasis on the issues like the protective equipment of employees, other services and facilities that are not provided on the right time and provided lately without out considering the safety requirements of employees. As participant “F2” forwarded her opinion about protective devices she mentioned that: *“I know that the protective equipment to employers is provided by the company. However, due to the management reluctance the protective device is provided to employees with delayed time schedule.”* As she said on her response: *“the employee voice hearing and airing the grievance arrangement is not practiced in the company, so that the employee relations strategy is almost none in the company as per the response of this participant.”* As she forwarded her opinion: *“As to my knowledge, termination of employment contract of workers is practiced in according to collective agreement document but, in some cases the practice of terminations with regard to temporary workers is against the labor law of the land. There is some sort of discrimination among permanent and*

temporary workers regarding their separation process and exercising their rights. Hence, the implementation of collective agreement document and labor proclamation No 377/2003 practiced with some degree of violation of land of the law.”

4.1.2 Analysis of Management Team Interview

Introduction

While the researcher conducting in-depth interview using as a tool semi structured interview at senior management level, four participants have been involved on the study in face to face interview. The researcher has made an introduction with each participant and submitted a letter of support from Addis Ababa University that requests the cooperation of the company management to allow and provide possible information for the researcher on the process of the study to be conducted.

During the introduction session, the researcher has briefly introduced himself including the research topic and the objectives of the study going to be conducted in Yekatit Paper Converting PLC. The general overview of the study has also been introduced by the researcher to the participants

The issues related to research ethics and confidentiality matters are communicated with each interview participants and the researcher has promised them that not to disclose any information to the third party except the utilization of the study purpose.

Table 5 Demographic data collected from interview participants

S/N	Interview Participants Code	Sex	Age	Level of Education	Total Service in Years	Position of Interview Participants
1	A	Male	54	MA	30	Corporate Service Director
2	B	Male	40	BA	17	Finance Director
3	C	Male	48	MBA	22	HR Director
4	D	Male	52	Diploma	34	Production Manager

Source: Data collected by the researcher from interview participants

In the above table the list of participants is coded as A, B, C, and D. This is to simply identify and organize the direct words taken from the participants and make quotation in analysis what has been said by each interviewee.

After having the demographic data from participants, the researcher has created rapport that would help him to continue and forward the first question to them.

Then the first open-ended question has been forwarded to the participant coded by “A”.

What are major challenges of the trade union and company management in collective bargaining process and how impasses are managed in the process of bilateral negotiation of both?

The participant coded in “A” has forwarded his response as: *“the negotiators and bargaining parties from trade union coming to bargaining table with confined objectives of gaining for their entire delegated body without considering the company side survival and benefits, then the negotiations and collective bargaining process ends up and mismatch and impasses are created between the management and trade union representatives. Hence, such disagreements and impasses go to the external third-party involvement.”*

However, as he has mentioned issues related to impasses he says that: *“the strength of trade union not so strong as it used to be, the bargaining power is very less compared to management team. Also, the Labor Law gives them some preferential advantage to employees and union, so that no serious deadlock is created in bargaining process.”*

As the manager responds additional points on the collective bargaining issue he said that: *“one major problem was the trade union usually does not believe in give and take negotiation strategy which could be concluded as absence of good faith bargaining behavior is observed from their side. They do not consider the ability of the company to provide such benefits and the holistic picture of the company during collective bargaining. However, the company attempts to gain faith of trade union by granting additional benefits to employees in order to increase productivity and maintain retention of employees”.*

Second point raised by the researcher was about the implementation of collective agreement document on matters like provision of safety protection equipment for employees.

The replay of participant “A” was: *“in line with the safety policy of the company, the protective equipment required for the job has been identified in collective agreement*

document. Unfortunately, a provision is done after a prolonged delay and repeated complaints by the trade union representatives and employees. It is also observed that quite a lot of employees do not use protective equipment delivered to them in work place.”

Third question asked by the researcher was: **What are the challenges related to separation/termination of employment contract and relations?**

The interview participant of management team member coded as “A” responded that: *“the company has a lot of contractual and casual workers having a position of definite period of employment. These categories of employment are not as such closely followed and, in some instances, company terminates their employment contract in a way that leading to court litigation which the company ends up to a loser. There are also some terminations without substantiated breach of laws of procedures.”*

Question four deals about the challenges faced by employee-employer disputes. It reads as: **How the company faces the challenges of employee-employer disputes related to court cases and what mechanisms are practiced to resolve such disputes of employment relations?**

The manager coded by “A” says that: *“sometimes through enough negotiations and consultation of both but, mostly management gives a deaf ear that leads to employees dissatisfied and lose of qualified workers left the company because of work related disputes due to unlawful terminations.”*

On question five the respondent manager is asked about the trade union recognition and involvement. The forwarded question reads as:

To what extent is the trade union recognition and involvement in employment relations issues like committee involvement and disciplinary matters that requires decision?

The response by the manager was: *“the trade union involves rarely in employee relation issues in a committee level as the company unilaterally decides cases without consultation of the trade union.”*

In question Six the researcher was interested to gather reliable information on employment relations strategy and its practical implementation. Hence, the responding manager has mentioned in his reply that: *“there is no formal as well as informal meeting practiced and no brainstorming session with employees. But, there are some suggestion boxes are available in different areas to*

capture employees opinion with no responses. So, as a whole the management does not give attention to employees' opinion."

Question Seven: **To what extent the employment relations policies, like the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No, 377/2003 and the collective agreement documents are implemented effectively?**

The manager coded as "A" replied that: *"as to me the implementation problems have been mentioned above in detail. It is observed that in some instances, practices of employment terminations are unlawful. As I have mentioned above regarding contractual and temporary workers, there has been some sort of discriminations among workers on the issues of terminations of employment relations"*

Question Eight is concerned about unfair practices on the side of management or labor. The question reads as: **What unfair labor or management practices are manifested in your organizational setting (negative attitudes to the job, not to bargain in good faith, slowing down of the production activity, strikes, picketing, and other unacceptable labor and management activities)?**

The response by the participant was that: *"sometimes unequal and unfair employee treatment is observed specially during promotion activities. But, regarding strikes and other unfair labor and management practices are not as such observed in Yekatit PLC in my stay with the company."*

The last point raised by the researcher was: **What other challenges are faced by the company on the issues of employment relations?**

The manager has finally mentioned the following: *"on employee relations the management team somehow does not consider the value of employees to the organization and the idea and their opinion have no platform in the organization."*

The second respondent manager coded as "B" replied the following:

The respondent forwarded his answer as a whole but, he does not reply the details raised by the researcher on the overall interview points. He says that: *"the challenge in our company as I observed includes, there are disputes between management and employees on the issues like implementation of medical insurance, working hours, employee transportation service availability, disputes arising from their safety matters."*

Employment contract terminations are processed by the HR department through receiving the application of employees to resign, however in some instances there are dismissals and terminations unlawfully processed on employment relations regarding temporary workers. The other major challenges are however the employees of the company are entitled to have safety and protective equipment, they are not provided on the right time and quality the required safety equipment. There is delay in provision of safety materials so that, it has hampered the productivity and moral of employees. In some cases, work accidents are happening because of the absence of safety materials and prolonged distribution.”

The third respondent coded by “C” replied his opinion as: *“the general challenges I observed in the company are from the side of employees is they have no sense of belongingness to the company, they are frequently absent from the job due to their own and family problems so that, the company takes disciplinary actions that results disputes between management and employees.*

Even currently there are four court cases on employee disputes that the company terminated the employment contract of some workers unlawfully. Regarding the collective bargaining process, since it is procedural activity, it is time consuming that takes prolonged duration, due to disagreements on the points to be negotiated between both management and the trade union. Therefore, as I observed from the employee side the working culture is not developed as expected by the management, because some employees are passive to act their expected performance and do not meet their performance levels because of their absence from the work place.

With regard to management, the practice of decision making on employee relations matters is to some extent is not participative, not in line with the collective agreement document and Labor Law. So, I feel that such unfair labor practice has to be improved.”

The last respondent is the manager coded as “D”. He is somehow different from other interview participants of department managers in that, he is the trade union chair person who is represented by the employees through the election processed by the workers. Hence, he is playing the role of maintaining and keeping interests of employees on one side. On the other side, he is also working as production department manager that he is assigned by the company to discharge his managerial job responsibilities.

As the respondent introduced himself and his job responsibility as he is assigned by the management as acting production department manager and simultaneously working as the

chairperson of the trade union elected by the workers to keep the interests of employees of Yekatit PLC.

After the researcher introduced his name and an overview of his study the open-ended interview session started with the manager coded as “D”. As usual the details of the content and the list of semi structured interview have been given to the respondent and he replied the following responses: *“I have worked for two years as a chairperson of the trade union of Yekatit Paper Converting PLC. Regarding the issues related to collective bargaining with the management team we usually make bilateral negotiations to deal with preplanned bargaining matters putting procedures to be followed during bargaining process.*

The management team involves itself in the process of election of trade union representatives. The general manager or his representative avails himself in the meeting that held to select the members of employee representatives. He gives to employees some idea and directions how to process the election.

With respect to complaints and challenges faced by the employees include, the delayed provision of safety equipment and protective devices that need to be provided for employees. In some instances, there is disputes and court cases with the company that resulted from some unlawful terminations. However, such disputes are resolved through bilateral negotiations made between the management and the trade union. Terminations are implemented by the management team in line with the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No 377/2003 and the collective agreement document. The major grounds for termination of employment contract include: some serious offences, like misappropriation of company property, alcoholism, corruption, quarrels of employees in the work place and the like.

Regarding the level of involvement of trade union representatives, it is low and most decisions on employment relations issue are made only by management. Regarding the effective implementation of the collective agreement and the labor law, it seems good. I as a manager usually take disciplinary actions upon production department employees. The disciplinary action normally is through written warning for their breach of the disciplinary code of conduct and the collective agreement.”

4.1.3 Analysis on Participants Observation

While the researcher conducting his study, on the process of gathering information, notes have been taken from what the researcher observed and some insights are recognized from the participants characteristics involved in the study.

The participants observation has been noted during both focus group discussion and interview session with management team. To this end the researcher has observed that some participants characteristics related to their responses. During focus group discussion some participants were trying to influence the response of others. For example, the behaviors that the researcher noticed were, some dominant participants during the discussion provide little or no interaction and discussion between participants. They also be silent in sharing their real feelings about sensitive topics with others and participants who have difficulties are observed.

The other phenomena that the researcher noticed was a participant who was involved in focus group discussion, who is coded by letter “B” stayed with the researcher alone for few minutes after finalizing and closing the focus group session. As this participant forwarded some other opinion that was not discussed during the process of FGD, he aggressively and with emotional feeling says that: *“the employment relations matter has very high difficulties that the management team terminates workers who raise some employee right issues, like salary increment, bonus and other employee benefits. The trade union by itself is highly influenced by the power of management. Any employment issues are basically only decided by the management level.*

Hence, trade union doesn’t have a room for participation in any employee relations matter. Employees have no right to ask any benefits that they are entitled to have. Our voice is not heard and no opportunity and occasions to air our grievances.”

The other phenomena observed by the researcher from the behaviors of participants involved in focus group discussion is, while the researcher was controlling their facial expressions and body languages some participants were trying to show influence and dominance on the others to respond positively, negatively or be silent for the issues discussed in the group interview session. During the management team interview session, the observed situation was, the last respondent replied to researcher is that he is working for the company management team as production

manager and at the same time he is responsible for keeping the interests of employees on the other side.

4.2 Interpretation and Presentation

In the overall data collection and analysis process the researcher noticed that the responses from focus group discussion and management team interview session on the issues of employment relations, practices and challenges faced almost are similar.

For example, we can see from participants response in both Focus Group Discussion and management interview session, most similar responses on challenges of employee relations include the event and occurrence of work related disputes and their resolution mechanisms is frequently noticed in the study. Hence, from such event researcher understood that work related disputes are common and frequent phenomena that can hinder the productivity of the company and the challenge that spoils the smooth relationship that exists between employee and employer.

The other similar responses that the researcher has got through data collection and information gathering process were, about employment contract terminations. In this regard, all most all the response stressed that in some instances are, there is mal practices of terminating employment contract unlawfully. For example, the employees hired for definite period are not considered as other permanent employees during their contract administration and termination so that as the researcher understood that there is some sort of discrimination on the practice of employee contract administration and separation process.

When it comes to the provision of safety equipment to the employees, most participants response was one and the same. They mentioned that, however the company provides safety equipment as per the collective agreement document the supply of such protective equipment is provided by management with complaints of employees and delay that finally ends up with work accidents because of absence of protective equipment and prolonged supply.

On the challenges related to collective bargaining process however, there is no practice of strikes, lockouts, and other industrial actions by the employees and the management side, the researcher has understood that most participants replied that in some instances there are the challenges of impasses, disagreements, failure to bargaining in good faith, and absence of give

and take principles that can help both bargaining parties to achieve win-win strategy in their collective bargaining.

As participants replied that the extent to which the trade union representatives involve in decision making on the employee relations and recognized by top management, their role of participation in employee relations matters is low and almost none. Because, the researcher has got substantial source of information from the participants on his study that most decisions are made by management without involvement of trade union.

The researcher has understood that even far from the involvement of trade union in decision making activity of employee relations matters to suggest the management team, conversely the management team of the company is involved in the process of election of members of trade union representative. As the researcher has got information from the participant “D” of management team interview the following statement is taken: *“the management team involves itself in the process of election of trade union representatives. The general manager or his representative avails himself in the meeting held to select the members of employee representatives. He gives to employees some idea and directions how to process the selection.”* Hence, such involvement of the management team hinders the rights of employees, the freedom of association that is provided in the Laws of the Land, the Ethiopian Constitution Article 42 and The Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No 377/2003, Article 14.1. Even as the Proclamation provides in Article 14.1, such involvement of the management team is considered as unlawful activity. Hence in respect to involvement, the management need to be silent and give them full freedom rather than availing itself in such occasion.

The practice of employee voice hearing and providing opportunity to air their grievances in Yekatit PLC is one of the issues that participants stressed in their responses. In this regard, almost all participants reply was similar, so that the researcher understood that the management team in Yekatit PLC knowingly or unknowingly does not give ears and considerations to employee voice hearing.

Overall participants responses on focus group discussion and management interview session on their general opinion on the implementation of collective agreement document and the existing Ethiopia Labor Proclamation No 377/2003 is not effectively practiced.

As the researcher understood that employees right and benefits like promotion, transfer, separation, salary increment, leaves, medical insurance related matters are not implemented in line with the collective agreement document. From the side of employees there are also unfair labor practices like absenteeism, disciplinary problems that lead the employees to be taken corrective measures to help improve their misbehaviors.

Other issue that the researcher noticed in his study during management team interview session was, one interview participant from the management team is working as chairperson of trade union representing employees in one side and working as production department manager on the other side. He is simultaneously representing both the management and the trade union. Hence, the researcher understood that there is some sort of conflict of interest on the role of the manager.

Chapter 5

Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Findings

Regarding the challenges faced by the employment relations most study participants frequently raised that work-related disputes are common problems in Yekatit Paper Converting PLC. Hence, the researcher understood that the problem found to be evident that the company faces such disputes in work place.

As participants response the major reason of such disputes was work related disagreements due to unlawful employment terminations, delayed provision of safety equipment for employees, some unfair practices of management like discrimination of workers hired in temporary basis and others.

As per the assessment conducted during the study by the researcher the trade union representatives' involvement and participation in employee relation matters is low. The participants' response shows that almost all employee relations matters like termination, transfer, promotion, disciplinary actions taken in correcting employee's behaviors are only decided by the management team alone.

Therefore, it is found to be that the level of involvement and recognition of trade union on the issues of employee relations is low. In contrast to the trade union involvement in the management activity of employee relations the researcher has found that the management team is involved in electoral session of employees vote to select their representatives. Such involvement of management team in the elections of labor union hinders and limits the freedom of association of employees.

The other major challenges faced by the company are the problem related to collective bargaining process. Regarding the practice of Yekatit PLC, there is established committee for collective bargaining that represents both the management team and trade union representatives

that are selected to bargain and negotiate collective bargaining. The study found that however, there are no serious industrial actions like strikes, picketing, lockout in Yekatit PLC, but in some instances impasses on bargaining, absence of give and take strategy during bargaining, and generally no good faith bargaining during the collective bargaining process.

Especially the trade union representative's practice of collective bargaining is found to be focusing only on the interests of their members and employees rather than negotiating in good faith and balancing the interest of both employees and the company.

Therefore, the researcher has found that in general terms in Yekatit Paper Manufacturing and Converting PLC there exists the challenge in bargaining process include impasses, disagreement, failure to bargain in good faith, absence of give and take principles of negotiation to achieve win-win strategy on the bargaining process.

The researcher also found that in Yekatit PLC there is no employee voice hearing and providing an opportunity to air their grievances. Such phenomena are supported by almost all participants involved in group discussion and deep interview session with management group. Hence, the researcher understands that the practice of employee voice hearing schedule in Yekatit PLC is none.

Regarding the assessment of effective implementation of the collective agreement and the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No 377/2003 as the researcher found that both HR procedures and rules are not implemented fairly and effectively. The issues like employee promotion, transfer, separation, salary increment, leaves and medical insurance matters are not fairly implemented.

5.2 Conclusion

The major objective of this thesis was to conduct study on the practices and challenges of employee relations in Yekatit Paper Converting PLC.

The research problems have been identified by the researcher in advance to conducting the study. Based on the research problems the major research questions have been developed in order to address the problems and suggest recommendations for such problems of the study. Specific objectives of the study set to assess and evaluate issues of employee relations through using appropriate research methodology. The literature review section of the study is concerned about reflecting related part of existing scholarly writings on the employment relations and practices. Concepts, theories and existing laws of the land has been highlighted in the literature review part of the study.

Regarding the methodological aspect of the study, descriptive research design has been employed with qualitative research approach. The sampling design was purposive sampling method is used because of its appropriateness for qualitative research approach. Focus group discussion and open ended interview were the methods used to collect data and gather appropriate information from key participants in Yekatit PLC.

Among several qualitative data analysis techniques ethnographic analysis is appropriate method for data analysis of focus group discussion and open ended interview. While the researcher conducting his study in focused group discussion detail notes have been taken and such notes are immediately after completing the data collection process analyzed, coded and transcribed by the researcher. The demographic information of participants is also presented in a tabular form and included in the study analysis section.

During the discussion of focus group interview the size of participants were 12 those who are divided in to two mini groups' participants that the researcher used to manage the study on the right time. Responses taken and noted from the participants in both focus group discussion and the management interview session are analyzed and presented stating in their own words using quotation by technique of ethnographic and narrative statements.

The researcher has also observed that some behaviors of the participants during focus group discussion. Such behaviors noticed were some dominant participants during focus group

discussion provide little or no interaction and silent to share real feelings about sensitive topics. The other observed events during focus group discussion were the facial expression and the body language of some dominant participants and their positive and negative influence on the involvement of discussion with other participants. After the ethnographic analysis is completed, the researcher presents his interpretation on the participant's response and prescribed what has been said by the participants using their own words and putting the statements to give the right meaning of data collected.

Generally, the study conducted in Yekatit Paper Converting Company finalized with findings and answers the research questions under study that the challenges of employment relations include issues related to collective bargaining and bilateral negotiation, the strategy of employee relations, employee voice hearing, involvement and recognition of trade union in employee relation activity has been discussed in detail. Regarding the practice of employment relations, work related disputes, its resolving mechanisms and the general implementation of Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No 377/2003 as well the collective agreement document and its mal practices are discussed in the study.

5.3 Recommendations

Having such challenges of employment relations, the researcher is interested to recommend possible future solutions for such problems to ensure improvements on the issues of employee relations in Yekatit Paper Converting PLC.

Therefore, the following recommendations points have been forwarded by the researcher:

- Though challenges and some mal practices are found to be evident in the overall implementations of the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No 377/2003 and the collective agreement document, the management need to work in line with Labor Law and government regulations and HR policies that to ensure better employee relations so that it can increase productivity and create smooth relations between workers and management.
- All employee rights and entitlement like, different type of leaves, health and safety issues need to be given priority and without delay, so that to avoid unnecessary disputes that spoils good relations of management and employees.

- Terminations of employment relations contract and employee separation practices need to be decided in line with Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No 377/2003, laws of the land.
- According to the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No 377/2003 Article 134(4) it is a mandatory provision that every party involved in collective bargaining activity should bargain in a good faith and should be the owner of good faith. The Proclamation also provides that in Article 185 (2) failure to bargain in a good faith leads both the management and the trade union to penalty.
- Therefore, considering such legal provisions the company and the trade union representatives are recommended to bargain in good faith. Parties, the management and union representatives also need to establish procedures for collective bargaining before they start collective bargaining process give and take strategies need to be practiced in order to reduce impasses and dead looks during negotiations and collective bargaining process.
- Impasses, disagreements and any difference of opinion during collective bargaining process need to be first amicably negotiated and discussed again and again to bring about better employment relations.
- Both bargaining practices need to understand and stick all steps provided in collective agreement document and the Labor Proclamation No, 377/2003 provisions.
- Employee voice hearing sessions are critically important in employment relations. It is the mechanisms in which employees air their work-related grievances.
- Therefore, the company management is recommended to arrange some occasions and periodical meeting so that employees express their feelings and emotions about their job-related matters. Hence, it is important to create open and transparent way of communications with employees to bring about conducive environment to discuss on their work-related problems. The management let the workers to ask questions arrange the mechanisms to gather information and come up with possible solutions.
- Involvement and participations of the trade union representatives on employment relations matters from the side of management team of Yekatit PLC is expected. Because of involvement and participation of the trade union in management of employee issues the trade union gets recognition by the management and having such recognition of the company the trade union develops sense of belongingness on their jobs. They can

perform their jobs with sense of responsibility. The management of Yekatit, taking into consideration that the sense of labor union belongingness to the company, is recommended to involve and participate the trade union in the decisions of employment relations matters like termination of employment relations, promotion, transfer, disciplinary issues and others.

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Annexes

Addis Ababa University School of Commerce Human Resource Management Department Semi-Structured Focus Group Interview Designed for Purposely Selected Employees

1. FGD (Focus Group Discussion)

Dear Respondent,

I am Daniel Mathewos with Personal ID/GSD/1519/08 graduate student of the University in the field of Human Resource Management. I am interested to conduct Study in Yekatit Paper Covering PLC on the topic called the Practice and Challenges of Employee Relations.

Therefore, you are kindly requested to respond actual and reliable information of your company existing situation on employee relations issues, challenges, practices, practical events, phenomena and norms of communications between the management and employee.

I certainly would like to assure you that the information/data I collect will never be disclosed to any other party except the purpose of the Study.

General Background of Responders:

1. Name of the Company _____
2. Position of Respondent _____
3. Level of Education of Respondent _____
4. Total Work Experience _____
5. Age _____

General Instruction of the interview:

Below you are kindly requested to answer open ended questions and make in-depth group discussion on the issues of employee relations in Yekatit PLC. In responding the questions, you can give some examples and illustrations to describe the real situations, events and phenomena of employment relations that you know.

1. What are major challenges that are faced by the company regarding employee relations?
2. What are challenges related to collective bargaining and negotiations between the company management and the trade union?
3. To what extent is the involvement and recognition of trade union and their level of participation in decision making of employee relations matters?
4. How do you evaluate the implementation of collective agreement document and HR policies in the providing employee protective equipment and other employee benefits?
5. How employee air their grievances and to what extent is employee voice is heard and considered by the management of Yekatit PLC?
6. What mechanisms are used to handle work related disputes and what are the effects of such challenges on the productivity of the company?
7. How do you evaluate the practice and implementation of employee separation or employment contract termination in Yekatit PLC?
8. To what extent is trust between the company management and trade union representatives?
9. What is your general opinion about the implementation of Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No 377/2003 and the collective agreement document signed between management and the trade union of Yekatit Paper Converting PLC?

10. What are any other difficulties of employment relations that hinder smooth communications of management and employee representative?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

T h a n k Y o u !

2 Letter of Cooperation from AAU School of Commerce

Addis Ababa University
College of Business and Economics
School of Commerce



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TO Yekatit Paper Manufacturing and
Addis Ababa Converting PLC

Ref. No. BIA/ISA/039/2010

Date: 25/7/2010

To Whom It May Concern

The Addis Ababa University School of Commerce currently runs for Postgraduate programs: Human Resource Management, Project Management, Marketing Management, Supply Chain and Logistics Management, beside its preparation to embark on launching some more expedient programs very soon.

As an immediate and direct stakeholder to this socioeconomically pragmatic move, we would like you to cooperate with us by way of assisting our students to conduct academic researches and case analyses in your organization. As such, we kindly request your esteemed organization to provide student Daniel Mathewos

ID.No. GSD 1519/08 with information pertaining to: The practice and Challenges of Employment Relations, HRM Post Graduate Thesis.

A copy of the paper produced may be provided to you if so demanded.

With Regards


Abraraw Chane (PhD)
Continuing and Distance Education Coordinator
Addis Ababa University, School of Commerce

Handwritten notes:
17/7/2010
Tobias
03/04/18
To the Department / Management
as per the letter
Per the above
E 03/4/18

3 Semi Structured Interview
Addis Ababa University School of Commerce

Human Resource Management Department
Semi Structured Interview Designed for Management

Dear Respondent,

I would like to thank in advance for your cooperation to be involved as participant to respond reliable and valid answer that facilitates information and data collection that would be used as an input for my study/thesis of post-graduation program in Human Resource Management.

I am **Daniel Mathewos** with Personal ID: GSD/1519/08 graduating student of Addis Ababa University School of Commerce HRM Department. I am intended to conduct my graduation thesis in your Company Yekatit Paper Converting PLC. *My Title approved by the University is, Practices and Challenges of Employee Relations, the Case Study of Yekatit Paper Converting PLC.*

Therefore, you are kindly requested to respond actual and reliable information related to your existing situation of Yekatit PLC regarding Employee Relations Challenges, practical events and norms of communications between employer and employee.

I certainly, would like to assure that the information/data that I am going to collect will never be disclosed to any other party except the appropriate and respective University Professors who assist and advise me in the process of my study.

General Background Information about Responders:

1. Name of the Company under the Study_____
- 2 Position of Respondent_____
- 3 Level of Education of Respondent_____
- 4 Total years of work experience of Respondent_____
- 5 Date of Birth of Respondent_____

General Instruction to respond questions

Kindly inform you that you can answer the under mentioned open-ended questions in your own words explaining the existing situation in Yekatit PLC. You can give some examples to describe events and phenomena of employment relations in your job responsibilities as a manager.

Questions:

1. What are the major challenges related to Trade Union and Management team in collective bargaining process and how impasses are managed in the process of bilateral negotiations of trade union and management in Yekatit PLC?

2. To what extent is the effective practice and implementation of the collective agreement document of the company in providing safety protective equipment and other benefits of employees?

3. What are the challenges related to employee separation practice/termination of employment relations?

4. How the company facesthe challenges of employer-employee disputes related to Court case and what mechanisms are practiced to resolve such disputes in employment relations?

5. To what extent is the trade union recognition and involvement in employment relations issues like committee involvementand disciplinary cases that requires decisions to be made?

6. How is employee relations strategy is implemented in Yekatit PLC and what practices are being used to hear employee voice in a way that they can air their work-related grievances?

7. To what extent the employment relations policies like the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No 377/2003 and collective agreement documents are practiced?

8. What unfair Labor or Management practices are manifested in your organizational setting? (negative attitudes to the job, not to bargain in good faith, slow downing the production activity, strikes, picketing, and other unacceptable labor and management activities.

9. What other challenges are faced by the company on the issues of employee relations which are not specified?

Th

ank You for your cooperation!

4 Researcher's Agreement of information non-disclosure

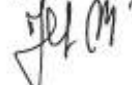
መገቢት 29/2010

ለምክትት የወረቀት ሠራዎች ድርጅት
አዲስ አበባ

ጉዳይ፡ የመረጃ ምጋታና ገለጻ ጠበቅ

በመለያ ቁጥር GSD/1519/08 በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ንግድ ሠራ ስራ ስልጠና
በሰው ኃይል አጠባባቂ / Human Resource Management / ጉዳይ ላይ ገቢ ስራ
ተመራጭ ተማሪ ስለሆኑ በምክትት የወረቀት ሠራዎች ድርጅት የመመዘኛ ጽሑፍ
እንዲያደርጉ ገለጻውን እንዲያስገቡ በዚህ አገልግሎት የሚገኘውን መረጃ
ነገናቱ ተገባር ውጭ በሚገኘውም ሌላ ሰው ለማሳወቅ መሆኑን እንዲገባላቸው
ነገናቱ ተገባር ውጭ አውቶ ስለሆነ በሕግ መንገድ ለምዘጠባዎች እንዲያደርጉ
አውቆ ይህንን የጽሑፍ ማረጋገጫ ለመስጠት ለጥያቄዎቻቸው።

ገንባታ ጋር



ዳንኤል ማቴዎስ

ስልክ፡ 0911568900

ኢ.ሜ.፡ mathewosd@yahoo.com

7, April 2018

To: Yekatit Paper Conversion & Manufacturing Phc
A.A

Subject: Commitment for non-disclosure:

I, the undermentioned student of Addis Ababa University School of Commerce
Human Resource Management Department, identified with personal ID: GSD/1519/08
Assure that will never disclose the information and data I collected from
the company at the event of my thesis. I Well understand that to do so will
lead me for legal liability. Finally, I would like to thank the Company in
advance for the cooperation and permission to conduct the study in its premises.

Best Regards



Daniel Mathewos
cell phone 0911568900
e.m: mathewosd@yahoo.com

Received
Eleni
~~7/14/18~~



5 Focus group discussion interview translated to Amharic

በአዲስአበባዩኒቨርሲቲንግድሥራት/ቤት

በሰው ሀይል አስተዳደር የሁለተኛ ዲግሪ መመሪያ ጥናታዊ ጽሑፍ መረጃ ለመስብሰብ የተዘጋጀ የቡድን ወይይት መነሻ ቃለ መጠይቅ

ስሜዳንኤል ማቴዎስ ይባላል። ከአዲስአበባዩኒቨርሲቲ በቅርቡ በማስተርስ ዲግሪ ስለም መረቅ የመመሪያ ጽሑፍ ገንባታ ጥናት ሥራ ምረቃ ብሪሃን ለመጻፍ ድርጅቱን አስፈሪ ቅጂ ለሁ።

በመሆኑም የመመሪያ ጽሑፍ ገንባታው በአሰሪና ሥራ ተኝ ግንኙነት አፈፃፀምና ተግዳሮቶቻቸው በሚል ርዕስ ለሆነ ለዚሁም መረጃ ማሰባሰቢያ ይህን የቡድን ወይይት ቃለ መጠይቅ መነሻ ጥያቄዎች አዘጋጅቻለሁ። ስለዚህ ለዚሁ ቃለ መጠይቅ የምትስጡት ምላሽና መረጃ ለመመሪያ ጽሑፍ ተግባር ብቻ የሚውል ሲሆን በማንኛውም መልኩ ለሌላ ወገን ተላልፎ የማይሰጥ መሆኑን አረጋግጣለሁ።

ስለዚህ ትክክለኛ የሆነ መረጃ እንድትስጡኝ በትኩረት ህትና አጠይቃለሁ።

1. የግል ሁኔታ መረጃ

የተጠያቂ ሥራ ተኝ ሥራ መደብ _____

የተጠያቂው ሥራ ተኝ ያታ _____

የልደት ዘመን _____ ዕድሜ _____

የትምህርት ደረጃ _____

የአገልግሎት ዘመን በዓመት _____

2. በየካቲት የወረቀት ሥራ ምረቃ ድርጅት በአሰሪና ሥራ ተኝ ግንኙነት መካከል ያሉ ተግዳሮቶች ምን ድንገቶች ናቸው? በዝርዝር

ብትገልጹልኝ? _____

3. የድርጅቱ ሥራ ተኝ ማህበር እና ማኔጅመንቱ በሚያደርጉት የህብረት ስምምነት ድርድር ያሉ ተግዳሮቶች ምን ድንገቶች ናቸው? _____

4. የድርጅቱ የሥራ ተኝ ማህበር ተወካዮች በአሰሪና ሠራተኞች ግንኙነት ጉዳዮች የመሳተፍና በድርጅቱ ማኔጅመንት ዘንድ ያላቸውን ተቀባይነት በተመለከተ የበኩል ህንጻት ያየችሁት ስጥብ? _____

5. ለሠራተኞች የሥራ ልብስና የአደጋ መከላከያ፣ አሰጣጥና አጠቃላይ የድርጅቱን ህብረት ስምምነት አፈጻጸምን በተመለከተ እንዴት ትገመግማለህ?

6. በአሰሪና ሠራተኞች መካከል ያለው የስራ ክርክር እንዲሁም አለመግባባት በድርጅታችሁ የሚፈታበት ሥርዓት እንዴት ነው? _____

7. የድርጅቱ ሠራተኞች ቅሬታቸውን የሚያስመብት፣ የሚወያዩበት፣ ስለመብታቸው ማኔጅመንቱን የሚጠይቁበት የውይይት መድረክ ድርጅቱ እንዴት ነው መቼ ያዘጋጃል?

8. የሠራተኞች የሥራ ውል መቋረጥ ወይም ስንበት አፈፃፀም በድርጅቱ ስጥ እንዴት ይተገበራል? በአፈፃፀሙ ዙሪያ ስያሉ ችግሮች ምን ድንገቶች ናቸው?

9. የድርጅቱ ማኔጅመንት የሠራተኞች ማህበሩን መተማመንና መቀራረብ እንዴት ታያለህ?

10. በየካቲት የወረቀት ስራዎች ድርጅት ህብረት ስምምነት እንዲሁም የአሠሪና ሠራተኛ ጉዳይ አዋጅ ቁጥር 377/96 አፈጻጸምን በተመለከተ እንዴት ትገመግማለህ? _____

11. የአሠሪና ሠራተኛን መልካም ግንኙነት የሚያበላሽ ሌሎች ግርኛ ካሉ ግለፅ ልኝ?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

እመሠግናለሁ!