

**KNOWLEDGE OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON LABOUR  
RELATIONS EQUILIBRIUM IN PUBLIC EDUCATION SECTOR IN KENYA**

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This paper will examine the influence of knowledge of industrial relations on labour relations equilibrium in the public education sector in Kenya.

**ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of knowledge of industrial relations on labour relations equilibrium in public education sector in Kenya with a view to instil labour relations harmony to enhance labour productivity and in turn improve performance in public education sector, achieving economic growth, and enhancing living standards and quality of life. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population of this study was 326,732 which comprised of employers (TSC staff and public universities council members), employees (academic and non academic) and the ministry of labour employees. The study population was 450 which comprised of the university registrars administration and the deputy vice chancellors administration of the 22 public universities in Kenya, TSC staff dealing with employee relations issues, the trade unions executive officers at the national level and the ministry of labour Nairobi office employees. In this study a census inquiry was used. The research instruments were the questionnaires. Quantitative and qualitative data was analyzed by the use of SPSS for production of graphs, tables, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. It is recommended that parties to*

*labour relations in the public education sector in Kenya should invest in knowledge of industrial relations to enable the public education sector manage strikes, now ranking as one of the top problem in all sectors particularly the public education sector in Kenya and globally, and the resulting losses that they create.*

**Keywords** – labour relations equilibrium, knowledge of industrial relations, ministry of labour, public education sector

### **1.0 Background of the Study**

Labour relation is one of the key elements in the system of labour administration (Goolsarran, 2006). The parties to the employment relationship should be encouraged to communicate and cooperate in resolving differences and in redressing workplace issues in a sound labour environment. The labour relationship is usually described as a tripartite relationship between employers, employees and the state. As this is a very complex relationship, it should be formally regulated (Ferreira, 2005). Labour relations equilibrium refers to a friendly and cooperative agreement on working relationships between employers and employees for their mutual benefit (Laden, 2012). Labour relations equilibrium enhances labour productivity and in turn improves performance in the education sector, achieving economic growth, and enhancing living standards and quality of life. It creates a peaceful working environment conducive to tolerance, dialogue and other alternative means of resolving labour disputes (Laden, 2012).

Education sector in an economy remains one of the most powerful engines for economic growth. It acts as a catalyst to transform the economic structure of countries from simple, slow growing and low value activities to more vibrant and productive economies. Education is recognized as a principal contributory factor to boost productivity of workers by generating skills that raise their working capacity, leading to economic growth (Hill Kent, 2005); Bloom et al, 2006; Galiani et al, 2008). This productivity gains can be contributed to enhancement of the income level of the individuals as well as the economy.

Apart from these direct economic benefits, indirect social benefits such as better work habits, particularly a greater awareness of time and more internalized norms that would make them more dependable, can be realized through better education which contributes to economic development process. Lower crime rates, greater participation of people in the regional development activities, greater awareness of human achievement, an appreciation for cultural diversity and spill over the knowledge among the colleagues and neighbours are indispensable requirements for efficient use of material resources to achieve fruitful results of the development activities. Endogenous growth theory asserts that investment in human capital will significantly contribute to economic growth, and indeed foster development (Romer, 2011).

Industrial actions have lately been common in the eastern Africa region, particularly Kenya, Uganda and Malawi where disparities in remuneration seem to be major areas of concern. A fitting imagery of this scenario is ‘muzzling the ox that ploughs one’s land’. According to Vernor Munoz (Worlds of Education, 2007), knowledge that is not built on the respect of human rights is knowledge of poor quality. Further, since there are certain cardinal values that motivate learning (including teaching, research and community outreach), it is essential to define the needs of students and teachers, as well as the adjustments needed to improve functions in the schooling and political systems.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Labour relations have an important “value in use” in establishing consensus between the parties involved (Estanque & Costa, 2011). For the necessary labour relations equilibrium to exist the employer and employee organizations should have a relative balance of bargaining power. This equilibrium state of power is the key to the success of the labour relations system, and if this equilibrium is lost it becomes difficult to reach consensus based and balanced solutions. (RoC, 2011 – 2015).

In Kenya, from 1995 to 2000 a total of 381 strikes had been experienced (Minja & Aswani, 2009). In 2010 the Ministry of Labour recorded 82 strikes. According to Industrial Court Disputes Register the reported disputes increased from 159 in 2007 to 1624 in 2010. The economic survey 2011 indicates decline of CBAs to 266 in 2011 compared to 297 in 2009. From 2010, 2013 the Ministry of Labour indicated 10,339,818 lost man hours.

According to Mutoro & Malalo, (2011) the public education sector experience strikes each year, in the year 2012 there was a university academic and non academic staff strike. Further observations shows that in 2013 there was a nationwide strike by teachers; this was followed by the March 2014 strikes by teaching and non-teaching staff of the public universities and the January 2015 nationwide strike by teachers which crippled activities in public schools.

Strike and labour standoff is a sign of industrial disharmony which translates to a state of disequilibrium in labour relations (Mathis & Jackson, 2008). Several local studies in Kenya (Nzioki, 2013; Grace, 2007; Mwamzandi, 2011; Christine et al, 2013) relate to labour relations and have clearly shown the state of disequilibrium in labour relations; however none of these studies clearly explain the factors which tilt the state of equilibrium and harmony in labour relations. This study therefore examines the influence of knowledge of industrial relations on labour relations equilibrium in public education sector in Kenya.

### **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The overall objective was to evaluate the influence of knowledge of industrial relations on labour relations equilibrium in the public education sector in Kenya

### **1.3 Study Hypothesis**

To achieve the above objective the following hypothesis were developed;

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Knowledge of industrial relations has no positive significant influence on labour relations equilibrium in the public education sector in Kenya.

**H<sub>a1</sub>:** Knowledge of industrial relations has a positive significant influence on labour relations equilibrium in the public education sector in Kenya.

## **2.0 Theoretical/ Empirical Review**

The study will be grounded on five major theories namely: Unitary Theory, Marxist Theory, Comparative Employment Relations theory, Systems Theory, and Pluralist Theory.

### **2.1 Unitary Theory**

The main elements of unitary theory are that there is only a single source of authority that is management. The role of organizational leaders is to promote loyalty and commitment among

workers (Farnham, 2000). Organizations are seen as consisting of teams that are working together for mutual goals, and there are also no conflicts of interests between managers and employees. The unitary theory believes that employers and employees can join forces for common objectives, interests, and values and that the management should exemplify strong leadership to attain organizational objectives. According to Rose (2008) trade unions under the unitary perspective are regarded as an intrusion into the organization from outside, competing with management for loyalty of employees. Trade unions are seen as a cause of industrial conflict thus not essential for the harmonious managing of conflicts. Conflicts in the organization are hence perceived as dysfunctional and often leading to disloyalty, and as a consequence impair the well-being of the organization (Cooper et al., 2011). The state is seen as a paramount contributor in the formulation of industrial relation systems.

## **2.2 Marxist Theory**

Marxists like Pluralists regard conflicts between employees and employers as inevitable. Marxists however see conflict as a product of the capitalist society. The adversarial relations in the workplace are simply one aspect of class society. The Marxist focuses on the type of society in which an organization functions. Conflicts arise not just because of competing interests within the organizations but because of the division within the society between those who own or manage the means of production and those who have only their labour to offer. Industrial conflict is thus seen as synonymous with political and social unrest which the researcher concurs with (Aswathappa, 2009).

Trade unions are seen both as labour reaction to exploitation by capital, as well as a weapon to bring about a revolutionary social change. Hence, concerns with wage-related disputes are secondary which the researcher disagrees with, since wage related disputes dominate industrial actions in Kenya and world over. Indeed, an adequate wage is a motivation of employees joining organizations. Moreover, trade unions focus on improving the position of workers within the capitalist system and not to overthrow which the researcher agrees with (Singh & Kumar, 2011).

## **2.3 Comparative Employment Relations theory**

Comparative Employment Relations theory is an interesting area of inquiry on the ground that employment relations institutions are substantively unimportant, mostly anti-market and transitory from a long-run perspective. The task of this theory is to identify the variables that generate conflictive interests and the institutions and practices designed by the three actors to ameliorate and resolve the conflicts (Kaufman, 2009). Poole identified the state of economic development, the strategies of the actors, cultural values and ideologies, the nation's political - economic structure, the power of the actors and the institutional structure of firms, employment relations organizations as primary explanatory variables. Barry and Wilkinson (2011) the theory's development has only made modest and incomplete progress.

## **2.4 Systems Theory**

The Systems Theory was developed by John Dunlop a sociologist in 1958. Dunlop is credited with the application of the Systems Approach to Industrial Relations (IR). He visualized IR to be a systematic construct namely, as a sub-system of society. Systems Approach essentially comprises four processes which include input acquisition, input transformation, output and feedback. An organization is considered an open system, existing in a context called environment. The organization influences its environment as well as gets influenced by the environment (Singh & Singh, 2011).

The environment may comprise social, political, technological factors and depends on organizations for essential supplies and to receive its outputs. The environment also influences the various processes of acquisition, transformation and delivery of outputs. IR system at any one time in its development is regarded as comprising certain actors and body of rules created to govern the actors at the workplace and work community (Singh & Kumar, 2011). This arrangement exists in Kenyan Industrial Relations.

Creation of rules according to Dunlop is the output that an IR System seeks to create. Rules in this context comprise one, rules governing all forms of compensation. Two, the duties and performance expected of workers including rules for maintaining discipline. Three, rules defining rights and duties of employers and employees including legislation and terms of collective agreements. Four, procedures for establishing rules, and Five, procedures for application of rules (Sivarethnamohan, 2010).

The rules are the output of IR. In the input transformation and feedback processes and their interaction, three 'actors' are involved. They include managers and their organizations, workers and their organizations and state and its agencies concerned with workplace. The actors in Kenyan context include the Kenyan Government represented by the Ministry of Labour, the employers and employers' organization and the Trade Unions. The actors do not function in isolation but in an environmental context. The technical context of workplace relates to how work is organized and the state of technology that is whether it is labour or capital intensive (Ikeanyibe & Onyishi, 2011).

The market context or the revenue related context comprises product demand, market growth, number of competitors and profit margins. The power context is how power is distributed among the three 'actors'. The three 'actors' hold common belief that employees are entitled to demand for a minimum quality of living. Besides, discussion and bargaining must be the preferred way to solve disputes and that the state does not have limited but clear roles as an arbiter in certain matters (Singh & Singh, 2011).

### **2.5 Pluralist Theory**

The theories on Pluralism evolved in the mid-sixties and early seventies when England witnessed a dramatic resurgence of industrial conflicts. The recent theories of Pluralism emanate from British Scholars and in particular Allan Flanders who is regarded as the Chief theorist of Pluralism. He was a senior lecturer at Oxford School from 1949. The Pluralistic approach perceives organizations as being made up of powerful and divergent sub groups, each with its own legitimate loyalties, set of objectives and leaders. This is evident in public education sector which have management and labour unions each pursuing different interests (Ikeanyibe & Onyishi, 2011).

Pluralist theory tends to see conflict as inherent in workplaces. In pluralism, the organization is perceived as being made up of powerful and divergent sub-groups, each with its own legitimate loyalties and with their own set of objectives and leaders. In particular, the two predominant sub-groups in the pluralist perspective are the management and trade unions (Polsby, 2006). Consequently, the role of management would lean less towards enforcing and controlling and more toward persuasion and co-ordination. Trade unions are deemed as legitimate representatives of employees; conflict is dealt by collective bargaining and is viewed not necessarily as a bad thing and, if managed, could in fact be channeled towards evolution and positive change (Gad, 2003).

## 2.6 Empirical Review

If partners in labour relations play their roles as expected, labour relations equilibrium will be achieved. Rittau and Dundon (2009) in their study examined the roles and influence of shop stewards under the partnership regime in Ireland. The duo has asserted that partnership rarely if ever involves the true distribution of power between equals. They contend that unions can be coerced into accepting partnership when faced with unpalatable alternative. Similarly traditional form of consultation and collective bargaining may be hollow and fail to deliver effective involvement in management decision making. In Ireland a number of parallels are evident (Roche & Geary, 2006; Geary, 2008). In particular, Dobbins and Gunnigle (2009) argue that the balance of mutuality may be skewed to management yet that does not necessarily diminish the value of partnership for workplace union stewards.

Confrontational approach by labour unions developed out of the basic assumption that employers would not willingly grant improvement to pay and conditions of employment. (Jerome & O'dowd, 2005). Nzioki (2013) in her study examined the effects of the roles of social partners on the performance of state corporations in Kenya. The study provides evidence on the roles of the social partners and how they have affected the performance of state corporations. She observed that the registrar of trade unions had not avoided overlapping of trade union areas of activity and the Ministry of Labour had not adequately played its key role of dispute settlement between employers and trade unions. There is need to adopt the mechanism and implement it effectively through specific practices (Lee & Rolee, 2009). Unions at the enterprise are part of the management and most times acted against workers. The increased controls and employee participation has significant challenges for employers including higher labour costs, less management autonomy, stronger employee bargaining power, and weaker control of labour mobility (Cafolla, 2009; Chen & Funke, 2009; Froissart, 2006).

The binding award by arbitrators brings about organizational peace and continuity in performance due to lack of interruption inform of strikes. The employment relations in China appear to be in the state of flux with much complexity in how people are managed and dealt with in the diversity of enterprises that exist (Cooke, 2005; Shen, 2006). This has led to the preferred arbitration system where two adversarial parties submit their claims to a third party who should be independent, disinterested and unbiased. According to Shen (2007) the Chinese workers were found to be in great need of hearing of their grievances by impartial third parties, through which labour disputes could be settled and settlement enforced by law. Arbitration recognises the fact that court proceedings are too technically complex for resolving industrial disputes (Hagglund & Provis, 2005). When the parties have agreed to abide by the arbitrator's ruling the decision is final and binding. Although the result of a labour arbitration hearing may not please the parties, the outcome is preferable to continuing strike or other action that in the long term benefits nobody.

Labour relation is an essential predictor of organization success. Labour relation is one of the key elements in the system of labour administration (Goolsarran, 2006). Grace (2007) in her study on employee perception of labour relations in Kenya commercial Bank revealed that the main cause of moderate labour relations in the sense of flow of information from the managers to the employees under them and the main cause of conflicts is poor communication followed by social relations. KCB needs to encourage all cadres of employee to participate in decision making especially if such decisions affected their lives and day to day performance of their duties. Other



studies propose ways for the banks to survive competition to include more corporate responsibility (Thujo, 2006) and relationship between employee participation in decision making and motivation in commercial banks (Boen, 2006)

Researches done in Eastern and Western Europe have shown that Union members are not satisfied with their Unions (Georgelless & Lange, 2010). Christine et al., (2013) in determining the factors affecting performance of trade unions in Kenya with focus to Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT). The major challenge facing KNUT according to members was found to be political manipulation where politicians use the unions for own political gains. In some countries unions do not exist at all or are relatively weak while other countries require firms that have union or worker representation on their boards of directors (Bolton & Haulian, 2007; Clegg et al., 2005). The study recommends that there should be effective communication between the union and members because it seems there is misunderstanding between the two, while unions are negotiating for salary increment, members do not recognize their efforts.

### **3.0 Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive research design. A research design is a logical thread which holds together all the crucial aspects of the research together so that they can derive meaning (Kothari, 2004). It is a process through which research questions are asked and answered (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Descriptive study is one that is undertaken with a view of offering the researcher a profile or to describe relevant aspects of the phenomena of interest from an individual, organization, organizational, industry oriented, or other perspective (Sekaran, 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2007; Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). This design method, presents procedures for collecting, analyzing and linking both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study (Creswell, 2005). The purpose of descriptive research is not only restricted to fact findings, but often results in formulation of important principles of knowledge and solution to significant problem (Kombo & Tromp, 2010).

The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative approach. Quantitative approach emphasizes data measurement and analysis in numerical form to give precise description. Quantitative approach places emphasis on methodology, procedure and statistical measures to test hypothesis and make predictions (Berg, 2004). Qualitative research approach helps in analysing information in a systematic way in order to come to some useful conclusions and recommendations on the social settings and the individuals who portray the characteristics (Cobertta, 2003).

### **3.1 Sampling and Sample Size**

A sample is a subset of population (Hyndman, 2008). Marczyk and Festinger (2005) defined a sample as subset of the population to be studied. Newing (2011) defines a sample as a subset of sampling units or cases for which data are collected. Yang (2008) states that the word 'sample' refers to the subset of a population. Therefore the goal of a research is to examine a sample and then generalize the results to the population. How accurately a researcher can generalize results from a given sample to the population depends on the representativeness of the sample. The degree of representativeness of a sample refers to how closely the sample mirrors the population (Gravetta & Forzano, 2006). Kasomo (2007) has explained that a sample size is the number of units in a sample and that the assumption behind sample size is that it is representative of the population from which it is drawn. Gal and Gal (2008) define sampling as a process of selecting a number of individuals in such a way that they represent the large group.

As result of the small number of the study population (450), it was possible to collect data from the entire population hence a census inquiry was used. A census is suitable when the universe is small and can be presumed to yield the highest accuracy as no element of chance is left since all items are covered (Kothari, 2004). The approach has been used in past studies with similar sampling frames (Okatch, 2012; Simon, 2013; Nixon, 2011)

In order to test sampling adequacy, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) which is an index for comparing the magnitudes of the observed correlation coefficients to the magnitudes of the partial correlation coefficients was used. A large value for KMO would indicate adequacy of relationship warranting factor analysis (Coopers & Schindler, 2006). The KMO statistic ranges from 0 to 1 with 0. 60 considered the minimum to conduct a factor analysis while 0. 70 is deemed most adequate (Amin, 2005).

### 3.2 Measurement of variables

The dependent variable for this study which is labour relations equilibrium was measured by the use of dichotomous and multiple choice questions. A five and four point likert scale (5-1) (4-1) was used for the statements corresponding to the various parameters of knowledge of industrial relations. The regression analysis was used to test the variation of the dependent variable explained by the variation in the independent variables by calculation of the R<sup>2</sup> and adjusted R<sup>2</sup> statistics. Logistic regression analysis was used to determine whether the independent variables predicted the dependent variable (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Labour relations equilibrium, as the dependent variable was regressed against the independent variable knowledge of industrial relations.

### 4.0 Findings

Respondents were asked the number of strikes that the public education sector face per year. Majority (86%) stated that they range between 1 to 10 strikes per year, 10% said between 11 to 20 strikes per year and 4% refuted this i.e. no strike at all. Exploring more on how long on average does this strike take, most respondents (68.3%) stated 2 months, 15.4% said 2 weeks and 16.3% said 5 days on average. Further probe on how often did the respondent experience employees' grievance in the public sector, 81.1% settled for mostly, 12% said sometimes and 6.9% opted for in rare cases.

Enquiring on the time taken to solve a complaint (duration of handling process) surprisingly, majority (90.9%) said indefinitely, 7.1% were for 6 weeks and 2% opted for 2 weeks. An opinion was sought as well on the top management whereby 80.1% rate them as bad, 14.9% as fair and 5% as good. Respondents were also asked to state their position in education sector compared to other sectors and majority (60.1%) said lower than others, 32.7% on par with others and 7.2% better. The study also sought to know the various ways of achieving industrial peace where as expected, majority (74.6%) showed their support for increased wages/other monetary benefits. 12% were in favour of increased facilities and amenities, 8% did not have any say and least (5.4%) said it could be done through counseling individual employees.

The study also sought to find if lack of cooperation from top management was the main reason for grievance in public education sector.78.3% showed their support by saying yes while 21.7% disagreed by stating no. On whether respondent thought the complaints/grievances were taken care of well in public education sector, 81.4% said no, 16.6% said yes while 2% were not sure about it. Further it was also asked whether the party which submits the grievance always satisfied with the



way the grievance is settled. Majority (99.9%) disagreed as to being satisfied while the remainders (0.9%) were not sure. Most of respondents (96.9%) said they were not satisfied with existing grievance settlement system while 3.1% were satisfied.

In addition, 94.9% of the respondents were of the opinion that all the labour relations parties were not performing their responsibilities effectively while equally (3.1%) on divide opinion for effective performance and being not sure about it respectively. As to whether trade unions and employers do reach collective agreements with reasonable time frame, 94.6% said no while 5.4% said yes. Investigating on whether Collective Bargaining Agreements (C.B.A) reached are implemented, almost all respondents (97.7%) said no while a few (2.3%) were not sure about it.

Majority of the respondents (96.6%) said that unions and management did not act complementarily for the cause of industrial peace and other proportion (3.4%) were not sure about acting complimentarily by unions and management. 72.6% disagreed (said no) to a labour information being available and transparent. To add to this, 63.4% said no to the question about information flowing among the players without interruption while 36.6% stated yes to information flow. Also opinion on whether employment policy in place is effectively adopted was sought where 95.1% said no and 4.9% agreed to effective adoption of policy in place. A hundred percent of the respondents said that employees were dissatisfied with management's offers.

The study sought to investigate the knowledge of industrial relations through a set of questions and summarized findings are shown in Table 4.8 below. Most of the respondents (79.4%) have less than 5 years of experience working in labour relations, 13.7% had over 10 years and 6.9% had between 6 and 10 years working in labour relations. Further probing on whether respondents go through the training sessions aimed at improving labour relation skills where 85.4% said no and remainder 14.6% said yes, they undergo training meant to improve their labour relation skills. Examining those who undergoes training revealed that 21.6% do train very often, 64.7% (majority) train very rare and another 13.7% train rarely. The approach used in training respondent was found to be 32.3% formal and 67.7% informal. Most of the respondents have less than 5 years of experience working in labour relations. This means that the respondents have inadequate working experience in relation to labour relations.

Various levels and fields of competence were investigated by allowing the respondents to indicate level of competence: advanced; intermediate; basic; no formal training. To start with respondent competence on field of relevant legislation/jurisprudence showed majority (62.9%) had no formal training, 28% had basics, 6% had intermediate and 3.1% have advanced competence. On the side of labour management relations competency, 68.3% had basic competence, 15.1% have intermediate and equally (10.6%) had advanced and 6% had no formal training. In area of collective bargaining revealed 42.9% have intermediate knowledge, 41.7% have basic knowledge, 9.1% had no formal training in this and 6.3% have advanced competency.

Further investigation on competency in area of day to day management of collective agreement, most respondents (39.1%) showed intermediate competency, 35.4% had basic competency, 16.6% had no formal training and 8.9% and advanced competency. Finally, in the area of enforcing the collective agreement, 51.1% had the basic competency, 32% had intermediate competency, 8.6% had no formal training and 8.3% had advanced competency. Generally, it can be said that most

respondents possess the requisite competency level in almost all areas which are used in day to day running of education sector.

On whether all labour relations parties' officials have studied labour relations courses formally, majority of the respondents (55.4%) disagreed with all officials having studied formally, 28.9% strongly disagreed, 5.4% division in opinion, 7.1% and 3.1% showed an agreement and strong agreement respectively on official studying formally. As to whether labour relations parties' officials have formal training programs in place to improve their skills, most of the respondents (60.3%) disagreed with this, 30.6% strongly disagreed and on equal (2%) division in opinion 4% respondents stated to be agreeing, 3.1% strongly agreeing and somehow thinking there are formal training programs.

Further investigation on the level of agreement on whether labour relations players have got the necessary experience to enable them to carry out their responsibilities effectively revealed a simple majority (41.4%) strongly disagreeing, 49.4% disagreed, 2.1% agreeing and 7.1% strongly agreeing that they have the experience. A question on the opinion on whether labour courts make informed settlement of disputes lead to most respondents (63.7%) strongly disagreeing, 27.1% disagreed, 7.2% strongly agreeing and 2% agreed.

The study also found that most respondents (57.1%) disagreed on the players having the knowledge of collective bargaining, 28% strongly disagreed with this as well while 7.7% were agreeing and 7.1% strongly agreed with players being knowledgeable. In addition, as to whether trade unions are instrumental in productivity improvement a simple majority (49.4%) disagreed, 41.4% strongly disagreed, 5.1% were neutral, 4.1% strongly agreed. 52.3% disagreed with existence of strong and enlightened group of labour relations players, 40.6% strongly disagreed to having such a group, 4% agrees and 3.1% strongly agrees. Finally seeking on whether non-compliance of applicable labour laws could be a potential cause of industrial conflict revealed 46% in disagreement, 37.1% strongly disagreeing, 9.7% being neutral and equally 3.1% in favour of agreement and 4.1% strong agreement respectively.

#### **4.1 Correlation Analysis Results**

The study sought to establish the strength of the relationship between party's recognition in labour relations, collective bargaining process, knowledge of industrial relations, arbitration mechanisms, and attitude among labour relations parties and labour relations equilibrium. To achieve this, Spearman's rank correlation was carried out since labour relations equilibrium was dichotomous and consequently in nominal measurement scale. According to Kothari (2004), product moment correlation should be carried out if and only if both dependent and independent variables are in either ratio or interval scale and if this condition is not satisfied then Spearman's rank correlation should be applied to test the strength of the relationship. Correlation coefficient as measured by rho ranges between  $-1 < \rho < +1$ . If correlation coefficient is +1 then there is a perfect relationship whereby an increase in the dependent variable is associated with an increase in the predictor variable and if negative there is an inverse relationship whereby an increase in the dependent variable is associated with a decrease in the predictor variable (Kothari, 2004). A correlation coefficient close to either +1 or -1, indicates there is a strong relationship (Kothari, 2004; Oso & Onen, 2009).

The study findings depicted that there was a significant positive relationship between labour relations equilibrium and knowledge of industrial relations ( $\rho=0.189^{**}$ , p-value  $<0.05$ ). This means that an increase in knowledge of industrial relations attribute leads to an increase in labour relations equilibrium.

#### 4.2 Regression Analysis Results

A test of the full model against the constant only model was statistically significant, indicating that knowledge of industrial relations had a positive influence on labour relations equilibrium in the public education sector in Kenya (Chi square=21.083, p-value  $<0.05$  with d.f= 1). Nagelkerke R squared of 0.732 and R of 0.856 indicated a strong positive relationship between knowledge of industrial relations and labour relations equilibrium. This means that 73.2% of total variability in the dependent variable (labour relations equilibrium) is explained by knowledge of industrial relations. On overall prediction, success was 69.5%: From the classification Table, 67% for no labour relations equilibrium and 72% for labour relations equilibrium. The Wald criterion demonstrated that knowledge of industrial relations made a significant contribution to prediction of labour relations equilibrium ( $\beta=0.132$ , Wald =17.413 and p-value  $<0.05$ ). B column indicates the magnitude and direction of the given independent variable in relation to labour relations equilibrium. The coefficient gives us the change in proportion of labour relations equilibrium given a unit change in knowledge of industrial relations. It can be concluded that possession of the knowledge of industrial relations by labour relations parties' officials in the public education sector increases the likelihood of labour relations equilibrium by 0.132. Exp (B) value indicated that when knowledge of industrial relations is raised by one unit, the odds ratio is 1.141 times as large and therefore this public education sector labour relations parties' attribute of acquiring the knowledge of industrial relations is more likely to lead to realization of labour relations equilibrium as summarised in equation 1.

Logit (p) = 1.030 +0.132 (Knowledge of industrial relations).....Equation 1.

#### 4.3 Hypothesis Testing

The study hypothesized that knowledge of industrial relations has a significant influence on labour relations equilibrium in public education sector in Kenya. The study findings indicated that there was a positive significant relationship between knowledge of industrial relations and labour relations ( $\beta=0.132$ , Wald =17.413 and p-value  $<0.05$ ). This therefore means that an increase in knowledge of industrial relations will increase labour relations equilibrium in the public education sector in Kenya. Since the p-value  $<0.05$  the null hypothesis that knowledge of industrial relations has no significant influence on labour relations equilibrium in public education sector in Kenya was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. It was therefore concluded that knowledge of industrial relations has a positive significant influence on labour relations equilibrium in public education sector in Kenya.

#### 5.0 Discussions

The Wald criterion demonstrated that knowledge of industrial relations made a significant contribution to prediction of labour relations equilibrium ( $\beta=0.132$ , Wald =17.413 and p-value  $<0.05$ ). B column indicates the magnitude and direction of the given independent variable in relation to labour relations equilibrium. The coefficient gives us the change in proportion of labour relations equilibrium given a unit change in knowledge of industrial relations. It can be concluded that possession of the knowledge of industrial relations by labour relations parties' officials in the

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Knowledge of industrial relations had a positive relationship with labour relations equilibrium in public education sector in Kenya. Knowledge of industrial relations had a statistically significant positive influence on labour relations equilibrium in public education sector in Kenya. This necessitated rejection of the null hypothesis that knowledge of industrial relations does not affect labour relations equilibrium in public education sector in Kenya

These results are in line with the findings from other studies that have emphasized the significant role of knowledge of industrial relations in determining labour relations equilibrium. Nonaka and Takeuchi, (1997); Murray and Peyrefitte, (2007). found out that formal training largely facilitates the exchange of explicit knowledge. Training is regarded as an important activity and continuous training is a characteristic of contemporary management approach which emphasis in philosophy of learning organization as indicated by Wenger and Snyder (2000). The result is also consistent with finding by Tripathi, (1992) that enlightened leadership will have the willingness to participate and cooperate in managing the organization for success and progress of success.

### **5.1 Conclusions**

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that knowledge of industrial relations facilitates labour relations equilibrium in the public education sector in Kenya. The study found out that for labour relations equilibrium to be realized there is need for organizations in this 21st. Century to increasingly emphasize on increasing the competencies of its professionals in order to transform them into knowledge workers. This will enable employees to stay at the forefront of their professional fields and be constantly aware of developments within their specific disciplines and professions. Thus, public education sector in Kenya is expected to place a premium on labour relations parties' training as part of embracing trends in contemporary human resource management philosophies.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

In general, the results provide labour relations parties in public education sector in Kenya with important insights by highlighting the benefits that the public education sector can derive through an effective implementation of determinants of labour relations equilibrium. In particular, the three key stakeholders in tripartism as representatives of the government, employers and employees respectively can gain a deeper understanding of these determinants of labour relations equilibrium to harmoniously settle disputes in public education sector which experiences strikes each year which is a sign of industrial disharmony which translates to a state of disequilibrium in labour relations. This is because the proposed model can serve as a guide for realizing labour relations equilibrium within the sector.

Adoption of strategic orientation initiatives like knowledge of industrial relations provision should be vigorously pursued by parties to labour relations in the public education sector in Kenya. Investing in knowledge of industrial relations will enable the public education sector manage

strikes, now ranking as one of the top problem in all sectors particularly the public education sector in Kenya and globally, and the resulting losses that they create.

### 5.3 Areas for Future Research

The findings presented in this study are based on the influence of knowledge of industrial relations on labour relations equilibrium in public education sector in Kenya. Future research should be extended to the entire education sector in Kenya. From the findings 73.2% of total variability in the dependent variable (labour relations equilibrium) is explained by knowledge of industrial relations. A further study is therefore recommended to investigate the other determinants of labour relations equilibrium in the public education sector in Kenya.

The study relied on quantitative data where the respondents were asked to select from the explicit options on the item in the instrument. But some success factors of labour relations equilibrium are known to be strategic and dynamic in nature. Therefore, a longitudinal study would be more preferable as it could provide a better perspective of the determinants of labour relations equilibrium in public education sector in Kenya in addition to further informing the policy frameworks of labour relations.

Lastly, the findings presented in this study are based on the effect of knowledge of industrial relations on labour relations equilibrium in public education sector in Kenya. Future research should be extended to the entire education sector and other sectors in Kenya.

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