



## **The Role of Trade Unions in Ensuring Job Security and Welfare Benefits: A Case Study of the Nigeria Labour Congress in Akwa Ibom State**

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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15297519>

**Citation:** Frank, E. O., & Etim, A. V. (2025). The Role of Trade Unions in Ensuring Job Security and Welfare Benefits: A Case Study of the Nigeria Labour Congress in Akwa Ibom State. *International Journal of Public Relations and Social Sciences*, 1(1)

### **Abstract**

*This study examines the role of trade unions in ensuring job security and improving welfare benefits for civil servants in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. It evaluates union effectiveness in negotiating employment retention policies, advocating for better working conditions, and securing workers' rights while identifying key challenges such as government interference, economic constraints, and leadership conflicts. A mixed-methods research design was employed, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Primary data were gathered through structured questionnaires, key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs), while secondary data sources included government reports, union documents, and academic literature. Data were analysed using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics and inferential techniques such as chi-square tests and regression analysis to assess the relationship between union activities and job security/welfare outcomes. The research is grounded in Marxist labour theory and collective bargaining theory, as they help to highlight the struggle between employers and employees, emphasising unions' role in addressing economic inequalities and underscoring unions' influence in securing favourable labour policies through negotiation. Findings reveal that trade unions significantly contribute to job security, wage increments, and welfare benefits like pensions and healthcare. However, legal restrictions, economic instability, and leadership disputes hinder their effectiveness. Strengthening legal frameworks, governance, and financial independence can enhance union influence.*

**Keywords:** Trade Unions, Job Security, Welfare Benefits, Collective Bargaining, Labor Relations

## **1.1 Introduction**

Trade unions play a critical role in advocating for workers' rights, ensuring job security, and improving welfare benefits. Historically, trade unionism in Nigeria emerged as a response to exploitative colonial labour policies, with the first formal union, the Railway Workers' Union, established in 1912 (Adebisi, 2022). Over the years, trade unions have evolved into powerful institutions influencing labour policies, with the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) becoming the umbrella body for trade unions in 1978 (Osamwonyi & Ugiagbe, 2020).

The Nigerian civil service remains the backbone of governance and public service delivery. However, civil servants often face challenges such as job insecurity, delayed salary payments, inadequate welfare benefits, and unfavourable working conditions (Kareem & Akinola, 2022).

The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) has played a significant role in negotiating for job security and welfare benefits for workers in both the public and private sectors, using tools such as collective bargaining, strikes, and advocacy campaigns (Osamwonyi & Ugiagbe, 2020). In Akwa Ibom State, the NLC has been instrumental in wage negotiations, pension security, and ensuring fair treatment of civil servants (Fayankinnu, 2019).

Despite these efforts, challenges remain. The increasing privatisation of government institutions, economic downturns, and government interference have weakened the NLC's ability to influence labour policies (Ananti, 2018). Furthermore, internal conflicts within the trade union movement have sometimes undermined its effectiveness (Omeje & Ogbu, 2019). Given these challenges, this study seeks to critically examine the role of trade unions in ensuring job security and welfare benefits for civil servants in Akwa Ibom State.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

While the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) has been at the forefront of advocating for job security and improved welfare conditions, Nigerian civil servants continue to face retrenchment, salary delays, pension irregularities, and deteriorating working conditions (Young, 2020). In Akwa Ibom State, many civil servants have expressed dissatisfaction with the level of support provided by trade unions in addressing these challenges (Ugo & Sebastine, 2020). The growing influence of government over trade union activities, coupled with legal constraints on labour strikes, has further limited the NLC's effectiveness in protecting workers' rights (Bankole, 2020).

This study aims to investigate the extent to which trade unions, particularly the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), have influenced job security and welfare benefits in Akwa Ibom State. It will assess the effectiveness of union-led negotiations, industrial actions, and policy advocacy in securing better working conditions for civil servants.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

While this study aims to investigate the extent to which trade unions, particularly the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), have influenced job security and welfare benefits in Akwa Ibom State, its specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the extent to which trade unions contribute to job security in the Nigerian civil service.
- ii. Analyse the role of trade unions in improving the welfare benefits of civil servants in Akwa Ibom State.
- iii. Identify the challenges faced by trade unions in advocating for workers' rights and welfare.
- iv. Propose strategies to enhance the effectiveness of trade unions in securing job security and welfare benefits.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. How do trade unions contribute to job security in the Nigerian civil service?
2. What impact have trade unions had on the welfare benefits of civil servants in Akwa Ibom State?
3. What are the major challenges faced by trade unions in advocating for workers' rights?
4. What strategies can be implemented to improve the effectiveness of trade unions in ensuring job security and welfare benefits?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study is important for multiple stakeholders, including policymakers, trade unions, civil servants, and researchers. It provides empirical insights into the effectiveness of trade unions in securing better working conditions and highlights the challenges that hinder their operations (Osakwe, 2019). The findings will inform policy recommendations to strengthen labour rights, improve collective bargaining processes, and enhance the autonomy of trade unions. Furthermore, this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge on labour relations in Nigeria, providing a foundation for future studies on trade unionism and worker welfare.

## **Literature Review**

### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

To have a deeper understanding of the research, it was hinged on two basic theories – the Marxist theory of trade unionism and the social exchange theory. The Marxist Theory of Trade Unionism views trade unions as instruments of class struggle, formed (in 1848) to counteract the exploitative tendencies of capitalism. According to Karl Marx, the

capitalist system is inherently structured to maximise profits at the expense of workers, often leading to wage suppression, job insecurity, and poor working conditions (Otobo, 2016). In this context, trade unions emerge as collective forces aimed at protecting workers' rights by challenging employer dominance and advocating for fair labour practices. This perspective suggests that trade unions function as a defensive mechanism against labour exploitation, using tools such as collective bargaining and industrial actions to secure better employment terms (Freeman & Medoff, 2004). The Marxist view is particularly relevant in the Nigerian civil service, where workers often face precarious employment conditions due to government policies and economic instability. By mobilising workers and engaging in strike actions, trade unions like the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) strive to balance power dynamics between employers (government) and employees, ensuring improved job security and welfare benefits.

The Social Exchange Theory, on the other hand, focuses on the relational aspects of trade unions and their role in fostering mutual benefits between workers and employers. This theory suggests that employees engage in collective bargaining and union membership as a rational choice to enhance their job stability and overall welfare (Hyman, 2018). From this perspective, trade unions act as intermediaries that negotiate employment conditions, ensuring that workers remain productive and committed while employers maintain a satisfied and stable workforce. A key aspect of the theory is reciprocity—when workers receive fair wages, job security, and welfare benefits, they are more likely to exhibit loyalty, motivation, and higher performance levels (Adeoluwa & Ogunnubi, 2018). In the Nigerian civil service, the NLC leverages this exchange relationship to justify demands for better employment conditions, arguing that improved staff welfare leads to increased efficiency and reduced turnover rates. Thus, the social exchange theory underscores the role of trade unions not only as advocates for workers but also as strategic partners in maintaining a functional labour system.

Both theories highlight the importance of trade unions in securing workers' rights but approach the issue from different angles. While the Marxist perspective emphasises struggle and resistance, the social exchange theory focuses on negotiation and mutual benefits. These theoretical lenses provide valuable insights into the role of trade unions in ensuring job security and welfare benefits for Nigerian civil servants.

## **2.2 Trade Unions and Job Security in Nigeria**

Kode (2021) submits that trade unions, particularly the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), have played a crucial role in ensuring job security for workers in Nigeria through mechanisms such as collective bargaining, policy advocacy, and industrial actions. Trade unions serve as a buffer against arbitrary dismissals, ensuring that employment decisions align with labour laws and fair employment practices. In the Nigerian civil service, where job insecurity is exacerbated by economic challenges and government

workforce restructuring, trade unions act as negotiating bodies that push for better employment conditions and safeguards against unfair labour practices.

According to Houeland (2022), trade unions have been instrumental in negotiating employment retention policies, which have helped prevent mass retrenchments during economic downturns. By engaging in collective bargaining and negotiations with government institutions, unions have secured policies that prioritise employee job stability over cost-cutting measures. Furthermore, according to Baccaro & Howell (2017), the NLC has actively opposed the casualisation of labour in the Nigerian public sector, arguing that contract-based employment undermines job security and deprives workers of essential benefits. This advocacy has led to significant policy adjustments, ensuring that more civil servants are granted permanent employment contracts with entitlements to pensions, healthcare, and workplace protections.

Despite these achievements, trade unions in Nigeria face significant challenges in their quest for employment security. For Taiwo et al. (2024), political interference and economic instability have consistently weakened the bargaining power of trade unions, and this limits their ability to secure long-term employment guarantees for workers. Governments often implement policies that restrict labour union influence, such as limiting the right to strike and enforcing anti-union regulations. Bello (2023) adds another critical challenge is the increasing privatisation and outsourcing of government services, which has led to job losses and reduced employment protections for civil servants. With more government functions being transferred to private contractors, trade unions struggle to extend their influence over non-permanent workers, making job security a growing concern in the civil service. Sustained policy reforms are necessary to bolster their influence and ensure long-term employment stability for Nigerian civil servants.

### **2.3 Trade Unions and Welfare Benefits in Nigeria**

According to Opute (2023), trade unions are instrumental in securing better remuneration, healthcare, pension security, and improved working conditions for civil servants in Nigeria. Through collective bargaining and industrial actions, unions have consistently advocated for fair wages and social benefits, ensuring that workers receive adequate compensation and essential welfare services. Their influence extends beyond salaries to retirement benefits, job-related allowances, and workplace safety policies, which contribute to the overall well-being of workers. And Udoh (2025) adds that reward systems play a critical role in enhancing productivity, motivation, and job satisfaction in organisations.

With respect to salary and wage negotiations, Opute (2023) opines that the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) has led major industrial actions that have resulted in

minimum wage increases and salary reviews for Nigerian civil servants. These negotiations have improved living standards for workers and established a benchmark for fair labour compensation in the country. Similarly, Hassel (2014) submits that trade unions play a key role in reducing wage disparities and ensuring timely salary payments. By engaging in dialogue with government agencies and employers, unions prevent salary arrears and push for regular income adjustments that reflect economic realities.

Regarding pension and social security, Balkaran (2011) asserts that trade unions have significantly influenced pension reforms in Nigeria, ensuring that retired workers receive their benefits without undue delays. Through sustained advocacy and policy interventions, unions have contributed to the review of pension schemes, securing retirement protections that guarantee financial security for former civil servants. Furthermore, Obamwonyi and Osaghae (2019) contend that trade unions have actively challenged pension fund mismanagement, leading to greater transparency in social security administration. By exposing corruption and irregularities in pension fund management, unions have played a watchdog role, ensuring that public servants receive their entitled benefits without exploitation.

In light of these contributions, it is evident that trade unions remain crucial to the welfare of Nigerian civil servants. Their continued engagement in salary negotiations, pension advocacy, and social security monitoring reinforces their indispensable role in labour relations and workforce stability. However, to sustain these gains, unions must persist in strengthening their bargaining power, combating corruption, and advocating for legal protections that secure the rights of Nigerian workers.

Trade unions have also played a significant role in securing healthcare and leave benefits for civil servants in Nigeria. According to Akinbode et al. (2024), unions have been instrumental in negotiating improved medical coverage, ensuring that workers have access to comprehensive health insurance plans and workplace healthcare services. Their efforts have led to policy reforms that mandate government contributions to employee health insurance schemes, thereby reducing the financial burden on civil servants. In addition, unions have advocated for extended maternity leave benefits, recognising the importance of maternal health and child welfare in workforce productivity.

Furthermore, Mordi et al. (2023) assert that trade unions have influenced various welfare policies aimed at improving the living and working conditions of civil servants. These policies include housing schemes, transport allowances, and work-life balance initiatives, which contribute to better job satisfaction and overall employee well-being. Through collective bargaining and persistent engagement with government agencies, trade unions have ensured that civil servants receive additional benefits that enhance their quality of life. These initiatives demonstrate the unions' broader commitment to not only protecting wages but also fostering a more supportive and productive work environment.

## **2.4 Challenges Facing Trade Unions in Nigeria**

Despite their numerous achievements, trade unions in Nigeria face significant challenges that hinder their effectiveness in advocating for workers' rights. These challenges range from government interference and economic constraints to internal union conflicts, all of which weaken the bargaining power of unions and limit their ability to secure favourable employment conditions for workers.

According to Adeoluwa and Ogunnubi (2018), government interference has historically repressed trade union activities in Nigeria, restricting their ability to call for strikes and negotiate better working conditions. The government has often imposed policies that limit union influence, particularly in sectors where labour unions hold significant power, such as the civil service. Similarly, Ngwama (2016) opines that legal constraints, such as the Trade Union Amendment Act (2005), have further weakened union autonomy, reducing the NLC's ability to directly influence employment policies. These legal restrictions prevent unions from freely organising industrial actions, making it harder for them to effectively advocate for improved wages and job security.

In addition to political constraints, economic challenges also pose a major obstacle to trade union effectiveness. Bamiwola (2023) submits that economic downturns have negatively impacted the government's ability to meet union demands, often leading to prolonged disputes and worker dissatisfaction. As government revenues decline, civil service salaries and benefits become harder to sustain, making it difficult for trade unions to negotiate favourable agreements. Furthermore, Young (2020) asserts that high inflation rates have significantly eroded wage increases, making salary adjustments won through union negotiations less impactful in real economic terms. This inflationary pressure reduces workers' purchasing power, undermining the very benefits trade unions seek to secure.

Internal conflicts within trade unions also present a major challenge to their effectiveness. Ugo and Sebastine (2020) contend that factional disputes and leadership struggles within the NLC have frequently undermined trade union unity, making it difficult to present a unified front during negotiations. Leadership crises often lead to divided allegiances among workers, reducing participation in union activities and weakening collective bargaining efforts. Additionally, Bankole (2020) opines that cases of corruption within trade unions have further eroded public trust in union leadership, making workers less likely to support union-led actions. Reports of mismanagement of union funds, lack of transparency, and unethical leadership practices have tarnished the reputation of unions, diminishing their credibility as defenders of worker rights.

In light of these challenges, trade unions in Nigeria must adopt new strategies to maintain their influence and effectiveness. Strengthening internal governance, enhancing transparency in financial management, and building stronger coalitions with international labour organisations may help unions regain public trust and negotiation power. Additionally, engaging in policy advocacy to amend restrictive labour laws

could help unions reclaim their autonomy and bargaining strength, ensuring they continue to play a vital role in protecting workers' rights.

According to existing research, trade unions have played a significant role in ensuring job security and welfare benefits for workers. However, despite the extensive studies conducted on trade union activities in Nigeria, several critical gaps remain in the literature.

One notable gap, as highlighted by previous studies, is the lack of empirical assessments of union-led policy outcomes in specific states such as Akwa Ibom. While much research has focused on national-level labour movements, fewer studies have systematically evaluated the impact of trade unions on employment policies and welfare benefits within particular state-level contexts. This gap creates a limited understanding of the effectiveness of union activities at decentralised government levels.

Furthermore, comparative analyses between Nigerian trade unions and global best practices in industrial relations remain underexplored. While research has examined how the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) engages with employers and government authorities, there is insufficient scholarly work comparing Nigerian trade union strategies with those in other developing or developed economies. A broader comparative perspective could provide valuable insights into how Nigerian trade unions can improve their effectiveness by adopting international labour strategies.

Another gap in the literature, as observed by labour scholars, is the impact of technological advancements on trade union operations and labour negotiations. The rise of digital communication, automation, and artificial intelligence has transformed the nature of employment and industrial relations, yet little research has examined how trade unions in Nigeria have adapted to these changes. Understanding how unions leverage technology for member mobilisation, collective bargaining, and advocacy is crucial in modern labour relations.

This study, therefore, aims to bridge these gaps by providing a case study-based evaluation of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) in Akwa Ibom State, focusing on the period 2015–2023. By conducting empirical assessments and comparative analyses and exploring technological influences on trade unions, this research will offer valuable contributions to the ongoing discourse on labour relations in Nigeria.

## **Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employed a descriptive case study approach, focusing on the activities and impact of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) in Akwa Ibom State. The qualitative and quantitative research methods were combined to provide a comprehensive assessment of trade union activities, with the qualitative aspect of the study focusing on document analysis, interviews, and thematic analysis, while the quantitative aspect involved structured questionnaires and statistical data analysis. This mixed-method approach

ensures a more nuanced understanding of union-led initiatives, challenges, and policy outcomes.

The population of this study comprises civil servants, trade union leaders, government officials, and labour rights activists in Akwa Ibom State. This diverse selection ensures a balanced perspective on trade union activities by incorporating the views of both union members and policymakers. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to achieve a representative sample. Purposive sampling was used to select trade union leaders, policymakers, and labour experts for in-depth interviews based on their experience and expertise in labour relations. Stratified random sampling was then applied to categorise civil servants by employment rank and sector, ensuring that the perspectives of both junior and senior workers are captured. Also, simple random sampling is utilised to select union members for surveys, ensuring an unbiased representation of unionised workers' experiences. To enhance the reliability of findings, the sample size was determined using Yamane's formula (1967) for finite population sampling, which ensured statistical significance and representativeness, calculated at a 95% confidence level.

### **3.3 Data Collection Methods**

This study employed both primary and secondary data collection methods to ensure a comprehensive analysis of trade union activities and their impact on job security and welfare benefits. The primary data sources included structured questionnaires, which were distributed to civil servants and trade union members to gather insights into their experiences regarding salary structures, job security, welfare benefits, and union interventions. Key informant interviews (KIIs) were also conducted with NLC leaders, policymakers, and labour experts to gain a deeper understanding of union strategies, challenges, and achievements. Furthermore, focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with union members to explore their collective perceptions of NLC activities and the effectiveness of trade unions in negotiating better conditions for workers.

### **3.4 Data Analysis Techniques**

A mixed-methods approach to data analysis, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative techniques for a balanced interpretation of findings. Quantitative analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics (percentages, mean scores, and frequency distributions) to summarise the survey responses. And inferential statistics, such as chi-square tests and regression analysis, were applied to examine the relationship between trade union activities and job security/welfare outcomes. The statistical analysis was performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to ensure data accuracy and reliability.

For qualitative analysis, data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions was examined using thematic analysis, which involved identifying

recurring patterns and perspectives from participant responses. Furthermore, content analysis was applied to government reports, union documents, and media publications to extract key themes, policy developments, and labour trends. This dual approach ensures that the study provides both statistical insights and contextual depth in evaluating the role of trade unions in job security and welfare benefits.

### 3.5 Validity and Reliability of Data

To ensure the credibility and accuracy of findings, this study adopted several measures to enhance validity and reliability. Triangulation was employed by cross-referencing multiple data sources (questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis) to validate findings and reduce biases. A pilot study was conducted to test and refine the questionnaire, ensuring that it effectively captures the required information before full-scale data collection.

Furthermore, a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha was applied to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire responses, ensuring that the instrument is reliable for measuring trade union activities and their impact on job security and welfare benefits. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated at 0.82, indicating a high level of reliability, as values above 0.70 are generally considered acceptable for social science research. This confirms that the survey instrument produced consistent and dependable results, strengthening the credibility of the study's conclusions.

## Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Trade Union Activities and Job Security

**Research Question One:** How do trade unions contribute to job security in the Nigerian civil service?

**Table 4.1: Trade Union Activities and Job Security Summary in Akwa Ibom State**

Key Findings	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Civil servants acknowledge NLC's role in securing employment.	75%
Collective bargaining is the most effective strategy for employment retention.	Majority response
Unions successfully lobbied against mass retrenchments during economic downturns.	Majority response
Privatization and outsourcing are major threats to job security.	60%
Job losses due to government reforms have increased.	60%
Political interference and legal constraints have weakened union bargaining power.	Majority response

Source: Field Work

According to the survey responses shown in Table 4.1, a significant proportion of civil servants (approximately 75%) acknowledged that the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) in Akwa Ibom State has played an active role in securing their employment. Respondents highlighted key union strategies such as collective bargaining, industrial actions, and advocacy against unfair labour practices.

The study finds that collective bargaining has been the most effective tool in negotiating employment retention policies. Many respondents confirmed that during economic downturns, unions have successfully lobbied against mass retrenchments and casualisation. This aligns with the findings of Houeland (2022), who opines that trade unions in Nigeria have consistently fought against policies that threaten job security.

However, privatisation and outsourcing remain major threats to employment stability, as confirmed by 60% of respondents who reported job losses due to government reforms. This supports the argument by Bello (2023) that trade unions are struggling to protect civil servants from job insecurity arising from economic restructuring. Additionally, political interference and legal constraints, such as the Trade Union Amendment Act (2005), have weakened union bargaining power (Ngwama, 2016).

#### 4.2 Trade Unions and Welfare Benefits

**Research Question Two:** What impact have trade unions had on the welfare benefits of civil servants in Akwa Ibom State?

**Table 4.2: Trade Unions and Welfare Benefits Summary in Akwa Ibom State**

Key Findings	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Trade unions have significantly contributed to welfare benefits.	80%
Wage negotiations have led to periodic salary reviews.	Majority response
Unions played a major role in securing national minimum wage increases.	Majority response
Pension reforms have improved due to union interventions.	70% of retired workers
Healthcare benefits, including health insurance and maternity leave, have improved due to union advocacy.	Majority response
Unions influenced welfare policies such as housing schemes and transport allowances.	Majority response

From Table 4.2 above, the majority (80%) of respondents affirmed that trade unions have contributed significantly to their welfare by securing better wages, pension benefits, healthcare provisions, and improved working conditions. The findings indicate that wage negotiations have led to periodic salary reviews, which civil servants perceive as a direct result of union-led industrial actions.

According to Opute (2023), the NLC's major achievements include advocating for a national minimum wage increase, a view supported by survey respondents who credited the union with ensuring salary increments. Furthermore, pension reforms have been positively influenced by union pressure, with 70% of retired workers confirming they received their entitlements following union intervention. These findings align with Balkaran (2011), who submits that union activism has played a crucial role in pension security in Nigeria.

The study also reveals that healthcare benefits have improved due to union advocacy. According to Akinbode et al. (2024), unions have successfully secured better health insurance coverage and extended maternity leave policies for civil servants. In addition, welfare policies such as housing schemes, transport allowances, and work-life balance policies have been influenced by trade union campaigns (Mordi et al., 2023).

#### 4.2 Challenges Facing Trade Unions in Akwa Ibom State

**Research Question Three:** What are the major challenges faced by trade unions in advocating for workers' rights?

**Table 4.3: Summary of Challenges Facing Trade Unions in Akwa Ibom State**

Challenges	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Government interference through legal restrictions and intimidation.	65%
Economic constraints, including inflation and budget deficits, hinder union negotiations.	Majority response
Prolonged disputes and worker dissatisfaction due to unmet demands.	Majority response
Internal conflicts within the NLC reduce trust in union leadership.	45%
Factional disputes and union corruption weaken collective bargaining power.	45%

*Source: Filed Work*

Despite these successes, the findings highlight several challenges that undermine trade union effectiveness. Respondents (as shown in Table 4.3) identified government interference, economic constraints, and internal union conflicts as the primary obstacles.

Approximately 65% of respondents noted that government interference through legal restrictions and intimidation has limited union activities. This supports the argument by Adeoluwa & Ogunnubi (2018), who assert that state repression has historically weakened labour movements. Additionally, economic constraints,

including inflation and budget deficits, have made it difficult for the government to meet union demands, leading to prolonged disputes and worker dissatisfaction (Bamiwola, 2023).

Lastly, internal conflicts within the NLC have emerged as a significant issue. Factional disputes and cases of union corruption were cited by 45% of respondents as factors that reduce trust in union leadership. Bankole (2020) argues that leadership struggles within trade unions have weakened their collective power, a claim supported by this study's findings.

#### 4.4 Statistical Analysis of Trade Union Impact

##### 4.4.1 Chi-Square Test on Trade Unions and Job Security

The Chi-square test was performed to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between trade union activities and job security. The results are presented in Table 4.4.1 below:

**Table 4.4.1: Chi-Square Test for Trade Unions and Job Security**

Variable	$\chi^2$ Value	df	p-value	Decision ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )
Trade Union Activities & Job Security	18.67	4	0.002	Significant

The p-value (0.002) is less than the significance level (0.05), indicating a statistically significant relationship between trade union activities and job security. This confirms that trade union interventions, such as collective bargaining and industrial actions, have a meaningful impact on employment retention policies.

##### 4.4.2 Regression Analysis on Trade Unions and Welfare Benefits

A regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how trade union activities influence welfare benefits such as salary increases, pension reforms, and healthcare provisions. The regression model is as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$$

Where:

- $Y$  = Welfare Benefits
- $X_1$  = Wage Negotiations
- $X_2$  = Pension Reforms
- $X_3$  = Healthcare Advocacy

The regression results are summarised in Table 4.4.2 below:

**Table 4.4.2: Regression Analysis of Trade Union Activities and Welfare Benefits**

Predictor Variable	Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Wage Negotiations (X1X_1)	0.54	0.12	4.50	0.000
Pension Reforms (X2X_2)	0.41	0.15	3.20	0.002
Healthcare Advocacy (X3X_3)	0.35	0.10	3.50	0.001
Constant ( $\beta_0$ )	2.05	0.55	3.73	0.001
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>0.68</b>			

From the data presented, the R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.68 suggests that 68% of the variations in welfare benefits can be explained by trade union activities. All predictor variables (wage negotiations, pension reforms, and healthcare advocacy) have statistically significant effects on welfare benefits (p-values < 0.05).

#### 4.4.3 Interpretation of Statistical Findings

The Chi-square test confirms that trade unions significantly influence job security by advocating for fair employment policies and fighting against mass retrenchments. The regression analysis demonstrates that wage negotiations, pension reforms, and healthcare advocacy are strong predictors of welfare benefits, confirming that trade unions play a crucial role in securing better conditions for civil servants.

These findings support previous literature (Opute, 2023; Balkaran, 2011; Akinbode et al., 2024) while providing empirical evidence to reinforce the argument that trade union activities are critical to improving job security and welfare benefits in Akwa Ibom State.

The study confirms that trade unions, particularly the NLC in Akwa Ibom State, play a critical role in job security and welfare benefits. However, challenges such as government interference, economic instability, and internal conflicts continue to hinder their effectiveness. While unions have successfully negotiated better wages, job security policies, and welfare benefits, they must address internal leadership struggles and find new strategies to navigate political and economic constraints.

## 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

This study has examined the role of trade unions in securing job security and welfare benefits for civil servants in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The findings confirm that trade unions, particularly the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), have played a significant role in negotiating better wages, preventing mass retrenchments, and improving working conditions. Collective bargaining and industrial actions remain the most effective tools used by unions to advocate for civil servants' rights. However, challenges such as

government interference, economic constraints, and internal union conflicts continue to undermine the effectiveness of trade unions. Additionally, privatisation and outsourcing threaten employment stability, making union-led interventions increasingly difficult.

Despite these challenges, the study affirms that trade unions have positively impacted pension security, healthcare benefits, and overall worker welfare. However, legal restrictions and financial limitations hinder their ability to fully protect workers' rights. To ensure that trade unions remain effective in the changing labour landscape, reforms in industrial relations policies and trade union leadership structures are necessary.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Trade unions should enhance their negotiation strategies by collaborating with international labour organisations to gain leverage in industrial relations.
2. Legal frameworks should be reviewed to grant unions more autonomy in negotiating labour policies.
3. The government should adopt labour-friendly policies that promote dialogue between trade unions and policymakers instead of imposing restrictions on union activities.
4. Trade unions should explore alternative welfare programmes, such as cooperative schemes and financial aid initiatives, to support members during economic downturns.
5. Regular audits and transparency measures should be enforced to restore public trust in trade union leadership.

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